



## **Board Report**

**February 24, 2021**

### **COVID-19: Regional Update**

Due to a rise in COVID cases, WorkOne offices moved back to an appointment-only status on November 16, 2020. Office staff continue to sanitize work areas within the WorkOne office locations and a maximum capacity for each office has been established to ensure the safety of our clients and staff. WorkOne staff continue to provide virtual services, or customers can request to schedule an appointment. Due to decreasing COVID numbers, WorkOne locations are tentatively set to re-open to the general public on March 1, 2021.

Region 8 continues to utilize the Dislocated Worker Disaster Recovery funds to hire dislocated workers as temporary employees in our WorkOne offices to assist with cleaning of WorkOne premises and management of maximum numbers of customers in the office at a given time. Temporary positions are currently filled in Bedford, Linton and Orange County. Two positions are slated to be filled in Monroe County and additional positions may be added in the near future when offices re-open.

Vincennes University recently hired a new Career Advisor in Brown County. Vacant positions are still available in Monroe and Lawrence Counties.

### **RESEA**

The RESEA Program has experienced a dramatic change during the pandemic. With the threat of COVID 19 transmission, all face-to-face Orientations and Interviews were discontinued. To maintain services, the RESEA program transitioned to a telephonic/virtual service model. Last Program Year (2019/2020,) over 12,500 Unemployment Claimants were selected for RESEA services in Region 8, a substantial increase over the annual average of 1,668 claimants selected the previous year. So far this Program Year (2020/2021), 4,289 UI Claimants have been selected for RESEA services. RESEA Specialists have completed 1,493 program Assessment Interviews, which translates to a 54% Successful Interview rate for program participants. To date, 513 RESEA clients have requested additional services such as virtual workshops, career guidance, job search assistance and job training after their initial orientation and assessment interview.

### **National Dislocated Worker Employment Recovery Grant (DW-ERG)**

Region 8 received an additional \$350,000 to provide Career Services, Training and Supportive Services to Dislocated Workers who have been affected by COVID-19. As of January 30<sup>th</sup>, 32 eligible workers have been enrolled to participate in career and training services.

## Region 8 County Unemployment Rates

As of December 2020, Indiana's unemployment rate dropped to 4.3% which is well below the national rate of 6.7%. Most of the Region 8 county rates have remained below the state average.

Region 8 staff continue to answer basic UI questions and help customers use WorkOne computers to file UI claims.

Customers who need

additional assistance are required to call or email the UI Contact Center at DWD. Customers at the Linton and Bloomington WorkOne locations have the option of using a designated phone to speak directly with an Unemployment Specialist at the UI Contact Center. Customers have the option to file by phone if they do not have access to a computer or smart phone to file online.

**UI Claims** - During 2020, DWD made over 7.8 million claimant payments totaling \$6.6 billion to Hoosiers across the state.

**Regular Unemployment Insurance (UI)** is limited to 26 weeks of payment in a benefit year and is for individuals who are unemployed through no fault of their own. Once an eligible claimant uses their 26 weeks, typically no more payments are permitted. In 2020, two additional programs were introduced to extend UI benefits:

1. Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC), which provided an additional 13 weeks beyond the initial 26 weeks, was scheduled to end on Dec. 26, 2020. The amendments to the CARES Act have extended this program an additional 11 weeks. This program began again on January 22, 2021.
2. Extended Benefits is part of permanent federal UI law and activates when there are periods of high unemployment. Indiana's extended benefits activated in the summer and deactivated in October.

**Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA)** is a temporary federal UI program for individuals not otherwise eligible for UI benefits, including the self-employed, independent contractors, gig economy workers, and those seeking part-time employment. For weeks beginning on or after Dec. 27, 2020, an individual could receive an additional 11 weeks of PUA for an overall total of 50 weeks. PUA expires on March 14, 2021, with a phase out period until April 10, 2021.

**The Mixed Earner Unemployment Compensation (MEUC)** program is for individuals collecting regular UI (excluding PUA) who have also earned more than \$5,000 in self-employed wages for the previous tax year. Eligible individuals receive a \$100 weekly benefit in addition to their regular UI payment. MEUC is payable beginning no earlier than the week ending Jan. 2, 2021 through the week of unemployment ending on or before March 14, 2021. Indiana is administering the MEUC program, which is optional.

County	July	August	September	October	November	December
Brown	7.2%	5.7%	5.1%	4.2%	4.2%	3.5%
Daviess	4.2%	3.5%	3.1%	2.7%	2.8%	2.4%
Greene	6.7%	5.7%	5.0%	4.1%	4.4%	3.8%
Lawrence	7.6%	5.9%	5.4%	4.7%	4.7%	4.1%
Martin	5.0%	3.9%	3.5%	3.2%	3.4%	2.9%
Monroe	6.8%	5.4%	4.4%	4.0%	3.8%	3.3%
Orange	14.3%	8.1%	6.9%	8.2%	7.1%	5.6%
Owen	7.2%	5.9%	4.9%	4.2%	4.2%	4.0%

## Performance Highlights and Business Services Updates

From July 1, 2020 to December 2020, the Business Service Team assisted with the following:

- **Work Based Learning** – An average of 19 customers were active in work-based learning (WBL) with regional employers.
- **WorkKeys**- Over 83 assessments were administered in the last six (6) months. Business Services staff continue to engage with employers throughout the region to discuss the utilization of the assessments as part of their hiring process.
- A total of 138 **Distinct Employer contacts** were made which represents an achievement of 23% of our annual program goal of 600 contacts.
- A total of 387 **Business Contacts** were made which represents an achievement of 23% of our annual program goal of 1,680 contacts. During this same time frame, employers searched 1,403 resumes using the ICC resume data base to fill job openings.
- **Ongoing Hiring Events and Job Fairs** have been severely limited due to COVID-19, but creative strategies are allowing for these events to occur. The Department of Workforce Development and Region 8 WorkOne hosted two virtual job fairs for Baxter in December and January. A virtual job fair has been scheduled with the U.S. Army for March 17<sup>th</sup> and discussion is currently being held with Catalent regarding a possible virtual job fair in the near future.
- Business Service Team members continue to promote access to **180 Skills** for local employers. 180 Skills will allow Hoosiers to gain key workforce skills free of charge through an online library of courses. Individuals who enroll will have the opportunity to complete courses designed to improve general employability skills relevant across job sectors or develop the foundational knowledge to enter Indiana's manufacturing industry.

### WARN/Non-WARN Notices

During this program year, there has been **1 WARN and 1 Non-WARN notice filed in Region 8**. The Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act purpose is to provide workers with sufficient time to prepare for the transition between the jobs they currently hold and new jobs. It also provides protection to workers, their families and communities by requiring employers to provide a 60-day notice in advance of covered plant closings and covered mass layoffs.

- **October 27, 2020**- Jasper Seating/JSI announced a Non-WARN layoff of 168 workers laid off from multiple locations over the period of March through September 2020. There were 78 workers located in Region 8. Rapid Response Orientations were completed on October 20, 2020.
- **December 23, 2020**- Manchester Tank & Equipment Company employees, including on-site leased workers from Express Employment, in Bedford Indiana were certified as eligible to apply for benefits through the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Program estimated to affect 134 workers. Virtual TAA Orientations were held on February 9, 2021 with 13 workers attending.

## Rapid Response Activities/TAA Orientations

**December 2, 2020-** White Stallion Energy filed a WARN notice indicating they were closing 9 locations in southern Indiana and Illinois which affected 338 workers. Mine locations in Region 8 included the Antioch Mine in Washington (103 workers) and Billings Mine in Cannelburg (73 workers). Virtual Rapid Response Orientations were held on December 18<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> with 27 workers attending. Several of these individuals have reached out to the local WorkOne offices for employment and training services.

**TAA Engagement-** Region 8 currently has 33 active TAA enrollments. From November 2020 to January 2021, eight (8) new customers began participating in TAA. During that same time frame, five (5) customers were participating in RTAA, eight (8) were attending training and one (1) entered into full time employment. TAA numbers will likely increase due to the TAA certification for Manchester Tank and White Stallion in our region.

## PY 20 Performance Support Grant (PSG) Outcomes

- Over \$21,000 of financial assistance has been provided to 35 customers who are scheduled to graduate from training by May 2021. Thus far, 19 students have graduated and 14 continue to attend training.
- 16 individuals have participated in short-term training. These funds are set to expire on May 15, 2021. Several trainings are scheduled for March that will allow for all remaining grant funds to be spent.
- 23 Participants have been provided with a work experience activity. 17 have successfully completed their work experience thus far and 10 are currently employed.
- 60 customers have received supportive services. Of those individuals, 36 are employed with salaries ranging from \$9.30 to \$33.65 per hour.



### Next Level Jobs: Rapid Recovery Grant

As a part of the Indiana Governor's Workforce Cabinet (GWC) "Rapid Recovery for a Better Future" initiative, the Governor dedicated funding available through the CARES Act

to increase short-term training opportunities for more than 10,000 Hoosiers. As a result, Region 8 was awarded \$582,000 in Workforce Training Grant funds to support tuition costs for individuals to attend short-term training programs that result in certifications needed for in-demand jobs. Between July 7 and December 30, 2020, Region 8 spent \$517,000 to provide tuition assistance to 153 customers, 84% of whom successfully completed their training program.

**DWD has extended an opportunity for regions to apply for additional WRG grants funds.** Region 8 has applied for and expects to receive approximately \$540,000 in additional funding to allow up to 185 more students to attend training and earn a certification during the period March 1, 2021 to September 30, 2021.

Region 8 was also awarded \$944,000 of Employer Training Grant funds to reimburse employers for training new employees and/or upskilling of incumbent workers. Local Business Services Staff worked with 33 regional employers to develop training plans for the NLJ Employer Training Grant - CARES Act Funding through December 30, 2020. This funding was fully obligated by September 24, 2020. 16 employers from Region 8 applied and were approved for \$954,000 for employee training. As a result, total of 198 workers in Region 8 received training.

# JAG Indiana

JOBS FOR AMERICA'S GRADUATES

- JAG has faced many challenges due to the pandemic. All Region 8 JAG schools have experienced closures and restrictions that have inhibited the JAG Specialists' ability to work with students. Currently all schools are receiving at least some in-person instruction each week. Specialists are focusing on building rapport with students in-person while they can!
- The Career Development Conference (CDC) is taking place virtually this year. The first couple of competitions are being judged this week. The Award Ceremony will be conducted virtually on March 12, 2021. Students from Owen Valley and Paoli are shown below preparing for their events.



- Region 8 JAG has developed a JAG Facebook page to share information and success stories for JAG students throughout the region. JAG staff would love to have more followers. Please visit their page at:  
<https://www.facebook.com/region8jag/>.
- Please keep Maddie Lynch, a Senior JAG Member @ Mitchell HS, in your thoughts. Maddie suffered life threatening injuries in a car accident late last month and remains at IU Methodist in Indianapolis.

