



Board Report

April 24, 2024

Participant Service Goals for PY'23

Program	Regional Plan Goals	Carry-In Clients PY'22	New in PY'23 (July 1-December 31)	Total	Goal %
WIOA Adult	523	104	344	448	86%
WIOA Dislocated Worker	128	28	113	141	110%
WIOA Out of School Youth	146	19	51	70	48%
WIOA In School Youth	37	18	2	20	54%

For PY 2023, enrollment numbers have increased throughout Region 8. This has largely been due to enrolling more clients from the RESEA and WRG Programs. Our education, training and job placement services have also helped a lot of participants successfully achieve their career goals. Below is one of the successes we have recently seen in the region:

When Noah Phegley came into the Linton WorkOne office, he was unemployed and felt his employment options were very limited. Noah was 20 years old and was interested in a career that would help him provide for his wife and daughter. Noah met with Career Advisor Heather Allen to discuss employment and training opportunities and was enrolled in the WIOA Adult and Youth programs. After completing career research, Noah was provided with the opportunity to attend CDL-A training at Wagler Education and Training Center funded by the WRG Grant. Noah started training in December 2023, successfully completed the program and earned his CDL-A license on January 3, 2024. Noah was able to obtain full-time employment on January 22, 2024 earning a wage of \$20.00 per hour. Since that time, Noah reported that he has also obtained a hazmat endorsement and received a recent pay raise. Noah stated that WRG funding made a significant impact on his life by providing him with much needed training which resulted in better employment opportunities and ultimately allowed him to provide a better future for his family.



Region 8 County Unemployment Rates

County	October	November	December	January	February
Brown	2.4%	3.2%	4.0%	3.9%	4.0%
Daviess	3.8%	2.5%	3.1%	2.8%	3.1%
Greene	3.8%	3.9%	5.0%	4.8%	5.0%
Lawrence	3.6%	3.7%	4.8%	4.6%	4.8%
Martin	2.8%	3.1%	3.5%	3.3%	3.5%
Monroe	3.3%	3.4%	4.4%	3.7%	4.4%
Orange	3.4%	3.6%	4.5%	4.2%	4.5%
Owen	3.5%	3.7%	4.9%	4.5%	4.9%

As of February 2024, Indiana's unemployment rate was 3.5%, which was lower than the national average of 3.9%. Most Region 8 counties were higher than the state average with the exception of Daviess and Martin. In addition, Indiana's labor force participation rate was 62.8% for February, which was slightly higher than the national rate of 62.5%. This rate is the percentage of Hoosiers 16 and older that are either working or actively looking for work. Those not in the labor force primarily include students, retirees and other non-working populations, such as individuals unable to work due to a disability or illness, or adults responsible for their family's childcare needs.

Region 8 staff continue to answer basic UI questions and help customers use WorkOne computers to file UI claims as needed. Customers who need additional assistance are required to call or email the UI Contact Center at DWD. Customers at the Bloomington WorkOne location 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.

Staff also continue to assist customers with ID.me, a highly secure identity verification process that was implemented in February 2021 to ensure claimants are able to access their unemployment benefits. This process was adopted due to claimants from several states being victimized by criminals using stolen identities to submit fraudulent unemployment claims. DWD has provided Region 8 with a few smart phones to assist customers in completing this process.

RESEA

The Re-Employment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program targets unemployed individuals who are most likely to exhaust UI benefits and provides career services designed to help them get back to work more quickly. From July 1 to March 31, 2024, there were 1,278 individuals selected to participate in RESEA services. Of those required to participate, 802 Assessment Interviews were completed with an RESEA Specialist. Of the remaining claimants, 131 had returned to work and the others declined services due to various reasons. During the same timeframe, 516 participants were selected for SUBRESEA. Of those required to participate, 389 successfully completed their required 1:1 meeting. Of those remaining claimants, 38 returned to work and the rest declined services.

WARN/Non-WARN Notices and Rapid Response Activities

Daviess County: Washington Nursing Center - On February 2nd, the Washington Nursing Center closed, resulting in a layoff of 51 workers. A Rapid Response Orientation was held on February 1st to provide packets that included information about available WorkOne services and other community resources. Seven (7) workers attended this session.

Monroe County: Catalent- On March 16th, Catalent laid off 135 employees. Sessions were held at the Bloomington WorkOne on Thursday, April 18th to provide these employees with information about WorkOne services and community resources.

Performance Highlights and Business Services Updates

From July 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024 the Business Service Team assisted with the following:

- **Seven (7) customers** have participated in **work-based learning (WBL) opportunities** with regional employers.
- **246 WorkKeys assessments** have been administered to individuals throughout the region. Business Services staff continue to promote the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) and engage with employers to discuss the utilization of these assessments as part of their hiring process.
- A total of **363 Distinct Employer** contacts were made, representing a **61%** achievement of our annual program goal of 600 contacts.
- A total of **1,600 Business Contacts** were made, representing a **100%** achievement of our annual program goal of 1600 contacts.

Ongoing Hiring Events and Job Fairs taking place throughout the region:

- From January-March 2024, WorkOne hosted, sponsored and/or attended **11 events** throughout the region. Several mini-job fairs were also hosted by WorkOne offices for employers during this period. Recent events include the Radius Annual Stakeholder Luncheon, Tech Park Talent Talk, BEDC Annual Luncheon, and “State of Daviess County” Chamber Luncheon. WorkOne has participated in several Career & Job Fairs in High Schools throughout the region. These included events at the following schools: Brown County, Eastern Greene, Edgewood and Owen Valley.

The Owen Valley High School College, Career, and Military Fair held on April 11th provided information to over 600 students. The career fair connected them with 46 businesses and 90 representatives to help them explore future colleges, careers, or military opportunities.



GRANT UPDATES



Next Level Jobs: Workforce Ready Grant and Employer Training Grant

Workforce Ready Grant

For Program Year 2023 (7/1/23 - 6/30/24) - Region 8 received an initial allocation of \$700,000 of WRG funding. Based on performance, the region recently received an additional \$350,300 bringing the total amount of WRG funds to \$1,050,300.

A total of \$105,030 is budgeted for administrative costs, and the remaining \$945,270 has been allocated for customer tuition assistance. As of 4/15/24, the region has enrolled 206 students into training programs and approximately \$869,000 of grant funds have been obligated. Thus far, 138 students have completed training, 97 have earned a certification and 18 have not yet taken their certification exam. A total of 51 customers are currently attending training and 17 failed to successfully complete their training program.

Success Story:



Jason Long is no stranger to tough circumstances. "I did not have very many chances to secure employment due to my background and no high school diploma" Long said. While incarcerated in 2022, Jason Long utilized the jail program at Wagler Education and Training Center to obtain his high school equivalency (HSE) diploma. Prior to his release, Jason had an interest in welding and enrolled in WETC's remediation program, which provided him with an AWS textbook and curriculum. Jason completed the classroom portion of the welding course in jail with the goal of finishing the program post-release. In January 2024, Jason was released and contacted Wagler to earn his welding certification so he could better his future. Jason met with WorkOne Career Advisor Kelly Gambill at the Linton WorkOne and was eligible for WRG and QUEST funding. Jason began WRG funded training on February 2nd.

On March 18, 2024, Jason obtained three welding certifications by attending evening classes. Jason is currently contemplating whether to join GATX Railcars as a welder or pursue direct entry into the Millwright Union in collaboration with Wagler and IKORCC. "I have to make a decision by next week. I have not been able to make decisions on employment for years based on my criminal record. It feels great to finally have options". Jason is excited for his future and will have employment as of May 1, 2024.

Employer Training Grant

For Program Year 2022, Region 8 received \$849,000 to reimburse employers for the cost of training new employees and/or upskilling incumbent workers. Almost \$800,000 of that funding was obligated prior to 6/30/23. To ensure all of the PY 22 grant funds are expended, DWD recently extended the contract through September 30, 2024. This extension means remaining grant funds must be obligated no later than March 31, 2024 to ensure the six month retention date can be met. Thus far approximately \$650,000 of reimbursement payments have been made to businesses and the region remains on track to expend these funds.

Region 8 also received an initial ETG allocation of \$250,000 for Program Year 2023. In January, Region 8 received an additional \$750,000 in funding to support Region 8 employers which brought the contract total for PY 23 to \$1,000,000. These funds will need to be obligated by 6/30/24. Over \$450,000 has been obligated thus far, and the Business Services Team has had significant interest from additional employers which will help the region utilize more of the available funds. Businesses who would like more information about how to apply for ETG funding should contact Robin Branch (rbranch@vinu.edu) or Earl Isom (eisom@dwd.in.gov).

Apprenticeship Building America (ABA) Grant

In April 2023, the South Central Region 8 Workforce Board received \$547,000 through a DOL sponsored grant acquired by the DWD Office of Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeships. The Apprenticeship Building America (ABA) funding is intended to expand the number of programs and apprentices; diversify the industries that utilize Registered Apprenticeship (RAP); and increase access to, and completion of, RAPs for underrepresented populations and underserved communities. The goal for these participants will be a nationally recognized credential. The grant period is effective from July 1, 2022 through May 15, 2026.

Target sectors for this grant include:

- Advanced Manufacturing
- IT and Business Service
- Building and Construction
- Growth or Emerging Industry
- Health and Life Sciences
- Transportation and Logistics
- Agriculture

The following activities may be funded for RAP and certified Pre-Apprenticeship participants: Related Technical Instruction (RTI), On-the-Job Learning (OJL) and Supportive Services (SS). The Regional Apprenticeship Coordinator met with numerous employers during the last several months and has identified promising opportunities to assist with existing apprenticeships as well as the establishment of new programs. Region 8 has currently funded 18 pre-apprentices and 5 apprentices and has the potential to assist a large number of pre-apprentices and apprentices during the next six months.

Quality Jobs, Equity, Strategy and Training (QUEST) Grant

In July 2022, Indiana applied for the Department of Labor's Quality Jobs, Equity, Strategy and Training (QUEST) Grant. This National Dislocated Worker grant enables individuals who have been adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and the social and economic inequities that the pandemic exacerbated, to enter, return to, or advance in high-quality jobs in growth industries including infrastructure, environment and climate, and the care economy. The Department of Workforce Development piloted this program in three regions throughout the state and were seeking to allocate funding to additional regions. In January 2024, Region 8 received funding in the amount of \$269,500 to assist eligible individuals with employment and training activities. As of 3/31/24, 66 individuals were enrolled in QUEST. Of those enrolled, 34 have received training funds. To date, Region 8 has spent over \$150,000 of this grant and will be requesting additional funding in the near future.

CHE Intermediary Capacity Building Grant

Region 8 has received \$240,000 from the Indiana Commission for Higher Education (CHE) to serve as an intermediary to increase their capacity to strengthen connections between students and schools with employers and postsecondary institutions. Region 8 is currently collaborating with Regional Opportunity Initiatives and Southern Indiana Education Center to serve the 27 school districts throughout the region. WorkOne Career Advisors will provide individual and small groups of students with informative and productive Career Discovery Meetings. Students will receive a questionnaire prior to the meeting to identify topics, career interests, questions or concerns they would like to discuss. Each participating student will receive a packet that contains information about their areas of interest as well as career planning tools, websites and organizations that can serve as resources as they make college and career decisions. Students will also have access to WorkOne Career Advisors to provide additional information or career guidance as requested.

Regional and State Career Development Conference (CDC)

The JAG Regional CDC was held at the French Lick Resort Events Center on February 2nd. JAG students who have excelled at their local CDC are able to participate in competitive events at the state level that highlight the employability skills they have learned through the program. The top performers from the region advanced to the State CDC competition that was held on March 15th in Indianapolis. Region 8 had winners in the following categories:

1st place in Project Based Learning - Brayten Enlow, Brooklyn Johnson and Claire McGee, Eastern Greene

1st place in Career Presentation - Brailen Morries- Owen Valley HS

2nd place in Outstanding Senior - Andrea Williams, Mitchell HS

2nd place in Writing Skills - Emily Rumley, Owen Valley HS

2nd place for Employability Skills - Isabella Morrow-Mitchell HS

3rd place in Financial Literacy - Josh Roberts, Edgewood High School



Congratulations to our Region 8 JAG students for doing so well!

JAG Expansion - Update

Region 8 is currently in the process of expanding our JAG programs to include additional schools throughout the region. Two new 11th/12th grade programs were started at Bloomfield and Linton-Stockton High Schools for the Spring 2024 semester. Owen Valley High School has added a 9th/10th grade program that will start in August 2024. Region 8 is tentatively scheduled to pilot a middle school program for that semester as well. Region 8 JAG Management team members are currently having discussions with other schools that have expressed interest in JAG programming.