



Board Report

April 26, 2023

Participant Service Goals for PY'22

Program	Regional Plan Goals	Carry-In PY'21 Clients	New in PY'22 (July 1-March 31)	Total	Goal %
WIOA Adult	782	90	291	381	49%
WIOA Dislocated Worker	160	12	59	71	44%
WIOA Out of School Youth	194	10	34	44	23%
WIOA In School Youth	48	7	24	31	65%

Region 8 struggled to meet performance last year due to a multitude of factors, such as pandemic office closures, customer/staff illnesses and staffing issues. We are now mostly staffed for the first time in two years and are starting to see an increase in enrollments. Below is one of the many successes we have recently seen in the region:

David L. came into the Linton WorkOne needing assistance with obtaining employment to support himself and his son. He was dissatisfied with his current employment because it did not provide him with a self-sufficient wage. He was also lacking in-demand skills that would allow him to advance in a career. David had changed jobs a few times to accept higher paying positions, but these required night shifts or a schedule that conflicted with caring for his son. As a result, he found himself back in a position that did not allow him to be financially secure. David realized he needed to do something to increase his wages and allow for a more flexible schedule.

David attended CDL training at Wagler Education and Training Center utilizing PSG funds. He received his CDL certification on March 17th and immediately came back to WorkOne for assistance with job search. With the help of his Career Advisor, David updated his resume and applied for several job opportunities. He accepted employment on March 29th as a full time CDL truck driver earning \$21.00 per hour, with a potential of earning \$23.00 per hour after his 3-month probationary period. Not only is David financially stable, but he is able to work a schedule that does not conflict with caring for his son.

Region 8 County Unemployment Rates

County	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.
Brown	2.8%	2.7%	2.5%	3.7%	3.9%
Daviess	2.2%	2.1%	1.5%	2.4%	2.6%
Greene	3.1%	3.1%	2.9%	4.1%	4.4%
Lawrence	3.2%	3.2%	2.7%	3.9%	4.4%
Martin	2.5%	2.5%	2.0%	2.8%	2.9%
Monroe	2.8%	2.6%	1.9%	3.0%	3.4%
Orange	3.2%	3.2%	2.6%	3.6%	4.0%
Owen	3.0%	2.9%	2.8%	3.7%	4.4%

As of February 2023, Indiana's unemployment rate was 3.1%, which was below the national rate of 3.6%. All Region 8 counties were above the state average with the exception of Daviess and Martin. Indiana's labor force participation rate was 63.4% in February, which is above the national rate of 62.1%.

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 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.

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. The Region 8 RESEA team resumed in-person orientations and 1-on-1 meetings in the local WorkOne offices beginning in May 2022 which allowed staff the opportunity to increase enrollments. From July 1 to March 31, 2023, 1,210 individuals were selected to participate in RESEA services. Of those required to participate, 572 Assessment Interviews were completed with an RESEA Specialist. Of the remaining claimants, 125 had returned to work and the others declined services due to various reasons. During the same timeframe, 399 participants were selected for SUBRESEA. Of those required to participate, 189 successfully completed their required 1:1 meeting. Of those remaining claimants, 19 returned to work and the rest declined services.

WARN/Non-WARN Notices and Rapid Response Activities

General Motors-Bedford - On March 15th, General Motors in Bedford announced a planned layoff of 45 employees that will occur on May 5th. Rapid Response Orientations are scheduled to occur on May 3rd and May 8th at the StoneGate Arts and Education Center. Affected workers will receive informational packets and presentations on WorkOne services, Adult Basic Education services and community services.

Performance Highlights and Business Services Updates

From July 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023 the Business Service Team assisted with the following:

- **Work Based Learning – 5 (five)** customers have participated in work-based learning (WBL) opportunities with regional employers.
- **WorkKeys - 95** 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 **204 Distinct Employer contacts** were made, representing a **34%** achievement of our annual program goal of 600 contacts.
- A total of **646 Business Contacts** were made, representing a **38%** achievement of our annual program goal of 1,680 contacts. During this same time frame, employers searched **1,406 resumes** using the ICC resume database to fill job openings.

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

- From January through March 2023, WorkOne hosted, sponsored and attended 5 hiring events throughout the region. A few of these events included the Linton Career Fair, Brown County Job Fair, Monroe County Library Job Fair, I.D.O.C. Job Fair and several mini-job fairs at our county offices for individual employers.
- The Owen Valley High School and Eastern Greene High School JAG programs both hosted career fairs at their schools. JAG Specialists Celeste Nicola and Jayme Bellman did a fantastic job of creating a welcoming environment for students and employers to engage in meaningful conversation. Many different types of employers, branches of the military, and post-secondary schools were represented at both career fairs. Representatives from the local WorkOne offices were present to discuss available services.



GRANT UPDATES

National Dislocated Worker Employment Recovery Grant (DW-ERG)

In September 2020, Region 8 received \$350,000 to provide Career Services, Training and Supportive Services to Dislocated Workers who have been affected by COVID-19. In October 2022, the region received an additional \$100,000. As of March 31st, 148 eligible workers have been enrolled to participate in career and training services, which exceeds the planned goal of 129 participants. The region will be able to utilize this funding until May 15, 2023.

WIOA Support Grant PY21

Region 8 was awarded approximately \$485,000 to fund initiatives to assist with capacity building, target populations, employer engagement and youth engagement. The three strategies used to address these initiatives were Pathways to Apprenticeships, Youth Engagement and WorkOne Customer Service. All funds from this grant were expended by March 31, 2023.

1. **Pathways to Apprenticeship-** Apprenticeship and Work-based Learning Coordinator Gail Mitchell continues to work with Region 8 apprentices and supports regional staff in worksite development for WIOA participants in need of work-based learning. The training portion of this initiative was modified to allow for additional training programs and adjusted performance metrics to meet the current training needs in the region.
2. **Youth Engagement-** The Region 8 Youth Engagement Coordinator contacted youth organizations and agencies across the region to promote our youth services and discuss cross referral efforts. She also attended career fairs at local high schools which allowed her to discuss youth services with their students. The Youth Engagement Coordinator accepted another position and unexpended funds allocated for this position were shifted to assist with customer tuition assistance.
3. **WorkOne Customer Service-** Region 8 hired six (6) Workforce Training Assistants to provide support in the local offices. This allows for the Career Advisors to focus on enrolling eligible participants in the various programs currently being provided in Region 8. The region is currently assessing the continued need and funding availability for these positions since the grant funds have now ended.

Success Story

Heather L. came to the WorkOne-Nashville office to request assistance with occupational skills training. She had been working as a housekeeper at her previous employment, but realized she needed to improve her circumstances when she started being asked to do additional duties with no increase in pay. Because of the recent separation from her spouse, Heather was living with a friend and receiving public assistance to meet her basic needs. She needed more income, but lacked the skills and training to find employment that would allow her to live on her own. Heather met with Career Advisor Monica Walters to discuss employment and training opportunities. She was enrolled in WIOA services and after completing assessments and career research, Heather decided to attend CDL training at C1 in Indianapolis. She completed her classes and earned her CDL on April 5th. Heather obtained employment as a truck driver and is earning \$33.17 an hour.

WIOA Support Grant PY22- Employer Training Scholarship Fund (ETSF)

Region 8 received \$428,282 to support the PY'22 Performance Support Grant initiative for employer training requests. Of this total, \$351,391 has been allocated for tuition assistance. The Employer Training Scholarship Fund (ETSF) provides funds for short-term training that leads to certifications for existing workers and new hires of companies located within the region. While the individuals who earn these credentials certainly benefit from their enhanced skills, the primary focus is based on the staffing needs of local employers. Participant eligibility is based on requests from employers rather than the economic status or existing marketable skills of the workers. Although this initiative is funded through Performance Support Grant Funds, staff has co-enrolled the majority of these individuals in WIOA. This initiative serves to increase employer engagement and helps address the needs of businesses while also providing a certification to each individual. To date, Region 8 has had 40 employers take part in this initiative. 48 individuals have received training and of those individuals, 34 have completed, 1 (one) dropped out and 13 are still attending. Along with the 97% class completion rate thus far, 90% of those tested have received their certification. At least 11 individuals have received a pay increase since receiving their certification.

Success Story:

A local employer was looking for ways to expand their business. They were struggling to find new employees to assist with growth and recognized they would need to train their existing workforce to create those opportunities. Brittani had been employed with the company as a laborer for 5 years, but lacked a Commercial Driver's License that would allow her to perform other positions within the company. Brittani was also required to travel extensively in her current position which kept her away from family responsibilities. When the employer became aware of the PSG 2022 Employer Training Scholarship Fund being offered in Region 8, they referred Brittani to the Daviess County WorkOne to complete CDL training. She started training in February 2023 and successfully completed the course. When she earned her CDL certification on March 3rd, Brittani was promoted from her position as a laborer to foreman, which created an opportunity to expand the business. Brittani also received an annual salary increase of over \$16,000 and is no longer required to travel extensively. Thanks to the assistance of the PSG Employer Training Scholarship Fund, the benefit of this training was transformative for both employer and employee.



Next Level Jobs: Workforce Ready Grant and Employer Training Grant

For Program Year 2022 (July 2022-June 2023), Region 8 received WRG grant funds for tuition in the amount of \$360,000. Approximately \$343,600 of these funds have been obligated. From July 2022 to March 2023, 82 students have been enrolled in training. Of those students, 70 have successfully completed their training course for an 89% completion rate. 51 have currently earned their certification which equates to an 82% certification rate.

As of 7/1/22, Region 8 has \$977,000 of Employer Training Grant funds available. \$849,000 of these funds will be used to reimburse employers for training new employees and/or upskilling incumbent workers. Employers who have not received Next Level Jobs training grants in the past are being given priority for these funds. DWD guidance for implementation of these grant funds were not given until February 2023, so funds are being obligated later than anticipated. Due to the overwhelming interest from employers, it is anticipated that all funding will be obligated no later than mid-June 2023. Businesses who would like more information about how to apply for these funds should contact Robin Branch (rbranch@vinu.edu) or Earl Isom (eisom@dwd.in.gov).

JAG Indiana

JOBS FOR AMERICA'S GRADUATES

The 2023 JAG Indiana State Career Development Conference (CDC) was held on March 17th at Ivy Tech Community College in Indianapolis. JAG students from around the state who have excelled in their local CDC are able to participate in competitive events that highlight the employability skills they have learned through the program. Region 8 JAG students placed in two of the state level events. Emily Miller from Mitchell High School earned 2nd Place in the Outstanding Senior competition, while Chris Oberman from Edgewood High School earned 3rd place in the Financial Literacy competition. Paris Earl, a Senior from Mitchell High School, was selected to serve as Emcee during the State CDC and had the pleasure of meeting Governor Eric Holcomb. We are so proud of our JAG students for doing so well!



Pictured above - bottom row left to right: Brown County JAG Specialist Roscoe Baugh, Paris Earl, Cheyenne Pemberton, Josie Bailey, McKai Hedge, Paoli JAG Specialist Katie Cook, Mitchell JAG Specialist Nikki Porter **Top Row-left to right:** Edgewood JAG Specialist Jill Ferguson, Chris Oberman, Allie Gerkin, Emily Miller, Samantha Cain, EGHS JAG Specialist Jayme Bellman, Chris Hooker, Mareck Reeves and Brandon Saechao



Pictured below left to right: Governor Holcomb, JAG Student Emily Miller (1st photo), JAG Student Chris Oberman (2nd photo), Associate Chief of Service Delivery and Field Operations Leslie Crist and DWD Commissioner David Adams