



# Board Report

June 26, 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	405	509	97%
WIOA Dislocated Worker	128	28	127	155	121%
WIOA Out of School Youth	146	19	62	81	55%
WIOA In School Youth	37	18	10	28	76%

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:

*James Deckard came to the Owen County WorkOne to improve his life along with those of his children. As a single father, James was working full-time but he was looking to increase his wages to better support his family. James had a High School Diploma but no other training or certifications. James met with Career Advisor Tressa Webb. He disclosed that he had made some mistakes when he was younger that have been a hinderance to his employment options. His current employer had taken a chance by employing him and had even offered a promotion to a driving position if James obtained his CDL-A license. James worked with Career Advisor Webb to complete the training requirements.*

*Utilizing Workforce Ready Grant funds provided by WorkOne, James began attending CDL training at Wagler Education and Training Center on April 1st and completed on May 22nd. James passed his CDL exam on May 30th and obtained his permanent CDL on June 11th. Since receiving his CDL, James was promoted by his employer and was able to increase his wages substantially.*



## Region 8 County Unemployment Rates

County	December	January	February	March	April
Brown	4.0%	3.9%	4.0%	3.9%	3.2%
Daviess	3.1%	2.8%	3.1%	3.1%	2.5%
Greene	5.0%	4.8%	5.0%	5.0%	4.1%
Lawrence	4.8%	4.6%	4.8%	4.7%	3.9%
Martin	3.5%	3.3%	3.5%	3.4%	2.8%
Monroe	4.4%	3.7%	4.4%	4.4%	3.4%
Orange	4.5%	4.2%	4.5%	4.4%	3.7%
Owen	4.9%	4.5%	4.9%	4.6%	3.7%

As of April 2024, Indiana's unemployment rate was 3.6%, which was lower than the national average of 3.9%. Half of the Region 8 counties were higher than the state average with Greene County remaining the highest at 4.1%. In addition, Indiana's labor force participation rate was 62.5% for April, which was slightly lower than the national rate of 62.7%. 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 and Linton 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. From July 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024, there were 1,486 individuals selected to participate in RESEA services. Of those required to participate, 964 Assessment Interviews were completed with an RESEA Specialist. Of the remaining claimants, 159 had returned to work and the others declined services due to various reasons. During the same timeframe, 826 participants were selected for SUBRESEA. Of those required to participate, 476 successfully completed their required 1:1 meeting. Of those remaining claimants, 68 returned to work and the rest declined services.

## WARN/Non-WARN Notices and Rapid Response Activities

**Martin County: KCARC** - KCARC in Loogootee closed their facility and 15 workers were laid off on May 10th. A Rapid Response Orientation was held on May 9th to provide informational packets that included available WorkOne services and other community resources. 12 workers took advantage of the opportunity and attended this session.

## Performance Highlights and Business Services Updates

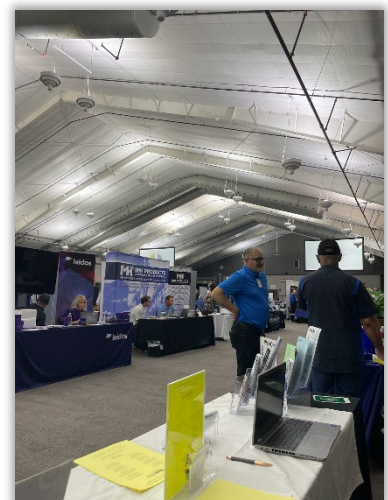
From July 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024 the Business Service Team assisted with the following:

- **Seven (7)** customers have participated in **work-based learning (WBL) opportunities** with regional employers.
- **253 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 **2,246 Business Contacts** were made, representing a **140%** achievement of our annual program goal of 1600 contacts.

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

From January-June 2024, WorkOne hosted, sponsored and/or attended **31 events** throughout the region. Several mini-job fairs were also hosted by WorkOne offices for employers during this period. Recent events include the Transition & Community Resource Fair, Linton Chamber Luncheon, Martin County Alliance Partner Meeting and State of the Bloomington Regional Economy Luncheon. WorkOne has participated in several Career & Job Fairs in High Schools throughout the region. These included events at the following locations: LRCC Career Expo, Daviess County Job Fair, StoneGate Job Fair and the Martin County Job Fair.

The 21<sup>st</sup> Buy Indiana Expo (pictured right) was held on April 16th at the French Lick Resort and Casino. The event offered companies an opportunity to expand their business with government centers, as well as networking with other companies from around the state and country. The event attracted nearly 200 companies seeking to do business with the Naval Surface Warfare Center at Crane. WorkOne was able to meet with employers to discuss services available as well as grant opportunities for apprenticeship development/support and employee training.



## 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 6/24/24, the region has enrolled 244 students into training programs and 100% of grant funds have been obligated. Thus far, 185 students have completed training, 156 have earned a certification and 1 has not yet taken their certification exam. A total of 35 customers are currently attending training and 24 failed to successfully complete their training program.

#### Success Story:

*Stephanie Grubb is a single mother with two children. She had a high school diploma and CNA license, but needed additional training to increase her ability to earn a self-sufficient wage. Stephanie met with Career Advisor David Beaver at the WorkOne in Bedford to discuss her options. After completing career research, Stephanie felt that attending short term training such as CCMA would allow her to advance her career path in healthcare. Stephanie was eligible for WRG funding through Vincennes University and started attending CCMA classes on March 11th at StoneGate Arts and Education Center. She successfully passed the course and received her CCMA Certification on June 13th. Stephanie accepted a position with The Indiana Center for Recovery, which recently opened in the former Dunn Hospital location. She will be making \$21.00 per hour with benefits. Stephanie believes this opportunity will not only provide a better life for herself and her children, but it will also create a pathway for her to pursue nursing in the future.*

#### 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 6/30/2024. This extension required that remaining grant funds be obligated no later than 3/31/24 to ensure the six month retention date can be met. Thus far, over \$690,000 of reimbursement payments have been made to businesses and the region remains on track to expend the majority of 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. A total of \$100,000 is budgeted for administrative costs, and the remaining \$900,000 will be obligated for employer training. These funds will need to be obligated by 6/30/24. Over \$724,000 has been obligated thus far, and the Business Services Team has had significant interest from additional employers. Businesses who would like more information about how to apply for ETG funding should contact Gail Mitchell ([gmitchell@vinu.edu](mailto:gmitchell@vinu.edu)) or Earl Isom ([eisom@dwd.in.gov](mailto: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 6 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**

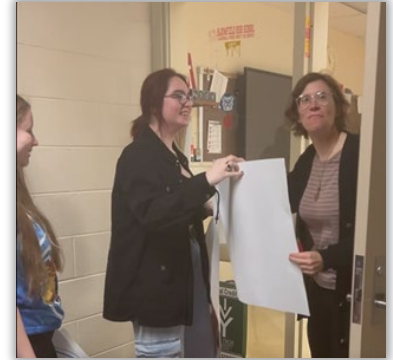
In July 2022, Indiana applied for the Department of Labor's Quality Jobs, Equity, Strategy and Training (QUEST) Grant. This National Dislocated Worker grant enables individuals who have been adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and the social and economic inequities that the pandemic exacerbated, 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. As of 6/1/24, Region 8 has received funding in the amount of \$769,500 to assist eligible individuals with employment and training activities. As of 5/31/24, 109 individuals were enrolled in QUEST. Of those enrolled, 40 have received training funds. To date, Region 8 has spent approximately \$208,000 of this grant.

## **CHE Intermediary Capacity Building Grant**

Region 8 recently received \$240,000 from the Indiana Commission for Higher Education (CHE) to serve as an intermediary to increase and strengthen student /school connections 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.

### **Bloomfield High School Teacher Appreciation and "Bettering BHS Projects"**

For Teacher Appreciation Week, Bloomfield's JAG students made posters for every teacher in the high school letting them know how much JAG students appreciate them. Students hand delivered the signs during homeroom, ensuring that each teacher received a personalized poster. The posters had heartfelt messages, reflecting the students' genuine admiration and respect for their educators. Some teachers were moved to tears by the gesture, while others displayed their posters proudly in their classrooms. It was a small act of kindness that had our students excited to be a part of JAG.



The students also completed "Bettering BHS Projects" where they worked in teams to come up with initiatives to better Bloomfield High School. They presented these projects to the principal and guidance counselor. Both gave insight while also writing down the information to propose to the school board and superintendent. The projects consisted of getting more elective classes, seniors being able to have "off-campus lunches", building an auditorium, introducing more flexible seating in classrooms and having an in-person health class rather than the current on-line offering.

### **Linton- Stockton High School: Field Day Volunteers**

When the Linton-Stockton Elementary PTO fell short on volunteers for the Annual Field Day offered for the elementary students, the Linton Stockton JAG students stepped up to fill the void. They assisted in various games such as football toss, 20 meter run, and tug of war. They also manned the water and popsicle station while students enjoyed bounce houses as well as a foam party with colored foam, music, and beach balls.



### **JAG Expansion - Update**

Region 8 has been successful in expanding our JAG program throughout the region. Two new 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> grade programs were started at Bloomfield and Linton-Stockton High Schools for the Spring 2024 semester. Region 8 is scheduled to start programs at the following schools in the Fall of 2024: Shakamak High School (11/12), Orleans/Mitchell combined program at Mitchell (9-10) and Owen Valley (9-10). Schools have also expressed great interest in Middle School JAG programming. Region 8 is scheduled to start three Middle School Programs in the fall at Bloomfield, Eastern Greene and WRV.