

## Regional Best Practice

### **Supportive Services and Incentives**

One best practice that has been beneficial to the youth in Region 5 is the use of Supportive Services, and in particular, incentive payments. Generally, Supportive Services have been used to provide assistance with: transportation (gas), child care costs, housing (on a very limited basis), medical services, the purchase of work required clothing and/or tools, and fees associated with participation in extra-curricular activities at school. The incentive payments have been used creatively to reward and encourage the attainment of small, incremental goals that are developed by the youth and the Youth Counselor, that lead to the ultimate goals of the youth program, such as high school graduation, GED attainment, and/or employment. By developing a service plan that includes incremental steps that are rewarded with incentives, we can keep our youth engaged as they begin to develop a sense of pride and confidence.

Currently, the incentive plan includes rewards for the following:

- ❖ Goal Attainment/Skill Increase agreed upon by the Youth Counselor and the Youth
- ❖ High School Diploma
- ❖ GED
- ❖ Credential/Certificate
- ❖ Employment
- ❖ Follow-Up – Maintaining contact for the year after program completion

The incentive payments range from \$25 - \$200. One of the challenges we've had is being consistent throughout the region, so we are currently in the process of tweaking the plan to make recommendations to the Youth Committee that will "tighten-up" some definitions. WIA funding has been used to provide the incentives, and the Youth Committee approved the plan. Youth Service Provider staff are responsible for assuring that payments are appropriate and allowable. Implementation occurred over the past year, and as stated, will be refined soon.

For more information, contact

Becky Branham, Associate Director, Interlocal Association – Region 5,

317-467-0248, ext. 30, [bbranham@workonecentral.org](mailto:bbranham@workonecentral.org)

## Regional Best Practice

### **Work Readiness**

The Region 10 Workforce Investment Board received a grant from the United Way to develop and deliver a Career Launch, program to teach youth “workplace literacies.” These literacies included Employability Skills, Basic Math, Personal Health and Wellness, Basic Computer, Communication, and Financial Management Skills. The target population for this program is at risk youth aged 18-25 and residents of Harrison, Floyd, and Clark counties. The program’s curriculum is delivered in group and one-on-one settings along with virtual instruction and video driven information.

Youth who complete the program not only gain knowledge and proficiency in these literacies, but they are also prepared to take the National Career Readiness Certificate by ACT. Region 10 began a pilot program in late 2011 and has had 24 participants to date. Seventeen of those participants have completed the program and shown proficiency in the six workplace literacies. All 17 received NCRC (6 Gold, 8 Silver, and 3 Bronze) certificates. Nine of the participants are employed and one has entered post-secondary education. In addition, two participants are currently taking part in the YHCC program at Deam and Hardy Lake State Parks. The Region’s plan is to continue Career Launch though program year 2012 and serve approximately 100 additional youth.

For more information, contact:  
Tony Waterson, Regional Director, WorkOne Southern Indiana,  
812-941-6437, [twaterson@jobworksinc.org](mailto:twaterson@jobworksinc.org)

## Regional Best Practice:

### **Work Readiness**

During the past year, the Youth Employment Council focused on the importance of work ethic and work ready skills called “success skills” for youth preparing to enter the workforce. As a result, Region 1 developed two projects. A “success skills” poster was created in September of 2011 and marketed to 25 school systems throughout Northwest Indiana. The poster depicted the skills that employers look for in employees and over 500 posters were placed in school classrooms throughout Northwest Indiana. Many administrators have stated that the posters are a constant reminder of the importance of being prepared for entry into the labor market. The other project was the Summer Jobs NWI initiative. This project is designed to encourage area employers to hire youth for the summer in order to provide the youth with the opportunity to gain work experience and the related “success skills”. This project was launched in March of 2012 and continued through the summer. Thirty-four employers in Region 1 hired a total of 107 youth including both WIA participants and non-WIA participants. The employers felt that the youth were motivated, good workers, and learned the “Success Skills” needed. One of the lessons learned was to start promoting the Summer NWI initiative in the fall instead of the spring. These two projects have positively affected the youth who have learned what skills are needed for life after high school. Expenses for the project included staff time and costs related to creative product development. The One Stop Operator with active support from the Youth Employment Council oversees both projects.

For more information, contact:

Tamara Stump, Senior Workforce Associate, Center of Workforce Innovation,  
219-462-2940 ext. 32, [tstump@innovativeworkforce.com](mailto:tstump@innovativeworkforce.com)

## Regional Best Practice

### **Summer Work Experience**

Northern Indiana youth had the opportunity to participate in a paid internship program this summer. The goal of the internship program was to provide youth with a real work experience that matched their occupational interests. Staff, with the assistance and support of the Youth Council, worked as a team to recruit 80 In School Youth and 24 Out of School Youth to participate, and 120 internship positions with 40 regional employers. Youth were matched based on their occupational interests with employer site sponsors. Staff worked to place students into internships where they have some career interest, including potential longer-term employment for those who expect to enter the workforce directly. In School Youth completed 6 week internships, and Out of School Youth are working on completing 12 week internships.

One of the big things about the program is the development of soft skills for our youth. These skills include such basic habits as showing up to work on time as well as teamwork, and communication with supervisors and co-workers. These skills are important to their careers down the road and also it's important to employers and businesses in north-central Indiana that young people start developing their soft skills early. The internship program provided youth with an opportunity to apply what they have learned in JAG workshops in a real work environment. It provided youth who were unable to obtain summer employment with a job. It also allowed youth career exposure so they could see if this is what they want to pursue long-term. When these young people get out into the workforce, it's a combination of technical skills such as math skills and computer skills but also soft skills. These programs help them see it through their own eyes. The program was funded using the WIA regional youth allocation. The cost of the program was approximately \$285,000. The internship program is overseen by the Youth Director, and JAG Specialists case managed the process for each youth over the 6 or 12 week timeframe. The program was implemented in 2 months. Looking to next summer, the internship process will begin in February and March so that we have more time to recruit internship employer sponsors, get all the paperwork completed, and assign youth to an internship site well in advanced of the start date.

For more information, contact:

Sherry L. Szmanda-Klein, Director Youth Services & Quality Assurance,  
Northern Indiana Workforce Board, 574-237-9675, x1140, [ssklein@gotoworkone.com](mailto:ssklein@gotoworkone.com)

**Regional Best Practice**  
**Summer Occupational Skills Camp**

The local Area Health Education Center (AHEC) partnered with WorkOne to complete another successful Health Careers Camp this past summer. Eleven students spent a week learning things such as suturing, CPR, touring the Union Hospital campus, and learning that there is more to health careers than meets the eye. Those not interested in hands on health care were impressed to learn how technology is a growing part of health care and the large number of technology related jobs available in health care. Each student did a presentation on the final day of camp highlighting what they had learned and what they hope to do with this knowledge. The camp was funded with WIA youth funds and students are provided a stipend for attending. Local AHEC staff provided all the leg work and man hours to run the camp. The region is exploring ways to expand the camp to our more rural counties and involve additional hospitals. AHEC's close relationships with numerous health care providers in the region make this a very real possibility.

For more information, contact:  
Linda Morley, Chief Operations Officer, Western Indiana Workforce Network,  
812-238-5616, [lmorley@workforcenet.org](mailto:lmorley@workforcenet.org)

## Regional Best Practice

### **Accelerated GED Program**

In 2010, EmployIndy, the regional operator for Marion County, operated a GED track for our summer youth program. The program included accelerated GED preparation, work readiness training and work experience. The GED preparation portion of the program resulted in unbelievable successes. Of the 140 youth, starting the program over 90% completed the 4-week educational phase. Over 80% increased their TABE scores by two grade levels. As a result of the success, EmployIndy rolled the program out as a year round program and called it YouthWorks Indy Year Round. Since the implementation of the program in the fall of 2010, approximately 150 youth have been enrolled with about 50% of them receiving their GED. The key to its success is the result of 5 classes per week for 4-6 hours per day coupled with computer assisted training, traditional classroom training and one-on-one training. The intense and full-time nature of the program allows youth to see results in a short time period. It also builds their confidence and prepares them for work and additional education.

Annual Budget     Approximately \$600,000 (WIA Youth)

Oversight         EmployIndy with River Valley Resources (case management) and MSD of  
Washington Township (education) as service providers

Challenges        About 30% of the youth leave the program in the first week; Better screening  
methods are being used to try to minimize this problem.

For more information, contact:  
William Miller, Director Workforce Initiatives, EmployIndy,  
317-684-2242, [wmiller@employindy.org](mailto:wmiller@employindy.org)

## Regional Best Practice

### Pathways to Guide Participants

The *Hire Pathways Program* is an education, training and employment program delivered by our Youth Team, designed to serve WIA Youth and Young Adults, from ages 17 to 21. There are four (4) Pathways available, and clients are enrolled in one or more pathways that best meets the most immediate needs identified during the comprehensive assessment.

- (1) *Hire Pathway 4 Education* provides assistance with attaining a GED (general education diploma) or high school diploma.
- (2) *Hire Pathway 4 College* provides support and guidance to assist participants in making the transition to post-secondary education.
- (3) *Hire Pathway 4 Careers* provides opportunities for short-term occupational skills training for jobs in demand in the Region.
- (4) *Hire Pathway 4 Jobs* provides work-readiness training coupled with a worksite-based training experience.

The program also offers numerous options for leadership development and community service. We have partnered with the United Way Agency of Greater Lafayette to identify community needs and provide youth with opportunities for professional and personal growth. The community service options include:

- Lafayette Transitional Housing utilized *Hire Pathways* participants to refurbish a dilapidated apartment. Youth clients cleaned, removed carpet, refinished floors, painted walls and trim, removed old furniture, installed appliances, and decorated with new furnishings. A new family was able to take occupancy of the refurbished apartment just before Christmas 2011;
- Participants have helped sort and bag donated food and load delivery trucks at the Food Finders Food Bank;
- Companion Caregivers is a program that assists elderly homeowners. Participants help with lawn care, landscaping and other general handyman tasks;
- Participants provide companionship, conversation, and activities for residents of the Bickford House Retirement Home as well as Cumberland Healthcare Facility;
- Participants helped the YWCA Battered Women's Shelters by painting, sorting donations, and general labor, and;
- The Salvation Army provided Youth clients the opportunity to deliver gifts to residents of several retirement homes in the Region.

Challenges that we faced were: the availability of work sites that align with scheduling and transportation needs of youth; youth with criminal records were very hard to place; youth who never worked with certain groups, like the elderly, were skeptical to participate in certain work experience locations; and preparing youth with work ready skills for the work sites.

For more information, contact:

Deborah Waymire, Chief Operations Officer, Region 4 Workforce Board,  
(765) 807-0882, [dwaymire@tap.lafayette.in.us](mailto:dwaymire@tap.lafayette.in.us)

## Regional Best Practice

### **Accessible Youth Staff**

Region 6's Youth Council has been keenly involved in determining and recommending the overall parameters and design of the Youth Program. Youth Council recommendations required youth services accessibility throughout the Region amidst declining resources. Region 6's YouthWorks (WIA Youth Program 14-21) is provided in all counties including eight WorkOne Offices and three school based JAG sites. Recommended service groups in order of priority are 1) High School Dropout Seeking GED; 2) High School Graduate Seeking Training; 3) High School Graduate Seeking Employment; 4) In School Youth Seeking High School Diploma. This service commitment is achieved by assignment of a Youth Career Advisor (YCA) to each county, with three covering two counties. YCAs are responsible to enhance and support the success of youth in achieving their high school credential through effective partnerships with area high schools, vocational schools and/or Adult Basic Education (ABE) partners. This is accomplished by location of YCAs within the high schools and co-location of ABE and WorkOne for connectivity of YouthWorks into a seamless system of services that is focused on the success of our youth customer as a future member of the workforce.

Most significant is the relationship of YouthWorks with ABE partners in service to high school dropouts. During the year ending 6/30/12, YouthWorks served 144 high school dropouts with 85 attaining their GED. This ABE partner relationship has benefited WIA with Literacy/Numeracy Remediation and GED attainment while working with ABE referrals for wrap around services such as supportive services, career exploration, vocational training and job placement. Region 6's relationship with ABE and high school educational partners has been a work in progress for the past 30 years and is based upon mutual trust, respect and commitment to quality customer services. The costs are more about time to develop strong partners and infrastructure sharing, than new initiatives. The challenge is to continue the commitment to quality service and achievement of meaningful educational credentials amidst funding reductions. The lesson learned is that it takes more time to build a relationship than to sustain an established relationship.

For more information, contact:

Karen Bailey, Associate Director of Operations, WorkOne – East Central- Region 6,  
756.282.6400 Ext. 104, [kbailey@work-one.org](mailto:kbailey@work-one.org)

**Regional Best Practice:**  
**Integrated Service Delivery**

Youth services are available full-time in every WorkOne location throughout Region 8. Services are delivered in an integrated system by WIA funded staff who also serve WIA Adults and Dislocated Workers. This structure allows youth to access all appropriate WorkOne services seamlessly through one case manager. In the spring of 2012, Region 8 launched a system-wide increased focus on employer contacts with the goal of placing more customers into employment. As part of this initiative, in addition to asking our Business Services team to promote adult and dislocated worker customers, specific efforts were made to market our youth participants more aggressively to employers.

During employer visits, staff members began to more effectively present information on how work experience and OJT can benefit companies who hire youth, and how WorkOne can assist with job retention counseling to address any issues that arise in the workplace. Many of the local employers visited have been receptive to the idea of hiring our youth and have found this information valuable. Although these enhancements to our employer presentations are recent, the early results are encouraging. During the first few months of this initiative, 2 youth workers were hired directly by employers and 6 work experience opportunities were developed. As a result of these work experience activities, 2 additional youth have been hired and one has a pending job offer. Based on these results, the region intends to explore more ways to continue improving the marketing of our youth to local employers and increasing our placement results at no additional cost to the WIA programs.

For more information, contact:  
Shannon Laurent, Region 8 Operator, (812) 332-4496, slaurent@hotmail.com