



NORTHWEST
INDIANA
LABOR MARKET
& ECONOMIC
OUTLOOK

2024

STATE OF THE WORKFORCE REPORT

ABOUT NORTHWEST INDIANA WORKFORCE BOARD

The Northwest Indiana Workforce Board (NWIWB) is comprised of business, education, labor, community, and economic development leaders responsible for the strategic vision of workforce development and governance of WorkOne Centers in Northwest Indiana. They are also responsible for managing connections to key resources in the areas of workforce, education, and entrepreneurship. The board works to determine current and future skill needs together with economic developers, employers, and economists. The board represents Jasper, Lake, La Porte, Newton, Porter, Pulaski, and Starke counties.

MISSION

To mobilize and integrate the leadership, services, and resources of the community to support workforce development.

This is achieved by:

- Strategically planning and developing policy for workforce development
- Overseeing regional workforce development system
- Developing and allocating resources for workforce development
- Participating in related economic development activities

VISION

To have a workforce that is highly skilled, motivated and diverse, earning sustainable or higher wages and actively engaged in skill advancement and life-long learning.

GOALS

- Increase skills of current workforce to align with economic development strategies and key industry sectors
- Improve employer access to qualified workers and awareness of training resources
- Ensure youth in NW Indiana are positioned for continued education/learning and workforce success
- Encourage and support an entrepreneurial spirit
- Assure compliance and efficient operations of a workforce development system



THE BOARD

OFFICERS

CHAIR

Karen Kopka
*Director of Human Resources
American Licorice Company*

VICE CHAIR

Lori Tubbs
*President
McColly Bennett
Commercial Advantage*

TREASURER

Jim Clarida
*Business Manager
IBEW Local 531*

SECRETARY

Kevin Comerford
*Director of Professional
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Construction Advancement
Foundation*

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Debi Baughman
*VP/Branch Training Director
Horizon Bank*

Adam Collins
*Plant Manager
Galfab*

George Douglas
Partner, Peddler's Pizza Pub

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Indiana American Water

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*Director, Technical
Training Programs
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Martina Tovar
*Family & Social Services
Administration
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Chris Beebe
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Audra Peterson
*Director
Porter County Career &
Technical Education*

Liz Negron-Haniford
*Regional Support Manager, Region 1
Department of Workforce
Development*

Adrienne Carrol
*Director of Adult Education
NEO*

Aco Sikoski
*Chancellor
Ivy Tech Community College,
Valparaiso Campus*

CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIALS

**Commissioner
Barb Regnitz**
Porter County

**Commissioner
Kyle Conrad**
Newton County

**Commissioner
Jeffrey DeYoung**
Jasper County

**Commissioner
Kyle Allen Sr.**
Lake County

**Commissioner
Connie Gramarossa**
La Porte County

**Councilman
Mike Tiede**
Pulaski County

**Commissioner
Charles Chesak**
Starke County

ABOUT STATE OF THE WORKFORCE REPORT SERIES

The “State of the Workforce” report is a comprehensive analysis designed to provide a detailed snapshot of the current economic and employment landscape in Northwest Indiana. Produced biannually by the Center of Workforce Innovations, this report serves as a vital tool for understanding the region’s workforce dynamics, identifying key trends, and addressing the challenges faced by employers and job seekers alike.

PURPOSE

The primary purpose of the “State of the Workforce” report is to inform and guide stakeholders across the region, including business leaders, policymakers, educators, and community organizations. By presenting accurate and up-to-date data, the report aims to:

- Assess Current Conditions:** Provide a clear and detailed overview of the current state of the workforce, including employment rates, industry performance, and demographic trends.
- Identify Trends and Challenges:** Highlight significant trends affecting the workforce and identify critical challenges that need to be addressed to ensure sustainable economic growth.
- Promote Economic Development:** The report supports regional economic development efforts by identifying growing industries and high-demand occupations, helping to attract new businesses and support existing ones.
- Facilitate Collaboration:** Encourage collaboration between various stakeholders, including businesses, educational institutions, and government agencies, to create a cohesive strategy for addressing workforce challenges.
- Empower the Community:** Equip community organizations and residents with the knowledge and tools they need to navigate the job market, pursue career opportunities, and contribute to the region’s economic success.

SCOPE

- The “State of the Workforce” report covers a wide range of topics, including:
- Economic Overview:** Analysis of current economic conditions and key indicators such as GDP growth and unemployment rates.
 - Workforce Demographics:** Detailed breakdown of the workforce by age, gender, education, and diversity.
 - Employment Trends:** Examination of employment patterns across various industries and occupations, highlighting areas of growth and decline.
 - Employer Needs and Challenges:** Insights from employers identifying skill gaps, training needs, and retention strategies.
 - Future Outlook:** Projections for future workforce trends and strategic recommendations for stakeholders.
 - Talent Development Initiatives:** Overview of existing workforce development programs and initiatives, including success stories and case studies.
- By providing a comprehensive and data-driven analysis, the “State of the Workforce” report aims to be a catalyst for positive change, fostering a resilient and dynamic workforce that can meet the needs of Northwest Indiana’s evolving economy. Through this report, we strive to create a shared vision for the future and empower our community to achieve sustainable economic growth and prosperity.

The report that follows presents data and implications of the data in addressing **five key questions** for our region:

- 1) Who is Available for Work?
- 2) Where Do Our Workers Work Now?
- 3) How Prepared is Our Workforce?
- 4) What Do Our Workers & Families Earn?
- 5) How Equal is Opportunity?

NWI WORKFORCE DEMOGRAPHICS



POPULATION & LABOR FORCE STATISTICS

The total population of Northwest Indiana is currently estimated at 870,725, with significant populations in Lake, Porter and La Porte counties. The labor force in the region comprises 402,372 individuals, with a participation rate of 46% for the overall population. Over the past 5 years, the labor force size has decreased by about 2%, reflecting broader demographic trends.

The labor force participation rate varies by age, gender, and education level. For instance, the participation rate for individuals aged 25-54 is 60%, compared to 25% for those aged 55 and above.



AGE & DIVERSITY BREAKDOWN

The age distribution of the workforce in Northwest Indiana shows a significant portion of workers in the prime working age group (25-54 years). Specifically, 60% of the workforce falls within this age range. This percentage, however, has been on a steady decline since the year 2000, and has fallen more than 10 percent over the past near quarter century. This decline in prime age employment has been absorbed by older workers (55+ years) which have by nearly the same amount over the time period. Younger workers (19-24 years) despite claims to the contrary have, have maintained steady employment levels over the years since 2000.

Diversity statistics reveal that 18% of the workforce identifies as non-white and 13% identify as Hispanic or Latino, highlighting the region's commitment to fostering a diverse and inclusive labor market. NWI, already one of the most diverse regions in the state, has been on a road to becoming more diverse over the years, and the workforce very much reflects this reality



EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT LEVELS

Educational attainment in the region has been steadily improving. Approximately 37% of the population holds a high school diploma or equivalent, and 33% have attained some level of higher education. Specifically, 24% of the workforce has a bachelor's degree or higher, a 3% increase over the past 5 years, Despite these slow gains, however, NWI still lags behind the state and nation.

DATA

NWI WORKFORCE



POPULATION & LABOR FORCE STATISTICS



870,725

NWI Overall
Population (2023)

STEADY INCREASE OVER
PAST 2 DECADES

46%

2023 Labor Force
Participation Rate
AGES 16+

Population / Unemployment Rate by County

Jasper County
33,281 / 4.5%

Lake County
499,689 / 5.7%

La Porte County
111,675 / 5.0%

Newton County
13,823 / 5.0%

Porter County
174,791 / 4.3%

Pulaski County
12,485 / 3.3%

Starke County
23,258 / 5.1%

1980

The last year Lake County's population
exceeded 500,000 until 2023



402,372

Amount of People
in Workforce

NWI HAS RETURNED TO
PRE-PANDEMIC
EMPLOYMENT
LEVELS

SURPASSED 400,000 IN LABOR FORCE AND 384,000
EMPLOYEES FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE 2019

Decrease in NWI's
Labor Force Size
in Past 5 Years

2%

Participation Rate by Age Group

15% **Young** Ages 16 to 24

60% **Prime** Ages 25 to 54

25% **Older** Ages 55+

SOURCE:
Population (2022) Unemployment Rate (January 2024)



AGE & DIVERSITY BREAKDOWN



60%

NWI Workers in
Prime Working
Age Group
(25-54 years old)

STEADY DECLINE IN PRIME
AGE WORKERS SINCE 2000

YOUNGER WORKERS (19-24
YEARS) HAVE MAINTAINED
STEADY EMPLOYMENT
LEVELS SINCE 2000

Decrease in Prime
Age Workers in
Past 25 Years

10%



10%



Increase in 55+
Age Workers in
Past 25 Years

18% Percent of Non-Whites in
NWI Workforce

13% Percent of Hispanic or Latino
Individuals in NWI Workforce



EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT LEVELS



37%

NWI Residents
with High School
Diploma

33%

Some Higher
Education

24%

NWI Residents
with Bachelor's
Degree of Higher

3%



Increase in
Residents Earning
Degrees in Past
5 Years

Despite gains, NWI lags behind state and nation.

2) Where Do Our Workers Work Now?

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS DATA



LARGEST ESTABLISHED INDUSTRY EXPANSIONS

Accommodation	83%
Warehousing & Storage	83%
Food Manufacturing	48%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	36%
Heavy & Civil Construction	26%



JOB GROWTH HIGH DEMAND OCCUPATIONS

Metal Furnace Operators	293%
Industrial Truck Drivers	167%
Food Batchmakers	159%
Management Analysts	128%
Transportation & Warehousing Supervisors	94%



SMALLER NOTABLE GAINS

Data Processing, Hosting and Related	81%
Beverage Manufacturing	35%
Electrical Component Manufacturing	30%



DECLINING OCCUPATIONS

Bank Tellers	56%
Rolling Machine Operators	51%
Administrative Assistants	50%
General & Operations Managers	45%
Machinists	36%



NOTABLE DECLINES

Amusement, Gambling & Recreation Industries	35%
Apparel Retailers	23%
State Government	19%



LARGEST WAGE INCREASES

Delivery Drivers	79%
Maids & Housekeepers	57%
Laborers & Material Movers	55%
Retail Salespeople	55%
Automotive Service Technicians	53%

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

KEY INDUSTRIES

- Healthcare
- Manufacturing
- Retail
- Education
- Hospitality

GROWTH INDUSTRIES

- Professional
- Scientific
- Technical Services

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY SECTORS

The employment landscape in Northwest Indiana is diverse, with key industries including healthcare, manufacturing, retail, education, and hospitality. As of 2023, the healthcare sector remains the largest employer, accounting for 14% of total employment. Manufacturing follows closely, contributing 13% to the regional job market. Retail trade, despite recent challenges, still employs a significant portion of the workforce.

JOB GROWTH & DECLINE IN KEY INDUSTRIES

Several industries in Northwest Indiana have experienced notable growth over the past decade. A significant boost in the accommodation sector points to increased tourism demands in our region. The designation of the Indiana Dunes National Park and other progress making our region a destination, are proving effective. As shopping and product movement trends have changed, warehouse and storage employment has also significantly increased over this period.

Additionally, Northwest Indiana has also been undergoing a shift to a more information-based economy. Employment in the Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services industries has risen 36% in the last decade. This shift is further punctuated by the increase in employment in the management of companies at 26%. These industries, in addition to other information-based sectors, now represent just under 8% of all regional employment.

Conversely, traditional manufacturing industries have faced job declines due to automation and offshoring, shedding about 1% of the total industry jobs over the past decade. The retail sector has also struggled, with a 4% decrease in employment, attributed to the shift in consumer behavior as well as staffing changes within the industry. Notably, public sector employment, made up of those employed at various levels of government, education, and public safety, has decreased by 11% in this period, suggesting a shift in the role public sector employment plays in regional economic dynamics.



KEY TRENDS & INSIGHTS

AGING WORKFORCE

The region faces challenges related to an aging workforce, with a growing percentage of workers aged 55 and above. This trend necessitates strategies to retain older workers and transfer their knowledge to younger generations.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Integrating younger workers into the labor force remains a priority. Initiatives aimed at providing vocational training and apprenticeships are crucial for reducing youth unemployment and ensuring a steady supply of skilled labor.



ANALYSIS OF HIGH-DEMAND OCCUPATIONS

Several occupations in Northwest Indiana have experienced significant changes over the past decade, reflecting broader economic trends and industry shifts. The demand for specialized manufacturing roles has seen notable increases. Metal furnace operators, for instance, have experienced a remarkable 293% rise, highlighting the region's resurgence and evolving complexity of manufacturing processes. These trends underscore the importance of specialized skills in the modern manufacturing landscape.

The expansion of the warehousing and storage sector has led to substantial growth in related occupations as well. Industrial truck drivers, essential for the logistics and distribution network, have seen a 167% increase in employment. Transportation and warehousing supervisors have also experienced a 94% rise, emphasizing the critical need for skilled leadership in managing the growing logistics operations. These developments align with the broader industry trends, showcasing the vital role of transportation and warehousing in the regional economy.

As Northwest Indiana transitions towards a more information-based economy, the demand for occupations such as management analysts has surged 128%. This growth reflects the increasing need for expertise in analyzing business operations and optimizing organizational performance. Management analysts are crucial in helping businesses adapt to the digital age, driving efficiency and strategic decision-making.

Conversely, several traditional occupations, such as bank tellers and administrative assistants, have faced significant declines due to the rise of digital banking, automated services and other technological advances. Some manufacturing occupations have faced similar fates, influenced by automation and shifts in manufacturing processes, highlighting the impact of automation and technological change on the workforce.

These changes in occupation demand reflect the dynamic nature of Northwest Indiana's economy, driven by technological advancements, industry shifts, and evolving business needs. Understanding these trends is crucial for workforce planning and development, ensuring that the region's labor force is equipped with the skills needed for future growth and prosperity.

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Efforts to promote diversity and inclusion are ongoing, with programs designed to support underrepresented groups in the workforce. These initiatives are vital for creating a more equitable labor market.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT & ECONOMIC MOBILITY

Higher educational attainment is closely linked to better economic opportunities. The region continues to focus on improving educational outcomes to enhance economic mobility for its residents.

EMPLOYER OPPORTUNITIES

SURVEY RESULTS & EMPLOYER FEEDBACK

The 2023 Indiana Chamber Employer Workforce Survey highlights several key challenges and demands from employers across Northwest Indiana. The survey, which collected responses from over 1,000 employers, revealed that 73% of respondents reported significant talent challenges. Among these, 42% identified attracting and retaining workers as their most pressing issue. In response to these challenges, many employers are now more willing to hire individuals with less education or fewer skills than previously required, providing on-the-job training to bridge the gaps.

EMPLOYER NEED DATA

94,000 # of Unique Regional
Job Postings in 2023

6,257 # of Companies
Competing for Talent

28 Days Average Duration of
Regional Job Postings

\$24.00 Median Advertised
(Hourly) Salary

52% Job Postings Listing
No Education Requirement



JOB POSTING ANALYSIS & EMPLOYER DEMANDS

The job posting analysis for Northwest Indiana from January 2023 to December 2023 provides further insights into employer demands. Over this period, employers posted a diverse range of job openings, reflecting the region’s evolving economic landscape.

Education Levels in Job Postings: A significant portion of job postings (52%) did not specify an educational requirement, highlighting employers’ flexibility in considering candidates from various educational backgrounds. For those postings that did specify education levels, 27% required at least a high school diploma or GED, while 10% sought candidates with an associate’s degree. Bachelor’s degrees were required for 18% of the postings, indicating a strong demand for higher education in certain roles. Master’s degrees and advanced professional degrees were less commonly required, reflecting in 4% and 3% of postings, respectively.

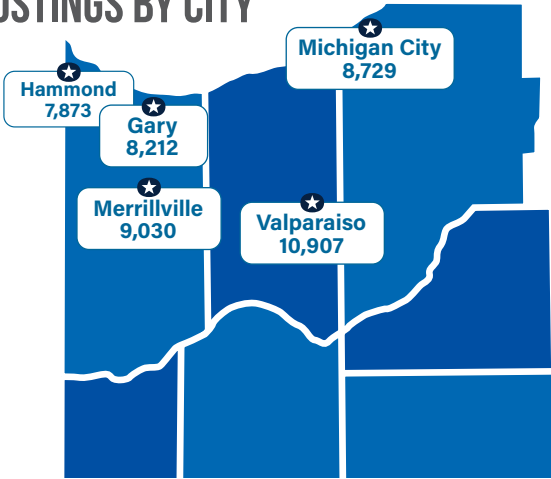
Top Occupations: The demand for healthcare professionals was exceptionally high, with registered nurses being the most frequently posted occupation. This shift underscores the critical need for healthcare services in the region. Additionally, there was a substantial need for heavy and tractor-trailer truck drivers, driven by the expansion in warehousing and storage sectors. The calls for retail salespersons and supervisors also increased despite the retail sector’s high turnover due to broader economic challenges. Customer service representatives were highly sought after, highlighting the importance of customer support roles across industries. The food service industry also grew, with significant postings for food service managers and fast-food workers.

Geographic Distribution of Job Postings: The job postings were predominantly concentrated in Lake County, which has the highest number of residents as well as businesses. However, job posting data from 2023 point to more total jobs available in Valparaiso

than any other individual city in the region. The top communities for job demand are rounded out by a few Lake County communities in Merrillville, Gary and Hammond as well as La Porte County representative Michigan City.

Skills Highlighted in Job Postings: The skills most in demand by employers in Northwest Indiana align closely with the feedback from the Chamber survey. Employers are looking for a blend of foundational and technical skills to support their operations and growth.

POSTINGS BY CITY



Communication skills are consistently highlighted as critical. Employers seek individuals who can effectively convey information, collaborate with team members, and engage with customers. Problem-solving skills are also highly valued, as employees who can identify issues and develop effective solutions contribute significantly to operational efficiency.

Proficiency with the Microsoft Office Suite is a fundamental requirement for many roles. Familiarity with applications such as Word, Excel, and PowerPoint is essential for a wide range of positions, from administrative roles to management.

As new workers enter the workforce, there is a growing need for leadership and management skills to build capacity and support these employees. Employers are looking for candidates who can lead teams, manage projects, and drive organizational success. This demand reflects the necessity to develop internal talent and ensure that new employees are effectively integrated into the workforce.

Overall, the job posting analysis highlights the dynamic nature of the Northwest Indiana job market, with significant demands in healthcare, logistics, retail, and customer service sectors.

MOST POSTED OCCUPATIONS

Registered Nurse	9,768
Truck Driver	3,120
Retail Salesperson	2,997
Customer Service Manager	1,698

FUTURE OUTLOOK

PROJECTIONS FOR FUTURE WORKFORCE TRENDS

EMERGING OCCUPATIONS

PERCENTAGE GROWTH

17%	Software Developers
15%	Market Research Analysts & Marketing Specialists
15%	Financial Managers
13%	Management Analysts
11%	Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder & Mental Health Counselors

Northwest Indiana is poised for significant changes in its workforce over the next decade, driven by demographic shifts, technological advancements, and strategic economic developments. These changes are expected to shape the region's economic landscape and create numerous job opportunities across various sectors.

Industries poised for growth include healthcare, technology, and renewable energy. The healthcare sector is expected to expand further due to the aging population and advancements in medical technology. Meanwhile, the technology sector will continue to grow, fueled by digital transformation across various industries and significant federal designations.

Northwest Indiana has recently been part of two Tech Hub designations, positioning the region as a pivotal area for technological development and innovation. These hubs will attract investment, foster innovation, and create numerous high-tech job opportunities. Additionally, the development of other projects, including the Quantum Corridor as well as chip and battery manufacturing facilities, will enhance the region's technological infrastructure. This will lead to an increased demand for skilled workers such as engineers, technicians, and quality control experts. This aligns with the broader shift towards advanced manufacturing, integrating new technologies and offering new opportunities for skilled workers.

Renewable energy is another emerging sector with significant job creation potential. The designation of a Hydrogen Hub and the MACH2 hub, along with local

PROJECTED INDUSTRY CHANGES & RETIREMENTS

	10-YEAR GROWTH	CURRENT WORKFORCE 55+
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	19%	30%
Food Manufacturing	25%	21%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	17%	28%
Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	5%	26%
Ambulatory Health Care Services	9%	25%



efforts to modernize the grid, transition from coal, and build resiliency in power distribution, will create numerous jobs in green energy.

INDUSTRY GROWTH & THE AGING WORKFORCE

The projected growth in several key industries in Northwest Indiana presents both opportunities and challenges, particularly in the context of an aging workforce. As industries expand, there is a growing concern about the potential employment crunch as a significant portion of the current workforce is nearing retirement age.

The Professional, Scientific and Technical Services sector is expected to experience substantial growth, driven by technological advancements and the establishment of tech hubs in the region. The increasing demand for highly-skilled professionals in areas such as data science, engineering, and IT will require a steady influx of new talent. However, the aging workforce in this sector may lead to a shortage of experienced professionals, necessitating robust training and succession planning strategies to bridge the gap.

The healthcare sector is poised for significant expansion as well due to the aging population and advancements in medical technology. This growth will increase the demand for healthcare professionals, including nurses, doctors, and medical technicians.

With many current healthcare workers nearing retirement, there is an urgent need to attract and train new professionals to ensure continuity of care and meet the rising demand for services.

Food manufacturing is another industry expected to grow, supported by regional agricultural strengths and increasing consumer demand. The sector will need skilled workers to operate and maintain advanced manufacturing equipment. As experienced workers retire, the industry must focus on recruiting and training new employees to maintain productivity and innovation.

The intersection of industry growth and an aging workforce underscores the importance of proactive workforce planning. Employers and stakeholders must invest in education and training programs to develop the next generation of workers. Initiatives such as apprenticeships, internships, and continuous learning opportunities will be crucial in preparing younger workers to step into roles vacated by retirees.

Additionally, efforts to retain older workers through flexible work arrangements and phased retirement plans can help mitigate the impact of an aging workforce. By leveraging the experience and knowledge of seasoned professionals while integrating fresh talent, Northwest Indiana can navigate the challenges and capitalize on the opportunities presented by industry growth.

OCCUPATIONS WITH HIGHEST PROJECTED DEMAND

	PROJECTED OPENINGS OVER 10 YEARS
Fast Food and Counter Workers	25,687
Laborers and Material Movers	22,301
Cashiers	14,552
Retail Salespersons	12,658
Driver/Sales Workers & Truck Drivers	11,983

OCCUPATIONS WITH HIGHEST PROJECTED GROWTH

	PROJECTED OCCUPATION GROWTH OVER 10 YEARS
Data Scientists	42%
Nurse Practitioners	34%
Veterinarians	24%
Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	24%
Computer & Information Analysts	21%

THE NORTHWEST INDIANA WORKFORCE BOARD (NWIWB) AND THE CENTER OF WORKFORCE INNOVATIONS (CWI) ARE ACTIVELY ADDRESSING THE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OUTLINED IN THIS REPORT THROUGH VARIOUS INITIATIVES AIMED AT USING PARTNERSHIPS TO CREATE ACCESSIBLE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES.

The Northwest Indiana Workforce Board (NWIWB) and the Center of Workforce Innovations (CWI) are actively addressing the opportunities and challenges outlined in this report through various initiatives aimed at using partnerships to create accessible employment opportunities.

Service Delivery to Adults: CWI and NWIWB are committed to providing comprehensive support to adult job seekers. This includes career exploration and counseling, job search assistance, and training programs tailored to the needs of local industries. They offer resources to help individuals upskill and reskill, ensuring they remain competitive in the evolving job market. Programs such as WorkOne Centers provide vital support, including resume writing workshops, interview preparation, and job placement services.

Another important component of adult services is the Adult Basic Education (ABE) Program, which assists students who are basic skills deficient or lack a high school diploma. The ABE Program focuses on improving literacy and numeracy skills, enabling participants to achieve their educational and career goals. By providing foundational education, the program helps individuals prepare for the exam, pursue further education, and gain the skills necessary for employment.

Youth Workforce Development: Recognizing the importance of early career development, CWI and NWIWB focus on preparing youth for the workforce through a variety of initiatives. These initiatives operate under the “NextGen” brand and are designed to bridge the gap between education, employers, and the workforce system to solve talent challenges. A cornerstone of NextGen is READY NWI, a collaboration among schools, businesses, and community organizations to ensure that our high school students

graduate academically, socially, and financially prepared to participate in the regional economy. Members are committed to presenting a full range of career resources, including sharing affordable post-high school education and training options so that no student is denied access to the education needed for acquiring high-quality jobs in the region.

Another important initiative is Jobs for America’s Graduates (JAG), which helps at-risk youth graduate from high school and transition successfully into postsecondary education or the workforce. JAG provides students with the necessary support and skills to overcome barriers to success.

Finally, CWI has partnered with regional manufacturers and Ivy Tech to create the South Shore FAME (Federation for Advanced Manufacturing Education) FAME is a two-year work-and-learn program designed to provide recent graduates with hands-on training and education in advanced manufacturing. The South Shore FAME chapter has just enrolled the first cohort this spring.

These initiatives and others provide hands-on experience and exposure to different career paths. Partnerships between local schools, employers, and community organizations help to integrate workforce readiness into educational curricula, ensuring that young people acquire the skills needed for future employment. Under the Regional Education and Employer Alliance for Developing Youth in Northwest Indiana (READY NWI) consortium, CWI will be connecting partners in the workforce ecosystem to the Next Generation of students utilizing an investment from the Commission for Higher Education. In this capacity CWI will serve as an intermediary and surround the schools with partners through Career Coaching to expand opportunities in the coming years.

Collaborative Efforts: Collaboration is a cornerstone of our strategy as we partner with local businesses, educational institutions, government agencies, and other service providers to create a cohesive approach to workforce development. A key example of this collaboration is NWI Works. The Opportunity Collaboratives at the center of this initiative aim to provide scalable, accessible, and comprehensive services to the most economically distressed communities in Northwest Indiana. These collaboratives bring essential service providers together to focus on engaging residents directly in their neighborhoods, and will serve as central points for workforce development, offering a range of services from career exploration, job training and education to childcare and health services. These hubs are designed to create prosperity for both employers and households by filling critical job openings and supporting economic growth in vulnerable areas. Partners in this project are actively developing two initial locations to launch this initiative in the coming year.

Another example is the mobile career services unit developed in partnership with the United Way of Northwest Indiana and the training unit with Ivy Tech Community College. The Mobile Career Services Unit, furnished with computers and networking equipment, brings career development opportunities directly to communities in need. The mobile unit addresses access issues such as transportation and child care, allowing more residents to take advantage of workforce development services.

The Ivy Tech Mobile Training Unit is decked with industrial technology, healthcare, equipment and a full service classroom. These mobile units will both be used around all 7 counties in Northwest Indiana.



WRAP UP DATA

43 Number of School Districts Engaged in READY NWI

8 South Shore FAME Founding Members

500+ Individuals served by READI 1.0

\$200k Investment by READI into talent development

4 School Corporations Served by "Bridging the Gap"

20 Regional JAG Programs

2 Initial Opportunity Collaborative Sites

1st Regional Mobile Career Development Service



PRESENTED BY

CENTER OF WORKFORCE INNOVATIONS



CWI is a mission-driven, non-profit organization that provides cost-effective solutions to meet the workforce-related needs of our customers. Our solutions range from building and maintaining broad-based partnerships to assisting individual organizations in creating targeted talent recruitment and retention strategies in Northwest Indiana. Commonly known for identifying and implementing best practices, CWI has administered more than 40 public and private ventures intended to improve the quality of the workforce, enhance the business climate, and ensure the realization of a higher quality of life. While remaining a driver of workforce development in NW Indiana, CWI strategic priorities are on empowering its regional workforce through high quality career advising, skill building and efforts to increase post-secondary credential attainment. cwicorp.com



NORTHWEST INDIANA WORKFORCE BOARD

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