

NORTHWEST INDIANA WORKFORCE BOARD MINUTES
WorkOne Gary
November 11, 2025

Present:

Lori Tubbs, Jim Clarida, Amy Henninfield, George Douglas, Martina Tovar, Liz Negron-Haniford, Adrienne Carroll, Aco Sikoski, Marcelo Marcos.

Proxy: Audra Peterson

Absent: Kevin Comerford, Chris Beebe, Anna Ortega, Mikie Stogsdill

Staff:

Lisa Daugherty, Kathy Neary, Erin Sizemore, Tammy Stump, Ana Davidson

CALL TO ORDER

Jim Clarida called the meeting to order.

Consent Agenda

Mr. Clarida asked the Board Members to review the items on the consent agenda.

Motion: A motion was made by Aco Sikoski and seconded by George Douglas to accept the consent agenda as presented. All were in favor. **The motion passed.**

1. Board Business

Dashboard/Performance

Mrs. Neary presented November Board report

Goal #1 Increase skills of current workforce to align with economic development strategies and key industry clusters. Training and placement provided to 34 Gary residents through Work B.I.G. with 10% wage average increase post-program. Expanded Child Development Associate training. Finalized the Indiana Plan pre-apprenticeship approval with Department of Workforce Development for the Gary location. Collaborated with IvyTech Community College Valpo Campus on the mobile training unit.

We received the Power Up reimbursement grant dollars from the State of Indiana. It's a broad initiative to get more upskilling and work base learning or apprenticeship opportunities; the employer who delivers or outsources the training of their staff must honor a 25% wage increase upon completion of the training.

Goal #2 Improve employer access to qualified workers and awareness of training resources:

Partnered with Construction Advancement Foundation to host Skilled Trades Day, connecting employers with emerging talent and promoting awareness of training pathways to address workforce needs in high-demand sectors. We had 950 people in attendance and over 26 schools.

Goal #3 Ensure Youth in NWI are positioned for continued education/learning and workforce success: Secured Ascend INCAP grant and partnered with READY NWI to expand youth apprenticeship programs. Completed the Gary Summer Youth Pilot Program. Launched Growth Opportunity Five (GO5) to enroll justice involved youth ages 18-24 in training and employment programs. Continue the promotion of the Work Ethic Certificate program to JAG managers and specialists. More than 13 schools are enrolled to participate in the 2025-2026 school year, with plans to add 10 schools through JAG classes.

Goal #4- Increase quality job exposure and experience through apprenticeships, work-based learning, employer supported training programs: Met with IvyTech Community College about the Work B.I.G. pathways and career mapping potential. Organized the Northwest Indiana Business Round Table (NWIBRT) Economic and Business Outlook event with Ivy Tech and Construction Advancement Foundation.

Goal #5 Assure compliance and efficient operations of a workforce development system: Met with DWD Commissioner Josh Richardson to showcase innovative workforce projects, including a potential pilot between the Employability Skills Boot Camp and DWD's Unemployment Division. Also discussed workforce board redistricting; Region 1 is expected to remain the same.

Our team of Community Engagement is documenting the client's referral via Charity Tracker. This allows our partners to have access to those clients.

Local Monitoring Policy, Change 2

Tammy Stump informed that during monitoring, DWD asked that we add more details to the policy regarding the internal auditing process for CWI. The following was added: "An annual audit of the Center of Workforce Innovations records as the fiscal agent of WIOA takes place between August 1 and October 30. This audit is conducted by an outside entity contracted to complete an independent review of the records".

Ms. Tubbs joined the meeting in person and asked for a motion.

Motion: A motion was made by Martina Tovar and seconded by George Douglas to approve the Local Monitoring Policy, Change 2. All were in favor. **The motion passed**

2. Old Business

None

3. REPORTS

Youth Employment Sub Meeting

Tammy Stump and Martina Tovar met to talk about member recruitment, goals of the Youth Employment Council, and meeting times. There are two new members: Marcelo Marcos, who is a Northwest Indiana Workforce Board member, and Ken Barry from Uthiverse. Martina mentioned two possible members: One is a manager at Costco and the other is District Manager for Starbucks. Additionally, Martina will reach out to Marvella Sports group and Tammy to COATES. They also discussed providing youth and young adults Labor Market Information about careers in and out of Northwest Indiana. Some of the board members offered to make some contacts to attract potential members to the Youth Council.

President's Report

Mrs. Daugherty talked about four topics:

- 1- Erin Sizemore, CFO, discovered a typo error in the contract between Northwest Indiana Workforce Board and CWI. Per the RFP end date of the contract must be June 30,2026 instead of June 30, 2027. This is a 3-year contract with option to renew for 1 year. She suggested the Board revises in January if they want to extend the contract or put out an RFP to potentially identify another provider.
- 2- Meeting schedule. The next meeting will be at the Michigan City Elston location and she along with the lead consultant will provide updates on the hub opportunity.

- 3- Board Resignations. We have had some board resignations and we'll need two representatives from the business community with emphasis on manufacturing. She worked with Mrs. Neary and her team and brought forward the following company names for the Board consideration: Midwest Aerospace in Crown Point, BNutty in Portage, Alliance Steel in Gary and Daifuku in Hobart. The Board recommended Mrs. Daugherty to start conversations with Midwest Aerospace and Alliance Steel. She is hoping to bring some nominations for the next meeting.
- 4- Governor's Workforce Cabinet. This was eliminated and went back to the State Workforce Development Board. They are soliciting participation from the local boards. She invited the Board members to consider joining to this. Jim Clarida volunteered to represent the board and some other members nominated Kevin Comerford; Mrs. Daugherty will contact him the following week.

GOOD NEWS

None

Save the Dates

NWIWB meeting January 15, 2026

ADJOURN

Ms. Tubbs adjourned the meeting.

Ana Davidson, Recording Secretary