



Board Report

June 23, 2021

COVID-19: Regional Update

Due to the continued decline in COVID-19 cases, Region 8 WorkOne locations resumed general public access as of March 1, 2021. WorkOne staff continue to provide virtual services when requested, or customers can schedule an appointment as needed. Staff continue to sanitize work areas within the WorkOne offices and a maximum capacity for each office allows staff and clients to maintain social distancing recommendations.

Region 8 continues to utilize Dislocated Worker Disaster Recovery funding to hire dislocated workers as temporary employees in several of our WorkOne locations to assist with cleaning and monitoring office capacity limits. Temporary positions are currently filled in Bloomington, Bedford, Linton and Paoli.

With additional Unemployment Insurance benefits ceasing as of June 19th, Region 8 expects an influx of job seekers in the upcoming months. Positions for Workforce Training Coordinators in Brown, Lawrence and Monroe Counties are currently vacant at this time. Region 8 will seek to fill these positions to meet demand throughout the region.

RESEA

During this program year, Region 8 has been able to maintain RESEA services using a telephonic/virtual service model. Over 11,000 Unemployment Claimants were selected for RESEA, but almost 66% of those individuals were automatically exempted from participation during this year. By the end of the program year, 3,857 UI Claimants will have been selected for services. RESEA Specialists have completed 1,780 Assessment Interviews, a 44% Successful Interview rate for program participants. Of the remaining claimants, over 1,900 have either returned to work or have declined services. As the post-COVID-19 environment continues to change and vaccination rates increase, the Region 8 RESEA team will continue to adapt our program processes to improve access and increase program participation.

National Dislocated Worker Employment Recovery Grant (DW-ERG)

Region 8 received approximately \$350,000 to provide Career Services, Training and Supportive Services to Dislocated Workers who have been affected by COVID-19. As of May 31st, 56 eligible workers have been enrolled to participate in career and training services.

Region 8 County Unemployment Rates

As of April 2021, Indiana's unemployment rate dropped to 3.9%, which is well below the national rate of 6.1%. Most of the Region 8 county rates have remained slightly above the state average.

Region 8 staff continue to answer basic UI questions and help customers use WorkOne computers to file UI claims. Customers who need additional assistance are required to call or email the UI Contact Center at DWD.

County	December	January	February	March	April
Brown	3.5%	4.7%	4.8%	4.6%	4.1%
Daviess	2.4%	2.9%	3.0%	3.0%	2.5%
Greene	3.8%	4.8%	4.9%	4.9%	4.2%
Lawrence	4.1%	4.7%	4.7%	4.7%	4.0%
Martin	2.9%	3.4%	3.3%	3.2%	2.9%
Monroe	3.3%	4.0%	4.1%	4.1%	3.3%
Orange	5.6%	5.9%	5.7%	5.7%	4.8%
Owen	4.0%	5.2%	5.0%	5.0%	4.5%

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.

DWD partnered with ID.me in February to create a highly secure identity verification process that ensures that claimants will be able to access their unemployment benefits. This process has been implemented as claimants from several states have been victimized by criminals using stolen identities to submit fraudulent unemployment claims.

UI Claims

As of June 19th, Indiana ended its participation for all federally funded pandemic unemployment. The programs that will end are as follows:

- Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC), which provided a \$300 weekly add-on to recipients of unemployment insurance.
- Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC), which provided recipients extended benefits after their traditional 26 weeks of unemployment insurance benefits have been exhausted.
- Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA), which provided benefits to individuals who do not normally qualify for unemployment benefits, such as self-employed, gig workers, and independent contractors.
- Mixed Earner Unemployment Compensation (MEUC), which provides a \$100 additional weekly benefit for individuals who are eligible for regular unemployment benefits but also earned at least \$5,000 in self-employment income.

Performance Highlights and Business Services Updates

From January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020, the Business Service Team assisted with the following:

- **Work Based Learning** – During this period there were 10 customers active in work-based learning (WBL) with regional employers (9 Work Experience and 1 OJT).
- **WorkKeys**- There were 160 WorkKeys assessments administered since January. Business Services staff continue to engage with employers throughout the region to discuss the utilization of the assessments as part of their hiring process.
- A total of **282 Distinct Employer contacts** were made which represents an achievement of **47 %** of our annual program goal of 600 contacts.
- A total of **921 Business Contacts** were made which represents an achievement of **55%** of our annual program goal of 1,680 contacts. During this same time frame, employers searched **2,226 resumes** using the ICC resume database to fill job openings.
- **Ongoing Hiring Events and Job Fairs** have been severely limited due to COVID-19, but creative strategies are allowing for these events to occur. The Department of Workforce Development and Region 8 WorkOne continue to assist the following medical manufacturing companies to promote hiring events: Baxter, Boston Scientific, Catalent and Cook Medical. Several companies are offering the HSE Pathway to Work and Earn While you Learn-English Language Learner pathway to attract new talent.
- Business Service Team members continue to promote access to **180 Skills** for local employers. 180 Skills will allow Hoosiers to gain key workforce skills free of charge through an online library of courses. Individuals who enroll will have the opportunity to complete courses designed to improve general employability skills relevant across job sectors or develop the foundational knowledge to enter Indiana’s manufacturing industry. Currently there are 5 employers in Region 8 who have applied for 180 Skills licenses to provide training to employees. Any current employer using 180 Skills may use their licenses through June 30, 2022.

WARN/Non-WARN Notices and Rapid Response Activities

During this program year, there has been **1 WARN notice filed in Region 8**. The Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act’s purpose is to provide workers with sufficient time to prepare for the transition between the jobs they currently hold and new jobs. It also provides protection to workers, their families and communities by requiring employers to provide a 60-day notice in advance of covered plant closings and covered mass layoffs.

- Five Star Senior Living, Inc. filed a WARN notice on April 20th indicating they were closing Meadowood Senior Living healthcare unit located in Bloomington, Indiana which affected 96 workers. Employment separations began May 1st and will end no later than July 5th. Virtual Rapid Response Orientations were held on May 24th and May 28th offering workers two sessions to attend at 8am or 2pm. These sessions were attended by 22 workers.

PY 20 Performance Support Grant (PSG) Outcomes

- Over \$21,000 of financial assistance has been provided to 35 customers who are scheduled to graduate from training by December 2021. Thus far, 26 students have graduated, two (2) did not complete and seven (7) are still attending training. Of those who have graduated, 23 are currently employed.
- 28 individuals have participated in short-term training. Of those individuals, 18 are currently employed, two (2) are currently unable to work and the other eight (8) are seeking employment opportunities.
- 24 Participants have been provided with a work experience activity. 19 have successfully completed their work experience thus far and 15 are currently employed.
- 70 customers have received supportive services. Of those individuals, 57 are employed with salaries ranging from \$9.30 to \$33.65 per hour.



Next Level Jobs: Workforce Ready Grant and Employer Training Grant

As a part of the Indiana Governor's Workforce Cabinet (GWC) "Rapid Recovery for a Better Future" initiative, the Governor dedicated funding available through the CARES Act to increase short-term training opportunities for more than 10,000 Hoosiers. As a result, Region 8 was awarded \$582,000 in Workforce Training Grant funds from July 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020 to support tuition costs for individuals to attend short-term training programs that result in certifications needed for in-demand jobs. As of December 30, 2020, Region 8 spent \$517,000 to provide tuition assistance to 153 customers, 84% of whom successfully completed their training program.

Region 8 also received an additional second round of Workforce Ready Grant funding in the amount of \$540,000 for up to 185 more students to attend training and earn a certification from March 1, 2021 to September 30, 2021. As of June 15th, approximately 90 students have been issued training vouchers that total more than \$310,000.

Region 8 was also recently awarded \$420,000 of Employer Training Grant funds in May 2021 to reimburse employers for training new employees and/or upskilling of incumbent workers. Additional Employer Training Grant funds will also be available as of July 1st to employers throughout the region. DWD anticipated approximately \$17 million to be disbursed to regions. Region 8's allocation remains unknown at this time. The NLJ-Employer Training Grant 5.0 Townhall Event is scheduled for Wednesday, July 7th from 10am to 11am and is open to employers to attend. Interested parties may register at this link: <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/6710545279863269387>

Congratulations to our 2021 JAG Graduates! This class sure faced many unexpected twists and turns during their Senior Year, but were persistent in their endeavors. We are so proud of all their hard work as well as the dedication of our JAG Team to encourage them every step of the way!

Pictured Below: JAG Manager Derek Morgan and Owen Valley Graduate Alaina Michalow

Left to right: JAG Student Jadynn Hernandez, Washington HS Graduate Eddie Ortega and JAG Specialist, Tina Bond.



Pictured Above: JAG Specialist Keyona Douglas and Owen Valley Graduate Monique Shade