



Board Report

September 29, 2021

Participant Service Goals for PY'21

| Program | Regional Plan Goals | Potential Carry-In Clients | New in 1 st quarter (July1-Sept.) | Total | Goal % |
|--------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|--|-------|--------|
| WIOA Adult | 879 | 207 | 112 | 319 | 36% |
| WIOA Dislocated Worker | 211 | 51 | 3 | 54 | 26% |
| WIOA Out of School Youth | 172 | 20 | 9 | 29 | 17% |
| WIOA In School Youth | 43 | 14 | 1 | 15 | 35% |

COVID-19: Regional Update

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 are still sanitizing work areas within the WorkOne offices and limiting capacity in each office to maintain social distancing recommendations.

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

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

UI Claims

As of September 4th, Indiana ended its participation for all federally funded pandemic unemployment compensation programs.

Region 8 County Unemployment Rates

| County | March | April | May | June | July |
|----------|-------|-------|------|------|------|
| Brown | 4.6% | 4.1% | 4.2% | 4.3% | 3.7% |
| Daviess | 3.0% | 2.5% | 2.9% | 3.0% | 2.6% |
| Greene | 4.9% | 4.2% | 4.2% | 4.6% | 4.0% |
| Lawrence | 4.7% | 4.0% | 4.1% | 4.4% | 4.1% |
| Martin | 3.2% | 2.9% | 3.0% | 3.2% | 2.8% |
| Monroe | 4.1% | 3.3% | 3.8% | 4.4% | 3.7% |
| Orange | 5.7% | 4.8% | 4.8% | 5.1% | 5.0% |
| Owen | 5.0% | 4.5% | 4.4% | 4.9% | 4.2% |

As of July 2021, Indiana's unemployment rate was 4.1%, which was well below the national rate of 5.4%. Several 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. 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 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. DWD has provided Region 8 with a few smart phones to assist customers in completing this process.

RESEA

Region 8 has maintained RESEA services using a telephonic/virtual service model. From July 1 to September 17th, approximately 150 UI Claimants have been selected for services. RESEA Specialists have completed 59 Assessment Interviews, a 39% Successful Interview rate for program participants. Of the remaining claimants, 35 have returned to work and the others have declined services. As of September 3rd, the Sub RESEA meetings began taking place in the offices. 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.

WARN/Non-WARN Notices and Rapid Response Activities

There have been no WARN notices since the last board meeting.

Performance Highlights and Business Services Updates

From July 1 to August 31, 2021, the Business Service Team assisted with the following:

- **Work Based Learning** – 14 customers active in work-based learning (WBL) with regional employers.
- **WorkKeys**- 49 WorkKeys assessments have been 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 **90 Distinct Employer contacts** were made, representing a **15%** achievement of our annual program goal of 600 contacts.
- A total of **409 Business Contacts** were made, representing a **24%** achievement of our annual program goal of 1,680 contacts. During this same time frame, employers searched **513 resumes** using the ICC resume database to fill job openings.

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

- **Orange County Job Fair** - WorkOne sponsored a booth at the event held on Thursday, July 29th at the Orange County Community Building in Paoli. 28 employers participated in this event.
- **Bloomington Economic Development Corporation (BEDC) Opportunity Expo** - BEDC has planned an upcoming hiring event called "Celebrating Innovation & Technology in Monroe County". The Region 8 Workforce Development Board will co-sponsor this event which will be held on Thursday, October 14th at The Mill in Bloomington.
- **Voices of Recovery Event** - This event was sponsored by Safe Haven Recovery Engagement Center in Orange County. Funds raised will support their mission to end substance abuse disorder in area communities and promote a healthier lifestyle through recovery. WorkOne sponsored a booth and provided information on employment and training services to the 50+ attendees. Pictured left to right: Orange County Career Advisor Cathy Tucker, Business Services Director Robin Branch and Business Services Consultant Jerry Sonheim.



GRANT UPDATES

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 August 31st, 64 eligible workers have been enrolled to participate in career and training services.

WIOA Support Grant PY21

DWD extended another opportunity for Workforce Boards to receive WIOA Performance Support Grant funding that must be spent by March 31, 2023. Region 8 was awarded approximately \$485,000 to fund the following initiatives to assist with capacity building, target populations, employer engagement and youth engagement:

1. **Pathways to apprenticeships-** Building upon Region 8's previous success with WorkINdiana and WRG programs, the region will create a pathway from short-term occupational skills training to a Registered Apprenticeship. New Registered Apprenticeships will be created to prepare participants for a career as a Certified Clinical Medical Assistant (CCMA), Welder, or Heating and Cooling (HVAC) Technician. A full-time position has been created to assist in the development and oversight of these apprenticeships.
2. **Youth Engagement Coordinator (YEC)-** A full-time position was developed to focus exclusively on marketing of available Youth services throughout the region, recruiting, and connecting potentially eligible Out Of School Youth ages 18-24 with WIOA Career Advisors.
3. **WorkOne Customer Service-** Due to the increased number of UI claimant issues and pandemic-related impacts on workers, Career Advisors have been forced to shift their attention to assisting customers with those tasks. Region 8 will hire 6 additional part-time Workforce Training Assistants throughout the region. This will allow Career Advisors to refocus their attention on customers enrolled in Wagner-Peyser, WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs.



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. Since March 2021, Region 8 has been awarded a total budget of \$900,500 of Round 2 WRG funds to be used for tuition and supportive service assistance. As of September 24th, \$644,620 has been obligated for 177 students, leaving a balance of \$255,880 that must be spent by 12/31.

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. Employers who would like more information about how to apply for these funds should contact Robin Branch (rbranch@vinu.edu) or Earl Isom (eisom@dwd.in.gov).

- JAG continues to face challenges due to the pandemic. All Region 8 schools have continued to have visitor and field trip restrictions that have minimized the students' abilities to participate fully in the JAG experience. The JAG Specialists remain dedicated to their students and are making sure to maintain successful programs despite these restrictions. Most JAG programs are serving at least 40 students.
- We are excited to have our regional WorkOne Career Advisors visiting our JAG students to assess them for WIOA In-School Youth Eligibility. Special thanks to Lawrence County Career Advisor Linda Knight for taking the initiative to get this started at Bedford North Lawrence!

- JAG students are constantly working on improving their communication and team building skills. Paoli JAG Students are keeping busy by participating in activities to enhance those skills. Pictured at right are students participating in the Build a Boat challenge.



- Mitchell High School JAG Specialist, Kim Allen (pictured below), became ill with COVID on September 4th. Kim's condition continued to decline and she is currently in intensive care, but remains stable. Mrs. Allen's Mitchell High School JAG students organized and hosted a prayer circle on September 13th to help lift up their Specialist in her time of need. Her students spoke about the impact Kim and the JAG Program has made on their lives. Please keep Kim in your thoughts during this time.

