

SUCCESS

Newsletter for Lake County Workforce Development **vol. 20 ed. 1**

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Lake County Workforce Development is a partner in the Job Center of Lake County. Workforce Development receives grants from the US Department of Labor including Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) grants to fund programs designed to cultivate and connect employers and the workforce.

Incumbent Worker Training helps local businesses develop and implement training programs for current employees who need additional training in order to retain and advance in their employment. Lake County Workforce Development assists employers with funding and connecting to training providers.

Fischer Paper Products has more than three generations of experience in manufacturing and supplying paper products. While building a new 162,000 square foot building in Antioch, the company needed to train up their current workforce to be able to sustain growth. They contacted



Lake County Workforce Development inquiring about Incumbent Worker Training. *"As Fischer Paper Products looks to improve efficiencies and meet increasing customer demand, we transitioned to a team-based culture and wanted training to give us some of the soft skills needed to help teams work and communicate at an improved level,"* explained Amy Keaton, Manufacturing Manager.

Lake County Workforce Development connected Fischer Paper Products to the Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center (IMEC) to customize a training plan. *"Fischer Paper Products met with IMEC when they were transitioning their operational structure to High Performance Work Teams and needed to build their employees' foundational team skills such as agility, collaboration, initiative, accountability and giving/receiving feedback,"* said Melissa Basa, IMEC's Regional Manager.

In September 2019, IMEC provided 15 hours of training to approximately 60 Fischer Paper employees across all position and seniority levels. IMEC and Workforce Development worked together to procure a state grant to cover the cost of training for Fischer Paper Products. Jeff Hubert, Business Service Representative for Lake County Workforce Development, explained, *"Incumbent Worker Training Grants are an effective workforce strategy to help employers train up their current employees and is a retention and attraction tool in the changing workforce."*



(Pictured left to right) Amy Keaton, Fischer Manufacturing Manager, Jeaneen Brisko and Jaime Arroyo (Fischer employees who received training), Ashley Beaudoin, IMEC Trainer, and Jeff Hubert, Workforce Development Business Service Representative.

Workforce Development qualifies individual jobseekers for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) training funds available through the U.S. Department of Labor. The goal is to help unemployed and underemployed individuals gain skills necessary to compete in the current market.

Andre worked various jobs in guest services, driving, and delivery. All of these jobs together, plus assistance through the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP), did not provide enough income to pay his bills and support his three children. Andre knew he needed a higher-wage job.

Andre accessed the services at the Job Center of Lake County and, through career coaching by Workforce Development, he identified truck driving as a high-growth, high-paying job that fit his skills, interests and work history. He was eligible to receive assistance with tuition through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and attended Commercial Driver's License (CDL) training at 160 Driving Academy beginning January 2019. Andre participated in a driving internship while applying for jobs. He networked with friends, teachers and Job Center staff members, and searched for jobs online. Andre's priority was to find a job that would allow him to be home at night with his children. Andre was hired as a **CDL Truck Driver** for McMahon Dairy Services in **June 2019**. He now earns over \$4,000 per month and no longer needs public assistance. Andre says, *"There is no better feeling than having a career and getting paid for something that you want to do."*



Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) is a federal program that provides a path for employment growth and opportunity through aid to workers who have lost their jobs as a result of foreign trade. The TAA program seeks to provide these trade-affected workers with opportunities to obtain the skills, resources, and support they need to become reemployed. Workforce Development administers the TAA program in Lake County.

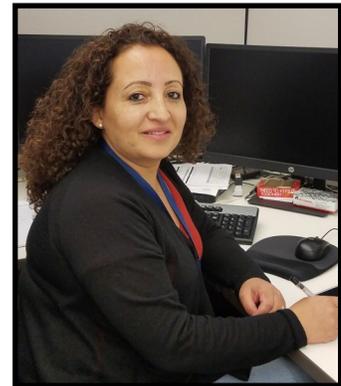
Randall lost his job of five years as an Order Support Specialist as a result of foreign trade. Randall had been working towards his career goal, recently completing his associate degree, but knew that a bachelor's degree would pave the way to a marketing career. Suddenly out of a job, Randall worried about how he would continue to pay for the remainder of his schooling. Because he was impacted by a company downsizing, Randall was invited to the Job Center to learn about the benefits that he qualified for through the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program. The TAA grant covered the cost for him to attend school at DePaul University. While completing his coursework, he worked at an unpaid internship for several months for a film production company.

Randall completed a **Bachelor Degree in Public Relations and Advertising** in June 2018 and then worked for a start-up company to build his portfolio before accepting a job in **February 2019** as a **Marketing Coordinator** at Resolution Productions Group, a family-owned business headquartered in Chicago that provides event and video production services. Randall says that the knowledge he gained through his recent education, internship, and past work experience helped him land the job. *"The B.A. degree qualified me for the position, and the internship developed the skill set to perform my role at a high level."*



The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) also provides funding for a paid work experience. Qualified job seekers may be matched with a six-month internship that allows them to add practical experience to their portfolio. Internships can benefit both experienced adults who are transitioning careers and individuals who have little experience.

When **Isela** was downsized from a position as a supervisor at a distribution center in 2018, she filed for unemployment insurance with the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES). The IDES website directed Isela to the Job Center of Lake County for employment assistance. She attended an information session and indicated an interest in exploring jobs in a different industry and work setting. Based on her skills and experience working with diverse individuals, Isela was referred to a paid work experience opportunity at the Lake County Coroner's office. In her previous jobs, Isela had worked with internal team members but rarely worked with individuals who were undergoing times of personal crisis. While providing office support at the Coroner's office, she regularly interacted with members of the public during a difficult time in their lives and found that she was good at calming and comforting individuals.



Looking for a job in a related field where she could continue to help people, Isela applied for and was hired as a **Program Assistant** with the Lake County Health Department in **January 2019**. In the new position, she supports Case Managers who are out in the field, enters new clients in the computer system, checks insurance and assists the psychiatric team by creating appointments. She is excited that her new job allows her to assist people. *"I couldn't have pictured myself in this role when I lost my distribution job, but I'm very happy now. This role fits my interests and passion."*

When **Mary** was laid off from a position as an Electronic Data Interchange Coordinator, she tried to conduct her job search alone but received no responses from employers. She contacted the Job Center of Lake County where she learned about intensive support for job seekers. Based on her lay-off status, Mary qualified for the WIOA training grant and selected training at IT Career Lab. She attended from May to August 2018, earning three industry-recognized credentials in network and systems infrastructure.



Her Career Specialist recommended that Mary participate in a paid work experience next. Since the majority of Mary's experience was solely with a home products company, she wanted to validate her skills in another work environment. Mary was placed in an internship with Management Information Systems at the Lake County Health Department. She supported the Help Desk and worked on a project to replace and deploy 300 computers.

With her new skills and work experience, Mary landed a job as an **Identity Management Analyst** at Consumer's Credit Union in **May 2019**. The position checks off Mary's top job priorities; she earns a solid wage at a company near her home while doing a job that she enjoys.

LAKE COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

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The Job Center of Lake County is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. All voice telephone numbers may be reached by persons using TTY/TDD equipment by calling TTY 800-526-0844 or 711. To request accommodations, contact dharris@lakecountyil.gov or 847.377.3423.

prepare ► research ► document ► find ► land ►

Lake County Workforce Development has broken down the job search into five defined steps and delivers a series of workshops called “5 Steps to Your Next Job”. Attendees learn the most up-to-date job search techniques. They also have an important opportunity to network with other job seekers and workforce professionals. Those who complete the 5-day series receive a certificate of completion. Workforce personnel continue to meet with and support graduates until they land their target job.

After **Yamille** was laid off from a large corporation in December 2018, she had inconsistent work for six months. She attended “5 Steps to Your Next Job” where she received coaching and guidance regarding her resume, career transition and training needs. Yamille used the job search tools that she learned in this series to develop a schedule of job search activities, connect with networking groups and research local companies.

Yamille qualified for the WIOA grant and received Six Sigma training at DePaul University. While researching companies, she discovered that Consumers Credit Union was hiring. Yamille applied, interviewed and was hired as a **Digital Platform Implementation Manager** in **June 2019**.



Yamille says that her biggest challenge while looking for work was not knowing precisely what job she wanted next. At times, she felt overwhelmed and worried that she would not find another job that she enjoyed. Her advice to others who are in career transition is to use online tools to research careers, maintain a schedule, network with others, and use the Job Center resources.