

## State of the Workforce

Workforce staff and partners make informed decisions based upon demographic data and labor market trends. To support this effort, Lake County Partners delivered a presentation at the Job Center of Lake County on November 2019 called the “State of the Workforce.” The labor force is one of the county’s strengths. Although there has been a slight decrease in the overall population within Lake County, the total labor force for the county has been increasing since 2014. Over 30% of the labor force commutes from other counties; Cook County is the biggest import site. The workforce is highly-educated. In Lake County, of those in the working-age population, 15 to 64 years of age, 50.5% hold an Associate degree or higher.

Top Common Skills

Skill	Frequency in Postings	Postings with Skill / Total Postings (Aug 2018 - Oct 2019)
Management	24%	54,826 / 231,854
Sales	19%	43,319 / 231,854
Communications	18%	41,742 / 231,854
Customer Service	18%	41,100 / 231,854
Leadership	16%	36,110 / 231,854
Operations	13%	29,982 / 231,854
Problem Solving	10%	23,306 / 231,854
Presentations	9%	20,667 / 231,854
Microsoft Excel	7%	16,793 / 231,854
Written Communication	7%	16,018 / 231,854

Chart 2: Source EMSI Lake County’s Top Common Skills by Frequency in Postings

## W.E.S.T. Workforce Essential Skills Training

The Workforce Essential Skills Training (WEST) Program completed its first successful program year. Lake County Workforce Development implemented the program in July 2018 to provide structured career readiness and essential skills (e.g. soft skills) education to adults ages 18 to 24. A primary goal was to address a need voiced by employers across many industries stating a desire for more refined essential skills in the workforce, especially in younger workers beginning their careers. During the development of the program, data similar to the charts illustrated above were analyzed. Workforce staff found similarities from what employers were saying and what the data was demonstrating.

During this first program year, 6 different cohorts of young adults were served through WEST for a grand total of 54 program participants from 18 different home cities. Among these participants, 46 successfully completed WEST. 39 of these participants either found employment or have completed/are participating in WIOA-funded training or work experience programs.









	Biopharmaceuticals	99
	Medical Devices	57
	Plastics	56
	Financial Services	52
	Environmental Services	51
	Upstream Metal Manufacturing	48
	Federal Government Services	48
	Communication Equipment and Services	48

Chart 1: Source: EMSI Industry Clusters are ranked according to worker earnings, growth, regional competitiveness, regional competitiveness and specialization and gross regional product.

The top industry cluster within the county is biopharmaceuticals as illustrated in chart 1. The most -requested skill in the job postings was management as demonstrated in chart 2. Recent job postings have also called for skills in the areas of: communication, customer service, problem solving, and written communication. These are the same skills that are taught in Workforce programs including Revive Lake County and the Workforce Essential Skills Training program.



Warren-Barr North Shore conducted mock interviews with the WEST participants

## Regional Job Fair

Lake and McHenry County co-hosted a Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics (TDL) job fair on October 9th at the University Center. Both counties coordinated the event to increase regional collaboration in the transportation industry. There were 32 job seekers and 12 employers at the event. The TDL job fair served as an opportunity to build awareness about the different career pathways available in the transportation industry.



## Disabilities Job Fair

The Disability Employment and Resource Fair was held at the Waukegan Library. A total of 25 Lake County employers and community organizations participated in the event. According to the Waukegan Library, 65 job seekers attended the job fair and both the employers and job seekers were very satisfied with the event. Several employers mentioned that this was an excellent way for them to meet with the workforce and welcome the opportunity to be involved in future events such as these.



## Ticket to Work

The Job Center of Lake County became a Ticket to Work provider through the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) grant in 2014. The Ticket to Work program provides Social Security disability beneficiaries the choices, opportunities, and support needed to become and stay employed, increase their earnings, and eventually leave and remain off benefits by being fully self-supportive.

A Disability Resource Coordinator (DRC) and a case manager were hired to implement the new grant. An important aspect of their roles included facilitating partnerships to reduce silos. They also offered behavioral health services, customized employment plans, job coaching, and referrals to services offered at the Job Center.

The DEI grant called for improving employment outcomes through policy development and systems change activities by:

- Enhancing the American Job Center Network and providing comprehensive services to multiple programs for which job seekers with disabilities are eligible; and
- Improving the American Job Centers' physical and programmatic access to job seekers with disabilities and other challenges.

Since 2014, over 800 people with a disability have received continued assistance and 60 tickets have been assigned to the Job Center since 2015. Future goals for the Ticket to Work program include continuing to expand the program and educate the community while providing comprehensive services and American Job Center accessibility to people with disabilities.

Person with Disability (PWD) that have utilized general Job Center services and resources	800
PWD who utilized Job Center for employment services	300
PWD who received WIOA training services	70
PWD who earned an industry-recognized credential	49
PWD who co-enrolled with Job Center partners	138
Number of Tickets Assigned	60

Source: ILWorkNet Dashboard- Data from 2014 to Present

## Goodwill Great Lakes

In 2014, Goodwill Great Lakes partnered with the Job Center of Lake County to recruit individuals for their AbilityOne program. AbilityOne assists individuals with significant disabilities to learn new job skills in the foodservice industry. If hired, individuals become employees of Goodwill Great Lakes, a food service provider with the Naval Station Great Lakes. As a Food Service worker earning \$11.57 an hour, they become eligible for benefits, vacation time, and a credit union membership. AbilityOne also offers its employees a range of training that includes leadership development and skills-building. Their Career Advancement Center (CAC) offers additional services such as internet access, computer literacy, job search training, keyboard training, and business communications. Through the training, employees are eligible to apply for advancement opportunities that increase their responsibility and pay. In 2019, Goodwill Great Lakes AbilityOne and Great Lakes Resources, through its partnership with the Job Center and other key organizations in Lake County, has hired 560 Lake County residents.