THE WORKFORCE BRIEF
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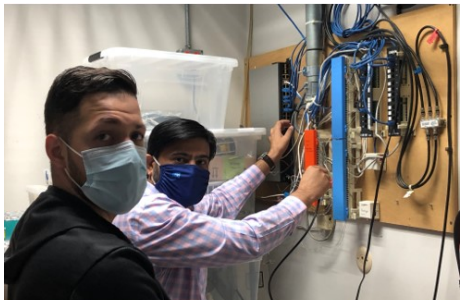
TALENT PIPELINE

Dynamic Blend of Training and Work Experience

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. WIOA also provides funding for a paid work experience. Participants may be matched with a six-month internship that allows them to add practical experience to their resume.

IT Expert System offers certification in technical and management programs. Its two sites in Schaumburg and Naperville are also testing centers. In 2020, it expanded its original package of two exams to cover 12 different exams in IT, medical, academic, and manufacturing fields.

Since April 2020, Lake County Workforce Development has funded six individuals for a unique blend of training and work experience at IT Expert System. As each participant enters the program, he/she shares with a mentor his/her background, experience, expertise, and expectations. Participants can build skills in areas including programing, operating systems, documentation, reporting, database management, and web development depending on their career goal. Additionally, each participant works with a mentor to complete specific projects at the organization related to his/her career goal. For example, one student has worked on a project to grow the testing center with new test service providers. Another student created a user training guide and documented the business strategy for the organization. The training and practical experience that all of the students are gaining at IT Expert Systems will launch them into the competitive field of information technology.



Connecting Talent to Opportunity

17 staff members from five organizations attended an online meeting with Advanced Resources on December 4, 2020. Advanced Resources is a staffing organization that specializes in positions in technology, finance, office support, and human resources. Participants discussed ways to connect the Lake County talent pool with job opportunities. Dina Fiorelli, Senior Director at Advanced Resources, shared that, although job contracts through her organization decreased by almost 50% at the outset of the pandemic, she has seen a significant increase in hiring beginning in July 2020. She says that Advanced Resources now has more contractors out working in Lake County than before the pandemic. She notes that many employers have found effective ways to interview, onboard, and allow employees to work remotely. Demar Harris, Director of Programs for Lake County Workforce Development, explained that Business Service Team members regularly hold meetings with employers to hear from them about the labor market. "These informational meetings have been especially critical during the pandemic, as our Business Service team needed to respond quickly to the changes in the market."

Attending organizations

- Lake County Workforce Development
- Illinois Department of Employment Security
- Illinois Division of Rehabilitation Services
- Youth Conservation Corps
- Youth Build Lake County

Dina Fiorelli

LakeCounty Workforce Development Department

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TALENT PIPELINE

Disability Job Fair During Pandemic

Five organizations partnered for a Job and Resources Fair for Individuals with Disabilities on September 16, 2020 at Hinkston Park in Waukegan. Due to the pandemic, the event followed CDC guidelines with social distancing being strictly enforced and masks had to be worn at all times. The event gave the option for attendees to drive through for information or walk up to exhibitors. 52 attendees were able to network with local employers and organizations at this event.

Event was co-sponsored by:

- Goodwill Great Lakes
- Illinois Department of Employment Security
- Illinois Division of Human Services
- Independence Center
- Lake County Workforce Development
- Waukegan Park District
- Waukegan Public Library

Employer Spotlight Presentations

The Employer Spotlight presentations were initially created to allow young adults to hear from industry employers in the four main local sectors of healthcare, professional services, transportation & logistics, and manufacturing. Each presentation highlights industry trends, labor market information, and career paths. Employers present and provide an overview of their organizations, entry level positions, training and benefits, career paths, and success stories. The first industry featured was healthcare and the spotlight employers were Children's Dentistry Group and Advocate Aurora Health. The industry spotlight presentation was shared with local programs that serve young adults and was posted on the Job Center of Lake County's YouTube channel so that job seeker of all ages can view it. The next industry to be featured will be Professional Services with spotlight employers are the Waukegan Park District and Consumers Credit Union. Subscribe to our YouTube channel, Job Center of Lake County IL, to see all the completed presentations.

Work Experience: Road to Opportunities

Lake County Workforce Development has continued to provide vital career and employment services to job seekers in need, which has in turn helped with preserving the talent pipeline in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since July 1st 2020, Workforce Development has enrolled more than 40 WIOA participants into work-based learning opportunities, which includes both paid work experiences/internships and on-the-job-training programs.

Antonio Castrejon, W2C Intern

More than 5 of these participants have been hired permanently at their work-based learning site. Other participants have used the experience to gain employment at other companies.

One local organization that Workforce Development has partnered with to provide these opportunities is Waukegan To College (W2C). W2C is currently serving as the worksite for two young adult WIOA participants, who are involved in projects such as academic advising, coaching parents, building partnerships, and event and workshop planning. One of W2C's primary goals is to work with students from under-served populations and families to help them reach their full learning potential and pursue post-secondary education pathways.

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