

# WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT STATE SUCCESS STORIES

Program Year 2011



EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

State Annual Reports: [http://www.doleta.gov/performance/results/AnnualReports/annual\\_report.cfm](http://www.doleta.gov/performance/results/AnnualReports/annual_report.cfm)

Foreword . . . . .	1
Workforce Investment Act Adult Program Success Stories . . . . .	2
Workforce Investment Act Dislocated Worker Program Success Stories. . . . .	38
Workforce Investment Act Youth Program Success Stories . . . . .	51
Trade Adjustment Act (TAA) Success Stories . . . . .	75
Other Workforce System Program Success Stories . . . . .	80

# FOREWORD

Each year states prepare and submit annual narrative reports on accomplishments under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) training and employment programs to the Employment and Training Administration, similar to that of an organization's annual report to its stockholders. In the reports, many states highlight participants, employers and other "success stories" that focus attention on achievements of different programs. These personal stories illustrate how states have responded to unemployed participants; providing tax dollar-funded services that have made a difference in the lives of many individuals.

The success stories are excerpted directly from the Program Year 2011 States' WIA Annual Report Narratives, which are located on the Department of Labor's (DOL) website at: [http://www.doleta.gov/performance/results/AnnualReports/annual\\_report.cfm](http://www.doleta.gov/performance/results/AnnualReports/annual_report.cfm).

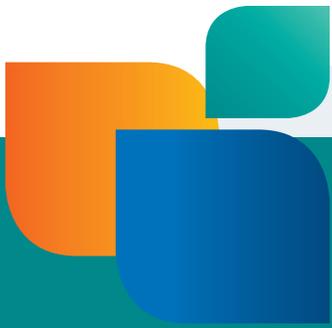
In general not every state includes individual participant success stories in their annual reports. This explains why some states are not included in this compilation and is in no way an indication that these states did not have noteworthy individual participant successes throughout 2011. Further, some states submitted numerous stories across various programs, and only a small collection was selected to highlight the unique successes achieved by the programs.

<sup>1</sup> ARRA served Adults and Youth ages 14-24

These stories focus on WIA Adults, Dislocated Workers, Youth (ages 14-21), and Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) participants, who have benefited from program services such as assessment, the development of an individual employment plan, classroom training, on-the-job training, job search assistance, and emergency support because of natural disasters. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)<sup>1</sup> and National Emergency Grants provided additional funds to support these employment and training services during the nation's economic downturn. A compilation of some participants who received services through these additional funds are included in this compilation. Further, some success stories highlighting the recent Veteran's Gold Card Initiative are included.

The highlighted Success Stories are pulled directly from the States' WIA annual report narratives. There is no changing of these stories and only minimal editing if needed for clarification and consistency. They are presented as the states present them in this aggregate form, as a point of access to the success stories resulting from the Workforce Investment System.

DOL plans to continue to compile and disseminate WIA participant success stories from States' Annual Report Narratives as an added way to put a face on performance—participants benefiting from these programs as well as to showcase to the public the significant impact of investments made in WIA training and employment programs.



# WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT ADULT PROGRAM SUCCESS STORIES



## ALABAMA

"I am thankful for the program because it allowed me to be hired. I hope that other companies and business owners would consider giving people an opportunity to prove themselves."

—Amanda Autry

### Amanda Autry's Success Story

"What a difference a year makes," states Amanda Autry as she addressed a group of ex-offenders during a job readiness workshop at Bishop State. A year ago, Autry was incarcerated and now she's gainfully employed as a welder and starting a new chapter in her life. Autry, like several of her co-workers, was given a second chance. She credits Travis Short, owner of Horizon Shipbuilding and Mobile Work's On-the-Job Training (OJT) programs for her success. "They gave me hope and an opportunity at life," Autry said. "I want to be a productive citizen of society and not be a statistic." Short states that the OJT program is ideal for his company because someone was willing to share the costs of hiring and training a new employee. "It's getting harder and harder to find quality people who are ready to work," Short said. "When you bring on new workers, there is a financial investment that you incur immediately. The financial incentive encouraged me to hire."

To date, 18 individuals have been hired, most ex-offenders; and the shipbuilding company has saved nearly \$70,000 in employment costs. DeWayne Scott echoed Short's comments as he addressed the crowd

of ex-offenders. Scott explained that a little over a year ago he was simply a participant in the ex-offender job readiness workshop, and now he shares his experience from being an unemployed felon to a productive member of society. Prior to working for Horizon, Scott served eleven years in prison. "I am thankful for the program because it allowed me to be hired," Scott said. "I hope that other companies and business owners would consider giving people an opportunity to prove themselves. Everybody deserves another chance and all ex-offenders aren't bad. Some made one mistake and it cost them dearly."

Mobile Works is pleased to offer this program to the business community as a resource to cover their training needs. "We have invested nearly \$500,000 dollars in training dollars for area businesses over the past two years," states Sydney Raine, President of Mobile Works. Mobile Works can pay up to 50 percent of the costs associated with training new hires for jobs that pay at least \$9 per hour.

## Ashleigh Gear's Success Story

"There were some very tough times. The program was difficult and there were many late nights of studying and doing paperwork."

'Dreams can come true,' I said to myself as I walked across the stage to receive my Bachelors of Science in Nursing," said Ashleigh Gear, who recently graduated from the University of South Alabama (USA). She credits Mobile Works for helping to make her dreams come true. She was faced with financial struggles as well as balancing her studies. "There were some very tough times," states Gear. "The program was difficult and there were many late nights of studying and doing paperwork. There were instructors who were very helpful and some instructors who were very difficult." However, she persevered through it all and is now a proud graduate of USA.

Gear heard of the WIA Program during orientation at school. According to Gear, paying for books and school was difficult. However, life became easier when she received funding to help pay for her school and books. Gear has always dreamed of becoming a nurse since she was a little girl. She can truly say her dreams are now a reality and have come to fruition. She has started work as an RN at Providence Hospital.

## James Coleman's Success Story

Through the Center for Workforce Development, James Coleman attended Beville State Community College and obtained his commercial driver's license (CDL) certificate and license. His case is very unique because, in spite of his past circumstances, he was unwilling to give up. Because of Mr. Coleman's past affiliation with the criminal justice system he knew that he would be faced with many obstacles to finding employment. It was in working through his issues that he found out about Jefferson County's WIA Program. It would be through this program that he would truly gain the means to obtain self-sufficiency and the freedom to work independently.

Mr. Coleman's process was not an easy one. He understood that individuals with a criminal past often had a more difficult experience finding employment. To ensure that his training would not be in vain he identified employers who were willing to offer him employment opportunities upon the successful completion of his training.

Mr. Coleman was approved for training and successfully completed Beville State's CDL program on August 24, 2012, and has since been extended two offers of employment. Mr. Coleman's ultimate goal is to own his own trucking company, and as an entrepreneur, come back to Center for Workforce Development (CWD) to offer employment to others who are attempting to overcome similar circumstances.

This is the benefit of "never giving up."

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### Lucas Zimmerer's Success Story



Lucas Zimmerer trained for a new career and was hired on November 11, 2012, as an underground miner with Hecla Greens Creek mining company at a starting wage rate of \$22.00 per hour plus benefits. An initial assessment of this Navy veteran conducted by Ketchikan Job Center staff

indicated insufficient job search skills and a lack of skills for suitable employment in a region of high unemployment. Staff helped Lucas prepare an excellent application packet that the mining companies would appreciate. He underwent vocational counseling, which included updating his résumé and mock interview practice. After training, he qualified for relocation assistance and now lives in Juneau with his family, and has earned two raises in pay since he was hired. Lucas now earns a self-supporting wage that provides well for his young family.



### Yolanda's Watson's Success Story

Yolanda Watson became a client of the Pine Bluff Workforce Center in the fall of 2009. She was seeking more gainful employment while attending classes at Southeast Arkansas College, with higher hopes of being accepted into the Registered Nursing Program Jefferson Regional Medical Center (JRMCC) School of Nursing. Yolanda was a single mother of two children; her family was receiving public assistance and she was also working part time as a Patient Care Tech at JRMCC to provide for herself and her family. On November 24, 2009, Yolanda was accepted into the RN Program at JRMCC. After providing core services to Yolanda, her Career Consultant decided that she was a prime candidate for WIA training assistance.

Yolanda was a perfect client as expected; she provided everything that was needed for eligibility determination in a timely manner and throughout her enrollment as a client in training. Her RN training started on January 4, 2010, after overcoming many obstacles throughout her life, including delivering her third child during the last term of nursing school. We are pleased to say that Yolanda graduated on December 8, 2011, with a Registered Nursing Degree and started to work at JRMCC on January 16, 2012, as a Transitional Care Nurse with an hourly rate of pay starting at \$24.25. This is a perfect example of how the program is designed to work; a positive return on the dollar spent. Instead of Yolanda being on public assistance and taking money out of the economy; she is now off public assistance, supporting herself and her family in addition to being a positive asset to the economy. This is just one of many examples illustrating how the Arkansas Workforce Centers in Southeast Arkansas were able to make a positive difference in someone's life, while improving the local economy.

## Miranda Burlison's Success Story

Miranda Burlison is a single parent of one child. When she applied for the WIA Adult Program through WAEDA, she was getting ready to start her second semester of LPN training. She was receiving food stamps and surviving on her student loan and Pell grant. She was struggling to stay afloat and felt that she could not afford to stay in school and support her family—she was worried she would have to drop out. After counseling with a case manager at WAEDA, Miranda was enrolled on the WIA Adult Program in January of 2011. With the financial assistance she received, she was able to begin her second semester of LPN training. She worked hard at her studies and caring for her daughter. She had to repeat one class from her last semester because she was three points short of passing. She successfully repeated that class and completed her Associate of Applied Science Degree in Nursing in May 2012. She passed her state boards in August 2012, and started working at El Direct in Fort Smith as a Nurse's Aide and feels she will be hired as a LPN as soon as a position is opened up.

Miranda is grateful for the help she received and is excited to start this new chapter in her life.

## Harriet Steimer's Success Story

When the plant-wide layoff occurred at American Railcar Industries, Harriet Steimer was not sure which direction to go, because all the plants in the area were laying people off or shutting down. About 10 years ago, she had started work on an Associate's Degree, and decided that now would be a good time to go to school and finish. The funding from the WIA Program allowed her to obtain an Associate's Degree in Accounting. Due to a lack of financial resources of her own, she would have found it extremely difficult if not impossible to pay for tuition, books, and afford the gas to drive back and forth to school. The job market in her local area was a little grim at the time of her graduation on December 15, 2011. However, she had high hopes that armed with a degree in Accounting and tax time coming up; she would be able to find a job. She relates that she could not have been more wrong about obtaining a job due to the economy. There were few

available jobs, and those that she found paid minimum wage, with crazy hours.

The WIA staff placed her in a job at Black River Technical College. This was her niche; she loved the college and enjoyed the work. Her co-workers took time to teach her how to make brochures, pamphlets, and use computer programs that she had learned about in college. After four months at the college, she accepted a bookkeeping job with the Greene County Industrial Training Council. Now she is able to put to use the skills learned in her degree field and she thoroughly enjoys the work.

Without the WIA Program, this would not have been possible. She is so thankful for the opportunity she received in the WIA Program. She says that it has changed her life and given her opportunities that she would never have had without it.

## Tiffany Smallwood's Success Story

Tiffany Smallwood came to the Workforce Center in Benton in December 2009 seeking financial assistance to continue the Registered Nursing program at Baptist Health Schools in Little Rock. Tiffany is married and has two small children. She worked at a Day Care Pre-School and JC Penny in the past, but even with her working the family was unable to generate an income above the poverty level. By the fall of 2009, Tiffany made up her mind to go back to school and get a job that would enable her family to be self-sufficient. She knew the next two years would be far from easy but she was determined. If exhausting days and late nights were sacrifices she had to make to have her dreams come true, Tiffany was ready and willing. If along the way her children somehow realized she was trying to be an example and inspiration to them, then that would be icing on the cake!

Tiffany completed the WIA application process and was determined eligible for WIA funding. Equipped now with Pell Grant and WIA assistance, there may not have been a more enthusiastic, resolute nursing student that began the January 2010 semester at Baptist Health.

Tiffany graduated June 9, 2011, with a Registered Nursing Certification and received her RN License on July 27, 2011. In April of 2011, Tiffany was offered a job in the Intermediate Care Unit, a step-down unit of the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit at Arkansas Children's Hospital (ACH) where she was doing her clinical rotation. Tiffany had completed clinical rotations in several other hospitals, but training at ACH stole her heart. From the first day Tiffany walked into ACH, her gratitude for the two wonderfully healthy children she had made her feel ACH was where she belonged.

Tiffany believes her nursing skills, patience and kind, motherly touch are God given and it is therefore her obligation to give back to Him, through the love and care she provides to each of her patients, that with which she has been blessed. Tiffany says there is no way she would be where she is today without WIA. She said this past Christmas was the best their family had ever had and every time she bought a gift for her children she thought about how fortunate she was to be an RN. Plans to take a vacation to the beach around the 4th of July this year are also going to be a first for their family and something Tiffany said she would never have imagined they would have the opportunity to do.

The Benton Workforce Center is very proud of all the time and effort Tiffany was willing to invest in her training and proud to have been a part of making her dreams a reality. Because ACH "treats all children and their parents/caregivers with care, compassion, and understanding," and because ACH "ministers to the emotional, social, educational, and recreational needs of hospitalized children and adolescents and utilizes developmentally appropriate activities to minimize stress and anxiety and foster positive feelings about health care," we are certain every child Tiffany takes care of will be blessed with much, much more than just great medical care.



### Terrence Barrington's Success Story

When Terrence Barrington was laid off from his job; he struggled to support a young family, including a wife who lost her job as well. Mr. Barrington turned to the Employ Florida network for help. Staff at Mr. Barrington's local workforce board, South Florida Workforce, helped him apply for an educational grant and prepared him for success as a student.

Mr. Barrington received the grant and began attending Sullivan and Cogliano Training Centers. After Mr. Barrington had been a student for four months, his classmates began to tap him for tutoring help. The assistance Mr. Barrington provided to his classmates did not go unnoticed; the dean soon realized that the students he tutored were making positive gains in class.

Sullivan and Cogliano hired Mr. Barrington as a paid tutor and six months later, hired him as a full-time instructor. Mr. Barrington continues to advance professionally at the Sullivan and Cogliano Training Center in Miami.

"When I arrive at work in the morning, I have such a feeling of satisfaction. South Florida Workforce helped me start a career I love and support my family. I cannot thank them enough."

## Elizabeth Matthews' Success Story

"My job is rewarding and I am able to support my family on my own. The Employ Florida network helped me advance my career and get back on my feet."

After being laid off from her job, Elizabeth Matthews, a single mother, struggled to support her family. She turned to Career Central in Pasco and Hernando counties for help. Staff helped her update her résumé, gain interviewing skills, and research different occupations. They also helped her enroll in a community service program and contribute to her community and, in doing so, demonstrate that she was a quick study and a hard worker.

Career Central staff took note and recommended her for On-the-Job Training at Regional Medical Center Bayonet Point. The hospital was pleased with Ms. Matthews' performance and skill-set and hired her as a full-time monitor technician and unit secretary.

"I am very pleased with my position at Regional Medical Center Bayonet Point," stated Ms. Matthews. "My job is rewarding and I am able to support my family on my own. The Employ Florida network helped me advance my career and get back on my feet."

## Gary Kinsey's Success Story

Florida's workforce system is finding innovative ways to collaborate to improve the state's business climate—even if it means helping job seekers create businesses themselves through entrepreneurship training. Entrepreneurship is the primary area of strategic focus for FloridaWorks, which provides workforce services in Alachua and Bradford counties. A leader in workforce entrepreneurship training, the local board recently was awarded an \$11.95 million U.S. DOL grant to replicate its StartUp Quest program—funded originally by a grant from Workforce Florida to provide entrepreneurship training and resources to out-of-work, degree-holding professionals—in seven other Florida workforce regions. The initiative is a component

of FloridaWorks' collective entrepreneurship training program, Entrepreneurship Quest, designed for job seekers at various educational and career levels.

Gainesville resident Gary Kinsey was unemployed after losing his job as a physical therapist when FloridaWorks contacted him about StartUp Quest. Mr. Kinsey's previous unsuccessful business ventures left him initially reluctant to pursue self-employment. But he changed his mind, meeting other out-of-work but highly motivated professionals through StartUp Quest who provided both inspiration and camaraderie.

Today, Mr. Kinsey is CEO and Founder of North Florida Medical Solutions, which earlier this year brought to market its first product, the CathStrap®, which prevents catheter backflow responsible for infections in patients.

Mr. Kinsey originally obtained the CathStrap® invention concept from a Startup Quest partner, the University of Florida's Office of Technology and Licensing, which seeks out companies to take UF research inventions to market.

"We've got lots of educated people looking for work and lots of technology available for development by entrepreneurs," said FloridaWorks Executive Director Kim Tesch-Vaught. "StartUp Quest educates job seekers about technology transfer and how to turn ideas into profits."

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## HAWAII



"An unfortunate situation, becoming unemployed, provided me with an opportunity to discover an industry I was truly interested in."

–Chris

### Chris' Success Story



#### Making a Connection in IT

Oahu WorkLinks connected Chris with ZR Systems Group LLC, one of Pacific Business News's 50 fastest-growing companies in Hawaii in 2011. Owner Ricky Zheng, who saw Chris's potential, was willing to give him an

opportunity to train on the job as a Service Technician. While new employees with ZR Systems are expected to complete one certification in their first six months of employment, Chris took and passed his A+ certification testing within four months of starting his job, then took his Network+ certification exam on April 28, 2012, just seven months after he started working.

"An unfortunate situation, becoming unemployed, provided me with an opportunity to discover an industry I was truly interested in," said Chris. "The OJT program enabled me to focus and learn about what I am now calling my passion. My new employment at ZR Systems has been nothing but positive!" Zheng said, "The Oahu WorkLinks OJT Program has helped our company expand to meet the needs of our growing business. As a small business, training new employees can be a costly and sometimes risky investment. Christopher Ohnheiser, a recruit from the program, has recently completed his six-month training period and we are happy to say that he has become a valuable asset to our organization."

### Dayna Ng's Success Story



#### Excelling "On the Job"

Pacific Commercial Services has been a business partner of Oahu WorkLinks for over five years and has hired 10 participants in various positions through the On-the-Job Training (OJT) program. All participants who completed OJT are still

working at the company, except for one person who left to open his own business and another who went to work for a larger organization for higher pay. Dr. Wendy Chang, President of Pacific Commercial Services, said, "I'm very happy with Oahu WorkLinks' OJT program, as it helps our company save time and money and allows us to train employees to our standards." Dayna Ng, a single parent with four children, had been receiving public assistance and food stamps. Pacific Commercial Services hired Dayna as a Receptionist through WIA's OJT Program. She was earning \$12.00 per hour, and did such an outstanding job in that position that she was promoted to a higher position as Junior Project Coordinator earning \$14.00 per hour. Dayna excelled in this position as well and received a second promotion to Project Coordinator, earning \$16.00 per hour. Dayna said, "I love working at Pacific Commercial Services and the company has given me so many opportunities to be successful."



### Miranda Timmons' Success Story



Miranda Timmons began the WIA Program in the spring semester of 2006 at the age of 27 as a single mother of four young girls. She had already taken one semester of classes at Shawnee Community College (SCC). Miranda knew that a college degree would help her find better full-time employment

than the two part-time jobs she was working. Living in public housing, using food stamps to make ends meet, and using Child Care Resource & Referral to pay her childcare, Miranda was doing everything possible to make a life for her family. After hearing how the WIA Program could help with tuition, books, travel, and childcare, she knew she could complete her college courses without an additional financial burden. Miranda took classes when she could, sometimes only part time, studying hard to keep her GPA as high as possible.

After all, she felt grades were reflective of how hard a person strives to be the best they can be. She was on the Vice-President's list several times when she was a full-time student and finished with a 3.79 GPA. Miranda graduated from SCC in August of 2011 with an Associate's of Applied Science as a Legal Administrative Assistant. She was also in the Phi Theta Kappa Honor's Society and graduated with honors from the college.

Miranda has been working full time for Shawnee Development Council, Inc. as a Weatherization Specialist since 2006. Her work includes using the knowledge that she has learned in classes, especially in the computer technology area. She has moved into a home with the help of Rural Development. Miranda believes her education has set an example for her children, family, and friends to follow.

### Tom Szymanski's Success Story



Tom, a U.S. Air Force Veteran who has a Certificate in Architectural Drafting and was unemployed for six months, qualified for the Champaign SESP "Green" Jobs Training program in November 2010, and successfully completed 80 hours of Energy Efficiency training through

two CleanEdison's workshops: BPI Insulation & Air-Sealing Technician in December 2010 and BPI Building Analyst/Energy Auditor in February 2011. He was hired at the University of Illinois in April 2011 as a Building Service Worker and has successfully retained employment for 12 months.

### Heather Oxley's Success Story



Heather Oxley has been a Maintenance Supervisor for six years and currently works in this capacity at the Hope Institute for Children and Families in Springfield, Illinois. The BOC training helped her get more in-depth information on energy cost-saving opportunities

for the main Hope Campus and its satellite facilities. One of these facilities is in the Noll Medical Pavilion. A retro-commissioning program for the HVAC system had already begun; however, Heather was able to utilize the information from the BOC courses to help implement a more comprehensive training program for the Medical Pavilion HVAC computer system. Having control of the system will translate into energy cost savings for the Hope Institute.

## Andrew Philippides' Success Story



"I could not have hoped for a better career; it was all made possible by Workforce Services Division and the helpful services they provide to unemployed people in Will County."

Andrew Philippides found himself laid off after three years of employment as a Support Analyst with Auto Auction Company. Though it was a great company to work for and Andrew had already survived a few rounds of layoffs, in June, 2009, it was the end of the road, and Andrew knew he needed assistance in finding his next job. Staff at the unemployment office suggested Andrew look into the possibility of obtaining a career scholarship from the Workforce Services Division of Will County (WSD) to go back to school. He was excited to find that he did qualify for a scholarship and enrolled in training at MicroTrain Technologies, where he completed training in Microsoft SQL Server Implementation and Design, Microsoft Certified Systems Engineering, and Windows SharePoint Services. Andrew recently started his new job as a Technical Specialist for CareVoyant, a company that provides software technology solutions for the healthcare industry. He is earning a higher salary now than when he was laid-off. Andrew says "I could not have hoped for a better career; it was all made possible by Workforce Services Division and the helpful services they provide to unemployed people in Will County."

## Wendy Wininger's Success Story



Wendy was assessed and determined eligible for WIA job search services in July 2011. Wendy's previous jobs were in retail and packaging and she was looking for employment opportunities in manufacturing. Unemployed since 2010, it was determined that Wendy lacked the necessary

manufacturing experience needed to become employed full time at a self-sufficient wage. As part of Wendy's individual employment plan

throughout her participation in the WIA Program, the Work Readiness class, Temporary Flood Recovery Project, Work Experience Program, and OJT were identified as valuable services in her job search efforts. Her progression through Core, Intensive, and Training services is a testament to her hard work and dedication to finding a full-time job. In August 2011, Wendy started the two-week OJT/NEG Work Readiness classes. Wendy successfully completed the class and received a certificate of completion and became OSHA certified. To help address her gap in employment, Wendy was assigned a temporary worksite placement with the NEG Flood Recovery project in October 2011, through Man-Tra-Con, as a Crew Worker making \$10 per hour. Wendy continued to demonstrate a great work ethic and was dedicated to finding a full-time job. At the beginning of the year, Man-Tra-Con and Continental Tire the Americas, LLC piloted a new project to place workers at the Mt. Vernon manufacturing facility on a 30-day work experience program with the option to progress into an OJT opportunity.

In January 2012, Wendy started the WIA funded Work Experience pilot project and was placed at Continental Tire of the Americas, LLC making \$15.20 per hour as a Passenger Tire Builder. After the 30-day review period was completed, Wendy was offered a position with Continental Tire effective March 2012, making \$16.62 per hour.

Wendy's participation in the OJT program, funded through the NEG Flood Program, allowed her the opportunity to learn the skills necessary to become a Passenger Tire Builder. In June 2012, Wendy successfully completed the program and is now a full-time permanent Continental Tire employee. She continues to report to our WIA office that she really likes her job and is doing well by continuing to meet her goals. Wendy's success is an excellent example of the various services and funding options that are offered through local workforce area #25.

## Donna Bragg's Success Story



"Going back to school gave me the confidence and skills needed to enter a completely new field."

"I lost my job in March of 2009 due to the current economic environment. My position was eliminated and I was permanently laid off. I had worked at General Casualty Insurance Company for 24 years, working my way up to a supervisor position as Claim Unit Manager. I received Unemployment Insurance and actively looked for work for five months. There were no jobs in my former line of work. I knew that I would need additional education to develop marketable skills in a field that would provide secure employment in the future.

I went to the workNet Center and talked with the people there about pursuing a new career in healthcare. I enrolled at the Capital Area School of Practical Nursing in the fall of 2009. I maintained nearly an 'A' average and did not miss a single day of school. Going back to school gave me the confidence and skills needed to enter a completely new field. I successfully completed the LPN program in August 2010. Soon after, I passed my State boards and in October 2010 I began working at SIU Healthcare as a Licensed Practical Nurse. I am still working in SIU's Pediatric Specialty Clinic and am happy with my new career and secure employment. I also received the Individual Achievement Award for Sangamon County at the Annual WIB/ Awards dinner and ceremony held on November 14, 2011."

## Kelly Welch's Success Story



"I could not have completed my goal without the assistance of the Workforce Network in Peoria."

"I was laid off from Caterpillar, Inc. in Mapleton, IL. I wanted to attend training for commercial truck driving. The recruiter referred me to a counselor at the Workforce Network, an Illinois workNet Center in Peoria. I attended labor market and assessment workshops so I would have a full understanding of the occupation. Later, due to the assessment and my newly learned knowledge of the transportation industry, I was deemed eligible and 'fit' for training. I attended the training at Illinois Central College Professional Development Institute. After only two months I completed the training, passed the State of Illinois exams, and became reemployed with a transportation company where I get to travel all over the country. With limited personal funds, I could not have completed my goal without the assistance of the Workforce Network in Peoria."

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## KANSAS

“Thank you so much for the financial help in the form of the generous grant I received this semester. The help Heartland Works has given me has been a blessing to me and my children as I struggle with finances while going to school full time.... I love nursing!”

–Dana

### Jeromy's Success Story

#### The Challenge

Jeromy spent many years chasing his dream job as a Football Coach. He attended college while playing the sport and earned a Master's Degree in Health and Human Performance while working as a Graduate Assistant. Once he graduated, Jeromy moved from college to college, coaching football as a Restricted Earnings Coach. The position offered him the experience of coaching football at the collegiate level. However, as a Restricted Earnings Coach, he was only making around \$60 per week. He decided he needed to find a career that would provide a better income to help support his family.

#### The Workforce Center Solution

In the summer of 2010, Jeromy came to the Hutchinson KANSASWORKS office to meet with a WIA Employment Specialist in hopes of finding a job that would not only match his interest, but also help him support his family. As an under-employed worker, Jeromy was able to participate in the WIA Program and enroll in the Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) program, offered at a local Community College. With career guidance provided through WIA, Jeromy decided this program was the perfect fit for his experience and education. Even better, it was in-demand in the local area.

#### The Outcome

Jeromy has now completed his PTA program and is a Certified Physical Therapist Assistant. He had multiple job offers upon completion and has been working at a local hospital making a very high wage.

### Dana's Success Story

#### The Challenge

Dana was a widow with four children to support when she came to the WIA Program. After the loss of her husband to a terminal illness, Dana found herself in a position which required her to immediately become the sole financial support for her household. Dana's prior work history and educational background were not sufficient to allow her to upgrade her employment to a position that would accomplish this financial goal. Dana was in her final two years of RN training and was struggling financially to stay in school when she visited the Workforce Center and asked for help.

#### The Workforce Center Solution

While enrolled with the WIA Program operated by Heartland Works, Inc. (HWI), Dana received financial aid to complete her Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) Degree. Dana's HWI WIA Career Consultant provided ongoing support and employment counseling during training.

#### The Outcome

Within two years of enrolling into WIA, Dana had completed her BSN and had transitioned into a full-time RN position which offered her a substantial increase to her earning potential.

## Gerald's Success Story

### The Challenge

Gerald came to the Southeast KANSASWORKS office, in Independence, Kansas. His employment prospects were poor, and he had been unemployed for more than six months.

### The Workforce Center Solution

Southeast KANSASWORKS conducted a comprehensive assessment of Gerald's knowledge, skills, abilities, and interests. With assistance, he was able to develop goals and an individual employment plan on reaching those goals. Southeast KANSASWORKS assisted Gerald with funding to attend training at Fort Scott Community College.

### The Outcome

Gerald quickly obtained a commercial driver's license and was hired by Fredonia Flatbed Express. He is currently working over the road and is making approximately \$22.10 per hour. He recently stated he is really enjoying his new job.

## Tyrell's Success Story

### The Challenge

Tyrell was a disabled veteran who had self-registered with KANSASWORKS as a job seeker. Recently separated from the Army, Tyrell had spent a month unemployed and was using KANSASWORKS to look for work on his own, but had not yet been able to connect to a viable employment opportunity.

### The Workforce Center Solution

Commerce WFC staff contacted Tyrell to invite him to visit the WFC for more customized assistance with his job search. At his first one-on-one meeting with a WFC Veterans Representative, Tyrell's employment needs were assessed and an employment plan developed. WFC staff educated Tyrell about the potential assistance he could receive from WFC partners such as Veterans Affairs and Vocational Rehabilitation and explained he could work with the Educational Opportunity Center (also a WFC partner) to explore additional educational opportunities. To solve Tyrell's immediate need of finding

employment, the Veterans Representative referred Tyrell to a local employer who was in need of a mechanic.

### The Outcome

Tyrell connected with the employer and was hired as a mechanic within a month of his first visit to the WFC. Three months later, WFC staff followed up with both Tyrell and the employer—he is still working and has received a pay raise. The employer reports Tyrell is one of his best employees and he would happily hire more Veterans in the future.

## Kurt's Success Story

Kurt, a US Air Force Veteran and 50-year-old single father of three, worked as an aviation manager for nearly five years, earning \$49 per hour. After being laid off and finding it impossible to support his family on weekly unemployment benefits, Kurt sought assistance from the Wichita Workforce Center. Despite not having a college degree, the Workforce Center helped Kurt highlight his technical and management experience on his résumé, making him marketable to employers. After an intensive job search with his case manager, Kurt obtained employment in the Technical, Engineering, and Computer division of a local company, earning \$40 per hour.





"I'm a big believer in Job Clubs. It really is people helping people to get jobs."  
-Larry Lanning

### Larry Lanning's Success Story



Larry Lanning, a 20-year Army veteran, had been out of work for eight months when he discovered the Floyd County Job Club through his local OET office.

At first he was skeptical, Larry, 61, said, but he soon realized that it was a place where he could meet other people who were in the same situation, and a place where members and staff were pulling for everyone to succeed. "I didn't feel like I was in it all by myself anymore. I felt like I had people to go to bat for me," Larry said. Other big benefits of attending a Job Club are getting leads on unadvertised jobs (the "hidden job market") and building strong networking contacts. Through getting to know OET staff at the Floyd County Job Club, Larry found out about a vacant disabled veterans' representative position with OET, a job he ultimately landed and continues to work in and enjoy. Reva Kidd, one of the Big Sandy Area Community Action Program (BSACAP) career advisors who worked with Larry at the Floyd County Job Club, said he always took full advantage of all the resources Job Club provides. "He was very dedicated to finding employment," Reva said. Larry often recommends Job Clubs of Eastern Kentucky to other job seekers, including the veterans he serves. "I'm a big believer in Job Clubs," Larry said. "It really is people helping people to get jobs."

### Victoria Boston's Success Story



Victoria Boston of Barbourville is one of about 3,000 Kentuckians who Kentucky Teleworks has helped enter the work-from-home job market. Before learning about Kentucky Teleworks upon visiting the Kentucky Communities Economic Opportunity Council (KCEOC) Community

Action Partnership, Victoria had applied for every job she could think of in the Barbourville area without any results. Once Victoria signed up with Kentucky Teleworks, Bonnie Cain, a KCEOC career advisor, helped Victoria get her résumé in shape and find the right job for her.

Because she had experience working in a call center in Victoria and liked helping people, the right fit proved to be a job with a company called VIP Desk. Using her computer in her home, Victoria helps people with questions about EBT cards for JP Morgan Chase Bank.

"When I used to think about working online I thought it was just scams," Victoria said, adding that Kentucky Teleworks helped her find safe, legitimate employment. Kentucky Teleworks researches and evaluates all companies and telework jobs before adding them to its online jobs directory. This eliminates scams and produces a focused list of solid jobs with proven, reputable companies.

Victoria said she tells her friends who are looking for work to try Kentucky Teleworks. "Whenever I tell someone about it they say 'Hey, I want a job working from home, too,'" she said.



“The workforce commission was very helpful to me. They will help anyone seeking employment find the job best suited for them based on their skills and prior experiences.”  
–Kristin P.

## A Better Bottom Line: Employing People with Disabilities

For over two decades he was a medical professional, at the top of his field of Pharmacy. Employed by one of the most successful network of neighborhood pharmacies, his career seemed secure. However, the last several years have proven to be overwhelmingly difficult.

He began losing strength, dexterity, mobility, and stamina to stand up to the daily tasks of a professional Pharmacist. Doctors diagnosed him with “Distal Muscular Dystrophy,” a neuromuscular, progressive ailment that inexorably deteriorated his physical strength and ability to do the manual tasks of his profession. His job was at risk.

Like millions of other American workers, he faced long-term disability and unemployment, a “double-whammy” to his well-being, and to our national economy. His Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor learned of Louisiana’s new Second Injury Fund program that utilizes a small percentage of the money collected from private insurance carriers for worker’s compensation recipients who wish to return-to-work, or continue working after a disabling condition or injury. Because of his medical diagnosis, the pharmacist qualified for assistance under the Vocational Rehabilitation program administered by Louisiana Rehabilitation Services, through Louisiana Workforce Commission. He also met the criterion for the Second Injury Fund program.

He met with his counselor and a Rehabilitation Technology Specialist to evaluate the essential functions of his work at his job-site. The observations led to recommendations to help him perform his tasks, as well as access the office lavatory without need for assistance. The recommendations were: 1) voice recognition software on his existing computer; 2) a front-loading scanner (to relieve his laborious paper-handling tasks); 3) ergonomic arm-rests for each arm ( a “zero-gravity”

support that rotates in all directions); 4) an anti-fatigue mat to reduce stress on his limbs and back; 5) an adaptive writing aid (to allow computer filing of scripted notes and other written documentation); and 6) an ADA modification to the store’s lavatory (allowing him to open the door without effort or assistance). The hardware costs of this job-accommodation plan were less than \$1,000. Overall the costs were approximately \$2,000.

The employee continues to work, now more efficiently than in recent years, and commands a professional salary, instead of a Social Security Disability Income (SSDI). The business community also observed the modifications as “best-practice,” following the principals of “Universal Design.” Corporate management of the pharmacy chain of stores was so impressed that they indicated that they will make the accommodations available in other stores throughout the United States.

## LEAP Program in Rapides Parish: Kristin P.’s Success Story

*The following testimonial reflects the feelings of many clients of the LEAP Program in Rapides Parish.*

“Hello, my name is Kristin P. I am 32 years old and I have no children as yet. I am a 1998 graduate of Bolton High School in Alexandria, Louisiana. I attended LSUA in the nursing curriculum after high school. I maintained a full-time job while attending LSUA and was able to pay my tuition without grants or other support. However, my grade point average was not high enough to gain acceptance into the clinical area of the nursing program at LSUA. I started Louisiana Technical College in the LPN curriculum and finished in July 2007. I was drawing unemployment when I applied for food stamps and had to take a two week class with Louisiana Job Employment

and Training (LaJET) Program to be eligible. My teacher, Ms. Lavern, was absolutely wonderful working with the students and very knowledgeable about creating my résumé on laworks.net.

I learned that employers look at this website and call in prospective employees based on their résumé. I received many phone calls from employers who persistently checked the website after I created my résumé. I gained employment at Pinecrest and am very happy with my future with the State of Louisiana. Before this class and before I posted my résumé online, I was having difficulty finding a job.

I am very grateful for taking this class and for the help I received from Ms. Lavern. I strongly suggest that people who are seeking employment should go to the Workforce Commission and post their résumé online at laworks.net. The Workforce Commission was very helpful to me. They will help anyone seeking employment find the job best suited for them based on their skills and prior experiences.”

### Region 1 (New Orleans): Success Story

A 27-year-old female visited our St. James Business and Career Solutions Center to seek financial assistance for a training program. The young lady was a single parent of two, receiving public assistance, and looking for a better opportunity for her family. She enrolled in the Industrial Instrumentation of Technology Program at South Central Louisiana Technical College in Reserve. The member is very grateful for the staff assistance provided with the WIA funding. The member has since then obtained her Associate of Applied Science in Industrial Instrumentation Technology. She is currently employed with Turner Industries in Norco, earning wages of \$12.50 per hour with fringe benefits.

### Region 3 (Houma): Kimberly Naquin's Success Story

Among the 31 customers achieving success through the Louisiana WIA (LWIA) is Kimberly Naquin, a 27-year-old divorcee with two small children who successfully completed a GED program. She worked in the Terrebonne Career Solutions Center as a General Office Clerk under the Work Experience Program to learn new skills. During her participation, her work time was scheduled so that she could attend classes at the Bayou Cane Adult Education center to complete GED requirements. She did successfully complete the GED program.

Another success story concerns Wayne Kelly who reported to the Terrebonne Career Solutions Center for services as Gold Card member for serving in the U.S. Army. Mr. Kelly was a participant in our mentoring program which gave him the skills and insight to secure a job with T3 Energy as a Manufacturing Specialist. He is currently studying to take the Law Enforcement exam so that he can become a police officer. He remains a member of our mentoring program to receive the guidance and motivation to achieve his goal.

### Region 4 (Lafayette): Charles Collins' Success Story

#### Employers Go from Job Vacancies to Hires within One Day

Mr. Charles Collins submitted an application for work at the Business & Career Solutions Center in Opelousas, Louisiana, on December 5, 2011. Throughout the past few years, Mr. Collins experienced personal challenges and was living at the Lighthouse Mission in Opelousas. Due to continuous use of drugs, Mr. Collins lost his wife, child, and family. He was spiraling down with no hopes of a future or ever seeing his family again. Mr. Collins (Charlie) began to contemplate his life, now living under a bridge, he knew this was not God's intentions for him. Charlie reached out for help from the Lighthouse Mission in Opelousas. Staff welcomed him with open arms; there he received counseling and encouragement. He was then referred to the LWIA 40 Business & Career Solutions Center—Acadiana Works Inc., which initially provided

valuable work experience activities, including mentoring, to give Charlie the opportunity for successful employment. Staff assisted him in finding initial employment with the private sector as a laborer for Air Exchange in Opelousas. Positive feedback was received from the employer regarding Charlie's conduct, work ethic, and positive attitude. Staff also assisted him in obtaining additional training regarding non-destructive testing. Soon after completion of training, Charlie received another job offer from Accurate to work as a Non-destructive Trainee, checking wells regarding pipes. Currently, he is working near San Antonio, Texas making \$13.50 an hour and receiving an \$850 per week living stipend. He has since purchased a vehicle for the first time in many years and is accumulating savings. Recently, he has reconnected with family members that he had not communicated with in several years.

### Region 6 (Alexandria): Aaron Weisman's Success Story

*"The WIA Program was very helpful because I had no other assistance for my schooling."*

Aaron Weisman, a resident of Beauregard Parish, was enrolled at Northwestern State University (NSU) in Natchitoches, LA, majoring in Industrial Engineering. Aaron had attended a private school that was not accredited in the state of Louisiana. Therefore, he did not qualify for any scholarships or Pell Grants. He took out student loans to pay for schooling. After being in school for a year, his sister informed him about the services available at the Beauregard Business and Career Solutions Center.

In November 2009, Carla Esters, Employment Consultant, completed paperwork required Aaron to enter the WIA Program. He completed all assessments required including: the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) and WorkKeys®. He scored high in all areas of the TABE test and received a Gold certificate for WorkKeys. Aaron was approved for training assistance with tuition, books, and supportive services in January 2010.

Aaron graduated from NSU on December 16, 2011, with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Industrial Engineering. He came back into the center for assistance with his job search and completed job applications. Aaron applied at Gilchrist Construction, where in the application process he had to take WorkKeys again. He was assessed at the Rapides Business & Career Solutions Center by DeAnna Land, and his score increased in Applied Mathematics to a seven, which is the highest level, while still maintaining the Gold certificate level. On July 12, 2012, Aaron began to work for Gilchrist as a Project Coordinator/Production Engineer, making \$19.70 an hour with health benefits. After a year of employment, he will be offered a 401K, life, and disability insurance. Aaron states that "the WIA Program was very helpful because I had no other assistance for my schooling." He is also very appreciative of the one-on-one assistance provided by Ms. Esters. He feels that having to take WorkKeys during the WIA enrollment process helped to prepare him for the assessment he had to take to obtain employment at Gilchrist. He credits the WIA Program and the Business & Career Solutions Centers for providing the assistance necessary to enable him to finish his college education and obtain self-sufficient employment.

### Region 7 (Shreveport): Thomas Tyler's Success Story

*"The WIA Program helped me put the pieces of my life back into place and add stability to my future."*

*"I wanted to take the time to say thank you and to explain how the WIA Program has impacted my life. First off, I wanted to thank you personally for being there anytime I had a question and making the process simple. You kept me informed of changes as well as being there if I just needed to talk, which made me feel as though you were by my side through the entire process. Secondly, the WIA Program helped me put the pieces of my life back into place and add stability to my future."*

*I worked in the automotive industry most of my life through many ups and downs. I watched the decline of many jobs and seen families torn apart over the uncertain future that was ahead of us all. After nine years, the day*

came when the plant closed and nobody knew what to do. I knew at that moment I needed a way out of the unstable lifestyle I found myself in, but did not know how. I heard through gossip among friends about programs available to us to retrain us into new career fields and decided to look into it. Within a week, I spoke to you, enrolled at Southern University, and never looked back.

The WIA Program was a blessing sent to me when I needed it most and in many ways gave me the push I needed to succeed. The program helped with the financial burden and allowed me to focus on my goal, but the help didn't stop there. There is an extra element in the program no one ever mentioned I feel has helped more than anything, I call it 'For the Good of the Program.' What I mean by this is, for all the people, time, money, and efforts it took to develop WIA and for it to continue to help others, the program needs success. Therefore, I was determined to succeed. After completing my nursing degree I now work for Willis Knighton Health Systems as a Registered Nurse with better pay, better benefits, and a secure future.

Without the WIA Program, I could have never gone back to school to better my life for myself and my family and I wanted to thank you!

Thanks for everything"  
Thomas C. Tyler, RN



## NEW HAMPSHIRE

### Therma Jean Cossette's Success Story



"I had the full support of my family and knew that PHR Certification would set me on the right course."

A new home meant a new start and a new career. Therma Jean Cossette knew that, without certification in her chosen field, career advancement would be impossible. The WIA helped her obtain the certification she needed and the career path she wanted to pursue. The move from Denver, Colorado to rural New Hampshire was a big change in Therma Jean Cossette's life. So, too was a new marriage. And in addition to the personal changes, Therma Jean had to explore an entirely different job market, with far fewer opportunities than an urban center offers.

"I had enjoyed my experiences in some large work environments such as Wal-Mart, and also in a rehabilitation facility, but my husband and I realized that I would need some specialized credentials in order to have an advantage in the smaller job market of New Hampshire," says Therma Jean. "We both agreed that I should try and obtain my PHR Certification." PHR is a nationally-recognized certification, awarded by the Human Resource Certification Institute (HR Certification Institute), recognizing individuals who possess the theoretical knowledge and practical experience in human resource management necessary to pass a rigorous examination demonstrating a mastery of the body of knowledge in the field.

Therma Jean visited a NH Works Career Center in Conway and met with an employment counselor, who introduced her to WIA Counselor Richard Fieldsen. Richard determined that Therma Jean qualified for a WIA Individual Training Account (ITA). Southern NH University

offered an accelerated PHR course, and Therma Jean was on her way. Still, with a three-year-old at home and a 90-minute commute to school, and homework each night, the challenges were evident. “I had the full support of my family and knew that PHR Certification would set me on the right course,” said Therma Jean. Therma Jean’s “right course” turned out not far from her new home in Tuftonboro. GI Plastek Wolfeboro is a well-established manufacturer of custom foam molding, with 110 employees. When Therma Jean saw that there was an opening for a Human Resources Manager, she put her interview talents and her PHR Certification to work. She was hired in April 2012 and loves her new job, which she describes as “Chief Happiness Officer.” Therma Jean is grateful for the NH Works system—the people who helped her, the opportunities offered for training, and the confidence she gained by obtaining a nationally recognized certification.

### Determination to Work Opens Door for OJT: Kathleen Fowler’s Success Story



*Kathleen Fowler would drive through snowstorms looking for work. Never quitting, always looking for the chance to prove herself to an employer. With the OJT program, she did just that.*

Kathleen Fowler remembers driving through the snowstorms to apply for a job. From Newburyport, Massachusetts, to Portsmouth, New Hampshire, Kathleen would go anywhere for work. For two years of the recession, she looked in vain. On the day her unemployment benefits were to expire, she visited her NH Works Career Center again to check the daily postings for any job opening that might meet her skill set.

Fran Bishop, Kathleen’s WIA Counselor, knew that Kathleen had some experience years ago in soldering and had completed a skills assessment with Kathleen. “She had indicated that she really enjoyed a soldering job she had eight years ago and that she liked working with tools,” said Bishop, who added that Kathleen would regularly check the electronic Job Match System for any job orders.

Luckily, Mike McGreevy of Agility Manufacturing in Dover was an employer long active in the NH Works system and a supporter of training programs for both new and incumbent workers. “I am always looking at the NH Works Job Match System, and I regularly place job openings on it,” says McGreevy, whose company manufactures printed circuit boards. “Kathleen saw our job listing and contacted us right away.”

McGreevy knew Kathleen had appropriate skills after a soldering test and realized that updating the skills and training would help Kathleen become a quality employee. An OJT contract was developed and Kathleen Fowler reentered the workforce with a growing company and a promising future.

### OJT Meant “Out from Ground Zero:” Michael Luksza’s Success Story



*The economic recession introduced thousands of New Hampshire residents to a new reality: fewer opportunities in their chosen field. Without the ability to adapt and learn new skills, dislocated workers can get left behind, and many will be unable to ever enter the workforce again.*

For Michael Luksza, laid off from a career in packaging engineering, that new reality was becoming clearer each time he received his unemployment check. “Basically, I was at Ground Zero and knew I needed a new career at 55 years old.”

Jean Donzello, a WIA counselor at Luksza’s local NH Works Career Center, worked with Luksza on how to transfer his skills developed at his former job into new pathways. With extensive experience in reading and understanding specifications and graphics, Donzello wanted Luksza to be able to demonstrate those skills in a different environment.

Gary Shirk owns Bovie Screen Process Printing, Inc., in Bow, New Hampshire. The well-known and established manufacturer of specialty printing and products in electronics, medical

manufacturing, retail and marketing displays, and government and education was experiencing its own challenges during the recession, which Shirk describes as “the equal opportunity disaster.”

Shirk has been a strong supporter of two NH Works programs that are often combined by employers. Return to Work, administered by NH Employment Security (a NH Works agency partner), allows prospective employers and unemployed job seekers to “test each other out” by allowing the job seeker to work up to 24 hours per week for an employer while still receiving unemployment compensation. Luksza began as a Return to Work tryout, and Shirk saw his capabilities and was happy to continue the training through OJT.

Shirk has used both training programs several times, and says, “These programs demonstrate a way for Bovie to hire and train great employees from the pool of many talented and qualified people who happen to be unemployed through no fault of their own.”

### OJT Helped Carol Learn New Skills and Get Back to Work: Carol Nyberg’s Success Story



*Carol Nyberg of Manchester worked for twenty years in the electronics industry. With a husband and three children (and two grandkids), she helped support her family until being laid off.*

Being laid off after working steady jobs for 20 years was a scary scenario for Carol Nyberg.

The missing paycheck created lots of challenges, and although her unemployment insurance helped a bit, Carol knew time was running out for benefits, and jobs were still few and far between for someone with her skills. Working with WIA counselors at her local NH Works Career Center, Carol was aggressive in her job search and was willing to train for any new skills to improve her job prospects.

At the same time, Electropac President Raymond Boissonneau, and Operations Manager Paul LaLiberte, were very aware of the resources of partnership of agencies in the NH Works system, and when they

needed to expand the workforce of the company, they didn’t hesitate to contact their employer service representative from NH Works for assistance.

“The programs such as On-The-Job Training and Return to Work have allowed us to explore new candidates for a number of positions over the years, and we appreciate the quick and coordinated service NH Works offers to us,” says LaLiberte.

Because of her familiarity with printed circuit boards, Carol became a prospective OJT recruit. “But I knew I needed new skills, particularly how to operate a punch machine, as well as learning automatic optical inspection machinery,” says Carol.

Electropac accepted Carol into an OJT position with the company following a thorough review of her current skills and what would be required in order for her to become a useful employee. Still completing her training, Carol is both relieved to be working again and excited about learning a new skill set in her chosen field. And, Electropac’s LaLiberte says he’ll continue to utilize the services offered by NH Works as the company continues to grow.





## NEW JERSEY

“The NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development was there to help me attain my career; I just hope I can return the favor.”

–William White

### William White's Success Story



*Talascend is a global recruiting company, specializing in engineering jobs, construction jobs, manufacturing jobs, and healthcare jobs.*

“When I left the Army after eight years I expected to be able to pick up a job quite easily. Two years into my job hunt I fell into, what I call ‘employment depression.’ I then decided to attend every job fair I could find. The very first one that I heard about was the Veterans Job Fair aboard the Battleship New Jersey. Luckily for me I met this great staffing firm while I was there, and now I have a position as a recruiter at Talascend. I have made it my personal ambition to find jobs for as many people as I can. The NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development was there to help me attain my career; I just hope I can return the favor.”

### Richardson's Success Story



*Laborer's Local 55 is one of the nation's first local unions dedicated exclusively to residential construction and energy efficiency retrofitting.*

“I heard about the pre-apprenticeship training program with the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice from a friend. The 10-week course was excellent and exposed me to the various trades. The course also prepared me to take the test, which I did pass, to register for an apprenticeship. As a result of the skills and knowledge I acquired through that pre-apprenticeship program, I became a business agent for Laborers Local 108. Subsequently, I was appointed president

of Laborers Local 55, which is based in Newark but has statewide jurisdiction. I also serve on the Central Planning Board in Newark, where I help to set the agenda for development in the city.”

### Charlene M. Smith's Success Story



“After sending out more than 150 résumés with little to no success, I joined the Dover Jersey Job Club in April 2012. I arrived there with a big chip on my shoulders because I thought that I was doing my best to get a job. However, I quickly learned many tips to tweak my résumé that

helped to build my confidence, which in turn helped me to move up in the selection process in jobs I applied for. I knew that I was in the right place after I found out that I was beat out for two of the jobs for which I applied by other Jersey Job Club participants. Even though there are many members of the Dover Jersey Job Club, I often felt like I was the only one there because of the time that the leader, Elena Collins, spent assisting me. Using the skills and tips that I learned at the Job Club, I am happy to report that I will be starting my new position in just a few short weeks.”



“Now, when I approach an employer, I have the skills, something to offer. I learned that finding a job is not just about chasing a paycheck, but building relationships.”

–Aaron

### DVOP Provides Assistance to Disabled Veteran: Martin’s Success Story

In 2006, Martin was a sophomore attending the University of Texas when his cousin was killed in Afghanistan. The day after the funeral, Martin joined the U.S. Army.

In 2011, Martin was medically discharged after being injured. He moved to Parma, Ohio, and was having difficulty paying his monthly bills. He soon fell behind on his mortgage, car, and utility payments.

As a disabled veteran, Martin was referred to Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) Joshua Collins at the Employment Connection, Cuyahoga County’s One-Stop (Area 3). Collins quickly connected Martin to partner veterans’ organizations, and they were able to provide him with \$1,000 in assistance for his delinquent bills.

Collins also worked closely with Martin to tailor his résumé for his job search. Within weeks, Martin had a job with the Red Cross for an executive assistant position at a starting pay rate of \$18 an hour.

### Ex-offender Reenters the Workforce: Jay’s Success Story

In November 2011, after serving 14 years for armed robbery, Army veteran Jay was released from prison. He met with DVOP Patrick Grames at The Source One-Stop in Lucas County (Area 9) for case management services and employment assistance. During his assessment, other barriers were identified such as homelessness and a lack of computer and job skills. A family member stepped in and provided him with housing.

Determined to improve his chances of successfully reentering the workforce, Nobles frequently used the One-Stop’s job search and employee-related services. Upon Grames’ suggestion, Nobles attended a job fair for the newly built Hollywood Casino that was opening in Toledo. He did not expect to be hired because he was an ex-offender. However, to his surprise, he received an email from the casino’s human resources department requesting additional information to perform a background check. Nobles submitted the additional information and was soon contacted by the company to schedule a drug screen. Three weeks later, Hollywood Casino called him and offered him a job as a custodial worker making \$10 an hour with benefits and overtime.

### Ex-offender Gains Confidence to Build His Career: Aaron’s Success Story

Aaron was released from prison in 2008. He moved to Columbus and immediately heard about the Central Ohio Workforce Investment Corporation (COWIC), Franklin County’s One-Stop. “I made that place my office because I didn’t want to sit wallowing in my position as an ex-offender,” he said. At COWIC (Area 11), Aaron learned to research jobs and submit applications online. He took the work readiness workshops to improve his computer skills and develop a résumé. However, because of his prison record, he could only find temporary work.

After being laid off from a temporary landscaping job, Aaron came back to COWIC to continue his job search. This time, he learned of the Sherwin-Williams Homework Painting Program, which includes classroom and work readiness training, hands-on instruction, and Environmental Protection Agency certification in lead paint removal.

Aaron met with COWIC's employment relations team and was accepted to the program, which he completed. Aaron says since then he has shifted from just looking for a job to building a career.

Through the program, Aaron gained the knowledge and confidence to begin his career. Now he has a full-time position with benefits at a local construction/home building company. He has also moved his family out of a hotel and into permanent housing.

"Now, when I approach an employer, I have the skills, something to offer," Aaron said. "I learned that finding a job is not just about chasing a paycheck, but building relationships."

### Tonya Finds the Strength to Endure: Tonya's Success Story

Tonya was ready to complete her final year in the nursing program at Kent State University when her husband was unexpectedly injured and became unable to return to work. Tonya was worried because she did not know how she would pay for her last year of school. She turned to The Employment Source (Area 6 – Stark County), and they provided her with a WIA scholarship.

Tonya was progressing nicely and had just entered her last semester of school when another tragedy struck. Her son sustained a head injury and suddenly died. Somehow she found the strength to persevere, complete her coursework, and receive her bachelor's degree.

Tonya's misfortunes and suffering would be enough for most people, but Tonya had one more test that she had to endure. After the death of her son, she had difficulty passing the National Council Licensure Examination for her nursing license. She took it three times and failed each time. WIA staff recommended and paid for individual tutoring. The tutoring worked. She passed her exam and was hired as an RN at Mercy Medical Center making \$25.25 per hour.

The WIA training has opened up many job opportunities for Tonya. She soon will begin a new position as a supervisor floor nurse at Shady Lawn in Dalton, Ohio.

### Single Mother Credits Program with Her Success: Chanelle's Success Story

"I feel better about myself. I finally finished something."

Twenty-five year old Chanelle had her first child at age 17. By the time she came to COWIC (Area 11 – Franklin County), she had three children ages eight, five, and three. Chanelle had been accepted into a nursing educational program and had federal loans, but the loans did not cover all her schooling expenses. Just days before her program was to start, she made the decision to ask COWIC for assistance.

COWIC provided Chanelle with an Individual Training Account (ITA) to complete the Columbus Practical School of Nursing's one-year program.

As a single mother, it was not always easy for Chanelle to attend school full time, five days a week, while working part time to make ends meet. She credits her job counselor and the services at COWIC for helping her to reach her goal.

"I feel better about myself," she says. "I finally finished something. I tried to do nursing school before, but I didn't have the focus or funds to keep it going. Without COWIC's help, I would have had to wait to start school."

With COWIC's assistance, Chanelle completed her program, took her exams, and was hired at A1 Nursing. She makes \$22 to \$27 per hour, is off public assistance, and is working toward her registered nursing degree at Hondros College.





## OKLAHOMA

*Every year thousands of Oklahomans are impacted positively by WIA programs. Below is a collection of success stories as told by those who experienced the benefits first-hand.*

### Central: Kendra Allen's Success Story



Kendra Allen started thinking about her future early. She wanted to obtain a college degree and get a job with benefits. In 2006 Kendra, while working part time for a law-firm in Guthrie, started attending Langston University majoring in Organization Management, with an option in

Supply Chain Management. Realizing that her income from her part-time job was not enough to cover her living expenses and college tuition, Kendra needed to look for additional funding sources. In 2009 Kendra heard about the WIA Program, and how if she was eligible through the program she could receive assistance with her tuition. Kendra then visited the Workforce office in Guthrie and met with a career coach who gave her information about the WIA Adult Program. Based on her situation, she was eligible and was enrolled in the program. It was an awesome feeling knowing that her dreams were on their way to becoming reality.

During her junior year at Langston University, Kendra applied for the Tinker Internship Program and was accepted. There at Tinker Air Force Base, Kendra began working in various positions as part of her Internship. Attending Langston full time and working as an intern at Tinker would soon show its rewards. On May 13, 2011, Kendra graduated from Langston University with a 3.469 GPA, Magna Cum Laude, and received her Bachelors of Science Degree in Business Administration. Very soon after, in June 2011 she was hired permanently as a Logistic Management Specialist.

Kendra gives a heartfelt thanks to the Guthrie Workforce adult staff for their support and guidance in helping make the pieces fit and a dream come true.

### Southwest: Success Story



"I am a 36-year-old wife and mother with two children in the home that decided to return to school for a Bachelors in Nursing about four years ago. I was working one to two minimum wage jobs as much as I was able. Before my endeavors began I only had my GED. For the time I was in

school I generally only had one vehicle to work with and we moved once a year. The two years of general education were not too demanding and I was still able to work. My husband and I had agreed that both of us working and sending the kids to daycare was not an option. Not only was it expensive but we felt the children deserved to spend more time with parents than people that they didn't know. When I started the nursing program at Southwestern Oklahoma State University I quickly realized that I would no longer be able to work as much; my hours were scattered, and I was doing clinicals all over Western Oklahoma and Oklahoma City. This also meant that my expenses would increase. I was running out of options. My choices was clear—either another job was in order, my hubby had to work, which increased costs for daycare, or take out more loans to be able to pay the bills. I took out the extra loans. Then the summer before my senior year I found out about WIA. They helped so much by paying for my tuition and helping with some of my gas expenses to school and clinicals.

This enabled me to put aside more money from my loans to help with expenses with books and the new electronic appliances like laptops and iPods for nursing school. It really helped a lot because I no longer had to come up with this money myself. And to save the best for last, we worked together to leave enough money aside to pay for my National Council Licensure Exam, which alone was almost \$400. Without paying to take this test I would not be able to get my license and go to work."

## Greg Miller's Success Story



"Nothing worth fighting for is easy and I now have an overwhelming feeling of joy and accomplishment."

Prior to his new profession, Greg was 35 years old, unemployed for over a year, and married with a 10-year-old daughter. He came into the Workforce office in Ada, Oklahoma, looking for training. His wife has been unable to work due to sickness and injury.

Greg's unemployment benefits were not enough to sustain his family. Making every effort not to lose everything including his house and cars, Greg took out loans, got help from his church, and cut every corner just to get by. He needed to go to school for a short time to get skills that would allow his family to not only survive but thrive.

Since the age of 19 Greg had the idea that he might like to become a professional truck driver. The high cost of school and having to go over the road was the only negative to entering the profession. He obtained his CDL permit before coming into the Workforce office. He was prepared to do whatever it took to have a better life, no matter what it took to get there.

At his meeting with the WIA counselor, they discussed schools and alternatives in training. Due to the high number of jobs and short training period, Greg decided it was time to sacrifice and go over the road to provide for his family. He was evaluated, granted the WIA scholarship and was in school a couple of weeks later. Greg graduated from the Arbuckle Truck Driving School's professional truck driving school at the top of his class. He went to work locally for a couple of months but decided to go over the road to make a larger salary. His long term goal is to be an owner operator and have his own business.

"With my new career I am working my way out of debt. We saved our house and bought a new car. I am able to pay my bills and have extra money for our future. Nothing worth fighting for is easy and I now have an overwhelming feeling of joy and accomplishment," says Greg.

## North Central: Matthew Glover's Success Story



Thirty-year-old Matthew Glover has a background and education in horticulture. He and his wife moved to Oklahoma two years ago to attend a graduate program at OSU. They were buying a house and had two vehicle payments when Matthew was laid off from his job at a sales and rental company. When filing for unemployment, he was directed to the Stillwater Workforce Oklahoma Office and the WIA Program.

Matthew was connected with Community Development Support Association WIA Title I career counselor Connie Brazee. Connie secured an OJT contract for Matthew at Kirtz Shutters. The OJT service helped Matthew gain new occupational skills and provided the incentive the employer needed to hire him as half of training hour wages were reimbursable. After the successful completion of his OJT, Matthew was able to obtain unsubsidized employment using the new skills he gained.

Matthew would like to thank Workforce Oklahoma, his career counselor Connie Brazee, and Kirtz Shutters for helping him through this experience. He is now gainfully employed and able to provide for his family. Having a good job with stable income helps him focus on more important family issues.

## Eastern: Crystal Brown's Success Story



Crystal Brown, a 30-year-old, single mother of three, was laid off from Fanelli Bros Trucking Company after working there for seven years as the Office Manager. In March 2009, after 30 years of business in Muskogee, Oklahoma, they closed the Oklahoma Terminal. Crystal had a high school

diploma and a certificate of completion from ICTC for Microsoft Office. Her father had just given her and her children his house to live in. She was in the middle of remodeling that house when she lost her job.

Crystal went into the Muskogee Workforce Center to follow up on her unemployment benefits when she was referred to a case manager. The case manager spoke to Crystal about going to college to earn a degree while unemployed. Crystal took advantage of that opportunity and opportunities afforded her through WIA and Workforce. She was able to receive assistance with clothing, counseling, job placement, and occupational training. She earned an Associate's Degree in Business Administration from Connors State College.

The most important thing she received from Workforce is the educational assistance. If it were not for that assistance she would not have been able to attend college. She would have kept looking for work to support her family. Being a single mother, she saw that as her only option. With the support from her case manager, Shari Belcher, she was encouraged all the time. Shari continued to call and check on Crystal. Shari cared about Crystal's success at school and her life with her children. Shari and Crystal became great friends.

Crystal's life has change dramatically. Through Workforce, Shari called Crystal to tell her about a job opening. Shari knew Crystal's unemployment benefits had just been exhausted. Shari made Crystal aware there was a job opening at the Eastern Workforce Investment Board (EWIB) for an Executive Assistant. She applied for the job and began work the following week. Now she works with people she considers to be the most kind, giving, good-hearted people in the world. Knowing Crystal only lacked two semesters when she began to work for the EWIB; her family, case manager, Shari, and her work

family at EWIB, helped her to get through it all. She graduated from Connors State College in May 2011 with her Associates in Business Administration. Crystal is still employed at the EWIB and she loves it! Crystal says, she would definitely not be where she is today without the program and all the wonderful people who pushed her along the way. She thanks everyone from the bottom of her heart!

## Lawrence Ramey's Success Story



Lawrence Ramey was injured at his last job, recovered and was released to return to work, but found himself unemployed. At 49, married and a father, he needed to support his family. He had lost good credit standing, the bills were getting higher, and he needed to do something.

He said, "I was lost for some time and scared to lose what we worked hard to get." He contacted Central Technology Center in Drumright and was connected with Renee Weil, Oklahoma Economic Development Authority WIA Title I Career Counselor, who helped him obtain tuition assistance for school.

Lawrence enrolled in the Truck Driving Program at Central Technology Center in Drumright for a four week training course that led to certification as a Class A CDL Truck Driver. Through the training he was able to obtain his certification and endorsements and in 30 days was reconnected to what he enjoyed about working.

Lawrence is now a truck driver for Hale's Trucking. "I didn't know how I was going to pay the price to go to school. Through the program I was able to obtain a good job only weeks after school. Bills are now caught up and we're in the market to buy a new home. Six months ago none of this was possible. A special thanks to my Career Counselor, Renee Weil, who helped me each step of the way and even today still calls to see how I am doing. Thanks again."





*Success Stories (State-wide activities/People Transformed by WIA)*

### First Certified Female Farrier in Puerto Rico



The Labor Development Local Area of Caguas/Guayama, tells the story of a 24-year-old woman from the Vega Ward in the municipality of Cayey, who since childhood has been associated with the breeding and care of pleasure horses as part of her family hobby. Her love and passion for

horses led her to become a horse tamer and breeder. As part of her occupation, she completed training and achieved a credential as a Veterinarian Technician.

As part of this training, she had the opportunity to study in the Equestrian Vocational School Agustín Mercado Reverón, where she obtained a credential as a blacksmith. She became the first Puerto Rican female to complete the certification in blacksmith, occupying the front pages of the Puerto Rico newspapers and interviewed in a few radio programs. This young woman broke all the stereotypes and prejudices to achieve a credential in a non-traditional occupation, being an example of success for Puerto Rican women.

### Adult Dreaming to Become Professional Farrier in Kentucky

The Caguas/Guayama Local Area delivered service to a 26-year-old male from the WIA Adult Program. He is a resident in La Lapa in Cayey, and since his childhood, has been dedicated to amateur blacksmith and horse care. He always had the dream to study how to become a blacksmith and get a certificate as a blacksmith. Through an Individual Training Account (ITA), he studied at the Equestrian Vocational School Agustín Mercado Reverón, taking training in

blacksmith where he achieved a credential as a blacksmith. But he continues dreaming of becoming a professional blacksmith, training in the Kentucky Horseshoeing School in Kentucky. This entrepreneur adult is close to making his dream come true, because he began his professional training in Kentucky in fall of 2012.

### Single Mom Testimony after Achieving a Credential with ITAs

“I want to thank the Caguas/Guayama Local Area for the opportunity given to me to become a professional through the participation in a training activity. This opportunity has been a wonderful experience, allowing me to prepare myself in the profession that I love, cardiovascular technician with vascular periphery (EDIC College Training Provider). When I received my grades I felt very proud, because with the help of God, the One Stop staff support, and with my own dedication and effort, I am a candidate for graduation, summa cum laude. In September 2012, I will begin my professional practice at the Ryder Hospital in Humacao. After finishing my practice I know I will be hired to offer a quality service, allowing me to cover the needs of my children. Thank you again for your trust in me.”

–Alexandra Torres Torres, Caguas, Puerto Rico

### Single Father Achieves the GED Credential through Literacy and Numeracy at the Manatí/Dorado Local Area

An adult participant of the Manatí/Dorado One-Stop Center was living in the United States with his wife and three daughters and had a stable job where earned an average salary despite not having a high school diploma. His marriage ended in divorce, and he assumed the full custody of his three daughters. Facing the situation of not

having who to take care of their daughters in United States, he decided to return to Puerto Rico. Arriving in Puerto Rico he faced difficulty finding a job because he had no high school diploma.

He visited the Manatí/Dorado One-Stop Center, was assessed, and was referred to receive the Literacy and Numeracy for Adults, which he completed with academic excellence. Currently, he works in his own workshop doing tin ware work and painting cars. He is currently evaluating and reviewing his Individual Employment Plan and will be recommended to receive an ITA to complete training in an occupation in demand, to complete the credential he required to enter employment according to his occupational goal.

### Former Woman Inmate Trains in Health Occupation in La Montaña: Local Area



Among the Montaña Local Area participants was a woman who was a former inmate. She visited the One-Stop Center and had the desire to complete secondary school. In February 2012, she graduated and obtained her high school diploma in an emotional ceremony. Her desire for self-improvement motivated her to continue developing her skills, and she decided to request the Computers with Conversational English pre-vocational training, which she also completed successfully. She is currently enrolled in D'Mart Institute in Corozal, studying to become a Medical Emergency Technician. She wants to become a professional and obtain a good job to be part of the group of Puerto Ricans who serve and work for the growth of Puerto Rico.



## SOUTH CAROLINA

### SC Works Cherokee: WIA Participant Success Story

James Taylor\* was referred to SC Works Cherokee by Miracle Hill Ministries (Harbor of Hope), a homeless shelter for men. He met his career consultant in the resource center while struggling to create a résumé, as well as trying to complete online job searches. James had battled addiction and a physical condition, which severely impacted his ability to work in the construction industry and consequently kept him out of a job for several years. He had an extensive criminal history, which unfortunately excluded him from job opportunities. James also had little-to-no experience using a computer and was very frustrated. Despite all of his frustrations, he persisted and was determined to achieve his goal of independence.

James was referred to Vocational Rehabilitation (Voc Rehab), a résumé workshop, and a WIA orientation for intensive services. He attended all appointments and began working with Pearl at Voc Rehab. He was subsequently evaluated for medical assistance with his physical limitations, and was assisted with physical therapy and knee supports through the Bryant Center.

James completed his résumé, continued to work on his computer skills, and was later enrolled in the Administrative Office Certificate program at a local college. WIA funds were utilized to assist James with continuing education pre-vocational services. He successfully completed this basic computer class and earned a certificate of completion in Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Business Grammar and Communication.

He completed WorkKeys classes through Voc Rehab and continued to meet with his career consultant for career counseling and assessments. James completed career assessments through "My Next Move" (careeronestop.com) and ResCare Academy. He gained self-confidence

and became more and more motivated with every accomplishment. As part of James' Individual Employment Plan, he began to research Labor Market Information to explore a career in truck driving, and he was WIA approved to attend the Truck Driving Institute (TDI) in Richburg, SC.

TDI was reluctant to accept James because of his criminal history. They were unsure of their ability to successfully assist him with job placement. James' career consultant, however, assured them that if James was allowed the opportunity to gain a credential, that he would be successful on his own. TDI accepted James with the stipulation that WIA would release them from the responsibility of guaranteed job placement. James successfully completed his CDL training and was hired by Carolina Cargo. He continues to work full time driving a truck. In little more than a year, James went from being homeless with no income, no marketable skills, a criminal history, and physical limitations to earning approximately \$500 per week, working full time and earning not one, but two credentials. Through the services and assistance of SC Works Cherokee, James has gained the confidence to achieve his goals and more importantly has a renewed relationship with his family.

*\*Participant's name has been changed.*

## SC Works Lexington: Michael Hine's Success Story

Michael Hines found himself unemployed and out of work in the technology field when the company he was working for moved much of their production overseas. The Computer Technician had spent more than 16 years in the industry but was now faced with re-employment uncertainty. Mr. Hines was determined to not be unemployed for a long period of time, working diligently at finding employment. Unfortunately, his best efforts hadn't yielded the success he was seeking. In the span of two years, Mr. Hines was unemployed for 18 months. Temporary employment and short-term contract positions provided some help, but Mr. Hines wanted to be back in permanent employment with benefits. During a visit to the SC Works Lexington Center, Mr. Hines learned about the WIA Program and the potential employment and training aid it could provide.

Mr. Hines enrolled in the WIA Program in 2011 and completed training in the professional technology field. He also found employment and started his new job as a Desktop Support Technician in August 2012. Mr. Hines plans to continue attending school while working in order to further enhance his skills. "I would like to say to anyone who is still unemployed: First, do not lose hope. Second, if you are able to, get into the classes made available by the [SC Works Lexington] Center. Third, if you do get into the WIA Program, make the most of it. There are many different areas of training available. There is a process to go through, but it is worth it in the long run. The benefits that will be afforded to you and your family will make it all worthwhile."

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## SOUTH DAKOTA

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### Amy's Success Story

Amy was enrolled as an adult on June 11, 2008. She started her training in the fall semester at Southeast Technical Institute in Cardiovascular Ultrasound Technology. After completing 18 months of school, Amy had to quit school due to the pending birth of her baby. While she was out of school for a year, Amy worked with WIA to increase her time management and study habit skills. Amy also continued to search for employment.

In 2011, Amy was ready to finish the program. Her hard work and assistance from WIA allowed her to start school again by assisting with tuition costs, support services for childcare, and uniforms for her clinicals. Amy graduated with her degree in Cardiovascular Ultrasound Technology and was hired at Sanford Health full time, starting at \$20.93 per hour.

### Bruce's Success Story

Bruce was a 49-year-old homeless, high school dropout when he moved from California to South Dakota in the early fall of 2010. His friends told him there were jobs available in South Dakota, and they provided him with a place to live.

Bruce met with a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and WIA representative in October 2010 and was referred to Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) classes to obtain his GED. Bruce faithfully walked every day to attend AEL classes. SNAP and WIA offered Rideline tickets to Bruce, but he insisted on walking. Bruce obtained his GED in April 2011. He also earned a Silver National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) while preparing for his GED.

After he received his GED and NCRC, local office staff called and visited with numerous employers to write OJT or Work Experience.

In the meantime, he faithfully attended Teknimedia to work on his computer skills. In July 2011, he started a temporary job at a local ethanol plant unloading freight cars. The temp agency said Bruce was a reliable worker at the ethanol plant, as well as on other spot jobs they gave him. They had no complaints and agreed to be a reference for him.

After the temporary position ended, Department of Labor and Regulation (DLR) staff assisted Bruce with applications and practice interviews. He was counseled on his appearance and ways to polish his interview skills to stand out from others. After a mock interview, Bruce was ready.

Lori, an Employment Specialist, called employers once again to line up OJT or Work Experience. Lori informed the employer how Bruce had faithfully attended AEL classes, walking every day in any kind of weather. He had been a loyal employee while working a temporary job and other spot jobs.

In February 2012, Bruce applied for an Operations Associate position at the Salvation Army, and was chosen for an interview. Local office staff followed up with an offer for OJT and an agreement was written in March. Bruce thrived at the OJT, and went above and beyond the position description. He received a Forklift Certification within the first month.

The OJT was successfully completed in May 2012, and Bruce is still happily employed there today. The employer is very pleased with his work.

## Jesse's Success Story



Jesse was enrolled in the WIA Adult Program on April 25, 2012, and received full services—core, intensive, and training. He is still an active participant. Jesse was a 21-year-old single parent and was underemployed, making \$9.75 an hour.

His main employment goal was to obtain full-time gainful employment as a welder to support himself and his daughter. Jesse was interested in welding after trying it in high school. He completed Key Train and Career InSite, and it seemed like welding would be a good fit for him.

Jesse was enrolled in the Welding Basics course at Regional Technical Education Center in Yankton, SD, where he was one of the top in his class. While attending the basics course Jesse applied at Kolberg Pioneer. He knew they would be a good company to work for, and they were looking for welders. Jesse knew they paid well, so he could fulfill his goal of supporting his family. After completing the Welding Basics course, Jesse enrolled in the American Welding Society (AWS) Certified Welding Course to earn an AWS Certification.

Jesse completed the AWS course on September 18, 2012. He recently gained full-time employment with Kolberg Pioneer, making \$15.36 an hour.

## TENNESSEE

### Cumberland County Career Center: Jason's Success Story

Jason felt secure in his job as a computer technician in Louisiana until the economy downturn impacted the business and he was laid off. He returned to Tennessee to be near family and to look for work. Jason was able to find work in Lebanon; however, he was laid off in January 2009. Then he began visiting the career center where he received assistance in preparing a résumé, job-search strategies, and skill assessments.

Jason was referred to the Tennessee Technology Center (TTC) to research enrollment in the Electronics Technology program. This program caters to those seeking careers in the fields of Industrial, Computer, and Telecommunication Electronics. With his prior work-related experience, this was a sound career choice. He enrolled at TTC in May 2010, and WIA assisted with monthly support-service payments for transportation, and his ITA helped with required tools and supplies. Jason's strong interest in this field was evident by his excellent grades and attendance. According to Instructor Stacy Johnson, "Jason strives to get all he can out of the program by completing extra tasks."

In September 2010, Jason joined the Student Leadership Council. He participated in Council activities including a blood drive, the Veterans Day Program, a coat drive, a canned-food collection, and an angel tree. Jason was among five nominated in October 2010 as Student of the Year.

In April 2011, 10 TTC students were selected to compete in the state SkillsUSA competitions (in Chattanooga). Jason and four others placed in the top 10 and received medals at the state level. In June, he competed at the national level in Kansas City and placed eighth in Electronics. He was also honored as the 2011 Summer Student of the Term.

Jason graduated in December 16, 2011, with three specialties: computer electronics, telecommunications, and industrial electronics. He is currently employed with Research Electronics in Cookeville as an Analyst and earns \$36,500 per year.



## VERMONT

### Middlebury and Burlington Offices: Success Stories

#### YP's Success Story

YP came to WIA with a criminal background after being in jail for two years. Assessment showed that there was a good chance that he could succeed with additional skills training. WIA paid for an advanced welding course which he completed with excellent grades. Only one week after his graduation, he secured employment as a full-time welder for C.C.S. Contractors at \$15.00 per hour. He called the WIA office to let us know he was working as a welder on the new Vermont Hotel in Burlington. Prior to this training he worked as a low-wage non-skilled laborer with minimal hope of job longevity or advancement. SH, a recently separated Veteran, was able to secure an entry level position with J.P. Morgan at \$12.00 per hour shortly after he graduated from the Community College of Vermont Business program using WIA adult funding.

#### Allen's Success Story

Allen L. comes from generational poverty and was referred through the Reach Up program. Having no high school diploma and a spotty work history, after a long case-managed and monitored job search process, in 2012 he was hired by the Burlington School district as a maintenance, cleaning person on the second shift starting at \$18.35 per hour. The school district will not only help him get his GED, they will help him get a full set of dentures that he desperately needs. This wage will allow him and his family of four children to become self-sufficient for the first time.

#### Amanda's Success Story

Amanda D. had three years of college education and a fairly good work history until substance abuse challenges took over her life and she lost custody of her child. After counseling and other available resources helped her deal with the substance abuse issues, she was able to get clean and sober then got her child back in April 2012, when she applied for Reach Up. We helped her develop a résumé and cover letter and offered lots of support, enabling her to get a job at Gardener's Supply, where she is making a good wage doing what she truly enjoys. This job will help Amanda and her child become self-sufficient.

#### St. Albans Office: Mark's Success Story

"I worked with Mark, a WIA participant, who was discharged from his position of seven years. He felt it was unjustified, but could not do anything about it. He was found eligible for unemployment insurance. He was making \$17.75 per hour and was a single father of two. He wanted help with getting his CDL Class A license and had a job offer from an employer to start right after his CDL training. The employer was going to utilize both his driving skills and his logistics coordinator/shipping/receiving skills. During the training the participant ran into some financial problems with medical bills and a car that kept breaking down. We were able to provide support services to allow him to continue with training. We paid for mileage reimbursement to ease the money situation. When the training ended he was ready to go to work, but the company found out that their insurance company would not insure him because he had two accidents in the last six months. Even though the accidents were found not to be his fault, the insurance company felt because he was not

experienced at CDL driving he would be a risk. He lost the job. He was very discouraged, but kept applying to various jobs. He had a few interviews and was very excited about one with the State Agency of Transportation (AOT) department that he saw listed in our office. He really wanted this job because it was only three miles from his home and had benefits which he really needed for his family. He got the job and was very excited and happy to be working for the State of Vermont. He was also very appreciative of all the help that WIA gave him and his family.”

### St. Johnsbury Office: Success Story

“A single mother is transitioned to my Reach Up caseload and proves to have good administrative skills. She also has a child with a significant health challenge, which has caused her to miss work in order to take him to Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center, some 50 miles away, at any given time of the day or night. Although she is the only one who can “authorize” the trip to the hospital, she does have reliable childcare most of the day. However, when called, she must leave work to decide whether the child is displaying sufficient distress to make the trip to the hospital for emergency care. Hence, she was not able to hold a job, was out of work, and on Reach Up with a 30-hour per week work requirement. Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL) Reach Up worked with her in Job Club, and as a case manager, helped her to more fully recognize the extent of her skills and strengths, improve her résumé, prepare for interviews, and to recognize more completely her abilities and determination. All of these steps increased her self-confidence over time. The VDOL Reach Up case manager placed her in a Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) work experience at a local youth services agency, which was willing to work around the absences due to the child’s medical issues, where she proved to be a significant asset. VDOL Reach Up staff then successfully negotiated an Individual Training Contract [(ITC) (similar to a WIA OJT using TANF funds)] with the same agency at \$13.00 per hour for this Mom who loves the work, the people, and the flexibility of a 20- to 24-hour work week, which allowed the closure of her TANF grant and the ability to flex her schedule when necessary.

She is now working there without any subsidy, as the ITC reimbursements have ended. On an exit interview questionnaire, both the employer and employee checked the “strongly agree” category in every exit interview question. “Strongly agree” is the most positive answer to the questions being asked to rate the program. At the bottom of the exit interview, the participant wrote:

“Thank you Marie! This program has greatly helped me, resulting in the perfect employment opportunity for me, with a great group of people.”

### Rutland Office: RS’s Success Story

RS, a disabled veteran who has been previously incarcerated, had some significant barriers to employment and had spent time using our core services. Jen, our local Vet’s rep, and I have helped with various tasks, including updating his résumé and getting the résumé to a company from a posting we found on Indeed.com. The company, Stellar Laser in Worcester, Vermont, was looking for technicians and paying \$18 an hour. They even paid his transport to go to the interview as well as relocation costs after they offered him job. Yay!!!!!! He shared with me, that if we hadn’t put that posting information available to him and others, he never would have known about the position. He is very grateful for the help we provided on his job search.

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### Richard's Success Story

Last January, Richard moved to Northern Virginia from Detroit, Michigan, hoping to find a better employment opportunity. He had been making less than \$12.00 an hour all his life. He was pleased with the Fairfax SkillSource Center–Alexandria and decided to take advantage of the WIA Program. He continued to conduct job search activities each day with the help of the One-Stop Center staff and took advantage of all employment activities. He interviewed at a company in Chantilly, Virginia, called A&A Transfer. He was offered a permanent position as an equipment technician making \$13.00 an hour with benefits and started July 23, 2012. Richard came by recently to let us know that he loves the new job, and his supervisor is very pleased with his performance.

### Mr. Zribi's Success Story

Mr. Zribi was employed at Nortel in Africa as a Quality Assurance Engineer from 1993 to 1996 when he lost his eye sight. He later owned/ managed “Early Bird Express” in Alexandria, and most recently worked as a “Mediation Intern” with Fairfax County. He holds three master’s degrees and had not been successful finding employment after his last position ended. Mr. Zribi attended the WIA Orientation and was enrolled in April 2011. He worked with the Social Security Administration’s Ticket to Work program to help secure employment. Through the collaboration of WIA and Ticket to Work, he received information about an OJT Program. A participating employer, American College of Commerce and Technology, expressed an interest in hiring him as a professor to teach Master’s Level online computer training, working directly as an assistant to the online teacher. He was hired as an “Academic Assistant” in the OJT program earning \$19.00 an hour and was provided assistive technology to perform his job requirements. He retained the position after the OJT contract ended and remains employed at American College of Commerce and Technology.

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## WYOMING

### Megan's Success Story

Megan was referred to the WIA Program through her advisor at Laramie County Community College (LCCC). At the time of service Megan was 24 years old, single, living on her own, and working as a veterinarian assistant, earning under the poverty guideline. Megan had completed all prerequisite course work to be accepted into the highly competitive LCCC Nursing Program. Understanding that continued employment would be difficult and strongly discouraged by the director of the nursing program, Megan sought additional funding to assist her through the two years of nursing school. Megan will work during the summer break, to earn savings to cover personal expenses, expected to occur during the fall semester at school. One of the factors that discourages employment during the fall and spring semesters, while a student is participating in the nursing program, is the amount of time spent in clinical experience outside the class room. Megan did not qualify for a PELL grant and would need to use her student loans and limited savings, from summer employment, to live during her two years of training. Megan was approved for both WIA intensive and training services.

During her two years in the nursing program Megan worked hard and earned a 3.64 cumulative GPA. Megan maintained communication with her case manager, Judy Carroll, at the Cheyenne Workforce Center on a regular basis and provided all required documentation as requested. Megan graduated from the nursing program at LCCC in December 2011 and received her license as an RN in February of 2012. Megan applied for employment at the local hospital in Cheyenne, Cheyenne Regional Medical Center, and was hired March 12, 2012, in their Nurse Residency Program with a starting salary of \$25 per hour. She is currently working full time at the hospital as an RN.

"Thank you, Donna for your help. It changed my life forever!"

—Dawn Noble

### Dawn's Success Story



Dawn came to the Gillette Workforce Center to inquire about funding for truck driver training in May 2011. She was hoping to receive training through Climb Wyoming, but they were not going to have another class until August, and she was hoping to be employed before then. Dawn

had 13 years of experience as a pizza delivery driver in long-term positions in Billings. She was the single parent of two children, ages six and one. After she moved to Gillette, she started delivering pizza again, but was not making much money, because there was not the volume of deliveries that she had in Billings. She said her boyfriend talked her into quitting because he said he was making plenty of money and she did not need to work; she could just stay home with the kids. Shortly after that, however, he left them, and she was left with no means of support. Dawn's tax refund enabled her to get into an apartment, but she needed to get to work as soon as possible. Her mother moved in with her to help with the kids, but she was not able to help financially.

Barriers that Dawn faced were financial difficulties: no savings and a lack of money to pay living and school expenses. Also, she lacked skills/credentials that would enable her to work at a self-supportive wage. Her assets included \$590 per month in child support, which would cover a good share of her \$675 monthly rent, a mother that would baby sit, an excellent work history with long term employment, and an excellent driving record.

Assessments indicated to Donna Gewecke, Dawn's Case Manager, that she was well-suited to truck driving as an occupation. Dawn liked to work with her hands and was very outdoorsy and physically capable. Also, Dawn had experience driving pick-ups and pulling

gooseneck trailers, had operated large farm tractors, and had 13 years of driving experience for pizza delivery.

Dawn attended Mt. West Commercial Driving School in Gillette on WIA Adult funding, from June 2, 2011, to July 8, 2011. She worked the following August for a local Gillette company driving semis, belly dumps, and water trucks, but was only making \$13 per hour, so she was still job hunting. She thought she had gotten a job lined up in Bismarck, North Dakota, so she moved there. The job did not materialize. She did, however, land a job in Grand Forks, North Dakota, for Transystems Inc., driving semi-trucks to haul sugar beets. She started September 10, 2011, at about 60 hours per week and making \$15.50 per hour. She worked throughout the winter and spring, had time off in May, June, and July, and returned to work in mid-August. She said this actually works quite well for her, since she has children. Dawn sent a photo on August 17, 2012, with this note, "This is me, Dawn Noble Bergquist. This is a set of doubles I hauled last year. Thank you, Donna for your help. It changed my life forever! Not only a career, but a husband, too: I married a fellow driver from Transystems Inc. I couldn't be happier!"

### Jesse's Success Story

Jesse is a 33-year-old married male who came into the Sheridan Workforce Center in October 2009. At that time, he was not employed on a regular basis: working part time as a substitute teacher and janitor at the Wyola Schools in Montana. He was searching for permanent employment or a career.

Jesse was home schooled and obtained his high school diploma. In May 2010 he completed one year of General Studies at Sheridan College. He was still unsure of a career choice at that time.

He did a lot of research and became interested in truck driving. His father, aunt, and uncle are all truck/bus drivers and he began to research a career as a CDL-A truck driver. Jesse checked with several local companies within the Sheridan area and also in North Dakota, South Dakota, and Alaska. He also contacted SAGE Technical Services

in Casper, Wyoming, to get details on CDL Training and the cost of the training. The results inspired him to push forward and find out how he could reach his goal. He became excited about the opportunities that were available, especially if he was willing to go "over the road." Jesse was willing to do whatever it took to succeed in his chosen career.

In August 2011, Jesse came to the Sheridan Workforce Center to see if he could obtain assistance with the training and financing. He was assisted by Workforce Specialist Penny Wondra as his Case Manager. Jesse went through the assessment process and was extremely diligent at getting the appropriate documents needed and completing the Kuder, and WorkKeys Assessments.

He was able to attend SAGE on October 25, 2011. WIA funding assisted Jesse with his tuition, fees, books, lodging, and fuel to get to Casper and back to Sheridan. While he was there, the director of the school called the Case Manager to praise Jesse's progress. She said he was one of the best students they have had. Jesse completed his training in November 2011. He received a certificate of Academic Excellence, a Certificate for Perfect Attendance, and his Tractor-Trailer Driver TTD 150 Certification. Upon completion of his CDL training, Jesse had a difficult time finding employment without experience. However, he was determined to find work.

In January 2011, Jesse was hired by Schlumberger. They were extremely happy with his interview and proceeded to send him to training with their trucks in Texas (all expenses paid). He is still currently working for Schlumberger, out of Casper, Wyoming. He is making a livable wage and is enjoying his career. The company has him running oil spool rigs. He says they are wonderful to work for and have given him good wages and self-worth, as he is now able to support his family.

## Jalen's Success Story

Jalen is separated from his wife and is taking care of their daughter and grandson. He was discharged from his job, due to a misunderstanding about his vacation.

Jalen stated that through his last job and previous, similar employment, he knew that he loves to drive and wanted to make that his profession. He stated that he believed if he could obtain his Class A CDL through Sage Truck Driving School, he would become more marketable to another company, and would be able to better provide for his family.

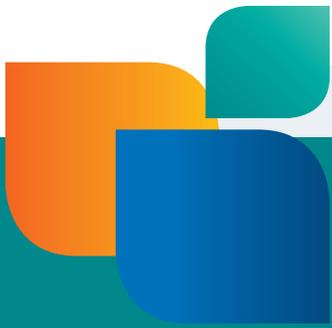
At the Cheyenne Workforce Center, it was determined that he was a good candidate for the training. Jalen was a go-getter from the beginning! He completed all assessments and provided all required documentations immediately. He was very upbeat and proactive. He stated he would do whatever it took to make this successful for him.

Jalen started his training right away in evening classes as that was all that was available at the time. Jalen and Sage had a great working relationship. He attended all classes and did his drive time when he could work it out.

Initially, Jalen failed the driving portion of his test and was so disappointed! However, he was encouraged by the Workforce Center staff and Sage that he could do it. Jalen passed his re-test with an overall GPA of 95.76 percent and received his credential July 12, 2012. He phoned his case manager, Janet Ryser, and stated, "Thanks for believing in me".

Jalen received a Class-A CDL certificate July 7, 2012, completing his TTD-150 driver training. He also received a Certificate of Academic Excellence and Certificate of Perfect Attendance. He entered full-time employment August 18, 2012, at Lowe's as a delivery driver. He started with a probationary wage of \$14.44 per hour, with benefits, and the potential for raises, bonuses, and incentives with the company.

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# WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT DISLOCATED WORKER PROGRAM SUCCESS STORIES



## ALABAMA

### Hawood Nelson, Jr.'s Success Story

On April 27, 2011, Hawood Nelson, Jr., his parents, and younger sister had just made it to the safe place in the basement of their home when they heard a loud bang. They came out to discover that half of their home was gone as a result of being struck by a tornado. Suffering through the immediacy of the devastation, the family salvaged what they could and, by evening, had moved in with his aunt and her family.

Prior to the tornado, Mr. Nelson had moved back home with his parents because he had become unemployed. The perspective gained after having to move back home made him realize that he had to do something different. He heard that CWD was a place to get funded for career training and decided to come in to discuss available programs.

He came into the office in June 2011 and requested funding to attend Jefferson State Community College to receive training to become a Pharmacy Technician. Mr. Nelson decided to become a Pharmacy Technician because his research had shown it to be a growing field and, with the right credentials, he could find and keep employment. After careful evaluation by the case manager, it was determined

that Mr. Nelson would benefit from this training. Mr. Nelson qualified for WIA funding and started his studies at Jefferson State on August 20, 2011. He completed the program on November 8, 2011, and immediately began his search for employment. In January 2012, Mr. Nelson was hired by Walgreen's Pharmacy as a Pharmacy Technician. Mr. Nelson remains employed there and now also has his own apartment and is considering furthering his education.

Mr. Nelson was featured on Change 42 News story in March 2012 regarding the Pharmacy Technician profession.

### Shawn's Success Story

Shawn, a dislocated worker, came into the Foley Career Center seeking assistance. He was referred to a local truck driving school and enrolled. He finished the training with an A+ on his final exam and a week later was offered a job with the trucking company. During his initial employment period with the company he continued to check in with the Career Center staff and gave them updates on his new job and places he had traveled. Recently, Shawn visited the Center to give them the news that he was now officially an owner-operator with the company. He continued to sing the praises of the Foley Career Center staff and the opportunity offered to him by the WIA Program.



### Stephen Granger's Success Story



Stephen Granger, a retired military veteran, was laid off from Alkan Shelter in July 2009, where he was a procurement officer making \$24.74 per hour. In August 2011, he enrolled in the dislocated worker program and subsequently, co-enrolled in the National Emergency Grant/On-the-Job Training (NEG/OJT) program.

He initially came to the Fairbanks Job Center seeking assistance with obtaining hazardous materials and air brakes endorsements for a truck driving job that he was offered with Fairbanks Pumping and Thawing. During the intake meeting it was determined that this job was below his skill level and he would still be underemployed. Fortunately another Fairbanks employer, Total Systems Services, Inc. (TSS, Inc.) was interested in using the NEG/OJT program as they had recently been awarded a building maintenance contract in the Fairbanks Federal Building. TSS, Inc. wanted to hire a building maintenance helper to meet the terms of the contract.

Mr. Granger was advised of the building maintenance helper position with TSS, Inc. He interviewed and was offered the position on April 10, 2012, with a starting wage of \$19.42 per hour and an additional \$3.50 per hour for health and welfare benefits. He apprenticed under the building maintenance manager who plans to retire in the next two years, opening up the manager position for Mr. Granger. Mr. Granger is very happy with his new job. He loves the work environment in the federal building and enjoys learning how to maintain all of the equipment in the building.



### Jerry Young's Success Story

Jerry Young, from Lee County, was laid off from his previous job, was only making \$8 per hour, and did not have the skills to obtain employment with a "living wage." Jerry visited the Arkansas Workforce Center in Marianna and inquired about services and specifically about any assistance to pay for occupational skills training at Crowley's Ridge Technical Institute (CRTI). His lifetime goal was to become an EMT so that he could help others. Jerry was enrolled into the WIA Dislocated Worker Program and later graduated from CRTI as an EMT with honors. Immediately after graduating he began working at Southern Paramedics in Brinkley, AR. He eventually transferred to St. Francis County Emergency Medical Services, continued his education, and now is a paramedic.

## HAWAII



### Piilani Watts' Success Story

#### Refining Her Career

Piilani Watts lost her job as a parts driver and wanted to find a new career. With help from the WIA Dislocated Worker Program, Piilani started her training program in January 2011 at Leeward Community College and graduated with a Certificate of Professional Development in Process Technology in April 2012. She was described as an outstanding student who completed this challenging training course, and she is now employed at Tesoro Refineries in Kapolei as a Boiler Technician.

## ILLINOIS



### Gary Prout's Success Story



Gary Prout is a 57-year-old Navy veteran. Gary heard about the NEG program for flood clean-up and applied for a position. After completion of his prerequisite physical requirements he was placed at Mermet Lake Conservation Area in Massac County.

Although Gary holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Psychology, he has been battling persistent unemployment since being laid off in 2002 from MCI WorldCom, a job that paid over \$70,000 per year. In the interim, he has picked up work as he could, doing some freelance remodeling and consulting, where he earned a fraction of his former salary. In 2010, Gary worked as an enumerator during the Census. When the job ended Gary had qualified for unemployment benefits.

Knowing he needed additional training to obtain gainful employment, Gary formulated a plan. He tested for placement in the Licensed Practical Nurse program and was accepted into the program at two local colleges. Because he already has a Bachelor's Degree, Gary is not eligible for Pell Grants and lacks sufficient income to pay for this program. Due to his participation in the NEG program and his eligibility for WIA, funds are available to help him complete this training and obtain a career in nursing. He is enrolled at Southeastern Illinois College in Harrisburg. Gary continues to work in the NEG program while he completes required classes for the nursing program. Once he completes his 1,040 hours he will devote his full attention to the nursing program. Gary is well liked at the worksite by both his coworkers and the supervisor. He is a hard worker and is looking forward to moving into a new career.



# KANSAS

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## Justin's Success Story

### The Challenge

Justin, a veteran, lost his job working for the railroad. A WIA case manager conducted career interests and skills assessments to match him with the current job market. It was determined he lacked the necessary skills to find self-sufficient employment.

### The Workforce Center Solution

The WIA case manager determined the Natural Gas Distribution and Transmission Program at Barton County Community College was a good fit for Justin. He started school in January 2009 and finished at the top of his class in May 2009. He also obtained his CDL.

### The Outcome

After graduation he accepted a job driving a truck and kept searching for a job in the Natural Gas Distribution and Transmission field. In March of 2010, he accepted a second year apprenticeship position with a local energy company making \$20 per hour. He is now a third-year apprentice making \$24 per hour. Justin shares, "Life couldn't be better for me." Congratulations, Justin!

## Randy's Success Story

### The Challenge

Randy was laid off from a construction company he worked at for almost 20 years. When he came to the Workforce Center, he had been unemployed for almost two years. He was at the end of his Unemployment Insurance benefits, his wife was not able to work and they were close to losing their home. Randy was unable to find work in the construction industry and needed a new skill set to become reemployed.

### The Workforce Center Solution

The Heartland Works Inc. (HWI) WIA Career Consultant connected Randy to the JobFit assessment to help him identify career interest areas and occupations that would be a good match for his interests and skills. They worked on a résumé that highlighted his existing skill set. Randy identified over-the-road truck driving as a training/employment goal, and WIA staff connected Randy to a training provider in the area and provided financial assistance to help him complete the training program.

### The Outcome

At the end of the six-week training program, Randy gained full-time employment with a national trucking company and remains employed with them over three months later. He contacts his HWI WIA career consultant on a regular basis and reports he enjoys his job and is grateful for the opportunity the WIA Program gave him.

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## 2012 Outstanding Dislocated Worker Award: Randell Fulkerson's Success Story

Randell Fulkerson owned his own automotive business for 11 years until he lost his company because of the downturn in the economy. He then went to work for an automotive company, only to lose that job due to downsizing. Fulkerson decided to “take a leap of faith” and enroll in school and try a much different career path, one that he felt would provide job stability and a level of satisfaction that he had been missing in his previous jobs. He enrolled in the clinical lab technician (CLT) program at Henderson Community College (HCC). Randell soon realized that attending college classes and experiencing satisfaction in his daily life was something that he had missed. He became very determined to make up for lost time and completely engaged himself in his studies and lab work. He would often stay after class to put in extra time on coursework because he “simply wanted to be the top student in the CLT class.” In addition, Randell would stay after class to help tutor students who were struggling with lab procedures. Randell graduated from HCC with a perfect 4.0 GPA and was the co-recipient of the Outstanding CLT Student award. He is currently working full time at Community Methodist Hospital as a lab technician and is teaching a urinalysis class at HCC. Additionally, he is enrolled at the University of Cincinnati working on a Bachelor's Degree in Medical Technology. Robert Jenkins, Randell's training coordinator, commented that not only does he have an impeccable work ethic, but also a true passion for learning and has the energy and focus to accomplish whatever he attempts. He modestly summarizes his career change as, “I was just a guy working on automobiles with grease underneath my fingernails all day long,” until he was forced to make a change. Now, Randell is thriving in his new career and was named the agency's 2012 Outstanding Dislocated Worker.

## Frederick Pierce's Success Story



Frederick (Freddie) Pierce left the Army in September 2001, but he struggled to transition into the civilian workforce and find long-term employment. He worked several temporary and short-term jobs until he found full-time employment at a local production facility. In February 2009 he was laid off and began a long job search. While receiving services from the one-stop career center, Freddie chose to attend Austin Peay State University to get a degree and find a better job. Freddie had been out of work for 130 weeks when he became eligible for the OJT/NEG program and went on to work with FP International. He was hired through the West Kentucky Workforce Investment Board (WKWIB) program in July 2011 and remains employed with the company.

## Jonathon Good's Success Story



Jonathan Good found a fresh start at the Breathitt Career Center after he was laid off from White Manufacturing after 13 years. After speaking with a friend in a similar situation, he visited the center and decided to resume college classes. He recently completed a two-year degree in criminal justice at Hopkinsville Community College, and is currently employed with the Christian County Sheriff's office.



## Music Teacher Pursues Nursing Career: Shawna's Success Story

Shawna always knew she wanted to be a nurse, even though her résumé was music-oriented. She had a degree in music from Youngstown State University, spent years teaching clarinet, and worked 15 years for a Pittsburgh-based music company. In spite of this, she jumped at an opportunity to pursue a nursing career, when in June 2009, and at the age of 51, she was laid off from Volkwein's Music.

In the fall of 2009, Shawna quickly found a place in the nursing program at Kent State University – East Liverpool Campus. She applied for and received Dislocated Worker WIA funding through the Trumbull County One-Stop (Area 18). Upon graduation in May 2011, Shawna attended a Northeast Ohio (NEO) HealthForce Career Workshop and met with Christine Bok, Mahoning County One-Stop (Area 17) account executive, and Ron Shadd, NEO HealthForce coordinator. The two worked with her to improve her résumé, and she attended the One-Stop's résumé workshop. During her job search, Shawna also participated in an OJT workshop and was certified as eligible for NEG/OJT funding.

Shawna passed the exam for her state license in August 2011, and by November she had three job offers. Shawna started her dream job at St. Elizabeth Hospital with an NEG/OJT contract, at a wage of \$23.05 an hour. She is grateful to both the Trumbull and Mahoning counties' WIA programs and to Christine and Ron for their encouragement and help.

## NEG/OJT Workshop Leads to New Job: Valerie's Success Story

After a 17-year career in sales and sales force management with Proctor and Gamble Corp., Valerie was unexpectedly laid off. She found employment in a variety of secretarial and sales jobs but eventually faced another layoff.

Valerie went to The Employment Source (Area 6 – Stark County) for assistance. She found the staff to be helpful and was sent many job leads and referrals. After attending The Employment Source's NEG/OJT workshop, she approached Akron Thermography, Inc., a wholesale printing company, and told them about the program. They offered her OJT and worked with The Employment Source to set up the contract. In March 2012, Valerie began her employment as a billing clerk with Akron Thermography, Inc., at an hourly wage of \$16.

Lisa Teague, owner of the company, is very pleased with the NEG/OJT Program and Valerie's performance on the job. "She is a high caliber candidate and employee," Teague said. "Anytime you hire an employee outside of your industry, there is a question as to whether they will work well in an environment they are not familiar with. Valerie is very smart. She has caught on quickly and asks the right questions at the right time."

## From Displaced Worker to Pharmacy Technician: Rolanda's Success Story



"Our instructor kept the class going, and made the complicated material fun and simple."

After working seven years at the University of Cincinnati as a research associate, Rolanda found herself without a job. Funding had been cut off for the study that employed her. Like thousands of other dislocated workers from Cincinnati and Hamilton County, Rolanda turned to the SuperJobs Center (Area 13) to see if she was eligible for funding to learn a new skill. She knew from the outset that she was interested in the pharmacy tech program being taught at Cincinnati State. "I wanted some stability in a new career," says Rolanda. "I didn't want to be laid off again."

Rolanda enjoys her pharmacy technician job at the Cincinnati Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

Career Coach Beverly Schurig of the SuperJobs Center worked with Rolanda to help her get enrolled in the class, and she was on her way to a new career. "I absolutely enjoyed the class," says Rolanda. "Our instructor kept the class going, and made the complicated material fun and simple."

Rolanda passed her certification board exam, and she worked as a temporary pharmacy tech while she searched for full-time positions. In May 2011, she began to volunteer at the Cincinnati Veterans Affairs Medical Center, where she worked at both the out-patient and in-patient pharmacies. That paid off when Rolanda was hired in March 2012 to staff the out-patient pharmacy.

"Being a pharmacy technician is a very satisfying and rewarding career, helping patients get well," she says. Thanks to help from SuperJobs and Cincinnati State, Rolanda is well on her way to those rewards.

## OJT Provides New Skills for Laid-Off Analyst: Kevin's Success Story

In February 2011, Kevin was laid off from his job with Vertex, Inc., as a computer systems analyst. Staff at Empyra, an information technology company in Youngstown, learned about Kevin and wanted to hire him but knew it would take some time for him to get up to speed with some of its proprietary software.

Empyra, which had previously used WIA's OJT for other employees, contacted the One-Stop Workforce System of Mahoning and Columbiana Counties (Area 17) about a possible OJT for Kevin. Area 17 provided Kevin and Empyra with a six-month OJT contract. He completed his training and continues to work for Empyra as a software developer at \$12.50 an hour.

## Job Fair Leads to Employment in Oil/Gas Industry: Paul's Success Story

Paul, a veteran and dislocated worker, returned to Ohio after being laid off in November 2009. He attended the Select Energy Job Fair in Carrollton in January 2012, hoping to secure employment in the "new" oil and gas industry in Carroll County. In the weeks that followed, Carroll County Connections (Area 16) staff contacted numerous fair attendees to advise them of upcoming local trainings and workshops.

Paul attended the oil and gas informational workshop, and then met with WIA case manager Sydney Cramblett to discuss his options. He expressed interest in obtaining his Class A CDL to become qualified for one of the many truck driving jobs associated with the oil and gas industry. Through Carroll County Connections' Dislocated Worker Program, Paul enrolled at the Big Rig Truck Driving School in Canton and was offered and accepted a job at Henrickson See Pro before finishing his classes.

His new job requires him to operate a 4,500 gallon tank truck and to hydroseed areas where excavation for new gas wells has occurred. He is so excited to be working that on a recent visit to Connections, he hugged his case manager twice and thanked her for helping him get this job.



### **Dislocated Worker got a Credential and Became an Entrepreneur**

A dislocated worker from the municipality of Barceloneta visited the One-Stop Center looking for a career change. The objective assessment showed the need of an occupational training.

He received an ITA account that he successfully used to obtain an electrician credential. This dislocated worker obtained an outstanding diploma at “Instituto de Banca,” an academic training provider in the Manatí area. Right now the participant is a successful entrepreneur fulfilling his dreams.

### **Dislocated Woman Trained by OJT in Northwest Local Area**

The Northwest Local Area tells the story of a single mother and dislocated worker from the services sector where she was working for 10 years. She is the main provider of her family and visited the One-Stop Center searching for services to be able to continue providing for her family. She attended different employment search activities but was not employed. The One-Stop Case Manager offered guidance on One-Stop Center services and she expressed her interest in training as an accounting assistant. The Local Area gave her an ITA to take the training. Subsequently, her objective assessment and her Individual Employment Plan reflected that she needed an OJT. She was placed as an accounting assistant in the JM professional company and once she completed her OJT she was retained by the employer. Her dedication, performance, leadership, responsibility, punctuality, knowledge, and desire to overcome obstacles allowed her to maintain and retain her job.

### **Dislocated Worker Becomes Green Job Entrepreneur in Northwest**

A displaced worker in the health industry, head of household, was searching for services to be able to provide for his family. He went to employment searching activities where he had no luck. He had vocational counseling where he expressed interest in the area of renewable energy and took a related workshop. He decided to explore the refrigeration field where he was able to combine knowledge in both fields and decided to establish his own business applying the knowledge obtained in the workshop. Presently he is very successful in Buenos Aires Air Conditioning Inc. He is in sales, repair, and the installation and maintenance of equipment, domestic, commercial, and industrial all over Puerto Rico.



## SOUTH CAROLINA

### SC Works Abbeville County: Zach Price's Success Story



Zach Price had been out of work for eight months, after the feed store that he was running in Calhoun Falls closed its doors. Zeb Young, a business/employer services representative with the Abbeville County SC Works Center, was trying to help him find work.

Meanwhile, Adams Building Supplies Manager, Don Rowell, had been looking for someone to work in the lumber yard and drive a delivery truck for his Abbeville business. He called his local SC Works Center in hopes of finding someone qualified for the position. Zach was made aware of the opening and expressed his interest.

When the opportunity at Adams Building became available, Zeb Young and Zach went to the business, but Rowell had already hired someone to start work on Monday, April 2. Young drove a disappointed Zach back to the SC Works Center. On the ride back, Zeb told him, "Everything happens for a reason...maybe something else will happen." Despite the hire, Rowell still interviewed Zach. "I told him if it didn't work out (with the new employee), I will call you," Rowell said. And it was a few days later that Rowell's new worker quit after three days, and he called Zeb to offer the position to Zach.

Zach began working on Friday, April 6 and has been a key part of the Adams Building Supplies staff ever since. He was hired as part of the WIA OJT program, which paid part of Zach's salary for the first 12 weeks while he was in training. Rowell made up his mind early on that he wanted to keep Zach after the OJT ended. Rowell said Zeb Young's recommendation made a big impression.

Today, Zach is one of six employees at Adams Building Supplies. He works in the yard, loads items such as wood and roofing shingles for the customers, and delivers loads with a forklift truck.



## SOUTH DAKOTA

### Darla's Success Story

Darla was laid off from her position as a marketing and art director. She was a veteran receiving unemployment insurance. She qualified for Energy Grant funding assistance and went through a Senior Certified Sustainability Professional program at Southeast Technical Institute.

After completion, Darla and the NEG/OJT program were recommended to Rock Garden Nursery by DLR. Her Sustainability Certificate played a large role, because the owner wanted someone with this training. However, even with the course knowledge, she did not meet all of the Rock Garden Nursery requirements. WIA staff explained the NEG/OJT program and the benefits. As a result, a NEG/OJT was written and completed. Darla was hired as a director and project manager with a \$70,000 annual salary.

### Terry's Success Story

Terry, a dislocated worker, was part of a January 2011 layoff. She was a full-time billing specialist since 2006, earning \$10.25 per hour.

Terry completed RN training in 2003 in Florida, but never became a licensed nurse. She wanted a career change when she met with WIA staff. Her employment goal was to become a licensed RN. WIA assisted Terry with costs to review RN training material, complete state/federal criminal background checks, take NCLEX-RN exam, and take the SD Board of Nursing RN licensure exam.

A few months after earning her RN license, WIA assisted Terry with an NEG/OJT at Golden Living Center – Covington Heights. She was hired as a charge nurse. She is now employed full time, earning \$17.80 per hour. Terry is very happy in her new career and most of all enjoys helping the residents at the nursing home.

## James' Success Story

James lost his job due to a restaurant closure in December 2011. James had some employment barriers and was not having success finding work.

In May 2012, a baker's helper job opened and James expressed an interest. Local office staff visited with the business and decided to authorize a short work experience to see if the owners and James were compatible. Some work clothes were provided through WIA support services. The job started off a little rough, and James wasn't meeting the expectations of the owners. It was an adjustment period for both parties. There were times it seemed the work experience would end.

A meeting was held for local office staff, the business owner and James to discuss issues. James spoke about his true feelings for the job and his interaction with the owners. After the meeting, things turned around, James' attitude changed, and the owners seemed to relax.

DLR local office staff continued to monitor the work experience and assist when needed. In the end, James was offered permanent employment.

## TENNESSEE

### Amy's Success Story



Amy W. had been working for her husband in his business when he suddenly passed away and she was left with nothing but her children. Amy came to the career center in November and began researching information about becoming an LPN. With the support of the career center, she was able to complete the LPN program at the Tennessee Technology Center – Pulaski in February 2012 and was hired soon after graduation into a full-time local LPN position. She is currently completing classwork to prepare her to enter an RN program.

### David's Success Story



After taking early retirement to care for an ailing relative and then experiencing the death of several relatives, David W. wanted to reenter the workforce. An NEG Disaster grant, used by the TN Career Center – Centerville, helped him find employment as a water plant technician with the Bon Aqua Lyles Utility District. South Central Tennessee Workforce Alliance (SCTWA) had received an estimated \$700,000 from the NEG Disaster funds to assist in the clean-up and restoration efforts needed because of recent flooding and tornadoes in seven area counties. At the conclusion of the program, David was hired as a full-time employee with the company.



## Public-Private Partnership for Irene Cleanup



### The Mountain Times

At a pullout on Route 73 just east of Brandon, Josh V. stands at the edge of a rocky ravine, pulling hand-over-hand on a rope. The other end is tied to a five-gallon bucket that Tyler and Josh G., down in the ravine, have loaded

with debris gathered along the upper reach of the Neshobe River. Behind him, April stands at the tailgate of Dwight's pickup truck, meticulously sorting and tabulating the gathered trash. The pickup has a bubble light on its roof, as does a blue car. Both vehicles display small red placards that read: "State of Vermont Clean-Up Crew Working in the Area – Rozalia Project."

The main focus of the crew's efforts this year is cleaning up after Tropical Storm Irene. This summer alone, cleanup crews have removed 114,951 pieces of debris from Vermont waterways, a large percentage of which was generated by Irene a year ago. According to Brigid Brese, Community Outreach and Site Coordinator for the Rozalia Project, 14,000 pieces weighing five tons were removed from Riford Brook in Randolph alone.

The most memorable finds have been an entire sugarhouse, a pre-1940 horse rake, and a full-size mobile home trailer frame wrapped around a tree.

April enters tick marks on a tally sheet for everything from tires and mattresses to cigarettes and golf balls. Stacked alongside the guardrail nearby are a household fan, bent scraps of sheet metal and a record-player. All items are weighed. The data will go directly onto spreadsheets as the Rozalia Project adds to its database of non-biodegradable flotsam and trash found in waters around the world.

"Team Becky," as the crew members have dubbed their six-person cohort, is one of four such crews currently working under a joint partnership between the Rozalia Project and the Vermont Dept. of Labor's Workforce Development Division. They are paid under a VTDOL cleanup grant, funded in turn by a National Emergency Grant from the U.S. Dept. of Labor for disaster relief and displaced worker employment under the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998. Last year Vermont qualified for three National Emergency Grants to cope with Lake Champlain flooding in April 2011, the Memorial Day floods that hit the northern counties, and Tropical Storm Irene. Within two weeks of Irene's visit, Vermont had received \$1.68 million to fund disaster relief field work.

WIA funds are also available to towns and nonprofits for activities to employ the unemployed and underemployed in disaster relief work. Bethel, Hartland, and Royalton are among those who have benefited. Under this provision, the Rozalia Project submitted an application to VTDOL to carry out Irene recovery work in Waterbury, Northfield, and the White River corridor.

In effect, the program is a close cousin of the Job Corps and the Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930's. Crew members must qualify under WIA guidelines: they must meet income eligibility guidelines and have been drawing unemployment for 15 weeks or more. Becky Trudeau, WIA case manager and career development specialist for VTDOL, explains that the program helps the unemployed and underemployed get training and strengthen credentials by providing good references and a record of steady work, commitment, and teamwork.

Team Becky members speak proudly of their work, adding that they even turn out on rainy days although working in thunderstorms is prohibited. They pool their collective past experience in construction, general labor, equipment operation, grounds maintenance, security,



## Mrs. Smith's Success Story

### Dislocated Worker Success, Ticket to Work, and Career Advancement

Mrs. Smith walked into the Fairfax SkillSource Center-Reston after being laid off as a sales manager for a major furniture company. She had worked for this company for over 15 years and was back in the market with obsolete skills while receiving unemployment benefits. She realized that she could not get a job in her previous field so decided to switch careers to the medical (in-demand) field to be a clinical medical assistant and was enrolled in the WIA Program. Mrs. Smith successfully completed the Medical Assistant Certificate training while also completing an internship to pass the MA certificate requirements. While attending training, she attended workshops, updated her résumé, and networked with colleagues and friends. Shortly, after her WIA training she emailed saying, "I did pass my MA certification and am now working for George Washington University Medical Faculty Associates. I work in the Reston Hospital complex as a Medical/Minor Surgical Assistant for a team of premier ENT, Vascular and Neuro Surgeons. It is part time for now but should soon go to full time. I love my new team and my boss is awesome."

and firefighting to solve problems and make the work run more smoothly. For example, Josh V. fashioned a rope harness for crew members descending into the river gorge and skid plates of scrap metal for the five-gallon buckets to prevent them from snagging and dumping their contents.

Equipment is low-tech. It includes a weed-whacker, long-handled pickers, saws, machete, hatchet, shovels, rakes, and a come-along. The program also provides rain gear and boots, first-aid kits, hand sanitizer, gloves, and water bottles. Mark and Josh V. contribute their own two-way radios to help members communicate over distance and listen for thunderstorm forecasts. Crew members carpool to work sites. Gas for the pickup, trash bags, and transfer station fees are reimbursed by the program, and Leicester and Brandon accept the crew's loads at no charge. They are also authorized to sell the scrap metal to help defray costs.

As of midsummer, the field locations include the northern reach of the White River in Rochester, Otter Creek and tributaries in northern Rutland County and Addison County, along the Third Branch and the Dog River in Randolph-Braintree-Northfield, and locations in Windsor County. The cleanup project is scheduled to end in September.

For more information on the Rozalia Project's mission and activities worldwide, go to [rozaliaproject.org](http://rozaliaproject.org). Contact Brigid Brese at 802-595-3862 with your information or request for other areas still in need of stream cleanup.

<http://www.mountaintimes.info/news/important-community-bulletins/2012/07/public-private-partnership-for-irene-cleanup/>



## VIRGIN ISLANDS

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### Mr. Zale T.'s Success Story

Mr. Zale T. came into the Workforce Center to explore employment opportunities. Having been laid off six months prior, he was ready to reenter the workforce. His previous employer had recently closed operations so there was no chance of going back to that line of work. After perusing the Eligible Training Provider List, he inquired about a fiber optics training course that would be starting shortly. He was assessed and tested and secured a place in the training course. After four months, Mr. T completed his training and received his certification in entry level fiber optic cabling. Two months later, Mr. T. contacted his case manager at the Workforce Center and happily announced that he had relocated to Florida and was doing an internship with a company there in fiber optic cabling. Although he also has a paid job with another company, he is optimistic that at the end of his internship he will find employment in a field that he loves.

### Mr. George J.'s Success Story

Mr. George J. accessed the system while seeking unemployment benefits. The Virgin Islands unemployment office is co-located in the same building as the workforce services. While there he found out about the services to the workers dislocated from the oil refinery through the National Emergency Grant. He was referred to one of the case managers there who outlined all the options available whether in advanced education, training, or job search. Mr. J had been an operations technician at the refinery and could not find a comparable job where he could use his skills. He expressed interest in wind energy and together with his case manager found a local training course entitled Photovoltaic and Wind Energy Associate. Completion of this course would result in industry recognized certification. However, in a twist of fate, while securing the paperwork necessary for enrollment in this course, Mr. J. heard of a job opening as an operations soft technician for a waste water company. Opting to find work, he applied for the job and got it based on his qualifications. Mr. J. thanked his case manager for his support during a tenuous time and assured him that he would be back for additional services should he ever need it based on this experience.

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# WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT YOUTH PROGRAM SUCCESS STORIES



## ALABAMA

“DESI helped me achieve my goal, because I got my GED and now I’m on to college.”

–Marion White

### Marion White’s Success Story

“I started at the DESI Career Training Center in July 2011 hoping to get my life together. DESI was a program I heard about from my aunt. I knew the only way to get into college was to get my GED. So I stopped being lazy and called DESI and got into the program. It wasn’t easy but I put it in my mind that I was going to make it and be the man I wanted to be in life. What prevented me from making it in public school was my attitude. I didn’t really like school, so I thought it was stupid, because I felt like I wasn’t learning anything that I didn’t already know. I made it all the way to the 11th grade and gave up. I loved the hood more than school. That’s crazy to say but was true. I thought I was a product of my environment. I had that “I don’t care” attitude because of the situation I was brought up in. School became the last priority for me. I had my mind on other things.

DESI helped me achieve my goal, because I got my GED and now I’m on to college. It helped me become more focused in school. DESI is a great program to attend because it helped me with all of the problems I had going on in my life. The staff is great and they really take the time out to help you with anything. They are there for you whenever you need them. The staff pushes you and keeps you focused at the same time. They make sure you get your GED and become successful in life.

My future plans are to go to Bishop State and get my Associates Degree in Electrical Technology. I want to start a good life for me and my family. I hope my future will be great. I want to thank DESI and the staff for all they have given me and for all they did to help me with my success in life as I worked to achieve what I thought would never happen.”

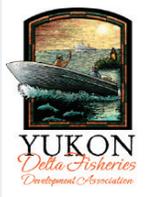
### James’ Success Story

James, an unemployed WIA eligible youth, came to the Talladega Career Center seeking employment. The Career Center had just been notified that funds were available for an Extended Youth Work Experience Program to hire additional temporary staff for the center. After an assessment by staff James was determined to be in need of work experience and was placed in the slot that was available at the Career Center. He was assigned specific duties of working at the front counter, answering the telephone, and directing customers. He learned quickly, was very professional with staff as well as customers, and quickly became an important element in the organization. However, the work experience program ended in March 2011 and James had to leave.

Soon afterward the Center was approved to hire a temporary Employment Security Clerk with regular funds and the center was able to hire James in the position. During his time as a temporary employee James applied for a permanent position through State Personnel. He took the test and scored high on the employment register. Soon James was hired as a permanent employee with full benefits. James is a great asset to the Career Center and has received numerous complements from employer representatives as well as customers seeking services.



### Angelica Damian's Success Story



Angelica is a 15-year-old native of Alakanuk, Alaska, about 10 miles by boat from Emmonak, the site of the fishery where she receives subsidized work experience opportunities as a WIA Youth

participating in the Kwik'Pak Youth Employment Program. She is the youngest of a single parent family. Angelica will be entering 10th grade this fall and has a goal of graduating high school and continuing on to post-secondary education.

#### Barriers

Lack of work history, employability skills, and transportation.

#### WIA Youth Service Strategy

The WIA Youth program provided transportation, training, and the employment opportunity; she is able to travel between Alakanuk and Emmonak by boat to receive training and employment at the Kwik'Pak Fishery.

#### The Outcome

Angelica is currently a youth leader in the second year of the program. She has gained work experience in the areas of office assistant, cashier, retail sales, public relations, and custodial duties, and currently mentors and assists in training of new participants.

### Michelle Tuttle's Success Story



Michelle Tuttle grew up in a challenging family. Michelle chose to live independently, though she was only 17 years old. Michelle scraped by with

the help from friends and income from her job detailing cars for \$10 per hour.

Michelle's determination paid off, and in 2009, she graduated from Ben Eielson High School. Considering her next steps, Michelle quickly determined her job detailing cars helped pay the bills, but did not lend itself to a solid career path.

Michelle turned to the Fairbanks Job Center (FJC) WIA Youth Program for assistance in achieving her training/employment goal of becoming a dental assistant. The youth program worked with Michelle to develop an Individual Service Strategy designed to reach her employment goal. WIA funds were combined with Michelle's PELL grant and her work earnings from delivering pizzas to get her through a one-year dental assistant program. Supportive services for gas, car insurance payment assistance, and rental assistance helped cover costs. Michelle successfully completed dental assistant training in August 2011.

In October 2011, Michelle obtained a dental assistant job at Tanana Chiefs Conference's Dental Clinic at \$16 per hour. Michelle is in follow-up status in the FJC WIA Youth Program at this time.





## Alex Green's Success Story

Alex Green is a 2012 graduate from Hughes High School and currently an East Arkansas Community College (EACC) freshman. Alex became a youth participant with the WIA of Eastern Arkansas as a junior in high school. While in the program, Alex participated in leadership development opportunities such as: exposure to post-secondary educational opportunities, college preparation and ACT, community service learning projects, and more. Alex also participated in summer work experience where he gained work ethics and new job skills. Alex is studying diesel technology at EACC in concurrent courses with a 4.0 GPA, working part time, and is a volunteer firefighter with the Hughes Fire Department. This summer, Alex was introduced to the Aviation Technology program at Mid-South Community College (MSCC) during the WIA Youth/ADTEC Aviation Day and would like to eventually enroll into this program.

## Josh Dawson's Success Story

During his junior year in high school, Josh Dawson applied for the WIA Youth Program and was provided a work experience opportunity at Hoxie High School. When he went back to school that fall, he learned that he did not have enough credits to graduate with his class, so he quit school. Eventually, with the encouragement of his mother and his WIA case manager, he enrolled in the Walnut Ridge Adult Education Center GED program. To make life a little more challenging, he learned that his girlfriend became pregnant and they got married. Josh did not pass the math portion of the GED test. Discouraged, he quit going to GED classes, and temporarily found a job. Since he was so close to completing his GED, his mom, wife, and case manager continued to encourage him to return to GED classes.

He worked another summer on the WIA youth program, and as Josh put it, his case manager “nagged me like a mama” to get his GED. After Josh’s son was born he told his case manager that he realized he needed to complete the GED to better himself and to support his wife and son. He knew that without an education he was not going to be able to get a good job. In May 2011, he successfully completed the GED program, and went to work full time for a lawn & landscaping business. Later he decided to reduce his hours and enroll at Black River Technical College in the fall 2011 semester.

Josh continues to attend Black River Tech where he is making good grades and steady progress toward an Associate’s Degree in business. He is also employed with a local construction company, making a good wage and working up to 32 hours a week. Once he completes college, Josh’s goal is to start his own business. Josh says that he is very thankful for the continued encouragement of his WIA case manager, who helped his mom and wife keep him focused on completing his GED and for the financial assistance he received from WIA. When he was told how proud the WIA staff was of his accomplishments, his response was, “I’m proud of myself!” The self-confidence and maturity Josh has developed during his participation in the WIA youth program makes him a success.

## Cody Hogan's Success Story

Cody Hogan of Leachville struggled with his very first job this past summer, but in the end, he was excited to have learned so much about his worksite and himself. Cody was home schooled, and received his GED through Arkansas Northeastern College's Adult Education Center. After that, he was referred to the Blytheville Workforce Center for help finding a job and gaining basic work skills. His timing was good, in that the WIA Summer Youth Program was just about to start in the Northeast area. He was determined eligible for WIA and placed as a groundskeeper for the City of Leachville.

Cody didn't like the job very much at first. As a home-schooled student and a first-time employee, he was inexperienced at dealing with others and sometimes he didn't quite know how to interact with his coworkers. He certainly didn't feel he fit in. Most of his coworkers had worked together many years, and the nicknames and inside jokes they all had, made him feel like an outsider. But he didn't give up, and he soon found his coworkers weren't so bad after all. When his family's car, their only means of transportation, quit during the middle of the program and couldn't be fixed, his coworkers picked him up each day for work. His coworkers, too, had noticed that Cody didn't quit, didn't complain, and was eager to learn. Soon he had a nickname just like all the others, which really helped his confidence. From commenting in the beginning on his lack of experience, his worksite supervisors began to praise him for being a hard worker and a fast learner. At the end of his summer employment, Cody stated that he learned several things. He'd had no idea how much work it takes to keep a small city going, and he also learned the value of dependability and teamwork. Through his first summer job, he realized the importance of setting goals and the reward of a job well done. Cody has begun to believe in himself and continues to set personal goals.

His first job, and the encouragement and support he received there, has given him the confidence to enroll at Arkansas Northeastern College this fall and begin working toward a Computer Information Systems Degree. His WIA case manager knows he can do it, and says he just needed the chance to see that for himself.



## Ashley David's Success Story



### Career Success!

Ashley David enrolled in the Hartford Job Corps Academy (HJCA) in February 2011. As a young mother, she worked very hard to overcome personal and financial difficulties with zest and professionalism. She entered HJCA with her high school diploma and successfully completed the Insurance and Financial Services Banking Career Technical Training. Ashley took part in a work-based learning opportunity as an administrative assistant for the City of Hartford. She graduated from HJCA with two job offers and is proud to be working as a bank teller. A highlight of Ashley's life as a student was being selected to make a presentation on behalf of HJCA at the January 2012 public forum held by the Connecticut Commission on Children and the Connecticut Workforce Development Council. The forum, entitled "Youth Unemployment: Facing the Challenges of the New 'Great Depression,'" was attended by Senator Richard Blumenthal, state legislators, staff of CTDOL, and local WIBs, representatives of local organizations, and youth from several schools in Connecticut.



"I believe that I have become more mature while in the WIA Youth Program, and it has helped me become more independent."  
–Christian Jubilado

### Christian Jubilado's Success Story



#### Working on a Better Path

Christian Jubilado, 17 years old, started the WIA Youth Program in May 2011 to get his high school diploma. He was co-enrolled with the YouthBuild Honolulu Program for pre-apprenticeship construction training.

Christian said, "I believe that I have become more mature while in the WIA Youth Program, and it has helped me become more independent. I continue to work toward future goals and would like to enlist in the Army. Before this, I messed up a lot and eventually got into trouble. I was lucky to work with a probation officer and a social worker who cared about me. I stopped hanging out with the friends I would get into trouble with and focused more on my future. Through the help and guidance of my WIA case manager and other staff, I found the motivation I needed to stick with the diploma program and not give up."

"Construction wasn't necessarily something that I originally had in mind as far as my future," he continued. "Working with YouthBuild and the Building Industry Association, however, gave me the chance to explore and keep an open mind as to what careers are out there for me. Doing on-site projects gives me a chance to give back to the community and gain hands-on experience. I have applied to enroll in the community college to earn credits and will start taking classes during the fall 2012 semester. I have grown up a lot in the year since I started and am even trying to mentor my little brother to stay on the right path for his own life. I still have a long way to go, but with everything I have been through I look forward to the journey of my success."

### Elisha Vasconcellos' Success Story



#### Going Back to Move Forward

Elisha Vasconcellos, a mother of a three-year-old boy, started her participation with the WIA Youth Program in February 2011. She believed that being a parent gave her more responsibility and motivated her to get her high school diploma. She received her diploma in December 2011 through Honolulu Community Action Program's Competency-Based program. She was also enrolled in a Work Experience component that enabled her to obtain employment at her worksite, Fresh Café, where she is still currently employed. She plans to further her education at a community college after she sets up childcare arrangements for her son.

She received her diploma in December 2011 through Honolulu Community Action Program's Competency-Based program. She was also enrolled in a Work Experience component that enabled her to obtain employment at her worksite, Fresh Café, where she is still currently employed. She plans to further her education at a community college after she sets up childcare arrangements for her son.

Elisha is a success because of her desire to have a better life, not only for her, but for her child. She appreciates the opportunity the WIA Youth Program provided her in getting her education back on track. She also sees that she can do anything with hard work and that her future is a bright one.



## KANSAS

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### Lacy's Success Story

#### The Challenge

During the spring of 2009, Kansas WorkforceONE received a referral for the Summer Youth Employment Program for Lacy. Lacy was a youth who had some barriers to employment. She lacked work experience and had some specialized needs she was working on through her Individualized Education Plan at school.

#### The Workforce Center Solution

Lacy was interested in working with the public, and her case manager thought she would be a good placement at one of our workforce centers. Lacy was placed in a position as a Customer Service Assistant/Office Assistant. She worked 32 hours per week answering phones, assisting and directing walk-in traffic, filing, and completing various office duties.

#### The Outcome

Lacy's summer work experience gave her the opportunity to practice and hone her skills. Her comfort and ability to communicate with the public flourished & she gained confidence. Following summer, Lacy was able to again participate in our program by enrolling in WIA as an in-school youth. She was placed as an administrative assistant, where she was responsible for data entry, spreadsheets, & follow-up. She later was hired by a local manufacturing company as a data entry clerk. Lacy graduated from high school ahead of schedule and with some work experience under her belt, is ready for her future.

### Hailey's Success Story

#### The Challenge

When Hailey came to the WIA Youth program, she was a high school student facing mental health and educational challenges. She had a poor work history and was basic skills deficient.

#### The Workforce Center Solution

Hailey was connected to a WIA Youth provider who specializes in using education and work experiences in the arts to enrich the lives of youth. Hailey participated in leadership development activities, educational tutoring and work experience. As an artist apprentice, she had the opportunity to design and create artwork for the community in which she lived. She also served as an arts ambassador to host guests who visited the worksite.

#### The Outcome

Hailey graduated from high school on time and began a post-secondary education program in fall 2012. Her experience with the WIA Youth Program gave her the academic skills to complete her high school education and the work experience to build her confidence to pursue further education after high school.

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“I think if I hadn’t come across the KentuckianaWorks Youth Career Center, I wouldn’t have been as persistent – very persistent – to get my GED, to study for it.”

–Trevor Cameron

### Summer Youth Program: Summer Bibb’s Success Story

Summer Bibb participated in the Summer Youth program last year and earned valuable work experience and confidence. Summer was placed at the L&N Depot in Bowling Green where she gave tours and worked in the gift shop. “This program has really helped her with her communication skills. Summer was very shy at the beginning of the program but is much more outgoing since taking this position,” said program coordinator Sharon Woods. “She has been a great mentor to the other summer youth workers this summer. She expressed to them the worth of the program and how it has helped her.” Upon completion of the program her employer wants to keep her on the job.

### Brittany Wilson’s Success Story



Brittany had such severe migraines that she couldn’t sit up let alone go to school. Though she was an A-B student as a freshman, her grades started slipping in her sophomore year, and she dropped out. Today, the 17-year-old Henry County resident’s migraines are managed and

less frequent. And with assistance from the newly expanded services of the KentuckianaWorks Youth Career Center in Bullitt County, she was able to complete her GED in November 2011. She enrolled at the Shelbyville campus of Jefferson Community and Technical School in the fall. She will take classes to become a certified phlebotomist in the high-demand field of health care. “I talked to them at the KentuckianaWorks Youth Career Center about paying for the GED,” Wilson said. “They said the center is more than just helping you get your GED. It’s helping you get into post-secondary school, doing your

FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) and helping you get a job.” Just like Wilson, out-of-school youth, ages 16-21, in Bullitt, Henry, Oldham, Shelby, Spencer and Trimble counties now can get tutoring assistance and financial incentives to complete their GEDs through the KentuckianaWorks Youth Career Center in Bullitt County. Young adults in these counties also can explore financial assistance for college and job training, receive career counseling and get help applying for college and job training. “Employers tell us that they need workers who have good job skills. They want to hire employees who can read and understand directions, who have basic math skills and who know their way around a computer,” said Michael Gritton, executive director of KentuckianaWorks. “Getting a GED is the first step in helping these young adults become more job ready. After that, we can help them find training to increase their skills and get a job or find financial assistance for college.”

### Trevor Cameron’s Success Story



#### Finding Support to Succeed

“I think if I hadn’t come across the KentuckianaWorks Youth Career Center, I wouldn’t have been as persistent—very persistent—to get my GED, to study for it,” said 17-year-old Trevor Cameron, a former Henry County

resident. “They offered as much help as possible. They did a great job for me.” Christina Burns, the youth specialist at the Youth Career Center, worked with Cameron to find out what he wanted to do after he got his GED, why he chose that area of study and where he wanted to live and work. “She helped me locate the cosmetology school,” he said. “She told me that if I needed any tutoring or anything like that, they would tutor me. They were very helpful, actually.” 54 Centers

offer help KentuckianaWorks Youth Career Centers have operated for several years in Bullitt and Jefferson counties and have a proven track record of helping young adults complete their GEDs and jump start their careers. The Bullitt County office currently serves 268 youth in the six counties.

### Youth/Adult Co-enrollment Program: Kayela Day's Success Story



Before Kayela Day was accepted into the Madisonville Community College You Make A Difference CNA program funded through WKWIB, she was employed as a part-time cashier making \$7.50 per hour. After completing the CNA program, Kayela continued her education and became an RN.

The WIA Adult Program provided financial assistance for Kayela to receive her Associate in Applied Science Degree, a stepping stone to becoming an RN. Kayela is currently employed at Regional Medical Center in Madisonville as a full-time RN. After receiving services from the WIA Youth and Adult programs, Kayela increased her wage by \$13.28 per hour.



## NEW HAMPSHIRE

### Preparing NH Youth for Careers of Tomorrow: Nate Nalezinski's Success Story



Nate did not know where he was headed in life, but the in-school youth program NH Jobs for America's Graduates (NHJAG) helped him gain confidence, clarity, and a paid internship at BAE Systems, one of New Hampshire's premier advanced manufacturing leaders.

Like many high school students, Nate Nalezinski wasn't quite sure of his place in the world. A student at Manchester Memorial High School, he had some challenges that were recognized as potential barriers to future employment in a career path job. Referred to the In-School program of NHJAG, Nate started a summer program with the long-time provider of in-school and out-of-school services for the Office of Workforce Opportunity.

Priscilla Parisien, President of NHJAG, saw some special qualities in Nate, including his interest in computers. She and Nate's NHJAG counselors encouraged him to participate in a special computer class offered at Southern NH University. Successful completion of the course provides a student with college credits, and Nate was suddenly a high school senior with three college credits under his belt.

The next step for Nate, with guidance from NHJAG, was applying for a paid internship at BAE Systems, one of New Hampshire's leading companies and its largest manufacturer with over 4,500 workers. BAE, with over 60 years in New Hampshire, is a leader in helping students gain skills in the important areas of science and engineering. BAE is a big supporter of the FIRST Robotics program and hosts special internships and other opportunities for youth across New Hampshire.

Nate applied for a paid internship (working at BAE after school hours) and was selected. Parisien was proud of Nate and how he was prepared for the interview. “Of all the students applying for the job, he was the only one to wear a suit and tie,” she said.

BAE was so pleased with Nate’s internship that he was offered a full-time job following his graduation from high school, and today Nate is an assembler at BAE Systems.



## NORTH DAKOTA

### Cole Roberts’ Success Story

“My name is Cole Roberts and I am 16 years old. I have a rare disability called WAGR syndrome. This has left me completely blind. In addition, I have had cancer and over 64 surgeries in my lifetime. Even though all of this has happened to me, I am just like every other teenager with a dream. I am also like every other teenager in that I would like to work and find a career.

Ever since I can remember, I have wanted to be in law enforcement. My first dream was to be a police officer. When I lost my sight completely at the age of seven, I knew I would never be an officer. I then started to focus on becoming a lawyer. I started to read books, watch television shows, and even talked with some blind judges. Being a lawyer became not only my dream but also my passion.

This summer I was very excited to begin working with a program, Youth Opportunities, which helps people with disabilities find employment. A quick disappointment occurred when the program did not have enough financing. Off to the farm I went for my third year of hauling trees, washing decks, and watering plants. The upside of that job was that it was on my grandparents’ farm and I got to spend valuable time with them.

Finally, I got the call from Job Service of North Dakota I was waiting for. Not only did I get placed with a job, but it was with Legal Services of North Dakota—could it get any better than that?

They took me in and gave me a glimpse of what it would be like working as a lawyer. Not only were they making my dream come true, but they were also changing my life and my future goals.

The longer I worked at Legal Services, the more I realized just how hard it might be to become a lawyer with my disability. Could it be done? Yes. But I realized I did not want to put so much of my life and time into what it might take. At first I was very devastated. I was

giving up another dream that I had held for so long. I not only felt lost, but I also felt like a failure. My mom encouraged me to take it to the Lord for guidance. I realized being a lawyer was my dream, but maybe not God's dream. I also realized that I was not a failure at all, and I was not lost. Rather, I was on the right path.

I have learned to take one day at a time now, keeping my options and dreams wide open for whatever it is God wants me to do. I have a few new career options that I am looking into. I hope I get a chance to work in all of them before I graduate from high school. I will never forget my time and wonderful coworkers at Legal Services of North Dakota; they changed my life. Thank you!"

### A Rural Cass County Youth's Success Story

A rural Cass County youth enrolled in the WIA Youth Program between the summer of her junior and senior year in high school. She completed a paid work experience from June through August of 2009 as a kitchen assistant with an employer in Fargo. During her senior year in high school she prepared for training beyond high school. She chose to attend Job Corps in Minot for Culinary Arts. During the summer of 2010 she completed a paid Work Experience and was hired by the employer.

In the fall of 2010, she enrolled at the Quentin Burdick Job Corps and completed certificates in the Office Administration Course & Culinary Arts. She returned to Fargo in 2011 and found employment using her Culinary Arts Training. She is currently living in her own apartment.

### Robert's Success Story

Robert's initial WIA activity was the ARRA 2008 Summer Youth Program. At 16 years old he worked as a nursing home activity assistant. He re-applied for the WIA Program in May 2010. His interests were to work with children, the disabled, or continue with the elderly. The assessment included the TABE. Robert's math and reading scores were very low for a 17-year-old close to finishing his sophomore year in high school. He did not have a driver's license and relied on his mom for rides. His job experience consisted of delivering newspapers and the three months at the nursing home in 2008.

A paid Work Experience agreement was secured with a skilled nursing home where Robert worked part time as a Universal Worker. His primary work area was the activities department. Robert remained with the nursing home for several months but that time was not without difficulties.

Working through personality differences and conflict with supervisors proved to be a valuable learning experience for Robert. He realized that he overreacted at times, and yet would use a positive approach to resolving the issues. Robert successfully completed his work experience in March 2011.

Job Service staff helped Robert complete an application for permanent employment. The facility was not able to hire him until June and he worked until August 2011. During this time, Robert learned how to establish a savings account and utilize direct deposit for his paychecks. His goal was to save his money and make a small withdrawal each month for "spending money." He also obtained a driver's license.

During Robert's work experience he visited with the case manager frequently about his progress in school as well as providing report cards. With his modified classes he maintained a B to C average and enjoyed school. Robert graduated on May 27, 2012.

Robert worked through personal and maturity issues while in the program. Through the assistance of WIA, vocational rehabilitation, and his special needs case manager at school, he learned to become more independent. He recently completed a "bucket list" and his top two goals were to work in a hospital for 30+ years and to become a foster parent! Robert applied to become a Qualified Service Provider (QSP) and to work as a support specialist for the developmentally disabled. He has decided to postpone attending college.

As of June 2012, Robert is employed full time! He was hired as a QSP to work with developmentally disabled clients. He earns \$10.50 an hour and will have full benefits after six months. He is completing a series of training modules at no expense to him.

He also volunteered as a coach for the Special Olympics soccer program in July 2012.

## Josh's Success Story

Josh started with the WIA Program April 7, 2010, as a senior in high school. Due to his age, he was determined eligible for both the WIA Youth and Adult programs. During his senior year, Josh had taken welding vocational classes and absolutely loved them.

Based on further assessment with his WIA case manager and career exploration with his high school career guidance counselor, he requested classroom training assistance with the Welding Associate in Applied Science program at North Dakota State College of Science (NDSCS). Josh was approved for tuition, books, fees, and tools required for the program and started at NDSCS in August 2010. He successfully completed his degree in May 2012.

Josh actively searched for jobs during his last semester and began working in May 2012 with Do All Metal Fabrication located in Glenburn as a full-time welder, making \$17 an hour with benefits.

## Joel's Success Story

Joel enrolled in WIA services as a sophomore in high school. He had no work skills and was unsure of what he wanted to do after graduation. He was referred to WIA by one of his teachers. That summer Joel was placed at a work experience site to gain employability skills. He learned punctuality, appearance and grooming, attitude towards others, conduct at the worksite, and how to complete assigned tasks. He also earned high school credit for this work experience and gained employment history to record on his future job applications and résumés.

Joel returned to high school in the fall of 2010. During his junior year, WIA staff worked with Joel on career exploration activities. He completed an interest inventory assessment that indicated an interest in realistic jobs. One of the occupations under the realistic category caught Joel's attention – Production Worker. During the summer of 2011 Joel applied for and secured summer employment at Marvin Windows and Doors in Grafton.

In the fall of 2011, Joel returned to high school for his senior year. During this school year WIA staff worked on financial skills with Joel. He completed online activities in the use of ATMs, purchasing with a debit card, making bank deposits, and paying bills. Joel also explored post-secondary training options and decided that he wanted to train for post-secondary employment through OJT.

Joel graduated in May 2012 and returned to Marvin Windows and Doors for the summer. During this summer employment, Joel applied for full-time, year round employment with Marvin Windows and Doors. He was hired and is now starting his career with Marvin Windows. Joel is now 19 years old, fully employed, and taking care of his own finances.



## Receive, Believe, Achieve: Whitney's and Jalesha's Success Story



Whitney and Jalesha are the kind of young women who would make any parent or teacher proud. Both are high achievers, and both used the opportunities afforded through Jobs for Cincinnati Graduates' (JCG) high school program, much of it funded with WIA dollars for low-income youth, to prepare for college and careers.

Whitney, 17, is valedictorian and student body president at Western Hills University High School. She has been awarded several scholarships, including the YWCA's prestigious Mamie Earl Sells Scholarship, which is presented annually to an outstanding female black high school senior. Whitney plans to attend the University of Cincinnati, where she will study computer science at the College of Engineering and Applied Science.

"As a little girl, I was always interested in computer technology," she says. JCG's emphasis on work readiness skills, career exploration, and leadership training was a good fit for her.

Jalesha, 17, is a senior at Winton Woods High School, and also is student body president. As a foster care youth living independently, she faces the kind of challenges most teens don't have to worry about. She received a full-ride scholarship to Wright State University that provides year-round housing – a huge benefit for a young woman who is emancipating from foster care.

"I am planning to major in criminal science and minor in Spanish," says Jalesha. "I've wanted to be a police officer for a long time—helping to put the bad guys away—but now I would really like to get into the FBI."

At JCG's annual award ceremony, the theme of "Receive, Believe, Achieve" resonated. Says Kathleen Williams, Youth Coordinator of the Southwest Ohio Region WIB:

"Both Whitney and Jalesha embody that theme—they've capitalized on the help they've received; they believe in themselves and their goals; and they are determined to achieve success in their lives."

The Southwest Ohio Region WIB implements WIA in Cincinnati and Hamilton County (Area 13).

## Summer Job Leads to White House: Kasey's Success Story

For Kasey, her first trip to Washington, DC, proved to be an eye-opener in terms of career opportunities and dreaming big.

A senior at Oak Harbor High School, Kasey traveled to the White House in January 2012 with her mother, Sherry, and took part in the kickoff of President Barack Obama's 2012 Summer Jobs Plus Program. She was invited to the summer jobs summit after participating in the WIA 2011 Summer Youth Program through WSOS Community Action Agency (Area 7 – Sandusky County), where her duties included eight weeks of work as an administrative assistant at the Oak Harbor mayor's office. The summit was designed to connect youth to jobs and help them find paths to summer employment in 2012.

The trip included a tour of the White House and the chance to meet several cabinet secretaries. Kasey stood out in her job at the mayor's office and earned the invitation to the White House on behalf of Ohio youth, while WSOS represented community action agencies at the event.

Kasey maintains a B average in school and plans to attend college at Bowling Green State University or Hocking College. She says she built a lot of relationships and learned important office skills during her summer employment at the mayor's office. "Each time I go, I learn something new from everybody," she said.



"Life has been good for me, I've got so much experience and I have met so many people through the job market and made friends along the way."

–Samuel

### Danielle Loftis' Success Story

Danielle Loftis is 23 years old and living in Spencer, Oklahoma. Danielle is a 2006 Graduate of Douglass High School, where she was named the class Valedictorian. Danielle was also a member of the Academic Decathlon Team in high school where they competed against other schools in reading, math, science, classical music, art and literature.

While in high school, Danielle took concurrent classes at Rose State College, during her Junior and Senior years. When she graduated from high school she had already earned 21 college credit hours.

In the fall of 2006, Danielle began her studies at Langston University where she was on the Deans Honor Roll for five years. She was the President of the Lambda Alpha Chapter of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc., Treasure of the Psychology Club, and Secretary and member of the National Pan Hellenic Council.

Danielle found out about the Workforce Center through other students at Langston University and inquired to see if she qualified for the WIA Youth Program. On August 31, 2009, Danielle was approved for the WIA Youth program. Later on July 7, 2010, Danielle was dual enrolled in the WIA Adult Program to ensure enough funds would be available to assist her in completing her training.

Danielle took on two majors at Langston University; she double majored in English and Psychology. Danielle graduated from Langston University on May 13, 2011, with a GPA of 3.33 in both majors.

Danielle is working at Carlisle Food Service in Oklahoma City performing data entry tasks. Danielle's plans are to begin her studies at Oklahoma Christian University starting on August 22, 2011. She will be studying for her Masters in Applied Behavioral Science. Her plans are to become a Counselor.

Danielle would like to thank her career coaches, Serita Patton, Greta Carreathers, and the Central Oklahoma Workforce Investment Board (COWIB) for being the gateway that assisted her through her junior and senior years at Langston University. Without financial assistance from WIA, Danielle says that she would not have been able to afford the finances to complete college on time. Danielle's philosophy is: "Live Life to the Fullest."

### Tulsa, Oklahoma: Samuel's Success Story

Samuel started the WIA Youth Program at age 16. He was a junior in high school with no work experience background. In addition to poverty, he was dealing with a disability called Bartter's Syndrome, which caused problems in the kidneys. Samuel also suffered from attention deficit disorder and depression, all of which required medication. Living in poverty, his family had a house to live in and sometimes a vehicle to get us back and forth to school or wherever they needed to go. His future was undetermined and Samuel did not know what direction it would go. Samuel said he had no idea that his life would turn out to be so successful.

Samuel believes the work experience was "key" to building his status as a hard worker. Not only did the program give him experience, Workforce also gave him the knowledge and understanding of good traits to have in the job market. Samuel said Workforce's "Summer Enrichment Program" taught him a number of things like: teamwork, communication, leadership, responsibility, and motivation. He still use these skills today at his job. WIA also helped with supportive services so that he could get books for college classes.

"Life has been good for me, I've got so much experience and I have met so many people through the job market and made friends

along the way. It is hard being a college student without parents who are able to finance it, but I don't let that stop me. I work hard and I do my best and I'm very careful with my finances."

Samuel earned an Associate in Graphic Design from Northern Oklahoma College and is currently attending Rogers State University in Claremore working towards a Bachelors of Fine Art. He is employed with Silvertree Technology as an assistant graphic designer.

"I'm glad to be a part of something that helps out the community and I want more and more individuals to get involved with Workforce and know about it. I am very thankful to Workforce for impacting my life."

### Southern: Shea Posey's Success Story



"Without assistance like the Big Five WIA Scholarship Program I don't think it would be financially possible for many students to start or achieve their goals and dreams of a college education."

When Shea Posey entered her junior year of college she was worried about how she would be able to afford to finish her degree. The first two years of college she used savings from her parents, grandparents, and great aunt. The last two years her savings had run low. She applied for a PELL Grant and wasn't eligible. Her dad was unable to help as much as he did in the past because he had been laid-off from his job. Through his unemployment insurance visits at the Workforce office, he was put in touch with WIA representative Francine Slater who told him of college assistance through the WIA Scholarship Fund. Shea was given an appointment, went through assessment and found eligible for the WIA Program.

Shea recently graduated from East Central University, in Ada, Oklahoma. She is proud of her accomplishment of a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with a concentration in Finance. She now works as a treasury assistant and earns a good salary with bonuses and benefits.

"Without assistance like the Big Five WIA Scholarship Program I don't think it would be financially possible for many students to start or achieve their goals and dreams of a college education. With the help of Big Five and my WIA counselors, I am now a college graduate working in a great field because I got the education that I wanted and needed. I feel more complete having accomplished one of my biggest goals I have set for myself thus far. I am very blessed to be where I am today, with a college degree and a great career at SandRidge Energy."

### South Central: Alexis Garner's Success Story

"Without the help I received at the Workforce Center, my life would be quite different. More than likely I never would have completed my undergraduate studies. I owe the members of the Workforce Center a deep debt of gratitude.

Alexis Garner is no stranger to hardship and adversity. At the age of eight, she witnessed the murder of her mother by a gunman who mistook her mom for someone else.

Immediately after her mom's death, she was sent to live with an aunt who resided in Virginia. The next several years of her life were spent in a revolving door. She moved from place to place living with various family members. First, was the aunt in Virginia; then with her father in Florida, Trinidad, and Minnesota; back with her aunt in Virginia; and then for a time with an older sister. Finally, during her senior year of high school, she moved back in with her father who by now was living in Lawton.

Despite all the instability in her life, Alexis was determined to overcome adversity. She set as a goal to become completely independent at the earliest time possible in her life. She began achieving her dream while a high school senior when she began working at Wal-Mart as well as two additional jobs to support herself.

Upon graduation from high school, she enrolled at Cameron University in Lawton pursuing a degree in Criminal Justice. An unplanned pregnancy forced her to reduce the number of hours she

worked by a significant margin. She now faced financial difficulty and a dilemma as to how to continue her education and provide support for her child.

It was during this time that a friend suggested she explore opportunities offered through programs available at the Lawton Workforce Center. It was at the Workforce Center after completing her initial assessments, that she met Darlene Williams, Skills Enhancement Function Leader. Ms. Williams assisted Alexis in skill building and afforded her an opportunity to qualify for and receive WIA financial assistance. Thanks to the assistance received through the Workforce Center, Alexis has completed her undergraduate studies and is now employed by Cornerstone Clinical Services as a behavioral rehabilitative specialist and case manager. She is currently enrolled at Mid America Christian University pursuing a Master's Degree in Psychology.

Alexis credits the assistance she received through the Lawton Workforce Center as the key to her successful endeavors. "Without the help I received at the Workforce Center, my life would be quite different. More than likely I never would have completed my undergraduate studies. I owe the members of the Workforce Center a deep debt of gratitude. I have been able to become employed in a field that I enjoy immensely. Having this job enables me to rest comfortably at nights knowing I can support my child and live a comfortable life style. I am eternally grateful to Ms. Darlene Williams and the entire staff at the Lawton Workforce Center for the support and encouragement they gave me. This is a debt I can never fully repay. I am going to try though, by being all I can be."

## Northwest: Mark Morrison's Success Story



"Thanks to this program I am able to provide more for my family. Programs like these make this the best state to live in."

As a husband and father, 21-year-old Mark Morrison knew he needed to support his family.

He was driving an old beat up jeep and renting a house and Mark "just felt like I could do more with my life." He was soon connected with Renee Weil, Oklahoma Economic Development Authority WIA Title I Career Counselor, who helped him obtain tuition assistance for school.

Mark enrolled in the LPN program at High Plains Technology Center in Woodward for a year of training that led to his certification as an LPN. Mark not only utilized WIA funds for tuition, he was able to get help with supportive services. Mark stated, "I was sitting in class and the instructors were using a smart board. I thought that it was neat except it didn't look clear." Mark contacted his Career Counselor Renee, who got approval to pay for an eye exam and glasses.

Mark Morrison is an LPN at the Integris Bass Hospital in Enid. "We are now more financially stable. We own our home and are driving new cars. We don't have to worry about how we are going to pay our bills, because I now have the training to make enough money to pay our bills. Thanks to this program I am able to provide more for my family. Programs like these make this the best state to live in. Thank you all so much for giving me this opportunity."

.....



## PUERTO RICO

### Youth Out School Parents Complete High School Diploma: Michelle Medina Maldonado's Success Story

Eighteen-year-old Michelle Medina Maldonado visited the One-Stop Center looking for services for young people who are out of school. She wanted to obtain her high school diploma. She was also in an advanced stage of pregnancy, unmarried, and not living with her partner. She encouraged her partner, who was 17 years old, to also solicit the services to obtain his high school diploma. They both enrolled in the high school equivalency course. They successfully met the challenge of being parents and at the same time students, and managed to complete high school. Their outstanding goal was obtaining their diplomas with baby at hand.

As part of the follow-up service, they received an occupational skills service in environmental preservation. Their future plan includes obtaining post-secondary degrees. They received counseling in economic assistance aid and labor tendencies. She is looking forward to studying nursing and he is interested in civil engineering. They both received counseling regarding the different educational entities.

### Internship of Youth Group in an Electronics Manufacturing Industry in North Central Arecibo

GDI Puerto Rico, Inc. is a company established in 2011 in Jayuya, Puerto Rico. The company is dedicated to the manufacturing of cable TV boxes and modems, digital telephones, and internet modems. Four in-school youth candidates for graduation from the school Josefina León Zayas of the electronics course participated in an internship in this company.

These young people were exposed to the following tasks:

- Building electronic systems according to engineering data and the instructions given by their supervisor
- Using hand tools and measuring instruments
- Analyzing and applying electronic information
- Solving electronic design problems
- Building Cable TV and Internet Boxes and equipment inventory

For these youth it was a significant experience since it gave them the opportunity to integrate into the labor market, define their occupational goals, and have real experience in the occupation in which they were training. In addition, they were able to develop leadership skills, increase their occupational skills, and make this a unique and enriching experience.

### Mayagüez/ Las Marias Leader Youth Becomes an Engineer: Pedro Morales' Success Story

Young Pedro Morales started participating in the Youth Program in 2007, when he was in secondary school. At 18 he participated in a Work Experience Project. During the years 2008 to 2010, while he was a college student, Pedro participated in the Summer Program to develop his skills and get money for college expenses. Also during his college years he worked at various part-time jobs to get money for college as well as helping with the education expenses of his twin younger sisters, Kimberly and Katherine. In May 2011 he obtained a Bachelor's Degree in Engineering Electronics Technology at the Interamerican University, San Germán campus. In August 2009 he was designated by the President of the Board of Mayors, José Guillermo Rodríguez, to represent Youth Program participants in the Local Board, a position he currently holds.

## Youth with Disability Becomes an Accountant in La Montaña Local Area

The La Montaña Local Area tells the story of an individual who came from a dysfunctional and low-income family. In his childhood and adolescence stages, he lived in a community where violence, crime, and drugs prevailed. He was part of the oppressors groups who controlled his neighborhood. He decided to leave school and his family. He was involved in a violent incident between rival drug dealer groups whereby he ended paraplegic and submerged in a deep depression.

However, he sought professional help to overcome his situation and become a productive person in society. First, he obtained his high school diploma and then a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration with a concentration in Accounting from the University of Turabo. While taking his post-secondary training he worked at the university employment program as an assistant counselor. He excelled as a student, graduating with good grades. His family is proud of him.

After completing his Bachelor's Degree, already as a graduate adult, he visited the Mountain Local Area looking for employment opportunities. The One-Stop Center staff delivered all services and referred him to a work experience. After he completed this activity the employer decided to retain him as a regular employee. He is currently an accountant in the finance department of his employer. In this way, he became a successful story of the Mountain Local Area.



## Trident Local Workforce Investment Board: Tyree Gasque's Success Story



Tyree Gasque came to Palmetto Youth Connections looking to attain his GED. Tyree had no idea that the additional training he would receive through Palmetto Youth Connections would give him the credentials to qualify for a job that had previously turned him down. Tyree's first step towards a new career was attaining his GED. He enrolled in GED preparation classes through Charleston Adult Education. He was committed to his education and passed his GED after just a month of preparation classes.

"I'd tell new students that they have to take responsibility for their own success. I asked questions in class, and I stayed late to work on my skills. I passed the GED test because I worked hard at it. I'm proud of myself for this accomplishment," said Tyree.

After attaining his GED, Tyree enrolled in customer service training designed and facilitated by the National Retail Federation. This nationally recognized training program in customer service prepares candidates to become qualified customer service professionals. After passing the National Retail Federation credential exam in customer services, Tyree updated his résumé and started applying for jobs. He applied online for a job at Lowe's, was called in the next day for an interview, and was offered a supervisory position in customer service.

Tyree enjoys his job at Lowe's and hopes that it will lead him to greater career opportunities in the future. "Palmetto Youth Connections gave me the training I needed to start my career. I have already received recognition for my excellent customer service skills from my employer and I know I'll continue to get better with time." Tyree plans to continue working at Lowe's and hopes to start college in the fall.

## SOUTH DAKOTA

### Natacha's Success Story

Natacha is a 20-year-old youth who came to the Rapid City Local Office after losing her job. Natacha was in a motorcycle accident that created several physical impairments, thus affecting her ability to secure and hold employment. Natacha was low income and considering applying for disability, but still had the desire to work.

Joy, Natacha's employment specialist, assisted Natacha by reaching out for support from service providers in the area. They coordinated services with Vocational Rehabilitation, the Disability Employment Initiative, South Dakota Advocacy Services, Black Hills Special Services, a neurologist, mental health counselor, and Natacha's previous employer. Joy provided Natacha with aptitude assessments to determine her field of interest and discussed employment restraints due to physical limitations.

Working with her team of professionals, Natacha was able to improve her computer skill development and obtain a National Career Readiness Certificate.

Natacha is currently learning new tasks with her previous employer through a work experience. She moved from a previous physical position she was no longer able to do, to a clerical position. Through additional counseling, Natacha is more optimistic about her future and has taken on additional duties to assist her employer.

### Melissa's Success Story



Melissa came to a local office for information regarding educational and employment assistance. Melissa, a 20-year-old youth, was making minimum wage working part time as a housekeeper.

WIA staff quickly found she would be a great candidate for the WIA Program. She was a low-income high school dropout, lacking basic skills. She needed additional assistance to help determine a career path. Melissa took the basic skills assessment and the WIA Program was able to pay for her GED test. Coordination with the local AEL provider and Melissa's employment specialist, Lori, paid off. Within four months, Melissa received her GED.

Melissa worked with Lori to identify an occupational direction and assess her aptitude to improve her career skills. She continued with the aptitude assessment to obtain her National Career Readiness Certificate. Melissa had never had a typing class during her educational experience. She worked independently on Mavis Beacon and the Teknimedia program offered at the local office. These programs improved the computer skills necessary in an office setting.

Melissa completed an online Reality Check to gain knowledge of her spending habits and occupations that will support her lifestyle. With Reality Check, Lori assisted Melissa in creating a budget. Melissa attended the Job Search Assistance Program (JSAP) to learn additional career skills and obtain employment. Lori has worked with Melissa to develop her résumé and complete mock interviews in preparation for her job search. WIA supportive service funds assisted Melissa in purchasing a few basic pieces to wear to an interview.

Melissa gained employability and social and office skills during a work experience as an office assistant. She is currently working for a private employer 30 hours a week making \$10.00 per hour. Melissa continues to work with her employment specialist to find full-time employment opportunities as well as post-secondary options.

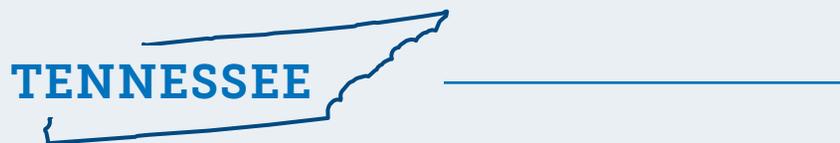
## Laura's Success Story



Laura, an out-of-school youth, came to the WIA Program as a low-income and homeless single mom receiving SNAP. Laura's employment specialist, Amber, assisted Laura by providing exposure to post-secondary options.

Laura decided to get the training she needed to support her family. WIA funds assisted Laura in obtaining her Associates Degree in Electro-Neurodiagnostic Technology. Laura took a job to pay her bills while looking for work in her field.

During Laura's follow-up services, Amber provided leadership development opportunities in résumé building and interviewing. Laura earned a full-time position as an EEG technician making \$18 an hour.



## Jordan's Success Story



Jordan enrolled in the WIA Youth Program when he was a sophomore in high school; at that time he was behind in his credits and at risk of dropping out of school. Through the program, Jordan was given an opportunity to attend tutoring and then to work as a farmhand at

Beardsley Farms. He also became very involved in the leadership team where his artistic talent blossomed; he helped design t-shirts for the program. During his senior year, Workforce Connections assisted Jordan in attending an ACT prep class so that he could prepare for the

college entrance exam; he had never dreamed of going to college before this program. Jordan graduated from high school in May 2012. He is completing a paid work experience as a graphic design intern with Tribe One before attending The Art Institute of Chicago.

## Ashley's Success Story



When Ashley C. came to the Tennessee Career Center in Cookeville, she was 21 years old and was working as a childcare assistant at a local daycare. She had graduated from high school but had no other education or training. Ashley had always wanted a nursing career but was unaware of available training programs; she was also financially unable to quit her job to begin training. Quickly to her aid came the WIA Program. In April 2009, her case manager, Bonnie Clinton, enrolled Ashley in the LPN program at the Tennessee Technology Center in Livingston. WIA provided financial assistance to help Ashley pay for books and uniforms during her training.

During 2010, Ashley completed the LPN program in April, passed her state boards in June, and by November began working as an LPN at an urgent care facility. Ashley hopes to further her nursing career as an RN. "WIA is a great program. It has given me the opportunity to go to school for practical nursing, which has always been my dream career. 'Thanks' to Bonnie Clinton and everyone at the Tennessee Career Center for making that dream possible."



### Mai-Ahn's Success Story



"I was completely surprised that my project had been selected as Best in Show. The competition is very tough because the fair draws the best students from all over Texas. The most interesting thing I learned from the experience is that the field of science is so vast; there are always questions to be asked and problems to solve."

Mai-Ahn Vu was the senior division Best in Show winner at the 2012 ExxonMobil Texas Science and Engineering Fair.



### EL's Success Story

EL has been training very part-time hours in a Work Experience for some time and in June completed her Alternative Diploma Plan. She did not see herself as a high school graduate, but she finished the required 20 hours of leadership development, passed the Pre-GED tests, completed her résumé/essay/cover letter and four months of work required for completion.

EL is doing well and working on being consistent. If the employer grows her shop as anticipated, EL will be hired on as a shift manager. EL has gone from a high school drop out to a graduate with a career path.

### RM's Success Story

RM has lived in foster care for over 10 years. She has had adult after adult fail her in life and she has grown sharp because of it. RM has a difficult time connecting with people, and she was placed at a horse farm for her Work Experience. Her mentoring employer quickly became frustrated with her gruff nature but understood that the more time RM spent with horses the happier in her tasks she was and the easier it was for her to complete her education. RM has since graduated, left foster care and moved to another part of the state where she was quickly hired on as a ranch hand on a large horse farm. RM is happy in her current position and knows that it was her hard work in training that gave her the reference.

## NR's Success Story

NR came to us as a homeless, high school drop out with a deep desire to work with children. She was let go from her tech training but remained a focused and positive intern and has now been hired on by her Work Experience mentoring employer through an OJT. As of November, she will have completed her hours and observation for her Child Development Associate and will be a full-time employee of the Children's House of Montpelier. Since engaging in WIA services she has completed her alternative high school plan and graduated and completed the terms of her Court Ordered Diversion, to include counseling. NR needed the push and consistency that case management could provide as she was used to starting off well and not completing. She is very proud of herself and has reunited with her mother; their relationship is growing.

## Summer Employment Opportunities: Barre Office's Success Story

*Rose and Carrie,*

*Attached is a photo (photo not available) of three young women who participated in the Randolph Technical Career Center's summer tech camp, funded with DOL monies....They are the youngest of the students we served. All came with a variety of risk factors, and all were academically at risk. The attached photo was taken at RTCC's Technical Awards Ceremony on Thursday evening, May 17. AB (on the left) and AW (on the right) were inducted into the National Technical Honor Society, and BB (center) received a technical excellence award for her participation in Business Management.*

*AW is a junior in our Automotive Technology program and will return next year to do a second year in Auto Tech. She is a student who has a smile on her face every day and who is a delight to be around. I'm sure she will be a real school leader here next year.*

*BB is a senior in Business Management. This is her second year in Business Management, and she has a coop placement at Bethel Mills' main office, where they love her. She has been offered a permanent position there after graduation.*

*AB is a senior in Power & Sustainable Technology. She has plans to go to college, and now she is working to figure out how to combine work and continuing her education in a way that is financially feasible.*

*A counselor who has worked with one of the young women talked to us on Thursday evening about how the summer tech camp was a transformative experience for her. I think the same can be said of all three. Despite huge challenges and little or no family support, these three young women have done remarkably well, and we have been privileged to work with them.*

*I thought you would like to know of their success.*

*Ruth*

## White River Junction Office: Success Stories

### LF's Success Story

LF participated in our Health Careers training at Gifford Hospital last year and with his reference was able to get a job at Vermont Castings. The work was above his skill level but he got good feedback and decided he needed to spend more time on his skills. He has recently entered Job Corps and is working on his culinary skills. He had an opportunity to work with a New England Culinary Institute trained chef at Gifford last summer and it has sparked a renewed interest. LF had always been told he would be working manual labor jobs and it has taken some time for him to realize his true interest. He has taken the data from all of his experiences and decided that he is still working with his hands but he is making meals instead of stoves.

### MD's Success Story

MD struggled with attitude and anger as well as his academics. In late November, he joined WIA and although he has not needed work place training, MD has gained the coping skills needed to transition to training at Job Corps. MD has logging skills and when he was in tech training at Hartford Area Technical Center in the mornings he did really well. His afternoons for the last two years were something different. He attended Hanover High School and did not fit in well or accept help with his academics. MD needed to be held to

expectations. Monthly team meetings and case management services gave MD the foundation he needed to remain on a career track. He did not finish high school but earned enough credits to only be behind by two: one in math, one-half in English and one-half in an elective. MD was accepted to Job Corps. He will earn a Hanover High School Diploma by working on these last remaining credits. Since we started the team meetings MD was more focused and his attitudes and sabotaging behavior reduced greatly. MD still struggled but he was spending less and less time in detention and more time in the classroom. He upheld the expectations the team laid out and because VDOL drove the meetings, the focus was so clear to MD, “this is for your future.” Hopefully he finds the same structure at Job Corps, and for now he’ll have access to case management to provide the background of what is most successful for MD. (White River-No WIA funds were spent other than case manager time).



### Meeteetse Youth Work Program: Success Story

As a small community of little more than 350 residents, Meeteetse has had to face the challenge of providing local work opportunities for its youth. The town is located more than 30 miles from Cody the nearest major community, and many of its youth had to find work in Cody and other locations. The commute to work represented a significant cost to the youth and their families. Also, it increased the potential for safety issues, and took the youth away from the community every workday. Younger youth, under age 16, had virtually no employment opportunity in Meeteetse. In addition, Meeteetse wanted to connect its youth to the community in a meaningful way.

Out of concern for the youth, the Meeteetse Youth Work Program was established six years ago with the purpose of providing youth with local work opportunities. The program, piloted in Meeteetse, could be applied in other small communities facing similar challenges. The program includes youth, ages 14 to 19, who are attending or have graduated from Meeteetse schools. A strength of the program is that they do not need to be income eligible to participate. Essentially, any youth seeking a job can be involved. Additional work opportunities have also been provided to other youth in Meeteetse, through the WIA Program, based on existing eligibility requirements and allowances.

The town of Meeteetse serves as the actual employer of the youth. They are hired as town workers and the town pays their wages. The town clerk-treasurer does all of the administrative work: payroll, administrative processing and work experience setup. The employers’ role is to provide direct supervision of the youth. They provide training and work opportunity, and insure that the youth complete their time sheets and other paperwork. Each employer fills out a contract with the town, to enable them to act as worksites, stating that they will abide by

the rules and policies of the program. One of the goals of the program is to try to have each youth work 100 hours with one employer and then 100 hours for another, in order to have a varied work experience.

In summer 2012, there are 15 youth working for about 10 employers in the program. The numbers involved vary from year to year. One challenge is placing youths in age-appropriate positions, to enable them to gain valuable experience not in violation of state and federal labor laws, etc. For example, this year a larger group than usual graduated from eighth grade. However, because of the strong partnership that exists in Meeteetse, this challenge continues to be overcome.

Each spring, an orientation is scheduled for the youth and employers. The Department of Workforce Services assists with this training by going over program rules, assigning the youth to read sections of the program guide booklet, and setting up and providing business/employer training. Labor Standards representatives review labor rules for the employers. For the youth, the Department helps them register in the Wyoming at Work electronic labor management system, as well as learn how to prepare résumés and present themselves and their credentials to employers. Once signed up with the town of Meeteetse, each youth's packet must contain required paperwork, including a résumé. The youth are then issued a card that says they are eligible to participate in the Meeteetse Youth Work Program. After this presentation, the advisory board assists employers with any questions and remaining needs. In addition, continuing education is provided. The advisory board holds about four regular meetings per year, with additional meetings as needed.

When the time arrives to match youth with employers, the employers come to the school to conduct interviews. Kids interview with every employer, after which the employers choose their youth. In the future, the process will move to the businesses choosing their top three youth, to make it easier to coordinate overlapping choices. The advisory board helps with placement when necessary. The fact that all youth will be paid the same helps to eliminate unfair competition for workers.

A primary reason for the continued success of the program is the total commitment that is given to the program by the participating

partners: they developed the program, they own it, and they run it. Another reason for its success is that the partners are dedicated to the youth of Meeteetse and providing them with work experience.

Youth are learning skills, earning income, saving money, and avoiding travel problems and safety issues. In addition, the program is creating more significant connections between the youth and businesses in town. Some continuing employment opportunities in Meeteetse have developed from these work experiences and business operators are looking at kids as a significant resource, not just as kids, which is developing cohesiveness in the community. In a related activity, the Meeteetse Recreation District takes senior citizens on a weekly shopping trip to Cody. Some youth employed by the program accompany these seniors on the shopping trips. This has developed connections between the seniors and the youth—one of many nonmonetary examples of the positive impact of the Meeteetse Youth Work Program on the community.

Some key points of the Meeteetse program worth emulating are: (1) a community takes charge of solving its challenges; (2) capable continuing partnerships; (3) adequate funding and other resources; (4) willingness to consider alternatives; (5) actively engaged employers; (6) youth who want to succeed; (7) work skills were developed; and (8) valuable associations were formed.

### Ashley's Success Story

Judy Carroll, Cheyenne Workforce Specialist, met with Ashley several months ago as a referral from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. They helped Ashley obtain work history and skills through a work experience component, through the WIA Program.

During the initial visit, Judy learned that Ashley was a 20-year-old young lady, who grew up in an abusive and secluded home. Ashley was born to drug addicted parents and has some brain damage from birth. This disability consists of Ashley having slurred speech and memory problems. Growing up, she was not allowed to go anywhere outside her house other than school. She was eventually taken out

of her home and sent to live with one of her grandparents, who essentially treated her the same way and used her as her personal servant. Ashley was not allowed to have any friends or a job. Her job was to serve her grandparent's everyday living needs. She did manage to graduate from high school. Upon completion of high school, Ashley's aunt took her into her home, so she could help her gain some freedom to be an adult and learn how to live independently and self-sufficiently. By the time they met with Judy, her aunt had become frustrated that her efforts weren't working at her preferred speed, which is why they initiated assistance through other resources.

Judy determined Ashley's eligibility and enrolled her into the WIA Program, to start working on placing her with a community employer. Once enrolled, her aunt clearly began to be a barrier, as she would not allow Ashley to speak for herself, when Judy would communicate with her about certain jobs and ideas, for her to be successful through this process. Ashley's demeanor and level of communication were like night and day when she met alone with Judy, compared to when her aunt was present, which made it difficult to accomplish anything. Judy would receive irate calls from the aunt after each independent appointment, because she didn't like what Ashley would tell her was done in their meetings. The aunt would yell at Judy and tell her how "slow" Ashley was, and that she was incapable of doing the jobs that Judy was researching. When Judy was told that Ashley was a burden to the aunt, among other things, it became clear that Ashley was still in a somewhat toxic environment that was affecting her ability to gain self-confidence and move successfully on with her life. This fueled Judy's desire to get Ashley into a job as soon as possible.

Ashley expressed her desire to work with animals, and after meeting with several employers, Judy was able to get her connected with local dog groomer, Man's Best Friend. She has now been there for a couple of months, and has shown great improvement in her confidence level. Judy saw her smile for the first time. She said she feels safe and in her element. Her supervisor said that Ashley has made tremendous improvements, and is one of the best workers on staff. She has never been late, always asks questions if she doesn't know how to do something, and takes initiative to learn new things, or improve

things that were lacking. Her supervisor has taken Ashley under her wing as a mentor and understands her barriers and disabilities. Because of this, she is able prove her willingness to be the positive role model in Ashley's life that she has never had. During a recent visit to the business, it was stated that Ashley will likely be kept on as a permanent staff member, once her work experience hours are complete. Ashley is earning money and stated that she is saving up so she can get her own place and work on living on her own. Until she has enough saved, she feels happy where she is at and feels positive about her life.

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# WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT TRADE ADJUSTMENT ACT (TAA) SUCCESS STORIES



## KENTUCKY

### Layton Blick's Success Story



Layton Blick was employed at Luvata in Franklin for 13 years prior to being laid off as a result of company downsizing. Married and the father of two children, Layton was faced with a tough decision about how to provide for his family. After attending a Rapid Response meeting, he

learned that he was eligible for the WIA Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Program. Determined to take advantage of the program, Layton enrolled in classes at Austin Peay University in Clarksville, TN, in the fall of 2012. He pursued an Associate's Degree in Chemical Engineering Technology, which complimented his work experience at Luvata. Layton graduated from Austin Peay in the fall of 2011 with a 3.79 GPA. Armed with a college degree, Layton was ready to reenter the workforce. On January 2, 2012, Layton began working at the Division 5 Fabricators and Erectors in Russellville as operations manager.

"Without them I could never had done this. In these hard times they have been a God send."

–Bob Disch

### Eva Cline's Success Story

After 33 years at A O Smith in Scottsville, Eva Cline was overwhelmed to learn of the plant's decision to move operations overseas. After attending a Rapid Response meeting, the 55-year-old realized that she could make a new start through the TAA program. Eva enrolled at Western Kentucky University (WKU) in August 2009 seeking a degree to become an RN.

In December 2011, Eva graduated from WKU and then found employment at the Medical Center in Franklin as an RN. What seemed to be the worst of times turned out to be just what Eva needed to fulfill her dreams of getting a good education and a great job.

### Bob Disch's Success Story



Bob worked for a company for 25 years until it closed and moved to Mexico. About the same time as his last day of work, Bob's 88-year-old uncle was diagnosed with cancer for the fifth time. Bob spent the next eight months searching for work in a bad economy while being his

uncle's caregiver. When Bob's uncle passed away, the job market was still weak, so he decided to enroll in classes with the help of the TAA. Bob felt this was the last chance he would have to make a big difference in his career goals. Bob enrolled in classes at Gateway Community and Technical College where he earned two associate degrees, one in the electrical field and the other in energy. Bob says he was able to make it through those two years with support from his wonderful wife and daughter. In addition, he received help from the people at the One-Stop Career Center and the TAA program. "Without them I could never had done this," Bob said. "In these hard times they have been a God send." Bob says it was a great feeling walking to the podium to get his degree from the dean and knowing that he made the Dean's List all through school with a GPA of well over 3.5. He was the first one on his side of the family to get a college degree.

### Lisa McKenzie's Success Story



Lisa McKenzie worked at Autoliv in seat belt assembly for more than six years when the Madisonville plant closed and moved to Mexico. She went to the JobNet Career Center for assistance following a Rapid Response event held at the plant and decided to go back to school through the TAA program. In December 2011, Lisa graduated from Madisonville Community College with an Associate of Applied Science Degree in Business Administration.

Following graduation, due to a lack of work experience, she worked with the JobNet Career Center and completed an internship program. Through this program, she gained valuable work experience as a human resource clerk at Land O' Frost. Currently, Lisa is employed full time at Knight & Sons Monuments Company and credits the WKWIB staff with helping her start her new life.



### Jennifer Sonnier's Success Story

Jennifer Sonnier, production/assembly line worker with 10 years of experience, was laid off from General Motors (GM) in the fall of 2008. She previously worked at Guide in Monroe, LA, and took a transfer to the GM Shreveport plant for what she had believed would be a more secure position. The GM layoff turned out to be her second trade affected layoff in three years.

Presented with the uncertainty of transferring to another GM plant or even being called back to work at a later date, she decided to utilize the educational/training benefits of the TAA program and enroll in Northwestern State's two-year RN program.

Through the TAA program, she was able to successfully change careers and attain skills that are in demand. She graduated in May of 2012 and is currently working as an RN at Christus Schumpert Hospital.



"This is just the beginning. It's another door opening in our lives. I was very thankful for the opportunity to be able to do this."

–Nelda Budder

### East Central: Kathy Motley's Success Story



The TAA has been extremely beneficial to many people in the Shawnee area such as Kathy Motley, a 50-year-old female who found herself laid off from a \$16.50 an hour production job at TDK Ferrites after 25 years of service. Following the advice of former coworkers, Kathy decided to

attend school to become an aircraft mechanic at Gordon Cooper Technology Center's Aviation Maintenance Technology program. "I never attended any post-secondary training but I learned that I could go to school to be re-trained through a government program called TAA," according to Kathy, who was very active in obtaining a new TAA petition for TDK, since the original petition had expired.

In school, Kathy excelled in aviation training and was chosen the A.M. Tech of the Year for 2009-10 in the general class and was given a perfect attendance award. She was hired at Tinker Air Force Base as an airframe and power plant mechanic at a starting wage of \$19.35 per hour with full health benefits. Kathy now has a career that she loves and is looking forward to future opportunities.

Because of the training experience she enjoys sharing her knowledge with students. She volunteers two lunch hours a week tutoring an intern who is studying for FAA exams. On weekends she meets with aviation students at the Shawnee library to go over class material. She would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to Workforce Oklahoma for the tuition assistance and supportive services received which helped her to change her life.

### Northeast: Nelda Budder's Success Story



Nelda Budder stood silently at a plant meeting while the CEO of the North American Region announced that the plant would be closing permanently. The company, Labinal, would be moving the operations to Mexico. Four-hundred eighty-four employees stood in astonishment.

Some employees cried while others stood in shock. Some employees admitted they did not know what they would do if the plant closed.

Nelda was a group leader at Labinal. It was her job to not only teach, but also encourage her team. As they slowly made their way back to their designated areas, Nelda remained calm and encouraged her team.

"This is just the beginning," she said. "It's another door opening in our lives."

The plant closing opened a door for Nelda which allowed her to be able to complete a college degree in Business Administration through the TAA Program.

"I was very thankful for the opportunity to be able to do this," said Nelda.

Nelda's determination and faith played a big part in her success.

"Faith is always easy when things are going good," she said, "but it is even sweeter if we can remember it when things are a little bumpy. And, even though we can't see it, destiny, or God in my opinion, always knows what we need."

Nelda completed her degree in Business Administration and obtained a temporary position with the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission. She utilized her connections from Labinal to help

her successfully complete reports and information pertaining to the TAA Program in the Pryor, Oklahoma Workforce Center.

Six months later an opening was available at DESI for a resource specialist. Nelda applied and was hired.

“It’s amazing,” she said. “This is the same company that helped the Workforce Center to send me to school. I am now employed with DESI and am very happy to help others as they go down a similar path that I have already been down.”

Nelda’s compassion for the customers is empathetic. She understands how it feels to lose a job. She also understands how the available programs can help to create new career paths, new beginnings, and new journeys in life.



### Burlington Office: Brett’s Success Story



“I couldn’t have accomplished this without the help I received from The Vermont Department of Labor and the TAA Program.”

Brett lost his job in November 2009 at age 25 when the filament plant where he had worked for two and a half years closed its doors in Middlebury, VT. His previous job in woodcraft in 2006 had ended after a reduction in production forced the management to reduce the workforce. In the midst of a struggling economy, Brett lost two full-time jobs in three years due to no fault on his part.

Physically fit and eager to move on, Brett turned his energies into researching his local labor market. While looking for work, he discovered there were job openings for auto mechanics in his county. This occupation grabbed Brett’s attention; he recognized he had basic mechanical skills having worked as a machine operator at the filament plant. While he was discerning the next step to bridge the gap between unemployment and a new occupation, the Vermont Department of Labor announced that a TAA Petition had certified the workers of the plant where Brett had worked.

The TAA Program was the answer for Brett. He applied for TAA and was approved to participate in TAA in April of 2010. Brett enrolled in an automotive technology program at Vermont Technical College (VTC). Upon acceptance into the college he applied for Vermont grants and to participate in training under the TAA Program. Brett received

grants funds and was approved for TAA. He began his program in August of 2010. The program was not a piece of cake.

Brett worked very hard over two years attending two summer programs in Automotive Technology with VTC as part of his curriculum in addition to taking full-time classes for four semesters. His perseverance paid off. Successfully completing the two-year program, Brett graduated in May of 2012 with an Associate of Applied Science Degree in Automotive Technology.

The assistance Brett received through employment services and financial aid is credited to the VDOL, Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC), VDOL's Unemployment Division, and the federal programs of Trade Readjustment Assistance and Trade Adjustment Assistance.

Brett was hired immediately upon graduation and is working full time for Denecker Chevrolet in Vergennes, VT, as an automotive technician in training. He could not be happier. Today Brett will tell you, "I couldn't have accomplished this without the help I received from the VDOL and the TAA Program." What does Brett's employer say about him? "We are very happy to have Brett as part of our team." Congratulations Brett!

## Rutland Office: John's Success Story

"I started working with John in November 2009 when he was laid off from Specialty Filaments when the plant closed. John had worked as an extruding machine operator at Specialty Filaments. The long-range plan was for John to get a Bachelor's Degree in Accounting. We knew Specialty Filaments had applied for certification under TAA, but until the certification was approved we decided to enroll John in WIA as a dislocated worker.

In the spring of 2010, Specialty Filaments was certified for TAA. I enrolled John in TAA and continued to assist him with funding for tuition and also with living expenses with TRA once his regular unemployment insurance benefits were exhausted. John graduated from Castleton State College on May 20, 2012, with a Bachelor's Degree in Accounting. He is now working as a tax compliance accountant for the State of Vermont."





# WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT OTHER WORKFORCE SYSTEM PROGRAM SUCCESS STORIES



## Emmanuel Fitz's Success Story

Emmanuel Fitz was placed at the Department of Workforce Services in Newport on work experience during the ARRA summer program. After his work experience, he qualified to receive WIA assistance to continue his college education at UCA in Conway. During this time he received disability counseling to aide his learning challenges. After overcoming those challenges, his grades improved and he was named to the Dean's list. He was interviewed by KATV Channel 7 as football manager for UCA and was voted team captain of the football team. He graduated on December 17, 2011, with a Bachelor of Arts Degree. Soon after graduating, Emmanuel had two offers for employment, one with UCA and the other with the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services in Newport. He chose to take the job at DWS where he continues employment today and is very appreciative of WIA services that helped to make his endeavors possible.



## Mandy's Success Story

Mandy, a 26-year-old married mother of one, was a stay home mom until her husband was laid off from his aviation job. While Mandy was able to find part-time work earning minimum wage, she sought assistance from the Cowley Workforce Center because she knew she could not make up for her husband's lost income only working part time. Mandy saw nursing as a stable career and made it her employment goal. Mandy had an Associate's Degree, but not the technical skills needed to obtain self-sufficient employment in the health care industry. With funding from ARRA received by the Workforce Alliance in 2009, Mandy attended Cowley College and Wichita Area Technical College to obtain her LPN. Upon graduation, Mandy went to work for a local hospital in Winfield as an LPN earning \$13.06 per hour. She is now continuing her education with tuition assistance from her employer to become an RN.



## Gold Card Veteran's Future Looks Brighter: Josh's Success Story

Josh, a Gold Card veteran, served four years in the U.S. Marines before he received an honorable discharge from the military. He had a wife and newborn baby. Looking to provide a decent income for them, he enrolled in college but soon discovered that it was not for him. He suddenly found himself jobless, homeless, and divorced.

When Josh came to the SuperJobs Center One-Stop (Area 13 – Hamilton County), he was behind in his child support and had no valid driver's license. He met with Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) Freddie Joyner and told him that his goal was to re-enlist into the military. Josh had already tried to re-enlist in the Marines but found he had waited too long and was no longer eligible. Joyner was able to set up an appointment for Josh to meet with a U.S. Army recruiter. The recruiter met with Josh and told him that he was eligible for the Army's Special Forces.

However, two barriers stood in Josh's way of signing his Army contract. He had a pending misdemeanor case and still did not have a driver's license. Joyner referred him to Legal Aid, and his Army recruiter wrote a letter to the judge explaining Josh's intent to return to the military. Joyner also helped him to secure housing through Goodwill, find a part-time job as a security guard, and obtain a bicycle to get to work.

Although Josh has yet to return to the military, the future is looking brighter for him. He has a valid driver's license and is paying his child support. Once Josh finishes paying the court costs resulting from his misdemeanor, he will be free to re-enlist.



## Eric Giles' Success Story



Eric Giles, a married father of two children, struggled just to find and keep work due to the fall of the economy. As companies were downsizing Eric was among those who had lost his job due to a reduction in force. As Eric struggled to find work, his family and their

lifestyle suffered. He felt hopeless and, with great hesitation, eventually was forced to enroll in assistance programs to help support the needs of his family, which made Eric feel worthless. Knowing he had to search for a way to better his situation he felt that going back to college to gain a degree in the field of his interest was the best way to solve his issue. Eric then enrolled in college. With no thoughts of how he was going to pay for his schooling, the only thing he was sure of is that it was the right thing to do. Stumbling upon information regarding the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act while searching the internet for some form of hope and financial assistance, a contact name of Kristi Fritz, case manager, and her number as the representative who was very instrumental in Eric's career success. Eric quickly enrolled and began attending Oklahoma State University's Construction Technology High Voltage Electricity program. This is where Eric's journey began as he describes his adventure in becoming a self-sufficient member of society.

"Kristi Fritz was diligent in providing me with the tools needed for this program to become a success. She assessed my needs, encouraged me, praised me, and pushed me when I was apprehensive. She even helped me find an internship, which was a huge support to me as I encountered a 'kink' with a college professor who was affecting my success in the program and challenging the support I was assured I would receive for my family. Oklahoma Employment Security Commission's Workforce Specialist, Gretchen Evans, was also

a great source of support during this time with the many questions of Unemployment requirements.

With the help and support of this program and these two amazing ladies, I graduated from OSUIT-Okmulgee with an Associate's Degree in Construction Technology with honors on December 14, 2010. My daughter was there to watch me walk across that stage and receive my degree. It was a moment that I will never forget. Today I am employed at Grand River Dam Authority in the field of my degree. I now have an income to support my family as well as the health insurance coverage that they need and deserve. I no longer need the support of others and have become an independent productive part of society. What a great feeling! It is the programs such as the WIA that enable individuals to better each community. I will be forever grateful to all who helped me make this mission possible for me and my family."



## SOUTH CAROLINA

### Veterans Gold Card Initiative: Ricardlo Johnson's Success Story

Ricardlo Johnson, a 24-year-old recently separated veteran from the United States Marine Corps, walked into the SC Works Sumter Center with his Gold Card looking to find employment. He received one-on-one intensive services from the SC Department of Employment and Workforce Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Specialist Keisha Bolden. During his assessment he was given labor market information for the Sumter and Charleston areas. At the time of his assessment he was without a working résumé. He was immediately scheduled to come in so that they could work together to highlight his experience and transferable skills. During a follow up call with Mr. Johnson, he stated that he was employed full time with Thompson Industrial as a contractor with Caterpillar working as a Production Technician.



## Texas Veterans Leadership Program's Success Story

Texas is one of four states selected to receive a \$750,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Labor to work on a joint project with the U.S. Department of the Army to assist soldiers in obtaining employment when they separate from the service. Texas Veterans Leadership Program (TVLP) has taken the lead in the development and implementation of a plan for the enhanced outreach and employment services for ex-military claimants. The plan includes forming a leadership council composed of employers and human resources professionals, different state and federal agencies, veterans' service organizations, and community and faith-based organizations.

## Veterans: Success Stories

### Jesse's Success Story



Operation Iraqi Freedom veteran Jesse and his family sold everything they owned and moved from Washington state to Georgetown, Texas. Jesse felt he would have a better opportunity finding employment in Texas. A TVLP Veterans Resource and Referral Specialist (VRRS), Bob,

referred Jesse to several different employers with whom Bob had networked to build solid relationships. The veteran started working for one of these employers within three weeks of the referral. Bob also coordinated with the Veterans of Foreign Wars so the family could receive financial assistance to help pay rent and utilities and coordinated with the local food bank for the family to receive food until Jesse received his first pay check. Unfortunately, the office environment with that employer did not work out for Jesse. Realizing

that Jesse needed a different work environment, Bob coordinated with the human resources director of a contractor with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Within a month, Bob was able to place Jesse with his second job. To date, Jesse has helped TVLP in getting five more veterans hired by the contractor.

### Denise's Success Story



Denise, the Houston, Texas VRRS, has been instrumental in working with the Texas Medical Center to develop a veterans hiring initiative. Denise assisted in the planning and coordination of a Veteran's only hiring event with the Texas Medical Center in June 2012 and outreached

other veteran organizations in the Houston area, including Texas Veterans Commission's (TVC's) employment services representatives. The hiring event was a great success with nearly 300 veterans attending. Since April 2012, Denise has been working directly with the human resources directors of the 14 hospitals that comprise the Texas Medical Center. Through her efforts and collaboration, 249 veterans have been hired by the Texas Medical Center.

### Ivan's Success Story



The Laredo, Texas VRRS, Gabriel, assisted Operation Enduring Freedom Veteran Ivan in obtaining employment with a major oil company. Ivan developed post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) during his second month on the job. The PTSD episodes began to occur on a daily basis

and led to management and coworkers becoming concerned for his well-being. The employer contacted Gabriel for assistance. Gabriel trained and worked with the employer's human resources department and the veteran's supervisor. Gabriel also coordinated with local community resources for Ivan to receive the treatment he needed. Through Gabriel's efforts, Ivan was able to return to work.



# VERMONT

## Workforce Education and Training Fund, Village of Johnson: Tim Percy's Success Story



The VDOL administers the Workforce Education and Training Fund (WETF) with money appropriated each year by the Vermont legislature. Funded through Act 46/Next Generation legislation, the WETF has trained hundreds of new and incumbent workers over the last several years.

One fine example of WETF dollars in action is the grant awarded to the Village of Johnson. The Village had hired a temporary employee, Tim Percy, in its facilities and maintenance department. However, the Village needed to fill a higher level position that included skilled line maintenance work. The full cost of training a worker in line maintenance is very high and thus the Village sought additional funding to enable the training to occur. An application was submitted to the WETF, and the Village was awarded a \$4000 grant. The grant paid approximately half the cost to send Tim to a line maintenance school in Rhode Island. Tim is now entering his second year of a registered apprenticeship and will receive progressive wage increases as his knowledge and skills progress.

The Village of Johnson's experience illustrates the power of the WETF to raise the skills and wages of Vermont's workforce. The Village was able to train an individual for a difficult-to-fill position and Tim is well on the way to a high-paying position in electrical line maintenance.







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