

W.I.B.

(WORKFORCE INNOVATION BOARD) of LWIA #15

Serving the counties of: Fulton, Marshall, Mason, McLean, Peoria, Stark, Tazewell and Woodford

MINUTES

WIB ZOOM Board Meeting Wednesday, May 14th, 2025 12:00 (noon) to 1:30 pm (approx.)

ZOOM: <https://zoom.us/j/92329456690?pwd=b7jV1KtPOeMeQD4j0UTl0ogarWWEvn.1>

Meeting ID: 923 2945 6690 Passcode: 385651

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I. Roll Call and Introductions of NEW Board Members – WIB Vice Chairman, Steve Timmermann assumed as Acting Chair for the 1st ten minutes of the meeting, beginning by opening the meeting at 12:01 pm with roll call.

Board Members Present: *Rebecca Brennan (Lifelong Access), Mark DeKeersgieter (CIRBN), Tami Foley (MCCA), Lori Johnson (Peoria Goodwill), **WIB Chair**, Sam Lewis (Pridestaff) (10 minutes late), David Maroon (Plumbers Local 63), Todd Mundorf (NRG, Pekin, IL), Karol Nova (IDHS/Dept. of Rehab. Services), Arnitria Shaw (ICC), **WIB Vice-Chair**, Steve Timmermann (Bank of Pontiac), John Whalen (Midwest Region Laborers Union) LEDC (Laborers' Economic Development Corporation) and David White (Connect-Transit).*

Board Members Absent: *Zach Bell (ALCAST Company), Brian Ford (Facet Tech), Luke Gruden (Mahoney Crouch & Mahoney Ins.), John Hubert (CAT), Jeffrey Inman (GPEDC), Bill Lawrence (PLR Insurance), John Lutostanski (Zentech), Curt Oldfield (SRC), Rick Pearce (Heartland C.C.), Brian Plath (Wayfinder LLC), Mike Shrier (Excalibur Seasoning), Steve Stewart (Morton Industries), Kim Stewart (Carle Care), and Jody Wanless (IDES).*

Career Link Staff: *Steve Martin (Executive Director), Dena Weth (Assistant Director), LeeAnn Norris (Fiscal Director), David Vaughn (Technical Specialist/Planner/EO officer), Kelly Schapmire (Program Manager), David Taylor (Systems Manager/Performance Manager), Tony Jones (McLean Co. Business Service Rep) and Michael Burress (Peoria Co. Business Service Rep).*

Guests: *Warren Cheatham (One Stop Center Manager), Terry Bitner (IDES), Nora Harrison (B/N EDC), Chris Kendall (Perfect Peoria), Shayne Miller (IDHS-Voc. Rehab. Services), Alisa Ndorongo-Fall (VRC @ BlmgtN DRS office), Khrystyna Sanborn (HCC), Melissa Simmons (IDHS-Voc. Rehab), and Johanna Wagner (Goodwill).*

II. *ACTION ITEM: Approval of (T) February 11, 2025 ZOOM WIB Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Mark DeKeersgieter and seconded by Tami Foley to approve the (W) February 11, 2025 ZOOM WIB Meeting Minutes as presented. Motion carried.

III. Participant Spotlight – Kelly Schapmire, Program Manager (Participant, Hillary)

Program Manager, Kelly Schapmire had the honors of sharing a success story through the General Revenue Funds Grants. When Career Link received the General Revenue Funds, a partnership was developed with Moonlight Coalition of Peoria, IL. Moonlight held employability skills workshops beginning in Jan. 2025. In addition to the employability skills workshops, work-experience was also an option for some of the students. Today, Kelly will be sharing the success story of one of those participants who went through these workshops and is currently employed.

*Hillary Nyabera, a new U.S. citizen from Kenya, has made remarkable strides since starting his job at Sophia's Kitchen (*Peoria, IL) shortly after his citizenship on January 25, 2025. Initially, he faced challenges due to language barriers and adjusting to the American workplace, but Hillary's dedication and hard work have transformed his experience. His supervisor has taken notice of his progress and is actively working to keep him on beyond the program's end in June, recognizing his potential and strong work ethic. Thankful for the opportunity, Hillary consistently expresses his gratitude and emphasizes the significance of his paycheck, which he sends back home to support his family in Kenya. His journey exemplifies the positive impact of job training programs on immigrants seeking to establish a better life for themselves and their loved ones.*

Acting Chairman, Steve Timmermann expressed that this was a great success story and hopefully Hillary will be able to continue on after the Moonlight program/Work Experience program ends on June 30, 2025 when the Grant ends, and that he will remain employed.

IV. **ACTION ITEM: Approval of One Stop Operator Agreement (Partner Consortium)* Executive Director, Steve Martin

Executive Director, Steve Martin stated that every four years, the One Stop Operator Contract is up. An RFP is submitted for those to bid on the contract. Steve reported that Career Link responded to the advertisement for an RFP Proposal for the One Stop Operator. WIB 'Executive Board' Chairman, Sam Lewis, received only one (1) Proposal. He presented it to the other Executive Board members. Each Board member rated the Proposal. On April 16, 2025, the Executive Board unanimously awarded the Contract to the One Stop Center Consortium of LWIA #15; Adult Literacy and Education from ICC, IDES (IL Dept. of Employment Services), Career Link and the Dept. of Human Services Vocational Rehab. This is the same Consortium that was awarded the Contract for the last four years. This is the Consortium that will be the One Stop Operator for LWIA #15 from July 01 2025 through June 30, 2029 (four years). Steve submitted the One Stop Operator Agreement that the four Core Partners have signed.

A motion was made by Carol Nova and seconded by John Whalen to approve the One Stop Operator Agreement (Partner Consortium). Motion carried.

V. Updates by Four Core Partners – One Stop Operator Manager, Warren Cheatham

OSO (One Stop Operator) Manager, Warren Cheatham provided an overview of his role as the One Stop Operator Manager. He stated that he oversaw the long process of revising the *RESOURCE GUIDE* Booklet. It has gone to the printer and he will be distributing this RESOURCE GUIDE to the Partners to distribute this booklet, that will be used towards both the staff and potential participants/customers. He emphasized that this update opportunity is to provide to the WIB members, the various roles of the Core Partners and of the One Stop Operator. Warren reminded the WIB's (Board of Directors) of their dual responsibilities, emphasizing that they have direct oversight of Career Link and the broader system, involving partner organizations. This why there are so many items on the Agenda dealing with Career Link itself. But the WIB Board also has an overall responsibility for the system as a whole which includes all of the partner organizations. When Congress created the One Stop Operator, both the Operator and the four-core partners became a steering committee that should guide everyone through the WIOA laws and its process.

- IDES (IL Dept. Employment & Security) Rep, Terry Bitner spoke on behalf of Regional Manager, Jody Wanless. He stated that a few months back, they spoke to Sarah Jolin with SCSEP (Senior Community Service Employment Program). They are working to get a Greeter Position filled at the One-Stop Center. This will be ongoing to fill this position.
- IL Central College, Vice President of Workforce and Diversity, Arnitria Shaw (ICC) reported that there have been changes at ICC. She shared that starting on (M) May 19, 2025 there will be a new Dean of College and Career Readiness; Sandy Erquain (sp). She was previously employed at ICC as the Trio-Upward bound Director and also she was with the Community Services area at Neighborhood House and served as an interim CEO. Arnitria invites anyone who needs to contact her to feel free to. The enrollments are backed to pre-covid numbers and rising! The options of being able to do Adult Ed via Hybrid or in-person, has opened up some opportunities for students, especially for those were concerned about child-care or being able to make their way to the ICC campus.
- DHS/Dept. of Voc & Rehab., Karol Nova stated that at this time they are trying to finish up the Graduates for this month and seeing how to proceed with enrolling them into school or employment. The end of the Fiscal year is near and there are some policy changes coming through and extra training is being provided.
- Warren suggested that at least once a year the WIB Board should meet at least once per year as this would be valuable. Steve stated that the Labor hall in Peoria, IL for maybe the August or the November meeting. If any of the Board members would like to share or report on regarding programs or workshops, these can be shared at any time and add it to the Agenda. Sam Lewis expressed that having the WIB board meeting in-person would be very good to have. Rebecca Brennan with Lifelong Access, stated that meeting in person would be a good thing and their facility could provide a large conference room to meet in-person if needed. She also reported that Lifelong Access has a new CEO, Karl Kopp beginning in June 2025 at Lifelong Access. Also Arnitria Shaw stated that there may be ample meeting space at ICC East Peoria or Peoria for the next WIB in-person meeting.

VI. Rivian Career Pathways – Executive Director, Steve Martin

Executive Director, Steve Martin stated that Career Link, LWIA #15 (8 County Area) , as well as LWIA #19 (Macon County Livingston County (Decatur & DeWitt) and LWIA #17 (Champaign County) were contacted by DCEO and RIVIAN to form an alliance in their recruitment needs. Heartland C.C. has written for a Grant using General Revenue funds and they are going to create a Career Pathways Program for RIVIAN. Out of that, the three LWIAs (15, 17 and 19) are going to help with recruitment and marketing and trying to get participants or people to apply with RIVIAN or applying for these Career Pathways Programs. The plan for now is to conduct job fairs for RIVIAN and other EV sector employers, refer individuals to the program regardless of WIOA eligibility and share information about the program on websites and in offices. The LWIAs will also provide funding in support to participants who meet our eligibility guidelines for WIOA. Steve stated that both he and the Assistant Director, Dena Weth, met with two representatives from RIVIAN; Hugh Shadeed and Amy Fitzgerald. Hugh has been conducting the liaison for RIVIAN and contacting and setting up meetings with DCEO and Heartland C.C., etc. Steve talked with RIVIAN about getting a better focus on how they want the LWIAs to assist them. RIVIAN stated that they are considering a program for Manufacturing Pathways which is somewhat of a 'pre-hire' program. Example, if there were a cohort of people who are interested in employment with RIVIAN, then the three LWIAs would set up this 'Manufacturing Pathways' curriculum that they could take. This would send a message to RIVIAN that these potential employees are a more seriousness candidate, than someone who hasn't gone through this pathways training. This is manufacturing skills foundations, road-base instruction, soft skills, is all included in this Manufacturing Pathways program. This is in the infancy stages and there are many discussions to have in the near future. Steve and Dena, both were surprised that Steve had mentioned that the 1-E grant was going to be written for RIVIAN for Career Link to fund Incumbent workers. But it was discovered that RIVIAN had 40 people already attending Heartland C.C. for industrial technology and various E-V technologies, various certification classes and they were being funded through an E-Tip grant that RIVIAN was using. On the flip-side of that, the more there were talks, RIVIAN stated that they wished they had known sooner, about the Incumbent Worker program offered by Career Link because they would have used it and saved RIVIAN a lot of money. Now RIVIAN well aware of the Incumbent Worker program. But Career Link's Business Service Reps tried to educate RIVIAN about these Programs that Career Link offers but the turn around of new staff at RIVIAN caused this information to slip through the cracks over the years. Steve is excited about moving along with RIVIAN for the future. Tami Foley with MCCA stated that they work with RIVIAN and the next-step program pays for classes at Heartland to work at RIVIAN. Tami offered to join Steve at any future meetings. Steve thanked Tami for her offer.

VII. *ACTION ITEM: RFP for In-School Dropout Prevention programs - Planner/Technical Specialist, David Vaughn

Career Link is seeking the Board's approval to award sub-contracts for the Dropout Prevention programs. These programs are designed to support high school juniors and seniors in successfully graduating and transitioning into employment or post-secondary education. In November of 2024 the board authorized the procurement process by a RFP. In February 2025, Career Link issued the RFP through Public Notices and regional distributions at high schools and alternative schools. Following the submission deadline, a committee of Career Link staff, evaluated five eligible proposals from Bloomington Area Career Center, Havana High School, McLean Regional Alternative School, Midwest Central High School and Stark County High School. Based on the committee's ratings, Career Link recommends the top four proposals, in order of their scores, depending on the availability of program year 2025 Youth funds. The proposals are ranked as follows: #1 - McLean Regional Alternative School, #2- Havana High School, #3 - Bloomington Area Career Center and #4 - Midwest Central High School. Stark County High School's proposal did not meet the minimum scoring requirement for funding consideration. Career Link expects to be notified of the WIOA allocation in June 2025. With the WIB Board approval, upon Career Link receiving notification of their Youth allocation, the selected four sub-contractors would be awarded a one-year contract, starting on July 01, 2025, with an option to extend for two additional one-year periods.

A motion was made by Dave White and seconded by Mark DeKeersgieter to approve the selected four sub-contractors of McLean Regional Alternative School, Havana High School, Bloomington Area Career Center and Midwest Central High School to be awarded a one-year contract, starting on July 01, 2025, with an option to extend the contracts for two additional one-year periods, upon Career Link receiving notification of their Youth allocation. Motion carried.

VIII. Update on Youth programs including results of RFP for In-school dropout Prevention programs -

Planner/Technical Specialist, Dave Vaughn and Assistant Director, Dena Weth

Assistant Director, Dena Weth provided the below 2024-2025 Youth Providers Report.
Youth Sub-contracted programs are awarded through a Request for Proposal process.

In-School Youth Programs: 3rd year of grant cycle started on July 1, 2024 and ends June 30, 2025.

These programs are designed to prevent At-Risk Youth from dropping out of high school. Each high school sets up a special for-credit class/program for At-Risk WIOA eligible participants. Students receive academic support for their regular classes, guidance towards post-secondary training, mentoring and employability skills training.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1. Bloomington Area Career Center | 3. McLean County Regional Alternative School |
| 2. Havana High School | 4. Midwest Central High School |

RFP was released in February 2025.

New funding year begins on July 1, 2025. Five ISY (In-School Youth) proposals were submitted and rated. Rankings based on highest scores obtained include:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. McLean Regional Alternative School | 4. Midwest Central High School |
| 2. Havana High School | 5. Stark County #100 (didn't meet minimum score to be considered for funding) |
| 3. Bloomington Area Career Center | |

Out of School Youth Programs: 1st year of grant cycle started on July 1, 2024 and ends on June 30, 2025.

These programs target youth who have dropped out of high school. In addition to working towards their GED, the youth are exposed to career exploration, soft skills review, post-secondary opportunities, mentoring and job readiness skills training. Some students enroll in a College level program (ICAPS) while working on obtainment of their GED.

Examples of Post-secondary programs include:

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| • Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) or Welding. | • Illinois Central College |
| • Black Hawk College | • Peoria Park District |
| • Heartland Community College | • Spoon River College |

Transitional Youth Programs: 1st year of grant cycle started on July 1, 2024 and ends on June 30, 2025.

These Programs are partnered with the GED Recovery Contractors. Emphasis is placed on the Transitional staff developing a positive working relationship with youth from the beginning stages of entering the GED Program through Exit. Once Exited, youth are followed for a 1-year period.

- Peoria Goodwill- Illinois Central College
- Peoria Park District
- Spoon River College
- Western Avenue Community Center- Heartland Community College
- Blackhawk College- No transitional grant assistance at this time

Work Experience opportunities are offered for both In and Out of School Youth. The Youth can work up to 29 hours per week and up to 1800 hours or 18 months-whichever occurs first.

Hourly wage change-approved by WIB on Oct. 2021

Approval for hourly wage to be determined utilizing business input- regarding similar position/wage within the company. Wages for Work Experience/Internships will be determined based on a scale system-low end will be minimum wage (currently \$15) an hour up to (\$20) an hour. In instances where hourly wage exceeds \$20 an hour, participant will only be eligible to receive \$20 an hour (top end of scale).

Internal Monitoring of Programs: Currently ongoing Sub-contractors are monitored to ensure that the program elements are being adhered to regarding: program objectives, enrollment numbers, incentive distribution, attendance/recordkeeping and delivery of 14 Youth elements. Continuation of 3-year funding cycle is dependent on Compliance of contract.

IX. JTED Home Illinois Grant – Planner/Technical Specialist, David Vaughn

Career Link Planner, David Vaughn, discussed the JTED (Job Training & Economic Development) grant which was awarded to Career Link. It is aimed at assisting homeless individuals in Peoria, IL with housing and employment resources. David Vaughn emphasized the program's personalized approach and the collaboration with local partners. He stated that this program year, in partnership with Phoenix Community Development Services and the Home for All Continuum of Care, Career Link received JTED (Job Training and Economic Development) grant funds through the State's Home Illinois Workforce Pilot program. Career Link was awarded \$840,000 for an 18 month implementation phase. As June 30, 2025 approaches, this will end the first of a two-year grant.

Career Link role is as grant recipient and fiscal agent, and are also responsible for all grant reporting to the State. Phoenix Community and Home for All are responsible for the day-to-day implementation the direct services to the customers in the program. The pilot program has focused on the goal of equipping homeless individuals in the Greater Peoria area with the necessary resources and assistance to help them secure immediate and long-term housing and sustainable employment opportunities. According to a Home for All continuum of care point of contact survey, conducted in January of 2025, there were 635 people that were experiencing homelessness in Peoria County, Tazewell County, Woodford County and Fulton County, including adults and children, emergency shelters, transitional housing and unsheltered. The Emergency shelter capacity is 614, that is; non-seasonal, non-domestic violence, emergency shelter beds and seasonal temporary emergency shelters. The implementation phase of this program, began in January 2025 and as of May 05, 2025, the Home Illinois Program has served 30 individuals. The project goal is to serve up to 60 clients, by June 30, 2026, offering fully customized services tailored to each individual's needs. All 30 participants enrolled, to date, have received comprehensive support including an introduction to available workforce services, career counselling, resume development and assistance with obtaining necessary identification. While not all participants required help in securing identification, Phoenix Community Service staff, insured that every individual's employment documentation was reviewed and verified. The programs, career counseling and resume preparation efforts are designed to help participants reduce employment barriers and effectively connect their work history to future opportunities. For example, when working with clients who rely on public transportation, job coaches assist in reviewing bus routes and schedules to ensure they can reliable meet work shift requirements. For individuals with criminal background, job coaches provide guidance on seeking opportunities with fair chance employers helping positioning them for long term success. In addition to employment focused services, the Workforce program offers a range of educational services, including cohere-basics classes, to digital illiteracy, enrollment support for GED programs and access to vocational certifications such as fork-lift operation, all aimed at enhancing their skill employability. Board member, Tami Foley asked about this program and its funding for McLean County. David Vaughn stated that Home for All continuum for care approach Career Link about applying for the Grant and also Home Sweet Home. After meeting with the Executive Director at HSH and he selected to not participate in this grant. Tami asked for the future to include the lead in the COC as there are permanent supportive housing etc. This will be addressed for the future decisions.

X. Overview of GRF (General Revenue Funded) Program Updates – Planner/Technical Specialist, David Vaughn & Assistant Director, Dena Weth

Career Link Planner, David Vaughn stated that the past two years, the Illinois General Assembly has allocated supplemental workforce funds to all local workforce areas. Career Link's share this year is approximately \$230K. As of July of 2014, Career Link submitted a detailed workplan to DCEO for approval explaining funding use. The workplan was given final approval in Dec. 2024, which includes two projects. As stated at the last WIB board meeting, Career Link contributed approximately \$3K of these funds to support the 2024 Discover Manufacturing event and were reimbursed ICC after the fact, for some of their expenses. Kelly Schapmire referred, earlier today; when presenting her Participant Spotlight story, the employability skills program by Peoria Park District's Moonlight Coalition. The employability skills program supports the Adult students and the graduates of their GED program. Moonlight has recruited 88 participants, so far, with 75 already enrolled and served through job readiness workshops, personalized job search support and barrier reduction services, including financial incentives, transportation assistance, on-sight child care and food baskets to the participants. Career Link's goal is to serve at least 80 individuals. Moonlight has another session of workshops scheduled, which should serve around another 15 to 20 individuals, therefore, Career Link fully expects to exceed the enrollment goal by the Grant end date of June 30, 2025. A key component to the program is providing work experience up to 24 individuals. This is where candidates gain practical skills at local businesses, similar to the Participant success story that was presented to the Board earlier today. Career Link serves as the

Employer of Record while the business is the worksite supervisor, providing support and guidance to the participant. To date, Career Link has successfully placed 15 participants in part-time positions in business like Peoria River-Plex, Peoria Friendship House, Sophia's Kitchen, SliceHub Pizzeria and Peoria Park District. Although Career Link is on track to meet the overall enrollment goals, the late approval date in Dec. 2024, affected the initial plans with an anticipated October start date, where the workplans were submitted in July, allowing a three-month delay, but the December approval pushed back recruitment for participants and work experience sights. This has created challenges in expending the designated work experience funding, before June 30, 2025. Career Link has struggled with placing individuals in work experience jobs, several participants have struggled with attendance, some simply stopped showing up for work. The difficulty between finding participants and the delayed start date, made it difficult. Career Link continues working with Moonlight to add more opportunities to enroll simply more individuals in the employability skills. Moonlight is getting ready for another round of the job readiness workshops and plan to enroll approximately 15 to 20 more individuals.

Assistant Director, Dena Weth stated that this has been a huge learning experience for everyone and in the future this program may benefit from having one-on-one assistance; more job coaches hired for each individual. Some workers who started didn't even last a day. The problem doesn't lie with obtaining a job position, but it lies with the retention of the job regardless of them going through the workshops, they still do not possess the fortitude to know what is expected of them, and of the employer; trying to knock down the barriers. The area is referred to as a 'Food Desert' at this point, Dena feels that Career Link & Moonlight did things really, really well, such as offering the Food Baskets for individuals. This will be the third round of helping out a lot of the participants who are struggling and Career Link is trying to identify how to get more money in everyone's pockets. All participants will have bus passes available so that they will not have to use the meager \$40 that they earn, to pay for their own transportation, especially for such a short period of time in the work experience program. These are just some lessons that will help with working with the regular populations one on one. Dena expressed that there is an option if there are additional Adult funds; in the past RFPs have been done for a non-traditional grant, so there is the possibility of trying to build upon this program; if funding isn't cut. This would be carrying on and utilizing things of the population and the various areas in the eight counties that Career Link serves.

Steve Martin remind the board that the General Revenue funds were not accessible a few years ago to the LWIAs throughout the state. Now they do. If they have projects, they are proposed to the State and a decision is made by DCEO as to whether or not they will fund it. In that past, for example, there were programs like 'Career Spark' which is catered to high schoolers or 'Discover Manufacturing', but now with these General Revenue funds available, Career Link is now able to fund them each year. It also allows for a lot of mobility on how these funds are spent, where the need is not there to adhere to WIOA and performance measures, etc. These General Revenue funds are available to all of the LWIAs now and it is a welcome sight. All the funds that are requested, do have to be spent, and report on them and are held accountable what is spent but not under any measures and other funding under WIOA eligibility.

David Vaughn stated that there are still a lot of guidelines, that DCEO gives us, in order to design the workplans that are submitted and they want to definitely want to see the results of individuals finding employment during the year, immediately.

XI. Budget Recap – Fiscal Director, LeeAnn Norris



3-31-25 Report with
fall.xlsx

Fiscal Director, LeeAnn Norris provided the attached report to the Board members & guests. WIB chairman, Sam Lewis expressed that he is very impressed and felt very positive of her excellent skills with working with Fiscal and Auditors, etc.

XII. Audit Report – Fiscal Director, LeeAnn Norris

*This line item should have been removed from the Agenda as this was reported at the last meeting.

XIII. Performance Report – Performance Manager, David Taylor

Performance Report – May 2025

Update on Clients Served and Exited between PY '23: 7/1/2023 - 6/30/2024

ADULTS

117 low-income adults were exited

86% earned a credential - goal was **76%**

Credentials included **32** Associate Degrees, **25** Bachelor Degrees, Occupational highlights: **61** nurses (39 RN's and 22 LPN's)

91% were working in the 2nd quarter of follow-up – goal was **82%**

\$1,331,096 - combined earning in that 2nd Qtr

\$12,815 -Median 2nd Qtr earnings – goal was **\$8,600** **89%** working in 4th Qtr [1/1/23 – 12/30/23] **goal 81%**

Fun Facts: We fund the training of many nurses (LPNs and RNs.) Last year we had 10 each gross over **\$80,000** in their first year of work. This included a Peoria County/LPN graduate of ICC, who grossed 87K.

(The general public might be shocked to learn that an LPN, working in a nursing home, can earn as much and often more than a RN with a Bachelor's degree working in a hospital.)

Most of the students in nursing training are female, but we do occasionally fund men in healthcare programs. Last year we had a male client (married with 3 kids on SNAP) graduate from ICC's RN program. He got a good job at OSF and is presently on-track to make over **\$100,000** in his first year of work. We suspect he working a lot of hours, but with above-average income he will be able to greatly help his family.

DISLOCATED WORKERS

11 Dislocated Workers were exited

91% earned an industry-recognized credential – goal was **79%**

Highlights include: 3 Bachelor Degrees, 3 Associate Degrees & 2 CDLs

91% were working in the 2nd Quarter of follow-up – goal was **83%**

\$11,801 - Median 2nd Qtr earnings – goal was **\$9,200** **96%** working in 4th Qtr [PY '23: 1/1/23 – 12/30/23] – **goal 81%**

Fun Fact: Our top wage earner was from Tazewell County. She was laid off from a manufacturing facility, at age 45, and decided to change industries. She earned an LPN credential after graduating from ICC and grossed **\$62,741** in her first year of work. She loves the new job and has no fear of being laid-off again.

YOUTH

136 Youth (age 16 -24) were exited

77% earned a credential – goal was **72%**

Youth clients, however, have to work or attend post-secondary for their credential to count

At this time, **75%** have a countable credential. We could pick-up a couple more.

Credential highlights – **40** GEDs, **58** HS Diplomas, **8** Post-secondary credentials

86% were working or in college in the 2nd Qtr of follow-up – goal was **76%**

\$516,315 - cumulative earnings in the 2nd Qtr

\$4,927 - Median earnings and our goal was **\$3,500**

90% working in the 4th Qtr [PY '23: 1/1/23 – 12/30/23] – goal **72.5%**

Fun Fact: The top youth wage earner was a Stark County youth, who was 19 when we enrolled her. She earned a BSN from Methodist College and grossed **\$61,000** in her first year of work

Preliminary Notes about PY '24 (7/1/24 – 6/30/2025)

Since our clients have done so well the last few years, when Steve and I negotiated our new goals (PY '24 & PY '25) with the state, we were forced to agree to raise a majority of our performance measures. At this time, we have a half of a year (July–Dec) of data collected. As a result, I am optimistic we are on track to at least meet the higher goals.

Adults: In 2024, we did have a higher than typical number of low-income adults leave their college training without a credential. The reasons are varied, but the healthy job market has enabled most to return to full-time work. We were excited to celebrate 20 more nurses graduate in December 2024. Most are now licensed and are starting new jobs. Once they are done being served, their success will significantly boost our outcomes. So far, those who earned a credential are doing well, and in fact we have several on track to earn over \$90,000 in their first year of work.

Dislocated Workers: Number of applicants is up, but the good job market is still keeping the number of laid-off workers seeking training low.

Youth: During negotiation with the state last year, we learned that our 8-county area serves a much higher percentage of youth in GED programs than other workforce areas. Some on the board will recall that last year, I reported that our youth had a higher than normal drop-out rate. Changes we implemented must be working, because I am seeing a decline in the number of dropouts. That being said, youth who earn a credential, must work or attend post-secondary training in follow-up for their credential to count. At this time, we have an uncomfortable number of teens who are not yet working or attending more training. As you may know, this can be a challenging group to motivate. In addition, a majority of our working youth clients are not working full-time. Some are full-time college students, but this makes meeting wage goals a challenge. One solution is double down on efforts to recruit more youth for post-secondary training that leads to higher wage positions.

Discussion:

WIB Board member, Mark DeKeersgieter asked if David Taylor could get the stats (regarding the accumulated wages and the average earner being above \$1.3M . . . are there stats on what the income was from the individuals were producing prior to being in the Career Link program.

David Taylor expressed that since these participants are low-income Adult group on this report so probably all of them were on 'SNAP' benefits. 'SNAP' was in the news today, the current administration in Washington DC would love to cut the 'SNAP' benefits, which is essentially 'FOOD STAMPS'. These low-income Adults are going from poverty to middle-class.

Mark D. stated then it is safe to say that they were probably all earning at a minimum \$40K or less; probably much less than that if they are on SNAP.

Steve Martin stated that they were earning much less than that, according to their family size, as well.

David Taylor said that for example, most of the nursing students are typically a single mom with two kids; and so low income for a family like that, is making less than \$26K annual.

Mark D. stated that Career Link pays for tuition, and supports, like child care, gas expense, etc. but a person has to look at the earnings the customers end up making after the training, this is one of the best returns on public tax dollars, out there.

David T. stated that education always pays off, even if they don't get a degree in highly demanded occupation, education just makes people better prepared in the workforce and it improves the quality of their family lives.

Mark D. stated that he appreciates all of this great information.

Steve Timmermann stated that it appears that there is a lot of training in the healthcare industry, but asked if Career Link still spending training funds on Welding apprenticeship and Truck Driving School training or have those areas falling off a bit.

David T. stated that, yes the funding is still there but there are NOT many calls or interest is not as common of any area of interest for individuals to want to go into that type of line of work when they can walk across the street and immediately get a job. Career Link does see applicants for Truck Driver and never falls off but it's certainly not as attractive of an industry as some of those health care jobs. There are people interested in Truck Driving school training until they see that over-the-road

means that they don't go home every night, and then there is all of the craziness on the roadways. A lot of people realize that they don't have the personality for it.

XIV. Business Services Rep. Reports {OJTs, IWTs, etc.} – Steve Martin on Business Rep status. Mike Burress

Executive Director, Steve Martin introduced Career Link's newest Business Service Representative, working out of the McLean County (Normal, IL) office and working with three other county areas of Fulton Co (Canton, IL), Mason Co. (Havana, IL) and Tazewell Co. (Pekin, IL) and also with RIVIAN. Welcome to Tony Jones.

Michael Burress is Career Link's other Business Service Representative, working out of the Peoria County (Peoria, IL) office as well as working with three other county areas of Stark Co. (Wyoming, IL) Woodford Co. (Eureka, IL) and Marshall Co. (Henry, IL). Michael reported referred to the General Revenue fund and those types of things. OJTs (On-the-Job) are coming along. The participants are supposed to stay with the employer for a year, once their 6 months training. IWT (which includes the apprenticeship program and leadership program. So far, there are eighteen continuing apprenticeships. There are five new CDL through IWT and should finish up in May. There are 10 new developed apprenticeships. There have been nine outreach events continuing to go out and collaborate and partner.

Chairman, Sam Lewis invited Tony Jones to reach out to him, VP Chair, Steve Timmermann or Mark DeKeersgieter or any of the Board that could assist with the various businesses and such.

XV. Public Comment

Executive Director, Steve Martin stated that the forms for Board recertification forms will be sent out to each WIB Board member in the next few weeks. These need to be completed and ready to send to the State by early fall. The FULL BOARD recertification is required every two years. This is not the same as Membership renewal.

The Membership renewal is when a WIB Board member's membership expires after three years of serving on the Board, and their membership has to be renewed.

As always, the composition of the WIB Board has to maintain a 51% Business Representative Membership, a 20% Labor Representative Membership and then, the rest are made up of the Agencies such as CBO, IDHS, Adult Lit, Econ. Development, IDES, etc.

Steve Martin expressed his gratitude and appreciation to each WIB Board member for their commitment to the LWIA #15 Board and the programs, the people and the businesses that are served each year.

Chairman, Sam Lewis expressed that he and Steve will be working towards have the next WIB Board meeting in person at a centrally located venue (*maybe with a hot dog roller, included. . . inside joke!* 😊)

XVI. *ACTION ITEM: Adjournment

A motion was made by Vice Chair, Steve Timmermann and seconded by Dave White to adjourn. Motion carried. Adjournment time: 1:23 PM

Respectfully submitted,

WIB Recording Secretary, Theresa Kotte, Executive Assistant
LWIA #15