

# Compendium:

NORTHEAST  
INDIANA  
WORKS



Board Newsletter, May 2020 (Steuben County Edition)

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Dear Board Members and Elected Officials:

All 11 WorkOne Northeast career centers are scheduled to reopen to the public by appointment only the week of June 8.

Customers in Allen County will be able to make appointments by calling the Fort Wayne center at 260.745.3555; customers in DeKalb, LaGrange, Noble, Steuben and Whitley counties can call the Auburn center at 260.925.0124, and customers in Adams, Grant, Huntington Wabash and Wells counties can call the center in Marion at 765.668.8911.

Hours and days of operation at the centers will be same as those posted before the pandemic. They can be found on Northeast Indiana Works' website at [https://www.neinworks.org/workone/locations-\(1\)](https://www.neinworks.org/workone/locations-(1))

People must continue to file for unemployment benefits online at [www.unemployment.in.gov](http://www.unemployment.in.gov).

Region WorkOne  
Centers Expected  
To Reopen the  
Week of June 8

Staff at the centers will practice extensive safety precautions and will encourage customers to also follow certain safety procedures. Staff will wear masks and face shields, adhere to social distancing, regularly wash and sanitize their hands, cover their mouths when coughing or sneezing, and avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth.

Customers will be asked to wear masks, if they have them, and will be encouraged to adhere to a social distancing protocol and practice hygiene measures once inside a center.

Staff and customers will be encouraged to self-screen. Any staff member or customer who has COVID-19 symptoms or an elevated temperature of 100.4 or greater will be asked not to enter a center.

All 11 centers underwent a thorough deep cleaning and will continue to be cleaned throughout the course of each day they're open.

WorkOne Northeast 's career centers have been closed to the public since March 24. Northeast Indiana Works administrative staff and WorkOne Northeast staff have continued working, mostly from home.

Tentative plans call for the centers to begin accepting walk-in customers the week of July 6.

"We have developed what we think is a responsible reopening plan that balances the need for safety and the employment-related needs of individuals and businesses," said **Edmond O'Neal**, president of Northeast Indiana Works. "Within the necessary constraints of the present situation, we are committed to serving as many people as possible in as timely a fashion as possible."

**More pandemic-related news on Pages 2, 3 and 4.**

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**Virtual Healthcare Job Fair Draws 691 Registrants:** Northeast Indiana Works and WorkOne Northeast, in conjunction with the Indiana Department of Workforce Development (DWD), conducted a virtual healthcare job fair April 22.

The fair included five healthcare providers, was in response to the significant continuing demand for healthcare workers in northeast Indiana, and was an ideal platform for employee recruitment during a time of social distancing. On average in a typical year, Northeast Indiana Works and WorkOne Northeast, working with community partners, arrange 250 in-person job fairs.

Participating in the virtual healthcare job fair were Adams Memorial Hospital, Cameron Memorial Community Hospital, Indiana University Health, Marion General Hospital and Parkview Health. Also participating was 3rd Congressional District U.S. Rep. **Jim Banks**, R-IN.

The virtual fair drew 691 registrants, which at the time was a record for virtual job fairs conducted in partnership with DWD. Of those, 256 attended the job fair. All registrants received a recording of the virtual fair.

Participating healthcare providers discussed selected job opportunities, which included positions at all levels, how to apply for those jobs, and answered questions from jobseekers.

“Even before the COVID-19 pandemic put considerable pressures on northeast Indiana’s healthcare providers, the industry had numerous open positions at all levels,” said **Rick Farrant**, director of communications for Northeast Indiana Works. “The virtual job fair, especially in light of virus-related restrictions, was a perfect way to address the industry’s needs, and DWD was a stellar partner in helping set up and carry out the event.”

**O’Neal Appointed to Federal Reserve Advisory Council:** Northeast Indiana Works’ president was appointed in March to the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago Advisory Council on Agriculture, Small Business and Labor.

Council members serve a two-year term and meet twice a year to provide their views on current business conditions to Chicago Fed President **Charles Evans** and other senior officials. Input from the advisory council on regional economic conditions contributes to the Federal Reserve System’s formulation of national monetary policy.

Council members generally represent private companies, labor organizations, academia, and banks throughout the Seventh Federal Reserve District, which encompasses the northern portions of Illinois and Indiana, southern Wisconsin, the Lower Peninsula of Michigan, and Iowa.

The Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago is one of 12 regional reserve banks that, along with the board of governors in Washington, D.C., make up the nation’s central bank. In addition to participation in the formulation of monetary policy, each reserve bank supervises member banks and bank holding companies, provides financial services to depository institutions and the U.S. government, and monitors economic conditions in its district.

In April, O’Neal was also a panelist during a weekly Fort Wayne UNITED live Facebook discussion. O’Neal talked about employment and career pathways.

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**JAG Students Earn Honors:** Five northeast Indiana programs and students won awards at the 12<sup>th</sup> annual Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) Career Development Conference May 8.

Originally scheduled in March, the conference was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and held virtually at the Indiana Government Center in downtown Indianapolis.

JAG, administered by the Indiana Department of Workforce Development, is a state-based, national non-profit organization that assists high school students with earning their diplomas. Fifteen chapters in northeast Indiana are overseen by Northeast Indiana Works and carried out by Brightpoint.

Winners from northeast Indiana were:

- **Alissa Bickerstaff**, Manchester High School, first place, career presentation
- **Zoey Ream** and **Elaine Shock**, Manchester High School, first place, entrepreneurship plan
- **Lauren Dunlap**, Ivy Tech Fort Wayne, second place, college success program
- DeKalb High School, third place, chapter marketing
- **Emily Eis**, DeKalb High School, honorable mention, outstanding senior

**Northeast Indiana Works Becomes Apprenticeship Intermediary:** Northeast Indiana Works has been approved as an apprenticeship intermediary by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL).

In that role, Northeast Indiana Works will work with employers to help them assess apprenticeship needs and explore options, including DOL registered apprenticeships.

**Unemployment Filings, Rates Soar:** In the seven weeks between March 15 and May 2, when pandemic-related layoffs were most acute, 71,805 initial northeast Indiana claims for unemployment benefits were filed with DWD.

Allen County had the most initial claims with 35,459, followed by Noble County with 6,376 and LaGrange County with 4,597.

The region's unemployment rate for April, which also included part of March, was 20.5 percent. That is higher than the highest one-week regional Great Recession percentage of 13.0, which occurred in March and June of 2009. LaGrange County, at 28.8 percent, and Noble County, at 28.7 percent, ranked third and fourth, respectively, in the state. Steuben County's rate was 19.8 percent.

**Media Exposure Blossoms:** Since the coronavirus pandemic began triggering business layoffs and new unemployment filings, Northeast Indiana Works has been at the forefront of news coverage detailing the viruses' economic impact.

The organization has been a go-to resource for dozens of stories in print, broadcast and social media throughout northeast Indiana. In many cases, the media blitz has included a strategic collaboration with the Community Research Institute at Purdue Fort Wayne.

A handful of the stories are included in the board packet.

Additionally, Northeast Indiana Works created an Employment Opportunities web page specifically designed to highlight job opportunities in the midst of the pandemic for people who may have lost their jobs.

**Garrett CTE Students Recognized:** The coronavirus pandemic prevented carrying out the 2nd annual Career and Technical Education (CTE) Awareness Month in May, a coordinated, widespread effort to recognize graduating CTE students in northeast Indiana and the employers that hired them.

However, one entity did hold a virtual event May 21. Eight Garrett High School Career Development Program students participated in a virtual 2020 Senior Signing Day.

The growing Career Development Program at Garrett offers students an opportunity to earn industry-recognized certifications, Ivy Tech credits, pre-apprenticeships, and internships in the skilled trades, including construction, manufacturing and welding. Some of those honored May 21 have gone directly into the workforce, some have landed apprenticeships, and some will continue their education at the postsecondary level.

The students recognized were: **Adrian Crupe, Mateo Fuentes, Calvin Gardner, Brandon Gator, Isaac King, Romano Ritenour, Kalab Robertson, and Kaleb Samons.**

**Chad Sutton**, director of career development at Garrett High, led the ceremonies. Besides the students, parents and employers, attendees included State Sen. **Dennis Kruse**, R-Auburn; Garrett Mayor **Todd Fiandt**; **Tonya Weaver**, superintendent of Garrett-Keyser-Butler Community Schools and a Northeast Indiana Works board member, and **Matt Presley**, DWD regional director of work-based learning and apprenticeship.

CTE Awareness Month, a celebration conceived by Northeast Indiana Works and the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership, is expected to resume in 2021.

*(The fall board meeting will be from 9 to 10:30 a.m. October 2, 2020 at 200 E. Main St., Suite 910, Fort Wayne)*