Compendium:

NORTHEAST INDIANA WORKS

Board Newsletter, July 2021

Dear Board Members:

More than 100 northeast Indiana employer applications for the latest round of Employment Training Grant (ETG) funding were submitted in the first week.

Region's Employers Once Again Flock to ETG Opportunities

The new application window for certification-based ETG training opened July 9.

Of the 101 applications received thus far, advanced manufacturing led the way among industries with 55. That was followed by building and construction (14); health and life sciences (14); It and Business Services (10); Agriculture (5), and Transportation and Logistics (3).

Allen County employers submitted the most applications (50). Other county totals: Grant (8), Whitley (8); Adams (6); Wells (6); Noble (5); Steuben (5); Wabash (5); DeKalb (4); Huntington (3), and LaGrange (1).

In 2020, northeast Indiana (Economic Growth Region 3) was among the region leaders in the state in the amount of money earmarked for ETG: $7,425,676. One hundred and eighteen northeast Indiana employers and 2,065 workers took advantage of the program, which in 2020 had an expanded scope in terms of the amount of grant money available to employers. An employee retention provision was also waived.

The ETG parameters have now reverted to previous levels: Qualifying employers are reimbursed up to $5,000 per employee trained and retained for six months — up to $50,000 per employer.

Workforce Cabinet Honors Regional CTE Entities: The Adams Wells Manufacturing Alliance, the Area 18 CTE Cooperative and Northeast Indiana Works received a 2021 Partnership Award of Excellence from the Governor's Workforce Cabinet.

The honor focuses on Career and Technical Education (CTE) initiatives. The award given the northeast Indiana entities and presented May 12 during ceremonies in Indianapolis was one of four statewide recognizing secondary school partnerships.

Northeast Indiana Works has long been involved with the manufacturing alliance and the Area 18 CTE Cooperative. **Kimberly Tempel**, Northeast Indiana Works senior director of business services/human resources, is currently on the alliance board. Alliance members include businesses, educators, and workforce and economic development representatives.

The award citation for the northeast Indiana contingent said in part: "Excellence in career and technical education is exemplified in achieving the maximum potential of groups working in partnership to promote, deliver, or support career and technical education."

Forty-Two Years and Counting: **Ellis Terrell Jr.** seems genuinely astonished when he reflects that he has worked in workforce development for 42 years.

"Good Lord," he says, "it's shocking. Incredible really."

But what has driven him all these years is not so shocking: He has an inherent desire to help people. And these days, the employment and training advisor who once handled a large caseload is now a welcoming face and steady presence at the front desk of the WorkOne Northeast career center in Fort Wayne.

"Helping people is very rewarding," he says. "You get a joy out of seeing people change their lives, get jobs, get careers. If you can help somebody, that's worth more than all the money in the world."

Terrell's approach, he says, is to use common sense in meeting challenges and making sure he treats everyone with the same compassionate customer-comes-first mentality.

"When you treat everyone the same, you have fewer angry people, fewer complaints," he says. "They come in the door, they're frustrated. They're thinking, 'Where is my next meal going to come from, where is my next check going to come from?'

"A lot of people landing at our doors have probably had 20 doors slammed in their face," he says. "By the time they get to a WorkOne, we're their last resort. Many have lost jobs, lost hope, and some have lost families."

Terrell began his workforce development career as a 22-year-old summer youth counselor with a Fort Wayne Comprehensive Employment & Training Act (CETA) program in 1979. That led to full-time CETA work, then employment with a series of programs and organizations that were precursors to WorkOne. He has been at the Fort Wayne WorkOne center since 2009.

Along the way, he and his wife of 38 years raised two children, now grown, and Terrell immersed himself in another love: teaching history. Utilizing a bachelor's in history and master's in liberal studies, both from Indiana University, he was an adjunct professor of history at the now-defunct Brown Mackie College and currently teaches history online at Colorado-based Aspen University.

"If I'm not here (at WorkOne)," he says, "I'm a college professor. The nutty college professor. Some of my former students even come here looking for jobs."

His love of history dates back to his Fort Wayne childhood growing up with two siblings and guided by hard-working parents, Alabama natives, who expected academic excellence from their children and taught them how to respect others.

Terrell, an introvert in those early years and still a very private person when it comes to his personal life, became fascinated with history books and television history channels in fourth grade. He says he once read

(Continued on Page 3)

(Continued from Page 2)

every book in the Afro-American section of his elementary school library and today remains an avid reader. He has, by his estimate, more than 400 books in his library at home, many of them delving into history.

"I buy another book," he says, "and it drives my wife crazy. I'm running out of space."

Terrell is 64 now and he knows retirement is somewhere on the horizon, although not imminent, and he knows what he's going to do when he leaves WorkOne – continue teaching history and continue practicing the values instilled by his parents. Especially common sense. Virtually everyone in his family implored him as a child to use common sense.

"You got to have common sense," they told him. "When you have a lot of common sense, you can get the job done."

Back then, he says, he interpreted using common sense a little differently.

"It meant," he says, "if I made a mistake, I had to clean it up."

National JAG Winners Announced: **Brittany Remesnik** of East Noble High School was named a 2021 Outstanding Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) Specialist during ceremonies at the four-day virtual Jobs for America's Graduates National Training Seminar.

She was one of 11 JAG specialists in Indiana to receive the honor.

Eight JAG programs in northeast Indiana also earned national distinction for reaching or exceeding five goals: graduation rate; job placement including the military; total full-time jobs; full-time positive outcomes, and further education rate. The eight programs were at DeKalb High School; Heritage Junior/Middle High School; Impact Institute; Manchester Junior/Senior High School; Marion High School; New Haven High School; Snider High School, and Wabash High School.

Northeast Indiana Works oversees 14 JAG programs in 13 schools. The programs are carried out by Brightpoint.

Appearances Around the Region: Northeast Indiana Works President and CEO **Edmond O'Neal** spoke at SEAL (State Earn and Learn) recognition ceremonies at the FWCS Career Academy, an Impact Institute graduation at East Noble High School, and along with Tempel and Director of Communications **Rick Farrant** attended the annual meeting of the Regional Chamber of Northeast Indiana.

Tempel, in partnership with the Freedom Academy, delivered presentations about ETG in Noble, Steuben and Whitley counties.

Farrant attended the annual meeting of the Noble County Economic Development Corp.

(*The next board meeting will be from 9 to 10:30 a.m. October 1, 2021. It is yet to be decided if it will be virtual or in-person.)*