

Compendium:

NORTHEAST
INDIANA
WORKS



Board Newsletter, December 2021

Dear Board Members:

Northeast Indiana Works has secured \$380,000 in foundation grants to carry out two career awareness campaigns.

The initial groundwork for one campaign, called Your Future: Make It Your Own, was done by the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership, the regional economic development organization. The campaign recently transitioned to Northeast Indiana Works.

Northeast Indiana
Works Gets \$380,000
for Career Awareness

The Dekko Foundation has granted \$150,000 for the first year of the planned three-year campaign, which will focus on educating, empowering and exposing the region's future workforce to the breadth of career paths and helping students align their strengths, abilities and passions to steer self-discovery. The campaign will target mostly high school/middle school-age young people.

A Your Future: Make It Your Own advisory committee will help guide and promote the campaign.

The second campaign will focus on manufacturing career awareness. The first two years of the planned three-year campaign are being supported by a \$230,000 grant from the Don Wood Foundation. Manufacturing is northeast Indiana's largest employing industry and the goal of the campaign is to get more young people into the manufacturing pipeline. The campaign will focus largely on Industry 4.0 careers (advanced technology that includes autonomous systems) and will target primarily middle school-aged students.

Additional funding is being sought to bolster both campaigns, which will include interactive elements and link existing career awareness and hands-on learning opportunities.

"Northeast Indiana is in the midst of expanding career awareness opportunities and these campaigns will not only enhance and provide consistency to those efforts but also provide new opportunities," said **Rick Farrant**, director of communications for Northeast Indiana Works. "Moreover, the campaigns will augment the significant private-sector financial commitments being directed toward programmatic and equipment costs related to talent pipeline development.

"It is essential that young people in northeast Indiana are informed about career options and what it will take to successfully enter those careers. While it is unreasonable to expect that all students will stay or return to the region once they've chosen and completed their career training or education, it is hoped that many will and by doing so ensure a skilled regional workforce."

The campaigns are expected to soft launch in spring 2022 with a full launch in fall 2022.

O’Neal Speaks in Support of READI Initiative: Northeast Indiana Works President and CEO **Edmond O’Neal** was part of a contingent of northeast Indiana leaders who presented a \$50-million Regional Economic Acceleration and Development Initiative (READI) proposal to the Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC).

The presentation, on behalf of the Northeast Indiana Regional Development Authority (RDA), was given December 3 in Speedway, IN. The region’s plan was approved on December 14.

READI is dedicating \$500 million in state appropriations to promote strategic investments that will make Indiana a magnet for talent and economic growth. Northeast Indiana’s plan will focus on three major strategies for regional development: workforce growth, downtown vibrancy and entrepreneurship and innovation. The RDA’s “Growing with Vision” plan showcases more than 130 proposed projects across northeast Indiana totaling more than \$2 billion of investment.

Among O’Neal’s other activities: he spoke at the Mayor’s and Commissioner’s Caucus about the roles of Northeast Indiana Works and WorkOne Northeast, attended a virtual young adult services summit organized by the Indiana Department of Workforce Development, and attended a Jobs for America’s Graduates (JAG) leadership conference at Sweetwater Sound. Northeast Indiana Works oversees 14 JAG programs.

Healthcare Consortium Identifies Key Needs: Thirty people participated virtually in the first Northeast Indiana Healthcare Consortium meeting November 4.

Northeast Indiana Works formed the healthcare consortium to assist the region’s healthcare industry in filling its talent pipelines.

Among the key needs that were identified: A gap analysis to determine all the healthcare career awareness/talent development activities in northeast Indiana; career awareness strategies to be undertaken by the consortium; a guide or guidance of some sort that clearly spells out career steps in healthcare; and more work-based learning opportunities.

Among the participating entities: IU Health, Lutheran Health, Parkview Health, American Senior Communities, Cameron Memorial Hospital, all five of the region’s Career and Technical Education (CTE) districts, Freedom Academy, Ivy Tech Community College, the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership, the Region 8 Education Service Center, Trine University, and University of Saint Francis.

Healthcare is the second largest employing industry in northeast Indiana and has struggled for a number of years in filling positions, both at the entry level and at higher levels of professional achievement.

Registered Apprenticeships: Northeast Indiana Works, which helped facilitate welding registered apprenticeships for Garrett High School students, is now pursuing the development of registered apprenticeships for other entities.

Discussions are ongoing with Fort Wayne Community Schools, Parkview Health and the Bowen Center. Northeast Indiana Works staff participating in those discussions are O’Neal, Senior Director of Business Services/Human Resources **Kim Tempel** and Farrant.

Opportunity Knocks Back on the Air: Opportunity Knocks, a weekly live interview on WPTA-TV (Channel 21) focusing on workforce and economic development topics, resumed in September after a long pandemic-related hiatus.

The program, an earned media partnership between Northeast Indiana Works and Channel 21, debuted in May 2014. Since then, nearly 250 guests have appeared on the program. Each segment is valued at \$900 in free brand promotion for Northeast Indiana Works — or about \$225,000 over the course of the last seven years.

Northeast Indiana Works schedules the topics and guests and preps them for the program, which airs Mondays during the noon news, except during some holidays and holiday periods. In the current schedule, the program will be on break from December 20 to January 10.

The most recent guest was **Liz Bushnell**, executive director of the Questa Education Foundation. Her appearance can be seen here: <https://tinyurl.com/yckne8mv>

The first guest in the New Year (on January 10) will be **Cindy Verduce**, director of career center and regional career services at Indiana Tech. She will be discussing job searching for soon-to-be college graduates.

Federal Reserve Banking System Seeks Feedback: O’Neal, Tempel and Farrant met virtually in October with the Federal Reserve to provide input on “Mapping a Resilient Ecosystem.”

Specifically, the banking system was interested in learning how Economic Growth Region 3 has responded to the pandemic, what resources have been needed in the regional workforce system, and what practices/policies have emerged from the response.

(The next board meeting will be from 9 to 10:30 a.m. January 7, 2022. It will be conducted virtually.)