

# Compendium:

NORTHEAST  
INDIANA  
WORKS



Board Newsletter, May 2022

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Dear Board Members:

Student signing ceremonies were conducted throughout northeast Indiana in May in recognition of CTE (Career & Technical Education) Awareness Month.

The month was designated several years ago by Northeast Indiana Works and the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership to promote skills-based training at the secondary-school level that leads to certifications and then employment after high school. The signings symbolically represent commitments to work for companies; in some cases, the signings also represent agreements to participate in apprenticeships.

CTE Awareness  
Month Recognized  
In Northeast Indiana

More than 150 students participated this year. Among the ceremonies:

- Adams Wells Manufacturing Alliance (AWMA): A signing ceremony involving graduating seniors was held May 4 in Decatur.
- Fort Wayne Community Schools Career Academy: A signing ceremony was held May 17 in Fort Wayne for students who are going to work for an employer or entering an apprenticeship.
- IMPACT Institute: Two signing ceremonies involving job and apprenticeship agreements were conducted May 18 in Kendallville.
- Garrett-Keyser-Butler Community Schools: The school district conducted a signing day block party May 20 for students who had secured either apprenticeships or jobs. **Edmond O’Neal**, president and CEO of Northeast Indiana Works, was among the speakers.

In a news release before the event, O’Neal said: “Students who complete CTE learning and experience opportunities are essential to the well-being of workforces through northeast Indiana and generally to the regional economy.”

Moreover, added **Jesse Webb**, principal/director of FWCS’ career academy, “Career and technical education courses give students a chance to be successful in life.”

**Manchester Student Wins National JAG Honor:** **Erika Yard**, a senior at Manchester High School, won first place in prepared speaking at the inaugural national Jobs for America’s Graduates (JAG) Career Development Conference May 5-7 in Dallas.

She won first place in public speaking at the regional conference and second place at the state conference.

JAG is carried out for Northeast Indiana Works by Brightpoint. There are 14 JAG programs in northeast Indiana involving 13 high schools.

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**O’Neal, Tempel Present During National Webinar:** Edmond O’Neal and **Kim Tempel**, senior director of business services/human resources, presented at a national webinar regarding Northeast Indiana Works’ pilot Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) and On-the-Job Training (OJT) programs.

The Indiana Department of Workforce Development also presented during the webinar, which was arranged by the U.S. Department of Labor’s WorkforceGPS. More than 500 people registered for the webinar, which was recorded. Nearly 300 people attended, most of them TAA case managers from across the country.

The TAA program was created to provide benefits and support to workers who become unemployed due to the impact of international trade. The OJT program pays employers up to 50 percent of a new hire’s wages for a specified training period.

Northeast Indiana Works was chosen to present at the webinar because its work with TAA and OJTs is recognized as a national best practice, especially in co-enrolling people in TAA and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

O’Neal and Tempel highlighted a number of ways Northeast Indiana Works has created efficiency and productivity in serving employers and individuals involved with TAA and OJTs, including developing longstanding relationships with employers and handling OJT payments to employers at the regional level.

“We are honored to be recognized for the work we’ve been doing and the efficient process we’ve put in place,” Tempel said. “But at the end of the day, the focus has been and always will be on helping employers and dislocated individuals.”

**Northeast Indiana Works Partners on Grant Submissions:** Northeast Indiana Works has partnered with and/or provided strategic direction for two Explore, Engage and Experience (3E) Grant submissions to the Indiana Department of Education.

The goal of the 3E program is to establish meaningful PK-12 pathways and opportunities.

In the first instance, Northeast Indiana Works is a key technical partner in a \$1.7-million grant submission by the Region 8 Education Service Center. The submission focuses on the healthcare industry.

Northeast Indiana Works’ role in the grant and its execution, should it be approved, is as a strategic advisor; convener of the Northeast Indiana Healthcare Consortium; leader of communication/outreach activities, and, as a registered apprenticeship intermediary, collaborative partner in promoting work experience opportunities. Also listed as technical partners for the Region 8 submission are Parkview Health and Junior Achievement of Northern Indiana.

Region 8, meanwhile, is a resource for school districts in Economic Growth Region 3, as well as Blackford, Jay, Kosciusko and Miami counties.

Northeast Indiana Works also provided advice and a letter of support for a 3E grant submission by DeKalb County Eastern School District. The district proposes to expand its CTE programs by offering more career exploration, engagement and experiences for students.

**O’Neal Joins 2 Boards:** Northeast Indiana President and CEO Edmond O’Neal has joined the board of Questa Education Foundation.

Questa provides low-interest partially forgivable post-secondary education loans that encourage students to remain and work in northeast Indiana after they complete their education. As such, it is a key partner in building and retaining workforce talent for the region.

Questa’s executive director, **Elizabeth Bushnell**, is playing a significant role in two Northeast Indiana Works initiatives: The Northeast Indiana Healthcare Consortium and the Youth Career Collective.

O’Neal also recently joined the STAR Financial board of directors.

*(The next board meeting will be from 9 to 10:30 a.m. June 1, 2022. It will be in person and virtual.)*