



## Board Report

September 24, 2025

### Participant Service Goals for PY'25

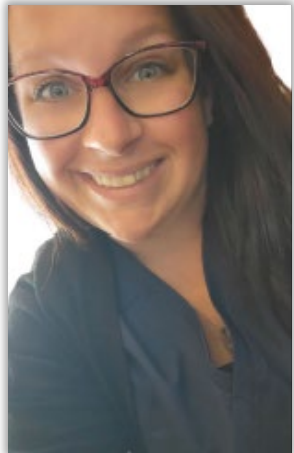
Program	Regional Plan Goals	Potential Carry-In Clients	New in PY'25 (7/1/25-8/31/25)	Total	Goal %
WIOA Adult	544*	49	74	123	23%
WIOA Dislocated Worker	106*	4	1	5	5%
WIOA Out of School Youth	139*	11	5	16	12%
WIOA In School Youth	35*	10	0	10	29%

\*Projected performance numbers

For Program Year 2025 (7/1/25-6/30/26), Region 8 is off to a promising start with adult customer enrollments and we are already well on the way toward meeting the new PY25 goals. Regional efforts are being discussed to increase Dislocated Worker and Youth enrollments throughout the next quarter. Our education, training and job placement services significantly support participants in achieving their career goals, which is reflected by the success story below:

*When Danielle F. contacted Wagler Education and Training Center, she was working full time as a Convenience Store Associate earning \$11 an hour. While she was thankful for employment, Danielle knew she had the potential to achieve more. Danielle desired a career that would provide long term stability, advancement opportunities and financial security for her family.*

*Danielle met with Linton Career Advisor Robin Waggoner and was enrolled in the WIOA program. After completing career research, Danielle chose CCMA as her occupation. She started WRG funded classes on 4/28/25. After completing training, Danielle immediately began applying for jobs in the healthcare field. Although she was receiving calls for interviews, she often discovered the positions had already been filled before her interview date. Instead of becoming discouraged, Danielle was persistent. She sought help to refine her resume and cover letter to better showcase her skills and credentials. In the meantime, Danielle passed the licensing exam and earned her CCMA certification. Very shortly after, Danielle secured full time employment in her new career field.*



*Her new job as a CCMA increased Danielle's income by more than \$29,000 per year and allowed her to no longer rely on public assistance. Her success story illustrates exactly why continued investment in workforce services and adult education is so critical. With the right resources, guidance, and training, students like Danielle can break through barriers, secure meaningful careers, and contribute to Indiana's workforce and economy.*

## Region 8 County Unemployment Rates

County	March	April	May	June	July
Brown	3.3%	2.6%	3.1%	3.2%	3.6%
Daviess	2.5%	2.1%	2.7%	3.0%	3.6%
Greene	3.7%	3.0%	3.4%	3.8%	4.2%
Lawrence	3.4%	2.9%	3.4%	3.7%	4.1%
Martin	2.7%	2.2%	2.9%	3.0%	3.2%
Monroe	3.0%	2.4%	3.2%	3.7%	4.4%
Orange	3.5%	3.0%	3.4%	3.7%	4.2%
Owen	3.7%	3.1%	3.6%	3.8%	4.2%

As of July 2025, Indiana's unemployment rate was 3.6%, which was lower than the national average of 4.2%. With the exception of Martin, the rest of the Region 8 counties were equal to or higher than the state average for the month of July. In addition, Indiana's seasonally adjusted labor force participation rate was 63.7% in July, remaining steady for the third consecutive month. This rate indicates the percentage of working-age Hoosiers (16 and older) who are either employed or actively looking for work. Indiana's rate is currently higher than the national average, which was 62.2%. Those not in the labor force primarily include students, retirees and other non-working populations, such as individuals unable to work due to a disability or illness, or adults responsible for their family's childcare needs.

Region 8 staff continue to answer basic UI questions and help customers use WorkOne computers to file UI claims as needed. Customers who need additional assistance are required to call or email the UI Contact Center at DWD. Customers at the Bloomington and Linton WorkOne locations have the option of using a designated phone to speak directly with an Unemployment Specialist at the UI Contact Center. Customers have the option to file by phone if they do not have access to a computer or smart phone to file online.

### **NEW GRANT: Pathways 2 Progress (P2P)- Pathway Home 6 Grant**

Through membership with Midwest Urban Strategies, Region 8 is a subrecipient of the Department of Labor's (DOL) Pathways Home 6 Grant, being marketed locally as the Pathways 2 Progress initiative. The region will receive approximately \$474,000 for a grant period from 7/1/25 to 12/31/2029. This program provides reentry services to eligible incarcerated individuals prior to release from local jails and will continue comprehensive services following release. This program has shown potential for breaking the cycle of recidivism by linking participants to the workforce system early—while still in jail—and then immediately engaging them upon reentry into the community.

Region 8 plans to enroll 50 participants over the next several years. Greene, Lawrence and Orange County jails have agreed to work with the region to assist in this endeavor. Monroe County Jail expressed interested but is unable to participate at this time. Additional facilities could potentially be added in the future depending on program performance. Because this grant includes a program planning and implementation phase, Region 8 will start enrolling participants in January 2026.

## GRANT UPDATES



### Next Level Jobs: Workforce Ready Grant and Employer Training Grant

#### Workforce Ready Grant

**For Program Year 2024 (7/1/24 - 9/30/25)** - Region 8 received a total allocation of \$925,000 of WRG funding. A total of \$92,500 was originally budgeted for administrative costs, and the remaining \$832,500 was allocated for customer tuition assistance. As of 9/17/25, this grant was 100% expended. A total of \$833,409 was spent on training tuition for customers and the remaining \$91,591 was spent on administrative costs.

A total of 204 individuals were enrolled using PY'24 WRG funds and 179 (87.75%) completed their training program. Of those who completed training, 158 (88.27%) successfully passed the course and earned a certification. A total of 22 customers dropped out of their training program and 3 are still attending classes.

**For Program Year 2025 (7/1/25 - 6/30/26)** - Region 8 will receive a total of \$900,000 of WRG funding. A total of \$90,000 will be budgeted for administrative costs and the remaining \$810,000 will be allocated for customer tuition. As of 9/8/25, 55 customers have been enrolled in training and \$217,263 has been obligated for tuition.

#### Success Story:

*Chris B. came to the WorkOne Bedford Office seeking a way to advance his career. Chris started college after high school, but quickly realized he was not interested in pursuing his degree. After that, he accepted a job at a Fabrication Company in Lawrence County. While he really enjoyed his employment, he realized his lack of a welding certification kept him from advancing or earning a higher wage.*

*Chris discussed his career goals with WorkOne Career Advisor Kathy Qualkenbush. During assessment, Chris was found to be eligible for WIOA and WRG funding to assist him with the desired welding training. Chris enrolled in welding classes at Wagler Education and Training Center where he completed training on 5/8/25 and earned his welding certification on 6/3/25. Chris was rewarded with a new job title at his current place of employment, and received close to a 10% wage increase due to his increased skills. Chris loves his new job and is extremely happy that he gets to stay with his employer. He said he can foresee a great career there, and he believes the help he received from WorkOne to earn his welding certification played an important role in making all of this success possible for him.*

#### Employer Training Grant

Region 8 received \$250,000 of Employer Training Grant funds for Program Year 2025 (7/1/25-6/30/26). A total of \$37,500 is budgeted for administrative costs and the additional \$212,500 will support regional employers. Employer eligibility requirements have changed with this new grant cycle. The major changes are new hire wages (\$19.00 per hour), wage increase expectations (5%) and company specialized training reimbursement (\$1,000 per trainee). These funds are fully obligated at this time and no additional funding will be available for this grant.



Power Up Indiana is a new program from the State of Indiana and the Office of Commerce that promotes change in employer practices by supporting those who invest in upskilling their existing workforce. It recognizes and rewards companies that train, retain, and advance talent from within—and builds a culture of lifelong learning across the state.

Power Up Indiana reimbursement is open to businesses of all sizes, investing in current employees through the select training of the employer in any industry or business sector. To receive reimbursement of funding put toward training, employers must:

- Provide training to a current employee
- Ensure training is completed and determined satisfactory by the business
- Provide the employee a 25% wage increase
- Maintain wage increase for two consecutive quarters

Region 8 has received an initial allocation of \$300,000 for Power Up Indiana with the opportunity to receive additional funding depending on performance. A total of \$45,000 will be budgeted for administrative costs and the remaining \$255,000 will be allocated for employer reimbursement. Businesses who would like more information about how to apply for Power Up funding should contact Gail Mitchell (gmitchell@vinu.edu) or Randy Wells (rwells@vinu.edu).

## Apprenticeship Building America (ABA) Grant

In April 2023, the South Central Region 8 Workforce Board received \$547,000 through a DOL sponsored grant acquired by the DWD Office of Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeships. The Apprenticeship Building America (ABA) funding is intended to expand the number of programs and apprentices; diversify the industries that utilize Registered Apprenticeship (RAP); and increase access to, and completion of, RAPs for underrepresented populations and underserved communities. The goal for these participants will be a nationally recognized credential.

RAP and certified Pre-Apprenticeship participants can receive funding for Related Technical Instruction (RTI), On-the-Job Learning (OJL) and Supportive Services (SS). Due to program requirements and other circumstances causing unintentional competition among entities within the region, it was difficult to enroll individuals as anticipated. In August of 2024, DWD requested to move a portion of this grant to another region that needed additional funds. Region 8 agreed to move approximately \$296,000 to assist in this process. To date, Region 8 has funded 36 pre-apprentices and 68 apprentices. Region 8 continues to enroll new apprentices and anticipates fully expending this grant by 5/15/26.

### **ABA Success Story:** From Struggling Student to Skilled Tradesman: A Journey of Determination and Support

*When Fabrizio walked through the doors of the JAG classroom, he carried more than just a backpack—he carried the weight of uncertainty. A low GPA, and the looming possibility of not graduating high school had placed him in the “at-risk” category. Coming from a low-income household, his future felt uncertain. But that future was about to change. While participating in JAG, Fabrizio co-enrolled in the WIOA Youth program. These programs didn’t just offer resources—they offered support. Through one-on-one career counseling, he found someone who listened, guided, and challenged him. JAG competencies helped him build soft skills in communication, leadership, and resilience. Career exploration opened his eyes to possibilities he hadn’t considered—especially in the skilled trades. As senior year approached, he made a bold decision: to enroll in a Welding Pre-Apprenticeship Program funded with assistance of the ABA grant. It was a turning point. The hands-on training gave him not only technical skills but also a sense of purpose.*

*By the time his high school graduation rolled around, he wasn’t just walking across the stage—he was stepping into a new life. With the support of JAG, WIOA and the experience gained through the ABA grant, he landed a job 3 weeks after graduation as a welder with a federal contractor, earning approximately \$45,000 a year. Fabrizio’s story is a reminder that with the right support, even the most uncertain futures can be forged into something strong.*

# Business Services Updates

## WARN/Non-WARN Notices and Rapid Response Activities

**Perdue Farms, LLC** - On 9/3/25, Perdue Food, LLC issued a WARN notice laying off 293 employees from their facility as of 10/10/25. Region 8 is working with Perdue to provide Rapid Response Orientations for the affected workers in late September through early October. These sessions will offer information regarding WorkOne services and other community resources. In an effort to transition these individuals to new job opportunities, Region 8 is also in the process of identifying local employers and businesses from surrounding counties to participate in career and resource fairs for these workers.

## Business Services Activities

- From July 2025 - August 2025, The Region 8 Business Services Team worked with a total of **26 Employers** to provide WIOA Business Services. **125 Business Services** were provided to those employers.
- During the last quarter, the Region 8 Business Services Team and local office staff have participated in various activities throughout the region. A few of those included mini job fairs hosted at the Bloomington WorkOne for Job Squad, HQ Direct and ResCare.
- Staff also attended, made presentations, or participated in various Chamber Events/Meetings in Daviess, Greene and Monroe Counties.

## Highlight: Skilled Trades Showcase

WorkOne participated in the Stonegate Skilled Trades Showcase held on September 18, 2025 at the Lawrence County Fairgrounds. This event, geared toward high school students, featured various union construction and skilled trade exhibitors offering hands-on activities to explore careers in the trades. The event introduces high school students to the skilled trades as the industry is facing a shortage of workers caused by retirement and fewer students choosing to pursue skilled trades occupations. Approximately 400 students attended from 12 school corporations across the region and the surrounding area.



Region 8 is currently maintaining four JAG programs at the following High Schools: Eastern Greene, Paoli, Bloomfield and Owen Valley. Specialists from three of those locations have returned to their JAG programs and Eastern Greene has a new Specialist that has quickly taken the reins to make the program a success.

Each of our schools hit the JAG National 6 of 6 metrics for the last school year. Pictured below are our current schools receiving their 6 of 6 awards. In addition, you will see that Melissa Gillenwater holds a JAG National award for "Outstanding Specialist" for her outstanding performance and dedication to her students and the program.



Melissa Gillenwater, Owen Valley High School



Kendall Reid, Eastern Greene High School



Katie Cook, Paoli Jr. Sr. High School



Christian Burris, Bloomfield High School