

**WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS. COMMUNITY GROWTH.  
TALENT DEVELOPMENT.**

# 2022 Annual Report

# CEO WELCOME

**“Integrity is choosing courage over comfort; choosing what is right over what is fun, fast, or easy; and choosing to practice our values rather than simply professing them.”**

*~ Brené Brown*

## **2022: A YEAR OF REGIONAL RESILIENCY**

2022 was challenging, in several ways, for businesses and residents throughout our region. We began the year still trying to navigate a public health crisis that disrupted the lives of thousands of workers in Northwest Wisconsin. Hundreds, if not thousands, of businesses significantly reduced their workforce or made structural changes that rippled through their community. These actions created an unexpected economic predicament, resulting in our region’s unemployment continuing to be among the highest in the state. The good news is that the northwest continues to move in the right direction! In November of 2021, our region averaged approximately 714 weekly unemployment claims. In November of 2022, our region averaged 367 weekly claims—a reduction of -49%.

**Despite these challenges, we witnessed the resiliency of our communities.** We observed the creativity of local businesses, shifting practices to ensure that existing and returning employees could safely return to the workplace and help their employer grow. Companies throughout our region leveraged or invested in innovations and technologies to create space for our workforce to continue contributing to the economy in remote environments. We saw municipalities, nonprofit organizations, human and social service agencies, and corporate partners all step up to raise, collect, and distribute critical resources.

As we traversed through what seemed to be endless health and economic crisis, our workforce development system continued to create opportunities for job seekers and businesses across the State. During the past year we:

- Coordinated training cohorts in in-demand industries such as advanced manufacturing, childcare, and construction
- Deployed a new pilot Training Navigator position to help individuals maximize and access the workforce and education resources available
- Invested in our re-entry initiatives to reduce recidivism rates and help businesses access a previously untapped labor pool
- Provided supportive services like childcare, rental, and transportation assistance to more than 200 individuals in the region

We are thankful for the visionary leadership that the Board of Directors, Committee members and Chief Elected Officials have provided throughout the year. I am so very grateful to the Northwest Wisconsin Investment Board (NWWIB) staff members who have provided outstanding leadership and service to the northwest region. We sadly said goodbye to our longtime friend and chairman of the board, LeRoy Forslund, this year. We will deeply miss his leadership, but I know that he would be proud of the work that is yet to come.

**~ Mari Kay-Nabozny,  
NWWIB Chief Executive Officer**

# PERFORMANCE

## PARTICIPANTS SERVED BY THE NUMBERS...



## INVESTMENT IN OUR COMMUNITIES & NEIGHBORS

### PY23 FUNDING LEVELS

### PERCENTAGE OF ACTIVITIES

	PY23 FUNDING LEVELS	PERCENTAGE OF ACTIVITIES
Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act	\$214,751	6%
Collaboration of Wisconsin	\$1,027,702	31%
Support to Communities	\$189,942	5.75%
Worker Advancement Initiative	\$1,589,681	48%
One-Stop Operator	\$17,575	0.75%
Re-Entry Programming	\$246,910	7.50%
Regional Career Pathways	\$12,253	0.50%
Service Contracts	\$12,530	0.50%
	<b>\$3,311,342</b>	<b>100%</b>



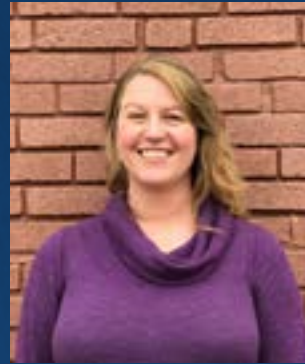
# MEET THE TEAM

Workforce Investment Boards are non-profit organizations charged with carrying out employment and training activities under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. The Northwest Wisconsin Workforce Investment Board (NWWIB) is one of eleven workforce development boards within the state of Wisconsin. Counties served in Northwest Wisconsin include Ashland, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Price, Iron, Rusk, Sawyer, Taylor, and Washburn. Our partners, programs, and services are dedicated to strengthening the Wisconsin workforce and connecting people to opportunities, whether you're a career seeker or employer.



**Mari Kay-Nabozny**  
Chief Executive Officer

First Job: Waitress



**Dawn Knapp**  
COW Project  
Coordinator

First Job: Ice Cream  
Scooper



**Melissa Rabska**  
Director of Operations  
& Communications

First Job: Gas Station  
Cashier



**Matthew Filipek**  
Pathways Home 2 Re-  
Entry Career Coach

First Job: Shopping  
Cart Collector



**Scott Schultz**  
Director of Industry &  
Innovation

First Job: Mowing Lawn  
& Shoveling Snow



**Ryce Davis**  
Windows to Work  
Coordinator/Case  
Manager

First Job: Mowing Lawn



**Kristi Waits**  
Director of Special  
Projects & EO Officer

First Job: Pizza Maker



**Kristina Wright**  
Administrative &  
Marketing Assistant

First Job: Cashier

# MAKING A DIFFERENCE

**“This program [Support to Communities] has helped me with getting in touch with resources like the WAI grant to assist with rent when I am short, assisted with getting my car fixed, and has said they will help with the costs of books and trainings. I would have been homeless at this point if it weren’t for this program. But the help I received now has gotten me by until I could get approved for the rural development loan to buy my family a home soon.”**

**~ Brittany, Support to Communities Participant**

After leaving an abusive relationship, Brittany White began recovery from Methamphetamine use disorder. At the time, she was homeless and living in a domestic violence shelter with her children for several months until she was able to get her family an apartment. Four years later, Brittany has stayed strong in her recovery. Brittany is a single mother of four children, working full time, and is also a full time student. In May 2022 Brittany graduated from Northwood Technical College receiving her Associate’s degree in Human Services. Currently, she is pursuing her Bachelor’s degree from the University of Wisconsin – Stout in Psychology CI (customized education) program.

Brittany is employed at Ashland County in the County Community Support program as a CCS Service Facilitator. She has also completed the predetermination application, which is required due to her past criminal record related to her addiction, passed the Substance Abuse Counselor in Training (SAC-IT) exam, and is waiting on the review by the DSPS to begin her supervised hours.

However, even with all of this success and all of the barriers that have been overcome, Brittany began to face some new challenges. During her recovery journey, Brittany and her family had been receiving support from HUD Section 8 Housing and the Foodshare Employment & Training Program. Now, with her new job and income, those supports were eliminated because she was no longer eligible. With there being no transition to help her sustain success, Brittany was struggling to make ends meet even though she was gainfully employed and was facing the “benefits cliff”.

The Support to Communities Case Manager worked with Brittany on supporting her where the program had the ability to do so. However, to support her housing and other needs, the Case Manager advocated for her and provided a warm hand off to connect Brittany with a partner organization to be enrolled in the Worker Advancement Initiative (WAI) grant, which has more flexibility to support participants with costs associated with gaining and maintaining employment.

## **SUPPORT TO COMMUNITIES NORTHWEST WISCONSIN**

The Support to Communities grant assists those who are or have been affected by opioid misuse or other substance misuse either personally or through family and friends. Job training and support as well as recovery services and financial assistance is available to those who are enrolled in the program. Assistance is also available to individuals who are seeking to transition to professions that support individuals with a substance use disorder or occupations addressing opioid recovery efforts.



## **CONSTRUCTION FOUNDATIONS SAWYER COUNTY**

Construction Foundations is a 13-week training course that was funded through the NWWIB's Worker Advancement Initiative Grant and supported by Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe University. Students earned a Technical Certificate, OSHA 10 Certification, and CPR/AED/Basic First Aid training. For the hands-on training components, students built a variety of projects including Adirondack chairs, picnic tables, a utility shed, and garden boxes for the college's community garden. Students now have the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in a job in construction or to start their own new ventures.

**“I’m so happy I found this training. The projects we worked on really helped me gain the skills and understanding necessary to start building things on my own from start to finish.” ~ De’Ja, Construction Foundations Student**

## **MACHINE TOOL BASICS DOUGLAS COUNTY**

Machine Tool Basics is a 12-week training course that was funded through the NWWIB's Support to Communities program with Northwood Technical College providing the instruction. Students learned print reading, machine tool applications, and also received training in OSHA 10 General Industry for Machine Tool, and CPR/AED/Basic First Aid. All students who took the training were successful and earned a certificate.

# STRATEGIES IN MOTION

**Meeting industry demands and providing training in the necessary occupations to ensure the region's economic vitality.**

## **COLLABORATION OF WISCONSIN NORTHWEST WISCONSIN**

The Collaboration of Wisconsin Rural Investment in Community Healthcare (COW) grant aims to upskill those who are interested in specific healthcare careers to get them the training they need. To participate in the program, part of eligibility for COW is that individuals must intend to work in specific rural counties due to the large labor shortages in these areas. COW supports individuals in paying for the costs of training for in-demand healthcare occupations. Statewide partners include Bay Area Workforce Development Board, Fox Valley Workforce Development Board, North Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board, and Southcentral Wisconsin Workforce Development Board.

## **RE-ENTRY PROGRAMMING NORTHWEST WISCONSIN**

Through both the Pathways Home 2 and Windows to Work program, the NWWIB is serving currently incarcerated and recently released individuals. These programs are designed to reduce recidivism by connecting this population with job opportunities and supports to be successful. Both programs assist participants with developing interviewing, resume writing, and on-the-job skills and assistance with employment post-release. Assistance is also available for food, housing, and job training needs.

## **WORKER ADVANCEMENT INITIATIVE NORTHWEST WISCONSIN**

The Worker Advancement Initiative (WAI) serves people whose previous employment has not come back post-pandemic as well as those who were not attached to or were not successful in the labor market prior to the pandemic. With our partners, including Indianhead Community Action Agency, Manpower, and Northcentral Technical College, and Northwest Wisconsin CEP, we focus on providing paid work experiences, on-the-job training opportunities, hard and soft skill training, and supportive services to address barriers related to employment.





## BUILDING COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Finding ways to give back to our communities is important to the staff of the NWWIB! By participating in local, regional, and national conversations, we can create the resources we need to build strong communities and economies. Throughout the year, we also love to explore the small ways we can make a difference in our communities on a microlevel. This includes doing some impromptu roadside cleanup, ringing the bells for the Salvation Army, or even building a scarecrow!



## NON-PROFIT LEADERSHIP CLINIC

The NWWIB participated in the Nonprofit Leadership Clinic hosted by the Ashland Area Development Corporation at Northwood Technical College in Ashland. Leaders in the Chequamegon Bay gathered to learn more about financing their organization, strategic planning, record keeping, and more!



## AMERICAN PUBLIC HUMAN SERVICES ASSOCIATION'S WORKFORCE SYMPOSIUM

The NWWIB CEO, Mari Kay-Nabozny, joined Kelly from National Association of Workforce Boards at the American Public Human Services Association's Workforce Symposium 2022: Aligning Workforce Development to Advance Family Economic Mobility.



## HOUSING OPPORTUNITY AND MOBILE EDUCATION SOLUTIONS

NWWIB CEO, Mari Kay-Nabozny, joined regional business and community leaders as they welcomed Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, and Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) representatives and regional stakeholders to discuss the impact of the \$9.8 million Housing Opportunity and Mobile Education Solutions (HOMES) grant that was awarded to Northwood Technical College.



## WE CHOOSE TO GO OUTSIDE THE BOX

After a robust strategic planning process, NWWIB has arrived at six key issues that must be addressed in our region. The above initiatives address several of the strategies that the NWWIB has put into place to work towards solutions to these regional issues.

# BEYOND BRICKS AND MORTAR



**15,132 DOWNLOADS AND COUNTING...**

Join the staff of the NWWIB as they dive into current employment trends and the ever-evolving challenges facing workers and employers in rural areas. Workforce Waves will explore smart, strategic, and unique solutions to meet the workforce needs in Wisconsin and the Midwest. New episodes will release each month to inform, inspire, and assist you in making a splash in your own community.

## **Teamwork makes the dream work.**

### **NWWIB is proud to collaborate with the following groups:**

- ✦ Ashland Area Development Corporation Board of Directors
- ✦ Bayfield County Economic Development Corporation Board of Directors
- ✦ CESAs 10, 11, & 12
- ✦ County Jails: Ashland, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Price, Rusk, Sawyer, & Washburn
- ✦ Price County Business + Industry Group
- ✦ Great Northwest Wisconsin Regional Career Pathways
- ✦ Indianhead Community Action Agency
- ✦ Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe University
- ✦ Manpower
- ✦ Northcentral Technical College
- ✦ Northern Wisconsin Woods Collaborative
- ✦ NorthWERD
- ✦ Northwest Connection Family Resources
- ✦ Northwest Wisconsin CEP
- ✦ Northwood Technical College
- ✦ Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board
- ✦ University of Wisconsin Superior
- ✦ Visions Northwest Regional Economic Development
- ✦ Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development
- ✦ Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation
- ✦ Wisconsin Workforce Development Association

# BUSINESS SERVICES



## SOLUTIONS IN ACTION

Staff at the NWWIB collaborate with partners and communities regularly to coordinate and host job fairs. Events are open to all employers no matter their industry. All job seekers regardless of age, education and work experience are always welcome. There is no dress code at these events, but job seekers are encouraged to dress for the role they are seeking and are urged to bring a current resume. Interested in having a job fair or hiring event in your community? Contact us today. We would love to partner!

## TDCON22

2022 marked the return of TDCON! The Wisconsin Workforce Development Association hosted the Talent Development Conference (TDCON2022) on April 7-8th, 2022, at the Chula Vista Resort in Wisconsin Dells. Business leaders, executives, state industry and trade associations, employers, policymakers, and workforce funders from across Wisconsin attended this event. The Statewide Business Services Group coordinated the planning of this successful event, which includes representation from all eleven of the state's workforce development boards. Save the date for TDCON23 on April 11-12th, 2023, in La Crosse, WI.

# CHILDCARE CONNECTIONS

The EverGrow Learning Center, Northwest Wisconsin Workforce Investment Board, and Ashland Area Development Corporation hosted Department of Children and Families Secretary Emilie Amundson (pictured below) to discuss increasing access to affordable, quality early care and education in northern Wisconsin and sharing how the EverGrow's Partner Up! grant is helping the community.

The Partner Up! grant program supports partnerships between businesses who purchase slots at existing regulated childcare providers. Funding from this program can be used to increase staff compensation, pay expenses, reserve childcare slots for local business employees, improve the quality of a childcare program, and more.



# BUILDING THE FUTURE WORKFORCE

Through funding from the Worker Advancement Initiative, the NWWIB coordinated with Northwood Technical College and Northwest Connection Family Resources to host a Group Child Care Essentials certificate training. Students who complete this certificate are certified on the Wisconsin Registry as a Level 7. The Wisconsin Registry serves as an Early Childhood Care and After school Education workforce registry. To work in the childcare industry at a regulated Childcare Center or an in-home provider, workers are required to be a part of the Registry. Twelve students participated in the training, the largest cohort yet, and all successfully earned their certificate.



**“I wanted to take a moment to thank for all of the kind words and feedback. It has been a long time since I’ve been the one in school, and this has given me the confidence needed to take the next step. I am currently in the process of applying to UW Stout for an online ECE Bachelor program, leading to a teaching license. These classes were the catalyst to get myself in gear! Thank you!” ~ Sarah McGuire, Childcare Training Student**

## ROADTRIP NATION COMING SOON

In collaboration with the Wisconsin Workforce Development Association, Wisconsin’s workforce development boards, and other strategic thought partners, the highly acclaimed team behind Roadtrip Nation will be developing a Youth Portal for Wisconsin. Through the development of this, youth in Wisconsin will be able to explore innovation and growth in Wisconsin’s workforce while developing a deeper understanding of career and education pathways (trainings, certifications, internships, etc.) available throughout the state. More to come soon as this project launches next year!

# WIOA SUCCESS INDICATORS



## LOVE WHERE YOU LIVE & WORK

After losing his job to a recent business closure, Mike was looking for a change. He had worked for the business for over five years and was doing a lot of soul searching and knew that he wanted to stay in the community he was currently living. Mike dug into local labor market information with the assistance of Northwest Wisconsin CEP staff, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) service provider in Northwest Wisconsin. After researching, he felt that driving in the forest products industry would be a solid choice. He was certain that obtaining a Class A CDL and driving pulp truck would allow him to work in and around the area's natural resources and interact daily with individuals who shared similar interests.

Through WIOA's Dislocated Worker Program, Mike was able to participate in training at the at Midwest Truck Driving School in Escanaba, MI, where he successfully participated in the 160 hour Class A CDL Training. Upon successful completion of the training and licensing, Mike was able to obtain a local driving job and continue to live and work in the area of Wisconsin he loves and calls home.

## WIOA PROGRAM YEAR 2021 TITLE I PERFORMANCE

### Adult Measures

Qtr. 2 Unsubsidized Employ.	<b>EXCEED</b>
Qtr. 4 Unsubsidized Employ.	<b>EXCEED</b>
Median Earnings	<b>EXCEED</b>
Credential Attainment Rate	<b>EXCEED</b>
Measurable Skill Gain	<b>EXCEED</b>

### Dislocated Worker Measures

Qtr. 2 Unsubsidized Employ.	<b>EXCEED</b>
Qtr. 4 Unsubsidized Employ.	<b>MET</b>
Median Earnings	<b>EXCEED</b>
Credential Attainment Rate	<b>EXCEED</b>
Measurable Skill Gain	<b>EXCEED</b>

### Youth Measures

Qtr. 2 Unsubsidized Employ. / Edu.	<b>EXCEED</b>
Qtr. 4 Unsubsidized Employ. / Edu.	<b>EXCEED</b>
Median Earnings	<b>EXCEED</b>
Credential Attainment Rate	<b>EXCEED</b>
Measurable Skills Gain	<b>EXCEED</b>

# BOARD MEMBERS

**Kelly Klein, Chair**

Iron County Development Zone Council

**Judy Aspling, Vice Chair**

Center City Housing

**Richard Nystrom, Secretary**

D & N Development

**Kyle Bukovich**

Northern Wisconsin Building & Construction Trades

**Andrew Donahue**

SBDC at University of Wisconsin – Superior

**Thomas Draghi**

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

**Tami Follett**

Fraser Industries

**Brad Gast**

Northcentral Technical College

**Edward Gruhl**

Gruhl Education Consulting, LLC

**Alyssa Headley**

State Farm Insurance

**Mic Isham**

Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission

**Dale Kelm**

Birch Haven Senior Living

**Mary McPhetridge**

Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce

**Ashley Moore**

Thrivent Financial

**Jeff Muse**

Northwest Wisconsin CEP

**Brian Nelson**

Iron Workers #512

**Bambi Pattermann**

Northwood Technical College

**Phil Rasmussen, Jr.**

Lakewoods Resort

**Cindy Rouzer**

Spooner Health

**Jennifer Shearer**

Indianhead Community Action Agency

**MJ Sills**

Unemployment Insurance

**Kerri Trubachik**

Associated Bank

# COMMITTEES

**Executive**

Kelly Klein, Chair  
Judy Aspling  
Dale Kelm  
Richard Nystrom  
Kerri Trubachik

**One Stop Operator**

Brad Gast, Chair  
Tom Casey  
Thomas Draghi  
Jeff Muse  
Bambi Pattermann  
Kristine Porter  
Sally Schraders

**Youth**

Mary McPhetridge, Chair  
Patrice Carlson  
Alyssa Headley  
Mic Isham  
Jeff Muse  
Brian Nelson  
Amanda Popovich  
Jennifer Shearer  
Melissa Weber  
Jake Wyrzkowski  
Sheila Young

**Strategic Directions and Development**

Judy Aspling, Chair  
Barb Flynn  
Kelly Klein  
Thomas Michels  
Bambi Pattermann  
Phil Rasmussen, Jr.  
Jessica Wagner-Schultz



*Pictured (left to right): Mari Kay-Nabozny, LeRoy Forslund, Mike BeBeau, and Richard Nystrom*

This year, we said goodbye to some of our longstanding leadership. Our Vice Chair, Mike BeBeau, who served on our board of directors for several years in many different roles and committees, retired and went on to new adventures.

It is with deep sorrow, that our Chair, LeRoy Forslund, passed away earlier this fall. For nearly four decades LeRoy served on the NWWIB and spent 22 years as Chairman of the Board, with dedication and commitment to helping those in need. LeRoy's strong leadership will be deeply missed.



## Northwest Wisconsin Workforce Investment Board, Inc.

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Find us on these  
social media sites:



*Northwest Wisconsin Workforce Investment Board is an equal opportunity employer and service provider. If you have a disability and need assistance with this information, please call us through Wisconsin Relay Service (7-1-1) or at 800-947-3529. To request information in an alternate format, including language assistance or translation of the information, please contact us at (715)-685-1425.*