



The Southwest Ohio Region
WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD

The latest news from
The Southwest Ohio Region
Workforce Investment Board

NEWSWIB

March 2012

Vol 4, Issue 3

Greetings!

Cincinnati and Hamilton County (Area 13) was selected as one of five locations in the State of Ohio for a pilot project to better integrate services offered to youth aging out of foster care.

"Connecting the Dots from Foster Care to Employment and Independent Living," an initiative launched last year by the Ohio Department of Job & Family Services, aims to connect foster youth, typically served by county Children's Services departments, to services offered to youth under the Workforce Investment Act. By leveraging and integrating services that traditionally have not been coordinated, foster youth will have a better chance of getting a diploma, furthering their education, as well as finding a job, says **Alice Worrell**, who is spearheading Connecting the Dots in Ohio.

To prepare for the pilot, we will send **Tim Dingler**, Human Services Supervisor at Hamilton County Job & Family Services, and **Monique Mays**, Children's Services, to a one-week Leadership Academy in Denver, sponsored by the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute. Other areas in Ohio selected for the pilot include Cuyahoga County, Lake County, Summit County and a consortium of Montgomery, Preble, Greene, and Clinton counties.

The pilot will begin this spring and will last for approximately 18 to 24 months. "We expect that this pilot will lead to best practices that can be shared throughout the state, and will give this vulnerable population a better chance at succeeding," says Worrell.

MARSHALL, OTHER WIB LEADERS PRESENT AT NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Sherry Kelley Marshall, President/CEO of the Southwest Ohio Region Workforce Investment Board (SWORWIB), and her Greater Cincinnati workforce colleagues headlined two workshops on March 11 at the National Association of Workforce Boards 2012 Forum in Washington, D.C.

Marshall, **Jeff Weber**, Executive Director of the Workforce One Investment Board; and **Bart Brown**, Regional Operator of the Indiana Region 9 Workforce Board, made a presentation on successful methods to broaden youth awareness of career pathways, using construction and manufacturing as examples. Later that afternoon, Marshall



joined **Ross Meyer**, Executive Director of Partners for a Competitive Workforce (PCW), to discuss the importance of regional data collection to drive better decision-making. That presentation detailed the history of the SWORWIB's original grant from the Greater Cincinnati Foundation to build commitments from workforce providers in the region to shared definitions and measurements, which eventually expanded to shared data collection, thanks to PCW. More than 50 agencies now participate in the data collection partnership.

Marshall expressed her thanks to the Greater Cincinnati Foundation for funding the SWORWIB to begin this regional effort.

MANUFACTURERS URGED TO LEARN MORE ABOUT CREDENTIALS

Manufacturing is making a comeback in the nation and Greater Cincinnati -- but employers who complain about skills gaps in job candidates need to do a better job of taking advantage of credentialed training.

That was the message of **Jennifer McNelly**, newly named President at the Manufacturing Institute and keynote speaker at a conference on Tri-State manufacturing sponsored by the Employers First Regional Workforce Network.



The conference, held Feb. 28 at Toyota Engineering & Manufacturing North America, in Erlanger, attracted about 100 employers, educators, and public workforce specialists.

The Manufacturing Institute, the research arm of the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM), unveiled in 2009 a skills certification system that builds one credential on top of another, beginning with academic and workplace competencies, and leading to higher-end engineering credentials.

These "stackable" credentials, which are worth college credits at some community colleges in the region, assure employers that a job seeker has the necessary technical skills to do a particular job. They are nationally recognized, meaning that if a worker moves across the country, the credential will be accepted by another employer.

In Greater Cincinnati, hundreds of dislocated workers from plants in Hamilton and Butler counties have started to climb the NAM ladder of credentials. Workforce partnerships, such as the one between the Southwest Ohio Region Workforce Investment Board, a member of Employers First, and the Communications Workers of America, have funded testing in the National Career Readiness Certificate -- the credential that measures baseline comprehension and math skills for the workplace -- and training in the Manufacturing Skills Standards credential. Many of these displaced workers, their credentials in hand, have found jobs with manufacturers that are hiring.

Still, many manufacturing employers are not familiar with this system, and need to be pro-active about determining how this credentialing system can help them get and keep strong employees, said McNelly. Training is offered through local workforce boards, at various non-profits; at career tech centers and at community colleges. Employers First, a one-stop resource center for employers in the Tri-State region, can provide information on the NCRC and MSSC. Contact Employers First Regional Liaison **Andy Lotter** at (513) 655-7175; andrew.lotter@employersfirst.com.



Elected officials and staff join Sherry Kelley Marshall and Daina Dennis for a tour of the SuperJobs Center.

City, state and federal elected officials or their staff toured the SuperJobs Center on Feb. 27, and were brought up to date on Southwest Ohio workforce initiatives and issues by **Sherry Kelley Marshall**, **Daina Dennis**, Project Director at SuperJobs, and **Carolyn Reynolds**, Rapid Response and Marketing Manager.

Those attending included City Council Member Wendell Young and staffer **Sedric Denson**; **Jon Harmon**, staffer for Council Member Chris Seelbach; **Holly Hankinson**, staffer for Yvette Simpson, and **Ben Frech**, staffer for P.G. Sittenfeld. Also attending were State Reps. Denise Driehaus and Peter Stautberg; **Rachel Miller**, staffer for Sen. Sherrod Brown; **Connie Laug**, staffer for Sen. Rob Portman; **Blake Dowlin**, staffer for Rep. Jean Schmidt; and **Erin Clemons**, staffer for Speaker John Boehner.

YOUTH SPOTLIGHT: TODD HARRISON & EASTER SEALS WRC

Once he was expelled from school, **Todd Harrison** decided it was time to change.

Harrison, now 19, was expelled for 90 days from Northwest High School in Colerain Township in November 2009 after a brush with a teacher. He and his mother found out that Easter Seals Work Resource Center, which provides services to eligible out-of-school youth through funding overseen by the SWORWIB, could help him turn things around. Harrison is one of more than 100 young people Easter Seals WRC will have served during its three-year contract with the SWORWIB that ends June 30, 2012.

With the help of Easter Seals Case Manager **Sharon Brooks**, Harrison entered a credit recovery program. He went to his local library, and to Easter Seals WRC, to stay on track with his studies.

Harrison was readmitted to Northwest High School in the spring of his junior year. He was determined to graduate on time, but had a very short time to catch up. "Some teachers were telling me I wasn't going to make it. There were times I wanted to drop out," says Harrison. "But I had a friend who motivated me."

Harrison made up his credits and moved into his regular classes by his senior year. Through Easter Seals WRC, he got a summer job working as a custodian at the [Clippard YMCA](#). "They loved him," says Brooks. "The Y told us he was an absolute joy to work with, very respectful of those he worked with."

He played varsity football his senior year, and realized his goal of graduating with his class in June 2011.



Todd Harrison with his Easter Seals WRC case manager, Sharon Brooks.

Today Harrison is a freshman at [Ohio Mid-Western College](#), a Christian college in Sharonville. He is studying business and plays football for the school. After school, he works at Arby's in Colerain - a job he got by going door-to-door with the resume he put together with the help of Easter Seals WRC. And although he has exited Easter Seals, he stays in touch with Brooks. "We stay connected," he says. Brooks adds: "Todd has shown his commitment to himself and his family. He balances school, a job, and helping take care of his younger sisters. I am optimistic that he will accomplish his goals."

SHORT TAKES

AREA 13 CONTINUES STRONG PERFORMANCE: The state-issued Performance Report for the second quarter of the current program year shows that Area 13 is exceeding goals in eight of nine categories. This includes percentage of adults entering employment (63 percent) and adults exceeding average earnings; dislocated workers entering (65 percent) and retaining (85 percent) employment, and exceeding average earnings; youth placement in employment, education or the military (84 percent); youth obtaining diploma or certificate (69 percent); youth improving in literacy and numeracy (48 percent). Area 13 met standards for adult worker retention (81 percent).

MAYOR'S YOUTH JOB FAIR NEXT WEEK: Mayor Mark Mallory will hold the 7th annual Youth Jobs & Opportunities Fair 2-6 p.m. March 29 at Duke Energy Convention Center. The event typically caters to several thousand youth each spring, who attend to connect with local employers. Young adults 16-24 are welcome to attend, especially recent college graduates or those who are close to graduating. Local community organizations will also be there to provide information on education and training, says [Shawn Butler](#), the mayor's Community Liaison. Employers and volunteers can register [here](#).

SOLIS, JILL BIDEN VISIT HCC:

Leaders of the Health Careers Collaborative of Greater Cincinnati greeted Secretary of Labor **Hilda Solis** and **Jill Biden**, wife of Vice President Joe Biden, when they visited Cincinnati State Technical and Community College Feb. 22 on a Community College to Career Tour.



Labor Secretary Hilda Solis speaks about the achievements of the Health Careers Collaborative.

Solis reported in a blog on her travels: "Now, the Cincinnati State collaboration is a national model that recently shared in a \$19.7 million Department of Labor grant to replicate its winning model nationally. Those who care about fiscal responsibility, take note: This project was named by the U.S. Government Accountability Office as one of 14 best national collaborations between workforce boards and employers."

Speaking of the GAO report, it was delivered to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions Feb. 16. Click [here](#) to read the transcripts or watch the hearing.

NEEDED: A FEW GOOD ANALYSTS: Two intelligence firms are reaching out to one-stops throughout Southwest Ohio to recruit dislocated workers for a new career: that of open-source information analyst.

In this pilot program, Riverside Research and Information International Associates will train people in the basics of data collection and research analysis. Prospective students must be 18, have a high school diploma or equivalent, good reading comprehension, and basic skills in Microsoft Office and navigating the Internet.

There is no cost for the training, and upon completion, students will earn a Department of Defense Security Clearance, which many employers that work with Wright Patterson Air Force Base require. Trainees will then be placed into an unpaid 150-hour internship with an employer. Agencies or employers that might be interested in hosting an internship can fill out a survey [here](#). Job seekers who want to find out more about this opportunity can fill out [this survey](#). To find out more about what a research analyst does and this program, click [here](#).

CHAMBER TO SPONSOR WORKFORCE PANEL: "Using the Public Workforce System to Your Advantage" is the topic of a program scheduled for April 11 at the Boy Scout Achievement Center, 10078 Reading Road, Evendale. The event is sponsored by the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber. **Steve Browne**, Executive Director of Human Resources at La Rosa's and a SWORWIB board member, will moderate the panel, which will include **Andy Lotter**, Regional Employer Liaison at Employers First Regional Workforce Network, and **Carolyn Reynolds**, Rapid Response coordinator at the SuperJobs Center. A light breakfast will be available at 8 a.m. and the program begins at 8:30 a.m. Register [here](#) or call (513) 579-3111,

COLBERT TALKS UP ON-THE-JOB TRAINING GRANTS: Michael Colbert, Director of the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, was a guest speaker at a City Council Job & Business Growth Seminar Feb. 27, discussing government incentives available to help employers hire dislocated and disadvantaged workers. On-the-Job Training, a program that encourages employers to hire the long-term dislocated worker by reimbursing 50 percent of the worker's wages during the training period, is available under a special grant from the federal government. Work Opportunity Tax Credits, which offers tax credits to employers who hire from certain

targeted groups, such as veterans, is another incentive. Business Services Representatives at SuperJobs Center can provide additional information to employers; contact Business Services Manager **Chuck Walters** at cwalters@superjobs.com. Colbert also promoted Ohio Means Jobs, Ohio's website that matches employers and job seekers.

EUROPEAN CHAMBER TO HOLD SKILLED WORKFORCE CONFERENCE: The European-American Chamber of Commerce will host a conference May 16 on Skilled Labor Workforce: U.S. & European Perspectives to address the issues and challenges the U.S. faces in recapitalizing its skilled labor workforce for economic prosperity and global competitiveness. International experts, policy makers, and industry leaders will convene in Cincinnati for the one day conference. Employers First Regional Workforce Network will be among the exhibitors, offering information about employer services. To find out more and register, click here.

IN THE NEWS:

SWORWIB appoints new board members

CWA newsletter promotes SuperAward winner Kevin Celata

Secretary Solis blogs about trip to Cincinnati State

Enquirer publishes SuperAward winners

Lighthouse youth to participate in neighborhood cleanup