



Geared Toward The Future

NORTHWEST CENTRAL ILLINOIS

WORKS

Winter 2020

The Workforce Board covering Bureau, Carroll, Jo Daviess, LaSalle, Lee,
Ogle, Putnam, and Whiteside Counties.

Pam Furlan, Executive Director BEST, Inc. Announces Retirement



After 46 years in workforce development Pam Furlan will retire from BEST, Inc. on May 1st. Her journey started in 1974 when Pam joined the LaSalle County staff administering the Comprehensive Employment & Training Act, commonly referred to as CETA. In 1984, when the legislation changed to the Job Training Partnership Act and the counties of LaSalle, Bureau, Putnam, and Lee were consolidated into one service delivery area Pam assisted with that transition serving as the Interim Director and later the Director of Internal operations, Fiscal Officer, and Program Coordinator. In 2002, Pam became the Executive Director of BEST, Inc. and NCI Works. In 2017, Pam became President of the statewide Directors' Association, the Illinois Workforce Partnership, working with state level officials and the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board as the liaison for the Directors' Association. Pam served as President from July 2017 to June 2019. Pam has indeed had a distinguished career. The staff at BEST, Inc. and members of NCI Works wish her all the best as she makes this transition. We are confident that her love for her horses and 2 dogs, and the Chicago White Sox, will fill her with hours of joy and happiness for years to come.



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Also in This Issue:

- Signing of NCI Works CMA Apprenticeship
- Job Fair hosted for Honeywell Employees
- Most Recent LMI

Opioid Dislocated Worker Grant Launches with the Naming of Kerri Hicks as Grant Coordinator and the Addition of Staff

Business Employment Skills Team, Inc.'s Grant Coordinator, Kerri Hicks, has been actively networking with Chambers, Rotaries, Task Forces, Law Enforcement and Drug Coalitions in getting the message of the Opioid Dislocated Worker Grant out into all 8 county communities, in hopes to break the cycle and find those that have been impacted in some way, employment. Currently, we are working with the referrals and determining eligibility / job readiness, to then begin working on the process of placement into a paid work experience. This Grant will have the ability to place 30 impacted participants back into the Workforce.



Kerri Hicks, BEST, Inc.

BEST, Inc. has partnered with Project OPEN that covers Whiteside, Lee, and Ogle counties. Project OPEN is a coalition that is working very diligently in community awareness on Substance Abuse by providing Prevention, Treatment, Recovery, and Workforce Development. Project OPEN is building an Employment Referral Process and Employer Survey that will help to gauge the “2nd Chance Employers” and the process in which the impacted participants will be able to follow to be re-integrated back into the Workforce.

Beginning of March, BEST has placed an Education Coordinator, Kim Dahl, with Perfectly Flawed (LaSalle County) as a Temporary Disaster Relief Position, this Kim will not only work on providing families and peers with support services, youth enrichment activities, and public information, which are all designed to save lives and strengthen communities and families impacted by addiction. Kim will also work with the Job Coaches and Kerri Hicks to identify those businesses that can be “2nd Chance Employers” and develop a strategy for approaching them for their support and consideration to help address the stigma. Utilizing the Employer survey that Project OPEN is currently working on, will be a fantastic tool in

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Core Partners of NCI WORKS

- ◆ Adult Education
- ◆ Business Employment Skills, Inc.
- ◆ Illinois Department of Employment Security
- ◆ Illinois Division of Rehabilitation Services

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helping to correct this stereotype. Information from these surveys will then help to build the Employer relationships needed to re-integrate these participants back into the Workforce.

BEST will also have 2 Job Coaches in the Temporary Disaster Relief Positions for the Northern Counties (Whiteside, Lee, Ogle, Carroll, and JoDaviess) and Southern Counties (Bureau, LaSalle, and Putnam). The Job Coach for the Northern Territories, Matt Howze, has been placed as of the beginning of March, Kerri is still actively searching for the Southern Territory Job Coach. The Job Coaches will provide the life skills needed for the impacted participants and be the liaison between the Employer and the Employee to promote a successful transition back into the work environment. To secure this successful transition, the Job Coach, will educate employers/supervisors about managing and working with these impacted participants struggling with Opioid abuse including those in recovery and the barriers that they will need to overcome in correcting this stigma.

BEST also partnered with Sinnissippi Center and was able to place a Behavioral Health Nurse, Kelly Diehl, at their location, the end of February. The Nurse's position will be providing clinical support to the psychiatric team. This support is to include initial intake and triage, assisting clients with medication concerns and refills, and providing intervention and referral.

NCI Works Industry Briefs are available for downloading! NCI works is releasing a series of **Industry Briefs** designed to provide information on the current environment/trends of a given industry, challenges that industry is facing, most important skills needed, qualities most desired by employers, hiring opportunities within our local area, salary ranges for our area, what is good about working in that field, what might be not-so-good about working in that field. These **Industry Briefs** are available to the general public, educators, economic developers, parents, counselors, teachers to download at:

<http://www.nciworks.org/industry-briefs/>

It is the hope of NCI Works that, by making these briefs available, area students and job seekers will be able to make the best informed decision possible when it comes to deciding on a career or making a career change.

For more information on this initiative please contact

Pam Furlan at pam_fulan@best-inc.org or

call at 815-224-0375

Ottawa One Stop Winter 2020 Events

Ottawa IDES continues to host monthly hiring events at the Ottawa One Stop at 1550 First Avenue, Ottawa, Illinois. This is a free service for employers who are interested in seeking candidates for their openings and have posted the openings on IllinoisJobLink.com. Job Seekers can find out about job openings on the same website by registering as a job seeker and posting their resume.

On January 16, 2020, IDES Ottawa Office held a very successful Multi-Employer Hiring Event, which included five different employers. This hiring event set a record for our small local office, in that there were twenty-six job seekers, and six of those job seekers were offered positions with three of the five companies who participated in the event.

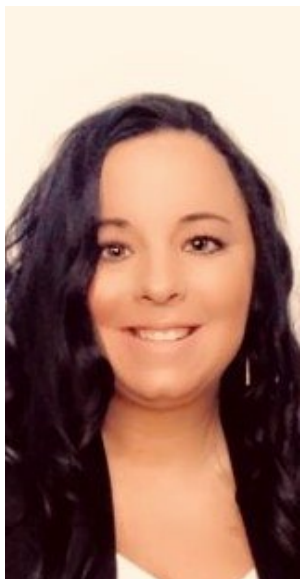
Ottawa IDES also hosts Expungement Workshops at the Ottawa One Stop, where individuals with a criminal background can learn about the expungement and sealing of criminal records and which offenses are disqualifying. They can also learn about changes to the law, which have expanded eligibility and learn about Fidelity Bonding, Work Opportunity Tax Credit and Illinois Health Care Waiver. The next Expungement and Sealing Workshop will be held on March 26, 2020 at the Ottawa One Stop from 10:30 am until noon.

NCI Works meets at 5:30 p.m. on the 4th Tuesday of the following months at Illinois Valley Community College, Sauk Valley Community College, Highland Community College and Carroll County Housing Authority via Electronic Meeting Capability

January	July
March	September
May	November

Meetings are open to the public.

(Dates & Locations are subject to change. Please consult the NCI Works website, www.nciworks.org, for meeting information)



Introducing NCI Works' Newest Member Abby Farrell, Director of Human Resources Starved Rock Lodge & Conference Center

1. Are you originally from the Illinois Valley? If not tell us about where you grew up and what brought you here.

I grew up near the Illinois Valley and have always found it to be a quaint community. I have found through finding my way in my career path that it is where I wanted to plant my roots to stay.

2. What is your professional Background?

I previously worked in education as a preschool daycare teacher along as a teacher's aide. I attended and graduated from IVCC and completed some additional coursework through Lincoln College. From there I was led to Starved Rock Lodge & Conference

Center, where I have really found a home in my adult career as the Director of Human Resources.

3. What made you decide to volunteer to service on a workforce board?

In my industry, I find it to be increasingly important to make an impact in the community through volunteering. I think this can come in many different ways and the workforce board was one locally I found to be interesting. It is refreshing to find a group of peers to discuss things that matter and work toward a common goal.

**Access to the services provided by each of these
agencies is available at:**

Southtowne Mall	2323 E Lincolnway
1550 First Avenue	Sterling, IL 61081
Ottawa, IL 61356	815-625-9648
815-434-3111	TTY: 800-526-0844

Northwest Central Illinois Works (NCI Works) is a locally appointed workforce board that oversees workforce development programs that are funded by millions of federal tax dollars for an eight-county area (Bureau, Carroll, Jo Daviess, LaSalle, Lee, Ogle, Putnam and Whiteside Counties).

December 2019 Unemployment Rate

Most Recent Available:

National	3.5%
State of IL	3.7%
LWIA 4	4.9%
Bureau Co	5.1%
Carroll Co.	4.4%
Jo Daviess Co.	4.7%
LaSalle Co	5.3%
Lee Co	4.2%
Ogle Co	5.1%
Putnam Co	5.7%
Whiteside Co.	4.5%

Wondering what the NCI Works partners can do for your business? Our matrix of business services is available online at www.nciworks.org.

“The Labor Market Demographic is an invaluable resource for those of us involved in Economic Development. We use this information when responding to a number of “request for information” such as: Grants, State Site Searches, Realtors, Retail , Disaster etc. Though you would think all would seek the same information, this is not the case. Having the very detailed breakdown in the Labor Market Demographic allows us to respond to specific Labor Market Demographic questions quickly and accurately.”

Boyd Palmer, Executive Director Ottawa Area Chamber of Commerce & Industry (retired)

Additional Labor Market Information is available at the NCI Works website at www.nciworks.org

Labor Force Data	Current Month ()
Employment	128,162
Average Annual Wage	\$43,691
Percentage Change Over 2018	-0.3%
Unemployment Rate: December 2019	4.9%
Industry	
Ag, Fishing, Forestry/Hunting	4,623
Mining/Quarrying/Oil/Gas	945
Utilities	1,822
Construction	6,044
Manufacturing	19,812
Wholesale Trade	4,648
Retail Trade	14,269
Transportation/Warehousing	9,044
Information	1,081
Finance/Insurance	3,633
Real Estate/Rental and Leasing	1,408
Professional Science/Technical	3,554
Management	357
Administrative Support	5,261
Educational	10,737
Health Care/Social Assistance	15,144
Arts/Entertainment/Recreation	1,495
Accommodation/Food Service	10,852
Other Services	5,995
Public Administration	7,419
Unclassified	19
Total All Industries	128,162
LWIA 4 Industry Employment Data/Source: Jobseq (2019Q3)	