



*Geared Toward The Future*

NORTHWEST CENTRAL ILLINOIS

**WORKS**

Summer 2018

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

## NCI Works/BEST Begins Two New Workforce Initiatives

NCI Works and the Business Employment Skills Team, Inc. (BEST) will be working with Thomas P. Miller & Associates (TPMA) to identify attitudes that are favorable or unfavorable to the hiring of individuals with felony backgrounds, the disabled, and veterans within the 8 county area. This project is being conducted to identify hiring concerns of area businesses and, ultimately, identify steps that can be taken by the workforce development system to better prepare those individuals within the targeted populations to re-enter the workforce.

Once the survey of area businesses is completed, TPMA will examine the materials currently being used to prepare job seekers in these targeted populations, as well as any marketing material used to promote them. TPMA will give necessary feedback on those materials in an effort to remove any overbearing obstacles in their approach. The project is expected to take 11 months, August 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019, at a cost of \$71,000.00.

In addition to the TPMA project, NCI Works and BEST have contracted with Workforce Enterprise Services, Inc. (WES) to develop a Talent Pipeline Template and Manual that will help create and maintain a pipeline of employable talent. This project will begin with a survey of area businesses on the essential soft and hard skills necessary to enter any given occupation across all industries. Because of the diverse industry base across the 8 counties served by NCI Works

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and BEST, the project will provide a generic template that can be utilized across industry sectors. This Rural Talent Pipeline Initiative, and resulting template, is intended to address the challenges our rural area businesses experience and improve hiring outcomes.

Once the template has been created, WES will conduct a train-the-trainer workshop with NCI Works partners and stakeholders and begin a pilot test of the new template. As part of the pilot test, WES will work with selected area businesses to demonstrate feasibility and make improvements in the template. The overall project is expected to take 18 months, July 1, 2018 to December 31, 2019, at a cost of \$110,000.00.

Anyone with questions about either of these initiatives can contact Pam Furlan, Executive Director of BEST, Inc. at 815-224-0375.

***THERE IS STILL TIME TO REGISTER FOR THE ANNUAL  
NCI WORKS EMPLOYER CONFERENCE!!!!!!!!!!!!***

Visit <http://www.nciworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/NCI-Works-2018-Conference-Announcement-and-Registration.pdf> to download the agenda and registration form.

Email registration to [dianna\\_schuler@best-inc.org](mailto:dianna_schuler@best-inc.org)

Or fax it to 815-433-6645

### **Core Partners OF NCI WORKS**

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

## NCI Works Launches Podcast Series

NCI Works has launched a new series of podcasts: Getting to Work. The series will focus on providing area job seekers with both career information and job search tips. Over the course of the coming months, additional podcasts will include career information on manufacturing, logistics, agriculture, information technology as well as tips on job search and other important work related topics.

The Getting to Work podcast can be accessed through the following services or at the NCI Works website:

<http://www.nciworks.org/publications-news/podcasts/>

iTunes/ApplePodcasts: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/getting-to-work/id1423132481?mt=2>

Stitcher Radio: <http://www.stitcher.com/s?fid=219424&refid=stpr>

Google Play:

[https://playmusic.app.goo.gl/?ibi=com.google.PlayMusic&isi=691797987&ius=googleplaymusic&apn=com.google.android.music&link=https://play.google.com/music/m/lgmfuzfi6eos7fcwdul543lf334?t%3DGetting\\_To\\_Work%26pcampaignid%3DMKT-na-all-co-pr-mu-pod-16](https://playmusic.app.goo.gl/?ibi=com.google.PlayMusic&isi=691797987&ius=googleplaymusic&apn=com.google.android.music&link=https://play.google.com/music/m/lgmfuzfi6eos7fcwdul543lf334?t%3DGetting_To_Work%26pcampaignid%3DMKT-na-all-co-pr-mu-pod-16)

You can also find the podcast on the Google Podcasts app!

***SAVE THE DATE!!!!***

**IDES Employer Forum**

**Thursday, November 1, 2018**

**10 a.m. to Noon**

**Location Yet To Be Determined**

**Illinois Department of Employment Security Director Mays will be speaking on services available through the One-Stop System including: tax credits, recruiting assistance, training assistance, and much more.**

**Look for more information on this free event in the coming weeks.**

## **Ashley Struve Wins State Recognition from Illinois Workforce Partnership**



In July of 2015, Ashley Struve found herself out of a job with the closure of Robertshaw. She had worked there for 10 years as a Machine Operator earning \$13.56/hour. She was a high school graduate but didn't have many skills to offer employers and few job options.

Since she was eligible for the TAARA program, Ashley decided to take advantage of the TAA Education and TRA benefits under that program. Coordinating her services and benefits with IDES and interests as shown by Illinois Worknet testing, we started searching for training programs. Ashley was interested in Environmental issues and found a program offered at EICC District - Clinton Community College in Health, Safety, and Environmental Technology. This program was an AS Degree which was almost 100% online. As Ashley was a single parent with a 6 year old daughter, this program appealed to her as she could be available to her daughter and take classes. She started classes in August.

The following summer Ashley found herself challenged needing child care for her required speech class. She applied but found 4 C's was out of money. Thankfully, a friend helped her out instead.

Ashley was very successful during her training receiving semester gpa's of 3.439 or above. During her final semester, Ashley was encouraged to look for an internship/work experience position to gain experience in her field of study. With the assistance of the Business Relations Representative from BEST, interviews were lined up with area employers.

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

January	July
March	September
May	November

***Meetings are open to the public.***

(Location are subject to change. Please consult the NCI Works website,  
[www.nciworks.org](http://www.nciworks.org), for updated meeting locations.)

Ashley was interviewed and found herself particularly interested in working at Maclean-Fogg Components Solutions, Metform Division. Her internship/work experience under the 1D program started in March of 2017. She assumed an EHS Specialist position where she worked 29 hours a week or less at a wage of \$14.40/hour. During her final semester in school, Ashley received a 4 pt. GPA in addition to working at her internship and being a full time Mom. Ashley graduated from Eastern Iowa Community College District in May of 2017 with a 3.533 cumulative GPA. Ashley’s internship at Metform ended in July of 2017.

Metform was so pleased with the Ashley’s work, they were very interested in hiring her utilizing the OJT program. Ashley was hired and works as a Safety Technician earning \$19.25/hr. During her OJT Ashley learned skills, becoming proficient in MQI, learning to facilitate continuous improvement projects, how to perform root-cause analysis of EHS incidents and how to lead EHS audits to ensure compliance with Federal and state regulations. While at Metform, Ashley was very successful and earned all excellent evaluations regarding her attendance/punctuality, displaying initiative, attitude, quality and accuracy of work, developing necessary skills, relationships with peers and supervisors and completing tasks on time.

Ashley’s OJT ended in February of 2018. She is still working at Metform and loves her job. Ashley is a wonderful role model to her daughter who is now 9 years old and her former coworkers at Robertshaw showing them it is possible to succeed after adversity.

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

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

*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).*

**July 2018 Unemployment Rate Most Recent Available:**

- National 4.1%**
- State of IL 4.3 %**
- LWIA 4 4.5%**
- Bureau Co 4.3%**
- Carroll Co. 3.8%**
- Jo Daviess Co. 3.3 %**
- LaSalle Co 5.3%**
- Lee Co 3.9%**
- Ogle Co 4.3%**
- Putnam Co 4.4%**
- Whiteside Co. 4.4%**

**Wondering what the NCI Works partners can do for your business? Our matrix of business services is available online at [www.nciworks.org](http://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**

Additional Labor Market Information is available at the NCI Works website at [www.nciworks.org](http://www.nciworks.org)

<b>Labor Force Data</b>	<b>Current Month (July 2018)</b>
Employment	127,666
Average Annual Wage	\$41,932
Percentage Change Over 2017	-1.0%
Unemployment Rate:	4.5%
<b>Industry</b>	
Ag, Fishing, Forestry/Hunting	4,802
Mining/Quarrying/Oil/Gas	1,032
Utilities	1,746
Construction	6,028
Manufacturing	20,005
Wholesale Trade	5,072
Retail Trade	14,668
Transportation/Warehousing	8,843
Information	1,127
Finance/Insurance	3,736
Real Estate/Rental and Leasing	1,473
Professional Science/Technical	3,282
Management	369
Administrative Support	4,573
Educational	10,535
Health Care/Social Assistance	15,105
Arts/Entertainment/Recreation	1,604
Accommodation/Food Service	10,859
Other Services	5,609
Public Administration	7,161
Unclassified	37
<b>Total All Industries</b>	<b>127,666</b>
LWIA 4 Industry Employment Data/Source: Jobseq (2018Q2)	