



Geared Toward The Future

NORTHWEST CENTRAL ILLINOIS

WORKS

Spring/Summer
2022

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

Congratulations to BEST's Spring and Summer 2022 Graduates!!!

Castor Health Institutes: CNAs—Mariah, Lainie, Kayleigh, Megan, Jimena, Ariana, Patsy, Lena, Leticia, Vicki, Violet, Gabbie, Shante, Paige, Meghan, Jamie, Shaylynn, Amanda, Bre, Dakota

Dental Assisting Technologies: Kendra, Dental Assistant Certificate

Highland Community College: Ashleigh, RN

Illinois Valley Community College: Kelsi, AAS Welding,; Jorge, AAS Electronics/Electrician; Shayna, RN; Katie, RN; Gabriela, RN; Haley, CNA; Lily, CNA; Madelyn, CNA; Ali, CDL; Christopher, CDL; Xavier, CDL; Elizabeth, Computer Networking Certificate

Kishwaukee College: Amber, AAS Radiologic Technology; Bailey, AAS Radiologic Technology;; Taylor, AAS Radiologic Technology; Autumn, AAS Radiologic Technology; Kaitlynn, Medical Assistant Certificate

Sauk Valley Community College: Josh, CDL

160 Driving Academy: Stephen, TDT Certification/CDL

Step Ahead Program: Sawyer, GED; Trent, GED

Illinois High School Diploma: Aidan, Damon, Dontae, Damon, Mason, Bradley, Anthony, Bradley

Dixon High School, Diploma: Caden, Molly, Jimmy

Foreston High School, Diploma: Hadley

Oregon High School, Diploma: Travis

Sterling High School, Diploma: Asia, Cheyenne, Corey



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www.nciworks.org



@NCIWorks

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TRI-COUNTY OPPORTUNITIES COUNCIL

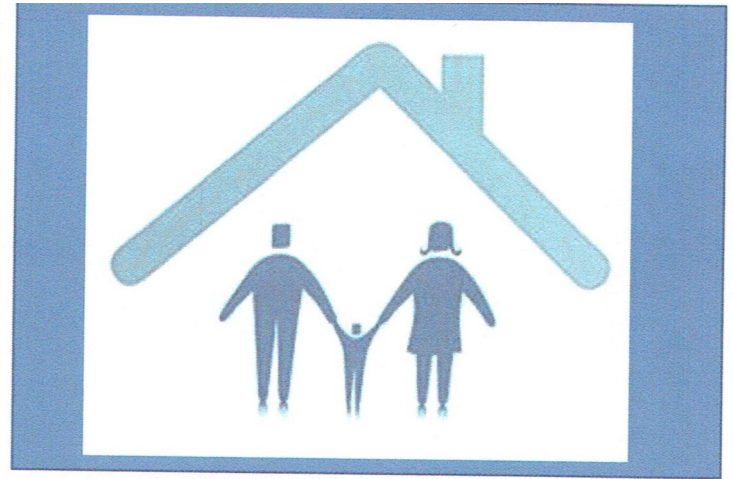
COVID HOUSING PAYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

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Are you currently in rental arrears due to the loss of income as the result to COVID-19: loss of income, laid off, hours reduced, furloughed?

We may be able to help!

Eligible households may receive financial assistance towards their rent arrears payable directly to their landlord.



Bureau/Putnam County

Outreach Worker:

(815)875-6064

80% Area Median Income (Yearly Income)

County	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Bureau	\$40,250	\$46,000	\$51,750	\$57,500	\$62,100	\$66,700	\$71,300	\$75,900
Putnam	\$45,550	\$52,050	\$58,550	\$65,050	\$70,300	\$75,500	\$80,700	\$85,900

If you are income eligible based on the guidelines above) contact an Outreach Worker to make an appointment for assistance.

www.tcochelps.org

Building Opportunities to Transform Communities.

Updates from SVCC Adult Education

ESL and GED classes began on August 22 for the Adult Education program at Sauk Valley Community College. Our GED classes are held in the morning and evening at Sauk Valley Community College. Our ESL classes are held at community locations in Dixon and Sterling. In September, we will have a new ESL class starting in Mt. Morris so our program is expanding.

Another new course is the Manufacturing Bridge course which will be offered in October. Students will learn more about the manufacturing pathway, meet with professionals in the field, and learn the reading, writing, math, and science required in this pathway. Students will be encouraged to transition into the welding program at Sauk Valley Community College upon completion of the Manufacturing Bridge course and the Adult Education program.

NCI Works meets at 12:00 p.m. on the 1st Tuesday of the following months. Due to COVID-19 we are currently meeting electronically during the following months:

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)

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).

GETTING TO WORK



Great Beyond The Door
NORTHWEST CENTRAL ILLINOIS WORKS

Getting To Work
A Podcast of NCI Works
www.nciworks.org

Getting to Work Can also be Found at:

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

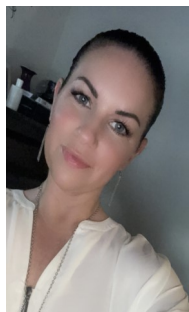
Google Link:

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/Igmfuzfi6eos7fcwdul543lf334?t%3DGetting_To_Work%26pcampaignid%3DMKT-na-all-co-pr-mu-pod-16

For more information on this initiative please contact
Dianna Schuler at dianna_schuler@best-inc.org or
call at 815-640-9406

PY 21 NCI Works Local Award Recipients: Individual Achievement

Ashleigh Chapman:



In May of 2020, Ashleigh contacted the BEST, Inc. office in Sterling to inquire about getting assistance with the cost of the nursing program at Highland Community College. She was a single mother and under-employed in the health care field. Her goal was to pursue a nursing license in order to have a more fulfilling job and a much higher income. Ashleigh was determined eligible for WIOA services as a low-income adult and was able to get help from BEST, Inc. with tuition assistance and mileage reimbursement. She drove back and forth to Freeport and/or Rockford three days a week for 2 years, which would not have been possible for her to afford without the travel reimbursement that BEST, Inc. provided. Ashleigh excelled in her classes and graduated in May of 2022. She will be taking the state boards soon in order to become a registered nurse.

Cheyenne Cantu:



Cheyenne began the BEST, Inc. Program in March of 2021. She was placed in a Work Experience (W/E) at the Rock Falls Chamber of Commerce in Rock Falls, Illinois. During her Work Experience, she was a student at Sterling High School, completed and was certified as a CNA, and successfully graduated from Sterling High School. She achieved all this while navigating a learning disability that, at times, made her work harder to meet her goals. Her goal is to work in the medical field as a Radiological and Ultrasound Technician. During her time at the Rock Falls Chamber of Commerce she was an integral part of their small staff. She learned numerous skills that will help her in her future career. She learned: the importance of prioritizing her workload, customer service, assisting and calming difficult customers, organization, work-life balance, organizing community events, assisting and supervising volunteers, stress reduction, planning and preparation. She has an outgoing and enthusiastic attitude that was contagious to staff and volunteers. She did such a good job that when her W/E was done she was hired by the chamber for temporary work with their Summer Splash Event. Her supervisors have said that Cheyenne is always willing to do hard work which can be rare in today's workplace. She will work outside in hot and/or cold weather and does not complain. She has the rare quality of always looking for more work and not complaining about hard work.

Hannah Kaltenbrun:



Hannah Kaltenbrun was referred to BEST Inc. by her STEP counselor, Toby Luxton, for assistance with employment. Hannah was going to graduate high school soon and was unsure of her next steps. Toby felt she would be a wonderful candidate for the paid work experience program because it would help her ease into permanent employment. Hannah was especially interested in working with young children but did not have experience and it was difficult to find a worksite in her small community due to COVID restrictions. She was eventually referred by BEST Inc. to a local restaurant to assist with back of the house duties such as dishwashing, cleaning, stocking and other duties as assigned. She was hired through the BEST Inc. work experience program and learned many skills at the restaurant. She learned how to manage a work schedule that changed each week, she performed tasks she had never done before and she learned how workers in a restaurant have to work together. Hannah was learning many skills but she didn't like the job. She stuck with it to build a work history and when her training hours ended, she was eager to seek other opportunities.

Hannah said she was still interested in working with young children. The BEST Inc. Youth Job Developer, Diamond Merboth, knocked on doors until she found a business that was interested in meeting Hannah. The meeting went well and a new work experience for Hannah was developed with Best Beginnings in Oregon, IL. Due to Hannah's prior work experience, we were very aware of Hannah's strengths and challenges and were able to work with the supervisor, Tiffany, at Best Beginnings to customize a learning experience that would allow Hannah's strengths to shine and provide opportunities for her to learn new skills. It was a great partnership. Hannah did indeed shine with all the supports in place. Upon completion of her training hours, Hannah was permanently hired. When asked what she loves most about her job, she said she love working with the kids and working with her coworkers. She plans to stay at Best Beginnings for a very, very long time.

Program Year 2021 State Award Winners

Each year the Illinois Workforce Partnership recognized outstanding achievements made by both a member of the business community and a workforce system customer. Below are the local area 4 state level winners with a brief summary of each winner (State Award Winners also receive local award recognition). We extend our congratulations to both our award winners.

Rock Falls Chamber of Commerce

Rock Falls, IL



BEST, Inc. has worked with the Rock Falls Chamber of Commerce since 2018. They have demonstrated outstanding leadership in workforce development and made significant contributions to our area workforce.

They have mentored three of our Work Experience clients at their office. They provided these client's an opportunity to learn applicable real-world skills within the confines of a nurturing learning environment. After our first Work Experience client completed her time there, Bethany Bland, their Executive Director, worked with our BRR, to help find an opportunity in the client's field of study and expertise with a chamber member business. This resulted in an OJT for that client and she is now permanently employed by that business. We have had two other Work Experience Client's at the Rock Falls Chamber. One client did such a good job that she was offered temporary employment at the chamber after completing her W/E.

The Rock Falls Chamber is a champion of BEST and WIOA by always sharing their experiences with the business community and recommending for others in the business community to use our services. The Rock Falls Chamber has sponsored numerous opportunities for our staff to get the word out about workforce services. This has been achieved through the use of their extensive social media outreach and sponsoring classes featuring BEST, Inc staff presentations to the business community. They have been a champion of our services and helping to grow the workforce for their chamber community and throughout their region. *(Pictured from Left to Right are: Sam Smith, Program Coordinator and Bethany Bland, President and CEO of Rock Falls Chamber of Commerce)*

Access to services provided by each of the member agencies is available by contacting:

**NCI Works One-Stop Center
1550 First Avenue
Ottawa, IL
815-640-9407**

**BEST, Inc.
2605 Woodlawn Rd.
Sterling, IL 61081
815-625-9648**

June 2022 Unemployment Rate

Most Recent Available:

National 3.8%

State of IL 4.7%

LWIA 4 4.3%

Bureau Co 4.1%

Carroll Co. 3.3%

Jo Daviess Co 3.2%

LaSalle Co 4.7%

Lee Co 4.2%

Ogle Co 4.3%

Putnam Co 4.2%

Whiteside Co. 4.1%

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

Customer Achievement Award Winner Shayna Miranda

Princeton, IL

Shayna resides in Bureau County and had been working as a Certified Nursing Assistant in the local Nursing homes and our Hospitals. Shayna's Mother and Sister are both in the Nursing Field, so it was only natural



that Shayna would follow in their footsteps though she really wanted to pursue Cosmetology. Her love of wanting to help others and making an impact in a Patient's life is what kept the passion strong in her Nursing path.

Shayna then came to the Business Employment Skills Team in July 2019 ready to further her Education and work towards obtaining her Nursing degree. Since she was working on this goal all on her own, she needed some assistance from BEST with Tuition and Transportation. Shayna initially thought that she would have to obtain a student loan as she felt "between the cracks" with other financial assistance options. Shayna had been determined Basic Skills Deficient during intake process but with much determination and hard work, she was accepted into the Nursing Program at Illinois Valley Community College. Shayna then started her Training assisted by BEST, Inc. in August 2019.

Shayna was not able to pass her first Semester of Nursing, this did not deter her from continuing on though. Shayna registered for Spring Semester and kept moving forward. BEST was able to then assist Shayna once again with Tuition and Transportation for the remaining 2 Semesters. Shayna passed each of those Semesters without a problem. She graduated on May 14, 2022 and received her Associated in Applied Science – Nursing degree. On June 23, 2022 she passed her NCLEX and will be starting her Full-Time RN (medical/surgical) position at St. Margaret Hospital in Peru on July 12, 2022. She is now looking forward to beginning her new career which would not have been possible without the help of this Program.

Congratulations

Congratulations to all of our local and state award winners. Their success is a reminder that what we do, as members and partners in the workforce system, has lasting impact on those that we assist.

Updates from Illinois Department of Employment Security

IDES reports that unemployment rates are down in all 14 metro areas and jobs up in most areas during July. To read the press release go to:

<https://ides.illinois.gov/newsroom/2022/august/unemployment-rates-down-in-all-14-metro-areas-jobs-up-in-most-ar.html>

Also, IllinoisJobLink.com is getting an upgrade to the system and will be up and available for both job seekers and employers to use again on 8/29/22 at 8:30 a.m.

“Labor Market Demographics are a necessity for those of us involved in Economic Development. We use this information when responding to “requests for information” such as: state site searches, industrial broker inquiries, retail leads, grants, etc. Companies deciding where to locate need to know if our area has the workforce to staff their needs. Though you would think all would seek the same information, this is not the case. Even more important is having the staff at BEST available to help us find the information needed. All of this allows us to continue to attract new business into the area.”

Dave Noble, Director of Community Development, City of Ottawa

Additional Labor Market Information is available at the NCI Works website at www.nciworks.org and BEST, Inc website at www.best-inc.org

Labor Force Data	UI % Current Month (June, 2022)
Employment	123,113
Average Annual Wage	\$49,497
Percentage Change Over 2021 1st Quarter	4.3%
Unemployment Rate: June, 2022	4.3%
Industry	1st Quarter 2022
Ag, Fishing, Forestry/Hunting	4,362
Mining/Quarrying/Oil/Gas	796
Utilities	1,436
Construction	6,110
Manufacturing	19,170
Wholesale Trade	4,703
Retail Trade	14,068
Transportation/Warehousing	8,668
Information	834
Finance/Insurance	3,445
Real Estate/Rental and Leasing	1,369
Professional Science/Technical	3,719
Management	322
Administrative Support	5,277
Educational	10,264
Health Care/Social Assistance	13,698
Arts/Entertainment/Recreation	1,543
Accommodation/Food Service	9,906
Other Services	5,801
Public Administration	7,622
Unclassified	0
Total All Industries	123,113
LWIA 4 Industry Employment Data/Source: Jobseq (2022Q1)	