



Geared Toward The Future

NORTHWEST CENTRAL ILLINOIS

**WORKS**

Spring/Summer '23

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

## **BEST, Inc Receives Second Apprenticeship Expansion Grant!**

BEST, Inc (Illinois Local Workforce Area 4) requested just shy of \$175,000 – the cap for grant requests and received approval for \$110,000 max. Grant is for a one year period with the possibility of extending it for up to an additional 4 years in June 2024. The purpose is to provide technical assistance to area companies/businesses in the development of apprenticeship programs that address company/business workforce needs. Technical Assistance Outreach covers 8 counties that BEST serves: Bureau, Carroll, Jo Daviess, La Salle, Lee, Ogle, Putnam, and Whiteside. BEST will also serve as a liaison to connect companies/businesses to the US Department of Labor Region 5 Office of Apprenticeship.

This is the first year of this round of Apprenticeship Expansion Grant, grant Period is July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024. Illinois can apply for an additional 4 years through competitive bid in 2024. During this first year staff will hold an additional 6 industry sector events to promote the development of new programs and the expansion of existing programs. Staff anticipate the standup of at least 1 additional program besides the ones at Jo Carroll Energy and Wolfline Construction. Staff also anticipate reaching 179 companies across all sectors based on their performance during their 2019 Apprenticeship Expansion Grant. The agency hopes to be able to apply for and receive additional funding during the 2024 bidding process so that it can expand programs such as those covered by the current grant as well as put more virtual resource (VR) career exploration tools in area schools.

### **Grant Will Cover:**

- Targeted Population Hiring Incentive \$2,000.00 -- \$250 per eligible hire based on the local definition of a targeted population (Veteran, Disabled, Returning Citizen) for a max of \$1000.00 per employer. 2 employers max. \$35,906.00 – Initial purchase of training materials for the National Broadband Association’s training. See attached for detailed/itemized breakout of costs.
- \$999.00 - Train the Trainer cost for 1 trainer is expected to be \$499 and conducted by the National Broadband Association. Travel expenses are estimated at an additional \$500.
- \$25,830 - Half of first year of apprenticeship training for Wolfline Construction for 5 students is estimated at \$14,330 (\$2,866 per student for 1 semester). Training cost for 12 students through the National Broadband Association curriculum is estimated at \$5,400 (12 students at \$450 each). = 19,730.00. Virtual Reality Career Exploration Tools for Pipeline Feeder Effort \$6,100 – Two Virtual Reality Goggles for CTE students career exploration in fiber broadband at \$600 each for a total of \$1,200.00. Development of 10 experiences for the virtual goggles \$4,400.
- Cloud hosting for virtual experiences for 10 months at \$50/month. \$500.00
- Staff cost for providing business engagement and technical assistance to remaining LWIA 4 counties.



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Oglesby, IL 61348  
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815-223-1385 (Fax)  
[www.nciworks.org](http://www.nciworks.org)

### **Also in This Issue:**

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## ***Congratulations to BEST's Spring 2023 Graduates!!!***

Highland Community College/160 Driving Academy: Tony—CDL

Illinois Valley Community College:

Salam—AAS Business Administration  
Delroy—CDL  
Paige—RN  
Brooke—RN  
Megan—LPN  
David—GED/HSE  
Mark—Automotive

Kassidi—RN  
Kaitlyn—Dental Assisting Certificate  
Alejandro—RN  
Erica—AAS Business Administration  
Delaney—LPN  
Larry—Automotive

Sauk Valley Community College:

Deann—AAS in Management  
Amdanda—RAD Tech  
Chasity—LPN  
Morgan—RAD Tech  
Brayden—RAD Tech  
Kellie—RN  
Jessica—RN  
Abril—RN  
Alyssa—LPN  
Amanda—LPN

Kasey—RAD Tech  
Stacy—RAD Tech  
Tina—LPN  
Gracie—RAD Tech  
Ryver—RAD Tech  
Brook—RN  
Natasha—RN  
Alexandria—RN  
Kirstin—LPN  
August—LPN

OSF College of Nursing: Mayra—BSN/RN

Rockford Career College: Patrick—HAVC Diploma

160 Driving Academy: Randy—CDL

Amboy High School: Jarrett—Diploma

Illinois High School Diplomas: Madison, Leslie, Breanna, Skyler, Jonathon, Alexandra

Oregon High School: Dawson—Diploma

Step Ahead ROE Program GED/HSE: Alondra, Hunter, Victor



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## Worth Repeating! What is WorkShare IL?

WorkShare IL is a voluntary program that provides employers, facing a decline in business, with an alternative to layoffs. The program allows an employer to reduce the hours of workers in any unit of their business in order to avoid permanent layoffs of workers. Each worker in an affected unit continues to work, but experiences a reduction in hours that ranges from 20% to 60%. Workers receive a portion of their unemployment benefits during the period of the temporary reduction to offset the reduction in earnings.

For more information regarding the WorkShare IL program, please visit: [WorkShare.ides.illinois.gov](http://WorkShare.ides.illinois.gov) To learn more about unemployment insurance in the State of Illinois, please visit: [IDES \(illinois.gov\)](http://IDES(illinois.gov)) Contact Information Special Units Program: (217) 558-8150 [DES.WorkShare@illinois.gov](mailto:DES.WorkShare@illinois.gov)

Local Contact: Jane Verplaetse, IDES Business Service Coordinator.  
[Jane.Verplaetse@illinois.gov](mailto:Jane.Verplaetse@illinois.gov) 309-794-3619

### Local & Regional Planning Process to Begin

NCI Works is starting to gear up for the 2024 Local and Regional Planning Process. This will involve each of the local Partners from Local Workforce Area #4 to participate and coordinate strategies for service delivery and initiatives that will benefit individuals in our workforce area. Local Partners should be on the look out for email correspondence regarding the Planning Guidelines that are scheduled to be released in December 2023.

NCI Works meets at 12:00 p.m. on the 1st Tuesday of 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](http://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).*



## Introducing Dr. Tracy Morris Illinois Valley Community College’s New President

Dr. Morris began as a first generation college student at Illinois Valley Community College (IVCC), earning her Associate of Arts before earning her Bachelor of Science degree from Western Illinois University. She went on to earn her Masters in Counseling and Doctorate in Adult and Higher Education, both from Northern Illinois University.

With 28 years of education-related experience and 21 years in higher education, Dr. Morris served as a high school teacher, K-8 school counselor, and a community college advisor and orientation coordinator before entering higher education administration. Dr. Morris began as the Director of Admissions and Records and then advanced to the Associate Vice President for Student Services at IVCC. From there, she joined Illinois Central College (ICC) as the Vice President of Student Services in 2014.

In 2018, Dr. Morris joined Joliet Junior College as the college’s first Compliance Officer. In this role, Dr. Morris developed a compliance program and performed oversight for on-time reporting, meeting legislative and accreditation requirements, review of board policies and institutional procedures, as well as conducting assessments and reviews.

In December 2022, Dr. Morris was selected as the Morris is the first IVCC graduate to be named IVCC President. Former president Dr. Al Wisgoski (1974-1996) graduated from IVCC predecessor LPO Junior College.



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

**NCI Works One-Stop Center**  
 1550 First Avenue  
 Ottawa, IL  
 815-434-3111

**TTY: 800-526-0844**

**June 2023 Unemployment Rate**

**Most Recent Available:**

- National 3.8%
- State of IL 4.5%
- LWIA 4 5.1%
- Bureau Co 5.6%
- Carroll Co. 4.1%
- Jo Daviess Co 3.7%
- LaSalle Co 5.6%
- Lee Co 4.5%
- Ogle Co 5.1%
- Putnam Co 5.0%
- Whiteside Co. 4.8%

**Check out the NCI Works! Podcast Series: Getting to Work!  
Available at [nciworks.org](http://nciworks.org) or on your favorite podcast app!**

*“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](http://www.nciworks.org) and BEST, Inc website at [www.best-inc.org](http://www.best-inc.org)

<b>Labor Force Data</b>	<b>UI % Current Month (June 2023)</b>
Employment	123,328
Average Annual Wage	\$51,815.00
Percentage Change Over 2021 3rd Quarter	0.7%
Unemployment Rate: June 2023	5.1%
<b>Industry</b>	<b>3rd Quarter 2022</b>
Ag, Fishing, Forestry/Hunting	4,275
Mining/Quarrying/Oil/Gas	880
Utilities	1,694
Construction	5,983
Manufacturing	19,231
Wholesale Trade	4,879
Retail Trade	13,859
Transportation/Warehousing	8,480
Information	831
Finance/Insurance	3,332
Real Estate/Rental and Leasing	1,369
Professional Science/Technical	3,536
Management	310
Administrative Support	4,882
Educational	10,619
Health Care/Social Assistance	13,463
Arts/Entertainment/Recreation	1,678
Accommodation/Food Service	10,510
Other Services	5,815
Public Administration	7,697
Unclassified	5
<b>Total All Industries</b>	<b>123,328</b>
LWIA 4 Industry Employment Data/Source: Jobseq (2023Q1)	