

OPENING THE DOOR TO

# OPPORTUNITY

IN DUPAGE COUNTY

# A YEAR IN REVIEW

2018-19





## MESSAGE FROM OUR **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

The workNet DuPage Career Center is DuPage County's premier workforce development organization. Using federal funds through the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA), we serve job seekers and businesses throughout the County with the overarching goal of strengthening the local economy and enhancing the quality of life. We are delighted to present our Year in Review for Program Year 18 (PY18- July 1, 2018-June 30, 2019). As outlined in the coming pages, workNet DuPage's job seeker and business services significantly impact the community. We provide financial assistance for job training programs and host job search skills workshops. For businesses, we award grants to cover the cost of workforce training and offer specialized recruiting assistance. We love the work we do here and the impressive gains that our clients make. From entry to executive levels, young adults to senior career professionals, and everyone in between, we proudly serve DuPage County.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lisa Schwach', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Lisa Schwach**  
*Executive Director*

workNet DuPage Career Center  
DuPage County Workforce Development Division

# WORKNET'S IMPACT ON DUPAGE

*The results are in  
for Program Year 18:  
(July 1, 2018-June 30, 2019)*



**15.5+ MIL**

in wages earned  
by clients who  
completed services



**80%**

earned credentials  
in high-demand  
occupations



**85.5%**

increase in earnings  
among low-income  
clients



**300+**

households gained  
economic security  
through new  
employment



**34%**

increase in clients  
pursuing healthcare  
careers after 1 new  
talent pipeline initiative



nearly  
**\$400,000**

given to DuPage  
businesses  
to upskill employees



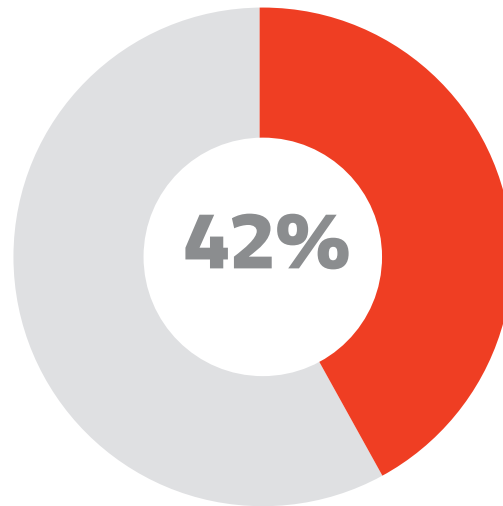
**1 AWARD**

for combating the  
opioid crisis received in  
Springfield, Illinois

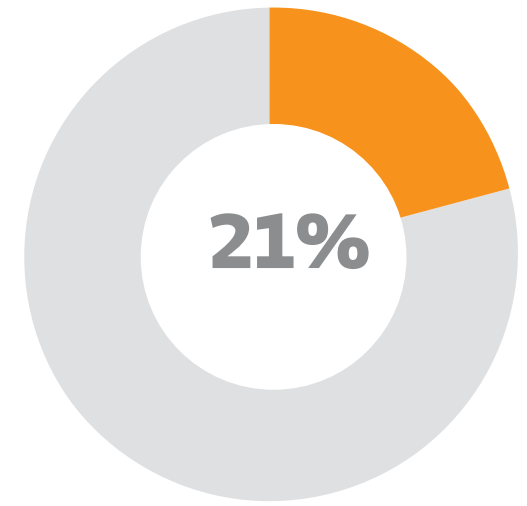
*Data reflects WIOA cases that were closed during PY18*

# WIOA TRAINING DOLLARS

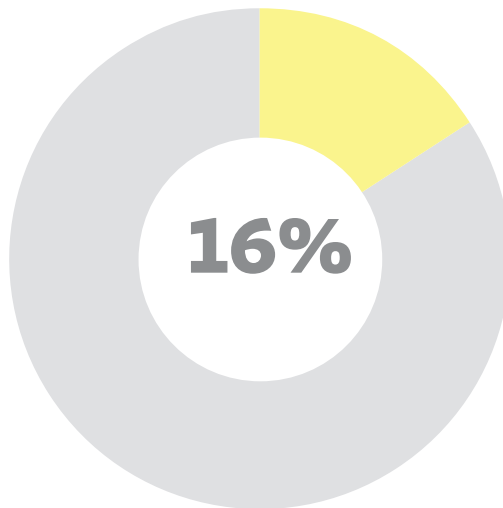
workNet DuPage Career Center  
clients attended occupational training  
programs in these industry sectors:



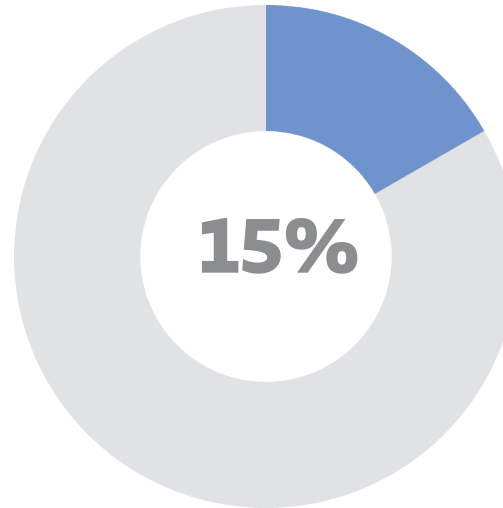
INFORMATION  
TECHNOLOGY



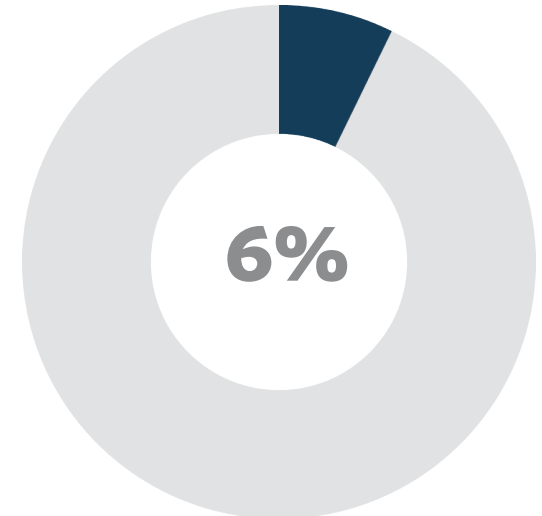
PROFESSIONAL  
SERVICES



HEALTHCARE



TRANSPORTATION,  
DISTRIBUTION,  
& LOGISTICS



MANUFACTURING



**40% OF AMERICANS**  
report having been laid off  
or terminated from a job  
at least once.

**WE'RE HERE TO  
HELP**



**Carson Pirie Scott**

**GOING OUT OF BUSINESS**



*Rapid Response assists both businesses and affected workers of companies in the event of layoff or closure to ease the transition*

 **1407**  
**INDIVIDUALS**  
**IMPACTED**

 **23** **BUSINESSES**  
**CONTACTED**

 **20** *out of* **23**  
**PARTICIPATED IN**  
**RAPID RESPONSE**

# CONNECTING LAID-OFF WORKERS WITH **OPPORTUNITY**



Despite record low unemployment in DuPage County, recent market disruptions in telecom and retail industries generated mass layoffs.

As consumer spending patterns have shifted online, the closing of community staples – Lord & Taylor, Pepperidge Farm, Carson Pirie Scott & Co., and Sears, to name a few – has impacted hundreds of employees' lives.

The workNet DuPage Rapid Response Program aided employers and workers during these challenging transitions. Representatives from DuPage County Workforce Development Division, the Illinois Department of Employment Security, and the Department of Labor created tailored strategies to help laid-off employees rapidly reenter the workforce. In 2019, 20 companies hosted the Rapid Response Team which delivered critical information about unemployment assistance and connected workers with no-cost career services. Laid-off employees learned about training grants up to \$10,000 designed to help them develop in-demand skills and become more marketable.

*If you've been laid-off from your job and need job search assistance, call workNet DuPage at 630.955.2030 or visit [worknetdupage.org](http://worknetdupage.org).*

# DUPAGE'S WORKNET MAKES A DIFFERENCE

## *Life after West Chicago's General Mills*

When the General Mills manufacturing plant closed in West Chicago in the summer of 2017, George Witowski's life turned upside down. 500 other workers share George's story.

For more than half a century, General Mills remained one of the area's largest employers, paying thousands of employees good union wages to enjoy the fruits of their labor and one day retire comfortably.

When George, currently 42, secured a job as a Cereal Processing Tech, he assumed he would work at General Mills for a couple decades, then retire with a secure future for his family. Five years later, the plant shut down.

While there is no painless way to let go of valuable workers, General Mills' efforts to ease the transition enabled workers to do so with dignity. Jamie Brown, DuPage Workforce Innovation Board Coordinator, says, "General Mills was a model employer and encouraged its employees to get connected to workNet's Rapid Response, and by extension, a myriad of federal, state and local resources."

A father of two children, ages 10 and 13, and the sole income earner at the time, when an opportunity for no-strings attached career services was offered through the workNet DuPage Rapid Response, George didn't hesitate to grab it. He says it was exactly

what he needed to get back on his feet.

With a growing awareness that good union jobs in the same type of factory setting were now few and far between, he made the decision to go back to school. Without funding from workNet DuPage, George says he wouldn't have been able to entertain the thought.

George researched in-demand careers and decided to pursue physical therapy.

George enrolled in the Physical Therapist Assistant Program at Elgin Community College. workNet DuPage covered tuition, but George took a job working the overnight shift at Northwestern Delanor Hospital to supplement his income. In addition to the courses he attended during the day, and housekeeping duties in the radiology unit at night, George found a way to make time and be present for his family.

In May 2019, George achieved a new milestone: graduating with honors with an Associate in Applied Science degree (AAS).

Wasting no time, he applied for physical therapy jobs and immediately obtained interviews. After hitting it off with the Regional and Facility Managers at

Athletico, George received a job offer contingent on passing the state licensing exam. Excited to work in his chosen profession, George accepted the position, passed



the exam with flying colors, and said goodbye to the graveyard shift.

His career counselor, Jessica Benelli, says, "George is a story of perseverance: he maintained his purpose in spite of the obstacles. He juggled a full time third-shift work schedule to provide for his family and a full-time school schedule to pursue a fulfilling career."

About that new job? George says, "I love it. I tell my wife and friends that I sometimes have to pinch myself. I enjoy work so much more now." George says the workNet DuPage staff made the process of applying for a grant simple. "workNet DuPage provided me with resources and opportunities that I didn't think I would have. I know I wouldn't be where I am today if it weren't for the center."

George lost a job but thanks to funding support from workNet DuPage, he gained a career helping others, and a renewed sense of purpose and pride.

**"I ENJOY WORK  
SO MUCH  
MORE NOW."**



## SUPPORTING WORKERS IN TRANSITION

Individuals affected by layoffs grapple with critical concerns beyond unemployment insurance: What should I do with my company retirement plan, such as a 401(k)? What about my company health insurance plan? How does COBRA work? How will I afford my mortgage? What if I run out of savings? Each month we held a “Layoff Survival Guide” workshop with Michael Sullivan, an accredited investment fiduciary and wealth advisor at Wealth Management Group to take on these questions. Mr. Sullivan, the host of the weekly radio show “In the Know” on AM 560 and a frequent contributor to Fox & Friends in the Morning and WGN Morning Show, encouraged participants to become informed, make smart decisions, and avoid costly, unnecessary mistakes.

### *“Kick-Start Your Job Search” Forum*

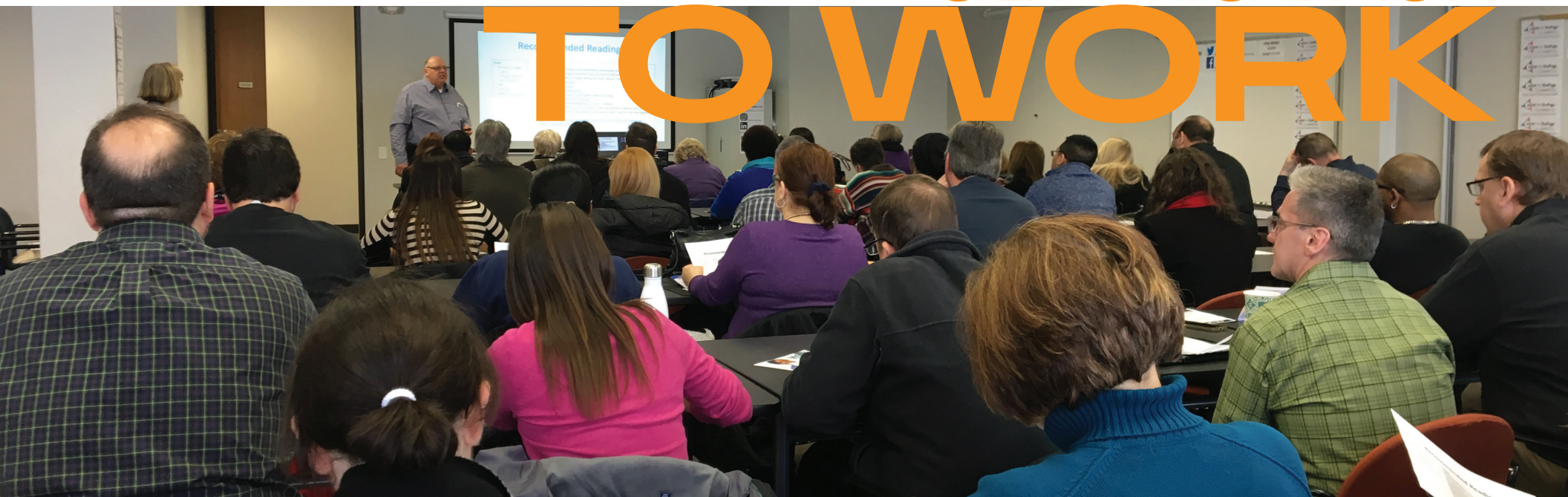
In February, we invited recently laid off County residents to “Kick-Start Your Job Search.” This was an opportunity for dislocated work-

ers across employment sectors to connect with a support network and learn about federal grants up-to-\$10,000 to pursue certificate programs which can help them be more marketable. This funding is made possible by the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which intends to close the skills gap in key industries, absorb disruptions in the economy due to layoffs, and remove barriers to entry into the workforce.

### *A Career Fair to Assist Carson’s Retail Workers*

To assist workers impacted by retail closings, workNet DuPage hosted a career fair for individuals looking for a career upgrade. Industry experts in the growing fields of information technology, healthcare, manufacturing, and TDL (transportation, distribution, and logistics) spoke about in-demand jobs in DuPage and access to job training grants. Approximately fifty workers came with the hope that when one door closes another one opens, perhaps even better.

# GETTING BACK TO WORK





# FROM CARSON'S TO A NEW CAREER

*Meet Susan. You might know someone just like her.*

Susan Northrup worked as a salesperson at the Carson Pirie Scott's Yorktown department store for forty years, almost her entire adult life. Except for a brief stint as an office receptionist, she had dedicated her career to the former retail giant.

And then she lost her job.

When Bon-Ton, Carson's corporate parent declared bankruptcy in 2018 and eventually shuttered its doors in 2019, Susan was one of 3,500 employees left with an uncertain future. Not yet able to retire, dreams of returning to an office environment surfaced. Detractors reasoned her skills were out of date. With the help of the workNet DuPage Career Center, she didn't listen.

In 1988, a federal law known as the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act ("WARN Act") passed. This legislation, designed to protect employees and communities, requires employers notify local government in advance of mass layoffs. When such notifications occur in DuPage County, a workNet DuPage Career Center rapid response specialist meets on-site with employees to share

information about available support services, including job search workshops and possible training grants, up-to \$10,000.

"I knew nothing about workNet's services," said Susan. "I first learned about the program when they came to speak at Carson's. My boss told me to go for it. I didn't realize there was such help out there. After all, I had never lost a job before."

Thanks to a federal grant, Susan was able to enroll in The Office Technology Information program at the College of DuPage (COD). Her grant covered the entire cost of an Administrative Assistant and Meeting/Event Planning certificate, one of several programs available through COD. She first learned she was approved for the grant on a Friday and began classes on Monday.

This COD track enabled Susan to acquire the technology skills necessary to attract prospective employers. In the midst of her studies – before she even completed the program – Susan landed a job as a customer service representative at the Village of Carol Stream, earning even more than she made at Carson's. Her well-established soft skills and newly acquired technical proficiency made her a strong fit.

"It wasn't just the classes at COD that helped

me," says Susan. "If it weren't for workNet's Bootcamp, I never would have stepped out of my comfort zone." Susan attributes her success to three specific tips: Network, Make Yourself Stand Out, and Follow-Up.

She believes the third bit of advice was particularly critical. "Had I not followed up at least two or three times, I may not have landed the job." Before the workshop, Susan assumed if a company was interested in hiring her they would be the ones to reach out. Boot Camp challenged such assumptions and provided her with greater understanding of the hiring process.

"Now that I have a job, people ask me, Are you going to continue with the program?" She never hesitates to respond. "I don't want to lose this

opportunity to earn the certificate. Who knows, I might go even further." Susan never went to college. Now with new-found confidence, she doesn't rule out the possibility.

In answer to the question: Would you recommend the workNet DuPage Career Center to a good friend? Susan answers, "Definitely. "I would tell them exactly how much the program helped me and if I hadn't enrolled, it would have taken me a lot longer to find a job."

**BEFORE SHE EVEN COMPLETED THE PROGRAM, SUSAN LANDED A JOB EARNING EVEN MORE THAN SHE MADE AT CARSON'S.**



# MAKE YOUR WAY

A pathway for young adults in DuPage County to explore careers and obtain jobs in in-demand occupations that provide upward mobility.

# LAUNCHING CAREERS

workNet DuPage's Youth Services remains the County's lead agency for youth career development. Make Your Way (My Way), serving ages 17-24, promotes career exploration, professional development and work readiness for young adults who aren't sure about their next step.

Participants gain valuable experience through internships, learning on the job, and training programs at approved WIOA providers. Make Your Way also offers career workshops on financial literacy, soft skills, resume building, and interviewing techniques.

During the 2018-19 year, the My Way program picked up steam with a record number of applications. To accommodate the surge in interest, we began group intakes. Young adults selected one of two paths: paid internships or job training programs, taking advantage of opportunities to explore careers in healthcare, information technology, graphic design, modern manufacturing, welding, and other fields.

By the end of the year, the My Way program boasted positive results: 128 new clients registered for job training and multiple paid internships led to permanent employment. One year post follow-up with program graduates revealed an average earnings increase of 103.2%.



**A RECORD  
NUMBER**   
**OF APPLICATIONS**

**128 NEW YOUTH  
CLIENTS IN  
JOB TRAINING**

**103.2%**   
**EARNINGS  
INCREASE**

# MEET SOME OF THE YOUNG ADULTS IN MYWAY



Rachel loves animals, and becoming a vet tech is number one on her list of career goals. Making her way through My Way, Rachel took the first step on her professional journey when she secured a paid internship at an Aurora-based veterinary clinic. This hands-on experience is more than on-the-job training; it allows Rachel to make informed decisions moving forward in her career and sets her up for future success.



Noah became enamored with planes early on. Growing up near an airport, he enjoyed gazing at jets in the sky. Not surprisingly, Noah chose to pursue a vocational program in aviation. While holding down a maintenance job at Sugar Grove's Municipal Airport, he completed a two and a half year program at Rock Valley Aviation Career Center. He is currently studying for his AMP certificate which will qualify him to fix and inspect small planes as well as commercial jets. Because of the aviation industry's need for skilled workers, the outlook for Noah – clear skies ahead.



A star wrestler, Cameron likes working with his hands. That's why an interactive training program at the Chicago Professional Center to become an HVAC mechanic was a perfect fit for his learning style. Cameron didn't let a stated job requirement of 1-2 years experience stop him from applying. With wisdom beyond his years, he said he just went for it. His can-do attitude and follow-up after the interview impressed the company. He is now an HVAC technician at AMITA Health—earning nearly double the living wage in DuPage County.



My Way participant Ryan went from paid on-the-job training to a permanent job. After a two month internship at Orbus, Ryan was hired full-time as an IT Support Technician. He says the opportunity obtained through the My Way program was a launching pad: “I came in knowing very little and now I have a good grasp on the inner workings of the IT industry. The experience has been so valuable.” 18 months and counting on the job, the opportunity to gain exposure to the IT trenches as front line tech support, without prior schooling, has helped Ryan navigate his future career plans. He’s decided to stick with the IT field and pursue a specialization down the road.



Christina wanted to explore in-demand careers in DuPage County. Through the My Way program, she secured an internship at Pioneer, a women-owned contract manufacturer in Addison. Inspired by the internship, she decided to complete training at Symbol Institute to become a certified CNC Machinist. My Way funded Christina’s program and helped her secure a job at Prince Industries in Carol Stream. Six months later, she is still on the job and enjoying her role. The company is equally committed to her success and providing more opportunity to grow.

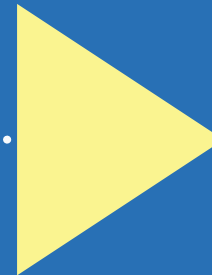
TO APPLY  
TEXT **MYWAY**  
to **630.423.1486**

For More Information  
Call **630.955.2070** or  
visit [worknetdupage.org/youth](http://worknetdupage.org/youth)

# JOB SEARCH

*Not all workNet DuPage clients require extensive job training. Sometimes, a 21st century job search will do the trick. Through a variety of workshops, participants benefited from professional no-cost coaching on resume optimization, modern interview practices, and networking skills.*

*Increased marketing efforts have allowed workNet DuPage to expand its reach, resulting in an uptick of over 90% in job club attendance despite DuPage County's record low unemployment levels.*





# BROADENING OUR REACH

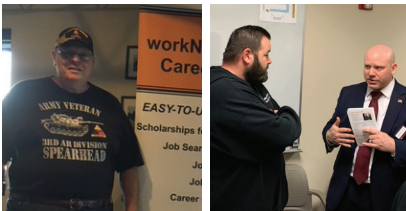


In an effort to reach more people, we expanded our workshop program to include three new seminars: Plan, Research, Act, Making Connections 101, Making Your Net “Work”. This series – open to all job seekers – covers the fundamentals of planning an effective job search.

Our job club under the direction of Jim Fergle, Manager of Job Seeker Services, gained new energy. We were fortunate to have a number of impressive speakers share key tips, smart strategies and motivation for a successful job hunt. Participants networked during seminars and made connections that in a number of cases led to landing a job.



## CONNECTED WITH A GREATER NUMBER OF EMPLOYERS LOOKING TO HIRE VETERANS



workNet DuPage participated in Veteran networking events throughout the western suburbs. As a featured guest, we established connections to build a strong network of Veteran support. The activity enabled us to bring more employers to workNet DuPage’s quarterly seminar for Veterans. At these events, Veterans learn how best to translate military skills and experience in writing resumes and preparing for job interviews. They also meet companies looking to provide Veterans with career opportunities, and service agencies committed to serving them in civilian life.

At these events, Veterans learn how best to translate military skills and experience in writing resumes and preparing for job interviews. They also meet companies looking to provide Veterans with career opportunities, and service agencies committed to serving them in civilian life.

## THE JOB SEARCH EVOLVED.

## WE DID, TOO.

If there’s a new job search trend, we’re on top of it. From applicant tracking systems (ATS) to visual resumes to robo interviews, workNet DuPage workshops ensure our clients secure the job.



**25** JOB CLUBS



**# OF ATTENDEES  
UP 93%**

from 2017-18

*As a result of workNet DuPage job search workshops, clients report they get more – and better – job offers. If you need job search assistance, visit [worknetdupage.org](http://worknetdupage.org).*



SEE WHAT CLIENTS SAY ABOUT

# WORKNET WORKSHOPS

*I got the job and received another offer the same day! I am so grateful for the workshops, guest speakers, and networking. Your great coaching advice just before my interviews gave me a solid strategy instead of doubt and fear. Most of all, your dedication to my success was sincere and what I needed most.*

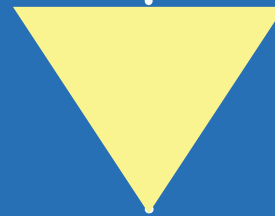
*-Paula S.*

*Before Jennifer Weggeman helped me I only had 2 companies call me back for an interview. **Since December I had three calls for interviews and one of those resulted in a job offer yesterday.** While I hated removing the older parts of my resume because it showed some of my best work, that section made me look too old. So you were right!*  
PHIL J.

*I accepted an offer! My 4 and 3/4 month emotional rollercoaster looks to be at an end. Thank you for the wonderful and informative Bootcamp. Since I had not needed to look for a job in over 30 years, it was a process of practice and building information. **This new position appears to be the one I've always wanted.** They were very impressed when I revealed the folder worth of research material on their company during the interview and came prepared with how I could assist them. Quote by the interviewer when I pulled out the folder, "That's all about us?"*  
-Michael L.

# DUAL FOCUS

*workNet DuPage has a dual customer-focus. We address the employment, training, and workforce development needs of job seekers AND local businesses. workNet DuPage awarded an unprecedented amount of grant dollars to local employers during PY18 to train existing employees and upskill the workforce.*



“The Incumbent Worker Training grant has allowed Aqueity to add value to our employees and provide training...This has been well received by our employees who have enjoyed and greatly benefitted from the training.”

Barry Saltzman, Aqueity COO  
IT company in Lombard

THE IT EXPERIENCE  
*Reinvented*





# UPSKILLING

## THE WORKFORCE



**\$393,609**  
GRANTED TO  
COMPANIES



**21 BUSINESSES**  
BENEFITTED



**643 WORKERS**  
UPSKILLED

With workNet DuPage, IWT doesn't just pay for itself, the first \$25,000 is paid for.



FROM SMALL BUSINESSES TO CORPORATE PARTNERS, WE HELPED COMPANIES REMAIN COMPETITIVE WITH INCUMBENT WORKER TRAINING (IWT) SOLUTIONS.

More businesses are catching on to the value of upskilling. A lack of skilled talent is one of the top three worries held by the overwhelming majority of business owners, according to the 22nd Annual Global CEO Survey by PwC. Their desired remedy: upskilling.

It turns out it pays to invest in human capital with employer-based training programs that view workers growth as integral to company growth. For every \$1 invested in upskilling, studies demonstrate the benefit tends to return at least \$2 in revenues or savings. With the workNet DuPage IWT grant program, that \$1 comes from workNet, and the \$2 dividend belongs to the company. With workNet, IWT doesn't just pay for itself, the first \$25,000 is paid for.

workNet DuPage awarded 20 local companies a total of \$393,609 to build job skills among existing employees. With the employer in the driver seat, companies met new demands, boosted productivity and averted downsizing with customized training solutions.

643 workers in IT, healthcare, manufacturing, and logistics acquired new skills. In many cases, employees benefited with pay raises, company promotions, and industry certifications.

Aurora-based Ballco Manufacturing used Calypso CMM and CNC credentialing to upskill certain members of its workforce. Employees involved in the training received company promotions and salary increases.

Companies in manufacturing and other industry sectors embraced apprenticeships using IWT funds to prepare the next generation of workers.

When Associated, a growing material handling solutions provider, realized it was about to face an imminent worker exodus due to retirements, the company took proactive measures. Associated leveraged workNet DuPage IWT funds to train technicians in Raymond specific procedures, working toward a DOL registered apprenticeship program. Experienced personnel instructed entry and mid-career co-workers, passing on essential in-house knowledge gearing the company for continued success.

Other companies pursued a different track. In an effort to advance its workers' technical skills, automotive and aerospace precision parts maker, Abrasive, enrolled employees in a CNC-related apprenticeship program at Harper Community College in Palatine.

With the workNet DuPage IWT program, employers and employees alike kept pace with the changing global economy and faced marketplace demands head on.

***If you are an employer in DuPage County, let us contribute to your success. Learn how workNet DuPage can help you hire, train, and retain a strong workforce. Call 630.955.2037 or visit [worknetdupage.org](http://worknetdupage.org).***



When Rana Meal Solutions established its North American headquarters in Bartlett, the pasta maker brought a taste of Italy to DuPage County. They also brought jobs and a boost to the local economy. Using custom hydraulic machinery, hundreds of manufacturing employees produce a variety of mouth-watering ravioli varieties: butter-nut squash, ricotta and spinach, and portobello, to name a few.

Due to its stateside success, the company expanded in 2018 – constructing a 326,652-square-foot building next door to its Brewster Creek Business Park location. The new facility is set to create about 180 new jobs.

Rana and workNet DuPage partnered to upskill its maintenance staff to support the company's growth. Despite Rana employees' extensive experience, the company – in an effort to maximize efficiency and minimize outside

### **RANA PARTNERED WITH WORKNET DUPAGE TO UPSKILL ITS MAINTENANCE STAFF TO SUPPORT THE COMPANY'S GROWTH.**

dependence – made the important decision to invest in employer-based training.

The flexibility of an IWT grant enabled Rana to bundle two

training programs. In the spring, maintenance department workers received electrical training at Elgin Community College to more efficiently manage and troubleshoot hydraulic machines churning out fresh-filled pastas. To meet needs specific to the company, a second training was provided later onsite led by a consultant. Customized to fit Rana's production needs, the training had the added benefit that it wouldn't interrupt company workflow. Rana chose the training days and times and workers garnered knowledge right on the company floor.





The healthcare industry in DuPage County has grown more than any industry over the past 5 years, adding nearly

**14,000 JOBS**



# A PIPELINE OF OPPORTUNITY

With the healthcare industry generating the greatest amount of job growth in DuPage County, it's no wonder workers in this sector are in high demand. To assist employers and connect residents with a career pathway, workNet DuPage established a healthcare talent pipeline. With certification funding, counseling support, and opportunities to interview with large regional employers, the initiative extends a ladder of opportunity.

## Issue

The DuPage Workforce Innovation Board identified a critical need for skilled patient care technicians and medical assistants.



workNet DuPage believes a rising tide lifts all boats. With this philosophy in mind, we reached out to regional healthcare providers to collectively address the labor demand.



We initiated a marketing campaign to provide County residents with opportunities for more than a job—a career. In the case of healthcare, 'more than a job, a career helping others.'



One-Stop Navigator Delora Manson responds to inquiries getting potential participants connected to the program.

In June, we co-hosted an informational event at Northwestern Medicine Central DuPage Hospital. Experienced PCTs and CMAs shared a day in the life of a healthcare worker, and workNet DuPage discussed training funding.



A year after the program's launch, the percentage of workNet DuPage clients entering the healthcare field increased 34%. And, we're just getting started.

## Impact



The client interviews with participating employers and if they are a good fit, they get the job!



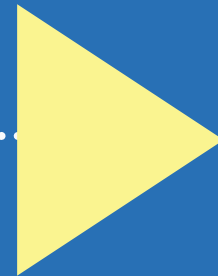
Once a client has successfully completed an approved training program, Workforce Innovation Board Coordinator Jamie Brown circulates their resume to participating employers and helps prepare with mock interviews.



After an applicant is determined eligible, they get connected to a workNet DuPage career counselor. From start to finish, this counselor provides resources and support.

# INNOVATION

*workNet DuPage takes the “Innovation” in the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act seriously. In PY18, we developed several initiatives to address special workforce development challenges.*







# 339,000 INDIVIDUALS

in Chicagoland who could  
be working are not due to  
opioid use.



“I am a Workforce Development Professional. The only weapons we have at our disposal to battle the opioid epidemic are job training and employment. Although we can’t single-handedly solve anything with these tools alone, I believe a training program to attend and a job to report to are important guardrails to prevent against relapse and lead to successful recovery.”

Lisa Schvach, workNet DuPage Executive Director



*A graduation ceremony was held in April for the first cohort of students of the Recovery and Manufacturing a Path Up (RAMP-UP) program.*



# A WINNING

## WORKFORCE SOLUTION TO COMBAT THE OPIOID CRISIS



*'DuPage County fentanyl deaths up 76 percent in 2018, total opioid-related deaths up 3 percent' (Naperville Sun, January 17, 2019)*

*'Illinois' overdose crisis getting worse, mirroring nationwide trend, CDC says' (Chicago Tribune, August 16, 2019)*

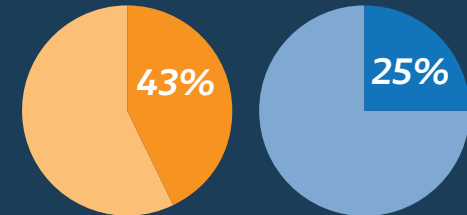
**With headlines highlighting the unrelenting opioid crisis, workNet DuPage took action:** Executive Director Lisa Schvach joined the

county's Heroin Opioid Prevention and Education (HOPE) Taskforce bringing a necessary workforce development perspective to the table – sharing how employment helps people overcome substance abuse and rebuild their lives.

We enlisted private and public partners to establish Recovery and Manufacturing – A Path Up (RAMP-UP), a workforce program connecting recovering opioid addicts with meaningful work and local employers with a distinct talent pool. Participants acquire marketable technical skills during a five-month curriculum that culminates in a nationally recognized Manufacturing Skill Standards Council's Certified Production Technician (CPT) credential. The class, which typically costs around \$5,000, is free for RAMP-UP participants and includes job placement assistance. Our business services team introduced participants to local manufacturers like Diamond Envelope in Aurora, and International Paper in Carol Stream.

Within a month of its first graduating class, all newly-credentialed job-seekers found employment in the manufacturing industry. Attendance and dedication to the program was re-

### A national epidemic hits home



43% of men and 25% of women in America ages 25-54 years were not actively employed because of opioid use (*Brookings Institution*)

markable, despite significant barriers including transportation, and in the case of one student, homelessness. Due to the positive results of the pilot, the program was continued with a second cohort that began in June 2019.

RAMP-UP won the 2019 Illinois Workforce Partnership Innovative Solutions Award. The award honors exemplary service to the state workforce system and is given to innovative economic development programs that have resulted in the economic growth of a community or region in the past year.

Every Tuesday and Thursday at 4pm for six months, Aaron got on his bike and prepared for the three hour journey ahead through the busy intersections of Joliet, the streets of Downers' Grove, and often the freezing cold rain of the Midwest winter, to make his way to RAMP-UP class at the Health Department Community Center on County Farm Road in Wheaton.

His journey up to that point had covered more than miles.

Caught up in the opiate epidemic plaguing our nation, Aaron refused to be another statistic. As one of the individual's in workNet DuPage's RAMP-UP program pilot, Aaron was on the road to recovery headed in the direction of training and employment.



## RAMP-UP WINS INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS AWARD



*workNet DuPage was honored to receive the 2019 Illinois Workforce Partnership (IWP) Innovative Solutions Award for RAMP-UP—a workforce solution to combat the opioid crisis. The accolade was presented to our Executive Director, Lisa Schvach, pictured above, with John Rico, Illinois Workforce Board President and President/CEO of Rico Enterprises, Lisa Bly, IWP Vice President, Michelle Cerutti, IWP President, and Tom Wendorf, Illinois Workforce Board and DuPage Workforce Innovation Board member, at the IWP Awards Ceremony in Springfield on September 12.*

## A Special Thanks to our Partners

**DuPage County Community Services • College of DuPage  
DuPage County Health Department  
DuPage County Probation & Court Services  
Healthcare Alternative Systems • Serenity House • JUST of DuPage**  
RAMP-UP has been supported by funding from Community Services Block Grant, Title I WIOA, Perkins, and Title II Adult Basic Education.

## FEATURED IN

**WBBM**  
NEWSRADIO  
780AM • 105.9FM

**DuPage County's RAMP-UP Program Helps  
Recovering Addicts Find Manufacturing Jobs**

 **CRAIG DELLIMORE**  
APRIL 26, 2019 - 12:14 PM

# Daily Herald

# Chicago Tribune

## Fighting the Opioid Epidemic One Job at a Time

By COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTOR GREG HART & LANNY WILSON  
MAY 08, 2019 | 1:57 PM



# 6 MILLION

jobs went unfilled in 2017,  
largely in the category of  
nontraditional for women



# BREAKING BOUNDARIES

RAISING AWARENESS FOR NONTRADITIONAL JOBS



During the 2018-19 program year, the center played a leading role raising awareness for non-traditional occupations, careers in which fewer than 25% are from one gender. For women, non-traditional jobs typically pay 20-30% higher starting wages, with increased earning potential.

On an ongoing basis, we spoke to job seekers about the low student debt and high earning potential of modern manufacturing, technology, and trade careers and the great demand from DuPage County area employers for skilled workers in these fields.

Most notably, workNet held its third installment of Breaking Boundaries, a career series to empower women to make informed career choices that help them to build a better future for themselves and their families by exploring all the career options available to them, including nontraditional avenues.

Kayleen McCabe, host of the cable show, “Rescue Renovation” on the DIY Network gave a compelling keynote that struck a chord with this year’s theme, “There’s no such thing as a man’s job!” A renovation

expert and an ardent advocate of the value of trade careers, McCabe shared her inspiring story of growing construction from hobby to rewarding career.

With our co-host Lake Park High School and the DuPage Regional Office of Education, we convened partners in the community to extend our reach for greater impact. A dynamic and educational Employer and Career Pathways Showcase featured training providers and twenty-six employers. Questions were fielded live from the floor and participants had a chance to meet female IT professionals, electricians, welders, sheet metal workers, leaders in manufacturing and many more women making their mark in nontraditional fields for women.

**20-30%**  
more in starting wages is what women in non-traditional jobs can typically expect to earn + increased earning potential





**I HAD NO IDEA WOMEN COULD DO ALL THESE JOBS!** -DANIELLE, DUPAGE COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT

Cisco, College of DuPage, Pioneer Service Inc, SWD Inc., and SMART sponsored Breaking Boundaries.

1 The Illinois Department of Commerce granted a proclamation to workNet DuPage and Lake Park High School for their joint efforts to raise awareness about modern manufacturing careers. Joseph McKeown, Manager of Regional Economic Development presented the honor.





# WELDING HER WAY TO A BRIGHTER FUTURE

by Jamie Brown

Anne came to the workNet DuPage Career Center seeking a career after nearly two decades of working dead-end jobs and living paycheck to paycheck. After doing research into various occupations and speaking with subject-matter experts, she enrolled in the Welding Certificate program at College of DuPage (COD) with the assistance of a WIOA training grant. Anne was not intimidated by the fact that welding is traditionally a male-dominated occupation. She pursued the career track because she enjoys working with her hands

provided Anne with the extra income she needed to meet her financial obligations and the opportunity to gain the hands-on skills necessary in the field. Since being hired in January of 2019, Anne has taken over the welding for the company and they have offered to pay for additional schooling to get a tool and die maker certificate next fall, along with a promotion to a Tool and Die Apprentice.



---

ANNE WAS NOT INTIMIDATED BY THE FACT THAT WELDING IS TRADITIONALLY A MALE-DOMINATED OCCUPATION. SHE PURSUED THE CAREER TRACK BECAUSE SHE ENJOYS WORKING WITH HER HANDS AND BEING CREATIVE. **WHAT'S MORE, SHE KNEW THE OCCUPATION WOULD PROVIDE HER WITH A HIGH-PAYING CAREER.**

---

and being creative. What's more, she knew the occupation would provide her with a high-paying career, job security and satisfaction.

Anne started the Welding Certificate program in the Fall of 2018. Shortly thereafter, she was hired by one of her professors as a Machinist Apprentice in his tool and die company. This

Since enrolling in the program at COD, Anne's career goals have expanded. When she came to workNet DuPage, she was focused solely on welding, but her employment has exposed her to other areas; she is now interested in fabrication, machining as well as tool and die. Anne has realized just how many opportunities the

training has opened up for her and is excited about the possibilities; possibilities that did not exist prior to receiving the WIOA training grant.

Anne has managed to maintain a GPA of 3.8 despite facing obstacles life has thrown at her along the way. She has moved twice, was forced to purchase a new car after someone totaled her car and has dealt with significant medical issues. Despite these obstacles, Anne remains focused on completing her training and advancing her career.

Anne has described the impact of the WIOA training grant: "I went from being in customer service for 17 years stuck in a dead-end job, to losing my most recent job due to medical reasons. I got a chance to get a grant from workNet to pursue a new career, took it, got past my medical issues and have worked my butt off to succeed despite numerous issues in my personal life. I'm using this opportunity to its fullest potential to make a better life for myself and my son."

# PROMOTING INCLUSION

OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES  
INTO THE WORKFORCE



## MYTH VS FACT

*How many of these  
myths have you heard?*

It will be expensive for an employer to hire a person with a disability.

Most reasonable adjustments cost nothing or very little. Employers can seek assistance from the Department of Labor and apply for tax incentives.

Employees with disabilities are likely to get into work related accidents.

Employees with disabilities are often more aware of safety issues and experience fewer injuries.

People with disabilities are not reliable.

People with disabilities tend to remain on the job and maintain better levels of attendance. A US Chamber of Commerce study revealed an 80% lower turnover rate.





Our efforts throughout the year focused on continuing to foster a more inclusive workforce, one where every person is recognized for his or her abilities — every day of the year.

In October 2018, we hosted a job fair to coincide with National Disability Employment Awareness Month with a theme of “America’s Workforce: Empowering All.” Over 200 job seekers made connections with local employers from a range of industries including healthcare, hospitality, entertainment, logistics, and government. Some were looking for their first break and others were seasoned professionals awaiting their next career move. All were looking to contribute their talents and abilities through meaningful employment.



**“I THINK  
TODAY PROVES  
HOW EAGER  
THE DISABILITY  
COMMUNITY IS  
TO WORK.”**

~Vocational Coordinator  
Joey Cantu, Naperville, IL

*Participating companies included:  
DuPage County, Dealer Inspire,  
UPS, Embassy Suites, Brookfield  
Zoo, Northwestern Medicine, Good-  
will Industries, Home Goods, AMC  
Theaters, Gerber Collision & Glass,  
Image FIRST, and Buck Services.*





**99** youth clients  
with disabilities  
served



**UP 20%**  
from 2017-18



## Shared Visions Partnerships with impact for youth with disabilities

workNet DuPage and Parents Alliance Employment Project (PAEP) have partnered since 1998 to promote the inclusion and integration of people with disabilities into the workforce.

## SERVING OUT OF SCHOOL YOUTH

In 2018-19, workNet funded PAEP's new Inspired by Ability program providing a 30-week job training program for youth with disabilities. Eight participants received career assessment, job

readiness training, and placement into paid job training sites. Students explored career paths in retail management and healthcare at companies TJ Max, and assisted living facilities, Windomere and Monarch Landing.

We expanded access to post-secondary education and vocational opportunities for residents with disabilities. There are about 101,000 people with developmental disabilities in DuPage County yet historically there have been few colleges that serve this population. Last year our partners at COD launched COACH (Career Opportunities and ACHievement) to fill the gap. Beginning with the first cohort, our Youth Services team worked with several COACH

students, providing funding and counseling support to make attending the game-changing program possible. We are proud to play a part in this transformative initiative and have eight new clients already enrolled.

## SERVING IN SCHOOL YOUTH

We continued funding PAEP's Project SEARCH at Northwestern Medicine's Central DuPage Hospital in Winfield. This international program is a business-led, one-year work program specifically for in-school youth ages 18-22 with disabilities that takes place entirely at the workplace. Through ten week internships, ten individuals gained work experience in a variety of hospital departments and were placed into competitive employment.

# AND WE LAUNCHED A NEW WEBSITE

Since our website launch, we've connected with a greater number of job seekers and employers online than we did over the same time period the prior year. The website has been well received by job seekers and DuPage County businesses alike. See for yourself!

**VISIT**  
**WORKNETDUPAGE.ORG**





**ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT  
COMMITTEE  
DUPAGE COUNTY  
BOARD**

Tim Elliott  
*Chair*  
Peter DiCianni  
*Vice Chair*  
Sadia Covert  
Brian J. Krajewski  
Donald E. Puchalski  
Sheila Rutledge

**DUPAGE COUNTY  
WORKFORCE  
INNOVATION BOARD**

Tiffany Rotondo  
*Chair*  
Jel Sert  
Alan Mindlin  
*Vice Chair*  
The Morey Corporation  
Ian Hardie  
*Secretary*  
Universal Technical Institute  
Joseph Cassidy  
*Treasurer*  
College of DuPage  
Amy King  
DeVry University  
Anna Cobb  
Jd Norman

Barb Szczepaniak  
The DuPage Community  
Foundation  
Barry Saltzman  
Aqueity  
Beatris Gonzalez  
II Department of  
Human Services  
Bernice Szczepanski  
Northwestern Medicine  
Calvin Giles  
Illinois Department of  
Employment Security  
Carol Simler  
DuPage Pads  
Christine Torres  
Crowe Horwath, llp  
Dan Allen  
Cisco  
Dan Deasy  
College of DuPage  
Darlene Ruscitti  
DuPage Regional Office  
of Education  
Debbie Gaspari  
Rexnord Aerospace  
Diana Robinson  
Northern Illinois University  
Greg Bedalov  
Choose DuPage  
Jane Clark  
Nationalease  
Jeff Feucht Ed.D.  
Glenbard Township  
District #87

Jim Gamache  
JBG Management Services  
Kate Wollensak  
Alzheimer's Association  
Kevin Bass  
Sterling Engineering  
Laura Crawford  
Chamber 630  
Lisa Dixon  
Edward-Elmhurst Health  
Marilyn liwanag  
Illinois Department of Human  
Services, Division of  
Rehabilitation Services  
Mary Keating  
DuPage County Community  
Services  
Michelle Arnold  
Dealer Inspire  
Mike Kish  
United Parcel Service  
Paul Seputis  
Common Sense Solutions  
Penny Clancy  
Sentinel Technologies  
Tamryn Hennessy  
Greater Oakbrook Chamber  
of Commerce  
Terry Jarman  
IBEW 701  
Tom Wendorf  
Illinois Workforce  
Investment Board



**GOVERNANCE**

**DANIEL J. CRONIN**  
DUPAGE COUNTY BOARD CHAIRMAN

UNLOCK **OPPORTUNITIES**  
**THAT WORK**

---

**CONNECT WITH WORKNET**

WORKNETDUPAGE.ORG



@WORKNETDUPAGE

THE WORKNET DUPAGE CAREER CENTER  
2525 CABOT DRIVE, LISLE, IL 60532  
(630) 955-2030 INFO@WORKNETDUPAGE.ORG