

# UNLOCK ING

**OPPORTUNITY  
DURING CRISIS**  
A YEAR IN REVIEW  
WORKNET DUPAGE 2019-2020



## LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN



**DANIEL J. CRONIN**  
DuPage County Board  
Chairman

2020 was a challenging year for everyone and tested us in ways no one imagined. Yet I am truly inspired by our collective efforts in the face of unprecedented hardship. The level of collaboration between County departments, multiple levels of government, the private sector, and community partners was exemplary. In the wake of the devastating health and economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, we mobilized federal, state, and local resources to coordinate a comprehensive response.

DuPage County's Workforce Development Division/workNet DuPage provided shining examples of our collaborative work. Our County's workNet center was the first in the state to find viable ways to deliver critical support to residents. The center's new communications effort, *From Layoff to Launch*, offered weekly live webinars with the Department of Labor to help residents access vital resources: unemployment insurance, health care, career training, and job search support, as well as rent assistance through a partnership with DuPage County's Department of Community Services.

WorkNet DuPage helped save jobs by connecting small businesses and nonprofits with critical funding to procure personal protective equipment, sanitization services, and develop remote work technology. This enabled numerous companies to safely reopen or transition to a remote work environment, saving 686 jobs that generate a total of \$36.2 million in annual wages. WorkNet DuPage also provided incumbent worker training grants to companies facing unanticipated workforce challenges due to the impact of the virus.

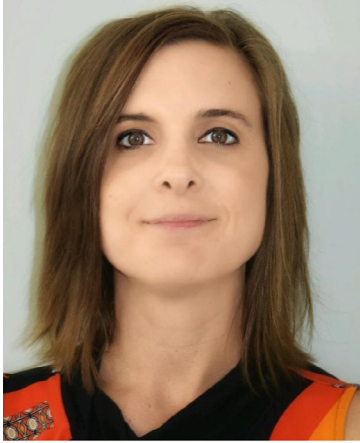
We know we cannot predict the economic landscape for 2021. The full and lasting impact of the pandemic have yet to be realized, and we know the impact is not felt uniformly throughout the economy.

DuPage County's workforce is a key asset of our region. With even greater urgency in 2021, our workNet center will unlock opportunity in the County's fastest growing sectors, connecting individuals with meaningful work and key industries with the talent they need.

Please visit [worknetdupage.org](http://worknetdupage.org) to learn more about our workforce development programs and read in this annual update about the people and businesses impacted by this important work.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dan Cronin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

## LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



### LISA SCHVACH

DuPage County Workforce  
Development Division/  
workNet DuPage  
Executive Director

Like everyone else across the globe, we started off this program year with carefully crafted strategies, goals, and plans... and, like everyone else, we found ourselves adapting and innovating in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As the sole federally-funded American Job Center in DuPage County, we knew we had a crucial role to play in supporting job seekers and businesses in our community throughout this challenging time. The pages that follow highlight some of the ways in which our team did just that – not only through the services we provide directly, but through key partnerships we developed to strengthen the reach and impact had by all.

Every year, workNet DuPage helps job seekers and businesses become more competitive. With funding through the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA), we provide job seekers with funding for training and career-related education, businesses with grants to train their workers, and so much more. This year was no exception – a total of \$2,611,641 was spent directly on furthering the education and boosting the skill sets of workers in DuPage. **We funded the education of 521 new job seeker clients. We issued grants to a total of 45 local businesses. And the individuals who completed our services and reentered the workforce generated a total of \$17,713,738 in wages earned.**

From entry to executive levels, year after year, workNet DuPage helps people of all ages develop their skills and careers in the key industries of DuPage: Healthcare, Information Technology, Transportation Distribution Logistics, and Manufacturing.

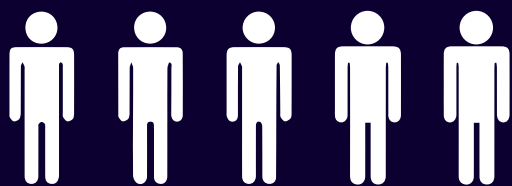
We are proud of the work we do, and we strive to make those we serve proud of theirs!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Lisa Schvach', written in a cursive style.

# IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

During the Program Year PY19 (7/1/19 to 6/30/20) workNet DuPage awarded

# \$3.2 million FOR



**521**  
new job seeker  
clients



**45**  
local businesses



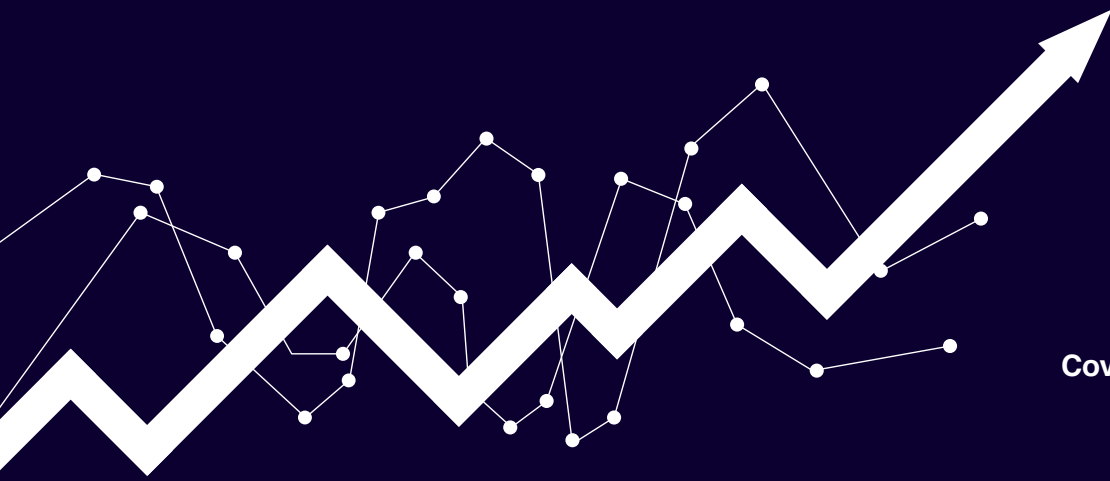
# \$17.7 million

earned in wages by our  
clients who completed  
training programs



# \$800K+

granted to businesses in DuPage

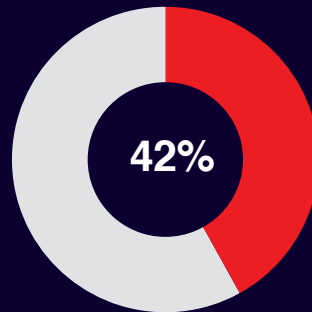


**23**  
apprenticeships  
& custom training  
solutions

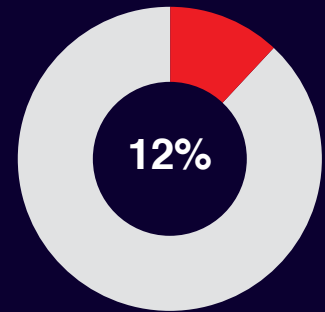
**22**  
Covid-19 related  
relief grants

**\$2.2**  
**million**

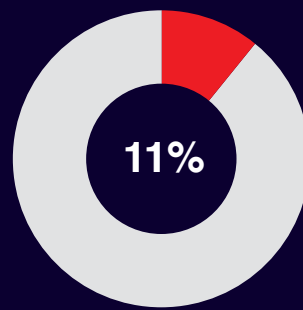
granted to job seekers  
for career training  
primarily in  
4 key  
industries:



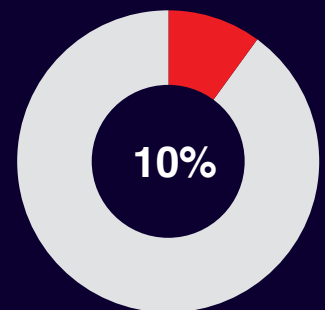
Information  
Technology



Healthcare



Transportation,  
Distribution,  
& Logistics



Manufacturing

# COO VID 19

PLAYING A  
**KEY**  
ROLE

# A GAME CHANGER FOR SMALL BUSINESS

**T**he COVID-19 pandemic is foremost a public health crisis but the economic impacts have been severe across the nation. Executive Director Lisa Schwach applied for a Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity (DCEO) Layoff

Aversion Grant to offer businesses critical relief. The funds enabled more than 20 DuPage small businesses and nonprofits to safely stay open and avoid layoffs. WorkNet DuPage reimbursements defrayed expenses up to \$50,000 per company.

Businesses utilized funds to procure vital PPE, sanitization services, and technology to swiftly transition to a remote environment. The end result: 686 jobs were saved and essential community services continued.

For small businesses it was a game changer. "This was life-saving!" said Katie Moore, Owner of Kiddie Academy of Bolingbrook.

Controller Jack Grimes at Cook's Direct says, "With the establishment of a remote workspace for each of its employees, Cook's Direct was able to maintain normal productivity and actually grow sales."

With an increase in alcohol and drug use during the pandemic, the funding saved livelihoods and lives. Serenity House and other community centers avoided closure because they could purchase PPE and technology to conduct telehealth. Online services ensured new and existing outpatient clients weren't left behind - critical during their first few weeks of sobriety. Extended Residential Care and Recovery Home programs continued to provide safe sober housing for 100 individuals.

NAMI utilized funds to acquire computers and technological services so individuals and families affected by mental illness would not lose access to resources and support groups. Staff members were retrained to ensure community members continued to receive the highest quality of care, even in a virtual setting.

# 22

COVID RELATED  
GRANTS GIVEN  
TOTALING

# \$515,747

THOUSAND

# 686

JOBS  
SAVED

# \$36.2

MILLION  
IN ANNUAL WAGES

# WORKNET STEPS UP

## FOR DUPAGE BUSINESSES

### RETAIL REMAINS OPEN

Since “work from home” is not practical in the perishable flower and plant business, receiving funds at the start of the pandemic proved critical for Phillips Flowers. A layoff aversion grant enabled the company to purchase protective equipment so it could safely bring approximately 200 employees back to work across nine locations.

**“While the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) was a major factor in our ability to reemploy and retain employees, it did not cover all the ancillary mitigation expenses. We are extremely grateful for this grant, and while our employees and customers are not directly aware, they have benefited immensely from it.”**

Jim Phillips, Chairman/CEO  
Phillips Flowers

### COMPANIES GO REMOTE

By not having to worry about childcare or being furloughed because of the closure of its corporate office, Cook’s Direct employees could concentrate on doing their jobs and successfully adapt.

**“The workNet DuPage grant allowed our company to purchase used laptops, web cameras, and headsets to establish a uniform remote workspace. As a result, Cook’s Direct was able to maintain productivity and actually grow sales.”**

Jack E. Grimes, Controller  
Cook’s Direct

### CRITICAL SERVICES CONTINUE

Easterseals purchased PPE and technological services. The support proved critical to safely reopen in May enabling the historic nonprofit to continue to serve the needs of children with disabilities as well as avoid any layoffs to its 130 person staff.

**Literally, we would not have been able to open without it.**

Theresa Forthofer, Easterseals  
DuPage & Fox Valley CEO





# DISTILLING HOPE

**LOCAL BREWERY JOINS THE FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19**

***“The grant reimbursement was hugely helpful. It allowed us to employ extra workers knowing we could cover the labor expense. This made us more productive and allowed us to keep up with demand.”***

***Jason Ebel,  
Two Brothers***

Award-winning craft beer. Five artisan restaurants. Specialty coffee. Hand-crafted spirits. Brothers Jason and Jim Ebel have seen their company, Two Brothers, evolve from a brewery to a thriving lifestyle brand. Growing up in Wheaton in the early 80s, the brothers could never have imagined the turn their future business would temporarily take during an unforeseen pandemic.

When Gov. J.B. Pritzker issued a statewide “stay-at-home” order in March to slow the spread of COVID-19, the company closed most of its

operations and furloughed staff.

Shortly after the lockdown, while a skeletal crew continued to roast beans at its Warrenville location, an official from The Department of Homeland Security walked in with an unexpected proposal. The federal government, facing a global hand sanitizer shortage, was reaching out to distilleries – key producers of ethanol, a central sanitizer ingredient.

FOR SEVEN WEEKS,  
TWO BROTHERS EXCLUSIVELY  
PRODUCED HAND SANITIZER.

The company didn't hesitate to take action.

According to Jason, ensuring employees continued to collect a paycheck was worth the high up-front cost of a new business. "Plus," he added "it's our patriotic duty."

### ***Avoiding layoffs***

In an attempt to ease Two Brothers' financial burden and avert layoffs,

***“IT'S OUR  
PATRIOTIC  
DUTY.”***

workNet DuPage disbursed 1E Cares Act funding, which enabled the company to purchase hydrogen peroxide, packaging, and other necessary items.

"The grant reimbursement was hugely helpful. It allowed us to employ extra workers knowing we could cover the labor expense. This made us more productive and allowed us to keep up with demand," says Jason. As a result, the company saved dozens of jobs.

Employees across Two Brothers' multiple lines returned to work in their new roles as sanitizer manufacturers.

For seven weeks, Two Brothers exclusively produced hand sanitizer. "Our employees took pride in helping first responders. It felt amazing to keep essential workers safe," said Jason.

The new shift benefited hospitals, police and fire departments, and retirement homes – all



in dire need. With Sodexo's 7,000 gallon purchase the Two Brothers' hand sanitizer made its way across the nation.

### ***A return to the new normal***

Eight months after the pandemic outbreak, Two Brothers returned to brewing, distilling, and roasting. Hand sanitizer production remains a minor part of the business.

"We can't thank workNet DuPage enough for helping our entire team during such a difficult time," Jason said. The gratitude goes both ways. workNet DuPage's unwavering commitment to companies facing challenges reflects the resilient spirit graciously modeled by two local brothers.



# A LIFELINE FOR RESIDENTS

Nationally, almost 6.65 million Americans filed for unemployment benefits the week ending March 28, 2020 according to the Department of Labor, the highest level on record. The coronavirus pandemic disrupted economies across the world as restaurants, hotels, and other businesses shut down.

While many DuPage businesses were fortunate to adapt to a virtual setting, remote work wasn't an option for numerous hospitality and service industry workers and others hardest hit from the pandemic. WorkNet DuPage offered hands-on solutions for affected workers to regain control over what felt like an overwhelming situation. When few things seemed certain, DuPage County residents could count on support from workNet DuPage.

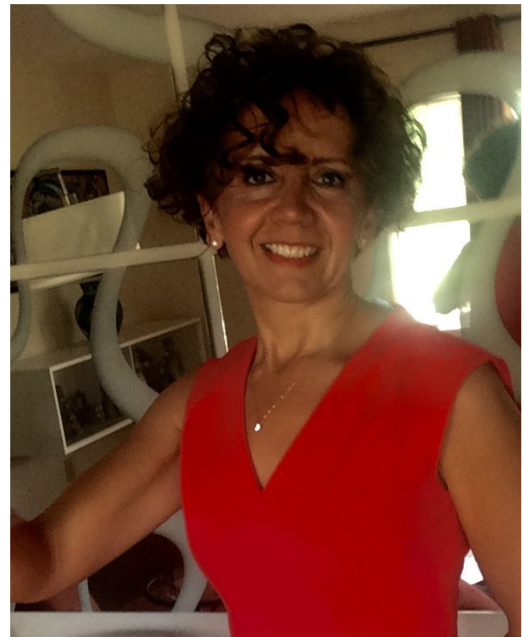
Following Governor Pritzker's "stay at home" order, workNet DuPage closed its physical facility but moved quickly to ensure access to resources. For our clients that meant meeting with a career counselor via Zoom or having a Skype/FaceTime call to review a resume instead of at our building in Lisle. We adapted, eager to serve.

## JOB POSTING SERVICE

Our Business Services Unit led by Ron Schlager connected with local companies to confirm job openings. By posting job leads on our website we sought to bridge companies with immediate hiring needs with people in need of immediate income.



**THIS TYPE OF  
SUPPORT  
IS KEY FOR  
DISLOCATED  
WORKERS AND  
INDISPENSABLE  
DURING COVID.**



*After workNet DuPage helped Susana with her resume, Susana received four interview invitations and three job offers. After being out of work during the pandemic, she is now gainfully employed in a senior-level position and credits workNet DuPage for helping her gain more confidence.*



# FIRST IN THE STATE



WE ENSURED ALL  
DUPAGE RESIDENTS HAD  
ACCESS TO IMMEDIATE  
SUPPORT WITH FROM  
LAYOFF TO LAUNCH

In April, we announced *From Layoff to Launch*, a new initiative designed for laid-off or furloughed residents. The weekly webinar expanded the center's Rapid Response Program to the general public, the first to do so in the state. The webinar's live Q&A forum was a lifeline.

Every week, workNet DuPage delivers critical information: how to file for unemployment benefits, what to expect after filing, and how to obtain health insurance coverage. Eligible residents access up-to-\$10,000 in federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funding (money that does not need to be paid back), to earn marketable credentials.

**WBBM**  
NEWSRADIO  
780AM • 105.9FM

**POSITIVELY  
NAPERVILLE**  
WORKNET DUPAGE OFFERS SUPPORT FOR  
WORKERS IMPACTED BY COVID-19

**Daily Herald**  
How agencies help jobseekers 'be  
proactive' during pandemic

News Release  
WorkNet DuPage Announces  
'From Layoff To Launch'  
Initiative  
The website will feature helpful webinars for those who are out of work.  
By: [unreadable] Date: [unreadable]  
[unreadable]

**Patch**

**TELEMUNDO  
CHICAGO**

**COMCAST  
NEWSMAKERS**

VISIT [WORKNETDUPAGE.ORG/LAUNCH](https://worknetdupage.org/launch)  
TO REGISTER AND LEARN MORE

# 2,260

**JOB CLUB ATTENDEES**

**AT**  
**30** **184%** **↑**  
**JOB CLUBS** **INCREASE WITH VIRTUAL FORMAT**

## WE DIDN'T SKIP A BEAT

The first week in April we implemented a virtual job club. Manager of Job Seeker Services Jim Fergle and a variety of featured speakers delivered top notch workshops on a range of topics. With the acceleration of live and video-recorded interviews through platforms such as Skype, Zoom, and HireVue, a new workshop series was created to help residents master these virtual conversations. The live sessions reached full capacity weekly. Additional themes included digital portfolios, connecting your personal brand to a cover letter, networking during a pandemic, and how to avoid job scams.

**The new format worked. Average attendance nearly tripled starting the first week.**



mySuburbanLife.com

**Digitally based services catch on at WorkNet DuPage**

Organization supports furloughed, unemployed during pandemic

By Megann Horstead  
© Nov. 11, 2020

# CLIENT SERVICES CONTINUED FULL STEAM

In addition to customized career coaching, workNet DuPage offered private virtual resume reviews and a new group workshop, *Wednesday Job Search Tips*. These midweek sessions, exclusively for workNet DuPage clients, helped county residents craft a winning resume, prepare a professional summary, and negotiate salary and benefits.

The live sessions sought to keep job seekers engaged and avoid further isolation.

WE HELPED ENSURE  
CLIENTS KEPT THE KEYS  
TO THEIR HOMES WHILE  
THEY UNLOCKED A  
BRIGHTER FUTURE



**With DuPage  
County Community  
Services we coupled  
job training with  
rent assistance  
lifting barriers to**

employment. In addition, the county provided technological equipment for remote learning and internet access.

# 28

CLIENT ONLY  
WORKSHOPS

# 714

ATTENDEES



**I AM ONCE  
AGAIN EARNING  
A PAYCHECK  
AT A JOB  
I REALLY LIKE.**

IN THIS VOLATILE  
ECONOMY, WORKNET  
DUPAGE'S SERVICES  
ARE VITAL.

DAVID, WORKNET DUPAGE CLIENT

# ASSISTING WITH THE CRISIS

ONE CONTACT  
TRACER AT A TIME



**WE WERE AWARDED A DISASTER RECOVERY GRANT THAT ALLOWED US TO ASSIST THE DUPAGE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT IN THEIR EFFORTS TO PUT TOGETHER A ROBUST TEAM OF CONTACT TRACERS. BY ASSISTING, WE TOOK ACTIVE MEASURES TO PROTECT THE HEALTH OF OUR COMMUNITY WHILE CREATING JOBS FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO LOST WORK DUE TO THE PANDEMIC.**



# MEET JERRILYN

## A CONTACT TRACER



Along with millions of Americans, Jerrilyn lost her job after a wave of pandemic-related hospitality and retail layoffs. Social distancing measures effectively eliminated her job in food service merchandizing.

One afternoon, after hearing Gov. J.B. Pritzker declare contact tracing as a critical tool to reopen the state, she felt a call to help. Jerrilyn enrolled in Johns Hopkins' and Purdue University's Global COVID-19 Contact Tracing online courses.

When she reached out to workNet DuPage to inquire how to put her new skills to use, little did she realize she was steps away from gainful employment. Career Counselor Robin Rock recognized Jerrilyn as a strong fit for the Disaster Recovery Grant

and arranged an interview with the DuPage County Health Department. Despite being out of practice she felt she aced the interview, but weeks passed and she heard nothing. Just when she had given up hope, a health department official called offering her the position of Case Investigator & Contact Tracing Specialist.

**“I felt like it was a blessing,” says Jerrilyn.**

According to Robin, “As a contact tracer, you’re constantly calling people who either have COVID-19 or have been exposed. It’s a sensitive situation and you need to demonstrate empathy. Jerrilyn has that ability.”

Jerrilyn has learned Salesforce and Microsoft TEAMS on the job – quickly getting her computer skills up to speed and increasing her long-term marketability.

“WorkNet Dupage offered me the opportunity to work in the field where I was offered on-the-job training, decent pay, and best of all, I could work from home! I enjoy educating my DuPage County neighbors about the virus, isolation and quarantine, and answering questions and concerns,” said Jerrilyn.

The 62-year-old appears to have hit her stride, something that eluded her as she raised her family and juggled the demands of four children. Jerrilyn’s already contacting companies to learn about career opportunities for life after the pandemic. She’s optimistic for what the future holds.



AND WE CARRIED ON WITH  
THE HEART AND SOUL  
OF OUR PROGRAMMING

**When  
residents  
have the  
key skills  
to succeed,  
key industries  
thrive.**

# UNLOCK ING

HEALTHCARE  
CAREERS





# TRAINING THE FRONT LINE

MEETING  
AN URGENT  
DEMAND

**T**he coronavirus pandemic shined a light on healthcare and the critical role it plays in ensuring a healthy and safe society. In-demand healthcare workers became first responders – our nation’s heroes.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts a 15% increase in the employment of healthcare occupations over the next decade – unprecedented growth. 2.4 million new jobs, more than any other industry, are necessary to accommodate longer life expectancies, medical advances, an increasing number of chronically-ill patients, and a wave of Baby Boomer retirements.

Local growth mirrors this national trend.

Healthcare is the largest and fastest growing industry in DuPage County, adding nearly 14,000 jobs in just the past five years. Behind the county’s impressive network of eight award-winning hospitals and large physician groups is a dynamic workforce of more than 75,000 employees. More trained workers will be needed to keep pace with projected growth.

Demand is especially evident among the so-called “hidden healthcare workforce” or allied healthcare positions which largely include middle skill jobs: medical assistants, health IT technicians, physical therapy assistants, and respiratory therapists.

# THE NEED



*Healthcare is the fastest growing industry in DuPage, adding nearly **14,000 jobs** in just the past five years.*

*Healthcare job openings outnumber job hires by **2:1**. There are nearly a half million unfilled healthcare jobs.*

*Medical assistant jobs are anticipated to **grow 19%** over the next decade, much faster than average. To enter the field, most people need to earn a medical assistant certificate.*

Marianne Considine, Talent Acquisition Manager at Northwestern Medicine, projects a great demand for nurses, patient care techs and environmental service personnel over the next five years or more.

## **Where there is a need, workNet DuPage sees opportunity.**

During the year, DuPage's WIOA program funded eligible individuals to attend job-training programs to help industry fill in-demand jobs and help residents launch careers. WorkNet DuPage's financial assistance coupled with esteemed career coaching, case management, and job search support, built an onboard ramp into the highly credentialed industry.

Once hired, many employers have tuition reimbursement programs for employees who choose to progress to more advanced roles. For example, workNet DuPage helped Alicia, a young mother, obtain her phlebotomy license

and medical assisting certification (CMA) and successfully land a job at Advocate Immediate Care. Now a few years into her job, she is taking advantage of her employer's tuition reimbursement program and training to become a registered nurse (RN).

## **Climbing the Career Ladder**

Established healthcare professionals eligible for the WIOA program advanced careers. For example, workNet DuPage funded certified nursing assistants (CNAs) to progress to licensed practical nurse (LPN) and experienced LPNs to RN.

2020

2002

DUPAGE REGIONAL HEALTHCARE EMPLOYMENT



# CLOSING THE SKILLS GAP

INCUMBENT WORKER  
TRAINING CHANGES LIVES

Faced with a dire need for Certified Nurse Assistants (CNAs), Edward-Elmhurst Health and workNet DuPage designed a pilot program to train entry-level non-patient care employees to fill the much needed positions.

Food, housekeeping, and laundry staff attended the College of DuPage basic nursing certification course. The highly reputable program teaches the 21 performance selected skills that guide the Illinois nurse aide competency evaluation.

WorkNet DuPage covered all tuition costs for the program which culminates with a CNA credential.

The outcome: Trainees received pay raises and promotions to a newly assigned role -



Patient Care Technician. Participant Yuri Dia said “My passion was always helping people, but I never knew I was able to do something like this.” Yerty Jurado said, “Becoming a CNA has definitely changed the direction of my career. It’s a foot in the door.”

Edward-Elmhurst Health reduced a labor shortage, increased employee satisfaction, and reduced turnover. “We created a wonderful partnership program with workNet DuPage,” says Michelle Einfalt, System Director, Talent Acquisition. “The program allowed employees to advance their skill sets and achieve promotions while also helping our hospitals fill a hard to fill role.”

***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/employers](http://worknetdupage.org/employers).***

**MY PASSION  
WAS ALWAYS  
HELPING PEOPLE,  
BUT I NEVER KNEW  
I WAS ABLE TO  
DO SOMETHING  
LIKE THIS.”**

~Yuri Dia





# JANELLE JOINS — THE — FRONT LINE

*We congratulate Janelle and all our healthcare training clients who are dedicating their lives to our healthcare while building a brighter future for themselves and their families.*

A career in healthcare often begins with a call to serve.

Janelle, 25, felt this tug. “I wanted to do something in healthcare. I’ve always liked helping people.” After browsing the College of DuPage (COD) website to explore potential careers, she decided to pursue respiratory therapy. When Janelle was younger, her brother was born with asthma and she witnessed the struggles individuals with chronic asthma endure. Unfortunately, her retail job wouldn’t cover the tuition.

Janelle was eligible for workNet DuPage’s young adult program. In addition to covering the full cost of COD’s Respiratory Therapist certificate program, workNet DuPage offered job search workshops and the support of a knowledgeable and caring staff.

“It’s been amazing! What I loved most was my communication with my counselor Keri. I can’t

compare it to anything else. Keri responded to my calls and emails right away. We really clicked.”

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, a ventilator shortage concerned many. Far less attention was paid to the shortage of skilled respiratory therapists - Janelle’s chosen career track - necessary to operate these lifesaving machines.

**JANELLE BUILT  
CONFIDENCE,  
OVERCAME  
FEARS, AND  
BEGAN TO LOOK  
TO THE FUTURE.**

While the ventilator supply has been replenished, the dire need for respiratory therapists remains. According to the Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics, the number of respiratory therapists, currently at 150,000 nationally, must increase by 21% over the next several years to accommodate the rising population of elderly patients with

chronic lung disease.

Thanks to workNet DuPage, Janelle’s COD teacher Barbara Coe, and a lot of hard work, Janelle is joining the ranks of specialized health care practitioners trained in cardiopulmonary

WHILE THE  
VENTILATOR  
SUPPLY HAS  
BEEN REPLENISHED,  
THE DIRE NEED  
FOR RESPIRATORY  
THERAPISTS  
REMAINS.

care. Janelle built confidence, overcame fears, and began to look to the future. "Working with workNet got my mind straight. I didn't have a lot of goals before. And now I do."

As she was concluding her studies the coronavirus pandemic hit. When her aunt came down with the virus and was hospitalized and placed on a ventilator, Janelle learned firsthand the essential role she would play in her future occupation. Her family's inability to visit their beloved aunt motivated her further. Laser focused, she completed training, passed her exams, and sent in an application for a state license. She now has several credentials under her belt.

After graduation, the longtime Bensenville resident found herself in serious demand. Her dreams came true in late October when she accepted a position as a Respiratory Care Practitioner at Northwest Community Hospital in Arlington Heights.

JANELLE NOW EARNS MORE THAN  
DOUBLE HER RETAIL WAGE.

Janelle now earns more than double her retail wage. "I'm really excited. With everything going on, I just want to help everyone that I can to the best of my ability. workNet DuPage opened a lot of doors for me. I see a lot of good things ahead."

Thankfully Janelle's aunt was weaned off a ventilator and is now at home in good condition.

Janelle knows better than anyone that the ventilator could not have saved her aunt without the essential medical professionals skilled in operating the machine.

*Ready to unlock a rewarding career in healthcare?  
Get started at [worknetdupage.org](https://worknetdupage.org).*

NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

TO APPLY  
VISIT

[WORKNETDUPAGE.ORG](https://worknetdupage.org)

OR CALL

**630.955.2030**

# SNAPSHOT HEALTHCARE

# 82

NEW HEALTHCARE  
PARTICIPANTS

# #1

PROGRAM AMONG  
**YOUNG  
ADULTS**  
17-24



TO APPLY VISIT [WORKNETDUPAGE.ORG](http://WORKNETDUPAGE.ORG)  
OR CALL 630.955.2030



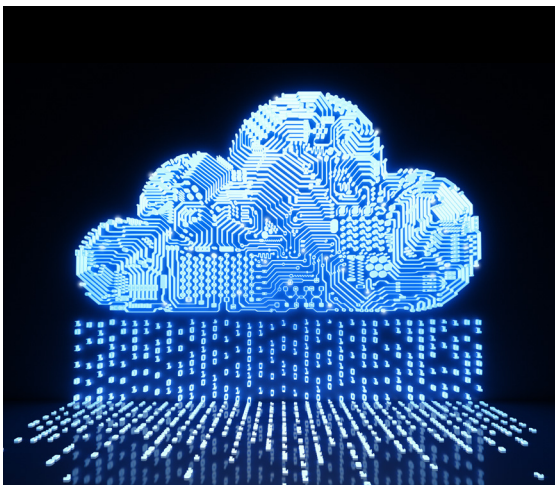
# UNLOCK ING

**INFORMATION  
TECHNOLOGY  
CAREERS**



# ADVANCING THE IT PIPELINE

43% OF CLIENTS SELECTED IT PROGRAMS DURING THE YEAR, THE SINGLE MOST POPULAR INDUSTRY.



In hospitals, classrooms, and businesses across America, IT professionals are the glue keeping our virtual world connected. These unspoken heroes play a critical role during the pandemic, enabling patients to facetime loved ones, students to continue learning, and company employees to operate remotely.

Growing demand for cloud-based technology, data management, and cyber security continues to drive regional job growth. The tech industry employs 29,776 workers in DuPage

County. As businesses integrate new technologies to increase efficiency and secure data, they continue to look for trained professionals.

Over the next five years, Penny Clancy, VP of Human Resources at Sentinel Technologies in Downers Grove, anticipates needing “more specialists and technicians to execute our complex projects.” Chief Operating Officer, Barry Saltzman, at Aqueity in Lombard, cites, “Over the next five years, I see additional needs in the cybersecurity market.” As companies expand their digital footprint, the Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts a 31% increase in the number of information security analysts over the next decade. By contrast, the average growth rate across all occupations is four percent.

43% percent of workNet DuPage clients selected IT programs during the year, the single most popular industry.

workNet DuPage helped 260 individuals launch or advance information technology careers.

## Breaking into the field

Earning stackable credentials – CCNA, A+, Net+, ITIL – coupled with job search assistance enabled entry-level clients to obtain employment as computer user support specialists, network technicians, and other roles.

The wide array of opportunities and earning potential motivated clients to pursue an IT career. DuPage IT companies provide good paying wages and advancement opportunities. The average salary in DuPage County for experienced information technology occupations is \$95,600 compared to \$58,300 – the combined average for all occupations.



All DuPage County Occupations Average Annual Wage  
DuPage County IT Occupations Average Annual Wage

Source: JobsEQ® Data as of 2020Q2

## Experienced workers advanced careers.

Perhaps no other industry demands adaptability more than information technology.

Workers must stay agile and keep their skills sharp and knowledge fresh. “Technology changes at a rapid pace so it is very hard to determine what

Amit Mehta, President of TechVoo, says, “The greatest workforce need is employees who can wear several hats. As the market changes, cross-func-

## THE WELL DOCUMENTED DEMAND FOR WORKERS WITH TECH SKILLS OVERSHADOWS THE EQUALLY IMPORTANT NEED FOR WORKERS WITH SOFT SKILLS

our needs will be in five years; our needs change as technology changes,” says Penny Clancy at Sentinel Technologies.

Trade Adjustment Manager Omar Sanchez says, “Everything is in the cloud now. Cloud computing is an area where there is a lot of growth.”

To keep pace with the changing landscape and maintain marketability, individuals with extensive experience utilized the WIOA grant to earn in-demand certifications in cloud based computing (AWS, Azure, VMWare) and PMP.

### Interpersonal skills matter

The well documented demand for workers with tech skills overshadows the equally important need for workers with soft skills including a positive attitude, interpersonal skills, and professionalism.

Barry Saltzman says, “We are always looking for strong interpersonal skills.”

tional employees matter more than ever. Technicians must answer calls and spot sales opportunities. Front-end help desk must prep technicians when they leave the office for a deployment. Operations people must follow up on sales leads. We cannot adapt to new markets by staying in traditional silos. We must have employees with technical and soft skills.”

During the year, workNet DuPage invested in the Conover Workplace Readiness software program to address the growing “soft skills” gap. The three-part series helps workNet DuPage clients enhance the soft skills needed to be successful in today’s workplace.





# US ARMY VET HUSAIN STARTS AN IT CAREER

“Own a smartphone? That’s information technology,” declares Husain of Aurora. Husain will tell you that people only use five percent of their phone’s power – a kind of untapped potential, similar to what he recently recognized in himself.

After serving in the US Army, stationed at Camp Mercer in Korea, Husain worked as a personal trainer for fifteen years. He enjoys helping others improve their physical wellness, but it isn’t enough to pay the bills. After working four additional jobs to supplement his training income in a nine-month span, he decided such a lifestyle wasn’t sustainable. He wanted more than a job – a career.

The Aurora Veteran’s Affairs office referred Husain to workNet DuPage where he discovered career counseling and the opportunity to explore in-demand careers. With assistance

from workNet DuPage, Husain enrolled in National Able’s IT Career Lab. The accelerated four-month job training program involves four nationally recognized IT certifications (CCENT, CCNA, MCP & MCSA). Best of all, it includes direct job placement assistance.

**“THE PROGRAM WAS  
VERY HELPFUL IN  
FINDING A JOB AND  
STARTING A CAREER,”  
SAYS HUSAIN.**

“For me not having any IT experience, the program was very helpful in finding a job and starting a career,” says Husain. “It provided reputable certifications necessary in the networking world.”

Husain obtained employment shortly after graduating and is gaining hands-on experience.

As a Network Operation Center Helpdesk Technician, he helps clients solve internet issues, troubleshoot computer problems, and provides essential customer service support. Ten months on the job, he has met people from all walks of life and values the diversity of opportunity in the field.

With help from workNet DuPage, Husain tapped into greater earnings and career potential. “I had Marianne as my counselor. She was motivating, engaging, and always checked in on my progress,” says Husain.

The staff at workNet DuPage felt privileged to serve Husain, a man who honorably served our country.

***Are you a DuPage County resident interested in starting or advancing an IT career? Visit [worknetdupage.org](http://worknetdupage.org) to learn more about how we help.***



# NEW SKILLS FOR NEW TECHNOLOGIES

The information technology sector has undergone significant transformation over the last few years. Cyberattacks increased in both frequency and sophistication. Organizations rely more on internet and computer networking necessitating wired and wireless networking skills. A tremendous number of applications and infrastructure moved to the “cloud.” The changes mean employee training is essential. The pandemic hastened the need for workers to build new skills.

Mindsight, an IT solutions company based in Downers Grove, took action to stay competitive. In July 2020 the company applied for a workNet DuPage Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) grant.

Mindsight Partner Jim Folliard says, “COVID-19 greatly accelerated the need for Mindsight to design, implement, manage, and support new technologies for customers immediately, or risk losing business and expansion opportunities in key markets like networking, wireless, contact centers, and data centers.”

A \$23,175 Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) grant allowed Mindsight employees to acquire new skills to boost productivity and meet new demands.

Employees attended seven trainings: Implementing and Operating Cisco Collaboration Core Technologies, AZ-104 Azure Administrator, Implementing and

Operating Cisco Security Core Technologies, Microsoft Azure Security Technologies, VMware vSphere: Fast Track, Project Management Basics (CAPM), and Introduction to Project Management.

Mindsight expects to earn approximately \$1,000,000 in new revenue, reduce turnover, and avoid downsizing as a direct result. Employees garnered industry-recognized credentials.

*MINDSIGHT EXPECTS TO  
EARN APPROXIMATELY  
\$1,000,000 IN NEW REVENUE,  
REDUCE TURNOVER, AND  
AVOID DOWNSIZING  
AS A DIRECT RESULT.*

“In this highly competitive industry, where customers rely on Mindsight consultants to solve problems their own IT departments are unable to, continuous education is key,” added Jim. When the outcome is advantageous for companies and workers alike, workNet DuPage is proud to play a part.

***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).***

# SNAPSHOT INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

# #1

## **MOST POPULAR INDUSTRY**

AMONG ALL CLIENTS

## **WE FUNDED**

# 257

INFORMATION  
TECHNOLOGY CLIENTS

## **CLIENTS EARNED**

# \$40.16

PER HOUR ON AVERAGE UPON  
EMPLOYMENT

TO APPLY VISIT

[WORKNETDUPAGE.ORG](http://WORKNETDUPAGE.ORG)

OR CALL

630.955.2030

# TOP

## **AREAS OF STUDY**

### **IT MANAGEMENT & ANALYSIS**

PROJECT MANAGEMENT- PMP  
SPARK  
TABLEAU  
POWER BI  
SPLUNK  
AGILE SCRUM  
SIX SIGMA

### **SUPPORT & NETWORKING**

A+  
NET+  
CYBERSECURITY  
CCNA  
WINDOWS ACTIVE DIRECTORY  
AWS  
VMWARE  
AZURE

### **DEVELOPMENT**

FULL STACK WEB DEVELOPMENT  
HTML  
CSS  
JAVASCRIPT  
PHP  
RUBY  
PYTHON  
MOBILE APP DEVELOPMENT  
SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT

### **OFFICE TECHNOLOGY**

MS EXCEL  
MS WORD  
MS OFFICE  
MS POWERPOINT  
SHAREPOINT  
QUICKBOOKS



# UNLOCK ING

**TRANSPORTATION,  
DISTRIBUTION  
& LOGISTICS  
CAREERS**





# *KEEPING DUPAGE* MOVING FORWARD

Ever consider the critical role transportation, distribution, and logistics (TDL) workers play during the pandemic? These essential workers keep transit running, procure life-saving supplies, and deliver medical equipment to homes and hospitals. With the FDA's greenlight they will now be responsible for the distribution of the vaccine throughout supply chains nationwide.

The pandemic's impact on the TDL sector has varied significantly. Dramatic shifts in commuting patterns wreak havoc on the airline industry and public transportation budgets. On the other hand, the acceleration of e-commerce and demand for certain consumer packaged goods generate a surge in demand for delivery drivers and warehouse roles. While the long-term effects remain unclear, DuPage County's position (in the Chicago metro region) as a global transportation hub means the

TDL industry will continue to play a vital role recapturing our region's prosperity.

The transportation and logistics sector will add nearly 500,000 new jobs between 2019 and 2029. Nationally, there will be more than two million heavy tractor-trailer truck drivers by 2029.



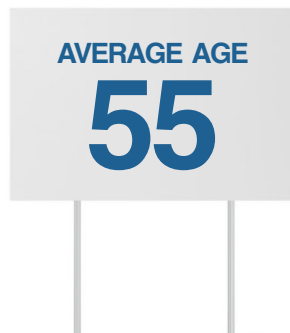
# THE NEED

The transportation and logistics sector will add nearly 500,000 new jobs between 2019 and 2029 . Nationally, there will be **more than two million heavy tractor-trailer truck drivers** by 2029.

Many companies have trouble finding and retaining qualified long-haul drivers. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics the average age of a commercial truck driver in the U.S. is 55, about **10 years older than the average across comparable industries.**

Metropolitan areas with the highest employment level in this occupation include Chicago-Naperville-Elgin which boasts the second highest wage potential in the nation.

Jane Clark, Vice President at NationalLease, one of the largest full-service truck leasing organizations in North America, says “The biggest needs in our industry are diesel techs and drivers. We expect that need to continue to rise over the next five years, as we face a perfect storm of diesel techs reaching retirement age at an alarming rate, fewer young people choosing trades as a career, and the increasing complexity of the equipment requiring highly skilled individuals.”



*The average age of truck drivers is 55, **10 years older than comparable industries.***

During the program year, workNet DuPage raised awareness about TDL careers and funded local candidates pursuing job training programs: drivers need a CDL license and diesel technicians need experience or certification from a trade school. Heavy and tractor-trailer truck driving was the most popular TDL occupation

pursued by workNet DuPage clients. Accelerated programming and a job that pays a good wage attracted residents of all ages to this career track. In just six weeks clients earn a CDL. Truckers earn on average \$51,700 in DuPage County. During the year, workNet DuPage funded 51 clients to obtain a commercial driver’s license (CDL). 96% of the participants successfully completed training.

DuPage County Workforce Innovation Board (WIB) Coordinator Jamie Brown says “Obtaining a CDL is the quickest path to employment. Most workNet DuPage CDL graduates get hired immediately.”

In addition to financial assistance, workNet DuPage clients benefit from individualized career counseling, resume reviews, mock interview assistance, and group job coaching workshops during and after training.

## DASHAUN FINDS OPPORTUNITY DURING A FURLOUGH



# PAVING A NEW PATH

DaShaun doesn't waste time – a helpful quality for his new career in commercial trucking.

Last July, when a fiber optics company furloughed the Lombard resident from his field surveyor job, he immediately signed up for workNet DuPage's WIOA program. He heard about the program from his grandfather who suggested it might pave the way forward and allow him to earn a certificate.

DaShaun explored in-demand careers in DuPage County. Knowing there is a shortage of skilled commercial drivers, he

IN THE SPAN OF HIS FURLOUGH, IN UNDER TWO MONTHS, DASHAUN EARNED A CDL CLASS A LICENSE AND HAZ MAT AND TANKER ENDORSEMENTS

decided to attend a trucking program to earn a Commercial Driver's License (CDL).

His hustle paid off. In the span of his furlough, in under two months, DaShaun attended the 160 Driving Academy and earned a class CDL-A license and Haz Mat and Tanker endorsements - permissions allowing him to transport liq-

uids and dangerous materials. Such perks make him a highly marketable job candidate.

As he ended the program, DaShaun received important news. His employer notified him that he and his crew members would be permanently laid off. He wasn't upset because he knew he had a new path forward.

## THE CALL OF THE ENDLESS HIGHWAY

DaShaun is looking forward to the open road. "I like being out in the elements. I love to tune into my own music, travel, and see the surrounding area. Plus, trucking jobs pay well."

workNet DuPage hosts a weekly *From Layoff to Launch* webinar to connect laid-off and furloughed workers with no-cost career services. "It's not just laid off workers that can benefit from workNet DuPage," says Susi Pihera, co-moderator. "Furloughed workers are welcome and encouraged to join. A potential return date is no guarantee, and if your employer calls you back to work you'll re-enter the workforce with new credentials."

Finding job listings on Indeed has been easy for DaShaun who is currently in talks with a company that needs a driver to handle cargo and equipment for regional work.

"With the Class A CDL now in my pocket, I have options. **Obtaining the workNet DuPage grant during the pandemic has absolutely made a difference in my employment outlook.** Having that CDL is sort of like having a golden ticket," says DaShaun.

The steady support from his career counselor Katrina Savaglio was a great benefit. "I think she is really great. I guess it's just a random pick for a career counselor, but I think I'm one of the lucky ones," DaShaun says. "Katrina's been able to help me with all my questions, is very communicative, and gets back to me in a timely manner."

**DaShaun only wishes he knew about the program sooner.**



WITH THE CLASS  
A CDL NOW IN MY  
POCKET, I HAVE  
OPTIONS...  
**HAVING  
THAT CDL IS  
SORT  
OF LIKE  
HAVING  
A GOLDEN  
TICKET,"**

SAID DASHAUN.

NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

TO APPLY  
VISIT

**WORKNETDUPAGE.ORG**

OR CALL

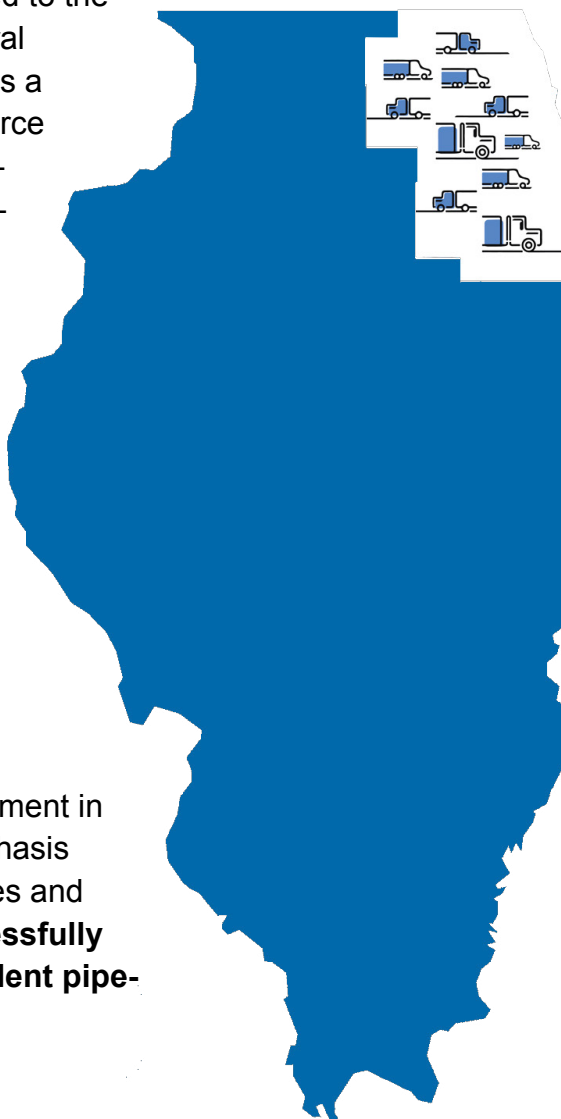
**630.955.2030**



# REGIONAL COLLABORATION TARGETING TRANSPORTATION

One of the things we are most proud of this year are the significant strides made among the Chicago metro region workNet offices to strengthen collaboration. In recognition that the economic vitality of a local area is directly related to the region as a whole, the federal WIOA legislation encourages a regional approach to workforce development. workNet DuPage is a member of the Economic Development Region (EDR) 4-Northeast Illinois. Collectively the group consists of seven Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIBs) in 10 counties that comprise 74% of the state's population.

During the year, workNet DuPage partnered with neighboring counties to promote employment in the TDL sector with an emphasis on aligning business services and outreach. **Jointly we successfully secured a TDL-focused talent pipeline grant.**



*Early in the program year, workNet DuPage hosted a regional Transportation and Logistics hiring event with Kane County to promote greater awareness for employment in the sector and connect companies with talent.*



As part of the regional effort, workNet DuPage Executive Director Lisa Schvach initiated a private-public partnership to upskill Ford automotive technicians at dealerships throughout Northeast Illinois. Designed to address the alarming rate of retirements among skilled diesel and auto mechanics with workers retiring faster than being replaced, the effort provided dealerships with the unique opportunity to aggressively accelerate technician training.

Universal Technical Institute (UTI) delivered Ford Motor Company Workforce Certification Technician Training to selected dealer technicians at its Lisle Campus. **19 trainees completed more than two years of training in a 14-week period earning five certifications: Steering & Suspension, Electrical Systems, Climate Control, Brake Systems, and Quick Lane.** The initiative included a mentorship program to ensure technicians received on the job technical experience.

WORKNET DUPAGE  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
**LISA SCHVACH**  
INITIATED A  
**PRIVATE-PUBLIC**  
**PARTNERSHIP**  
**TO UPSKILL FORD**  
**AUTOMOTIVE**  
**TECHNICIANS**  
AT DEALERSHIPS  
THROUGHOUT  
NORTHEAST ILLINOIS.



# SNAPSHOT

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# TRANSPORTATION, DISTRIBUTION & LOGISTICS

---

**WE FUNDED**

**78**

CLIENTS IN THIS  
INDUSTRY

**AVERAGE AGE**

**37**

OF TRAINEES

**DURING THE YEAR**

**51**

CLIENTS OBTAINED  
A COMMERCIAL DRIVER'S  
LICENSE (CDL)

**CLIENTS EARNED**

**\$20.52**

PER HOUR ON AVERAGE UPON  
EMPLOYMENT

**ACHIEVING A**

**96%**

SUCCESS RATE

**HEAVY & TRACTOR-TRAILER  
TRUCK DRIVING WAS THE**

**#1**

PROGRAM IN INDUSTRY

NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

TO APPLY VISIT

**WORKNETDUPAGE.ORG**

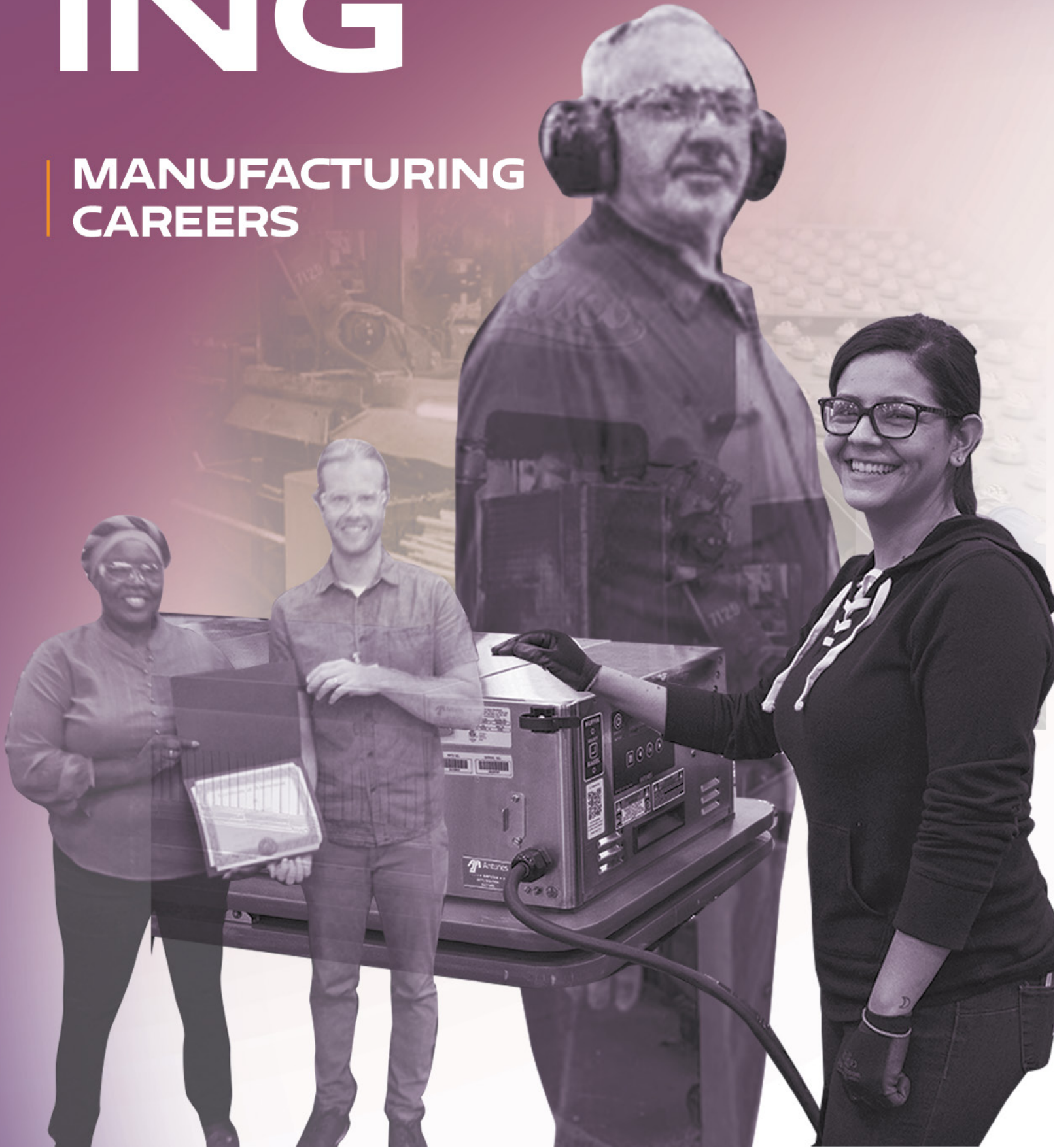
OR CALL

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# UNLOCK ING

MANUFACTURING  
CAREERS







# EXPANDING THE TALENT POOL

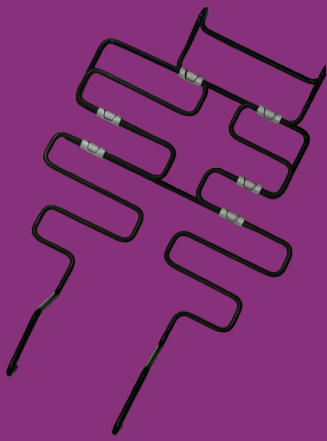
The wire rack in your oven.  
The ballot envelope in the mail.  
The popsicle in the freezer.  
All made right here in DuPage County.

To appreciate the strength of manufacturing in DuPage, consider the following: there are nearly 2,000 manufacturing companies in DuPage County employing more than 56,000 people. DuPage has the 2nd largest manufacturing employment of any county in Illinois and the U.S. Department of Commerce named DuPage as one of twelve “manufacturing communities” in the nation.

Unlike other professionals, most manufacturing workers cannot do their job remotely. During the COVID-19 pandemic, these essential employees mobilized to provide necessary food and life-saving medical supplies.

Our region produced millions of COVID-19 tests and products to beat the pandemic. Family-owned and operated Antunes headquartered in Carol Stream leveraged its in-house design and fabrication capabilities to develop safety and sanitation equipment. Craft beer pioneer Two Brothers sprang into action to make hand sanitizer for first

responders. Victor Envelope in Bensenville - a company that produces more than 1 billion envelopes annually - was also deemed an essential manufacturer. “We dedicated ourselves to keeping our people safe and healthy during the pandemic,” says Susan Ryan, VP of Human Resources. “COVID-19 generated an increased demand for Ballot Envelopes which we were prepared to manufacture.”



## SPOTLIGHT ON IP AUTOMATION

Like other businesses, IP Automation, known for its wireforming machines, was impacted by COVID-19.

“We shipped two machines at the beginning of this year to Canada, but to this day, we still can’t get there to finish installing. Still, certain customers are actually busier – the people making shopping carts are busy and automotive is picking up,” says President Tom Christofilis.

When it comes to doing business in DuPage County, Tom calls the region ideal. “There are simply more resources. When you can call in the morning and have it in the afternoon, it’s a huge deal - specifically, if you’re trying to time to market.”

Employees at IP Automation typically have an engineering background or experience with machine building, machining, fabrication, or welding. “We’re always looking for CNC machinists, welders, and technicians,” Tom says.



WorkNet DuPage recognizes the importance of the manufacturing sector and works with many local manufacturers throughout the year to dispel the myth that manufacturing jobs are outdated and low-paying.

fill the many jobs they have to offer.

WorkNet DuPage has several initiatives aimed to help manufacturers address their talent gaps. During the year, the center

## OVER THE NEXT DECADE 4.6 MILLION MANUFACTURING JOBS WILL NEED TO BE FILLED.

The often misunderstood and underrated industry has undergone rapid modernization over the past 20 years to keep pace with the global economy. DuPage County manufacturing companies are constantly innovating.

funded residents to start or advance a manufacturing career. We also expanded the manufacturing talent pool through apprenticeships, incumbent worker training, and partnerships with community organizations.

**STRUGGLE TO FILL JOBS**  
Over the next decade 4.6 million manufacturing jobs will need to be filled. DuPage County manufacturers, just like their counterparts across the country, often struggle to



IF YOU WANT TO GO FAST,  
GO ALONE.  
IF YOU WANT TO GO FAR  
GO TOGETHER.

AFRICAN PROVERB



**With our partners, workNet DuPage went further.**

During the year we strengthened our partnership with World Relief DuPage Aurora to help asylum seekers and refugees build financially stable lives for themselves and their families and help companies address critical labor shortages.

While new Americans may choose to pursue different industries, a significant number have pursued manufacturing careers, filling a critical need among the manufacturing employer base. Over the past two years, workNet DuPage provided funding assistance for 91 asylum seekers and refugees – the majority World Relief referrals – to attend job training programs. More than 50 percent of these clients pursued manufacturing careers—the most popular industry among them.



**For over two years, workNet DuPage has partnered with World Relief DuPage Aurora to expand opportunities for new Americans and support the local economy.**

**91**  
**PARTICIPANTS**

**50%**  
**SELECTED**  
**MANUFACTURING**  
**TRAINING PROGRAMS**

**40%**  
**WAGE INCREASE**

**THE IMPACT OF THE PARTNERSHIP STRENGTHENS EVERYONE INVOLVED; FROM FAMILIES TO LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS TO BUSINESSES, AND OUR COUNTRY IS A BETTER PLACE BECAUSE OF IT.”**

**DAN PETERSON, WORLD RELIEF DUPAGE AURORA**

World Relief’s grassroots knowledge and resettlement expertise coupled with workNet DuPage’s training grants and career counseling make for a great partnership. Extensive job readiness classes, language training, and strong employer support effectively build a talent pipeline of highly motivated and skilled candidates, and in the process, help one of the most vulnerable populations in DuPage County build a positive future. After completing training, clients, on average, earn a 40% increase in wages and companies report excellent job retention rates.

WorkNet DuPage Career Counselor Marianne Eisley works one-on-one with clients. “My World Relief-referred clients attend full-time training programs while concurrently working full-time jobs to support their families. They have all been genuinely grateful for the opportunity to rebuild their lives.” Two of Marianne’s clients from Myanmar just graduated from Symbol Training Institute’s computer-numerical controlled (CNC) machine training at the top of their class.

In its second year the partnership expanded to include a Youth Workforce Development program to serve in-school and out-of-school immigrant youth. WorkNet DuPage awarded World Relief a contract to provide young adults, ages 18-24, opportunities to attain industry recognized credentials. To date the program has served 41 youth, who have been placed in training programs and employment opportunities in manufacturing, information technology, and other key sectors.

“The collaboration between workNet DuPage and World Relief has a broad reaching impact,” says Dan Peterson, Senior Employment Specialist at World Relief DuPage Aurora. “The career services available through workNet DuPage equips World Relief’s immigrant families with the skills and opportunities they need to integrate and thrive in their new community. The impact of the partnership strengthens everyone involved; from families to local organizations to businesses, and our country is a better place because of it.”



# APPRENTICESHIPS

## DEVELOPING THE MANUFACTURING WORKFORCE

Last year, workNet DuPage awarded local employers \$267,822 in Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) grants to ensure the County's workforce remained competitive. 23 local companies received funding to build 164 employees' skills and meet new demands with customized training solutions. The majority of the funding went to manufacturing companies though information technology, health-care and other sectors were also grant recipients.

Of the IWT funds, workNet DuPage awarded over \$60,000 to four manufacturing companies to fund apprenticeship programs. Apprentices train on the job and work their way up career ladders that manufacturing employers are eager to provide.

### **Historic Klein Tools prepares for the future with help from workNet DuPage**

Take a trip to any Home Depot and odds are good the new pliers you pick up were forged in DuPage County. Klein Tools, a sixth-generation family business established in 1857, designs and manufactures premium quality hand tools that rest on the shelves of global suppliers. Many of the tools are produced at Klein's Elk Grove Village facility.

Last March, the government designated Klein – a producer of necessary equipment for electricians and other tradespeople – an essential business. Production needs remain high during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Klein Tools consistently leverages new technology and ideas to modernize its engineering, manufacturing, and quality processes. While the company's technology has kept up with the times, they've run into employment roadblocks: a declining number of individuals pursuing trade careers has hindered Klein's ability to recruit skilled talent.



The Elk Grove Village plant employs 76 workers and, like many manufacturers, has struggled to find qualified machinists. Labor Relations Manager Maggie Rossi says, “30 company employees have been at our facility for 25-40 years. As generations change over time, new talent hasn't followed suit.”

Klein's hiring dilemma reflects national industry trends. In a strategic effort to develop a talent pipeline of advanced skilled workers, Klein Tools partnered with Harper Community College and workNet DuPage to establish an apprenticeship program.



The “earn and learn” model combines on-the-job-training with coursework at Harper Community College over a three year period.

Apprentices start earning a paycheck immediately with steady wage increases every six months. Upon completion, apprentices will earn their Associate’s degree in manufacturing technology. Best of all, workNet DuPage reimburses all classroom costs through WIOA-funded Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) grants.

## MOUNTING STUDENT DEBT, A NATIONWIDE PROBLEM, VANISHES WITH THE “EARN AND LEARN” MODEL.



“We have benefited from workNet DuPage from their generous contributions for our apprenticeship program. We started with one apprentice and now we have three,” says Maggie.

Apprentices pursue either electromechanical or CNC precision machining tracks. The knowledge apprentices acquire in the classroom immediately translates to the workplace, filling a critical need on the plant floor.

Mounting student debt, a nationwide problem, vanishes with the “earn and learn” model. Participants graduate debt-free, gainfully employed, and credentialed. In the process, Klein Tools develops the workforce needed to remain strong well into the future. ***If you are an employer in DuPage, let us contribute to your success. Call 630.955.2037 or visit [worknetdupage.org](http://worknetdupage.org).***



*TOP LEFT: At Klein Tools, Stanley Lubiak, a company employee set to mark his 40th work anniversary in 2021, directly supervises and mentors the apprentices sharing his wealth of experience.*

*BOTTOM LEFT: Armando pictured by a forge machine holds an extremely hot tool he just created. Everything starts here, from a large piece of steel that is heated up to over 2300 degrees.*

# SNAPSHOT MANUFACTURING

---

**42+**

JOB SEEKERS TRAINED

**145=**

COMPANY EMPLOYEES  
UPSKILLED

**187**

FUNDED TO ADVANCE SKILLS  
IN MANUFACTURING

---

TO APPLY VISIT  
[WORKNETDUPAGE.ORG](http://WORKNETDUPAGE.ORG)

OR CALL  
**630.955.2030**

**TOP**

**AREAS OF STUDY**

INDUSTRIAL MAINTENANCE

CNC

WELDING

MANUFACTURING TECHNOLOGY

**AVERAGE AGE**

**37**

OF JOB SEEKER  
TRAINEES

**ACHIEVING A**

**80%**

SUCCESS RATE





# GOVERNANCE

**DANIEL J. CRONIN**

DUPAGE COUNTY BOARD CHAIRMAN

**LISA SCHVACH**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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*Chair*

Peter DiCianni

Sadia Covert

Brian J. Krajewski

Donald E. Puchalski

Sheila Rutledge

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CISCO

**Kevin Bass**

Sterling Engineering

**Greg Bedalov**

Choose DuPage

**Joseph Cassidy**

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**Jane Clark**

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TO GET STARTED TODAY

