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We shifted from being program administrators to becoming economic strategy partners



Lake County
Workforce Development



Workforce
Solutions

Workforce
Training

Workforce
Ecosystem



Health Care Summit
& Job Fair



YDPA - Youth Development
Practitioner Apprenticeship



Regional Roundtable:
Strategies for Workforce &
Manufacturing

Goal: Position workforce development as a primary driver of regional economic growth.



1. The Case for Alignment
Why workforce must integrate with economic development



2. Economic & Industry Partnerships in Action
Municipal, association, and chamber engagement



3. Policy as a Business Strategy Tool
Leveraging OJT, Work Experience, Apprenticeship & Technology



4. Driving Innovation & Employer Modernization
AI initiatives, sector strategies, and business competitiveness



5. The Integrated Ecosystem Model
Building a replicable framework for regional growth

Session Roadmap

The Case for Alignment

Workforce shortages and skills gap

Employer modernization pressures

Economic development alignment gaps

Need for deeper business engagement

How many of you feel workforce is still seen as a support system, not an economic driver?

The Case for Alignment



Our Shift From Program Delivery to Economic Strategy

Before:

- Transactional services
- Individual placements
- Disconnected partnerships

Now:

- Economic development alignment
- Industry-driven solutions
- Policy + Incentives + strategy

Economic & Industry Partnerships in Action



- Municipal Partners
- Chambers of Commerce
- Lake County Partners
- Regional Office of Education
- College of Lake County
- Non-Profits
- Industry Associations
- Employers



Embedding Workforce in Economic Development: Collaborative Partnerships. Workforce sits at the economic development table.

Economic & Industry Partnerships in Action

Meeting with Municipalities and Economic Development Leaders



Economic & Industry Partnerships in Action

2025 INVESTMENTS

Life Sciences, Manufacturing

- Plano Pharmaceuticals
- Flex
- AbbVie Pharmaceuticals
- Tuf-Tite
- MSI Express
- Belle Aire Creations

Office, Housing, Other

- Fortune Brands Innovations
- Miller Cooper & Co.
- Lake County Regional Office of Education
- Fox Lake Crossing (154 Apartments)
- Lakeview Fox Lake (148 Apartments)
- Maeve Libertyville (91 Apartments)



Fortune Brands
Innovations

abbvie

The
MAEVE
GROUP



MILLER
COOPER
& Co., Ltd
ACCOUNTANTS AND CONSULTANTS

Economic & Industry Partnerships in Action

FIVE YEAR METRICS

					2025
New Jobs	470	419	741	541	1,862
Retained Jobs	127	112	512	667	1,333
Direct Investment	\$125 M	\$202 M	\$610 M	\$251 M	\$633 M

5-YR TOTAL

New Jobs
4,033

Retained Jobs
2,751

Direct Investment
\$1.82 B

Economic & Industry Partnerships in Action

Getting Started – Annual State of the Workforce



- Industry Insights: Key trends, wage & benefit strategies, and best practices
- Local Support & Resources: Access tools for workforce development
- Networking: Connect with businesses, agencies, and community organizations
- Labor market insights for employers
- Shared language between workforce & economic development

Economic & Industry Partnerships in Action

Small Business Engagement Strategy



- Funding to support RFP for Chamber partnership
- Chamber members learn the value-add of the partnership with Workforce Development
- Aspect of engaging Minority Owned/Woman Owned Businesses
- Promote the Workforce Board and Local Chamber to our business community
- Local Chambers foster collaboration among businesses, government agencies, and community organizations to create a unified approach to the activities you already conduct



Scott Adams, President/CEO



Carol Levin, Public Relations/Marketing
Director/Social Media/Photography



Green Oaks, Libertyville, Mundelein, Vernon
Hills



Claire Slattery, Executive Director/CEO



Victoria Katz, Members Services Manager



Lake Zurich, Deer Park, Kildeer, Long Grove & Hawthorn Woods

Economic & Industry Partnerships in Action

Employer Touchpoints & Outcomes



- 40,000+ community members/businesses reached via emails, newsletters, direct mail, and social media promoting LCWD!
- Engagement activities comprised of community events, economic development meetings, and marketing and promotional efforts
- They have combined for 262 activities planned for businesses and residents

- Employers talk to employers
- Workforce listens
- Solutions co-designed
- Association Partnership
- Economic development involvement
- Attendance data
- Outcomes (pipeline, training interest, partnerships formed)



Economic & Industry Partnerships in Action

Why Industry Summits Work

Economic & Industry Partnerships in Action

Wellness Unlocked: Lake County Healthcare Forum and Job Fair

Illinois Health and Hospital
Association

Lake County Health Dept

Advocate Condell Hospital

Northwestern Medicine Lake
Forest Hospital

City of Hope

Rosalind Franklin University

Healthcare Foundation of
Northern Lake County



Learned about healthcare workforce challenges, key policy updates, efforts to advance health equity, and the economic impact of healthcare in Lake County.



The forum fostered collaboration among healthcare providers, policymakers, and community stakeholders. This event identified actionable strategies to enhance healthcare delivery and improve health outcomes for the residents of Lake County.

Economic & Industry Partnerships in Action

Hospitality & Retail Workforce Summit

President and CEO of the Illinois Hotel and Lodging Association (IHLA)

President and CEO of the Illinois Restaurant Association (IRA)

College of Lake County

Lake County Workforce Development

Lake County Health Department

Visit Lake County

Municipalities



Heard from top leaders on workforce trends, wages, and retention strategies



Learned about hiring, training, and business growth opportunities



Built partnerships with businesses, agencies, and community organizations

Economic & Industry Partnerships in Action

Education Sector Strategy: Expanding Parent Mentor Models Through School District Partnerships with United Way as a Strategic Partner

Why a Sector Strategy for Education?

This RFP supports a strategic, equity-driven approach to:

- Strengthen school-based staffing through local talent pipelines
- Expand Parent Mentor models to improve student success and community engagement
- Address shortages in high-need areas like Special Education, STEM, and Bilingual Education
- Build career pathways into education, social work, and healthcare sectors

6
Waukegan
Schools

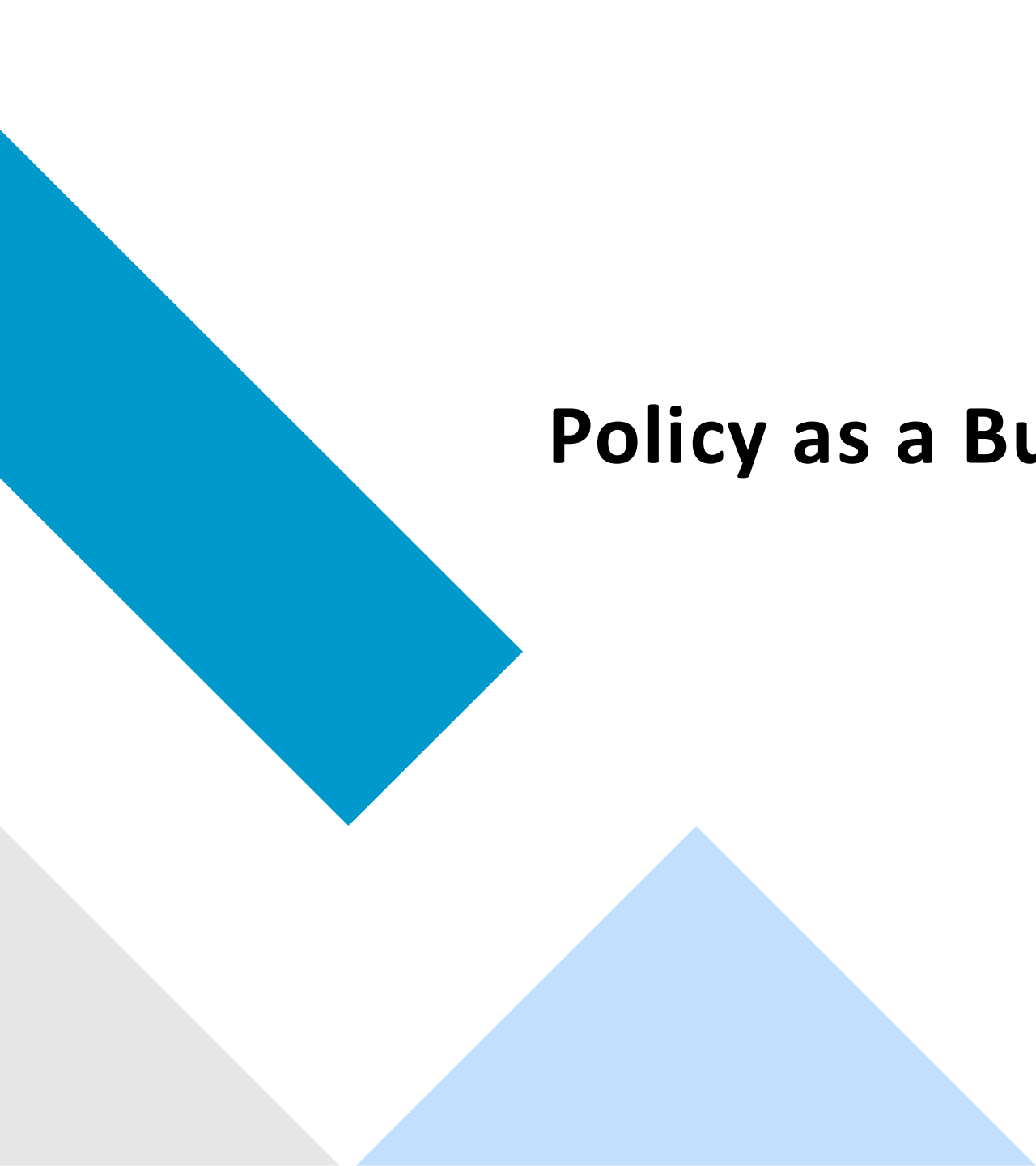
6 Parent
Mentor
Coordinators

49 Parent
Mentors

1061 K-5th grade
students

6,402
Volunteer
Hours

Expand to additional school districts



Policy as a Business Strategy Tool

Policies are not compliance tools. They are business incentives.

Policy as a Business Strategy Tool

Employer Focused Policies

- OJT Policy
- Work Experience Policy
- Apprenticeship Policy
- Technology Policy
- Training Policy



Employer of DOL-registered OJT Apprenticeships can go up to 1 year (2080 hours) and up to 90% wage reimbursement while considering SVP Justification and Analysis



Utilization and Implementation of the Specific Vocational Preparation Learning Model

Guidance: Review SVP before a DOL-registered OJT

Guidance: Place SVP Document within the client's OJT/Apprenticeship file



- Risk reduction
- Wage reimbursement

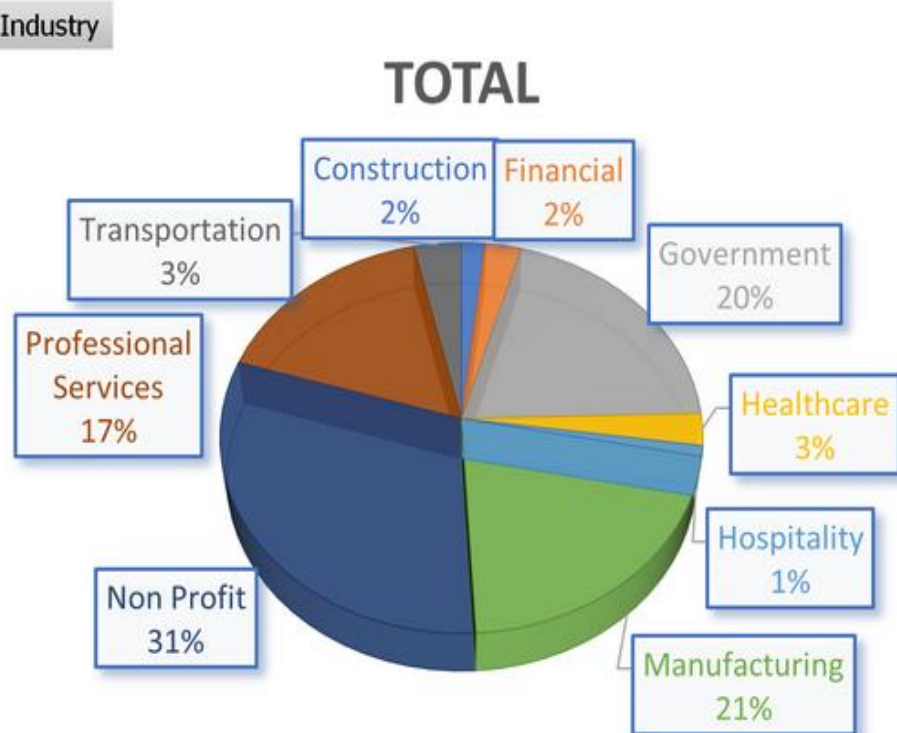
- Skill acceleration
- Business growth

Policy as a Business Strategy Tool

Business Services Impact in Lake County

Program Data
Jan 1, 2025 - Dec 31, 2025

2097 Businesses Reached



Work Experience

- 56 Interns
- \$1,500,000 invested

On – The – Job Training

- 22 of Hires
- \$475,000 invested

Incumbent Worker Training

- 166 employees trained
- \$505,000 invested

Driving Innovation & Employer Modernization

- AI RFP
- Automation
- Re-engineering
- Upskilling strategy



Driving Innovation & Employer Modernization

Future Focused Workforce Model

- Skills-based hiring
- Emerging technologies
- Data-driven planning
- Continuous employer engagement
- CEJA (Climate & Equitable Jobs Act)



AI RFP -



Automation



Digital Literacy



Upskilling strategy

Deloitte is conducting research in support of the AI RFP. They will conduct comprehensive research, create a report, and present it to the Lake County Workforce Development Board.

Focus of the research:

1. AI Engagement & User Adoption for all Lake County Workforce Development staff
2. AI Necessity & Engagement per Workforce industry segments in Lake County Illinois
3. Manufacturing, Healthcare, Information Technology, Professional Services, and Transportation & Logistics as priority industries

The Integrated Ecosystem Model

What Makes This Replicable

- Start with economic development alignment
- Host one industry convening
- Use policy as an incentive tool
- Measure & report impact
- Elevate workforce as economic driver

Key Takeaways

- Workforce must align with economic development
- Industry drives design
- Policy can be leveraged strategically
- Innovation keeps employers engaged



Lake County Workforce Development has designed and delivers workforce solutions that are responsive to a continuous career journey and not a set a stand-alone programs.



First Jobs
Summer Youth
Employment
Career Exploration
Job Seekers

Job Center Services
Grant Funded Programs
Assessments
Employment & Training Plan
Barrier Reduction Services

Workplace Essential Skills
Occupational Skills Training
Digital Literacy
Industry Training
Work Based Learning

Employer Engagement
Job Fairs, Job Postings
On the Job Training
Internships

Apprenticeships
Employee Training Grants
New skills & credentials
Leadership Training
New systems & machine training

Transitioning Jobs
Transitioning Careers
Updating Skills
Re-entering the labor force

Thank you!
