

Greetings from the chairman's desk

I'm proud to introduce the first issue of the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) newsletter. It's important that we identify who we are as IWIB members and partners and to recognize the dedicated efforts of so many throughout the diverse and vibrant regions of Illinois. This ongoing effort will represent our communication among each other and to our citizens as we strive to deliver a proven workforce model that develops and strengthens a vital talent pipeline across our state. This newsletter will highlight our workforce customers—businesses who provide employment opportunities, job seekers who fill the skills gap in the modern workforce, and state agencies, training providers, and commu-

nity-based organizations who deliver the needed services and expertise to create an equitable workforce that drives collective benefits in our communities. I am grateful to IWIB member Mike Conley and Dr. Scott Shook of Illinois State University for answering my call to create a vehicle that, in my vision, will share important issues in the workforce world and provide examples of best practices that can help all of us in our mission of providing the best possible workforce and talent development system. I firmly believe the best is yet to come for Illinois, and thank you for reading!

--John Rico, Co-Chair
Illinois Workforce Innovation Board

Improving opioid use disorder outcomes through workforce development in Will County

Local workforce area utilizes Opioid grant, innovative strategies to scale 'recovery coaches'

by Dr. Kathleen Burke, Director
Will County Office of
Substance Use Initiatives

There is an extreme shortage in behavioral health care workers in Will County. This shortage created an access problem for individuals seeking care for an opioid use disorder. The Behavioral Health organizations in our community welcomed the opportunity to be part of the solution provided by the Illinois Opioid Crisis Dislocated Worker Grant. Will County Office

of Substance Use Initiatives and Will County Workforce Services teamed up to develop and implement a grant project that trains Recovery Coaches to alleviate the shortages of behavioral health care workers exacerbated by the opioid crisis in Will County.

The partnership between Will County Offices of Substance Use Initiatives and Workforce Services is unique. Both teams have quickly come up to speed on the goals of each division and how working together

can assist in reaching our grant goals as well as addressing long term gaps in the Will County workforce. Team collaboration has drawn out creative, innovative and more productive ideas and practical solutions. It also serves as a platform from which to model our relationships with our agency and educational partners. Our project serves as a point of contact for the Workforce Innovation Board, made up of 30 business and public sector executives. They represent a diverse group of

stakeholders in sectors such as health care, manufacturing, government, and education. These stakeholders are now becoming better informed about behavioral health, shortages, and the impact of the opioid crisis on the labor force.

Recovery coaches facilitate the development of a recovery community. Recovery supports are the people, places, and things that help people stop using drugs and alcohol and begin a life in

--see Opioid Grant, page 3

Returning citizen finds fulfillment in manufacturing sector

With leg up from McHenry County workforce network, Charles finds rewarding career

by Julie Courtney, Director
McHenry County
Workforce Network

If you were to talk with Charles about his life journey he would likely mention choices and opportunities. Charles early adult life involved bad choices that lead him in and out of Dept. of Corrections over a 20 year period. He would find work during the times that he was not incarcerated however without any training or skills the jobs were either cash or minimum wage. To make up for the lack of income, the choices he would make would return him to prison. While in prison he would work jobs anywhere from cleaning toilets to being a mentor to other inmates. It all paid him \$17/ month.

After his last release he found jobs with a metals company and then on to a warehouse job with a flooring company until his car was rear ended at a stop light and he injured his back. Without work he contemplated the same familiar choices. Fortunately, at the same time, he was referred to contact McHenry County Workforce about training opportunities. Originally thinking CDL, after a skills and interest assessment by workforce staff he choose to enter into CNC training.



Charles, left, with Vo-Tech supervisor Adam Furman

Charles started attending reentry work readiness workshops at the Workforce Center which then lead to an Enhanced Work Experience through McHenry County Workforce. The Enhanced Work Experience was a WIOA funded 16 week concurrent combination of TMA Introduction to CNC classroom training and a paid temporary part time Internship at Vo-Tech Inc., a manufactur-

ing company. He went to class one day a week and working as a CNC intern 3 days. He completed the TMA training and received the NIMS Certificate for CNC Lath Operators.

Vo-Tech offered Charles a full time position with the company at the conclusion of the training and internship. He is working in a WIOA supported On the Job Training Program to continue his skills gain. As

he did during incarceration, he is giving back and mentoring 3 new interns who recently started with the company after they completed a McHenry County College CNC pre-apprenticeship program.

Charles patiently moves forward one day at a time with appreciation for all the opportunities. "I am truly grateful to be working at Votech. I am making as much per hour now as I made in a month when I was incarcerated", Charles stated. He has been able to regain consistent contact with his son. He also plans to continue his skills gain with a possible apprenticeship.

The opportunities have not just benefited Charles as a job seeker. The opportunity has also created a benefit to the business by choosing to give Charles a chance. Charles supervisor Adam Furman is the owner's son and he stated, "Charles has provided a positive work atmosphere. He has also provided us with an example of good work ethic and attitude. The more people we can find like Charles the stronger our company will get."

Charles' story is an example of what a difference can be made for individuals and businesses when opportunity is a choice.

■ Opioid Grant: *Individualized approach provides best results*

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recovery. Different people find different things supportive. Successful recovery depends on finding and using the supports that work best for the individual. Recovery support can include transitional housing, employment services, medical care, mental health treatment, child-care, transportation, and other types of services and resources that allow people to move forward in recovery. Recovery coaches are helpful for making decisions about what to do with one's life and the part addiction or recovery plays in it. The Recovery Coach serves as a role model, mentor, advocate and motivator to recovering individuals in order to help prevent relapse and promote long-term recovery. Entry into the recovery coach profession is not complicated or time consuming.

We chose to focus on Recovery Coaching because of a need in our community and an established partnership with the Governor State University College of Health and Human Services' Addiction Studies and Behavioral Health Program. GSU offers a Recovery Coach (RC) 40 hour training program funded by SUPR (Illinois Department of Human Services; Division of Substance Use Prevention and Recovery) and a limited number of internships at no cost to participants. GSU serves as both a pipeline for RC applicants and an educational site for coursework. Our grant provides an additional opportunity for 30 RC training internships. In addition to classroom work all the RC interns meet biweekly to learn, discuss and problem solve their individual experiences with other peers. We are also working with Joliet Junior College to create longer term educational choices

for those coaches interested. Behavioral Health has focused primarily on clinical categories of personnel. We see a definite need for more support roles like recovery coaching.

A part time Project Manager was hired to lead the project and provide a cohesive linkage with the Workforce team. The Workforce team has been diligent in managing the numerous processes for applicant eligibility and employing at the same time applicant recruitment and selection took place.

Additionally, a part time Field Supervisor was hired to manage the recovery coach interns ensuring a successful site/agency placement and work experience. A successful recovery coach internship hinges on the development and maintenance of an appropriate support structure. We determined early on that RC interns would require close super-

vision because of the unique requirements at each agency site and to manage agency expectations. Each site developed a one paragraph description of the work requirements and that was added to the job description for each RC. It is important that each intern practice the skills of a recovery coach and not substitute for other personnel gaps agencies may experience. Fourteen people have been placed at 6 agencies to date. We continue to interview applicants as the word gets out about our project.

The next phase of our project focuses on supporting successful internships at each agency site. We will determine additional training the coaches may need. We also will be recruiting individuals affected by the opioid epidemic who would like additional education in the behavioral health field.

IWIB Apprenticeship Committee promotes work-based learning strategy for talent development

The Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) established the Apprenticeship Committee in 2016. The Committee integrates their work into the larger framework of career pathways, establishing apprenticeship as a work-based learning model. Work-based learning approaches workforce development from both the supply and demand sides by connecting individuals to career pathways while serving as a solution for businesses to find and tap into undiscovered talent.

The Committee's charge is to advise the IWIB on apprenticeship and to oversee the implementation of a comprehensive statewide plan with the following goals:

- Fully integrate apprenticeship

into state workforce development, education, and economic development strategies and programs;

- Support the rapid development of new apprenticeship programs and/or the significant expansion of existing programs;

- Support the development and recruitment of a diverse pipeline of apprentices; and

- Build state capacity to make it easier for industry to start apprenticeship programs and for apprentices to access opportunities.

The Apprenticeship Committee executes its mission through three basic working groups:

The **Business Engagement** group seeks ways to identify and convince

employers challenged by a growing skills gap that an apprenticeship approach is a practical solution for growing their own talent by braiding the concepts of education, on-the-job training, and mentorship into a strategy that supports a quality workforce and dramatically improved retention percentages.

The **Systems and Supports** work group concentrates on building out the basic infrastructure supporting the apprenticeship model across the state, including Registered Apprenticeships recognized by the federal Department of Labor, Non-Registered Apprenticeships that adhere to the same rigorous

--see Apprenticeship Committee, page 4

■ Apprenticeship Committee: Navigators, Intermediaries charged with rapid expansion of career pathway model

> continued from page 3

standards, and pre-Apprenticeship and Youth Apprenticeships that allow new talent to sample the benefits of an earn-and-learn model.

Employers and job-seekers have varying degrees of knowledge and comfort with the concept of apprenticeships, and the goal is to provide a variety of options for participation to meet their needs in a variety of sectors and regions.

The **Marketing** Committee also attacks the issue from both employer and

job-seeker perspectives, by promoting the dissemination of its message to the business community in Illinois and developing inroads into populations targeted by federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funding.

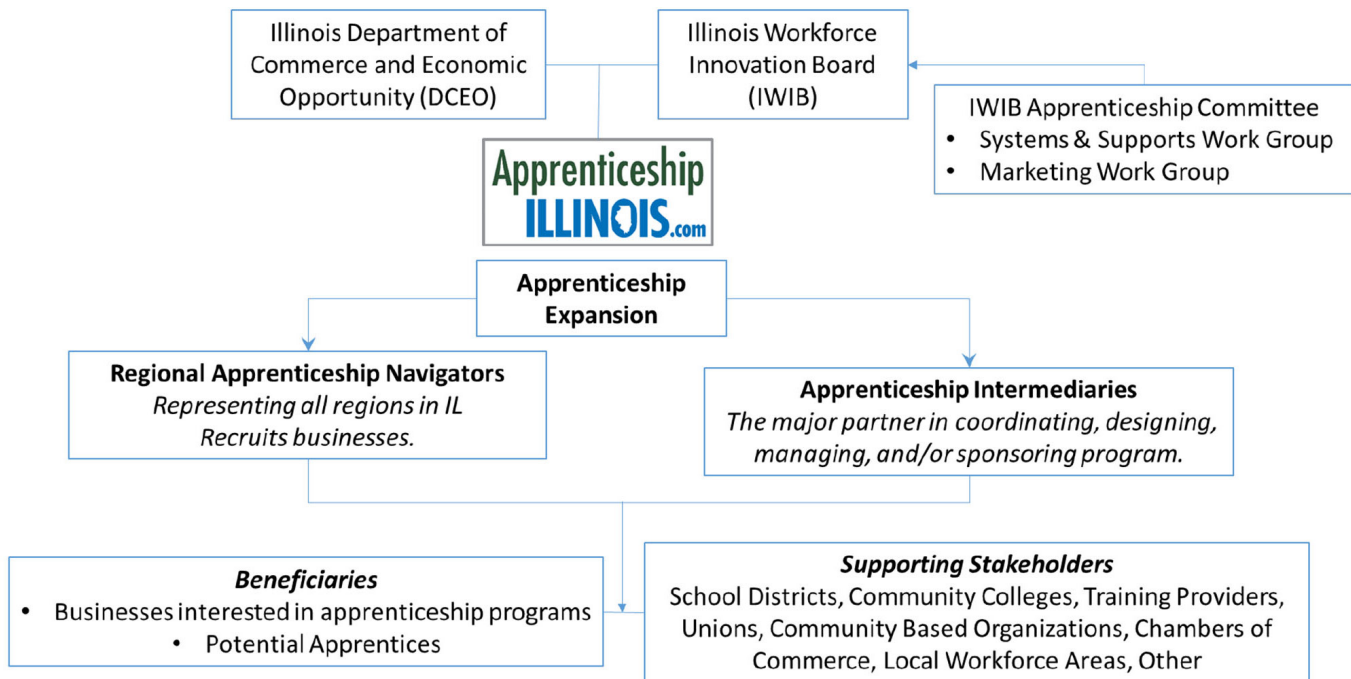
All three of these groups are included under the umbrella of **Apprenticeship Illinois**, which is described in the adjacent chart. Two key components of the committee's work are ensuring that apprenticeship opportunities are equitable, and that they meet the needs of the state as a whole, but also of

the diverse and specific regions and employment sectors and their unique needs.

The Committee includes leaders representing all key apprenticeship stakeholders: business and industry, training providers, local workforce innovation boards, community-based organizations, unions, philanthropies, community colleges, K-12 school districts, the core WIOA partners, and the State Workforce Board.

The Apprenticeship Committee is developing a system of **Intermediaries** and **Navigators** to build the foundation for expanding

apprenticeships. Navigators are primarily the business-facing side of the equation. They are the statewide "sales force" for apprenticeship to Illinois employers. They accomplish this by developing relationships and solutions within high-demand sectors. Intermediaries provide the logistical support businesses need in coordinating and implementing apprenticeship programs. Intermediaries are tasked with recruiting potential apprentices, preparing them to enter apprenticeships, and facilitating their completion.



The Apprenticeship Committee is committed to strengthen the Apprenticeship Illinois system. For more information, visit ApprenticeshipIllinois.com. This website is continually being updated to provide more resources to expand apprenticeship.

Some guidance on dealing with the COVID-19 threat

As most of you are aware, the March quarterly meeting of the IWIB and all related committee meetings have been modified to eliminate in-person conflagrations. Many of the committee meetings are being re-arranged as conference calls or webinars. Your specific committee staff should be reaching out to confirm the dates and times.

In an effort to stay ahead of the Covid-19 potentialities, the era of in-person meetings at the state government level has effectively ground to a halt.

The health, safety, and well-being of everyone in the workforce system are of paramount importance. With recent developments regarding COVID-19 (the 2019 novel Coronavirus), we should all consider best-practice preventative safety measures and reference processes and procedures to keep us, our family, co-workers and others healthy.

The number of estimated COVID-19 cases in the United States continues to rise. You should closely monitor the situation and take guidance from the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as well as your state and local communities.

Everyone is encouraged to be mindful of preventative measures that can be taken. The CDC offers some Steps to Prevent Illness that can be useful in preventing many types of illnesses, including the flu.

Proactive Steps to Stay Healthy

The 2019 novel Coronavirus is believed to be spread through the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes, much in the way influenza and other respiratory viruses spread. Because of this, individuals are encouraged to follow these common-sense practices:

- Wash hands regularly for at least 20 seconds using soap and water.
- Avoid the touching of eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home if you are sick and exhibit cold or flu-like symptoms, except to get medical care.
- Cover mouth and nose with the inside of the arm or

with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. Throw the tissue away immediately. Wash hands as soon as possible afterward.

- Wear a facemask if you are sick. If you are NOT sick, you do not need to wear a facemask unless those you are caring for are sick and unable to wear a facemask. Facemasks are in short supply and should be saved for caregivers and those that are sick.

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily.

Additional information is available from IDPH at their Coronavirus-2019 (COVID-2019) website, the COVID-19 Hotline at 1 (800) 889-3931 or by email at dph.sick@illinois.gov and from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website.

SCHEDULE OF REMAINING 2020 IWIB MEETINGS

IWIB Summer Quarterly Meeting and Retreat

Thursday, June 18, 2020

1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

College of DuPage
DuPage

IWIB Fall Quarterly Meeting Thursday, September 17, 2020

2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Crowne Plaza Hotel
Springfield

IWIB Winter Quarterly Meeting Thursday, December 10, 2020

2 p.m. to 5 p.m.

March is
International
Women's
Month



Guided by reverence for work, IWIB member Massie advocates for special populations and self-reliance

Mike Massie is an attorney in Galva, Illinois. He is a veteran member of the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board, where he serves as a co-chair for the Career Pathways for Targeted Populations (CPTP) committee. He and his wife Vicki live on a lake in Dahinda. They are proud parents of five children and nine grandchildren. Vicki and Mike partner at work, home and leisure. Although an English Major graduate from Knox College, Vicki is a key member of the law firm.

With modeling and coaching from his children, Mike runs, bikes and swims. His favorite toys are his walk behind lawn mower, back pack blower, tennis racket and water craft; they all provide great opportunities to work and play outside.

A graduate of the University of Illinois Law School, Mike looks forward to 2022 that will be the 50th anniversary of Mike's admission to the bar. He has been active in Local, State and American Bar Associations. His workforce innovation opportunity has been working on wind and solar projects for the past 10 plus years for one of the world's largest renewable companies.

2022 will also be the 50th anniversary of Mike's membership in Rotary. He has tried to model "Service Above Self" with involvement in YMCA Youth and Government, Big Brother Program, 4-H, teaching Sunday School, Rotary Foreign Youth Exchange and other civ-

Why We IWIB. In which members explain their reasons for serving workforce.

ic activities.

Mike credits his parents with instilling a work ethic in him. They are responsible, he says, for his workforce DNA. "If you're going to be a ditch digger, be the best ditch digger you can be" was a favorite aphorism of the Massie parents. "The dignity of work – physical and academic – were always yoked at home," says Mike. "Although my great grandmother, grandmother and mother were college graduates, the opportunity to work on the Christmas Tree Farm from elementary school age to law school, to put in an honest day's work for an honest day's pay, was as valued and expected as any academic effort." The good fortune and life experiences of those learned disciplines at home are certainly a factor in Mike's interest in the work of IWIB.

Mike's main motivation for his service to IWIB is his belief in self-reliance. "As a member of the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board, it is a privilege to work with others to help provide innovative workforce opportunities" he said. "A Board whose success is measured by impact on lives leading to work force self-reliance through strong



Mike Massie (standing, right) in a multi-generational family picture.

partnerships with the business, education and government sectors is essential to impacting lives."

The Career Pathways Targeted Population Committee upon which Mike serves is an opportunity to address equity and accountability. "Returning citizens, those with disabilities, opportunity youth and other targeted populations deserve opportunities similar to all populations" said Mike. "Nonetheless, self-reliance should be encouraged and expected of all populations. Helping with holistic approaches that lead to self-reliance are paramount for this work."

For a number of years, Mike was honored to help advocate and support the Agriculture, Food & Natural Resource Career Pathway efforts in the State. Although he personally took no ag or food classes – nor was he a member of FFA – what he learned from this pathway experience makes it a model to champion, he said. "What this model provides is lifetime opportunity for awareness, life skills and career skills by combining education, work-based learning, and essential skills discipline experiences" said Mike.

The CPTP Model for the committee charge:

"Prepare Illinois workers for a career, not just their next job."

