

Workforce Development Institute



2019 ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

GROWING AND
KEEPING GOOD JOBS
IN NEW YORK STATE

2019 ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

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“Training existing employees will also help businesses address workforce shortages and create new job opportunities for entry-level employees. This would not have been possible without the WDI support.”

—NORTH COUNTRY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE ON THE IMPACT OF THE WDI-FUNDED NAMTRANS TRANSPORTATION CLUSTER INITIATIVE, DEDICATED TO SERVING AND GROWING THIS CLUSTER OF MORE THAN 50 COMPANIES THAT EMPLOY APPROXIMATELY 9,000 PEOPLE IN THE NORTH COUNTRY.

ABOUT US

Workforce Development Institute (WDI) is a statewide non-profit and partner to organized labor that works to grow and keep good jobs in New York State. We use a range of tools—including ground level information, workforce expertise, and flexible funding—to facilitate projects that build workforce skills and strengthen employers' ability to hire, promote, and retain workers.

Each of our 10 Regional Directors covers a large territory of New York State and spends a significant amount of time traveling their region to identify workforce trends, opportunities, and challenges. The Regional Directors work closely with a centralized strategy-focused team to improve our understanding of workforce issues and develop solutions to address them. We see our niche as filling gaps not covered by other workforce development or economic development entities, with an end goal of facilitating the growth of good jobs.

We are a collaborative organization whose role adapts based on the needs and nature of each workforce issue. Common functions we perform include:

- Identification of a problem/ challenge (for one organization or many)
- Connection of organizations with needs to resources
- Piloting or testing new programs, technologies, or methods
- Serving as workforce consultants on a wide array of workforce issues
- Facilitation of projects
- Funding for projects

The majority of WDI's financial support comes from the New York State Legislature. While we work across all sectors, a significant portion of our budget is targeted

by the Legislature to help the manufacturing sector rebound. Numbers and projects identified in this report reflect this emphasis.

Finally, our roots are in labor, so we are interested in seeing an improved distribution of wealth—a move away from the 99:1 ratio toward growth of the middle class. Although the types of projects we facilitate and support vary, our goal is that all have a positive and measurable impact on the workforce.

A silhouette of a person wearing a blue hard hat and a high-visibility vest, holding a laptop, stands in the foreground. In the background, several wind turbines are visible against a sunset sky with a bright sun low on the horizon.

Our statewide presence is a strength that empowers us to identify programs that work, and pursue opportunities to scale them to other occupations, industry sectors, or regions of the state.

BOOTS ON THE GROUND WORK LEADS THE WAY

Every year our regional staff tour roughly 1,000 organizations across the state—a mix of businesses, non-profits, and unions—to collect information about workforce trends. We see and hear a lot, and this “boots on the ground” work often points us to areas of focus for both our regional and statewide work. What follows are some areas of focus during 2019, trends identified that led us to these areas, and a sampling of initiatives we’re working on in response to trends identified.

1 Introducing the Next Generation to the Jobs of New York’s Future

There remains a significant gap between job opportunities and the public’s understanding of those jobs, including their existence, and the relevant education/experience that they require. However, over the last few years we’ve seen a concerted effort on the part of School Districts, Community Colleges, Workforce and Economic Development entities, Businesses, and the NYS Legislature to develop programming aimed at exposing high school (and sometimes younger) students to various careers. We expect this trend to continue, especially as changes in technology make the job landscape even more “unknown”. Career exposure opportunities are one way to ensure the next generation is on top of the spectrum of jobs and career paths that exist. During 2019, WDI participated in a number of Career Awareness/Exposure events—often facilitating or convening others on the topic.

A student is introduced to manufacturing processes at one of the many Manufacturing Day events supported by WDI in 2019.





Young people are connected to a variety of viable career paths through career awareness programs. Credit: United Way of Buffalo & Erie County



North Country Manufacturing Day. Credit: Lauren Robertello.

HELPING MANUFACTURING DAYS GAIN MOMENTUM ACROSS THE STATE

The *2018 Deloitte and The Manufacturing Institute Skills Gap and Future of Work Study* notes that approximately 2.4 million positions are on track to go unfilled through 2028. During October—recognized nationally as Manufacturing Month—WDI staff collaborated with partners in virtually every region of the state to produce innovative programming aimed at changing misperceptions about manufacturing and steering new workers toward this high demand field.

In **New York City**, the Garment District is both an iconic landmark and a vital economic engine for the region.

WDI's NYC Regional Director worked closely with the NYC Manufacturing Extension Partner, ITAC, to develop a day focused on Fashion Manufacturing. Seven businesses agreed to open their doors for guided tours of their facilities and discussions about their processes, challenges, and opportunities. The event was promoted to high schools that focus their programming on fashion and the arts in order to provide some real-world exposure to students. The morning's panel discussions covered a range of topics, including emerging business models that manufacturers are now

adopting in order to succeed in NYC, as well as an increased awareness around the importance of equity and inclusion in a variety of forms—from minority and size inclusion, to labels targeting specific communities. In the afternoon, students and business leaders attended tours of the participating manufacturers and were given the opportunity to see various machines in action, hear how these manufacturers work with fashion designers across the globe, and view the output of these collaborations.

In the **Lower Hudson Valley** the WDI supported a first-ever Advanced Manufacturing and Energy Careers Bus Tour. More than 50 Westchester educators literally got on a bus to learn about career opportunities at two manufacturer facilities and one utility (Con Edison). The intent of the tour was for the educators to understand the career possibilities in these fields, and in turn share what they learned with the region's high school students and parents.

On **Long Island** WDI played a significant role in coordinating a new "Adopt a School" program, focused initially on high needs districts, to facilitate tours of companies. Six companies participated in the tours and close to 350 students had opportunities to hear directly from company staff about current and future job opportunities.

WDI supported other 2019 Manufacturing Day events, in slightly different ways, in every other region of the state.

CONNECTING HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE STUDENTS WITH AN IMPORTANT EMPLOYER; CONNECTING THAT EMPLOYER TO APPRENTICESHIP

Steinway & Sons is a world-renowned Queens-based company that has been manufacturing pianos for over 160 years, and is the last one of its kind in the United States.

Like many manufacturing employers, Steinway projects that a significant number of its roughly 350 employees—many of whom are skilled craftspeople represented by the **United Furniture Workers**—will be retiring in the next several years. Finding new workers with the required skills has been a challenge for the company. The WDI NYC Regional Director worked with the company on a few levels to address this current and future staffing issue:

- Connections were made between Steinway and three Career & Technical Education high schools that have carpentry and related studies. One school brought students on a tour of Steinway so that they could learn about job opportunities and see the factory in action.



USING VIDEOS TO PERSUADE: MADE IN THE SOUTHERN TIER

With the support of WDI and several local employers, the Chemung County Chamber of Commerce developed the *Made in the Southern Tier* video project to highlight the manufacturing sector and prompt more students and job seekers to consider manufacturing as a career choice. These videos are being shown in classrooms and are being used by manufacturers and workforce partners in support of manufacturing jobs. They help paint a clear picture of what modern manufacturing looks like, the benefits of manufacturing careers, local training opportunities that provide a path to these jobs, and the personal and professional success that this career path can provide for Chemung County residents.

All videos can be viewed at:
www.madeinthesoutherntier.com

- A connection was also made between Steinway and LaGuardia Community College. The college hopes to refer students and graduates for jobs.
- WDI also worked with Steinway to help the company develop its own pilot apprenticeship program. The apprenticeship program is a highly specialized one that provides fully paid, hands-on work experience, while also providing education in theory and techniques behind piano fabrication, assembly, tuning, regulation, and more. WDI support of equipment to establish a training room and workspace and partial support of an

instructor were key to helping this historical manufacturer maneuver today's workforce development environment. Successful completion of the program will create a direct pathway to employment with Steinway.

Steinway is a perfect example of a company with great career opportunities that may go unnoticed. Connections of companies to educational institutions can help deliver a pipeline of potential employees. A successful apprenticeship program can be the key to success for manufacturers looking to attract employees by offering a clear pathway forward.

Students from a career and technical education (CTE) school visited Steinway & Sons to learn about the apprenticeship program.



Credit: Steinway & Sons



WDI's New York City Regional Director worked closely with the NYC Manufacturing Extension Partner, ITAC, to develop a day focused on Fashion Manufacturing. Several manufacturers like Tom's Sons International Pleating (pictured) opened their doors for student tours and demonstrations.



Credit: United Way of Buffalo & Erie County

Participants of the American Apprenticeship Initiative, aimed at expanding Registered Apprenticeship throughout the US, have been placed in 30 Western New York manufacturers like S&H Machine Co., Inc. (pictured above) in Buffalo, NY. WDI has supported the WNY United Way for several years with this project, serving over 220 new apprentices.

2 Upskilling the Workforce So Employers Can Hire/Promote More Readily

There is increased interest on the part of employers in providing employees with opportunities to advance their skills—and advance in their jobs—via incremental training. Training in “bite-sized pieces” (often called micro-credentials or stackable credentials) are wins for the employee (they gain skills), for the business (improved skills result in improved productivity), and are manageable on the part of both the employer and employee in terms of time and investments. During 2019 WDI worked with organizations across the state to help employers bring training in-house, or to send employees out to training opportunities off-site.

HUDSON VALLEY: EFCO PRODUCTS STAFF GAIN A MARKET-DEMANDED CERTIFICATION

EFCO Products started as a family business in the Hudson Valley over 100 years ago, selling flour from a horse drawn cart. Fast forward to today, the Poughkeepsie-headquartered company manufactures a variety of off-the-shelf and custom-formulated products for wholesale bakeries, chain restaurants, retail bakeries, food processors, frozen food manufacturers, and supermarket bakeries. Two generations of family are still actively involved in the business and commitment to quality and the customer experience remain similar to those possessed in the early 1900s.

Today's competitive manufacturing environment, however, is significantly different from that of the early 20th century. The company, comprised of just under 100 employees with roughly 50% represented by the **Teamsters Local 445**, is committed to training to ensure that staff remain at the forefront of regulatory changes. During this past year WDI assistance enabled the company to complete specific food safety training necessary to attain Safe Quality Food (or SQF) certification. A total of 68 employees received training, two of which were promoted. Company management reports that training resulted in improved use of resources (inventory management, for example), and an improved company-wide understanding of quality assurance. EFCO competes with large and multinational corporations, and anticipates that this training and certification will ensure it remains competitive.

NORTH COUNTRY: AKWESASNE MOHAWK CASINO AND RESORT REMAINS CURRENT AND COMPETITIVE

The **Akwesasne Mohawk Casino and Resort (AMCR)** is one of the largest employers in the North Country region, with over 800 employees. Located in the Mohawk Tribal Land in Franklin County, the AMCR started out roughly 20 years ago as a result of the gaming compact between New York State (NYS) and tribal governments. Proceeds from gaming are divided among these entities.

New development projects are critical to keeping an entertainment center such as AMCR fresh and attractive as a tourism draw, and AMCR has a number of projects planned for 2019 for this purpose, including development of a new brewery and renovations to their dining facilities. To support the

projects, WDI worked with AMCR to bring project management training to staff so various projects can be managed effectively to completion. Over a period of 15 weeks, teams of employees worked on mock projects and then moved on to using their new skills on real AMCR projects. Program participants gained the knowledge and practical skills on how to review a project, build a team to support it, and follow through to completion. Casino leadership supported the process and empowered the teams to own the process and make decisions. A total of 42 individuals participated in the project management training, and casino leadership reports they are pleased with the results of this initiative. Employees gained valuable skills that have helped to provide a competitive advantage to AMCR while also serving as a first step toward new career opportunities/certification and improved earning potential for AMCR staff.

MOHAWK VALLEY: DE-BURRING PROCESS UPGRADE HAS MULTIPLE BENEFITS

A project with **Amphenol Aerospace**, a Sidney-based (Delaware County) manufacturer of electrical connectors and interconnect products for military and commercial aerospace applications, had multiple goals: to improve the quality of product via installation of new, more efficient equipment; to train 40+ Operators and Team Leaders on the new equipment; and to improve the safety of the processes used. WDI financial support enabled the company to install new downdraft tables used for de-burring which, in turn, allowed the removal of older equipment that had been modified to perform this function. After installation/training, the company reports that



WDI-funded project management training gave 42 employees of the Akwesasne Mohawk Casino and Resort the skills needed to manage larger projects and expand their responsibilities within the organization, putting them on a pathway to future promotion. Credit: Akwesasne Mohawk Casino and Resort



TREND IDENTIFIED:

Several sectors are competing for the same type of worker. Manufacturing, Construction, Auto Repair, and Utility/Sewer Authorities all need workers with strong electromechanical and other "hands-on" problem-solving skills. Training programs that emphasize foundational skills that could lead to one of several paths make sense. Community colleges have the opportunity to play a major role in this space!



the new downdraft tables have helped to eliminate much of the dust generated by the de-burring process, which has led to a cleaner, safer environment. In addition to the health and safety improvements, the elimination of airborne contaminants has also improved the quality of the product. Amphenol is a significant employer for the county, with 1,100+ employees, many of whom are represented by the **International Association of Machinist and Aerospace Workers**.

LONG ISLAND: HELPING HEALTHCARE LAUNCH A NEW APPRENTICESHIP

The **1199SEIU Training and Upgrading Fund** serves over 55,000 healthcare workers each year by providing a variety of education and job training programs to 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers across NYS (all major cities), as well as MD/DC, MA, NJ, and FL.

A change in NYS Public Health Law 2824 requires that Central Sterile Processing Technicians (CCSPT) pass an internationally accredited central service exam and complete ten hours of continuing education credit annually. In response to this change, **Northwell Health**, a nonprofit healthcare network and New York State's largest healthcare provider,

launched a CCSPT apprenticeship program so that employees in various entry-level positions would have the opportunity to become certified in an in-demand occupation and earn wage increases. The apprenticeship program was funded via the 1199SEIU Training and Upgrading Fund and WDI.

The CCSPT apprenticeship program uses the services of peer mentors who provide support to the apprentices during the on-the-job training portion of the apprenticeship. This component of the program is an important one, but requires that experienced Technicians be willing to invest the time in mentoring. WDI supported an incentive for peer mentor participation as part of the program.

At the conclusion of the first CCSPT apprenticeship run, 11 participants successfully completed their apprenticeship requirements and passed the internationally accredited certification exam necessary to become a Certified Central Sterile Processing Technician. The 100% pass rate on the exam was truly impressive since the national pass rate is 60%, and is evidence of the quality of the training and mentorship support that apprentices received.

1199SEIU Training Fund Management noted that "The skill levels of the employees were significantly enhanced by the training and mentorship provided during the 400 hours of training for Central Sterile Processing Technicians. The WDI grant was fundamental in providing support and competency-based education. The one-on-one support and encouragement from mentors gave apprentices the confidence to succeed in their new roles."

All 11 apprentices who successfully completed the program were able to continue working for Northwell

Health as Certified Central Sterile Processing Technicians, and received higher wages once they became journeyworkers.

CENTRAL NEW YORK: SPECIALIZED SUPERVISORY TRAINING LEADS TO PROMOTIONS, EFFICIENCIES, REDUCED TURNOVER

Located in Spencer, NY (Tioga County), the **Raymond-Hadley Corp.** is a developer, blender, co-manufacturer, and co-packer of dry food products such as grains, flours, bake mixes, frosting mixes, spices, and seasonings. During the last few years the company has invested in lean training and has focused on increasing revenue to help mitigate the effects of increased industry competition and consolidation. These earlier investments allowed Raymond Hadley to then turn attention to training that would improve plant morale, reduce turnover, improve safety, and potentially lead to promotion opportunities. With support from WDI, the Raymond-Hadley Corp. was able to provide their supervisory staff with Training Within Industry (TWI) instruction. The TWI training is meant to provide a well-rounded approach for teaching job methods, job instruction, and handling job relations.

Company management reports that the training helped supervisors improve their approach to day-to-day direction and instruction, thus improving morale and reducing employee turnover by 20%. Within their application to WDI, Raymond-Hadley predicted that this project would enable five employees to develop new skills. Exceeding their own expectations, the training helped 10 employees significantly increase their supervisory skills, leading to

the promotion of two supervisory employees. Additionally, this training helped the company become more efficient by enabling the supervisory staff to develop the skills necessary to spend less energy on low-impact problems and redirect to higher impact problems.

Raymond-Hadley Corporation's methodical investments in training have positioned the company for growth.

NORTH COUNTRY: SUPPORT OF A UNION-COMMUNITY COLLEGE PARTNERSHIP IS A WIN-WIN

With support from WDI, **Clinton Community College (CCC)** in Plattsburgh, NY, recently completed the addition of a new degree program that forges a partnership with the **International Brotherhood**

of Electrical Workers Union (IBEW) Local 910. The partnership makes it easier for CCC students to enter the IBEW, and for IBEW journeyworkers to complete an associate degree.

The Industrial/Commercial Electrician Associate of Occupational Studies (AOS) is a 60-credit program that features hands-on training and mirrors a more traditional apprenticeship program. Traditional community college students who complete the AOS degree at CCC will be prepared for and earn extra points towards their IBEW entrance applications. In addition, IBEW members who successfully achieve the 8,000 hours of training required to become a journeyworker will start the AOS degree program with 51 credits, leaving them with just 9 credits (or three classes) to complete their AOS degree. In order to make

this degree program accessible, the three required courses had to be made available in an online format. With backing from WDI, Clinton Community College was able to complete the conversion of these courses to an online format, thereby making all three courses available from anywhere within the North Country (or beyond).

The IBEW Local 910 Training Director stated, "Colleges and apprenticeships working together like this will help build the future of skilled labor."

Enrollment for the degree program began in Fall 2019. This degree program and partnership is a model for other community colleges and unions. Both entrance points—either via the college or the IBEW—sets an individual up for a career pathway and multiple credentials.





Opportunities Long Island's 5th graduating class. Credit: Opportunities Long Island



3 Promoting Equity and Inclusion in Workforce Development

Research has provided indicators that a diverse workforce, with diverse viewpoints, has the potential to lead to a more productive and effective workforce (*Global Competitiveness Report 2018*, World Economic Forum). While we've known this for some time, it has not always led employers to actively seek out a diverse workforce. The current tight labor market is changing that equation. Boomers are retiring and replacement workers with the right skills are scarce, or at least not applying to open jobs (see *Introducing the Next Generation to the Jobs of New York's Future*, p. 5). We're hearing from employers who are asking how they can cast wider nets to find a workforce. Casting a wider net means considering populations that may have been overlooked in the past. So what does this shift, or openness to hiring differently imply? It implies that NOW is the time for progress in pulling populations back into the labor market that have historically been either underemployed, suffered from high rates of unemployment, or seen other inequities. During 2019 WDI worked on a number of programs that promoted equity and inclusion in the workforce.

MULTI-REGION: THE CONSTRUCTION SECTOR ACTIVELY PURSUES A DIVERSE WORKFORCE

In several regions of the state, WDI works with the Building and Construction Trades on programs that actively promote union construction career pathways to individuals from minority or disadvantaged communities, and then help individuals from those communities via preparation to succeed in a union apprenticeship program. All of the programs are direct entry, which means graduates can be accepted by registered union apprenticeship programs outside of the general recruitment process. Participants of these programs have seen success—with a high percentage placed into a union apprenticeship,

and many reporting that they feel empowered to develop their voices and leadership potential. Graduates often become peer mentors to others, or leaders in the building trades and in their communities.

In **NYC**, WDI has helped **Pathways to Apprenticeship (P2A)** with three different programs recently—in Washington Heights, West Harlem, and the Far Rockaways. In all, WDI support enabled 33 trainees to complete pre-apprentice programs. P2A reports that 21 of the 33 have been placed into union apprenticeships in a variety of trades (Plumbers and Steamfitters, Bricklayers, Laborers, etc) with an average wage of \$21.00.

Opportunities Long Island, which operates a program in Nassau and Suffolk Counties, reports that during 2019 their program enrolled 21

students and that all 21 graduated. To date, 18 of the graduates have been placed and retained at various trades.

In **Rochester**, the **Multi-Craft and Pre-Apprenticeship Preparation Program (or MAPP)** is unique in that it works with a separate “feeder” program called Project Phoenix which, in turn, doubles as both a screening mechanism for MAPP and a significant community development program. During Project Phoenix, trainees work side-by-side with union journeyworkers to gain skills while rehabbing blighted City of Rochester Landbank properties. The properties are then returned to the community for re-sale. During 2019, MAPP enrolled 7 students and all 7 graduated and were placed into union apprenticeships. 10 additional students were working on Landbank properties in preparation for the next round of MAPP.

CAPITAL REGION: ENGLISH SKILLS + SEWING SKILLS FOR IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES = A PATH TO SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Literacy Volunteers of Rensselaer County (LVORC) provides those learning English as a Second Language (ESL) with skills that will help improve performance in the workplace, and via assistance with placement into good jobs. Through outreach to the community, LVORC determined there was growth in three areas of sewing and textile business needs: 1) hiring due to retirements,

2) demand in expanding businesses, and 3) open positions in new start-up businesses. In response to this need, WDI worked with LVORC on a Sewing and English Workplace Skills program. The goal of the program was to improve conversational and contextual on-the-job English for immigrants and refugees, while also providing job skills that could help the trainees find employment.

LVORC reports that the program helped the eight trainees, all immigrant women, improve their conversational English measurably, and that four of the women have already found employment; two in sewing and two in other fields. LVORC also noted that the program's benefits to the students were far greater than simply mastering the art of sewing by machine, or



Amber Cunningham, 3rd year apprentice, IBEW Local 910



Shi Greene, 3rd year journeyworker, Local 79 Mason Tenders

learning English by itself. Rather, the program empowered the students to communicate with coworkers, to state individual needs, to identify and solve problems in the workplace, to suggest improvements, and to take pride in their work. In short, the Sewing and English Workplace Skills program set the trainees on a path to self-sufficiency.

MULTI-REGION: RAISING AWARENESS ON HOW/WHEN IMPROVED DIVERSITY IN JOBS CAN HAPPEN

Sometimes WDI's role is simply to raise the issue of and benefits that result from a focus on Diversity and Inclusion.

Our **Long Island** Regional Director wrote an article for InnovateLI around the importance of diverse opinions on productivity, and the difficulty women have being heard in fields traditionally viewed as belonging to men—Energy is one. (www.innovateli.com/diverse-opinions-fuel-c3e-women-in-energy-event/).

In the **Capital Region**, WDI staff participated in a Talent and Inclusion Symposium, bringing in **Greyston Bakery**, with which we have worked a few times. Greyston staff described their open hiring model that “screens-in” workers traditionally left out of the job market, including those with criminal records. The model has worked for the bakery, and is a good prototype for other organizations.

As part of our work to raise awareness about good jobs going unfilled, WDI launched an Instagram campaign entitled **YOUunion_NY** in 2019 to highlight women in union jobs (www.instagram.com/youunion_ny/). We asked the women a number of questions about their jobs and what the union has meant to them and their career path(s). We focused on women and union jobs as a starting point, but plan to broaden the campaign to highlight women and men in both union and non-union jobs in future years.

Credit: Cornell Cooperative Extension of Oneida County



SUPPORTING TRAINING

for low-income immigrants and refugees increases their employability potential and economic security. A project with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Oneida County provided Somali Bantu refugees in Utica with farming and food safety training.

“There are so many benefits to actually being able to be skilled with your hands. No one can ever take that from you. No matter what you do and no matter where you go, the trades are always going to be needed.”

—RIKKI ALLISON, LOCAL 46 SHEET METAL WORKERS (YOUUNION_NY INSTAGRAM CAMPAIGN)

4 Piloting Innovative Workforce Programs



The world of work and workforce development is changing rapidly. Go to any conference on the topic and you will hear that students in high school and college are essentially preparing for jobs that don't yet exist. So how does one prepare for the future when we don't have complete information on the possibilities? One answer is to focus on skills and credentials that are flexible and transferable.

During 2019 WDI piloted a number of “new-to-New York State” programs. We see part of our mission as trying new tools, technologies, or programs to determine what works (or doesn't) and what might have wider applicability across the state.

Following are some launched pilots or outcomes collected during 2019—all with good results:

MOHAWK VALLEY: CHOBANI VOXY PILOT HOLDS PROMISE FOR ESL LEARNERS

Effective communication between employees and employers is perhaps one of the most critical workplace barometers. A successful communication strategy supports worker comprehension of assigned tasks and reduces job-duty uncertainty. On a manufacturing production floor, an effective communication strategy minimizes the potential for accidents and ultimately contributes to a safer and more productive jobsite. An effective communication strategy, however, is made more challenging when the workforce is comprised of non-native speakers.

Despite language and cultural barriers, the Mohawk Valley's refugee and immigrant populations have successfully integrated themselves into the manufacturing, hospitality, and healthcare sectors. In a typical workplace setting, a group of limited

English proficiency immigrant and/or refugee employees will rely on one or two bilingual co-workers to translate for them. On occasions when the “interpreter” is absent or unavailable, however, productivity and quotas may not be met, which in turn becomes problematic for the employer.

A variety of traditional methods have been used to encourage English language literacy among the region's foreign-born employees. Following the economic recession, worksite ESL classes were offered as well as after work and weekend programs provided by local religious institutions, community colleges, and BOCES. Although well-intended, these programs were not particularly successful because the commitment of in-person classes was not compatible with this group's family obligations, often irregular schedules, and long shifts.

At WDI we recognized the need to experiment with new technology as it relates to teaching and learning the English language. We were fortunate to be introduced to **Voxy** (www.voxy.com), an online English learning platform, which provides web-based training via personal computers and smartphones. This past year we worked with Voxy and **Chobani**, the international manufacturer of Greek yogurt, to try Voxy in a manufacturing setting.



Refugee employees of the New Berlin-based Greek yogurt manufacturer Chobani attend a class as part of their ESL Apprenticeship. This program is a joint initiative of WDI, Chobani, and Voxy, an online English learning platform. Credit: WDI Staff

In May of 2019 a pilot was launched at Chobani's manufacturing facility in New Berlin (Chenango County). Fifteen (15) refugee employees are participating in a multi-month program (still ongoing at the time of print), an ESL Apprenticeship, designed to improve English language literacy on the production floor. By the mid-way point of the pilot, eight participants had measurably improved their level

The *Close It Summit 2019- Critical Shift\Work. Learn. Tech.* is an annual conference featuring innovations in hiring, training, and career pathways. Chobani was a recipient of one of the Summit's SHIFT Awards, designed to recognize employers who are shifting from traditional hiring, assessment, and training methods to create new paths to employment and economic opportunities.

Stay tuned for updates on the pilot in the near future. We are hopeful Voxy will become a well-used resource in the toolbelt of workforce development professionals in terms of offering a convenient option for ESL learners.

ROCHESTER/GENESEE VALLEY UPDATE: PILOT OF NEW SOFT SKILLS PROGRAM SHOWS POSITIVE RESULTS

Last year's impact report noted that our Rochester/Genesee Valley (RGV) Regional Director was working on a project to pilot a soft skills program in NYS that had been developed and seen success by the California-based non-profit, **New World of Work (NWoW)**. NWoW is affiliated with the CA-based community college system and in 2012 began tracking futurist projections, economic reports, and national research related to the correlation between education and employment. Via a set of Skills Panels, NWoW staff gathered feedback from employers, entrepreneurs, human resources specialists, educators, and students to determine the essential employability skills required in the emerging global economy. The result was the creation of a "Top 10" list of essential 21st century employability skills, and the development of a curriculum to gain these skills. The curriculum has seen significant success with CA employers, and so our RGV Regional Director and a local partner from **Engage Forward** went to CA to be trained on the system.



Employees from the WDI-funded pilot of the New World of Work program at Clifton Springs manufacturer GW Lisk. Credit: Lisa Rawcliffe, Engage Forward

of English, were engaging in group classes and utilizing the platform on an average of four hours per month. Successful graduates of the program will receive a small salary increase with the potential for career ladder advancement.

It is important to note that Voxy is a highly configurable solution that can be adapted to the real-world needs of different employers and sectors, and can be co-branded and offered through local vendors such as community colleges or non-profits. The co-branding aspect of the product was important to WDI so that local partners are not removed from the process (think Amazon and the elimination of local retailers). The pilot and its results thus far were presented by WDI, Chobani, and Voxy as part of the Close It Summit held in October in Santa Fe, New Mexico.



This past winter WDI and Engage Forward worked with manufacturer **GW Lisk** in Clifton Springs (Ontario County) on a program to try out the NWoW curriculum. Critical elements of the program were contextualized for a manufacturing work environment. The program also included introduction to a problem-solving method called “Improvement Kata”. The results of the pilot are now in and reinforce the findings from CA—the program works!

Specific topics covered included the following:

- Adaptability
- Resilience
- Empathy
- Analysis/Solution Mindset
- Communication
- Social/Diversity Awareness
- Collaboration
- Introduction to Toyota
- Entrepreneurial Mindset
- Improvement Kata
- Self-Awareness

The course was delivered in two-hour increments over nine (9) weeks. Training was interactive and included videos, activities, and simulations to expand understanding and application of each skill. Students completed both pre- and post-training self-evaluations for each

of the skills. The employer (Lisk) also evaluated skill levels for each student before and after training.

The percentage improvement scores noted by the employer showed significant improvement, ranging from 50% to 100%. Interestingly, pre and post self-evaluation results by the students themselves were different. The student survey results reflected modest improvement overall. However, many of the students self-assessed themselves with decreasing scores on one or more individual competencies. According to NWoW, this has been typical of what they’ve found in CA as well. Historically, they’ve seen employers note significant increases in skills while the employees do not. This difference has been attributed to the employee suddenly becoming much more aware of the importance of the skills in the workplace, and therefore critical of his or her own skills. This too can be viewed as success in terms of students gaining significant understanding of the importance of the skills.

Next Steps: WDI is using the curriculum in a few other places in the Rochester/Genesee Valley. We are also considering where insertion of this curriculum into other curriculums (manufacturing apprenticeships, for example) might make sense.

LOWER HUDSON VALLEY/NEW YORK CITY: PARTNERING WITH BUSINESS, ACADEMIA, AND LABOR UNIONS TO MEET INDUSTRY DEMANDS

Pilot programs we facilitate can sometimes take a few years (and many hours of sweat equity) before we are accurately able to measure success. A few years ago WDI staff—via our field intelligence work—discovered that Natural Gas Operators were in high demand by the Natural Gas Utilities. At that time it was estimated there were roughly 6,000 miles of gas distribution piping in Westchester County and Manhattan, and that 2,000 miles of that piping would need to be replaced within the next ten years. The Gas Operators, therefore, were needed to handle a planned growth in the replacement of these older natural gas distribution pipes. WDI staff spent time gathering information from our partners at the Department of Public Service, labor unions, and industry to confirm the information, understand the extent of the need, and determine viable solutions to this growing skills gap.

In 2017 WDI partnered with **Westchester Community College (WCC)**, the **United Association of Plumbers & Steamfitters Local 21** (or Local 21, based in Peekskill), and

“WDI’s assistance with funding has been critical to helping us explore new ways of upskilling while helping us to meet customer demand.”

—OPTIMAX SYSTEMS, INC. IN ONTARIO, NY (WAYNE COUNTY). WDI PROVIDED FUNDING TO HELP LAUNCH A NYS-CERTIFIED PRECISION OPTICS MANUFACTURING TECHNICIAN APPRENTICESHIP.

Con Edison out of NYC to develop a pre-employment training program for Gas Operators. The program saw prospective workers complete training with industry-recognized and required credentials. Three sessions have since been run that produced 37 trainees. We recently checked back in with the collaborators to determine job retention and found that 28 of the trainees are still employed in the industry. The result was a short-term training program that was sustainable, replicable, and also met industry needs.

The success of this training program is a direct result of a hands-on collaboration between multiple partners, all with unique but critical roles:

- **Con Edison**—the business that would be hiring the workers—drove the course content, helped promote the program, donated additional equipment for each of the sessions to facilitate hands-on training, and provided access to their testing facility to test program participants on the tasks required for this type of work. A ConEd instructor also provided the instruction for the pilot program.

- **Local 21**—the labor force representative— provided the trainers for the 2nd and 3rd programs and the classroom and labs for hands-on training. Local 21 also provided equipment for the labs, expertise to assess the technical progress of the participants, and worked with WCC throughout the program to address other needs of the participants.
- **WCC** managed the program, promoted it, interviewed and selected the participants, worked with the Department of Labor to get participant funding, provided soft skills, career readiness and CPR/AED training, hosted the job fair, and worked throughout the program with participants on any wrap-around services required.
- **WDI** provided industry and workforce expertise, significant financial support, and the initial field intelligence that pointed the way for the program development.

Many utilities are facing an aging workforce and infrastructure. While this is a challenge, it’s also an opportunity to train and place individuals into solid jobs that should continue for many years. We see value in replicating this program throughout NYS.



At WDI, we see part of our mission as trying new tools, technologies, or programs to determine what works (or doesn't) and what might have wider applicability across the state.

5 Integrating Data and Field Intelligence to Inform Programming



The Suffolk County IDA engaged WDI to conduct ground-level intelligence and report on the economic and workforce development challenges of the Long Island Pharmaceutical and Nutraceutical sector. Read the full report at www.wdiny.org/Explore-Our-Work/Publications/Reports.

Establishing internal metrics around outcome review has also provided WDI staff with the tools needed to help other organizations achieve the same goal.

WDI's approach to program implementation is oftentimes the culmination of reviews of field data collection (from organizations with which we work), data collected through WDI's own outcome collection process (from projects funded), and/or much bigger data (Bureau of Labor Statistics for example). During 2019 there were a few areas where analysis of data played a significant role in programming.

MULTI-REGION: A FOCUS ON OUTCOMES—INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL

As a condition of approval, each WDI funded project must identify one or more positive workforce outcomes (i.e. job growth, promotion, retention, placement, and/or skill development) that will result from the project.

Funded organizations are given a survey to complete anywhere from one to twelve months after a project ends, and are asked to provide WDI with feedback on the level of success of the project. The outcome survey response rate has been roughly 70%, providing WDI with valuable insight into what kind of programming has a significant impact and could be scaled to other regions.

During 2019 WDI staff put significant time into an internal review of outcomes of previously funded projects.

An important part of this process was an analysis into the effectiveness of several questions on WDI's funding application and outcome survey which, in turn, led to important edits to both. Changes are slated to be rolled out in 2020, when accompanying system changes will be completed. The new materials will enable WDI to pinpoint project

effectiveness with greater accuracy and improve alignment of projects with the workforce they are intended to serve. Establishing internal metrics around outcome review has also provided WDI staff with the tools needed to help other organizations achieve the same goal.

One such opportunity came when **AlbanyCanCode (ACC)** reached out to WDI to discuss its data collection and program evaluation efforts. ACC is a non-profit organization that delivers coding and technology courses to a diverse group of students around New York's Capital Region. Founded four years ago (with help from WDI), ACC has seen its course offerings, its enrollment, and its regional profile grow in rapid fashion. This growth has been good news for the ACC team and for area residents seeking to improve their coding skills and their value in the labor market, but has also brought some challenges. ACC needed help revamping their data collection and reporting in order to track student outcomes, to support continuous improvement of ACC course offerings, and to improve the response to outside organizations interested in investing in ACC's future growth. WDI met with ACC's team and conducted a thorough review of their information

gathering processes, from student intake all the way to post-graduation surveys. WDI also reviewed ACC's data management and reporting systems to identify current strengths and areas for improvement. From this review, we compiled a set of findings and recommendations that the ACC team could implement. Among our findings were a recognition of the strong foundation ACC has built to date and the importance of collecting, analyzing, and sharing the empirical evidence of the value ACC's courses bring to their students. We continue to work with ACC to support the organization's growth and look forward to their continued evolution.

WDI staff sees this type of "expertise-sharing" as integral to our role among New York's workforce and economic development organizations.

LONG ISLAND: WHITE PAPER IS A MODEL FOR ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COLLABORATION

On June 11, the Long Island Association (LIA) hosted the official release of "Driving Long Island's Innovation Economy: The Pharmaceutical Nutraceutical Growth Factor", a joint white paper project of WDI and **Suffolk County IDA**.

The project came about after the Suffolk County IDA noticed a significant rise in Pharma/Nutra client expansion, and WDI observed a growing demand for a workforce to fill jobs with clear career pathways and good pay. Suffolk IDA engaged WDI to conduct the ground-level intelligence gathering and to write the report. The goal of the study was to understand the needs of the Pharmaceutical and Nutraceutical sector with the aim of identifying and addressing economic and

workforce development challenges in order to help existing companies expand and provide tools to attract new ones. The release format of the report was designed to foster dialogue around what Long Island can do as a region to help this industry thrive, and to help Long Islanders access the growing sector's good jobs.

WDI's Long Island Regional Director and Policy Analyst presented the report findings and participated in a follow-up Q&A session. Over 80 regional decision-makers attended the meeting including senior leaders in the bio-tech industry and representatives of the region's educational institutions. In addition, *Newsday* and *LIBN* covered the report release event.

Two key outcomes emerged from the discussion:

- **Two companies—Nature's Bounty and Applied DNA**—agreed to take leadership positions in convening industry around a strategy for promoting the pharma/nutra jobs and economic potential on Long Island, and for advocating for the industry. LIA and Empire State Development (ESD) are determining next steps on this first item.
- **Estee Lauder** agreed to take a leadership role in convening educational institutions and government to develop a regional curriculum with stackable credentials starting from BOCES through four-year institutions. Estee Lauder also committed to donating a 50-foot packaging/production line for training, and lending their subject matter experts to the tasks of curriculum development and training. WDI's Long Island Regional Director has been facilitating follow-up to this outcome.



INFORMATION SHARING LEADS TO RESULTS

In Central New York, WDI is working with SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF) in new ways. Labor market data (credentials/skills in demand) and field data (open jobs that SUNY ESF grads could fill) are two types of information WDI can provide. The WDI-ESF relationship benefits both students and local employers.

Beyond the tangible outcomes, the project demonstrates value in coordinating and leveraging individual assets and expertise that economic and workforce development bring to a region. Economic development partners have immediate and first-hand knowledge of companies that are growing and hiring, while workforce development partners identify and "drill down" on specific occupations and skills to connect those employers to the local workforce ecosystem. Together we can create a pipeline of skilled local workers!

6 Preparing New York State for the Energy Sector's Future

The clean energy industry is continuing its slow evolution. However, climate change, decreasing costs of renewables and energy storage, and increasing consumer participation in the energy market all point to a markedly increasing rate of change in the industry over the next several years. This change will, in turn, significantly impact the workforce.

There are several clean energy industry trends we've identified related to the workforce:

- The number of clean energy jobs in New York is growing faster than overall job growth.
- Policies (and policy goals) are driving the NY market (Governor Cuomo's Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, for example).
- Building and construction contractors are busy and continue to have a pipeline of traditional work, so they cannot focus on the clean energy work of tomorrow. This is a potential issue since significant new work falls in the purview of the trades.
- Workforce development is beginning to take center stage; there is acknowledgment that significant planning must occur in order to ensure that New Yorkers benefit from policy goals.
- Discussions around transitioning workers from old to new energy sources has moved from concept to necessity.

Our ground level intelligence has also uncovered a number of workforce or skills gaps that need to be addressed for the clean energy industry to grow to meet the state's scientifically necessary energy and climate goals. Gaps vary from region

to region in New York, however the following skills gaps (or shortages) exist in the clean energy workforce *across* New York:

- Mechanical Tradespeople with renewable energy experience and training—While NY trades have clean energy experience, there will be shortages that need to be addressed to meet policy targets.
- Sales, Bidding, and Estimating Skills—Many companies have the technical skills for clean energy work but lack the ability to sell, bid and estimate jobs.
- Engineers—There are not enough engineers to meet the demands of the industry.
- Project Developers—Many development companies are from out of state.
- Connection of Manufacturers to the Renewable Energy Sector—While the size and scope of manufacturing that already occurs in New York is significant, companies that could be part of a supply chain to the emerging clean energy sector must understand that the work exists, and then how to modify their processes in order to win this new work.

In response to these trends and workforce gaps, WDI is working in a number of areas:



WDI travels throughout the state to speak to our partners...about the trends in energy and to convene discussions on the support the industry needs to develop a workforce.



CLOSING INFORMATION GAPS:

WDI travels throughout the state to speak to our partners in labor unions, industry, academia, community based organizations, and government about the trends in energy, and to convene discussions on the support the industry needs to develop a workforce. We also provide information about available workforce development funds.

COORDINATING EFFORTS OF TRAINING AND EDUCATION PROVIDERS:

On Long Island, WDI is working to bring together Long Island training providers, academic institutions, and labor unions to discuss offshore wind workforce training plans. Our goal is to coordinate efforts to avoid duplicative programming and to ensure programs are connected to employers with viable jobs as an outcome. The group has met several times and is currently putting together an asset map to share with industry.

TAKING A DEEP DIVE INTO OFFSHORE WIND:

WDI continues to increase our understanding and expertise in the offshore wind industry with the goal of preparing New York's workforce for this emerging industry. This year our Energy Program Manager attended an advanced course on Offshore Wind Project Development at the University of Delaware to learn directly from experienced European project developers. We are sharing the information with partners such as New York City Economic Development Corp (NYCEDC), the Partnership for New York City, the Long Island Regional Economic Development Council, the Long Island Federation of Labor, and contractors. We welcome the opportunity to partner with additional interested parties.

PLANNING FOR AN OPPORTUNITY-DRIVEN JUST TRANSITION:

We are in a transition period and WDI is exploring how this transition will impact the current workforce. In

some cases, transition to renewable sources has the potential to impact entire regions when older energy generation employers shut down. We believe there are a number of steps that require action for this significant transition to occur:

- An analysis of jobs/skills that will no longer be required versus jobs/skills that will grow
- Steps to help the workforce pursue new work, where appropriate
- Importantly, appropriate economic development actions so that jobs that are eliminated are replaced with good jobs on a "just-in-time" basis

There is a lot happening in this arena. Connect with WDI through our website, blog, or social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter) to stay informed of our efforts.



“I was given the opportunity to increase my work hours from part-time to 40 a week, but could not afford the child care costs on my own. If it had not been for the WDI subsidy, I would have had to decrease my work hours back to part-time.”

-WDI CHILD CARE SUBSIDY RECIPIENT

7 Elevating Child Care As a Workforce Issue

Employers regularly identify access to high-quality, affordable child care as a persistent challenge to their workforce. Investments in child care offer benefits on two levels: support for the current workforce because it enables parents to work, and support for the future workforce because it enables access to developmentally appropriate child care with quality learning opportunities.

“Achieving a world-class education system and creating a highly skilled workforce begins with high-quality early learning opportunities.”

–U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, INSTITUTE FOR A COMPETITIVE WORKFORCE

Since 2003, WDI’s Child Care Subsidy Facilitated Enrollment Program (CCSFEP) has provided assistance towards the high cost of child care for hard-working families. Child care costs can jeopardize an employee’s stability in the workforce, and present significant attrition and reliability issues for employers. The 2019 WDI CCSFEP Annual Report (a separate report) demonstrates the impact the program has had in supporting the development of children, the workforce, and economic growth. The report can be found on our website at wdiny.org/childcare.

The issue of child care accessibility—or rather inaccessibility—has risen in prominence during the last few years because of the effect on the economy. During this time WDI’s role in child care has expanded. At the state level, a WDI representative was

appointed to serve on the Governor’s Child Care Availability Taskforce, representing the intersection between working families and their employers. At the regional level, a WDI representative is serving on a number of Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) Child Care Workgroups to provide information and data that will enable these groups to prioritize child care in economic development planning. At the county level, WDI is engaging with local districts to increase accessibility to child care subsidies in the form of waivers that limit family co-payments (making family costs more reasonable).

These efforts have helped to shape meaningful policy that support working families and employers in New York State.

IMPACT OF WDI’S CHILD CARE SUBSIDY FACILITATED ENROLLMENT PROGRAM (CCSFEP)



WHAT WE FUNDED

Last year WDI approved/launched 244 new projects via the WDI Grant Program at an estimated cost of \$3.4 million. This \$3.4 million leveraged an additional \$5.9 million in other funds. In addition, we supported 72 projects/events via sponsorships at a cost of \$185,000. Details on both types of funded projects are below.¹

Grant Program

SOURCE OF FUNDING

All applicants are required to provide details on the total cost of a project, including their own in-kind, wages, and other sources. Last year WDI costs as a % of total project costs was 36%.

	\$ (in 000's)
WDI Approved Funding via Grants Program	\$3,394
In-Kind Funding from Grantee	\$3,370
In-Kind Wages (Grantee staff time spent in training/on project)	\$849
Other Grants/Sources	\$1,700
Total Project Costs	\$9,313
<i>WDI Costs as a % of Total Costs</i>	<i>36%</i>

TYPES OF PROJECTS FUNDED

Although the majority of projects are training-related, job impacts can result through a variety of mechanisms.

	# Projects	% of Total
Training Program	138	57%
Equipment/Other Purchase	70	29%
Other*	30	12%
Combination	6	2%

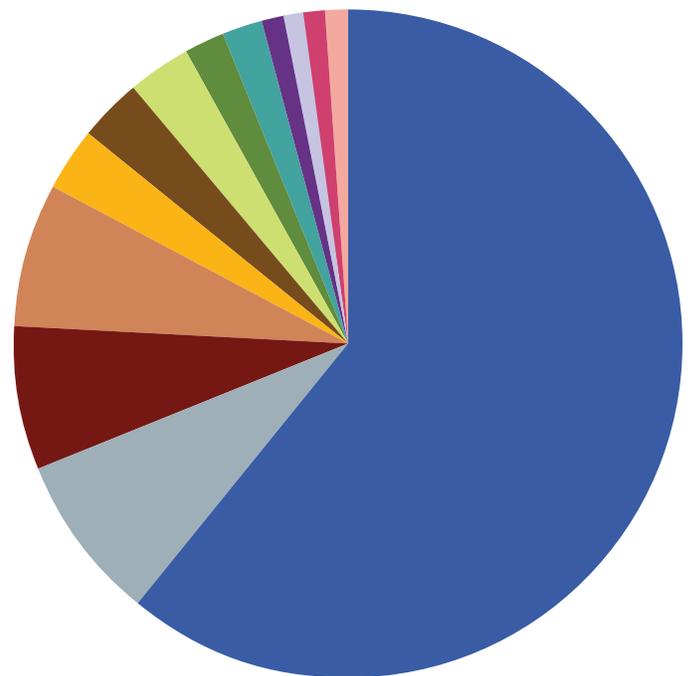
*Examples include assistance with the development of a strategic plan or marketing plan, product testing before launch, review of plant layout to streamline production processes, etc.

PROJECTS FUNDED BY ORGANIZATION SIZE

Employee Count	# Projects
0-50	119
51-100	30
101-150	18
151-200	10
201+	67

SECTORS SERVED

- Manufacturing
- Construction
- Utilities/Energy
- Social Assistance
- Education
- Health
- Retail/Wholesale
- Government
- Professional and Business Services
- Information
- Transportation/Warehousing
- Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting
- Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation



¹ These figures reflect the budgets of projects launched. Projects are often launched in one year but are completed/paid in a subsequent year. For actual costs incurred for projects see Organization Financials/Other Information, p. 28.



PROJECT FOCUS

Organizations are asked to identify how a project will impact the workforce in terms of **numbers of jobs**. Last year, organizations supported via WDI stated anticipated results as follows:

Focus of Project*	Primary	Secondary
Skill Development	11,750	1,546
Job Retention	420	1,378
Job Growth	239	1,015
Job Promotion	191	236
Job Placement	22	218
Totals	12,622	4,393

* All projects must have a primary focus. Most projects have a secondary focus as well. Often the two are overlapping (the same individuals are impacted).

COMMON PROJECTS/REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

- Apprenticeship—skills training to round out apprenticeships (Healthcare, Manufacturing)
- Certified Production Technician Training
- CNC Machining Training
- Communication Skills Training
- Customer Service Training
- Geometric Dimensioning and Tolerancing Training
- Leadership Training
- Maintenance Mechanic Training
- Problem-Solving Training
- Programmable Logic Training/ Electrical Troubleshooting Training
- Project Management Training
- Preventive Maintenance Training
- Safety Training (wide variety—including Food Safety)
- Sewing Training (variety of levels)
- Soft Skills/Employability Skills Training
- Shop Math Training
- Statistical Analysis Training
- Supervisory Training
- Welding Training
- Workplace ESL Training
- Equipment or Software (and specialized training for both—specific to an organization)
- Business Process Training, such as LEAN or Training within Industry (TWI)

Sponsorships

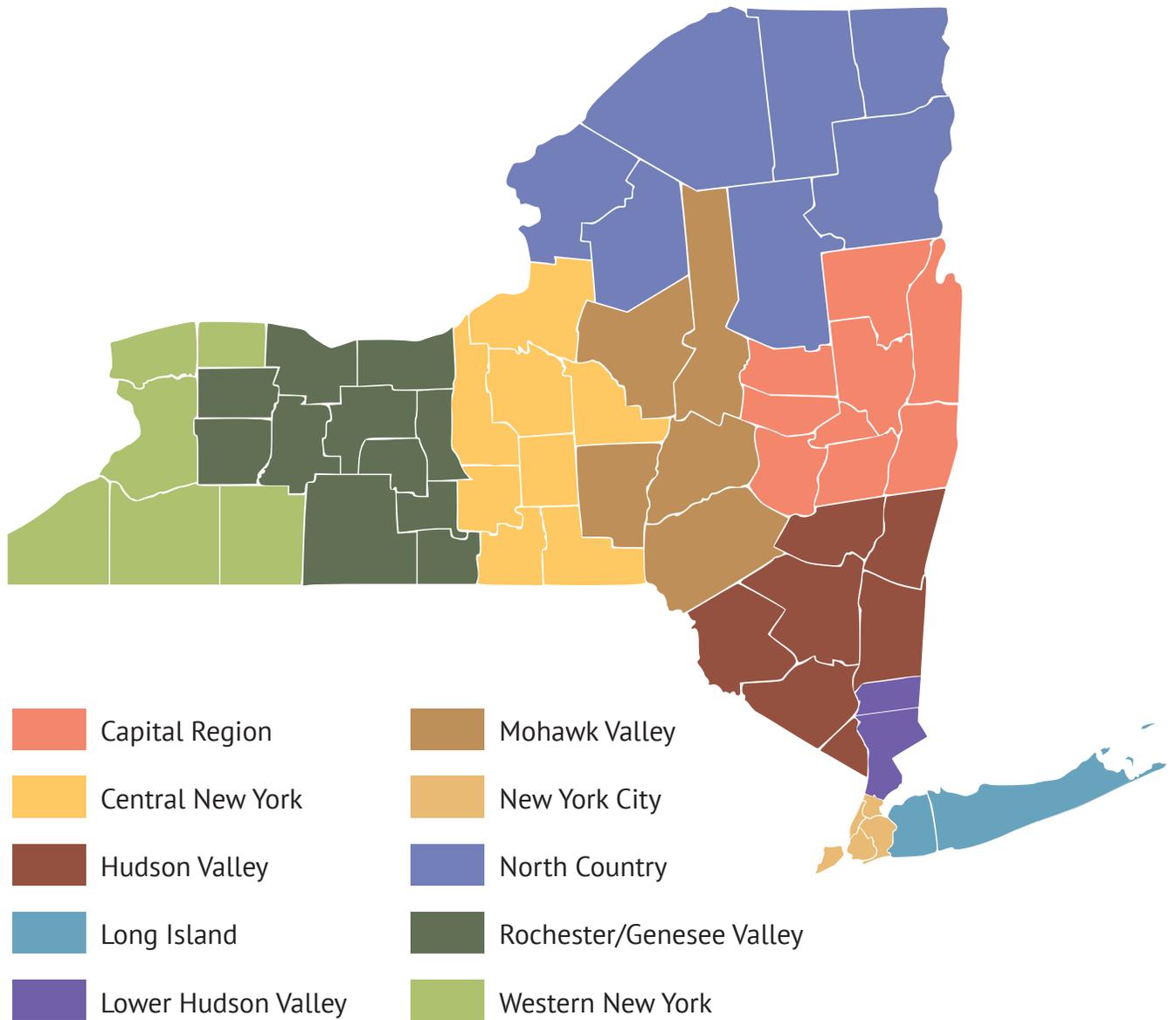
Sponsorships typically revolve around workforce events or panels that convene employers and workforce and/or economic officials around an issue. Common topics were around Career Awareness, Upskilling the Workforce, and Promoting NY Business/ Jobs. A total of \$185,000 was spent on sponsorships.

PROJECT/EVENT TOPIC	\$ (in 000's)
Career Awareness / Introducing Next Gen to Jobs of Future	\$83
Promoting NY Business	\$37
Upskilling the Workforce	\$24
Outreach/Work with Labor Partners	\$15
Promoting Equity and Inclusion in the Workforce	\$13
Elevating Energy as a Significant Jobs Driver	\$10
Integrating Data and Field Intelligence to Inform Programming	\$3
Elevating Child Care as a Workforce Issue	\$1
Total	\$185

ORGANIZATION FINANCIALS / OTHER INFORMATION

WDI is supported primarily through the NYS Legislature and two NYS agencies – the Department of Labor and the Office of Children and Family Services. Program expenses include those for our interactive grants program, our sponsorship program, as well as for program staff. Last year WDI had a total of 32 staff across the state. Total costs were \$9.5 million. Program costs (program staff and project costs) were 86% of total costs and included \$4.2 million of actual spending in grants/sponsorships. Management/general costs were 14% of total costs.

WDI'S STATEWIDE REACH





Young people are connected to a variety of viable career paths through career awareness programs.



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

Central Administration

96 South Swan Street, Albany, NY 12210

518.463.2141 • wdiny.org

 [linkedin.com/company/workforce-development-institute-wdi/](https://www.linkedin.com/company/workforce-development-institute-wdi/)

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