



Workforce Development Institute

Annual Impact Report

STRENGTHENING
NEW YORK'S WORKFORCE

2021



2021 ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

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A Message from the Executive Director

I am honored and humbled to lead WDI as we continue to navigate our way out of the COVID-19 pandemic. I may have a new role, but my roots in fighting for workers' rights run deep. From my years working for the New York State Labor Movement, I have seen firsthand how labor standards can raise workers' pay, benefits, and safety on the job. Unions, through collective bargaining, help close gender and racial pay gaps. However, in low-wage sectors, women and communities of color have seen tremendous job loss during this pandemic, partly due to a lack of essential child care. WDI is committed to helping ensure that they are front and center in an equitable recovery.

Our primary goal is to help rebuild the economy by getting people back to work safely while investing in workers' access to skills that meet various industry demands. Workforce Development is not just a buzzword today. It is essential to creating an economic climate that levels the playing field for underserved populations. Companies must have social equity and workforce development plans attached to their proposals when requesting state and local assistance or winning contract bids. WDI has been a trusted partner with labor and those in the business community who understand that

high road, family-sustaining jobs with good pay and benefits are critical to bringing people out of poverty, back into the workforce, and into the middle class.

WDI IS GROUNDED IN OUR WORKER-CENTERED APPROACH AND WILL CONTINUE TO FORM STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS TO:

- Create a more diverse workforce in industries where women and people of color are underrepresented, and build a pipeline to high-quality jobs with on-the-job training.
- Grow an equitable cannabis industry that will include skills training and job readiness programs for disenfranchised communities.
- Build a greener economy with renewable energy supply chain opportunities for workers in construction, maintenance & operation, and manufacturing American-made components large and small.
- Enhance infrastructure projects that support apprenticeship programs to rebuild roads and bridges, rail and transit, and modernize the electrical grid.
- Advocate for human infrastructure needs and workforce supports like affordable and accessible child care and help improve wages for those who care for our most vulnerable.

As Executive Director along with our Board and dedicated staff, we will use this opportunity to build on our organizational accomplishments while working with allies on programs from the ground level. In addition, we will ensure accountability and transparency of the vital public funding we receive. Finally, our work will help address emerging workforce challenges, propose innovative solutions, and support employers that place workers as full partners to improve economic productivity in New York State.

WDI's 2021 Annual Impact Report looks back on this past year and our role in helping workers, unions, employers, manufacturers, and community-based organizations succeed in this challenging and ever-changing environment. But we also lay out a path for workers to attain and adapt to the skills needed to compete and succeed in the "future of work."

In closing, I would also like to recognize the tremendous effort put forth by our Board and staff. Their collective skills and passion are unmatched, and I appreciate their dedication to our work and look forward to leading the organization to a bright future alongside them.

In partnership,



Amy Desjardins



About Us

The Workforce Development Institute (WDI) is a statewide non-profit that works to increase opportunities for all New Yorkers to succeed in the workforce while earning family-sustaining wages. We use a range of tools including “boots on the ground” information, workforce expertise, data analysis, and flexible funding to facilitate projects that help labor unions, employers, educational institutions, and other workforce partners think and act differently regarding hiring, training, educating, and retaining an inclusive and productive workforce.

We identify and solve workforce problems and capitalize on workforce opportunities by improving the skills, knowledge, and prospects of all workers; including those not yet in the workforce. This is achieved through facilitating and supporting a wide variety of projects that have a positive and measurable impact for working people, influenced by our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Each of our 10 Regional Directors covers a large territory of New York State and spends a significant amount of time exploring their regions and developing partnerships 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 while developing solutions to address them.

Our niche is filling gaps not covered by other workforce development or economic development entities, with an end goal of improving the lives of workers and strengthening the workforce of our state.

Our work is always demand-driven, in that it often starts with employer or market needs, but our true focus is on the worker to ensure that all are provided with opportunities for economic self-sufficiency and social justice. Although the types of projects we facilitate and support vary, they must all promote tolerance, respect diversity, and have a positive and measurable impact on the worker.

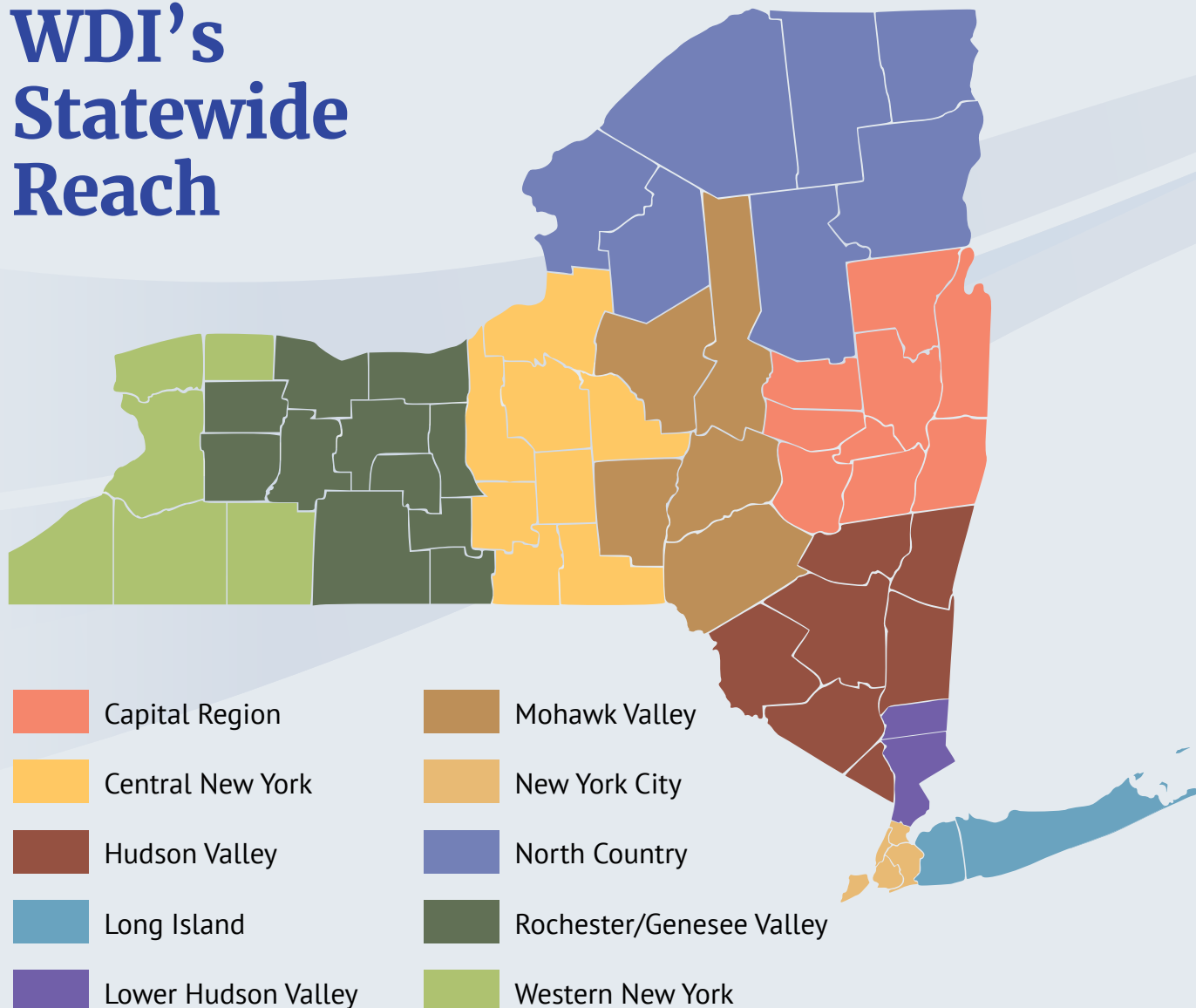
Common functions we perform include:

- Identifying a problem/challenge (for one organization or many)
- Serving as workforce consultants on a wide array of workforce issues
- Connecting organizations with resources to meet their needs
- Piloting or testing new programs, technologies, or methods
- Facilitating projects by convening partners and leveraging resources
- Providing flexible and responsive funding for projects

WDI's Child Care Subsidy Facilitated Enrollment Program (CCSFEP) aims to provide stability for working families through equitable access to quality, affordable child care. The Child Care Subsidy Team works closely with local and statewide partners to administer income-based child care subsidies for median-income households, and to increase the awareness of the child care crisis beyond traditional stakeholders in order to develop solutions that improve outcomes for working families.

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.

WDI's Statewide Reach



Collectively, WDI Regional Directors (RDs) engage with over **1,000 unions, businesses, community-based organizations, and educational institutions each year**, and this year that number increased from the recent past.

RDs represent WDI on over 200 boards, councils, and committees, including:

- Area Labor Federations and Central Labor Councils
- Workforce Development Boards
- K-12 and Higher Education advisory committees
- Manufacturing and Industrial alliances
- Regional Economic Development Councils
- Non-profit and CBO boards and committees
- Economic Development groups
- Chambers of Commerce

Our staff are sought-after guests on panels and are often invited to present or participate in webinars and statewide conferences. As **Regional Experts** they are interviewed and quoted by the media on current workforce topics that impact their region.

COVID-19: Supporting the Workforce During Recovery

The COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting economic crisis have dominated every aspect of our lives in the past year. There have been new challenges for working families to overcome, new demands for products such as personal protective equipment, and major changes to where, when, and how we work, regardless of our industries or location. While there have been many hard days, there have also been many bright spots where ingenuity and collaboration brought new opportunities.

CENTRAL NEW YORK: MAINTAINING SAFETY PRECAUTIONS WHILE UPSKILLING EMPLOYEES

Darco Manufacturing Inc. is a small contract manufacturer in Syracuse that crafts precision machined parts. At the onset of COVID-19, the company was designated an essential business and needed to adjust operations to keep a consistent workflow on the factory floor while keeping employees safe. The company implemented social distancing protocols that resulted in communication challenges. Maintaining six feet of distance in a noisy machine shop made it almost impossible to provide work instructions, mentor, and train new employees. WDI assisted with the purchase of two-way headsets that allowed employees to communicate effectively while keeping a safe distance. The new communications system was integral in training to upskill employees on the safe operation and maintenance of equipment.

HUDSON VALLEY: STITCHING TOGETHER MASKS, OPPORTUNITIES, AND JUSTICE

Rural & Migrant Ministry (RMM) developed a sewing cooperative in Sullivan County, where WDI is helping fund a local instructor to train four individuals who lost their jobs due to the pandemic.

They are sewing face masks desperately needed by farm workers and food manufacturing employees. The regional staff of WDI is also assisting RMM by connecting them to companies in the sewing pod run by the Accelerator of Orange County. Through this connection, piece-work that is currently being sent out of state could be pulled back and given to the new RMM sewing cooperative, providing continued economic opportunity and self-sufficiency beyond the need for face masks due to COVID-19.

LONG ISLAND: AMUSEMENT PARKS WELCOME BACK WORKERS AND GUESTS SAFELY

Since 1962, Adventureland has been a part of Long Island summers, offering over 30 rides and attractions, concessions, and outdoor games. It is also a major employer in the area, employing over 650 people, many of whom are high school or college students. As with many businesses, amusement parks are required to take new precautions to keep employees and customers safe. In order for the park to meet NYS guidelines and re-open safely this summer, Adventureland needed to provide COVID safety training to each employee. Safety is always the main priority, but this additional training was a costly undertaking after an industry-wide shutdown in 2020. WDI provided grant funding to assist

with the cost to ensure many young workers had the chance to get their first jobs and foundational skills they will carry through their careers.



Photo credit: Adventureland

WESTERN NEW YORK: INVESTING IN TECHNOLOGY TO ENACT HEALTH PRECAUTIONS

McGard, a manufacturer of security fasteners, was required to adopt new health regulations for everyone working onsite. In addition to providing PPE, staggering shifts, social distancing, and offering remote work, they implemented temperature checks for everyone entering the premises. Scanning almost 700 employees across three shifts presented a logistical challenge, and assigning employees to perform the checks would not produce the necessary accuracy. Instead, they invested in automated temperature monitoring equipment that scanned anyone entering and gave an immediate reading. A high temperature would immediately be reported to the company's safety manager and the employee's supervisor.

This WDI-funded project was successful at maintaining health and safety, and the company not only retained all employees, but also hired additional employees in this period of high unemployment nationwide.

NORTH COUNTRY: RETIREMENTS LEAD TO NEW LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

As the North Country recovers from the effects of the pandemic, many organizations are reporting an exodus of employees due to retirement. This has created promotional opportunities, bringing people into roles as managers, supervisors, and group leaders who have industry knowledge but need management training. WDI provided funding for a range of leadership programs focused on interpersonal skills of communication, managing workplace conflict, and problem-solving. Some of the organizations funded include: the **City of Watertown**, **Citizen Advocates** in Franklin County, **Mold-Rite** and **APG-Neuros Corporation** in Clinton County, **Qubica AMF** in Lewis County, and **Potsdam Specialty Paper** in St. Lawrence County. This trend is growing outside the region as well, and is likely to continue as rates of retirement continue to increase nationwide.

STATEWIDE: LOOKING FOR SOLUTIONS TO HIGH TURNOVER IN CRUCIAL INDUSTRIES

In a year of rapid change, turnover is prevalent across all industries. This includes critical sectors that have already felt the pinch in recent years and are now pursuing creative solutions.

The **1199SEIU Training and Upgrading Fund** provides education and training to over 55,000 healthcare workers annually. As our population ages, the need for home health aides continues to increase, but turnover also remains very high. This is largely due to the combination of stagnant wages and limited training opportunities for a workforce disproportionately made up of women and new Americans. 1199SEIU launched a six-month pilot coaching program for 200 home health aides to enhance their skills to support clients with chronic health conditions. Participants received instruction and coaching, and established relationships with mentors to provide career guidance and continual support. Participants receive stipends to ensure they are able to dedicate time to training without missing out on the income they could have made by taking on additional shifts. Removing this



Photo credit: McGard

“either/or” scenario allows them to focus on their long-term careers while still meeting their present needs.

The **Council of Family and Child Caring Agencies (COFCCA)** is a non-profit that provides advocacy, support, and training to 104 child welfare and juvenile justice agencies throughout the state. The work of child welfare workers can be highly rewarding and equally stressful. Turnover is a challenge across the industry, which can have a negative effect on service to families, and lead to burnout among workers. Family foster care case planners have a particularly high turnover rate of 56%. WDI provided funding to a pilot program launched by COFCCA in New York City. It brought together 20 case planners for a six-part training series that included workshops on important skills, but also highlighted career pathways for individuals to move up in the industry. The program also created a peer-to-peer community, with participants making connections with each other for support. The cohort reported 95% retention rate after the first six months, leading to an expanded program for case planners elsewhere in the state.



Photo credit: Darco Manufacturing Inc.

Pre-Apprenticeship Programs Increase Access to the Building and Construction Trades

The demand for skilled tradespeople continues to grow with many planned infrastructure projects as a result of the federal government's Build Back Better Agenda.

The Statewide Pre-Apprentice Program (SPAP) is a collaboration of WDI and the NYS Building & Construction Trades Council that connects statewide projects to local programs helping to provide high-wage opportunities for individuals to gain skills and lifelong careers. Our goal is to advance opportunities for entry-level workers through apprenticeship readiness education and training and workforce development programs for underserved populations.

For the last several years WDI has partnered with Building and Construction Trades Councils to offer pre-apprentice programs in Rochester, Buffalo and on Long Island designed to increase participation for women and people of color in the trades. New programs were added in Newburgh and Albany in 2021. These programs provide foundational and technical skills, exposure to multiple trades, and offer Direct Entry to union apprenticeships for graduates. The federal infrastructure plan will create a generation of work for the building and construction trades, and it is important that we are providing pathways for individuals who are underrepresented to gain entry to these careers with family-sustaining wages.

THE NYS BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION TRADES PARTNER WITH WDI ON A STATEWIDE PRE-APPRENTICE PROGRAM (SPAP)

Building on the success of existing pre-apprenticeship programs, the **NYS Building and Construction Trades Council** is working with WDI to expand pre-apprenticeship around the state. The Statewide Pre-Apprentice Program (SPAP) will bring statewide perspective and best practices from successful programs to develop new local

programs where needed. The goal is to advance opportunities for entry-level workers from underrepresented populations to gain the foundational skills, technical knowledge, and work experience to qualify for apprenticeships leading to lifelong careers.

Learn more here:

wdiny.org/OurNewsAndViews/Statewide-Pre-Apprentice-Program--SPAP



Photo credit: BUILdNBEYOND HV

HUDSON VALLEY

The BUILDNBEYOND HV pre-apprenticeship program was established by the **Hudson Valley Building and Construction Trades Council** in Newburgh during 2021. Candidates complete 160+ hours of hands-on instruction as pre-apprentices, preparing them for direct entry into paid apprenticeships in one of the 14 unionized trades working with the program. During the eight-week program, pre-apprentices develop industry skills, learn about tools and materials, visit union training facilities, and study labor history. The pre-apprentices also complete specialized coursework such as OSHA-10, CPR/First Aid, construction math, excavator safety, and more through a combination of classroom and hands-on instruction.

Participants in the first class ranged in age from 18 to 30. Graduates have already been selected to enter paid apprenticeships with **Laborers' Local 17**, **IBEW Local 363**, **Carpenters Local 279**, and **Operating Engineers Local 825**.

CAPITAL REGION

In 2021, the **Greater Capital Region Building and Construction Trades Council** worked with community partners to launch the **Multi-Craft Apprenticeship Preparation Program (M.A.P.P.)** Albany. This pre-apprenticeship program is modeled after **Rochester M.A.P.P.**, and enables direct entry into Building Trades apprenticeships.

Albany M.A.P.P. is building community awareness of these career opportunities in a region where the construction labor market has been tight for years, and infrastructure upgrades and the clean energy sector are creating more opportunities. The program is located in the City of Albany's South End, bringing in applicants from that neighborhood and other communities of color in the city. With multi-year offshore wind projects happening in the nearby

Port of Albany, M.A.P.P. can tailor the program to serve as a training and recruitment partner for these projects. This ability to be responsive and adjust training to the needs of local projects will produce the best chance of long-term success for program graduates. The program expects to graduate its first cohort in 2022.

LONG ISLAND

Opportunities Long Island is a 240-hour apprenticeship preparation program that works to connect individuals from underserved communities to the union construction trades in Nassau and Suffolk Counties. During the eight-week training students develop skills through hands-on and in-classroom training, and visiting local unions. After the training is completed, graduates are eligible for direct entry into one of 30 different union apprenticeship programs.

ROCHESTER/GENESEE VALLEY

The **Rochester Multi-Craft Apprenticeship Preparation Program (M.A.P.P.)** provides training on a broad set of skills in-demand among a diverse set of trades, giving participants the best chance of success in entering an apprenticeship program. M.A.P.P. works with individuals from communities that are historically disadvantaged, teaching technical skills, but also encouraging self-reliance, dignity, and accountability to their communities. As students progress, training coordinators have an opportunity to evaluate their potential and actual performance. The results have been mutually beneficial, diversifying the candidate pools within apprenticeships, and placing qualified individuals into union building trades careers.

WESTERN NEW YORK

The **WNY Pre-Apprentice Program** in Buffalo pairs pre-apprentices with a journeyworker for eight weeks of on-the-job training in a particular trade, with the opportunity to gain

direct entry into the apprenticeship program upon completion. Trained pre-apprentices are in such high demand they often do not finish the full program before becoming an apprentice. Working with the **Buffalo Building and Construction Trades Council**, WDI supported a four-week program with the **Plasterers and Cement Masons Local 9**, followed by a four-week program with the **UA Plumbers & Steamfitters Local 22** with pre-apprentices gaining experience installing foam insulation and radiant heat at the **Lothlorien Therapeutic Riding Center, Inc.** The WNY program often works directly with the City of Buffalo or local not for profit organizations to use their buildings for the training, delivering a service to the community while developing skills.



Photo credit: Albany M.A.P.P.



Photo credit: Rochester M.A.P.P.

Partnering with Labor Unions to Advance a Skilled Workforce

New York State with well over 2.5 million union members accounts for 22% of workers in industries including retail, healthcare, building and construction trades, manufacturing, State and local governments, and education. WDI works closely with labor unions to keep their members safe on the job, and ensure they have the skills they need to advance their careers and keep our state moving forward in its economic recovery.

DEVELOPING A PIPELINE OF THE NEXT GENERATION OF TRAINERS

The **International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW)** has experienced recent retirements and is expecting more among some of the experienced training directors and lead instructors for its electrical apprenticeship programs. WDI provided funding to support the 4th Annual IBEW/NECA Trainers Summit to ensure there is continuity as these changes take place. The summit brings together participants from around the state to share information on issues and changes in the industry, determine classroom needs, and share best practices for continuous improvement of apprenticeship programs. It's also an opportunity to identify top talent and develop a pipeline of trainers who will be the next generation of leaders of these programs.

CREATING VIRTUAL AND IN-PERSON OPPORTUNITIES TO KEEP WORKERS ON THE JOB

The work of the Building and Construction Trades unions was essential during the COVID-19 pandemic, but delivering training became complicated. Unions needed to move to virtual classrooms in order to keep pace with the training requirements for their programs and to keep their apprentices and journeypersons safe and up to date with certifications. WDI funded virtual training equipment for the

Eastern New York Laborers Training Center in the Capital Region and for **Laborers Local 17** in the Hudson Valley. This equipment ensured the workforce was ready to be on the worksites for a very busy construction season.

We also supported the ongoing needs for new equipment in training centers. This included projects with **Ironworkers Local 417** in the Hudson Valley, **UA Plumbers & Steamfitters Local Union 200**, and **Laborers Local 66** on Long Island; and **UA Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 112** in the Mohawk Valley. The resulting training ensures members gain skills and experience on modern equipment and materials being used on worksites.

MOHAWK VALLEY: PARTNERING TO TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION TO HELP DISLOCATED EMPLOYEES

Remington Arms was a pioneer in the production of sporting and hunting rifles and ammunition, and has been the largest employer in Herkimer County for many years. The company was sold in 2020, laying off 701 workers, largely members of **United Mine Workers of America, UMWA Local 717**, from highly skilled manufacturing jobs. With few comparable local job opportunities, WDI worked with **Empowered Pathways** from Utica to develop and deliver job readiness training that included developing resumes, job searching, virtual interviewing, and

upgrading computer skills. The sessions were held on site at **Herkimer County Community College**, allowing the participants to build camaraderie and support each other at a very challenging time to be reentering the job market. This program demonstrated the commitment of WDI and its partners to meet these individuals where they are to give them the best possible chance for success.

NYC: EMBEDDING NEW TECHNOLOGIES IN CURRICULUM RESULTS IN PROMOTIONS

The **International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) Local 30** represents over 5,000 stationary engineers and facility maintenance workers in New York City, Long Island, and Connecticut. The Local has the only NYSDOL-registered apprenticeship program in the field of stationary engineering, training workers in HVAC/R engineering,



Photo credit: Empowered Pathways



Photo credit: IUOE Local 30

facility maintenance systems, and associated technology. The union's tagline aptly is "We Power and Maintain," working in the engineering rooms of the iconic buildings that define New York culture including: the Empire State Building, the Museum of Modern Art, CitiField, Yankee Stadium, Madison Square Garden, and the Statue of Liberty.

Prior to COVID-19, WDI supported a new classroom training system to help members stay current with changing technologies in heating and cooling systems being used in the field. To date, 100 members have been trained on the equipment, and 50 apprentices have been promoted to Mechanic level as a result of the training. The promotions resulted in wage increases of roughly \$7.20 per hour. Overall, the union reports that the new equipment has improved the knowledge and safety of their members.

NEW TECHNOLOGIES LEAD TO EVOLVING DEMANDS FOR TRAINING

CNC Technical Solutions in Medina delivers mechatronics training for a wide range of companies in the Western New York and Rochester/Genesee Valley regions. Mechatronics is the integration of mechanical, electronic and electrical engineering systems that are critical to the operations of modern manufacturing facilities from food and beverage, to automotive and beyond.

CNC Tech has expanded its offerings to include five phases of instruction, from basic electromechanical engineering to advanced motor control systems. The evolution of the courses comes from industry demand, with companies providing regular input on what is needed to maintain operations as they continue to integrate new equipment and systems.

WDI has partnered with CNC Tech and its clients for many years, providing grants that include scholarships for maintenance and operations staff to gain valuable skills that are in high demand. This has included workers from unionized companies that have built the training into their approved apprenticeship ladders, including: members of the **United Auto Workers** at **Perry's Ice Cream** and **Chassix**; members of the **United Steel Workers** at **Aurubis** and **Sumitomo Rubber**; members of the **International Association of Machinists** at **Milk Bone**; members of **IUE-CWA** at **LAPP Insulators**; and members of the **Teamsters** at **Upstate Farms**.

ENSURING WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENTS FOR ALL WORKERS

The staff of the **Retail, Wholesale, and Department Store Union (RWDSU) Local 338 & Associated Benefit Funds** participated in training as they prepared to welcome 700 new members who broadened the diversity of the union. WDI supported **Safe Zone** training to create safe, welcoming and inclusive spaces for LGBTQ+ individuals and to challenge homophobia, transphobia, and heterosexism. Participants gained a greater understanding of workplace issues members may experience and how to foster better communication to support more effective representation.

PROVIDING TRAINING FOR THE PUBLIC SECTOR WORKFORCE

In an ongoing partnership with the **Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA)** that has evolved over the past several years, WDI continues to provide funding for training that includes test preparation for Civil Service exams, helping members advance their careers. As with many employers, municipalities are experiencing an increased demand for individuals with Commercial Driver Licenses (CDL). WDI has worked closely with CSEA to provide funding for CDL training across the state, opening up pathways into good paying driving jobs for its members.

PULP AND PAPER MANUFACTURERS TAKE MANY APPROACHES TO ENHANCE SKILLS

Through a federal grant funded by the **Northern Border Regional Commission**, WDI has supported the **United Steelworkers** in four manufacturers in the North Country, including: **Huhtamaki, Inc. (USW Local 4)**, **Neenah Paper (USW Local 1988)**, **Dunn Paper, (USW Local 4)**, and **Twin Rivers Paper (USW Locals 1438, 956, and 1300)**. The projects included in-person training on in-demand skills such as programmable logic controllers and pipefitting, as well as online training through **Tooling U-SME**. Funding also supported internships on several of these sites, with the intent to build the next generation of the workforce in this vital industry.



Photo credit: Sylvamo (formerly International Paper)

Cannabis Workforce Initiative: Growing Opportunities for Social Equity

The New York State Cannabis Workforce Initiative (CWI) is a collaboration between the New York State School of Industrial & Labor Relations at Cornell University and the Workforce Development Institute. Our mission is to promote and support social equity in the adult-use cannabis market by providing quality workforce development and legal education. Our work prioritizes diversity, equity, and quality jobs in the emerging cannabis industry through skills training, entrepreneurship services, workforce supports, legal education for employees and employers, and the development of high-road career pathways.



New York State's legalization of Adult-Use Cannabis will create a wide range of opportunities for workers and require new workforce development programs to prepare workers for these high-quality careers. The legislation prioritizes opportunities for those harmed by the prohibition of cannabis by establishing a goal to award 50% of business licenses to social equity candidates. Our aim is to aid the State in its implementation of the social justice and equity components of the industry in ways that benefit those equity candidates.

The CWI is organized into four principal components, all grounded in social equity and restorative justice principles:

- Cannabis Industry Workforce Needs Assessment: We are enhancing the body of knowledge of the industry's workforce and aiding implementation, keeping social equity front and center by studying current industry literature, lessons from other states, New York's regulatory framework, and labor market data. We look forward to sharing our research with our partners in government, labor, industry, and education.
- Advisory Committee & Partner Network: We are engaging with partners from a variety of areas to inform and guide the work of the Cannabis Workforce Initiative. Community-based, reentry, and workforce development organizations complement our connections to labor unions, government, industry, and educators to make sure our approach is collaborative and practical.
- Legal Education: Leveraging the expertise of the ILR, we are developing legal education programs on the changes to cannabis laws, including expungement. We will provide training to prospective employees and employers to increase opportunities for people with

criminal records, and train employers to be high-road employers using good labor standards to create fair and equitable workplaces for all workers.

- Workforce Development Programs: Working with our advisory committee and partner network, we are identifying opportunities for pilot programs on skills training, entrepreneurship, workforce supports, and other areas based on our research and the workforce needs. WDI's long history of developing, delivering, funding, and evaluating such programs has been indispensable to the CWI.

Our services will be accessible and affordable (offered at no cost to individuals, when possible) to members of impacted communities, as well as prospective business owners and workers. We are committed to generating real, meaningful outcomes for those who utilize the CWI's programs and services, with accountability to the communities we serve, as well as the executive and legislative branches.

[Learn more at cannabisworkforce.org](https://cannabisworkforce.org)



Photo credit: Local 338 RWDSU/UFCW

Building the Workforce to Build a Greener Economy

New York State has set ambitious and necessary energy and environmental goals, most notably requiring **70% of New York's electricity to come from renewable energy sources** like wind and solar by 2030. To achieve those goals will require a skilled, ready, and supported workforce, and a pipeline for the next generation of workers.

WDI stays informed of regional and statewide shifts by working with a robust network of partners to monitor, analyze, and share information about what's happening and what's next in the renewable energy workforce. WDI convenes educational events, such as the April 2021 webinar hosted by WDI's New York City Regional Director, introducing New York City-area students and young people to career opportunities in offshore wind. The panel of experts included speakers from the legislature, **NYSERDA**, offshore wind development companies, the Building and Construction trades (specifically **IBEW Local 3**), and the **State University of New York**.

Panelists shared their enthusiasm for the huge potential for this industry, as New York is at the forefront of the sector's development in the U.S. with by far the largest planned development at this time. With 9,000+ megawatts of power slated to be developed, there will be billions of dollars in economic activity across a variety of sectors. This will add significant green energy to our electrical grid and create a wide spectrum of good jobs for decades to come.

WDI often joins our partners' events to elevate the importance of workforce development and

connect to broader conversations, including participating in a panel at the **Waterfront Alliance's** 2021 conference. WDI's Director of Research was part of a panel on growing the future offshore wind workforce from grade school to higher education, specifically highlighting the important role of community colleges in serving non-traditional students.

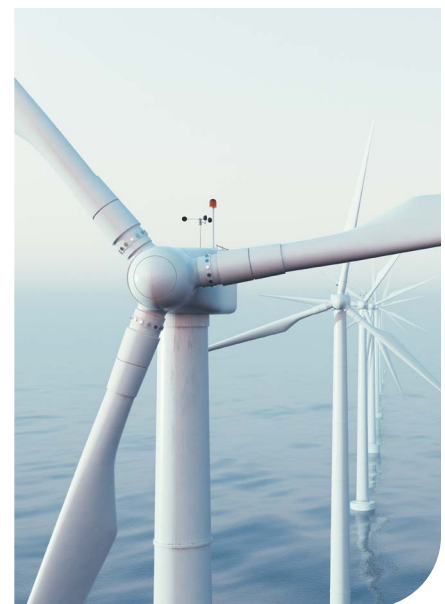
WDI continued its work in support of an agreement with **Orsted/Eversource**—developers of Sunrise Wind Farm (an 880-megawatt, offshore wind farm to be located off of Long Island)—to help provide advice and guidance to the creation of a **National Offshore Wind Training Center**. We also partnered with **Citizens Campaign for the Environment** to support their education and training campaign on the economic benefits of wind while promoting the diversity of job opportunities within the industry. Finally, WDI continues to work with supply chain coalitions and unions to help build a domestic, union-made supply chain with high-road economic development.

While many of the sites for offshore wind will be downstate, this new sector has the potential to impact job growth in sectors like manufacturing, engineering services, scientific consulting, training, and materials research across the state. WDI has researched and supported this industry for over a decade, and are currently in the process of updating our 2017 study of jobs, skills, and training gaps for the major phases of development. We are creating an inventory of training and education programs and mapping their locations to provide a tool for those making investments to meet the

needs of the industry. An interactive map developed by WDI includes both lease areas and ports, and will be updated with additions over time. We will ultimately link this data to WDI's **Future Skills Exchange (FSX)** platform.

WDI shared perspectives on diversity, equity, and inclusion in renewable energy with a national audience at the invitation of the **Business Network for Offshore Wind**. WDI's Regional Director for the Capital Region, and Director of Research spoke about the imperative to deliver on the dual promise of mitigating climate change while delivering high-road jobs to an inclusive group of New Yorkers.

As the offshore wind energy workforce grows in New York State, it is critical that diversity, equity, and inclusion remain top of mind. Our partnerships with unions, businesses, government, and developers will continue to ensure jobs in renewable energy offer equitable access, good pay, quality training, and advancement opportunities.



“WDI has helped my family out in more ways than I can describe. Without WDI’s increased income thresholds, I don’t know that I would be able to afford day care costs for my family. This program is a lifesaver and every day I am thankful for their dedication to my family’s needs as well as the needs of other families throughout the area in the same situation. Our children directly benefit from this program.”

—WDI CCSFEP, PARENT



Child Care: A Prerequisite to an Economic Recovery

WDI’s Child Care Subsidy Facilitated Enrollment Program (CCSFEP) provides child care subsidies to working families earning up to 275% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) in eight counties across Upstate New York—Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, Erie, Monroe, Oneida, and Onondaga.

The child care sector plays a fundamental role in New York State’s economic security. Child care, along with other critical workforce supports, enables participation and advancement in the workforce. The sector’s ongoing fragility has made accessibility and affordability of quality child care unattainable for many working families. While a global pandemic has elevated the issue to new heights of awareness, women have been disproportionately impacted as a result of caregiving responsibilities.

As schools and many child care providers closed their doors, WDI worked closely with our partners to address the child care crisis. In response to the pandemic, CCSFEP counties implemented waivers that increased the

affordability of care for parents and stabilized the sector for providers. This had a profound impact during the pandemic and allowed the CCSFEP to provide increased support to over 1,500 families and nearly 850 small business child care providers in a time of need.

The CCSFEP strategically works to reduce the hardship gap that families face when their wages are too high to qualify for public assistance programs, but do not earn enough to make ends meet. With an average annual subsidy exceeding \$10,000 per family, CCSFEP recipients report that they experience personal benefits that extend far beyond the ability to afford child care. These benefits often have a significant impact on the ability to provide basic necessities for the household such as increasing the quality of nutrition options and paying for housing and transportation.

Child care is infrastructure. Without it, parents can't work. This multigenerational investment dramatically reduces a predominant employment barrier and offers a high rate of return on investment for the community at large. As a result of enrollment in the program, families reported through an anonymous WDI survey that 55% had improved attendance at work, 51% experienced increased productivity, 47% retained employment, and 37% achieved advancement in the workplace.

New York's dedicated child care professionals not only served as an integral component of the pandemic workforce by caring for the children of essential workers, but were essential workers themselves. According to the U.S. Department of Treasury, "One in every 110 U.S. workers—and one in every 55 working women—makes a living in early childhood education and care." The sector continues to be undercompensated and undervalued for their important work that is predominantly carried out by women and people of color.

As we make the necessary steps to recover from the pandemic, child care will serve as the backbone of our economic recovery. WDI will continue to prioritize improving access to and affordability of child care through eliminating regional inequities and strengthening the child care workforce, ultimately improving the economic mobility of both parents and providers. Collaboration beyond traditional stakeholders remains paramount in establishing equitable access to child care, and WDI will serve as an agent to bring workforce and economic development to the table.

Investing in Child Care Supports Economic Growth



\$27,752

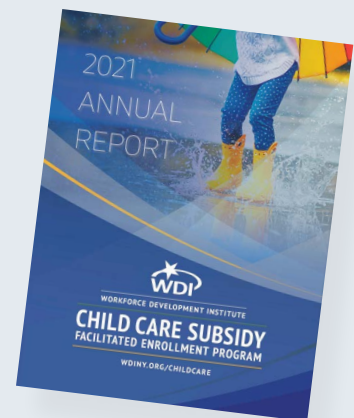
average cost of child care for an infant and toddler in NYS.



A minimum wage worker

in NY would need to work full time for **33 weeks**, or from January to August, just to pay for child care for one infant.

Source: [EPI](#)



Last year WDI's CCSFEP program in the eight counties served/supported 1,510 families, 2,070 children, and 2,075 child care businesses. For more information, please refer to the [2021 CCSFEP Annual Report](#) or review an overview:

wdiny.org/Explore-Our-Work/Child-Care-Subsidy-Program

Future Skills Exchange (FSX) Helps Learners Take Next Step Forward

One in four workers are unsure how or where to acquire new skills. With nearly 1,000,000 unique credentials and many more courses in the U.S., it's easy for people to get lost and miss out on opportunities when they have to search across multiple websites.

Future Skills Exchange (FSX) is a free, web-based platform developed by WDI that connects New Yorkers seeking courses, apprenticeships, credentials, and assessments directly to the education and training providers that deliver them. Opportunities can be sorted by location, cost, remote versus classroom, employment and wage information, financial assistance and other filters to find those best suited for their careers and lives.

WDI partnered with the New York Association of Training and Employment Professionals (NYATEP) and Credential Engine, the national leader in credential data transparency, to end the confusion by mapping out the credential landscape and making it accessible. Education and training providers of all types from colleges to union apprenticeship programs are sharing detailed information about their programs on FSX, and describing their offerings in clear and consistent language. All credentials added into FSX can also be published in Credential Engine's national registry, providing a larger market for New York-based training providers that offer online education.

The ongoing pandemic continues to dramatically change the employment landscape, and the demand for new skills is intensifying in an increasingly digital world. Our promotional campaign continues, using social media, targeted advertising, and intermediaries such as workforce development boards and guidance counselors to drive traffic to the site. FSX promises to serve as a powerful tool to help job seekers and learners navigate and connect to those skills for success in the workplace. Visit futureskillsx.org.



FEATURES FOR LEARNERS

- Simple and flexible interface
- Multiple search pathways by keywords, skills, location, virtual vs. in-person, price, and other filters
- Connects learners directly to details and registration, thereby reducing navigation steps
- Curated user reviews on individual course listings

FEATURES FOR EDUCATION/TRAINING PROVIDERS

- Workforce Partners use FSX as a powerful tool in identifying targeted (and WIOA and Pell eligible) training for their caseloads.

FEATURES FOR UNION APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS

- Programs connect with the next generation of union workforce graduating from high school or already employed, using technology that reaches them where they're most active and engaged.
- Expanded marketing outreach to candidates who may have no familiarity with the benefits of union apprenticeship opportunities.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT UPGRADES AND FEATURES

- API and bulk upload functionality, helping providers easily add content to the site, especially colleges with large numbers of credit and non-credit courses.
- New fields for employment and wage outcomes for courses that will help learners make more informed decisions.
- Search Engine Optimization (SEO) to maximize the public's ability to find their way to the platform.

Shifting the Paradigm Toward Inclusion of All Workers

During the last year, COVID-19 redefined every industry and occupation, some temporarily and some permanently. The labor market has shifted significantly, exposing the vulnerabilities and needs of each sector, and inequities have been exposed that exist for many workers, whether based on race, gender, lack of economic opportunity, or other factors. WDI is committed to helping address these challenges, closing the gaps where possible to ensure there are equitable opportunities for advancement for all individuals within the workforce.

MULTI-REGION: DIRECT ENTRY PROGRAM FOR WOMEN LEADS TO REWARDING CAREERS

Sisters in the Brotherhood, a project of the **North Atlantic States Carpenters Training Fund** ran in Albany, Buffalo, and Rock Tavern in 2021. The program seeks to increase gender diversity in the trades by recruiting women for a four-week training program that opens the door to people who may have never considered this type of work. Successful completion results in direct entry into the carpentry apprenticeship program, where the women begin to earn while they learn as a union carpenter.

WDI assisted with funding for tools, personal protective equipment, and mentorship. Transportation stipends were also provided to reduce one of the biggest barriers to success during training. This allows the trainees to get to know the trade and explore whether it is a good fit for them. **Sisters in the Brotherhood** aims to increase female participation to 10% overall in carpentry, giving women the skills to enter a career with family-sustaining wages, and the support and benefits of the union. It will help set the stage for success for many women in carpentry as construction needs rise across the state.



Photo credit: Sisters in the Brotherhood

NYC: INCREASING GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR BLACK-OWNED BUSINESSES

The **Black Government Contracting Club (BGCC)** is a mission driven social enterprise that organizes Black-owned businesses with the goal of procuring government contracts. Composed of approximately 300 businesses varying in size and across sectors, members work to become more sustainable through expanding into new markets, preparing to access loans, grants, and other forms of financing, and building relationships with prospective

institutional clients. Additional benefits include diversifying vendor pipelines, modernizing business processes, and strengthening the local economy.

The BGCC developed a year-long accelerator program along with an in-depth curriculum and offered training at no cost to members. WDI sponsored a Micro Accelerator Program to serve as a feeder for the longer program, covering the cost of 20 small business owners to attend. The micro accelerator program ran for six weeks, covering a range of

topics including market research, identifying opportunities, developing an action plan, and building connections to government agencies. The training culminated with the writing of a “Black Paper,” making the case for doing business with MWBEs to be shared with elected officials and government agencies. Program instructors provided regular guidance to participants encouraging collaboration, resulting in a cohort that became advocates and resources for one another.

NYC: PRE-APPRENTICE PILOT CREATES PATHWAYS FOR SKILLED GARMENT WORKERS

WDI is currently helping **SoHarlem**, a Harlem-based non-profit, develop the Garment Industry Pre-Apprenticeship Program, a one-year pilot designed to help Upper Manhattan residents master the sewing skills required by garment industry employers that are currently looking to hire. This program will be managed under the **Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone’s (UMEZ)** Creative Economy Initiative (CEI), which was created to highlight the creative economy as a meaningful part of an economic and workforce development recovery strategy.

MULTI-REGION: IMPROVING COMMUNICATION WITH WORKPLACE LANGUAGE TRAINING

WDI has launched several language skills-related projects in recent years, including two programs that took different approaches.

InvaGen Pharmaceuticals, Inc on Long Island, develops and produces generic prescription medicines for a variety of therapeutic uses. **Chobani**, in the Mohawk Valley, produces the top-selling Greek yogurt in the U.S. What these companies have in common is a workforce of 30% – 35% non-native English speakers. Both companies recognized the need for language training to improve internal communications, production efficiencies, and employee morale.

InvaGen worked with the **Corporate Training Center at SUNY Suffolk** to provide workplace Spanish language training to frontline managers and supervisors. This training focused on workplace-specific language needed to enrich communications with Spanish-speaking employees. While InvaGen has a long history of providing ESL training to Spanish-speaking employees, they hope to

remove the burden of language from these employees who are also building technical skills. Training managers and supervisors fluent in Spanish will also help with increased recruitment efforts to the growing Spanish-speaking population on Long Island.

Chobani employs many refugees and other non-native English speakers from all around the world, which requires personalized English language training based on their individual needs. The company is using the online training tool, **Voxy EnGen**, which they previously used in a successful pilot program supported by WDI. In the program, around 300 employees take an oral proficiency assessment, and the results are used to create customized lessons with a focus on food manufacturing, safety, and other specific vocational language skills. Improving English proficiency will improve retention, and allow them to upskill current employees, qualifying them for higher paying roles. WDI is hopeful that this personalized model of ESL training will prove itself to be a successful option for other employers.



Photo credit: SoHarlem



Photo credit: Spectrum Designs Foundation

MULTI-REGION: DESIGNING INCLUSIVE WORK ENVIRONMENTS

Founded in Port Washington, and newly expanded into Pleasantville in Westchester County, **Spectrum Designs Foundation** is a custom apparel and promotional items business with a social mission: to create meaningful and inclusive employment opportunities for people on the autism spectrum, addressing the problem of low rates of employment and earnings.

Helping individuals become more financially independent, confident, skilled, and social is a win for everyone—worker, employer, and community. WDI recently assisted Spectrum Designs in the purchase of equipment necessary to expand their social enterprise which will in turn help the company to hire and train individuals on using the new equipment. This will prepare new hires for success within the company and will also help ensure retention. Spectrum Designs informs others in community-based businesses of the benefits of hiring and training people on the autism spectrum.

MOHAWK VALLEY: LEARNING NEW SKILLS ON NEW TECHNOLOGY

Arc Herkimer and the **Arc Oneida-Lewis Chapter** serve individuals with developmental disabilities throughout the Mohawk Valley. **Herkimer Industries** and **Progress Industries**, the respective employment and vocational divisions of these non-profits, employ workers who produce a wide range of items with domestic and international reach and have become valued partners to manufacturers.

COVID-19 led to the mandatory suspension of day services, reducing revenue for both organizations in 2020. This reduced funding to purchase much needed equipment used in the vocational divisions making it impossible to fulfill contractual obligations.

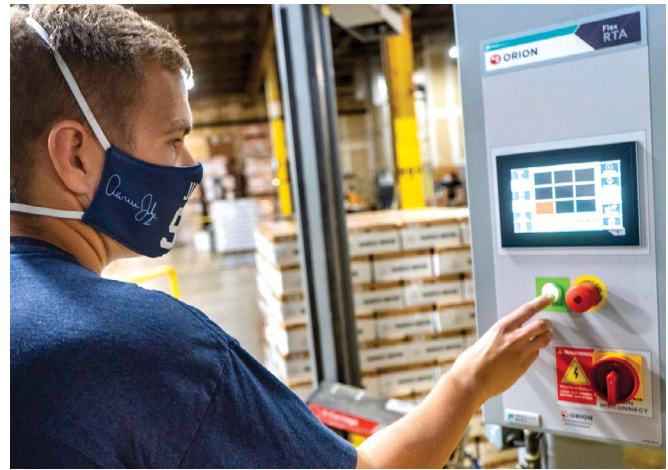


Photo credit: Arc Oneida-Lewis

At Herkimer Industries, WDI supported the purchase of a new industrial paper shredder that resulted in new skills for existing (and future) employees, particularly those who are severely disabled. For some, it is providing their first opportunity to acquire gainful employment and will open up new opportunities within Herkimer Industries and beyond. For Progress Industries, an existing client's request for increased production of a particular packaging item resulted in a bottleneck at the end of the production line. WDI supported the purchase of a pallet wrapping machine that enhanced and expedited production and solidified the ongoing partnership with this client. It also provides a unique opportunity for incumbent workers to learn new skills and technology that are standard in the packaging industry, making workers more marketable in the future.

Statewide: Studying Equity Gaps in the Workforce System

Working in partnership with **New York Association of Training and Employment Professionals (NYATEP)**, WDI is supporting a statewide analysis of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the workforce system, to gain a better understanding of the racial equity gaps that exist within the sector. The project will enable the gathering of real time data to ensure that the voices and needs of Black, Indigenous, & People of Color (BIPOC) workforce professionals are elevated and their accomplishments are acknowledged.

Supporting the Workforce of the Forestry and Wood Products Sector

The forest economy is a vital part of New York State's industrial identity. The sector generates billions of dollars in output every year in wood products including: furniture, Christmas trees, pulp and paper products, firewood, home décor, building products and lumber, and wood pellets. The industry employs tens of thousands of people and is constantly evolving, requiring training and education for the current and future workforce.

Progress has continued steadily on the multi-year initiative to support the workforce of the forestry and wood products sector through a federal grant funded by the **Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC)**. Strengthening the workforce along with the Forest to Factory Floor Continuum is a collaborative project among WDI, **Paul Smith's College (PSC)**, and **New York Logger Training (NYLT)**.

TRAINING SUPPORT FOR THE FORESTRY SECTOR

PSC has coordinated two training programs: School of Logging, a short-term, non-credit program that prepares participants for careers in logging, forestry, and related

businesses, and Troops to Timber, developed in collaboration with Transitional Services from **Fort Drum** to offer transitioning soldiers the opportunity to learn about careers in forestry and gain hands-on experience. While both programs were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, the School of Logging program graduated seven students in Summer 2021 and over 100 soldiers have participated in virtual Troops to Timber training sessions.

The team at NYLT has been working to leverage the continued demand for its previously developed, industry-validated online curricula and Train the Trainer programs for incumbent

loggers. Work through the NBRC grant has enabled the development of a new training program centered on helping loggers to diversify income streams and operations so they are better able to weather periodic downturns.



Photo credit: Cornell Cooperative Extension of Warren County

FACILITATED INTERNSHIPS TO DEVELOP THE FUTURE FORESTRY WORKFORCE

The Facilitated Internship Program places students from a wide variety of training/educational programs with employers in the forestry and wood products sector for hands-on experience in the field. WDI has placed 26 interns at 21 employers across the North Country, Mohawk Valley, and Central New York.

Clinton County (North Country)

- Josh Laware Logging and Excavation, LLC
- Parker Family Maple Farm
- Steele Truss & Panel LLC
- T&T Leasing of Plattsburgh, Inc.

Essex County (North Country)

- Essex County Soil and Water Conservation District
- Yankee Mat Company LLC

Herkimer County (Mohawk Valley)

- Twin Rivers Paper

Franklin County (North Country)

- Molpus Woodlands Group
- Pg Sample Enterprises, Inc.
- Tupper Lake Hardwoods, Inc.

Lewis County (North Country)

- LandVest, Inc.
- Neenah, Inc.
- Omniafiltra LLC

Oneida County (Mohawk Valley)

- Adirondack Barrel Cooperage

St. Lawrence County (North Country)

- APC Paper Company
- Potsdam Specialty Paper
- St. Lawrence Soil and Water
- Structural Wood Corporation

Multi-County

- Empire State Forest Products Association

Oswego County (Central New York)

- Huhtamaki, Inc.
- Oswego Soil and Water

Encouraging Career Awareness & Exploration for the Next Generation

The workforce of the future cannot be forgotten while solving the challenges of today. During our economic recovery we must ensure that the next generation understands the many pathways into successful careers.

CAPITAL REGION: YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS PROGRAM DEVELOPS COMMUNITY-MINDED BLACK ENTREPRENEURS

The **City of Albany** partnered with the Atlanta-based organization **The League** to deliver a six-week, virtual entrepreneurship program for young men of color ages 14 to 24. The program provided the technical skills and knowledge needed to build online businesses, while giving participants the support to see themselves as future businessmen and leaders.

Participants engaged in project-based workshops on topics including: strategic marketing, computer software, networking, college financial aid and scholarship information, the

importance of access to capital and credit, and creation of individualized business plans and resumes. Participants met with local business leaders to gain insight and start developing the connections needed to build their brands and their confidence.

In addition to creating bonds within their cohort, these young men opened their minds to life beyond their own backyards by connecting with other cohorts around the country. Following the completion of the program, some participants were transitioned into the **Albany Summer Youth Employment Program Leadership Academy** for additional mentorship and support.

HUDSON VALLEY: COLLABORATION RESULTS IN POPULAR ZOOM SERIES FOCUSED ON HEALTHCARE CAREERS

Healthcare is one of the top sectors for future employment in the Hudson Valley, with 12% growth anticipated annually. To meet workforce demand for this growing sector, the **Wappingers Central School District** launched a pilot initiative to provide high school students with first-hand information about career opportunities via Zoom meetings with individuals working in the sector. The program was coordinated by a working group from the school district, WDI, **Dutchess Community College**, the **Dutchess Workforce Investment Board**, and local employers.

The monthly Zoom sessions featured panelists currently working as physicians, nurses, therapists, technicians, administrators, and health educators. These volunteers provided an overview of their job, what a day at work is like, the education required, and expected pay ranges. Videos of worksites and job activities were also included. Students selected the careers they wished to explore, and each session included time for their questions. All the Career Zoom sessions were live streamed on YouTube, allowing teachers and parents to experience the program as well. The Career Zooms will be expanded to feature unionized Building Trades and manufacturing careers in future.

LONG ISLAND: FLEXIBLE FUNDING EXPANDED LONG ISLAND SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

Summer Youth Employment Programs (SYEP) are critical opportunities for young people living at or below the poverty level to earn income while also gaining early work experience. On Long Island, the **Town of Huntington Human Services Department** in partnership with the **Tri Community and Youth Agency** had up to 30 students engaged in their program on any given day. As part of this year's program, WDI supported a two-week program extension for students to learn foundational skills including team-building, leadership, resume writing, and networking.



Photo credit: H2M Architects and Engineers

The program also featured career exploration with Long Island businesses in manufacturing, engineering, architecture, and healthcare. The students were actively engaged in team building exercises during all site visits and excited to learn about professional opportunities available and close to home. This program took a holistic approach, including ensuring students had daily meals, as many students face the challenge of food insecurity.

LONG ISLAND: HIGHLIGHTING MANUFACTURING CAREERS TO RETAIN LOCAL TALENT

The manufacturing sector employs tens of thousands of Long Islanders, from defense and aerospace, to biomedical, food, and beverage. Many students, teachers, and parents are unaware of all that is produced in their backyards, and the many jobs with higher-than-average salaries. Every October, Manufacturing Month programs try to reverse this trend.

The trade association **IgniteLI** advocates for manufacturers and takes an active role in planning Manufacturing Month events. They launched an outreach project working with Dr. Subrina Oliver of **O-High Technologies** with a 2021 goal to reach 4000+ students in 12 underinvested school districts. With a mixture of in-person and virtual events and site visits, this project



Photo credit: Assembly House 150



Photo credit: Assembly House 150

introduces middle and high school students from minority communities to impressive local companies that produce goods for national and international consumption

By building awareness of these careers, students can see the real-world applications of their STEM learning. There is a win for businesses that engage with these programs as they introduce themselves to the future workforce and can start building connections to attract local talent.

WESTERN NEW YORK: LEARNING THE ART AND SCIENCE OF CAREERS IN THE CONSTRUCTION TRADES

Assembly House 150 in Buffalo, is an artist-led 501c(3) nonprofit art, design and construction incubator and experiential learning center built on the principle of using hands-on instruction to prepare students for a variety of careers. The Society for the Advancement of Construction Related Arts (SACRA) Program is a 390-hour, paid career experience program geared toward underemployed and unemployed individuals from the nearby community. This includes prioritizing service to Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), veterans, individuals with disabilities, currently or formerly incarcerated, and recipients of benefit programs.

The SACRA program is housed out of a historic, 1870s-era church providing a unique and inspiring learning environment that incorporates hands-on projects throughout the

community, provides visits to local worksites and landmarks, and offers career awareness through field trips, workshops, and visits from experts in the field.

WDI supported a project manager for the SACRA program to assist in grass-roots recruitment efforts, build relationships with local employers, and connect program participants with placement into pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs, artisan trades, millwork shops, and finishing work.

CENTRAL NEW YORK: PREPARING STUDENTS FOR THE JOBS OF TODAY AND TOMORROW

The **Enterprise America Program** is a hands-on training program for middle and high school students from over 65 school districts in Central New York and the Mohawk Valley. The program involves classroom instruction with curriculum provided by **WCNY PBS Central New York**. Upon completion, students spend a day in the WCNY Enterprise America City where they run a virtual city and participate in a business-to-business economy. This simulated environment develops critical foundational skills, including communication, collaboration, and critical thinking.

WDI is sponsoring Career Education Days as part of the program. The series provides high school students with the opportunity to engage with employers from industries including: manufacturing, healthcare,

building and construction trades, IT, finance, and more. Employers host booths with information about their company and industry, the careers they offer, the training necessary, and the skills they look for in applicants. Students have opportunities for networking and interview practice, and can schedule tours at employers' sites to get a first-hand view. The program welcomes parents to be part of the experience to aid their students in choosing a career path. Career Education Days will run through the summer of 2022.

NYC: PROVIDING WORK-BASED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES TO CLOSE ACHIEVEMENT GAPS

The **Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation's** internship programs connect primarily young people of color to meaningful work experiences, helping them build professional networks, and increase professional and technical skills. Gaps in social capital and work-based learning experiences that already exist between these students and their White counterparts were exacerbated by reduced opportunities as internships were less available during the pandemic.

This made the program as important as ever, but COVID-19 significantly impacted the organization's ability to cover the full cost of the summer

internship program. With support from WDI funding, the Navy Yard retained 50 summer internships, which were either in-person or virtual based on necessary health precautions. Interns had the opportunity to attend professional development sessions, including virtual networking and industry panels. Despite the shift to virtual, the Brooklyn Navy Yard team also interviewed all 900 summer internship applicants as a professional development opportunity.

The internships that were offered were tightly aligned to each student's area of study and career interest, including manufacturing, art, fashion, technology, architecture, nonprofit work, and culinary arts. Job roles included marketing, engineering, graphic design, computer science, and business administration. Seven students were hired upon completion of their internships and will be valuable assets to businesses in helping them restart operations and return to productivity.

ROCHESTER/GENESEE VALLEY: "WE NEED MORE" PROJECT COMBATS BRAIN DRAIN

The **Chemung County Chamber of Commerce** produced "We Need More," a video to raise awareness of local manufacturing careers in a region where companies have struggled to fill positions, particularly during the pandemic.

The video highlights production and non-production (e.g., front office, sales) positions, placing an emphasis on diversity and inclusion. The video paints a clear picture of what manufacturing looks like, the benefits of these careers, local training opportunities that provide a direct path to those jobs, and the personal and professional success these careers provide for the emerging and established workforce.

The video was sponsored by WDI as part of the "Made in the Southern Tier" initiative for Manufacturing Day 2021, which is presented in partnership with the **Career Development Council**. It was promoted to students throughout the **Greater Southern Tier BOCES**, and to the community on other platforms. By fostering a better understanding of the strong manufacturing base in Chemung County, the hope is to inspire the current and future workforce to stay local and seek employment with these businesses.

HUDSON VALLEY: PILOT PROGRAM BUILDING REAL-LIFE TOOLS FOR SUCCESS

OpenHub in the Hudson Valley, developed the **OPEN Reboot Pilot Program**, teaching hardware skills to young adults age 16 to 24 through hands-on training repairing and enhancing computers. Students met with a mentor/instructor for 20 hours over five weeks, learning the basics of computer hardware, as well as job readiness skills such as resume building, and digital skills such as scheduling and digital collaboration. The dynamic learning experience was designed to address the digital divide in urban communities, and underlying issues of poverty.

Six individuals from the Poughkeepsie area completed the program and were able to take the computers home with them on graduation day, providing them with tools to pursue careers in technology. WDI provided funding to assist with the learning experience and allow OpenHub to hire additional employees to administer the program.



Photo credit: OpenHub



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

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