

# WIOA

Professional Development  
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## Developing and Sustaining a Regional Business Services Team

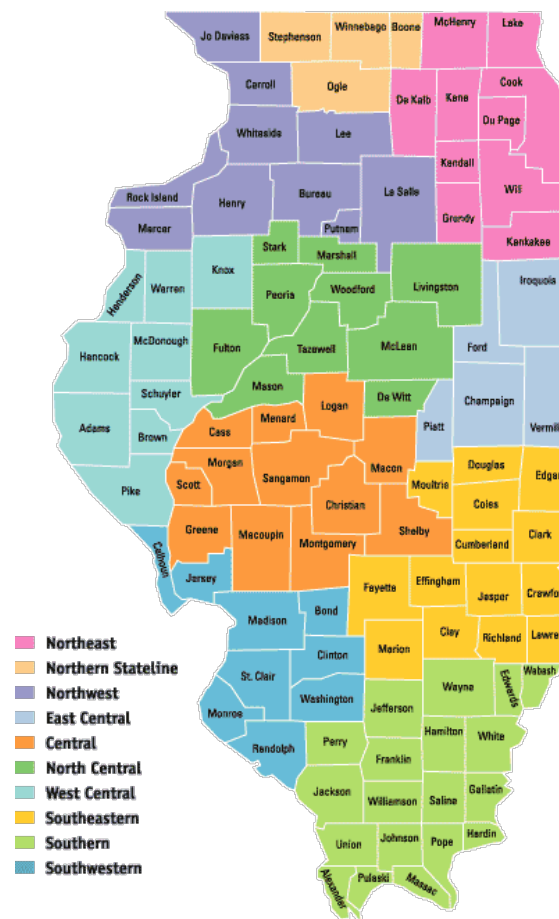
April 27, 2021

# Panel Moderator and Members

- **Panel Moderator:** Susan Flessner, Director, Workforce Services Division of Will County
- **LWIA 1:** Jeff Hubert, Employment Specialist, Lake County Workforce Development
- **LWIA 6:** Jessica Barkwill, Job Developer, DuPage County Workforce Development Division
- **LWIA 10:** Mary Gajcak, Business Liaison, Workforce Investment Board of Will County
- **IDES—Northern Illinois:** Ted Duckett, Business Service Manager
- **IDHS/DRS:** Sherry Sparks, Workforce Development Unit Manager, Department of Rehabilitation Services

# NORTHEAST ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REGION (NEEDR)

- 10 Counties (Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, McHenry and Will)
- Population = 8,787,042
  - 69% of all Illinois' population
- Employment base = 3,763,227
  - 74% of all Illinois' employment
- Number of employers = 237,522
  - 68% of all Illinois' employers



# WORKFORCE PARTNERS OF METROPOLITAN CHICAGO

The Workforce Partners' successful alliance is based on the knowledge that the metropolitan Chicago area represents a regional economy and the challenges in developing a highly skilled workforce that meet the current and future needs of employers are shared across the area. Activities undertaken by the Workforce Partners of Metropolitan Chicago are designed to influence and inform issues impacting the quality of the regional workforce

## LEADERSHIP TEAM

- Cook County – Karin Norington-Reaves/Marisa Lewis
- DuPage County– Lisa Schvach, Jamie Brown
- Grundy/Livingston/Kankakee Counties – Ladonna Russell
- Kane/DeKalb/Kendall Counties – Scott Berger, Renee Renken
- Lake County – Jennifer Serino, Laura Gergley
- McHenry County – Julie Courtney, Jeffery Poynter
- Will County – Susan Flessner\*, Caroline Portlock

# WPMC Early Planning

- Directors from the seven local workforce areas in the NEEDR meet monthly (since 2001) to share **information** on new activities and/or concerns, **updates** on regional grants and other joint initiatives, and **topics** for further research or planning
- One recurring topic – and the reason we’re here today:



## WPMC Strategic Plan for 2019 and Regional grants

- **A Regional Business Services Team** was part of the 2019 WPMC Strategic Plan –broken down into two phases:
  - **First Phase:** WIOA Title I business services team members from 7 LWIAS
  - **Second Phase:** Team from Phase one combined with staff from Core Partner agencies (IDES, IDHS/DRS, others)
- A regional grant was received to cover the logistics management, growth and support of the Regional Business Services Team.



## April 2019—Launch of R-BST

- Held a meeting at the Will County AJC with 50+ people in attendance. Key components:

Initial agenda items were selected for first meeting

Bi-monthly meeting locations were picked out of a hat for the remainder of the year (Kankakee, Woodstock, Lisle)

Directors articulated their support and expectations for the Team so business services team members took the assignment seriously.

- Regional Coordinators manage the logistics, agenda, meeting summaries, activities

# R-BST Work Plan

Meeting	Training	Discussion	Operations	Continuous Improvement	Best Practices	"Homework"
Description	Training topics will be adjusted based on team feedback and needs. Some training will be conducted by team members and some by third party experts.	The team will be presented with challenging scenarios to discuss and address.	The team will draft, revise and finalize rules of engagement over the course of the year, as well as discuss other operational topics and issues.	The team will track its own progress and prepare for future tracking.	Team members will present best practices to promote cross-region consistency and learning.	Team members may be assigned tasks at meetings to complete by the following meeting.
Meeting 1 <b>April 2019</b> Held 4/30/19 Will County	Introductions and overview of potential topics and tasks					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop brief overview of business services offered</li> <li>Identify a best practice to share</li> <li>Discuss training needs</li> </ul>
Meeting 2 <b>June 2019</b> <b>Kankakee</b>	Overall focus: detailed discussion of how business services are offered in each LWIA. Review items assigned as homework last meeting.					
	Discuss group training needs; revise topics below as needed. <i>Foundational element: Flexible</i>	Scenario: A new company with extensive workforce needs opens in McHenry County. <i>Foundational element: Sector-Based</i>	Discuss current and future partner engagement. Who is currently at the table? Who should be? To what extent?  Projects for year one joint activities	Discuss current data tracking each LWIA. What do they currently track? How and how often?	Each team presents one; group discusses needs and decides on what to cover in future meetings. <i>Foundational element: Flexible</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be determined based on feedback from first meeting</li> <li>Plan for regional Job Fairs and possibly assist with large WARN activities</li> </ul>
Meeting 3 <b>August 2019</b>	Overall focus: begin discussing integrating core partners into team. Which partners? What are the common training needs? What pilot activities should be undertaken first? How can Economic Development entities be integrated into BST activities? <i>Foundational element: Coordinated</i>					
	Industry sector information. What is available? What are the best sources? How can information be used most effectively? <i>Foundational element: Sector-Based</i>	Scenario TBD <i>Foundational element: Sector-Based</i>	Revisit rules of engagement, considering team feedback. Discuss core partner integration. <i>Foundational elements: Aligned, Coordinated</i>	Develop initial list of metrics for discussion/ review.	Topic(s) based on discussions/feedback from previous meetings. Discuss topic for next meeting. <i>Foundational element: Flexible</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Get feedback from local areas on metrics</li> <li>Review results of joint activities to date.</li> </ul>

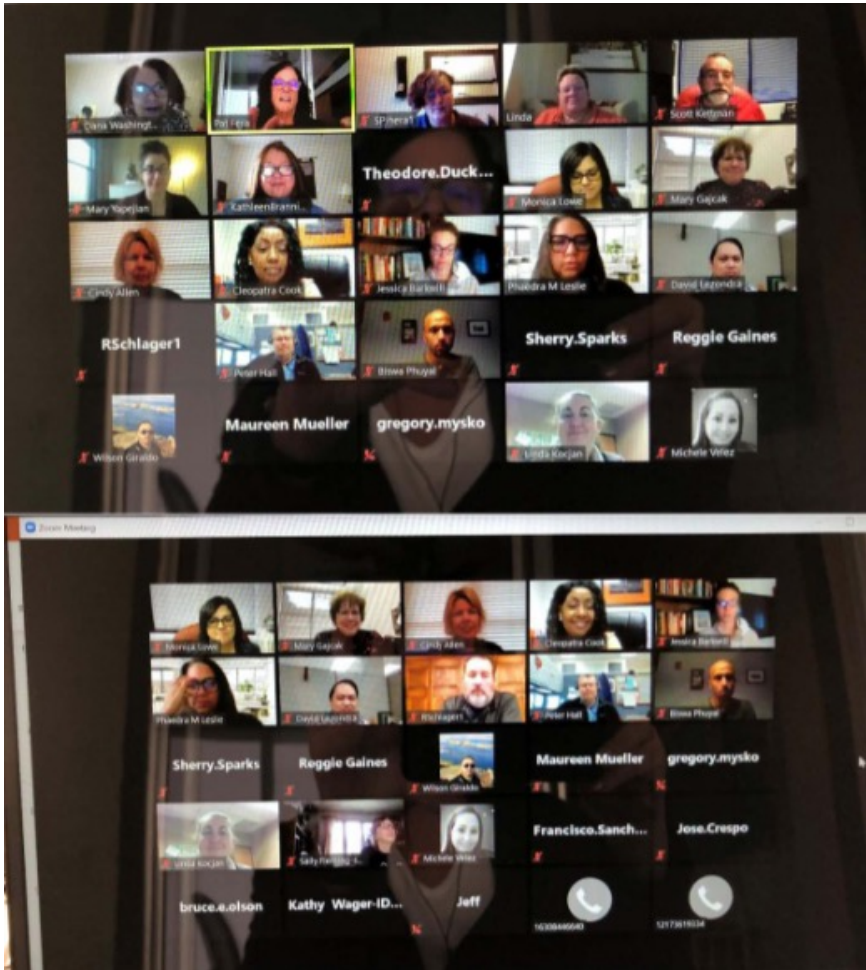


# Actual Meeting

- Team members met in different locations, shared snacks and learned about what other local teams were doing and how they were doing it, discussed new activities in their areas and what they were planning... leaving a little time for networking at in-person meetings.



## Along the way...



- Team members participated in a certification training on Business Engagement through Business U
- Staff planned regional TDL Job Fairs together, regional Incumbent Worker Training outreach, materials to update partner agency staff on the team
- Last meeting of the year was “Meet and Greet” with Core Partner agency Business Services staff

## 2020/Early 2021

- Meetings have been virtual since April of 2020 because of **Covid**. Activities during the pandemic include:

### Exploring technology

Reviewed conference meeting software systems, text message applications, virtual job fair options, etc.

### Sharing approaches

Updates from every area and agency on what they are doing during Covid

### Focus on dislocated workers

Have shared Dislocated Worker activities including WARN events and activities areas were holding to assist individuals, special e-blasts and data pulls, etc.

### Use of data

Had training on new DCEO IEBS system as a team and have discussed other uses for system and information offered/needed

### Joint trainings

Annual schedule of joint trainings established, including Prospecting for New Business Customers, Employer panels on large scale hires and layoffs, employer outreach and relationship nurturing, etc.)

# Unintended Outcomes

- Team members from one local area call team members from other local areas
- Team members from one local area plan and execute activities with team members from other local area outside of regional meetings
- Team members from one local area share information on their own and ask questions of one another
- Team members from all of the local areas see the value of regional interactions
- Panelists share experience as R-BST members

# What does it take?

**Commitment** from local workforce area Directors to spend time and capacity of staff on regional business services planning and activities

Engagement of **local BST members** assigned to regional team and their ability to think outside of just their workforce areas

Engagement of **core partner staff** members assigned to the team and their ability to provide another perspective; contribute a different experience; and offer up partnerships previously not considered, etc.

One or more regional coordinators (or others) to **manage the process**, logistics, activities, etc.

Multiple workforce areas willingness to **work as a collaborative** to prepare and submit grant proposals

**In-person meetings** work better than virtual meetings and hopefully that can happen again in the near future

It only takes one success to make it real...

Questions?  
Comments?