



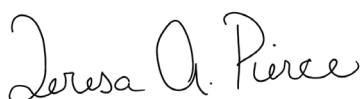
Annual Report 2015

Dear Reader:

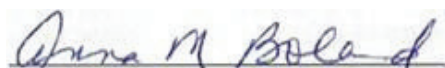
We are pleased to present the 2015-2016 annual report for Workforce Connections, Inc. Workforce Connection, Inc.'s programs provide opportunities for individuals who have experienced barriers to obtaining and maintaining meaningful employment. The organization assists job seekers, laid-off workers and youth with career planning, job search assistance and skills training. You will read throughout this annual report about real people who have been positively impacted by our programs. The people we serve are an inspiration to us! As we watch them work hard every day to increase their skill sets, we also work hard every day to increase the skill set of the organization to increase our capacity for future growth.

Workforce Connections, Inc. partners with employers, technical colleges, industry organizations and the Western Wisconsin Workforce Development Board to offer demand-driven services, and we look forward to the full implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The Second Chance Act, FoodShare Employment and Training Program and Wisconsin Works Program provide an excellent opportunity to continue to focus on our mission of connecting people, work and training while advancing self-sufficiency.

We thank you for the opportunity to provide services to western Wisconsin!



Teresa Pierce
Executive Director



Ann Boland
Board of Directors Chair



Table of Contents

Board of Directors	1	Connecting to Second Chances	5
Wisconsin Works (W-2)	2	Transportation Connections	6
FoodShare Employment and Training (FSET)	2	Wisconsin Senior Employment	6
YouthBuild	3	Business Services	7
Organization Spotlight	3	Healthcare Navigator	7
Workforce Investment Act (WIA)	4	Financials	8
Windows to Work	5	Staff Listing	9

Workforce Connections Board of Directors

2014-2015 Members

Bruce Ardel

Kurt Bear

Ann Boland

Doug Billings

Marty Gaul

Bob Hillary

Bruce May

David Ring

Kevin Zagrodnick



Workforce Connections Board members gather at the 2014 annual meeting held in December. Pictured left to right, Back row: Marty Gaul, Kurt Bear, Dave Ring, and WCI Executive Director Teresa Pierce. Front row: Doug Billings, Ann Boland, Bob Hillary, and Kevin Zagrodnick.

Workforce Connections wishes to

Thank its outgoing board members:

Marty Gaul and Bruce May

&

Welcome its new board members:

Angela Menezes, Karen Long, Anne Hlavacka and Tim Vondrasek.

Wisconsin Works (W-2)

Kris came to Workforce Connections while she was off work for a medical issue that required surgery.

Once healed, she was ready to go back to work only to learn her employer no longer had a position for her.

Kris was worried about her family and how she would support them especially after she also received a notice of eviction.

Kris's Employment Coordinator was able to help Kris with rent assistance and her

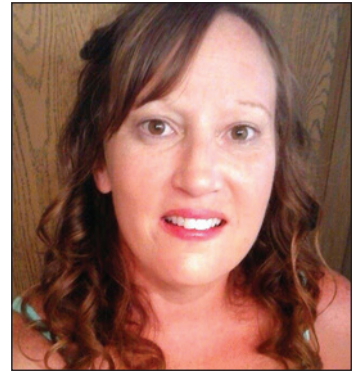
job search.

Kris attended job fairs and practiced discussing her skills and qualifications with employers.

She worked hard to get her name and resume out, and ended up securing a full time job in a matter of a few weeks.

Kris is employed at Viroqua Day Care Center and providing for her family.

Workforce Connections has been operating W-2 in Western Wisconsin for more



than 15 years.

In 2015 more 1,000 individuals were served through the program with emergency housing assistance, job placement and other services.

FoodShare Employment and Training (FSET)

Success

Rachel enrolled in the FSET program roughly 30 days after being released from prison after 10 years of incarceration.

Rachel was concerned about finding employment because of her criminal history. But she worked hard and continued to apply for many positions despite feeling discouraged after not receiving interviews or being offered positions.

During this time, Rachel continued to attend weekly appointments with her Employment Coordinator.

She was more than excited when she received two employment offers and was able to work it out so she could accept both positions.

Workforce Connections began an FSET contract that covers Western Wisconsin in April 2015.

FSET is a voluntary program for all FoodShare members who want to build job skills and find employment.

Through September 2015, Workforce Connections has seen nearly 2,000 clients.



Success

Packing up was a constant in Christopher's life. The longest he remembers ever living at one place as a family was for 18 months.

Christopher began attending LaCrossroads, a charter high school, in La Crosse during his sophomore year. It was here that he was introduced to YouthBuild.

The program offered him class credit and taught him skills in the construction trades along with providing a steady paycheck.

Christopher has been the breadwinner for the family, which includes a younger brother and sister, since his junior year of high school.

Christopher graduated early from high and plans to join the military.

** This is part of a full article that appeared in the La Crosse Tribune.*

Workforce Connections revamped our image over the past year with the roll out of a new organizational branding and marketing strategy.

The strategy included an updated Workforce Connections logo, new program flyers as well as an updated look and feel to the organization's letterhead and business cards.

Metre, a La Crosse-based advertising agency partnered with us to enhance our image.

The agency wanted the branding to portray what is at the heart of Workforce Connections: being a trustworthy, professional, respectful and collaborative organization.



Betsy secured employment with Mathy Construction where she runs tests on aggregate and asphalt.

She loves her job and is thankful for the help her Employment Coordinator provided her.



WIA Participant

Workforce Investment Act (WIA)

Successes

Mathew came to Workforce Connections with several years of welding experience, but he also had a criminal record and was having a hard time finding a job.

After meeting with his Employment Coordinator, he decided to enroll in a welding skills institute held by Western Technical College.

The 12-week institute, held in Black River Falls, helped Mathew with his technical welding skills, which helped him find a temporary job at Bimbo Bakery.

A few months later, he applied and was hired at Trane Company.

Mathew believes perfect timing and the certificate he earned through the welding skills institute is what led to his employment.

Looking to the future, Mathew would like to continue his education in machining or welding.

Tammy was stressed and lacking confidence when she first came to Workforce Connections after losing her job of 20 years at Fort McCoy working with Army lodging.

Through hard work and the assistance of her Employment Coordinator she was able to gain self-confidence and a new career.

Tammy was interested in a healthcare career, but thought her age and the toughness of courses would prevent her from reaching this dream.



However, with tuition and fuel assistance from Workforce Connections, she was able to work her way through school and earned a Certified Nursing Assistant certifi-

cate, phlebotomy certificate and a Medical Assistant degree.

She is now employed at Mayo Clinic Health System and loving her job.

Tammy says she doesn't know where she would be without the help of her Employment Coordinator and she is very thankful for all the assistance she received.

Job Centers: the heart of employment and training

Workforce Connections collaborates with other employment and training agencies to operate two comprehensive Job Centers in Western Wisconsin.

The Job Center located in Tomah had 5,579 walk-ins and phone calls from July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015.

The Workforce Development Center of Western Wisconsin, located in La Crosse, had 25,178 walk-ins and phone calls.



Windows to Work

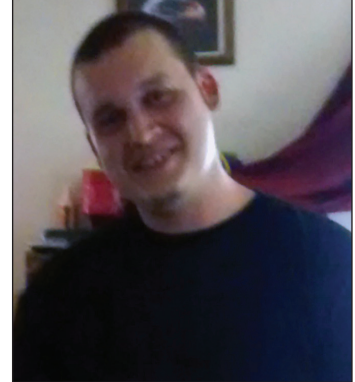
Success

Brandon first learned of the benefits of the Windows to Work program while incarcerated and knew the program could benefit him both before and after his release.

Brandon and his Employment Coordinator met prior to his release where the two explored career options, perfected Brandon's resume and discussed how to overcome other barriers he would face once he re-entered the work world.

Brandon was hired at Northern Engraving the first day he was released and within a few weeks had secured his own apartment.

He says feeling proud of himself and his accomplishments is an understatement. He adds that his Employment Coordinator provided him with the motivation he needed and he's happy to be building parts of his life that he never had before.



"My Employment Coordinator was a pleasure to work with and very helpful.

Thanks again!"

Phillip
WIA Participant

Connecting to Second Chances

2015 marked the beginning of a new endeavor for Workforce Connections with the start of its Connecting to Second Chances program.

The program is designed to provide successful re-entry tools to individuals currently in jail, prison or on electronic monitoring.

Connecting to Second Chances centers on a mentoring partnership between those re-entering society and their mentor.

Workforce Connections also partners with Western Technical College's Project Proven to help participant meet educational goals.

Since the program started in June 2015, eight participants have entered the program and Workforce Connections has trained 13 mentors.

Seven of the eight people enrolled in Connecting to Second Chances are either employed or furthering their education.

Wisconsin Senior Employment



At 80 years of age, Jane Johnson is the reigning elder in the Wisconsin Senior Employment program, but

she hasn't let age slow her down.

Jane's tenacity and drive was recognized when she was named the 2015 Wisconsin Older Worker of the Year.

Johnson's host agency is the La Crosse County Aging Unit where she works at a nutrition center. She stays busy bagging meals, wiping down tables and chairs for diners and dishing out meals. She also socializes with the diners and shows up for each shift with a smile

Success

on her face.

Besides working at her host site, Johnson also spends time improving her computer skills, pursuing job leads and remaining driven to succeed.

The WISE Program provides older adults with training opportunities and part-time paid work experience in community service organizations. The on-the-job experience helps build and improve skills for permanent employment.

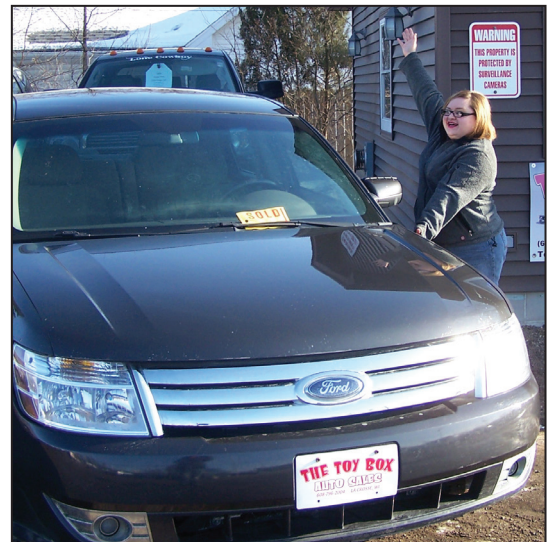
Transportation Connections

Success

Sheila needed reliable transportation to get her to and from her two jobs and school. She purchased her vehicle in March 2015 and was very pleased to be able buy a dependable vehicle that will get her where she needs to go.

Transportation Connections assists employed individuals with vehicle repairs and purchases.

In 2015 two loans were made for vehicle purchases.



Healthcare Navigator

For the second consecutive year Workforce Connections was able to provide assistance to individuals and small businesses while they navigate the Health Insurance Marketplace.

Healthcare navigators are trained to lead people through the process of signing up for insurance through the Health Insurance Marketplace.

Workforce Connections previous success in implementing the program allowed the organization to secure additional funding for 2016.

WCI Healthcare Navigators provide support to those in Buffalo, Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe, Juneau, Vernon, Crawford and Trempealeau counties.

"Thank you all so much for everything you do at Workforce Connections!"

Your program is truly a Godsend and your help is needed by so many of us out here."

Angela
WIA Participant

Business Services

Local Business Connection

One example of how Workforce Connections connects to locals businesses is through the project it collaborated with Westby Cooperative Creamery on by administering a staff survey.

The survey gave a glimpse into the cooperative's staff demographics and morale.

Workforce Connections compiled the results of 130 submitted surveys and presented the outcomes to the cooperative.

Workforce Connections staff has been involved in the Skills Wisconsin project that began in 2012.

The project was funded through the U.S. Department of Labor Workforce Innovation Fund.

Skills Wisconsin is transforming how Wisconsin's workforce system engages with businesses to match workers looking for a job with businesses looking for workers, resulting in better outcomes for workers, businesses, and the pro-

grams that serve both.

Workforce Connections staff have made nearly 2,000 business contacts since

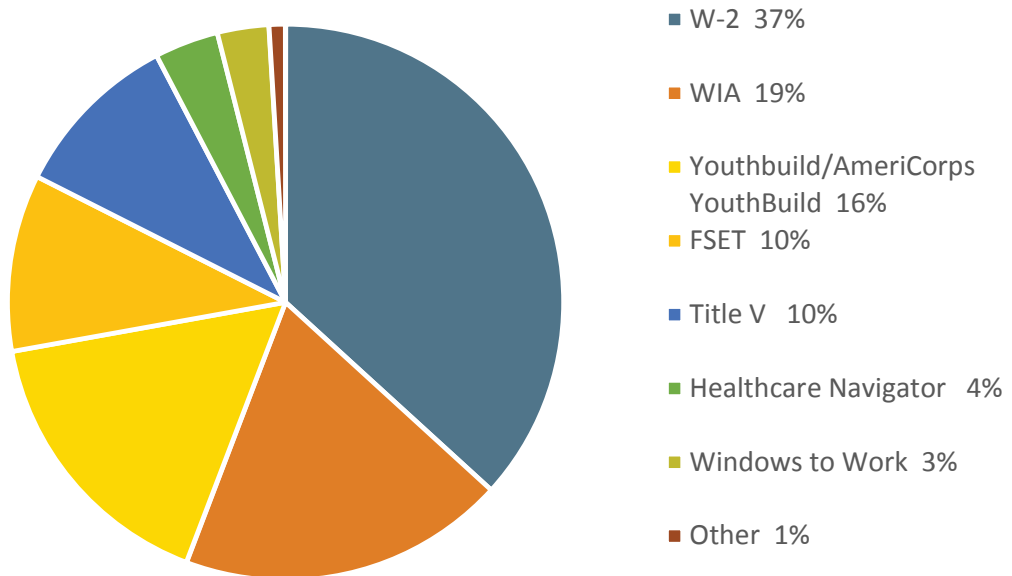
January 2015.

As a part of the project, The Wisconsin Workforce Development Association has been

developing a statewide professional development training program for business solutions staff. The effort includes the Collabor8 Summit, which three Workforce Connections staff attended.



2014-2015 Fiscal Year Revenues



Total Revenues = \$2,003,899



Staff Listing

Pamela Amundson

Finance Manager - Fiscal

Kristin Bell

Employment Coordinator

Autumn Bergerson

Employment Coordinator

Ashley Bermudo

Employment Coordinator

Gina Brown

W-2/FSET Programs Manager

Andrea Brownlee

Employment Coordinator

Leslie Carlson

Employment Coordinator

Kelsey Connor

Coach Coordinator

Sarah Felix

Employment Coordinator

Kenda Fluegge

Development Manager

Jessie Foss

Finance Manager - Admin

Shannon Franek

Operations Coordinator

Amy Gernetzke

Employment Resource Coordinator

Glenda Lee

Accounting Coordinator

Dolores Marusarz

Employment Coordinator

Jacie Meier

Job Developer

Gina Merrell

Employment Coordinator

Frankie Mezera

Employment Coordinator

Brad Myhre

Website/Database Coordinator

Kelly Norsten

WIA Programs Manager

Faith Oliver

Employment Coordinator

Wanda Palmer

Employment Coordinator

Teresa Pierce

Executive Director

Sarah Rick

Employment Coordinator

Amy Scarborough

Operations Coordinator

Della Snyder

Employment Resource Coordinator

Tom Stark

Employment Coordinator

Pam Taylor

Employment Coordinator

Carmin Trillo

Operations Coordinator

Sandy Turner

Employment Coordinator

Emily Vieth

Employment Coordinator

Carol Wagenson

Workforce Development Manager

Workforce Connections
2615 East Avenue South, Suite 103
La Crosse, WI 54601
www.workforceconnections.org
1-800-742-5627 • (608) 789-5627