National Appeal Local Feel

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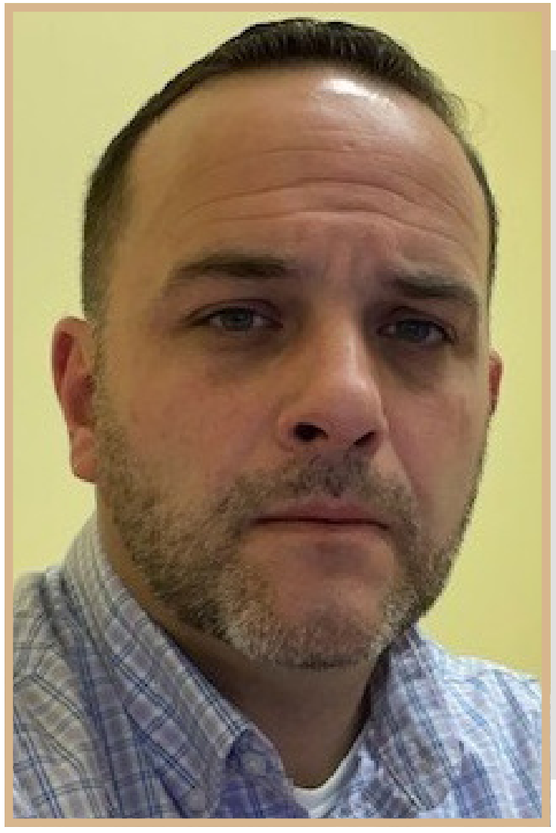
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Oct. 2026 | Volume 15



EDSI.com

Introducing This Month's Issue



Click to hear from our Regional Director of Operations Nicholas Shirk as he introduces the October edition of *National Appeal Local Feel* and speaks on EDSI's commitment to sharing its best practices, innovations and latest updates across all our regions.

Awards & Accolades

Celebrating Success: Adult Jobseekers Turn Opportunity Into Employment

North Central Connecticut

Behind every successful employment outcome is a story of determination, perseverance, and the right support at the right time.

Capital Workforce Partners recently celebrated its 2026 Adult Jobseekers Award recipients, recognizing individuals whose workforce journeys demonstrate the transformative impact of opportunity, guidance, and support.

This year's honorees – Jameika Pegeus, Liliana Isabel Pareja Roca, Gerald Thomas, and Anna Zapata – each took important steps toward their career goals through the American Job Center network. With access to career guidance, training, and workforce resources, they were able to overcome challenges, build their skills, and secure meaningful employment.

Their next chapters include opportunities with employers across a range of industries:

- **Jameika Pegeus joined Trinity Health Of New England.**
- **Liliana Isabel Pareja Roca joined First Choice Health Centers.**
- **Gerald Thomas and Anna Zapata both accepted positions with Pursuit Aerospace.**



But these accomplishments represent more than the completion of a training program or the acceptance of a job offer. Successful workforce development often means staying alongside individuals through the challenging moments between identifying a goal and achieving it. Career changes can require persistence, encouragement, new skills, and access to the right resources, and having a trusted support system can make all the difference.

The Adult Jobseekers Award celebrates individuals who have faced barriers, embraced new possibilities, remained committed to their goals, and demonstrated the perseverance necessary to move forward. Their stories demonstrate that workforce development can absolutely lead to tangible outcomes: new skills, new opportunities, and meaningful employment.

Their accomplishments also illustrate the broader impact of the American Job Center network. When individuals have access to career services, training, and professionals who continue to support them along the way, they gain more than a pathway to employment. They gain the tools, confidence, and connections to build their futures. Congratulations to the 2026 Adult Jobseekers Award recipients! Their stories are a powerful reminder of what can happen when opportunity meets determination and sustained support.





EDSI CEO Kevin Schnieders Recognized as One of Corp! Magazine's 2026 Michigan Inspiring Leaders



EDSI is proud to announce that Chief Servant Leader Kevin Schnieders has been named one of **Corp! Magazine's 2026 Michigan Inspiring Leaders**, an honor recognizing exceptional professionals who are making a meaningful impact across Michigan's business and nonprofit communities.

The annual recognition celebrates visionary leaders whose influence extends beyond organizational success to strengthen workplaces, industries and communities throughout the state. Honorees will be featured in Corp! Magazine's special August edition and recognized during an awards celebration in Detroit alongside Michigan's Most Valuable Professionals, Entrepreneurs and Young Professionals.

For more than four decades, Kevin has championed a leadership philosophy centered on service, continuous improvement and investing in people. Under his leadership, EDSI has grown into a nationally recognized workforce development and





consulting organization, helping individuals build meaningful careers while supporting employers, educators and community partners with innovative workforce solutions.

Kevin's belief that leadership begins with service has shaped EDSI's culture and long-term success. By empowering employees, fostering strong partnerships and maintaining an unwavering commitment to client success, he has cultivated an organization known for delivering measurable impact in communities across the country.

"Leadership is service—and service takes courage," Kevin often says, a philosophy reflected in EDSI's mission-driven approach to workforce development and organizational excellence.

This recognition underscores not only Kevin's influence as a leader, but also the collective commitment of the EDSI team to creating opportunities that strengthen individuals, organizations and communities.

Congratulations to Kevin on this well-deserved honor and for continuing to inspire others through purpose-driven leadership.



Macomb / St. Clair Team Shines at Michigan Works! Annual Conference

Macomb / St. Clair, Michigan

Workforce professionals from across the state gathered at the recent Michigan Works! Annual Conference to share best practices, strengthen partnerships and discuss innovative strategies for advancing Michigan's workforce.

Among those in attendance were members of EDSI's Michigan Works! Macomb/St. Clair team, who represented the organization while engaging with colleagues from across the workforce development network.





The conference also brought special recognition for **Jill Kotchi**, Program Manager with EDSI's Young Professionals team, who was named the **Macomb / St. Clair Michigan Works! Shining Star Award** recipient.

Presented annually by Michigan Works!, the Shining Star Award honors one individual from each local workforce agency whose dedication and service have made a meaningful difference for job seekers and employers. Kotchi's commitment to helping young people overcome barriers, connect with opportunities and achieve their goals has had a lasting impact throughout Macomb and St. Clair counties.

Congratulations to Jill on this well-earned recognition and for her continued leadership in helping create pathways to success for the next generation of talent.

Celebrating the People Behind the Mission: SLATE Honors Unsung Heroes

St. Louis, Missouri



Workforce development is ultimately about people – and the dedicated professionals who serve job seekers and communities every day play a critical role in creating pathways to opportunity.

Recently, the St. Louis Agency on Training & Employment (SLATE) came together to celebrate the employees whose compassion, leadership, and commitment make that mission possible.

The celebration featured a special recognition from the City of St. Louis, which proclaimed **June 17, 2026, as SLATE Unsung Heroes Day**. The occasion honored team members whose extraordinary dedication provides hope, guidance, and support to clients navigating challenging circumstances, including health and mental health barriers.

The event also recognized employees across multiple award categories, celebrated the retirement of a longtime team member, and reflected on the first year of leadership for SLATE's Executive Director. Team members were also recognized in celebration of Father's Day.

While awards and milestones provided opportunities to celebrate, the heart of the event was a reminder of the importance of the people who show up each day to serve their community.

As SLATE reflected on the spirit of Juneteenth, the celebration offered an opportunity to consider the powerful connection between service, leadership, and opportunity. Workforce development organizations have the ability to help individuals overcome barriers, discover new possibilities, and build more secure futures – and that impact begins with the people doing the work.

For EDSI, partnerships with organizations like SLATE demonstrate what can happen when workforce professionals, community leaders, and service organizations share a commitment to helping people move forward.

Congratulations to the SLATE team on this well-deserved recognition – and thank you for the compassion, dedication, and heart you bring to your community every day.









Program Highlights & Innovations

Career Corps: Paid Work Experience in Action

Chester County, Pennsylvania

For young people, the opportunity to experience a real workplace can be the difference between wondering what a career might look like and discovering what is possible.

In Pennsylvania, The Chester County One-Stop reached a significant milestone this summer with **five Paid Work Experience (PWE) placements – the highest number of placements the team has seen in a long time**.

The success reflects a collaborative approach that brings together youth, workforce professionals, employers and community partners.



Youth enter Career Corps through school outreach, partner referrals and walk-ins at the Chester County One-Stop. Before beginning a PWE, participants work with staff on goal planning, resumes, career assessments and Career Kickstart training covering workplace communication, time management and professional expectations.

The team then works closely with Business Services Representatives to identify employers and make thoughtful matches based on participants' interests, skills and circumstances.

The result is a range of meaningful experiences.

At PECO, three young men gained exposure to STEM fields including data, drone operation and electrical work. Despite significant transportation challenges, all three arrived on time every day and completed a final presentation.

At Good Works, Inc., participant Ramal Jackson gained maintenance and electrical experience. His work ethic garnered recognition in the nonprofit's newsletter. This attracted a local electrical contractor, who is providing a real pathway to an electrical apprenticeship program.

At Open Hearth, Kayla gained administrative experience that expanded her career possibilities beyond the custodial roles she had previously held.

Other placements included Exton Senior Living, where a PWE made a lasting impact, and the SPCA's Critter Camp, where a participant was paid to do the things she loves most, while discovering a natural talent for teaching others.

The support continues throughout each placement. Youth receive regular check-ins, while employers participate in endpoint evaluations focused on attendance, communication, teamwork and skill development.

For Career Corps, PWE is about more than placing young people in jobs. It's about creating opportunities that help participants recognize their strengths, build confidence and explore careers – while giving employers a meaningful role in developing the next generation of talent.

Click here to read the entire article on our blog.

Strengthening Workforce Connections in the Lehigh Valley

Lehigh Valley, Pennsylvania

Lehigh Valley's One-Stop team, in partnership with Workforce Board Lehigh Valley, went into overdrive this summer to grow awareness and connect more local residents to workforce services.

In August, Lehigh Valley's awareness work was highly promotional and outreach-oriented—bringing employers, job seekers, training providers, and community partners together through job fairs, Job Huts, workshops, and hands-on career services.

In September, the effort transitioned into sustained engagement, with a strong emphasis on helping people actually use one-stop resources: improving resumes, practicing interviews, developing LinkedIn profiles, exploring training, connecting with employers, and accessing specialized services.

The full calendar of services offered can be found here.









Supporting Safer, Stronger Communities

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

EDSI's Pushing Progress Philly team attended the 24 Hours of Peace community event in Newark, NJ in August. This event provided opportunity for team members to connect with other violence interrupters and discuss ways to engage community, reduce gun violence, and grow economic mobility in those we serve.





Prison to Prosperity: Creating Pathways to a New Beginning

St. Louis City, Missouri

For 14 residents of the St. Louis City Justice Center, completing the Prison to Prosperity (P2P) program represented more than the end of a 10-week course. It marked a step toward a new chapter.

In July and August, the first 2026 P2P cohort celebrated graduation after completing an intensive program designed to help participants prepare for successful reentry and their return to the workforce. The program is a collaboration between the City of St. Louis' Division of Corrections and the St. Louis Agency on Training and Employment (SLATE).

Led by SLATE team members Eric Wilson, Luveta Hunt and Shannon Johnson, and EDSI One-Stop Operator Rebecca Ritter, P2P combines workforce preparation with personal growth. Participants explore topics including communication, emotional regulation, stress management, healthy relationships, goal setting, financial literacy, career exploration and job readiness.

At the heart of the program is a focus on the head, heart and hands, encouraging participants to reflect on their experiences, develop healthier decision-making skills, build confidence and gain practical skills they can apply when they return to their communities.

The transformation happens gradually throughout the 10-week program. The first weeks focus on paperwork, introductions and building a foundation for the experience. By the third week, participants begin to build trust in the process and feel more comfortable opening up about their experiences. By week 10, facilitators can see and hear the changes taking place as participants begin applying what they have learned. The impact can extend beyond the classroom, with participants sharing lessons and modeling new skills for others in the facility.

For graduate Michael Hollins, the experience provided an opportunity for reflection and personal growth. "The program really helped me to look at things differently. It taught me how to forgive myself. I never had an experience like this program." Hollins also described how the lessons extended beyond the classroom, with participants sharing what they learned with others in their housing units.

Shannon Johnson, SLATE's Director of Strategic Partnerships & Initiatives, described the program's emphasis on accountability, mindset and continued growth:

"The Prison 2 Prosperity program has been truly transformational. We created a space of accountability where men can shift their mindsets and equip themselves with the tools for lifelong success. Who we were in the past does not dictate who we are becoming. Everyone has made a change or pivot in their lives no matter how big or small, we all have. I am incredibly proud of our cohorts' dedication to change, and we remain committed to walking alongside them on their journeys."

That spirit of connection is an important part of P2P. While the program begins before release, SLATE's support continues afterward. Graduates can work with SLATE and community partners to connect with employment opportunities, workforce resources and other services that can help support their transition back into the community.



This video highlights P2P's focus on meeting participants where they are, creating opportunities for reflection and growth, and connecting graduates with the training and employment resources they need to successfully reenter the workforce and build greater self-sufficiency.

The impact of the first cohort was evident even before graduation. Interest in future classes is already growing among residents at the Justice Center.

"The guys are already asking when the next class will start," said graduate Ralph Quinn. "They always wanted to know what we learned each week, and now they want to take it themselves."

That enthusiasm reflects what makes P2P meaningful: the opportunity to build skills, confidence and a sense of purpose before returning to the community – and to have continued support as participants put those skills into practice.

With the first cohort now complete, SLATE and the Division of Corrections are planning future cohorts, creating additional opportunities for residents to prepare for employment, strengthen their lives and build a path forward.

Through Prison to Prosperity, SLATE is helping turn reentry preparation into opportunity – one person, one skill and one new beginning at a time.

Editorial Note: This article was based on information shared in SLATE's official newsletter update for Quarter 3, 2026, Issue 1.

Building Skills Through Summer Work: SEAL Students Visit Mission of Yahweh

Gulf Coast, Texas

This summer, students with disabilities participating in the **Summer Earn and Learn (SEAL)** program gained valuable workplace experience through paid work opportunities with local employers. One of those worksites was **Mission of Yahweh**, which welcomed multiple SEAL participants this summer.

Mission of Yahweh was among the Workforce Solutions employer worksites supporting SEAL participants, with approximately five to six students placed at the organization. The partnership gave students an opportunity to gain experience in a real workplace while developing skills that can support their future employment goals.







SEAL is designed to help students with disabilities build work experience and explore employment opportunities during the summer. Through partnerships with employers across the region, participants can gain exposure to the workplace and develop skills that can help prepare them for the next step in their careers.

The visit to Mission of Yahweh highlighted the value of employer partnerships in creating opportunities for young people with disabilities. By opening their workplace to SEAL participants, employers like Mission of Yahweh play an important role in helping students gain experience and build confidence as they prepare for the workforce.

Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast thanks Mission of Yahweh for serving as a SEAL employer worksite and supporting students as they take steps toward their employment goals.

Special Projects

Career Source Capital Region: Building Connections, Creating Opportunities

Tallahassee, Florida

On July 1, EDSI proudly launched workforce development services across North Florida Career Source Capital Region in Florida, serving the communities of Gadsden, Jefferson, Leon, and Wakulla counties. This exciting expansion marks an important opportunity to connect job seekers, youth, and employers with the resources and support they need to thrive.



Today, services are delivered through two comprehensive career centers located in Leon and Wakulla counties, as well as two community access points hosted through partner locations in Gadsden and Jefferson counties. While the region spans both urban and rural communities, our team is committed to ensuring that every customer has access to quality workforce services. We are especially excited to expand our reach within the rural areas of the region by leveraging virtual service delivery, making support more accessible than ever before.





Through programs including Adult and Dislocated Worker (ADW), WIOA Adult, WIOA Youth, and Welfare Transition (WT)/SNAP, our team is helping individuals gain skills, find employment, and create pathways toward long-term success. While our doors officially opened just a few months ago, our team of 20 professionals has already embraced the EDSI culture. Every day, they demonstrate our values by showing up with positivity, supporting one another, and providing exceptional service to every customer who walks through our doors.

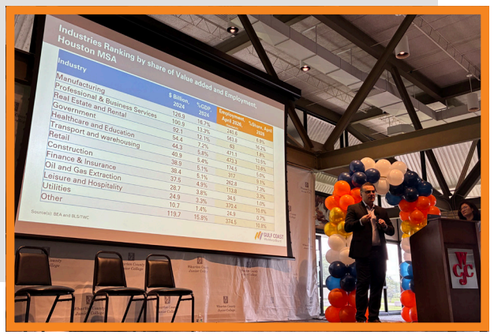
The first two months have been a whirlwind of activity and growth. July and August were filled with onboarding, HR training, role-specific development, and Value Stream Mapping sessions designed to establish strong foundations for operational excellence. Amid the busy schedules, the team also found time to build connections and celebrate together, even enjoying a little snow cone fun along the way.

A key contributor to our successful launch has been the incredible support provided by our transition team. Their willingness to step in wherever needed has helped ensure continuity of service while new operations were established. Whether providing guidance, sharing expertise, or simply lending a helping hand, their dedication has embodied the EDSI spirit of collaboration and service. We are incredibly grateful for the energy, positivity, and commitment they have brought to this transition and to the communities we now proudly serve.

As we continue to grow throughout the North Florida Capital Region, we look forward to strengthening partnerships, expanding access to services, and creating even more opportunities for the individuals, families, and businesses that call these communities home.

Texas Gulf Coast Workforce Summit Highlights the Future of Construction Workforce Development

Wharton, Texas



Regional collaboration took center stage at the 2026 Texas Gulf Coast Workforce Summit, where employers, educators, workforce professionals, industry leaders, and community partners gathered at Wharton County Junior College to address one common goal: building a stronger workforce for the future.

This year's summit placed a special emphasis on construction, one of the Gulf Coast region's fastest-growing industries. Through engaging presentations, panel discussions, and networking opportunities, attendees explored how strategic partnerships can strengthen talent pipelines, prepare individuals for high-demand careers, and support the long-term success of local businesses.

Throughout the event, participants gained valuable insights into current labor market trends, workforce challenges, and innovative solutions designed to meet the evolving needs of the construction industry. Discussions focused on creating stronger connections between education, workforce development, and employers to ensure students and job seekers are equipped with the skills businesses need today and in the years ahead.

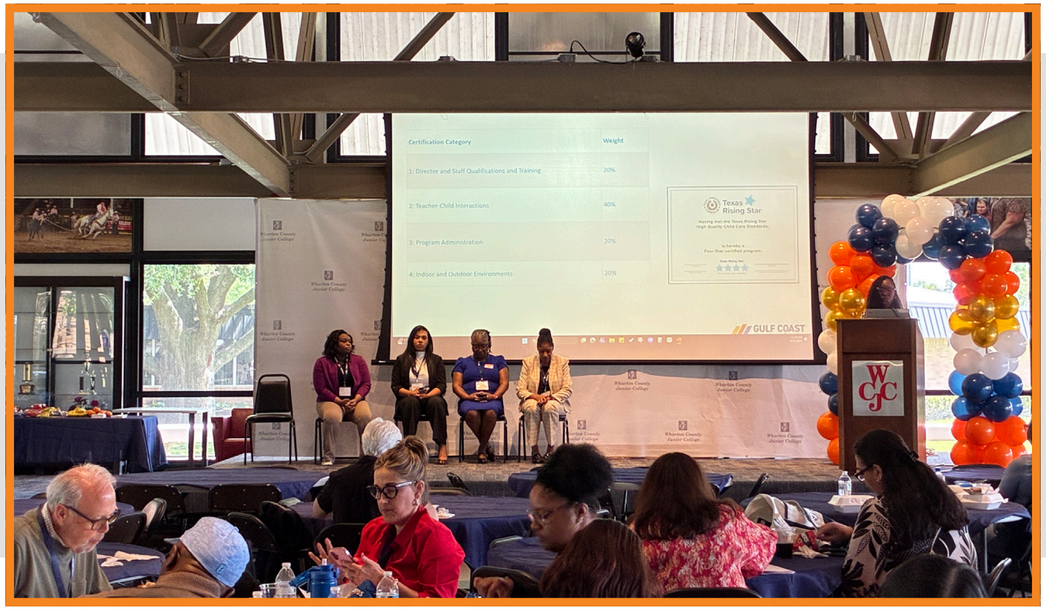
A major highlight of the summit was the focus on Registered Apprenticeship Programs as a proven workforce development strategy. Industry experts shared practical guidance on establishing apprenticeship programs, leveraging available resources, and creating structured career pathways that benefit both employers and workers. These



conversations reinforced the importance of investing in hands-on training that leads to sustainable careers while helping employers build a reliable pipeline of skilled talent.

Beyond the educational sessions, the summit provided valuable opportunities for attendees to exchange ideas, strengthen existing partnerships, and establish new collaborations. Representatives from business, education, workforce organizations, and community agencies engaged in meaningful conversations about removing barriers to employment, expanding access to training, and creating workforce solutions that support regional economic growth.
The event demonstrated that workforce development is most effective when organizations work together toward a shared vision. By aligning education, industry, and workforce initiatives, the Texas Gulf Coast continues to build a stronger foundation for economic prosperity while creating opportunities for individuals to achieve meaningful careers.

Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast extends its appreciation to every employer, educator, speaker, partner, and attendee whose participation made this year's Workforce Summit a success. Together, these collaborative efforts are helping shape the future of construction and strengthening the workforce that will drive the Gulf Coast economy for years to come.



Responding Together: EDSI Supports Regional Rapid Response for JBS Workers

Montgomery County, Pennsylvania

When JBS USA announced plans to close its Souderton, Pennsylvania beef processing facility, the scale and geographic reach of the announcement called for a response extending far beyond a single workforce area. The original Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) notice identified 1,742 potentially impacted employees who commuted to Souderton from across southeastern Pennsylvania, including significant numbers from Philadelphia and communities throughout Montgomery, Bucks, Berks, Delaware, and Lehigh counties. What began as the closure of a single facility quickly became a regional workforce challenge requiring an equally regional response.

Working alongside MontcoWorks, Pennsylvania's Rapid Response team, Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations (BWPO) staff, local Workforce Development Boards, One-Stop Career Center partners, JBS, and others, EDSI helped mobilize staff and resources from across the region.

Early planning identified challenges beyond the number of workers affected. Language, literacy, and digital-literacy barriers could make navigating unemployment benefits, career center registration, and the job-search process more difficult. The response needed to be flexible, accessible, and capable of connecting workers with resources in their own communities.

EDSI Teams Step Up Across the Region

EDSI operations team members serving Montgomery, Bucks, Berks, Philadelphia, Delaware Counties, and the Lehigh Valley stepped in alongside state and local workforce partners to support three major pre-layoff efforts: individualized resume consultations, a regional job fair, and onsite Rapid Response information sessions.

During several days of onsite resume consultations, workforce professionals met one-on-one with JBS employees to translate their experience into skills and qualifications prospective employers could understand. Resources were developed to help staff understand highly specific plant positions and identify transferable skills, equipment experience, certifications, cross-training, leadership experience, and accomplishments. In total, 195 JBS employees received individualized resume assistance.

Their next chapters include opportunities with employers across a range of industries:

- **1,742 workers originally identified as potentially impacted**
- **195 workers received one-on-one resume assistance**
- **50 employers participated in the regional job fair**
- **700–800 impacted workers estimated to have attended the job fair**
- **550 workers participated in onsite Rapid Response information sessions**
- **400 positions ultimately preserved when JBS revised its plans**

The response moved from preparation to opportunity on August 1 with a regional job fair near the Souderton facility. Fifty employers participated, giving JBS employees an opportunity to connect directly with companies that were actively hiring. While an exact attendance count was not collected, staff onsite estimated that approximately 700 to 800 impacted workers attended. EDSI staff supported the event alongside workforce partners, helping workers navigate the fair and connect with career center resources.

Bringing Rapid Response Services Onsite

From August 4–7, the effort returned to JBS for onsite Rapid Response information sessions. At each scheduled time, three sessions were conducted simultaneously in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole to make critical information accessible to the diverse workforce. Employees received guidance on Unemployment Compensation and learned how to connect with career center services in their home communities.

EDSI coordinated staffing for the career center portion of the sessions, bringing together team members from across its southeastern Pennsylvania operations while working closely with BWPO and other workforce partners. Approximately 550 JBS employees participated over the four-day effort.



Adapting and Continuing the Response

As onsite Rapid Response activities concluded, JBS announced plans to reinvest in the Souderton facility and preserve approximately 400 positions. While welcome news, the majority of the workforce originally identified in the WARN notice was still impacted.

The response then shifted from large-scale onsite activities to individualized outreach through workers' local career center offices. Information collected during the Rapid Response sessions was organized by workers' home communities and shared with appropriate workforce teams to support connections to employment opportunities and available services. Regional partners are also coordinating additional assistance for workers with limited English proficiency who may face language barriers during that outreach.

The JBS Rapid Response demonstrated the strength of a workforce system willing to work across organizational and geographic boundaries. EDSI employees from six service areas stepped beyond their normal program and geographic boundaries to provide additional capacity where it was needed, while working alongside partners throughout the region.

For workers experiencing an unexpected career transition, county lines and program structures should not stand between them and the help they need. The JBS response demonstrated what is possible when EDSI and its partners work across those boundaries to bring services to workers when and where they are needed.



Empowering Employees to Turn Ideas into Impact

Jamie Boyes, EDSI Digital Transformation & Technology



Over the past year, EDSI has been exploring how artificial intelligence, automation, and digital tools can support our mission of helping individuals, employers, and communities succeed. What started as a series of technology initiatives has evolved into something even more exciting: a growing movement of employee-driven innovation.

Across the organization, staff are discovering new ways to solve problems, streamline processes, and improve customer experiences using technology. Many of these solutions don't begin in IT. They begin with frontline staff, managers, trainers, workforce professionals, and support teams who see an opportunity to make work easier and outcomes better.

This emerging group of innovators is often called "citizen developers" - employees who use accessible technology tools to create solutions, automate repetitive tasks, improve reporting, and solve business challenges without needing traditional software development experience.

At EDSI, the rise of citizen developers is helping transform how ideas move from concept to reality.

One of the driving forces behind this movement has been the growth of EDSI's AI and innovation community. Through the AI Guilds initiative, employees from across programs, regions, and departments regularly come together to share ideas, discuss challenges, and explore practical ways technology can support their daily work. Rather than focusing solely on technology, the Guilds emphasize collaboration, experimentation, and real-world problem solving. As a result, innovative ideas are no longer isolated within individual teams. They are being shared, refined, and expanded across the organization.

Many employees are already using AI tools to help draft documents, summarize information, brainstorm ideas, conduct research, improve training materials, and

streamline routine administrative work. Others are exploring workflow automation, data visualization, and reporting enhancements that reduce manual effort while increasing consistency and accuracy.

At the same time, EDSI's Digital Transformation and IT teams continue to develop and support enterprise solutions that provide a foundation for innovation. Tools such as the Resume Builder, AI Resume Grader, and WIOA Navigator demonstrate how technology can be designed specifically to support workforce development while allowing staff to focus more of their time on coaching, engagement, and customer service. These solutions are not intended to replace human expertise. Instead, they help remove administrative burden so employees can spend more time doing what they do best: serving people.

Education remains an important part of this journey. Throughout the year, staff have participated in training focused on AI fundamentals, responsible AI use, prompt engineering, automation, and practical business applications. These learning opportunities help employees build confidence while ensuring innovation remains aligned with EDSI's values, policies, and commitment to quality service.

Perhaps the most significant outcome of these efforts is a shift in mindset. Technology is no longer viewed exclusively as something that is delivered to employees. Increasingly, employees are becoming active participants in improving how work gets done. Ideas that once remained local workarounds are becoming organizational solutions. Challenges that once required extensive manual effort are being simplified through collaboration, creativity, and innovation.

The future of work at EDSI will continue to be shaped by new technologies, but our greatest advantage remains our people. As citizen developers, innovators, and problem-solvers continue to emerge across the organization, EDSI is building a culture where innovation is not limited to a single department. It is a capability shared by everyone.

Technology may provide the tools, but it is our employees who are driving transformation.

Why The Strongest Employer Partnerships Start With A Problem, Not A Pitch

Kimberly Glenn, Managing Director-Innovative Learning Solutions



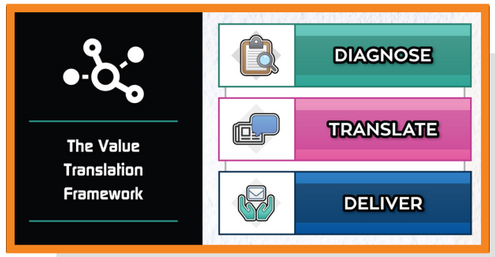
Picture a workforce professional sitting across the desk from a plant manager. Maybe she runs an adult education program. Maybe she's a business services rep from the local American Job Center. She opens with what she's got to offer: the funding stream, the cohort structure, the partnership she's hoping to build. He listens, asks if it's free, and thanks her for her time. Six weeks later, his production lines are still short-staffed, and her candidates are still looking for someone to hire them.

Nothing about that meeting was wrong exactly. The program was real, the funding was real, the candidates were ready to work. What went sideways was the frame. She walked in with something to sell. He was sitting on a problem. Those are two different conversations, and they rarely end the same way, whether you're carrying a Title I job seeker caseload or a Title II adult education roster.

That distinction is the foundation of a body of work I've spent more than two decades building through workforce and adult education consulting, and field-testing with practitioners in Connecticut, Michigan, and through a national webinar with the Association of Adult Literacy Professional Developers. We call it the Value Translation Framework, and the idea behind it is simple: employers are not deciding whether to support workforce development or adult education. They are deciding how to solve operational problems that cost them money every quarter, including turnover, slow ramp-up time, and unfilled frontline roles. Whether the candidate pipeline behind you sits inside a workforce board, an adult education program, or both, the practitioner who walks in ready to solve that problem gets a different meeting than the one who walks in ready to sell a program.

Three moves, in order

The framework asks practitioners, career navigators, and business services teams to work through three steps before they ever pick up the phone.



First, diagnose the employer's actual problem. This is research, not outreach. Roles posted for six or more weeks, repeated postings for the same position, a recent expansion or contract win: these are free, public signals of where an employer's pain is concentrated. The goal isn't a full diagnosis. It's one specific, observable claim to open the conversation with.

Second, translate program language into operations language. Program language describes what we do. Operations language describes what candidates deliver for the employer. "We offer digital literacy classes" becomes "our candidates arrive digitally ready, which reduces the technology onboarding time your supervisors currently absorb." Same activity, different frame, and the frame decides which department picks up the phone, whether that candidate came through a WIOA Title I referral or an adult education IET cohort.

Third, put it in one sentence. A practitioner who can complete that sentence honestly has something an employer can act on. A practitioner who gets stuck on one part has found the gap to close before the outreach begins.

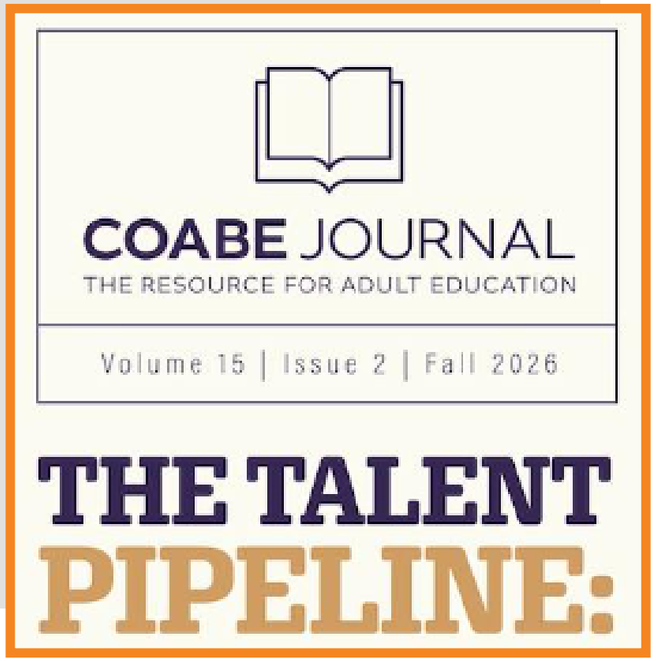
We help [employer type] solve [specific problem] by providing [candidates with specific preparation], which results in [measurable outcome].

Why now, for both sides of the house

The case for this shift has gotten stronger, not softer, and the timing connects workforce boards and adult education programs more directly than it has in years. Manufacturers have named attracting and retaining talent their top business challenge every quarter since late 2017 (Manufacturing Institute, 2024). Restaurant and hospitality turnover runs close to 80% a year (Homebase, 2025). CNA turnover in long-term care sits above 40% (EA Workforce, 2025). And as of last year, WIOA's Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator now measures retention with the same employer, a shared indicator across all six WIOA core programs, Title I and Title II alike (89 Fed. Reg. 13814, 2024). That is a rare alignment. A business services team talking to a hospital administrator and an adult education coordinator talking to the same hospital administrator are, for the first time, reporting toward the same federal measure. A practitioner who talks about candidate retention is speaking to that shared measure and to the employer across the table in the same sentence. The coordinated effort here is key, and if done in partnership, is an excellent opportunity to build strong employer pipelines.

The same instinct, applied earlier

If this sounds like an extension of how we already work, it is. Showing up prepared with the employer's problem already understood, not a program to pitch, is the same instinct behind how we show up, smile, and support in everything else we build. This framework is part of the same body of work as BRIDGE, our employer engagement training package, and it reflects what two decades of sitting across the table from plant managers, hospital administrators, and restaurant operators, on both the workforce development and adult education sides of the table, has taught us about what actually gets a meeting scheduled.



A full academic treatment of the framework, including the research base, the WIOA policy implications, and worked examples across healthcare, hospitality, and manufacturing, will publish in *COABE Journal's Fall issue*. This is the shorter version for everyone across workforce development and adult education who lives this work every day: the candidates are already there, the employers are already looking, and the job in front of all of us, no matter which side of the WIOA title we sit on, is the translation that connects them.

Job Fairs & Conferences

Building Tomorrow's Workforce: Blue Water Building Trades Career Fair Connects Students to Opportunity

Macomb / St. Clair, Michigan

For the fifth year, the Blue Water Building Trades Career Fair has brought together students, educators, employers, and workforce partners with one shared goal: strengthening the future skilled trades workforce across Michigan's Blue Water and Thumb regions.



See the Blue Water Building Trades Career Fair in action and hear firsthand how hands-on career exploration is helping connect students to high-demand opportunities across the region.







The event was created in response to a growing shortage of skilled trades talent and a recognition that many rural students lacked access to large-scale career exploration opportunities available in more urban areas. By hosting the event in St. Clair County, organizers made hands-on career exploration accessible to students across the region.

A collaborative effort between the Blue Water Building Trades Association, Macomb/St. Clair Michigan Works!, St. Clair RESA, MUST Construction Careers, and the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO), the fair introduces students in grades 9 through 12 to high-demand careers that help build and maintain the nation's critical infrastructure, including roads, bridges, energy systems, water facilities, and more.

EDSI's Young Professionals team also supported the event as volunteers, helping create a welcoming and engaging experience for participating students and employers.

What sets the event apart is its immersive, hands-on approach. Students can climb aboard heavy equipment, test tools used on job sites, participate in virtual simulations, and engage directly with industry professionals. Organizers consistently find that these interactive experiences are what resonate most with attendees, helping students better understand career options and the pathways required to pursue them.

The fair also serves as a direct connection to employment and apprenticeship opportunities. Each year, employers meet with graduating seniors who are ready to enter the workforce, creating valuable opportunities for both job seekers and industry partners.

Having welcomed more than 1,100 students annually from four counties in recent years, organizers hope to continue expanding participation and ultimately make attendance a standard part of every St. Clair County student's high school experience, ensuring future generations leave school with a clearer vision for career success.

Connecting Chester County Job Seekers With Local Employers

Exton, Pennsylvania



The Chester County One-Stop recently hosted its monthly Job Fair at its Exton location, bringing local employers, job seekers and workforce partners together for meaningful career connections.

Participating employers represented a range of industries and opportunities, including healthcare, education and human services, manufacturing, engineering, retail and more. Events like these give job seekers the chance to meet directly with employers, learn about available positions and explore potential career pathways-all in one place.

The Chester County One-Stop team continues to create opportunities for job seekers and employers to connect, strengthening the local workforce and helping individuals take their next step toward meaningful employment. We're grateful to the employers who invested their time in the event and to the job seekers who came ready to explore new possibilities.





Good Jobs Challenge Job Fair Connects Southeastern Pennsylvania Job Seekers with Career Opportunities

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



Since its launch in late 2022, the Good Jobs Challenge (GJC) of Southeastern Pennsylvania, led by Philadelphia Works Inc., has connected thousands of job seekers to training opportunities while strengthening workforce pipelines in healthcare, life sciences, energy, and infrastructure. EDSI has played key roles as both the communications consultant and support services team.



EDSI's GJC staff partnered with the Philadelphia One-Stop team to host a Good Jobs Challenge Job Fair out of the One-Stop center in center city on 8/21/26, bringing together job seekers, employers, and training providers to create meaningful employment and career-development opportunities.

21 employers and 3 training providers attended the event. A total of 645 job seekers registered for the event, with 268 participants ultimately served. Of those served, 73 (27%) were pre-registered participants, while 195 (73%) were walk-in participants, demonstrating strong interest and engagement from job seekers in the community.

Job seekers shared positive feedback about the event, highlighting the opportunity to connect directly with employers, learn about available career pathways, and access information about training opportunities. Employers also expressed their satisfaction with the event and the strong level of engagement from job seekers. The general consensus among employers can be summed up by one participant's feedback:

> ***It was an amazing, well-organized event, with a good, busy flow of job seekers."***

The success of the job fair is already producing tangible outcomes. There have been two confirmed hires with AmeriHealth Caritas resulting from participants who attended the job fair with more outcomes to come. These hires demonstrate the value of bringing employers, training providers, and job seekers together and highlight the Good Jobs Challenge's continued impact on connecting participants to quality employment opportunities.

Overall, the Good Jobs Challenge Job Fair was a successful workforce development event that generated strong employer participation, significant job seeker engagement, and promising employment outcomes. The event further strengthened partnerships between the Philadelphia One-Stop, employers, training providers, and the Good Jobs Challenge, supporting the broader goal of building stronger and more accessible workforce pipelines across Southeastern Pennsylvania.

In the News

The Philadelphia Tribune recently featured the challenges and opportunities facing Philadelphia-area job seekers and highlighted workforce development efforts across the region.







The event welcomed **395 participants and 28 employers**, giving job seekers the chance to meet directly with hiring representatives, learn about career opportunities, and make connections across an industry that plays an important role in communities throughout the region.

Click here to see the event in action by watching the video.

Fueling Futures: Connecting Job Seekers to Energy & Utilities Careers

Gulf Coast, Texas

Our Gulf Coast region brought employers and job seekers together at the **Fueling Futures: Energy & Utilities Job Fair** in September, creating opportunities to explore careers across electric power, renewable energy, natural gas, water and wastewater, engineering, and field operations.



Missouri Governor's Conference Highlights Workforce Impact

Southeast Missouri

EDSI Missouri team members had an opportunity to learn and connect at the 68th Annual Missouri Governor's Conference on Economic Development in Kansas City. EDSI representatives, Linda Fitzgerald, Cathy Harris, and Samantha Terry joined workforce and economic development leaders from across the state to share ideas, strengthen partnerships and gain new perspectives on the work happening throughout Missouri.

A highlight of the conference was the recognition of Certified Work Ready Communities throughout EDSI's Southeast Missouri region. Missouri's Certified Work Ready Community initiative brings together workforce development, education, employers, economic development and community leaders to strengthen local

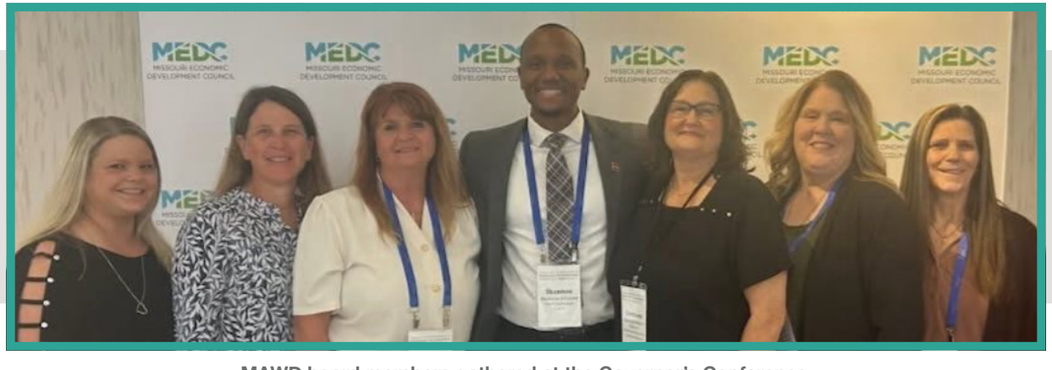


talent pipelines and help ensure workers have the foundational skills employers need. All 13 counties within the Southeast Workforce Development Board's region hold the Certified Work Ready Community designation, reflecting a region-wide commitment to building a skilled workforce and connecting employers with talent.

Linda Fitzgerald was honored to accept the awards alongside Southeast Workforce Development Board Director Gretchen Morse and Board Chair Scott Sattler, recognizing the region's 13 Certified Work Ready Communities. Linda played a key role in supporting the certification efforts across the region, alongside the many workforce, economic development, education, business and community partners who made the achievement possible.

Together, these experiences highlight the Southeast Missouri team's commitment to continuous learning and collaboration. Whether developing new skills through internal training or connecting with partners across the state, our teams continue to find ways to grow their knowledge and strengthen the support they provide to individuals, employers and communities.

Congratulations to the Southeast Missouri team and all the community partners recognized for their continued work and commitment to building stronger communities!



MAWD board members gathered at the Governor's Conference.

Advancing Workforce Solutions in Ocean County

Ocean County, New Jersey

Workforce development plays a vital role in helping businesses grow and residents build meaningful careers. In the latest edition of the Ocean County Business Association Magazine, EDSI's Diana Monti, Ocean County Career Center Operator, shares insights on the power of strong employer partnerships, talent development and community collaboration in creating a thriving local workforce.

The article highlights how workforce organizations can help connect businesses with skilled talent while supporting individuals on their path to long-term career success.



Helping Our Community Work Better, Together

By *Diana Monti*

Ocean County's economy doesn't run on spreadsheets or statistics alone—it runs on people. From healthcare and construction, to logistics, manufacturing, and hospitality, local businesses depend on a workforce that is skilled, adaptable, and ready to meet changing demands. At the same time, residents are looking for pathways that lead to steady careers and long-term security for their families. Ocean County Career Center is the hub where all of these people connect.

Behind the scenes, workforce development in Ocean County follows a national framework known as the American Job Center network. Since 1998, federal workforce policy has emphasized the role of job training and adult education in supporting economic

Click here to read the full story and learn more about the impact of workforce development in Ocean County and the partnerships helping to strengthen the region's economy.

Connecting Job Seekers With Opportunity

Ocean County, New Jersey

Workforce Day brought job seekers, employers and training providers together for a day focused on one thing: connecting people with opportunity.

More than **300 job seeker**s attended the event, meeting directly with **30 employers and five training providers** representing a variety of industries. From healthcare and manufacturing to transportation, banking and more, attendees had the opportunity

to explore career options, ask questions and make face-to-face connections with potential employers.

That personal connection continues to be an important part of the job search. As one employer shared with local news coverage of the event, meeting candidates in person provides an opportunity to put a face to a name, answer questions and give job seekers a better understanding of the company and its available positions.

The event also received coverage from **WOLF/FOX 56**, with EDSI Business Services Representative Matt Giombetti appearing in the segment to share more about the event and the opportunities available to job seekers. Media partnerships like this play an important role in reaching job seekers throughout the community and encouraging them to take advantage of workforce services and hiring events.



Workforce Day was a great example of what can happen when job seekers, employers, training providers and workforce professionals come together around a shared goal: helping people take their next step toward a career.

Regional Partners Unite to Strengthen Business Growth and Workforce Development

Wharton, Texas

Business leaders, workforce partners, and community organizations came together in Wharton for the Chambers in Action: Business Growth Summit, a regional collaboration focused on strengthening businesses and supporting workforce development initiatives.

Hosted at the Wharton Civic Center, the summit connected employers from across Wharton, Bay City, and El Campo with valuable resources from local, state, and federal partners. Attendees participated in networking opportunities, employer panel discussions, and resource sessions covering workforce solutions, apprenticeship opportunities, business services, and economic development support.

Special thanks to all partnering organizations, employers, chambers, and community leaders who helped make this collaborative event a success. Events like these continue to create meaningful connections that support business growth and strengthen our regional workforce.

Multi-Generational Healthcare Career Acceleration Program

Houston, Texas - Fort Bend Center

The Multi-Generational Healthcare Career Acceleration Program is an innovative eight-week workforce initiative designed to help parents pursue careers in healthcare while ensuring their children receive enriching educational support at the same time. By removing common barriers to training, the program



Click here to check out the graduation video.

creates opportunities for families to grow together while preparing parents for careers in one of the region's most in-demand industries.

The most recent cohort enrolled 11 parents, all of whom participated through Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) services, and every participant successfully earned a Certified Nursing Assistant certificate upon program completion. The program also engaged 14 youth, providing a supportive learning environment that allowed parents to focus on their career training while their children participated in age-appropriate educational activities.

Program outcomes demonstrate strong momentum beyond graduation. Mid- and post-program surveys found that 9 of the 11 participants plan to continue their education through WIOA scholarship opportunities. Of those participants, two expressed interest in pursuing additional healthcare certificate programs, while three indicated they are ready to enter the workforce immediately.

Building on the success of the previous cohort, the program continues to demonstrate how a family-centered approach to workforce development can create lasting educational and employment opportunities for both parents and their children.



View a participant's Multi-Generational Healthcare Success Story here.

Success Stories

From the Red Scorpion to a New Career: Mark's Journey to Facilities Maintenance Success

Lancaster, Pennsylvania



When Mark first came to Lancaster One-Stop in May 2026, he was facing an uncertain future. After returning to his community and ending his career as a professional wrestler known as "The Red Scorpion," he found himself wondering what would come next. Like many individuals navigating a major life transition, Mark appeared confident on the surface while privately questioning how his skills and experiences would translate into a new career. He openly shared concerns about his future and admitted he was uncertain about who he was beyond the identity he had built in the wrestling world.

What Mark did not realize at the time was that the same determination, resilience, and willingness to embrace new opportunities that had fueled his success in the ring would also become the foundation for his next chapter. From





the very beginning, he approached every step of the process with focus and purpose. Mark quickly completed the WIOA requirements needed to pursue training opportunities and secured funding to attend Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology. His commitment to building a better future was evident throughout his journey.

While participating in the Career Connections Program, Mark stood out for his professionalism, confidence, and strong interviewing skills. His ability to communicate effectively and present himself with poise reflected the work ethic, discipline, and perseverance he had developed throughout his life and career.
Today, Mark is preparing to graduate from Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology with a certification in Facilities Maintenance. He takes great pride in the knowledge and hands-on experience he has gained through his training. His enthusiasm for learning is reflected in the regular updates and photos he shares with his Career Advisor, highlighting projects, accomplishments, and milestones along the way.

As he looks ahead to his December graduation, Mark is excited to begin the next phase of his career as a Facilities Maintenance Technician. His story is a powerful reminder that while career paths may change, the strengths developed through life's experiences can lead to new opportunities and success. Through perseverance, self-belief, and a willingness to step outside his comfort zone, Mark has transformed uncertainty into a promising future. His journey demonstrates that new beginnings are possible when determination meets opportunity.

Blogs Published

Aligning Skills, Training and Employer Demand Through Job Task Analysis

As industries continue to evolve and skill requirements shift, organizations need more than labor market data to prepare the workforce of tomorrow. EDSI's latest blog explores the value of Job Task Analysis (JTA), a proven approach that identifies the tasks, knowledge and skills required for successful job performance and helps connect employer needs with workforce solutions.

From designing targeted training programs to strengthening career pathways and improving job matching, JTA provides a foundation for building more responsive workforce systems. Discover how EDSI helps employers, workforce development organizations and education partners turn job-level insights into effective workforce strategies.

Click here to read the full blog on EDSI's website.



New Business

New Business Wins

New Jersey

- **Middlesex One-Stop Operator**







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Oct. 2026 Volume 15

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