

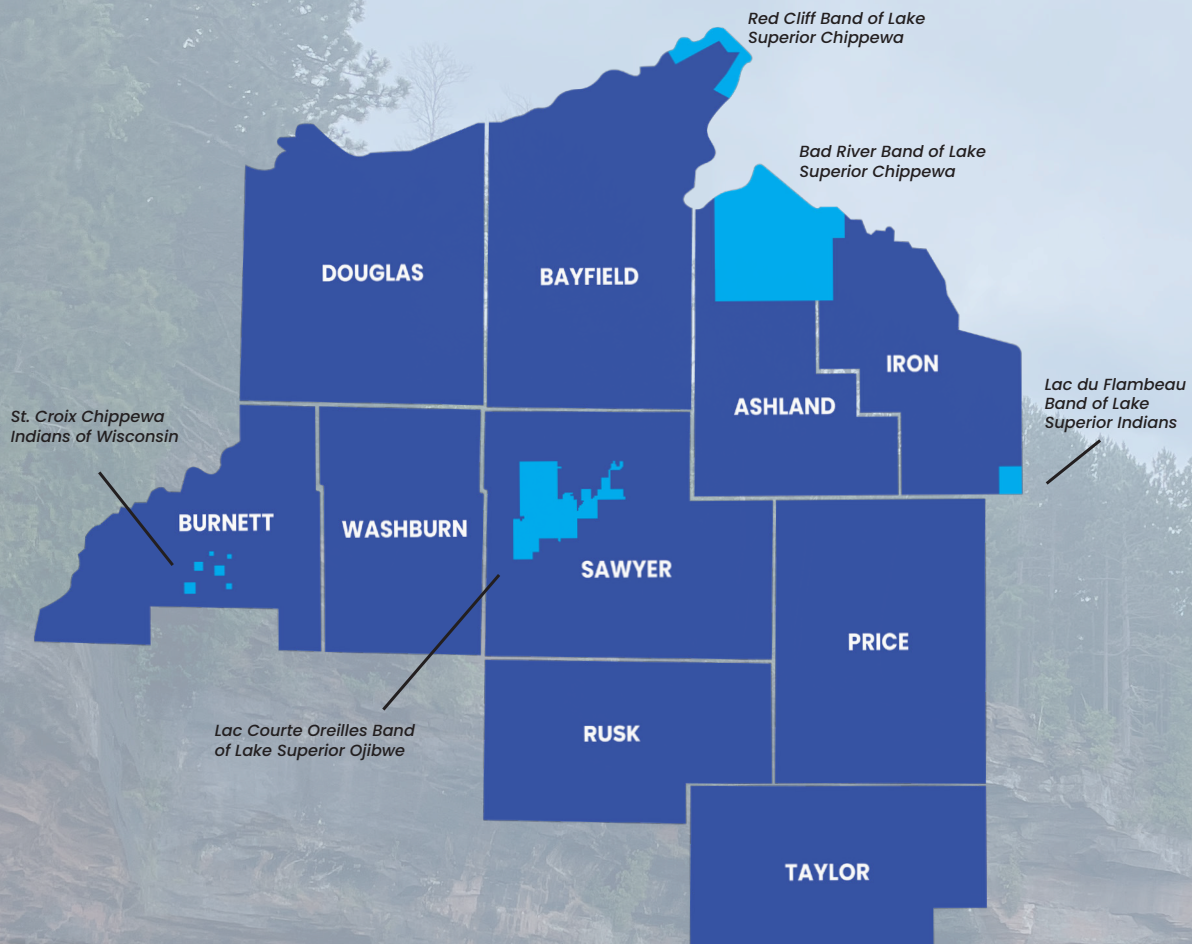


NORTHWEST WISCONSIN WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD

A proud partner of the AmericanJobCenter network



2025 ANNUAL REPORT



OUR REGION

Our communities in Northwest Wisconsin are primarily small and rural, but we cover a diverse range of individuals. We serve ten counties and five of the eleven federally recognized tribal nations in the State of Wisconsin. We are proud to serve this region that we call home and continue to do our part in upskilling individuals to continue contributing to our workforce or learning to enter it for the first time.

COUNTIES

Ashland, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Iron, Price, Rusk, Sawyer, Taylor and Washburn

TRIBAL NATIONS

Mashkiiziibii - Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
Waaswaaganing - Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Indians
Odaawaa-zaaga'iganiing - Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe
Gaa-Miskwaabikaang - Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
Manoominikeshiinyag - St. Croix Chippewa Indians of Wisconsin

A MESSAGE

If there's one thing we know how to do in Northwest Wisconsin, it's get the job done. Whether that means connecting employers to skilled workers, navigating new workforce programs, or just finding a way to hold a meeting when three counties are snowed in — the Northwest Wisconsin Workforce Investment Board always finds a way.

In 2025, our team continued to expand our reach, partnerships, and NWWIB programs. From CDL training, digital navigation, re-entry support and AI innovation, our staff rolled up their sleeves (sometimes literally) and tackled the region's most pressing workforce challenges. But we're not just focused on today — ***we're future-forward***. With major regional construction projects on the horizon and new industries taking shape, we're already building the workforce to meet tomorrow's demands. It's not just about filling jobs. It's about preparing people and communities to thrive in a changing economy.

None of this would be possible without our incredible corporate sponsors and partners who stand beside us — investing in talent, innovation, and opportunity. Their support fuels the programs, trainings, and connections that make this region stronger every day. Getting the job done isn't just a tagline, but a way of life. And this year, we helped hundreds of businesses and job seekers across the region do the same.

So grab your coffee (or your fourth cup, we're not judging), and take a look inside at what happens when determination meets collaboration in Northwest Wisconsin.



Sincerely,
Mari Kay-Nabozny
NWWIB CEO

MISSION

Create, and continue to improve, an innovative and quality strategic direction for the regional workforce development system.

VISION

Northwest Wisconsin will have a system that employers, workers, job seekers, and taxpayers will value as the system of choice for their workforce development needs.

TEAM VALUES

Communication

Efficiency

Levity

Autonomy

**1,494
INDIVIDUALS
RECEIVED
NWWIB SERVICES
IN 2025!**

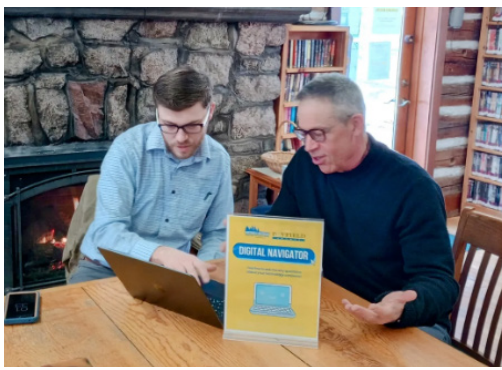


PROGRAMS THAT PERSEVERE

In 2025, we operated eight workforce initiatives—six of which are still going strong today. It feels unauthentic to not share that it was certainly an unpredictable year, with funding cuts at a federal level and shifting priorities, but we're proud to share that the NWWIB persevered and served more than **1,494 individuals**. None of this would have been possible without the dedication and hard work of our incredible staff.

This year, our workforce programs supported a diverse group of people. From those re-entering the community after incarceration with little to their name, to individuals who suddenly found themselves unemployed after years of stable work. Through our CLICK program, we also expanded our impact into communities, helping participants strengthen their digital literacy and build their confidence with technology.

Our work isn't just about overcoming barriers to employment, but about helping individuals regain purpose, skill, and connection. As we reflect on this year of growth and resilience, we invite you to explore how our programs have made an impact across the Northwest Wisconsin region.



CONNECTING LIVES THROUGH INTERNET AND COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE (CLICK)

632 INDIVIDUALS SERVED OVER 1,600 DIGITAL DEVICES LOANED

Digital navigation services and device distribution in Ashland, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Iron, Sawyer, Rusk and Washburn Counties.



FOSTERING OPIOID RECOVERY THROUGH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT (FORWD)

60 INDIVIDUALS SERVED

Serves individuals who may have been impacted by opioid misuse or are interested in pursuing training or employment to provide relief to others impacted by the opioid crisis.



PATHWAYS HOME 4 (PH4)

293 INDIVIDUALS SERVED

Provides incarcerated individuals with 20 to 270 days left to serve on their sentence residing in county jails in our region access to employment opportunities.



WORKER ADVANCEMENT INITIATIVE 2.0 (WAI 2.0)

48 INDIVIDUALS SERVED

Supports individuals entering or re-entering the workforce through short-term training opportunities.



WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT (WIOA)

258 INDIVIDUALS SERVED

Offers adults, dislocated workers, and youth access to services to help obtain and maintain full time employment in a career pathway. This program is provided in collaboration with Northwest Wisconsin CEP.



WINDOWS TO WORK (W2W)

21 INDIVIDUALS SERVED

Designed to help justice-involved individuals re-enter the community after release by providing *pre-* and *post-* release services for employment and life skills.

PROGRAMS WE SAID, "BYE" TO...

These grant programs concluded in 2025 after successfully completing their full grant cycle and fulfilling all funded service years.



GUIDING RESOURCES FOR OUTSTANDING WORK IN EARLY CHILDHOOD STUDIES (GROWS)

34 INDIVIDUALS SERVED

GROWS was written to last for one year. This grant supported aspiring educators and individuals interested in early childhood studies. Program aimed to bridge the gap between obtaining an associates and a bachelors degree in early childhood education.



QUALITY JOBS, EQUITY, STRATEGY AND TRAINING (QUEST)

148 INDIVIDUALS SERVED

QUEST was written to last two years. This grant supported training for individuals working in, returning to, or interested in pursuing an early childhood education and/or childcare career.

AIDING AND BUILDING RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

Partnership transforms what might otherwise be small interventions into life-changing moments. When a public library partners with the NWWIB to offer digital navigation, confidence is restored and careers reopen. When local employers invest in emerging talent, individuals rebuilding after incarceration gain access to meaningful work and new beginnings. When community-based organizations coordinate around transportation, training, housing, and wraparound supports, a person facing crisis can stabilize, heal, and grow.

These stories reflect the beating heart of rural Wisconsin. They remind us that building strong communities is not about any single program. It is about connection. It is about people helping people. And it is about the enduring truth that when communities collaborate, individuals rise—and when individuals rise, communities flourish.

Empowering Through Technology

Nancy is a participant of the *Connecting Lives Through Internet & Community Knowledge (CLICK)* program. In this program, she connected with a NWWIB Digital Navigator who helped her regain her confidence with using a laptop. To this day, she still utilizes CLICK resources. We are happy to report that she has gained the skills to utilize the internet independently along with complete basic tech skills, such as send emails without assistance. (Pictured bottom left with her CLICK loaned laptop.)

Supporting New Career Pathways

After his release from prison, Joseph joined the *Pathways Home 4 (PH4)* program. The program was able to cover most of his CDL training costs. With the financial support and additional guidance, he completed training and earned a promotion as a truck driver at *Stunts Concrete*. (Pictured bottom right with his CDL certificate.)

Assisting with Overcoming Barriers

Ashley joined the *Pathways Home 4 (PH4)* program with no money and very little other resources. With

the NWWIB's help, she found work but later needed emergency dental care she couldn't afford. *Pathways Home 4* was able to cover the cost, allowing her to recover and stay employed. "I never would have gotten this far, this fast, without the help I received," she shared. (Pictured top left at current place of employment.)

Building Community and Opening Doors

"To anyone considering this program [the NWWIB]: do it. The assistance you receive can open doors that once felt out of reach. It's not just about financial help—it's about having a community that wants to see you succeed." This is what NWWIB *FORWD* and *WAI 2.0* program participant, Aaron, had to say after finishing training, receiving his CDL certificate and getting employed with a local trucking company. (Pictured top middle on the left with CDL instructor on the right.)

Re-Entry to New Business Owner

Re-entering society after incarceration isn't easy— just ask Tou. After release, he struggled to find housing and employment. "I knew I couldn't do it on my own," he recalled. The *Windows to Work (W2W)* program was a turning point that gave him structure and a plan for the future. With support from his NWWIB career coach, Tou enrolled in *Business Management* courses. "Windows to Work opened doors and gave me a voice," he shared. Today, Tou has stable housing and owns the *Art of the Cut Barbershop & Art Gallery* in Ashland, WI. When asked if he'd recommend NWWIB services, his answer was simple: "Absolutely. It gives you the guidance you didn't have before. It truly helped shape who I am today." (Pictured in the top right corner with his coworker inside his new business.)

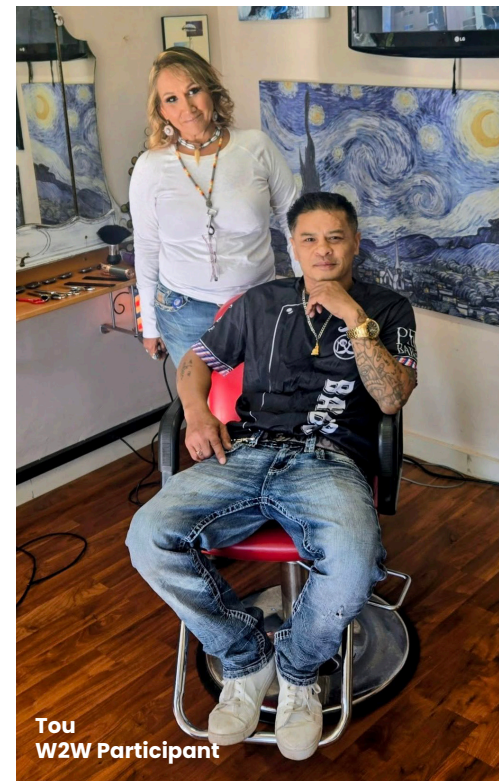




Ashley
PH4 Participant



Aaron
WAI 2 and FORWD Participant



Tou
W2W Participant

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE WITH...

THE BLATNIK BRIDGE PROJECT

Along with other partners, the NWWIB is working hard to support the Blatnik Bridge Project by helping to recruit, train and place local workers into highway-construction careers through a regional workforce partnership. Our goal is to ensure that individuals have access to local, good-paying, and in-demand jobs tied to the bridge rebuild.



Picture credited to Duluth Tribune News

ENBRIDGE

Together, the NWWIB and Enbridge are helping to ensure that local workers have access to training. The goal for both organizations is to strengthen our regional economy. This is in an effort to support any major infrastructure projects happening in Northwest Wisconsin.



Picture credited to Enbridge

JOB PODS

Job Pods are a brand-new resource that connect job seekers to reliable workforce development tools and expert guidance. The NWWIB is happy to be a partner in this project and bringing it to the Frances L. Simek Memorial Library in Medford, WI. We look forward to partnering with other libraries to bring more Job Pods to the region.



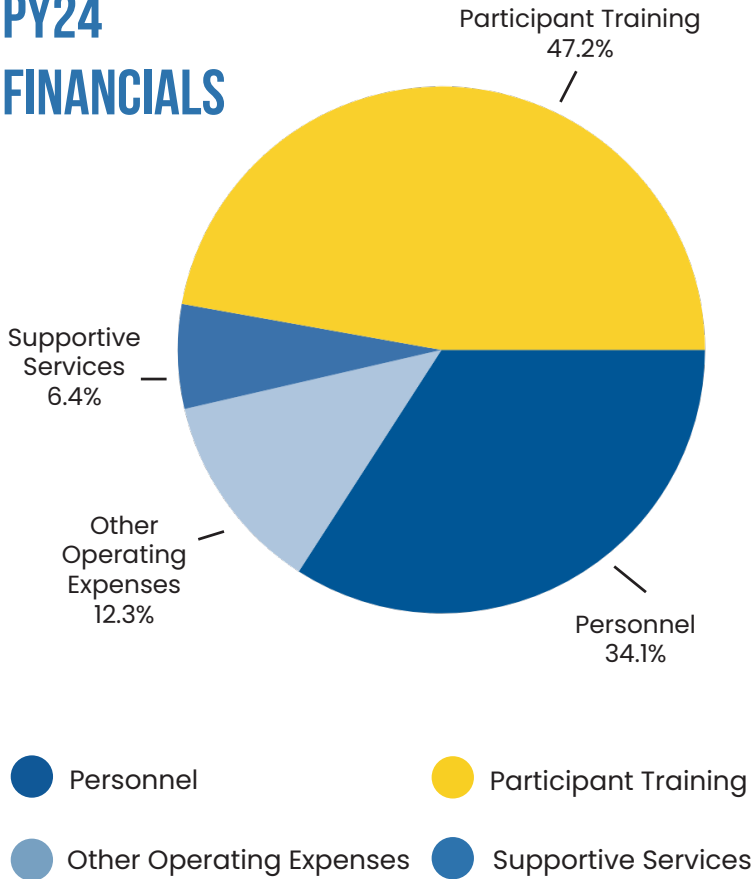
COMMUNITY INVESTMENTS

COLLABORATION OF WISCONSIN (COW)*	\$329,406
CONNECTING LIVES THROUGH INTERNET & COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE (CLICK)	\$238,447
SERVICE CONTRACTS	\$188,191
QUALITY, JOBS, EQUITY, STRATEGY AND TRAINING (QUEST)*	\$175,813
PATHWAYS HOME 4 (PH4)*	\$147,161
PATHWAYS HOME 4 (PH4) WEST CENTRAL	\$144,974
WORKER'S ADVANCEMENT INITIATIVE (WAI)*	\$117,294
OTHER	\$78,507
PATHWAYS HOME 2 (PH2)	\$77,676
SUPPORT TO COMMUNITIES (STC)*	\$70,108
WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT (WIOA)	\$69,874
WINDOWS TO WORK (W2W)	\$40,787
WORKER'S ADVANCEMENT INITIATIVE 2.0 (WAI 2.0)	\$31,527
FOSTERING OPIOID RECOVERY THROUGH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT (FORWD)	\$21,802
REGIONAL CAREER PATHWAYS (RCP)	\$25,765
ONE-STOP-OPERATOR (OSO)	\$14,338

**Grant programs were active until June 2025.
They are currently not active.*

Take a moment to explore this year's financials, especially our community investments. Each grant program represents public dollars at work—funding the innovation and services that strengthen our workforce, support families and sustain the communities we call home. For a deeper look at how these funds are allocated, check out our PY24 Financials chart.

PY24 FINANCIALS



BE A WORKFORCE LEADER

JOIN OUR CORPORATE SPONSOR PROGRAM

This is an opportunity for employers and businesses to invest in their local and regional communities as a leader in the workforce field. Join today!

← **SCAN THE QR-CODE TO LEARN MORE
OR SEND AN EMAIL TO mari@nwwib.com**

NWWIB BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Judy Aspling | Steve Bitzer | Andrea Chartier | Thomas Draghi | Skyler Dural-Eder
Tammi Follet | Brad Gast | Edward Gruhl | Brent Harju | Michelle Johnson
Dale Kelm | Mary McPhetridge | Ashley Moore | Elaine Ogilvie | Kristine Porter
PC Rasmussen | Crystal Rohde | Cindy Rouzer | Jennifer Shearer
Mary Sills | Gene Stanchfield | Carl Svendsen | Kerri Trubachik**

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Judy Aspling | Dale Kelm | Mary McPhetridge | Crystal Rohde | Kerri Trubachik

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Judy Aspling | Dale Kelm | Kerri Trubachik

ONE-STOP-OPERATOR COMMITTEE

**Steve Bitzer | Thomas Draghi | Skyler Dural-Eder | Brad Gast | Sara Lazarz
| Kristine Porter | Sally Schraders | Tait Strand**

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

Judy Aspling | Thomas Michels | PC Rasmussen | Jessica Wagner-Schultz

YOUTH COMMITTEE

**Olivia Dachel | Skyler Dural-Eder | Mary McPhetridge | Ed Gruhl | Brent Harju
Nancy Larson | Jennifer Reijo | Scott Schultz | Sheila Young**

THANK YOU SPONSORS



301 Ellis Ave, Suite 3 | Ashland, WI 54806 | (715) 685-1425 | www.nwwib.com

Northwest Wisconsin Workforce Investment Board is an equal opportunity employer and service provider. If you have a disability and need assistance with this information, please call us through Wisconsin Relay Service (7-1-1) or at 800-947-3529. To request information in an alternate format, including language assistance or translation of the information, please contact us at 715-685-1425.