

LCWDB Joint Talent Pipeline & Employer Connections Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, October 14, 2025, at 9:00 AM

UCC Environmental

2100 Norman Drive West, #6753, Waukegan, IL 60085

I. Call to Order

II. Public Comment

III. Chair Report

IV. Regular Business

- a. Authorize staff to enter negotiations with Symbol Training Institute to develop a contract for manufacturing sector training and workforce development services, for an amount up to \$340,000, consistent with the proposal submitted. Attachment A
- b. Authorize staff to enter into negotiations with United Way of Lake County (UWLC) for implementation of the WIOA Education Sector Strategy: Expanding Parent Mentor Models Through School District Partnerships initiative, for an amount not to exceed \$100,000 Attachment B

V. Strategic Focus

Strategic Discussion

From Shared Observations to Strategic Alignment

Joint committee discussion focused on building shared understanding of the challenges that impact workforce readiness — particularly around onboarding, early job success, and the expectations placed on both job seekers and supervisors.

The discussion will explore:

- What employers and training providers are observing
- Where readiness or communication is breaking down
- What types of models or approaches may be worth learning more about

VI. Other Business / Updates

VII. Member Time

VIII. Adjournment



Lake County Workforce Development Board

Subject:

WIOA Sector Strategy for Advancing the Manufacturing Workforce (RFP #25287) – Award Recommendation to Symbol Training Institute

Action:

Authorize staff to enter negotiations with Symbol Training Institute to develop a contract for manufacturing sector training and workforce development services, for an amount up to \$340,000, consistent with the proposal submitted.

Background:

The Lake County Workforce Development Board issued RFP #25287 – WIOA Sector Strategy for Advancing the Manufacturing Workforce in August 2025. The purpose of this solicitation was to expand training capacity, strengthen industry partnerships, and create sustainable pathways to employment in the manufacturing sector. The RFP sought a provider capable of delivering advanced, hands-on training and aligning career pathways with employer demand across precision manufacturing and industrial maintenance.

Following a competitive review and scoring process, Symbol Training Institute has been selected as the recommended awardee. Established in 2005, Symbol is a nationally recognized, employer-driven training provider accredited by the National Institute for Metalworking Skills (NIMS) and the Illinois Board of Higher Education. Symbol partners with more than 360 manufacturing companies throughout the region and maintains an 85% job placement rate, having trained over 2,800 students since inception.

Through this initiative, Symbol will deliver two primary occupational training programs designed to upskill and prepare job seekers for high-demand positions:

- IMT 401: Industrial Maintenance Technician – 204 hours / 17 weeks
- CNC 205: CNC Technology with Quality Control – 192 hours / 16 weeks

Both programs lead to multiple industry-recognized NIMS credentials and prepare participants for roles such as Maintenance Technician, CNC Operator, Quality Control Technician, and Industrial Mechanic. Training will occur at Symbol's Skokie and Addison facilities, with instruction, career coaching, and job placement services offered in collaboration with regional manufacturing employers.

The proposed agreement will utilize \$340,000 in WIOA funding to support participant recruitment, training, career coaching, job placement, and program evaluation consistent with federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requirements.

Implementation Timeline:

The initiative is anticipated to begin in January 2026 and continue through June 2027. Major milestones will include participant recruitment and enrollment (January–February 2026), training delivery (February 2026–December 2026), and placement, follow-up, and reporting (January–June 2027)

Strategic Alignment:

This initiative directly supports the LCWDB strategic imperatives:

- Create a culture of equitable prosperity – Expanding access to high-quality manufacturing training and employment opportunities.
- Strengthen employer-led partnerships – Engaging manufacturers to co-design training pipelines and support direct hiring.
- Expand workforce access for underrepresented communities – Providing entry points for individuals with limited experience into stable, high-wage careers.
- Prepare for emerging high-growth industries – Building the regional capacity needed to sustain and grow the advanced manufacturing workforce.

Lake County Workforce Development Board**Subject:**

WIOA Education Sector Strategy – Expanding Parent Mentor Models Through School District Partnerships (RFP #25288) – Award Recommendation to United Way of Lake County

Action:

Authorize staff to enter into negotiations with United Way of Lake County (UWLC) for implementation of the WIOA Education Sector Strategy: Expanding Parent Mentor Models Through School District Partnerships initiative, for an amount not to exceed \$100,000

Background:

The Lake County Workforce Development Board issued RFP #25288 – WIOA Education Sector Strategy: Expanding Parent Mentor Models Through School District Partnerships in August 2025. The purpose of this solicitation was to address workforce gaps in the education sector, strengthen parent engagement, and expand local career pathways through collaboration between school districts, nonprofits, and community organizations.

This initiative builds on the Parent Mentor Program (PMP) model, a nationally recognized, equity-driven strategy that connects parents to classrooms as mentors—enhancing student learning while developing a workforce pipeline for paraprofessionals and educators. The RFP called for a lead organization to coordinate across multiple school districts, expand mentor recruitment, and align training and credentialing opportunities with education sector workforce needs.

Following a competitive evaluation and review process, United Way of Lake County (UWLC) has been selected as the recommended awardee. UWLC’s proposal expands the existing Parent Mentor partnership in Waukegan Community Unit School District 60, with plans to engage 56 parent mentors (retaining 48 active participants) across 50 classrooms, directly supporting over 1,150 students. The project strengthens the education-to-workforce pipeline by integrating leadership training, digital literacy, and career readiness supports for participating parents.

UWLC will collaborate with Hispanic American Community Education and Services (HACES) and local school districts to expand access, align the Parent Mentor model with workforce pathways, and create opportunities for participants to pursue credentials through the Illinois State Board of Education’s Ladders of Opportunity Initiative.

The proposed agreement will utilize \$100,000 in WIOA funding to support this initiative, consistent with the RFP parameters and federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requirements.

Implementation Timeline:

The initiative is anticipated to begin in January 2026 and continue through June 2027. Key milestones will include school district and partner engagement (January–March 2026), mentor recruitment and training (March–December 2026), and program evaluation and reporting (January–June 2027).

Strategic Alignment:

This initiative directly supports the LCWDB strategic imperatives:

- Create a culture of equitable prosperity – Empowering parents as community educators and workforce participants.
- Strengthen employer-led partnerships – Collaborating with school districts and nonprofits to build a sustainable education workforce pipeline.
- Expand workforce access for underrepresented communities – Connecting multilingual and low-income parents to education sector opportunities.
- Prepare for emerging high-growth industries – Addressing the teacher shortage and developing the next generation of educational professionals.