



Workforce Development Professionals are everywhere!



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How did you get started in workforce development?

I had worked as a teacher in the Regional Occupational Program (ROP) in Modesto, CA for eight years where I was introduced to Workforce Development as a summer coordinator for the CETA program. My position involved placement of over 200 young adults into summer jobs, and teaching workplace readiness and occupational skills in retail sales and merchandising. I moved to Iowa in 1986, not knowing what my future would bring... I loved my job in California, and didn't believe I could find another career that would bring me the joy I experienced as a teacher and mentor of my students. I learned of a position as an Employment and Training Specialist in the JTPA program through Southeastern Community College and was excited to have the opportunity to utilize my skills working with adults, dislocated workers

and youth connecting them with local employers to fill/create jobs in Southeast Iowa. It was a perfect fit for my skills and my interests. It is my firm belief that "work should be play you get paid for". I found my "playground" and a personal connection with workforce development, realizing the difference we can make each and every day, not only to our customers, but to our communities. I have been in the field for over 28 years and recently retired from the college, only to find myself working two weeks later as a consultant for Iowa Workforce Development as a Project Manager for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, ensuring that ALL Iowans have the skills necessary to meet the needs of employers and fill those middle skills jobs that are so needed to make our economy strong.

What is the most exciting thing about being a workforce development professional?

There are many things that excite me about being a workforce development professional. I believe the most exciting thing about this career is the fact that we can make a difference in people's lives, bringing

HOPE to individuals...helping them develop a plan for success in a career area of interest with the opportunity to support themselves and their families. Equally exciting is the new WIOA

legislation that not only encourages, but requires that ALL partners (workforce, education, human services, economic development) work together, sharing resources and knowledge to enhance the services and opportunities for underserved

populations, ensuring they have the necessary skills to compete in the job market, meeting the needs of employers and most importantly, obtaining those jobs that were once only a dream.

What do you value most about your NAWDP membership?

Workforce development is critical to the economic success of our nation, our communities and our families. NAWDP strengthens the support of our programs by providing the tools and resources necessary for continuous improvement and professional growth. As a former director, it was necessary to keep abreast of what was happening on Capitol Hill regarding legislation and funding....NAWDP provides the most current information to their membership to assist with

program planning. Additionally, NAWDP members can earn nationally-recognized credentials, through the many education and training programs available, whether it be online, in-person or attendance at national conferences. Finally, NAWDP provides the opportunity to share experiences and best practices with other workforce development professionals from around the country.

Why did you apply for the CWDP?

My position as Youth Program Coordinator with WIA required that I create a professional development plan. My director at the time was a NAWDP board member, who firmly believed in certification for workforce professionals. She encouraged me, along with our staff to apply for the CWDP, which would demonstrate our proficiency in the field. When I was promoted to Regional Director of the WIA program, I, too,

believed that workforce staff should be given every opportunity to build upon their skills and encouraged each to earn their certification. WIOA legislation requires a plan for professional development for one-stop system staff and partners. The CWDP provides this certification, developing professional capacity with a standard of excellence.