



Change in IWIB Lead Staff

Mark Burgess looks forward to new challenges as performance manager for Office of Employment and Training; Lisa Jones assumes IWIB Staff duties

Longtime Staff to the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board Mark Burgess has taken on a new role in the Office of Employment and Training, as a Performance Manager.

A familiar face will assume IWIB Lead Staff duties as Lisa Jones, Manager of the Office of Employment and Training, takes on those duties.

“Mark has been an incred-

ible advocate for the IWIB and worked tirelessly to help make positive change,” said Jones. “During his tenure he supported the Board in developing its first-ever policy process as well as a Strategic Plan; increased board involvement; and received recognition at both the state and national level for policy and best practices through the Apprenticeship Committee and the Service

Integration Policy Workgroup.”

Everyone involved in IWIB has appreciated Mark’s conscientious attention to detail. “His dedication and enthusiasm for this work has been a tremendous asset in supporting the work of the IWIB and ensuring workforce in Illinois meets the needs of businesses and those seeking employment or wanting to advance in

their careers,” Lisa added.

Questions regarding IWIB standing committees should be directed to the committee chair or staff; otherwise contact Lisa (Lisa.D.Jones@illinois.gov) for guidance.

All of us who have come to know Mark through our shared work wish him all the best as he moves into this new role.

Remote June meetings split into digestible segments

In acknowledgement of the special challenges presented by remote meetings, the IWIB Summer Meetings will be structured and convened through two one-hour webinar meetings with focused agendas. The board will also receive updates on activities of each of the board working groups and from our WIOA partners, originally scheduled for the cancelled Spring Meeting.

On June 16, 2020, the IWIB will meet to receive updates and announcements from our partners, IWIB committees, and national agencies.

On June 18, 2020, the IWIB

will meet to review and discuss new strategies and priorities related to modifications to the IWIB Strategic Plan for 2020-2022 and take action to approve the new modifications. The IWIB will also receive final information related to the Illinois’ workforce system’s approach to economic recovery during and after the COVID 19 pandemic and other topics such as the recently approved Business Engagement Committee and a new Equity Task Force being discussed.

Watch your email for calendar invites and be prepared to make the most of these webinars.

Perseverance is key to LWIA 3 success story

The Workforce Connection (TWC) (LWIA #3) board has worked tirelessly to analyze the workforce needs of the tri-county Rockford region and ensure the workforce system is seen as a regional resource for both career seekers and employers. One strategy utilized by TWC board is to bring employer and individual success stories to board meetings, which shares the value of our work to stakeholders in the region with program operations and service delivery.

Noella Badibanga is a refugee from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. She was forced to flee her country in the early 2000’s due to increased violence and hostile living conditions. She spent nearly ten years in a ref-

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■ LWIA 3: *Workforce dollars support immersion here*

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ugee camp in Malawi where she began learning English and worked as a hairstylist. During this time, she met her husband, they married, and tried to make the best of their situation. In 2014, Noella received the news that she had finally been accepted to enter the United States.

When she and her husband arrived in Rockford, they were overwhelmed by cultural, language, and employment barriers. They acclimated to their new life by starting entry-level jobs to support their growing family. Noella had dreams of becoming a nurse and creating a positive life for her family here in Rockford and willing to work hard to achieve these goals. Noella enrolled into Rock Valley College's Refugee and Immigrant Services Program and was referred to the English as a Second

Language (ESL) program to enhance her language skills. Once she felt confident with her English abilities, she enrolled into the WIOA Adult Program to take GED classes and receive employment counseling. With the support of her teacher, career planner, and family, she successfully passed the GED test at the beginning of 2019. She utilized The Workforce Connection to find a full-time position at Lowe's in Rockford, IL as a distribution warehouse associate working on weekends. She met with her career planner to make goals and enrolled into general credit courses at Rock Valley College (RVC) during the week.

In March 2020, after 5 years of residence, Noella was able to take and pass her United States Citizenship test in Chicago, IL. Noella continues to work for Lowe's while taking general education classes at RVC and caring for her two sons. She still plans to start



nursing courses at Rock Valley College in 2021 utilizing WIOA training dollars.

Individuals like Noella are the reason we get up and do this work every day. By making certain that our workforce system in LWIA

3 is responsive to the needs of the region serving Boone Stephenson and Winnebago counties. We know that we can make a significant impact on the quality of life of the people and businesses in our community.

Honor veterans, spouses for their sacrifices

In honor of National Military Appreciation Month, IWIB thanks all who have served in the United States Armed Forces. We appreciate your sacrifice to help protect us at home and abroad. Illinois, through the collaboration of networked partnerships, has many resources available to former and current Military Services Members (Active, Guard, and Reserve) as well as Military Spouses.

To see what the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is doing to support veterans and their families during the COVID-19 pandemic, visit their website. Learn the

measures you can take to protect yourself, and what the VA is doing to help our veterans and their communities.

The VA has information regarding health benefits and financial literacy along with how to access these benefits for veterans.

Here's a brief list of WIOA partners and training services available to our Military Service Members and Spouses:

Illinois Department of Employment Security
Individualized Career Planning Assistance

*Unemployment Services
 Illinois Job Link*

Illinois Department of Human Services
*Family & Community Services
 Mental Health
 Rehabilitation Services
 Substance Abuse*

Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity
*Apprenticeships
 (Employers & Job Seekers)
 Layoffs and Closing Guidance*

Go Getter makes most of career opportunity

People who know Damika Jones would describe her as a go-getter. Someone with potential. Someone with ambition and drive to take what she was given in life and make something better

for herself.

Damika has always been ambitious in her career goals but was unsure of how she could achieve what she wanted. She'd worked a series of small jobs, but never really found something that would lead to a career. She was working a few hours a week at UPS when she first saw a flier for the Manufacturing Careers Internship Program and became interested in MCIP. She quickly realized that there were much better opportunities for her with this program than she'd get with her part-time job at UPS, so she quit and dedicated the next four weeks of her life to attending boot camp and elevating her resume, interview, and job readiness skills. She convinced a friend to attend the boot camp with her, but he quickly dropped out. She didn't let this deter her—



she became more steadfast and committed to the program. She would wake up early each day to take one bus to another bus, just to get from her house to the

church where the boot camp was held. She worked hard, always asking questions on employer site visits and put-

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EARN AND LEARN SUCCESS STORY

NAME

Damika Jones

ORGANIZATION

Business and Career Services, Inc.

PROGRAM TYPE

Apprenticeship Illinois

CAREER PATHWAY

Manufacturing

CREDENTIALS

EARNED

Powered Industrial Lift Truck

ConstructionWorks facilitates pipeline of construction talent

ConstructionWorks Powered by the Illinois Tollway is an innovative program to create a qualified pipeline of diverse men and women ready to enter careers in the construction industry and apprenticeships.

Lake County participates in the program as a part of the Northern Illinois region. Lake County Workforce Development promotes openings in apprenticeship trades programs, assists individuals with skill training to prepare for these programs, and provides support services.

Juan had experience in construction and flooring and was having a difficult time landing a long-term job due to a felony in his background. Juan attended a ConstructionWorks Information Session in March 2019. With the help of his Workforce Development Career Specialist, Juan researched apprenticeship options and applied to the Chicago

Regional Council of Carpenters Apprentice and Training Program.

He completed aptitude and qualifying tests, attended a mandatory orientation session and was invited to complete a 10-week, pre-apprenticeship program in Elk Grove Village. Juan had to quit his part-time job to attend this unpaid program, so his Career Specialist arranged for Juan to receive a small stipend while completing the program. This stipend was available through the ConstructionWorks Barrier Reduction fund.

In November 2019, Juan was placed by Tradesmen International, a construction staffing firm, at a solar energy contractor, Sun Peak. The position was to last only one month, but Sun Peak decided to hire Juan directly based upon his performance and the training he received at the Carpenter's Training Center. Juan is completing certification



on the job through the North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners.

He is grateful to Sun Peak for giving him a chance to demonstrate his quality. "I have great satisfaction in my efforts to have a positive impact on the world through solar installation." During the COVID-19 crisis, Juan remained employed, working on a solar project for Sun Peak at DePauw University.

■ **Go Getter:** *Intern acquires diverse skills through experience*

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ting her best foot forward. At the end of boot camp, Damika was ready to work. She was assigned to an internship at Mifab where she had to take a late start, due to a family emergency. She came back a week later, ready to go for her six-week internship. At Mifab, she arrived to work on time every day as she learned Pick and Pack, assembly, and even got the chance to do some shipping and receiving. She received the highest praise from her site supervisor, who praised

her ability to learn quickly and her desire to be trained in different areas. She wanted to absorb as much as possible during her internship, not staying just in the warehouse, but she also wanted to learn the computer system and maybe even some desk work.

At the end of her six-week internship, Mifab did not want to let her go, but they had to. They were not currently hiring, but they stated that they would take her in a heartbeat as soon as something opened up. Damika did not let this bother her—she took the remaining time

of her internship and made the most of it. She asked her site supervisor to review and critique her resume, and even asked him to conduct an exit interview with her. She asked him about what kinds of things he looks for when he’s hiring and what mistakes candidates often make during the application and interview process.

When the last days of her internship were closing in, Mifab caved. They offered her a position as a Shipping Clerk. Damika was so excited that all of her hard work had paid off.

At the same time, Dami-

ka was taking those skills that she learned—skills from the boot camp and skills she acquired at her internship—to do more. She applied for a full-time job at United Airlines as a Customer Service Representative and they hired her. Although she did not take the position that her internship site had eventually offered, she used the knowledge and skills she gained through the Manufacturing Careers Internship Program, as well as her “go-getter” attitude, to achieve what she wanted.

For a complete listing, or to track changes, <https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Pages/BoardActivity.aspx>

IWIB ELECTRONIC SCHEDULE FOR JUNE

Here are some tentative meeting dates and deadlines for various IWIB activities through June. IWIB members are invited to attend any of the meetings, along with members of the general public. All telephonic or webinar meetings are subject to and will be compliant with Illinois Open Meetings Act requirements.

Calendar	Activity / Group	Purpose
June 8, 2020	IWIB Executive Committee	Request to Approve SP Modifications
June 10, 2020	IWIB Meeting Prep	Materials Distributed
June 16, 2020	IWIB Quarterly Meeting	Board Updates, Announcements
June 18, 2020	IWIB Leadership Meeting	Routine Discussions
June 18, 2020	IWIB Quarterly Meeting	IWIB Business Discussions
June 19 - 26, 2020	Staff finalize 2020-2022 Strategic Plan Modifications	
June 27, 2020	2020-2022 Strategic Plan Modifications Distributed	
July 1, 2020	2020-2022 Strategic Plan Modifications Implementation	

Call For Content

We publish this newsletter to celebrate the accomplishments of the workforce system and its clients on both the employer and job-seeker sides, and also to share ideas and best practices for fully actualizing federal and state workforce resources to promote economic development and transition targeted populations into

meaningful careers.

Ideas for future stories in the IWIB newsletter should be directed to Dr. Scott Shook at Illinois State University (sashook@ilstu.edu) or IWIB board member Mike Conley (mike@trentonsun.net).

It is our goal to highlight each local workforce area in Illinois and

the unique regional approaches they take to workforce development, to shine a light on each business member of IWIB and contextualize their reasons for serving in this volunteer capacity, and to lift up the many inspiring stories from around the state of job seekers leveraging the workforce system.

Continous improvement, thy name is Marlon McClinton

Inspired as a seventh grader, CIC chair built career on the foundation of professional development

The genesis of Marlon McClinton's future career was formed when he was in the seventh grade. An engineer visited his school on Career Day to discuss engineering as a career and his most recent professional assignments. Marlon was interested in the subject matter, but he was mostly impressed with the man, and the way he carried himself.

"I was impressed with his confidence and poise and the quality of his presentation," says Marlon today. "And, he looked like someone from my community, my block. He looked like me. It was on that day that I decided to become an engineer."

His decision would inform the rest of his educational pursuits, and his life. By establishing a goal for himself--to become an engineer--he was able to find the will and initiative to accept the challenge of his parents to attend and graduate from college.

"I attended Lindblom Technical High School where I had an opportunity to take advanced mathematics, drafting, and a broad range of science and technical courses," said Marlon. "Lindblom prepared me well for the University of Illinois at Chicago, where I earned my B.S. in Metallurgical Engineering, and later an M.S. in Materials Science from Northwestern University in Evanston.

As he embarked on a career with first Inland Steel Research Laboratories and later Gas Research Institute, Marlon continued to harbor entrepreneurial visions for his future.

"Perhaps I was influenced by my grandparents, who migrated from the South and purchased a three-story apartment building for our extended family, or my uncle who manufactured and sold hair care products," Marlon said. "I knew early on that I wanted to leverage my work experience into my own business."

In order to achieve the goal of merging his engineering education with his business aspirations, Marlon would learn to lean on continuous professional development.

It is likely no accident that Marlon



Marlon McClinton brings the principles and practices from his own successful business career to his work on the workforce board.

Why We IWIB.
In which members
explain their reasons for
serving workforce.

landed as the chairman of the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board's (IWIB) Continuous Improvement Committee; it is the groundwork on which his success has been achieved.

An experience early in his career illustrated the power of continuing training and education to Marlon.

"As a young engineer I gave an extremely poor business presentation on the status of an important project to a large department of the company," Marlon recalls. "I was committed to overcoming this setback by taking several professional development courses on public speaking and effective presentations. The problem was completely resolved, and I even began looking forward to public speaking opportunities."

The value of continuing skill development, along with discipline and

commitment on his part, convinced Marlon to seek additional opportunities that expanded his business acumen and prepared him for the next steps of his career.

Eventually, Marlon's path led him to complete the Executive MBA program at Northwestern University's Kellogg Graduate School of Business, with a special focus on Strategic Business Management. Marlon completed the program, and successfully facilitated a corporate merger for his firm.

With his business skills honed to a sharp edge, and his children's educational needs accounted for, and a career spent building a network of energy professionals, Marlon was ready to start his own business.

Utilivate Technologies was formed on an infamous day in U.S. history, September 11, 2001.

The company pioneered the concept of home performance and testing in Illinois, including home weatherization and other performance metrics, to lower income communities in Chicago, with special focus on employing special populations including formerly incarcerated individuals, unemployed youth, and other at-risk groups. By introducing a viable career pathway in home performance and weatherization contracting, Utilivate was able to influence lives while providing exceptional, value-added services for its customers, utilizing a truly diverse team of professionals.

Utilivate earned Building Performance Institute (BPI) certification of its own personnel, and subsequently completed the other rigorous requirements needed to become a BPI Certified Training and Testing Center for a broad range of home performance certifications.

Eventually, Utilivate spun off a subsidiary to directly hire its best students to provide top-notch weatherization and home performance contracting services to residents in the greater Chicago metropolitan area.

"A source of great satisfaction was

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seeing newly employed graduates proudly visit our office and training center with their families," said Marlon, "providing real evidence of the value of training in helping to build successful, prosperous, and growing families."

In more recent years, to meet market demand, Utilivate shifted its corporate focus to target the commercial, industrial, and public sectors as a Program Implementor or Service Provider for a broad range of utility energy efficiency service offerings including energy assessments, benchmarking, and direct install services. An essential element of Utilivate's role in these programs has been to conduct extensive outreach to recruit and engage a broad and diverse cross section of Illinois' businesses, not-for-profit organizations, and faith-based organizations population focusing on under-represented communities.

It was my vision, from the start, to organically build an organization that could effectively integrate my strategic business acumen, innovation management expertise, and energy industry

experience to provide exceptional, value-added services for customers utilizing a truly diverse team of professionals," Marlon said.

Utilivate has been a family business in every sense of the term. Marlon's wife Jewel utilizes her advanced education degrees to lead the company's training, marketing, and outreach efforts. Their adult children--Jamila, Aaron, and Anisa--have applied their own expertise in the fields of management, journalism, and hospitality to the company's benefit.

The framework of Marlon's business and his own belief in the value of career training made him a natural for IWIB, and in 2018 he was asked by the governor's office to become a member, based on his track record of employer outreach and career services to Illinois' most underserved and underrepresented populations.

"I was delighted to join IWIB both because of my personal experience with the role of training in my career development and the real opportunity to help improve job and career options for workers and job seekers through an effective, highly-integrated Illinois workforce system. I have been active in general Board deliberations and the

work of the Career Pathways Committee and have observed how the Illinois workforce system is directly improving the lives of countless workers in Illinois," said Marlon.

More recently, Utilivate has expanded its role in the energy efficiency sector even more, and now specializes in verifying and quantifying the impact of many energy efficiency programs through the state, and providing recommendations for continuous improvement.

Marlon was asked to chair the Continuous Improvement Committee in 2019, and there may be no more harmonic convergence in the workforce sphere. His background, his career, and his life are all owed to a constant striving for something better, an aspiration for further education and achievement, a commitment to accountability and professional education and training.

For Marlon, serving the IWIB and the CIC is its own reward. "It has been truly one of the most rewarding and satisfying challenges in my career," said Marlon, before revealing one final piece of poetic symbolism. "Perhaps only second to serving as career day speaker at Chicago neighborhood grammar schools." Full circle.



Marlon McClinton's entrepreneurial spirit runs through his family, all of whom have contributed to Utilivate's evolution and success.