

Workforce Board of Northern Cook County One-Stop Solutions for Freight Forwarding

One-Stop Solutions for Freight Forwarding project delivers training solutions to address critical skill shortages for the area's robust freight forwarding industry and promotes awareness of opportunities and career paths within the freight forwarding industry through redirection and enhancement of existing resources.

The One-Stop Solutions for Freight Forwarding project focuses its efforts on the TWL sector in the area served by freight forwarding. In the footprint served by the area's one-stop system, freight forwarding represents a substantial industry segment with the vast majority of the state's 264 freight forwarding companies located within the corridor of the metro Chicago region.

The area has experienced an increase in number of freight forwarders due to increased market demand for exporting and importing goods coupled with general job seeker lack of awareness of industry opportunities and growth. Representatives of the freight forwarding industry have reported significant shortages both in the short and long- terms for customer service personnel with specific credentials in such areas as ocean export agent, air export agent, gateway agent, customs broker, and letter of credit specialists. It is anticipated that this project will produce 52 workers with the skills that the freight forwarding industry is seeking; specifically in the Customer Service positions including import and export aspects of freight forwarding.

a) Who funded the project and to what levels:

The project was funded through a regional critical skills shortage WIA grant at \$52,250.00 for training costs. Additional funds were leveraged from the WIA service provider, Illinois Department of Employment Security, the Greater O'Hare Association. Freight forwarding companies matching the incumbent worker training dollar for dollar.

b) What partners were involved and what roles they played;

- Greater O'Hare Association of Commerce and Industry (GOA) a major, regional business association dedicated to providing value to its members through business advocacy, educational programs, and networking opportunities. GOA represents more than 700 companies in the area, ten percent of which are engaged in freight forwarding and promotes the initiative to its business membership; specifically its Freight Forwarders members.
- International Business Center (IBC) hosted by DePaul University-Rolling Meadows. A not-for-profit collaborative project comprising local, state, federal, and private sector stakeholders, IBC is focused on building a stronger economy through promoting international trade opportunities and providing businesses an opportunity to develop relationships and expertise necessary to expand global trade. The freight forwarding industry is central to the accomplishment of IBC's mission and promotes initiative within its business membership
- William Rainey Harper College has developed the curriculum and provides the training. The curriculum is developed through the continuing education department at Harper College to familiarize and educate job seekers and incumbent employees with international trade terminology. One significant change has occurred on the community college level; as a result of this initiative, Harper College has reviewed its continuing education as well as its credit courses offered in transportation, warehousing and logistics and specifically freight forwarding.
- Business and Career Services, WIA service provider, supported the project with personnel costs related to WIA compliance and employer relations.
- Illinois Department of Employment Security supported the project with personnel working directly with the employers.

- An important relationship has been established with a major industry association, the Customs Broker and Foreign Freight Forwarders Association that represents more than 270 area freight forwarders. This organization helps to promote the project and sit on the advisory committee