

Workforce Development Strategies, Inc Maturity Matters

Maturity Matters™ (MM) has the potential to be WDSI's strongest and most innovative program. The MM initiative grew from the 2004 State of the Workforce Report. The report identified four key initiatives/priorities designed to foster the economic competitiveness of the region. Priority 2 – Make Our Mature Workforce (ages 35-70) a Primary Economic Development Selling Point was used as the basis for the development of MM. Specific recommendations related to placing as much emphasis on adult education as on the education of children and youth in order to ensure a sufficient and qualified workforce prepared to meet the needs of regional employers.

Maturity Matters™ was developed through a grant from the Retirement Research Foundation of Chicago. WDSI received the one year grant of \$117,000, with Ball State University providing \$8000 in-kind match. Corporation for a Skilled Workforce and Ball State University partnered with WDSI to develop a suite of products that include the following:

- North Central Indiana Mature Worker Profile,
- Report and Key Findings from the North Central Indiana 60+ Success Study,
- Maturity Matters™ Opportunities for Mature Workers in North Central Indiana,
- Handbook Curriculum for Human Resources Personnel.

Through two graduate students, Ball State University provided research for the development of the Handbook Curriculum for Human Resources Personnel. In addition, Dr. Kathy Segrist, Gerontology Professor, provided insight to aging issues as well as connections to national organizations addressing similar issues. Through her connections, the team had the opportunity to present at three key national conferences held in Indianapolis and California. CSW worked with WDSI to conduct the regional research and analyze the data which resulted in the two reports. In addition to their research expertise, CSW assisted with the facilitation of the regional taskforce which guided the overall project and development of the final products.

Resources from the WIRED grant will be used to explore the concept of a Lifelong Learning Institute and continued development of employer services to address issues related to pending retirements of the regional workforce.

WDSI and CSW are continuing to explore collaborative efforts which will expand the concepts and potential services and product line of Maturity Matters™.

Additional information can be found at www.maturitymatters.org.