



### Workforce Development Professionals are everywhere!



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#### How did you get started in workforce development?

Timing as they say is everything and for me that has been especially true. Until I started in workforce development I had worked in a very different professional background though I was looking to find other challenges and opportunities that would provide for a more “normal” schedule. My wife was researching positions for me and came upon an opening for an assistant director of the local WIA adult, dislocated worker, youth, and TANF programs. The position sought someone with supervisory and grant experience of which I had both. I eventually called to see if the position was even open as it had been posted for several months. I was certain it was already filled and someone had forgotten to take the posting down.

As fate would have it, I talked with the director of the WIA program and over the course of a ninety minute conversation on a Friday afternoon she encouraged me to get my application and resume in over the weekend as they were planning to conduct interviews soon. By Sunday afternoon I had submitted all of the necessary paperwork with no thoughts on even being seriously considered. In the meantime I searched the web for as much

information as I could find on the programs related to WIA and on the local office. At the very least I was hoping trying to sound as least somewhat intelligent during the interview.

After interviewing and feeling as though it had gone reasonably well despite my workforce development knowledge I received a call on Wednesday asking if I would be available for a final interview. In less than a week I had gone from not knowing anything about workforce development to accepting the position. Though I did not have previous experience or knowledge with workforce, I did have experience working with people that were in challenging and difficult positions in their life. I was used to offering people ideas on how to seek community resources to help them move up from their given circumstances and improve their overall situations. What I discovered very quickly is that we all have talents and skills, the question is how do you transfer those skills and utilize them to the best of your ability to meet the needs of the position you are looking to fill.

**If you could give one piece of advice to a new workforce professional, what would it be?**

Always remain active in your community and meet as many people as you possibly can. The friendships and contacts that I have developed are rewarding and beneficial on both professional and personal levels. I know that I can always reach out to counterparts and colleagues for their thoughts and suggestions or how best to resolve an issue or

challenge. In turn, they know they can rely on me to help them when they have questions or need resources to help someone succeed. None of us has all of the answers or resources and in order for us to help as many people as possible be successful, we must continue to expand our resource bases.

**What do you value most about your NAWDP membership?**

The interaction and connection with colleagues from my local region and state are extremely important in helping me get through my daily work. My NAWDP membership however helps me to step away from the day-to-day operations and think about the big picture and how changes in legislation, policy, and economic trends are going to affect me, our region, and the customers we are trying to serve which includes business and industry and the customers that walk through the doors seeking services. The challenges we are

experiencing are not unique and if others are also facing those challenges I believe someone has probably figured out at least one way to address them. Even if someone else's answer to an issue is not viable for me, there are likely details that I can use to help develop my own solution. Someone else, in turn, will likely learn from me as well. The combined knowledge, experience, and wisdom of the NAWDP group is so much more than any one person will ever be able to develop on their own.

**Why did you apply for the CWDP?**

The saying "put your money where your mouth is" and encouragement from a good friend both played a large part in my decision to apply for the CWDP. I had been working in the field for about four years when I felt compelled to show that everything I had learned through experience, reading, meetings, practice, and hard work had really made me in to someone who could be

recognized by their peers as a professional. It was not until I started putting together the information for the application that I realized how much I had learned. I know that I need to keep learning in order just to keep up with changes and challenges we continue to face and having my CWDP reminds me that in order to do that I have to remain engaged at every level possible.