



Workforce Development Professionals are everywhere!



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How did you get started in workforce development?

Having a career in workforce development was quite by accident! When I graduated from high school, I had aspirations of going to college to become a teacher. My high school guidance counselor told me this was not a career to get into because it was overpopulated. I was not offered any other suggestions or ideas.

I graduated from high school and went to a business school for a one year secretarial certificate. With my credential, I found a job in my hometown as a secretary to the executive director of an agency that provided assistance to low income individuals. The agency's assistance also

included employment and training services (which is what the field was referred to at that time instead of workforce development). I found myself drawn to assisting the customers coming in the front door rather than focusing on the demands of my position at that time. I remained in this position for a couple of years before relocating to another state due to husband's employment. I was out of the workforce development field for about 10 years when an opportunity arose that led me back to it. It was a temporary position for a dislocated worker grant during the JTPA era in the mid-1980s. I have been with workforce development ever since.

What do you value most about your NAWDP membership?

I have been a member of National Association of Workforce Development Professionals (NAWDP) since I first earned my certification as a Certified Workforce Development Professional (CWDP) in 2005. At that time in my career I had moved through several positions, advancing my career in workforce development. I started in a temporary position and advanced my career through the

positions of greeter, interviewer, career counselor, and manager. While a manager of a one-county office, I realized changes were taking place in the world of workforce development. I realized that without a college degree I was not as employable or retainable as an employee, and would also be overlooked for advancement.

I then learned about the CWDP certification and knew that this certification would document my skills and experience. I also had been attending my state's vocational college and was working on an associate's degree in business management which I finished in 2007. Since that time, I have moved in and out of positions which included: manager of multiple counties, and associate director of operations role; a director of workforce operations role; and my current position as vice president of workforce development for a region comprised of nine counties in eastern Indiana. The reason I mention all of this is because I would not have been able to advance in my career without my

CWDP, associate's degree, and work experience. My philosophy over the years is that an individual in the workforce development arena needs to be able to "walk the walk" so they can "talk the talk" with customers and employers!

As a member of NAWDP I have valued the online workshops, newsletters with all the valuable information, and the conferences. It is always thrilling for me to see and meet all the great people in workforce development helping individuals throughout the nation succeed in their goals with the assistance of workforce development services.

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

Probably the one big thing I encountered throughout my career has been CHANGE! I have survived legislation change – JTPA, WIA, and now WIOA. Due to legislative change, I have been employed by five different employers during my career. At times, as a single mother of three children, it has been a scary ride but well worth it. I love helping people! Do not let change paralyze you! Embrace it! Do not get caught up in the "what ifs". Do your job to the best of your ability every

day! Individuals will continue to need workforce development assistance – though it may look different than what we did yesterday! Work smarter – not harder!

This is a quote I have hanging on my office wall by my desk, and I read it every day!: "Change is the law of life. And those who only look to the past or present are certain to miss the future!" -John F. Kennedy