

DEFINING OUR CULTURE

NIWL VALUES



Deliver with Integrity
We hold ourselves accountable, relying on evidence to produce quality work that partners can trust.



Innovate
We foster a culture of continuous growth and learning to build sustainable capacity.



Respect All People
We intentionally weave equity principles through the fabric of our work to create an inclusive environment for individuals and communities.



Collaborate
We work together to produce the best results for the individual and communities we serve.

DELIVER WITH INTEGRITY

At the end of the last calendar year, the National Institute for Work and Learning held a series of reflection sessions with its staff. We asked project and portfolio managers what makes them tick; what principles or values they bring to their work; and how these play out in their every day. We captured four cardinal values that form the basis of NIWL's culture and describe them here.

NIWL approaches our work with a spirit of transparency and mutual accountability. Delivering quality content, setting clear expectations, and relying on data to refine programs, strategies and tools engenders trust among our partners that NIWL is a committed partner for the long haul.

“Full transparency, full accountability, all day every day, and being clear about what expectations are, is really important.”

—Cherine Smith, NIWL Project Manager

NIWL collects **continuous feedback** from partners and participants. We verify our understanding of their perspectives and then apply the feedback to make responsive decisions. In the **Bridge to Employment** college readiness and career exploration program, annual focus groups with participating youth guide content and delivery for the next year, resulting in higher participation after a COVID-19 lull. **Next Engineers**, a program designed to help diverse young people discover their inner engineer, used demographic data to identify equity gaps and refine outreach and application screening into a more inclusive process.

“It has to do with the relationship. We are always checking in with the client and making sure the work is what they're looking for, and then adjusting.”

—Amy Detgen, NIWL Senior Research Lead

NIWL designs monitoring and evaluation strategies to support partners in using data to make thoughtful decisions. Visualizations in **data dashboards** make valid and reliable data accessible. Facilitated **'pause and reflect' sessions** render the data actionable. Our partnership with the **Pennsylvania State GEAR UP** college access program spans decades; the recent introduction of a data dashboard to ongoing evaluation prompted consternation among educators but led to understanding the value of up-to-date data.

“Having built the trust and respect with the client allowed us to step into an area where they were not comfortable, but they were trusting us to help them get to where they need to go.”

—Pam Carter, Director, NIWL Research and Evaluation

Delivering with integrity means that partners return to work with us again and again.

“We create a space that is open to our partners asking any question that they need.
[Having] repeat partners is a testament to us being conscious of how we engage.”

—Michele Preston, NIWL Project Manager

