

DEFINING OUR CULTURE

NIWL VALUES



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

INNOVATE

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 innovates in how we work, who we work with, and what we deliver. We strive to create with intention and align our innovations with partner and participant needs.

We engage and support innovative partners to set progress in motion. In the Department of Labor-funded **Growth Opportunities** grant program, NIWL sought out community-based partners—some first-time recipients of federal grant funding—with the vision and connections to tap the potential of young people leaving incarceration and link them to equitable career pathways. These partners practice a comprehensive approach to workforce development by building their programs around support for the whole person, advocacy, and participants' culture.

NIWL creates tools and resources that respond directly to the needs of partners and participants, whether working with secondary school students, incarcerated adults, apprentices, or employee corporate volunteers. We developed **career awareness e-modules** for youth and the adult navigators who support them. **Safeguarding e-modules** ensure that adults working with youth understand and enact practices that keep youth safe and secure. A **pacing guide for career and technical education** that guides instruction in Michigan state prisons is now being adopted by teachers across the state. Our first-of-its-kind, Department of Labor-approved **youth development practitioner apprenticeship** adapts the trades apprenticeship model to help employers tailor-train new or existing youth serving employees—with lived experience in the communities they serve—as intake counselors, outreach workers and case workers.

We deliver inventive strategies for **virtual engagement** to expand our reach. The 2022 BTE **Global Youth Convening** used the 6Connex platform to host hundreds of international youths in expert panels, presentations, and individual coaching that support their successful transitions beyond secondary school.

Taking the time to do it right is key to our capacity for innovation.

“We take our time with everything. Time to do the research, time to collaborate to make sure that what we are creating is really new, and exciting, and provides growth. All those things are helping us create quality work for our partners.”

—Kelly Tungett, NIWL Technical Officer