

UNITED STATES PROGRAMS

National Institute for Work and Learning

OUR MISSION

At FHI 360's National Institute for Work and Learning (NIWL), we believe that equitable access to quality education and fulfilling work empowers people to reach their highest potential. That's why NIWL focuses on two key drivers of individual well-being: **education** and **employment**. In the 50 years since our founding, the ways in which individuals and communities navigate work and learning have transformed dramatically. The individuals and communities we serve include those from historically underserved communities who may be impacted by poverty, displaced from education or the workforce, involved with the justice system, or experience systemic and institutional inequities. By collaborating with these communities to devise responses to their needs and priorities, we advance diversity, equity and inclusion in work and learning. Working with the private sector, foundations, government agencies, school districts, institutions of higher education, community-based organizations, Tribal Nations, and the workforce system, NIWL fosters collaboration among and across sectors through:

- Partnership building
- Strategic planning and logic model development
- Program design and implementation
- Capacity strengthening
- Technical assistance
- Research, monitoring, and evaluation

NIWL'S AREAS OF EXPERTISE

Workforce Development

NIWL uses a people-centered approach as we work to reduce barriers to participation in the labor market, such as lack of access to training, collateral



Participant in Young Adult Reentry Program completes a training course. Image: FHI 360/Kyle Pompey

consequences of criminal justice involvement, and lack of access to supportive resources necessary for career growth and economic stability.

For example, through our Compass Rose Collaborative, NIWL serves as an intermediary for the U.S. Department of Labor's [Growth Opportunities](#) Grant, which provides workforce development training, mentoring, and placement for young people impacted by the justice system who live in areas struck by community violence. We have also expanded our offerings to increase opportunities for workers and learners with the [Youth Development Practitioner Apprenticeship Program \(YDPA\)](#), designed to ensure positive youth development principles are employed with existing staff and to open the field of youth development to people with valuable lived experience who may lack access to other formal education and training pathways. One of our first apprentices, Brian, believes the apprenticeship experience is:

"Organized, motivating, and worthwhile. I can now express myself, open-up, and communicate with youth and colleagues a lot easier. It has been a magnificent experience." Brian C.

College and Career Readiness

Unfortunately, many young people in underserved communities were not given and therefore lack adequate preparation for the 21st century job market. The NIWL Learning and Workforce Development team develops and implements programming and resources for young people as they prepare for future education and career pathways. Since 2016, NIWL has partnered with Johnson & Johnson on its **Women in Science, Technology, Engineering, Math, Manufacturing and Design (WiSTEM²D)** initiative to inspire and support girls and women in their pursuit of STEM studies and careers. Through creative, inquiry-driven learning and play, WiSTEM²D sparks interest and increases access and equity in high demand fields. NIWL provides technical assistance, volunteer resources and evaluation services.



Bridge to Employment alumna studies biomedical engineering. Image: FHI 360/Jessica Scranton

Johnson & Johnson's **Bridge to Employment** program inspires young people (14-to-18 years old) to stay in school, excel academically, and elevate their career aspirations. Students, with adult mentors from Johnson & Johnson, engage in career readiness and exploration, post-secondary education awareness and preparation, community engagement and leadership activities. NIWL provides strategic planning, volunteer training, activity guides, college preparation, and planning tools.

Following lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic, NIWL meets workers and learners where

they are. In the last year, NIWL released 64 cutting-edge online college and career readiness tools – including eModule courses and digital badges – and provided 24 remote professional development opportunities.

Our learning management system and resource hub provide educators, counselors, parents, and other navigators with the tools they need to effectively support youth and improve college and career readiness. NIWL is changing the way young people and their navigators develop the skills they need to succeed and thrive in higher education and the workforce.

Research and Evaluation

NIWL applies rigorous evaluation approaches to include formative and summative outcomes-based, participatory, process, performance, and impact evaluation. Our current research and evaluation services guide workforce, justice, and education partners in effectively documenting program implementation progress as well as measuring the effectiveness and impact of their programs and policies.

For example, NIWL conducted a research study of the **Pascua Yaqui Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) Program**, which expanded services to protect tribal children from removal while supporting, preserving, strengthening, and reunifying families. This impact study will provide evidence to the extent of Pascua Yaqui's program approach at achieving its goals, including fewer child removals, strengthening families' parenting skills, and ultimately family reunification. A technical report, which will serve as documentation to support an evidence-based practice review of Pascua Yaqui's ICWA program, is forthcoming.



For JA Worldwide, NIWL evaluated its **Building a Financially Capable Generation** program, which aimed to teach financial literacy to 6th - 12th graders in 15 countries. The program has three different learning components: basic concepts (saving, debt); a game type mobile app; and an innovation challenge. NIWL evaluated Year 4 of the program using pre/post surveys to determine any detectable differences in financial knowledge, skills, and behaviors of participants.

Corporate Outreach and Philanthropy Management

In the past, businesses primarily made monetary contributions—in response to a local disaster, for example— but today they are tackling specific societal issues. In many cases, these investments are combined with corporate volunteering for community impact.

NIWL is collaborating with multiple Fortune 100 companies to focus on youth development, from arts and design to STEM education to crime prevention. For example, NIWL is working with the Walmart Foundation to examine why youth become justice involved and what resources and systems are needed in rural America for to support these youth. NIWL conducted extensive research in one rural Arkansas community to understand the drivers of justice

About FHI 360: FHI 360 is a global organization that mobilizes research, resources and relationships so people everywhere have access to the opportunities they need to lead full and healthy lives. With collaborations in over 60 countries, we work directly with local leaders to advance social and economic equity, improve health and well-being, respond to humanitarian crises and strengthen community resilience. We share data-driven insights and scalable tools that expand access and equity so communities can effectively address complex challenges, respond to shocks and achieve thriving futures.

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involvement. NIWL is taking the lessons learned and producing a '**community blueprint**' on effective prevention, intervention, and diversion programs that guide youth toward preparing for positive learning and employment outcomes.

NIWL worked with the GE Foundation in developing its signature CSR program: **Next Engineers**. Throughout this process, NIWL provided the GE Foundation with strategic planning, program design, communication, and program launch support. Currently in its third year of implementation, the GE Foundation's Next Engineers inspires young people to pursue engineering pathways. Across four locations, employee volunteers provide coaching, hands-on engineering challenges, and insight into what it's really like to become an engineer. NIWL continues to provide strategic planning, volunteer training, activity guides, communication support, and technical assistance.

VALUE-DRIVEN

Agile, community-driven, and evidence-aligned approaches are essential to guiding individuals and communities through the ever-shifting landscape of work and learning.

Through collaboration and respect for all people, we work to deliver projects, products, and programs that center community voice to create a more equitable world for everyone we serve. We conduct our work with integrity, holding ourselves accountable through rigorous evaluation. And – always – we foster a culture of continuous learning and innovation to build sustainable capacity.

CONTACT

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