

National Institute for Work & Learning Annual Report

January–December 2024

Bridge to Employment students in Trenton, NJ, talk with Site Coordinator Destiny De La Rosa
Photo Credit: Edwin Torres, FHI 360

Executive Summary

Growing with Intention

At FHI 360's National Institute for Work and Learning, we strive to grow with intention. We thoughtfully cultivate relationships with companies and organizations seeking to build impactful, sustainable programs in the places where you live and work.

This year, we are grateful to you for investing in your communities, in youth, and in workforce development. You are investing in the future. These investments in work-based learning, early career exposure, hands-on learning, and mentorship help young people gain experience and a vision for their paths forward.

At the same time, these investments are transformative for companies. They provide employees with a chance to learn additional skills and display leadership by engaging with youth and young adults. As an employee volunteer in one of our programs shared, *"As a volunteer, you learn adaptability, patience, and a different way of solving problems."*

Above all, the programs we build together foster a sense of community and make you exemplary neighbors. As you'll see in the pages below, our work connects people, builds networks, and impacts thousands. Whether it's apprentices learning youth development practices or rural youth gaining a second chance, high school students touring college campuses or dedicated professionals coming together to share their expertise, our collective efforts create lasting change and open doors to new opportunities. Together, we are shaping a brighter future for all of us.

Thank you for trusting us to shepherd your vision into reality. We look forward to our continued partnership and the incredible impact we will achieve together.



Lisa Johnson, Director of the National Institute for Work and Learning. Photo Credit: Julia Reihls, FHI 360

Strategic Priorities

- Supporting Community Partners
- Elevating Community Voices
- Influencing the Field
- Growing with Intention

2024: Our Work by the Numbers

Active projects

 **30**

Funders

 **17**

Subawardees

 **37**

Workforce development,
college and career readiness,
and research & evaluation
resources and tools created



108 including



NIWL delivered

 **Over 8,000**

Hours of technical assistance, including strategic planning sessions, capacity strengthening, volunteer training, and more

 **27** Conferences attended

 **16** Presentations at national conferences



4

eModule courses



28

Research and evaluation tools such as survey tools and interview protocols



11

Individual eModules

As well as a full range of other resources: facilitator guides, student activities, training guides, case management toolkits, and workshops

2024: People by the Numbers



Program participants impacted directly

5,761



Individuals impacted indirectly⁽¹⁾

1,165,055



Hours provided by employee volunteers from corporate partners to support participants in NIWL programs

9,240



Participants who graduated from or completed an NIWL program in 2024

1,289



Participants who gained employment, including 186 internships and 20 apprenticeships

1,397



Participants who completed either educational or professional credentials

612



Awarded in scholarships to 169 students

\$2,010,300



Reentry program participants who did NOT recidivate⁽²⁾

Over 97%

¹ This number includes over 1.1 million students participating in Women in STEM²D sessions using FHI 360-created activities, as well as parents and other family members of program participants engaged beyond direct program enrollment.

² Our partners self-report to FHI 360 on their awareness of participants' re-involvement with the justice system. DOL defines recidivism as being convicted of a new crime committed within 12 months of release from incarceration or being placed on probation.



Where We Work

Countries

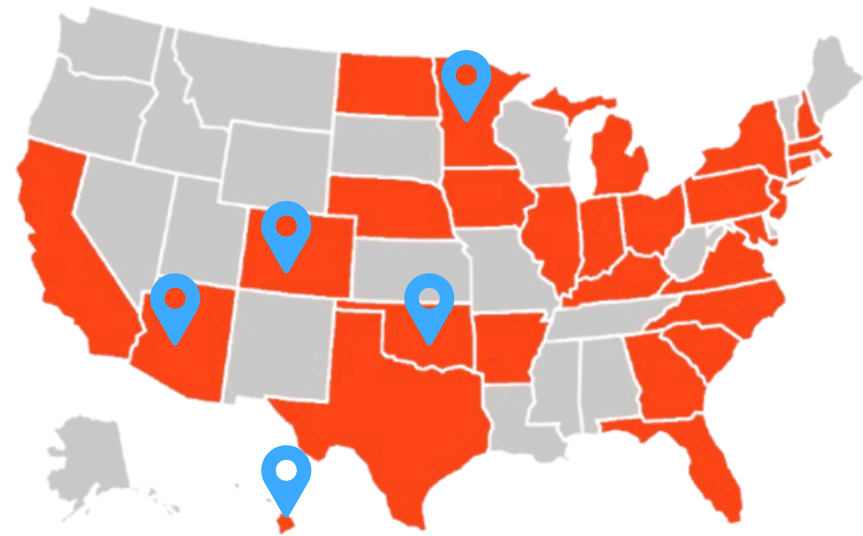
- Argentina
- Brazil
- Ireland
- Poland
- Thailand
- Australia
- China
- Italy
- South Africa
- United Kingdom
- Belgium
- Czech Republic
- Philippines
- Switzerland
- United States

*Additionally, NIWL's Women in STEM²D activities and curricula have been accessed in **43 countries!***

Where We Work


States

- Arizona
- Arkansas
- California
- Colorado
- Connecticut
- Florida
- Georgia
- Hawaii
- Illinois
- Indiana
- Iowa
- Kentucky
- Maryland
- Massachusetts
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- Nebraska
- New Hampshire
- New Jersey
- New York
- North Carolina
- North Dakota
- Ohio
- Oklahoma
- Pennsylvania
- South Carolina
- Texas
- Virginia
- Washington D.C.



Our Partner Tribal Nations and Organizations

- Cherokee Nation
- Kinai 'Eha, Hawaii
- National American Indian Court Judges Association
- Pascua Yaqui Tribe
- Red Lake Nation Saginaw-Chippewa Tribe

 Locations represented by blue map pins on map above.

Apprenticeships



Apprentice James Taylor participates in Lake County, IL, kickoff for the Youth Development Practitioner Apprenticeship. Photo Credit: Rebecca Corrigan



YDPA apprentices at their program completion ceremony.
Photo Credit: Dante Brown from The Community Works

Youth Development Practitioner Apprenticeship

Funded by the Lake County Workforce Development Board

Learning to Change Lives

NIWL's Youth Development Practitioner Apprenticeship (YDPA) program has been a transformative experience for the youth-serving professionals of Lake County, IL, as well as the young people they work with.

Our work with the Lake County Workforce Development Board has allowed YDPA to be an invaluable professional development opportunity. Through key elements of a registered apprenticeship program – on-the-job training, mentorship, coursework, and a Department of Labor credential upon completion – the program has resulted in a highly effective and capable cohort of youth development professionals.

In 2024, the program:

- Enrolled 17 apprentices, who gained subsidized employment
- Gained 6 registered employer partners
- Provided 70 hours of technical assistance
- Impacted 50 people in total

The success of YDPA furthers our commitment to apprenticeship as an effective workforce solution for professionals looking to improve their skillset.

"The experience helped me realize that as long as you have the **support and the resources** that you need, and someone's pushing you to **reach your full potential**, you can **be whatever you want to be and be successful.**"
— Angel Tovar, Business and Career Services Illinois,
Youth Development Practitioner Apprentice

Apprenticeship Building America

Funded by the U.S. Department of Labor

Expanding Opportunity

In 2024, NIWL's Apprenticeship programs grew to create more opportunities in counseling and youth services. Funding from the U.S. Department of Labor allowed NIWL to build a network of partners focused on advancing apprenticeship as a workforce solution. Under this grant, NIWL will develop two new registered apprenticeships, starting with the Substance Use Disorder and Mental Health Counselor Apprenticeship, and expand the Youth Development Practitioner Apprenticeship.

Through these programs, NIWL meets the rapidly growing workforce development needs in the youth services and mental health counseling fields. Since the grant started in July 2024, we've:

- Established 6 subgrantee partnerships
- Engaged 3 states (CA, IL, and MA)
- Created 21 apprenticeship curriculum modules
- Began developing 3 nationally registered apprenticeships
- Began developing 2 pre-apprenticeships, with 2 more to follow in 2025

Our work in apprenticeship furthers our efforts to provide Americans with more affordable and rewarding career pathways.

NIWL's Registered Apprenticeships are supported by the Employment Training Administration of the U.S. Department of Labor as part of an ABA2 grant award totaling \$8 million with 0% financed from non-governmental sources.



Youth Development Practitioner Apprentice Luis Garcia speaks at the YDPA program completion ceremony.
Photo Credit: Dante Brown from The Community Works

Corporate Engagement



Students participate in the Next Engineers: Engineering Camp in Greenville, SC, funded by the GE Aerospace Foundation. Photo Credit: Clemson University

Community Blueprint for Justice-Impacted Youth in Rural America

Funded by the Walmart Foundation

Fostering Partnerships

The Community Blueprint project is an extension of the Playbook for Rural Youth Justice, which guides rural communities through the process of identifying concrete steps to prove opportunities to support youth in rural communities.

Building on the learnings from the playbook, the Community Blueprint is expanding to at least 3 new communities in rural America:

- Wapello County, Iowa
- Hidalgo County, Texas
- Dickinson, North Dakota

Using the playbook, rural community stakeholders will develop innovative strategies to deflect youth from involvement with the criminal justice system. NIWL will guide community stakeholders through the process of developing their own blueprint, resulting in recommendations the community can use to support their youth. The lead organization in each community will then implement a top recommendation as a pilot program.

Finally, recognizing the unique needs of rural communities, NIWL will bring community partners together to share best practices for supporting youth in rural areas.

Our work with the Walmart Foundation shows NIWL's commitment to fostering long-lasting and meaningful partnerships with our funders, ensuring we build a deep understanding of our funders' values and needs.



Playbook for Rural Youth Justice youth participate in teambuilding activities after convening discussions. Photo by Hays Photography for FHI 360

Next Engineers

Funded by the GE Aerospace Foundation

Lifting People Up

Launched in 2021 by the GE Foundation, now GE Aerospace Foundation, Next Engineers inspires young people to pursue engineering through hands-on activities, skill development, and coaching from GE Aerospace and GE Vernova employees. Designed in collaboration with FHI 360, the program supports local communities by engaging employees as volunteers. We continue to lead global implementation, including providing technical assistance and global communications, working closely with local organizations managing the program, and supporting GE Aerospace and GE Vernova sites worldwide. Beyond student impact, employee volunteers reported gaining new skills, developing a deeper understanding of their company, and experiencing greater workplace satisfaction and connection to their company.

In 2024, NIWL:

- Launched Next Engineers in Warsaw, Poland, onboarding Perspektywy Education Foundation and GE Aerospace employees on program management and youth engagement.
- Led 13 youth engagement trainings for 400+ employees across five cities.
- Hosted the first in-person global convening for partners to share best practices.
- Supported volunteer mobilization strategies, resulting in employees volunteering 6,200+ hours.



GE Vernova volunteers test a catapult prototype with Engineering Camp students in Greenville, SC. Photo Credit: Clemson University

162

Engineering Academy graduates in 2024

7,387

Total students reached in 2024

\$ 1.9M

Scholarships awarded in 2024

“When I went to university, many of the people around me had learned the theoretical aspects of engineering, but didn’t have so much **hands-on experience**. Volunteering with Engineering Academy was **an opportunity** to make sure these kids could **use their skills** in more real-life situations.” — Euan Kirrage, Next Engineers Volunteer



Bridge to Employment Trenton student Nayeishka.
Photo Credit: Edwin Torres, FHI 360

Bridge to Employment

Funded by Johnson & Johnson

Building Brighter Futures

Established in 1992, Bridge to Employment (BTE) connects young people ages 15-18 to careers in health and STEM²D through academic and hands-on experiences.

Each BTE program focuses on academic enrichment, career readiness & exploration, post-secondary education exploration & preparation, community engagement, and youth leadership.

BTE's long success relies on the close partnerships NIWL helps build between Johnson & Johnson's local operating companies, schools, and community-based organizations. While each program is tailored to its local community, we provide a library of resources and opportunities for partners to learn from each other's experiences.

In 2024:

- BTE ran in 12 locations around the world
- 79% of BTE graduates plan to attend post-secondary education
- 43% of BTE graduates plan to pursue a career in STEM²D
- \$110,000 in scholarships awarded to 58 BTE graduates

“ I come from a first-gen family. **Everything** I'm learning here is **useful to me** and will be useful **to my siblings** as well.
— Nayeishka, BTE Trenton participant

420

Youth participated in BTE in 2024

156

Participants graduated from BTE in 2024

2,916

Employee volunteer hours spent mentoring BTE youth in 2024

Research & Evaluation



Next Engineers: Engineering Camp facilitators review test data in Greenville, SC.
Photo Credit: Clemson University

Pascua Yaqui Indian Child Welfare Act Evaluation

Funded by the Pascua Yaqui Tribe

Researching Impact

Our Research & Evaluation team's dedicated work on this evaluation demonstrates the team's expertise and strong partnership with the Pascua Yaqui Tribe.

The Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) of 1978 addresses the high rates of American Indian and Alaska Native children being removed from their families. The Pascua Yaqui Tribe, with around 19,000 members in Arizona, has been proactive in implementing ICWA to support their community.

Since 2015, the Tribe has used federal funds to expand their ICWA team, adding roles in the Attorney General's Office, Children's Services, and Enrollment Department. The formal ICWA Program, established in 2021, has improved coordination, sped up enrollment, reduced caseloads, and ensured placements align with the Tribe's preferences.

Our study examines the impact of the Tribe's ICWA program on child placement outcomes, with a focus on family reunification. Using an interrupted time-series analysis to assess changes before and after key interventions, our study provides insights for enhancing child welfare practices for Yaqui children and families.

This work and other evaluations like it support our partners' efforts to continuously improve their programs' outcomes.



Passing the culture on to the next generation during the Promising Justice Practices Convening, Photo Credit: Hawk Hartico

GEAR UP Evaluation

Funded by the Pennsylvania State Department of Education

Guiding Future Achievement

NIWL has worked closely with Pennsylvania State's Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Program (GEAR UP), which is designed to increase the number of low-income students ready to succeed in postsecondary education. In the 2023-2024 school year, 3,704 individuals participated in 246 sessions focused on essential skills like teamwork and communication, career exploration, and academic support such as tutoring in STEM subjects.

During 2024, NIWL provided evaluations on two topics:

1. A quasi-experimental study on the impact of GEAR UP services on Algebra I pass rates, and
2. An analysis of findings from a STEM Survey

Through careful review of students' participation in various GEAR UP sessions and activities, including STEM tutoring and workshops, NIWL's research & evaluation team provided valuable insights into where the program is having the most impact and what differences exist across districts.

The team then facilitated discussions with GEAR UP site coordinators and team leads on how the findings might influence their program planning and what information they might share with each other to support even greater program impact.

Economic Opportunities



Nic Alexander from the Department of Labor speaks during FHI 360's Second Chance Month panel. Photo Credit: Julia Reihs, FHI 360



Vernon Brown, an auto repair instructor for the YARP program, facilitates hands-on training for participants. Photo Credit: Kyle Pompey for FHI 360

Young Adult Reentry Partnership

Funded by the U.S. Department of Labor

A Comprehensive Approach to Reentry

FHI 360's Young Adult Reentry Partnership (YARP) worked with numerous local community organizations to provide comprehensive support for individuals with prior involvement in the criminal legal system.

By providing support services covering basic needs, legal services, employment training, education, and job placement, the YARP program contributed to both workforce development and crime prevention in the United States.

Over the course of its four-year run from 2020 to 2024, the YARP program achieved:

592

Enrolled Participants
by 2024

529

Program
Graduates

497

Placed in subsidized
employment

0.2%

Recidivism
Rate

YARP is supported by a U.S. Department of Labor grant award totaling \$4,298,500 with 0% financed from non-governmental sources.

"Reentry programs make **economic sense**. By focusing on a young person's **assets**, building their **confidence and skills**, and providing **access to employment**, they're not going to be re-arrested. They're going to be strong community members and **excel in their journey**." — Lisa Johnson, Director of NIWL

NIWL Resources

Advancing Workforce Pathways

Beyond specific projects, NIWL has developed a library of resources to support partners, navigators, employers, parents, and others in supporting career exploration and development.

Through tools such as our [Exploring Nursing Pathways](#) and [Careers in Trade](#) eBooks, young people can discover a wide variety of affordable pathways into high-quality, fulfilling careers.

Other resources, such as our [Career Awareness learning series](#), offer young people and their navigators self-paced guides to 21st century essential skills and workplace readiness skills.

Finally, our self-paced and facilitated Career Empowerment Labs, such as Digital Know-How, Career Starter Kit, and Igniting Your Career help individuals of all ages build workplace competencies to ensure successful employment or upskill for career advancement.

Many of our resources can be customized to meet specific needs.

80

New resources and tools for partners, navigators, and young people

11

eModules developed in 2024



Careers in Trade eBook cover image.



Next Engineers: Cincinnati Engineering Academy graduates. Photo Credit: GE Aerospace

Our Projects in 2024

- Apprenticeship Building America 2
- Bridge to Employment
- Career MAP
- Career Mobility Action Plan Evaluation
- Cherokee Institute of Excellence
- Community Ambassadors Playbook
- Community Blueprint for Justice-impacted Youth in Rural America
- Community Impact Benchmarking and Fellowship
- Compass Rose - Growth Opportunities 1
- Compass Rose - Growth Opportunities 4
- GEAR UP Evaluation
- Holistic Defense Pilot Evaluation 2
- Native Teaching Fellows
- Next Engineers
- North Dakota Standards Based Learning
- NSF ADVANCE Adaptation
- NYEC AECF
- OJJDP FY 2021 Delinquency Prevention
- Pascua Yaqui Tribe ICWA Outcomes Study
- Pathway to Success
- Phoenix Youth Catalyst
- Playbook for Rural Youth Justice
- Promising Justice Practices in Native Communities
- Second Chance Act - Post-Release Employment Program
- Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Michigan Juvenile Youth)
- Teacher Bridge Program Evaluation
- WiSTEM²D University Pillar, Undergraduate Programs
- WiSTEM²D Youth Programs
- Youth Development Practitioner Apprenticeship
- Young Adult Reentry Program

Our Funders

- American University
- Cherokee Nation
- GE Aerospace Foundation
- Greater Washington Urban League
- Johnson & Johnson
- Lake County Workforce Development Board
- Michigan Department of Education
- National American Indian Court Judges Association
- National Indian Education Association
- North Dakota Central Regional Education Association
- Pascua Yaqui Tribe
- Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education
- South East Education Cooperative
- U.S. Department of Justice
- U.S. Department of Labor
- Walmart Foundation
- Anonymous funder



BTE Trenton students tour Princeton University.
Photo Credit: Edwin Torres, FHI 360

Our Partners & Subawardees

- Asociación Conciencia
- Central Regional Education Association (CREA)
- Clemson University
- Communities in Schools of Jacksonville
- CommunityWorks
- Erika's Closet
- Georgia Tech Research Corp
- Hand2HeartDC
- JUMP! Foundation
- Junior Achievement Brazil
- Junior Achievement Czech Republic
- KentuckianaWorks
- Kinai 'Eha
- Lancaster County STEM Alliance
- Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Office
- National Association of Workforce Boards
- National Association of Workforce Development Professionals
- National Collaborative for Transformative Youth Policy
- National Youth Employment Coalition
- NCIA
- New Ways to Work
- OrthoWorx
- Our Piece of the Pie
- Palm Beach State College
- Pathfinders Resource Conservation and Development
- Perspektywy Education Foundation
- Philadelphia Education Fund
- Phoenix Youth and Family Services
- Project BUILD
- PROTEC
- Public Works Alliance
- The College of New Jersey (TCNJ)
- The Inspirational Learning Group
- The Now Effect
- The RightWay Foundation
- University of Cincinnati
- Valley Initiative for Development and Advancement (VIDA)



Judge William (Bill) Bowers from the Yurok Tribe of California participates in the Promising Justice Practices Convening.
Photo Credit: Hawk Hartico

fhi360



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 improve health and well-being, respond to humanitarian crises and strengthen community resilience. We share data-driven insights and scalable tools that expand access so communities can effectively address complex challenges, respond to shocks and achieve thriving futures.

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NIWL Staff during the 2024 Staff Retreat. Photo Credit: Julia Reihns, FHI 360