



WorkINdiana Newsletter

February 2015 Issue 7 Vol. 1

Occupational Spotlight: Customer Service/Call Center (CBP and IC3)



Customer service consultants may spend a lot of time answering phone calls and talking to customers regarding their company's products or services. In addition to answering questions, customer service consultants identify opportunities to offer information and make product or service suggestions based on a customer's needs. They may be responsible for taking orders from customers and obtaining their personal information, such as name, address, phone number, and payment method. The job description may also include updating and making changes to customer accounts.

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INDIANA WAGE INFORMATION

	Entry	Median
Hourly Wage	\$11.78	\$14.56
Long Term	14.7% (increase)	
Short Term	4.6% (increase)	

*Data collected from hoosierdata.in.gov



Professional Spotlight: Alishea Hawkins

Alishea Hawkins is the newest member of the Adult Education team. Alishea joined the Adult Education (AE) Department on October 27th after an illustrious career with the Department of Child Services working tirelessly on behalf of youth after they age out of foster care. Alishea will serve as the Director of Adult Education Policy and Programs.

Jennifer Walker, Operations Analyst, with the Department of Child Services said “I can think of no one better than Alishea to be heading up Indiana’s Adult Education programs. She gives her all to everything she touches and is a fierce advocate for those she serves. Those attributes together with her natural ability to shape productive programs made her an invaluable asset to the Department of Child Services. The Department of Workforce Development is fortunate to have her working in the ranks!”

Q&A

Did you always know what you wanted to do?

I had set a very clear career path for myself when I was in high school. Once I got into that career, however, I found out it was not for me. I knew I wanted to serve and assist people in some capacity while also making

enough money to support myself and one day a family. Thankfully, I was exposed to many different options within various career paths during my college and graduate experience. I had set out to become a Psychologist and through my education and experiences discovered that what I really enjoy is systems work. I feel that building programs and collaborations allow me to serve many people at a time.

What inspires you to do what you do every day?

The people we serve. Several years ago, while working in a post-secondary support program, I met a group of students who had non-traditional backgrounds. These students educated me on how systems that are in place to help can themselves become barriers. This and other lessons I learned during my time with these students continue to motivate me to improve any and all systems that are put in place to assist our most vulnerable Hoosiers. When I find myself stuck or discouraged it is the students, youth, adults and their resiliency that I return to in order find the motivation to keep going. I look forward to interacting with the students being served in our AE and WorkINdiana programs, hearing their voices, their stories, and how the programs we offer motivate them to keep going.

Tell us about the work you did before coming to the Indiana Department of Workforce Development?

I spent the last 10 years working in Child Welfare with a focus on older youth (aged 16-23) who were transitioning out of the foster

care system into adulthood. I was fortunate to be part of a team who built a national model of foundational principles to support a service array for young people who are making the step from being a dependent in foster care to an interdependent adult. This model, called Collaborative Care, gained national attention and was highlighted as a best practice by many leaders in the Child Welfare field. This work was inclusive and involved interaction with young people as statewide and local partnerships were built in many sectors ranging from Housing, Education, Employment, Healthcare and Youth Engagement. The primary focuses of this work being to ensure young people have the skills and abilities needed to navigate the community in which they live once they have exited foster care. Education is involved in every step of this program starting with ensuring service providers have the knowledge and skills to deliver services according to the model. Additionally, ensuring the youth served have proper education about how to access resources in their community, such as WorkOne Centers and Adult Education programs.

Moving from Child Welfare to Adult Education allows me to continue to serve this young adult population, with the expanded definition of youth per WIOA, and widen my scope of impact.

What advice would you give others?

Regarding working, I always told myself I could do anything for three months. To stick with it for three months then re-evaluate. Once I got to three months, if I did not have

WIN (Worldwide Interactive Network)

another option, I could do another 3 months. I held a 3rd shift position at a residential facility for adults with severe and chronic mental illness for almost two years, which was not an easy job. Show that you can stick it out in difficult situations, employers like dedication. Do not look at any task as beneath you. You never know where it will take you. Employers notice when you are ready and willing to work and who is a team player. Everything you do should be done to the best of your ability. If you are doing your best, you can and should take pride in your effort and work product. Be nice and respectful to everyone as you never know who will be your next boss.



Alishea forwarded this photo in jest. It perfectly personifies her humor and contagious laughter in the workplace



Chase Hall of Region 9 uses a WIN at McDowell Learning Center in Columbus and earns a welding certificate through Ivy Tech Community College with help from the WorkINdiana program.

The WIN Career Readiness Courseware is an online learning system for individuals who want to improve their essential workplace skills such as Applied Mathematics, Applied Technology, Listening, Locating Information, Observation, Reading for Information, Teamwork, Writing, Business Writing, and Work Habits. Students work through the levels and take placement tests to demonstrate mastery of the skills in each section.

WIN is not only a good tool to use in the adult education classroom to prepare for transitioning to employment, but many of the skills covered in the WIN courseware can help students be more successful in taking the High School Equivalency Exam or Accuplacer, the college entrance examination.

WIN closely aligns to WorkKeys, so using WIN is a great way to prepare for taking the WorkKeys assessments at the WorkOne center which enables students to earn a National Career Readiness Certificate.

In Region 1, the Hammond Area

Career Center (ACC) actively uses the WIN courseware to help students increase their basic skills attainment and to prepare for the National Career Readiness Certificate.

The adult education providers refer students to the WorkOne Career Advisor to use WIN. This makes the transition easy for the adult education students since the career advisors are housed at the adult education sites. Adult education students do not have to make a special trip to the WorkOne to enroll in the WIN software. Margret Hayes, an ABE Career Advisor at the Hammond ACC, handles this process for all interested students. She also tracks success rate of the students using WIN.

An overwhelming majority of the students who are using WIN are co-enrolled in WorkOne and adult education programs. Adult education students can use WIN courseware as a distance education tool. Margaret feels that the WIN courseware is user-friendly and actually helps students with their high school equivalency diploma.



Q&A

Could you tell me more about the WIN software?

-Donna Lovelady

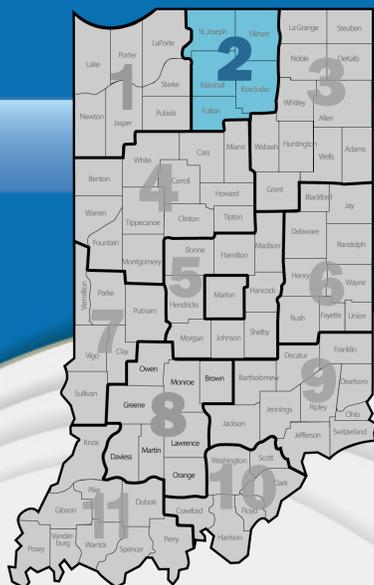
How fortuitous! Your question came at the perfect time. Please read the article in this issue of the newsletter to learn more about the WIN software. One thing that was not mentioned in the article was the instruction in work habits or those employability skills that are necessary for getting, keeping, and doing well on a job. If you want to try out the WIN software for your personal use or to help others improve their basic and/or employability skills, please contact your nearest WorkOne for assistance. WIN is available at no cost to you or your students. Please submit your questions and comments to bjohnson@dwd.in.gov.

Since obtaining a high school diploma or an equivalent is just the start, using WIN will help those who already have a diploma identify and remediate skills gaps that students will need for employment, additional training opportunities, or the next step on their career path. The majority of students who have used WIN scored between 10th and 12th grade on their TABE assessment and plan on entering into the WorkINdiana training program. Region 9's McDowell Learning Center in Columbus has been using WIN for about four years. Norma Flodder is the Life Coach who works closely with students in the WIN program. About 18-25 students are usually involved in WIN, and the majority of them come into the program with the goal of becoming co-enrolled in WorkOne services and adult education classes for eligibility into WorkINdiana certifications. Most of the WIN students at McDowell have scored at the 11th or 12th grade reading level on TABE, and many are already high school graduates.

The students at McDowell take the Indiana Career Explorer (ICE) to verify they are good candidates for a certain WorkINdiana career certification. These students spend at least 12 hours in the adult education classroom and

become fully enrolled. They can also continue to use the WIN courseware as a tool in distance education. When they have worked through the WIN courseware, they are referred to the WorkOne, where they may take the WorkKeys assessments, gain the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC), enter a training program, such as WorkINdiana, or find employment.

According to Nickie Nolting, Adult Education Coordinator at McDowell, "Students who are serious about preparing for a career are motivated to use WIN as a tool that fits their individual needs and helps them find success."



News from Region 2

Lori Manes found the start to success at Horizon Education Alliance

Lori came to Horizon Education Alliance (HEA) Adult Education in early February 2014 with a dramatic history. She was pregnant and estranged from her family.

She says, “I was sleeping on a friend’s couch and was surrounded by fake marijuana. I knew I couldn’t bring a baby into that kind of life. So I asked myself, ‘life or death?’ and I walked away from everyone I ever knew and set my goal on making my life for my baby.”

She said she saw a cross on the sign for the Faith Mission, Elkhart’s shelter for the homeless, and she knew that was her first step. Finding incredible generosity at the Mission, she soon had a part-time job and learned about HEA Adult Education, a short walk away. Our distance-only learning best fit her schedule and she was off and running. Lori worked every day on her lessons, sometimes coming to our lab: “I loved how I had a coach to guide me, and HEA is a great program because they offer one-on-one help, and not just with my lessons. They helped me to not get stressed out.”

Within six months, Lori passed her HSE (High School Equivalency) test and signed up at the Elkhart WorkOne for CNA training through WorkINdiana. She now has a home through public housing, and has started the process of college applications to major in criminal justice. Change can happen, according to Lori, and it starts with education.



Lori Manes and her son

“I always refer people to HEA Adult Education.”

Article submitted by Barb Stith, Director of Horizon Education Alliance Adult Education and Lori’s teacher. The adult education program is one of five initiatives of HEA scanning education issues from birth to grave.

Enthusiasm and Attitude

We continue our series on soft (people or interpersonal) skills with Enthusiasm and Attitude. Ralph Waldo Emerson said: Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm. This is very true at work where an “I can!” attitude is vital. Having a positive mental attitude on the job will enhance your ability to transform a tough situation into an opportunity for growth and improvement.

Enthusiasm in the workplace starts at the job interview. According to several sources, the positive energy you display at this initial meeting can strongly influence your rating. Many employers would rather teach the necessary job skills to an enthusiastic but inexperienced worker than hire someone with perfect qualifications but a negative attitude. You can demonstrate enthusiasm during the interview by smiling, using good posture, making eye contact, and paying close attention to questions. We all know that getting the job and keeping the job are two very different things. The enthusiasm displayed during the interview and early days of employment may begin to wane. Your punctuality and regular job attendance, along with willingness to listen, learn and try new things are ways to show that you are still excited about your job.

Maintaining a positive attitude can be crucial to advancement in your career. The employee with a positive attitude comes across as someone who wants to be at work and is willing to do what it takes to get the job done. This includes getting along with customers, co-workers and supervisors, as well as being open to constructive criticism. Supervisors tend to promote those employees who motivate their co-workers.

If you are not a naturally positive person, you can take steps to improve in this area.

- Be grateful: Listing reasons to be thankful can build your enthusiasm in your current situation.



- Be proud: Regardless what work you do, you can find a reason to be proud of it. All work provides some service or benefit to others and that justifies your pride. Are you looking for work? Be proud of your past accomplishments. Be proud of the fact that you haven't given up in the search process!
- Be proactive: Taking initiative on a project demonstrates and builds your enthusiasm. When you are the facilitator you will spend time promoting your project/product. As you help others become interested in whatever you are leading, your enthusiasm level rises, too.
- Be passionate: Almost any work has good and bad sides. The trick to growing your enthusiasm and keeping a positive attitude is to find your passion. Find at least one aspect of your work at which you will become the best. Become passionate about customer service or on-time reports or team meetings or... anything. Let your enthusiasm and positive attitude show!

About WorkINDiana

The WorkINDiana program offers short-term occupational training to adult education students spanning 6 business sectors and 30 industry-recognized certifications. Please visit this link to find out more: <http://www.amplifyae.org/view/workindiana>

The WorkINDiana Program and Adult Education are supported by WorkOne Centers. Please let us know how we are doing including: questions, topics of interest, or articles you'd like to submit. Send your comments to bjohnson@dwd.in.gov.

Look for our April edition in two months!

For past WorkINDiana Newsletters and Adult Education Newsletters, please visit this link: <http://www.amplifyae.org/newsletters>