

# The Workforce Development Board of Oswego County



July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024

Annual Report



*The mission of the Workforce Development Board of Oswego County is to attract, develop and maintain a qualified workforce for the Oswego County community, to assist in economic development by convening community leaders to engage in strategic planning and facilitating dialogue to educate and train the workforce needed by today's and tomorrow's businesses.*

## A Message from our Chair – Marq Brown



Throughout program year July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024, the Workforce Development Board (WDB) of Oswego County has been focused on developing training initiatives that will help support the anticipated rapid economic growth in the region due to the Micron project. These training initiatives are needed to support the rapid growth and fill vacancies that already exist in advanced manufacturing, healthcare, technology, and support industries like construction and logistics. We made a lot of headway last year but it remains very important that we continue to focus our energy and our investments on talent pipelines as well as investing in new ones, specifically making larger investments in high school and community college dual enrollment programs.

The WDB and its partners have continued building pipelines throughout the program year in support of the advanced manufacturing industry and other ancillary industries. We expect to see a significant increase in new businesses to support Micron's operation and those businesses will continue to create even more need for skilled workers. In recognition of these upcoming changes, the WDB has continued to support the region's training needs for CDL drivers, healthcare workers, and other positions. We strive to support manufacturing by building those pipelines and providing services through the One-Stop Career Center located in Fulton. We continue to look at the need to support population growth over the next few years. This is going to require additional training and educational programs at all of our local educational organizations for many different industries, through development of new ones and expansion of current ones.

In addition, the WDB continued to provide events throughout the county. As in years past, we held our annual hiring events in Fulton and Oswego. We also hosted mini job fairs in the Career Center throughout the year. All events had participation from both employers and residents and continue to grow in attendance.

Finally, we continue to work with our youth and local high schools to create and support programs that help students identify career pathways through shadowing and internship opportunities with local employers across all industries. One great example is the Fulton City School District's Early College Health Sciences and IT programs in partnership with Cayuga Community College. These dual enrollment opportunities are vital in building the next generation of skilled workers in Oswego County. Continuing to develop talent through these early learning opportunities with clear career pathways will strengthen our ability to keep talent here supporting our economy for years to come.

As we continue to look forward to the exciting future of CNY, it is vital we continue to build and keep talent right here in Oswego County. All of these training programs create talent pipelines directly impacting the success of our industry partners and community members.

I invite you to review this annual report. If you would like to learn more about the programs we support, please don't hesitate to email me at [mdbrown@oswegohealth.org](mailto:mdbrown@oswegohealth.org).

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marq Brown', written in a cursive style.

Marq Brown

## A Message from our Executive Director – Rachel Pierce



I thought Program Year 2023 was going to be the year I settled into my role as Career Center Director and Executive Director to the Workforce Development Board, while mapping out our role in the preparation for Micron and the economic boom on the horizon. Was that true? Yes, but another structural change came when we separated from the Department of Social Services and became the Department of Workforce Development on January 1, 2024. The Oswego County Legislature saw the great work our team was doing and the demand for workforce development in our community and sought to support that. They invested in a new department, thus eliminating the restrictions of working within the social services system. The flexibility of the County investment has allowed us even more creativity in our services to local businesses and community members.

There has been a lot of time spent over the past year discussing and planning new programs to introduce people to advanced manufacturing, increase interest in construction trades, and maintain existing industries in our region. The Micron announcement has helped shape plans for the future, but we focus on keeping our legacy businesses and industries thriving during conversations at Workforce Development Board meetings and others. Conversations at the Future-Ready Workforce Innovation Consortium and the Oswego County Micron Strategy Steering Committee always circle back to how Micron-based manufacturing training can benefit other advanced manufacturers or how Oswego County can prepare for the estimated 40,000 subsequent jobs from the Micron-effect. OCWNY will not only focus on Micron as we continue forward. We will strive to support our current partners and be a source of motivation for the emerging workforce and jobseekers in pursuance of economic self-sufficiency.

I want to thank everyone, especially all members of the Workforce Development Board of Oswego County, for your continued support and faith in my ability to lead workforce development initiatives in Oswego County. The passion and involvement of WDB members is invaluable and appreciated as we continue to impart change for the work-eager of our community. The motivation that emanates out of our Board members continues to inspire my team and I to offer our best and push ourselves to also inspire our customers on their career pathways.

Thank you all and I look forward to continuing partnerships in PY2024!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rachel Pierce', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rachel Pierce  
Executive Director  
Workforce Development Board of Oswego County  
Oswego County Workforce New York Career Center

## A Message from our One-Stop Operator – Zoe Vandermeulen

In Program Year 2023, the partners and center staff focused on increasing communication and referrals as well as learning about programs and services available to businesses and jobseekers through cross-training forums.

In August 2023, Zoë Vandermeulen, One-Stop System Operator, from Action Collaboration reached out to all workforce system partner agencies and center directors to get their contact information for a directory. The directory, published in late August 2023 and now being updated, also includes a brief description of the workforce system programs and supportive services offered by each agency. This directory is a resource for increasing referrals within our system.

The partners and center directors also meet semi-annually for virtual Partners' Roundtable meetings. At these meetings, the group shares updates, discusses ways to collaborate, and plans topics of interest for the cross-training Partner & Staff Forums. During the months that the Partners Roundtable does not meet, Zoë collects everyone's updates and publishes a monthly email with news and announcements from this group.

This group also held four virtual Partner & Staff Forums in PY23. These are designed to familiarize frontline staff with the resources available to their customers in Oswego County. These Forums are also valuable networking opportunities, especially for recently hired staff members. Forum topics included:

- Services for customers with disabilities
- Generational differences in the workplace
- Housing and homelessness
- Agencies and programs serving specific populations

These Forums are well-received, with around 30 attendees.

In PY24, we will continue to build on the success of our partners' group create new partnerships, increase referrals, and offer valuable cross-training and networking opportunities.

## New Initiatives

**CDL Training Program** – Centerstate CEO partnered with OCWNY in July 2023 to establish an industry partnership which aligns employers, training providers and community organizations around a strategy to add more CDL training slots in the region. This strategy was designed specifically to attract and retain diverse talent in CDL-related careers in construction, logistics, manufacturing and public transit and include paid training with local providers and work-based learning with local employers. As the hired consultant, OCWNY assigned one Employment Specialist to focus on a two-county industry partnership with Oswego and Onondaga County CDL trainers and employers. The regional partnerships and enhanced recruitment have proven successful in the increased class sizes at CiTi BOCES for CDL-A & B training and employer-based training programs. There is a large demand for more CDL drivers across industries and the interest is there. OCWNY is actively looking for additional funding to support the continuation of this CDL training program.

**Upskilling the Current Local Workforce** – OCWNY has come to the assistance of many local employers in different approaches this program year. The CDL Training Program opened communication with more employers and other Oswego County departments where we helped connect and fund current employees with training for subsequent promotions and raises. The City of Fulton reached out for additional training for their laborers. We helped set up a *Nuts and Bolts* class with Cayuga Community College for training. Pathfinder Bank and various Oswego County Departments have partnered with OCWNY to set up Metrix eLearning System accounts for Professional Development for current employees needing an enhanced skillset to excel in their positions within their companies and departments. We hope to increase the number of businesses partnering with us for Metrix professional development skills training over the next program year.

**Real Life Rosies** – The Manufacturers' Association of Central New York (MACNY) was awarded funding by NYSDOL to expand their Real Life Rosies program in the Mohawk Valley to Onondaga and Oswego Counties. OCWNY is partnering on the project. The goal of the project is to improve access to registered apprenticeship work opportunities for women through a program focusing on the manufacturing industry. In support of implementing a pre-apprenticeship micro-credential curriculum in advanced manufacturing at Cayuga Community College, developed to engage and support female participants in exploring a career path in advanced manufacturing, obtaining employment and/or registered apprenticeship. The Department of Workforce Development will offer recruitment assistance, resource navigation, case management, resume development, interview skills, job placement, supportive services, and follow-up services to all program participants. The first Oswego County cohort will kick off in mid-September 2024.

**Oswego Build** – OCWNY's role in the Micron Future-Ready Workforce Innovation Consortium and the Oswego County Micron Strategy Steering Committee has continued support across all industries but sought growth among Advanced Manufacturing and Construction. OCWNY's focus on the construction industry has amounted into a joint venture with Centerstate CEO for the expansion of Syracuse Build into Oswego Build and replication of the Pathways to Apprenticeship program with \$455,435. Oswego Build will enhance workforce support for the local construction industry with its flagship Pathways to Apprenticeship pre-apprenticeship training program with local trade unions. Trades unions will need a drastic increase in skilled labor to maintain current contracts, build the Micron megafab, and keep up with subsequent regional growth. Oswego Build will become the Oswego County branch of the foundation of trade skills training; supporting Governor Hochul's statewide ON-RAMP initiative, which focuses on advanced manufacturing and construction trades training.

## Program Year 2023 Budget

July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024

**Federal, state, and local dollars totaled \$3,487,795 in PY23**

|   | \$          | %   |
|---|-------------|-----|
| WIOA Adult  | \$ 373,032  | 11% |
| WIOA Dislocated Worker  | \$ 374,926  | 11% |
| WIOA Youth  | \$ 421,400  | 12% |
| WIOA Admin  | \$ 137,706  | 4%  |
| NY Systems Change and Inclusive Opportunities Network (SCION) | \$ 84,266   | 2%  |
| NYS Employment Network  | \$ 37,255   | 1%  |
| CDL Training Program  | \$ 63,849   | 2%  |
| American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)                               | \$ 462,963  | 13% |
| TANF Summer Youth Employment                                  | \$ 397,759  | 11% |
| FFFS Grants   | \$1,019,956 | 29% |
| FSET/SNAP   | \$ 114,683  | 3%  |

## Program Year 2023 Performance Report

**2,087** Job Seekers utilized the OCWNY Career Center

**3,194** Basic Career Services provided to jobseekers

**2,078** Individualized Career Services provided to jobseekers

**266** Training and Pre-Vocational Services provided to jobseekers

**1,171** Individuals were employed 6 months following program exit (591 Adults, 517 DW, 63 Youth)

**\$38,273** Median Earnings for Adult Program Participants

**\$37,857** Median Earnings for Dislocated Worker Program Participants

**\$23,433** Median Earnings for Youth Program Participants

**98%** Jobseekers surveyed who expressed satisfaction with the services they received

## Program Year 2023 Highlights

- OCWNY continued to assist local businesses with employment and training needs. Job fairs in September 2023 and May 2024 were held at the City of Fulton War Memorial and Lake Ontario Event & Conference Center, respectively, in an effort to connect jobseekers with local employers. **OCWNY would like to thank the local businesses who participated in these events!**
- Operation Oswego County, TDO and OCWNY hosted an Oswego County Manufacturing Summit in April 2024 to bring local employers together for interactive workshops and networking.
- Novelis continued to utilize OCWNY services for pre-employment testing and interviewing throughout the year. The Metrix Online Learning System was utilized to test Industrial Math and Reading Comprehension. First Choice Staffing also scheduled pre-employment testing for positions at Novelis.
- Oswego County Ambulance and Hearse continued to use the Career Center for pre-employment testing sessions as well.
- Other employers used the Career Center for recruitment purposes:
  - Oswego Health, Oswego County Opportunities, Felix Schoeller, Bankers Life and CiTi BOCES participated in a hiring event held at the Pulaski Family Welcome Center.
  - MacKenzie-Childs held recruitments for warehouse positions, account associates, custodial assistant, and quality control inspectors.
  - OCWNY hosted a Manufacturing Job Fair which included Chase Enterprise, Felix Schoeller, K&N Foods, United Auto Supply and Universal Metal Works.
  - Centro held an event to recruit bus drivers at the Career Center.
  - New Beginnings Home Care, Elite Home Health Care each held a recruitment event.
  - St. Luke Health Services and Excellus also held a recruitment event at the Career Center.
  - Mini Job Fairs were scheduled each month at the Career Center and included representatives from Pathfinder Bank, Upstate Niagara Cooperative, ARISE, Oswego Health, United Auto Supply, SMWIA Local 58, Little Lukes, and St. Luke Health Services.
- OCWNY continued use of the Metrix Online Learning System to provide job seekers with the opportunity to develop technical and soft skills at their own pace. In PY 2023, 420 licenses were issued to jobseekers who completed approximately 1,200 courses.
- The Career Center was again selected as a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) site for 2024. Approximately 170 tax returns were prepared by SUNY Oswego accounting students.
- Management staff attended the Deconstructed event at the MOST in July 2023. This event was the unveiling of the new semiconductor exhibit sponsored by Micron.
- OCWNY staff continued involvement in community activities to promote available services.
  - Staff were on site to provide information at the CiTi BOCES Manufacturing Day, Agriculture Day, Public Safety and Armed Forces Expo, and Health Careers Expo.
  - Cayuga Community College hosted a Job and Internship Fair in March 2024 with staff from OCWNY on site to provide information about available services.
  - In March 2024, staff were available to provide information at a Resource Fair for veterans.
  - Staff took part in the Youth Career Summit in June 2024. Students had the opportunity to attend workshops and gain advice from experienced professionals.
  - Staff were on hand at Senator Mannion's Senior Fair held in October 2023.
  - Staff also attended multiple Healthy Family Events and Community Events hosted by various school districts within the county.

## Business Services

Program Year 2023 statistics:

- 253** Businesses were served
- 136** Businesses posted jobs
- 25** Onsite recruitments were held at the OCWNY Career Center
- 99** Participants for September 2023 & May 2024 job fairs
- 6** Businesses participated in subsidized employment programs, which trained 42 participants
- 95%** Businesses surveyed expressed satisfaction with service(s) received.
- 159** Novelis pre-employment testing attendees
- 61** First Choice Staffing pre-employment testing attendees
- 22** Oswego County Ambulance and Hearse pre-employment testing attendees

## On-the-Job Training (OJT) and Paid Work Experience (PWE)

42 individuals were active in the OJT program during Program Year 2023 with 6 different employers. Returning employers utilized the program, including Pathfinder Bank, Felix Schoeller NA, and Oswego County Ambulance and Hearse, Pestmaster; and new employers Little Luke's and Fruit Valley Orchard. Training spanned a variety of in-demand occupational areas, including manufacturing, emergency services, and financial/banking. All training occurred at the employers' workplaces where trainees learned occupational skills in a new field or upgraded skills in their current field.

OCWNY also contracted with local employers and small business owners to provide young adults with short-term wage subsidized employment. 49 individuals were active in the PWE program during Program Year 2023 with 30 different employers. This opportunity allowed our emerging workforce to gain valuable work experience, work readiness skills, and local references to improve prospects in pursuance of permanent employment.

## Vocational Training and Supportive Services

135 job seekers received financial support for vocational training services during PY 2023. Customers were enrolled in certificate- and degree-bearing training programs with CiTi BOCES, 160 Driving Academy, OCM BOCES, Sage Driving School, Onondaga Community College, St. Joseph's School of Nursing, Pomeroy School of Nursing, SUNY Upstate, Faxton St. Luke's, Southeastern Lineman School and proprietary schools. Courses of study included practical nursing, welding, paramedic, commercial driver training, and more.

In addition, supportive services were provided to both recipients of training scholarships and job seeking customers. Supportive services included CPR certification training, textbooks, work clothes, vehicle repairs, and mileage reimbursements.



## Services for Individuals with Disabilities

OCWNY is proud to offer services to individuals with disabilities. A Disability Resource Coordinator (DRC) works with the Social Security Administration's Ticket-to-Work (TTW) program to help beneficiaries by providing information about how employment affects Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits. Outreach is provided through TTW overviews. The goal of the overviews is to encourage those receiving disability benefits to explore their options and join the workforce to help them obtain or regain self-sufficiency and financial independence. As a partner in the New York Employment Services System (NYESS) Administrative Employment Network, Oswego County generates revenue through TTW for assisting beneficiaries to obtain and retain employment.

OCWNY was also awarded funding in January 2022 through the New York Systems Change and Inclusive Opportunities Network (NY SCION) Program. OCWNY will receive up to \$100,000 annually, with an additional \$30,000 from NYS Office of Mental Health starting Program Year 2024, to fund the DRC position and expand the local network to support employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. The NY SCION grant expands services to all individuals who disclose a disability regardless of benefit status, promotes business engagement to educate on opportunities to expand employment to individuals with disabilities through feasible accommodations, and builds capacity for individuals with disabilities within existing career pathways.

## Young Adult (Youth) Services

Young adult programs are designed to provide access and referrals to the wide array of services available with OCWNY and throughout Oswego County. These services help young adults achieve academic, vocational, and employment success. During PY2023, young adults had access to workshops, NYSDOL's Career Zone/JobZone, Metrix Online Learning, driver's education, financial literacy, occupational skills training, high school equivalency remediation, vocational training, and paid work experiences. OCWNY continues a strong partnership with CiTi BOCES CTE programs, offering paid internships in their fields of study. These students gain experience in their desired profession and are often hired by their internship placements upon successful graduation.

OCWNY supports other local career pathways educational programs for Oswego County students through P-TECH at CiTi BOCES with students from all 9 school districts and the Early College High School Information Technology & Health Sciences programs through Cayuga Community College and 3 school districts. These programs produce graduates with associate degrees that enter the workforce in professions with self-sustaining wages or continue their education to further their career pathway. These programs support our emerging workforce in Oswego County and continue to spawn future programs and initiatives to provide workforce training opportunities and increase our local population.

The Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) is an effective program to engage young people in work readiness services. 121 youth, ages 14-20, were placed throughout Oswego County during the summer of 2024. The program targets county residents living in cash assistance households, those in foster care, individuals with disabilities, and others from low-income households. Participants are given opportunities to work in a wide variety of positions across municipalities, schools, community agencies, and private businesses. Seasonal staff provided trainees with work readiness sessions at their job sites, covering topics like job searching, completing job applications, interview skills, customer service, job retention skills, and professional workplace behavior. Young workers earned wages totaling over \$250,000 this summer, which is typically spent back into the local economy.

## Youth Systems Building Academy

The Workforce Development Board of Oswego County had the honor of leading a local cohort in participating in the 2024 U. S. Department of Labor, Employment & Training Administration Youth Systems Building Academy (YSB) Cohort 2. The YSB is an innovative effort to increase and enhance employment opportunities for youth. The Workforce Development Board of Oswego County partnered with the Oswego City-County Youth Bureau, Oswego County Opportunities, and the Richard S. Shineman Foundation on this project January through June 2024, to develop an action plan for reaching the goal of increased outreach and recruitment of youth for workforce development programs for career pathways with supportive services. Our group met virtually with a team coach every 2-3 weeks and visited Washington D.C. in February and May for 3-day convenings to work together in person, attend presentations by various federal agencies and national partners, and have collaboration time with other cohorts from across the country. It was an amazing opportunity and inspiring experience that our local group has committed to continuing efforts set forth in our action plan. We are currently working with a Public Relations class from SUNY Oswego for analysis of our current marketing efforts and a suggested plan moving forward. We have also committed to enhancing youth voice in our program development and marketing. This opportunity was an honor to be recognized by the federal government for our community's collaborative efforts.



## Nancy L. Premo Woman of Distinction Award

The Greater Oswego-Fulton Chamber of Commerce's Nancy L. Premo Woman of Distinction Award celebrates a woman in business whose service has made a positive impact in the community. The award honors Nancy L. Premo, CenterState CEO's late vice president of Human Resources. In February 2024, the Woman of Distinction Award was presented to Rachel Pierce, Executive Director of the Workforce Development Board of Oswego County.

Following her receipt of this award, Rachel participated in a panel discussion at the Women Rising: Motivate, Connect, Empower event in March 2024. Panel members led a discussion of *Clusterluck* film which was previewed at the event.



## Workforce Development Board Members

**Tania Anderson**  
ARISE

**Eric Behling**  
Behling's Orchards

**Marq Brown**  
Oswego Health

**Pamela Caraccioli**  
Fulton Savings Bank

**Brian Chetney**  
Oswego City-County Youth Bureau

**Diane Cooper-Currier**  
Oswego County Opportunities

**Dan Dorsey Jr**  
Eagle Beverage Company

**Stephanie Earle/Jessica Barnes**  
ConnexCare

**Kristi Eck**  
SUNY Oswego

**Dave Goodness**  
Workforce Development Institute

**Louise Hand**  
Constellation Energy

**Patrick Harrington**  
IBEW 43 Local

**Brian Heffron**  
CiTi BOCES

**Greg Hilton**  
Huhtamaki

**Keiko Kimura**  
Cayuga Community College

**Tim McKernan**  
EJ USA, Inc

**Zach Menter**  
Oswego County Ambulance & Hearse Services

**Peter Naughton**  
NYS DOL

**Andrew Quinn**  
Novelis

**Eric Saunders**  
UA Local 81 Plumbers & Steamfitters

**Patrick Sheppard**  
NYSED ACCES-VR

**Piper Titus**  
Page Trucking

**Christopher Todd/Kristen Foland**  
CiTi BOCES

**Chena Tucker**  
Richard S. Shineman Foundation

**Heather Vashaw**  
Pathfinder Bank

**Abby Weaver**  
Alberts Group

**Austin Wheelock**  
Operation Oswego County

**Oswego County Workforce New York Partners**

**Oswego County Department of Workforce Development**

**New York State Department of Labor**

**Adult Career and Continuing Education Services – Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR)**

**Cayuga Community College**

**CiTi BOCES**

**Compass Federal Credit Union**

**Farnham Family Services**

**Native American Community Services**

**NYS Commission of The Blind**

**Oswego City-County Youth Bureau**

**Oswego County Department of Social Services**

**Oswego County Opportunities**

**Small Business Development Center (SBDC)**

The Workforce Development Board of Oswego County, along with the staff and leadership of Oswego County Workforce New York, would like to thank the business leaders, community organizations and elected officials who partnered with us to make PY23 a success!

Follow us on social media as Oswego County Workforce New York:

