

## Genesis gains Work Ethic Certificate grant

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The Indiana Department of Workforce Development recently awarded nearly \$600,000 to 18 recipients for their plans to implement the Governor's Work Ethic Certificate (WEC) program. The program was developed by the State Workforce Innovation Council to address the employability skills gap. Grants will provide recipients between \$20,000 and \$55,000 to develop and adopt community- and employer-recognized work ethic certification programs in communities throughout Indiana.

Genesis: Pathways to Success (the rebranding of Ripley County's EcO15 and the STEM initiative of Ripley County Community Foundation), based in Batesville, in partnership with Batesville, Jac-Cen-Del, Milan and South Ripley school corporations, will receive \$20,000 for a consortium of corporations.

"For the past eight years, and probably long before that, we've heard from employers that there is a lack of 'soft skills' in the workforce. The Governor's

WEC provides a model that will help young people understand the value and benefit of not only a strong work ethic, but also a level of professionalism that is expected by employers," said Cheryl Obendorf, director of GPS.

"Hoosier employers routinely cite employability skills as the most challenging characteristics to find in applicants and new hires," said IDWD Commissioner Steven Braun. "The Governor's Work Ethic Certificate program is designed to provide Hoosier employers with a pipeline of workers with a proven work ethic and assist Indiana communities in closing the skills gap."

The WEC program is part of an ongoing effort to encourage collaboration among employers and local school districts and career centers. Employer input is required during the development of a program with the goal of providing high school students with an understanding of the employability skills in demand by local employers.

High school seniors who successfully complete the program will receive a certificate, which is signed by the governor and DWD commissioner.

In Ripley County, 10 employers provided letters of support for the consortium's application, according to Obendorf. Those employers confirmed the value of these employability skills by offering promises of advisory board members, applicant pool preference and guaranteed job interviews to WEC graduates.

"We were excited to see the Ripley County schools included among those awarded grants by the Department of Workforce Development," said South Ripley superintendent Rob Moorhead. "We have developed strong collaborative relationships among the four public school districts in Ripley County and look forward to partnering with our business community to develop the parameters for the Work Ethic Certificates that can be earned by our graduates."

This will help to strengthen the college and career readiness activities that are already under way in each school district.”

Batesville Mayor Mike Bettice commented, "We are excited to be one of the first communities in the state to offer the Work Ethic Certificate program to the students in our area. We know that developing the ‘soft skills’ needed to enter the workforce is critical, but often overlooked. Students will have the opportunity to develop organizational skills and learn how to be a team player while understanding the importance of being punctual and respectful of others. I want to personally thank Cheryll and the GPS Action Team for their hard work in making sure students in our area are provided with the tools necessary to address the

professional and technical challenges they may face when starting a career."

“For the past four years, we have stressed the importance of ensuring high school students have access to career and technical education, and central to that is ensuring that our young people understand the value and benefit of a strong work ethic,” said Gov. Mike Pence.

Forty-two grant applications representing 132 school corporations from across Indiana were submitted to IDWD. The 18 selected pilot programs will implement programming during the 2017-18 school years. The grant also requires recipients to develop a “Train the Trainer” plan in order to train neighboring school districts in an effort

to replicate the program in their communities.

School districts, career and technical education centers and Workforce Development Boards were eligible to apply. Interested parties that did not apply or did not receive grant funding are encouraged to develop and implement WEC programs in their community. The State Workforce Innovation Council Work Ethic Certificate Taskforce has developed a process by which programs can become an approved Governor’s WEC program.

More information about the Governor’s WEC program, including a listing of recipients, is available at [in.gov/dwd/workethic.htm](http://in.gov/dwd/workethic.htm).