



MUS 2026 Annual Convening Event Overview:

Overview

Midwest Urban Strategies (MUS) will host its 2026 Annual Convening, WorkforceWorks!! Northwest Indiana: The Urban Rural Connection, June 2–4, 2026 in partnership with MUS Member, Center of Workforce Innovations (CWI).

As a consortium of Workforce Development Boards and affiliate members, MUS convenes national and regional leaders to strengthen how workforce systems operate in practice. This convening is designed as a focused, high-impact experience that brings together leaders and practitioners to explore how workforce strategies are implemented across communities with different economic conditions but shared challenges.

Purpose

The convening is designed to create alignment across workforce systems by connecting strategy to practice. It provides a space for leaders to engage directly with peers, employers, and community partners to better understand how workforce efforts are structured, delivered, and sustained at the local level. The goal is to surface what is working, identify conditions that support success, and support the replication of effective approaches across regions.

Target Audience

The convening brings together a targeted group of 75–100 attendees from across the workforce ecosystem. This includes Workforce Development Boards (WDBs), workforce development professionals, executive directors, community-based organizations, employers, and local elected officials. Given MUS's role as a Department of Labor intermediary, the audience reflects those responsible for shaping, implementing, and supporting workforce strategies at the local, regional, and national levels.

What the Convening Will Entail

The convening is structured as an immersive, on-the-ground experience where participants move across Northwest Indiana together. Attendees will engage in curated site visits, guided discussions, and facilitated conversations that take place throughout the experience.

Rather than relying solely on presentations, the convening centers real-time engagement with workforce strategies in practice. Participants will hear directly from the practitioners, employers, and community leaders implementing this work, creating space for dialogue, shared learning, and connection.

Agenda Highlights (High-Level) *While the detailed agenda is still being finalized, the convening will include:*

- Curated site visits to workforce training centers and community-based programs
- Engagement with employer-driven workforce initiatives
- Exploration of regional strategies that connect urban and rural communities
- Facilitated discussions held throughout the experience, including during travel between sites
- Opportunities for peer exchange, problem-solving, and cross-regional learning

Each element is designed to provide practical insight into how workforce systems are built, aligned, and sustained.

Anticipated Attendance

The convening will host approximately 75–100 attendees. This intentionally sized group allows for meaningful interaction, deeper conversations, and stronger relationship-building among participants.

Alignment with Organizational and Community Goals

This convening directly supports MUS's mission as a workforce intermediary to connect national workforce priorities with local implementation. It aligns with the *WorkforceWorks!!* initiative, which uplifts the work of our member organizations, showcasing their strategies and impact, and advances industry-driven strategies, worker mobility, integrated systems, accountability, and innovation.

At the community level, the convening highlights how workforce systems respond to local labor market needs by coordinating efforts across Workforce Development Boards, employers, and community partners. It reinforces the importance of building systems with communities, ensuring that strategies are grounded in real conditions and lead to measurable outcomes.

By bringing together leaders across regions, the convening supports stronger alignment between workforce policy and practice, strengthens partnerships, and contributes to more effective workforce systems that serve both job seekers and employers.

