WIOA Annual Statewide Performance Report Narrative

QUICK VIEW: PROGRAM YEAR 2023

Feburary 2025

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

AJC	American Job Center
BIPOC	Black, Indigenous, and People of color
CFR	Code of Federal Regulation
CTE	Career and Technical Education
DWD	Department of Workforce Development
DWG	Dislocated Worker Grant
ETA	Employment and Training Administration
ETPL	Eligible Training Provider List
ISY	In-school youth
ITA	Individual Training Account
JVSG	Jobs for Veterans State Grants
LVER	Local Veterans' Employment Representative
LWDA	Local Workforce Development Area
LWDB	Local Workforce Development Board
LWIB	Local Workforce Innovation Board
OEO	Office of Economic Opportunity
OJT	On-the-job training
OSY	Out-of-school youth
RESEA	Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
TAA	Trade Adjustment Assistance
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
TEGL	Training and Employment Guidance Letter
UI	Unemployment Insurance
WIB	Workforce Investment Board
WIOA	Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
WIPS	Workforce Integrated Performance System

INTRODUCTION

General Overview

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires states to prepare and submit annual reports describing the progress in meeting their strategic vision and goals for the workforce system. In their narratives, and in accordance with WIOA Section 185(d) specifications, states, and territories report on a variety of items, such as waiver requests, success stories, performance accountability, and promising practices.

This interactive document showcases a synthesis of the reported narratives from 57 states and territories and organizes them in two main sections: Section I – State Narrative Highlights and Section II – State Narrative Excerpts. Section I highlights common items from the Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) No. 05-18 and expands on other topics that arise from the syntheses, and how states and territories converge under such topics; these include:

- Use of State Funds
- Evaluations
- Waivers
- Success Stories

Section II provides a summary of the same items for each reporting state and territory, pursuant to TEGL No. 05-18.

All the information in this document comes directly from the Program Year (PY) 2023 States' WIOA Annual Statewide Performance Report Narratives and it has been edited for clarity, consistency, and concision purposes. To access the complete annual statewide performance report narratives for each state and territory, please visit the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Employment and Training Administration (ETA) website at: dol.gov/agencies/eta/performance/results.

Use of State Funds

In accordance with Section 128(a)(1) of WIOA, states and territories may undertake activities with funds reserved by the governor, which can be up to 15 percent of their allotment. This section showcases how states and territories address under-served populations through their WIOA programs, emphasizing co-enrollment and policy integration across core and partner programs. It highlights unique efforts funded by the Governor's Reserve to reach recipients of public assistance, low-income individuals, those with basic skills deficiencies, and veterans. The section also illustrates innovative approaches to WIOA requirements, ensuring

priority for individualized career and training services in the WIOA Adult program, which helps workers secure good jobs through employment services and training opportunities.

Additionally, the section covers activities where the workforce system revisited and revised policies to enhance service delivery, focusing on job quality and responsiveness to worker and business needs. It outlines ETA's youth vision and priorities, offering policy clarifications for WIOA Youth programs, including self-attestation, mental health assessments, and digital literacy. The section also details various training services aimed at improving outcomes for populations with employment barriers, outreach activities to meet customer needs, and efforts to reduce administrative barriers, such as refining intake and service delivery processes.

Evaluations

In their annual report narratives, states and territories discuss several elements relating to current, planned, or completed evaluation and research projects. This section focuses on highlighting evaluation and research activities, including methodologies; continuous improvement strategies utilizing results from studies and evidence-based practices evaluated; and a summary of completed evaluations and reports.

Waivers

Waivers, contingent to approval, aim at helping states and territories, particularly if affected by disasters or extraneous circumstances, to "improve jobseeker and employer outcomes, or otherwise achieve positive outcomes."[1] Most states and territories applied and received approval for at least one WIOA waiver, and many received several. This section focuses on the most common types of waivers, the purposes for which states and territories received waivers, and highlights shared features of how states and territories executed those waivers.

Success Stories

In their annual report narratives, states and territories share individuals' success stories that highlight how services, such as industry-specific training, employment assistance and placement, certification programs, and vocational rehabilitation, helped them gain economic self-sufficiency. There are several programs that work specifically with priority populations such as veterans, low-income individuals, justice-involved participants, and individuals with other barriers to employment. WIOA also serves businesses through customized services, such as recruitment events and job fairs, human resource consultation, industry sector strategies, and providing labor market information. With such a variety of success stories, states are leveraging the diversity, innovation, and flexibility of the types of programs and services that they offer to address the needs of their local communities. These success stories highlight WIOA Title I programs, including WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs.

[1] WIOA Waiver Information. *What Can Be Waived*. dol.gov/agencies/eta/wioa/waivers

SECTION I

STATE NARRATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

Use of State Funds

Overview

This section highlights examples of how states and territories have implemented initiatives to support under-served populations through their WIOA statewide activities programs. The examples showcase how the initiatives engaged local areas to enhance job quality and skills-based practices; supported barrier reduction services and exceeded enrollment and credential targets; connected veterans with career opportunities and provided comprehensive support services; offered educational and career training to inmates, expanding its reach through third-party requests; and brought services to remote communities, improving access to workforce services and fostering relationships with local partners.

This section illustrates practices and innovative approaches to WIOA youth programs. One of the featured programs trains staff to provide educational instruction, hands-on experience, and exposure to careers in conservation, land management, and firefighting. Meanwhile, another program equips high school students with skills and experience in the hospitality industry through hands-on training with hotel partners. This collaborative employer-driven program aims to address worker shortages and prepare students for the workforce.

Lastly, this section presents other statewide activities that discuss co-enrollment, and examples of policy or service integration across core and partner programs, and activities enhancing workforce connections, supporting education and training, and addressing barriers to employment. Key examples focus on bridging the gap between education and real-world job skills. Additionally, this section features the importance of data-driven decision-making and re-engaging individuals in education to improve workforce outcomes.

Use of State Funds Highlights

Under-Served Populations

Colorado

Provide Support to Businesses and Employers to Enhance Job Quality and Implement Skills-Based Practices that Support Individuals

During PY23, the Colorado Workforce Development Council Employer Coach engaged all local workforce areas, including individual coaching for several Workforce Centers. The Employer coach continues to meet with and present the Job Quality Framework to Chambers of Commerce to increase training and conversations on individualized job quality improvement plans for the State's employers. Additionally, the Employer Coach reached over 800 conference attendees from multiple prominent events, engaged approximately 170 business owners through chamber partnerships and TA through the SBDC Network Trainers and

Business Services Representatives. The Coach conducted national presentations and provided in-depth coaching for pilot businesses and government partners, and participated in workforce symposiums, sector partnerships, and education symposiums, reaching hundreds of attendees and businesses.

Illinois

Job Training and Economic Development Program (JTED)

The State provided $15 million for the JTED Program. JTED provides the ability to support barrier reduction services. The following was achieved for the grant period ending July 2024:

- 110 percent (2,145) adults enrolled based on their planned performance.
- 317 percent (6,495) of youth enrolled in training. Of this, 6,062 youth participated in the Illinois Manufacturers Association Scaling Transformative Advanced Manufacturing Pathways (STAMP) program.
- 126 percent (3,803) participants have obtained at least one credential.
- 76 percent of adults have been placed in employment.

Barrier reduction funding has proven to be impactful for assisting participants in staying in training and employment. The following is a statement from a JTED participant assisted with barrier reduction funding.

> "Barrier reduction funding is devoted to increasing family stability and job retention by covering accumulated emergency costs for basic needs, such as housing-related expenses (rent, utilities, internet connectivity, etc.), transportation, childcare, digital technology needs, education needs, mental health services, substance abuse services, income support, and work-related supplies that are not typically covered by programmatic supportive services. WIOA providers can access these funds by applying to be a JTED provider or by partnering with JTED providers."

Iowa

Home Base Iowa (HBI)

HBI is the State's premier initiative to connect Iowa communities and businesses with skilled veterans, transitioning service members, and military spouses seeking career opportunities and a place to call home. In PY23, HBI saw significant growth, underscoring the program's commitment to supporting veterans and their families in establishing successful careers and meaningful connections within the States' communities.

In April 2023, the HBI and JVSG programs were brought together under one umbrella to maximize their reach and impact across the state. This new work unit is referred to as the Office of Veteran Workforce Services (OVWS). This reorganization has increased capacity, communication, and consistency in the way we deliver services to several groups including but not limited to the following: veterans, service members, employers, partners, communities and institutions of higher education.

Vision: Establish Iowa as the state of choice for veterans, transitioning service members, and their families.

Mission: The State is committed to achieving this by fostering strong collaborations and forming strategic partnerships with the Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs, Iowa Economic Development Authority, community partners, employers, and educational institutions. Together, the State aims to create a supportive and enriching environment that offers outstanding educational opportunities, employment, and community integration, making every aspect of living and working in Iowa welcoming and rewarding.

In PY23, HBI provided tailored employment services to 90 veterans, transitioning service members, and their spouses. However, these services are just one aspect of HBI's comprehensive support network. In partnership with the JVSG team, HBI offers wrap-around services to address the various needs of veterans moving to Iowa. JVSG veteran career planners deliver individualized employment assistance, while HBI career planners provide essential information on community resources and incentives, facilitating a smooth transition into State life.

HBI's support services include guidance on education benefits, VA home loans, community and statewide incentives, connections to veteran support networks, and local veteran service officers. This holistic approach helps veterans find purpose and community after they serve the Nation.

A major priority for HBI in PY23 was recruiting and retaining veterans, service members and their families in the state. The State recognizes veterans' valuable contributions to communities and local economies, bringing with them a wealth of skills and talents that enhance Iowa's workforce and communities. Additionally, the federal funds veterans bring through VA disability compensation, retirement pensions, and VA home loan guarantees stimulate local economies across the state.

A significant accomplishment to support the efforts in recruiting military talent occurred in November 2023. During that month, Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) was approved as a 3rd Party Administrator of the Department of Defense SkillBridge Program. Through this program, approved industry partners can gain early workforce access to transitioning service members up to 180 days prior to their separation with approval by their command. IWD was approved by the DoD to serve as an intermediary and work with employers in Iowa to review their applications and training plans for program approval. Since November 2023, the OVWS team, with support from HBI, has helped approve 22 new DoD SkillBridge opportunities in Iowa. Separating service members represent a talented pipeline for Iowa businesses and the goal is to attract this talent to Iowa.

According to the FY23 Geographic Distribution of VA Expenditures (GDX) report, the State has a veteran population of 177,922. These veterans contributed $1.6 billion in federal funds to the state, bolstering local economies and supporting community growth. HBI's recruitment and retention efforts aim to increase Iowa's veteran population and ensure all veterans have access to the benefits they have earned.

Another key focus for HBI is enhancing veteran participation in Iowa's labor force. In FY23, 83.8 percent of the State's veteran population was active in the workforce. While some veterans choose not to pursue employment due to retirement, disability, or financial benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs, HBI emphasizes the value of employment beyond monetary

compensation. By highlighting secondary benefits such as personal fulfillment, skill development, and community engagement. HBI aims to encourage greater workforce participation among Iowa's veterans.

HBI PY23 Highlights:

- Surpassed 130 Total HBI Communities (including 80+ designated counties)
- Helped Over 90 Veterans and Spouses Find Employment
- 129+ Employers received HBI designation

Offender Reentry Program

The State appropriates $418,312.69 in general fund dollars to IWD for the purpose of placing six Reentry Career Planners at the following locations: Iowa Correctional Institution Facility in Mount Pleasant, Fort Dodge Correctional Facility in Fort Dodge, and the Clarinda Correctional Facility in Clarinda. This funding also covers one Reentry Operations Manager to oversee operating procedures and the program.

The program staff partners with the Iowa Department of Corrections (IDOC) and other offender-related partners throughout the state, to assist in the overall goal of reducing recidivism. IDOC has nine correctional institutions that house around 8,535 individuals. Nearly 90 percent will return to their communities; just over 3,800 were released in PY22. Community Based Corrections (CBC) has eight judicial districts that supervise about 39,100 individuals on probation, parole, special sentence, and pretrial release. CBC also has 22 residential facilities that house and supervise around 2,092 individuals.

Nearly 50,000 individuals are currently incarcerated or on community supervision in the state. The average daily cost of incarceration per individual is $101.81, totaling just under $37,000 per individual per year. The IDOC reports that the three-year recidivism rate for FY23 is 35.8 percent; or 1.5 percent higher than the recidivism rate observed in FY22. The national average for state prisons is around 70 percent.

Training is in progress so that the Reentry Career Planners in the State's institutions are certified as an Offender Workforce Development Specialist (OWDS). This certification is an inclusive workforce development program with a 10-module curriculum designed to introduce, explain, and provide practical experience with the tools and strategies targeting employment retention for the justice-involved and marginalized population. Currently, three out of six of the Reentry Career Planners that are working in the correctional institutions are OWDS certified.

The State's reentry program supports WIOA through recording registered-only individuals and program enrollment into Wagner-Peyser. The goal is to teach work-related skills, find a career pathway, job placement prior to release from the institution, and network with employers and community reentry service providers to ensure a successful transition for the returning citizen. The Reentry Career Planners help create résumés, assist with mock interviews, and proctor the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) and O*NET assessments.

Empowering and Motivating Ex-offenders to Reach Gainful Employment (EMERGE) is a workshop taught that focuses on how to get back into the workforce and explain their criminal history to potential employers. The staff act as a sponsor for the IDOC Registered Apprenticeship programs and host career fairs inside the institution. They also network with employers and educate them on incentives to hire returning citizens, including the Federal Bonding program, Work Opportunity Tax Credit program, and the Iowa income tax benefit. They perform individualized job referrals based on skill set and job search three weeks prior to the incarcerated individual's release, including referrals to IowaWorks Centers in the area the individual will return to. Referrals also happen through the Iowa Registered Apprenticeship General Interest electronic referral form for apprentices that need to continue in their program after release or are looking to enroll in a program.

During PY23, the Reentry Career Planners served 1,900 individuals, which is 22 percent of the incarcerated population in Iowa. This number is larger compared to the last program year as these positions were fully staffed.

Tennessee

Workforce Reentry Tablet Program

The Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development (TDLWD) is spearheading a unique statewide program aimed at curbing recidivism, educating inmates, and creating a new pipeline of qualified workers for employers. The Workforce Reentry Tablet Program has provided funding for specially designed tablets to be placed in each of the State's County jails. The tablets have a concentrated focus on allowing persons incarcerated with the opportunity to complete the required adult education coursework in preparation for the HiSET high school equivalency exam, while also making courses for career training (such as plumbing and HVAC certifications), résumé building, job search support, mental health services, and substance abuse wellness and general life skills available, all at no cost to the user. TDLWD currently has tablets in 88 of the 95 county jail facilities in Tennessee. Currently over 8,630 learner accounts have been created.

As an expansion of the Workforce-Tablet Program, TDLWD recently included third-party requests for use of the tablets. Such requests can be made in two ways:

1) Third parties can request workforce-reentry tablets for on-site usage in facilities that serve justice-involved individuals and that have defined workforce development objectives and/or
2) Third parties can also request to add content to the tablets to educate, develop, and inform the incarcerated users.

The expansion of the program will further maximize the department's reach to justice-individuals and community-based service provision.

Metropolitan Development Housing Agency

As an innovative approach to service delivery and immediate needs identified across the state, TDLWD – Division of Workforce Services has partnered with the Metropolitan Development Housing Agency (MDHA) and the American Job Center Network of Partners to provide on-site services at the two local housing developments in the Metro Nashville area. This pilot program

provides Title I and Title III Programs, the Youth Employment Program, Homeless Veterans Program (HVRP), reverse referrals for SNAP E&T, Reentry, and Adult Education, as appropriate. Additional supportive services such as childcare, transportation, and partner program training are provided as identified per participant.

Since January 2024, there have been a total of 196 referrals made to partner services including WIOA Title I, Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Education, SNAP E&T, as well as non-profit agencies providing services to low-income individuals. To assist in making referrals and serving individuals at MDHA, a resident at MDHA was hired as a Career Services Assistant. These partner referrals are an increase over what would have occurred within Comprehensive and affiliate AJCs. With these additional referrals and innovative hiring practices, this pilot is proving to be a model moving forward to expand outreach with similar projects, such as Titans Town, to support occupational training and job opportunities.

Utah

Rural Area Outreach and Partnership

The Southeast area has made great strides in bringing services to remote communities where many customers are over 90 miles from the closest AJC. Some remote communities are part of the Navajo Nation. Workforce Services staff volunteer at events in these communities which includes helping with food distribution. During these events, staff share information on Workforce Services and develop relationships with the community and school partners. Building these relationships opens the door for Workforce Services staff to obtain access to community spaces and schools where they can meet with customers. Staff use laptops to provide services and help customers apply for UI, SNAP, WIOA and other public assistance programs. Some locations require staff to problem solve things such as helping customers connect to power, internet and providing services outside the facility. These efforts have resulted in Navajo youth and adults participating in WIOA services including youth employment internships. The community centers and schools have asked staff to make regular visits. Workforce Services continues to improve access to services and grow trusting relationships with the Navajo Nation and rural communities.

Integrated Service Delivery

Delaware

TANF

Delaware's TANF Team is a partnership between the Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Social Services (DSS), and DOL-ETA. TANF funds are contracted to agencies to fund two programs:

1. Employment Connection services help TANF recipients obtain and maintain full-time unsubsidized employment or participate in a combination of work activities to receive their cash grant.

2. Keep a Job services to provide employment retention assistance to participants who have obtained unsubsidized employment that results in maintaining employment and achieving long term economic independence, including income growth.

The TANF program's goal, administered through a joint effort with DSS and the Delaware Department of Labor, is to give people temporary help until they get a job. Within the program, both the State and the TANF client have responsibilities. The State provides positive incentives for the family to become self-sufficient and self-supporting. Time on TANF is limited for most people, up to 36 months, but they must work or participate in work related activities for 30 hours a week to receive a TANF check. In FY24, DET enrolled 336 clients, 740 job placements and provided services to over 1,916 clients.

Yes WIOA Can

Arizona

Gila County Summer Forestry Program

The State allocated $306,140 to train staff in providing educational instruction on various aspects of the forestry industry to young people in the rural communities of Hayden and Winkelman. This initiative is a collaboration between Gila County, the Tonto National Forest, and the Conservation Corps. The program recruits 66 young workers from Hayden and Winkelman to participate in summer crews for a six- to eight-week program, offering hands-on experience and exposure to careers in the forestry sector.

During the summer program, the Tonto National Forest staff provide specialized educational instruction, introducing students to a variety of employment opportunities within the Forestry Service. The program allows students to engage directly with experts in fields such as conservation, land management, and firefighting, giving them a comprehensive understanding of potential career paths. Additionally, students who participate in the program are enrolled in AmeriCorps, allowing them to earn education credits that can be applied toward furthering their education.

Guam

Hotel Associate Youth Apprenticeship Program

The Governor's office has launched a new initiative designed to equip the youth with skills and experience for a future in the Territory's hospitality industry. It is called the Hotel Associate Youth Apprenticeship Program (HAYAP) which provides high school students an opportunity to gain hands-on training with hotel partners and pursue careers in the hotel sector.

The program is a collaboration between GDOL and Guam Community College. The Hyatt Regency Guam and Hotel Nikko Guam registered as the first two hotels to employ six paid student apprentices. Other hotels that have joined the Hotel Associate Youth Apprenticeship Program include:

- Dusit Thani Guam Resort,

- Dusit Beach Resort,
- Bayview Hotel Guam, and
- Guam Plaza Resort and Spa.

Several more hotels are lined up to join once they complete their apprenticeship standards.

GDOL Director, David Dell'Isola, said apprenticeship programs are a proven model for success. "We've seen the results with the Guam Registered Apprenticeship Program and similar programs in partnership with GCC. Over the years, thousands have graduated from these programs and have gone on to successful and fulfilling careers, contributing to the local economy," Dell'Isola said in a statement.

Labor now wants to bring that successful apprenticeship model into the classroom and give the Territory's younger generation more alternatives and opportunities for career paths as the government partners with the private sector and identifies areas in high demand, he said. "This will help our students gain relevant skills and prepare them for the future workforce while also meeting the needs of the job market," Dell'Isola added. In HAYAP, students get OJT, mentorship, and explore different careers in hospitality and tourism. High school students must be at least 16 years of age to qualify and have completed at least one year of GCC's Hospitality and Tourism Management Program. Like a Registered Apprenticeship (RA) program, HAYAP is also an employer-driven apprenticeship program where students can work, get paid, earn their Certificate of Mastery, and pursue an Associate of Science in International Hotel Management.

Addressing worker shortage

HAYAP represents an innovative approach to workforce development. This program focuses on cultivating new and up-and-coming talent for the job market. It offers opportunities directly in schools, young people who may choose an alternate path from college can enter the workforce immediately after high school. This pathway provides students with a direct route to career readiness, aligning their interests and skills with industry needs. HAYAP's success has already sparked interest from other industries.

GDOL is now engaging with employers from industries such as automotive, culinary, early childhood education, and construction to explore youth apprenticeship programs in these fields. Earlier this week, the Governor proclaimed May 5 to 11, 2024, as Youth Apprenticeship Week. Building off the success of National Apprenticeship Week, this year marks the inaugural year of Youth Apprenticeship Week nationwide. Youth Apprenticeship Week highlights the benefits and value of RA program opportunities for youth.

Other State Funds Activities

Idaho

Teacher Externship Program

Beginning in late PY18/early PY19, the Idaho Workforce Development Council (WDC) and STEM Action Center piloted a teacher externship program with 16 educators and employers. Teachers were paired with an employer worksite for a minimum of 200 hours during the summer to not only gain practical experience in an occupation, but to also learn about the greater workforce needs of the organization. Both teachers and employers have lauded the program, given that it improves connections between the State's classrooms and workplaces and allows teachers to take real-world experiences back to their students. The WDC, in partnership with Micron Technology, provided funding for the teacher externship program from January 2023 through June 2025. After the grant's conclusion, the value of the program has prompted the WDC to allocate $750,000 for the next three years to fund teachers' stipends, ensuring that the program remains low or no-cost for participating employers. A recent grant for the program allowed for much broader outreach and recruiting for the externship program and made the experience free for employers. Participation in 2024 jumped to 97 externs. 2024 teacher extern with CBS2 News:

> "I externed with CBS News last summer and had an excellent experience so was delighted when we both wanted to work together again. Since my first externship, Jacob Boone, my supervisor and the promotions manager at CBS News, and his wife Jaynee Boone, the General Manager of the Hampton Inn Boise Airport, both served as Business Professionals of America regional competition judges for me. Jacob also often provided equipment and studio setup advice for my yearbook program, which helped save my school hundreds of dollars. Since the connections I'd made last summer greatly benefitted my classroom and my program I was looking forward to participating again…
>
> Some of the things I appreciated most about working with CBS was the diversity of experiences I had, the trust and confidence they put in me, and the kind and welcoming nature of their staff. I look forward to sharing these experiences in my classrooms in the future, particularly the knowledge I've gained regarding production of live events, working with a diverse range of clientele, and the immense amount of creative problem solving, critical thinking, and agile reaction skills this career field requires. Most importantly, I hope the connections I've made through this program will continue to benefit my students, as the access to industry and content experts has already proven invaluable. I would highly recommend any teacher, rookie or veteran, to take full advantage of this program."

Nevada

Nevada P-20 to Workforce Research Data System (NPWR)

The NPWR is a state-of-the-art research tool that provides Nevadans with unparalleled access to the knowledge needed to understand the trends shaping the State's education and workforce outcomes. NPWR was built on a federated system that merges data across participating agencies using a sophisticated matching algorithm. NPWR leaves all private data behind the existing firewalls of each agency and de-identifies all data during the matching process. Using this de-identified and matched data, NPWR generates reports from participating agencies for the purposes of better understanding the trends shaping Nevada's education and workforce outcomes.

NPWR is truly a statewide collaboration, with the NPWR Advisory Committee made up of the data-sharing partners and established to assist in the support of the statewide longitudinal system. These data-sharing partners include DETR for wage

data and Title I and Title III (onboarding); Nevada Department of Education (NDE) for Adult Education and early childhood data; Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE); Nevada Department of Motor Vehicles (Nevada DMV) for matching only; DHHS for early childhood information; Nevada Department of Corrections (NDOC); Nevada Department of Veteran Services (NDVS); Department of Business and Industry (B&I) for apprenticeship data.

In November 2023, the first NPWR Strategic Plan was approved by the NPWR Advisory Committee. This document is to act as the goals and guide for the State of Nevada's P-20W longitudinal data system, known as NPWR, for the near future. The purpose of this plan is to help address gaps and resources that can help NPWR grow to become a more valuable tool to the entire State, through modernization efforts and bringing resources and talent in-state to work to help citizens, departments, researchers, and resources.

Due to the success in the first year, in December 2023, OWINN awarded the second round of NPWR Research Grant projects, funded through WIOA Governor's Reserve. NPWR awarded nine projects at a total of $331,477.71. The funded projects were:

- Workforce and Economic Development
    - Assessing Workforce Availability and Associated Skill Sets Needed to Close Gaps in the Value Network and Supply Chain of Nevada's Healthcare Industry Sector; University Center for Economic Development; University of Nevada, Reno.
    - The Potential Economic and Fiscal Benefits of Connecting Over 30,000 Disconnected Youth in Nevada to Education or Employment by 2030; Consultant to/representing Workforce Connections, Southern Nevada's LWDB.
    - AI-Enhanced Education in Nevada and its Transformative Impact on Workforce Development, Employment Prospects, and Tomorrow's Job Market Proficiencies; Center for Migration, Demography and Population Studies; University of Nevada, Las Vegas.
    - Care Workers in Nevada: A Crisis Now and in the Future; The Lincy Institute.
    - The Dynamics of Labor Force Participation – A Statewide Analysis and Survey in a Post-Pandemic Nevada; Kenny Guinn Center for Policy Priorities and Center for Business and Economic Research; University of Nevada, Las Vegas.
- Education
    - Strengthening Nevada's PK-20 Teacher Pipeline: An Assessment to Meet Workforce Projections; Clark County Education Association.
    - An Exploratory Study of Two Post-Secondary Policies and Student Outcomes in Nevada; Department of Educational Psychology, Leadership, and Higher Education; University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

- Nevada Goes to College: A Statistical Portrait of Higher Education Enrollment and Degree Attainment of Minoritized Students in Field of Education; College of Education and Human Development; University of Nevada, Reno.

- Students
  - An Examination of Novice Teacher Career Persistence Trends; Elizabeth Hofschulte Collins, MS; Doctoral Fellow in Teacher Preparation and Retention, National Institute for the Advancement of Education; University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

Pennsylvania

Near Completer

The Near Completer Grant program was designed for Pennsylvanians who started post-secondary education in high-priority, in-demand fields but stopped without completing their degrees or certificates. Under the guidance of LWDBs and partner schools, participants gain the skills and job training needed to obtain quality employment with family-sustaining wages—a key priority of Governor Josh Shapiro's budget proposal. LWDBs awarded grant funding partner with Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education schools or other post-secondary education institutions, businesses, workforce leaders, and community partners to help eliminate common barriers faced by individuals seeking re-enrollment. Over $6 million was awarded to four LWDBs. When the project wrapped in June 2024, 197 of the 237 enrollees graduated. Their collective graduation rate was 83 percent, well-surpassing Pennsylvania's 59 percent overall graduation rate for students enrolled in 4-year institutions. The grantees reported all or most of their students were certain they were never going to be able to finish school and graduate. Through this program, nearly 200 citizens are now free of that heavy "drop-out" burden that anyone who has gone through something like this carries.

Wisconsin

Governor's Task Force on Workforce and Artificial Intelligence (AI)

In PY23, Governor Evers signed Executive Order #211, creating the Governor's Task Force on Workforce and AI. Envisioned as a mechanism to adapt and equip a workforce capable of capitalizing on the generative AI transformation, creation of the governor's task force set in motion a comprehensive effort to help harness the evolving technologies and strengthen the State's workforce for the 21st century and beyond. The work of the task force culminated in an advisory action plan that was adopted in July of 2024 that offers specific policy proposals based on the collaborative work of the task force and the expertise of leaders from education, government, workforce development, economic development, and the business community. Themes of the policy proposals reflect the need to expand digital literacy; develop more flexible training and credentialing; continue efforts to remove employment barriers and connect underutilized talent pools with AI skills; improve government service delivery through strategic deployment of AI tools; and incent industry adoption of AI tools to enhance competitiveness and create high quality jobs. Governor's Reserve funds were used to obtain technical assistance, expert services, and other support for the work of the task force.

U.S. Virgin Islands

Text-Based Solutions

The Territory launched a text-based outreach platform through Engage by Cell, which has proven to be highly effective. This platform allows case managers to efficiently inform the public of updates and program information, leveraging high open rates to maximize engagement. Studies show that SMS messaging achieves a 97 percent open rate, with 90 percent of messages read within three minutes (compared to email's 20 percent to 30 percent open rates). Utilizing this technology as a part of the strategy allowed for guaranteed distribution of information and calls to action. This practice has led to an increase in marketing impressions and reach. The Territory utilizes this text-based platform to directly communicate with individual participants, keeping them informed of individualized updates, required documentation, training opportunities, and upcoming events specific to their career needs.

Waivers

Overview

In their submission of the PY23 WIOA Annual Report Narrative, most states and territories reported at least one WIOA waiver, while others reported more. This section shares the common purposes for which states and territories received waivers and highlights how states and territories executed those waivers. Although some states and territories did not have waivers in place long enough to report outcomes, many were able to share anticipated outcomes, or the initial impacts related to the approved waivers.

Generally, waivers helped increase flexibility for local workforce systems. Waivers were also used to help:

- Adjust reimbursement rates,
- Support in-school youth (ISY) who were at risk for disengagement,
- Increase the number of eligible and qualified training providers,
- Reduce administrative and reporting burdens on eligible and qualified training providers, and
- Build effective reporting systems or partnerships so eligible and qualified training providers could collect and submit WIOA performance data.

Overall, state narratives described 86 waivers. Most states reported on the following:

- 34% Waiver of the requirement that states and local areas expend 75 percent of all Governor's reserve and/or local formula youth funds on out-of-school youth (OSY).
- 22% Waiver to allow local areas to provide ISY with Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for ISY.
- 11% Waiver to increase on-the-job-training (OJT) employer reimbursement by up to 90 percent for businesses with 50 or fewer employees.

The following highlights include waivers addressing specific state situations beyond the more routinely granted waivers.

Waiver Highlights

California

Waiver of WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(H)(i). This Waiver Allows up to a 90 Percent Reimbursement of OJT Costs for Businesses with 50 or Fewer Employees (WIOA Waiver OJT).

Riverside County Workforce Development provided crucial employer assistance to Phenix Technology, Inc., a small business helmet manufacturer, to meet the demands of a growing business. The OJT program, with its labor market analysis, job placement coordination, screening, and candidate searching, played a pivotal role in the company's growth. Since its inception in 2013, Phenix Technology, Inc. has grown from six employees to thirty-four permanent employees and five interns. As they look to the future, they aim to further expand their business with the continued assistance of Riverside County's OJT programs.

Idaho

Waiver to Allow the State Board to Act as the Local Board - WIOA Section 107(b)

This waiver has been in effect since PY05, when the Governor consolidated the six workforce development areas at the time into two local areas. These two areas entered into an agreement, which is still in place, to have the State function as a single statewide planning area. By requesting the waiver to have the WDC (WIOA State Board) conduct the functions of the local board, Idaho has been able to reduce its overall state and local administrative costs, which its governors have supported since the waiver's initial implementation. This move has become even more important since WIOA imposed increased reporting and administrative requirements upon states considering the significant funding reductions the State has faced since 2012. The primary goal sought by this waiver is to reduce administrative costs and maximize the available money directed to career and training services, including work-based learning, and services to business and jobseekers. The eventual programmatic outcome results in service to a larger number of participants than would otherwise be served due to higher administrative costs. To maximize resources available for service delivery, the State continues to use the flexibility of this waiver to allow the WDC to serve as the local workforce board.

Indiana

Youth Funding Expenditures Waiver

The State was approved for a waiver to provide flexibility for regional WDBs to decrease the minimum OSY expenditures from 75 percent to 50 percent, as needed. OSY services are very individualized to meet the needs of participants by providing them with access to partnerships with training providers and employer partners, which are tailored to help OSY participants achieve their individual goals.

The waiver has been specifically used to ensure consistent funding for the State's Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) program. Consistent support for JAG has notably boosted access to WIOA for JAG participants. JAG/WIOA co-enrollment has further

enhanced access to youth program elements for these in-school students. This co-enrollment ensures access to the 14 youth program elements. However, across the state, the use of WIOA in-school funding is less than 25 percent, although it is higher in some workforce service areas.

In PY23, the State's WDB's in three regions utilized the Youth Funding Expenditures Waiver. Due to an investment from the Family and Social Services Administration's (FSSA) TANF program in August 2023, these workforce service areas opted to co-enroll ISY in JAG and WIOA to provide greater access to supportive services like tutoring and goal completion incentives.

To meet broad ISY enrollment goals under WIOA, the State's WDB's rely on programs like JAG, which is a 43-year nationally recognized workforce preparation and dropout prevention program, to improve high school graduation rates, increase post-graduation employment, and to increase access to, and utilization of, post-secondary education and training by Indiana's new high school graduates.

The flexibility allowed by the Waiver on Funding Youth Expenditures has contributed to the success of Indiana's JAG program by allowing JAG to continue in-class instruction, student mentoring, and participant follow-up services. Included in JAG outcomes are nearly 2,500 ISY in the follow-up phase of services and over 4,500 junior and senior students in classrooms across the state. For the State Class of 2023, JAG Indiana boasts a 96 percent graduation rate, outpacing all Indiana seniors in that cohort by 8 percent.

Through the numerous opportunities offered in JAG programming and other individualized services for OSY, including work experience, mentorship opportunities, connections to Adult Education and/or other partners, and a direct connection to program services, outcomes for youth with barriers are strong. Additionally, most youth who have received occupational skills training achieve employment and skills gains at a higher level than those who have not.

As identified in the waiver, DOL anticipated an increase in the number of ISY served, with the performance accountability outcomes for the overall WIOA Youth—including both ISY and OSY—expected to remain stable or improve across most WIOA Youth performance indicators. Total participants served increased from 2,888 in PY22 to 2,848 in PY23. Median earnings also increased from $4,639 in PY22 to $5,222 in PY23.

Prioritizing OSY

DWD and the WDB's are continually exploring innovative methods to prioritize OSY and provide educational, training, and employment service opportunities. This includes:

- Targeting OSY involved with the criminal justice system and residing in high-crime areas
- Collaborating with Adult Education programs for co-enrollment and educational remediation in support of future employment/education goals
- Ensuring flexible access points for service delivery

- Providing comprehensive wrap-around services for special populations, particularly those with limited language proficiency, disabilities, and/or basic skills deficiencies
- Partnering with Vocational Rehabilitation Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS).

Minnesota

Homeless Youth/Foster Youth Waiver

Minnesota secured a waiver from the DOL that assures the LWDAs have the flexibility to target services to in-school youth who meet DOL's definition of homeless youth. A Minnesota Department of Education survey identified over 3,600 youth in grades 8–12 statewide who were homeless. This waiver allows the state to reduce the required OSY expenditure rate from 75 percent to 60 percent for LWDAs who prioritize ISY who are homeless or foster youth.

When WIOA is reauthorized, states and local areas will have more flexibility in determining eligibility for services. In the meantime, the waivers allow the State the flexibility to offer cost-effective, high-quality services to both ISY and OSY. For these reasons, Minnesota Youth will renew/extend all current waivers.

The State's Homeless Youth/Foster Youth waiver provided seven LWDAs, in PY23, with the flexibility to target homeless youth and foster youth while they are still in school. Services include provision of critical employment and training services to at-risk ISY without jeopardizing the delivery of services to out-of-school participants. This waiver supports one of the goals of Minnesota's State WIOA Plan: to increase the high school (HS) graduation rate for under-represented youth.

Overall, for PY23 WIOA Youth of the 2,574 served, 448 were homeless/runaway youth. Of these 448, 75 were ISY homeless youth without a HS diploma at enrollment.

A total of 136 youth identified as either in foster care, or previously in foster care. Out of the 136, 45 were ISYs. Performance results for PY23 youth exiters who were either in foster care or who had previously been in foster care are on the following page.

Nebraska

Waiver of 75 percent OSY expenditure requirement

Greater Lincoln Workforce Development Area

During the PY23 performance period of the 75 percent OSY expenditure waiver, the Greater Lincoln Workforce Development Area expanded opportunities for ISY based on funding flexibility afforded under the waiver. This flexibility allowed Greater Lincoln to serve 12 additional ISY participants, providing them with invaluable work experiences in local government through both the City of Lincoln and Lancaster County youth employment programs. Both programs create pathways for ISY to explore public service careers and acquire hands-on experience in a structured and supportive work-experience environment, exposing them to a variety of local government functions. This real-world exposure provided participating ISY with insights into how government agencies operate, offering practical experience that help with develop of professional skills and understanding of civic

responsibility. Moreover, participating ISY had opportunities to meet with city and county officials, including the Mayor of the City of Lincoln and the Lancaster County Commissioner. These interactions not only allowed participating ISY to gain insight into mechanisms of city and county government but also provided them with opportunities to discuss potential improvements for their communities with city and county leaders. This level of engagement was key in helping participating ISY make informed decisions about future career paths, giving them a clearer sense of what they enjoy and what aligns with their professional ambitions. By focusing on creating meaningful real-world work experiences for ISY, this promising practice demonstrated the value of providing opportunities for young people to actively participate in shaping their futures and the future of their communities.

During the PY23 performance period of the 75 percent OSY expenditure waiver, an ISY participated in work experience at the Lincoln City Clerk's Office based on funding flexibility afforded under the waiver. During a particularly busy period when the office faced an influx of work, the ISY took on significant and impactful responsibilities. As shared by the City Clerk:

> "[The ISY] has been an incredible asset to our office. During a hectic time, [the ISY] not only worked on their own projects but also stayed late to assist us when necessary. [The ISY's] work in designing two Office Manuals was outstanding—[the ISY] took our ideas and materials and turned them into beautifully branded manuals that are now essential resources for our new hires. [The ISY's] talent with art design helped us establish a cohesive 'Clerks Vibe' that aligns with our City Logo.'"

The ISY's contributions not only demonstrated initiative and creativity but also forged important connections with other city departments. As a result, several departments have already expressed interest in hiring the ISY for a potential summer position during PY24. This work experience opportunity empowered this ISY to make a tangible impact while developing occupational skills. Without the funding flexibility provided under the waiver, this opportunity may not have been available and the ISY's occupational skills development may have been delayed or not realized. This ISY's story is a testament to the impact of this waiver in helping ISY explore potential careers while making meaningful contributions to their communities.

Nevada

Waiver to Increase OJT Employer Reimbursement up to 90 Percent for Businesses with 50 or Fewer Employees

This waiver has given the State a greater opportunity to utilize and operate OJTs throughout the state. Utilization of the 90 percent OJT waiver was 115, or 58.7 percent, with over 81 percent completing an OJT successfully. The participants who benefited from the OJTs had an average wage of $17.85 per hour as compared to a wage of $19.48 for all OJT participants. Approximately,

- 53 percent of the participants served identify as African American/Black; American Indian; Asian; Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander; or more than one race, with 34 percent identifying as Hispanic or Latino.
- The participants had the following barriers:
    - 3.5 percent re-entry;

- 1.8 percent veteran; and
- 23.7 percent persons with a disability.

Evaluations

Overview

TEGL No. 05-18 asks states and territories to include descriptions of current or planned evaluation and related research projects, including any efforts to coordinate the development of such projects with WIOA Core programs, other state agencies, and local boards in their narrative reports. States and territories also include continuous improvement strategies utilizing results from studies and evidence-based practices evaluated. State and territory evaluation and research projects fall into several broad categories such as the assessment of toolkits and supporting products, workforce training processes and outcomes, agency services to participants, and labor force participation and barriers of entry, to list a few.

Evaluation Highlights

Colorado

Evaluation Initiative with Northern Illinois University (NIU)

WIOA requires WDP to conduct formal evaluations of WIOA program activities to research and test innovative services and strategies and achieve high levels of performance and outcomes. Working with NIU, Workforce Development Programs (WDP) established a model for WIOA program evaluation using the Training Placement and Outcomes in Colorado Workforce Areas. WDP and NIU continued to provide technical assistance and training for a cohort of local area staff, the WIOA Evaluation Team, to build their capacity to employ a mixed-method evaluation approach involving quantitative and qualitative strategies. Each local workforce area completed a quantitative analysis in the area and is performing a qualitative analysis to understand the 'why' behind the numbers. The evaluation team identified best practices in each local area and incorporated recommendations to improve outcomes for WIOA participants.

The local areas use various tools, including The Evaluation Tool, to independently evaluate outcomes of WIOA programs with an increased emphasis on serving marginalized populations and improving program service delivery. This work has dramatically improved the capacity of state and local workforce areas to improve yearly program planning to more produce access to high-wage employment and to conduct independent program evaluations to make data-driven recommendations that maximize program performance for all customers. The State presented the evaluation work at three webinars and the 2023 National Performance Accountability and Reporting Convening hosted by DOL. The following tactics were and are being employed by NIU to improve and enhance Colorado's use of quantitative and qualitative evaluation:

Program Year 2022 Evaluation Team Accomplishments

In partnership with NIU, CDLE published the finalized PY22 evaluation report, Training Placement and Outcomes in Colorado Workforce Areas in early PY23, which addressed the evaluation of data from PY21.

Program Year 2023 Evaluation Team Accomplishments

1. Provided TA and training for the local areas' evaluation leads for the year's evaluation efforts. Conducted a survey of the WIOA Title I participants to gain a better understanding of why some of the disproportionate impacts in outcomes might be occurring among race/ethnicity groups.
2. Assisted with the design of state and local evaluation reports and provided training to both the WDP Evaluation Coordinator and statewide evaluation team. This report writing will further use, at the state and local area level, of results for planning and performance improvement purposes.
3. The Evaluation Team (state and local members) will continue to meet and hone evaluation skills. This investment will support local area evaluation given the costs for contracting such services is prohibitive to do on each program yearly. This team developed tools and created reports using the evaluation tools on the federal and state grants under WDP which will further quality investments and enhance service outcomes.
4. Completed participation in DOL's Evaluation Peer Learning Cohort (EvalPLC). Colorado was selected to participate in EvalPLC to learn from experienced evaluators, and state and national subject matter experts to build upon its developed and tested process for conducting WIOA Title I program evaluation. The primary goal was to build research and evaluation capacity and alignment across all four Core WIOA programs and other critical workforce partners. Colorado's EvalPLC state team representing Core WIOA programs collaborated to develop a capstone project that tests innovative strategies to achieve significant improvements in services impacting education, employment, housing, justice-involved and foster youth, as well as all other groups of disconnected youth. This project further built upon the work Colorado is doing to effectively reach youth in the disability community through cross-agency Disability Awareness Training and Disability Program Navigators positioned in workforce centers.
5. In partnership with NIU, CDLE published the finalized PY23 evaluation report: *Colorado's WIOA Title I - Adult and Dislocated Worker Annual Evaluation Report*, which addresses the evaluation of data from PY22.

Indiana

An evaluation was conducted in June 2024 on WIOA Title I Adult Priority of Service (APOS). The report, *WIOA: An Analysis of the Title I Adult Workforce Program and Adult Priority of Service*, presents key findings and points of further interest in a comparative analysis of employment and wage results for adult participants whose Priority of Service was determined in PY22.

The State has consistently increased service levels to adults with APOS barriers over the last four PYs. As of PY23-Q3, 73.6 percent of participants receiving individualized career and training services in the adult program are from at least one of three APOS priority groups (recipients of public assistance, low-income individuals, and individuals with a basic skills deficiency) established by DOL. This represents a 16 percent increase since PY20. As service levels for adults, in the three priority groups have increased, it is important to understand, through a comprehensive evaluation of participant results, what the impact to employment and wages are for participants with APOS barriers as compared to participants without APOS barriers.

In general, the report revealed that adult participants during the review period who had APOS barriers experienced employment and wage results that were lower than those of adult participants without APOS barriers. Of the participants who had APOS barriers, those who reported the Basic Skills Deficiency barrier had the highest rate of employment and average total wages for the review period. Participants who received Public Assistance reported the lowest rate of employment and average total wages. WIOA Governor's Reserve funds were utilized to carry out this evaluation.

Iowa

Evaluation Activities under WIOA Title I

Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) and Iowa State University's Iowa's Integrated Data System for Decision-Making (I2D2) team partnered together to conduct a preliminary evaluation of WIOA Title I programs. The I2D2 team was recruited for this project because of their experience with integrated data and prior work conducting needs assessments and program evaluations for other state departments.

IWD WIOA Title I program leadership initiated the partnership with the intent to cultivate short-term knowledge (Phase I) and use this knowledge to develop a longer-term plan for ongoing evaluation (Phase II+). Phase I comprises the work for the current report, and involved two components:

- First, the team examined Title I datasets specifically to see what could be learned from within-program records prior to integration with other data systems. WIOA leadership expressed specific interest in several areas for this data exploration component:
    - Who are Title I programs serving, and are these groups representative of those who may benefit from services?
    - What is the level of co-enrollment across programs? And
    - What are the most reported barriers to employment?
- Second, the team conducted data discovery to explore additional datasets within IWD and departments outside of IWD that would have useful information to inform evaluation efforts in the longer term (Phase II+).

<u>Part I. WIOA Title I Pilot Evaluation</u>

This pilot evaluation focused primarily on PY22, but also included a preliminary look at longitudinal records to explore potential for additional future evaluation work. The following summary highlights key findings from three areas of analysis that sought to:

a) describe program participants,

b) examine co-enrollment between WIOA Title I programs and other IWD programs, and

c) study the 13 barriers to employment.

Throughout this project and simultaneously with participation in other national learning community efforts related to WIOA evaluations, the I2D2 team explored potential additional data systems that could be combined to enhance future evaluations. The goal was to find helpful data that could inform prioritized analytic questions about whether WIOA programs are serving the intended audiences and what short- and long-term outcomes are being advanced. Through participation in national learning communities with other states who are conducting WIOA evaluations, and discussions with other Iowa state agency leaders, the State explored several useful systems and their potential benefits:

1. Unemployment and Wages data (IWD)
2. Post-secondary enrollment records (Iowa Department of Education)
3. TANF, SNAP, and other public benefits programs (mostly Iowa Department of Health and Human Services)

The results of the evaluation completed during PY23 provided great initial insight into the impacts of the WIOA Title I program in Iowa. Additionally, the State has identified several areas of technical assistance through this evaluation, one example is the need for additional training and education on the importance of recording barriers at program entry. The State looks forward to continuing this work and expanding upon this early success.

New Jersey

Evaluation Activities under WIOA Title I

New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJDOL) has created a multi-year plan for its research and evaluation activities. Central to this effort has been establishing the New Jersey State Data System (NJSDS). Since 1988, the State has maintained a longstanding research partnership with The John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. NJDOL and the Heldrich Center established a multi-agency-data-use agreement and NJSDS through support of multiple federal Workforce Data Quality Initiatives (WDQI) and State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) grants.

NJSDS includes data not only from NJDOL, but also from the NJ Department of Education (NJDOE), the NJ Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE), and the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority (HESAA).

In the coming year, NJDOL also has plans to build its own internal evaluation unit to manage WIOA and other program and policy evaluation initiatives.

<u>Current and Planned Evaluation and Research Projects</u>

NJDOL plans to use NJSDS and other (Administrative) data to evaluate the performance of federal- and State-supported education and job training programs by laying out a plan to conduct evaluations and to reinforce a culture within the State to make data-informed decisions. Current and planned evaluation and research projects in NJDOL include:

- PY 2021 WIOA Evaluation: A Study of WIOA Title I and Title IV Transportation Services
  The Heldrich Center worked with NJDOL to conduct a process study of WIOA Title I and Title IV transportation services during PY21 (July 1, 2021–June 30, 2022). Access to transportation in the State of New Jersey remains an ongoing challenge for many populations. With an emphasis placed on the barriers for WIOA Title I and Title IV customers, transportation is perceived to be a significant barrier for people with disabilities and others in accessing workforce development services that assist with obtaining employment. In PY21, the COVID-19 pandemic may have also exacerbated existing transportation challenges and/or created new opportunities for innovative solutions to transportation challenges. This evaluation explored the dynamics of the transportation challenges that existed for WIOA customers in PY21 and seeks to pose innovative solutions to address these challenges.

This study had three primary objectives:

1. Identify transportation service challenges for WIOA customers in New Jersey participating in WIOA services at the One-Stop Career Centers;
2. Identify and highlight promising transportation programs and/or services that could be expanded or replicated in five rural/southern counties (Atlantic, Burlington, Cumberland, Salem, and Cape May) where transportation is perceived by local policymakers as a significant challenge to WIOA service participation and employment; and
3. Offer meaningful, tangible recommendations to the NJDOL, and to rural counties, on how to modify WIOA service delivery in light of the transportation challenges that exist for WIOA customers in those areas.

The WIOA PY21 evaluation was conducted from October 15, 2023 to March 31, 2024.

The final report, *An Evaluation of WIOA Services in New Jersey, Program Year 2021* was presented to the NJ State Employment and Training Commission (SETC), on June 12, 2024.

The final report includes:

- An analysis of transportation services provided through WIOA to Title I and Title IV customers during PY21, using the available data.
- The identification and profile of transportation programs that are considered promising or innovative.
- A landscape of transportation programs/initiatives recently tried and/or current operated in the targeted rural/southern counties in the state.
- The identification of potential WIOA service modifications in context of the transportation challenges noted in the rural/southern counties in the state.
- Recommendations on programs that could be expanded and/or piloted in other areas of the state, based on qualitative research, have high levels of satisfaction from state and local staff or subject matter experts.

Rhode Island

The Department of Labor & Training (RIDLT) recognized in early 2022 that the state had not been completing regular evaluations of its WIOA Title I program consistent with 20 CFR 682.220. In PY22, RIDLT lead a coalition of partner WIOA state agencies in applying to the 2022–2023 Evaluation Peer Learning Cohort (EvalPLC) hosted by DOL in the hopes that the initiative would offer a shared space where the state could identify collective evaluation needs and wants, receive guidance, support and expertise from experienced facilitators on how to overcome barriers to collaboration, and begin the development of an action plan for joint data analysis and performance evaluation.

The results of that effort were realized in PY23. The various state agencies administering WIOA programs entered an MOU that authorizes cross program evaluations designed and informed by those agencies, as well as by the SWDB. Completed evaluations, with associated findings and results, will be shared with state and local boards. As State Workforce Agency and administrative agent for the SWDB, the RIDLT serves as lead for conducting WIOA evaluations.

In Spring 2024 the state completed its first cross-program evaluation—a study of the geographic location of WIOA service locations and their associated outreach and recruitment networks, as compared to state's communities and subcommunities of greatest economic need. The final report highlighted "service deserts" of severe economic hardship that were not being reflected in collective WIOA enrollment. WIOA agencies are now in the process of strategizing on enhanced recruitment and awareness efforts in these communities. Given the State's small size; any progress in addressing employment barriers and in building economic security in these communities would have an outsized impact on statewide measures of economic stability and growth.

As the State completes additional WIOA evaluations; those assessments and any resulting actions, such as policy changes or adjustment in strategy, will be shared with partner federal agencies at the appropriate time. Furthermore, the state will continue to cooperate with federal requests for data or evaluation; and will make every reasonable effort to respond to such requests in a timely manner.

South Dakota

In January of 2024, DLR participated in an Applied Data Analytics training course hosted in part by the Coleridge Initiative, the State of Arkansas, the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA), and the DOL-ETA. Through the Applied Data Analytics course, the State was able to work with de-identified data to prove TANF participants who co-enroll in WIOA Title I have higher employment outcomes than those who were not enrolled in WIOA Title I.

Taking what was learned during that training course, South Dakota looked at similar information for TANF work-ready participants that DLR had enrolled in the Title III program. DLR focused on participants who exited from WIOA Title I and Title III between January 1, 2022, and December 31, 2022, to ensure the State has second and fourth quarter after exit outcomes. Participants were then divided into two groups, those who only enrolled in Title III and those who were co-enrolled in Title I, entailing 111 and 164 participants respectively.

After reviewing the outcome data for both groups, DLR confirmed the results were similar. Individuals co-enrolled in WIOA Title I achieved higher employment outcomes in the second and fourth quarters after exit compared to those enrolled solely in Title III. TANF participants co-enrolled only in WIOA Title III demonstrated better employment outcomes in the fourth quarter than in the second quarter. In contrast, those co-enrolled in WIOA Title I maintained consistent employment outcomes from the second to the fourth quarter, indicating that none of these individuals lost their jobs between the two quarters.

The outcome information is encouraging for leadership as it proves co-enrollment into Title I has positive outcomes no matter what state the participants are in.

Wisconsin

WIOA Evaluation Peer Learning Cohort (PLC) Customer Feedback Loop Foundational Fact Finding

Wisconsin participated in the 2023 WIOA EvalPLC. The aim was to improve coordination of Wisconsin WIOA evaluation activities, specifically to learn ways to improve customer feedback loops to better assess program effectiveness and increase customer satisfaction. The Wisconsin EvalPLC workgroup included all WIOA Title programs as well as partners from TANF, SNAP, apprenticeship, and a regional One-Stop Operator. The group shared current customer feedback practices and gathered information on customer feedback loops from the research literature, other states, and federal partners. The group found that it's important to plan for customer feedback, include feedback throughout the entire process, and incorporate feedback in an iterative process, while also adjusting feedback loops based on collected feedback.

The next phase planned for this effort is for the EvalPLC workgroup to develop a Customer Feedback Iterative Guide on gathering customer feedback. The intention is for the guide to provide examples of short/fast actions and longer, more involved approaches that could be used for different situations (gathering ongoing feedback or getting specific feedback on a new and/or targeted process). The guide would also include details on how to collect information from a wide set of consumers to avoid survey fatigue and to understand a variety of experiences—such as the different perspectives of individuals who actively use program services and those who do not. Further, the guidance will include information on how to combine customer feedback with other data (performance, administrative, stories), and provide guidance on how to use information gathered to address feedback (i.e., close the feedback loop). The aim will be to use the customer feedback to improve services and outcomes.

Wyoming

Study of Disproportionate Impact

The Wyoming Workforce Development Council (WWDC) contracted with Northern Illinois University's Workforce Policy Lab (WPL) to provide the evaluation component for WIOA Title I. The process was guided by WIOA's purpose, performance metrics, and guidance related to WIOA-defined barriers. For the quantitative analysis portion, the WPL used data from Wyoming's PIRL quarterly reporting files from PYs 2018 through 2022. In addition to evaluating the numeric data, WPL applied qualitative analyses through focus groups aimed at uncovering a deeper understanding of the various components surrounding WIOA participants' journey in the program. Questions posed to focus groups included questions with themes associated with the

following stages of the WIOA program: outreach and recruitment, application and intake, assessment of barriers to program completion and employment, assessment of training selection, training placement, and exit outcomes.

Although Adult Education (AE) in Wyoming was not included in the WWDC evaluation component for Title I, AE conducted multiple evaluations through PY23. This began with monthly desk audits at both the local and state levels and reviewed data, career services, and a fiscal review. This was followed with a quarterly narrative report and an end-of-year comprehensive report in which local providers were required to evaluate program performance in narrative form on successes/challenges in:

- Meeting federal targets for measurable skill gains and post-exit outcome measures.
- Alignment to the 13 considerations for AE programs.
- The delivery of career services to qualified enrolled participants.
- Co-enrollments for WIOA Core partners.
- Continuous program improvement.
- Strategic planning for career pathways.
- Referrals to WIOA Core partners and other community service providers.
- Financial reporting.
- Integration with One-Stop Partners.

Success Stories

Overview

States and territories are encouraged to include information on customer accomplishments and successes. This section highlights a variety of success stories and provides valuable examples of how states and territories are implementing WIOA to help adult and youth jobseekers gain skills and employment. Other examples include how states and territories are implementing WIOA to support dislocated workers and the transformative impact of workforce development programs in helping individuals overcome employment barriers, gain new skills, and achieve career success, and create and maintain successful business partnerships with employers. Each story highlights how targeted support and training can empower people to transition from unemployment or underemployment to fulfilling and stable careers.

Success Stories Highlights

WIOA Adult Program

Oklahoma

Before applying for Oklahoma Works services, Brina faced numerous challenges. As a single mother of two, she had been struggling with limited resources and opportunities. At the time, she was a high school dropout, living with her grandmother, and had worked various odd jobs for eight years. Despite her efforts, she found herself in a precarious situation with an inadequate income and limited career prospects. Brina's transportation and housing situations were particularly unstable, and she was searching for a way to improve her circumstances.

Brina discovered Oklahoma Works through an online search, which led her to seek out their services. Upon connecting with Oklahoma Works, she received a comprehensive range of support services, including assessment, housing assistance, clothing, childcare, and counseling. These resources were crucial in her journey towards stability and self-sufficiency. Additionally, she participated in occupational training for business administration through Talking Leaves, which equipped her with the skills needed for a more stable career path.

Currently, Brina is employed at Foreman Construction Management, earning $22.00 per hour. She has been with this company for one year, and her new role represents a significant improvement in her financial and personal well-being. The support she received from Oklahoma Works, particularly the childcare assistance and the guidance from the staff, was instrumental in her success. The ability to balance work and parenting without the added stress of inadequate childcare was a game-changer for Brina.

Since completing the services through Oklahoma Works, Brina's life has transformed dramatically. She now has the independence to support herself and her two boys, significantly improving their quality of life. The stability she has achieved has empowered her to provide a better future for her family, and she is grateful for the role Oklahoma Works played in making this possible. Brina's journey reflects the profound impact that tailored support services can have on individuals facing challenging circumstances.

Tennessee

Campbell – Titles I, II, and III Co-enrollment

"Kay" was a long-term unemployed individual receiving public assistance (SNAP plus other benefits) who wanted to return to the workforce. She had worked in the home health field for 15 years prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. She successfully completed Adult Education and gained her HiSET in preparation of entering the Practical Nursing program at TCAT-Jacksboro. She was co-enrolled with SNAP E&T, as well as the WIOA Title I Adult program through the AJC in Jacksboro to provide travel and other supportive service needs throughout participation. She successfully completed her Nursing, obtained her license from the State of Tennessee as a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), and gained employment on July 17, 2023, earning over $35 per hour working full time as an LPN. She is currently "living her best life" working as an LPN, and traveling the country as her schedule allows. She is proud to have overcome and returned to the workforce without need for any additional public assistance.

Virginia

A Farrier's job is physically demanding. Contorting oneself into a pretzel under a 1,100-pound horse for several hours daily can leave even the fittest person with aches and pains.

Savannah always wanted to have a career as a Farrier. She knew she needed advanced training, so she researched training centers all over the country. She landed at the Oklahoma Horseshoeing School in Purcell, OK. The Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) could help her with room and board expenses, but she would need help with tuition. Her DARS Representative contacted SWVA Works' Tazewell County Workforce Specialist, Lisa Hubbard. SWVA Works is funded by the SWVA WDB's WIOA grant. SWVA Works paid her tuition, and while she was there, she also completed work readiness skills training activities remotely to earn incentive payments. At the end of eight weeks of training, she earned a workplace-recognized credential, and she returned home to Tazewell County, ready to start her own farrier business, but where would she begin?

SWVA Works helped her with small business entrepreneurship training, and DARS helped her with marketing ideas for getting business cards and a business logo. She worked with her Workforce Specialist, Lisa Hubbard, to get supplies, but shoeing horses also needed a reliable truck to haul an anvil and forge. How could she get a truck for her business when she was starting out? Lisa told her about a "Cars to Work" program that the SWVA WDB had available from Tazewell County ARPA funds. Savannah applied and was approved. Staff found her a used Chevrolet Colorado truck with affordable payments for two years.

SWVA Works partnered with other agencies to help Savannah reach her career goal of becoming a Farrier. Now, she can provide farrier services in all surrounding counties.

When asked how SWVA Works assisted her in her career, she stated,

> "Southwest Workforce has helped me with my business in so many ways. They sent me to Oklahoma Horseshoeing School for 8 weeks, and I got my professional horseshoeing certification. They helped pay for my tools, which was a blessing because I didn't need just my tools; I had to have chaps, a hoof stand, a forge, and an anvil. They also gave me a class on how to maintain and manage my own business. They helped me get my truck, which has had no issues, and has gotten me counties away from home to shoe horses. This program has given me many opportunities to meet new people and work on some amazing animals."

WIOA Dislocated Worker Program

Alaska

Richard's Story

Richard, a disabled U.S. Army veteran, worked for Henning Inc., until July when his position was terminated due to a contract with the Municipality of Anchorage ending. He initially came into the Anchorage Midtown Job Center for assistance with his UI claim but was quickly identified as a veteran who was eligible for WIOA Dislocated Worker and JVSG program. JVSG staff provided résumé and job search assistance. Richard was also provided housing assistance through WIOA while he looked for employment. Richard has a bachelor's degree in criminal justice and is working on obtaining a Peer Support Specialist certification. His employment goal is to work in social services. He obtained a position with the Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness as a Housing Navigator on August 10th with a starting salary of $28 per hour.

Arkansas

Lindsey – Dislocated Worker

A Dislocated Worker participant in Eastern Arkansas, walked into the Workforce Center seeking information on the WIOA program. As a long-term unemployed single parent receiving SNAP benefits, Lindsey needed support to get back into the workforce. Her last employment was on May 12, 2020, when she was laid off from the Pillow Clinic in Helena, Arkansas.

Lindsey promptly registered in the Arkansas JobLink (AJL) system and completed a WIOA Dislocated Worker/Adult application. Upon review, her Career Advisor confirmed her status as a Dislocated Worker due to her layoff. Recognizing her lack of skills in a high-demand occupation, Lindsey worked with her career advisor to develop an individualized employment plan and explore career pathways that matched her interests. She ultimately decided to pursue a career in nursing and applied to the Nursing program at Phillips Community College of the University of Arkansas (PCCUA).

During her training period, Lindsey began the adult work experience program at the Helena Workforce Center, gaining practical experience as an Office Clerk. On August 22, 2022, she started occupational skills training in the Nursing program at PCCUA, focusing on acquiring the skills necessary to succeed in the healthcare field.

On May 10, 2024, Lindsey's hard work and dedication paid off as she was awarded an Associate of Applied Science degree in Nursing from PCCUA.

Lindsey's journey through the WIOA program is a testament to her resilience and determination. By leveraging the resources and support provided by the WIOA program, she successfully transitioned from being a long-term unemployed individual to a highly skilled and credentialed Registered Nurse. Lindsey's story highlights the impact of the WIOA program in empowering individuals to achieve their career goals and improve their lives.

On June 10, 2024, Lindsey was hired full time as an Emergency Room Registered Nurse at Forrest City Medical Center in Forrest City Arkansas.

Kansas

WIOA Dislocated Worker - Local Area 2 – Heartland Works

The client was enrolled in the WIOA Dislocated Worker program. The client was a military spouse and had also received notification of their impending separation from military employment. Their highest educational attainment at enrollment was a high school diploma. In addition, he lacked the education, training, and experience to transition to high in demand work in production or manufacturing without WIOA assistance. The client learned about the Heroes MAKE America program through the Career Skills program at Fort Riley. The client was interested in the program because it provided education, training and certification relating to maintenance, production management and a variety of other positions of interest to the client. These positions are connected to demand occupations in the Local Area. The client was enrolled in the Heroes MAKE America program. During one of the monthly updates the client stated, "I am thoroughly enjoying the program, learning about the production industry while making valuable connections that boost my confidence in transitioning my career." The client completed the program and obtained his Certified Production Technician certificate from Washburn Institute of Technology in December 2023. The client accepted the position as a Restaurant Consultant where he manages several restaurants overseeing logistics and ordering of supplies. The client started working in February 2024, earning $62,000/year.

WIOA Youth Program

Alabama

Youth Enrichment Services (YES) Program, Molly

Molly, age 17, entered the Enterprise Career Center in September 2023 as a high school dropout. She was enrolled in WIOA and referred to the YES Program to complete her high school education and receive soft skills training. She worked quickly, completed the Conover Work Readiness Program by the end of September, and earned her accredited high school diploma on December 20, 2023. In February 2024, she began working at Dr. Harrison's ABA Therapy Center in Ozark and became a Registered Behavior Technician in July 2024. WIOA and the YES Program helped her with the first step in her educational goal of becoming a social worker.

Michigan

WIOA Out-of-School Youth Program

After a short prison sentence, Jerry found himself living in a halfway house and wanted to make some changes in his life. Obtaining his high school diploma and finding a full-time job was his focus, so Jerry began working with a Michigan Works! Region 7B Youth Career Advisor.

The Career Advisor worked with Jerry on overcoming his barriers to employment and had referred him to Iosco Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA) to complete his high school diploma. Jerry was always willing to do what was suggested by the Career Advisor. Michigan Works! Region 7B was able to assist with auto repairs which allowed Jerry to maintain his employment with Bricker Construction and to continue to attend his classes to complete his high school diploma.

Thanks to the assistance he received from Michigan Works! Region 7B, Jerry completed his GED in less than a year and maintained his full-time job, earning $20 per hour. He has left the halfway house and is currently living with his mother until he becomes financially sound.

Jerry stated, “Following through with things really pays off. Without the assistance of Michigan Works! Region 7B and Iosco RESA, I would not be where I am now—I would not have gotten it done.”

Vermont

At just 19 years old, Skyler had a clear goal: he wanted to become an electrician. With a high school diploma earned and some summer work experience as a dishwasher and supermarket cashier, Skyler’s determination was evident. However, turning his aspirations into reality required guidance and support Skyler was referred to VDOL by the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC). Recognizing his eligibility for WIOA as a member of a priority population from an economically disadvantaged household, VDOL quickly stepped in to help Skyler take his first steps toward a promising career.

With VDOL’s assistance, Skyler secured an apprenticeship with a local electric company. This opportunity marked the beginning of a hands-on journey in the electrical trade. Skyler excelled in his first year of apprenticeship training. Now, he continues to be an apprentice with the same company and is enrolled in his second year of apprenticeship classes.

VDOL provided critical support along the way, helping Skyler with essential resources such as books for his coursework and car repairs to ensure reliable transportation to training and work.

Skyler’s journey is a testament to the power of determination, the value of community support, and the impact of personalized workforce development. His future in the electrical trade shines brightly, thanks to his hard work and the resources and guidance he received through VDOL.

In Skyler’s own words:

"I'd like to say that VDOL has been very helpful, and I am glad for the year that VDOL has been working with me! They put a lot of effort and time into your success! They also help you when you don't have the time for certain things—they put in the extra effort and time for you! When you have your mind set on something, VDOL does not disappoint and will put you on the right track, no matter the circumstances!"

Wagner-Peyser

Idaho

Mike - Wagner-Peyser/Employment Services (ES)

Mike worked as a meat cutter for about ten years. He left that occupation to pursue work in the transportation/material moving industry. But, unfortunately as an 11th grade high school dropout with a GED, he soon found himself unemployed and receiving UI benefits. Lucky for him, he was selected to attend an RESEA interview at a local IDOL AJC office.

During his initial RESEA interview, it became clear that Mike was interested in a career that would provide a livable wage, the opportunity to learn new skills, and a good work-life balance. He had no idea where to start his job search, but the IDOL workforce consultant eagerly shared all the work search resources available to assist Mike in getting back to work.

He took an online interest inventory through one of the State's workforce platforms, Next Steps Idaho. And after talking through his goals and interests with AJC staff, they tapped relevant labor market information to identify details about the skilled trades, specifically HVAC and plumbing, in which he had shown an interest. It appeared that Mike's local area had multiple apprenticeship opportunities for jobseekers who were interested in them.

Through additional research into both the plumbing and HVAC industries, and with a heavy focus on each occupation's job descriptions and education requirements, Mike decided to pursue plumbing as a career. He was extremely excited about being able to attend training as an apprentice while continuing to work full time and provide for his family. He was also pleasantly surprised by the promotional opportunities available in the occupation, as well as the ability to earn a livable wage within a relatively short time.

Mike was referred to both the WIOA Adult/Dislocated Worker and Idaho LAUNCH programs for assistance to fund his training. He began his related technical instruction through the Workforce Training Center at a local college and was shortly thereafter hired by a local plumbing company, earning $18.00 per hour to start.

Through interviews, assessments, and referrals to other agencies, Mike continued to receive assistance from a variety of programs and services which created a comprehensive, wrap-round service delivery model that helped him make an informed decision about his steps toward self-sufficient reemployment.

Mike stated, "You guys have been so awesome. I tell everybody about you. I received employment services in another state, but they just threw a job at me and told me to move along. You all seem to really care about helping me find a career."

Guam

WIOA-Adult/Wagner-Peyser - Mr. Ngiraibuuch

In collaboration with the Guam Behavioral Health & Wellness Center, Guam Department of Corrections, GDOL, and other service providers in the fight against recidivism, Guam started working with justice-involved individuals prior to release and continued after they were released, as the enroll and complete their Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (RSAT) program. Mr. Ngiraibuuch was part of our RSAT group. Shortly after Jenner's release, we continued our services to help aid in completing his secondary education. He shared an interest in returning to the community and working for the community. As a justice-involved and a non-high school graduate, his employment goal was to get into the Mayor's Office but lacked the essential education requirements. Through continued monitoring and career services, Jenner was able to successfully complete his RSAT. Enrolled in the Adult program under WIOA where he was able to attain his secondary education, eliminating a barrier to employment and reaching a milestone in his life.

Mr. Ngiraibuuch was then able to enter unsubsidized employment with Dededo Mayor's Office. He now serves the community of the largest village in the Territory as a public servant and as a staff in the Dededo Mayor's Office.

Kentucky

West Kentucky Workforce Board - Wagner-Peyser

An individual came into the Paducah Career Center to seek assistance finding employment after being laid off from his job at Westlake Chemical. From the time he walked in, he was extremely focused on finding a career that would help him provide for his family.

He signed up for job services and requested all the assistance that could be offered to him in finding a job that could provide financial stability and peace of mind for his family. His skills, barriers, and goals as a jobseeker were discussed to better match him to potential employers. Then, his résumé was reviewed to assess his skills. He was encouraged to attend the job fair.

He showed up to the job fair the following Tuesday and spoke with all the participating employers. He was on each one's "possible hire" list and even received an offer from the Kentucky State Penitentiary. He accepted an offer with Premier Fire and Security, earning a comfortable wage and benefits package that suited his family's needs.

SECTION II

STATE NARRATIVE EXCERPTS

Alabama

Alabama Department of Labor

Alabama Department of Commerce

Use of State Funds

Under-served Populations

WIOA Supportive Services, Including Relocation Assistance

The State, through WIOA Governor's Set-Aside funds, provides relocation assistance to participants in need of assistance to accept employment in another location. It is intended to serve eligible adults and dislocated workers who cannot find suitable employment in their local area and who have secured employment outside of their commuting area (more than 75 miles) necessitating a move. This service is available statewide through the Alabama Career Center System, and information about the program is provided to Dislocated Workers by the State's Rapid Response Team when responding to mass layoffs. Two individuals requested this service during PY23 for $7,000 in assistance. The Rapid Response Team also presented information on this service to individuals exiting incarceration and preparing for reentry during PY23.

The Workforce Development Division (WDD) established a program providing supportive services for WIOA participants, such as reimbursement for exams, licensing fees, clothing, and tools not covered by ITAs or OJTs. In PY23, 191 participants were served, and reimbursements totaling $50,089.57 were provided to support participants.

Integrated Service Delivery

Incumbent Worker Training Program (IWTP)

In addition to WIOA funds, during PY23, the WDD also provided Incumbent Worker Services to additional individuals through a separate grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Reimagine Workforce Preparation fund. Throughout the grant's life, the Alabama Workforce Stabilization Program has approved 345 employers for IWT and served approximately 6,192 incumbent workers. These workers were provided with training to upskill them in their current jobs. All these participants were also co-enrolled in WIOA and received career services.

Yes WIOA Can

There were active Incumbent Worker agreements for the for-profit, non-profit, and governmental employers for training (funded with the Governor's Set-Aside funds to help current employees get trained in up to date, in-demand skills). Funds continue to pay for tuition and books for dislocated workers, adults, and youth to attend a two-year college or other post-secondary institutions to learn new skills needed to re-enter the workforce. Additionally, short-term, job-driven training was provided for dislocated workers

and adults to help them acquire the skills necessary to re-enter the workforce as quickly as possible. These services were made more accessible due to the ability to transfer funds (up to 100%) between the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. During PY23, the greatest need was in the Adult program.

Work-Based Learning

The State, through its Incumbent Worker Training Program (funded through the Governor's Set-Aside funds), offers employers the opportunity to receive reimbursement for Related Technical Instruction expenses such as tuition for registered apprentices, who are also incumbent workers. The Business Services Representatives in the Alabama Career Center System and the Alabama Office of Apprenticeship present this opportunity to employers.

The State also continued to connect apprentices with WIOA training to support their apprenticeships through the Individual Training Account program and OJT program. In PY23, nine apprenticeships were co-enrolled in WIOA programs.

Other State Funds Activities

IWTP

The IWTP is administered through the Alabama Department of Commerce, WDD. Section 134(a)(3)(A)(i) of WIOA authorizes Incumbent Worker Training as a statewide workforce development activity. The State's IWTP was funded through the Governor's Ten Percent funds in PY23. The IWTP assists Alabama employers in helping with expenses associated with new or updated skills training for current, full-time employees. For-profit companies, non-profits, and governmental organizations in operation in Alabama for at least two years are eligible to apply for IWTP funds. An interested company must have at least one full-time permanent employee other than its owner. Companies seeking IWTP funding must also be current on all state and federal tax obligations. Applicants must provide a dollar-for-dollar "soft" match to requested funds. A soft match can include, but is not limited to, employee wages, benefits, and cash payments to vendors. Each applicant could apply for up to $30,000 of IWTP funds in PY23, subject to not exceeding the lifetime award of $60,000.00.

Successful IWTP applicant companies contract with outside training providers to provide basic work skills training to existing employees. Applicants must demonstrate a need for upgraded skill levels for existing employees. Within their applications, IWTP companies anticipate measurable training outcomes. IWTP skills training should support company efforts to minimize lay-offs (lay-off aversion) and/or help the company remain competitive. The technical and professional training programs provided with the assistance of these funds equip incumbent workers with specific workplace skills required to provide optimal performance within existing jobs and may enable them to broaden the scope of their workplace responsibilities. Successful training completion should allow greater opportunities for employee retention and increased earnings potential, thus achieving one of the major DOL goals for the IWT Program, which is layoff aversion.

The State launched its IWTP in September 2001. Through June 30, 2024, the State has awarded nearly $17,815,382 in IWTP funding to Alabama businesses, benefiting more than 26,212 workers. This includes $239,910 awarded for nine new IWTP

contracts for PY23. Statewide, PY23 contracts were awarded to companies of all sizes in six counties, benefiting 146 individual workers.

Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

WIOA Section 116(E) Process Evaluation

During PY23, the State initiated and furthered several new and ongoing process evaluation activities as defined under WIOA Section 116(e):

- Ongoing evaluations of WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth program performance
- Implementation of discretionary grant performance evaluation policy
- Development of the State Evaluation Plan and revisions to the sanctions policy
- Research into the Employment Related to Training metric
- Research into the Labor Force Participation Rate
- Further development of the One Workforce project, including the development of a unified intake portal across Alabama workforce systems
- Analysis of credential attainment across all Alabama state agencies
- Interfacing with partner agencies to secure performance and priority data
- Interfacing with state workforce agencies to create the Talent Triad unified intake portal
- Further development of the WIOA Provider Performance evaluation process.

All current and planned evaluation activities are outlined on the Workforce Development Division website.

Continuous Improvement

During PY23, several efforts to coordinate projects with WIOA, partner agencies, and workforce boards solidified a thoroughly developed working relationship with all required and optional partners and stakeholders of the workforce system, culminating in the “One Workforce” working group. Initially a policy planning group of program administrators, the One Workforce group is now leading a project to unify case management systems for statewide workforce programs with a state-designed common intake portal (the Talent Triad system).

Reports

Information/Research requests, compliance reviews, and similar State and Federal evaluations are processed through the Workforce Development Division's (WDD) State Reporting Section. The Section is responsible for administering the AlabamaWorks! system, preparing for on-site visits and compliance reviews, developing policy and procedures for research/evaluation, developing/maintaining workforce data for evaluation activities, researching workforce and training needs, analyzing workforce processes, delivering performance and evaluation reports, and providing technical assistance through AlabamaWorks! Helpdesk.

PY23 Data Validation Report

The Workforce Development Division (WDD) completed the PY23 data validation project on September 18, 2024, in compliance with TEGL 23-19 Change 1-2. The review focused on the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs. All required data elements were validated and categorized into three subgroups: Eligibility Elements, Administration Elements (including wage data), and Reporting Elements (such as service dates and follow-up items).

Advancing Alabama's Public Workforce System

A comprehensive evaluation of the State's workforce system that examines labor force participation rates, post-secondary attainment, and economic growth across the state. The report analyzes the effectiveness of WIOA programs and identifies areas for improvement in the State's workforce development system.

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

Waiver allowing the use of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for in-school youth (ISY), ages 14–21

Strategies

This waiver of 20 CFR 681.550 allowed the State to offer ITAs to ISY. The waiver enhanced the State's ability to serve ISY with ITAs. Expected programmatic outcomes included:

- Serving 100 ISY per year who would not be eligible for an ITA otherwise (i.e. as an adult participant)
- 50 percent of ISY enrolled in ITAs will earn a credential
- 45 percent of ISY enrolled in ITAs will obtain a Measurable Skills Gain

Impact on Performance

This waiver has not boosted participation numbers as expected. No youth participants used this waiver in PY23. As included in the March 2024 PY24–PY28 State Plan submission, this waiver will remain available in PY24.

Success Stories

Adult

Natalie first visited the Hamilton Career Center in August 2022, seeking WIOA/Individual Training Accounts (ITA) assistance. She completed value-added services until funding became available to pay for her final two semesters of nursing school at Bevill State Community College in Hamilton, AL. During Natalie's time at Bevill State, she was very involved as a Student Ambassador. Natalie obtained her AAS-Nursing in December 2023 and was awarded the Florence Nightingale Certificate of Recognition. She gave a speech during her Pinning Ceremony. Natalie has transferred to the University of North Alabama to pursue her BSN online. She works at Walker Baptist Medical Center as a Registered Nurse in the ICU Department, earning $32.52 per hour.

Adult

In August of this year, Anthony embarked on a transformative journey under the WIOA program, enrolling in Truck Driver training at Truck Driver Institute in Oxford, Alabama. His story is a testament to resilience and determination, marked by the triumphs he achieved despite facing significant challenges in his life. After spending 20 years incarcerated, Anthony approached with a genuine commitment to change. From his conversation, it was clear that he was serious about creating a better future for himself and his family. His determination was inspiring. Once he was deemed eligible for the program, Anthony sprang into action. He took and passed the TABE test, completing all necessary requirements in just two days. With his swift progress, he was soon approved to begin training at TDI. Remarkably, he finished the course ahead of schedule. After obtaining his CDL license, Anthony returned to the Career Center to express his heartfelt gratitude. Overwhelmed with emotion, he thanked everyone for their support in his journey. He shared the incredible news that he had received a job offer with a salary exceeding $100,000 a year—a dream he believed would have been impossible without assistance. Today, Anthony is not just earning a living; he is building a future the right way, embodying the spirit of hard work and dedication. His story inspires others, proving that it's never too late to pursue your dreams with determination and the right support.

Dislocated Worker

Cheryl came to the Sheffield Career Center after being laid off from Freightcar America in Cherokee. She began training through the TAA Program and was co-enrolled in WIOA services. After participating in training to become a sonographer for a few semesters, she had some difficult life circumstances that caused her to discontinue training through the TAA Program. She spoke with someone at length and decided to change her curriculum to Medical Assisting Technology. She could not continue training through the TAA Program due to this decision.

Cheryl attended the Spring Semester of 2023 using Pell Grant funds and had good academic performance. Sheffield Career Center Staff requested WIOA Dislocated Worker ITA funding for the Summer Semester of 2023, and WIOA assisted Cheryl with the remainder of her training. Cheryl made the Dean's List during the Fall semester of 2023 and the Spring semester of 2024. She graduated in May 2024 with an Associate Degree in Medical Assisting Technology and is currently employed full time as a Medical Assistant at Petersville Family Care.

Dislocated Worker

Mr. Bird received WIOA funding to obtain his CDL Class A through the Truck Driver Institute in Oxford, AL. Before receiving WIOA, Mr. Bird had just started working and lived at the Fresh Start Recovery Ministries in Lincoln, AL, which assists homeless individuals. Through this program, Mr. Bird learned about WIOA and how the program could help him receive his CDL Class A. Even though Mr. Bird had to remediate his TABE results, he was not discouraged and could retest and pass with the results to proceed with WIOA. The WIOA program helped Mr. Bird pay for his training and gain the marketable skills he needed to care for himself. After completing training, Mr. Bird was employed by Werner Trucking and went over the road. Currently, Mr. Bird is loving his new career driving trucks and traveling. Mr. Bird says he appreciates and is thankful to the career center for helping him enter this new field.

Youth

Jacob was employed at a convenience store and had recently graduated high school. He was enrolled in an ITA and completed the HVAC Fast Track Program on August 28, 2023. He is an HVAC Technician, earning $20.00 per hour.

Youth

Youth Enrichment Services (YES) Program, Molly

Molly, age 17, entered the Enterprise Career Center in September 2023 as a high school dropout. She was enrolled in WIOA and referred to the YES Program to complete her high school education and receive soft skills training. She worked quickly, completed the Conover Work Readiness Program by the end of September, and earned her accredited high school diploma on December 20, 2023. In February 2024, she began working at Dr. Harrison's ABA Therapy Center in Ozark and became a Registered Behavior Technician in July 2024. WIOA and the YES Program helped her with the first step in her educational goal of becoming a social worker.

Alaska

Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOLWD)

Use of State Funds

Under-served Populations

Adult

Throughout its One-Stop Job Center network, providing services in accordance with Priority Populations Policy 07-517.1, Division of Employment and Training Services' (DETS) Career Support and Training Services (CSTS) case managers actively worked with 850 Adult participants, of whom 586 were new registrants during the program year. Program exits decreased from 462 in PY22 to 456 in PY23. The State's WIOA Adult program served more males than females by a two-to-one ratio (551 to 294—five individuals chose not to provide "gender"), with 58 percent (494) in the 25–44 age bracket. Low-income individuals comprised 53 percent (447), 8 percent (64) experienced disabilities, and 11 percent (90) were single parents. Of the 850 participants, 755 identified as a single race and of these, 71 percent (538) identified as Caucasian.

Dislocated Worker

Per policy 07-524.1, the State's WIOA Dislocated Worker program provides employment and training services to individuals who have lost their job through no fault of their own or received a layoff notice, employees who have received notice that they will lose their job unless they complete additional training or acquire additional credentials, displaced homemakers who have relied on the income of another family member and no longer receive that support, and relocated active military spouses. Self-employed individuals who have experienced income reduction or were compelled to close their business due to economic conditions in their community or natural disaster may also be dislocated workers. In PY23, the Dislocated Worker program served 355 individuals and similar to the Adult program, served more males than females at a seven-to-two ratio (277 to 77—one individual chose not to provide "gender"), with 57 percent (202) in the 25–44 age bracket. Low-income individuals comprised 33 percent (116) of this group and 6 percent (22) were single parents. Of the 355 individuals served, 308 identified as a single race and of these, 91 percent (280) identified as Caucasian.

Integrated Service Delivery

Dislocated Worker

Under the Dislocated Worker program umbrella, the State's Incumbent Worker Training program assisted 18 employers to train 48 incumbent workers in ground and air transportation, healthcare, technology, human resources, business, and management industries. Benefits to employers included business expansion and stability, ability to continue employment year-round, layoff aversion, and community health stability. Benefits to employees included portable credentials, pay increases, year-round work, and advancement.

Yes WIOA Can

Housed in DETS, CSTS case managers in One-Stop job centers provide support for the State's WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. CSTS staff work with individuals to determine program eligibility and, after enrollment, identify goals and an appropriate combination of services to address individual needs via comprehensive objective assessments, career evaluation, and labor market analysis to develop an Individual Employment Plan while providing referrals for necessary additional resources. Participants may receive pre-vocational, vocational, occupational, apprenticeship, OJT, and Incumbent Worker Training, as well as supportive services to help meet costs of housing, transportation, tools, clothing, books, and other supplies while participating in program services.

Across all titles, WIOA programs prioritize high-need populations, with special focus on supporting veterans and their eligible spouses, displaced homemakers, individuals with barriers to employment, including but not limited to, recipients of public assistance, low-income individuals, older individuals, ex-offenders, youth in or aged out of foster care, long-term unemployed individuals, basic skills deficient individuals, and other groups determined by the Governor to have barriers to employment. Job center staff also collaborate with Registered Apprenticeship (RA) programs to promote and enhance the use of apprenticeships. Staff understand the value of apprenticeship as a work-based opportunity for jobseekers, how to establish new apprenticeship programs, and ways to blend and braid WIOA funds into RA opportunities.

Alaska continued to strengthen WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs in PY23 as evidenced by meeting or exceeding most program year performance indicators, continuing to improve the division's integrated data and case management system, fostering inter-agency and external partnerships, and supporting Incumbent Worker Training in multiple industries to increase employers' competitiveness by developing a skilled workforce. CSTS staff will continue to partner with and serve Alaskans in a shared effort to strengthen the State's workforce.

DETS, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), and Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB) staff collaborate to maximize outreach and participant funding through WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Rapid Response, National Dislocated Worker Grant, Trade Adjustment Assistance, and Vocational Rehabilitation programs in accordance with the department's Co-enrollment Policy 07-505.1.

Youth

AWIB's Grant Unit administers the WIOA Youth program. A comprehensive statewide system of WIOA Youth partners deliver services funded via an annual competitive solicitation award process. These subrecipients provide industry-driven vocational, academic, and supportive services to eligible ISY and OSY, with the majority of resources focusing on out-of-school, homeless, foster care, and adjudicated youth.

In PY23, AWIB allocated $2,857,735 to ten subrecipients across six economic regions. The reduction in youth funding prompted a comprehensive review of resources and a renewed focus on strategic partnerships. During the reporting period, these subrecipients collectively served 751 youth, successfully exiting 444 of them from the program.

The funding decrease underscored the importance of reassessing co-enrollment strategies. As a result of this reassessment, applications from single parents, long-term unemployed individuals, and youth with disabilities increased. Additionally, a notable rise in applications was observed among Asian and multiracial youth.

WIOA Title II – Alaska Adult Education

Within DETS, the Alaska Adult Education (AAE) office administers a statewide program for adults to enhance their post-secondary education skills as they transition into the labor market, vocational training, or collegiate level academia. The AAE office manages Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) funds to forge partnerships and provide students with the educational advantages they need. AAE grantees are funded according to their capacity to conduct basic adult education, literacy, family, and workplace literacy; English language acquisition; workforce preparation activities; digital literacy; civics education; and integrated education and training. In PY23, AAE awarded over $2.4 million to regional adult education grantees including an integrated correctional system to deliver federally mandated adult education and literacy activities, and a grant for Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE). Some PY23 AAE program highlights include:

- Basic skills and pre-secondary education, which is instruction comparable to first through eighth grade educational levels and is designed to prepare students for secondary education courses. During PY23, 51 percent of AAE's full-time students tested at or below eighth grade educational functional level.
- Secondary education and high school equivalency preparation, which provides instruction to improve students' skills for transition into higher education, training, or employment. This curriculum is rigorously aligned with the functional level of high school. Pre-testing determined only two percent of incoming students tested in the ninth through twelfth grade range.
- AAE measures achievement of educational functioning level (EFL) gain from pre- to post-testing using standardized proctored testing, as well as attainment of a high school diploma or equivalent, to demonstrate measurable skill gains. In PY23, 23.9 percent of students achieved EFL gains in Literacy/English Language Arts, 9.7 percent achieved gains in Mathematics, and 23.3 percent achieved measurable skill gains, an increase over the previous year's 18.4 percent.
- The State awarded 504 high school equivalency diplomas in PY23, an increase from the previous year.
- The Alaska English as a Second Language (ESL) program, which assists students to improve their reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension of the English language. In PY23, 47 percent of full-time students assessed were ESL students.

Other State Funds Activities

Statewide activity funds are a vital part of the State's workforce development system. These funds support all required activities outlined in WIOA Title ID and 20 CFR 682.200 including AWIB oversight, managing the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), providing labor market information, providing additional assistance to local areas that have high concentrations of eligible youth, operating a fiscal and management accountability information system, conducting monitoring and performance evaluation

projects, training staff, capacity building, and technical assistance, to support optimal operation of the One-Stop delivery system. Statewide funds also offer the flexibility to increase the State's capacity to serve Alaskans through grant awards.

Evaluations

With a portion of statewide funds Set-Aside by the Governor, Alaska Workforce Investment Board, through its Assessment and Evaluation committee, and the Division of Employment and Training Services, partner with Research and Analysis (R&A); other DOLWD divisions; national, state, and local agencies; trade unions and organizations; training providers; and other non-profit and private entities around the state to evaluate WIOA program performance via a variety of products. R&A collects national, state, and local data in addition to working with WIOA program leaders and partners to conduct and publish longitudinal studies regarding the State's demography and economy as they relate to the workforce, to ensure that the state is on a continuous path of improvement and excellence in providing targeted training and support to the State's employers and jobseekers. R&A's Occupational Database and other proprietary information systems provide participant data and rich labor market information to create a platform for deep, long-term evaluation of workforce programs.

Activities and Methodology

RESEA

The State is reworking its evaluation study design for the RESEA program due to the State's small population pool resulting in an inadequate sample size for its original design. The State's geography and population size creates challenges unique to the State and partnering with other states to increase its sample size is not an option. The evaluation study partners UI program analysts and programmers, two economists from R&A (serving as evaluators), and Abt Global. As of September 2024, R&A evaluators have been working with UI program analysts and programmers to explore methods for conducting a random assignment selection of eligible claimants into either a treatment group or a control group. Once additional information is gathered from the programmers, the evaluators will meet with Abt Global to further refine the evaluation process and address any necessary adjustments for implementing a random assignment evaluation study. Due to limited programming resources and competing projects, a specific completion date for this evaluation study has not yet been determined.

JOBZ Club and S'Cool Store

In PY18, the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) and school district staff began working with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) to evaluate the effectiveness of JOBZ Club and S'Cool Store in increasing graduation rates and post-school outcomes for students with disabilities as identified in DEED's State Systematic Improvement Plan. PY18 was the first year of collecting data at the student level and this will be an on-going evaluation through 2025.

Continuous Improvement

JOBZ Club and S'Cool Store

DVR has been extremely successful in providing statewide services to transition age students in urban, rural, and remote locations. This has been accomplished through partnerships with school districts, specialized Pre-ETS Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs), and other organizations that assist with coordinating transportation and enrollment. As part of this project, DVR also increased the distribution of training materials and resources, specifically those that include culturally responsive programming for rural districts with large populations of Alaska Native students with disabilities by:

- Changing the Pathways curriculum to include subsistence and self-employment through subsistence activities; and
- Distributing "Picture Your Future – Exploring Your Transition Goals" which is a culturally responsive assessment tool and transition planning guide.

DVR has also incorporated responsive programming into statewide transition training through virtual teacher training and at the Alaska Statewide Special Education Conference that incorporates training on using Picture Your Future and implementing Pathways. Due to challenges collecting data, formal evaluation of these measures by DVR was discontinued during PY22.

Reports

Nonresidents Working in Alaska Report

To benefit the State's economy, it is critical to prepare State workers for occupations and specialties with high rates of nonresident hire. Published in February 2024, the *Nonresidents Working in Alaska* report examines the industries, occupations, and regions with high percentages of nonresident workers. The AWIB and other policymakers use this information to identify where to develop training programs that will prepare more Alaskans for high-paying jobs.

Training Program Performance Report

The *Alaska Training Program Performance* report details the employment and earnings for participants of several training programs in the state. These include WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, and other programs. R&A uses data from its internal occupational database system to compare trainees' occupations and earnings from the year before training to the year after. This comparison is mandated by Alaska Statute 23.15.580, which requires DOLWD to evaluate state employment-related training programs. The employment and wage outcomes R&A produces are delivered to the AWIB each year, with the outcomes intended to guide training program development and workforce needs.

Special Labor Market Topics

R&A published a number of special research topics in the monthly publication Alaska Economic Trends, including:

- *Alaska Women in Construction*
- *Nonresidents During the Recovery*
- *Statewide Jobs Forecast*

- *Worker Shortage and Turnover*

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

Waiver to allow the State Board to act as the Local Board.

Strategies

The primary goals of Alaska's Combined State Plan and its waiver request are rooted in a commitment to optimizing Alaska's workforce system. The Combined State Plan supports the State's vision to "enhance and improve opportunities for all Alaskans to obtain high-skill, high-wage jobs and careers by promoting the dignity of work and the value of employment." The approved waiver granted the Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB) the authority to act as the sole local board for the entire state while allowing DOLWD to report as a single entity. This approach streamlines reporting processes, enhances transparency, and fosters a more efficient and accountable workforce development system tailored to Alaska's unique economic and geographic challenges.

The AWIB Workforce Readiness and Employment and Placement Committee closely aligns training and employment programs with local employer needs. AWIB also prioritizes involvement in events focused on local workforce issues, such as informational sessions on Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funding for rural communities. Additionally, the waiver allows AWIB to facilitate regional collaboration among job centers, educational institutions, labor organizations, and non-profits. These partnerships help identify hiring needs and shape responsive training programs that effectively address sector demands, meet performance outcomes, and serve all regions.

Impact on Performance

No information provided for this section.

Success Stories

WIOA Adult Program

Collaboration Leads to Self-sufficiency

Trista obtained full-time year-round employment as a Licensed Massage Therapist at the Hotel Captain Cook earning $70.00 per hour plus tips. Additionally, she opened her own massage therapy business and is working one day per week.

Trista is a single mother, receiving public assistance and was initially referred to the Mat-Su Job Center by her Work Services (WS) Case Manager. An assessment was completed by Career Support and Training Services (CSTS) staff indicating the need

for Trista to obtain training for an occupation where she could earn a livable wage to support herself and her family. Although she worked for the same employer in a seasonal position as a greenhouse worker for more than five years, she lacked enough transferable skills to be competitive in the local labor market.

Trista worked with her case managers from WS and CSTS to build an Individual Employment Plan outlining services and goals necessary for her career success. The WIOA Adult program funded tuition and fees to attend the Massage Therapy training course at the Alaska Institute of Oriental Medicine, Acupuncture and Massage Therapy as well as fees for the Massage and Bodywork Licensing Examination.

WS coordinated her Parents Achieving Self-Sufficiency childcare benefits and funded her state licensing fees and other support services to remove obstacles along the way. Trista had many challenges throughout her employment plan including caring for her disabled son and his childcare needs, her own health, and transportation. Her persistence and dedication to her plan as well as continued contact with her case managers was paramount to her success and self-sufficiency.

Training Leads to Non-traditional Employment

Allyson gained full-time year-round employment as an Underground Miner with Coeur Alaska's Kensington Mine earning $28.84 per hour, plus benefits. She was referred to CSTS by Coeur Alaska after receiving an employment offer contingent upon her completion of a Mining and Petroleum Training Service (MAPTS) Underground Mining course. After an assessment by CSTS, Allyson was found to be eligible and suitable for the WIOA Adult program. Allyson was working a part-time job that paid $14.00 per hour and earned her associate's degree in occupational safety and health but was unable to gain employment with her degree alone. The WIOA Adult program funded the cost of the MAPTS training, and she is now able to live comfortably as she works toward her ultimate goal of becoming a Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) employee which will require her to work as a miner for ten years.

WIOA Dislocated Worker Program

Training Leads to Pay Increase

Blake obtained full-time year-round employment as a Registered Nurse at Providence Valdez Medical Center earning $39.53 per hour plus benefits. Blake contacted the Valdez Job Center (VJC) when other students from her nursing cohort mentioned they may be able to help with grant funding assistance. An initial assessment conducted by VJC Wagner-Peyser staff indicated Blake may be a good candidate for enrollment in WIOA to obtain funding to complete her Associates of Applied Sciences degree in Nursing at the University of Alaska. VJC staff connected Blake with the CSTS team at the Peninsula Job Center where she was determined eligible for the WIOA Dislocated Worker program as a displaced homemaker due to losing the support of her spouse, the primary income earner. During further assessment, it was discovered Blake had previously completed Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) training and spent the prior nine years working in the medical field as both a CNA and Medical Assistant (MA). Since she no longer had the primary financial support of her spouse and was now a single parent, Blake needed funding for tuition, fees, books, testing, licensing, and support costs to assist with required out-of-town clinicals. Although she was unable to receive Pell Grant funds or other scholarship assistance, she continued to work as an MA and used that income, along with her

tax refund and Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend to pay for all her basic needs while attending school. Blake is now self-sufficient, earning $17.00 per hour more than her previous job and extremely grateful for the assistance she received.

WIOA Youth Program

Tenacity Leads to Professional Target

Madison sought a fulfilling career through the Women in the Trades Heavy Equipment Operating (HEO) program by Alaska Works Partnership. As a single mother working in childcare, she aimed for financial stability and benefits. Facing challenges, she applied for the HEO apprenticeship twice, initially being unsuccessful. Undeterred, Madison worked as a pilot car driver and later secured acceptance into the HEO apprenticeship, showcasing her tenacity and hard work.

Alaska's Veterans' Program

Richard's Story

Richard, a disabled U.S. Army veteran, worked for Henning Inc., until July when his position was terminated due to a contract with the Municipality of Anchorage ending. He initially came into the Anchorage Midtown Job Center for assistance with his UI claim but was quickly identified as a veteran who was eligible for WIOA Dislocated Worker and JVSG program. JVSG staff provided résumé and job search assistance. Richard was also provided housing assistance through WIOA while he looked for employment. Richard has a bachelor's degree in criminal justice and is working on obtaining a Peer Support Specialist certification. His employment goal is to work in social services. He obtained a position with the Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness as a Housing Navigator on August 10th with a starting salary of $28 per hour.

Arizona

Arizona@Work

Arizona Department of Economic Security

Use of State Funds

Under-served Populations

Emergency Vehicle Operations Driving Simulator Training System

In response to the pressing need for well-trained, qualified workforce in the fields of firefighting, law enforcement, and Emergency Medical Services (EMS), particularly in the rural areas of Coconino County, the State invested $175,522 in the acquisition of an Emergency Vehicle Operations Driving Simulator Training System. The system includes comprehensive modules and a simulator that can integrate with an existing pump panel simulator, which is specifically used for fire training.

Northland Pioneer Community College (NPC) Commercial Driver's License, Firefighter and Welding Training Project

The State invested $470,856 to enhance vocational training opportunities for students in rural areas, addressing critical employment needs in high-demand fields. The funding specifically supports the following:

- Firefighter Academy at NPC in Taylor, AZ;
- Commercial Driving program in Holbrook, AZ; and
- Construction program in Kayenta, AZ.

The new equipment will enable NPC to train approximately 243 students annually across a variety of disciplines including firefighting, EMS, commercial driving, welding, and other construction sciences. These students will be trained at three distinct rural locations (Holbrook, Taylor, and St. Johns), ensuring that various communities have access to high-quality training and career advancement opportunities in fields that are essential to the local economy.

Integrated Service Delivery

Registered Apprenticeship (RA) Programs

RA programs continue to be a vital component of Arizona's sector strategy. RA programs also help advance consumer choice for participants in the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs who access training programs on the State's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). In PY23, 76 sponsors operating a total of 138 RA programs were included on the State's ETPL.

The Arizona Apprenticeship Office (AAO) oversees RA programs and supports local employers and industries in developing a highly skilled workforce through OJT and related classroom instruction. In PY23, AAO's efforts led to a 26 percent increase in

new apprenticeship enrollments, with 4,380 new apprentices registered, up from 3,483 new apprentices in PY22. By June 2024, Arizona had 7,421 registered apprentices, compared to 5,918 in June 2023.

AAO also registered 60 new programs in diverse and key industries such as construction, healthcare, aviation, automotive, renewable energy, advanced manufacturing, sales, and personal care services. A notable new program is the semiconductor technician apprenticeship for the Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC), arguably one of the country's largest semiconductor producers. The program is the result of the collaboration between AAO, the City of Phoenix Workforce Development Board, and the National Institute of Innovation and Technology. The program is the beginning of TSMC's efforts to build its workforce, with additional occupations expected to be developed and registered in PY24.

AAO's expanded outreach through accelerator events, information sessions, and partnerships with post-secondary and secondary educational institutions, including Career and Technical Education (CTE) Programs, has yielded increased registration of programs and apprentices as previously noted.

ReadyTechGo

The State invested $300,000 to rebrand and launch ReadyTechGo, a training initiative through Arizona's colleges. ReadyTechGo offers an Automated Industrial Technology (AIT) Program that equips students with essential skills for careers in advanced manufacturing, a rapidly growing industry which integrates technology and robotics. The program's curriculum is front-loaded, allowing students to be job-ready in as little as two weeks, with opportunities to pursue further certifications in high-demand fields such as electric vehicles, semiconductors, medical devices, and aerospace. The entire program can be completed within two years, culminating in an associate degree.

The ReadyTechGo network includes Central Arizona College, Estrella Mountain Community College, Mesa Community College, and Pima Community College, with plans for expansion. The AIT Program across the four colleges currently accommodates up to 150 students per year. A distinctive feature of the AIT Program is its consistent curriculum across all participating colleges, allowing students to transfer, if needed, between schools without delaying their completion date.

Arizona's modern manufacturing sector employs over 162,000 people, particularly within the rapidly expanding corridor from southeast Phoenix to Tucson. As these operations grow, there is an increasing demand for skilled workers in advanced industrial technology. ReadyTechGo addresses this current need by cultivating a workforce that is trained to meet the highest industry standards, while also attracting additional innovative companies to the State.

Yes WIOA Can

Construction Pre-Apprenticeship Programs

Pima County received $125,435 to invest in various construction equipment and supplies to place 20 students in Las Artes, Tucson, in a pre-apprenticeship program. The program is designed to offer hands-on learning experiences in construction sciences and is a collaborative effort between the Building Trades Center for Workforce Development and the Multi-Craft Core Curriculum Pre-apprenticeship program under the Arizona Building and Construction Trades Council.

Students enrolled in the pre-apprenticeship program at Las Artes can transition into official apprenticeships under the Arizona Building and Construction Trades Council upon graduation. The program equips students who are working on their high school equivalency diploma, with both the practical skills and the educational credentials needed to succeed in the construction industry, thereby providing them with a solid foundation for a sustainable career.

Mountain Institute CTE Firefighter Program

Yavapai County received $166,197 to purchase two advanced firefighter simulators along with various equipment to support after-school programs in construction sciences and robotics. This initiative involves key stakeholders including local high schools, community organizations, fire departments, and businesses that are committed to enhancing CTE opportunities for students. The project aims to provide high-quality training and exposure to career paths in firefighting, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), and carpentry, ensuring that students are well-prepared to meet industry and sector needs in Yavapai County.

The acquisition of the firefighter simulators will significantly enhance the training experience for up to 120 fire services and wildland fire students during their certification process on an annual basis. These simulators provide state-of-the-art training, equipping students with the skills necessary to enter the local workforce with confidence and competence. In addition, the funding will be used to purchase materials, equipment, and supplies to expand STEM and carpentry after-school programs, benefiting an additional 338 high school students each year. These programs will introduce students to cutting-edge technology and construction techniques, broadening their career prospects and increasing their engagement with practical, hands-on learning.

Gila County Summer Forestry Program

The State allocated $306,140 to train staff in providing educational instruction on various aspects of the forestry industry to young people in the rural communities of Hayden and Winkelman. This initiative is a collaboration between Gila County, the Tonto National Forest, and the Conservation Corps. The program recruits 66 young workers from Hayden and Winkelman to participate in summer crews for a six- to eight-week program, offering hands-on experience and exposure to careers in the forestry sector.

During the summer program, the Tonto National Forest staff provide specialized educational instruction, introducing students to a variety of employment opportunities within the Forestry Service. The program allows students to engage directly with experts in fields such as conservation, land management, and firefighting, giving them a comprehensive understanding of potential career paths. Additionally, students who participate in the program are enrolled in AmeriCorps, allowing them to earn education credits that can be applied toward furthering their education.

Barry Goldwater Construction Sciences Program

The State allocated $178,394 for the purchase of essential equipment to establish a new construction science program at Barry Goldwater High School, located in the Deer Valley Unified School District.

The construction science program will serve approximately 90 to 100 high school students annually, providing them with hands-on training and education in various construction disciplines. Graduates of the program will earn National Center for Construction

Education and Research certification, a nationally recognized credential that will open doors to apprenticeship opportunities with local employers. These employers include industry leaders such as McCarthy Builders, West Coast Plumbing and Air, Rummel Construction, DLR, AERO Automatic Sprinkler, and Core Construction, all of whom are actively involved in shaping the program to ensure it aligns with the immediate needs of the local workforce.

Major construction projects like the TSMC campus have boosted the demand for skilled construction workers in north and west Phoenix. The new two-year construction science program at Barry Goldwater High School directly addresses this demand by preparing students with the skills, knowledge, and certifications necessary to enter the construction industry. The program is specifically designed to meet the workforce needs of local employers, ensuring that graduates are job-ready and equipped for a wide range of quality construction jobs and RA opportunities.

Western Maricopa Education Center's (West-Mec's) Energy and Manufacturing and Water Systems Program

The State invested $265,920 to purchase various equipment to expand West-MEC's Automation and Industrial Technology Program and the Water Systems program at its Deer Valley Airport campus. The newly acquired equipment will be used to train and certify approximately 180 high school students for careers in energy and manufacturing, and an additional 61 students for careers in water systems on an annual basis. These programs address the growing demand for skilled workers in the energy, manufacturing, and water systems sectors in Maricopa County by facilitating students' acquisition of technical skills and certifications needed to enter these sectors directly after graduation. Employment opportunities are available with local employers such as TSMC, Palo Verde Generating Station, and various municipal water departments including those of the City of Buckeye and the City of Glendale. Students in the programs will also have the option to pursue an associate degree at Glendale Community College.

Other State Funds Activities

Not applicable.

Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

High Impact Training

The purpose of the High Impact Training analysis (previously referred to as the Title I-B Training Provider Evaluation Project) was to establish a process to evaluate the effectiveness of training programs in the ARIZONA@WORK system and objectively conduct such evaluation by quantifying the effects of external factors outside the control of the training providers and removing them from consideration. The High Impact Training analysis is intended to facilitate better understanding of the effectiveness of different training programs, specifically, and training subjects more generally, and allow workforce staff and jobseekers alike to make better informed decisions. The analysis aimed to help workforce policy makers adopt training program strategies that align

with the goals of the ARIZONA@WORK system by promoting resources that lead participants to meaningful employment with livable wages.

In 2023, Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) focused on getting feedback and stakeholder engagement on the draft of the High Impact Training analysis. To ensure all options are considered and that strengths and weaknesses in the methodology are identified, OEO met with the following stakeholders to obtain input: Eligible Training Provider List coordinators, Department of Economic Security (DES), State and LWDBs, and DOL. OEO plans to continue to engage stakeholders to solicit feedback on the High Impact Training model, thereby ensuring optimal functionality and application of the model as a useful analytical tool.

Continuous Improvement

Additional Considerations for Evaluation and Research

DES is exploring an impact study that aims to establish whether or how effectively Title I-B Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth program services contribute to self-sufficiency for those identified as low-income individuals at program entry. The study would focus on low-income individuals receiving SNAP and TANF benefits and comparing outcomes to SNAP and TANF recipients who also received Title I-B services. Self-sufficiency would be defined as:

i. 100 percent of the Lower Living Standard Income Level (LLSIL) guidelines and

ii. the local area's self-sufficiency level, expressed as a percentage of the LLSIL.

Reports

Arizona Economic Activity Report (see Appendix B in the State's report: *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Annual Statewide Performance Report Narrative for Titles I and III Program Year 2023*).

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

Waiver to use Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for in-school youth (ISY).

Strategies

To promote career pathways and access to services for all youth, the State continues to leverage its waiver to use ITAs for ISY. In PY23, 83 training services funded by ITAs were delivered to 82 ISY participants.

Impact on Performance

Of those participants impacting PY23 WIOA performance indicators, ISY who received training via ITA were more likely to have successful placement in the second and fourth quarters after exit, attained a credential, and achieved a measurable skill gain.

The impacts of the waiver on WIOA performance indicators appear promising for PY23, continuing a trend seen in PY21 and PY22 data. The waiver was approved in late 2019, with 2020 being the first full Calendar Year ITA funding was accessible to participants. As cohort sizes continue to increase and data quality improves, the benefits of the waiver on ISY performance become clearer.

Success Stories

Micaela

Micaela enrolled in the program on February 28, 2024, to pursue Commercial Driver's License (CDL) training at Phoenix Truck Driving School. Initially she was shy and quiet, but she showed a strong commitment to changing her life. Micaela moved from Oregon, where she had experienced homelessness and was determined to overcome past struggles, including addiction, to build a better future. With the support of her family, who offered her a stable place to stay during training, Micaela thrived. She consistently completed her tasks, attended a women's support group, and actively searched for jobs. Her hard work paid off when she passed her CDL test and secured a position with May Trucking, where she remains employed.

Adult Program

From Phlebotomist to Registered Nurse (RN) with the Support of ARIZONA@WORK Pinal County

The participant recently achieved a significant milestone by completing the RN program and earning her RN license in January 2024. She had previously worked as a Phlebotomist for ten years, a role that did not provide sufficient income to support her family. Despite the challenges, she was determined to pursue her dream of becoming an RN. During her studies, the participant faced financial difficulties, especially as her husband is a disabled veteran. She demonstrated incredible commitment by driving from Marana to Tucson four times a week to attend classes and complete her internship at Pima Community College.

Throughout this journey, ARIZONA@WORK Pinal County's Adult program provided crucial support. This included gas cards, a backpack, scrubs, shoes, and essential medical supplies such as a stethoscope. The program also assisted with her books, background check, fingerprint clearance card, RN state exam, and the cost of her National Council Licensure Examination - RN license. Her hard work and perseverance paid off when she was hired by Northwest Hospital in Tucson as an RN, earning $34.41 per hour during her training period. This story is a testament to her dedication and the vital support from ARIZONA@WORK Pinal County, which helped her overcome obstacles and achieve her goal of becoming an RN.

Adult Program/National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP)

Service Coordination

Algene came to ARIZONA@WORK Pinal County with multiple barriers to employment, including justice involvement and minimal work history. Algene received services through the Adult Program and was co-enrolled in the Portable, Practical Educational Preparation NFJP.

While in the program, Algene obtained stop-gap employment as a laborer for a concrete mix company, making $19.00 an hour. However, ARIZONA@WORK Pinal County continued to help him reach his objective of earning a CDL, recognizing that more could be done to help the participant reach his career goal and achieve self-sufficiency.

ARIZONA@WORK Pinal County administered the Picture Interest Career Survey, which showed that Algene ‘s second highest score was in Realistic work. This category indicated he liked to work with tools, machines, and prefers physical, outdoor, and mechanical work and prefers a structured work environment. The assessment results aligned with Algene’s CDL goal.

Subsequently, the Adult Program funded Algene’s occupational skills training with Phoenix Truck Driving School, which began in February 2024. While in the training, he also received supportive services through NFJP.

Because Algene’s job was considered stop-gap employment, ARIZONA@WORK Pinal County helped advocate for his advancement with the same employer, once he obtained his CDL. With Algene’s determination and hard work—attending training during the day and working overnight—he obtained his CDL in April 2024. As a result of completing the training and receiving his CDL, Algene’s employer promoted him to a commercial driver position. His new job pays $30.00 an hour and has opportunities for overtime. His training and employment also led to other aspects of his life falling into place, including marriage to his fiancée.

Algene’s success story shows that great things can be achieved, with participant perseverance and appropriate support from programs like ARIZONA@WORK Pinal County Adult Program and NFJP.

Adult Program

A New Beginning After 20 Years in Prison

A career planner from the ARIZONA@WORK Pinal County Adult program received the following thank-you letter from a participant who had been incarcerated for 20 years:

> “Dear Sonia Cortez and the ARIZONA@WORK Pinal County Staff,
>
> I hope this letter finds you well. I wanted to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude for your unwavering support and guidance throughout my journey to obtaining my CDL and launching my new career. Your dedication, patience, and expertise have been invaluable to me. From the very beginning, you took the time to understand where I came from and the challenges I faced after spending 20 years in prison. You stood by me every step of the way. Your encouragement and belief in my abilities motivated me to push through every obstacle and achieve my goals.
>
> Thanks to your assistance, I am now a licensed commercial driver, earning over $30 an hour, and ready to embark on this exciting new chapter in my life. The skills and knowledge I gained with your help and the support of

ARIZONA@WORK Pinal County will undoubtedly contribute to my future success. Once again, thank you, Sonia, for your exceptional support. Your commitment to helping individuals like me succeed is truly commendable. I look forward to keeping you informed about my employment so that you can continue to inspire others with what is possible. Wishing you all the best, and may your dedication continue to positively impact many more lives."

Adult Program - Client Testimonial

From an Adult participant who is now a youth work-based learning specialist at ARIZONA@WORK:

"I came to ARIZONA@WORK seeking a better job. My Case Manager was great about informing me of job opportunities, and training that were available. After completing a course through AWC in fiber optic [sic] I realized that was not a career I wanted to pursue as a future goal. My case manager helped me focus on my passion [for] working with youth. I've worked with youth for many years of my life. I fell in love with the ARIZONA@WORK youth program, helping them succeed in life. So, I'm grateful for the opportunity to work with youth and not only working in a career that I love, but also help shape the future."

Youth Program - Client Testimonial

From an ISY participant who now works as a detention officer at Yuma County Sheriff Office:

"ARIZONA@WORK made it possible to achieve my goals to the best of my ability and more. They were always interested in what I was going through and made sure they answered any questions I had. Because of ARIZONA@WORK, I took my first steps into a new chapter in my life! Thank you!"

Youth Program - Client Testimonial

From an OSY participant who was unemployed and with barriers to employment (with disability, basic-skills deficient, and low-income). The participant is now employed as an automotive technician at Home Nissan Yuma: "Thank you ARIZONA@WORK for giving me the on-the-job training opportunity that I've dreamed about. I appreciate all the help that has been provided to me."

Arkansas

Arkansas Division of Workforce Services (ADWS)

Use of State Funds

Arkansas carried out all required statewide employment and training activities as described in Section 682.200.

Under-served Populations

No information provided fort this section.

Integrated Service Delivery

Sector Strategies and Regional Planning Activities

ADWS allotted an additional $250K for awards to LWDBs to assist with Regional Planning and services delivery efforts and to provide support for the effective development, convening, and implementation of industry and sector partnerships.

Arkansas JobLink (AJL)

AJL is the State's integrated web-based workforce development management information system (MIS) used by the State and local areas to share and manage participant data between the Wagner-Peyser program, the TAA program, and WIOA. AJL provides jobseekers, employers, and workforce development professionals with tremendous flexibility and capacity for accessing, tracking, and reporting services: self-directed, staff-facilitated, staff-assisted, and case management.

All staff have access to and can view all services provided to clients regardless of individual program funding. This approach allows all funding streams to consider the "complete package" of services provided or made available to the client reducing duplication of effort and maximizing outcomes. It also facilitates a single process to extract required data for the generation and submission of performance or demographic client details as required by current mandates. In short AJL provides all workforce partners with a "whole person view" of the services available, or provided to, each client or group.

The State has taken a lead in the development of a direct electronic interface between their AJL and UI systems. Through this interface the State ensures that all UI claimants are registered for work and eliminates repetitive information gathering from UI claimants. Arkansas has also implemented a proactive approach to RESEA claimants with the goal of reducing the average length of time a client is out of work. This effort would have been exponentially more difficult if the State had not dealt with an integrated service delivery system. Using electronic wage matching, records are regularly updated with information received from the State and other sources to identify those who have obtained employment and calculate average earnings.

Each quarter, quarterly wage record information is loaded into AJL to measure the progress on state and local common performance measures. The quarterly wage information includes wages paid to an individual, the Social Security account number, the name of the individual, and the Federal employer identification number of the employer paying the wages to the

individual. State wage records are available to other member states through the Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS) on a quarterly basis. Likewise, Arkansas is able to track participants that work or move outside of the state for performance measurement purposes through WRIS wage records from member states.

All local WIOA Title I service providers have access to the state wage record information for the purpose of measuring local common performance measures.

Yes WIOA Can

High Concentration of Eligible Youth Awards

ADWS provided an additional $200K of funding to LWDBs who are serving a high concentration of WIOA-eligible youth, in accordance with the definition of "Eligible Youth" found in the WIOA law, Title I Section 129. Eligible Youth are defined as individuals 16–24 years of age, who are considered low-income persons, and who have one or more risk factors.

WIOA Outreach Activities Awards

ADWS allotted an additional $150K for outreach activity awards to LWDBs. The public workforce system plays a critical role in connecting talent with opportunity, connects customers to employment and training opportunities, and helps employers recruit skilled employees that match their employment opportunities. To fully communicate the workforce system's value and expand awareness of its services to jobseekers and employers, the system must conduct effective and targeted outreach. WIOA requires grantees to inform the public about services, conduct proactive outreach to underserved populations, and make individuals aware of services that can support their employment needs. ADWS funded up to $15,000 per LWDB with the goal of increased WIOA enrollments across the state. Funds awarded for WIOA allowable outreach activities must be utilized for additional outreach activities and not to supplant WIOA formula funds awarded for Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker programs.

Other State Funds Activities

Not applicable.

Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

Enrollment to Employment

In PY23, Arkansas Workforce Connections (AWC) and the Arkansas CDO Office worked with the Coleridge Initiative to develop a new Applied Data Analytics training program curriculum, titled "Evaluating Enrollment to Employment Pathways." This program leverages the State's workforce longitudinal data developed under the Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) to train participants on applied use of data analytics on integrated WIOA, SNAP, TANF, and work-based learning data to design and

develop scalable research and products for supporting data-driven policy and practice, with a particular focus on co-enrollment and integrated service delivery.

Two cohorts of 30 students each were funded under WDQI, but additional braided funding from ETA, the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA), and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) were able to support three additional cohorts for which there was incredible national interest in participating.

Over the course of five cohorts in PY23, 168 participants representing 25 states (two to four agencies per state) conducted 23 high quality research projects and data product development efforts jointly contributing to a substantial body of knowledge on a wide variety of topics that can directly benefit workforce development in policy and practice

Continuous Improvement

In PY23, the leadership of ADWS, engaged the University of Arkansas Counselor Education Program to complete a comprehensive WIOA Systems Evaluation, Skills Gap Analysis, and a series of Customer Service Surveys. For this study, ADWS assigned to assess the following Workforce areas: Northeast Arkansas Workforce Development Board; Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District; Central Arkansas LWDB; Little Rock WDB; Southeast Arkansas WDB; Southwest Arkansas LWDB. Results of the evaluation, including customer satisfaction findings can be found here. The Arkansas WDB, in conjunction with state staff, are collaboratively reviewing the report and addressing deficiencies and gaps while also improving areas that were noted as promising practices.

Reports

The most recent Arkansas Labor Market and Economic Report is produced by the Occupational/Career Information unit of the Labor Market Information section to provide relevant information about the economy and workforce in the state and the ten Workforce Development Areas. The primary focus of this report includes the years 2019 to 2023, with some information covering shorter periods due to accessibility of data. Projection information for industry and occupational trends covers the years 2023 to 2025.

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

The State did not operate under waivers during PY23. Youth waivers were approved in the PY24–27 Combined WIOA State Plan.

Strategies

Not applicable.

Impact on Performance

Not applicable.

Success Stories

Lindsey – Dislocated Worker

A Dislocated Worker participant in Eastern Arkansas, walked into the Workforce Center seeking information on the WIOA program. As a long-term unemployed single parent receiving SNAP benefits, Lindsey needed support to get back into the workforce. Her last employment was on May 12, 2020, when she was laid off from the Pillow Clinic in Helena, Arkansas.

Lindsey promptly registered in the Arkansas JobLink (AJL) system and completed a WIOA Dislocated Worker/Adult application. Upon review, her Career Advisor confirmed her status as a Dislocated Worker due to her layoff. Recognizing her lack of skills in a high-demand occupation, Lindsey worked with her career advisor to develop an individualized employment plan and explore career pathways that matched her interests. She ultimately decided to pursue a career in nursing and applied to the Nursing program at Phillips Community College of the University of Arkansas (PCCUA).

During her training period, Lindsey began the adult work experience program at the Helena Workforce Center, gaining practical experience as an Office Clerk. On August 22, 2022, she started occupational skills training in the Nursing program at PCCUA, focusing on acquiring the skills necessary to succeed in the healthcare field.

On May 10, 2024, Lindsey's hard work and dedication paid off as she was awarded an Associate of Applied Science degree in Nursing from PCCUA.

Lindsey's journey through the WIOA program is a testament to her resilience and determination. By leveraging the resources and support provided by the WIOA program, she successfully transitioned from being a long-term unemployed individual to a highly skilled and credentialed Registered Nurse. Lindsey's story highlights the impact of the WIOA program in empowering individuals to achieve their career goals and improve their lives.

On June 10, 2024, Lindsey was hired full time as an Emergency Room Registered Nurse at Forrest City Medical Center in Forrest City Arkansas.

Mr. Sherrill – Dislocated Worker

A Dislocated Worker participant in Western Arkansas was laid off from Tyson Foods after working for the company for several years. He worked full time as a Maintenance Technician, but felt he did not have many other skills outside of that. Mr. Sherrill heard about the WIOA program and visited the Ft. Smith Workforce Center in May 2023, seeking assistance to attend Arkansas Tech University Ozark (ATU Ozark) in the Air and Refrigeration program. With assistance from his career advisor, Mr. Sherrill was provided with the guidance and tools needed to apply for and enroll in college.

He quickly completed all coursework in the Air Conditioning Refrigeration Certificate Program at ATU Ozark and received his certificate just a few months after being in the WIOA program. Coincidentally, Mr. Sherrill was hired by the college he attended as an instructor in the AC/Refrigeration program. Mr. Sherrill is a perfect example of how WIOA can assist anyone transition back into employment after a difficult season of uncertainty.

Ms. Gann – Adult

An Adult participant in Northwest Arkansas, found herself at a crossroads with her educational and career journey. Ms. Gann, a single mother of three with her oldest child being with a disability, attended college before, but was never successful due to challenges of life and not identifying a career that she loved. She attended college classes first for business, and then nursing. After losing interest, she realized that neither one of them suited her career choices. She was connected with the WIOA program as well as Arkansas Career Pathways programs for guidance and assistance. After consulting with program advisors and taking a series of assessments, she discovered that Radiology might be a good career choice for her.

Ms. Gann's case managers assisted with completing paperwork for her college application and financial aid. It was determined that she did not have adequate funding for a Pell grant, which presented another barrier for Ms. Gann to reach her goals. WIOA was able to assist with this barrier and fund tuition and supportive services to ensure she could complete training until she found work in Radiology. Her Pell funding was maxed out after her first semester in the program. After a lot of studying, hard work, and diligence, Ms. Gann graduated and received her Radiologic Technologist license. Ms. Gann is working at 1st Choice Healthcare in Salem, AR, as an X-ray/Lab Tech with a starting salary of $22.00 per hour.

California

California Workforce Development Board

Use of State Funds

Under-served Populations

Employment Social Enterprise (ESE) Program

The ESE program aims to build on existing ESE programs and/or collaborate with the existing successful ESE programs. The ESE program focuses on transitioning participants into the workforce by placing them into employment, typically in a supported employment setting, helping them earn wages while building work experience, improving job skills, and providing supportive services and wrap-around support. This support includes housing, access to childcare, and mental health services. By using WIOA 15 percent Governor's Discretionary Funds to tailor WIOA services specific to the needs of special populations, California aims to increase enrollment in WIOA programs and help improve employment and training outcomes. In addition, the ESE programs coordinate with multiple state agencies and departments to increase access and retention of transitional employment through Social Enterprises to support recruitment, wrap-around support, case management, and job placement for participants in the ESE program. The ESE program will offer employment and skill-building opportunities to help employees navigate employment challenges. Successful participation is expected to enhance employee retention and increase earnings potential, aligning with the goals of the DOL and the State.

Opportunity Young Adult (OYA) Career Pathway Program

The OYA Career Pathway Program is designed to create pathways to success for OYA aged 18–28. The goal is to create pathways to success that test and demonstrate program strategies to improve employment outcomes and reduce persistent economic inequities. This program will enable the state to implement projects that use innovative, OYA-centered outreach and program strategies to connect OYAs with jobs that pay family-sustaining wages and develop culturally competent services tailored to their needs.

The program aims to help OYAs secure quality jobs that offer family-sustaining wages, benefits, predictable hours, opportunities for career advancement, and worker voice. By using WIOA 15 percent Governor's Discretionary Funds to tailor WIOA services specific to the needs of OYAs, the State aims to increase enrollment in WIOA programs and help to improve employment and training outcomes of OYAs. Projects will invest in wrap-around support services to enhance the likelihood of program completion, employment outcomes, and career pathway advancement. This includes providing comprehensive case management with a trauma-informed approach.

Integrated Service Delivery

No information provided for this section.

Yes WIOA Can

Farmworker Advancement Program (FAP)

The FAP aims to research, design, and implement projects that focus exclusively on farmworker needs at a regional level. The program offers essential skills and upskilling training to help farmworkers advance within the agricultural industry or transition to other sectors. The FAP aims to assist farmworkers in securing quality jobs that provide family-sustaining wages, benefits, predictable hours, and opportunities for career advancement while promoting worker voice. Additionally, projects will offer wrap-around support and resources to enhance skills, prevent job loss, and foster upward mobility. These programs will assist with referrals to health, housing, educational resources, and career and financial coaching.

The FAP is intended to increase access to WIOA-funded services for the State's farmworker population. Using WIOA 15 percent Governor's Discretionary funds to tailor WIOA services specific to the needs of farmworkers will increase farmworker enrollment in WIOA programs and help to improve employment and training outcomes for farmworkers.

Other State Funds Activities

Displaced Oil and Gas Worker Fund (DOGWF)

The DOGWF aims to pioneer initiatives that guide displaced oil and gas workers into new jobs and career trajectories, with a commitment to securing stable, well-compensated, and gratifying roles for these workers across diverse industries. This initiative aims to support these workers in transitioning into sectors that match their skills and expertise and offer comparable wages. The primary focus of this initiative is to enhance the prospects of these individuals by offering targeted education, training, and reemployment opportunities. The program supports two groups: Core Workers, who are directly engaged in oil or gas extraction and refinement, and Core Adjacent Workers, who are in occupations that exist in the oil and gas industry but also have potential in other industries.

English Language Learner (ELL) Integrated Education and Training Fund (IET)

The ELL-IET Fund aims to support new or existing projects that incorporate an IET program model to prepare ELLs for in-demand, high-quality jobs with sustainable wages. The IET instructional strategy offers ELLs integrated instruction for career-related training and contextualized language-building skills to expedite entrance into and advancement in the workforce. It is an education program that incorporates adult education services with occupational skills training to increase participant advancement in education and career. The IET program model requires a sector-based approach to education and training and robust employer partnerships in the local or regional labor market. Expansion of the IET model will increase access to career pathways and bridge educational gaps to help ELLs with significant barriers to high-quality employment enter or advance in the workforce. Through this program, ELLs will obtain occupational skills for jobs with family supporting wages within in demand industries in the project service area.

Regional Investment Initiative – Catalyst Program

The Regional Investment Initiative Catalyst Program aims to bridge the gap between planning regional economic development strategies and implementing projects designed to achieve outcomes that align with those strategies. Catalyst funds will support each region's California Jobs First Collaborative to invest in pre-development activities, enabling regions to develop projects and maximize investment opportunities while reserving Implementation Phase funds for ready-to-go projects. Allocating funds for a Catalyst Program will accomplish two core goals: it will strengthen the California Jobs First Collaboratives social infrastructure to allow for continued regional inclusive planning and will enable regions to build a pipeline of viable, ready-to-go Regional Investment Initiative-aligned projects. This will maximize funding opportunities by capitalizing on federal, state, and private investments, as well as enable aligned projects to compete for funding beyond the lifetime of the program. Pre-development funds will expand on the work of the Regional Investment Initiative Planning Phase and catalyze projects in disinvested communities across the state while giving regions the flexibility to design projects that meet their needs. These funds will enable communities across the state to develop projects that align with the vision of the California Jobs First Collaborative and position them to access additional federal, state, and private funds.

Emergency Medical Services Program

The Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Program aims to assist in the development, implementation, and facilitation of EMS program pilot sites, culminating in the replication and expansion of up to 11 Targeted EMS Corps program sites throughout the State. The developed program structure for pilot sites should be designed to increase the number of Emergency Medical Technicians in local communities with a particular focus on the inclusion of young adult participants.

Firefighter Joint Apprenticeship Program

The Firefighter Joint Apprenticeship aims to expand and/or develop apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships that incorporate data-proven strategies to recruit, train, and employ firefighters and paramedics. The grant supports the preliminary research and planning, development, and implementation of training programs developed in coordination with and approved by the California Firefighter Joint Apprenticeship Committee (Cal-JAC). Apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships must be a registered program sponsored by the California Apprenticeship Council (CAC) and registered with the California Division of Apprenticeship Standards (DAS). CAC is defined in Labor Code Section 3070. Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

CWDB Approach to Assessment and Evaluation

As described in the State Plan, the CWDB is engaged in an extensive assessment of the different state and federal programs it oversees. The assessment usually takes two forms:

1) a descriptive analysis of the efficacy of the implementation of the different grants and programs and
2) an evaluation of the impacts the different grants and programs have on the workforce development system.

External third-party evaluators and CWDB research specialists typically conduct the program assessment. For each program assessment conducted by a third-party evaluator, a CWDB research specialist acts as a conduit for data collection, research design, and outcome specifications between the third-party evaluator, CWDB leadership, and relevant program staff.

The broad questions that all CWDB assessments and evaluations seek to answer are:

1. Is the workforce development training provided through the different CWDB grants and programs effective overall and for various sub-populations?
2. Do participants in workforce development training provided through the different CWDB grants and programs improve their outcomes regarding employment and wages?

The CWDB research team has had in-depth and ongoing conversations with the Labor and Workforce Development Agency (LWDA) regarding the common evaluation framework. The coordination between CWDB and LWDA has produced promising results, clarifying and streamlining the shared effort toward new and improved data reporting systems.

Continuous Improvement

Based on completed and ongoing assessments, the CWDB Research and Evaluation Team continues to:

- Serve as the CWDB point of contact on ongoing and current evaluations. The Ph.D. researchers are trained social scientists and are well-versed in the techniques and tools to conduct full-scale evaluations. They are also familiar with the different data systems within LWDA.
- Design and launch a Salesforce-based participant data collection system called Cal E-Grants (CEG). The CWDB already uses CEG for grant applications, invoices, and qualitative reports. Grantees will use a pre-determined data list with simple specifications divided into six categories:
    a) participant information,
    b) career services,
    c) supportive services,
    d) training services,
    e) credentials, and
    f) outputs and outcomes.

  The CEG system will provide quantitative reports on participants' progress on demand and in real time.

Under the CAAL-Skills program, EDD received funding from the DOL as part of the Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) and is working in collaboration with the CWDB to move the CAAL-Skills Databases to the Cloud. Efforts in this regard include:

- Supporting the Cloud Computing Policy (TL 14-04) for all new reportable and non-reportable IT projects.
- Developing a publicly accessible Workforce Metrics Dashboard portal.
- Providing partners with a secure mechanism to exchange workforce metrics data.
- Facilitating direct public access to the Workforce Metrics Dashboard Reports (WMDRs).
- Presenting program performance outcomes.
- Developing and launching an interactive dashboard that will allow users to query information by workforce program, population characteristics, program year, and participant region.

The CWDB is mandated to start a joint application design and data sharing between community colleges for HRTPs and High Road Construction Careers, or HRCCs. This task involves collecting data from community colleges, importing it to the internal data store, further processing it based on the predefined business rules, and generating dynamic, static, and interactive business reports. This project is currently in the design stages.

The state will continue to emphasize demand-driven skills attainment to facilitate upward mobility for populations with barriers to employment. Building the regional skills infrastructure and connecting program participants to good jobs in growth sectors requires partnerships that align programs and coordinate services across programs and funding streams, including supportive services. The CWDB will continue to prioritize activities designed to help achieve the State Plan's three primary policy objectives:

- Demand-driven skills attainment.
- Upward mobility for populations with barriers to employment.
- Program alignment.

To summarize, through the development of the web portal, the CWDB can both serve as the repository and more easily facilitate the display and analysis of labor market outcome data for workforce, education, and related human service program participants in current and future CWDB workforce development projects. Besides receiving federal WIOA funding, the CWDB has received a significant level of state funding, all requiring some form of assessment and evaluation. Moreover, the lessons learned from the completed and current assessments have led the CWDB to reexamine the data collection processes, research designs, and education and employment outcomes specifications. The CWDB will have the program-specific evaluations summarized above completed in-house and move toward developing a common evaluation framework to assess the collective impact of all workforce development programs in California.

CWDB Approach to Assessment and Evaluation

The lessons learned from the completed and current assessments have led the CWDB to reexamine the data collection processes, research designs, and education and employment outcomes specifications. The CWDB research team has had in-depth and ongoing conversations with the Labor and LWDA regarding a common evaluation framework. The coordination

between CWDB and LWDA has produced promising results, clarifying and streamlining the shared effort toward new and improved data reporting systems, as exemplified in the work undertaken to meet the requirements specified in the SB 755 legislation.

Reports

CAAL-Skills Workforce Metrics Dashboard Report 2025

The 2025 Workforce Metrics Dashboard Report will be the second Workforce Metrics Dashboard Report to utilize CAAL-Skills data, following the first Workforce Metrics Dashboard created in 2018. Once complete, the dashboard report will provide descriptive statistics on aggregate outcomes for individuals who exited participating programs PY17, PY18, PY19, PY20, PY21, PY22, and PY23. CAAL-Skills will publish subsequent Workforce Metrics Dashboard Reports annually.

The 2025 Workforce Metrics Dashboard Report will summarize and graphically display credential attainment, employment, and wage data for WIOA Core programs, CalWORKS (California's TANF program), CalFresh (California's SNAP E&T program), the TAA program, the Employment Training Panel's state-funded Incumbent Worker Training program, State Certified Apprenticeships, the California Community College system's Career Technical Education programs, as well as rehabilitative programs operated by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and the Prison Industry Authority.

Draft tables and accompanying narratives for the 2025 Workforce Metrics Dashboard Report have yet to be developed. The CAAL-Skills technical team is currently focused on system modernization efforts and has yet to request, receive, merge, cleanse, and prepare the relevant source data of participating programs.

Per the CAAL-Skills memorandum of understanding (MOU), the data system was originally kept on a standalone network with no access to any other network, including the Internet. However, hosting Personally Identifiable Information (PII) on an isolated platform did not meet National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) information security guidelines or Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS) for information systems. This limitation required the CAAL-Skills team to perform all technical duties on premises despite statewide policies and practices emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic, and data-sharing partners were required to physically transfer data via encrypted USB drives. Additionally, CWDB depended on the EDD for all infrastructure needs. These constraints resulted in months of additional effort to process and convert the data received into consistent and reportable data.

Following conversations with data partners, CAAL-Skills initiated modernization efforts and established an Amazon Web Services (AWS) cloud platform via the CDT to securely store the data in compliance with NIST and FIPS standards. The data system itself has been completely reengineered to allow for increased consistency among partner data, more flexibility with respect to changes in partner data collection strategies, and faster and more efficient data intake, processing, and reporting. Central to this updated architecture is the restructuring of data categories based on years of internal analysis of data and numerous discussions with partners to better understand their business processes.

CAAL-Skills is eliminating the risks associated with exchanging physical devices with partners by leveraging the CDT's Secure Automated File Exchange (SAFE) solution for the electronic transfer of PII data. It is revising data sharing agreements and associated data specifications to further streamline the system, facilitate faster data processing, and reduce turnaround time between intake and reporting. Once the revised agreements are in place, the database will be ready to receive new data.

Once completed, these modernization efforts will facilitate the annual publication of subsequent Workforce Metrics Dashboard Reports and the creation of a public-facing CAAL-Skills web portal, which is currently under development.

Waivers

The State worked with its WIOA partners in PY21 to implement Workforce Services Directives (WSDs) and update the *COVID-19 WIOA Waiver Guidance* (WSD20-13) for the Waiver application cycle of PY22–23.

To provide Local Boards with additional flexibility when assisting individuals affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, the State requested three WIOA waivers from DOL during PY21. In the Workforce Services Directive (WSD22-12), the State established policies and procedures for Local Boards to access the DOL-approved waivers. This included an application where Local Boards were required to outline how each waiver would impact their participants, community, and service delivery. They were also required to provide their projected programmatic outcomes so the state could track their progress via CalJOBS^{SM} to fulfill DOL reporting requirements.

Waiver Implemented

The CWDB was approved for all requested waivers, effective July 1, 2022–June 30, 2023.

- Waiver of WIOA Section 134(d)(5). This waiver allows up to 30 percent of WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker local formula funds to be used to provide transitional jobs (WIOA Waiver Transitional Jobs).
- Waiver of WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(H)(i). This waiver allows up to a 90 percent reimbursement of on-the-job training (OJT) costs for businesses with 50 or fewer employees (WIOA Waiver OJT).
- Waiver of WIOA Section 129(a)(4)(A). This waiver allows the state and Local Boards to decrease the federal 75 percent out-of-school youth (OSY) expenditure requirement to 50 percent to increase the allowable expenditures for serving in-school youth (ISY) at risk for disengagement (WIOA Waiver OSY).

The CWDB has worked extensively to create policies to reduce the administrative burden on Local Boards and establish consistency in processes and procedures. The CWDB published formal guidance for the WIOA Waivers and provided any necessary technical assistance directly to the Local Boards.

Strategies

Process and Approval of Local and Regional Plans

The California Unified Strategic Workforce Development Plan (State Plan) provides a conceptual outline for Regional Planning Units (RPUs), Local Boards, and their partners to jointly develop their Regional and Local Plans. The State Plan policy objectives, developed in collaboration with WIOA partners and Local Boards, work toward the shared vision of creating a comprehensive system that addresses poverty and promotes income mobility as a cornerstone of service delivery. As outlined under WIOA Section 106, Regional Plans provide a roadmap for the alignment of resources and investments to meet specific outcomes within the 15 RPUs. Regional Plans articulate how RPUs will build intentionality around industry sector engagement, drive workforce development outcomes across multiple jurisdictions, and expand on-ramps to career pathways for individuals who experience barriers to employment. As outlined in WIOA Section 108, Local Plans provide an action plan to operationalize the Regional Plan roadmap by delineating how individuals can access services through their local America's Job Center of California℠ (AJCC) system. Based on the WIOA MOUs for each LWDB, local plans articulate how Local Boards will coordinate with local partners to ensure person-centered service delivery. In addition to the federal planning requirements, WIOA indicates that Regional and Local Plans should be consistent with the State Plan's vision and goals.

Impact on Performance

WIOA Waiver Transitional Jobs

In 2023, Tony Cameron visited the Southeast Los Angeles County Workforce Development Board (SELACO WDB) for job training and placement assistance. Mr. Cameron wanted to explore better opportunities after working part-time as a retail associate. Mr. Cameron was co-enrolled in three SELECO projects. The first was Prison to Employment (P2E). This was funded by the State and administered by South Bay, and P2E covered the cost of OJT. The second was the HOME Project. This was funded by the County of LA, and HOME covered the cost of Work Experience (WEX) (Transitional Employment Services). The third was WIOA. WIOA covered all case management, placement, and support services as needed. Mr. Cameron is currently thriving as a Community Health Worker at the Therapeutic Play Foundation. He credits his success to the SELECO WDB staff.

WIOA Waiver OJT

Riverside County Workforce Development provided crucial employer assistance to Phenix Technology, Inc., a small business helmet manufacturer, to meet the demands of a growing business. The OJT program, with its labor market analysis, job placement coordination, screening, and candidate searching, played a pivotal role in the company's growth. Since its inception in 2013, Phenix Technology, Inc. has grown from six employees to thirty-four permanent employees and five interns. As they look to the future, they aim to further expand their business with the continued assistance of Riverside County's OJT programs.

WIOA Waiver OSY

In September 2023, Jazper enrolled in the Santa Cruz County Workforce Development Sueños Youth Employment Program. As a former incarcerated juvenile, Jazper faced significant challenges in seeking employment and support. The Sueños Youth program provided Jazper with the necessary resources to reintegrate back into the community. His participation in program activities significantly improved his communication skills, employment soft skills, and interpersonal skills. Jazper's dedication led to his participation in the WEX program, where he was placed as an Administrative Assistant for the Community Action Board

(CAB), a local non-profit organization. His hard work paid off when he was offered a part-time position with CAB. The resources and support provided by the Sueños Youth program were instrumental in Jazper's successful transition back into the community.

Success Stories

No information provided for this section.

Colorado

Colorado Workforce Development Council (CWDC)

Use of State Funds

Under-served Populations

In PY23, the State launched a framework and tool for aligning and evaluating the quality of non-degree credentials, in cooperation with the Colorado Department of Education (CDE), other agencies and industry partners, to increase the value of credentials and learning experiences that take place in non-traditional settings. This lifts apprenticeship programs as a flexible, high-quality method of training. Another bill was passed to reverse map pathways into registered apprenticeships (RA) and ensure seamless transitions into programs through career and technical education (CTE). Apprenticeship Colorado, The Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE) and the CTE division of the Colorado Community College System work together to build CTE programs in high school and community college that lead into RA programs, with an emphasis on industries identified in the 2023 Talent Pipeline Report. By aligning these programs, the State is ensuring seamless transitions between high school, post-secondary, and career. Students will have the chance to accelerate through CTE coursework directly related to the competencies of an RA.

The State received recognition as a State Apprenticeship Agency (SAA) by the DOL Office of Apprenticeship effective July 1, 2023. Governor Polis signed SB23–051 Conforming Workforce Development Statutes directing SAA to establish the State Apprenticeship Council (SAC) to provide professional and technical expertise and advise the SAA on RA standards, rules, and performance. The apprenticeship model creates multiple career pathways that connect people to paid work experience, educational instruction, and a nationally recognized credential. Employers also benefit from these programs, as RAs help them strengthen their talent pipelines. Given that many Coloradans cannot afford to quit working to pursue training or education, apprenticeships also serve as a powerful tool to help address gaps in the labor market. In PY23, the State Apprenticeship Agency registered 96 new programs with 50 unique sponsors.

Expanding Access to Apprenticeships to More Individuals with Disabilities

DVR and the CDLE Apprenticeship Team deepened their collaboration in PY23 to provide ongoing, system-wide training. A DVR representative is permanently represented on the Monthly Apprenticeship Expansion call, a statewide convening of apprenticeship partners.

Accessibility Efforts

CDLE and CDE collaborated to offer combined training. The training sessions offered directly supported HB 21–1110 and aimed to provide accessibility and disability awareness training to state partners. Last year, 176 attendees registered for the training sessions including representatives from federal, state, and local government agencies and several not-for-profit organizations. This year the training courses are on track to exceed last year’s participation with more than 150 participants registered.

Adult Priority of Service and Additional Underserved Populations

Colorado has implemented a robust adult priority of service policy with local service providers seeking to achieve 100 percent of participants meeting the statutory categories.

Statutory Adult Priority of Service Categories for PY23: 1,877/2,287 (82.07%) – unique participants

- 46.74 percent: 1,069 Public assistance recipient
- 58.20 percent: 1,331 Individual/Family income
- 7.61 percent: 174 Homeless
- 2.36 percent: 54 Foster Child
- 12.86 percent: 294 Individuals with disability – single income
- 5.77 percent: 132 Free Lunch Recipient
- 16.00 percent: 366 Basic skills deficient
- 7.87 percent: 180 Underemployed

(some participants are counted in multiple categories)

Local service providers are actively pursuing outreach to individuals with barriers to employment as defined in WIOA. During PY23 they achieved the following outcome: Adults Served with Barriers to Employment: 95.29 percent.

Disability Program Navigator (DPN) Program

Colorado's participation in the Disability Employment Initiative (ended March 2021) built the foundation for the Disability Program Navigator (DPN) program by establishing working relationships between the workforce system and key disability-focused employment organizations, including Vocational Rehabilitation. Upon close-out of the final round of the Disability Employment Initiative, CDLE's Workforce Development Programs (WDP) realized the need to continue the highly successful work of the Disability Resource Coordinators (DRC) from the Disability Employment Initiative Grant Round VIII and the importance of leading a statewide focus on serving people with disabilities through the State's local workforce areas.

Employment and Training established partnerships with CDLE's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and local workforce areas, to initiate the Disability Program Navigators (DPNs). The DPNs help jobseekers with disabilities by referring them to workforce centers and vocational rehabilitation programs for employment and other services. This collaboration has increased client services funding for the disability community, thereby enabling them to achieve competitive integrated employment with a livable wage.

The Disability Program Navigator (DPN) initiative was unanimously approved by the Joint Budget Committee (JBC) and signed into the Long Appropriations Bill by Governor Polis during the 2024 legislative session. This state funding will allow DVR to draw down additional federal funds, which will sustain the work of the DPN Initiative to align workforce services for individuals with disabilities. This enhances the partnerships between E&T, DVR, and other disability-related providers, and allows for the regular and ongoing collaboration that reduces duplication of services, braids resources, and supports greater opportunities for people with disabilities to use their skills and be fully engaged in various in-demand occupations. These matching funds allow the draw down of $1.8 million, resulting in a total of $2.36 million for the program. These funds pay for 10 DPN positions in local workforce areas, 1 FTE in E&T, and 0.6 FTE in DVR. DVR will also receive an additional $863,321.00 for case services.

Disability Awareness Training:
Using the Programmatic Accessibility Course and Toolkit and HB21-1110 Colorado Laws for Persons with Disabilities

In partnership with the Colorado Department of Education, The Rocky Mountain ADA Center (RMADAC), Employment and Training developed the third annual Disability Awareness Training focusing on HB21-1110. After completing the training, participants receive a certificate of completion provided by RMADAC and can earn continuing education units for credentialing purposes. This training is designed to ensure that participants comply with HB21-1110. Through this state legislation, the State is the first state to require both state and local governments to meet web accessibility standards.

Integrated Service Delivery

Formulate, Test, and Scale the Braiding of Funding Across Programs.

The Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) and CDLE collaborated to develop and fund the Paving Access to Careers and Employment (PACE) Program utilizing [Workforce Enterprise Funds (WEF), formerly] Supplemental Employment Support Funds (ESF) and Colorado's Employment First funding.

This enables Program Ambassadors to provide supportive services that will increase the number of SNAP applicants and recipients that engage and enroll in Wagner-Peyser employment services, or other local employment and training programs. PACE leverages existing expertise in Colorado's workforce development system and builds upon already established employment and training-focused partnerships to assist SNAP clients reduce significant employment barriers, such as lack of childcare or stable housing, to become economically self-sufficient. This program enables the State to leverage federal matching funds, maximizing the impact of every dollar spent. By drawing down these federal dollars, the State effectively increase the resources available to support goals and initiatives.

Promote Collaboration Models to Align and Streamline the Delivery of Stimulus Dollars, SNAP 50/50, Colorado Works, and Other Benefits

CDHS partnered with CDLE in PY23 to expand the Colorado Works Subsidized Training and Employment Program (CW STEP) services to eligible Colorado Works clients that reside in Colorado's rural communities. The CW STEP program offers people who are eligible or receiving Colorado's TANF program Colorado Works (meet an income threshold and have a dependent in the

home), an opportunity to attach to a work-based learning experience. In CW STEP, people attain a livable wage and permanent job through work-based learning opportunities including transitional jobs, apprenticeships, paid internships, and supportive services that reduce challenges to finding and maintaining employment. In the 2023–2024 program year, CW STEP clients who completed the program earned an average wage of $17.08 per hour.

In PY23, Rehire Colorado Transitional Jobs program and the Colorado Works Subsidized Employment (CW Step) enrolled 522 people in work-based learning programs. Rehire Colorado prioritizes serving individuals who are 50 years old and older, veterans, and non-custodial parents (parents who pay child support). Clients who find employment after their transitional job earn an average wage of $17.36 per hour.

Better Serve All Individuals in Need of Support by Strengthening the Alignment and Information Sharing Across Programs, In-Person and Virtually

During PY23, HB24-1364 Education Based Workforce Readiness was signed into law. This bill establishes and requires the research and implementation of the Statewide Longitudinal Data System. This will expand on the previous work of the Colorado Data Trust, and greatly enhance the State's ability to securely and responsibly share data.

Significant time was dedicated to aligning partners both virtually, through various technical assistance modules, and in-person at key events such as the Business Services Summit, Rocky Mountain Workforce Development Association Conference and Think BIG conference. A series of methods widely adopted by workforce boards across the country was introduced to address challenges, meet customer needs, and foster skill development through human-centered design concepts.

Support Local Boards in Engaging Businesses and Key Employers to Address Community Issues Including Childcare, Transportation, and Affordable Housing

As previously mentioned, partners within the TalentFOUND network worked together to develop the Colorado Job Quality Framework, which outlines the key attributes of a quality job and provides actionable steps for local communities, employers, and leaders to enhance job quality in Colorado. In PY23, CWDC Employer Coach presented the framework, along with tools and resources at the National Association of Workforce Boards conference.

Yes WIOA Can

Educate Coloradans on Targeted in Demand Career Pathways and Recovery Opportunities through the Enhancement of My Colorado Journey

CWDC continued their focus on the management and promotion of My Colorado Journey, including enhancing relationships with partner organizations, providing overviews of the platform to potential partners, planning and executing an outreach campaign, and releasing two new career pathways (Aerospace and Public Safety) a refreshed career pathway in Public Health, and a communications toolkit for use by state and local government partners, schools, and community-based organizations to spread awareness across multiple stakeholders about these new career pathways as well as the My Colorado Journey platform overall.

Map and Promote In-Demand Industries in a Future-Ready Way with Embedded Opportunities for Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeships in Partnership with businesses and Employers

Additional in-demand career pathways added to the My Colorado Journey platform. During PY23 new Aerospace and Public Safety, along with a refreshed Public Health, career pathways were developed by the CWDC, CCCS, and partners. In June 2024, they were published on My Colorado Journey. The addition of the new career pathways bring the total number of industries published to 15.

Work-Based Learning for CTE Students

The State exceeded the Perkins Work-based Learning (WBL) target by 20.2 percent for 2023, coming in at 27.2 percent against a target of 7 percent. Beginning in FY24–25, the secondary WBL target will be 27 percent. Academic Year 20–21 was the first year the state measured performance on this indicator and Colorado exceeded the established performance target, even during the pandemic. As CTE programs continue to move forward, the State anticipates work-based learning participation to increase and has worked with partners across the WIOA network to provide technical assistance, playbooks, and other resources to CTE programs and school districts and will continue to do so.

Provide Support to Businesses and Employers to Enhance Job Quality and Implement Skills-Based Practices that Support Individuals

During PY23, the Colorado Workforce Development Council Employer Coach engaged all local workforce areas, including individual coaching for several Workforce Centers. The Employer coach continues to meet with and present the Job Quality Framework to Chambers of Commerce to increase training and conversations on individualized job quality improvement plans for the State's employers. Additionally, the Employer Coach reached over 800 conference attendees from multiple prominent events, engaged approximately 170 business owners through chamber partnerships and TA through the SBDC Network Trainers and Business Services Representatives. The Coach conducted national presentations and provided in-depth coaching for pilot businesses and government partners, and participated in workforce symposiums, sector partnerships, and education symposiums, reaching hundreds of attendees and businesses.

Enhance the Delivery of Career Advising and Navigation through Technology and Staff-Delivered Services Across All System Partners

In PY23, registered My Colorado Journey customers grew by 28 percent, increasing from 45,103 to 57,672. Outcomes completed increased by 15 percent, reaching a cumulative total of 3,022. To further expand professional engagement, training and demonstrations were provided to nearly 300 potential professional users, far surpassing the initial goal of 100. The launch of a LinkedIn page has also broadened MCJ's visibility, strengthening connections across the workforce ecosystem. In the spring of 2024, an AI-powered résumé and cover letter tool was launched helping students and jobseekers create strong, organized résumés by focusing on four categories: work experience, education, awards, and skills.

Connecting Colorado

The State's workforce case management and labor exchange system used to document participation and performance outcomes of workforce training programs through the Public Workforce System in Colorado, has served Coloradans since 2002. CDLE's Employment and Training Division has contracted with two vendors to implement new Labor Exchange and Case Management systems that will work seamlessly as one system. The vendors have started their implementations, and the State expects to launch the new system, offering AI tools never before available to all jobseekers and businesses in Colorado, in Spring of 2025.

Career Coaching Collaborative Campaign

In PY23, more than 2,525 Coloradans benefited from the Career Coaching Collaborative. This initiative strengthens and builds capacity in Colorado's workforce ecosystem by employing 26 career coaches who offer career navigation and coaching services across 12 community-based organizations and 10 workforce areas. The Colorado Rural Workforce Consortium hosts a portion of these coaches to provide digital coaching services within a virtual workforce area, expanding access and flexibility for those seeking support. The virtual area offers coaching in both English and Spanish, and operates outside typical business hours, ensuring accessibility for individuals who are unable to travel to a physical location.

Other State Funds Activities

Not applicable.

Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

Evaluation Initiative with Northern Illinois University (NIU)

WIOA requires WDP to conduct formal evaluations of WIOA program activities to research and test innovative services and strategies and achieve high levels of performance and outcomes. Working with NIU, Workforce Development Programs (WDP) established a model for WIOA program evaluation using the Training Placement and Outcomes in Colorado Workforce Areas. WDP and NIU continued to provide technical assistance and training for a cohort of local area staff, the WIOA Evaluation Team, to build their capacity to employ a mixed-method evaluation approach involving quantitative and qualitative strategies. Each local workforce area completed a quantitative analysis in the area and is performing a qualitative analysis to understand the 'why' behind the numbers. The evaluation team identified best practices in each local area and incorporated recommendations to improve outcomes for WIOA participants.

The local areas use various tools, including The Evaluation Tool, to independently evaluate outcomes of WIOA programs with an increased emphasis on serving marginalized populations and improving program service delivery. This work has dramatically improved the capacity of state and local workforce areas to improve yearly program planning to more produce access to high-wage employment and to conduct independent program evaluations to make data-driven recommendations that maximize program performance for all customers. The State presented the evaluation work at three webinars and the 2023 National Performance Accountability and Reporting Convening hosted by DOL.

Continuous Improvement

Program Year 2023 Evaluation Team Accomplishments

The Evaluation Team (state and local members) will continue to meet and hone evaluation skills. This investment will support local area evaluation given the costs for contracting such services is prohibitive to do on each program yearly. This team developed tools and created reports using the evaluation tools on the federal and state grants under WDP which will further quality investments and enhance service outcomes.

Program Year 2024 Planned Evaluation Team Activities

The State will participate in and align its current evaluation efforts with those of DOL, when requested (to date this has not occurred). By providing training to local workforce area staff employ a mixed-method evaluation approach, the State will identify best practices and incorporate recommendations to further evaluate outcomes of WIOA programs. It is anticipated that this increased emphasis on serving barriered populations will increase enrollments and expand service delivery.

Colorado Workforce Development Council - Continuous Improvement Process

The State Council has developed a policy that includes a set of standards for awarding Performance Incentive Funds. This Policy Guidance Letter (PGL) can be accessed at the following link: GRT-2023-01: PY23 Performance Incentive Funds and includes the following:

- Rating Scale
- Reporting Template
- Application Guidelines
- Best Practices Form

Performance Incentive Funds are issued once the state and local performance outcomes are adjusted per DOL guidelines.

Reports

Appreciative Inquiry Report

The Employment and Training (E&T) Division published the Appreciative Inquiry Report, summarizing findings and recommendations from the Appreciative Inquiry interviews conducted with 118 state agency partners, local area directors, and local board members. This work anticipates the needs of future workers and businesses to inform strategic planning, local and state planning, legislation, policy, waivers, program administration, grant applications, and partnership development.

Colorado's WIOA Title I - Adult and Dislocated Worker Annual Evaluation Report

In partnership with Northern Illinois University (NIU), CDLE published the final PY23 evaluation report: Colorado's WIOA Title I - Adult and Dislocated Worker Annual Evaluation Report, which addresses the evaluation of data from PY22.

Training Placement and Outcomes in Colorado Workforce Areas

In partnership with Northern Illinois University (NIU), CDLE published the final PY22 evaluation report, Training Placement and Outcomes in Colorado Workforce Areas in early PY23, which addressed the evaluation of data from PY21.

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

Active waiver implemented:

- Ability to change youth expenditures from 75 percent out-of-school (OSY)/25 percent in-school youth (ISY) to 50 percent OSY/50 percent ISY for PY23 funds at the state and local levels.

Active waiver not utilized:

- Allow local areas to reserve more than 20 percent of Adult and Dislocated Worker funds for incumbent worker training (IWT) (approved through June 30, 2024).

DOL Approves Five WIOA Waivers

CDLE requested and was approved for five waivers of WIOA requirements, allowing local workforce areas greater flexibility in their services to jobseekers and businesses. Following are the waivers:

- To allow local areas to reserve up to 50 percent of Adult and Dislocated Worker funds for IWT—during PY24–PY27.
- To waive the requirement for an incumbent worker to have an established employment history of six months or longer with the employer to participate—during PY24–PY27.
- To allow an increase of the on-the-job training (OJT) employer reimbursement up to 90 percent for businesses with 50 or fewer employees—during PY24–PY27.
- To allow the use of WIOA individual training accounts (ITAs) for ISY—during PY24 and PY25.
- To allow local workforce areas to count both WIOA local youth formula funds and TANF funds toward the minimum 20 percent expenditure requirement for paid or unpaid work experience—during PY24 and PY25.

Strategies

Ability to Change Youth Expenditures from 75 percent OSY/25 Percent ISY to 50 Percent OSY/50 Percent ISY for PY23 Funds at the State and Local Levels

The Tri-County local area first implemented this waiver in PY22 and continued in PY23 to target ISY with drop-out prevention services. Through partnerships with Arvada and Littleton NEXT, Project Search, School to Work Alliance Program, Jefferson County Human Services, and Jefferson County Public Schools, Tri-County engaged and supported 75 (versus 61 in PY22) young adults to continue and complete their education goals while supporting work readiness prep activities.

Allow Local Areas to Reserve More than 20 Percent of Adult and Dislocated Worker Funds for IWT

Although several local areas served incumbent workers during PY23, no local areas utilized the waiver.

Through its active participation on workforce committees within the National Governors' Association and the National Association of State Workforce Agencies, the State has taken a leadership role to shape and align waiver initiatives across multiple states and effect workforce policies at the national level.

Impact on Performance

Ability to Change Youth Expenditures from 75 percent OSY/25 Percent ISY to 50 Percent OSY/50 Percent ISY for PY23 Funds at the State and Local Levels

Tri-County set the following goals in PY23 and exceeded both:

- PY23 Goal: 84 percent of in-school participants will succeed in dropout prevention by staying enrolled in school and/or graduating high school. Outcome: 84.38 percent
- PY23 Goal: Increase credential attainment rate for all Youth participants from 71 percent (PY22 goal) to 72.22 percent. Outcome: 75.93 percent

The Arapahoe/Douglas local area implemented this waiver during PY23 with the following outcomes:

- 100 WIOA Youth in-school enrollments for PY23 versus 74 for PY22
- 74 total young adults in-school were provided drop-out services
- 71 continued with high school and or graduated.
- 95 percent success rate
- Credential rate
    - Goal = 65 percent
    - Actual = 65.14 percent

At the state level:

- Because only two of ten local areas implemented the waiver in PY23 and Youth funding allocations decreased by 8.57 percent for PY23, youth enrollments at the state level decreased overall and the number of ISY enrollments did not increase year over year. However, the State met all PY23 youth program performance measures at 95 percent or above. All participating local areas in the future will track and report on in-school enrollments, and the dropout prevention rate for participants, to CDLE. CDLE will monitor credential attainment rate for the participating local areas.

Success Stories

"A Little Help Goes a Long Way"

Seth was an older jobseeker who needed to find a part-time job in order to make ends meet and take care of his needs. He did not qualify for the AARP Skills Builder program, and he experienced some challenges with technology. Seth took the initiative and met with a member of the Community Learning and Support Team in Boulder County- otherwise known as the training team.

A member of the Training Team worked with Seth, offering support, guidance, and assistance with his résumé. The team member helped him find job postings that fit his skills and experience well. Seth applied for a part-time position with a "Ross" department store in Longmont and was hired! He has continued to stay in contact, emailing multiple times to express his gratitude for the support, encouragement, resources, and access to employment opportunities provided by Workforce Boulder County (WfBC).

Seth shared that as an older jobseeker with limited digital skills, seeking part-time work has been a great accomplishment that has helped him support himself- highlighting what great success can be achieved with just a little help from places like WfBC!

"Opportunity Found"

Nataliia grew up in Lviv, Ukraine, and had the opportunity ten years ago as a teenager to visit the U.S. through a school exchange program. After finishing her education in Ukraine, Nataliia taught English to children and was planning to open her own school. Then the unimaginable happened- war broke out in her home country. In September 2022, a Boulder resident saw Nataliia's Facebook posts requesting assistance; with the aid of "United for Ukraine," Nataliia returned to the U.S. to live with a sponsor family in Boulder, CO.

Nataliia learned of Workforce Boulder County (WfBC) through other Ukrainian friends and went in person to explore the services. There, she met with a Service Navigator, learned about in-demand industries, began her research, and became interested in Human Resource jobs. She returned to WfBC and was referred to a Career Support Specialist who assisted Nataliia with funding a one-semester online HR Certificate at the University of Cornell. Nataliia completed her HR training at the end of 2023 and secured an internship as a Human Resource Generalist at Boulder Community Health. There, she learned about Compensation Benefits and Recruitment and gained confidence in a supportive environment. She completed her 131-hour internship in January 2024 and shared the good news with her WBL Career Support Specialist—Nataliia had found a full-time HR position at "Home Instead" in Denver, earning $22 per hour with full benefits.

One and half years after Nataliia arrived in the U.S., she met her goal of starting a new life with a new profession in a new country. She attributes her success to her ambition and the support she received from United for Ukraine and Workforce Boulder County!

From Laid-Off to a Master's Degree & A CPA!

Judy connected with Pikes Peak Workforce Center after she lost her job as an accountant. She worked at a manufacturing company that laid off all its workers and closed its plant after five decades in business due to foreign trade. The good news was that she was eligible to be a Trade Adjustment Assistance participant at the workforce center. Judy faced significant competition with other prospective employees during her job search. She decided that it was time for her to advance her skills and upgrade her professional credentials to finally break into the top-level executive field of finance. We are proud to say that Judy recently earned her Master of Finance and Accounting and Financial Management degree (and then obtained a CPA license) to work as a Treasurer/Controller. Judy graduated with the highest and most distinguished honors!

Filling the Gap

Christine moved her family to Colorado to take a leadership role at her job. Six months later, she was laid off and found herself unsure of her next steps. Most of her work experience had been in the garment industry, and her connections were not generating successful outcomes as she searched for full-time employment.

After working with a career coach on her résumé and discussing her goals, it was decided that the "Change Management Certificate" would be the perfect training to add to her skill set. Christine followed directions carefully, wrote an outstanding justification letter, and completed the job posting and search requirements for potential course candidates. Christine took the training and loved it! Next, she revamped her résumé, took the Résumé Workshop to seek professional feedback, and hit the trail looking for her next position. Christine's diligence and dedication left a lasting impression on the staff she worked with; her commitment to identifying and submitting her job search was unparalleled.

At the beginning of 2024, Christine obtained a one-year contractor position doing global supply change for real estate. By June, she had been hired full time with benefits, making $140,000 with a guaranteed bonus of 16 percent. Christine's success story was made possible by her dedication and hard work, taking every suggestion from her career coach to heart.

Connecticut

Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL)

Governor's Workforce Council Connecticut

Use of State Funds

Statewide activities, delivered in the state with 15 percent Reserve funds during PY23, included:

- Maintaining the state list of eligible training providers;
- State administration of the adult, dislocated worker and youth workforce development activities, by conducting performance evaluations, including programmatic monitoring and customer satisfaction surveys;
- Assisting in the operations of the AJCs;
- Operating fiscal management and performance accountability system activities; and
- Supporting CTHires, the State's WIOA case management information system.

Activities related to monitoring, evaluation, and accountability provide essential information and guidance for the state and its workforce development partners regarding continuous improvement and program efficiencies. Also, of particular value to the WDBs in achieving programmatic goals is performance data that is made available through CTHires. By having timely access to this data, WDBs can analyze performance, determine areas in need of attention, and focus on solutions.

Under-served Populations

Reemployment Services for UI Claimants
CTDOL provides a variety of federally funded reemployment services to UI claimants through the UI RESEA program which serves claimants who are either profiled as most likely to exhaust benefits or those receiving Unemployment Compensation for Ex-Service Members (UCX). The goal of this program is to provide UI claimants early access to services provided by the AJCs that will help get them back into the workforce faster. The UI RESEA program also serves as a prevention/detection program for improper UI payments.

Jobs First Employment Services (JFES) Integration in the AJCs
In partnership with the Connecticut Department of Social Services and the five WDBs, CTDOL administers the JFES program which provides a host of employment-related services to recipients of TANF, the State's federally funded cash assistance program for low-income families under TANF. The WDBs operate as intermediaries that subcontract with other organizations to provide direct services to JFES participants in AJCs around the State. The JFES budget for this period was $13,145,177 and a total of 3,546 JFES participants were served during the program year.

Serving Individuals with Disabilities

CTDOL provides a number of workforce development options for individuals with disabilities and offers information to assist in meeting employment-related needs. For example, job search assistance and guidance on employment and training opportunities are available through the State's AJCs. Also, helpful resources are linked at Disability Resources for Job Seekers and Employers, a CTDOL web page that provides information for both employers and jobseekers on topics including assistive technology, tax credits, workplace accommodations, and disability employment initiatives.

In addition, CTDOL serves as a member of the Disability Focus Group. Other members include the Department of Aging and Disability Services, the Department of Developmental Services, State Department of Education, EdAdvance, and Adult Education providers. The group plans, organizes and convenes the Annual Conference on Serving Adults with Disabilities. This year's conference, held on May 3, 2024, was attended by 250 participants. Presentations on the topics of Depression, Suicide Prevention, Autism and Resilience were offered. CTDOL was a Gold Sponsor of this event, which enabled forty-five JFES staff to attend the conference.

Integrated Service Delivery

Reemployment Services for UI Claimants

In PY23, the UI RESEA program continued to remain offline while CTDOL worked with consortium partners and the UI Information Technology Support Center (ITSC), a national collaborative between DOL, the states, and local workforce agencies, to address technology barriers. CTDOL continued to design and develop a new, enhanced RESEA module within the ReEmployCT system that will meet current and future needs of the program to better serve UI claimants. While the new RESEA is under development, a statewide interim solution was implemented in September 2023. This solution, which relies on manual processes to select and notice participants, track results, and compile federal reports, will remain in place to serve eligible participants pending the development and implementation of the new RESEA system, targeted for completion in 2025.

Yes WIOA Can

Outreach Efforts by the Office of Research

Throughout PY23, CTDOL's Office of Research offered outreach activities, via both virtual and in-person formats, and provided detailed labor market information of interest to jobseekers, students, workforce development professionals who provide job search and employment assistance, and to education, government, and business leaders. In addition, the Office of Research gave presentations to human resources professionals and civic associations and provided data and information to the GWC and OWS. Both in-person and virtual presentations were offered to a variety of groups, including high schools, adult education providers, GWC, Connecticut Learns and Works Breakfast Symposia (two events), and to numerous associations, boards, and local organizations.

Other State Funds Activities

Not applicable.

Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

UI RESEA Evaluation Study

CTDOL, in partnership with the New York State Department of Labor, transitioned to the final data analysis phase of the UI RESEA evaluation study. The study, which serves as an essential tool for supporting continuous learning and program improvement, is designed to test a variety of promising RESEA service delivery strategies and interventions. Building new evidence on the effective interventions and their impact on UI claimants' reemployment outcomes, including wages, are key components of the study. The final report from the study will be completed by the end of 2024.

P20 Win Workforce Training Impact Study

The requested study proposes to answer the following questions:

1. What are the wage and employment outcomes of CT workforce training programs?
2. What are the wage and employment outcomes of CT post-secondary, adult education, and technical education programs?
3. What are the common career pathways in CT?
4. What are employment and wage outcomes by career pathways?
5. Which career pathways lead to the strongest wage growth?

Continuous Improvement

P20 Win Data Analysis Initiative

The State will use the resulting data to evaluate the WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs; Adult Education; Trade Act; Jobs First Employment Services; and other state and federal grant-funded initiatives. Specifically, college entry and co-enrollment outcomes, as well as successful career pathways amongst the programs and initiatives, will be evaluated.

CTHires Unified Reporting Enhancement

OWS worked closely with CTDOL on development of a unified reporting module in CTHires for reporting outcomes from Career ConneCT, a program that provides career training and workforce services across various industries for unemployed and underemployed individuals.

Reports

P20 Win Data Analysis Initiative

The report will replace Connecticut's Higher Education/Workforce Legislative Report Card (LRC), which CTDOL's Office of Research has produced over the years. The most recent LRC, as of 2021, includes information on employment by industry and average wages of recent graduates of Connecticut's public colleges and universities.

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

The State submitted a request to DOL to waive the requirement that WDBs expend 75 percent of local youth formula funds on OSY. In May 2024, DOL approved the waiver for PY24 and PY25, allowing the State to lower the expenditure requirement to 50 percent for the Northwest and Southwest WDBs.

Strategies

No information provided for this section.

Impact on Performance

No information provided for this section.

Success Stories

Best Chance Program

Upon completing the program, James attained employment in Dining Services at the University of Hartford. The BEST Chance Program is funded through DOL, the CTDOL, the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, and other partners.

Delaware

Delaware Workforce Development Board (DWDB)

Use of State Funds

Under-served Populations

Advancement through Pardons and Expungement (APEX)

The APEX program aims to provide opportunities to individuals with criminal histories who wish to obtain gainful employment by helping clients through the pardons and expungement process, providing employer education, and advancing legislative reform. Staff provide these clients with an overview of Division of Employment and Training (DET) services that includes fidelity bonding, training opportunities, workshops, résumé and job search assistance, etc. With partnership and financial support from the CJC, DHSS and DVR, over 5,600 justice-involved individuals were outreached, 257 new DJL enrollments, 72 pardons granted, 141 expungements granted, 80 ITAs and over 500 supportive services provided in FY24.

Integrated Service Delivery

Learning for Careers (LFC)

DWDB in partnership with the Delaware Department of Labor, Division of Employment and Training ("DOL/DET") and Delaware Department of Education (DOE) (collectively Delaware), invests funds into programs that will engage the State's business community and learners in activities that result in the creation or expansion of paid work experiences for youth and adult learners in Delaware. Work-based leaning, which includes career awareness, exploration, and paid work experiences must focus on middle and high skill, demand, and wage occupations as defined by the Delaware Department of Labor. The purpose of LFC investments is to expand employer participation in student education, training, and employment programs that lead to an increase in the number of:

1. Youth served through summer youth employment or other DOL-funded programs;
2. Secondary students participating in experiential work-based learning awareness, exploration, and immersion (e.g., internship, clinical, school-based enterprise, registered youth apprenticeship) activities;
3. Post-secondary students participating in work-based learning and/or clinical/experiential learning programs.
4. Strengthen employer-led efforts to recruit youth (ages 14 to 24) into the workforce and/or to expand the capacity of employers to offer clinical, internship, apprenticeship, work-based learning immersion, or other types of cooperative education programs. This program engaged 34 students in work-based learning in FY24.

TANF

Delaware's TANF Team is a partnership between the Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Social Services (DSS), and DOL-ETA. TANF funds are contracted to agencies to fund two programs:

3. Employment Connection services help TANF recipients obtain and maintain full-time unsubsidized employment or participate in a combination of work activities to receive their cash grant.
4. Keep a Job services to provide employment retention assistance to participants who have obtained unsubsidized employment that results in maintaining employment and achieving long term economic independence, including income growth.

The TANF program's goal, administered through a joint effort with DSS and the Delaware Department of Labor, is to give people temporary help until they get a job. Within the program, both the State and the TANF client have responsibilities. The State provides positive incentives for the family to become self-sufficient and self-supporting. Time on TANF is limited for most people, up to 36 months, but they must work or participate in work related activities for 30 hours a week to receive a TANF check. In FY24, DET enrolled 336 clients, 740 job placements and provided services to over 1,916 clients.

Today's Reinvestment Around Industry Needs (TRAIN)

TRAIN's objective is to collaborate with providers to help employers identify workforce training needs and develop tailored solutions. These solutions focus on delivering targeted education and training, primarily to unemployed and underemployed individuals, ensuring that Delaware employers have access to the skilled talent necessary for growth and competitiveness. In FY24, this program engaged 20 employers and trained over 91 individuals.

Yes WIOA Can

Blue Collar

Funds are invested in high-quality occupational skills training and/or workforce preparation programs for adult career entrants or career changers. Blue Collar dedicates resources to initiatives that offer services, guidance, and support, enabling participants to secure unsubsidized employment or employment combined with continued education specific to their industry or occupation. These efforts empower participants to achieve their career goals and follow through on their career plans. All programs must meet federally negotiated performance measures, provide training leading to industry-recognized certifications, conduct assessments, incorporate paid work experience, assist with job search and placement, and offer retention services. Blue Collar funds also support ISY and OSY.

The DWDB has a spending authority of $3.9 million for Blue Collar funds, with the board allocating 50 percent of these funds to adult programs and 50 percent to youth programs. Of the youth program funds, 80 percent is designated for ISY and 20 percent for OSY. This allocation helps offset WIOA fund requirements, which mandate at least 25 percent of WIOA funds go to ISY and at least 75 percent to OSY. 586 youth and adults were served in FY24.

Elevate Delaware

Elevate Delaware provides tuition for an eligible individual to attend an approved non-credit certificate program that provides industry-accepted skill training and certification. Participants must be currently employed within a State business that employs under 51 employees. This program was established to provide tuition reimbursement and/or supportive services (up to $10,000) for currently employed individuals to obtain additional training for career advancement. Elevate Delaware is intended to do all the following:

1. Preserve jobs for State residents and small businesses.
2. Assist Delaware residents who need skills for promotion or to obtain higher paid employment.
3. Assist small businesses in the state who need employees that have obtained certification for specific skills.

Elevate Delaware client update: 24 enrollments and 18 completions.

Focus on Alternative Skills Training (FAST)

FAST provides tuition assistance for eligible Delaware residents who are enrolled in an approved certificate program. Eligible participants must meet the following criteria:

a) Be a State resident
b) Have earned a diploma or its equivalent
c) Enrolled in an approved non-degree credit certificate program no later than 24 months after graduating from high school.

Areas of training include healthcare, hospitality, food service or tourism, transportation logistics and warehousing. The total amount of FAST payments for each eligible individual may not exceed $10,000.

Summer Youth

The Delaware State Summer Youth Program provides summer employment experiences for low-income youth ages 14–21. This experience provides the opportunity to learn positive work behaviors, gain skills, promote responsibility, teamwork, good work ethic, and earn wages over the summer months. All employment experiences provide youth a meaningful work experience while gaining exposure to the working world and its requirements. In 2024, 333 youth participated in the Summer Youth so far (year-round cohort not complete). Over 135 unique worksites were utilized statewide to offer experiences to participants.

Other State Funds Activities

Not applicable.

Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

Clean, Green, and Blue Economy Market Analysis

The Division of Employment and Training, in collaboration with the University of Delaware (UD), is conducting a market analysis focused on workforce opportunities in the wind, electricity, and marine sectors. The objective of this project is to assess the skills and training current workers possess and determine what additional training individuals would need to transition into the clean energy and blue economy workforce. For example, a recent visit to the Maritime Institute of Technology and Graduate Studies (MITAGS) in Maryland, where members from the State toured the facility to evaluate whether the training offered there should be introduced in Delaware or if it would be more advantageous to partner with MITAGS, leveraging their existing infrastructure. UD is expected to deliver a comprehensive report by June 30, 2025, outlining their findings and recommendations for the future in this sector.

Continuous Improvement

Management Information System (MIS) Enhancement

The Division of Employment and Training (DET) worked with America's Job Link Alliance (AJLA) and internal staff to develop new Tableau reports and dashboards including interactive maps showing job orders by location, fiscal reports showing training provider payments, enhanced client contact information for targeted outreach. Regular training meetings conducted with administrators and program managers on enhancements and federal reporting requirements.

Virtual Service Delivery Enhancement

Enhanced virtual platforms (Zoom and Microsoft Teams) for staff to continue providing services including workshops. Created online scheduling mechanism in Microsoft Teams for all AJC staff to access and view statewide scheduling for workshops and appointments, both in-person and virtually. Upgraded all conference rooms with the latest technology for interactive hybrid format service delivery.

Operational Standardization

Streamlined and improved continuity of operations through standardized policies with procedures. Created process allowing supervisors and managers to develop operating manuals by combining relevant policies and procedures into unified training guides.

Reports

- Final Report and Recommendations to the DWDB
- Business Decision Maker Survey
- Gap Analysis of Entrepreneurial Resources

- Gap Analysis of Wraparound Services
- Labor Force and Skills Assessment

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

No information provided for this section.

Strategies

Not applicable.

Impact on Performance

Not applicable.

Success Stories

APEX Program

"To make a LONG story short, I started the process of clearing my criminal record 8 years ago back in 2016. Mr. Duncan has aided me from start to finish!!! If I won the lottery for $1 Billion, Mr. Duncan would receive HALF!!! He is GREAT man, well deserving of a promotion!!! Thank you, Apex, I am a lifelong fan now, I recommend anyone who needs help with clearing their criminal history to you guys!!! Thank you."

APEX Program

"[The] Delaware Department of Labor is currently assisting me with job training and employment search. The representatives are helpful in other areas outside of labor law issues and have been wonderful in matters that may have affected individuals from seeking employment.

I would like to give the upmost respect and appreciation for [sic] the Department of Labor and The Apex program and my case manager Ms. Baker. I've been wanting to improve my career by upgrading my CDL Class B to Class A. With the help and support from Ms. Baker I was shown the training and skills to successfully complete and pass my CDL test. Now I'll be able to support my two daughters and have financial independence and freedom."

CDL Training Program

"I'm a single mom to an awesome little baby girl. I was very stuck in low-paying jobs. High school kid jobs. Hotels and restaurants for years. I knew I wasn't going to get anywhere with that pay. Especially having a brand-new baby, every other month things change and she's growing, and she always needs new things. I also was renting a small room and sharing it between myself and my child. I had dreams of being a truck driver before I had my child. Had my CDL permit but a lot of trucking companies weren't looking to take me on for training because of my felony background as well. I was feeling super down and bummed out about life. Then I heard about the apex program through the DOL. I applied and met Ms. Baker! She was very quick in her response. And very diligent when it came to passing paperwork along and getting everything processed. I mean, SUPER QUICK! We met and talked, had an interview and she empathized with me and met me right where I was at as far as being a parent and wanting to do the best I can for my kid. Next thing I knew, by the end of the week I received the phone call that I was approved for my grant! I went to American Driver Training Academy. Where there, they have a 98 percent passing rate. Meaning you're pretty much guaranteed to pass in 4 weeks. And sure, as my name is Jamie, I passed!"

Delaware Division of Labor

"I was very distraught when visiting your office today. Robin showed such care and compassion and made me feel better. Then Tessa went above and beyond trying to help me with my résumé and trying to guide me to find work suitable to my skills. I felt cared for and that is huge this day and age. They are both assets to the Delaware Division of Labor.

My initial experience of utilizing the Department of Labor Resources after being laid off was overwhelming. It was extremely difficult, and I was a bit apprehensive with the realization of unemployment as my new reality. Especially considering my lack of career training for the next career pathway. I was determined to obtain the resources I needed to further my career, but the process was mentally draining. I decided to challenge the system and trust the process. Several months had [sic] passed due to lack of funding and staffing for a Case Manager.

After some time had passed, I received a call from your office with the opportunity of assistance for career training. I immediately gather all the required information requested to proceed with the enrollment process. During this process I developed a great rapport with Ms. Wasserman (Case Manager). I needed more clarity, so she suggested I speak with Ms. Bosch (Training Supervisor) regarding my specific situation. After providing additional documentation and discussing my history, passion, and eagerness to further my knowledge and education. Tessa thoroughly reviewed my credentials and informed me I met the necessary requirements as a good candidate for the educational assistance program. I can profoundly say, this has been a remarkable experience for me to have come so far, with so many obstacles preventing me from my [sic] obtaining my career training goals. And through this unexpected path of life, I'm proud to say the Department of Labor has the resources to tenacity to build a better career force for the future and now I can be a part of that workforce! Thanks so much for all your help!"

Job Search Assistance Program

"In January of this year, I lost my job through no fault of my own. I was devastated and lost and hopeless. Sherian called me regularly to check on me and my progress in my job search. She was available via phone call or email to assist me with questions (and I had many). This was the first time in my life where I lost my job. I have had over 20 years of job experiences, and I didn't know where to go from there. Sherian helped to guide me through the process. She was always so positive and encouraging. She helped me to feel hopeful when I had lost all hope of finding a job. She was kind during a time when I was in desperate need of kindness. I used job link everyday several times a day. I went on about 25 interviews thanks to Job link. It took almost six months, but I found a great job, with great pay. I am so happy I had her as a case worker because she honestly gave me the push I needed. Many thanks to Sherian."

Job Search Assistance Program

"Mark was also very positive; he emailed me jobs to apply for and he kept in touch regularly. He provided me with resources on classes I could take while I was looking for a job. I remember I emailed him one day and I said 'Mark, I have applied for over 300 jobs, and I haven't gotten a call back' and Mark said: 'stay positive don't allow yourself to get discouraged.' Those words are just what I need to press on. I have had such a positive experience, and I really lucked to get a team of encouraging kindhearted individuals. Thanks so much Mark."

District of Columbia

District of Columbia Department of Employment Services (DOES)

Use of State Funds

Under-served Populations

Workforce on Wheels (WOW) Program Expansion

DOES expanded its WOW program to reach underserved communities in PY23. By bringing career and training resources directly to neighborhoods, WOW addressed accessibility challenges and improved satisfaction among residents who might otherwise face barriers to accessing workforce services. Feedback collected during WOW engagements was used to tailor future outreach efforts and service offerings.

Improve Community Access to Workforce and Education Services

Improving accessibility to workforce programs is a key priority for the District, particularly for individuals facing barriers to employment. In PY23, the District is enhancing the capabilities of its AJCs and expanding mobile services through Workforce on Wheels to bring resources directly to underserved communities. Digital platforms like the launch of Career Ready DC, an AI-driven career exploration platform, will provide residents with greater access to training opportunities, career pathways, and job placement services.

Integrated Service Delivery

Collaboration with the Capital Workforce Innovation Consortium

Through its work with the Capital Workforce Innovation Consortium, the District further enhanced its sector strategies by addressing workforce challenges collaboratively with regional partners. The Consortium provided technical assistance, capacity building, and strategic support to training providers, ensuring that workforce development programs aligned with employer demands and high-growth industries. A key outcome of this partnership was the introduction of Skills Nation DC, a digital hub that connects residents to training opportunities and career pathways in technology, innovation, and other high-demand fields. The platform simplifies the navigation of available programs and resources, enabling residents to identify and pursue career pathways aligned with their skills and interests. This effort aligns with the WIOA State Plan's focus on improving service integration and expanding access to career pathways, particularly for underserved populations. By fostering collaboration and leveraging digital tools, the District is creating a more responsive workforce development system.

Yes WIOA Can

Improve Youth Services

The District remains dedicated to enhancing youth services by providing pathways to education, training, and employment that lead to long-term career success. In PY23, programs such as the Pathways for Young Adults Program (PYAP) and Youth Apprenticeship Program are being expanded to offer credentialing opportunities in areas like IT, green infrastructure, and healthcare. Within Youth Apprenticeship, partnerships were formed with educational institutions such as Howard University, and large area employers, such as DC Water to increase career readiness and support youth as they transition from education to employment. These efforts ensure that youth are equipped with the skills and support necessary to succeed in the workforce.

Enhance System Alignment

The District is committed to fostering collaboration among workforce development, education, and social service providers to ensure a cohesive system that effectively meets the needs of jobseekers and employers. Efforts in PY23 include strengthening partnerships with government agencies, community-based organizations, and private sector employers to streamline service delivery and reduce redundancies. By aligning resources and initiatives across agencies, the District is building an integrated system that supports residents' career and education goals while responding to the needs of businesses.

Expand the Talent Pool for Businesses

To meet the demands of high-growth industries, the District is investing in programs that prepare residents for in-demand occupations. In PY23, training programs are being aligned with the evolving needs of sectors such as healthcare, IT, infrastructure, and education. The District is also expanding apprenticeship and OJT opportunities to address skills gaps and provide businesses with a skilled workforce. A notable effort in PY23, was the launch of the HBCU Public Service Program that will provide pipelines to HBCU graduates who are unemployed and seeking opportunities within District Government Agencies. Collaboration with employers continues to be a cornerstone of these efforts, with customized training solutions designed to meet specific industry needs.

Other State Funds Activities

Not applicable.

Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

RESEA Program Experimental Evaluation

The evaluation assesses the impact of being selected for RESEA versus not being selected for RESEA on individuals':

I. UI weeks paid in the first six months of the initial claim,

II. employment status in the second calendar quarter following the calendar quarter of the initial claim, and

III. earnings in the second calendar quarter following the calendar quarter of the initial claim.

Specifically, the evaluation compares outcomes across claimants randomly assigned to the treatment group (i.e., selected for RESEA) or to the control (i.e., not selected for RESEA) group. The evaluation will then attribute any differences in those outcomes to the treatment group's having been selected for RESEA participation.

Continuous Improvement

Enhanced Services at AJCs

DOES continued to prioritize customer service improvements at its AJCs. In PY23, additional staff training sessions were conducted to standardize and enhance service delivery across all locations. These trainings focused on customer interaction, cultural competency, and process improvements, ensuring that all customers—particularly those from underserved populations—received high-quality assistance. Customer feedback surveys, collected regularly at AJCs, informed these improvements, resulting in higher satisfaction rates.

Digital Enhancements to "My Journey DC" Platform

To improve accessibility and user experience, DOES made updates to the "My Journey DC" platform in PY23. These updates included streamlined navigation and the integration of new features such as personalized career exploration tools and job-matching algorithms. These enhancements empowered users to independently explore career pathways, access training opportunities, and connect with employers, contributing to a more efficient and customer-focused system.

Customer Feedback Mechanisms

In PY23, DOES expanded its customer feedback mechanisms by incorporating digital tools to gather real-time insights. These tools included post-service surveys and online feedback forms available through DOES websites and platforms. The data collected was analyzed to identify service delivery gaps and implement targeted improvements. These enhancements contributed to a more transparent and responsive system, ensuring customers felt heard and valued.

Reports

No information provided for this section.

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

No information provided for this section.

Strategies

Not applicable.

Impact on Performance

Not applicable.

Success Stories

DOES OAIT Howard University Faculty Practice Plan (HUFPP) Youth Apprenticeship Program (YAP)

A Dunbar Senior High School graduating senior was all set to join the U.S. Armed Services. However, she heard about the DOES OAIT HUFPP YAP and applied. She was accepted and turned out to be an extremely successful YAP participant. Upon completing the 200-hour DOES OAIT HUFPP YAP, she was offered a full-time apprenticeship opportunity with HUFPP which she accepted. Today, she has received HIPAA, EMR and Revenue Cycle training and is on course to take the Certified Health Access Associate exam. Thereafter, she may start the journey to take the Certified Professional Coder Exam.

Being employed with the HUFPP affords this individual the opportunity to enroll in Howard University tuition-free which is her plan on the journey to become a medical assistant and eventually a registered nurse.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Public Service Program

The HBCU Public Service Program is transforming lives and launching careers in public service. A PY23 apprentice, a graduate of the University of the District of Columbia, is a testament to the program's success.

As a Disease Intervention Specialist at the DC Department of Health, the HBCU apprentice plays a crucial role in protecting public health. He credits the HBCU Public Service Program with providing him with the foundation for his success. In his own words:

> "This apprenticeship program has provided me with new tools and skills that I never knew would be attainable right after graduating. Outside of the professional gain, I have gained some lifelong friendships from the apprenticeship program. Going through the same struggles and challenges and having people to go through them with is a blessing that I will always be thankful for."

But the apprentice's journey was not without its challenges. Transitioning from the academic world to the professional sphere presented a steep learning curve. The HBCU Public Service Program provided him with the support and mentorship he needed to navigate this transition. Through professional development, networking events, and OJT, he gained valuable skills in communication, problem-solving, and teamwork. Today, the apprentice is a confident and capable public health professional,

making a real difference in his community. His story is an inspiration to aspiring public servants and a powerful example of the impact of the HBCU Public Service Program.

WIOA Dislocated Worker Program

The customer has been enrolled in the WIOA Dislocated Worker program for job search services since October 2, 2023. The individual was interested in securing a full-time, permanent position and received assistance from a Workforce Development Specialist (WDS) to apply for opportunities through VOS, private sector roles, and positions within the DC Government. The customer had been actively seeking employment in the fields of Human Resources, specifically roles such as HR Specialist, HR Analyst, or HR Manager.

The WDS provided ongoing encouragement, emphasizing the importance of persistence and confidence in the job search. While unemployed for a few months, the customer secured temporary full-time employment with WMATA as a Project Coordinator. This position, with a pay rate of $26.00 per hour, lasted from March 26, 2024, to July 29, 2024. During this period, the WDS continued to provide support, referring the customer to additional employment opportunities through VOS, DC Government announcements, and private sector postings, including providing job order numbers for relevant openings.

On September 13, 2024, the WDS followed up with the customer via telephone to discuss updates regarding their employment status. During this conversation, the customer reported beginning a new role on August 26, 2024, as an HR Specialist with a term appointment in the DC Government. The customer expressed excitement and gratitude for this opportunity, highlighting the potential for growth and the goal of transitioning into a permanent position within the DC Government.

This case reflects the effective collaboration between the customer and the WDS, showcasing the impact of personalized support and persistent job search strategies in achieving meaningful employment outcomes.

WIOA Adult Program

A customer came to the AJC in Northeast Washington, D.C., seeking career services to transition from a career in education to a role in office administration. The individual’s last day of employment in education was March 13, 2020, and they expressed interest in the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) as part of their career transition journey.

On January 17, 2023, the customer was enrolled in the WIOA Adult program and began receiving intensive career services from a Workforce Development Specialist (WDS). These services included a comprehensive résumé review to highlight transferable skills, career guidance and counseling, targeted job leads and referrals, and a formal referral to SCSEP. During this period, the customer shared their appreciation for the support, stating, “Thank you. I appreciate everything that you have done for me. Your guidance and instruction is [sic] moving me towards building my new life.”

The WDS formally referred the customer to SCSEP on January 18, 2023. Following an interview with the SCSEP Coordinator on February 1, 2023, it was determined that an Administrative Assistant assignment would best align with the customer’s skills and goals. On March 6, 2023, the customer began a 20-hour-per-week assignment with Seabury Resources for the Aging. Over the

course of this assignment, which concluded on June 28, 2024, the customer gained valuable experience and was deemed “job ready.”

Building on this success, Seabury Resources for the Aging recognized the customer’s potential and offered a part-time position as a Recreation Manager. The customer began their new role on August 28, 2024, working 20 hours per week at a pay rate of $21.00 per hour. This transition into a paid role within the organization reflects the customer’s determination, the effectiveness of SCSEP, and the tailored support provided by the WDS.

This success story highlights how the SCSEP program and the AJC’s comprehensive career services can empower individuals to rebuild their careers, develop new skills, and achieve meaningful employment, even after significant challenges.

Toni Thomas CompTIA A+ Program

Another success story highlights a participant who enrolled in the Toni Thomas CompTIA A+ program on May 1, 2023. As part of the program’s second cohort, they excelled in their studies and became the first participant to pass both exams and achieve CompTIA A+ certification. Building on this success, they secured an internship with the Library of Congress, which later led to employment in October 2023 as a Help Desk Support professional with the MIL Corporation, a contractor for the Library of Congress.

The participant credited the Toni Thomas program, DOES, and the internship opportunity for paving the way to full-time employment in a growing IT field. Their story exemplifies how tailored workforce training and internship opportunities can equip individuals with the skills and experience needed to achieve meaningful and sustainable careers.

Florida

CareerSource Florida

Florida Department of Economic Opportunity

Use of State Funds

The CareerSource Florida Board of Directors allocates state Set-Aside funds for program administration and state-level priority initiatives to increase the prosperity of workers and employers, reduce welfare dependency, increase economic self-sufficiency, meet employer needs, enhance worker productivity, and strengthen business competitiveness. For PY23–24, the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors approved the allocations to reflect the strategic initiatives and priorities of Governor DeSantis to strengthen alignment among CareerSource Florida, the Florida Commerce, and the Florida Department of Education to enhance WIOA implementation and further support the State's economic growth.

Under-served Populations

Rural Initiatives

The State identified 29 counties and five cities in three additional counties as Rural Areas of Opportunity. These counties and cities face economic challenges unique to rural communities. Accordingly, the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors designated supplementary allocations for LWDBs identified as rural boards to further support operations. The $2 million allocated to this category fund critical workforce development needs in the State's rural communities.

Integrated Service Delivery

Hope Florida – A Pathway to Prosperity

Spearheaded by First Lady DeSantis and implemented through the Florida Department of Children and Families, and other partner agencies, Hope Florida Navigators are funded in the CareerSource Florida network with the Governor's WIOA Set-Aside. The CareerSource Florida Board of Directors approved $2.5 million in WIOA funding to support Hope Florida – A Pathway to Prosperity, and $1.75 million in Wagner-Peyser funding to provide dedicated Hope Florida Navigators. Hope Navigators throughout the state work to strengthen coordination between DCF and the State's LWDBs to guide Floridians on an individualized path to economic prosperity, economic self-sufficiency and hope by focusing on community collaboration between private sector, faith-based community, non-profits and government entities to break down traditional community silos. A referral process involving regional DCF offices and LWDBs allows access to specialized services and programming to help Hope Florida program participants find jobs, enroll in training, and launch new career pathways that lead to self-sufficiency and economic prosperity.

Yes WIOA Can

Florida Healthcare Training Initiative (FHTI)

The FHTI is a specialized program under WIOA that focuses on enhancing healthcare training opportunities and fostering a skilled healthcare workforce in the state. FHTI recognizes the critical role of well-trained healthcare professionals in delivering quality healthcare services and aims to provide accessible and comprehensive training programs to individuals seeking healthcare careers. The CareerSource Florida Board of Directors provided $2.75 million for this two-year initiative. The workforce boards participating in this initiative include CareerSource Escarosa, CareerSource Okaloosa Walton, CareerSource Northeast Florida, and CareerSource Broward.

Supporting Aviation, Aerospace and Defense Manufacturing through a Comprehensive Sector Strategy Approach

The CareerSource Florida Board of Directors approved $9 million to support talent pipeline development in aviation, aerospace, defense manufacturing and IT/cybersecurity. The initiative is in the second of three years. The dollars were awarded to three LWDBs on Florida's Space Coast to create the Florida Atlantic Workforce Alliance. This allocation represented close to one-third of a more than $27 million investment in the industry sector leveraging funds from Florida Commerce's Job Growth Grant Fund, and the Department of Education's Cybersecurity and IT Training Grant and Pathways to Career Opportunities Grant.

Apprenticeship Navigators

The CareerSource Florida Board of Directors approved $1.75 million to fund dedicated Apprenticeship Navigators at each LWDB. Apprenticeship Navigators create and implement outreach plans to educate employers, jobseekers, and other stakeholders about the benefits of Registered Apprenticeship (RA) programs. They create awareness of the benefits of RAs to employers, education providers, business associations, and other potential stakeholders across their regions, and work closely with Apprenticeship Training Representatives from the Florida Department of Education to expand apprenticeship programs throughout the state.

Apprenticeship Navigators are also responsible for connecting individual jobseekers with apprenticeship opportunities and support employers and apprentices utilizing various funding mechanisms including customized training, incumbent worker training, OJT, occupational skills training, and supportive services provided through WIOA.

Quick Response Training Program

The State appropriated $7.5 million for the state Quick Response Training Program. Available to new and expanding companies, this nationally recognized grant program provides funds to create specialized training specifically for new hires in high-skill industries. During the 2023–2024 program year, the program awarded 24 Quick Response Training grants to businesses in a range of industries including trade and logistics, manufacturing, professional services and infotech. More than 2,700 workers are projected to be trained using these grants.

Other State Funds Activities

Not applicable

Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

No information provided for this section.

Continuous Improvement

Beyond Sunshine: Advancing Florida's World Class Economy for the Next Generation

To harness the economic dynamism of the State's regional economies and ensure continued growth, the Florida Council of 100 created a new economic development strategy centered around regional strengths and leveraging world-class higher education system. The Florida Council of 100 formed an innovative platform for the regular convening of regional and rural economic development organizations to align common goals with the advancement of unique local initiatives. Underpinning this effort, over the last twelve months, in partnership with McKinsey & Company, the Florida Council of 100 examined the State's six regional and rural economies and identified the industries generating higher-wage and resilient jobs.

This data-driven work provides a framework for the new, globally attractive Florida. The Florida Council of 100 will participate in meetings of the state economic development community, including private companies, economic development organizations, educational and training institutions, political leadership, and investors, and help to create high-value jobs and develop the talent needed to fill them.

Beyond Sunshine outlines their approach to business-driven economic development and serves as a roadmap for securing the State's economic success. The priorities are clear:

- Increase the focus and promotion of high-priority economic clusters in each region.
- Increase jobs in higher-wage industries and align talent at all levels to fill these roles.
- Position Florida domestically and internationally as the best place to start a career, build wealth, and raise a family.

CareerSource Florida leveraged the information in this report to help determine which industry sectors and in which areas would have the greatest impact of utilizing state-level 15 percent Set-Aside funding resulting in a greater return on investment.

Reports

- Beyond Sunshine: Advancing Florida's World Class Economy for the Next Generation

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

Florida had three waivers that were granted during the PY 2023–2024 that were re-approved as part of Florida's 2024–2028 WIOA Combined Plan.

- Recapture and Reallocation of WIOA Funds
- WIOA Out-of-School Youth (OSY) Expenditure Requirement
- WIOA In-School Youth (ISY) Individual Training Accounts (ITAs)

Strategies

Recapture and Reallocation of WIOA Funds

The State submitted a request to DOL for a waiver of the reallocation provisions at WIOA Sections 128(c)(3) and 133(c)(3) to allow Florida to develop different criteria than required by statute for the reallocation of recaptured funds among local workforce areas. ETA approved the State's request through June 30, 2028, to waive the reallocation provisions and allow Florida to recapture funds according to state-developed criteria.

WIOA OSY Expenditure Requirement

The State submitted a request to DOL for a waiver associated with the requirement at WIOA Section 129(a)(4)(A) and 20 CFR 681.410 that the State and local areas expend 75 percent of Governor's Reserve youth funds and local formula youth funds on OSY. The ETA approved the State's request to lower the expenditure requirement of reserve funds to 50 percent for OSY. Florida was permitted to lower the local youth funds expenditure requirement to 50 percent for OSY. The waiver is in effect for PYs 2024 and 2025.

WIOA ISY ITAs

Florida submitted a request to DOL for a waiver associated with the requirement 20 CFR 681.410 to allow WIOA ITAs for ISY. ETA approved the State's request to waive the requirement limiting ITAs to only OSY, ages 16–21 ages 16–21. The waiver is in effect for PYs 24–25.

Impact on Performance

The chart provides data to demonstrate initial outcomes that are being tracked.

Program Year	Measure	Total OSY Participants (%)	Total ISY Participants (%)	Total Youth Participants
2022	Total Youth Participants	4,322 (83%)	881 (16.9%)	5,203
2023	Total Youth Participants	4,386 (82%)	958 (18%)	5,344

Program Year	Measure	New OSY Participants	New ISY Participants	Total New Youth Participants
2022	Total Youth Participants	2,604	421	3,025
2023	Total Youth Participants	2,509	510	3,019

Program Year	OSY Enrolled in Education and Training	Using ITAs	ISY Enrolled in Education and Training	Using ITAs
2022	2,976	846	843	14
2023	3,000	967	911	18

Success Stories

Hope Florida - A Pathway to Prosperity

LWDBs are working hand-in-hand with the Florida Department of Children and Families' Hope Navigators to assist individuals in overcoming barriers to employment, employment assistance, engage in training opportunities, and provide wrap-around support services. This partnership promotes awareness of the benefits of the Hope Florida initiative to employers, individuals, education providers, business associations, and other potential stakeholders across their regions, and work with those stakeholders to recruit businesses as Hope Florida employers. More recently, the Hope Florida initiative has expanded to include Florida's very large veteran population as part of its efforts through the Paychecks for Patriots events held across the state. More than 6,700 veterans and their family members participated in prior Paychecks for Patriots events and 4,000 gained employment.

Georgia

WorkSource Georgia

Use of State Funds

Under-served Populations

Not applicable.

Integrated Service Delivery

Sector Partnerships and Career Pathways

Sector partnerships remain a cornerstone of the State's workforce development strategy, playing a vital role in addressing the current and future needs of jobseekers, employers, education partners, and surrounding communities. In PY23, the State continued its innovative implementation of the WorkSource Sector Partnerships Grant, which directly invests in regional initiatives led by LWDAs. These initiatives foster strong collaboration among stakeholders to build talent pipelines in high-demand industries across the state.

Since the grant's inception in 2016, the State's workforce system has demonstrated adaptability and resilience, leveraging the programs and initiatives born from this grant to respond to an ever-changing labor market. As DOL introduces a reimagined sector strategy framework aimed at advancing the workforce system's goals and mission, the State has announced that PY24 will be the final year of the WorkSource Sector Partnerships Grant. The State plans to recalibrate its sector strategy approach, drawing insights from DOL's guidance and the wealth of successful outcomes achieved through this grant.

Key Achievements of Sector Partnerships in PY23:

- Aligned Career Pathways: Sector partnership activities have ensured the development of accessible and cohesive career pathways. These pathways are designed to connect individuals to sustainable, high-quality careers in industries critical to the State's economic growth.
- Strategic Alignment with State Initiatives: Efforts under the WorkSource Sector Partnerships Grant were integrated with Georgia's Untapped Workforce Initiative and the QUEST Dislocated Worker Grant to enhance outcomes. This alignment has expanded access to training opportunities, employer engagement, and workforce solutions for populations most impacted by economic shifts.
- Regional Collaboration and Investment: The State's sector partnership framework has empowered LWDAs to lead region-specific initiatives that address unique industry demands and labor market challenges. These efforts have strengthened local economies and created robust support systems for employers and workers alike.

As the State transitions to a new phase in its sector strategy, the state is committed to building on the foundation laid by the WorkSource Sector Partnerships Grant. By incorporating DOL's enhanced sector framework and applying lessons learned from past initiatives, the State aims to further its mission of connecting talent with opportunity while meeting the workforce needs of businesses across the state.

Yes WIOA Can

Training Academy

The WorkSource Georgia Academy serves as a training platform on the provisions of WIOA in the state. The goal is to create an effective workforce system to meet jobseeker and employer needs. One way that the State strives to meet this goal is by hosting an annual conference. This conference aims to provide valuable insights, tools, and strategies to improve workforce development efforts and enhance collaboration among stakeholders. This conference is tailored for workforce development professionals and service providers. Attendees have the opportunity to learn about the latest trends, best practices, and innovations in workforce development, as well as network with subject matter experts and leaders. In PY23, each breakout session fell within a specific "learning track" that individuals could choose from. The learning tracks for the conference included:

- Business Services
- Programs/Service Delivery
- Data and Information
- Grants/Finance
- Partnerships

Something that was also new for the PY23 Academy was "office hours" which gave times that OWD teams were made available to answer any questions that attendees may have had regarding specific topics.

Another way that the State strives to create an effective workforce system is to offer virtual training sessions. The Programs Unit, in collaboration with other TCSG staff produced and hosted four statewide virtual training sessions via ZOOM/WEBEX during PY23. The sessions were well attended by LWDA, OWD and partner staff and focused on Adult and Dislocated Worker services. Each session provided interactive testing, question and answer opportunities and training evaluations to assist with process improvement.

All training resources, including Q&A written responses and additional online resources are maintained on the State's website and are made available to all LWDA staff.

An overall training survey was sent out to all participants requesting information on future training format, topics and preferred delivery. OWD intends to further build out training resources to facilitate the onboarding of new staff, as well as improve service delivery while maintaining compliance with federal and state requirements.

Youth Virtual WEX

In PY23, the Office of Workforce Development funded the expansion of the virtual Work Experience program statewide to include all LWDAs that wanted to participate.

Career Compass Academy (CCA) is a five-week virtual program that equips WIOA-eligible youth with work-ready skills, career exploration opportunities, and job shadowing activities. It was developed to address the demand for virtual learning environments that combine career exploration and paid work readiness training.

Key Features:

- Live Format: Includes 15 live webinars, 36 self-paced online modules, and a personalized career plan.
- Accessibility: Expanded statewide for any LWDA
- (LWDA) interested in participating, ensuring increased access for youth.
- Technology Platforms: Utilizes Accenture's Skills to Succeed Academy for online modules, Zoom for webinars, and TCSG's Blackboard for classroom management and progress tracking

Implementation Partner: CareerRise, Inc. plays a central role in the program by:

- Recruiting industry partners.
- Facilitating webinars and career panels.
- Managing relationships with Accenture and providing technical assistance.

Local Workforce Partner Contributions:

- Youth recruitment and WIOA eligibility determination.
- Case management and stipend distribution.

Statewide Expansion: Initially serving five local boards (Atlanta, Atlanta Regional, Cobb, DeKalb, and Fulton), CCA has expanded to include Middle Georgia, Northwest Georgia, Georgia Mountains, and Macon-Bibb areas.

Flexible Delivery Options:

1. CCA Live!: Offers structured programming three times a year with live sessions.
2. CCA On-Demand: Provides pre-recorded content for flexible implementation.
3. Guided Implementation: Offers customizable options for local adaptation.

Budget and Resources:

Local boards typically provide $200 weekly stipends for participating youth, equaling $1,000 per student. The program's administrative costs include facilitation, progress tracking, and platform licenses.

Lastly, during PY23, plans were discussed to implement an On-Demand version of the Career Compass Academy virtual work experience to allow more flexibility to the Local Workforce partners and the participants. The intention is to implement this new option through a pilot to provide more options in addition to the current platform for participants that have limited access to technology, live in rural areas, and those that need face-to-face interaction instead of virtual. Once the pilot is executed, Local Workforce partners will have access to classroom bootcamp options, or a hybrid classroom with fully remote options.

Other State Funds Activities

Not applicable.

Evaluations

While the State did not have any formal evaluation or research projects ongoing in PY23, evaluating the current system is a high priority as Georgia further integrates these programs and identify jobseeker and employer needs across the state. The State will maintain close communication with their Federal Project Officer and Regional Administrator at DOL-ETA to identify opportunities to implement formal research projects in the future

Activities and Methodology

Not applicable.

Continuous Improvement

Not applicable.

Reports

Not applicable.

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

The State currently has a Youth Expenditure Waiver active until June 30, 2026, which lowers the expenditure requirements established by WIOA of at least 75 percent of funding to be spent for the out-of-school (OSY) population to 50 percent.

Strategies

The flexibility afforded by the waiver continued to allow LWDAs to expand in-school youth (ISY) programming within their service area, create valuable partnerships with school districts, technical colleges, and other education and community partners throughout their area.

Impact on Performance

The State continues to see an increase in total youth enrollment and will further disaggregate the data to fully evaluate youth services for the upcoming State Plan submission. In the analysis conducted for this Annual Performance Narrative Report, the State identified an increase in services to youth with the following barrier:

- basic skills deficient,
- individuals experiencing homelessness,
- pregnant/parenting, and
- individuals with disabilities.

The largest increases in services were seen in paid Work Experience, Youth Career Services—specifically labor market and employment information, as well as paid internships—and the provision of supportive services (primarily for transportation and childcare).

Success Stories

No information provided for this section.

Hawai'i

State of Hawai'i Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR)

Use of State Funds

The unexpended funds totaling $1,657,206.02 were used for statewide activities as outlined in 20 CFR 682.210 to finance the following projects:

1) Summer Youth Financial Literacy and Work Experience Program;
2) Guild Consulting – State Unified Plan; and
3) Ready-to-Work (career and work-based training to high-school students with disabilities).

Under-served Populations

Ready-To-Work Program

Workforce Transition Center's Ready-to-Work Program works with Special Education students in participating high schools throughout the State to provide career and work-based training, including soft skills, to enable students to become productive and contributing members of their communities. In-class training includes skills development for students through OJT via simulated retail "stores" at school. When ready, students are placed with partnering businesses in the community, such as McDonald's, Tony Honda, and Little Caesars, working no more than ten hours per week. Students are provided with supportive services, including work-appropriate attire and safety shoes.

Integrated Service Delivery

Community Service Grant - Digital Literacy

DLIR's DOL Community Project Grant awarded in PY22, continued its partnership with Hawai'i Department of Education, Hawai'i State Public Library System and Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism to address the need for digital literacy digital literacy across the state based on its Statewide Digital Plan. It saw fruition in PY23 with the implementation of the Hawai'i Digital Work Skills Initiative. One segment of the multi-level digital work skills program has since provided program participants (WIOA participants and community members) with digital work skill training classes at local public libraries Statewide and by Waipahu Community School for Adults. This initiative introduces digital literacy proficiencies, providing beginner to intermediate-level free digital literacy classes.

Yes WIOA Can

Employment & Training Fund (ETF)

ETF allows private industry employers to upskill or enhance their current workforce. ETF provides employers with training subsidies so that their employees can hone their existing skills or learn new ones to remain on the cutting edge for their jobs. Employers are subsidized by the ETF program for up to 50 percent of the approved curriculum training course cost, up to a maximum of $1,000. There are currently 15 ETF training vendors available to provide training to incumbent workers. During PY23, over 80 employers participated by referring their employees to various training courses and 432 employees upgraded their work skills.

Other State Funds Activities

No information provided for this section.

Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

The State has conducted evaluations in the past to assess needs and identify solutions to problems found through its inquiries. Pending research will incorporate the RESEA program which will be undergoing an evaluation process in conjunction with DOL and Abt Global, including an impact and selection model study. The process involves implementing a procedure to randomly assign UI claimants to evaluation study groups and data collection. This process will begin in April 2025. There will be a chance to include co-enrolled Title I participants to compare outcomes based on cohort within the study. Local boards and providers will be consulted in this process.

Continuous Improvement

No information provided for this section.

Reports

No information provided for this section.

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

WIOA Section 107(b) requirements to allow the State Board to carry out the roles and responsibilities of a local board.

Strategies

The State has a current waiver of WIOA Section 107(b) requirements to allow the State Board to carry out the roles and responsibilities of a local board, noted in the Unified State Plan, granted by DOL-ETA on May 30, 2024. The previous waiver of June 2022 let the State assume the responsibility of administering service delivery upon Kauai County's local elected officials' request. WIOA Title I services were delivered by the local Kauai WDD/AJC office in PY23.

Impact on Performance

Kauai staff received some training and technical assistance but required more. Extensive outreach is necessary and is expected to increase enrollments for all programs in PY24.

Success Stories

WIOA Maui Adult Worker Success Story – Patrick L.

In early 2024, Patrick L. approached Goodwill Hawai'i's Career Services Department with a clear vision: to forge a career in the healthcare sector. However, Patrick recognized he first needed to address his educational qualifications to make this dream a reality. Determined to set a strong foundation for his career, he enrolled in the GED program at McKinley School for Adults. Patrick's commitment to his new goal has been nothing short of remarkable. He has maintained an impressive attendance record and achieved high scores on his tests, demonstrating his dedication and resilience. These accomplishments are significant milestones on his journey toward a career in a hospital setting. Thanks to the support and guidance provided by Goodwill Hawai'i, Patrick now sees a tangible path to achieving his career aspirations. His success story is a testament to the transformative impact of the resources and encouragement offered through our programs. Patrick's journey continues to inspire others in the community, showing that with the right support and determination, new career paths are within reach.

WIOA Maui Adult Success Story

John U., a skilled tradesman with years of experience, found himself facing an unexpected and challenging situation. Laid off by his union, John was left searching for resources to support himself and his family while seeking his next employment opportunity. During this difficult time, he turned to Goodwill Hawai'i, hoping to find the assistance and guidance he needed. When John first walked through the doors of Goodwill Hawai'i, he was met with understanding and compassion. The dedicated team at Goodwill immediately set to work, providing John with the resources and support he needed to navigate this challenging period. From career counseling and résumé building to job search assistance and skills training, Goodwill was with John every step of the way. John remained determined and focused on finding his next opportunity. Goodwill's unwavering support and encouragement played a crucial role in keeping his spirits high. The staff helped John identify potential job openings, prepared him for interviews, and provided financial assistance to cover essential needs during his job search. A significant turning point came when John secured a job that required specific tools to perform effectively. Understanding the importance of this opportunity, Goodwill Hawai'i fulfilled their role by purchasing the necessary tools for John, ensuring he could excel in his new role.

WIOA Maui Dislocated Worker Success Story - Avis U.

Avis U. faced significant challenges when the disaster left her unemployed. The wildfires drastically reduced local employment opportunities. During this challenging time, Avis turned to Goodwill for support, seeking assistance to regain her footing in the workforce.

Understanding the urgency of her situation, the team at Goodwill Hawai‘i quickly stepped in to provide comprehensive support. Recognizing the immediate need for appropriate work attire, which was a barrier to entering the workforce again, Avis was provided with work clothing through support services. This assistance played a crucial role in restoring her confidence and equipping her to pursue job opportunities once more.

Thanks to the targeted support and resources provided by Goodwill, Avis successfully secured a new job. Her return to work marks a significant milestone in her recovery journey, bringing stability and a renewed sense of hope. Avis' story is a powerful testament to her resilience and the critical role of community support services in times of crisis.

WIOA Maui Dislocated Worker Success Story - John N.

After graduating from high school in 2017, John worked in retail sales for over a year, saving his earnings to fund his college education. He completed Certified Nurse Aide (CNA) training in December 2019 and earned an Associate of Arts degree with a major in Liberal Arts in May 2022. During his CNA studies, he participated in a paid internship program at Hawai‘i Pacific Health, where he received hands-on training and developed his skills as a nurse assistant. Upon completing his Liberal Arts degree, John was employed as a Medical Assistant for two years, a role in which he found passion and fulfillment. Unfortunately, the clinic he worked for was set to close in a few months. Determined to advance his career, John enrolled in the Medical Assisting Program at UH Kauai Community College, supported by financial aid from the WIOA Adult program. He completed the program with certification in May 2024, making the Dean's List. Currently, he works full time as a Medical Assistant at Hawai‘i Pacific Health.

WIOA Maui Dislocated Worker Success Story - Elizabeth

When Elizabeth first walked through the doors of Goodwill Hawai‘i in Maui, she was searching for more than just a job; she sought a fulfilling career that could offer her growth and stability. Her previous experiences had left her wanting a role that not only matched her skills but also provided opportunities to learn and evolve. This determination led her to the Career Services Department at Goodwill Hawai‘i, where she teamed up with a dedicated career navigator who understood her aspirations and the challenges she faced.

Over the next several months, Elizabeth and her career navigator worked diligently on refining her résumé, honing her interview skills, and exploring various career pathways that aligned with her interests and abilities. The process was thorough, with each session tailored to address her unique needs and to build her confidence as a professional.

The commitment to finding the right fit meant that Elizabeth sometimes had to exercise patience. She understood that meaningful careers do not materialize overnight, and with the guidance of her navigator, she persisted. This perseverance paid off when a position for an Administrative Assistant in the very department she had come to trust, and respect opened. Elizabeth's transition to the role of Administrative Assistant at the Career Services Department was seamless. Her prior involvement with the

department as a client meant she was already familiar with the culture and expectations of Goodwill Hawai‘i. Her story is a testament to the power of dedicated career navigation and personalized support.

Summer Youth Financial Literacy and Work Experience Program - Joshua W.

Some mornings Joshua W. biked 17 miles to his summer job at Keeau High School. He was one of many interns this summer for DLIR's WDD's Summer Youth Financial Literacy and Work Experience Program. Joshua performed general labor tasks for Mr. Moniz, an agricultural teacher at Keaau High School. He worked in the classroom, lab, kitchen, and farm. "It was a paid internship and looked like it would be a fun experience," said Joshua, "Something that I could put on my résumé." When asked about why he decided to bike 17 miles, Joshua said it was because he did not always have transportation. "But it was fun and a good workout for me," he said. "I use my bike to get to work and to work out to get into more shape for the military." Joshua said he liked the internship program because he was able to improve his work experience and learned new skills. He plans to leave for Hawai'i National Guard basic training in October. DLIR held a graduation ceremony for summer youth program participants in July. Dozens attended both in-person and virtually.

WIOA Maui Youth Success Story

This young woman transitioned to the Ola I Ka Hana program when Goodwill Hawai‘i became the new service provider. She was a quiet young woman without a support system, with past trauma due to family circumstances. Over the years, she and her Youth Specialist developed a relationship that provided the support she needed.

She was the sole provider for herself, doing everything on her own. Supporting herself by working part time, she attended school full time. The many hours of school and studying that she put in during the days she was not working were not easy. Although there were many days that she struggled, because of her relationship with her Youth Specialist, she had the necessary support to get through those hard days.

In the Fall 2024 semester she learned that she needed only one more class to get a second degree. She decided to complete that in the Spring 2024 semester. She was on the Dean's list for most of her post education years. She accomplished her goal of completing her Culinary Degree in the Spring 2024 Semester, graduating in May, with two degrees (an A.A. in Baking and an A.A. in Cooking). She is now working at the Fairmont Kea Lani Hotel in the baking department.

WIOA Maui Youth Program Success Story

After graduating from university, Megan encountered a tough job market that made it challenging to pursue her career aspirations due to limited opportunities and a lack of experience. She wanted to change the trajectory of her career, rather than let the job market define it. Hele Imua gave her that opportunity. As she described it, "The program connects individuals to jobs in a meaningful way, fostering a sustainable workforce and retaining local talent." She was grateful to the DLIR Team for their commitment to maintaining this program, as well as the departments that collaborate with them to nurture the next generation. She was pleased with her internship at DHS/MQD and hope her success continues.

WIOA Maui Youth Program Success Story

This young man entered the Ola I Ka Hana Program as a referral from DVR. The youth was placed in the WIOA in-school program as he was enrolled at UH Maui College, in the process of obtaining his Culinary Degree. Part of his support services needs included book purchases for classes. There were some challenges because of the youth being diagnosed with a hearing disability, but nothing that could not be surmounted.

During the school year, the youth revisited his educational/degree plan and decided to work towards earning a Culinary Certificate versus a Culinary Degree. It was a difficult decision for this participant to make. Collectively working with his academic counselor, disability counselor and teachers along with his Program Youth Specialist, everyone was able to support this young man during that transition and followed him to the end at UH Maui College. With resilience, strength, and hard work he completed all requirements to graduate in the Spring of 2024 with a Culinary Certificate. Together with his Youth Specialist, they completed his résumé and application for a job at Humble Market Kitchen in Wailea. His goal is to one day open his own food truck to serve the community of Maui.

Hele Imua Internship Program Success Story

This young man entered the Ola I Ka Hana Program as a referral from DVR. The youth was placed in the WIOA in-school program as he was enrolled at UH Maui College, in the process of obtaining his Culinary Degree. Part of his support services needs included book purchases for classes. There were some challenges because of the youth being diagnosed with a hearing disability, but nothing that could not be surmounted.

During the school year, the youth revisited his educational/degree plan and decided to work towards earning a Culinary Certificate versus a Culinary Degree. It was a difficult decision for this participant to make. Collectively working with his academic counselor, disability counselor and teachers along with his Program Youth Specialist, everyone was able to support this young man during that transition and followed him to the end at UH Maui College. With resilience, strength, and hard work he completed all requirements to graduate in the Spring of 2024 with a Culinary Certificate. Together with his Youth Specialist they completed his résumé and application for a job at Humble Market Kitchen in Wailea. His goal is to one day open his own food truck to serve the community of Maui.

Idaho

Idaho Workforce Development Council

Idaho Department of Labor (IDOL)

Use of State Funds

Under-served Populations

No information provided for this section.

Integrated Service Delivery

Career Pathways

Through the State's work-based learning initiative, Idaho LEADER (Learn.Do.Earn), all of the core partners, along with the State Board of Education, State Department of Education, Department of Commerce, Department of Health and Welfare, STEM Action Center, Department of Correction, Department of Juvenile Corrections, and Idaho Public Television, are working to increase the line of sight between youth, transitioning adults, and career opportunities. The group has adopted a work-based learning continuum that categorizes opportunities for employers to engage with education and the workforce system under Learning About Work, Learning Through Work, and Learning At Work. Scaling apprenticeship is a high priority under LEADER and the investments made through the State Apprenticeship Expansion and American Apprenticeship Initiative grants in Apprenticeship Idaho have moved the state forward significantly. In addition, the WDC implemented a Youth Apprenticeship Readiness Grant that created a public-private partnership with Idaho Business for Education, and the Idaho Office of the State Board (OSBE) of Education is implementing a Closing the Skills Gap award. While these grants have concluded, apprenticeship expansion and maintenance efforts are continued through the Apprenticeship Idaho Coalition to ensure that employers and apprentices experience a seamless approach to services.

The expansion of Idaho LAUNCH, previously mentioned, is also driving efforts to clearly articulate career pathways so that high school seniors see not only a place to start, but the many options that can get them to where they want to be.

Yes WIOA Can

Sector Strategies

The 2024 WIOA State Plan includes innovative approaches designed to meet the needs of the individuals who face barriers to employment in an economic climate where historically low unemployment rates are straining employers' ability to find talent. The economic analysis revealed that much of Idaho's current job demand and job growth are in education and health services; trade, transportation, and utilities; construction; professional and business services; and leisure and hospitality. While jobs in retail trade and accommodation and food service lean towards lower wages, they play an important role in the development of workplace

skills for Idahoans with the highest barriers to employment. In addition, these two industries are important in the rural communities where options for full-time, year-round jobs with benefits are often limited. Providing career pathways into the higher skilled jobs or leveraging entry-level employment in these industries to develop workplace skills is necessary for Idaho's sector strategies and career pathways. Additionally, jobs in education are increasingly appearing on state and regional "in-demand" occupation lists signifying the need to invest in strategies that grow the talent needed to train the workforce of the future.

The WDC, in partnership with the Idaho Association of Commerce and Industry, launched the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Talent Pipeline Management Initiative (TPM) in 2020, leveraging state workforce development training funds to train an initial cohort of 30 individuals in the methodology. The WDC now supports TPM in all six regions of the state and has allocated $550,000 through the end of FY25 to fund TPM Project Managers. These individuals work with local industry cohorts and education providers (K-career) to align the talent pipeline through the following steps:

1. Organize Employer Collaboratives
2. Engage in Demand Planning
3. Communicate Competency and Credential Requirements
4. Analyze Talent Flows
5. Build Talent Supply Chains
6. Continuous Improvement

The WDC is pleased to report that the initial cohort and current Project Managers have created talent pipelines within the food processing, healthcare, and construction industries, with ongoing projects in culinary arts and broadband internet.

The State's Workforce Development Training Fund has also supported sector strategies by providing state-funded grants to partnerships of industry and education groups to develop or promote training in high-demand occupations, including an additional $13 million dedicated to support STEM-focused projects. Over the past few years, the WDC has shifted its investment strategy to emphasize industry sector grants and direct training to individuals through Idaho LAUNCH. Further, with the expansion of Idaho LAUNCH to target graduating high school students specifically, the WDC is connecting Idaho's identified in-demand jobs directly to education. With a transparent system that allows students to see the in-demand jobs list and facts about each job, such as the skills needed and projected salary, this program allows students to select education and training pathways that connect real jobs in their communities.

Eligible Training Provider Reporting

Going into its fourth year, IDOL simplified the reporting process this year, beginning with the elimination of the separate application process for public and private training providers. Consolidating this function into a single application format contained within IdahoWorks for both training providers and staff helped to improve overall data collection efforts. To meet the federal

requirement of including non-WIOA participant outcomes in the measure, OSBE provides student data via an encrypted file transfer process, complying with state and federal privacy concerns.

Another item that facilitated a smoother reporting process this year was the re-establishment of an agreement between IDOL and the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) to obtain State driver's license data. This agreement, initially established in 2011, authorizes ITD to forward Idaho driver's license data to IDOL, which allows it to triangulate wage data with the incoming data in an effort to identify training participants for reporting on wage outcomes. This process assists greatly in those instances when providers do not or cannot provide this information as requested. Early iterations of this practice resulted in an 85 percent match rate. With the improved data collection and processing advancements, it is estimated that the match rates will have improved since then.

Other State Funds Activities

Teacher Externship Program

Beginning in late PY18/early PY19, the WDC and STEM Action Center piloted a teacher externship program with 16 educators and employers. Teachers were paired with an employer worksite for a minimum of 200 hours during the summer to not only gain practical experience in an occupation, but to also learn about the greater workforce needs of the organization. Both teachers and employers have lauded the program, given that it improves connections between the State's classrooms and workplaces and allows teachers to take real-world experiences back to their students. The WDC, in partnership with Micron Technology, provided funding for the teacher externship program from January 2023 through June 2025. After the grant's conclusion, the value of the program has prompted the WDC to allocate $750,000 for the next three years to fund teachers' stipends, ensuring that the program remains low or no-cost for participating employers. A recent grant for the program allowed for much broader outreach and recruiting for the externship program and made the experience free for employers. Participation in 2024 jumped to 97 externs. 2024 teacher extern with CBS2 News:

> "I externed with CBS News last summer and had an excellent experience so was delighted when we both wanted to work together again. Since my first externship, Jacob Boone, my supervisor and the promotions manager at CBS News, and his wife Jaynee Boone, the General Manager of the Hampton Inn Boise Airport, both served as Business Professionals of America regional competition judges for me. Jacob also often provided equipment and studio setup advice for my yearbook program, which helped save my school hundreds of dollars. Since the connections I'd made last summer greatly benefitted my classroom and my program I was looking forward to participating again…
>
> Some of the things I appreciated most about working with CBS was the diversity of experiences I had, the trust and confidence they put in me, and the kind and welcoming nature of their staff. I look forward to sharing these experiences in my classrooms in the future, particularly the knowledge I've gained regarding production of live events, working with a diverse range of clientele, and the immense amount of creative problem solving, critical thinking, and agile reaction skills this career field requires. Most importantly, I hope the connections I've made through this program will continue to

benefit my students, as the access to industry and content experts has already proven invaluable. I would highly recommend any teacher, rookie or veteran, to take full advantage of this program."

Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

WIOA PY23 Evaluation Update

In 2023, more than 125,000 Idahoans received benefits from SNAP administered by Idaho Department of Health and Welfare (DHW). Approximately 20 percent of recipients are mandated to participate in DHW's SNAP E&T programs. The remaining recipients have no such mandate and may access workforce services available elsewhere.

During PY23, IDOL has laid the groundwork to conduct a rigorous evaluation to assess the effect of the State's workforce development system programs on this population, primarily their service impact, and whether they increased or improved employment outcomes.

Setting the stage for this evaluation, the following activities were completed during PY23:

- IDOL and the Office of the State Board of Education staff participated in the Applied Data Analytics Training Opportunity offered by National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) and the Coleridge Initiative.
- IDOL learned about the SNAP E&T program, exploring how the mandatory program could better coordinate with the One-Stop system.
- The National Governor's Association selected a team from IDOL, DHW, and the Idaho Workforce Development Council to participate in its on-going Policy Academy designed to improve SNAP and WIOA partner program collaboration.
- Initiated during PY23, negotiations for a data sharing agreement authorizing DHW to provide data to help track the co-enrollment of SNAP and TANF participants with One-Stop partner programs is soon to be finalized between the agencies.

Analysts from both IDOL's Research and Analysis and Workforce Programs Administrative Bureaus have laid out the evaluation's next steps—setting up a research project to answer following questions relevant to the evaluations' initial phase:

1. SNAP population - How many SNAP recipients are actively receiving services through WIOA partner programs at present?
2. Employment Outcomes - What are the employment outcomes for mandatory and voluntary SNAP recipients, and how do these outcomes differ based on co-enrollment in various WIOA titles?

The answers to the above questions will serve as a baseline to:

- Develop policy;

- Plan service delivery/program design;
- Expand outreach to SNAP participants; and
- Maintain continuous evaluation of outcomes as IDOL and DHW implement this new partnership.

The initial phase of this evaluation, funded by Idaho's WIOA Governor's Reserve fund, will be conducted by IDOL throughout PY24.

Continuous Improvement

No information provided for this section.

Reports

No information provided for this section.

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

Waiver to allow the State board to act as the local board - WIOA Section 107(b).

Strategies

This waiver has been in effect since PY05, when the Governor consolidated the six workforce development areas at the time into two local areas. These two areas entered into an agreement, which is still in place, to have the State function as a single statewide planning area. By requesting the waiver to have the WDC (WIOA State Board) conduct the functions of the local board, Idaho has been able to reduce its overall state and local administrative costs, which its governors have supported since the waiver's initial implementation. This move has become even more important since WIOA imposed increased reporting and administrative requirements upon states considering the significant funding reductions the State has faced since 2012. The primary goal sought by this waiver is to reduce administrative costs and maximize the available money directed to career and training services, including work-based learning, and services to business and jobseekers. The eventual programmatic outcome results in service to a larger number of participants than would otherwise be served due to higher administrative costs. To maximize resources available for service delivery, the State continues to use the flexibility of this waiver to allow the WDC to serve as the local workforce board.

Impact on Performance

When initially implemented, this move saved the State WIA program $1,482,788 by removing the required maintenance of six local areas throughout the state. These former administrative funds have been utilized as program funds allowing for more participants to be served, which permits the State to maintain service levels despite funding cuts over the years. In today's dollars, the costs easily translate to a programmatic infusion of $2,454,446 which, in 2024, amounts to just over 37.4 percent of the State's total WIOA Title IB allotment from DOL for PY23.

The single statewide planning structure helps reduce annual overhead, emphasizing spending program funds towards direct training and support of businesses and participants. By strengthening administrative oversight and accountability processes, it has helped significantly in eliminating administrative deficiencies over the years that may have resulted in disallowed costs.

As state education policy aligns with the State's workforce development goals, Idaho's statewide structure enhances efforts to transform its workforce development system into a demand driven system. Having the State Board provide the functions of both the state and local board presents an additional benefit to board members, as they can gain a full perspective of WIOA activities throughout the state and recognize that all areas of the state face similar challenges.

Success Stories

Kmwee - WIOA Youth Program

Kmwee, a WIOA Youth participant, relocated to Idaho as a refugee with her mom and sister. Having limited financial resources and few marketable skills, she sought support to help explore career options and obtain occupational training. She learned about IDOL and WIOA during a community outreach presentation hosted by IDOL at a local community college. Kmwee attended English as a Second Language classes to improve her language skills to eventually fulfill her aspiration of working in the medical field.

Once enrolled, IDOL's WIOA Youth program assisted Kmwee with Career Exploration, Individual Support and Guidance, Labor Market Information, Occupational Skills Training, Financial Support, Financial Literacy, Job Search Assistance, Career Development and Supportive Services. With this assistance from the program, she successfully completed her certification in Medical Assisting and Phlebotomy, gaining valuable, marketable skills necessary to secure employment and begin earning a starting wage of $15 per hour. In an email, Kmwee stated,

> "This program really fulfilled my dream. Without it, I wasn't sure where to start pursuing my dream. I feel so blessed to have had the opportunity to be part of this program and to meet [the career planner], who always helps me out when I couldn't find a way. Thank you for letting me join this program. I can't thank you enough. I don't think a word can describe how I feel about WIOA program."

Ian - WIOA Youth Program

Prior to enrollment in the WIOA Youth program, Ian graduated from Idaho Job Corps where he earned a certificate in welding. But he ended up working in customer service at a large retailer and faced several challenges in his employment there. Sincerely

wanting to establish himself as a welder, he found that securing employment in this field proved difficult, even with his certification.

Working with the Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, their staff referred Ian to IDOL's WIOA Youth program as a co-enrollee. Ian and his IDOL career planner worked together to fine-tune his goals and interests through several skills and interest inventories, job search planning, and labor market information. Ian's career planner reached out to a local employer, providing them information about the WIOA program's OJT activity.

Convinced by IDOL staff, the employer brought Ian on board, where he participated in a 13-week welding OJT. He now earns $18.00 per hour, and the employer is very pleased with his performance in his new job. Ian stated, "[It's b]een an amazing experience and as far as moving on from other past jobs, this has gotten me where I really wanted to be and given me that push."

Emily - WIOA Youth Program

Emily left high school in 2019 after completing 10th grade. In late 2022, she was referred to the WIOA program. Her goal was to complete her GED and find a career path.

Over the course of the next 18 months, Emily worked with her career planner and an AJC mobile services staff member. Emily completed career interest assessments, financial literacy training, and studied for her GED exams. She enrolled in dental assistant training through Idaho Launch in May 2023 and interned at a dental office for two months. Emily graduated, worked with IDOL staff to develop a résumé, and was hired as an orthodontist assistant. This allowed Emily to move out of her parents' home and become self-sufficient.

When asked about the impact of the WIOA program, Emily said, "The program was a huge help to me, and I really appreciate it. The chance that they gave me was the opportunity of a lifetime that I never would've had otherwise. I am now working full time as an orthodontist assistant, thanks to WIOA."

WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker

- A Career Coach with Equus Workforce Solutions, Idaho's Adult and Dislocated Worker provider has two Adult participants who recently graduated from their training programs. After successfully obtaining their Commercial Driver's Licenses (CDL), both have found full-time employment: One with a local utility company and another with a local cement company.
- Another Equus participant, a Dislocated Worker, successfully completed training in Heavy Equipment Operation, and is now working full time for a local construction company. The participant indicated to her career coach that her one-week paychecks are now more than she was earning in an entire month in her prior job.
- A Dislocated Worker participant was having difficulty returning to work because his résumé was outdated. With staff assistance, he updated his résumé and within a week accepted a job as a Territorial Sales Manager for a large pet food company.

Mike - Wagner-Peyser/Employment Services (ES)

Mike worked as a meat cutter for about ten years. He left that occupation to pursue work in the transportation/material moving industry. But, unfortunately as an 11th grade high school dropout with a GED, he soon found himself unemployed and receiving UI benefits. Lucky for him, he was selected to attend an RESEA interview at a local IDOL AJC office.

During his initial RESEA interview, it became clear that Mike was interested in a career that would provide a livable wage, the opportunity to learn new skills, and a good work-life balance. He had no idea where to start his job search, but the IDOL workforce consultant eagerly shared all the work search resources available to assist Mike in getting back to work.

He took an online interest inventory through one of the State's workforce platforms, Next Steps Idaho. And after talking through his goals and interests with AJC staff, they tapped relevant labor market information to identify details about the skilled trades, specifically HVAC and plumbing, in which he had shown an interest. It appeared that Mike's local area had multiple apprenticeship opportunities for jobseekers who were interested in them.

Through additional research into both the plumbing and HVAC industries, and with a heavy focus on each occupation's job descriptions and education requirements, Mike decided to pursue plumbing as a career. He was extremely excited about being able to attend training as an apprentice while continuing to work full time and provide for his family. He was also pleasantly surprised by the promotional opportunities available in the occupation, as well as the ability to earn a livable wage within a relatively short time.

Mike was referred to both the WIOA Adult/Dislocated Worker and Idaho LAUNCH programs for assistance to fund his training. He began his related technical instruction through the Workforce Training Center at a local college and was shortly thereafter hired by a local plumbing company, earning $18.00 per hour to start.

Through interviews, assessments, and referrals to other agencies, Mike continued to receive assistance from a variety of programs and services which created a comprehensive, wrap-round service delivery model that helped him make an informed decision about his steps toward self-sufficient reemployment.

Mike stated, "You guys have been so awesome. I tell everybody about you. I received employment services in another state, but they just threw a job at me and told me to move along. You all seem to really care about helping me find a career."

Illinois

Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB)

Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity

Use of State Funds

Under-served Populations

Promote Innovative Career Pathway Solutions

The IWIB's Career Pathways for Targeted Populations (CPTP) Committee and the three workgroups promote innovative career pathway solutions for their target populations: individuals with disabilities, justice-impacted youth, and opportunity youth.

The committee compiled wrap-around support and career pathway resources to create an online repository. This guide will expand Illinois workNet's Work Success Support Resources search engine to highlight Illinois career pathways and worker supports. The guide is scheduled to be live by the end of 2024. In addition, the opportunity youth workgroup has prioritized career awareness.

WIOA professional development focused on promoting innovations in career pathways through the Workforce Wednesday Webinars and WIOA Summit.

Illinois Department of Employment Security's Career Information System (CIS) was provided for free to high schools across the state and supported by technical assistance and training when requested. Career Pathways information was built into the CIS360 system so that any student who used CIS will see the career pathways approved by the Illinois State Board of Education.

Integrated Service Delivery

Expand and Improve Bridge and Integrated Education and Training Models

Title II Adult Education initiated programmatic supports, technical assistance, and professional development that led to a 40 percent increase in adult learner enrollment in Integrated Career and Academic Preparation System (ICAPS), Illinois' version of Integrated Education and Training Models. Strategies that support this continuous growth included:

- The yearlong Transitions Academy, professional development that focuses on peer-to-peer sharing of promising practices, and the facilitated meetings, Cohort Conversations, where program teams met with experts in ICAPS development to plan and implement ICAPS.
- The ICAPS provided accelerated pathways to industry-recognized credentials where instruction and training are supplemented by support courses, comprehensive student support services, and augmented by collaborative teaching practices between workforce training instructors and basic skills instructors.

Job Training and Economic Development Program (JTED)

The Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) does not have funding to pay for barrier reduction services, so Title III makes referrals to partners in the AJCs or in the community. To that end, IDES maintains and updates a resource list of support services and programs to make referrals from. It is organized by office location, and it is accessible and updatable to all IDES staff that work in local office/AJCs.

Promote the Use of All Types of Apprenticeships

The IWIB's Apprenticeship Illinois Committee created a framework to support all types of apprenticeships and work-based learning programs that may lead to apprenticeships. This past year, the Committee intentionally modified the Committee member roster to include more representatives from each of the Core WIOA partners as well as individuals from the Illinois State Board of Education, K–12 CTE programs, community colleges, and community-based organizations (CBOs) who provide programs on the work-based learning continuum, anywhere from short internships, pre-apprenticeships, youth apprenticeships, unregistered apprenticeships, and DOL Registered Apprenticeships. The Committee will identify successful models that use a stepped approach or pathway to apprenticeships.

Yes WIOA Can

Job Training and Economic Development Program (JTED)

The State provided $15 million for the JTED Program. JTED provides the ability to support barrier reduction services. The following was achieved for the grant period ending July 2024:

- 110 percent (2,145) adults enrolled based on their planned performance.
- 317 percent (6,495) of youth enrolled in training. Of this, 6,062 youth participated in the Illinois Manufacturers Association Scaling Transformative Advanced Manufacturing Pathways (STAMP) program.
- 126 percent (3,803) participants have obtained at least one credential.
- 76 percent of adults have been placed in employment.

Barrier reduction funding has proven to be impactful for assisting participants in staying in training and employment. The following is a statement from a JTED participant assisted with barrier reduction funding.

> "Barrier reduction funding is devoted to increasing family stability and job retention by covering accumulated emergency costs for basic needs, such as housing-related expenses (rent, utilities, internet connectivity, etc.), transportation, childcare, digital technology needs, education needs, mental health services, substance abuse services, income support, and work-related supplies that are not typically covered by programmatic supportive services. WIOA providers can access these funds by applying to be a JTED provider or by partnering with JTED providers."

Improve the Integration of Program and Case Management Information Systems

The State's approach to integrating data across the four core programs for the purpose of streamlined intake and service delivery was to maximize: Application Programming Interfaces (APIs); data sharing; and aligned service delivery policies and procedures across the core programs, each of which is managed in separate state agencies. The core programs planned and implemented integration through multiple interagency working groups including IWIB Referral Policy Work Group; IWIB Continuous Improvement Committee; IWIB Performance Work Group; and the WIOA Interagency Technical Assistance team.

Other State Funds Activities

No information provided for this section.

Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

Statistical Adjustment Model (SAM) Evaluation

PY23 was the final year for The Effectiveness in Serving Employer Pilot program using the two approaches, Employer Penetration Rate and Retention with the same Employer in the 2nd and 4th quarter after exit. DOL has provided guidance that they will use one measure, Retention with the same Employer in the 2nd and 4th quarter after exit. This measure will be baseline for PY24 and PY25 and will be added to the negotiation progress across all six-core programs for PY26.

Continuous Improvement

WIOA Title I Illinois Performance Accountability and Transparency System (IPATS) Enhancements

During PY23, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) worked closely with Southern Illinois University (SIU) to make several enhancements to the Illinois Performance Accountability and Transparency System (IPATS) by, an authorization-only tool used to support state and local WIOA Title I partners. Updates were implemented across various tools within IPATS, and new tools were introduced.

The Dashboard was expanded to include additional metrics related to Individualized Career Services, Youth Service Elements, Participants with Open Services, Training and Youth Education/Training Services, and Measurable Skill Gain Attainment. Furthermore, updates to the customer lists generated by these metrics now provide users with more actionable information, creating a responsive and interactive system. These enhancements assist partners in serving their customers more effectively while ensuring accurate documentation of actions and progress within the system.

Reports

No information provided for this section.

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) Waiver of Six-Month Employment Requirement.

Strategies

Overall PY23 Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) included 346 projects with 2,070 workers trained. Of these, 70 projects were conducted under the waiver, representing 20 percent of the total. There were 55 businesses able to conduct IWT under the waiver.

Impact on Performance

In the 70 projects with a majority of new workers, overall, 595 workers received training. Of that amount, 254 workers in these projects were new hires representing 12 percent of all incumbent workers trained.

Outcomes for incumbent worker trainees are very positive, regardless of whether the project was conducted under the waiver. PY23 outcomes are similar to historical patterns. Nearly all workers are retained, but the percent receiving wage increases and promotions immediately as a direct result of the training are less than 10 percent.

Success Stories

Alex

Alex's journey is a testament to resilience and determination. Despite facing setbacks like limited job prospects, he sought out opportunities for growth. Starting as a Merchandising Associate at Costco, he supplemented his income with part-time work at Lowe's to support his household.

Recognizing the need for a career change after experiencing an unexpected setback, Alex, with the help of WIOA Funding, enrolled in the Combined HVAC/Electrician Program at West Chicago Professional Center. From July 2023 to February 2024 Alex attended training and successfully obtained his EPA License and Certificate of Training Completion in the Combined HVAC and Electrician Program. After several months of job searching, Alex secured full-time employment as an HVAC Technician with Mendel Plumbing and Heating in April 2024. This transition not only signifies personal achievement but also marks a significant step towards fulfilling his long-term goal of establishing a stable career in the HVAC field.

Through strategic planning, including budget adjustments and continued employment at Costco during his training, Alex ensured financial stability for his household while pursuing his career aspirations. Alex provided financial support for his retired parents, living on a fixed income.

With a clear vision for his future and a strong work ethic, he is well-equipped to thrive in his chosen field and build a brighter future for himself.

Veronica

Veronica worked as a Project Manager until her layoff in 2023. She came to workNet DuPage for employment services after working with an outplacement firm with little success. Veronica states that she felt “lost and unsure of her identity” as a result of her position being eliminated.

Veronica began working with a career coach on her employment goals. As Veronica continued to job search, she realized she needed additional certifications to compete in her field. It was imperative that she find employment quickly, as she is the sole support for her son.

With the help of her career coach, Veronica began to research training programs to earn additional certifications. Veronica identified a training program which met her needs and began training shortly thereafter. Veronica completed the training program and earned three certifications to add to her résumé. Shortly after completing training, she interviewed and offered a position as a Strategic Planning Manager for a major local employer. Veronica is grateful for the services she received from workNet DuPage.

> “WorkNet DuPage has become like family to me. The team is dedicated to helping and supporting jobseekers through their most vulnerable times. That support is invaluable and irreplaceable. Because of workNet DuPage I was able to lift myself again, and shine better than before, and now, I share this light with the world.”

Brittan

Brittan was a 21-year-old single mother of an infant when she came to Vermilion County Works (VCW) as a low-income adult in 2020. At the time of her enrollment, she was working part time as a food server, making $5.75 per hour. She knew that she wanted a change and the opportunity to provide a better life for her son, so she came to our office with the goal of earning her associate’s degree in health information technology at Danville Area Community College and finding remote work in the healthcare field.

After meeting with local staff to verify her eligibility, completing an assessment, and developing a career plan, she was enrolled in the appropriate services. VCW assisted Brittan with her tuition, fees, books, and supplies to support her career goal.

2020 was a difficult year to begin a new career path. At the same time that Danville Area Community College transitioned to online learning, Brittan was involved in a car accident. These events could have been enough to deter her from her goal, but she persevered. She was determined to see her courses through. So, with a broken nose and an altered education plan, she completed her semester with a 3.7 GPA.

On top of COVID-19 concerns, Brittan was a single mother and was struggling to balance family, work, and school. As her third term approached, she recognized that working full time to support herself and her son was taking its toll on her education. Instead of allowing her GPA to suffer, she decided to proceed with a lighter course load, which allowed her to proceed more confidently

and successfully in her courses. She was determined to complete her education, even if it took longer than she originally anticipated.

Brittan graduated with her Associates in Applied Science in Health Information Technology and a certificate in Medical Coding in the summer of 2023. She just celebrated her one-year work anniversary at True Rx Health Strategists, where she works remotely as a Patient Care Representative. She is extremely appreciative of the assistance that she received at VCW and the life that it has provided for her and her son.

Dennis - WIOA Youth Program

Dennis is one of LWIA 24's ISY Program Participants. He is a part-time student attending Southwestern Illinois College who is majoring in Political Science. Before joining, Dennis had never heard about the WIOA program before until one day by chance at Lowe's, our supervisor's husband was around and happened to bring it up. Dennis was surprised at all the services and opportunities our program provides our youth and was highly interested from the beginning.

When Dennis and his Career Specialist met for the first time, Dennis had just been in the United States for about a month. He was raised in Bolivia and had lived there most of his life. It was a culture shock both socially and economically. Dennis was able to get proper attire for his new job through supportive services despite having owned very little. Transportation has also been a barrier for Dennis due to him and his family sharing one car. He learned how to take the city bus early on, and that is now how he gets to work. Dennis also lacked confidence when he came into the program but throughout his journey and new experiences, Dennis has since bloomed into a confident young man.

Soon after enrolling into the Youth program, Dennis began and completed his Paid Work Experience at St. Clair County Intergovernmental Grants Department as an Office Assistant for LIHEAP. His supervisor and colleagues would constantly talk about what a pleasure it was to have Dennis in the office. His consistent strong work ethic and positive attitude led to an interview with the St. Clair County Circuit Clerk as his paid work experience was nearing the end. The Circuit Clerk and his staff were impressed with Dennis during the interview and agreed to an OJT. Dennis has been working there since January 2024 and has been doing great. Dennis is still participating and excelling in his OJT at the St. Clair County Courthouse. Although being a college student and working is not easy, Dennis has continued to push forward—eased and facilitated by the resources we offer. Dennis is excited and hopeful about his future. He is eternally grateful to have learned and become part of the WIOA Youth program.

Indiana

Indiana Department of Workforce Development (DWD)

Use of State Funds

Under-served Populations

Not applicable.

Integrated Service Delivery

Performance

Effective performance management plays a vital role in enabling Indiana to collect and analyze the data needed to assess the success of workforce programs. By leveraging WIOA Governor's Reserve funds for performance management, the State has enhanced its ability to develop comprehensive dashboards and other user-friendly tools. These resources will serve not only DWD but also local WDB's, empowering them to make informed strategic decisions. Looking ahead to PY24, the State is excited to continue this initiative with a thorough redesign of the Workforce Dashboard. This redesign aims to provide even greater insights into workforce efforts, ensuring that they can monitor progress and drive improvements in the programs effectively.

Justice-Involved Youth in High Crime Communities (Youth Funding Expenditures Waiver)

In PY23 one local area was the sub-recipient of a DOL Growth Opportunity Grant. This grant focused on serving OSY involved in the criminal justice system who reside in high crime areas, specifically Gary, Indiana. The Growth Opportunity Grant relies on collaborations with justice agencies, violence prevention groups, and employers to provide employment support, violence prevention, mentoring, conflict resolution, leadership development, paid work experience and placement into education and employment for justice-involved youth in high-poverty, high-crime areas with recent experience of community unrest.

English Language Learners (Youth Funding Expenditures Waiver)

Over the course of the last 15 years, the State's English-language Learner (ELL) population has grown by over 500 percent. Some Indiana school corporations have even seen ELL populations grow by 1,000 percent in just the last three years. Youth populations in several workforce service areas have become a focus population of wrap-around services in connecting WIOA Title II, Adult Education and WIOA support services to assist them in improving English skills and employment access.

Yes WIOA Can

Workforce Systems

In a proactive effort to enhance efficiency and boost performance outcomes, Indiana has embarked on a comprehensive assessment of the technology supporting its workforce system. This ongoing evaluation has highlighted the importance of

centralizing both systems and data collection across all relevant touchpoints. To facilitate this objective of streamlining data acquisition and ultimately improving performance metrics, Indiana has strategically leveraged the WIOA Governor's Reserve funds. These funds are being used not just as a financial resource but also as a catalyst for fostering innovative solutions and practices within the workforce system. As DWD continues to evaluate the progress and identify emerging opportunities throughout PY24, DWD remains committed to allocating a portion of these funds to further this mission. The goal is to create a more cohesive and effective data collection framework that will lead to better outcomes for the workforce we serve.

Evaluations

The State is making significant strides in enhancing its capacity for regular program evaluations, especially within the framework of WIOA Title I. Throughout PY23, impressive progress has been achieved in this initiative. As part of the State's commitment to continuous improvement, the State has actively participated in DOL's Evaluation Professional Learning Community (PLC) Workgroup. This collaboration has brought together a dedicated team of professionals who are focused on creating a systematic process for identifying and prioritizing topics that warrant evaluation. Looking ahead to PY24, the State has ambitious plans to strengthen this effort further. The State aims to fill a new position within the Performance Reporting and Data Integrity Unit, specifically dedicated to program evaluation. This role will involve close collaboration with subject matter experts (SMEs) to conduct thorough assessments of program effectiveness, ensuring that evaluations are both comprehensive and impactful. Through these initiatives, the State is committed to fostering a culture of accountability and continuous improvement in its workforce programs. The use of WIOA Governor's Reserve funds will continue to drive this work.

In addition to participation in DOL's Evaluation PLC Workgroup, an evaluation was conducted in June 2024 on WIOA Title I Adult Priority of Service (APOS). The report presents key findings and points of further interest in a comparative analysis of employment and wage results for adult participants whose Priority of Service was determined in PY22.

The State has consistently increased service levels to adults with APOS barriers over the last four PYs. As of PY23-Q3, 73.6 percent of participants receiving individualized career and training services in the adult program are from at least one of three APOS priority groups (recipients of public assistance, low-income individuals, and individuals with a basic skills deficiency) established by DOL. This represents a 16 percent increase since PY20. As service levels for adults, in the three priority groups have increased, it is important to understand, through a comprehensive evaluation of participant results, what the impact to employment and wages are for participants with APOS barriers as compared to participants without APOS barriers. In general, the report revealed that adult participants during the review period who had APOS barriers experienced employment and wage results that were lower than those of adult participants without APOS barriers. Of the participants who had APOS barriers, those who reported the Basic Skills Deficiency barrier had the highest rate of employment and average total wages for the review period. Participants who received Public Assistance reported the lowest rate of employment and average total wages. WIOA Governor's Reserve funds were utilized to carry out this evaluation.

Partnerships with Adult Education and Indiana Department of Corrections (IDOC) (Youth Funding Expenditures Waiver)

Additional statewide strategies include partnerships with Indiana Adult Education programs for co-enrollment and educational remediation in support of future employment/education goals; partnerships with IDOC to enroll youth who exit the juvenile justice

system, making the AJC their first stop upon release. In the past year, IDOC has worked to improve the transition processes, including scheduling pre-release meetings between youth offenders and AJC youth case managers prior to exit. In PY23, IDOC referred 67 youth to AJC locations across the state.

Flexible Access Points (Youth Funding Expenditures Waiver)

Across all youth programs, allowing flexible access points for youth to meet with WIOA case managers is the most beneficial service strategy to ensure their engagement in program activities. This includes ISY and OSY, as potential youth participants are often overwhelmed by the process of visiting a government office; staff have been known to meet youth at McDonald's, adult education centers, or community partners where youth may be receiving other services to connect and serve. For example, a WDB in southwest Indiana launched "*Neighborhood Navigator*" positions with on-site "office hours" at local community-based locations; services are more open to youth and others who may need WIOA or Wagner-Peyser-like services.

Focus on Special Population Groups (Youth Funding Expenditures Waiver)

There has been a large uptick in special populations across youth programs, especially those with limited language proficiency, individuals with disabilities, and youth who are basic skills deficient (BSD). Youth who would be considered BSD continue to grow following the pandemic, which can be attributed to the interrupted learning they experienced while in-school. Additionally, while the graduation rate for high school students has begun to recover from the early 2020's, reaching 88 percent for the Class of 2023, youth are still not equipped for, or engaged in, post-secondary education opportunities.

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) Partnership (Youth Funding Expenditures Waiver)

The State's WIOA partnership between VR Pre-ETS and IDWD's JAG program prioritized enrollment of youth with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and 504 plans, with a goal of enrollment in classes of at least 20 percent youth with disabilities. This partnership includes increased access to internships/work experience, preparation for post-secondary education opportunities and other required Pre-ETS services; the partnership has been identified by the Rehabilitation Services agency at the federal level.

Other State Funds Activities

Not applicable.

Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

Federal Quarterly Performance Dashboard

In PY23, DWD continued its Federal Quarterly Performance Dashboard. This dashboard allows staff and workforce partners to quickly review and analyze both individual quarter and annual rolling WIOA performance data—both statewide and for local areas in one location. DWD has plans to bring greater enhancements to this tool in PY24 to include more interactive design and new data elements for review.

WIOA: An Analysis of the Title I Adult Workforce Program and Adult Priority of Service (APOS).

In addition to ease of access to performance-level data, DWD has continued its commitment to evidence-based performance evaluations. Indiana has focused significantly on APOS in recent years, aiming to meet the DOL's goal of having at least 75 percent of participants in the adult program receive individualized career and training services from one of the three priority groups.

Indiana has consistently increased service levels to adults with APOS barriers over the last four program years. As of PY23-Q3, 73.6 percent of participants receiving individualized career and training services in the adult program were from at least one of three APOS priority groups (recipients of public assistance, low-income individuals, or basic skills deficient), representing at 16 percent increase since PY20.

As service levels for adults in the APOS priority groups have increased, it became crucial to comprehensively evaluate participant results to understand the impact on employment and wages for those with APOS barriers compared to those without. The purpose of conducting this evaluation was to compare the employment and wage results for adult participants whose priority of service was determined in PY22. The comparative analysis focused on participants with APOS barriers and without APOS barriers and their respective employment and wage results for the review period.

DWD plans to conduct at least one WIOA Title I evaluation in PY24. Efforts are currently underway to review and select a priority topic. A few of the areas that Indiana is considering would focus the efforts on Training, Business Services, SNAP E&T, and Co-Enrollment.

RESEA Program

In addition to the work on WIOA Title I Evaluations, DWD has continued to make progress on an evidence-based evaluation of the RESEA program. While this evaluation will be focused on specific efforts and data elements of the RESEA program, the goal is to seek opportunities throughout the evaluation to also evaluate WIOA programming where applicable. DWD expects to complete and submit this evaluation through the Clearinghouse for Labor Evaluation and Research (CLEAR) in PY24.

2023 Workforce Program Review

As in previous years, the State Legislature conducted an annual review, analysis, and evaluation process for the State's workforce-related programs during PY23. This review was conducted by the Office of Fiscal and Management Analysis (OFMA), a division of Indiana's Legislative Services Agency (LSA).

Continuous Improvement

DWD is committed to continuous improvement strategies utilizing results from studies and evidence-based practices. As part of DWD's planning process to conduct evaluations, a segment of the work following evaluations is focused on actionable items that can be implemented to improve overall program delivery and service design.

In the case of WIOA Title I evaluation that focused on APOS, the states has begun to complete further refinement of the data to identify how each local area is performing in their service to adults in priority groups. The results of this review will allow DWD to tailor technical assistance that may be needed to help local areas meet the goal of 75 percent.

DWD continues its partnership with the Indiana Business Research Center (IBRC) to support the facilitation of evaluation design, collection, and analysis of data and reporting. DWD's long-standing collaboration with IBRC enables the joint teams to enhance the research and analysis efforts they support for the agency.

Reports

Indiana Economic Analysis Report

The State compiled its annual Indiana Economic Analysis Report, which used industry, employment, and other labor market information made available through DOL.

Additional reports:

- WIOA: An Analysis of the Title I Adult Workforce Program and Adult Priority of Service
- Federal Performance Metrics Dashboard
- LSA 2023 Indiana Workforce-Related Program Review

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

- Youth Funding Expenditures Waiver
- State Board Membership Requirements Waiver

Strategies

Youth Funding Expenditures Waiver

The State was approved for a waiver to provide flexibility for regional WDBs to decrease the minimum OSY expenditures from 75 percent to 50 percent, as needed. OSY services are very individualized to meet the needs of participants by providing them with access to partnerships with training providers and employer partners, which are tailored to help OSY participants achieve their individual goals.

The waiver has been specifically used to ensure consistent funding for the State's Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) program. Consistent support for JAG has notably boosted access to WIOA for JAG participants. JAG/WIOA co-enrollment has further enhanced access to youth program elements for these in-school students. This co-enrollment ensures access to the 14 youth program elements. However, across the state, the use of WIOA in-school funding is less than 25 percent, although it is higher in some workforce service areas.

In PY23, the State's WDB's in three regions utilized the Youth Funding Expenditures Waiver. Due to an investment from the Family and Social Services Administration's (FSSA) TANF program in August 2023, these workforce service areas opted to co-enroll ISY in JAG and WIOA to provide greater access to supportive services like tutoring and goal completion incentives.

To meet broad ISY enrollment goals under WIOA, the State's WDB's rely on programs like JAG, which is a 43-year nationally recognized workforce preparation and dropout prevention program, to improve high school graduation rates, increase post-graduation employment, and to increase access to, and utilization of, post-secondary education and training by Indiana's new high school graduates.

The flexibility allowed by the Waiver on Funding Youth Expenditures has contributed to the success of Indiana's JAG program by allowing JAG to continue in-class instruction, student mentoring, and participant follow-up services. Included in JAG outcomes are nearly 2,500 ISY in the follow-up phase of services and over 4,500 junior and senior students in classrooms across the state. For the State Class of 2023, JAG Indiana boasts a 96 percent graduation rate, outpacing all Indiana seniors in that cohort by 8 percent.

Through the numerous opportunities offered in JAG programming and other individualized services for OSY, including work experience, mentorship opportunities, connections to Adult Education and/or other partners, and a direct connection to program services, outcomes for youth with barriers are strong. Additionally, most youth who have received occupational skills training achieve employment and skills gains at a higher level than those who have not.

State Board Membership Requirements Waiver

During the 2018 Legislative Session, the State General Assembly created the Governor's Workforce Cabinet (GWC) and designated it with the responsibilities of the state workforce board and the authority to direct state agencies in strategically addressing current and future workforce and education needs. The GWC achieved its PY23 goals by continuing to convene key partners, determine strategy, and drive change for individuals and employers. GWC is comprised of 33 total members with 28 voting members representing different geographic areas of the state. Members are appointed by the Governor and include business and community leaders, K–12 and career and technical education representatives, appointees from post-secondary institutions, Indiana lawmakers and experts from state agencies. This unique structure enables a comprehensive view of workforce from early childhood, K–12, post-secondary, and adult education to the labor force—essentially cradle to career. Industry and employer representatives continue to remain a majority of the GWC.

Impact on Performance

Youth Funding Expenditures Waiver

As identified in the waiver, DOL anticipated an increase in the number of ISY served, with the performance accountability outcomes for the overall WIOA Youth—including both ISY and OSY—expected to remain stable or improve across most WIOA Youth performance indicators. Total participants served increased from 2,888 in PY22 to 2,848 in PY23. Median earnings also increased from $4,639 in PY22 to $5,222 in PY23.

Prioritizing OSY

DWD and the WDB's are continually exploring innovative methods to prioritize OSY and provide educational, training, and employment service opportunities. This includes:

- Targeting OSY involved with the criminal justice system and residing in high-crime areas
- Collaborating with Adult Education programs for co-enrollment and educational remediation in support of future employment/education goals
- Ensuring flexible access points for service delivery
- Providing comprehensive wrap-around services for special populations, particularly those with limited language proficiency, disabilities, and/or basic skills deficiencies
- Partnering with Vocational Rehabilitation Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS).

State Board Membership Requirements Waiver

In June 2022, the GWC began conducting its meetings regionally. By July 2024, all twelve designated economic growth regions had served as GWC meeting locations. Attendees range from local business, civic leaders, regional workforce board members, economic development organizations, post-secondary institutions, training partners and community organizations. This structure enables stakeholders to discuss local priority topics and share regional successes and challenges with GWC members. The GWC benefits from observing regional best practices and discussing opportunities to scale while also offering solutions and statewide resources to address local challenges.

In advance of the 2023 legislative session, industry representatives worked closely with the GWC Chair and Executive Director to lead member working groups to develop *Recommendations to Tackle Employer Talent Challenges and Accelerate the State's Economy*. The recommendations proposed solutions for helping employers find skilled workers, removing barriers to employment for potential workers, and preparing the future workforce and were submitted. Many items championed or proposed in the GWC recommendations received the support of the Governor and Indiana General Assembly.

Recommendations resulting in legislative action include:

- Expansion of early learning opportunities.

- Increased support of kindergarten readiness and third grade reading level proficiency.
- Development of a career navigation network using intermediaries for ISY and select individuals.
- K–12 Career Scholarship Accounts to remove barriers related to work-based learning opportunities.
- Scaling of career technical education graduation pathways and funding.
- Acceleration of digital development:
    - Increased funding for short-term certification programs, credential attainment and stack- ability, and on-the-job education opportunities.
    - Establishment of college funding formula for in-demand STEM degrees.
    - Development of in-state college retention incentives.
    - Increase funding for adult education.

The GWC recommendations also served as the basis for the State's WIOA strategic plan and broader economic, workforce development, and education and training talent pipeline goals. A second iteration of recommendations is currently under development and will be published in advance of the 2025 legislative session. These new recommendations will reflect the collaborative efforts of the GWC and industry partners to develop strategies to move Indiana forward through interviews with subject matter experts, and comprehensive local and national program, outcome, and best practice research and review.

Success Stories

Out-of-School Youth Program

Alivia came to her local AJC with her parent for assistance earning her High School Equivalency (HSE) diploma and finding employment. Alivia had very little work experience, had been homeschooled her entire life, was very shy. Her parent did most of the talking with the OSY Career Advisor.

Alivia had very little computer knowledge and did not have an e-mail address. The career advisor reviewed the services and benefits of the WIOA program and referred Alivia to the Adult Education program. Due to the overwhelming nature of the changes and potential challenges for Alivia, the career advisor allowed Alivia to get acclimated to her new educational system before pursuing WIOA enrollment.

The career advisor checked Alivia's progress regularly and one day, Alivia contacted the career advisor to seek assistance with her job search and potential training after she completed her HSE. Alivia was making good progress with her HSE and indicated that her dream was to be a welder. The career advisor enrolled Alivia into the WIOA Youth program and assisted her with job search and supportive services to travel to and from her HSE classes. Additionally, Alivia was able to earn several youth incentives for meeting with her career advisor, earning MSG's, gaining employment, and successfully earning her HSE!

Alivia has now gained confidence and was featured as a student speaker at her Adult Education graduation ceremony, sharing her story and gratitude for her support system. Alivia is currently in a 480-hour paid Work Experience (WEX) for metal finishing but still maintains her long-term goal of becoming a certified welder. When asked how the AJC and youth program impacted her life, Alvia stated, “By giving me hope, knowing that there was something out there that could help me in my future…If you put in the hard work, you can accomplish anything!”

Iowa

IowaWorks

Iowa Workforce Development

Use of State Funds

Fifteen percent Governor's Reserve Set-Aside funds (State Set-Aside) in the state are used to pay for required activities related to grant and financial administration, monitoring and oversight, reporting, and disseminating and updating Eligible Training Provider data, providing technical assistance to local areas, and staffing the State Workforce Board and performance accountability team. Additionally, Set-Aside funds support maintenance of the management information system for WIOA also known as IowaWorks.

Under-served Populations

Home Base Iowa (HBI)

HBI is the State's premier initiative to connect Iowa communities and businesses with skilled veterans, transitioning service members, and military spouses seeking career opportunities and a place to call home. In PY23, HBI saw significant growth, underscoring the program's commitment to supporting veterans and their families in establishing successful careers and meaningful connections within the States' communities.

In April 2023, the Home Base Iowa and JVSG programs were brought together under one umbrella to maximize their reach and impact across the state. This new work unit is referred to as the Office of Veteran Workforce Services (OVWS). This reorganization has increased capacity, communication, and consistency in the way we deliver services to several groups including but not limited to the following: veterans, service members, employers, partners, communities and institutions of higher education.

Vision: Establish Iowa as the state of choice for veterans, transitioning service members, and their families.

Mission: The State is committed to achieving this by fostering strong collaborations and forming strategic partnerships with the Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs, Iowa Economic Development Authority, community partners, employers, and educational institutions. Together, the State aims to create a supportive and enriching environment that offers outstanding educational opportunities, employment, and community integration, making every aspect of living and working in Iowa welcoming and rewarding.

In PY23, HBI provided tailored employment services to 90 veterans, transitioning service members, and their spouses. However, these services are just one aspect of HBI's comprehensive support network. In partnership with the JVSG team, HBI offers wrap-around services to address the various needs of veterans moving to Iowa. JVSG veteran career planners deliver individualized employment assistance, while HBI career planners provide essential information on community resources and incentives, facilitating a smooth transition into State life.

HBI's support services include guidance on education benefits, VA home loans, community and statewide incentives, connections to veteran support networks, and local veteran service officers. This holistic approach helps veterans find purpose and community after they serve the Nation.

A major priority for HBI in PY23 was recruiting and retaining veterans, service members and their families in the state. The State recognizes veterans' valuable contributions to communities and local economies, bringing with them a wealth of skills and talents that enhance Iowa's workforce and communities. Additionally, the federal funds veterans bring through VA disability compensation, retirement pensions, and VA home loan guarantees stimulate local economies across the state.

A significant accomplishment to support the efforts in recruiting military talent occurred in November 2023. During that month, Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) was approved as a 3rd Party Administrator of the Department of Defense SkillBridge Program. Through this program, approved industry partners can gain early workforce access to transitioning service members up to 180 days prior to their separation with approval by their command. IWD was approved by the DoD to serve as an intermediary and work with employers in Iowa to review their applications and training plans for program approval. Since November 2023, the OVWS team, with support from HBI, has helped approve 22 new DoD SkillBridge opportunities in Iowa. Separating service members represent a talented pipeline for Iowa businesses and the goal is to attract this talent to Iowa.

According to the FY23 Geographic Distribution of VA Expenditures (GDX) report, the State has a veteran population of 177,922. These veterans contributed $1.6 billion in federal funds to the state, bolstering local economies and supporting community growth. HBI's recruitment and retention efforts aim to increase Iowa's veteran population and ensure all veterans have access to the benefits they have earned.

Another key focus for HBI is enhancing veteran participation in Iowa's labor force. In FY23, 83.8 percent of the State's veteran population was active in the workforce. While some veterans choose not to pursue employment due to retirement, disability, or financial benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs, HBI emphasizes the value of employment beyond monetary compensation. By highlighting secondary benefits such as personal fulfillment, skill development, and community engagement. HBI aims to encourage greater workforce participation among Iowa's veterans.

HBI PY23 Highlights:

- Surpassed 130 Total HBI Communities (including 80+ designated counties)
- Helped Over 90 Veterans and Spouses Find Employment
- 129+ Employers received HBI designation

Offender Reentry Program

The State appropriates $418,312.69 in general fund dollars to IWD for the purpose of placing six Reentry Career Planners at the following locations: Iowa Correctional Institution Facility in Mount Pleasant, Fort Dodge Correctional Facility in Fort Dodge, and

the Clarinda Correctional Facility in Clarinda. This funding also covers one Reentry Operations Manager to oversee operating procedures and the program.

The program staff partners with the Iowa Department of Corrections (IDOC) and other offender-related partners throughout the state, to assist in the overall goal of reducing recidivism. IDOC has nine correctional institutions that house around 8,535 individuals. Nearly 90 percent will return to their communities; just over 3,800 were released in PY22. Community Based Corrections (CBC) has eight judicial districts that supervise about 39,100 individuals on probation, parole, special sentence, and pretrial release. CBC also has 22 residential facilities that house and supervise around 2,092 individuals.

Nearly 50,000 individuals are currently incarcerated or on community supervision in the state. The average daily cost of incarceration per individual is $101.81, totaling just under $37,000 per individual per year. The IDOC reports that the three-year recidivism rate for FY23 is 35.8 percent; or 1.5 percent higher than the recidivism rate observed in FY22. The national average for state prisons is around 70 percent.

Training is in progress so that the Reentry Career Planners in the State's institutions are certified as an Offender Workforce Development Specialist (OWDS). This certification is an inclusive workforce development program with a 10-module curriculum designed to introduce, explain, and provide practical experience with the tools and strategies targeting employment retention for the justice-involved and marginalized population. Currently, three out of six of the Reentry Career Planners that are working in the correctional institutions are OWDS certified.

The State's reentry program supports WIOA through recording registered-only individuals and program enrollment into Wagner-Peyser. The goal is to teach work-related skills, find a career pathway, job placement prior to release from the institution, and network with employers and community reentry service providers to ensure a successful transition for the returning citizen. The Reentry Career Planners help create résumés, assist with mock interviews, and proctor the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) and O*NET assessments.

Empowering and Motivating Ex-offenders to Reach Gainful Employment (EMERGE) is a workshop taught that focuses on how to get back into the workforce and explain their criminal history to potential employers. The staff act as a sponsor for the IDOC Registered Apprenticeship programs and host career fairs inside the institution. They also network with employers and educate them on incentives to hire returning citizens, including the Federal Bonding program, Work Opportunity Tax Credit program, and the Iowa income tax benefit. They perform individualized job referrals based on skill set and job search three weeks prior to the incarcerated individual's release, including referrals to IowaWorks Centers in the area the individual will return to. Referrals also happen through the Iowa Registered Apprenticeship General Interest electronic referral form for apprentices that need to continue in their program after release or are looking to enroll in a program.

During PY23, the Reentry Career Planners served 1,900 individuals, which is 22 percent of the incarcerated population in Iowa. This number is larger compared to the last program year as these positions were fully staffed.

Integrated Service Delivery

No information provided for this section.

Yes WIOA Can

No information provided for this section.

Other State Funds Activities

Not applicable.

Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

Evaluation Activities under WIOA Title I

Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) and Iowa State University's Iowa's Integrated Data System for Decision-Making (I2D2) team partnered together to conduct a preliminary evaluation of WIOA Title I programs. The I2D2 team was recruited for this project because of their experience with integrated data and prior work conducting needs assessments and program evaluations for other state departments.

IWD WIOA Title I program leadership initiated the partnership with the intent to cultivate short-term knowledge (Phase I) and use this knowledge to develop a longer-term plan for ongoing evaluation (Phase II+). Phase I comprises the work for the current report, and involved two components:

- First, the team examined Title I datasets specifically to see what could be learned from within-program records prior to integration with other data systems. WIOA leadership expressed specific interest in several areas for this data exploration component:
    - Who are Title I programs serving, and are these groups representative of those who may benefit from services?
    - What is the level of co-enrollment across programs? And
    - What are the most reported barriers to employment?
- Second, the team conducted data discovery to explore additional datasets within IWD and departments outside of IWD that would have useful information to inform evaluation efforts in the longer term (Phase II+).

<u>Part I. WIOA Title I Pilot Evaluation</u>

This pilot evaluation focused primarily on PY22, but also included a preliminary look at longitudinal records to explore potential for additional future evaluation work. The following summary highlights key findings from three areas of analysis that sought to:

d) describe program participants,

e) examine co-enrollment between WIOA Title I programs and other IWD programs, and

f) study the 13 barriers to employment.

Part II: Data System Discovery

The data discovery process with the PIRL and related workforce data revealed some important patterns and considerations for future evaluation work.

The PIRL is divided into PY files that contain information about participants who received services during that program year as well as outcomes from program participants in previous year(s). While helpful for federal reporting requirements that mandate annual fiscal year accountability, this annual file presented some challenges for an evaluation that seeks to look at individual participant success and outcomes across time (rather than just reporting who received services in any given year). Given that participants could join the program at any point during the year, as the State looks to examine outcomes the timing of enrollment will become more important than the specific PY in which someone was enrolled. Similarly, outcome data is provided annually rather than in an ongoing longitudinal record.

For the current report, the I2D2 team connected individuals with their own outcome data to pilot a longitudinal examination. However, at the time of the analysis, the entirety of PY23 data had not been released. This meant that not all of the outcome data was available for PY22.

RESEA Evaluation

The RESEA program is administered in all IowaWorks Centers. The program assists individuals receiving unemployment benefits to return to work (RTW) and reduces the time an individual receives unemployment benefits by providing reemployment services. The RESEA theory of change holds that unemployed individuals reenter the workforce at a more rapid rate when provided reemployment services and UI requirements are enforced. These individuals also engage in more reemployment services, are referred to more partner programs/services, receive more individualized résumé assistance and have more able and available issues resolved.

Iowa's RESEA program is currently structured to allow in person and virtual initial appointments and reemployment services. Program staff theorize that expanding the method to receive virtual services will increase the participation of initial appointments and reemployment services. The State offers additional individualized RESEA meetings and believes this will assist the customer to update their reemployment plan, gain additional reemployment services, obtain more referrals to partner programs/services and can troubleshoot job-seeking issues with their RESEA Career Planner.

The overall objective of this evaluation is to assess the effect of the RESEA program on individuals receiving UI benefits who are required to look for employment. Iowa secured a professional evaluator, and the evaluation started October 2022. The data collection period has concluded, and the professional evaluator is assessing the outcomes of the study.

Continuous Improvement

Other Data Systems that Could Inform WIOA Title I Evaluation

Throughout this project and simultaneously with participation in other national learning community efforts related to WIOA evaluations, the I2D2 team explored potential additional data systems that could be combined to enhance future evaluations. The goal was to find helpful data that could inform prioritized analytic questions about whether WIOA programs are serving the intended audiences and what short- and long-term outcomes are being advanced. Through participation in national learning communities with other states who are conducting WIOA evaluations, and discussions with other Iowa state agency leaders, the State explored several useful systems and their potential benefits:

4. Unemployment and Wages data (IWD)
5. Post-secondary enrollment records (Iowa Department of Education)
6. TANF, SNAP, and other public benefits programs (mostly Iowa Department of Health and Human Services)

The results of the evaluation completed during PY23 provided great initial insight into the impacts of the WIOA Title I program in Iowa. Additionally, the State has identified several areas of technical assistance through this evaluation, one example is the need for additional training and education on the importance of recording barriers at program entry. The State looks forward to continuing this work and expanding upon this early success.

Reports

Evaluation of the Iowa RCM/RESEA Program

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

The State did not have any active waivers in place for PY23.

Strategies

Not applicable.

Impact on Performance

Not applicable.

Success Stories

No information provided for this section.

Kansas

KansasWorks

KansasWorks State Board

Use of State Funds

The Kansas Department of Commerce fulfills the responsibility of required activities mandated in WIOA Sections 129 and 134. In addition to this the Governor has utilized reserve funds to support projects aligned with the strategic goals and needs. These projects are designed to implement innovative programs and strategies to meet the needs of all employers in Kansas while effectively serving individuals with barriers to employment.

The Governor's Reserve funds are also used to fund staff who develop strategies for effectively serving identified populations with multiple barriers to employment, including individuals with disabilities, justice-involved job candidates and older workers.

Under-served Populations

Workforce/Corrections Initiatives/Addressing Barriers to Reentry

The Manager for Justice-Involved Programs serves as the liaison between Kansas Department of Commerce (Commerce) and Kansas Department of Corrections (KDOC) to work Statewide at increasing opportunities for individuals involved in the criminal justice system to rejoin the workforce in sustainable living wage employment. Statewide involvement activities include:

- Regular meetings with KDOC Director of Employment and Director of Education, to discuss goals and connections needed to foster employment for individuals exiting the correctional facilities.
- Train Department of Commerce Workforce Services Specialist Registered Apprentices and other staff on assisting individuals who have been involved in the justice system with rejoining the workforce.
- Train Workforce Center Business Services Teams on engaging employers in conversations about hiring justice-involved individuals.
- Providing training for partner agencies on employment support specific to individuals involved in the justice system.
- Connecting with businesses interested in expanding their hiring pool to qualified justice-involved individuals.
- Providing oversight for shared position with Commerce and Kansas Juvenile Correctional Complex (KJCC).
- Administering multiple Federal competitive grants received by Commerce.

Integrated Service Delivery

Retaining Employment and Talent After Injury/Illness Network (RETAIN)

RETAINWORKS is part of RETAIN, a federally funded initiative exploring early stay-at-work/return-to-work (SAW/RTW) intervention strategies that keep people in the labor force following illness or injury which could result in a work disability. The overarching goal of RETAINWORKS is a cultural change to viewing employment as an outcome of medical treatment.

RETAINWORKS is funded by DOL and the Social Security Administration under a grant award of $21,600,000 to the Kansas Department of Commerce. The primary objectives are to increase employment retention and labor force participation, and to reduce long-term work disability among project participants.

Through a statewide collaboration between three of the largest medical systems in Kansas, Ascension Via Christi, Stormont Vail, and the University of Kansas Health Systems, in partnership with all five LWDBs, Nurse Navigators, employed by the medical systems, and Workforce Coordinators, employed by the LWDBs, are coordinating health interventions and employment service delivery to support the employee in returning to or staying at work after an illness or injury. Additionally, Referral and Enrollment leads track program progress and assist with recruitment and training of participating Medical Providers.

As of June 30, 2024, 1,170 individuals were enrolled. This demonstrated an increase of 415 percent, compared to the previous program year. Partnering medical providers across the state now total 470, exceeding the program's original goal of 250 providers.

KansasWorks State Board Strategic Plan

Every two years the KansasWorks State Board develops a new strategic plan to guide the focus, oversight, and investments of the KansasWorks State Board.

Workforce Innovation Conference

The Annual Workforce Innovation Conference took place in October and was hosted by the Kansas Department of Commerce and Kansas Board Regents. Presentations and workshops were provided to enhance and improve workforce solutions in Kansas. Plus, the schedule included Local Area discussion groups that provided an opportunity for each local area to discuss takeaways from the conference and share ideas that can be implemented in their Local Areas.

Yes WIOA Can

Opportunity Youth Program (NCCC)

During the report year, Commerce sub granted WIOA discretionary funds to Neosho County Community College to provide specialized, intensive services to OSY who have serious barriers to employment. Participants will soon, or have already, aged out of Foster Care; lack a high school diploma; have not acquired the skills and tools needed for typical adult living such as a driver's license or basic banking; or other barriers. The project seeks to demonstrate that expansive, intensive delivery of one-on-one employment and training services and supports results in increased employment for young adults with multiple barriers.

WorkReady

The National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) is a nationally recognized certificate that lets employers know a job candidate's skills before they even walk into the interview. Jobseekers present their Bronze, Silver, Gold, or Platinum Certificate to Employers as proof of skills in reading, locating information, and mathematics.

Workforce Innovation Conference

The Annual Workforce Innovation Conference took place in October and was hosted by the Kansas Department of Commerce and Kansas Board Regents. Presentations and workshops were provided to enhance and improve workforce solutions in Kansas. Plus, the schedule included Local Area discussion groups that provided an opportunity for each local area to discuss takeaways from the conference and share ideas that can be implemented in their Local Areas.

Registered Apprenticeship (RA)

The RA training programs are available in 1,500 occupations across 170 industries found in businesses of all sizes and last from 1–5 years. Apprenticeship programs are for people of all ages who want to earn a salary while they learn, gaining skills and knowledge. These programs offer employers the opportunity to strengthen and build their workforce providing a high-quality talent pipeline. RA programs meet the needs of both employers and jobseekers.

KansasWorks.com

KansasWorks.com continues to adapt to the needs of Kansas employers and jobs seekers as well as expansion of programs. KansasWorks.com, hosted by America's JobLink Alliance (AJLA), expanded to include additional enrollments for new grants such as Pathway Home 2 and SAEEI as relates to the case management modules of the system. Kansas continues to strive to make routine adjustments to the site to foster a welcoming appearance for all users.

WorkKeys/National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC)®

WorkKeys NCRC is an assessment-based credential issued at four levels: Platinum, Gold, Silver, and Bronze. The NCRC measures and certifies the essential work skills needed for success in jobs across industries and occupations. WorkKeys NCRC has helped Kansas businesses streamline the selection process for hourly manufacturing employees. The level of certificate easily indicates if the jobseeker can grasp key concepts to be successful in the manufacturing industry. Other Kansas businesses have used the WorkKeys NCRC to provide wage increases if the employee reaches a higher certificate level. The Kansas Workforce Centers provide the WorkKeys NCRC at no cost to the employers and the jobseekers.

The credential is awarded in four levels and verifies skills proficiency in:

- Problem solving
- Critical thinking
- Reading and using work-related text

- Applying information from workplace documents to solve problems
- Applying mathematical reasoning to work-related problems
- Setting up and performing work-related mathematical calculations
- Locating, synthesizing, and applying information that is presented graphically
- Comparing, summarizing, and analyzing information presented in multiple related graphics

A NCRC is earned by achieving a Level Score of 3 or better on all three WorkKeys assessments:

- Applied Math
- Workplace Documents
- Graphic Literacy

Other State Funds Activities

My ReEmployment Program (MRP)

Beginning June 2021, My (Re)Employment Plan (MRP) was revived and updated in HB2196. The program is a collaboration between the Kansas Department of Commerce, Kansas Department of Labor (KDOL), and KansasWorks Workforce System, and provides enhanced reemployment services to Kansans who are unemployed and looking for work. The program connects unemployment recipients who have received three consecutive UI payments with KansasWorks.com. Selected claimants are required to complete a Job Search Plan and have an active résumé in KansasWorks.com. Customers needing assistance are encouraged to visit their nearest Workforce Center. During PY22,

- 7,638 claimants were notified of their required participation in the My (Re)Employment Plan program.
- 3,690 have successfully completed all program requirements.
    - The remaining 1,923 potentially returned to work prior to completion or other unknown factors.
- 1,125 were waived from participation, mainly due to returning to work.

In September 2022, the program achieved full automation via the customer's utilization of KansasWorks.com. This automated system seamlessly integrates the job search plan and skills assessment components within the KansasWorks.com platform. Upon successful completion of these tasks and a published résumé, the program's associated services are finalized, and notifications are automatically transmitted to KDOL to update customer status.

During Phase 2 of the program, Designated staff have been tasked of quarterly reviews of the résumés uploaded during the My (Re)Employment Plan (MRP) process, checking for content and quality. This followed by two local areas initiating a pilot initiative involving proactive outreach, which includes cold calling, customers who have completed their My (Re)Employment Plan (MRP)

requirements to extend supplementary workforce services. These endeavors serve as a pivotal entry point for individuals seeking access to the Workforce Center.

Evaluations

Within the state, the Kansas Department of Commerce is responsible for WIOA Title I and Title III activities, which includes program evaluations. Commerce program evaluation processes are focused on two areas:

1) topic/activity specific evaluation and
2) program specific evaluation.

Commerce continues to build and improve upon these evaluation processes. The process is intended to create a consistent and meaningful evaluation regardless of focus area within a reasonable amount of time. Evaluations will further support continuous improvement and assist in identifying best practices across programs within the local areas and state.

Activities and Methodology

WIOA Title I Program Evaluation

Commerce is in progress with WIOA Title I program evaluation in which a task group of experts will come together and focus on pointed questions in efforts to identify best practices and promote continuous improvement. WIOA Title I task group members have a good understanding of the programs to include Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs.

This long-term evaluation for WIOA Title I started in the spring of 2023 with the establishment of the task group. This group consists of representatives from all five local areas to include One-Stop partner representation, research analyst, program managers, and other key partners as needed. This evaluation is currently in the pre-implementation state.

During this stage, the group assembled to become familiar with the process, review objectives, and address questions. Progress continues within this phase in that the WIOA Title I task group experts submitted for consideration questions in which are high priority for evaluation. This exercise provided definition to the course for the program evaluation as the task group moves forward. Questions were narrowed to two questions per program. With questions being agreed upon, the task group will be transitioning into the Accountability stage. During this stage, the research analyst will be conducting data analysis to provide to the task group for assessment of program operations against expectations. Based on the questions posed, outcomes could result in a wide spectrum of conclusions from higher employment rates to increased wages. When data analysis is complete, the task group will résumé meeting to continue with the stages of the program evaluation efforts. While a firm completion date has not been identified, progress continues within evaluation efforts.

Peer Learning Cohort (PLC) on Program Evaluation

The Kansas Department of Commerce was approved to participate in a Peer Learning Cohort (PLC) on Program Evaluation. This PLC will be meeting during PY23 and forward. Commerce team members include WIOA Titles I, II, III, and IV partners. This

comprehensive team will be working to create a transparent program evaluation process, which could expand beyond those receiving employment and training services to adult basic education and vocational rehabilitation services.

The outcome from the Evaluation PLC for PY23 was creating an Evaluation Action Plan, where WIOA Titles I–IV continue to work together and explore options for sharing referral data. This aims to create a smoother transition for participants who are referred to services across WIOA titles and was identified by members from all four titles as an important step in the process of best assisting participants.

Kansas RESEA Program Evaluation

The Kansas RESEA program is currently examining the impact it has on participant UI recipiency and employment outcomes. The program has completed an evaluation for a proposed Randomized Controlled Trial Design.

WIOA Dislocated Worker and Trade Adjustment Act

Determine the impact of the discontinuation of TAA and the potential of serving these eligible participants with Dislocated Worker funding.

Continuous Improvement

Workforce Centers Activities and Training

Over the past year, the KansasWorks Workforce Centers continued to provide services both in person and virtually, based on the needs of the customer.

For both employers and jobseekers, job fairs were provided both virtually and in-person. The in-person events that were the most successful were the smaller industry-targeted fairs at the Workforce Centers. These events were able to match jobseekers to the open positions available from these employers better than the larger events. Other successful events this past year provided by the Centers were both in-person and virtual workshops. These workshops included: Job Success, Experienced Worker, and How to Fill Out State and Federal Applications. Also, the State continued to utilize both Mobile Centers to provide services to events that matched jobseekers to employers, in communities that do not have physical Workforce Centers.

Regarding training, an area of focus during PY22 for staff was in response to the Workforce 2.0 findings. One of the main efforts was geared towards training staff in providing excellent résumé assistance. Throughout this past year, the in-house résumé expert provided in-depth résumé training to all Workforce Center staff. This training included some of the following: different résumé formats, how best to list skills, identifying and handling gaps or other potential barriers, how to target different jobs/fields, and the top five items' employers are looking for in a résumé.

Another addition to training for the Workforce Center staff came in the form of Registered Apprenticeship for Supervisors. The first edition of this program started in January 2023 with five Workforce Center Supervisors. These staff will have a full year of classroom training, followed by another year of mentorship with their Regional Operations Managers. After six months in the program, they all are not only enjoying the training aspect of it, but also the relationship building they have with each other.

All Workforce Center staff continue to receive quarterly trainings provided by the Kansas Department of Labor (KDOL), on updated information regarding UI and how Workforce Center staff can best partner with KDOL on assisting these customers. It's a great partnership between the two agencies.

Over the past year, KansasWorks Workforce Centers continued to offer both in-person and virtual services, adapting to the needs of customers. For employers and jobseekers, Job Fairs were conducted in both formats. The most successful in-person events were smaller, industry-targeted fairs held at Workforce Centers, which more effectively matched jobseekers with open positions compared to larger events. Additionally, the Centers hosted a range of in-person and virtual workshops, including topics such as Job Success, Experienced Workers, and Completing State and Federal Applications. Mobile Centers were deployed to bring services to communities without physical Workforce Centers, connecting jobseekers with employers at events.

In terms of staff development, KansasWorks has expanded its commitment to training by offering three distinct Registered Apprenticeship (RA) programs for its workforce: Supervisors, Frontline Staff, and Reemployment Navigators. Each RA program is specifically designed to address the unique training needs of these groups, providing targeted resources and hands-on experience. The Supervisors program focuses on leadership skills, operational management, and team development, while the Frontline Staff program equips employees with the tools to enhance customer service, job matching, and program knowledge. The Reemployment Navigators program provides specialized training in guiding individuals through the reemployment process, focusing on personalized support and job placement strategies. These RA programs are invaluable for professional growth, offering staff continuous learning opportunities, mentorship, and the skills needed to excel.

Reports

WIOA Title I Program Evaluation

The completed results from the WIOA Title I Program Evaluation for the Adult program are that supportive services had a positive effect on wages and employment for the program, and that receiving training had a very positive effect on wages and employment. For the Dislocated Worker program, supportive services also had a positive effect on wages and employment, and that receiving training had a very positive effect on wages and employment. The Youth program had slightly different questions than the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs, and the findings from the Program Evaluation for the Youth program were those participants with access to the supportive services and occupational skills training experienced increases in employment compared to those youth reported as unemployed during the period reviewed. For those receiving supportive services, the employment rate was 22.95 percent whereas 14.68 percent employment rate was reported for those who did not have access. Likewise, for those who received occupational skills training, 21.79 percent employment rate was reported versus 14.77 percent for those with no occupational skills training.

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

ETA has approved for PY24/PY25, the State's request to waive the requirement that the State expend 75 percent of Governor's Reserve youth funds on out-of-school youth (OSY). In addition, ETA has approved for PY24/25, the State's request to waive the requirement that local areas expend 75 percent of local youth formula funds on OSY. The State may lower the local youth funds expenditure requirement to 50 percent for OSY. Similarly, on September 28, 2023, ETA approved for PY23 the State's request to waive the requirement that the State expend 75 percent of Governor's Reserve youth funds on OSY. The State's Federal Project Officer clarified via email that the waiver does apply to local youth funds spent on direct services to youth.

Strategies

On September 28, 2023, ETA approved for PY23 the State's request to waive the requirement that the State expend 75 percent of Governor's Reserve youth funds on OSY. The State's Federal Project Officer clarified via email that the waiver does apply to local youth funds spent on direct services to youth.

Some local areas in Kansas are using the waiver to deepen their partnership with Jobs for America's Graduates - Kansas (JAG-K). The JAG-K representative at Wyandotte High School maintains regular contact with the local area for referrals and sharing information on ISY. Other local areas are continuing to emphasize and enroll mostly OSY, not utilizing the waiver.

Impact on Performance

As a result of this waiver, the State served 581 Youth during PY23, an increase over the 553 Youth served in PY22. Likewise, Kansas served 100 ISY during PY23, also an increase over the 83 ISY served in PY22.

Performance accountability outcomes for overall WIOA Youth have remained steady or increased for the majority of WIOA Youth performance indicators—Youth Employment Q2, Youth Employment Q4, Median Earnings, Credential Rate Attainment, and Measurable Skill Gains.

The two performance measures that have seen a decline are the two measures that have the largest lag time in reporting. The reporting cohorts for both Youth Employment Q4 and Credential Rate Attainment are looking at youth participants served from January 1, 2022, through December 31, 2022. Since the initial waiver request was approved on September 28, 2023, Kansas would not expect this waiver to have an impact on Youth Employment Q4 and Credential Attainment to date.

Although not completely related solely to ISY, the State has evaluated the WIOA Youth program and looked at the effects supportive services and occupational skills training have had on the outcomes of Youth program participants. As one might expect, both supportive services and occupational skills training have a positive impact on youth (see Evaluations section).

This waiver is having a positive impact on those at-risk youth who are in-school but need additional assistance from WIOA to stay in school and complete necessary education that will eventually lead to better career options in the future.

Success Stories

WIOA Dislocated Worker - Local Area 2 – Heartland Works

The client was enrolled in the WIOA Dislocated Worker program. The client was a military spouse and had also received notification of their impending separation from military employment. Their highest educational attainment at enrollment was a high school diploma. In addition, he lacked the education, training, and experience to transition to high in demand work in production or manufacturing without WIOA assistance. The client learned about the Heroes MAKE America program through the Career Skills program at Fort Riley. The client was interested in the program because it provided education, training and certification relating to maintenance, production management and a variety of other positions of interest to the client. These positions are connected to demand occupations in the Local Area. The client was enrolled in the Heroes MAKE America program. During one of the monthly updates the client stated, “I am thoroughly enjoying the program, learning about the production industry while making valuable connections that boost my confidence in transitioning my career.” The client completed the program and obtained his Certified Production Technician certificate from Washburn Institute of Technology in December 2023. The client accepted the position as a Restaurant Consultant where he manages several restaurants overseeing logistics and ordering of supplies. The client started working in February 2024, earning $62,000/year.

Local Area 3 – Workforce Partnership

Last year, the Mid-America College of Health Sciences, located in Merriam, celebrated the graduation of 44 students from its Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN) program, marking a significant milestone in the careers of these aspiring healthcare professionals. Fourteen of those individuals received training funds through Workforce Partnership’s Wyandotte and Johnson County Workforce Centers to help fund the accelerated nine-month LPN program, reflecting Workforce Partnership’s commitment to providing comprehensive and accelerated nursing education to meet the growing demand for qualified nurses in the healthcare industry.

The journey to becoming an LPN is both a significant financial and personal commitment. With a program cost of over $20,000 per student, the financial burden is considerable. Workforce Partnership’s financial support covered approximately $94,000 in total costs for tuition, fees, and supplies for these 14 students. Even with our financial support, many students find it necessary to maintain full- or part-time employment alongside their studies. This dedication often means sacrificing precious family time to fulfill academic and work commitments.

Becoming an LPN also requires passage of the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX). This rigorous exam is a pivotal step for nursing students, leading to new opportunities and advancements in their careers. One of our proud graduates, Chasity R., who successfully completed her NCLEX in June 2024, experienced a commendable promotion and pay raise from $21.75 to $33.00 per hour, reflecting the value and trust her company places in her enhanced skills and qualifications. Witnessing the students’ transition from learners to healthcare professionals is a profound experience, symbolizing their dedication, hard work, and the bright future that lies ahead in their nursing careers. This achievement not only signifies the dedication and hard work of the students but also underscores the importance of community resources in fostering educational opportunities.

WIOA Youth - Local Area I - Kansas WorkforceOne

Darby, a lifelong resident of Garden City, geared up for her senior year in high school with a bright future ahead. Referred to Kansas WorkforceOne's In-School Youth program through the Department for Children and Family's Pre-ETS program, Darby was given the opportunity for a Paid Work-Based Learning Experience. Kansas WorkforceOne, in collaboration with DCF and Rehabilitation Services, connected Darby with her Employment Specialist to identify her interests, prepare for employment through soft skills training, and find a work experience that aligned with her goals. An existing partnership with Downtown Vision provided a seamless transition to Darby's first job experience, where she eagerly contributed and built valuable connections with the community. Darby's enthusiasm for her role at Downtown Vision helped her develop essential social and professional skills. Despite her visual impairment, she remained determined to demonstrate her abilities and make a positive impact. Darby's experience deepened her connection with her hometown and empowered her to pursue her future goal of joining a religious community. "I want people to know that being blind doesn't define me. I was more than willing to do what I needed to help people," she shared confidently.

Darby's journey highlights Kansas WorkforceOne's dedication to helping youth gain the skills and experiences needed to thrive in their communities and future careers.

WIOA Youth - Local Area 4 – Workforce Alliance of South Central Kansas

Jaden reached out to the Workforce Center for assistance to move into a different industry, as she had been employed in food service since her teens. She worked closely with her WIOA Youth Case Manager and Work Experience Coordinator to narrow down her interests, revamp her résumé and practice her interview skills. Jaden interviewed with Dondlinger Construction. She nailed the interview and is now earning $17 per hour with employer paid health and dental coverage as a full-time laborer in Dondlinger's Facilities Service Division.

WIOA Youth – Local Area 5 – Southeast

In-School Youth and Incumbent Worker Success Story

In PY20, Skyler Bigley was just a 16-year-old high school student with no prior work experience and the challenges of a documented disability. He was not sure how to get his foot in the door of the working world, but he knew he wanted to build a future. Little did anyone know at the time that Skyler's journey with Southeast KansasWorks would span years and evolve into an incredible success story—one that began with entry-level work and culminated in a high-demand welding career.

Skyler came to the Independence Workforce Center looking for help. He was set to graduate high school in May 2023 but had never been employed. His lack of experience and disability posed barriers, yet his determination to make something of himself was clear. The Youth Career Advisor quickly recognized that Skyler was eligible for the WIOA ISY program, and the wheels were set in motion to equip him with the tools and experiences he needed.

Skyler's first breakthrough came when Southeast KansasWorks helped him secure a Work Experience at Neodesha School District USD 461, where he started working as a construction laborer earning $10 per hour. This was not just a job—it was the beginning of a new chapter. Under the guidance of his Youth Career Advisor, Skyler developed an Individual Service Strategy (ISS), completed the Lifeworks skills workshop, and built his résumé, wrote a cover letter, and participated in mock interviews. His dedication earned him multiple incentives, including a $100 reward for completing Lifeworks and another $100 for completing his work experience.

Skyler performed so well that Neodesha School District brought him back for another year of Work Experience, allowing him to gain even more skills while still in school. Through it all, Skyler stayed focused on his long-term goal—he told his Career Advisor that one day, he wanted to become a welder.

After graduating high school and achieving the goals set in his ISS, Skyler exited the Youth Program, having built a solid foundation for his future career. But this was not the last time Southeast KansasWorks would cross paths with Skyler.

In PY23, Southeast KansasWorks was approached by Tindle Construction, where Skyler had been working full time. The company was facing significant challenges due to a downturn in the boat industry and feared layoffs in their workforce. Skyler, who had developed his skills at Tindle, was now at risk of losing his job.

Tindle Construction reached out for help with Incumbent Worker funds to retrain employees and avert layoffs. The solution was Carbon material welding—a high-demand skill that would allow employees to shift into a more critical role at the company.

Thanks to Southeast KansasWorks' quick action, Tindle Construction secured the funding necessary to retrain its employees, including Skyler. The Incumbent Worker program funded Skyler's training at a total cost of $8,311.11 per employee, transforming Skyler into a carbon material welder earning $22 per hour, more than double what he had earned during his initial work experience.

Kentucky

Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board (KWIB)

Use of State Funds

The Governor's Discretionary Funds were invested in several promising programs and initiatives, each making a significant impact. Funded programs included Code Kentucky, a technology-focused program designed to introduce youth to the IT and technological workforce. Funds were also used to fund Everybody Counts, a program providing knowledge, resources, and career coaching to high school seniors concerning their college and career paths. Other programs and initiatives supported by the Governor's Discretionary Funds include:

- Establishment of an Electric Vehicle Workforce Coordinator, a position needed as a direct result of electric vehicle investments.
- Growing regional outcomes through the workforce, an initiative that uses a comprehensive and holistic approach to workforce development and talent strategy, focused on leveraging the community's assets to grow, attract, and retain workers for a sustainable workforce.
- Jefferson Community and Technical College Line Technician Program, which aids those seeking work as line technicians. The program has some of the best-paid registered apprenticeships in the state.
- TEK Center which is removing barriers to employment by providing critical trade field training, including heavy equipment operators, industrial maintenance technicians, plumbers, and electricians in Eastern Kentucky.
- Eastern Kentucky Advanced Manufacturing Institute provides training and programs for dislocated mining industry workers and other career seekers opportunities in high-tech advanced manufacturing, including automation and robotics.

Under-served Populations

Kentuckiana Builds

WIOA funds the pre-apprenticeship construction training program called Kentuckiana Builds. A partnership with the Louisville Urban League, Kentuckiana Builds was created in 2016 to respond to the need for a pipeline of trained construction employees and to increase the number of minorities and women going into the sector regionally. This six-week technical education and hands-on training program introduces jobseekers to the skilled construction trades, including electrical, plumbing, carpentry, HVAC, and more.

In PY23, more than one hundred people enrolled in Kentuckiana Builds. This statewide relief-funded program placed 79 training graduates in construction jobs at an average wage of nearly $20 per hour.

Second/Fair Chance

The State hosts many Second/Fair Chance programs designed to assist individuals in the correctional system, as well as those going through rehabilitation or dealing with substance abuse problems, in finding skills and employment across the commonwealth. Such programs work alongside eligible employers and provide incentives in the form of the Work Opportunity Tax Credit, a general business credit jointly administered by the IRS and DOL. Eligible employers who are certified by the Kentucky Career Center may claim the credit if they hire, pay, or incur wages to certain individuals. Second/Fair Chance programs include Registered Apprenticeship programs, Fair Chance Employer programs, such as The Fair Chance Academy and the Kentucky Transformational Employment Program, the Prison-to-Work Pipeline Program, and Jobs on Day One.

The key is to meet the students where they are. Everybody Counts achieves this by holding a physical, consistent presence within the school for two to four days per week. This is a more effective means of assisting young people as it allows coaches to build strong relationships with students, educators, and administrators to create a personalized plan of support. Additionally, Everybody Counts aims to connect with guardians and mentors in the student's personal lives, allowing them access to the options students have for college, careers, and beyond.

Everybody Counts

In PY23, the Everybody Counts initiative experienced substantial growth, doubling its number of locations and coaches from 13 coaches in 12 high schools to an impressive 26 coaches within 25 high schools. These programs span across several counties and have impacted the lives of students by providing them access to various opportunities in education, training, and scholarships. Such successes include investing in scholarship funding in the Scott and Fayette County areas. Looking towards the future, Everybody Counts intends to add an eSports center inside of the Success Academy. This center will not only teach students how to take part in the career of eSports but will also provide the skills necessary to develop such games, helping them to take their first steps into the STEM industry.

This past year, the metrics have shown that for every 11 coaches present in schools, 200 students are positively impacted. These numbers are anticipated to increase.

Retaining Employment and Talent After Injury/Illness Network (RETAIN) Kentucky

A significant and largely untapped talent pool in the commonwealth are individuals with disabilities. One means of reaching these individuals is the RETAIN program, a federally funded initiative exploring stay-at-work/return-to-work strategies. The State's extension of RETAIN, RETAIN Kentucky, is led by the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation together with the University of Kentucky Human Development Institute and committed project partners, including The Council of State Governments. The program aims to help injured or ill workers remain in or return to their jobs by implementing and evaluating early intervention strategies. The Retaining Employment and Talent After Injury/Illness Network program works with employees, employers, and healthcare providers to address strategies for successful return to work. Building on state efforts, including Kentucky Work Matters, Employment First, and the Call to Action to Meet Commonwealth Workforce Needs, RETAIN Kentucky is using peer support,

assistive technology, and universal design to promote quality, coordinated health, and employment-related stay-at-work/return-to-work services.

Project SEARCH

Project SEARCH, an international initiative based at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, helps prepare young people with significant disabilities to achieve competitive integrated employment. It is a work-based learning experience model for transition-aged students in cooperation with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, a host employer, a local high school, and the Community Rehabilitation Program. The program takes place in the student's final year of high school and follows the local school schedule for the year. Students in Project Search participate in three internships within the host site and gain valuable transferrable work skills to carry over into the local workforce area for employment. Currently, there are four Project Search programs in the state:

1. Norse/Northern Kentucky University Project Search - Campbell County Schools - Highland Heights.
2. ABB Optical Project Search - Boone County Schools - Florence.
3. Baptist Health Project Search - Elizabethtown Independent Schools - Elizabethtown.
4. UK Healthcare Project Search - Fayette County Schools - Lexington.

Total workplace immersion facilitates a seamless combination of classroom instruction, career exploration, and hands-on training through worksite rotations. The goal for each program participant is competitive integrated employment. To reach that goal, the program provides real-life work experience combined with training in employability and independent-living skills to help young people with significant disabilities make successful transitions to productive adult life. It involves an extensive period of skills training and career exploration, innovative adaptations, long-term job coaching, and continuous feedback from teachers, skills trainers, and employers. This individualized approach results in students with significant intellectual disabilities finding employment in non-traditional, complex, and rewarding jobs.

Integrated Service Delivery

Co-Enrollment

The State is a co-enrollment state. Adults and dislocated workers who receive Kentucky Career Center services other than self-service and informational activities are required to be co-enrolled in Wagner-Peyser, WIOA Programs, and, if eligible, Trade Adjustment Assistance through an automated process in the Commonwealth's official system of record. Staff ensure that the correct activities are recorded for the respective programs and that information is verified in the system of record. Once registered in the system, the customer's information is electronically shared and integrated into the system of record.

A Collaborative Approach to Workforce Development

Collaboration and partnerships are key themes in the State's WIOA State Plan, and the Education and Workforce Collaborative ("Collaborative") is the platform for aligning workforce priorities.

Initiated in 2020 through the Governor's Executive Order 2020-551, the Collaborative brings education and workforce development system partners together in one group, allowing resources to be efficiently and effectively aligned for the improvement of the workforce development system. The 19-member Collaborative is made up of executive Cabinet leadership, education leaders from the primary and post-secondary levels, the state chamber of commerce, federal workforce training providers, local workforce boards, elected officials, and the state workforce board chair.

The Deputy Secretary of the Education and Labor Cabinet chairs the Collaborative, and during PY23, addressed workforce components from the Strategic Plan.

The quarterly Collaborative meetings in PY23 researched resources for veterans, transitioning military and military families, Kentucky's Workforce Development State Plan, individuals facing benefit cliffs, and the LAUNCH Initiative.

Yes WIOA Can

Using Virtual Reality for Career Exploration

In 2022, the Bluegrass WIB applied for State Reserve funding for an innovative idea: utilizing virtual reality as a means for career exploration and training for youth and jobseekers in the Bluegrass Area. By the fall of the same year, the Kentucky Career Center—Bluegrass began offering career exploration and training through Oculus virtual reality headsets. This innovative new service allows jobseekers to explore on-the-job scenarios and gain skills through simulated activities using virtual reality headsets.

Jobseekers in the Bluegrass Area use the devices to explore various career options, improve their skills, and demonstrate their competencies in several sectors. The six primary sectors in the Bluegrass region are manufacturing, healthcare, skilled trades, such as welding, construction, electrical, warehousing and storage, public safety, hospitality and tourism, and automotive. Each sector provides a variety of modules that allow jobseekers to explore, expand, or demonstrate their skills.

The devices have been invaluable in serving as a key to opening doors to employers, community organizations, and youth. The devices also serve as a draw at job fairs and community events to open the door to other services provided through the public workforce system. In PY23, the Oculus headsets engaged 5,859 Bluegrass residents through virtual reality training and career exploration services who may not otherwise have been aware of Kentucky Career Center/AJC services.

Other State Funds Activities

Not applicable.

Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

Workforce Study

The Education and Labor Cabinet partnered with the University of Kentucky's Center for Business and Economic Research conduct a study to evaluate the effectiveness of Kentucky's state-sponsored workforce development programs, primarily focused on Kentucky Adult Education, the Kentucky Community Technical College System TRAINS program, and the Bluegrass State Skills Corporation.

Continuous Improvement

Kee Suite System Enhancement

In preparation for drafting the WIOA 2024–2027 Combined State Plan, statewide listening tours were conducted, including focus group sessions with all ten LWDAs. The framework for the tour involved working with the local Workforce Development Area Board directors and their teams to invite workforce stakeholders for a brief overview of the WIOA State Plan and to receive feedback on local employer and jobseeker needs. In total, 33 groups of 348 individuals participated, with a breakdown of 198 workforce partners, 82 employers, 51 elected officials, and 17 individual customers contributing their perspectives.

The recurring theme was "exposure to careers" starting in middle school and highlighting more work-based learning opportunities. Participants indicated that guardians and educators need to be more involved in workforce exposure through the dissemination of career and training options available and help provide an understanding that "good jobs" are available in all sectors. The goal is to reach youth before they become disconnected from workforce and education and ensure that all untapped talent is introduced to the State's workforce development pipeline.

Attendees emphasized the importance of businesses being engaged partners and having an active "voice at the table." They requested more investment in work-based learning (especially as a succession strategy), more sector strategy opportunities, more support to small and medium-sized businesses, and more support for county and municipal needs. Participants expressed that the lines of partnership between education and workforce needed to be better connected and called for stronger communication and outreach.

One of the concerns raised during the listening sessions is that the Kentucky Career Center is viewed as an "unemployment office," a stigma that decreases the incentive to seek assistance. There was a call for WIOA funding to be leveraged for combined resources and collaboration, citing that doing so could also negate duplication of services. Co-location of workforce programs was also addressed, expressing that one physical space provides better service as it limits customer waiting times and increases the likelihood of continued engagement. Finally, there was an interest in ongoing staff training and exposure to the greater Kentucky workforce development system.

Participants shared the common barriers to those entering the workforce:

- Lack of accessible and affordable childcare with an interest in support for Universal Pre-K and Employee Assistance programs.
- Lack of reliable transportation access for those in urban and rural areas.
- Lack of access to new and affordable housing with a higher demand for multi-unit housing.

These sessions provided the State's workforce system with invaluable data that will be applied to present and future programs and initiatives. Addressing workforce barriers is an integral part of achieving the goals set forth by the WIOA Combined State Plan and sustaining the workforce pipeline.

Separately, the Commonwealth conducted an evaluation of the longstanding Kentucky's Work Ready Communities initiative. The feedback received allowed KWIB to adopt a new framework under the title of Work Ready Communities—Next Generation.

The evaluation highlighted the importance of the program to the State's communities and economic development strategies with the update that includes a new statewide framework designed to elevate the existing strategic objectives, tie in talent-ready community objectives, and encourage the ability to strategize on a regional basis. The strategic local and regional objectives include:

1) supply and demand of regional skills,
2) awareness and engagement with untapped talent pools, and
3) work-based learning opportunities.

The talent ready local and regional strategies include:

1) addressing childcare barriers to employment,
2) affordable housing,
3) transportation,
4) broadband infrastructure, and
5) talent attraction.

Reports

Workforce Study

The study indicated that career outcomes improved with Kentucky Adult Education involvement. Participants had higher employment rates than non-participants after enrollment. Wages for females rose gradually and significantly following enrollment. Compared to females, the wages of males enrolled were slightly higher (2%–3%). However, employment impact gains declined after four years. Male employment rate gains declined more quickly than female, reduced by nearly half the initial difference of

14.6 percent. Furthermore, for both females and males, enrollment in Kentucky Adult Education experienced net gains overall due to more employment opportunities and overall higher wages long-term. ESL learners took longer to catch up on wages than those with uninterrupted attendance.

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

The State did not submit any waivers to DOL-ETA for PY23.

Strategies

Not applicable.

Impact on Performance

Not applicable.

Success Stories

Cumberlands WBD

- Youth
  An individual juggled a 25-hour-a-week job at Walmart with his studies at Whitley County High School and graduated in 2023. While in high school, he took online courses at the University of Cumberland, aiming toward an associate degree in business. After completing a two-month lineman course, this individual landed a full-time position as a lineman at APEX. He continued to study at Cumberlands and earned his degree in May 2024.
- Dislocated Worker
  An individual's wife's illness forced him to put his career on hold. After her passing, he sought support from WIOA and found a new path. Through CDL training, he gained valuable skills and discovered a renewed sense of purpose. He completed his program in March 2023 and is now a successful heavy equipment mover. He is grateful for the program that helped him rebuild his life.
- Adult
  An individual was diagnosed with thyroid cancer on January 23, 2024. With only one semester left in her nursing program, she worried about how she'd finish what she'd started. Despite her health challenges, she remained dedicated to her studies and the Workplace Innovation and Opportunity Act program. She not only completed her ADN with honors but

was also named Somerset Community College's Health Sciences Student of the Year. The individual's courage and determination paid off, and she's now a registered nurse in the Emergency Room at Lake Cumberland Regional Hospital.

Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program

- David Boone JobSight
  A partner in the Kentucky Career Center JobSight network of workforce centers, Daniel Boone, Community Action Agency, provides WIOA services in Clay and Jackson counties under contract with the Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program. Those services include programs for adults, dislocated workers, and youth between the ages of 18 and 24 who may need assistance honing skills such as résumé building or networking with local employers or who need assistance being retrained or going to school.
- Services at Daniel Boone JobSight Help One Individual Take First Step in Healthcare Career
  An individual learned about the employment services at JobSight, located in Clay County at the Daniel Boone Community Action Agency, and started working with a Career Advisor. The advisor evaluated the individual and determined what services would be available to help achieve her career goals.

  Because she had no prior experience, the Individual felt fortunate to have had assistance and the services available through JobSight. She wanted to go into phlebotomy while continuing her education to gain experience on the job, get used to a hospital setting, and become more knowledgeable of the terminology used on a day-to-day basis in the medical field. The individual was able to shadow a phlebotomist and assist at a local lab. She added that in addition to helping her find a job, her advisor also helped cover extra expenses she had, allowing her to complete her work experience and then transition to employment.

  This individual is currently working as a PRN Phlebotomist while carrying a full schedule as a nursing student and plans to begin working full time in the nursing field. She recommends a Kentucky Career Center JobSight location in Eastern Kentucky to anyone who is looking for work or wants to get started in their job search.
- Additional success stories:
  - Decision to Enroll for Services through LKLP JobSight Leads to a Career in Healthcare Leadership
  - Internship to Good Job Full-time Employment

Green River Area Development District

- Dislocated Worker Upskilled to Find New Employment After a Layoff
  An individual found himself among hundreds of workers laid off from Century Aluminum, facing stiff competition for new jobs. Aware of his lack of qualifications and credentials, he feared the challenge of securing employment. Attending a Rapid Response meeting, he learned of training opportunities and decided to explore them further. He sought assistance at the Kentucky Career Center in Owensboro, where he met with someone from Equus Workforce Solutions.

Expressing his desire to work in maintenance at a manufacturing facility despite lacking the necessary skills, he was introduced to the ITEC program offered by Owensboro Community and Technical College. This program promised to equip him with the required expertise through a two-semester curriculum. Encouraged by the prospect of quickly reentering the workforce, the individual enrolled.

The individual Johnny excelled in his training, achieving an impressive GPA of 3.893. He earned multiple certificates, including Industrial Electrician Levels I and II, Industrial Automation and Robotics Technician Level I, Automation Technician, Industrial Maintenance Robotics Technician, Industrial Maintenance Mechanic Level I, Industrial Maintenance Electronic Mechanic, and Integrated Manufacturing Technology. Following his training, the individual sought guidance from someone at Equus Workforce Solutions, who helped him refine his résumé, hone his interview skills, and navigate the job market. With their support, the individual secured a position in the maintenance department at Waupaca, earning a respectable wage of $25.56 per hour.

- Dislocated Worker – Skills 2 Succeed
  An individual was laid off from his long-time job and sought assistance at a Kentucky Career Center in the Green River Area. His UI was running out, and the arrival of a new baby was near. He decided to pivot his career.

  In September 2023, the individual sought assistance at the Kentucky Career Center. Fueled by the impending end of his UI and the imminent arrival of a new baby, He decided to pivot into the high-demand field of Transportation and Logistics, an industry familiar to him due to family ties.

  The individual enrolled in 160 Driving Academy in Evansville, Indiana. Through rigorous classroom courses and hands-on training, he successfully obtained his CDL permit, marking a crucial milestone in his pursuit of a new career.

  The individual secured a position with Happy Trails Trucking in Henderson, KY, as a local driver. With a wage of $23.50 per hour and the advantage of being home every evening, he not only found stable employment but also carved a path for a prosperous future. His success story stands as a testament to the effectiveness of career support and training programs in empowering individuals to overcome challenges and achieve meaningful professional milestones.

KentuckianaWorks WDB

- The Spot
  Young Adult Opportunity Center, a partnership with Goodwill Industries of Kentucky, connected young adults ages 16–21 throughout the Louisville region with career resources and wraparound support services, including reliable transportation, housing, mental health counseling, paid internships, career training, and jobs. Demand for this program continues to be high: The Spot served more than 1,000 young adults PY23. One hundred seventy-two participants were placed in jobs with an average wage of $16.00 per hour.
- Additional success stories:
  - PY23 testimonials

- Bullitt County School System Teacher Registered Apprenticeship

TENCO WDB

- WIOA Adult
  When an individual met with a career counselor in October 2023, he was living in a camper on a family member's property. After some family emergencies, he realized he needed to get a regular job to support himself. He wanted a job where he could work independently and welcomed the opportunity to travel.

  The individual was 59 years old, had some legal issues, and struggled with basic reading and math skills. It took work, but he persisted and convinced his career counselor that he was committed to getting his CDL.

  With WIOA Title I training funds and supportive services, the individual started his training in December 2023. He had excellent progress reports each week and completed his training in four weeks. He obtained his Class A CDL license on January 8, 2024.

  In March 2024, the individual accepted a position with Western Express in Nashville, TN. He now travels across the country and continues to update his counselor periodically, sending photos of his adventures around the United States.

- Adult
  An individual came in for an appointment after being referred by his caseworker at the homeless shelter. He disclosed during the initial appointment that he had felony charges relating to drugs, no driver's license, and little family support. Several support services through different agencies were discussed, and the individual mentioned that he had to seek work within 30 days to be able to stay at the homeless shelter. His primary choice of employment was with St. Claire Regional Medical Center. He said he and his family had good experiences at the hospital, and he stated that he would consider it an honor to work there. By using the established relationship between the Career Center and St. Claire, the staff was able to refer the individual directly for an open position.

  He was offered a full-time position in Environmental Services with St. Claire Regional Medical Center, earning $14.00 per hour. He contacted the center to share his good news, but concerns came with the job offer. He did not have appropriate shoes, a driver's license, or reliable transportation, so he made referrals to partner agencies for assistance. The SITE program was able to provide him with new shoes and a gas card. With the gas card, he could pay a friend to drive him to work until he could get his license back. He also had more good news—he was approved for an apartment and could move from the homeless shelter.

West Kentucky Workforce Board

- Wagner-Peyser
  An individual came into the Paducah Career Center to seek assistance finding employment after being laid off from his job

at Westlake Chemical. From the time he walked in, he was extremely focused on finding a career that would help him provide for his family.

He signed up for job services and requested all the assistance that could be offered to him in finding a job that could provide financial stability and peace of mind for his family. His skills, barriers, and goals as a jobseeker were discussed to better match him to potential employers. Then, his résumé was reviewed to assess his skills. He was encouraged to attend the job fair.

He showed up to the job fair the following Tuesday and spoke with all the participating employers. He was on each one's "possible hire" list and even received an offer from the Kentucky State Penitentiary. He accepted an offer with Premier Fire and Security, earning a comfortable wage and benefits package that suited his family's needs.

- Graduation to Career! Austin – In-School Youth
  An individual entered the program as a rising senior at Christian County High School. He was deficient in basic skills and unemployed, but he had a goal to become a Lineman. He needed tutoring to keep up with his assignments and earn above a C average. He was advised to seek assistance from the Christian County Public School's WIOA ISY program, which the West Kentucky Workforce Board funds.

  The individual attended tutoring on a regular basis, which improved his test-taking skills and confidence in his test-taking strategies. This allowed him to achieve a Measurable Skill Gain. Then, he began working in a paid environment at Cayce Mill Supply. He worked in the electrical parts warehouse and lighting department there. After graduation, he was able to keep his job. He still aspires to be a lineman, but for now, he enjoys working and earning money.

- Dislocated Worker/Rapid Response Succes
  An individual was working at MSSC when the plant consolidated and began phasing elimination of their workforce. The layoffs at the Hopkinsville, Kentucky facility was certified as Trade impacted by DOL. She was dislocated in March 2022. She attended Rapid Response activities offered by the West Kentucky Workforce Board and learned that WIOA could help her earn a degree. She met with a WIOA Career Coach and enrolled at Hopkinsville Community College, majoring in Business. She gained full-time employment on May 20, 2024, with Pennyroyal Farm Analysis Group, Inc., working as a Bookkeeper/Payroll Clerk.

- Assisting Transitioning Military & Veterans
  West Kentucky Workforce Board assists veterans and eligible spouses in gaining access to high-quality jobs and careers. Staff help businesses hire and retain skilled workers. When veterans or transitioning service members and eligible spouses seek services at local career centers, they receive priority of service. The West Kentucky Workforce Board's Veterans Transition Liaison, Derek Poor, is located at Fort Campbell to assist veterans and spouses in connecting with resources, receiving résumé assistance, career center information, and/or direct employment. Mr. Poor has also been assisting the Kentucky Chamber with their Military Hiring Academy.

Each month, the South Western Kentucky Economic Development Corporation and the West Kentucky Workforce Board sponsor a Manufacturing Seminar at the Fort Campbell Transitions Assistance Program office. This allows manufacturers in the area to meet with transitioning service members interested in manufacturing employment. At the February 2024 seminar, JTEKT Japan, Toyota Boshoku America, and White Drive Products participated. These connections will lead to more significant employment and mentorship opportunities.

Additional success Stories

- Kentucky WIB
    - Kentucky Career Center
    - Veteran Services in Northern Kentucky Success in Matching and Building Veteran Employer Champions
    - Adult and Wrap-Around Services
    - Providing Access to Nontraditional Talent Pipelines
    - Supporting Training & Upskilling of Existing Employees
    - Northern Kentucky “Work for Success” Prepares People in Recovery for Jobs

Louisiana

Louisiana Department of Labor, Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC)

Use of State Funds

Under-served Populations

Reintegration of Justice – Involved Personnel

Wagner-Peyser funds provide full time dedicated staff working directly in or coordination with Day Reporting Centers (DRC). Employment is widely seen as a crucial element for successful reintegration for justice-involved personnel.

LWC currently supports seven-day reporting centers in the following parishes: St Tammany, Caddo, East Baton Rouge, Ouachita, Calcasieu, and combined Orleans/Jefferson.

The staff provide individualized career services to formerly justice-involved personnel that contribute to their successful transition to society. Staff also conduct outreach and advocacy on behalf of the participants to coordinate with local service agencies to provide various needs such as housing, clothing, transportation, legal assistance, etc. coordination with the local shelters—housing, other partners.

A comprehensive assessment and employment plan including follow-up every 30 days to ensure gainful employment. Substantial employment can assist individuals in succeeding after release from incarceration. This process allows the individuals to refocus their time and efforts on improving positive outcomes and can provide meaningful careers for the workforce.

Integrated Service Delivery

No information provided for this section.

Yes WIOA Can

Louisiana Workforce Commission Statewide Expungement Initiative

During PY23, utilizing Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funds, LWC initiated partnerships with the Justice and Accountability Center of Louisiana and Southern University Law Center to assist citizens with removing obstacles related to criminal history, reinstating suspended drivers' licenses, and offering Fair Chance Hiring workshops at no-cost to income eligible recipients.

The expungement, background checks and driver's license clinics fostered partnerships between community-based organizations, the justice system, local workforce boards, and LWC programs, including Business Services, Rapid Response, Apprenticeship, Veterans, Re-entry, and CSBG.

LWC has held 23 expungement clinics across the state and provided resources to develop an expungement app, increasing access to good paying jobs and equal opportunity. The impact is ongoing, but to date, the State is proud to report:

- 2,715 individuals served
- 356 expungements granted
- 31 warrants recalled
- 4 driver's license clinics
- 88 driver's licenses reinstatement support
- $56,361 in retracted fines and fees
- 882 registered app users.

Jobs for America's Graduates Louisiana (JAG-LA)

The JAG-LA programs work with students with significant life obstacles that could disrupt school completion and/or hinder successful entry into the workforce or post-secondary educational programs. The program offers a career-to-school model curriculum, mentoring, and follow-up to seniors. However, any student accepted into the program must want to be a participant, need the services provided, be able to benefit by earning a high school diploma, career diploma, or high school equivalency diploma, and be able to benefit by being placed in a competitive job or by entering higher education.

Other State Funds Activities

Not applicable.

Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

RESEA Program Evaluation

Since the RESEA Program procured The Policy & Research Group (PRG) to conduct its evaluation of the RESEA program, the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) continues to take steps to ensure that RESEA interventions, or service delivery strategies, meet or exceed the standards of DOL requirements. PRG will work with LWC to decide which RESEA program component(s) to evaluate and conduct an Evaluability Assessment of the RESEA program component(s). PRG has developed research questions that explore the RESEA program's influence on a particular population's outcomes of interest (e.g., employment, benefit duration, earnings), develop a Logic Model of the RESEA component(s) to be evaluated and assess existing data and data systems.

Continuous Improvement

Virtual RESEA Service Delivery Enhancement

The RESEA program continues to utilize the virtual platform 10to8 since December 2021 to provide virtual RESEA services delivery. 10to8 provides participants the ability to schedule appointments, receive reminders via email and SMS, and reschedule if necessary. The platform offers calendars for staff members, provides advance notice of appointments, and includes reporting tools while minimizing no-shows up to 90 percent. In PY23, 33,342 participants were scheduled for RESEA services and 31,849 were successfully completed, achieving a 96 percent completion rate that exceeds the target goal of 70 percent.

Sector Strategy Implementation

LWC is transitioning to a new regionally focused sector strategy model to better align services and enhance industry impact. This regional approach will ensure closer alignment with workforce development boards' vision and plans, provide greater flexibility in coordination, and foster stronger connections with regional economic drivers, educational institutions, and training partners.

Reports

WIOA Annual Statewide Report Program Year 2023

The report captures the work, achievements as well as challenges from July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024. It highlights the State's best practices as well as strategies outlined in the Combined State Plan helping to prepare the State's workers, educators and workforce.

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

- Waiver of the requirement that states and local areas expend 75 percent of all Governor's Reserve and/or local formula youth funds on out-of-school youth (OSY).
- Waiver of requirement that only permits WIOA Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for OSY for PY22 and PY23.

Strategies

Waiver of the Requirement that States and Local Areas Expend 75 Percent of all Governor's Reserve and/or Local Formula Youth Funds on OSY

The approval waives the requirement that the State expend 75 percent of Governor's Reserve youth funds on OSY. In addition, the State may lower the expenditure requirement of Governor's Reserve to 50 percent for OSY.

Waiver of Requirement that Only Permits WIOA ITAs for OSY for PY22 and PY23

The approval waives the State's requirement limiting ITAs to only OSY, ages 16–24 years of age. Additionally, the approval outlines that the State may use ITAs for ISY ages 16–21 years of age. The approval of this waiver should not impede the State's efforts to prioritize OSY, including outreach to the OSY population.

Impact on Performance

No information provided for this section.

Success Stories

No information provided for this section.

Maine

Maine Department of Labor

Use of State Funds

Under-served Populations

Hiring Staff with Lived Experience

Service providers from all three local areas and the Maine Department of Labor's Bureau of Employment Services continue to expand the practice of hiring staff from representatives of target groups being served. This practice was adopted during the Opioid grant with the hire of individuals in substance use recovery who could act as navigators and provide evidence of success to other participants in recovery. The practice has expanded to include re-entry peer navigators to assist in serving justice involved participants re-entering the workforce.

Integrated Service Delivery

Promoting Restorative Practice for Serving Justice Involved Adults and Youth

The Northeastern Workforce Development Board has taken steps to launch a new approach to serving justice-involved adults and youth. Title IB staff will receive training in how to utilize restorative practices for customers reentering the workforce after incarceration, one of the QUEST grant target populations. The practice will eventually be expanded to ensure job retention of reentry customers place in employment. With assistance from a restorative practice leader staff will work directly with the employer and customer to address circumstances that might impede job retention.

The Bureau of Employment Services CareerCenter Veteran's Program staff participate in Veteran's Court where veterans facing incarceration for certain offenses are given choice of incarceration or working with CareerCenters on career exploration, job readiness, and job search skills. The Veteran's Program staff attends the court proceedings to meet with the justice involved veterans who accept the Judge's offer so they can start working with them on employment plans and next steps.

Yes WIOA Can

Industry Partnership Program

In 2022, to meet the needs of those industries disrupted by COVID-19 the State Workforce Board (SWB) launched the Industry Partnership Program. The $3.7 million program, part of the Governor's workforce strategy and a key priority for Maine's long-term economic growth, funded six Industry Partnership initiatives, which included businesses, industry associations, education and training providers, and community-based organizations. The projects were funded in 2022 with the bulk of the projects starting work in 2023. Five of the six projects applied for contract extensions and will continue efforts beyond the original end-date of December 31, 2024.

The Industry Partnership Program is focused on recruiting, retention, and career advancement of workers in meaningful, good-paying careers. Through the program, the SWB has supported sector-based approaches to identify each sector's most important workforce needs and work with training and educational organizations to provide training necessary to develop skilled workers to meet those needs, promoting pipelines of workers through structured career pathways. The projects have helped to define where the SWB plans to go next to help develop the space.

Other State Funds Activities

Not applicable.

Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

The Center for Workforce Research and Information (CWRI) collaborated with the Maine Bureau of Employment Services (BES) to evaluate the long-term earnings outcomes of participants in the State's WIOA Adult program who received a variety of services, to identify earnings outcomes and upward mobility of participants over time by services received, demographic characteristics, and occupation-specific skills training. Results were presented to and shared with WIOA partners including the SWB, LWBs, and staff that directly serve WIOA participants.

Now CWRI analysts are expanding this program evaluation by applying this framework to the Youth program, studying the outcomes of youth participants since 2016, their long-term employment and earnings outcomes, and incorporating newly available outcome data.

Continuous Improvement

High Staff Turnover

Because high quality jobs are abundant in Maine, jobseekers have the opportunity to jump quickly to the next job resulting in significant staff turnover at every level of the system. While the amount of time it takes to recruit, hire, and train new staff is a challenge in itself, due diligence regarding assurance of accurate data entry into complex MIS systems, and appropriate service delivery to customers has become an everyday concern. Local service providers of Title IB services and Employment Services have instituted quality assurance teams to regularly review how services are documented and whether data is accurately captured for performance reporting purposes. Service providers are taking stride to explore why staff are leaving and ensure new staff feel welcome and appreciated.

Reports

No information provided for this section.

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

The State requested and received a waiver of the requirement to spend 75 percent of youth funds on out-of-school youth (OSY) for PY23.

Strategies

The waiver request identified the following goals:

- Increase high school students' successful entry into employment, Registered Apprenticeship (RA), or post-secondary education.
- Increase services to youth at risk of dropping out of high school.
- Increase the overall number of WIOA youth served per program year.
- Increase State High Schools' awareness of WIOA services available to eligible high school students.
- Decrease the number of disconnected youths by connecting youth with paid work experience, pre-apprenticeship, and extended learning opportunities before they drop out or detach from the school system.
- Increase involvement of State employers, apprenticeship sponsors, schools, and workforce system partners in activities that ensure high school youth successfully transition to employment and/or advanced training.

The focus on providing more high-school youth with paid work experience aligns with the goals of the Maine Children's Cabinet as a method for improving long-term outcomes for state youth, particularly those at risk of dropping out of school and/or disconnecting from the workforce afterward.

Impact on Performance

The number of ISY participants expanded during PY23 and it is expected to continue to increase as schools become accustomed to working with WIOA staff to serve eligible students. This year saw increased numbers of high school students enrolled in pre-apprenticeship programs, for which the Youth program funded the work experience component. RA sponsors provided the classroom component and each student who successfully completed the program received an industry recognized credential. These pre-apprenticeship programs prepare students for direct entry into RA or related employment.

The State intends to continue to request the 75 percent expenditure requirement waiver for the next two PYs (PY24 and PY25). Title IB service providers have made it clear that the waiver needs to span at least two years to document expected outcomes and ensure the high-school juniors and seniors served enter employment or post-secondary education.

Success Stories

No information provided for this section.

Maryland

Maryland Department of Labor (DLLR)

Use of State Funds

Under-served Populations

Reentry Navigators

The State has dedicated staff allocated for reentry services in Maryland. The reentry navigators serve all thirteen 13 local areas. They interface with inmates in correctional education programs (both academic and occupational), local detention centers and serve as the critical point of contact to AJCs. In addition, reentry navigators interact with businesses who hire ex-offenders. The main purpose of the initiative is to:

- Develop and administer connections between AJC, businesses, and correctional facilities to produce a credentialed, skilled work force benefiting workers and employers.
- Assist returning citizens in reentry into the workforce in self-sustaining occupations.
- Provide resources to aid in eliminating barriers to employment.
- Ensure each returning citizen who requests employment services gains stable employment that fulfills their purpose and financial needs and enables them to maintain employment.

Workforce Solutions to Address Homelessness (WSAH) Demonstration Project ($997,976)

The WSAH pilot program was conceived by the Interagency Council on Homelessness's (ICH) Workforce Subcommittee. The goal of the pilot is to bridge the gap between workforce and homeless services on both a system and provider level. Using best practices put forth by the ICH and identified via a landscape analysis conducted by the Workforce Subcommittee, grantees were required to form comprehensive partnerships to coordinate the delivery of employment and related services to best meet the needs of individuals experiencing or at-risk of homelessness. Applicants could apply for up to $200,000 to be spent across a three-year period. The pilot launched in October 2022 and will conclude in September 2025.

Maryland's Workforce Development Response to Substance Use and the Overdose Epidemic

- Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Employment Development (MOED) ($100,000)
  MOED received a grant in January 2023 to expand one-on-one services to individuals who engage with the career center and identify as someone in recovery from a substance use disorder (SUD). As a result of their participation in the Support to Communities grant (DOL-ETA), MOED identified a need for rapid employment among individuals impacted by SUDs. MOED used this funding from MD Labor to hire a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist to serve as a liaison between behavioral health treatment providers, patients in treatment, and the career center.

The Peer Specialist was co-located twice a week at a drop-in recovery center in East Baltimore. The population served by the drop-in center varied from regular attendees of daily recovery meetings to individuals who came to the center once or twice for a specific need. The Peer Specialist provided services to any who requested employment assistance and helped with résumé writing, career navigation, and goal setting.

Integrated Service Delivery

Maryland's Workforce Development Response to Substance Use and the Overdose Epidemic

- Supporting Recovery Through Employment (SRTE) ($996,364)
  Since 2019, MD Labor has benefitted from a fruitful partnership with the Maryland Department of Health's Behavioral Health Administration (BHA), in which there has been a shared recognition of the value of employment to a person's recovery from a substance use disorder. Following the conclusion of the successful Opioid Workforce Innovation Fund (OWIF) grant made possible through a partnership with BHA, MD Labor continued to advance the efforts of organizations currently serving unemployed, underemployed, and incumbent workers in recovery from a substance use disorder with developing a pipeline from training to employment through the release of SRTE.

  MD Labor received 33 applications from organizations across the State. The roughly $1 million made available through SRTE ultimately funded 11 behavioral health and social service organizations that provided services across seven different counties. Funded applications provided training in fields such as healthcare IT, manufacturing, construction, and peer recovery. MD Labor learned from previous grants with a similar scope and purpose that it was often more challenging to serve individuals with direct lived experience of addiction and recovery compared to individuals who had indirect experience through a family member or friend. To address this need, SRTE required that applicants must only use funding to provide services to people with personal experience of addiction and recovery. SRTE also increased the allowable cost per participant from $6,000 under OWIF to $7,500, thus allowing more resources to be directed toward wraparound supportive services. The grant period of performance took place between September 1, 2022, and October 31, 2023. By the conclusion of SRTE, 268 people had completed job training, 219 earned an industry-recognized credential, and 218 people were placed into unsubsidized employment.

Yes WIOA Can

Maryland Business Works (MBW)

MBW is an incumbent worker training program administered by MD Labor's Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning (DWDAL). The program was established to support employer strategies for retention, growth expansion, and layoff aversion through upgrading the skills of currently employed workers of Maryland's businesses. The program's training funds are available to businesses serious about increasing employee productivity, upgrading the skills of current employees, and creating opportunities for expanding the existing workforce. Projects funded through MBW are focused on in-demand occupations and skill sets, as defined by businesses, and are intended to lead to potential career growth and increased wages for participating

workers. Participating companies are required to match the funds provided by the MBW program for the actual training costs on a dollar-to-dollar basis. Companies pay for 100 percent of total training costs and then receive a 50 percent reimbursement by MD Labor upon successful completion of the trainee. Since April 2016, the State has invested a total of $2.5 million of Governor Set-Aside funds in MBW. During PY23, 212 incumbent workers received training and industry recognized credentials with the support of the MBW program. A total of $237,523.88 was spent for training—for an average cost per participant of $1,120.39. Businesses increased wages for 209 individuals completing training, and 209 new hires were planned. In addition, registered apprenticeships (RA) utilized funding to train 192 registered apprentices out of the 209 total individuals trained in Maryland. Industries utilizing the grant included construction trades, manufacturing, IT/cyber, and professional services.

Apprenticeship

Maryland has used its Governor's Set Aside funds to support apprenticeship growth in a variety of ways, including three pilot activities:

- School-to-Apprenticeship Pathway - International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW)
  MD Labor funded the Baltimore Electrician Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee (JATC) to continue expansion of its apprenticeship program by working with participating local public school systems to offer a School-to-Apprenticeship pathway.
- Baltimore Alliance for Careers in Healthcare (BACH)
  Maryland invested funds into BACH, recognizing the role that an apprenticeship intermediary in healthcare could have in accelerating awareness and uptake of the RA Earn-And-Learn model in this non-traditional sector. BACH was awarded funding in the amount of $481,609 over a period of two years beginning on March 21, 2022, and ending on January 31, 2024, to support the continuation and expansion of its Healthcare Apprenticeship Program. Under this grant funding, all five occupational apprenticeship programs became active, and 23 apprentices were enrolled.
- Association of International Professional Accountants (AICPA)
  AICPA received a $119,875.00 grant to support the cost of related instruction for a minimum of 25 new registered apprentices for the AICPA's RA program. The apprentices study the Finance Leadership Program, which leads to the occupation of Finance Business Partner and the Chartered Global Management Accountant designation. The maximum allowable costs per new apprentice are $4,795. As an intermediary and related instruction provider, AICPA develops and updates related instruction to maintain a world-class global designation and ensure apprentices progress and succeed.

  AICPA employer outreach team has provided webinars to 30 potential employers. The grant is a major incentive to finance and accounting field leaders. To date, four employers have completed their employer agreement, and 30 apprentices have been registered. Additional employers are reviewing final documentation for signature with several additional employers engaged in follow-up discussions. AICPA RA program occupation is gaining interest at an unexpected pace. AICPA is considering adding a Maryland-based salesperson to have a consistent person available in the state.

Other State Funds Activities

Not applicable.

Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

In partnership with the Governor's Workforce Development Board, the MD Labor will soon conduct a study to evaluate certain components of workforce development activities within the WIOA system. The State is in early stages of organizing itself on the evaluation goals, methodologies used, whether a procurement will be used to manage the evaluator selection, etc.

Maryland will build on its existing evaluative work this coming PY and intends to engage the forthcoming Governor's WDB System Governance workgroup in this effort to coordinate the development of future projects in partnership with WIOA Core programs, other agencies, and local boards.

To date, evaluation efforts have primarily centered on the RESEA program, which is offered in partnership by Labor's Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning and Division of Unemployment Insurance. The evaluation seeks to help Maryland to understand the customer experience and related outcomes, including a look at key data systems, such as the Maryland Workforce Exchange and the Division of Unemployment Insurance's BEACON UI system.

In addition, MD Labor has strategically partnered with its Maryland Longitudinal Data System (MLDS) Center to better understand outcomes for program participants over time. Through working to securely share data on WIOA participants, community college students, incarcerated individuals, and registered apprentices, the State can better understand long-term outcomes of participants beyond the required timeframe of WIOA reporting.

Continuous Improvement

Staff from the Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability (OPEGA)/Department of Legislative Services met with MD Labor staff to learn more about Maryland's reemployment programs, with a focus on gaining a deeper understanding of claimant participation, how success is measured within the program, and what data collection methods are used.

Maryland participated in a DOL panel hosted by ABT Associates, Always Learning Something New: How Building a Culture of Learning and Evaluation Leads to Program Improvement. The other States on the panel were Texas and Washington State. Maryland was recognized for sharing RESEA evaluation results with staff, improving processes based on results of the process improvement analysis conducted by the RESEA evaluation team, and for being one of the only States in the nation to reach all claimants through the Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services and RESEA programs.

MD Labor continued to administer the Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) grant during PY23. This grant supports activities to bring historical WIOA Title I and Title III data into the MLDS and the development of a process for regular ongoing data submissions. Bringing data into MLDS allows MD Labor and outside researchers to better understand the impact of WIOA

programming on wage and employment outcomes, as well as to explore other related outcome variables (e.g., higher education enrollment). The WDQI grant similarly supports bringing noncredit completion data from the Maryland Higher Education Commission into MLDS for similar analysis around wage and employment outcomes.

Reports

- *Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments (RESEA) in Maryland—PY 2020 Evaluation.*
- *Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments (RESEA) in Maryland—Plan for Annual Assessments with Incremental Improvements*
- *Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments (RESEA) in Maryland—PY 2019 Evaluation*
- *Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments (RESEA) in Maryland—Process Analysis*

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

The State did not have any waivers in place related to WIOA for PY23.

Strategies

Not applicable.

Impact on Performance

Not applicable.

Success Stories

Wagner-Peyser Employment Services

Howard County Career Fair helps employers find qualified workers

The AJC in Columbia, MD, hosted a highly successful career fair in early July of 2023 that brought together eight major area employers and over 120 jobseekers. Staff representing both the Howard County Workforce Development system as well as Maryland's Professional Outplacement Assistance Center teamed up to help jobseekers maximize their success. MD Labor staff person, Teresa Mena, who led planning for the event, sent out information in advance on how to effectively prepare for and participate in career fairs.

Jobseekers in attendance at the career fair had the opportunity to meet a group of outstanding local employers that included:

- US Cyber Command
- The Federal Highway Administration
- Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory
- Howard County Government
- Howard County Fire and Rescue Services
- Maryland Department of Transportation
- The Columbia Association

Employers were seeking candidates to fill positions ranging from entry- to high-level professional roles. Post-event survey responses from employers were very positive. At least three jobseekers received employment offers at the event.

Adult Services

Meet Amy - Incumbent worker receives training to advance her career

Amy works for the Maryland Farm to Food program, part of the Maryland Food Bank. The Maryland Food Bank relies on donations and volunteers to provide food services to the needy, but they struggle with transportation challenges getting the food donations shipped to distribution areas on the Upper Shore. When Amy discovered she could be eligible for a scholarship through the Upper Shore WIB to participate in a seven-week CDL training that would allow her to drive the vehicles to pick up food donations, she jumped at the chance. “I am so glad I now have the CDL license to help the Food Bank,” said Amy.

> “Last week I hauled a tractor trailer load of potatoes from Baltimore to Dorchester County. It was a big deal because it was right before the holidays. A lot of people count on the Food Bank at that time of year. Not only that, but I can now help haul grain for my Dad and brother as well as another local farmer. Just my pure appreciation for the Upper Shore Workforce Investment Board! Thank you so much! I had no knowledge of this program prior to my application for the CDL program. I now tell anyone who asks me about how I paid for my CDL about the scholarship money!”

Adult Services

Meet One of Maryland’s Dedicated Reemployment Staff - Andrea comes up with creative solutions to reach jobseekers with transportation barriers

Like MD Labor workforce staff across the State, Workforce Development Specialist Andrea Kenney sometimes needs to come up with creative solutions to get her customers the help they need. Although she usually leads reemployment workshops offered at the Salisbury, Maryland AJC, she was working with two jobseekers in August of 2023 who needed immediate assistance with

interviewing skills ahead of upcoming job interviews. Unfortunately, neither had the transportation to meet Andrea at the AJC. To get these customers the help they needed to succeed, Andrea scheduled an AJC Mobile Workforce Unit to meet them at a local library they could both reach. Grateful for her support, they arrived on time, participated in mock interviews, and used the computers available on the mobile unit to print out paper copies of their resumes to distribute to their prospective employers at their scheduled interviews. Because they were meeting in person, Andrea noticed one of the jobseeker's body language and encouraged her to sit up straight in her chair and make eye contact with the Hiring Manager during the interview to convey confidence. Both customers reported back within three weeks that they had landed jobs, and Andrea was thanked by the jobseeker whose posture she called attention to. Andrea shared that "she told me she was surprised at how different she felt about herself just by throwing back her shoulders. She credited that one factor as the most important part of convincing the employer she was the right person for the job."

WIOA Discretionary Grant Program

Meet Ron - WIOA Discretionary Grant helps Ron and his wife finally get ahead

Ron and his wife had always worked, but the low-skilled, minimum wage jobs they held kept them trapped in poverty. Things were finally starting to look up when Ron enrolled in a Registered Apprenticeship with Chaney Enterprises, a large east coast concrete supplier headquartered in Gambrills, MD. He was glad to have landed a good job on a career path, but he and his spouse were still struggling to make ends meet. Their paycheck-to-paycheck existence had never allowed them to save enough for the upfront costs required to rent an apartment, such as the security deposit, advanced monthly rent and utility deposits. They used their meager resources to secure extended stay motel rooms, and when they lacked even enough to pay for this shelter, they lived in their car—until Ron's new employer found out about the situation.

As it happened, Chaney Enterprises had an unusual resource to help Ron. The company had recently been awarded a grant through the Jobs that Build (JTB) Employer Fund. MD Labor designed the JTB program, which utilized federal resources allocated to Maryland under the American Rescue Plan Act to support businesses in implementing creative solutions to address barriers significantly hindering workforce participation and retention. The fund prioritized employee support programs and payroll incentives as keys to increasing competitiveness to attract and retain the most qualified workers.

Ron's new employer used money from their JTB grant award to immediately move Ron and his wife into an apartment. Not only was the pressing issue of housing immediately addressed but Ron was now able to put all his energy into focusing on his apprenticeship.

When management at Chaney Enterprises was asked why they elected to use the funding to address Ron's housing challenges, they responded:

> "This funding provided a unique opportunity for us to look beyond the traditional role of an employer. Not only were we able to use the JTB grant to help retain apprentices by supplying completion bonuses, but it gave us a once in a lifetime opportunity to supply one of our apprentices with a career pathway and the stable housing situation he would need to be successful in it. At the same time, we are gaining a much-needed driver!"

Massachusetts

Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development

Use of State Funds

Under-served Populations

No information provided for this section.

Integrated Service Delivery

State Workforce Advisory Committee (SWAC)

The SWAC serves as the statewide coordinating committee for oversight of implementation of WIOA policies and principles across WIOA Core programs and additional partner agencies. The SWAC includes the primary agencies that serve Massachusetts citizens who require or seek special services to assist them with training and finding employment. The SWAC meets regularly to coordinate their efforts toward their goals for their service populations.

The membership of the SWAC includes:

- Adult and Community Learning Services
- Commonwealth Corporation
- Department of Youth Services
- Department of Transitional Assistance
- Division of Apprenticeship Standards
- Department of Corrections
- Department of Youth Services
- Executive Office of Education
- SCSEP
- Job Corps
- Massachusetts Commission for the Blind
- MassAbility
- MassHire Department of Career Services

- Massachusetts Workforce Association
- Operation ABLE
- The Center for Workforce Inclusion
- YouthBuild
- Other Partners

Yes WIOA Can

No information provided for this section.

Other State Funds Activities

The Massachusetts Workforce Training Fund Program (WTFP)

The WTFP, operated by Commonwealth Corporation, provides state businesses with resources to invest in the skills of their workforce. Financed by state employers, in PY23, WTFP offered matching grants up to $200,000 to offset the costs of training workers. In PY23, the Workforce Training Fund Program awarded two types of grants to state businesses. Businesses who are eligible to participate must contribute to the WTFP via a surcharge on UI payments. These grants support training for thousands of workers and improve the competitiveness and productivity of thousands of businesses across the state. The types of grants are:

- General Program: Businesses of any size are eligible to apply. (Intermediaries may lead to a consortium application.) In PY23, businesses could request up to $200,000, for up to two years, to support training for their workforce. Grant funds must be matched dollar-for-dollar. The match may be cash or in-kind (including wages paid to employees during training).
- Express Program: Small businesses with 100 or fewer Massachusetts employees are eligible to apply for grants to cover training selected from a database of over 4,500 registered courses. In PY23, businesses could request receive up to $20,000 per calendar year; the maximum payment per trainee, per course was $3,000.

Grow With Google (GwG)

MassHire Department of Career Services began offering the “Grow with Google” program in March 2022. The National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) partnered with Google and Coursera to offer the “Google Career Certificate Scholarship Program” to prepare customers for a new career in three to six months in high-growth fields with no experience required.

The State was selected by Google to continue the GwG program as MassHire surpassed expectations with the most successful GwG certificate completions.

NASWA is no longer a partner, and MDCS re-launched the program through a partnership with Google and Coursera. The program runs from May 1, 2024, to January 25, 2025. The 1,000 scholarships are offered for the following courses:

- Data Analytics,
- Advanced Data Analytics,
- IT Support,
- Project Management,
- User Experience (UX) Design,
- IT Automation with Python,
- Digital Marketing & E-Commerce,
- Business Intelligence, and
- Cybersecurity.

At the end of the training, completers can connect with top employers that are currently hiring. The Grow with Google program is now scheduled to sunset in January 2025. Massachusetts has 361 individuals taking advantage of this training opportunity, and as of May 2024 has seen 31 completions, among the highest participating in the program across the country.

Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

No information provided for this section.

Continuous Improvement

No information provided for this section.

Reports

No information provided for this section.

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

The State did not have any waivers in process during PY23.

Strategies

Not applicable.

Impact on Performance

Not applicable.

Success Stories

No information provided for this section.

Michigan

State of Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO)

Use of State Funds

During PY23, the State provided Governor's Reserve funding to support several significant projects. In addition to being in alignment with the goals of WIOA, many of these projects support Governor Whitmer's goal to increase the number of working-age adults with a skills certificate or college degree from 51.1 percent today to 60 percent by 2030 and increase access to opportunities that grow the middle class, as well as other goals found in Michigan's Statewide Workforce Plan.

Under-served Populations

In PY23, the State-funded Barrier Removal Employment Success (BRES) program partnered with WIOA Title I and III programs to support at-risk individuals, and to assist them in securing and retaining long-term, meaningful employment. Often this population, especially those currently working, are earning low wages. They are often referred to as the Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed (ALICE) population. The ALICE population consists of households that earn above the Federal Poverty Level, yet still struggle to make ends meet, or are one crisis away from poverty. Despite struggling to make ends meet, ALICE households often do not qualify for public assistance. BRES provides additional supportive services to jobseekers, including those participating in WD workforce education or training programs where supportive service funding is limited or unavailable. These funds are intended to address and remove barriers preventing customers from taking a job or staying in a job if they are currently employed. Supporting employment and removing barriers to employment for these populations has a profound impact on their economic well-being.

BRES helps close gaps by improving the economic security of at-risk, low-income workers through greater opportunities for stable, long-term employment and better wages. It helps grow the middle class by removing barriers to employment. BRES also creates better jobs and supports small businesses by assisting workers who may otherwise not be able to become employed, stay employed, and be part of Michigan's labor force. Below, the chart shows the number of co-enrollments in WIOA Title I and III programs and BRES.

Michigan Registered Apprenticeship Map to Prosperity (MiRAMP)

Governor's Reserve funding and General Fund/General Purpose funding was allocated to the MiRAMP program for supportive services to assist 3,300 unemployed or underemployed workers in new RAs with the goal, including veterans, individuals with disabilities, justice-involved individuals, youth, and individuals without a high school diploma or high school equivalency (HSE). The actual number of new RAs supported was 4,222, or 128 percent of goal.

Michigan Rural Enhanced Access to Careers in Healthcare (MiREACH) 2.0

MiREACH 2.0 supports tuition and support services to individuals entering healthcare occupations directly impacting patient care in rural communities. The MiREACH 2.0 program assists in the alleviation of workforce shortages by creating sustainable

employment and training programs in healthcare occupations (including behavioral and mental healthcare) serving rural populations.

Integrated Service Delivery

Key Partnerships

Collaboration is a critical component of the Michigan Statewide Workforce Plan and a key component of the success with the administration of WIOA programming. Strong partnerships help to leverage the State's WIOA resources, increase opportunities for jobseekers and businesses, and help ensure a no-wrong-door workforce system. They have enhanced the ability of the local workforce investment areas to access information and data, improve services, and increase efficiency in recruitment processes, referrals, and case management. Key partnerships in the state that continue to be crucial to the success of the workforce development system include:

- Title II Adult Education Partners: Michigan has a robust, integrated employment and training model to leverage Title I and II resources and funding. Further, co-enrollment of Title II participants is strongly encouraged across all Title I and III programs.
- Title IV Partners: Michigan's Title I staff is actively engaged with Michigan Rehabilitation Services and the Bureau of Services for Blind Persons. WIOA Title I and IV staff work together to complete Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessments to determine how to best support individuals with disabilities.
- Michigan's Department of Education (MDE): WD staff has partnered with MDE's Career and Technical Education staff to establish a Career Readiness Initiative workgroup. This group focuses on a wide range of topics such as career readiness and removing barriers to employment.

Capacity Building and Professional Development (CBPD)

The CBPD funding may be used for, but is not limited to, supporting state and local partnerships, enhancing system capacity to provide opportunities for individuals with barriers to employment to enter in-demand industry sectors or occupations and non-traditional occupations, developing and improving local program performance and goals, and assisting ongoing system development and proficiency, including professional development and technical assistance. Activities supported by this funding will assist in addressing the goals of local and/or regional strategic plans, and the needs of local and regional employers for a skilled workforce. In PY23, 2,314 partners received training through CBPD efforts on topics such as cultural awareness, trauma-informed care, business solutions, and labor market information analysis.

Integrated Education and Training

In alignment with WIOA and the Statewide Workforce Plan's commitment to strengthening education pathways and increasing access for adult learners, Workforce Development (WD) has allocated funding to support Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs that have already been, or will be, developed jointly by local MWAs and adult education providers. The intent of IET

programming in the state is for WIOA Title II adult education providers to partner with a local MWA and/or an existing training provider to co-enroll participants in WIOA Title I and Title II services, when appropriate. The IET program must be part of a regionally or locally defined career pathway. The IET program must include three required components:

1) Adult education and literacy activities,
2) Workforce preparation activities, and
3) Occupational training.

The three required components must occur simultaneously within the overall scope of the IET program and must each be of sufficient intensity and quality. Most local partners have opted to receive this funding for program development.

Michigan Statewide Apprenticeship Inclusion and Readiness System (MiSTAIRS)

WD braided Governor's Reserve funding to support the MiSTAIRS program to ensure the State achieves its goals in the MiSTAIRS program to expand RAs by a minimum of 1,640. Grant-funded reimbursements for Apprenticeship Readiness (AR) participants and RA participants augments the support needed to provide access to relevant hands-on training, specialized remedial related instruction, where necessary, and appropriate supportive services to help ensure AR participants' successful entry into and completion of RAs.

Sector Strategy Employer-Led Collaboratives

A Sector Strategy Employer-Led Collaborative is a collaboration of businesses at the regional or state level, working together to solve shared workforce challenges. This effort brings together partners like MWAs, business associations, and non-profits to facilitate collaboration between employers, educational institutions, economic development organizations, and other workforce development stakeholders. Their goal is to tackle issues related to talent, such as career awareness and exploration for K–12 and higher education, recruitment, upskilling, and retention. Solutions may include developing customized training programs, including pre-apprenticeship and RA programs.

Yes WIOA Can

Career Exploration and Experience Events

Funding has been awarded to the local areas to support career exploration and experience of multiple businesses and industries at a single, coordinated location. These events introduce young adults and educators to available career paths in their region by offering a hands-on experience with in-demand businesses and industries. These innovative and interactive events provide real-time information regarding employer, education, and training requirements necessary to secure employment. Impacts include career awareness, relationship building, establishing a talent pipeline, and talent retention. In PY23, eight career exploration events were offered, engaging nearly 450 employers and supporting 17,250 attendees statewide.

Funding to Support WIOA Participant Training

WIOA allows states to use a portion of the Governor's Reserve funds to develop strategies to serve individuals with barriers to employment, and to implement promising services for workers and businesses, including support for education, training, and skill upgrading. By ensuring the credentials and degrees Michiganders receive prepare them with the skills needed now and as they evolve, the State can move more workers up into the middle class and provide pathways for new workers and those reskilling for new positions. To meet local demand, MWAs received a one-time funding award to assist with the ability to provide training opportunities. Funding for this initiative resulted in an additional 454 WIOA participants receiving training. This work directly supported WD's goals as part of LEO's Operational Plan.

High Concentrations of WIOA Eligible Youth

Funding was awarded to provide additional assistance to local areas that have a high concentration of WIOA eligible youth. The funds awarded are to provide additional assistance to local areas that have high concentrations of WIOA eligible youth to carry out the following:

- Provide an objective assessment of the academic levels, skills levels, and service needs of each participant.
- Develop service strategies for each participant that are directly linked to one or more of the indicators of performance described in WIOA Section 116(b)(2)(A)(ii), and that shall identify career pathways that include education and employment goals (including non-traditional employment), appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate services for the participant, taking into account the assessment conducted pursuant to subparagraph (A), except that a new service strategy for a participant is not required if the provider carrying out such a program determines it is appropriate to use a recent service strategy developed for the participant under another education or training program.
- Provide the following:
    1. Activities leading to the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, or a recognized post-secondary credential.
    2. Preparation for post-secondary education and training opportunities.
    3. Strong linkages between academic instruction (based on state academic content and student academic achievement standards established under Section 1111 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 [20 United States Code 6311]) and occupational education that leads to the attainment of recognized post-secondary credentials
    4. Preparation for unsubsidized employment opportunities, in appropriate cases.
    5. Effective connections to employers, including small employers, in in-demand industry sectors and occupations of the local and regional labor markets.

Further, local WIOA Youth programs must include each of the 14 program elements listed in WIOA Section 129(c)(2) as options available to youth participants.

In PY23, 1,052 individuals received workforce preparation services, 663 participants entered a work experience, 576 of those individuals completed the work experience, and 418 employers participated in the workforce development activities for eligible youth.

This work also directly supported WD's Operational Plan goals.

Michigan Registered Apprenticeship Innovation Network (MiRAIN)

WD braided Governor's Reserve funding to support MiRAIN to ensure the State achieved its goals to expand RA opportunities by a minimum of 5,230. Activities included the development of an MCDA Data Dashboard that contains a progress to goal RA dashboard (MiRAIN Gauge). The dashboard combines DOL RA Partners Information Data System data with state wage records data to produce relevant RA information, including RA program completers' Occupation Wage Data One-Year-After median annual earnings of $74,680 (as of June 30). Additional State Apprenticeship Expansion (SAE) Team personnel salary and fringe benefits contributed to MiRAIN through leveraged funding included one Full Time Employee (FTE) Departmental Analyst during the grant performance period. The SAE Departmental Analyst supported data analysis, evaluation, reporting, and tracking for the MiRAIN program. The actual number of new RAs achieved as a performance outcome in this program was 5,865, exceeding program goals.

Michigan Youth Apprenticeship Readiness Network (MiYARN)

WD braided Governor's Reserve funding to support MiYARN to ensure the State of Michigan achieved its goals to expand the number of youth RA opportunities by a minimum of 1,024 new RAs. Additional SAE Team personnel salary and fringe benefits contributed to the MiYARN program which included an FTE Youth Departmental Analyst. The Youth Departmental Analyst supported data analysis, evaluation, reporting, and tracking for the MiYARN project. The actual number of new RAs achieved as a performance outcome in this program was 2,805 new RAs, exceeding program goals.

MWA Apprenticeship Success Coordinators and MWA RA Program Intermediary Functions

Governor's Reserve funding and General Fund/General Purpose funding was allocated to MWAs for the Apprenticeship Success Coordinators (ASC) and RA program intermediary functions. ASCs perform outreach to and coordination with employers and organized labor to expand RA programs, increase partnerships, improve services to RA stakeholders, promote and connect employers with the Registered Apprenticeship Program Tracking with Online Reporting (RAPTOR – WorkHands) application, and enroll and track participants served. Funding was also awarded for intermediary services to increase the use of the RA model. A majority of MWAs offer RA program sponsorship and coordination services to regional employers. The MWA intermediary function extends opportunities and RA program model benefits to more employer partners and Michigan workers.

Young Professionals

The purpose of the Young Professionals initiative is to increase career awareness and preparation while reducing youth unemployment. This will be accomplished by introducing under-represented young adults, ages 14 to 24, to the world of work while providing participants and their families with income. Combined services will place young adults on the right path to gain the

skills necessary to achieve lifelong economic self-sufficiency. Funding supports the creation and/or enhancement of locally developed Young Professionals employment initiatives to meet the unique needs of communities throughout the state. The Young Professionals initiative is highlighted as a success to build on as it supports the strategy to expand career exposure, exploration, experience, and navigation with the Statewide Workforce Plan, as well as LEO's Strategic Plan. The most recent completed year of funding for this project resulted in 1,013 young adults receiving services.

Other State Funds Activities

Not applicable.

Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

Long-Term Effects of WIOA Title I Programs

WD is partnering with the Michigan Department of Technology, Management, and Budget's Michigan Center for Data and Analytics (MCDA) to conduct an evaluation analyzing the long-term effects of WIOA Title I programs. The evaluation explores the long-term effects of WIOA services on labor market outcomes, including employment, retention, and earnings. It also explores long-term industry migrations for individuals who are initially placed in temporary work positions, observing whether temporary workers eventually find permanent employment, and in which industries.

The study is being conducted using data from two main data sources: OSMIS and Unemployment Insurance Agency wage records. Data was collected on individuals who registered in WIOA programs in calendar years 2017 and 2018 and follows their labor market outcomes for five years after exiting those programs. The period observed for this study covers the COVID-19 pandemic, a disruptive event for labor market trends. The trends explored may have looked significantly different in the absence of such an event.

Initial analyses of the data suggest that WIOA Title I programs have a positive impact on long-term wages, but employment rates fall over time. Aggregate employment rates are high immediately after program exit, but they decline over the first two years, before stabilizing approximately three years after exit. However, those who do remain employed earn significantly higher wages over the five years examined.

Participants placed in temporary work positions experience similarly mixed results. Most of the participants initially placed in temporary positions later find permanent positions. However, many these individuals appear to become and remain unemployed, and another significant portion remain in temporary positions at the end of five years.

Continuous Improvement

MCDA will also continue to generate and update related work, such as a WIOA workforce dashboard and monthly and annual labor market reports. Currently, the dashboard focuses on WIOA Title I and III program participants, giving details on program demographics, barriers to employment, and wage and employment outcomes. It could be expanded to include Title II programs as well as programs outside of WIOA. The dashboard is currently available to State staff.

Long-Term Effects of WIOA Title I Programs

The results will be used to support WD's efforts to continuously improve services and program outcomes. The total projected cost for this evaluation is $328,187.

Reports

Long-Term Effects of WIOA Title I Programs

The results of this report will also be used to determine how participation in WIOA contributes to the Statewide Workforce Plan's focus on how increased access to resources grows the middle class. The final report is currently being drafted and is not yet publicly available. Once finalized in January of 2025, the report will be posted publicly and shared with local and state partners.

Additional Reports

- 2023 Michigan Annual Economic Analysis Report
- Michigan's Labor Market News

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

WIOA Youth Program

The DOL approved a waiver of statutory and regulatory provisions of WIOA. Waiver approval is applied to the life of PY22 and PY23 WIOA Youth funding.

The State sought and was granted approval for the following:

- A waiver to lower the minimum OSY expenditure requirement to 50 percent for formula funding at both the state and local levels; and,
- A waiver to lower the minimum OSY expenditure requirement for WIOA statewide activities funding to 50 percent when providing direct services to youth.

Workforce Development Board Membership Requirements

The State was approved for a waiver to substitute the WIOA SWDB membership requirements with alternate requirements, which specify board membership, chairperson, and category/sub-category representation requirements for PY22 and PY23.

Strategies

WIOA Youth Program

Flexibility of funding has increased the State's ability to provide resources to meet the needs of all youth populations to ensure they have access to quality workforce development programming. Each of the State's local areas met or exceeded their performance metrics, in compliance with the waiver approval. The State tracks performance and expenditures quarterly and annually using the One-Stop Management Information System (OSMIS) and the Management of Awards to Recipients System. Should any area be identified as at-risk following a quarterly review, technical assistance is available and immediately provided.

Workforce Development Board Membership Requirements

Projected programmatic outcomes resulting from alternate state workforce development board composition include better support for true engagement of employers and education providers with the State's workforce development system. The composition also provides an enhanced opportunity for the creation of innovative solutions that address the challenges employers in key sectors are facing. An increase in Michiganders possessing post-secondary credentials was also anticipated to occur.

Impact on Performance

WIOA Youth Program

Receipt of these waivers has resulted in an increase in the number of both OSY and ISY served in the last three PYs with a 0.75 percent increase in OSY and 4.41 percent increase in ISY in PY23.

Workforce Development Board Membership Requirements

The average percentage of participants obtaining a credential increased in all WIOA programs from PY22 to PY23.

Success Stories

WIOA Adult Program

LaShonda came to Great Lakes Bay Michigan Works! seeking career assistance. She had been unemployed for over five months and was interested in becoming a CDL-A, over-the-road truck driver to start a new career and be able to support herself. LaShonda was seeking funding for the CDL-A program with 160 Driving Academy.

She was able to take advantage of services through the WIOA Adult and Food Assistance Employment and Training (FAE&T) programs. LaShonda received job leads and career assessments through WIOA, and Vocational Occupational Training funding and mileage reimbursement from the FAE&T program.

LaShonda completed her CDL-A training at 160 Driving Academy and is now a licensed CDL-A driver working for CFI Trucking Company, earning $29.38 per hour with benefits. She has doubled her wages from her previous job and is loving her new position.

LaShonda said this about her services: “I appreciate how you all were able to help me get my CDL license to complete my success to become a truck driver. I won’t trade it for anything. I’m loving every day of being a truck driver.”

WIOA Dislocated Worker Program

Andrez had never anticipated his journey unfolding as it did when he first walked through the doors of the Newaygo Michigan Works! West Central Service Center. After losing his job at Deur Speet Motors, a local car dealership, he found himself grappling with the daunting task of navigating unemployment assistance. Filing for UI and registering for work were just the first steps in what would become a transformative experience.

Andrez attended an orientation, where he learned about the police academy and the support available through the WIOA Dislocated Worker program to assist with funding to attend West Shore Community College. He was encouraged by the prospect of résumé building assistance and gas mileage support for commuting to training sessions.

Andrez did not hesitate. He committed himself wholeheartedly to pursuing his dream of becoming a police officer. The academy demanded his dedication, but Andrez thrived, graduating with honors. Two weeks after graduation, Andrez proudly donned his uniform as a newly employed police officer with the Grant Police Department, earning $21 per hour. Andrez stopped back into the service center to express his thanks as well as offering additional guidance.

“I am being placed into another section of the police force,” he said. “Reach out if there are any interested police academy applicants in case I can help them along the way.” His journey from unemployment to law enforcement was a testament to his resilience and determination. Andrez was not content with just starting out; he set his sights on climbing the ranks in the years to come, driven by his passion for service and a newfound sense of purpose.

WIOA In-School Youth Program

As a student at Cadillac Innovation High School, Tyler Kuchta was involved with the Northwest Michigan Works! Jobs for Michigan’s Graduates program, and a student in the welding program at the Wexford Missaukee Career Tech Center.

Tyler completed that program and graduated from high school but wanted to gain some certifications to help him pursue his dream job as a Welder. Tyler had the opportunity to enroll in the Northwest Michigan Works! Summer Young Professionals Welding Program. He earned three certifications and shortly after completing the program, he landed a job as a Welder at B&P Manufacturing in Cadillac, where he earns $15.00 per hour.

Tyler stated, “Northwest Michigan Works! helped to give me valuable job skills that have become useful in my workplace.”

WIOA Out-Of-School Youth Program

After a short prison sentence, Jerry found himself living in a halfway house and wanted to make some changes in his life. Obtaining his high school diploma and finding a full-time job was his focus, so Jerry began working with a Michigan Works! Region 7B Youth Career Advisor.

The Career Advisor worked with Jerry on overcoming his barriers to employment and had referred him to Iosco Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA) to complete his high school diploma. Jerry was always willing to do what was suggested by the Career Advisor. Michigan Works! Region 7B was able to assist with auto repairs which allowed Jerry to maintain his employment with Bricker Construction and to continue to attend his classes to complete his high school diploma.

Thanks to the assistance he received from Michigan Works! Region 7B, Jerry completed his GED in less than a year and maintained his full-time job, earning $20 per hour. He has left the halfway house and is currently living with his mother until he becomes financially sound.

Jerry stated, “Following through with things really pays off. Without the assistance of Michigan Works! Region 7B and Iosco RESA, I would not be where I am now—I would not have gotten it done.”

Minnesota

Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)

Use of State Funds

Under-served Populations

Not applicable.

Integrated Service Delivery

Co-enrollment and Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)

TAA implemented a feature in the shared case management tracking system, WF1, to alert staff if a participant is potentially eligible for TAA at the time of DW enrollment. This results in higher levels of collaboration and co-enrollment which is required under the federal Final Rule.

Partnerships to Serve Teen Parents

DEED, the Department of Human Services (DHS), and the MAWB have worked in partnership since 2009 to serve teen parents receiving Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) benefits or in TANF-eligible households. This partnership has leveraged over $8.6 million of TANF funds to provide work experience and work-readiness training for over 5,000 teen parents or younger youth receiving MFIP benefits. Many of the participants have little or no previous work experience, and they develop work readiness skills through their participation in the project. Co-enrollment in the WIOA Youth program and the Minnesota Youth program, when appropriate, has contributed to the success of these projects.

Braded Funds

WIOA Youth providers blend and braid funding sources to support youth in reaching their education and employment outcomes. By braiding state and federal resources, WIOA providers are able to provide comprehensive, case managed services to youth and support them with critical activities such as obtaining a high school diploma/GED, post-secondary training and credentialing, support services, and paid work experiences in their desired field. Programs provide adult support, structure, and expectations to help youth meet their employment and education goals. Youth strengthen and practice cultural competencies while supporting Youth Voice and building youths' ability to advocate for services and opportunities.

Yes WIOA Can

State-Funded Dislocated Worker (DW)

The State is unique in having both a state and federally funded DW program. The State DW program, funded through the State's Workforce Development Fund (WDF), is more flexible and allows the State to serve larger number of participants. The State DW

program has added eligibility criteria that allows individuals who are long-term unemployed to receive services and removed Selective Service registration requirement for enrollment. In PY23, the state program served 5,931 individuals. To provide direct services to customers, DW provides state grants to a network of 16 LWDAs, as well as seven independent non-profit service providers.

Disability Employment Initiative, Partners for Youth Career Pathways

The State completed the Round 7 Youth Disability Employment Initiative in March 2020. Through multi-agency partnerships spanning the state and local levels, Minnesota's Partners for Youth Career Pathways successfully supported over 400 youth with disabilities in achieving their education and employment goals through an intergenerational, person-centered approach. Minnesota's Partners for Youth Career Pathways grant was recognized by DOL in a Promising Practices Brief on WorkforceGPS. The brief highlighted the PACER Center's publication, Incorporating the *Guideposts for Success into Minnesota's Personal Learning Plan Process* and the Youth Action Plan/Individual Service Strategy document utilized by Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council. The Youth Action Plan/Individual Service Strategy aligns the 14 WIOA Youth program elements, allowable Pre-ETS (VRS-funded) activities, and the five Guideposts for Success. This document helps staff to better align and provide services across multiple programs.

Other State Funds Activities

Not applicable.

Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

Adult and Dislocated Worker (DW)

- SVI Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) Study
  This study uses the Center for Disease Control's social vulnerability index to assess if Title I programs serve Minnesotans from the most marginalized parts of the state, based on zip codes. This study resulted in DEED setting a goal to increase the percentage of people they serve from the most marginalized parts of the state (defined using the SVI). PTM is working with WIOA Adult and DW to establish baselines for Title I Adult programs and create interactive multi-layered maps and measures to help program staff target outreach.
- Study of the impact of internet access on accessing Title I services (planning/implementation of study)
  This study looks at the impact of internet access on receiving Title I services. The primary research questions are as follows:
    a. How do low-broadband areas differ from control areas based on demographics and economic conditions?
    b. Is there a difference in enrollment rates between low-broadband and control areas?

This study will leverage data from the PIRL, Federal Communications Commission (FCC) data, Census Bureau data, and data from DEED's Office of Broadband Development. In addition to leveraging administrative data, the State plans to interview providers about their challenges in serving people with limited to no internet. The report is expected to be complete Spring of 2025.

Youth Program

- SVI
  Local youth service providers focus on serving hard-to-serve youth. Many youth have multiple barriers to employment including disability, basic skills deficiencies, limited English proficiency, foster care or justice system involvement, teen parenthood, lack of diploma/equivalency and/or academic attainment behind their peers. Housing and food insecurities remain major areas of concern across the state and are an ongoing priority for the Walz administration. DEED's Performance and Training Management (PTM) conducted an analysis of youth workforce programs' efforts to serve youth with the highest needs. PTM SVI metrics to identify the most vulnerable zip codes across the state of Minnesota. These zip codes were cross referenced with WIOA Youth participant data and the results showed that nearly nine out of ten youth served in WIOA Youth live in one of the State's most vulnerable zip codes. The PTM analysis reaffirms the notion that Minnesota's WIOA Youth service providers are meeting the spirit of WIOA and administering programs that are accessible to Minnesota's most vulnerable youth.

Continuous Improvement

The State continues to partner with DOL, to share its approach to evaluation, analysis, and how to conduct rigorous independent evaluations without needing an external vendor via technical assistance sessions or larger meetings. Continuous Quality Improvement strategies are ongoing and follow the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle as a "trial-and-learning" method to test changes quickly for the DW and Adult programs. As new guidance is received, multiple protocols, including database and data entry procedures, need to be evaluated to determine the actual impacts of the change. This may include, applying changes to multiple programs, updating policy, remapping the State's case management system, Workforce One (WF1), updating case management desk guides, and scheduling training sessions to inform LWDAs. Planning for DOL monitoring visits begin with coordinating with LWDAs to inform of the planned visit and to prepare files for the monitoring visit. DEED is already unified with local areas via WF1. The State responds to DOL monitoring reports in collaboration with LWDAs.

Reports

Study of Changing Populations

This study includes partnering with DEED's Labor Market Information (LMI) team to see if programs are properly set up to serve Minnesotans most impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic. The initial results indicate that Title I Adult programs have pivoted to serving more customers across every measure of marginalization the State analyzed after the COVID-19 Pandemic. The next

step of this study is examining the regional impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic in the state and seeing if Title I programs served industries impacted by pandemic layoffs.

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

The State renewed the following waivers for PY23, which provide the State's WDAs with the flexibility to provide high-quality, cost-effective services to both OSY and ISY:

- Homeless Youth/Foster Youth Waiver
- ISY Individual Training Account (ITA) Waiver
- Waiver of 75 percent OSY Expenditure Requirement: Governor's Reserve funds for Direct Services

Strategies

Homeless Youth/Foster Youth Waiver

Minnesota secured a waiver from the DOL that assures the LWDAs have the flexibility to target services to in-school youth who meet DOL's definition of homeless youth. A Minnesota Department of Education survey identified over 3,600 youth in grades 8–12 statewide who were homeless. This waiver allows the state to reduce the required OSY expenditure rate from 75 percent to 60 percent for LWDAs who prioritize ISY who are homeless or foster youth.

Impact on Performance

When WIOA is reauthorized, states and local areas will have more flexibility in determining eligibility for services. In the meantime, the waivers allow the State the flexibility to offer cost-effective, high-quality services to both ISY and OSY. For these reasons, Minnesota Youth will renew/extend all current waivers.

Homeless Youth/Foster Youth Waiver

The State's Homeless Youth/Foster Youth waiver provided seven LWDAs, in PY23, with the flexibility to target homeless youth and foster youth while they are still in school. Services include provision of critical employment and training services to at-risk ISY without jeopardizing the delivery of services to out-of-school participants. This waiver supports one of the goals of Minnesota's State WIOA Plan: to increase the high school (HS) graduation rate for under-represented youth.

Overall, for PY23 WIOA Youth of the 2,574 served, 448 were homeless/runaway youth. Of these 448, 75 were ISY homeless youth without a HS diploma at enrollment.

A total of 136 youth identified as either in foster care, or previously in foster care. Out of the 136, 45 were ISYs. Performance results for PY23 youth exiters who were either in foster care or who had previously been in foster care are on the following page.

ISY ITA Waiver

The COVID-19 Pandemic impacted the State's use of ITAs: 158 were set up statewide. In PY23, 31 ITAs were set up for ISY and another 127 ITAs were set up for OSY.

Waiver of 75 percent OSY Expenditure Requirement: Governor's Reserve Funds for Direct Services

In PY20, the State awarded (Competitive Request for Proposal Process) $250,000 of State Set-Aside funds/Governor's Reserve funds to two agencies serving under-represented youth, using the YouthBuild program model: Goodwill/Easter Seals of Minnesota (targets OSY) and Southeastern Minnesota Workforce Development, Inc., (targets ISY). The waiver eliminated the requirement that 75 percent of the funding be spent on OSY: the agencies had the flexibility to determine the mix of ISY and OSY.

Success Stories

No information is provided for this section.

Mississippi

Mississippi Works - Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES)

Use of State Funds

Under-served Populations

No information provided for this section.

Integrated Service Delivery

No information provided for this section.

Yes WIOA Can

Claiborne County School District – Governor's Discretionary Grant

The "Linking Today's Education to Tomorrow's Careers through STEM" initiative has taken a holistic approach to community and economic development, by engaging more than 106 students in rural Southwest Mississippi, equipping them with the skills and training needed to create a pipeline of future STEM entrepreneurs, engineers, and nuclear advocates, and establishing a clear pathway to high-skill careers in the state. The goal is to train and empower individuals and communities with the skills needed to effect systemic change within their own communities. The Claiborne County School District utilized the Governor's Reserve fund to purchase supplies and equipment, enabling the training and certification of over 65 students in three CTE Pathways, thus creating a highly qualified future STEM workforce. Additionally, more than 18 students graduated from the Claiborne County School District with STEM-related scholarships.

Industry collaboration further supported students by providing work-based experiences through paid internships and career development opportunities. Due to students' excellence in these internships, 20 work-based learning students secured job placements and full-time careers with Entergy Mississippi. Two students earned the NANTeL Generic Plant Access certification, which offers a starting salary of more than $35,000 per year. Another 131 students are currently enrolled in the program. The "Linking Today's Education to Tomorrow's Careers through STEM" program has also gained support from Alcorn State University and Hinds Community College, both of which now offer dual credit courses. Currently, 18 participants are enrolled in the Energy Industry Fundamentals (EIF 2.0) certification program.

Southern Mississippi Planning and Development District (SMPDD) Builds a Comprehensive Re-Entry Project for the Twin District Workforce Development Area (TDWDA)

The project, funded through a RESTORE grant from AccelerateMS, is designed to do that for individuals returning to Hancock, Harrison, or Jackson counties by providing assessments, skills training, job search, placement services, and mitigating barriers to re-entry and employment success. Additional SMPDD re-entry projects underway include a $3 million Pathway Home grant

awarded in July 2024 by DOL-ETA and a customized workforce training program scheduled to begin in September 2024 paid for through the WIOA Governor's Reserve fund grant.

The DOL Pathway grants are designed to help eliminate gaps between release from prison, or jail, and enrollment in a workforce development program. The grant is the first to be awarded in the state. SMPDD plans partnerships with five regional correctional facilities in the workforce and will provide services to 300 participants. Additionally, partnerships are in place with social service organizations and major employers in the region. These collaborative efforts will be instrumental in giving the returning individuals the best chance of successful re-entry and becoming productive members of society.

In partnership with the Mississippi Construction Education Foundation (MECF), SMPDD will begin a customized workforce training program targeting 30 parolees and/or probationers residing in Hancock, Harrison, or Jackson counties in September 2024. Participants will earn a Level I Carpentry certification from the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER). The goal is to connect existing services, resources, and employment opportunities to successful participants to overcome re-entry barriers. Funds for the program come from the WIOA Governor's Reserve fund.

"The programs we are developing are innovative but not necessarily new," said Leonard Bentz, SMPDD executive director. "The innovation is that we are looking at re-entry as an ecosystem. This is a new way to think about supporting better re-entry outcomes and improving the future of formerly incarcerated people, their families, and their communities."

Other State Funds Activities

Not applicable.

Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

Workforce Data Quality Initiative Grant Evaluation

MDES received funding for a Workforce Data Quality Initiative Grant (WDQI) and used the funding to expand current systems to:

- Enhance UI Wage Records Reporting,
- Study the Effectiveness of Training Programs, and
- Modify the Eligible Training Provider List System to Improve Efficiency with MS Works.

Continuous Improvement

Multi-State Data Collaborative Initiative

On April 9, 2024, MDES became the first agency in Mississippi to join the Multi-State Data Collaborative (MSDC). Before the sharing of data may begin, MDES is committed to coordinating this effort by including AccelerateMS, Mississippi State's National Strategic Planning and Analysis Research Center (NSPARC), the State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) members, and the State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB) in future conversations to best meet the needs of strategic partners.

Reports

No information provided for this section.

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

The State was granted a waiver associated with the requirements at WIOA Section 129 (a)(4)(A) and 20 CFR 681.410, which requires not less than 75 percent of youth funds be used for out-of-school youth (OSY).

Strategies

This request is consistent with the MS WIOA Combined State Plan and its "no wrong door" strategies. Increasing the percentage of funding available to ISY will open doors to work experience, pre-apprenticeship programs, and career pathways for at-risk students.

- Goal 1:
  Increase access to the MS Smart Start Career Pathway for at-risk youth in local communities based on need and without regard to educational status. The Smart Start Career Pathway provides manageable steps leading to successively higher credentials and employment outcomes tailored to current life situations. This waiver allows the state to provide work-based learning opportunities, mitigate dropout behaviors, and improve student retention. Early intervention will increase attachment to the workforce and enrollment in post-secondary training.
- Goal 2:
  Build on strategic partnerships to improve services and leverage resources. This waiver enhances linkages to local education and human services agencies and maximizes the use of scarce state and local resources.

  Because of the waiver, the quantifiable and measurable outcomes MS Partnership LWDA expects to achieve are increasing the number of students ready for entry into the workplace by teaching essential, necessary soft skills, and providing work-based learning opportunities to ISY.

  The Delta LWDA (DWDA) will serve 50 to 60 ISYs annually with the expectation that these youths will be work-ready upon completion of high school and prepared to meet the DWDA WIOA performance measures. For example, in their current

ISY program, the participants are training for certification in pharmacy tech, CDL, and welding, which requires consistency.

Impact on Performance

They are more of a somewhat captive audience, which is the opposite of OSY. Many youths are not interested in continuing higher education, and they get lost the summer after graduating. Currently, DWDA is finding many of these youths with high school diplomas lack a desire for training in their OSY programs. The local area works to close this gap with stronger relationships with school counselors.

OSY will continue to be the priority in Twin Districts LWDA, but they believe the partnership with ISY at high schools is increasingly important. With the waiver, Twin Districts believes they could substantially increase the number of enrollments. Schools are asking for ISY partnerships, which are needed to help students who may not have thrived during the pandemic and now may be deficient in basic skills.

A partnership between Twin Districts LWDA and Kemper County School District has provided an unprecedented opportunity for students enrolled in the Work-Based Learning program. Students have been afforded job placement previously unavailable, and employers have benefitted from the additional and much-needed workforce. The staff of the workforce area has worked closely with students to ensure that they arrive at their first interview prepared with proper job search skills and once hired, armed with the soft skills and work ethics needed to succeed. Using the Kemper County School District model, the LWDA can easily replicate the program. It has expanded to the Hattiesburg Public School District.

Following established strategies, the state will continue to serve OSY. Adding more ISY funding will enhance the total number of youths served, as described in the waiver.

Future Plan Built on Previous Successes

The Mississippi Partnership is working to link the ISY program with industry-recognized apprenticeships at local community colleges so there will be a seamless transition for ISY who choose to continue their education in career tech fields within LWDA target sectors.

The Mississippi Partnership LWDA has built strategic partnerships to improve services and leverage resources for youth in the workforce area. They have enhanced linkages to local education agencies and other agencies and maximized the use of workforce programs. This is helping to build a progressive pipeline of employees for the industry by exposing and linking youth in high school to short-term (up to two years) workforce programs after high school graduation.

The State's graduation requirements changed for students who entered the 9th grade in August 2018, and all students are required to complete a College and Career Readiness Course or 140 hours of work-based learning activities. This waiver has helped the Mississippi Partnership LWDA provide work-based learning opportunities and career exploration, mitigate dropout behaviors, and improve student retention. Early intervention will increase attachment to the workforce and enrollment in post-secondary training.

The state will build on the success of the Mississippi Partnership's program, with the Delta LWDA planning an in-school pilot project that involves two youth providers and a community college. This LWDA planned expansion will require the LWDA to take advantage of the waiver.

The Twin Districts LWDA (TDWDA) will also be expanding their ISY pilot project. One of the goals of the TDWDA Sector Strategy Plan is to establish a growing partnership with high school career and technical education (CTE) programs. SMPDD partnered with the Mississippi Department of Education to provide WIOA Youth services to high school career and technical students to achieve the goal. Through the partnership, the objectives of both programs are met. SMPDD has worked with local CTE Directors, Work-based Learning Coordinators, and Guidance Counselors to enroll CTE students into WIOA Youth programs. The high school CTE programs provide the youth training in a specific pathway, and the WIOA Youth programs provide work readiness skills training and supportive services and connect the youth to work-based learning opportunities. Because COVID-19 required TDWDA to adapt their training model to be able to provide remote services, they now can connect with all CTE programs in the local area. TDWDA piloted the program with Kemper County High School and Hattiesburg High School. The plan is to expand to several CTE programs across the TDWDA 24 county service area and, therefore, enroll many more ISY into the WIOA Youth program utilizing the 50/50 waiver. SMPDD and TDWDA are currently participating in statewide Perkins V taskforce planning team meetings to align their funding streams better, reduce duplication, and coordinate services.

Success Stories

OJT Success Story

An individual was flourishing in a rewarding 22-year career with Crown, Cork and Seal in Batesville. Unfortunately, Crown notified employees early in 2024 that the plant was closing and worked with the Mississippi Department of Employment Security to host a Rapid Response event to share resources with all employees. In his final days at Crown, this individual learned about a job opening at Lockers Manufacturing in Batesville. The Batesville WIN Job Center partners with Lockers to help with recruiting and has an OJT Agreement with them. Lockers hired this person, and Batesville staff added him to OJT. Due to his supervisory experience with Crown, Lockers hired him as a Paint Line Lead with a starting hourly wage of over $28 plus benefits. Lockers allowed him to complete his last days at Crown before starting his new job in April 2024. This individual is now in training to learn their manufacturing process and equipment.

WIOA Gateway OSY Program Success Story

An individual visited the Northwest WIN Job Center seeking employment after dropping out of her local high school in 2022. She had enrolled in the Adult Education Program offered through Northwest Community College and was referred to the WIN Job Center for assistance. During the discussion, she explored the option of enrolling in the WIOA Gateway OSY program, which would provide her with a part time work experience opportunity in the IT Department at the Northwest Community College Oxford Campus. She then met with the onsite IT Technician, Mr. Stevie McGee, where they discussed job duties and established a positive working relationship. She embraced her tasks with enthusiasm. Since then, the participant has successfully completed

her High School Equivalency (HSE) and achieved a platinum-level score on the Career Readiness Certificate (CRC). With a strong interest in IT, she has performed her work experience with pride. Additionally, she has enrolled in the IT Program at NWCC and will begin her studies in January 2024.

WIOA Youth Program - Dental Career Success

A youth was very insecure about her smile and decided she needed braces. Over time, this youth built up her self-confidence after hearing the orthodontist telling her during each visit that she had the prettiest smile. Inspired by her interaction with the orthodontist while wearing braces, she chose the dental field as her career pathway. She applied for funding through the Clarksdale WIN Job Center in August 2022 and was awarded an Individual Training Account (ITA). In June 2024, the youth received her Associate Degree in Dental Hygiene from Mississippi Delta Community College and applied for her license. She is now a Registered Dental Hygienist and works for Barnes Family Dentistry in Hattiesburg, MS. This participant credits the Clarksdale WIN Job Center for not only assisting her in completing her education and training, but also with finding her purpose. She is proud of her career in dentistry and considers herself an asset to her community.

WIOA Adult Program - Simone

Despite facing numerous hurdles along the way, including the loss of her mother, the heartbreaking loss of a child, and a divorce, Simone refused to give in to despair. With each setback, Simone found the strength to rise again, fueled by determination to create a better life through education and hard work. She enrolled in the MIBEST/Culinary Arts program in August 2022 and received a Culinary Arts CTE (1 year) Certificate in summer 2023 with several other certifications to showcase ServSafe and a Silver NCRC.

Since she had obtained these credentials and college credit, she was qualified to apply for the Competency-Based Diploma. Finally, after enrolling on and off for thirteen years, Simone’s perseverance paid off; she earned her HSE in the summer of 2023 and delivered the graduate message at the HSE Summer Graduation.

Now, having the taste of success, she was compelled to keep going. She enrolled to further her education in the Culinary Arts Program. Last month, she was installed as a new member of the Nu Upsilon chapter of Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) and will receive her AA degree in Culinary Arts on May 10, 2024, in the MCC Spring Graduation, where she has been asked to give the benediction.

WIOA OSY Program – Sunflower-Humphreys Counties Progress, Inc. (SHCPI) Youth Participant

A recent high school graduate entered the WIOA Youth program in July 2023, starting with no work experience, work readiness training, or college preparation. A former high school basketball player, she aspired to play for Hinds Community College and pursue a career as a dental hygienist.

With the support of SHCPI/WIOA staff, this participant successfully enrolled at Hinds Community College and tried out for their basketball team for the fall season. She gained work experience through a placement at the B. B. King Museum in Indianola, MS. After completing 200 hours of work experience, she was hired as a gift shop cashier and tour guide at the museum.

She has since transferred to Mississippi Delta Community College to continue her studies in dental hygiene and pursue her basketball career. She plans to return to the B. B. King Museum in the fall of 2025.

WIOA Adult Program – DSU Aerial Applicator Training Program

A participant was a 37-year-old heavy equipment operator who dropped out of high school and never received his GED. He earned a good income and did not see the need to return to school, but he had a dream of becoming an Ag Pilot. However, he never thought it would happen because the training is expensive (over $90,000), and he had a family to support.

In October 2022, Delta State University (DSU) launched the first Aerial Applicator Training Program, made possible by a $2 million federal appropriation arranged by Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith, along with funding from Rural LISC (Local Initiatives Support Corporation), and state support from AccelerateMS. This program aims to train Ag Pilots to address the shortage caused by retiring pilots and those aging out of the workforce. Since then, the Ag Pilot Apprenticeship program has been certified by the DOL, and South Delta PDD has received $351,000 in apprenticeship funding.

To enroll in the DSU Aerial Applicator Training Program, candidates must have a private pilot's license, a company sponsor, and 100 hours of flying time. He began working with SRB Flying Service on the ground, learning as much as he could about agricultural operations. With his employer allowing him to use their plane, he obtained his license and logged the required flying hours, after which they agreed to sponsor him in DSU's program.

The participant started the program in October 2022 and graduated with the first class of ten Ag Pilots in May 2023. He began working for his sponsor in July 2023 and is expected to earn between $75,000 and $100,000 in his first year. His dream has become a reality, thanks to the support of organizations like Rural LISC and individual employers whose passion for the industry has led to their commitment to sponsor and hire student Ag Pilots.

WIOA OSY Program – Northwest Mississippi Community College

An individual visited the Northwest WIN Job Center seeking employment after dropping out of her local high school in 2022. She had enrolled in the Adult Education Program offered through Northwest Community College and was referred to the WIN Job Center for assistance.

During the discussion, she explored the option of enrolling in the WIOA Gateway OSY program, which would provide her with a part-time work experience opportunity in the Information Technology Department at the Northwest Community College Oxford Campus. She then met with the onsite IT Technician, Mr. Stevie McGee, where they discussed job duties and established a positive working relationship. She embraced her tasks with enthusiasm.

Since then, the participant has successfully completed her High School Equivalency (HSE) and achieved a platinum-level score on the Career Readiness Certificate (CRC). With a strong interest in Information Technology, she has performed her work experience with pride. Additionally, she has enrolled in the Information Technology Program at NWCC and will begin her studies in January 2024.

WIOA Adult Program – Itawamba Community College

A 19-year-old newlywed came to the Pontotoc center with a clear goal: to obtain her CNA license as a steppingstone toward becoming a Registered Nurse.

From a young age, this participant was inspired to pursue a career in nursing, especially after witnessing the challenges her family members faced due to muscular dystrophy, including her older sister. Though she does not have the condition, her passion for healthcare and desire to help those with genetic disorders has always been strong.

The participant's ultimate dream is to work at Le Bonheur Children's Hospital, where she hopes to care for children with genetic conditions. With this goal in mind, she applied for and was approved for WIOA funding to cover the costs of her CNA training at Itawamba Community College (ICC). She began the program on August 7, 2023, and successfully completed it on October 25, 2023. After passing her certification test, she is now employed as a CNA at Tippah County Health & Rehab.

Thanks to the support of WIOA, the participant is well on her way to achieving her dream of becoming a Registered Nurse. Her determination and hard work are a testament to her bright future in healthcare.

WIOA ISY/Gateway Program

A student at the Choctaw County Career and Technology Center, joined the Gateway Program in the fall semester of 2023. He lives with his mother, brother, and two sisters, and enjoys sports and video games. Despite having no prior work experience, he was determined to earn his own money and gain valuable job skills.

Though quiet by nature, he was a motivated and active participant in each of the Essential Job Skills Training classes. His dedication paid off when he completed his internship at SuperValu in Ackerman, Mississippi. The store manager was impressed with the participant's work ethic and was eager to support him in completing his 100 required internship hours.

The participant's performance was so outstanding that, at the end of his internship, the manager hired him as a permanent employee. SuperValu uses direct deposit for payroll, but he did not have a checking account at the time. WIOA staff stepped in to help, accompanying him to the bank to open an account.

Recently, the youth provider, GTPDD, checked in with the SuperValu manager, who continues to be pleased with his work. His success is a shining example of how Gateway Program students can exceed expectations, leaving a positive impression on employers.

WIOA ISY Program

A 17-year-old with barriers to employment, enrolled in SMPDD Columbia's WIOA Workforce Training program to gain workforce skills and financial assistance. While attending high school, she was also a caregiver for her ailing mother and little sister.

The participant completed the program's classroom training and work experience. She was so thankful when she received her first check. She has now completed high school where she had the honor of being selected valedictorian. She is now attending Alcorn State University where she is pursuing a degree in nursing. The participant states that she "is thankful for the opportunity to participate in the program and receive useful skills that she can use forever."

Missouri

Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development (MDHEWD)

Missouri Job Center

Use of State Funds

Under-served Populations

Reentry

OWD is actively working with many state agencies in the Missouri Reentry Process, including the state Departments of Corrections, Health and Senior Services, Social Services, Elementary and Secondary Education – Vocational Rehabilitation, Revenue, Mental Health, Public Safety, Transportation, and Office of the State Courts Administrator plus other state and local agencies to prepare justice-involved individuals to reenter Missouri communities.

OWD's Job Center staff begin providing services prior to the individual's release, including employment goal setting, résumé building, job interview skills, personal presentation, and professional/workplace expectations. Individuals are also connected with the Job Center in the area identified in the release plan to continue with services and connect with employers post-release. During PY23, just over 700 individuals were enrolled in Wagner-Peyser and received workforce services.

The first individuals were served through this reentry partnership in Fall 2022, and employment data is becoming available for those served early in the program. Nearly half of the individuals were employed six months after program exit, and 72 percent were employed 12 months after program exit.

Integrated Service Delivery

State Progress in Implementing Sector Strategies and Career Pathways

Business engagement strategies have been developed and are inclusive of participating public workforce partner organizations. The OWD Business Support Unit (BSU), together with business outreach staff from Core WIOA partners, collaborate to streamline employer outreach and to improve business engagement within the state's employment and training system overall. Targeted industries include advanced manufacturing, construction, healthcare, information technology, and agriculture.

The growing importance of work-based learning continues to be a valuable approach to meeting employer demands for a skilled workforce. Apprenticeship Missouri works with employers to build a skilled workforce and to grow apprenticeship and work-based learning opportunities across the state.

As of the end of the federal fiscal year (September 30, 2024), Missouri ranked third in the nation for new apprentices, active apprentices, and completed apprentices.

Work experience and transitional jobs for youth and adults is one of the highest priorities under WIOA. Work-based learning incorporates skill competencies needed by employers, ensuring individuals completing work-based learning are positioned to immediately add value in the workplace and have the marketable skills to provide upward mobility in a career pathway.

Transitional jobs are reserved for those chronically unemployed and provide real life work experience when it is greatly needed to be successful in the workplace. This service is provided as needed to meet the specific needs of the employer and participant.

The OWD BSU provides outreach to employers. A priority of this unit is to establish quality work experience sites in a variety of career pathways in each local area.

Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) is a focal point used throughout the state by the BSU. IWT is a highly shared resource for employers to help design programs to address layoff aversion. This includes collaboration with other partners and local workforce boards who assist with incumbent worker funding.

IWT is designed to offset the cost of training or “skilling up” employees who have an established work history with the company. The program encourages advancement, increases opportunities for hiring entry level staff, and gives wage increases. The state’s policy allows local boards flexibility to provide this valuable service to employers when needed.

As a result of the realignment of state departments five years ago, higher education and workforce development are now one department. The combination has created synergies with the focus of serving adult and youth populations. The Adult Learner Network focuses on ways that higher education institutions may best serve the adult student population and brings together employers, educational institutions, workforce development, and other stakeholders to meet educational and skills needs. A second example is that Missouri’s Job Centers are equipped to assist individuals with completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, or FAFSA, and are able to make connections with state programs for educational assistance such FastTrack.

Yes WIOA Can

Career Opportunity for Youth (COTY)

In cooperation with the Central Region Workforce Development Board and Columbia Public Schools, OWD is connecting with students in Columbia Public Schools (CPS). The project connects students not pursuing education or training after high school with Job Center services, career exploration opportunities, and paid work experiences with local employers. The purpose of the pilot is to,

1) build a pipeline by connecting students to the workforce before graduation,
2) provide students with a real-world work experience to gain workplace skills, and
3) give opportunities for career exploration.

Conversations, planning, and agreements between parties to make this project possible, took place in PY23 with a full-time staff member beginning work on July 29, 2024. In addition to onboarding activities, the staff member has been making progress with

commitments from area employers to hire students. The staff member has also been connecting with students in the district to participate in the program.

Web-Based Training

MDHEWD has been working with an on-line training provider since 2019. MDHEWD continues to maintain this partnership, curating programs for Missouri employers, including OWD, and providing opportunities for individuals to earn credentials while building and enhancing skills.

Web-based training provides a flexible avenue for customers to learn new marketable skills while seeking new employment or advancing along a career pathway. Most classes are on-demand, allowing the individual to meet personal and professional commitments. This free program is offered statewide, with enrollments handled through OWD's Virtual Learning Unit. By offering online courses, this platform has helped individuals overcome barriers to traditional education, such as geographical constraints and time limitations, allowing Missouri residents to up-skill, re-skill, and pursue lifelong learning opportunities.

The online learning platform has the capability of building specialized curations of courses selected to meet specific needs. Missouri Job Ready Day 1 is a curation to build and reinforce employability skills needed in the workplace, and a version of this program is also available to assist justice-involved individuals as they prepare for release and employment in Missouri's communities. Training programs may be built, or curated, for an employer's specific needs, benefiting both the employer and worker.

Other State Funds Activities

Not applicable.

Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

Program Evaluation

Data has become engrained in the culture of OWD and is used throughout the organization for making decisions, policy recommendations, and forming new workforce strategies. Dashboards are sent to staff and local partners each week as a first look at performance for the prior week. Job Center Supervisors query daily numbers for enrollments, services, and traffic for their centers to manage operations. OWD's focus is not just on numbers. OWD staff understand that each number represents an individual, a person that is receiving assistance and on a path to meeting employment goals.

During the 2022 Evaluation Peer Learning Cohort (EvalPLC), the State formed a team of individuals from all parts of the public workforce system. The team learned about the WIOA evaluation process by building an evidence-based framework to be replicated and used to build research projects.

The Missouri Evaluation Team compiled a list of questions about the public workforce system to be answered through the data. The team prioritized the list of research topics and the State's first formal evaluation project, Barriers: How Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Services Affect Employment, was completed by OWD in June 2024. The research takes a deep dive into the most common barriers reported by individuals in the WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs, and the impact of different levels of services on employment outcomes. The Missouri Evaluation Team will continue to collaborate to identify and prioritize projects.

Through the years, the State received Workforce Data Quality Initiative and other grants to begin building a workforce longitudinal data system with several departments contributing data and information. During the State's 2024 legislative session, funding and staffing for a P20W data system became a reality, providing a focus on the data and linkages across agencies, educational institutions, and programs. The P20W will allow the State to answer workforce-related questions to understand the workforce landscape and to build policies around the data.

Continuous Improvement

The State has two evaluation projects underway in PY24. The first project is a comparison of the customers served prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and customers served now based on demographic groups, education level, and employment status at program entry. Results from this study will help the public workforce system understand the changing landscape of customers, the services customers need to meet career goals and determine the best ways to provide services.

The second evaluation project will be a multi-year study of a pilot project that began in July 2024. The pilot is a partnership with a large urban public school system. Students not pursuing training or education after high school are identified and referred to an OWD staff member located in the school. Career exploration, employment services, and work-based learning opportunities with local businesses connect the student with the workforce prior to receiving a diploma. This evaluation project will track employment and wage outcomes of participating students to those that did not participate, as well as students that received post-secondary education and training credentials.

The State is striving to improve the workforce system, and research and evaluation are part of the process. The State will continue to strategically choose projects to better understand the population, unique needs based on geography, barriers, and demographics to design and deliver services. Projects will provide meaningful feedback and an objective assessment of the system and services, allowing the State to validate, rethink, and pivot where needed.

Reports

No information provided for this section.

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

Youth-Related Waivers

OWD works very closely with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Career Readiness, to expand Registered Apprenticeship (RA) programs and launch new programs, providing young adults with an alternative to self-sufficient career opportunities outside of the post-secondary journey. In addition, the State regularly connects high schools and career and technical education centers (CTE) with WIOA resources and encourages building relationships with LWDAs and associated Job Centers for support.

During PY23, OWD engaged 55 of the State's 57 CTEs, promoting WIOA Youth services and registered youth apprenticeship. Two waivers are being utilized to increase the number of ISY, supporting work-based learning opportunities for students and workers in high-growth industries throughout the state. The waiver will continue supporting the Governor's initiatives of youth RA and increasing the number of youths served through WIOA.

- Waiver 1: OSY Expenditure Waiver
  DOL approved the State's waiver (WIOA Section 129(a)(4)(A) and 20 CFR 681.410) request to reduce WIOA OSY expenditures from the 75 percent requirement down to 50 percent for PY22 and PY23.
- Waiver 2: ISY Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) Waiver
  DOL approved the waiver (WIOA Section 20 CFR 681.550) request to allow WIOA ITAs for ISY, ages 16–21 for PY22 and PY23.
- Waiver 3: On-the-Job Training (OJT) Waiver
  The State had an approved waiver (WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(H)(i) and 20 CFR 680.720(b)) request to increase OJT employer reimbursement up to 90 percent through June 30, 2024.
- Waiver 4: Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) Waiver
  The State has an approved waiver (WIOA Section 134(d)(4) and 20 CFR 680.800(a)) allowing LWDBs to reserve more than 20 percent of WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker funds for IWT.

Strategies

OSY Expenditure Waiver

The State has received this waiver for a total of five consecutive PYs. This waiver provides flexibility to the state and local areas to serve more ISY with work experience, pre-apprenticeship, RA, and other work-based learning opportunities.

ISY ITAs Waiver

This waiver request provides the state and local areas the flexibility to serve more youth in-classroom training and RA training, regardless of school status.

IWT Waiver

This waiver increased the threshold for IWT from 20 percent to 50 percent through June 30, 2024.

Impact on Performance

ISY ITAs Waiver

During PY23, 57 ITAs were used for ISY, a decrease of 4 compared to last year's usage of ITAs for ISY. Outcomes associated with this measure were 45 and 63 percent for measurable skills gain (MSG) and credential attainment respectively. For PY23, the actual achieved MSG was 62 percent for all youth and 64 percent for ISY. The actual credential attainment rate was 59 percent for all youth and 51 percent for ISY.

From PY19 through PY22, the use of these two waivers steadily increased the number of ISY served using WIOA funds, except for PY20. The number of youths served in PY23 decreased compared to the previous PY.

Goals initially set for the youth waivers included all youth participants and incremental increases for each PY. In PY23, the achieved MSG was 62 percent for all youth and 64 percent for ISY. The actual achieved Credential Rate was 59 percent for all youth and 51 percent for ISY.

OJT Waiver

During PY23, 33 people were served through OJT, an increase of 14 percent over last year's OJT services. Of the 33 OJT enrollments, two OJT agreements were established using the 90 percent reimbursement rate; both increased reimbursements occurred under Missouri's QUEST Dislocated Worker Grant.

Although OJT enrollments are increasing from last year, few workforce regions have chosen to utilize the increased OJT reimbursement; one workforce region is utilizing the ability to increase reimbursement to 75 percent as allowed in regulations. The Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning team will be spreading awareness of the increased reimbursement rates during the upcoming year to expand the use of this waiver, which was recently approved for PY24 and PY25.

IWT Waiver

In PY23, the Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning team approved 12 IWT applications, serving 52 individuals across four workforce regions. Although a small decline in IWT, regions continue to offer this service to Missouri workers and businesses. The decline in enrollments for IWT is attributed to the continued reduction in WIOA allocations.

To increase IWT enrollments and participation across more workforce regions, the Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning team will be revising the current IWT policy and supporting programmatic guidance and forms next PY. The updates provide opportunities to increase the use of this waiver through staff training, bringing additional awareness and reminders of IWT as a service for employers. The waiver was recently approved for PY24 and PY25.

Success Stories

No information provided for this section.

Montana

Montana Department of Labor & Industry (MTDLI)

Use of State Funds

Under-served Populations

Workforce Integration Specialist

MRAP's Workforce Integration Specialist worked with MTDLI staff, Registered apprenticeship (RA) sponsors, and community partners to identify and increase service to underserved populations in RA programs. The specialist conducted outreach, delivered public presentations, and participated on boards to increase awareness of program availability to underserved groups.

Collaboration with Department of Corrections and Helena College

MTDLI partnered with JSM, the Department of Corrections (DOC), and Helena College. The partnership offered justice-involved individuals an opportunity to acquire the skills needed to re-enter the workforce through a high-paying occupation. Six individuals from the Helena Prerelease Center completed education and training created by Helena College, utilizing a mobile welding classroom brought directly to the prerelease site. Participants completed the course, earning multiple certificates. Helena College provided lower training costs to DOC, and JSM provided funding for required equipment (helmets, grinders, jackets, etc.).

Serving Montana's Tribal Nations

- In PY23, MTDLI focused on building stronger relationships with the state's eight recognized tribal nations. American Indians in the state face comparably higher barriers to employment than other Montanans. To serve this population more effectively, MTDLI's Commissioner established the Office of the Tribal Liaison, which includes both a lead liaison role and support staff. The office trains MTDLI staff on cultural awareness, tribal practices, and best practices in listening and learning from tribes. The office also conducts extensive outreach. This work included meeting with tribal councils when invited, attending listening sessions to learn about how state government can be better partner with tribes on workforce efforts, and, when appropriate, sharing information about ways MTDLI can partner with tribes on related initiatives.
- This year, for the first time ever, MTDLI was invited to meet with the Tribal Employment Rights Office (TERO), which is comprised of representatives from the eight recognized tribal nations in the state. During the program year, MTDLI was invited to participate in multiple TERO convenings and asked to share information about MTDLI's teams and services. Partnerships, grant support, and collaborations were fostered and will continue to grow.

The Liaison office also connected with the Tribal Colleges and school districts located on tribal reservations. We will build capacity within these areas and provide more opportunities for the young adults 16–24. MTDLI is providing information on careers in the trades, industry, apprenticeships and entrepreneurship. Our tribal communities have expressed interest in career exploration opportunities in these fields, and workers wanting to stay on their lands and make a difference while making good

money for themselves and their families benefit as well. Our outreach has expanded into a young adult leadership campaign called, *Its-i-ney-hey*, which means “Give it Heck” in Aaniiih language.

Integrated Service Delivery

Integration Efforts

In PY23, a cross-functional team of MTDLI IT staff and programmatic subject matter experts began an extensive project to build a new client case management system. The new case management system better reflects service delivery to businesses and individuals, creates a more consistent intake process across service providers, provides more streamlined and accurate PIRL reporting, and ultimately allows more data-sharing across WIOA partners for an improved customer experience.

Additionally, beginning in PY23, WIOA program managers, the WSD monitoring team, and the WSD policy analyst began focused continuous improvement efforts to discuss successes and revisit opportunities to learn more and improve WSD policy, technical assistance, service delivery, and data collection and validation. These meetings were particularly helpful to new and seasoned staff alike, offering ongoing training and reminders about the details and nuances of WSD work and the need for mutual understanding and support during EmployMT development.

WIOA Statewide Coordination of ADA Referrals and Training

Montana worked to improve collaboration with WIOA Core partners providing Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation services. The agency held quarterly meetings with core partners in Vocational Rehabilitation and Adult Education and conducted cross-training between agencies on programs, services, and referral opportunities. WIOA Core partners also met with neighboring state Wyoming to discuss best practices in collaboration, referrals, and continuous improvement in data sharing between partners.

MTDLI – Tribal Collaboration

MTDLI established a JSM office on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation and began efforts for JSM to co-locate in other tribal offices to expand access to programs and services and increase co-enrollment with WIOA partners. In collaboration with the MTDLI Tribal Liaison, several meetings were held across Montana to develop relationships and gain a greater understanding of barriers that tribal entities and members face in the labor market. The collaboration improved communication between MTDLI and tribal entities. It also honored local tribal customs and traditions of inclusion and respect, i.e., holding a traditional prayer and blessing meeting rooms. Ultimately, referrals and co-enrollments increased.

Yes WIOA Can

Instrument Shop

Instrument Shop is a hands-on educational program empowering teens through musical instrument building. Participants learn to build the instruments in a workshop setting alongside qualified instructors in a small student/teacher ratio. Instrument Shop is a

social and creative environment offering plenty of room for independent work and supports youth to develop soft skills including problem-solving and communication.

Other State Funds Activities

Assistance for Business Clinics (ABC)

Ten in-person ABCs were offered across Montana in large and small communities, with 309 businesses attending. Subject matter experts from a variety of agencies presented on the following state services and programs: MTDLI for JSM, local labor market information, MRAP, UI contributions and benefits, human rights, safety, and wage and hour; Department of Revenue for withholdings and e-services; Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) for child support, new hire reporting, and VRBS; Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve; workers compensation, and Montana Correctional Enterprises.

Collaboration with Infrastructure Investment Activities

MTDLI engaged with various federal funding recipients to advise and collaborate on workforce development aspects of federal infrastructure investments. The collaboration included analyzing related occupations with supply shortages, identifying skill requirements and complementary training programs for addressing skill gap issues, and connecting individuals eligible for Title I and III services to potential opportunities. Areas of collaboration include funding allocated to expanding broadband infrastructure and access, Montana's regional remote sensing and photonics tech hub (Headwaters Tech Hub), and the Training for Residential Energy Contractor (TREC) programs.

Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

From March 2023 to February 2024, MTDLI implemented a Randomized Control Trial (RCT) evaluation of new service delivery strategies in the RESEA program. The RCT provided an impact analysis of an online reemployment course that delivers information and strategies to jobseekers. The RCT studied over 3,000 participants for one year, with over 1,400 participating in the course. MTDLI partnered with the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis (FRB Minneapolis) to measure the impact of the new services on unemployment duration, wages, and employment outcomes, as well as continued participation in WIOA activities, such as further Wagner-Peyser program participation or enrollment in the WIOA Dislocated Worker program. A complete outcomes analysis will come later as more wage and employment data becomes available for the entire cohort. Still, MTDLI began working with the FRB Minneapolis to produce an intermediate analysis while total outcomes are in progress.

Continuous Improvement

This year MTDLI continued to expand staff access to program-related data across multiple formats. Data and economist teams distributed the research and reports to the WIOA Core program teams, providing presentations and question-and-answer opportunities for program managers and service providers so that the information could be understood and applied effectively.

MTDLI also continued to maintain data dashboards and data visualization tools to support the use and accessibility of the information created in this research. These tools provided visual analytics of labor market information and program activities to inform managers, workforce consultants, and other staff for decision-making. Easy access to downloadable data on program activities improved monitoring and auditing, information sharing, and management decisions. The agency also maintained a set of dashboards tailored to the needs of the State's SWIB, assuring the board had easily accessible information about both local and statewide labor market information to inform their strategic work.

Results from the RCT analysis of the RESEA program provided key information about the ability to utilize virtual tools more broadly across all WIOA programs, and strategies learned from those results will be applied to service delivery as the data continues to be analyzed. By evaluating wage and employment outcomes and the medium for which assistance is provided, MTDLI is gaining valuable knowledge about potential barriers such as how internet access and computer literacy may impede widespread adoption of new online services.

Finally, MTDLI has applied the knowledge gained from childcare, nursing, and apprenticeship research to improve service delivery to businesses and jobseekers. For example, recognizing the positive benefits of the apprenticeship training model and the need for increased access to childcare across the state, MTDLI is increasing utilization of apprenticeship training in the childcare sector. In addition, the National Dislocated Worker Grant for layoffs in the timber industry allowed Montana to incorporate short-term and apprenticeship training to assist individuals impacted by layoffs in getting back to work quickly while obtaining valuable skills.

Reports

Montana Registered Apprenticeship Program (MRAP) Report

MTDLI completed several in-depth reports on workforce programs in the state. Every year, MTDLI updates its analysis of MRAP participation trends and apprentice outcomes. The report identifies positive program outcomes, demonstrating the value of apprenticeship and providing information that can be used for continuous improvement within MTDLI. The program reached record highs for active apprenticeships and the number of businesses utilizing apprenticeships to train their workforce.

WIOA Title I Programs

MTDLI also conducted research exploring how WIOA Title I programs help Montanans overcome employment barriers, exploring program trends and outcome differences across various dimensions. The report analyzed program implementation across subcontracted providers, spending levels, service types, and training programs, i.e., an increasing share of funds is spent directly on behalf of participants over time and less on overhead—a goal of program operation. The report also explores enrollments and outcomes by worker demographics, improving MTDLI's understanding of how program success varies between participants from different backgrounds across race, age, education, disability, and veteran status. The findings in this report will be leveraged to improve program policy and guidelines in future iterations.

Employment Projections

MTDLI published a set of employment projections for occupational job growth from 2022–2032 in the state. The employment projections are based on historical employment data, produced as part of a contract with the DOL-ETA using the nationally recommended methodology for employment forecasts and the programs provided by the Projections Managing Partnership. The report and accompanying dashboard break down projections by educational requirements and earnings levels, allowing workers and workforce providers to identify potential high-growth occupations for different groups. This includes the top-growing occupations with apprenticeships in the state, helping workers identify which field in MRAP may be right for them.

Nursing Workforce

MTDLI also produced information on topical issues in the labor market. This included a report on the nursing workforce in Montana, describing and identifying workforce trends and changes induced by the pandemic between 2020 and 2022. The report also highlights supply and demand issues faced by the nursing occupation, such as an aging workforce and decreasing numbers of Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) relative to other nursing occupations. This report primarily utilized the National Council of State Boards of Nursing's national survey of nurses to produce estimates of the nursing workforce in the state.

Childcare Deserts

Similarly, MTDLI produced a report on childcare supply and demand, combining data on licensed childcare providers and county populations to identify areas classified as childcare deserts. This report also discussed the impact of childcare issues on workforce supply in the state.

Labor Day Report

Finally, MTDLI produced its annual Labor Day Report that details statewide economic issues with a particular emphasis on labor market trends and topical issues of interest to workforce developers and professionals.

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

1. Waiver to allow the State Board to carry out the functions of the Local Board
2. Waiver to operate one comprehensive One-Stop Center, maximizing funds for direct service delivery to individuals and businesses and unifying Montana's approach to workforce development.
3. Waiver to lower the expenditure requirement of Governor's Reserve funds from 75 to 50 percent for out-of-school-youth (OSY).
4. Waiver to allow WIOA individual training accounts (ITAs) for ISY—Under this waiver, ITAs may be expanded beyond OSY, ages 16–24, to include ITAs for ISY, ages 16–21.

Strategies

Waiver to Allow the State Board to Act as the Local Board

Under this waiver, the State continued to allocate funding for WIOA Title I programs by local area. Each local area allocates funds to counties utilizing local unemployment and poverty data to ensure funds are distributed to maximize service delivery. County-elected officials sit on the State Workforce Innovation Board and can provide local input into activities throughout Montana.

Waiver to Lower the Expenditure Requirement of Governor's Reserve Funds from 75 to 50 Percent for OSY

Under this waiver, ETA expects that the number of ISY served will increase and performance accountability outcomes for overall WIOA Youth (both ISY and OSY) will remain steady or increase for the majority of the WIOA Youth performance indicators.

Waiver to Allow WIOA ITAs for ISY

Under this waiver, ITAs may be expanded beyond OSY, ages 16–24, to include ITAs for ISY, ages 16–21.

Impact on Performance

No information provided for this section.

Success Stories

WIOA Dislocated Worker Program

Mary came to Job Service Polson to look for work, having been unemployed for two months. She had lost her job in November. Staff had a conversation with Mary about her interests and career goals. She had done some diesel technology classes in the past but had not completed her training. During the conversation, staff learned that Mary had always wanted to obtain her Class A CDL. She was referred to WIOA case managers and was subsequently enrolled in the WIOA Dislocated Worker program to complete CDL Training. This career is a bright outlook and would provide her with a livable wage, while matching her interests. Mary completed training and obtained her CDL. Her WIOA Case Manager assisted her with her job search, and she was recently hired with a local business to be a Truck Driver. The program also assisted Mary with some required work clothes.

WIOA Adult Program

John came to his local Job Service office for career assistance. He had worked most of his life in construction but was no longer able to physically do this kind of work. He was homeless, receiving public assistance and was on probation. His goal was to go to school to earn his associate's degree in chemical dependency counseling from the local tribal college so that he could find employment as a counselor to help others. He was found eligible for the WIOA Adult and Montana HELPLink programs. With hard work and assistance from the WIOA Adult program, HELPLink, MT Vocational Rehabilitation, and other scholarships, he was able to complete his associate's degree with a 4.0 along with the Student of the Year Award for Chemical Dependency Counseling. He was recently hired as a Case Manager for a recovery center in his community and excited to be back in the workforce in a field he is passionate about.

WIOA Incumbent Worker Training Program

In PY23, a small agriculture business requested training for two employees on production equipment at a cost of about $3,000. In a post-evaluation, the owner wrote that the investment had substantial impact:

> "[The two employees] were able to learn about maintaining and fixing our some of our current equipment. Most of our equipment requires us to fly a tech in but our employees' ability to troubleshoot and fix the equipment has been a huge help. They also have more confidence to challenge our current practices. Change can be hard to implement but the more knowledge my employees have, the more we can talk through why the changes might be best for our company.
>
> It was great to see the efficiency we have gained the last 6 months. The employees are more empowered to take on new challenges. This has allowed us to remain competitive in our industry and push our employees' wages higher. We really feel to retain our good employees we have to be aggressive with wages and increasing their abilities makes this easier to do."

Additional Success Stories - MTDLI's Programs

- Helena Prerelease Welding Program
- Tribal success story Morning Star Propane
- Lumber industry Rapid Response efforts and resources

Nebraska

Nebraska Department of Labor (NDOL)

Use of State Funds

Under-served Populations

No information provided for this section.

Integrated Service Delivery

No information provided for this section.

Yes WIOA Can

No information provided for this section.

Other State Funds Activities

Not applicable.

Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

Disproportionate Impact Study

During PY23, NDOL initiated its pilot Disproportionate Impact Study, informed by insights provided by the State of Colorado at the 2023 WIOA Performance Accountability and Reporting Convening in Washington, D.C. The primary objectives of NDOL's pilot study were to enhance research and evaluation capacity and establish processes for generating statistically valid reports. Due to small sample sizes derived from PY22 program exiters, the pilot study did not yield statistically significant findings.

Continuous Improvement

No information provided for this section.

Reports

No information provided for this section.

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

During PY22 and PY23 (July 1, 2022–June 30, 2024), two waivers were in place for the State:

- Waiver of the 75 percent out-of-school youth (OSY) expenditure requirement; and
- Waiver of the prohibition against ISY use of ITAs for occupational skills training.

Strategies

Waiver of 75 Percent OSY Expenditure Requirement

NDOL's strategic goal under this waiver was to increase the number of youths participating in evidence-based programs that result in positive outcomes for ISY and OSY, including high school graduation, participation in post-secondary education, career development, and employment. Further, this goal aligns with the state plan goal for preparing an educated and skilled workforce that meets the needs of employers, selection and prioritization of development of career pathways (refer to Section II.b.2. of Nebraska's PY22 Modification of the State Plan for additional information on this goal).

Projected programmatic outcomes of this waiver at the time of approval were:

- 10 new ISY participating in JAG Nebraska statewide during each of PY22 and PY23;
- 5 new ISY participating in youth Registered Apprenticeship (RA) programs during each of PY22 and PY23;
- 10 percent increase in local area high school graduation rates among Title I youth participating in JAG Nebraska compared to Title I youth not participating in JAG Nebraska during PY22 and PY23; and
- 10 percent statewide increase in PY22 and PY23 Q2 and Q4 employment rates among Title I youth participating in youth RA programs compared to PY22 and PY23 Q2 and Q4 employment rates among Title I youth not participating in youth RA programs.

The projected impact of this waiver was enhancement of the State's ability to serve ISY, including those with basic skills deficiency and those who are English language learners, offenders, individuals who are in or have aged out of foster care, pregnant or parenting youth, youth with disabilities, and youth that require additional assistance to complete education or secure employment. In addition, this waiver was expected to increase the ability of local area Title I Youth programs to enhance services for ISY, while continuing to serve OSY.

Progress toward achieving projected outcomes and waiver impact

Late in PY22, QCU determined the data collection tool designed for this waiver did not collect data to sufficiently measure progress on this waiver which was approved for continuation through PY24 and PY25. QCU continues its redesign of the tracking

tool during PY24 to ensure data is available for evaluation of waiver progress for PY22 through PY25. In addition, QCU will continue to provide technical assistance through PY25 to local areas on goals, projected outcomes, and implementation of this waiver.

Waiver of Prohibition Against ISY Use of ITAs

NDOL's strategic goal under this waiver was to enhance efforts of state plan partners regarding goals and strategies to overcome barriers to participation in career pathway programs and the workforce system, specifically in relation to youth program participants (refer to Section II.b.2. and II.c. of Nebraska's PY22 Modification of the State Plan for additional information).

Projected programmatic outcomes of the waiver at the time of approval were:

- establishment of 30 ITAs statewide using Title I Youth program funds during each of PY22 and PY23; and
- credential attainment rates of 90 percent among Title I Youth program participants who have utilized an ITA funded by Title I Youth programs.

The projected impact of this waiver was enhancement of Nebraska's ability to serve ISY, including those with basic skills deficiency and those who are English language learners, offenders, in or have aged out of foster care, pregnant or parenting, have a disability, or require additional assistance to complete education or secure employment. In addition, this waiver was expected to increase the ability of Title I youth programs to enhance services for ISY, while continuing to serve OSY.

Progress toward achieving projected outcomes and waiver impact

This waiver was approved for PY22 and PY23. NDOL did not reapply for continuation of this waiver. Expected performance on Goal 1 was not met during PY22 or PY23. Expected performance on Goal 2 was exceeded during PY22 but not met during PY23.

Impact on Performance

Waiver of 75 Percent OSY Expenditure Requirement

- Greater Lincoln Workforce Development Area
  During the PY23 performance period of the 75 percent OSY expenditure waiver, the Greater Lincoln Workforce Development Area expanded opportunities for ISY based on funding flexibility afforded under the waiver. This flexibility allowed Greater Lincoln to serve 12 additional ISY participants, providing them with invaluable work experiences in local government through both the City of Lincoln and Lancaster County youth employment programs. Both programs create pathways for ISY to explore public service careers and acquire hands-on experience in a structured and supportive work-experience environment, exposing them to a variety of local government functions. This real-world exposure provided participating ISY with insights into how government agencies operate, offering practical experience that help with develop of professional skills and understanding of civic responsibility. Moreover, participating ISY had opportunities to meet with city and county officials, including the Mayor of the City of Lincoln and the Lancaster County Commissioner. These

interactions not only allowed participating ISY to gain insight into mechanisms of city and county government but also provided them with opportunities to discuss potential improvements for their communities with city and county leaders. This level of engagement was key in helping participating ISY make informed decisions about future career paths, giving them a clearer sense of what they enjoy and what aligns with their professional ambitions. By focusing on creating meaningful real-world work experiences for ISY, this promising practice demonstrated the value of providing opportunities for young people to actively participate in shaping their futures and the future of their communities.

During the PY23 performance period of the 75 percent OSY expenditure waiver, an ISY participated in work experience at the Lincoln City Clerk's Office based on funding flexibility afforded under the waiver. During a particularly busy period when the office faced an influx of work, the ISY took on significant and impactful responsibilities. As shared by the City Clerk:

> "[The ISY] has been an incredible asset to our office. During a hectic time, [the ISY] not only worked on their own projects but also stayed late to assist us when necessary. [The ISY's] work in designing two Office Manuals was outstanding— [the ISY] took our ideas and materials and turned them into beautifully branded manuals that are now essential resources for our new hires. [The ISY's] talent with art design helped us establish a cohesive 'Clerks Vibe' that aligns with our City Logo.'"

The ISY's contributions not only demonstrated initiative and creativity but also forged important connections with other city departments. As a result, several departments have already expressed interest in hiring the ISY for a potential summer position during PY24. This work experience opportunity empowered this ISY to make a tangible impact while developing occupational skills. Without the funding flexibility provided under the waiver, this opportunity may not have been available and the ISY's occupational skills development may have been delayed or not realized. This ISY's story is a testament to the impact of this waiver in helping ISY explore potential careers while making meaningful contributions to their communities.

- Greater Omaha Workforce Development Area
  During the PY23 performance period of the 75 percent OSY expenditure waiver, Greater Omaha was able to foster valuable collaborations with community partners serving ISY. For example, Omaha Public Schools (OPS) Career Academies provide students with early exposure to trades, allowing them to develop practical skills and, in some cases, earn credits toward future careers. The waiver also made it possible to facilitate partnerships with OPS and trade organizations to begin development of pre-apprenticeship programs and fund training for ISY pursuing trade careers. Further, the waiver made it possible for more students to access services and support they need while still in high school and helping them transition seamlessly into successful careers, apprenticeships, and post-secondary education and training

Waiver of Prohibition Against ISY Use of ITAs

- Greater Omaha Workforce Development Area
  During the PY23 performance period of the State's waiver of the prohibition against ISY use of ITAs for occupational skills

training, an ISY sought assistance with obtaining an Associate of Applied Science (AAS) in aviation maintenance technology. With the help of Title I Youth funds covering tuition not already financed by Pell Grants or scholarships, the ISY successfully completed their AAS and earned a certificate in Aviation Maintenance-Powerplant. The Title I Youth program also provided the ISY with vital support toward overcoming barriers, enabling the ISY to stay on track with achievement of their occupational skills goals. The ISY worked closely with their case manager, participated in mock interviews to enhance job search readiness, and engaged in labor market information activities to explore entry points in the aviation maintenance field and identify future advancement opportunities. The ISY also participated in financial literacy training. As a result of comprehensive support, the ISY secured employment with a regional airline, where the ISY is now utilizing their degree.

Success Stories

No information provided for this section.

Nevada

Nevada's Workforce Development Boards

State of Nevada Department of Employment Training and Rehabilitation (DETR)

Use of State Funds

During PY23, Workforce Connections (WC) staff continued to participate and provide input to the Executive Committee of the Governor's Workforce Development Board and work with staff from the Governor's Office of Workforce Innovation (OWINN), the DETR, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Nevada Department of Education (NDE). The collaborative efforts meet all WIOA implementation requirements in the local area and create an integrated system that meets the employment and training needs of Southern Nevadans.

The workforce development initiatives are driven by their strategic goals. WC aims to deliver efficient, effective, and timely employment and training services throughout the SNWDA. The initiatives support the realization of an integrated One-Stop Delivery System (OSDS) that supports Southern Nevada's targeted industry sectors and aligns education, career training, and workforce development services in the local area to achieve targeted objectives.

Under-served Populations

Silver State Works (SSW) Program: The Silver State Works initiative is a state-funded program designed to create an opportunity for business to help strengthen the State's economy. The funding is provided at no cost to the employer while receiving incentives to hire pre-screened qualified workers. The Silver State Works program targets unemployment claimants, reentry individuals, TANF recipients, disabled individuals, and veterans providing OJT and incentive-based employment opportunities.

ESD Work Experience (WEX): The ESD state-funded Work Experience initiative targets hard-to-place individuals. It allows a business to provide a work-based learning experience to an individual for approximately 320 hours before making a hiring decision. During the 320 hours, EmployNV Career Hub will pay the individual's wages. It helps participants find employment by improving their work opportunities and their lives by learning new skills in an actual work environment.

Pathway to $20 program: This state-funded program targets the underemployed or part-time worker by providing intensive employment services, training, and other services to assist an individual to obtain a job paying at least $20.00 per hour or puts them on a pathway to a position paying at least that wage.

Integrated Service Delivery

Brightline Project

Per request of DOL, WC is now serving as the anchor agency for the Place Based Initiative: Brightline West Project, which received a $3 billion investment by the federal government. WC will be working with Brightline, Nevada's Department of Transportation, Southern Nevada Building Trade Unions, local counties, municipalities, and other partners to help ensure access for all Southern Nevadans to construction and operational jobs for this project.

Industry Sector Partnerships Work Ready Funds

As a testament to the impact of these initiatives, WC secured a $1.8 million grant from DETR Governor's Reserve funds to further meet the talent needs of employers. This grant fuels services that promote career pathways and skill development for Southern Nevada's target industries. This powerful tool offers employers yet another resource to address their workforce needs. The second half of PY23 saw a flurry of activity. Five ISP sectors were reconvened, employers were connected with dedicated account managers at the EmployNV Business Hubs, and job fairs were organized to bridge the gap between jobseekers and employers. The initiative was bolstered by additional funding from the American Recovery Plan Act from the City of Las Vegas, and Nevada Career Enhancement Program (CEP) Funds from DETR, ensuring a comprehensive approach to workforce development.

Yes WIOA Can

Career Enhancement Program

CEP is a state-funded initiative, supported by employer taxes as mandated by law, that provides training and reemployment opportunities for jobseekers. This program aims to equip individuals with the job skills needed in today's market. It is a key service offered by EmployNV Career Hub offices, delivering unique support to both businesses and jobseekers that may not be available through other federal programs. CEP focuses on helping unemployed individuals return to the workforce through short-term vocational training and by removing financial barriers that could prevent them from accepting job offers. The program covers employment-related expenses that jobseekers often face when offered a position, such as health cards, gaming cards, background checks, security clearances, alcohol awareness classes and certifications, work clothing, safety shoes, and essential tools. These seemingly minor costs can pose significant obstacles for individuals experiencing financial hardship due to unemployment.

High School Senior Workforce Workshop

WC teamed up with the Clark County School District to better equip high school seniors with the skills they needed to succeed in the workforce. In a pilot program, 169 students from eight schools were guided through résumé writing, interviewing techniques, and job search strategies. The results were impressive —39 of these students received job offers on-the-spot at the Spring Job Fair. Each student created a jobseeker profile within EmployNV.gov to ensure connectivity after graduation.

Other State Funds Activities

Nevada P-20 to Workforce Research Data System (NPWR)

The NPWR is a state-of-the-art research tool that provides Nevadans with unparalleled access to the knowledge needed to understand the trends shaping the State's education and workforce outcomes. NPWR was built on a federated system that merges data across participating agencies using a sophisticated matching algorithm. NPWR leaves all private data behind the existing firewalls of each agency and de-identifies all data during the matching process. Using this de-identified and matched data, NPWR generates reports from participating agencies for the purposes of better understanding the trends shaping Nevada's education and workforce outcomes.

NPWR is truly a statewide collaboration, with the NPWR Advisory Committee made up of the data-sharing partners and established to assist in the support of the statewide longitudinal system. These data-sharing partners include DETR for wage data and Title I and Title III (onboarding); Nevada Department of Education (NDE) for Adult Education and early childhood data; Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE); Nevada Department of Motor Vehicles (Nevada DMV) for matching only; DHHS for early childhood information; Nevada Department of Corrections (NDOC); Nevada Department of Veteran Services (NDVS); Department of Business and Industry (B&I) for apprenticeship data.

In November 2023, the first NPWR Strategic Plan was approved by the NPWR Advisory Committee. This document is to act as the goals and guide for the State of Nevada's P-20W longitudinal data system, known as NPWR, for the near future. The purpose of this plan is to help address gaps and resources that can help NPWR grow to become a more valuable tool to the entire State, through modernization efforts and bringing resources and talent in-state to work to help citizens, departments, researchers, and resources.

Due to the success in the first year, in December 2023, OWINN awarded the second round of NPWR Research Grant projects, funded through WIOA Governor's Reserve. NPWR awarded nine projects at a total of $331,477.71. The funded projects were:

- Workforce and Economic Development
    - Assessing Workforce Availability and Associated Skill Sets Needed to Close Gaps in the Value Network and Supply Chain of Nevada's Healthcare Industry Sector; University Center for Economic Development; University of Nevada, Reno.
    - The Potential Economic and Fiscal Benefits of Connecting Over 30,000 Disconnected Youth in Nevada to Education or Employment by 2030; Consultant to/representing Workforce Connections, Southern Nevada's LWDB.
    - AI-Enhanced Education in Nevada and its Transformative Impact on Workforce Development, Employment Prospects, and Tomorrow's Job Market Proficiencies; Center for Migration, Demography and Population Studies; University of Nevada, Las Vegas.
    - Care Workers in Nevada: A Crisis Now and in the Future; The Lincy Institute.

- The Dynamics of Labor Force Participation – A Statewide Analysis and Survey in a Post-Pandemic Nevada; Kenny Guinn Center for Policy Priorities and Center for Business and Economic Research; University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

- Education
  - Strengthening Nevada's PK-20 Teacher Pipeline: An Assessment to Meet Workforce Projections; Clark County Education Association.
  - An Exploratory Study of Two Post-Secondary Policies and Student Outcomes in Nevada; Department of Educational Psychology, Leadership, and Higher Education; University of Nevada, Las Vegas.
  - Nevada Goes to College: A Statistical Portrait of Higher Education Enrollment and Degree Attainment of Minoritized Students in Field of Education; College of Education and Human Development; University of Nevada, Reno.
- Students
  - An Examination of Novice Teacher Career Persistence Trends; Elizabeth Hofschulte Collins, MS; Doctoral Fellow in Teacher Preparation and Retention, National Institute for the Advancement of Education; University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

Nevada Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation contracted Actus to conduct a third-party evaluation of the Federal-funded Nevada RESEA program and the state-funded REANV (Reemployment and Eligibility Assessment) program. The primary objective of the evaluation is to conduct a randomized controlled trial (RCT) impact study to assess the effectiveness of the two programs in:

1. assisting UI claimants in securing employment and improving their earnings, and
2. reducing the number of UI benefit weeks and total benefit amounts collected.

Continuous Improvement

Self-Appraisal System (SAS)

During PY23, the SAS reviews were conducted on the WIOA Title I Program, Wagner-Peyser Title III Program, Nevada's Career Enhancement Program, and Nevada's Silver State Works Program entries to determine:

- Success in reaching State Entered Employment for participants

- Appropriateness of services provided to employers and participants
- Timeliness in service delivery to employers and participants

In PY23, program staff monitored, analyzed, and coached Nevada's EmployNV Career and Business Hub offices to ensure goals were met and appropriate program services were recorded. Staff utilized the SARA system, integrated with EmployNV, the statewide workforce case management system, to ensure consistent and timely communication with participants. SARA has allowed for staff to send scheduled program specific communication via text and email, schedule and remind participants about appointments, allowed for documentation to be obtained and recorded, helped alert staff to urgent client needs, and has enhanced participant and staff communication. Staff have also been able to utilize On-Demand Interview Network (ODIN) through SARA. ODIN is a virtual meeting space where staff can schedule appointments with participants. This has been especially advantageous for the Wagner-Peyser's Reemployment and Eligibility Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program staff because rural offices are still required to complete appointments but have a limited selection pool for participants. This has allowed them to make selections from areas in Nevada where participants are abundant and allows rural offices to further assist in meeting program goals. This has allowed Nevada to modernize tasks performed by workforce staff while also simplifying processes for participants.

The State was able to exceed the participant employment 2nd quarter after exit goal by 233 percent and missed the placement goal by 73 percent due to changes in office policies and procedures. The offices are no longer recording placements in EmployNV. Placements were used to track staff effectiveness in putting jobseekers to work. Instead, offices are now aligned with the goals of the DOL and are working towards keeping jobseekers employed in the 2nd and 4th quarter after they exit the Wagner-Peyser program, as well as median earnings in the 2nd quarter after exit.

The Silver State Works Program had a total of 26 participants who remained employed, which is 97 percent less than the goal of 383. Participation in Silver State Works has decreased this program year; however, the total number of participants was 26, and the number of participants who remained employed was 26. This makes the retention rate 100 percent, exceeding the goal by 17 percent.

Job Orders received from Employers exceeded the planned goal by 46 percent. While the number of jobs available exceeded the goal, the number of jobseekers registered was under its goal by 22 percent. The high number of job orders can be attributed to employers using self-service to post their own jobs and not being able to fill all their positions due to the low unemployment rate.

Efforts to ensure the appropriateness of services and timeliness of service delivery were successful and supported by the customer survey results received. 94 percent of participants receiving employment services rated the services received as beneficial.

Reports

The Interim Report presents preliminary findings based on data halfway through the evaluation period. Notably, these preliminary findings show that the two programs:

- ✓ Increased the receipt of job counseling services and direct job referrals for participants.
- ✓ Reduced average UI duration by 1.8 weeks.
- ✓ Led to an average $586 in UI savings per participant.
- ✓ Increased the employment rate in quarter 1 after program entry by 4.7 percentage points.
- ✓ Increased quarter 1 earnings by $205.

These preliminary findings are promising because they show that the two programs are effective in delivering services to UI claimants and facilitating improvements in their reemployment outcomes.

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

The State currently has in effect three DOL-ETA Waivers:

- Waiver of 20 CFR 681.550 to allow WIOA individuals training accounts (ITA) for in-school youth (ISY). This waiver is approved through June 30, 2025.
- Waiver of WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(H)(i) and 20 CFR 680.720(b) to increase OJT employer reimbursement up to 90 percent for businesses with 50 or fewer employees.
- Waiver associated with the requirement at WIOA Section 129(a)(4)(A) and 20 CFR 681.410 to allow State and local areas to expend 75 percent of Governor's Reserve youth funds and local youth formula funds on out-of-school youth (OSY).

Strategies

Waiver to Allow ITAs for ISY

This waiver allows the State to waive the requirement limiting ITAs to only out-of-school youth (OSY), ages 16–24; the State may use individualized training accounts (ITAs) for ISY ages 18–21.

Waiver to Increase OJT Employer Reimbursement up to 90 Percent for Businesses with 50 or Fewer Employees

The waiver permits the State and its local workforce areas to increase the reimbursement rate for OJT contracts up to 75 percent. The State may also reimburse up to 90 percent for OJT for businesses with 50 or fewer employees.

Waiver to Allow State and Local Areas to Expend 75 Percent of Governor's Reserve Youth Funds and Local Youth Formula Funds on OSY

The waiver is approved through PY25, which includes the entire period for which the state is authorized to spend PY25 funding.

Impact on Performance

Waiver To Allow ITAs for ISY

This waiver has been an excellent opportunity to promote apprenticeship programs to youth. It also assists ISY in rural workforce areas overcome the unique employment and economic challenges facing rural areas of Nevada. Utilization of the ISY ITA waiver was 21, or 5.4 percent of ISY. Approximately:

- 29.2 percent of participants identified as African American/Black; Asian; or more than one race, with 54.2 percent identifying as Hispanic or Latino.
- 25 percent chose not to answer when asked about race.
- The largest barrier identified was BSD at 45.6 percent.

Waiver to Increase OJT Employer Reimbursement up to 90 Percent for Businesses with 50 or Fewer Employees

This waiver has given the State a greater opportunity to utilize and operate OJTs throughout the state. Utilization of the 90 percent OJT waiver was 115, or 58.7 percent, with over 81 percent completing an OJT successfully. The participants who benefited from the OJTs had an average wage of $17.85 per hour as compared to a wage of $19.48 for all OJT participants. Approximately,

- 53 percent of the participants served identify as African American/Black; American Indian; Asian; Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander; or more than one race, with 34 percent identifying as Hispanic or Latino.
- The participants had the following barriers:
    - 3.5 percent re-entry;
    - 1.8 percent veteran; and
    - 23.7 percent persons with a disability.

Waiver to Allow State and Local Areas to Expend 75 Percent of Governor's Reserve Youth Funds and Local Youth Formula Funds on OSY

Utilization of the ISY waiver in the state has allowed ISY enrollments to grow to 24.5 percent of total enrollments. ISY represented 27.6 percent of active youth participants. Approximately 55 percent of the participants served identify as African American/Black; American Indian; Asian; Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander; or more than one race with 46.9 percent identifying as Hispanic or Latino. The participants had the following barriers:

- 8.3 percent re-entry;
- 50.5 percent Basic Skills Deficient (BSD); and

- 45.1 percent persons with a disability.

High School diploma rates for ISY were 40.7 percent compared to OSY drop-out recovery diploma rates of 17.3 percent. Also entered employment was 78 percent for ISY as compared to 71.6 percent for OSY drop-out recovery.

Success Stories

WIOA-Adult

Betty Ann was referred to Community Services Agency (CSA) by Medical Skills for Life Institute for support with tuition for a phlebotomy/lab assistant certification. Betty Ann is a single mother and was living with her brother at the time of enrollment. Betty Ann had not been employed since 2019, after leaving the workforce to be a stay-at-home mother, but was ready to re-enter the workforce in a field that would pay a livable wage for her and her daughter. Betty Ann had previously held a phlebotomy license from out of state but needed additional training and to obtain a Nevada license. CSA assisted her with a portion of her training costs and referred her to the EmployNV Career Hub for additional support. Betty Ann received phlebotomy/lab assistant training and was certified. She had a very positive experience at her training externship site, and they created a permanent phlebotomist position for her.

WIOA-Dislocated Worker

John enrolled in the EmployNV Career Hub ADW program and completed training as an electrician. He secured employment through an OJT with a prominent electric company, earning $23 per hour. After completing the OJT, John was hired into a full-time position with benefits. He has been thriving in his current role, earning a sustainable wage and excelling in his career. John continues to attend the huddles and remains engaged with his career coach and mentor.

WIOA-Adult

Luis enrolled in the EmployNV Career Hub Adult/Dislocated Worker program after 24 years of incarceration. He participated in the program and attended various personal development classes. Luis enrolled in the QUEST Dislocated Worker Grant and completed vocational training, becoming a certified welder. He also completed OSHA 10, CPR, and forklift certifications. Luis secured employment with a partnering employer, earning $20 per hour. He continues to be involved in the program, attending the huddles and meeting with his career coach and mentor weekly.

WIOA-Adult

Roy, a 29-year-old single male, was released from prison last year and struggled to find a job that both accepted his legal history and paid enough to support himself. He quickly realized that many of the “felon-friendly” job opportunities required specific certifications and training, which he could not afford, leaving him stuck in dead-end jobs just to get by. A family friend who had received help from the EmployNV Career Hub to obtain a CDL referred Roy to the program. Since trucking is a field more

accepting of his legal history and he enjoyed driving, Roy decided this was the right path for him. Working with his case manager, Roy developed an employment plan that began with CDL training. The EmployNV Hub covered the costs of his tuition, books, licensing fees, and boots, and provided transportation assistance through gas cards. After completing the classroom and hands-on training, Roy passed his exams and earned his Class A CDL. He is now employed with a local trucking company, Renu Oil, making $24 an hour. Now earning a livable wage, Roy can support himself and start building a savings account to provide financial security for the future.

WIOA-Adult

Emerie enrolled in the EmployNV Career Hub Adult/Dislocated Worker program and successfully completed HVAC training. He obtained employment in his field after completing the training and is now working full time as an HVAC technician, earning $25.00 per hour. He transitioned into his own apartment and reestablished a relationship with his family. Emerie also completed personal development classes and counseling through the career hub.

WIOA-Employer- Carson Medical Group

> “The Incumbent Worker training has allowed Carson Medical Group to expand the skill set of our front office and administrative staff at every level. With this program we have implemented training in both soft and technical skills that allow our staff to better serve our customers. Exposing the office staff the opportunity for leadership training has allowed us to increase wages and identify new opportunities to promote incumbent workers to leadership positions. Even if staff is not at a place to move to a leadership position, each trainee has received an hourly wage increase. This grant allows us to train higher number of staff simultaneously to decrease the gap between training opportunities. We will continue to work with Nevadaworks to ensure Carson Medical Group staff is well trained and confident in their place here, knowing we are investing in their future.”

New Hampshire

State Workforce Innovation Board

New Hampshire Business and Economic Affairs

Use of State Funds

The State utilizes some Governor's Reserve funds for the state administration of the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs, which include program monitoring activities as well as providing technical assistance to subrecipients. The State also uses the funds pay for systems costs related to the Title I Case Management System as well as the administration and maintenance of the Eligible Training Provider List. In PY23, New Hampshire also utilized Governor's Reserve funds to contract with Thomas P. Miller and Associates (TPMA) for the writing and implementation of the WIOA four-year State Plan.

The State also utilizes a large percentage of Governor's Reserve funds on projects that help address workforce development needs within the state. For PY23, the State released a Request for Proposal which called for long- and short-term projects which would address workforce issues, gaps, and needs within the state.

Under-served Populations

WIOA Plus

The WIOA Plus program was developed to fulfill the unmet needs within the existing WIOA programs through direct participant assistance for training and supportive services needs that exceed the state funding caps. WIOA Plus is being administered by the current WIOA Title I Adult Program provider as a supplemental program. As such, there are very little administrative costs associated with it. Therefore, most of the funds are provided directly for trainings and/or supportive services in four sectors of the workforce. These four sectors (Early Childhood Education, K–12 Education, Healthcare, and the Trades) are experiencing critical or near critical levels of worker shortages.

Integrated Service Delivery

FutureWorks BI

Provided by FutureWork Systems, LLC. (FWC), FutureWorks BI provides end users with robust visibility into WIOA and FutureWork Systems' defined performance indicators, as well as other data mined from PIRL data provided by case management systems. The application service includes a comprehensive cloud-based Web application for PIRL data interaction to facilitate program and policy decision-making. By combining intuitive access to WIOA PIRL data using a powerful BI tool designed for workforce development with ongoing expert technical assistance services, workforce development professionals of any technical skill level have what they need to meet their current and evolving performance reporting and analytics needs.

FutureWorks BI provides the most current view of performance and participant flow indicators (new enrollments, served, exited and in-program) across the entire organization, including the AJC Centers, youth providers, and Eligible Training Providers and across additional data elements that interest the state or local area if provided via a supplemental data feed. FutureWorks BI maintains historical program data to support longitudinal analyses.

Yes WIOA Can

All Youth Count (AYC)

AYC is a public-private partnership between Easter Seals NH; New Hampshire Division of Children, Youth, and Families; and private sector partners. It is designed to provide foster care youth, as well as youth who have exited foster care, ages 14–26 with assistance to lead successful, independent lives. Providing a combination of supportive employment, vocational mentorship, and individualized/person centered support to mitigate barriers to independence/stability; AYC seeks to reach youth who would benefit from flexible, customized assistance. In so doing, AYC envisions a community where all youth, ages 14–26 who are in, exiting, or recently exited foster care have access to the opportunities, resources, and relationships they need to actualize their potential, and achieve their goals.

Other State Funds Activities

Not applicable.

Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

System evaluation, woven into the operational practices of partners, is ongoing to ensure the State continues to offer quality services that comply with state and federal requirements and ensures continuous improvement. System partners meet regularly to assess program effectiveness through the review of new and current programs to promote efficiencies, coordinate and reduce duplication of services, discuss key monitoring findings, review best practices internal and from other states, review performance outcomes for Core WIOA programs, and share formal and informal customer satisfaction results in an effort to inform system change.

This year, the State contracted with Thomas P. Miller and Associates (TPMA) to assist the state in the development of the four-year WIOA State Plan. TPMA staff worked alongside staff from the Office of Workforce Opportunity to complete all aspects of the state plan development which included analyses of economic and workforce factors in New Hampshire and an assessment of workforce development activities. TPMA and OWO staff completed public comment sessions as well as stakeholder engagement sessions to receive input but also to evaluate the current workforce system.

In the end, the State's WIOA 2024 State Plan was built by evaluating the current and future workforce needs of the state as well as input from partners, employers, staff, partners, and end users. This information was used to formulate the State's vision and

goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce that meets the needs of employers, and a strategy to achieve the vision and goals set forth in the plan.

Continuous Improvement

The Customer Satisfaction Survey is sent to WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth customers using two methods, a direct web link and a Survey Monkey email. When a customer obtains employment or exits the program, a WIOA Career Specialist will send the Customer Satisfaction Survey via web link.

Customers also receive an automated Survey Monkey email after their file exits in the Job Match System (JMS), our case management system. A Survey Monkey reminder email is sent to the customer fourteen days later if the survey has not been completed.

This year, the WIOA Title I programs sent out 751 customer satisfaction survey requests. Although a majority of survey's were opened, only 51 survey responses were received back. This resulted in only a 6.8 percent return rate. Even though the return late was low, individuals were generally satisfied with the WIOA programs and the services provided.

- Overall Program Satisfaction – 84.4 percent.
- Services Meeting Expectations – 93.5 percent.
- Employment and Training Support Satisfaction – 84 percent.

Reports

No information provided for this section.

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

The State had no waiver requests during this period.

Strategies

Not applicable.

Impact on Performance

Not applicable.

Success Stories

WIOA Adult

Casey was a 37-year-old married woman with four children, when she contacted the WIOA program for potential funding to obtain her LPN license. She was determined eligible for Adult WIOA services on August 18, 2022. Casey was working as a LNA and had over 10+ years in the healthcare environment as an LNA and prior to this she worked for five years as a direct support professional. She stated she was ready to take the next step in her medical career path and become an LPN, knowing this is the natural progression in the nursing field, and becoming an LPN would increase her wages and promote her continued growth in the medical field. In discussion regarding the LPN profession, it became apparent she had a realistic view of the daily work activities and job duties of an LPN, and her extensive work experience as an LNA, allowed her to develop many basic nursing skills that would be extremely beneficial to her as an LPN. In addition, her comprehensive assessment results also support this goal as being an appropriate and obtainable goal for her. We also reviewed LMI for LPNs which indicated wages between $22.57–$35.70, which would meet her needs, and a projected 10 percent projected annual growth in the state.

> “We discussed potential training vendors, but she had already been accepted into the LPN program with LNA Health Careers. This was a 52-week, 1401 hours training program at a cost of this training $23,000.00. She received funding from WIOA ($6,500.00) and partnered with NHES-WNNH ($7,000.00) and covered the remaining balance through scholarships and loans.”

She started her training on September 9, 2022, and received her certificate of completion certificate on August 4, 2023, with a GPA of 3.46. Throughout her training Casey, continued to work full time hours, and even went through a bout of COVID, in addition to raising four children. During our monthly contact she often spoke of the course being much more difficult than she expected, and at times felt overwhelmed, but she hung in there and was even chosen as LNA HC “Student of the Month” for July, with the write up in their monthly newsletter stating the following:

> “Casey Braley is an LPN student who goes the distance. Working full time, married with a family, and making excellent grades in her nursing classes. She uses every free minute she has, to study. Casey loves working with the elderly and already has an LPN job lined up at a facility she loves. She is a passionate about nursing and advocating for patients.”

Once she obtained her temporary LPN license, she was able to start her career as an LPN and started work as an LPN with Forest View Manor on August 21, 2023, earning $33.00 an hour with benefits. She passed her NCLEX exam on September 18, 2023, and received her official LPN NH State License.

WIOA Adult

Kurt enrolled in the WIOA Adult program in PY22. He was a referral from a former student who completed the Microelectronics Bootcamp at NCC. Kurt could no longer perform the job he was in and truly was inspired by his spouse to take a leap of faith and enter an exciting and rewarding career path of Electrical and Electronic Mechanical Assembly. Kurt’s highest level of education

was a high school diploma. He was accepted into the Microelectronics Boot Camp Training Program at NCC. This training program prepares individuals for an entry-level ribbon/wire bonding and manual epoxy dispense and die attach positions at local companies.

Without WIOA, Kurt would not have had this training opportunity. Throughout the training, Kurt consistently received positive comments from the Program Director, showed up on time despite an unforeseen immediate family health hardship, and was a dedicated trainee. All his hard work thus far paid off successfully in the certificate of completion for his training program, receiving a measurable skill gain, and passing the lean white belt certification exam. Kurt accepted a full-time position within the Electronic Systems Sector at BAE as a Microwave Technician II making a competitive pay rate with full health benefits. He will no longer be underemployed and continues to be successful in his job.

At NCC's Commencement Ceremony, Kurt graciously was honored with his training certificate. Today, Kurt is very thankful for the opportunity WIOA provided to him for shaping his workforce future for a better tomorrow and made his family proud.

WIOA Adult

Chris is a single father of two. He has worked in the food service industry in a grocery store environment in various titles from customer service, Assistant Manager, to Department Manager. In May, after much consideration, he realized he was ready and needed to make a career change. He indicated having medical issues growing up, he always had an interest in the healthcare field, but the time was never right to pursue this interest. He became aware of a medical assistant training that was being offered by St. Joseph School of Nursing. After discussing with his fiancée, they both agreed now was the time for him to pursue this goal. He applied and was accepted. He has a long-range goal of eventually becoming an RN and considers this is the first step in this career path. He is excited about entering an occupation that offers opportunity for growth and advancement and earning potential to support his family.

After completing his comprehensive assessment, reviewing work history, skills, barriers, education and assessments, all factors taken into consideration supported Chris's goal as being an appropriate and obtainable career path and goal for Chris to pursue. Chris was accepted into the St. Joseph School of Nursing Medical Assistant program where WIOA Adult was able to cover the total cost of this training, required tools (scrubs, stethoscope, etc.), and provided him with transportation reimbursement. Throughout his training, he received "glowing" feedback. During graduation, you could feel his passion for healthcare in the room through the impact he made on the instructors, his peers, and his family. Chris received the Medical Assistant Certificate of Completion from St. Joseph School of Nursing in December 2023 and earned his Clinical Medical Assistant Certification (CCMA) in February 2024.

Chris was offered a full-time position as a Medical Assistant at St. Joseph Hospital making excellent pay with benefits. He loves his new job and career. His CN anticipates his continued success with pursuing LPN or RN in the near future.

Dislocated Worker

Kirsten is a 60-year-old single female living in Manchester who was laid off on November 7, 2022, from Vogelsang USA. She worked remotely as an IT Tech for Vogelsang. When Kirsten was laid off by Vogelsang, she was told she was being let go because her skills were outdated. Kirsten's highest level of education is a bachelor's degree in computer science from Indiana University. At the time of her layoff, Kirsten had over twenty years of programing experience.

Kirsten was not sure what she should do after being told her skills were outdated and her first thought was to become an LNA, but she did not realize they only make $20 an hour. She would like to get out of IT but wants to make $60,000 or more. She realized her IT skills are outdated and is not sure what her next career move would be.

Kirsten entered the Dislocated Worker program and worked with the Employment Counselor to research what was available using her IT background but without having to necessarily program. She started by enrolling with Visible Edge in their Data Science & Machine Learning Technologies Certificate Program. Kirsten loved the classes and did extremely well, with Visible Edge telling out employment counselor that Kirsten was a star pupil.

Upon completion of the training program and receiving her certifications, Visible Edge offered Kirsten a position as an instructor. Although she was making slightly less than before, she was still able to work remotely and use her skills along with her training to change the direction of her career. While Kirsten was in training, she exhausted her unemployment compensation. The Dislocated Worker program was able to assist her with her utilities through Support Services and remove those barriers that would distract from being successful with training. Kirsten has told us she loves working with Visible Edge, feels they are a great group to work with and is looking forward to working with the students.

Dislocated worker

Shannon is a 46-year-old married female with one child still living at home. Shannon had been employed by Computer Security Products for approximately nine months when she was laid off. Shannon experienced a number of layoffs over the preceding years and was ready for a change. Shannon entered the WIOA Dislocated Worker program at the very end of PY22 but was hesitant about training since she had been out of school for a number of years.

Employment Counselor Specialist Kim Gryglik encouraged Shannon along in the process. Shannon decided to enroll at Nashua Community College in the Microelectronics Boot Camp in August 2023 even though she was still nervous about the training. ECS Gryglik, with the help of the Nashua Community College team, and WIOA Dislocated Worker program, was able to assist Shannon in overcoming her concerns about returning to school. Shannon thrived in the training environment, completed the program, and received her certification on November 16, 2023.

Shannon was hired almost immediately after completing her training by Mercury Systems in Andover Massachusetts as a Microelectronics Specialist with full benefits and making 17 percent more than she had at her last position. Shannon states she loves her new career and that it would not be possible without the assistance of the WIOA Dislocated Worker program. She realized that she succeeded in not only a new career, but in overcoming her anxiety about going back to school and stepping up to a new challenge.

Dislocated worker

David is a single male who had several years of college but no degree. He had many years of experience in the IT field but had been laid off in 2021, and due to not having a degree, was not able to find a position in the IT field. David had taken a job as a seasonal maintenance person at a summer camp and worked as a shipping clerk for a natural foods company to make ends meet. Between these two jobs his combined income was $51,000 a year.

David entered the program in December 2023, knowing he would need some type of certification to compete for IT jobs. David enrolled in the Certified Information Systems Security Professional program offered through Intellectual Point. This training would provide him with certification in AI and Cisco Systems. Training started in January 2024 and ran through April 2024. David continued to interview for IT position while he was in training 16 and in discussion with the Employment Counselor Specialist, believed he would be able to finish any training if he secured new employment during the training period. He completed his first portion in January 2024. The second portion of the training was completed in March 2024, a month before the scheduled completion date.

During this time David continued to interview for IT position in the Keene area. After interviewing for five different positions, he was hired by the Markem-Imaje Corporation as an IT Coordinator. The position David was hired for pays $95,000 a year with full benefits, almost doubling his salary and no longer being seasonal.

WIOA-Youth

Before Ayobami was in NH JAG, she was a striving high school student with a desire to get into a career that would make a positive impact upon the lives of others. Thankfully, through her friend who is already in the JAG program, she was introduced to NH JAG. The Specialist met with Ayobami, learned of her aspirations, and introduced how the NH JAG program could assist her. Ayobami was told that she would not have to wait to pursue career opportunities and drift through the academic system. She was told that NH JAG could help her in the present state and academic growth could take place presently! It is because of this assistance from the JAG program that Ayobami has seen immediate success.

Ayobami immediately took advantage of the opportunities that JAG provided, most recently competing at the NH JAG Career Development Conference earlier this Spring. This conference is for NH JAG students from across the state who come together to learn, grow, and celebrate the success that the program is having upon them. Her specialist helped her craft her first résumé, and she was prepped to participate in a “mock interview” to have her interviewing skills tested. This competition had a profound and eye-opening impact on Ayobami. With this experience, she learned how to interact professionally in interviews, which is knowledge she will take with her in the future to her next interview in the “real world.”

After only one year with NH JAG, Ayobami held the confidence to apply to the N.Y.L.F. Medicine (National Youth Leadership Forum). Specifically, she wants to be an anesthesiologist, and this program is a summer program that works as a medical summer camp. The enrolled students obtain college credit, hands-on medical experience, and medical knowledge is distributed to the students. It is without a doubt a great opportunity for young students who are interested in the medical field to gain knowledge and practical experience. Ayobami applied and was accepted! Now, she is looking ahead to the summer to reap the

benefits that this amazing forum will provide. Her interviewing and résumé skills have been utilized, and all other competencies that she garners from the JAG program will continue to be implemented in her life to provide the excellence that she is seeking. Ayobami is a great student to have in the program, and the difference that NH JAG has made in her life is clearly seen, which is celebrated in her success.

WIOA-Youth

Desiree has been in the MY TURN program for the past year and has made some excellent strides and continues to excel on her path to financial freedom. Desiree Joined the MY TURN program in hopes to further her education and received much more! Desiree had a strong passion for the Hospitality Industry and was committed to completing school and becoming and Chef to open her own restaurant. Unfortunately, due to lack of support at home and being a single mother, she had to put her dreams on hold, even with this impediment Desiree with the help of MY TURN staff was able to find something she was equally passionate about, helping others. She was successful in securing a spot in a Phlebotomy Training program and she graduated from LNA Health Careers in July of 2023.

The goal crushing did not stop there! Desiree sat for her state exam and became a licensed Phlebotomist, and with her license was able to not only work in NH but also in several other states where the minimum wage is higher for healthcare professionals.! MY TURN staff assisted Desiree with updating her résumé to showcase her newly acquired skill and find fulltime employment.

Desiree is now established and is making great money. She loves the work she does and is looking forward to continuing and growing in the field. Desiree eventually would like to use her skills to fund the dream of becoming a restaurant owner. Her goal is to expand and continue to grow as a young professional. We are so proud of Desiree, and she has our unequivocal support as she continues to shoot for the stars! She also makes the best Tacos/ Flautas in Southern NH!

WIOA-Youth

Miguel came into the OSY program simultaneously entering MY TURN's Young Adult Court Program. Avoiding incarceration with this opportunity, Miguel was able to pursue his goal of obtaining his CDL-A. Personally, he and his girlfriend were able to welcome a newborn into the world and he was motivated to get started.

There are stringent requirements of Phase 1 of the YAC program, including but not limited to: obtaining and maintaining meaningful employment, twice weekly check-ins at his parole office, weekly court hearings to address his progress and set new tasks he must achieve, and working with MY TURN weekly. Miguel has exceeded the court's expectations each week and has successfully entered Phase 2. He has maintained employment, attended all check-ins, court hearings, and MY TURN appointments. He completed a court appointed certificate program for THC misuse before expected, impressing the entire YAC team.

Miguel has been studying the CDL Driver's Manual and will be scheduling an appointment to take his permit test at his next MY TURN meeting. From there, he will do ELDT Theory Training as his last prerequisite to enrolling into the available CDL-A training. John is now saving to buy a new car and get a place of his own, with hopes of being able to also help support his family once he

is out of their household. John has come so far in such a short amount of time. “I believe that he is going to be very successful in this field and will go on to live a prosperous life. You can see a gleam in his eye now. He is proud of himself and so am I.”

WIOA-Youth

Ariana was a dropout from high school and was unsure of what her next steps were. She was interested in becoming an LNA but had no means to get there on her own. With the help of JAG, Ariana was able to enroll with LNA Health Careers. She recently passed her certificate of completion, and we are so proud of her! Ariana’s next steps are to get her license and find a job in her area as an LNA.

WIOA-Youth

I have been working with Fiordalis coming up on a year. She is an outstanding young lady! She came into the program super motivated and wanted to take full advantage of the opportunities offered by the MY TURN program. Fiordalis is the daughter of two immigrant parents who did all they could to make it possible for her and her siblings to thrive and be part of the American dream.

As soon as she was able to contribute, knowing all her parents’ sacrifices, she did just that. She began with an interest in beauty and the hope that one day she would earn her license and be able to help her parents. She joined the program with a completed CTE Cosmetology program under her belt from Nashua High School North.

After her completion she knew she wanted to do more and needed assistance to continue her education beyond Highschool. She was super passionate in making others find confidence through beauty and selfcare. She even volunteered her talent in makeup, hair, and fashion to help the seniors get ready for Prom! She wanted to be that glimmer of hope for those who were once bullied and outcasted for being different and shared her struggles facing body shaming and cultural insensitivity.

Fiordalis graduated with her LNA certificate from LNA Health Careers and is currently working full time! She is heading back to school this summer to for Esthetics at empire beauty schools and Nursing School next Spring. “My goal is to become a Nurse and I’m so excited to have all of your help and Support with this process, I wouldn’t even know where to start if it wasn’t for MY TURN.”

She hopes to one day be the owner of a Med Spa as a Registered Nurse offering services in Medical Esthetics. Fiordalis is a success because she is compassionate, motivated, and hardworking. Acts of kindness can make the world a happier place, and you certainly feel that when she enters the room. The Sky is the limit for Fiordalis.

WIOA-Youth

Sarah came to MY TURN as a single mother with a two-year-old daughter. She was fresh out of a very unhealthy relationship with her daughters’ father. She was couch surfing, jobless and completely lost. Sarah had a history of failed employment and lack of guidance throughout her life. When MY TURN Staff initially sat with Sarah we planned attainable goals to reach for her within

the first six months. Sarah tirelessly worked hard toward every single goal. She left her toxic relationship and acquired a restraining order to solidify her and her daughter's safety. She was able to secure safe housing for her and her daughter in their very own place. She enrolled her daughter in a wonderful daycare so she could start working. She started with a part-time job, picking up any shift offered to her, while she looked for a full-time position in a field she was interested in. By month three of working with MY TURN Sarah was offered a well-paying, full-time position at a dental office. After working there for a few months and really evaluating how she would like to proceed in her future career, she researched and decided she would like to work helping children. Sarah applied for a position as a Paraprofessional at Seabrook Elementary School. Sarah's drive and tenacity to build a better life for her and her daughter has proven to be nothing short of admirable. She has set goals and has been able to achieve every single one. She has not given up once, despite the many obstacles that have been in front of her. Sarah is on the road to success, where less than a year ago she truly had no hope for her or her daughter's future.

WIOA-Youth

In 2017, Naomi dropped out of high school and gave birth to a son in 2018. In 2019, Naomi enrolled into Job Corp expecting to graduate with a diploma and a certification as a clinical medical assistant in 2020. However, due to COVID-19, it took more time than expected and she graduated in 2021. In February 2023, she applied to JAGNH so that she could receive financial assistance for Licensed Nursing Assistant (LNA) training at LNA Health Careers. Naomi started her LNA training at LNA Health Careers in October 2023, and 19 successfully completed her training the following month. She is now an LNA. Her short-term goal is to save money and own a home so that she and her son can move to a better neighborhood. Her long-term goals are to receive more education in nursing and eventually become a Registered Nurse.

WIOA-Youth

Hayley, a working single mother who did not complete high school, joined JAG in the fall of 2022. She had a few bumps in the road and briefly left the program but contacted her Career Specialist in the spring of 2023 with a renewed goal of getting her LNA certificate. She was able to achieve that goal the Fall of 2023 and is hoping to get her high school equivalency diploma in the near future. She has a job lined up as an LNA at a local assisted living facility. Hayley is now a LNA.

WIOA-Youth

Thai has been a participant of MY TURN OSY program since September 2023 and has made gargantuan strides in the right direction. Thai joined our program to gain insight and navigational skills in the "Adult World." Initially joining as almost a last resort to the constant merry-go-round of tries and failures. Thai is what some may call a troubled youth. She was hanging with the wrong crowd, smoking, and drinking heavily. To the point it started to reflect academically as well as socially. She was hanging out late, missing and skipping school. Thai's parents ended up sending her down south to live with her sister to see if a change of scenery can help (did not work), eventually being sent to Job Corps where she was able to obtain her LNA.

It was not until Thai got connected with MY TURN that she finally got the opportunity and guidance to pursue her dream, and get the help needed to land a job in that career path. MY TURN staff worked together with Thai to prepare her for the field by working on her résumé, cover letter, interview skills, application process, all that is required to attain the success in the goal she set forth.

After a few tries, and a couple interviews later, Thai accomplished her goal and landed a great job in the LNA field. Thai is currently working at Merrimack County Nursing Home, assisting the elderly in all types of aspects. She loves the job and believes she is making a difference in their final years, in which she is! A challenge she recently faced, that unfortunately is part of the job, is losing a few patients. She understands it comes with the territory, but the bonds that she is making with her patients makes it undoubtably hit home. Her heart is invested, as well as her time. Her devotion to and love for her patients has made her decide to go even further into the field by setting a goal to now become an LPN. With the help of MY TURN staff and the OSY program she is confident that this goal will be another major accomplishment in her turnaround story.

Additional Success Stories

- Vibrant, Inclusive and Prosperous (VIP) Workforce Program
    - Alyaa
    - Muyoboke, Theophile, and Jackson - The story of three brothers
- All Youth Count
    - Anna
    - Kendra
    - Catherine

New Jersey

New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJDOL)

Use of State Funds

As highlighted in the State's WIOA 2024–27 State Plan, the Governor's Reserve, which includes Title I funds reserved across Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker allocations, as well as Title III funds reserved from Wagner-Peyser funding, supports NJDOL and SETC in carrying out their required functions. This includes activities related to fiscal and programmatic oversight, technical assistance, state policy and guidance development, as well as research and evaluation activities, as well as investments in specific programmatic strategies.

Under-served Populations

WIOA Set-Aside Investments

In addition to creating stronger awareness across partners and stakeholder in the public workforce system, NJDOL also leveraged resources from Governor Set-Aside funds to support state workforce programs, expanding opportunities for serving youth and justice-involved individuals, specifically.

Integrated Service Delivery

Specifically, in PY23, Governor's Reserve funds supported staff working across the Office of Finance and Accounting, the Office of Research and Information, the Office of Internal Audit, and the Workforce Development Division.

An important focus of NJDOL in PY23, coming out of the pandemic, was on internal capacity building across these teams to support stronger monitoring and oversight procedures and systems. This included the following:

- Sustainability of Program Oversight and Development Team: Over the last year, NJDOL established and hired for a new role, the Assistant Director of Program Oversight and Development (POD). This leader and team are responsible for program monitoring, technical assistance, and guidance and training development. The POD team serves as the main liaison for NJDOL's LWDBs for questions regarding implementation regarding program, policies, and state priorities. In addition, monitors on the POD team completed the mandated monitoring of all 23 One-Stop Career Centers statewide for PY23. This process reinforces accountability and adherence to programmatic and operational standards across the statewide system.
- Coordination across POD, Fiscal, and Internal Audit Teams: In addition, the POD team with NJDOL's Fiscal and Internal Audit Teams began meeting and coordinating monitoring efforts more intentionally and directly, leading to important strides in strengthening and integrating fiscal and programmatic monitoring efforts. As a result of joint collaboration and planning, NJDOL issued new guidance and developed new processes for monthly review of budgets and expenditures.

- Business Outreach and Industry Partnerships Teams: As highlighted in the Annual Report, a major focus of investment in PY23 has been in building the capacity of the Industry Partnerships team. Both the Business Outreach and Industry Partnerships teams report into the State's Assistant Director of Business Engagement and Sector Strategies and work directly with LWDB staff to align state and local level business and employer engagement sector strategies and services. The organization and alignment of these teams and their work has been a strong focus, as the system seeks to maximize benefits for employers, as well as jobseekers.

Yes WIOA Can

In addition to the teams that are supported through WIOA Set-Aside resources, NJDOL also uses the resources to support state level investments. In PY23, these programs included:

- Job Opportunities for Building Success (JOBS): Provides employment and training services to individuals under supervision by the State Division of Probation.
- Summer Youth Work Experience Program: Provides youth, with valuable summer internships to help them successfully transition to the world of work.
- Bridges to Employing Youth: Provides specialized workforce development services to youth for following targeted populations: Youth with disabilities, justice-involved youth, youth who are in or have aged out of foster care, and pregnant or parenting youth.
- New Jersey Youth Corps: Help disconnected OSY reengage in educational, training and employment opportunities for sustainable long-term career development.

In particular, in PY23, through WIOA support NJDOL:

- Expanded summer youth employment opportunities to include more youth and year-round experiences. Over 400 additional youth participated this summer. 2,107 youth participated in the summer of 2024, compared to 1,681 in the summer of 2023.
- Expanded New Jersey Youth Corps program components to include Mental Health and Wellness Instruction in addition to regular counseling and referrals to increase youth access to mental health services.
- Doubled the number of participants slots and grantees that could participate in the JOBS program, expanding service for the justice-involved population, and ultimately strengthen training, employment, and successful reintegration into the community.

Other State Funds Activities

Not applicable.

Evaluations

NJDOL has created a multi-year plan for its research and evaluation activities. Central to this effort has been establishing the New Jersey State Data System (NJSDS). Since 1988, the State has maintained a longstanding research partnership with The John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. NJDOL and the Heldrich Center established a multi-agency-data-use agreement and NJSDS through support of multiple federal Workforce Data Quality Initiatives (WDQI) and State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) grants.

NJSDS includes data not only from NJDOL, but also from the NJ Department of Education (NJDOE), the NJ Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE), and the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority (HESAA).

In the coming year, NJDOL also has plans to build its own internal evaluation unit to manage WIOA and other program and policy evaluation initiatives.

Activities and Methodology

PY21 WIOA Evaluation: A Study of WIOA Title I and Title IV Transportation Services

The Heldrich Center worked with NJDOL to conduct a process study of WIOA Title I and Title IV transportation services during PY21 (July 1, 2021–June 30, 2022). Access to transportation in the State of New Jersey remains an ongoing challenge for many populations. With an emphasis placed on the barriers for WIOA Title I and Title IV customers, transportation is perceived to be a significant barrier for people with disabilities and others in accessing workforce development services that assist with obtaining employment. In PY21, the COVID-19 pandemic may have also exacerbated existing transportation challenges and/or created new opportunities for innovative solutions to transportation challenges. This evaluation explored the dynamics of the transportation challenges that existed for WIOA customers in PY21 and seeks to pose innovative solutions to address these challenges.

This study had three primary objectives:

1. Identify transportation service challenges for WIOA customers in New Jersey participating in WIOA services at the One-Stop Career Centers;
2. Identify and highlight promising transportation programs and/or services that could be expanded or replicated in five rural/southern counties (Atlantic, Burlington, Cumberland, Salem, and Cape May) where transportation is perceived by local policymakers as a significant challenge to WIOA service participation and employment; and
3. Offer meaningful, tangible recommendations to the NJDOL, and to rural counties, on how to modify WIOA service delivery in light of the transportation challenges that exist for WIOA customers in those areas.

RESEA Impact Evaluation Study

The RESEA program represents a pivotal strategy in integrating State UI with workforce development systems. Its primary goal is to facilitate the reemployment of dislocated workers receiving unemployment compensation. To advance this mission, the NJDOL has partnered with the Heldrich Center to conduct a rigorous component evaluation of RESEA. Utilizing a randomized controlled trial (RCT) design, this evaluation examines the impact of a targeted text message intervention aimed at increasing participant engagement.

Prior reemployment evaluation studies included a review of the existing reemployment studies on the Clearinghouse for Labor Evaluation and Research (CLEAR) with high and moderate causal ratings using random assignment designs (CLEAR, 2019). Based on this research, NJDOL worked with Heldrich to develop plans for a two-group random control trial to assess the effect of text notification services on jobseekers' participation rates in RESEA, their duration of unemployment, and on wages after reemployment.

NJDOL will use this impact evaluation to evaluate the effectiveness of push text notifications in encouraging participants to attend scheduled appointments and complete mandatory documentation. The study includes a random sample of RESEA participants receiving text notifications and compares their outcomes to RESEA participants who do not receive them.

The purpose of this impact evaluation is to:

- Measure the impact of text notifications on RESEA participation and outcomes
- Inform future decisions on whether to continue, or even scale up, the text notification intervention for RESEA participants

The design of the study includes the following:

1. The Heldrich Center receives weekly files of UI claimants who have been profiled for RESEA services.
2. Claimants are randomly assigned into a treatment or control group:
    a. Those in the treatment group receive weekly text notifications regarding their required participation in RESEA services and other job search services provided by NJDOL.
    b. Claimants who are randomly assigned to the control group will receive typical RESEA services provided by NJDOL.
3. Following enrollment, the Heldrich Center will analyze participant outcomes, including participation in RESEA, duration of weeks on UI compensation, and wages following reemployment after their period on UI. Other outcomes include:
    a. Intermediate Outcomes: Including, anticipation in the Initial Meeting, Participation in the Follow-up Meeting, IEP Forms Completion.
    b. Primary Outcomes: Duration of unemployment compensation (defined by UIPL 1-20 as the number of weeks RESEA participants receive UC), Employment (measured in the second full calendar quarter following the start of

a participant's UC claim, as defined by UIPL 1-20), Wages earned in the 2nd full quarter following reemployment measured in wages for the quarter (or three-month period).

Continuous Improvement

In addition to formal evaluation activities, NJDOL also continued development and implementation of several different research and performance accountability projects that seek to strengthen and sustain use of data to drive decision-making at multiple levels of the public workforce system—from setting strategy for the system to supporting the individual choices of jobseekers and workers in New Jersey:

- Federal Evaluations
- MyCareerNJ
- Expansion of NJDOL Research Data Lake: Workforce Research and Analytics
- Consumer Report Card
- Quality assurance framework applied to training programs on the ETPL
- Local Area Statistical Adjustment Model Development

Reports

PY21 WIOA Evaluation: A Study of WIOA Title I and Title IV Transportation Services

The final report, *An Evaluation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Services in New Jersey, Program Year 2021*, was presented to the NJ State Employment and Training Commission (SETC), on June 12, 2024.

The final report includes:

- An analysis of transportation services provided through WIOA to Title I and Title IV customers during PY21, using the available data.
- The identification and profile of transportation programs that are considered promising or innovative.
- A landscape of transportation programs/initiatives recently tried and/or current operated in the targeted rural/southern counties in the state.
- The identification of potential WIOA service modifications in context of the transportation challenges noted in the rural/southern counties in the state.
- Recommendations on programs that could be expanded and/or piloted in other areas of the state, based on qualitative research, have high levels of satisfaction from state and local staff or subject matter experts.

RESEA Impact Evaluation Study

The Heldrich Center will prepare a final evaluation report and a series of in-depth presentations to report study outcomes, including data visualizations, for key stakeholders.

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

A waiver of the requirement that the State and local areas expend 75 percent of all Governor's Reserve and local formula youth funds on OSY was approved by DOL-ETA for PY24 and PY25 as part of the State's 2024–27 WIOA State Plan.

Strategies

The State is putting mechanisms in place to support local areas that are not meeting the 75 percent OSY requirement to ensure that are building capacity to meet these requirements by PY26.

Impact on Performance

No information provided for this section.

Success Stories

No information provided for this section.

New Mexico

New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (NMDWS)

Use of State Funds

Because federal funding has remained flat while the State legislature has instituted mandatory pay increases, New Mexico uses its Set-Aside to fund core operations. State Set-Aside funds support the following ongoing costs that support statewide systems/operations to support and enhance workforce development activities.

Under-served Populations

No information provided for this section.

Integrated Service Delivery

Personnel Costs of WIOA Program Coordinators and Monitoring

NMDWS uses Set-Aside funding for staff assigned to provide ongoing support to each of the four LWDBs, including consultation for local board and chief elected officials on best and promising practices; Title I program implementation for youth, adult, and dislocated workers, fiscal compliance, policy development, local/regional planning, sector strategy and career pathway implementation, and partnership engagement at federal, state, and local levels.

Be Pro Be Proud

Be Pro Be Proud is a state-funded partnership between the NMDWS and the New Mexico Center for Economic Opportunity, the charitable foundation of the New Mexico Chamber of Commerce, spearheading the movement to bring a new generation of pride, progress, and professionals to the State's skilled workforce. Be Pro Be Proud is a national workforce development initiative focused on attracting students and young adults to technical careers through exciting simulation experiences, then connecting them to post-secondary opportunities to include Registered Apprenticeships (RA) and careers. The Be Pro Be Proud New Mexico (Be Pro Be Proud NM) mobile workshop unit makes tour stops at local middle schools, high schools, and community organizations.

The Be Pro Be Proud initiative is addressing a pressing national challenge. Over 23 percent of current skilled professionals are at or near retirement age. The next generation of new talent is not sufficient to meet the demand. The initiative targets many key audiences including high school and non-traditional students, current skilled professionals, legislators, parents, teachers, career coaches, and employers to dispel the myths about skilled trade professions. The mobile workshop is customized to skilled professions that are most relevant to the industry needs in the state. The professions selected for Be Pro Be Proud NM are:

- Automation/Robotics,
- Carpenters/Construction,

- Commercial Trucking Driving,
- Diesel Technician,
- Electricians,
- Fiber Optics,
- Healthcare/Medical Technicians,
- Heavy Equipment Operators,
- HVAC,
- Line workers,
- Plumbers, and
- Welders.

Since the first launch in Arkansas in 2016, there have been over 394,600 visitors and over 95,135 individuals who have joined the movement nationwide. The Be Pro Be Proud initiative is currently in Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Texas. Be Pro Be Proud NM launched on November 9, 2023, and has had over 7,100 visitors with over 3,000 individuals joining the movement. The Be Pro Be Proud NM mobile workshop made a total of 61 tour stops throughout New Mexico in PY23.

Yes WIOA Can

New Mexico Workforce Connection Online System

NMDWS used Set-Aside funding to sustain a virtual system available 24/7 to support access to services and supports including, unemployment benefits, career exploration/readiness tools, résumé development, links to labor market information and access to career professionals to provide one-on-one assistance and career counseling. The New Mexico Workforce Connection Online System also manages and reports performance, accountability, and case management work statewide.

New Mexico Performs Data Dashboard/System

The dashboard system is licensed from FutureWork System. The NM Performs system performance monitoring data views and reports are designed to provide timely and accurate data on activities and outcomes to assist NMDWS leadership, including SWDB and LWDBs, to set priorities, target resources, review, and report on program goals.

Career Solutions and Why I Work

NMDWS uses Set-Aside funding for online tools and resources designed to support career readiness/exploration for youth and young adults. The Career Solutions tools also include a curriculum that can be utilized by schools to support classroom instruction. These two tools have quickly become recognized and valued for their ability to connect.

K–12 Activities under Work-Based Learning

In PY23, NMDWS substantively contributed to career-connected learning for students and other young people in New Mexico public education in several important ways. These approaches included providing staffing resources in collaboration with the New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED); administering a system of high school career consultants; and supporting educator preparation through RA programs. NMDWS will maintain and expand this public school system engagement in PY24 and beyond.

Throughout PY23, NMDWS and NMPED jointly employed a Youth Work-Based Learning Program Manager, who helped advance career and technical education and work-based learning initiatives by providing training and technical assistance to public schools throughout the state. This effort focused on best and promising practices in career readiness, job exploration, and strategies to enhance collaboration and coordination with LWDBs, state and regional businesses, and industry organizations to facilitate and implement meaningful work-based learning opportunities for youth participants.

One of the key roles of the joint NMDWS-NMPED Program Manager has been to coordinate the activities of high school career consultants, who provided outreach to young people, usually ages 16–24, in schools, workforce connections offices, and communities to recruit them to participate in pre-apprenticeship programs. The high school career consultants, who worked in five high schools, as well as in higher education institutions and with community partners, supported students with onboarding and orientation, and helped them identify their interests and match them with businesses and case management. The New Mexico State Legislature appropriated $1.7 million for the high school career consultants in PY23 but eliminated this funding for PY24. DWS remains committed to this approach going forward for several high school career consultants, identifying alternative funding sources in the coming year.

NMDWS also supported the New Mexico public education system in PY23 through sustained support, engagement, and promotion of RA programs in educator preparation. During PY23, NMDWS approved a new RA program in the Hobbs School District to sponsor apprenticeships for educator preparation in early childhood through 3rd grade. NMDWS continued support of another RA program at Santa Fe Community College, established in the previous year, specifically focused on preparing early childhood educators in state-funded preschool, childcare and Head Start programs. Because decades of research have found significant benefits of quality early childhood education on later K–12 outcomes, this initiative will certainly have positive impacts throughout New Mexico’s public education system.

In PY23, NMDWS also coordinated with NMPED, and its educator preparation partners on the development of a teacher residency apprenticeship, including supporting PED’s successful federal grant application for the DOL Apprenticeships Build America (ABA) grant, a $4 million initiative to support educator preparation apprenticeships. NMDWS and NMPED have begun discussions on how to coordinate this effort with DWS’ federal apprenticeship programs and formula funds in PY24 and beyond.

Looking forward, NMDWS is also expanding this involvement in supporting public education in the state by serving on the new state Career and Technical Education Advisory Board, co-leading with NMPED a new work-based learning community of practice initiative for school districts and workforce partners and assisting NMPED with outreach and recruitment of business representation on school district and school advisory committees.

Other State Funds Activities

Not applicable

Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

No information provided for this section.

Continuous Improvement

Customer Satisfaction

NMDWS distributed the Customer Satisfaction Survey (CSS) on February 12, 2024, to 7,390 participants that received services from NMDWS Workforce Connection Centers (NMWCC) or who interacted with the Workforce Connection Online System (WCOS) during calendar year 2023. Approximately 6.2 percent (458) of the emails bounced because the email address stored in the participant record in WCOS was not valid. This is slightly lower than the 6.3 percent that bounced in the survey that was sent out in 2023.

The overall level of customer satisfaction in 2023 significantly improved compared to customer satisfaction in 2022. About 71.3 percent responded positively when asked about their level of satisfaction with the services they received while visiting a NMWCC in 2023. This was a marked increase (12.7 percentage points) from the 58.6 percent that participants reported for 2022.

Reports

The following is a list of research and evaluations that the NMDWS Economic Research and Analysis (ER&A) Bureau conducted in PY23. These studies informed and guided state and local planning for the Combined State Plan, and LWDB local plans. Research included focused data studies and publications which were used to facilitate discussions for economic recovery and workforce planning. Additional agencies benefitting from evaluation/research documents included Department of Health, Economic Development, Senior Employment, and legislative staff and representatives.

Major Employment Developments (MED).

Every month ER&A sends the MED report to over 100 people. The MED lists business activities driving either the creation or loss of 50 jobs or more throughout the state. Information is gathered from published articles, government documents, private- and

public-sector news releases, and reports from local Workforce Connection offices. A shortened version is included in the Labor Market Review.

New Mexico Healthcare Workforce Committee 2023 Annual Report

NMDWS staff from ER&A contributed to this annual report, published in October 2023, which focused on a demand analysis for select healthcare professionals. The data used were 2022–2032 long-term projections; employment and wages; and the number of advertised job openings made available from WCOS.

Additional Reports

- 2024 State of the Workforce Report
- New Mexico Data Focus: Union Membership
- Highlights from the New Mexico 2023 State of the Workforce
- Tribal Population and Employment Status Data
- Job Creation at New Establishments in New Mexico
- Highlights from the 2023 Veterans Profile
- New Mexico Data Focus:
    - Youth
    - Child Care
    - Multiple Jobholding Rate
    - Seniors (65 years and Older)
    - (2023) Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey
    - (2024) Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey
    - Union Membership
    - 2023 Employment and Unemployment for New Mexico's Municipalities
- Revised Employment Growth After the 2023 Benchmark Review
- New Mexico's Alternative Measures of Labor Underutilization
- New Mexico Exports and Jobs Supported

- The Gender Wage Gap
- Tribal Population and Employment Data
- New Mexico Occupational Employment and Wages Statistics (OEWS) 2023 at a Glance
- 2022–2032 Occupational Employment Projections
- Industry Spotlight: Retail Trade

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

The State did not have any waivers during PY22.

Strategies

Not applicable.

Impact on Performance

Not applicable.

Success Stories

Adult Participant from the Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board

Soriah Martinez, 20-year-old, came into the Raton Workforce Connection Center to inquire about job training. WIOA Community Support Advocate (CSA), Joshua, met with her to explain the eligibility and enrollment process, then spoke about a plan to address her needs once qualified for WIOA services. Since completing High School, she worked various part-time jobs including as a barista at a local coffee shop and making dough for a pizza restaurant. Soriah shared that she was looking to find work experience training in an office setting as she was starting to think more about her future and long-term job potential.

After she was determined to be eligible, she was enrolled and provided a Transitional Jobs Training (TJT) activity. Soriah was placed at The Center for Community Innovation where she would learn skills as an office clerk for their Hi-Set program and Skill Sharp program. During her training, site supervisor Bianca Patterson noticed that Soriah had done murals, art, music, and other creative elements in High School and throughout her life. Bianca mentioned to Soriah that there was an opening at The Center for Community Innovation to oversee the tourism for Colfax County which would include taking pictures, posting on social media, and keeping up with events.

Through this potential and her past experiences, she was able to take Skill Soft classes to get certified in web design, adobe photoshop, and graphic design. Soriah was assisted by the Center for Community Innovation to create her portfolio. Since then, she has been offered to continue her training and has started an OJT activity on April 16th, she is now earning $14 an hour while receiving additional training. Soriah is performing well as she trains and is on the path to finding full-time employment.

Dislocated Worker Participant from the Eastern Area Local Workforce Development Board

Armando's journey is the true definition of commitment and desire to improve someone's own life, showcasing how individuals can overcome challenges and reinvent themselves, even at the age of 61. After finding himself unemployed following a brief stint as a supervisor at a local car wash, Armando was at a crossroads. Having relocated to Alamogordo from California to care for his mother-in-law, Armando and his wife found solace in the serene and tranquil lifestyle of the area, with its proximity to the mountains and its favorable weather.

Despite his varied work experiences in construction and customer service, Armando felt unfulfilled, viewing his past jobs as a mere means of earning a paycheck. With his children grown and gone, he yearned for a more meaningful career. Encouraged by his brother, a truck driver, Armando saw an opportunity in obtaining his Commercial Driver's License (CDL), envisioning a future where they could drive together or even start their own trucking company.

However, navigating the process of obtaining his CDL seemed daunting, especially while unemployed. It was not until December 2023 that he attended a reemployment services meeting (RESEA) after filing for UI, that Armando learned about the services offered by WIOA and the Alamogordo Workforce Connection Center. Upon discovering the CDL program at Mountain View Vocational Institute (MVVI), he seized the opportunity and sought guidance from his career coach on what steps he needed to take to pursue this CDL training opportunity.

With determination, Armando embarked on his journey to obtain his CDL. Despite facing challenges, including transportation costs to attend classes in El Paso, he remained steadfast. With the support of WIOA, Armando successfully completed the program on February 29, 2024, obtaining his Certificate of Completion and passing his road test. Armando's hard work paid off when he secured employment as a Concrete Truck Driver with a local concrete company on March 25, 2024, earning $19.60 an hour. Armando's story exemplifies the success of programs like WIOA, demonstrating how individuals can leverage available resources to overcome adversity, pursue their passions, and achieve their goals. Through perseverance and determination, Armando has not only secured employment but has also regained his sense of self-worth and confidence, paving the way for a brighter future.

In-School Youth Participant from the Southwest Area Local Workforce Development Board

Ms. Apachito is the Senior Class President and Student Council President at Alamo High School at the Alamo Navajo Reservation in Socorro County. While visiting the school counselor to discuss her future, Ms. Apachito shared that she is interested in a career in the military and took the ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery). She said that if she

scores well enough, she wants to enlist in the Army for a healthcare career. The school counselor told Ms. Apachito about the benefits of the Youth Services program, and she enrolled.

Ms. Apachito's extracurricular activities include volleyball, basketball, track, and cross-country sports. Teachers have complimented her on her work ethic and communication skills when working with other students. Ms. Apachito earned $1,584 in incentives for completing various Youth Services program activities.

> "I am very thankful to have had the opportunity to participate in the WIOA program. Being in the program has taught me responsibility, time management, communication skills, and the importance of what it's like to have a job. I want to thank everyone for giving me the chance to be able to participate in this program and for all the encouragement I have received."

Out-of-School Youth Participant from the Central Region Workforce Development Board

20-year-old Isaac enrolled in the WIOA Youth program as a high school dropout in December of 2020. He was encouraged to enroll in an HSE program prior to receiving additional program elements to help support Isaac's overall employability and success. Isaac successfully completed BEST Training and Financial Literacy and was placed at Multi Services Construction as General Laborer in January 2021.

During the course of his employment, Isaac was trained by the business owner, Mike Navarro, in the following trades: electrical, plumbing, heating, roofing, concrete, remodeling, flooring and general construction.

> "Isaac learned the basics from the bottom on up on how to build a home. He was an eager and quick learner. He never complained when asked to do a chore and was always on time for work. I honestly feel that he will someday have his own construction business." Stated Mr. Navarro.

In February 2022, Isaac Coronado earned his High School Equivalency. This was a proud moment and achievement for this young man. He knew it would open doors for his advancement in his field. During his involvement with WIOA, he earned a credential, incentives, supportive services, and work experience. Isaac completed 450 hours of work experience in May 2021. He was then retained by his WIOA job site with a pay raise.

Currently, Isaac is a student at Central New Mexico Community College majoring in Computer Science. "I eventually want to be a civil engineer. I may eventually return to construction in a different avenue." He is also employed part time by FedEx at the Albuquerque International Airport and states, "I personally want to thank the WIOA Youth program and Youth Development Inc., for guiding me in my life. I needed that support and platform at that time in my life. I will forever be grateful."

Adult/Culinary Arts Training Program

Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board's (NALWDB) partnership with New Mexico Corrections Department, for the implementation of WIOA-supported vocational programming has not only impacted our prisoner population, but it has also brought joy and excitement to prison Wardens and staff.

Chef Ruiz discovered his passion for cooking behind bars. Twenty-five years later, Ruiz wants to help build confidence in others who have been incarcerated. The New Mexico Correctional Facility has partnered with NALWDB to train nine incarcerated individuals with a four-week culinary course, using a curriculum developed over the last year.

The Northern Board, Department of Workforce Solutions and Service Provider of the Northern Board had the opportunity to meet these individuals and discuss the opportunity that has been given to them and their future upon release of New Mexico Santa Fe Penitentiary.

New York

New York State Department of Labor

Use of State Funds

Under-served Populations

Low-Income Adults

As required in WIOA, low-income adults are given priority for career and training services in Career Centers. WDS TA #23-01: Serving Priority Populations and Priority of Service under the WIOA Title I Adult program, was issued in PY22, as well as multiple training opportunities for staff statewide on this topic.

Individuals who have Basic Skills Deficient

Local areas have started to use simplified, valid, and reliable assessments to determine basic skills deficiency (BSD) of individuals for eligibility purposes, instead of using rigorous National Reporting System-approved tests. This allows providers to offer tests that are relevant to the customers' needs and capacity, while ensuring enrollment for eligible youth. Should Education Functioning Level (EFL) or grade-level equivalent be needed during service provision or outcome documentation, local areas will work with existing education-focused partners to support the assessments and education of BSD individuals.

Individuals with Disabilities

On April 1, 2024, NYSDOL was awarded a $2.01 million Equitable Transition Model (ETM) Demonstration Grant by DOL's Office of Disability Employment Policy. Subsequently, on October 16, 2024, NYSDOL was awarded an additional $750,741 in incremental funding for the first year of this program. Under the NY ETM, NYSDOL has partnered with OMH, NYSED/ACCES-VR, San Diego State University, and the Capital Region, Columbia-Greene, Hempstead-Long Beach, and Monroe LWDBs to serve approximately 675 youth and young adults with disabilities, with a focus on multiply marginalized populations (e.g., foster care, justice-involved individuals, and those with low literacy). The grant has a five-year period of performance, in which NYSDOL is expected to receive approximately $17.4 million. The NY ETM Model features two key project staff including Youth Access Coordinators, who will serve the youth and young adults as well as their families; and Outreach and Engagement Specialists, who will work within workforce systems to recruit participants, as well as with partners and key stakeholders to support and serve participants.

On October 21, 2021, NYS Governor Kathy Hochul announced NY SCION to expand the already successful network of Disability Resource Coordinators (DRCs) to all 33 LWDAs to increase the capacity of their service delivery and better serve individuals with disabilities. NY SCION aims to improve education, training, and employment opportunities and outcomes for youth and adults with disabilities, including those receiving Social Security disability benefits. On May 10, 2024, OMH signed a partnership MOU with NYSDOL, committing to provide $1 million annually to support NY SCION. This partnership was further formalized into policy per WDS TA#21-06.2: Revised guidance for implementation of the New York Systems Change and Inclusive Opportunities

Network (NY SCION) Program. To date, there are 27 DRCs covering 48 counties in NYS. As of December 2023, 2,364 customers with disabilities have been served directly by the DRCs; 11,185 customers with disabilities have been served through NYS Career Centers; and 4,300 customers with disabilities have entered unsubsidized employment.

As of 2020, all NYS Career Centers were equipped with a range of assistive technology that includes text scanning and reading software for individuals who are blind or low-vision, adaptive computer systems and hardware, and accessible workstations. This technology was updated at the end of PY23, with funding from the CAREER Grant, to ensure customers can use the most up-to-date vision software.

Long-Term Unemployed (LTU)

NYSDOL Business Services staff outreach to businesses with job opportunities that align with targeted LTU customers. The purpose of this outreach is to build relationships with area businesses and increase the number of employment leads for customers, as well as customize recruitments and targeted career fairs, and create multiple opportunities to connect qualified candidates with businesses.

Justice-Involved Individuals

NYSDOL administers DOL's Federal Bonding Program (FBP) in NYS to provide fidelity bonding to businesses that hire individuals who meet one of the eight eligibility criteria of the program. Fidelity bonding protects businesses from losses such as theft, larceny, or embezzlement due to employee dishonesty. Businesses receive these fidelity bonds free-of-charge as an incentive to hire applicants with barriers to employment. Bonding coverage begins at a default amount of $5,000 and increases by increments of $5,000 to a maximum of $25,000, depending on the amount of coverage the employer would like to have. Fidelity coverage is free and lasts for six months. In most situations, the coverage can be renewed with the business for an additional six months at no charge. During the period of July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024, NYSDOL issued bonds to nine businesses for a total of $115,000 in coverage.

NYSDOL has designated Local Bonding Coordinators (LBCs) in almost every NYSDOL Career Center in the state. A current list of all LBCs is found on the NYSDOL's Federal Bonding Program web page. The NYS Bonding Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that all new bonding coordinators receive training and that the website reflects personnel changes.

Under the Work for Success Program, NYSDOL developed a pilot program for implementation, working in conjunction with local Career Centers in pilot locations and the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) to promote and increase the employment of formerly incarcerated individuals. Career Centers provide liaisons for the program, known as Reentry Employment Specialists, who assist jobseekers in overcoming barriers to employment due to incarceration, as well as matching formerly incarcerated individuals to job openings. RBSTs are working to educate businesses about available hiring incentives and providing job development services. As a result of staff outreach, 6,168 businesses employed eligible candidates, with 14,484 jobs being held by program participants in PY23.

On September 9, 2023, NYSDOL received a $4.1 million PROWD award via a cooperative agreement between the DOL-ETA and the United States Department of Justice's (DOJ) Bureau of Prisons (BOP). Under PROWD, NYSDOL will serve 400 adults in

the care and custody of the DOJ-BOP, as well as after their release. Under this project, NYSDOL has chosen to partner with Roots of Success, a national not-for-profit that provides green energy apprenticeship/pre-apprenticeship training to adults in custody. This grant has a four-year period of performance in which NYSDOL is expecting to receive a total of $10 million.

Displaced Homemakers

NYSDOL administers the NYS Displaced Homemaker program, which is funded with $1.62 million in non-federal, state funds. In 2023, NYSDOL issued funding to ten organizations in Albany, Bronx, Brooklyn, Nassau, Oneida, Schenectady, Schoharie, Suffolk, Tompkins, and Westchester counties. Additionally, under WIOA, displaced homemakers are considered DWs. This makes them eligible for all WIOA DW services, including but not limited to, career pathway development and counseling; help applying for jobs with interview preparation, résumé, and cover letter writing; job search strategies, readiness, and referrals; career and computer workshops; information about training and educational services; and referrals to supportive services to address needs such as childcare, medical, housing, transportation, and financial literacy. In total, 431 Displaced Homemakers were served during PY 2023.

At-Risk and Priority

Youth and Young Adults in Foster Care (FC), have run away or experienced homelessness (RHY), and who also may have some type of juvenile justice involvement—NYSDOL continues to partner with required WIOA agencies to improve the transition to employment and training for FC, RHY, low income, and those youth with other barriers to employment to create lasting systems-change through collaboration efforts (i.e., ETM and NY SCION).

Integrated Service Delivery

No information provided for this section.

Yes WIOA Can

OSY

The State continues to build the capacity of local areas to help retain OSY. The NYSDOL Youth Unit continues to host a monthly “Bring Your Own Questions” call to address WIOA Youth program providers’ immediate data entry, policy, program, and practice questions. During these calls providers also get to network and learn from each other’s best practices for recruitment of OSY. In addition, they developed a self-paced “Title 1 Youth Program Basics Training Series” in 2023, comprised of nine separate videos with companion resources and further learning opportunities to onboard new WIOA Youth staff at the local level or provide easy access to refresher training for experienced staff. Along with one-on-one and group online technical assistance, NYSDOL’s Youth Unit has started to meet virtually with LWDB Youth programs to support local staff efforts with OSY and offer a training catalog designed to further the knowledge of staff and administrators as appropriate. Statewide partnerships will be forged for continued collaboration with the LWDBs and entities that serve youth with multiple barriers to employment, including those living in areas affected by gun violence NYSDOL’s Workforce Development Training (WDT) Programs.

Technical Assistance Needs of the NYS Workforce System

NYSDOL continues to provide training and capacity-building activities and technical assistance to NYS's workforce development and Career Center System. Training opportunities are provided to all levels of workforce professionals, from NYS and LWDB members to front-line staff, program providers, partners, and stakeholders. Capacity-building activities will continue to be delivered through a variety of methods, including participatory and skill-building training, site visits, individualized coaching, monitoring, and WIOA Interagency partner meetings.

Training needs throughout the State are regularly assessed through continuous communication, analysis of performance data, and the work of the TAAG, referral, and other workgroups. Trainings are developed based on the identified need. In August 2023, NYSDOL and local WIOA Title I and III leaders launched the Workforce Synergy Forum, a monthly peer-learning focused space to strategize and operationalize successful practices. The NYSDOL Programs and Tools for Workforce Professionals web page includes recordings and resources developed through the 14 Workforce Synergy Forums, along with guides, training supplements for a multitude of programs, appropriate data entry practices, and fact sheets.

Other State Funds Activities

Not applicable.

Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

No information provided for this section.

Continuous Improvement

No information provided for this section.

Reports

NYSDOL produces several weekly, quarterly, and monthly reports designed to evaluate the programs, initiatives, and solicitations implemented under WIOA Titles I and III in the state.

NYSDOL responds to a substantial volume of LWDB reporting requests on a quarterly, monthly, and *ad-hoc* basis. Reports provided include aggregate and individual reporting on performance, cohort demographics and characteristics, services, and outcomes to assist local areas with developing more effective service strategies.

NYSDOL also actively operates several federally funded grants. Programmatic narrative reports are submitted on a quarterly basis describing project activities related to grant goals and objectives. NYSDOL leadership also receives narrative reports on

state-level projects. The federal grants and state-level projects, as well as the information submitted in the reports, include, but are not limited to:

- The New York Partnerships for Reentry Opportunities in Workforce Development (NY PROWD) – Quarterly reports include a summary of grant activities; progress toward grant goals; development and implementation of effective practices and program model strategies; matched/leveraged resources; strategic partnerships; employer engagement; key issues and technical assistance needs; significant activities, accomplishments, and success stories; and evidence and evaluation.
- New York Systems Change and Inclusive Opportunities Network (NY SCION) – Quarterly reports include a summary of grant progress including participants served; business engagement activities; challenges and successes; total grant allocations; and accrued expenditures;
- QUEST Disaster Recovery DWG – Quarterly reports include a summary of grant progress including total expenditures; challenges and concerns; key issues and technical assistance needs; and significant activities, accomplishments, and success stories. Internal bi-weekly reports are also compiled by NYSDOL staff and reviewed to track grant progress;
- JVSG – The report includes information about outlays, expenditures, and obligations related to the budget; staffing expenses; performance goals and outcomes; the individualized career services rate for JVSG staff; services to non-veterans rate; staffing changes and vacancy information; and best practices for the Hire a Veteran Medallion Program;
- NYSDOL TRP – Quarterly and annual reports are submitted to ESD. These reports include accomplishments or successes; challenges impacting the program; and participant data for enrollment and completion of the program.
- RESEA – This quarterly report includes a summary of how many customers were scheduled for and completed mandatory reemployment services meetings with Career Center staff in comparison to the annually projected goals; and
- Education Stabilization Fund - Reimagine Workforce Preparation (ESF-RWP) U.S. Department of Education Grant – This quarterly report includes a narrative of short-term trainings that are being offered to participants, impactful supportive services, and credentials earned. In addition to the narrative quarterly report, ESF-RWP State partners also submit participant data information every quarter that includes the total number of enrolled participants, total number of participants who completed training, credentials earned, and income second quarter after exit.

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

Waiver of the Requirement to Expend 75 Percent of Governor's Reserve and Local Formula Youth Funds on Out-of-School Youth (OSY).

In PY23, the State received approval for a DOL waiver to support workforce development: Waiver associated with the requirement at WIOA Section 129(a)(4)(A) and 20 CFR 681.410 that the State and local areas expend 75 percent of Governor's Reserve and local formula youth funds on OSY.

Strategies

This waiver was further extended through the duration of PY23 and allowed the State to lower the expenditure requirement for both Governor's Reserve and local funds to 50 percent for OSY. This waiver addresses an increase in local need to provide targeted programs for ISY services and allows LWDBs to invest in preventative strategies and address the myriads of current needs within the ISY population.

The waiver allows NYSDOL the ability to focus more State-level and local formula youth funds on the provision of services to ISY and focus on the following outcomes:

- Increased attainment of MSG, especially educational credentials such as high school diplomas;
- Decreased high school dropout rates;
- Increased participation in occupational skills training and work experience opportunities;
- Increased industry-recognized credential gains;
- The expansion of program outreach to middle school students to plant the seeds for career success; and
- Increased collaboration with partners to align workforce programs and promote trades, both generally and for women in trades.

Impact on Performance

This waiver had a positive impact on the State and local area performance outcomes. NYS achieved 119.6 percent (61%) of its PY23 Youth MSG goal of 51 percent, with 2,737 positive outcomes. Likewise, NYS achieved 104.9 percent (57.7%) of its PY23 Youth Credential Attainment of 55 percent, with 1,497 positive outcomes.

In addition to improvements in the state and local area performance outcomes, Statewide ISY enrollments increased with the waiver, totaling 3,700 in PY21; 2,523 in PY22; and 2,746 in PY23.

Success Stories

No information provided for this section.

North Carolina

North Carolina Department of Commerce, Division of Workforce Solutions

Use of State Funds

In June 2023, Governor Cooper announced two, two-year NCWorks Local Innovation implementation grants as part of the NC Job Ready initiative. These awardees (listed below) are innovative collaboratives of LWDBs and other local partners, working to enhance educational attainment and workforce readiness.

DWS continues to partner with the North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) to provide financial support to implement initiatives resulting in improved services to veterans and to employers supporting veterans. As part of the North Carolina for Military Employment (NC4ME) initiative, DWS conducts ten NC4ME Hiring Events across the state throughout the year (often adapted to a virtual format after the pandemic began). These events entail veteran jobseeker résumé and interview preparation, jobseeker skill set matching employer needs, and on-site interviews during the hiring event. A supporting effort of this initiative is formal training for employer Human Resources Directors on interpreting/cross-walking service member skills into civilian parlance, and on the benefit of hiring veterans. DWS also partners with DMVA to publish the North Carolina Veterans Resource Guide as an all-encompassing reference for veterans and employers.

Aligned with Governor Cooper's NC Job Ready initiative and through the utilization of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding, in PY23, DWS worked with LWDBs to implement grants for Reentry/Justice-Involved initiatives, Substance Use Disorder initiatives and Work-Based Learning initiatives. These grants are ongoing through December 2026. Initial successes for these grants include:

- As of June 2024, eight LWDBs have effectively provided supportive services to 226 individuals previously involved in the justice system and 320 individuals grappling with substance use disorders.
- Through June 2024, 11 LWDBs have served 197 unique small businesses by providing funding for over 500 individuals to participate in work-based learning activities.

Through ARPA funds, DWS entered a partnership with the NC Department of Adult Correction to expand services to those reentering after incarceration. DWS awarded grants to three LWDBs to create Local Reentry Councils. Additionally, funding was made available for DAC to ensure all local reentry councils had access to Naloxone to provide to those reentering while also navigating substance use disorders.

Under-served Populations

Building Hope - Preparing Gender Minorities for Careers in Construction (Chatham, Orange and Wake counties)

A $225,000 grant will help address both a critical need for workers in the construction industry and gender pay disparities by increasing the number of women trained in various skilled trades. A Chapel Hill-based non-profit organization, Hope Renovations, provides pre-apprenticeship training in construction trades, case management to help resolve employment barriers like childcare,

internships and additional coaching services to help women succeed on the job. This grant will allow Hope Renovations to expand services beyond Orange County and support the training of approximately 40 participants. Partners include Capital Area Workforce Development Board, Hope Renovations and Wake Technical Community College.

Integrated Service Delivery

DWS is also continuing its support of local area economic development and workforce efforts by continuing to fund work-based learning and focused employer services. Additionally, the Governor's Reserve is resourcing NCWorks Commission Local Innovation Grants, Reentry-focused supportive services, major economic development project support and assisting local areas with county transfers as part of the State's workforce alignment initiative.

Yes WIOA Can

DWS is also supporting local workforce efforts by investing in Future Works performance data tracking, the state apprenticeship program, the NCcareers.org platform for career awareness (particularly engaging K–12 students), and training both front-line staff and leaders through the NCWorks Training Center, managed by DWS.

OPT-IN and Jobs, Education, and Training (J.E.T.) - Creating Opportunities for Opportunity Youth (Burke County)

A $225,000 grant will support "opportunity youth" (those who are currently neither in the labor force nor in school) and help meet Burke County's workforce needs by expanding the "OPT-IN" (Opportunity Internship) program and launching the J.E.T. program. OPT-IN serves recent high school graduates by matching them with local employers for an eight-week, paid exploratory internship. Participants also receive mentoring and professional development classes. Similarly, J.E.T. can serve any opportunity for youth between the ages of 18–24, connecting them to local companies offering family-sustaining wages, while providing mentoring and professional development. Both programs will focus on outreach on communities of color. Partners include Western Piedmont Workforce Development Board, The Industrial Commons and its affiliate program "Work in Burke," Burke Development, Inc., Western Piedmont Community College, Burke County Public Schools, NCWorks Career Center – Burke County, N.C. Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and Meridian Specialty Yarn Group, Inc.

Other State Funds Activities

Not applicable.

Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

Employer Needs Survey

Every two years, the NCWorks Commission partners with the NC Commerce Labor and Economic Analysis Division (LEAD) to gather and use relevant data to inform strategies that enable North Carolina's workforce and businesses to compete in a global economy.

The 2024 Employer Needs Survey provides vital insights into the workforce challenges faced by employers and identifies strategies to bridge talent gaps. This year's survey findings reveal a labor market that has improved since the previous study in 2022 but one that still faces considerable tightness. While fewer employers (62%) reported difficulties filling open positions compared to 2022 (81%), a lack of job applicants and deficiencies in employability skills such as work ethic, motivation, and reliability remained top reasons for hiring challenges.

To attract and retain talent, the majority of employers increased wages, offered more flexible schedules, and expanded training opportunities. However, many continue to face barriers in attracting job applicants, stemming, they report, from insufficient access to childcare and reliable transportation for potential workers. Looking ahead, one out of five employers plans to adopt automation technologies over the next two years, which could further disrupt workforce needs.

Continuous Improvement

No information provided for this section.

Reports

2024 Employer Needs Survey

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

For PY22, PY23, and PY24, the State received approval from DOL-ETA to waive the requirement at WIOA Section 129(a)(4)(A) and 20 CFR 681.410 that the State and local areas expend 75 percent of Governor's Reserve youth funds and local formula youth funds on out-of-school youth (OSY).

Strategies

The waiver allows the State to lower the expenditure requirement to 50 percent for OSY.

Impact on Performance

No information provided for this section.

Success Stories

Jason - Adult

In October 2023, Walker visited the NCWorks Career Center – Watauga County to discuss employment services, sharing that his own experience in recovery had given him a passion to help others facing similar challenges. He expressed interest in becoming a Peer Support Specialist. NCWorks enrolled Walker in a workbased learning opportunity that allowed him to gain experience at High Country Community Health (HCCH). Walker also received transportation assistance from the NCWorks Substance Use Disorder Recovery Grant, which the North Carolina Division of Workforce Solutions had awarded to High Country Workforce Development Board with funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Walker completed his Peer Support Specialist Certification training in December 2023 and immediately contacted his NCWorks career advisors and thanked them for helping him meet one of his major goals. Next, Walker intends to become a Licensed Clinical Addictions Specialist, and eventually start his own peer support agency and make an even bigger impact in his community

Lyric - Young Adult

Brown has excelled as a high school student while also completing a community college degree, participating in community service projects, serving as senior class president at school, playing multiple sports and working at a part-time job at a local supermarket. Through the Career and College Promise program at Gaston College, Brown earned credits that transferred to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where she is now a freshman. She also earned a certificate in Foundations of Biotechnology at Gaston College. Her aspirations are to complete a Doctor of Physical Therapy Degree, become a physical therapist, and to own her own business as a strength and conditioning coach. As a student-athlete, she has been a physical therapy patient and feels confident this is a career she wants to pursue. She has also job-shadowed physical therapist assistants and achieved health sciences certifications through Central Piedmont Community College.

Sarah - Youth

Even before she had graduated from high school, Campo has already made a mark in the workforce as a senior park associate with Union County Parks and Recreation, and as a local volunteer. She has demonstrated exceptional commitment and leadership, showcasing her passion for community service and environmental conservation. Campo has served on the City of Monroe’s Youth Council and participated in a downtown beautification project, in which the Youth Council helped create an art bridge installation. She has gained workforce experience by volunteering with Mission Monroe’s Scattered Site Rehab Program in the summer of 2023. She recruited other teens and participated in work on the rehabilitation of a house to benefit homeless children. Campo is on target to complete her high school education a year early, and through the Career and College Promise program at South Piedmont Community College, she has started working toward an associate degree in Engineering.

North Dakota

Job Service North Dakota (JSND)

Use of State Funds

Under-served Populations

No information provided for this section.

Integrated Service Delivery

No information provided for this section.

Yes WIOA Can

Statewide funding is essential for the operation of federal programs JSND offers and for continued workforce development in the state. This funding is utilized for the North Dakota Workforce Development Council, One-Stop certification and monitoring, maintenance and development costs related to the Virtual One-Stop management information system, and continued work on the ETPL.

Statewide funds were used to continue to fund the ETPL and Document Imaging modules from the vendor, Geographic Solutions. This has enhanced the efficiency and accuracy of the ETPL and ties into the case management and labor exchange system allowing direct reporting into the PIRL.

Statewide funds were also used to promote a virtual job fair highlighting high-wage/high-demand careers in the state. The promotion centered around recruitment for out-of-state jobseekers based on data identified from the Virtual One-Stop System. The State had jobseekers from 23 states and 20 different countries attend this virtual event. The total jobseeker count was over 650 individuals with 76 employees participating. Additionally, statewide funds were used to contract with Easy Virtual Fair that provides a virtual platform to conduct job fairs.

JSND purchased three virtual career headsets, and the software aligned with these devices. These headsets are used in DOCR facilities, area schools, and colleges to promote 79 high-wage/high-demand occupations across the state.

Lastly, statewide funds were used to purchase the Big Interview/Foreign Language modules that are compatible with the Geographic Solutions Virtual One-Stop System.

Through the activities supported by these funds, the State’s One-Stop Delivery System provides high-quality, outcome-focused workforce development services consistent with the State’s four-year plan, while tracking progress toward meeting strategic goals and implementing the Governor’s vision for the State’s workforce system.

Other State Funds Activities

Not applicable.

Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

Job Placement Pilot Program (JP3) Evaluation

The primary aim of the JP3 evaluation, a joint effort between JSND and the North Dakota Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (NDDOCR), is to provide supportive services to individuals re-entering the community after incarceration to help them obtain and retain employment.

Referral criteria for enrollment into JP3 includes:

- Must be within 90 days of release (or already released)
- Must have attended Career Readiness classes or Career Readiness Workshops
- Must have identification documents to satisfy I-9 employment verification requirements
- Must be being released to one of two service areas piloting the program:
    - Bismarck/Mandan metro area
    - Fargo-Moorhead metro area

The categories of supportive services that JP3 can provide to an individual are Transportation, Housing/Shelter, Medical, and Other (which includes items such as clothing required for employment, haircuts or clothing for interviews, phone cards, fees for educational testing or licensure, etc.).

To examine the program's effectiveness and inform possible future permanent versions of this pilot, the use of support services was examined in relation to successful or unsuccessful completion of the program for PY23. The category and amount of support services spent on each individual, stratified by their exit disposition (Successful or Unsuccessful) is the primary focus of this report.

Basic demographic information was also collected, including age, gender, race/ethnicity, etc., along with specialized information pertinent to the JP3 participants, such as length of most recent incarceration, first time incarceration, and restrictions on employment due to specific conviction type. Self-identified barriers were also collected upon enrollment to the program, including Homelessness and Lack of Access to a Motor Vehicle.

There were 40 total participants who exited the program in PY23: 15 successfully, and 25 unsuccessfully. As a successful exit requires six months of continual employment, while a participant may exit unsuccessfully at any time, the State expects the margin between the two categories to decrease as the program continues into PY24.

The following are detailed descriptions of each exit type:

- Successful: Successfully completed six or more months of continuous employment.
- Unsuccessful – Fled: Fled a re-entry housing center while on a work-release type of placement.
- Unsuccessful – Noncompliance: Noncompliance with any term of participation in the program, including but not limited to no-call/no-show's to appointments, not providing requested employment information to case managers, becoming combative with case managers, etc.
- Unsuccessful – Reincarceration: Became reincarcerated while participating in program.
- Unsuccessful – Relocated: Relocated outside the service area for this program

Conclusion

44 percent of women who exited in PY23 exited successfully, versus 35 percent of men who exited.

A higher percentage of participants in their 30's (47%) and 60's (100%) exited successfully versus the other age groups.

The effect of pre-existing barriers on successful completion of the program is unclear. For example, for participants who had been incarcerated multiple times, they exhibited a close percentage for successful completion (35%) as unsuccessful due to noncompliance (29%).

Length of most recent incarceration also had limited value for reporting as numbers were scattered across types of exits.

More dollars were spent on housing per person for successful participants ($317.27/person) than unsuccessful ($284.74/person), as well as dollars in the "Other" category ($445.86/person for successful and $95.64/person for unsuccessful). This may suggest that an emphasis on housing and procuring work clothes and tools for work (which are both under the "Other" category) would be beneficial for helping participants complete the program successfully.

Noncompliance was the type of unsuccessful exit that had the most participants and expenditures compared to any other type of unsuccessful exit. For future program direction, a focus should be made on suitability of referral, such as vetting the career goals of potential participants, as well as assessing behavioral records while incarcerated.

Continuous Improvement

No information provided for this section.

Reports

No information provided for this section.

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

The State did not have any waivers in place for PY23.

Strategies

Not applicable.

Impact on Performance

Not applicable.

Success Stories

Brandy, WIOA Adult

Brandy, a WIOA Adult participant, wrote a review of her CDL course at the local college once she completed the course, and included a thank you to Job Service:

> "Lastly, I want to extend my deepest gratitude to Trent of North Dakota Job Service. Trent was the unsung hero who made it possible for me to attend CDL School in the first place. He advocated on my behalf and secured funding for my CDL course through the WIOA program. For those who dream of obtaining their CDL but are deterred by the cost, I want to emphasize don't let financial concerns hold you back. The…program [is] designed to help candidates acquire the skills they need to increase their earning potential. Trent is the go-to person who can help make this dream a reality. Trent, you truly rock. Your dedication to helping people like me access career-changing opportunities is commendable. Thanks to you, the seemingly insurmountable obstacle of course fees became a non-issue, allowing me to focus entirely on my training. To anyone considering pursuing their CDL but worried about the financial aspect, I strongly encourage you to reach out to Trent at North Dakota Job Service. His expertise in navigating the WIOA program can be the key to unlocking your future in the trucking industry."

Faizah, Adult-WIOA

Faizah is a New American that came to us at the beginning of 2023 stating that she was halfway through her Nursing program at the University of Mary and ran out of financial aid to help her finish. She had her B.S. in Human Biology from the University of Cape Coast in Ghana, but her studies in that country were very different from the U.S., so she had to re-train. She was eligible for

WIOA and WIOA helped her through her last three semesters of her Nursing degree. Faizah graduated with her BS in Nursing in February of 2024, and in March she started her new full-time career as an RN. She started her career at $33.25 an hour with full benefits. During a follow up call to her, she said she is so happy with her new employment and very excited about her future as a nurse.

Meredith, WIOA-Adult

Another participant wrote an open letter to thank her advisor at Job Service and encourage others to seek out resources through WIOA:

> "Hello! To anyone that this may assist, getting help from Job Service has been like a dream. WIOA is an amazing program and without the help, I would not be where I am today. Without the help of Job Service, specifically my advisor, who helped me out and put much time and effort into making sure I knew what to do...No matter how difficult or how much paperwork there was to do, my advisor always made sure I was in the loop, on top of things, and tried to make it as easy as possible for me. She also made sure I knew the resources that were available to me. If it had not been for Job Service and my advisor, I would not be working as an LPN today. In the beginning, asking for help was a bit of a struggle. No one wants to admit that they need help, much less want to admit that they need help with money or financials. But after getting through the obstacle of asking for help, it became apparent that my dreams, hopes, aspirations, and the overall lifestyle I live now, would not be what it is today without that assistance. I would have had to take loans out, spend more time working, less time studying, and overall struggling with day-to-day issues. It would have made going to classes and school much harder. In the end, Job Service made sure that the immense cost concern that comes with post-secondary education was mainly covered putting me at ease. I truly appreciate all that Job Service, the WIOA program, and my advisor have done. If you or anyone you know is having a hard time with paying for post-secondary education, the WIOA program at Job Service might be an option for you! Take it into consideration and don't forget, asking for help is okay!!!"

Sharyn, WIOA-Adult

WIOA has given many opportunities for people to change their lives and one of them is Sharyn. Upon the first meeting with Sharyn, her determination to complete her CDL was obvious. She grew up riding in her fathers' truck, so she had the support of her father and some knowledge of the career. She was eligible as a WIOA Adult, and she was looking forward to this career as a CDL driver. She researched companies she wanted to work for during her training. Following the completion of training, Kayla was hired by a trucking company where she earns a percentage of her loads. In the past four months, her average salary has been $5,700 per month. Sharyn is not only a success but also someone to admire in a non-traditional occupation for a female. Sharyn is a very hard-working person and now has the job and financial stability.

Sharyn also added her personal thank you:

> "I can't thank Job Service of ND enough! The WIOA program has truly changed my life. I have been struggling for years to work my way up the ladder at the various jobs I've held, and I couldn't ever get to a place where I could comfortably afford my bills. And now with the help of Job Service I have more than DOUBLED my income. I never thought I would get to this point in my life where I didn't have to worry about how I was going to pay my bills. I'm so incredibly thankful for this opportunity. I couldn't have done it without the help of my Case Manager, Kristin. She was absolutely incredible. Once I told her I wanted to get my CDL, she was there every step of the way advocating for me. After I was accepted into a CDL training program, her excellence didn't stop there. There were some issues taking place at the facility I was attending, and Kristin went out of her way to get in touch with the necessary people that were able to handle the situation. This was crucial because I didn't think I was going to be able to finish the training program with that outfit, but she made sure those issues were addressed immediately! She's just been a great advocate for the people she helps on a daily basis, and we need more people like that who will help you reach your dreams. You shouldn't have to do it alone and struggle, it takes a team! So, thank you to everyone who made this possible. I am finally able to start paying off my debt and build a better life for myself. "

Darin, Dislocated Worker

Darin came to the Bismarck One-Stop Center in September 2023 after the company he was working for laid him off. He was working for a printing company, and work was slow, so they had no choice but to lay off his position with no intention of bringing him back. This qualified Darin as a Dislocated Worker in our WIOA program, and he was committed to pivot his professional career and look at training to become a CDL driver. After Darin met with his case manager, discussing his goals and prior educations and training, it was discovered he had some past mistakes that could potentially affect his ability to become employed as a commercial driver. But Darin did not give up. He was determined to get his CDL, so he put in some extra work to prove he could be hired. He obtained two different letters from employers writing on his behalf stating that if a CDL position were to open in their company, they would hire Darin regardless of his prior barriers. This was great news for Darin as it satisfied the WIOA staff concerns with training Darin in this industry. We sent him to the training course, and he successfully attained his CDL in February 2024. He obtained a job right away with a driving company but had to wait until the North Dakota winter passed before he could start. He officially started in April as a full-time "Lowboy Heavy Haul" driver earning $23.00 per hour. A month later, he received his 30- day review, full benefits and a dollar raise. Darin is now earning $24.00 per hour and receiving full benefits, including health, dental, PTO, Sick time, etc. He is extremely happy with his new position and forever grateful for the WIOA program to give him this new opportunity in life.

Darin added his own words to the story: "[T]hank you for the kind words. I couldn't have done it without you. You and your team are amazing!!!"

Forrest, WIOA-Adult

Forrest was referred to WIOA by the Superintendent of his high school. He lived in a small rural community in North Dakota with limited employment opportunities if a person did not have some advanced schooling or training. Forrest was seeking financial assistance with the intent of pursuing an AAS degree in Cyber Security through Bismarck State College.

He was determined eligible as an OSY per recognized youth eligibility barrier in and the training request was approved by the selection committee in time to start in the fall semester. WIOA assisted Forrest with tuition, books and fees, and one time transportation assistance for a round trip to and from the training site. He successfully completed his AAS degree and graduated with a 3.175 GPA in May of 2024.

Forrest started his job search prior to graduation, reaching out to his case manager in early May. Forrest followed several job postings on the Job Service website, finding an opportunity in one of the larger cities in North Dakota, and one with the local electric cooperative in his very own community.

Forrest recently started his new position as a Security Analyst with wages at $29.80 per hour, with benefits at the local cooperative. He indicated in his email to his current case manager that he was thankful for the opportunity that WIOA provided him. He wanted to thank both his current and past case manager (who had retired during his enrollment)—he appreciated all their hard work in helping him find not only a job, but a career that he could spend the rest of his life in.

Ohio

Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS)

Use of State Funds

Under-served Populations

Employment Navigators

To assist jobseekers who have significant barriers to employment—such as justice involvement, lack of housing, and mental health and recovery issues—funds were provided to develop employment navigators to help them access support and find employment.

Child Protective Services Fellowship

Funding was provided for the Child Protective Services Fellowship, which assists 12 participating counties with the recruitment, training, and work experience for college students interested in becoming children services workers.

Columbus Promise

Funding was provided for the Columbus Promise project, which provides scholarships covering tuition and fees for Columbus City Schools graduates to attend Columbus State Community College.

Mobile Unit

Statewide funds were used to purchase a mobile unit to increase customer access to OhioMeansJobs Center services, job fairs, interviews, trainings, and other employment events.

Welcoming Workforce Initiative

WIOA funds supported the “Welcoming Workforce” initiative, which is designed to help local workforce areas overcome talent shortages through outreach to international newcomers (i.e., international students and other community members born outside the United States).

Integrated Service Delivery

No information provided for this section.

Yes WIOA Can

Support Ohio’s commitment to the EV industry

Funding was provided to create a recruitment center to hire 2,200 employees for a new lithium-ion battery plant. This included funds to develop EV training programs and to purchase equipment (e.g. charging stations) to train new electricians and auto technicians.

Electrical Training Academy

To create a three-year apprenticeship program to train workers to install low-voltage voice and data wiring for the broadband industry, funding was provided for an Electrical Training Academy.

Virtual Reality Headsets

Statewide funds were used to purchase virtual reality headsets to help students and adults explore careers and consider enrolling in certificate programs or post-secondary education.

Business Resource Network Subgrant

For the third year in a row, OWD offered the local workforce areas the opportunity to submit applications for the Business Resource Network (BRN) Subgrant. The purpose of BRN funding is to expand business services teams, business outreach, and employer engagement. This is an opportunity for local areas to get creative and engage employers in new and exciting ways.

The BRN Set-Aside was $4.5 million. All 20 local workforce areas applied. Some were approved as submitted; others were requested to be modified to ensure that all costs were allowable. OWD approved all 20 applications, allocating over $4.4 million. One local workforce area returned funding and did not participate early in the program year.

The WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker, and Rapid Response program manager oversaw the award, along with fiscal management and executive leadership. Quarterly funding review calls were held to ensure obligation requirements were met and metrics submitted. A lot of great work was done with the funding. Examples included local transportation programs for employers, career exploration, business intelligence, outreach, virtual reality, and training. As of June 21, 2024, local areas had expended $3.2 million, which was 72 percent of the total award through May 2024. Funds had a service end date of June 30, 2024, but there was a 90-day liquidation period through September 30, 2024. The expenditure rate was 95.6 percent by the end of liquidation.

Other State Funds Activities

Not applicable.

Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

Helping Ohioans Pursue Employment (HOPE) Program

In PY21, the ODJFS Office of Transformation commissioned McKinsey & Company to survey Ohioans who had recently either applied for unemployment benefits or registered on OhioMeansJobs.com. In response to survey results, Wagner-Peyser staff developed the HOPE initiative. In calendar year 2022, the department began emailing unemployment applicants extensive information about the free in-person employment services available at the State's 88 OhioMeansJobs Centers, in addition to the self-service features available at OhioMeansJobs.com.

In Calendar Year 2023, the department began a pilot of Phase II, which includes three additional touchpoints after a customer's unemployment benefit application is approved. These touchpoints include videos related to services available at OhioMeansJobs Centers, as well as a needs questionnaire. Completing the needs questionnaire allows the customer to be connected to an employment professional in an OhioMeansJobs Center within one business day. The pilot encompassed ten counties in three workforce development areas.

In the first quarter of 2024, Phase II of HOPE was implemented statewide. Since that time, more than 250,000 correspondences have been sent to unemployment claimants. These correspondences provided claimants with information related to services available at OhioMeansJobs Centers. Additionally, the letters gave customers the opportunity to request one-on-one job search assistance from a Wagner-Peyser employment professional in their area.

Since Phase II implementation, employment professionals have assisted more than 500 individuals with services related to résumés, interviewing, and labor market information. Additionally, they provide customers with information on services available through OhioMeansJobs Center partners. This includes, but is not limited to, veteran services, occupational skills training, supportive services, and services specifically designed for youth and older jobseekers.

Phase III of the HOPE initiative will allow questionnaire and survey data to be entered into the ARIES system to ensure that all services and referrals are accurately tracked and reported.

Ohio Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program (CCMEP) Statewide Evaluation

In 2023, the Ohio Workforce Association organized an evaluation of the CCMEP program, which ODJFS funded. The consulting firm ICF International was selected through a competitive bidding process to evaluate the program's performance for PY17 through PY21. This evaluation, scheduled for completion by December 2023, received an extension and was completed in spring 2024. The evaluation employs a mixed-methods approach, including both a participant outcomes study and an implementation study.

Key Components of the Evaluation:

- Implementation Study: Included state and county-level document reviews, surveys, interviews with staff, and focus groups with staff and participants. This study assessed program fidelity, identified best practices, uncovered challenges, presented expansion opportunities, and documented solutions.
- Outcome Evaluation: Examined data to identify the characteristics, types of services offered and received, and outcomes of CCMEP participants. This analysis provided insights into how well the program recruited and served young adults.

- Focus on Case Management: The evaluation examined Ohio's Coaching Case Management model, which was implemented statewide, and which over half the counties were using.
- Challenges and Limitations: The evaluation timeframe was limited to five years due to the unavailability of PY22 data, stemming from issues with the new ARIES case management system.

RESEA Program Evaluation

DOL contracted with Abt Associates to provide technical assistance and guidance to states to help them adopt a culture of evidence and align their fiscal year 2023 and fiscal year 2024 RESEA State Plans and program design with federal evaluation and evidence-based requirements. OWD's RESEA Section is responsible for managing this evaluation in Ohio. The State hopes to learn whether there are differences between unemployment claimants who:

1) received traditional RESEA services,
2) received RESEA services with enhanced workshop experiences, and
3) did not receive any RESEA services.

A randomized controlled trial was used to evaluate the effectiveness of the RESEA program, including an implementation and impact study. A 12-week pilot study was conducted from April 22, 2024, to July 12, 2024. This helped identify training needs, streamline workflows, and provide a better understanding of what data needs to be extracted for analysis. The statewide randomization of data for 30,000 unemployment claimants placed into treatment and control groups began on July 15, 2024. This initiative is expected to take 18 to 24 months. A final report will follow shortly after that. A team from OSU was serving as the evaluator.

Ohio 's RESEA Program Office meets one-on-one monthly with Abt Associates, as well as on a quarterly basis as part of a multi-state cohort to learn more about evidence-based studies and how they can benefit Ohio's RESEA program.

A workgroup was formed to develop a workshop that will be added to Ohio's RESEA delivery model and piloted soon. Members include RESEA program administrators, OSU staff, and local WIOA delivery staff and leadership. The goal of the workgroup is to help jobseekers understand the job market and undertake more impactful job searches.

Continuous Improvement

Ohio CCMEP Statewide Evaluation

Key Recommendations:

- Continuation of Case Management and Coaching Model: The evaluation showed positive feedback from both participants and staff using the model. The statewide expansion of implementation should be continued.

- Maintain Momentum: Continue focusing on relationship building, sharing best practices, and finding innovative ways to provide meaningful work experiences for youth.
- Improve Program Awareness: Increase advertising efforts using various methods such as billboards, social media, and partnerships with local organizations to enhance program visibility.
- Address Barriers: Enhance supportive services to mitigate barriers such as transportation, childcare, and housing.

This comprehensive evaluation will provide valuable insights and recommendations for enhancing the CCMEP program's effectiveness and efficiency in serving Ohio's young adults.

Reports

Ohio CCMEP Statewide Evaluation

(March 31, 2024). *Ohio Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program (CCMEP) Statewide Evaluation: Statewide Implementation and Outcomes Report*. ICF.

Key Findings:

- Service Utilization: Work experience opportunities and supportive services were the most utilized, with 64 percent and 61 percent of participants using these services, respectively. Less-used services included youth follow-up services and entrepreneurial skills training.
- Educational Outcomes: Participants still in secondary school exhibited higher graduation rates compared to those not in school. However, participants with disabilities and pregnant or parenting participants faced additional challenges in achieving educational and employment goals compared to their peers.
- Employment Outcomes: Two quarters after exit, 63 percent of participants with disabilities were employed or in school, compared to 70 percent of those without disabilities. Median wages for participants with disabilities were also lower compared to their peers without disabilities.
- Challenges: Transportation, childcare, and housing assistance were significant barriers. Additionally, the transition from a summer to a year-round employment program for youth faced resistance in some counties due to increased complexity and outcome reporting requirements.

Waivers

Ohio tracks waiver usage for reporting and evaluation purposes. Listed below are the approved waivers with supporting documentation collected from the State's database and fiscal reports. Ohio completed a comprehensive evaluation of the Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program (CCMEP) program in early 2024. This evaluation provided some additional insight regarding the success of waivers, as well as the potential need for technical assistance.

Waiver Implemented

- Waiver to allow TANF funds to count toward the 75 percent expenditure requirement for out-of-school youth (OSY) and allow the expenditure requirement to be calculated on a statewide basis
- Waiver to allow the use of individual training accounts (ITAs) for in-school youth (ISY)
- Waiver to allow TANF funds to count toward the 20 percent work experience expenditure requirement

Strategies

Waiver to Allow TANF Funds to Count Toward the 75 Percent Expenditure Requirement for OSY and Allow the Expenditure Requirement to be Calculated on a Statewide Basis

This waiver supports the implementation of Ohio's expanded youth program, CCMEP, by using both WIOA and TANF funding sources to support the unique needs of the same customer while easing administrative burdens associated with managing two federal funding streams. The large infusion of TANF dollars allows WIOA Youth dollars to have a greater impact, and it also allows more disconnected youth to be served. Additionally, by allowing the expenditure rate to be calculated statewide, the waiver gives LWDAs more flexibility to address the unique needs of participants in their communities.

To recognize the TANF dollars invested in WIOA OSY under CCMEP, ODJFS includes the amount of TANF dollars spent on co-enrolled WIOA OSY during a program year in both the numerator and denominator of the OSY rate calculation.

Waiver to Allow the Use of ITAs for ISY

The intent of individual training accounts for the WIOA OSY program is to expand training options, increase program flexibility, enhance customer choice, and reduce paperwork. Ohio desired the same benefits for the ISY program. This waiver encourages ISY to explore in-demand occupations and career pathways and to take responsibility for planning their futures. Ohio is working to achieve the following goals and programmatic outcomes:

- Improve the ability of LWDBs, youth program providers, and CCMEP lead agencies to respond quickly to the needs of ISY.
- Increase the quality of learning opportunities.
- Increase employment and training opportunities.
- Improve coordination by reducing fragmentation of service delivery.
- Improve customer choice and empower youth to make responsible career choices.
- Reduce unnecessary paperwork.
- Develop an emerging workforce of prepared candidates ready for work.

- Increase accountability.

Waiver to Allow TANF Funds to Count Toward the 20 Percent Work Experience Expenditure Requirement

The purpose of this waiver is to increase participant enrollment in work experiences by having TANF-funded, co-enrolled participants count toward the 20 percent requirement defined in 20 CFR 681.590. The waiver supports the principles of streamlining services and increasing accountability and accessibility, state and local flexibility, and ease of administration.

Both WIOA Youth and TANF expenditures will count toward the 20 percent expenditure requirement for paid or unpaid work experience for youth co-enrolled in those programs. In addition to WIOA local youth program funds spent on paid and unpaid work experiences—including wages and staff costs for developing and managing work experiences—local areas in Ohio may include TANF work experience expenditures in the calculation of the 20 percent work experience expenditure requirement.

Impact on Performance

Waiver to Allow TANF Funds to Count Toward the 75 Percent Expenditure Requirement for OSY and Allow the Expenditure Requirement to be Calculated on a Statewide Basis

Using this waiver, the OSY expenditure statewide rate for the PY22 funds was 86.9 percent, and for the PY23 funds, it was 80.9 percent. For PY23, the rate will likely increase when all the spending is complete at the end of June 2025. The number of WIOA participants co-funded with TANF dollars was 5,353, which was an increase from the previous program year (4,821 participants). Also, the overall percentage of co-funded participants increased from 25.7 percent to 27.1 percent in PY23.

Waiver to Allow the Use of ITAs for ISY

Using this waiver, the overall usage of ITAs increased over the past three years. For PY20, 841 youth ITAs, whereas in PY23, 1,344 used ITAs. The breakdown for the ISY and OSY ITAs was 157 (ISY) and 684 (OSY) for PY20, and 342 (ISY) and 1,002 (OSY) for PY23. The waiver usage led to an overall increase of 503 ITAs.

Waiver to Allow TANF Funds to Count Toward the 20 Percent Work Experience Expenditure Requirement

For PY21, Ohio’s youth programs (TANF, WIOA, and co-enrolled) had a total of 18,779 participants. Of those, 8,022 (42.7%) were enrolled in work experience programs. For PY22, Ohio’s youth programs had a total of 18,845 participants. Of those, 7,872 (41.8%) were enrolled in work experience programs. For PY23, Ohio’s youth programs had a total of 19,754 participants. Of those, 7,081 (35.8%) were enrolled in work experience programs.

The number of work experiences decreased for PY23 due to local workforce areas struggling with several challenges. These included a tight labor market that made youth less likely to be interested in subsidized employment opportunities and workforce areas needing time to adjust wages provided in work experiences.

All Three Waivers’ Indirect Effects on Performance and Various At-Risk Priority Populations Served

A review of the PY23 WIOA Youth participants identified the following:

- 9.4 percent were justice-involved;
- 8.4 percent were homeless or runaways;
- 19.8 percent had disabilities;
- 15.2 percent were single parents; and
- 6.3 percent were in foster care.

The percentage of WIOA Youth who obtained employment or enrolled in training and were able to maintain employment or training was 74.3 percent, which was an increase from PY22 (72.4%).

Success Stories

No information provided for this section.

Oklahoma

Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development

Use of State Funds

The State strategically utilizes the Governor's Reserve fund, which constitutes up to 15 percent of the State's total WIOA allotment, to support several key initiatives aimed at strengthening workforce development and addressing the needs of critical industries. These initiatives play a vital role in driving progress in both economic recovery and long-term growth. In PY23, these programs have made substantial impacts in sectors like aerospace, cybersecurity, transportation, and advanced manufacturing.

Under-served Populations

No information provided for this section.

Integrated Service Delivery

No information provided for this section.

Yes WIOA Can

No information provided for this section.

Other State Funds Activities

Not applicable.

Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

In the state, efforts are underway to enhance the evaluation and research projects that assess the effectiveness of the State's workforce programs. Representatives from the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission (OESC) are in the early stages of planning these initiatives, focusing on developing evaluation methodologies that will provide meaningful insights into program performance. These efforts will use both qualitative and quantitative methods, including surveys, data analysis, and case studies, to measure outcomes across various workforce programs. The goal is to ensure that evaluations align with state and federal performance measures, while also addressing the unique needs of local areas.

OESC is working closely with WIOA Core partners—Title I (Adult, Youth, and Dislocated Worker Programs), Title II (Adult Education), Title III (Wagner-Peyser), and Title IV (Vocational Rehabilitation)—as well as other state agencies and LWDBs to

ensure a coordinated approach. Internally, the WIOA and Research and Statistics Departments are leading collaboration efforts, while externally, OESC is partnering with CareerTech, Rehabilitative Services, and local workforce boards.

To support these initiatives, OESC has been accepted to join ETA's Evaluation Peer Learning Cohort (EvalPLC). The EvalPLC provides states with a capacity-building forum, offering technical assistance, coaching, and peer collaboration to strengthen evaluation design and implementation, particularly for adult and youth programs under WIOA. As part of this effort, state teams will develop a capstone project, which may include:

- An evaluation design plan,
- A statement of work for an evaluation RFP, or
- An evaluation action plan to enhance workforce programs and services.

RESEA State Plan Evaluation Study

Oklahoma's RESEA program remains a cornerstone of the State's efforts to enhance reemployment services for unemployed individuals. A recent RESEA evaluation study, grounded in data-driven methodologies, aimed to assess the impact of varied work search requirements on UI claimants. The study's findings have important implications for service delivery and policy improvements. The evaluation study focused on the following key goals:

1. Objective: The primary goal of the study was to evaluate the long-term effects of less-stringent work search requirements for UI claimants. Specifically, it assessed the impact on earnings, employment, and UI benefit receipt over a nine-year follow-up period. This research extended the work of Johnson and Klepinger (1991) and related studies, such as Lachowska et al. (2016), which are part of the CLEAR profile.
2. Methodology: The study analyzed data from a randomized controlled trial conducted in Washington State during the 1980s. UI claimants were randomly assigned to one of four groups with varying levels of work search requirements and verification processes. The study utilized administrative data to track outcomes for each group up to nine years after their initial UI claim.
3. Findings: The study revealed that claimants with less-stringent work search requirements were significantly less likely to be employed in the first quarter following their claims compared to those with more-stringent requirements. Additionally, these individuals received UI benefits for a longer duration, exhausted their benefits at higher rates, and were more reliant on UI during the year following their initial claims.
4. Study Quality: The quality of the causal evidence is considered high due to the well-implemented randomized controlled trial. The study confidently attributed the observed effects to the differences in work search requirements, eliminating the likelihood that other factors influenced the outcomes.

This evaluation serves as a critical tool in Oklahoma's broader RESEA initiative. By analyzing the long-term effects of varying work search requirements, the state can refine its approach to reemployment services, making informed, data-backed decisions

to enhance program effectiveness. These insights allow for continuous improvement in serving UI claimants and help shape policies that optimize reemployment outcomes while balancing claimant support and workforce engagement.

Economic Data and Trends

Another major focus of Oklahoma's evaluation efforts involves researching economic data and workforce trends to inform the State's workforce policies and training programs. In collaboration with state agencies, Oklahoma collects and analyzes labor market trends, sector growth, and industry demand to ensure that workforce programs are targeted to meet employer needs. The State's research projects incorporate a wide range of data sources, including the 2023 Annual Economic Report, the PY22 Workforce Information Annual Performance Report, the Oklahoma Wage Report 2023, and various industry and occupational employment projections. These sources help provide a detailed understanding of current and projected labor market conditions.

The analysis leverages a combination of quantitative methods, such as job market data analysis, and economic trend reports. Data from resources such as the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), Oklahoma Economic Indicators, and the Oklahoma Business Employment Dynamics reports also contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the workforce landscape. These combined efforts ensure that workforce programs and initiatives are continuously refined to meet Oklahoma's economic growth strategies and adapt to changing industry needs.

Continuous Improvement

The State's publicly accessible research and evaluation reports serve as the foundation for ongoing and future evaluation projects. These reports provide critical insights into the successes and challenges of the State's workforce programs, allowing OESC to build on lessons learned and further refine service delivery.

Reports

2023 Annual Economic Report

A detailed analysis of Oklahoma's economic trends for the year 2023, providing insights into industry performance, employment changes, and economic health indicators. This report helps workforce professionals understand overall economic conditions and target workforce programs to align with emerging trends and needs.

Program Year 2022 Workforce Information Annual Performance Report

A summary of workforce activities and performance metrics from PY22, including employment trends and workforce initiatives. It supports understanding of past workforce activities and evaluates effectiveness, which is critical for future program improvements.

Oklahoma Wage Report 2023

An analysis of wage levels across different industries and occupations in the state for the year 2023. This report assists in identifying wage disparities and aligning training programs with high-wage, high-demand occupations.

Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) 2022

Quarterly report detailing employment and wages by industry, providing a breakdown of economic activity throughout the State. The QCEW is valuable for tracking employment changes over time, helping to adjust workforce strategies to support sectors experiencing significant growth or decline.

Oklahoma Economic Indicators (September 2024)

Monthly economic indicators such as unemployment rates, consumer confidence, and business growth in the state. These indicators are used to gauge the state of the economy and adjust workforce interventions in response to economic changes.

Industry and Occupational Employment Projections (2022–2032)

Long-term projections of employment demand across industries and occupations for the years 2022–2032. This report helps workforce development programs prioritize training for sectors expected to grow in the long term, ensuring alignment with industry needs.

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

The State did not have any waivers in process during PY22.

Strategies

Not applicable.

Impact on Performance

Not applicable.

Success Stories

Youth

Prior to applying for Oklahoma Works, Trace was navigating a challenging period in his life. At 22, he found himself living in subsidized housing after having been homeless for six months. His situation was precarious, with significant concerns about stability and prospects. He was not employed, had minimal education beyond high school, and faced issues related to transportation and housing.

Trace’s introduction to Oklahoma Works came through the Youth Action Board, which provided valuable information about the resources and support available through the program. Eager for a change, he decided to reach out for assistance.

Through Oklahoma Works, he received crucial services, including career assessments and job placement assistance. These services were instrumental in identifying a career path that suited his skills and goals. Additionally, he participated in a Work Experience Internship with Pivot, Inc., an organization dedicated to supporting young people and families. This experience not only provided practical job skills but also reinforced his commitment to helping others. He received additional support through the DHS, SNAP program to support his educational journey.

Currently, he is employed as a Follow-Up Specialist at Solari, where he earns $21.00 per hour. His new role involves supporting individuals with mental health issues, a job that aligns closely with his passion for making a positive impact. He has been with Solari for eight months and has experienced significant improvements in his personal and professional life since completing the services through Oklahoma Works.

“The most important service I received from Oklahoma Works was the opportunity to participate in the work experience program,” I reflect. “It was instrumental in helping me develop the skills needed to assist at-risk youth and find meaningful employment.”

Since his involvement with the program, his life has transformed remarkably. He is no longer in subsidized housing and have secured a stable and well-paying job. This new stability has greatly improved his overall well-being and provided him with a sense of purpose and fulfillment.

“I am deeply grateful for the support provided by programs like COWIB and Oklahoma Works,” Trace shares. “Their assistance has been crucial in my journey toward success and has equipped me with the tools to achieve my goals.”

OSY Engagement

Aubriana, a resilient and determined 16-year-old, has already achieved impressive milestones despite facing significant challenges. As a parenting youth without a high school diploma and receiving SNAP benefits, she was committed to transforming her life.

On April 5, 2024, Aubriana applied for the WIOA program with the goal of completing her GED and earning certification as a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA). Her remarkable strength and dedication to her education and personal growth were evident throughout the process. With the support of WIOA youth services, Aubriana successfully obtained her GED and completed her CNA certification, both on June 26, 2024.

This achievement is a testament to her hard work and perseverance. Aubriana is now focused on furthering her education and plans to enroll in Certified Medication Aide (CMA) classes after holding her CNA licensure for six months.

Since March 2024, Aubriana has been employed at Elk Crossing, where she has advanced from a Patient Care Assistant (PCA) to a CNA, receiving a wage increase in recognition of her growing skills.

Low-Income Adults

Before applying for Oklahoma Works services, Brina faced numerous challenges. As a single mother of two, she had been struggling with limited resources and opportunities. At the time, she was a high school dropout, living with her grandmother, and had worked various odd jobs for eight years. Despite her efforts, she found herself in a precarious situation with an inadequate income and limited career prospects. Brina's transportation and housing situations were particularly unstable, and she was searching for a way to improve her circumstances.

Brina discovered Oklahoma Works through an online search, which led her to seek out their services. Upon connecting with Oklahoma Works, she received a comprehensive range of support services, including assessment, housing assistance, clothing, childcare, and counseling. These resources were crucial in her journey towards stability and self-sufficiency. Additionally, she participated in occupational training for business administration through Talking Leaves, which equipped her with the skills needed for a more stable career path.

Currently, Brina is employed at Foreman Construction Management, earning $22.00 per hour. She has been with this company for one year, and her new role represents a significant improvement in her financial and personal well-being. The support she received from Oklahoma Works, particularly the childcare assistance and the guidance from the staff, was instrumental in her success. The ability to balance work and parenting without the added stress of inadequate childcare was a game-changer for Brina.

Since completing the services through Oklahoma Works, Brina's life has transformed dramatically. She now has the independence to support herself and her two boys, significantly improving their quality of life. The stability she has achieved has empowered her to provide a better future for her family, and she is grateful for the role Oklahoma Works played in making this possible. Brina's journey reflects the profound impact that tailored support services can have on individuals facing challenging circumstances.

Dislocated Workers

A dislocated worker success story from Southern Oklahoma illustrates the importance of retraining programs through the Dislocated Worker Program. The benefit of receiving transportation assistance as well as tuition to attend training allowed Loretta Tohkubbi a new career path. Here is what Loretta had to say about the experience:

> "Before applying for Oklahoma Works services, my life was a 55-year-old married woman who was working at Spirit Aero Systems. I had a high school diploma and had received some vocational training while working at Spirit. Education comes in many forms and accepting what is offered may be what can help open the next door for you whether it be a job, a career, or a step-up from where you are at.
>
> This is what Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) did for me. When Spirit Aero Systems closed its doors, meetings with personnel from Workforce, were set-up for those of us being laid off to offer us the opportunity to retrain. I saw it as an opportunity to return to school to become someone I had wanted to become earlier in life, but life had got in the way.

TAA helped with tuition, books, and anything else that was needed each semester for the classes while WIOA helped with gas and mileage to attend classes.

I attended Eastern Oklahoma State College for two years, was on the Dean's Honor Roll each semester, and received an Associate in Business Administration with a GPA of 3.214. While in my third semester, one of my instructors called me about a position at All Saints Episcopal Church in McAlester. It sounded like what I was interested in, and I agreed to apply for the position.

I was offered the position of Office Administrator/Secretary and I have been happily working in this position since the day I accepted the position. It is a position I don't feel that I would have ever been qualified for or applied for without the help of TAA and WIOA in getting an education. This has opened up doors for greater opportunities and bettering my life in ways that I couldn't foresee."

Justice-Involved

A justice-involved success story in the Western Oklahoma Workforce Development area showcases the impact of targeted training and support. After being released from incarceration, this individual faced numerous barriers to re-entering the workforce. With the help of local workforce partners, he enrolled in a commercial truck driving program, which not only provided industry-specific training but also offered help with obtaining the necessary certifications. Here is what participant Robert Brooner had to say:

"My name is Robert, and I am writing today to express my gratitude to WIOA for the support that has been given to me. I am now a proactive member of society with an opportunity to be successful because of the skills I have obtained. I am now a semi-truck driver and was given the opportunity to learn this new skill because of WIOA.

I am a recent parolee from Oklahoma Department of Corrections, but I am so much more than just a convict. After I was released from prison in March of 2023, I was encouraged to talk to Oklahoma Works. After learning more about the programs offered by WIOA, I soon realized what an excellent opportunity I had been given. As a recent parolee from prison, many obstacles are encountered when it comes to employment. There are many people that do not put faith in a person with a felony record. I made a decision to acquire a skill that is needed all across America. WIOA made that opportunity and dream come true by providing monetary and moral support.

My caseworker is Kara Burnes from the Stillwater, Oklahoma workforce office and I could not have asked for a better individual to help me. Kara has been there with me through my entire journey and has supported me not only through professional services but also as a concerned newfound friend.

I chose to go to Drumright Central Tech truck driving school. This was a 5-week course, and I successfully completed the school training. I was immediately hired by a local company as a truck driver and went to work the week after I

graduated school in late August of 2023. I now have a steady income, and I make very good wages. Next year I expect to make $60,000+ as a yearly income. This is incredible to me the way my life is being turned around. I now have a career, not just a job and I love what I do.

I want to thank everybody that is a part of the WIOA program that enabled me to become a better version of myself and to get me back on track as a successful member of society. Without your help me [sic] options would have run out aa long time ago. Please accept my sincere gratitude."

Co-Enrollment - WIOA Title I Adult/Youth program

Co-enrollment is a critical strategy in workforce development that allows individuals to participate in multiple WIOA programs simultaneously, maximizing the range of services they receive. Northeast Oklahoma Workforce leveraged resources from different program areas, co-enrolling participants like Jadalynn. This approach not only enhances skill development and employability but also improves job placement outcomes by coordinating efforts across youth, adult, and dislocated worker programs. Through co-enrollment, participants can benefit from various resources such as training, work experience, and supportive services, empowering them to achieve their career goals and build sustainable futures.

Shortly after her 19th birthday, Jadalynn realized that her life was not heading in the direction she wanted. With that in mind, she decided to leave college and her challenging home environment, setting out with nothing but a backpack. After several months, hundreds of miles, and working two fast-food jobs, Jadalynn found herself in Pryor, OK, where she was fortunate to be taken in by a kind family.

Through her friend she learned about a work experience opportunity available through WIOA Title I. On August 9, 2023, Jadalynn was co-enrolled in the WIOA Title I Adult/Youth program and began her work experience on August 25, 2023.

During her time at the front desk Jadalynn developed essential skills such as engaging with and assisting clients, handling phone calls, and understanding professional dress codes. The office environment was incredibly supportive, with everyone offering guidance and encouragement. Each day, she was given constructive feedback on how to improve, which was invaluable as she had never learned many of these practical skills before. A few weeks after completing her work experience Jadalynn received a call from her Title I career navigator about a potential job opportunity where she had completed her work experience.

Jadalynn met with the Pryor AJC manager about a Career Coordinator position available with Oklahoma Employment Security Commission. On May 6, 2024, she began her new career as a Career Coordinator.

Jadalynn is grateful for the programs available through WIOA Title I, as they have transformed her outlook on life. She never imagined having a bright future, but now she finds herself thinking about possibilities she once thought were out of reach—such as owning a home, having a beautiful wedding, raising a large family, taking vacations, and building a career she genuinely enjoys.

Oregon

State of Oregon Employment Department (OED)

Use of State Funds

Under-served Populations

No information provided for this section

Integrated Service Delivery

Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) Agency – WIOA Titles I and II, NDWGs

The HECC's eight offices include the Office of Workforce Investments (OWI) and the Office of Community Colleges and Workforce Development (CCWD).

OWI and CCWD have direct administrative responsibility for many of the activities identified in the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs identified in Title I of WIOA and the Adult Education and Literacy activities identified in Title II of WIOA. In these roles, the HECC distributes workforce funding, provides fiscal oversight and accountability for workforce programs, and provides policy direction and technical assistance to state and local workforce partners, staff, and other stakeholders statewide.

- OWI is responsible for convening partnerships in the workforce system, supporting and providing technical assistance to Oregon's Workforce and Talent Development Board (WTDB) and LWDBs, and implementing the Governor's vision and the WTDB strategic plan. The OWI administers WIOA Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker programs, Federal Discretionary grants, and NDWGs.
- The Office of CCWD provides coordination, leadership, and resources to Oregon's 17 locally governed community colleges, 17 adult basic skills providers, community-based organizations and other partnerships. CCWD administers Title II of WIOA, also known as the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act. This provides federal funds to local providers and supports leadership and training to assure quality basic skills services for adults across Oregon.

Yes WIOA Can

WIOA Youth Program

In PY23, many youths in the state faced daunting barriers—housing instability, transportation issues, undiagnosed learning disabilities, mental health struggles, generational poverty, and academic challenges that hindered their path to a high school diploma. The lasting effects of COVID-19 added another layer of complexity, prompting Oregon's WIOA Youth programs to adapt with new approaches to engagement and retention. Programs focused on innovative outreach, meeting youth where they are,

and strengthening community partnerships. Recognizing the need to reach even more students, Oregon also requested an in-school/out-of-school waiver to increase engagement for youth still in the State's educational system.

The "earn and learn" model, which offers paid hands-on work experience, continued to be a key driver of success across the State's WIOA Youth programs, helping youth stay engaged and complete their training before moving into meaningful employment. One young participant from Eastern Oregon highlighted the impact of their internship experience, saying: "I've learned how to figure things out for myself in an environment I am unfamiliar with. Improving that skill is important for my future career and aspirations, and this internship has provided valuable experience."

Among the 2,167-youth served in PY23, an impressive 98 percent took part in career services, essential in connecting them to career pathways as the post-pandemic workforce evolved. Of these participants, 826 achieved measurable skills gains, and 287 earned a high school diploma, equivalent, or recognized post-secondary credential—essential foundations for their entry into career paths across the state. Youth facing employment barriers saw a placement rate of 59.4 percent, while those who were long-term unemployed achieved a placement rate of 60.5 percent.

Updates to Oregon's Labor Market Information Website – QualityInfo.org

The State completed several small projects and maintenance tasks for the QualityInfo.org website. Following a multi-year project completed in 2022 to completely revamp and update the site, the projects in PY23 tackled smaller items that kept the site performing and providing usable information for customers. This work included updating the occupational coding structure for job listings and occupational tools on the site to the 2018 Standard Occupational Classification System; investing in new software to highlight accessibility issues on the website, which resulted in correcting several items and prioritizing the remaining accessibility issues; and implementing several infrastructure upgrades to modernize the platform the site is built on going forward.

Other State Funds Activities

Supporting Oregon's Workforce System

The Employment Department's Research Division was heavily involved in assisting local workforce boards; sharing labor market information with students and educators around the state; and providing labor market analysis for businesses, community organizations, and economic development entities. This work included composing articles about the labor market and making economic presentations to workforce boards, policymakers, business leaders, students, jobseekers, and internal workforce staff.

Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

RESEA Program Evaluation

States are required to implement federal RESEA interventions and service delivery strategies that have strong evidence to support their work, and to evaluate any strategies without such evidence. To this end, OED executed a contract with Portland

State University to begin a three-year evaluation of the RESEA program, and work on the project started in spring 2024. The purpose of the evaluation is to determine if claimants who receive a subsequent (targeted) intervention will experience better employment outcomes versus those who only receive a single RESEA intervention. The goal is to make significant research-based improvements to the RESEA program and if possible, similar workforce programs as well.

SNAP Data Grant Evaluation

In September 2023, the State received a $1.5 million FFY-23 SNAP Employment and Training Data and Technical Assistance (DATA) grant from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food Nutrition Service (FNS). The purpose of the grant is to support the development of State SNAP E&T data collection systems and processes, as well as enhance the State's ability to critically review and analyze program services and outcomes for continuous program improvement. OED has executed a contract with a vendor to perform this work, which started September 2023 and is scheduled to end September 2026.

Using quantitative data analysis, key objectives of the grant are to characterize SNAP E&T participants and those who do not enroll in the program; assess gaps in SNAP E&T access and enrollment among eligible SNAP recipients; identify gaps in service delivery; and identify opportunities for statewide program improvement.

Analysis of WIOA Engagement Levels

In PY24, OED will evaluate how engagement with WIOA services is associated with employment-related outcomes. Using PIRL data from the State, this evaluation will focus on two questions:

1) Is there a difference in outcomes for different levels of engagement? and
2) How are populations of interest utilizing the different levels of services?

Staff leading this project participated in DOL-sponsored training in 2024 that used PIRL data from Arkansas to complete a similar evaluation.

Continuous Improvement

The WTDB's Continuous Improvement Committee (CIC) is charged with assessing the effectiveness of the State's public workforce development system, or WorkSource Oregon (WSO). WorkSource Oregon is a system comprising public and private partners who work together to respond to workforce challenges faced by individuals and businesses across Oregon. Since being established through Oregon legislation in 2021, the CIC has completed an Initial Assessment Report (Coraggio Group, 2021) to address urgent issues and concerns resulting from the pandemic and a Governance Assessment Report (Coraggio, 2022). The Governance Assessment report included four Pillars necessary for good governance within the WSO system and associated near and long-term recommendations:

- Pillar One: A Clear and Shared Definition of the System
- Pillar Two: Committed Leadership from the Governor and Executive Branch

- Pillar Three: A Strong, Educated, Empowered, and Accountable State Board
- Pillar Four: State Agency Alignment.

The CIC will complete the next Assessment in December 2024. This Assessment focuses on policies governing the workforce system, system structure, and performance and accountability. Recommendations will be provided to the Governor and legislature.

Reports

2024 Talent Assessment

The WTDB completed the 2024 Talent Assessment in May. The Talent Assessment provides analysis and findings on the State's economic and workforce landscape; skills supply and demand for target occupations; and the competitive position of the State's talent pool and workforce development system.

Overall, the analysis found that the State's workforce system benefited from a large network of partners, effective and scalable employer-led training, and significant state investments. However, lack of a strong coordinating authority, burdensome licensure processes, fewer workforce development opportunities in rural communities, and evidence of credential bias threaten future prosperity for the State's workers and businesses.

All WTDB's research is posted on the Data and Reports web page.

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

For PY23, the State requested a WIOA waiver to allow for increased service to in-school youth (ISY). WIOA requires 75 percent of funding to be used for services to out-of-school youth (OSY) and 25 percent to ISY.

Strategies

No information provided for this section.

Impact on Performance

The approved waiver reduced the allowable minimum expenditures on OSY to 50 percent. This created additional opportunities to serve youth prior to them exiting the education system. Approval for the waiver was received well into the program year, and this created a situation where some local workforce areas were not able to implement their plans for the waiver in time for meaningful application. Other local workforce areas were able to take advantage of this additional flexibility, especially in rural areas, and have indicated that they would utilize a similar waiver in the future if one were available.

Success Stories

A heartfelt success from East Cascades—as told by Career Development Coordinator Joe Milazzo

WSO Customer with over 20 years' experience as a commercial truck driver was having trouble finding employment…then WorkSource Oregon stepped in!

WSO Customer:

> "[…] I shared my emotional discouragement concerning obtaining employment with my local WorkSource STEP coach, Ryan Valdesuso. Ryan then quickly introduced my situation to his professional colleague, Joe Milazzo, who reached out via email to obtain more information concerning my situation. Joe quickly set up a video call with and encouraged me to be on the offense when applying for work. Joe shared brilliant ideas which resulted in my employment within weeks. It was a different tactic that was new to me.
>
> Your civil service is valuable to our community. A big shout out to Ryan Valdesuso and Joe Milazzo, Central Oregon WorkSource for taking the time to assist me in obtaining employment. I was losing hope and felt stuck in knee-deep quicksand. They pulled me up by the bootstraps and truly made a difference in my life. Please ask for help if you or someone you know is going thru a similar situation. The skills and knowledge you learn, and share may save a life."

Statement from Ryan and Joe: "As much as the jobseeker feels we gave them; they gave us so much more in return. This is The Why, why we come to work and make the difference!"

A Journey of Transformation: From Release to Employment in Just 10 Days—as told by St. Helens Business Representative Josh Moe

In September 2023, a jobseeker walked through our doors, seeking a fresh start. This individual had just been released from prison a few days earlier, facing the daunting challenge of reentering society and finding stable employment. Spearheading his journey was Business and Employment Specialist (BES) Lead Worker Steven Jonkers, who worked closely with him to complete his iMatchSkills profile. During conversations led by Steven and BES Russ Gray, they learned the customer was a Veteran and receiving SNAP benefits. Recognizing the importance of a comprehensive approach, referrals were made to STEP coach Tiffany Norvald for the STEP program, as well as to Disabled Veterans Outreach Program representative, James Penley.

With his registration in iMatchSkills complete, the jobseeker stumbled upon a promising staff-assisted job listing at a personal care product manufacturer, conveniently located near his transitional housing. The alignment between his aspirations and the job opportunity was unmistakable.

Enter Business Service Representative Josh Moe, who was in a virtual meeting when Russ Gray knocked on the door and presented the jobseeker's résumé, seeking assistance in prescreening him for the position. Despite a busy schedule, Josh recognized the urgency of the situation and stepped away from his meeting to conduct the interview. The jobseeker's desire for

stable employment within proximity to his transitional housing, a testament to his commitment to his new journey, resonated deeply with the team.

Josh confirmed that the jobseeker met all the necessary qualifications for the role and promptly forwarded his résumé to the human resources manager. This move showcased the strong working relationship Josh had built with the employer through his dedication and professionalism.

The climax of this narrative came in the form of an interview scheduled for the following day. After a successful interaction, the jobseeker returned to the WorkSource center, where he engaged with DVOP James Penley and STEP Coach Tiffany Norvald.

As the story unfolded, the jobseeker shared the exciting news – he had been offered the position! This life-changing opportunity was to begin the following Monday, a mere ten days after his release from a nearly two-year prison sentence. This remarkable transformation was only possible through the collective efforts of our dedicated team, with each staff member playing an important role in the customer's journey to employment.

This narrative serves as a shining example of our agency's commitment to making a tangible difference in the lives of those we serve. It embodies the essence of our mission – to provide holistic support, foster second chances, and empower individuals to pave their path towards a brighter future.

Statewide Business Services Team Meeting

The statewide Business Services team met in person at the Broadway Commons in Salem for a two-day meeting in April 2024. This was an opportunity to spend meaningful time together growing as a team, sharing best practices and knowledge with one another, as well as training and strengthening skillsets to accomplish goals of consistency and providing the best services possible to internal and external customers.

Jim Pfarrer, Director of Workforce Operations, joined to kick off the in-person meeting and set expectations for the time together.

The gathering heard from employers in Manufacturing, Healthcare, Waste Management, and Marketing that had experience working with WSO and provided insight into their industries for our education and for better partnerships.

The first day consisted of Business Services representatives, job listing writers and career development coordinators.

The management team, including area managers and supervisors for Business Services, joined on the second day. It was a team effort to share knowledge and expertise with one another.

Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Workforce Development Board

Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry (L&I)

Use of State Funds

The State supports several staff positions with the Governor's Reserve funding to accomplish the required statewide activities. This includes staff from BWPO's central office teams who complete the required Rapid Response activities supporting businesses and workers impacted by lay-offs; manages the Commonwealth Workforce Development System (CWDS) which disseminates the list of eligible training providers; provides technical assistance to state entities and local areas to carry out the State Plan; and other required activities. The Bureau of Workforce Development Administration (BWDA) carries out monitoring and oversight of activities for services to youth, adults, and dislocated workers under WIOA Title I, and operates and manages fiscal accountability information systems.

Under-served Populations

Youth Reentry

In PY22, L&I awarded $5.5 million in Youth Reentry Grant funding to ten LWDBs. The goal of this initiative is to engage youth, ages 18–24, who were incarcerated or subject to the justice system, into a career pathway leading to post-secondary education, advanced training, and/or meaningful employment. These programs are helping to reduce recidivism in their areas. To date, this program has reached 2,285 individuals.

Integrated Service Delivery

Digital Literacy and Workforce Development Grant (DLWDG) Round 3

A continuation and enhancement of the DLWDG Round 1, grantees in Round 3 were able to continue their existing projects with 12 months of additional funds (up to $45,000/project). L&I's $600,000 DLWDG Round 3 supports 16 effective programs that enhance foundational digital literacy skills for these jobseekers in their local communities. This grant has a period of performance from October 1, 2022, through September 30, 2023. These grants support L&I's vision to prepare individuals for job searching and emerging employment opportunities, to gain access to employment with family sustaining wages, and to increase communities' infrastructures for providing foundational digital literacy skills.

DLWDG Round 4

A continuation and enhancement of the DLWDG Round 2, grantees in Round 4 were able to continue their existing projects with 12 months of additional funds (up to $45,000/project). The award totals nearly $700,000 and will connect the State's workers with the skills they need to effectively navigate the technology platforms used in today's workplaces. DLWDG Round 4 supports 16

effective programs that enhance foundational digital literacy skills for these jobseekers in their local communities. This grant has a period of performance from August 1, 2023, through July 31, 2024. This is an additional round of digital-literacy funding that builds on $835,000 awarded in May 2022 (DLWDG Round 2) to support local programs that provide computer-skills training to help people find good jobs in Pennsylvania. Digital literacy grants are 100 percent federally funded.

Business Education Partnership PY21

The L&I awarded 22 Business Education Partnership (BEP) grants to LWDBs and had a period of performance from February 1, 2022, to December 31, 2023. Awards totaled $3.1 million (up to $150,000 per grantee). The BEP program allows school districts to collaborate with local business and LWDBs to educate students, parents and guardians regarding HPOs and in-demand career pathways. The partnerships provide career-related experiences, exposure to different workplace opportunities and knowledge regarding opportunities in the state through internships, job shadowing, career mentoring, career awareness activities and tours.

Business Education Partnership PY22

The L&I awarded 22 BEP grants to LWDBs and had a period of performance from June 1, 2023, to August 31, 2024. Awards totaled $3.2 million (up to $150,000 per grantee).

Yes WIOA Can

Agribusiness Workforce Services Engagement

In collaboration with the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PDA), BWDA revised the structure of agriculture initiatives and plans to solicit proposals beginning in December 2024. A selected vendor for this project will connect small agribusinesses to workforce development resources and offices; they will also develop training and guidance for workforce development stakeholders for navigating the unique workforce circumstances in the agribusiness industry. The program will educate eligible farm and agribusiness owners to ensure that they understand and have access to the services offered through the PA CareerLink®/PA Workforce Development System, including tax credits, OJT contracts, RA opportunities, writing effective job postings and job descriptions, and recruitment of populations not traditionally employed in agriculture. Another initiative of the grant is to provide additional individualized technical assistance to farms and agribusinesses who would benefit, which can include improvements to the organization’s Human Resources and Workforce Development processes for hiring, training, retaining, managing, and evaluating employees.

Near Completer

The Near Completer Grant program was designed for Pennsylvanians who started post-secondary education in high-priority, in-demand fields but stopped without completing their degrees or certificates. Under the guidance of LWDBs and partner schools, participants gain the skills and job training needed to obtain quality employment with family-sustaining wages—a key priority of Governor Josh Shapiro’s budget proposal. LWDBs awarded grant funding partner with Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education schools or other post-secondary education institutions, businesses, workforce leaders, and community partners to help eliminate common barriers faced by individuals seeking re-enrollment. Over $6 million was awarded to four LWDBs. When the

project wrapped in June 2024, 197 of the 237 enrollees graduated. Their collective graduation rate was 83 percent, well-surpassing Pennsylvania's 59 percent overall graduation rate for students enrolled in 4-year institutions. The grantees reported all or most of their students were certain they were never going to be able to finish school and graduate. Through this program, nearly 200 citizens are now free of that heavy "drop-out" burden that anyone who has gone through something like this carries.

Certified Teacher Registered Apprenticeship

In December 2023, L&I awarded Certified Teacher Registered Apprenticeship Grant, to develop a framework for a Registered Apprenticeship to be utilized by school districts within the Commonwealth, which will ultimately allow for the creation of teaching pathways in various subject areas for paraprofessionals throughout Pennsylvania. The goal is to create a program template that can be utilized across the state and adapted to specific regional or local needs. Central Susquehanna IU 16 was awarded $379,405 in funding for this program, which began December 1, 2023, and will run until February 28, 2025.

Other State Funds Activities

Not applicable.

Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

Business Service Best Practice Guide and Business Service Assessment

Following the Business Service Delivery Evaluation conducted by L&I, the Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations (BWPO) and local leaders created a guide for conducting business services consistently across the state. This Guide outlined the various partners and their roles in serving businesses. The Guide encouraged inclusion of all partners serving employers in business service meetings to ensure employer needs are met without duplication of services or employer fatigue. The Guide was provided to all local area field teams in December 2023.

The Bureau assessed the state of business services across the state by interviewing state and partner staff that serve businesses. Additionally, a survey was sent to all employers in the Commonwealth Workforce Development System (CWDS) and posted to the New Hires website. The goal of this broad engagement was to connect with employers currently working with PA CareerLink® Offices, employers that previously worked with PA CareerLink® Offices but no longer do, and those employers that have not engaged with PA CareerLink®. The survey results and final report will be available during the next Statewide Performance Report. Based on those findings, focus groups with employers will be conducted.

RESEA Program Evaluation

In alignment with new federal regulations for the RESEA program, the State's first annual RESEA evaluation concluded on June 30, 2023, which viewed the program pre-COVID-19. The evaluation collected data on the efficacy of the program performance

metrics, including shortening the time the claimant receives unemployment benefits and employment retention, and measured the value of program participation.

In the next (current) phase of the RESEA evaluation, the State will use a randomized controlled trial study to:

- Compare UC benefit durations of virtual RESEA participants, in-person RESEA participants, and non-participant claimants.
- Compare rates of employment (two and four quarters after exit from the program) of virtual RESEA participants, in-person RESEA participants, and non-participant claimants.
- Compare the wages (two and four quarters after exit from the program) of virtual RESEA participants, in-person RESEA participants, and non-participant claimants.

Digital Literacy Grant Round 2 - Third Party Evaluation

L&I procured a vendor with knowledge and experience in research and evaluation methodologies and WIOA workforce development systems to evaluate the efficacy and impact of the Digital Literacy and Workforce Development Grant. Work began in September 2022. The evaluator created a monthly report to update the grants' progress and to share challenges that the grantees encountered. The evaluator visited all 20 grantees, beginning in March 2023. In September 2023, Bureau of Workforce Development Administration (BWDA) received the final report in which the evaluator shared and discussed performance outcomes, challenges incurred, and the overall status of the grant utilization for each grantee. This grant served 2,533 individuals. While the grantees served only 15 of Pennsylvania's 67 counties (22 percent), these counties together represent nearly half of the State's population (49 percent).

Business Education Partnership - Third Party Evaluation

L&I procured a vendor with knowledge and experience in research and evaluation methodologies and WIOA workforce development systems to evaluate the efficacy and impact of the Business Education Partnership grants. Beginning in December 2022, the evaluator held bi-monthly calls with the grantees. Site visits began in June 2023 and all 22 grantees were visited by the evaluator, which were completed in December 2023.

Grant Performance Evaluation

In collaboration with the Center for Workforce Information and Analysis (CWIA), the Apprenticeship Training Office (ATO), and the Pennsylvania WDB, the BWDA Grants Unit developed a Statement of Work to contract with a vendor to:

- Analyze existing grants and new Notices of Grant Availability (NGAs) and recommend strategic improvements to performance monitoring;
- Build data collection tools and performance report dashboards; and
- Evaluate incoming grant performance data and produce summary reports and visualizations upon request.

Pennsylvania began working with KPMG in PY22 to determine Key Performance Indicators, create data collections tools, and securely collect data for tracking. The project will run through June 2026 and aims to result in a Grants Services Unit with improved grants management skills and strategies, and an ability to create deeper, more quantitative-focused performance reports. In addition, L&I extended its partnership with the Harvard Kennedy School Government Performance Lab through June 2025 to build on efforts to improve grantmaking processes, including principles of Active Grant Management.

Continuous Improvement

Programmatic training and technical assistance is provided for BWPO-administered programs, which include:

- WIOA Title I Adult;
- WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker;
- Rapid Response;
- WIOA Title I Disaster Grant;
- WIOA Title I Youth;
- TANF Youth;
- Labor Exchange/Wagner-Peyser;
- TAA;
- RESEA;
- Foreign Labor Certification;
- Work Opportunity Tax Credit;
- Federal Bonding;
- Jobs for Veterans State Grants; and
- ETPL.

This performance year, training and resources continued to build upon the foundational knowledge, skills and resources staff need to deliver effective services to shared jobseeker and employer customers, with the foundational CareerLink 101 (CL101) course and others updated with new statewide and programmatic information, and new courses added. Collaboration with subject matter experts was key, as was surveying and incorporating insights from PA CareerLink® field staff. Through these efforts, desk guides were created which provide guidance on policy and procedure. Consistent communication was a focus to ensure all partners were aware of learning opportunities available to them.

CareerLink 101 (CL101)

The CL101 course is designed for any workforce development professional that is a part of the PA CareerLink® system. The course is a combination of self-paced interactive learning modules, reflection questions and activities, and collaboration with other workforce development professionals during a four hour live virtual session. CL101 teaches workforce development professionals how PA CareerLink® came to be and its innovative service strategies; shared customers and the importance of working together; PA CareerLink® programs, services, and how they are provided; and how the work is measured. It helps to provide an understanding of the important role everyone plays in the PA CareerLink® system and the impact of working together. In this performance year, 368 workforce development professionals representing the six WIOA Core programs and various partner programs completed CL101.

Additional Continuous Improvements Strategies

- Building upon Foundational Program-Related Training
- Providing Guidance on Policy and Procedure
- Communication and Outreach
- Interval Trainings
- ETPL Training

Reports

Digital Literacy Grant Round 2 - Third Party Evaluation

The final report included recommendations for future Digital Literacy and Workforce Development Grants. Through the final report, grant recipients requested that future grants have increased funding and a longer period of performance to help alleviate the staff turnover due to salary and length of employment. BWDA is incorporating these requests into future Notice of Grant Availabilities.

Business Education Partnership - Third Party Evaluation

In June 2024, BWDA received the final report in which the evaluator shared and discussed performance outcomes, challenges incurred, and the overall status of the grant utilization. Some suggested improvements included a more comprehensive tracking method, currently being developed using Microsoft Forms, and the inclusion of cumulative tables to allow for better tracking of the grants' overall progress over its' entire duration. Each grantee received a site visit report, which contained the results of staff interviews, discussions on project design, and each grantee plans for sustainability beyond the grant period.

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

The State had no active WIOA waivers during the last program year.

Strategies

Not applicable.

Impact on Performance

Not applicable.

Success Stories

After Losing a Long-Time Position, Betsy Increases Her Skills and Rejoins the Workforce with a Better Job

Betsy was laid off from a marketing firm specializing in retail store layout resets after being employed for over 15 years. As part of regular Unemployment Compensation (UC) outreach efforts, PA CareerLink® staff contacted Betsy to help with finding new employment. Betsy came to the PA CareerLink® Jefferson County and met with Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operation (BWPO) staff to complete the PA CareerLink® registration requirement and to search for work, and later to meet requirements of the RESEA program. Betsy was referred to WIOA Title I staff as a dislocated adult. After attending several workshops at the PA CareerLink®, Betsy considered going to training for a Commercial Driver's License (CDL). However, family concerns led to Betsy deciding to stay in her current line of work, and PA CareerLink® staff completed job development activities on her behalf. Betsy obtained employment with Mondelez International, working a full-time position for $18.00 per hour.

Determined Single Mother Overcomes Challenges to Achieve GED and Pursue Nursing Career - Young Adult Program

A single mother of two sons came to the PA CareerLink® Somerset Co., on March 3, 2023. We registered her into the Young Adult Program. She was an 18-year-old high school dropout. She was currently in her senior year but was falling behind on her schoolwork as she was working a job and trying to care for her two young sons. We started her in General Educational Development (GED) classes on April 4, 2023. After faithfully attending classes for a month and scoring well on the GED Ready tests, a supportive service was submitted to cover the cost of the GED test. She continued to attend GED classes while taking the GED test sections. As of July 11, 2023, she has passed all GED test sections. She is now looking into different schooling options for becoming a nurse.

Shaping Young Lives Through a Career in Childcare – OSY Youth Program

In April 2024, Tatiana took a pivotal step toward building her future by joining the OSY Program at PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley. Motivated by her goal of achieving financial independence and securing meaningful employment, she dove headfirst into the

program, determined to succeed. Her commitment was evident from the start, and by May 2024, she had successfully completed the You're Hired curriculum. Through this comprehensive training, Tatiana gained essential workforce skills in interviewing, time management, personal finance, entrepreneurship, and more, preparing her for the next stage of her career journey. During her time in the program, Tatiana expressed a deep passion for working with children to her career advisor. Recognizing her enthusiasm and potential, the career advisor, alongside the work-based training developer, identified a local daycare facility as a fitting worksite for her Paid Work Experience (PWE). In May 2024, Tatiana began working at the daycare, where she quickly impressed everyone with her dedication and natural ability to connect with the children. Originally scheduled to complete her PWE by July, her outstanding performance and glowing feedback from her supervisor led to an extension through August 2024. Tatiana's work ethic, dependability, and love for working with children did not go unnoticed. Impressed by her contributions, the daycare partnered with PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley to offer her an OJT opportunity as a Preschool Assistant. This OJT, which began in mid-August, has allowed Tatiana to further develop her skills while becoming an integral part of the daycare's team. She is now valued not only for her reliability but also for her genuine passion and care for the children she works with. As of October 2024, Tatiana is on track to complete her OJT by November. She is proud to have achieved financial independence while pursuing a career she truly loves.

From Background Barriers to Healthcare Triumph: Michael's Inspiring Journey to Success

During Second Chance Month, PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley proudly spotlighted the remarkable journey of a WIOA participant, Michael. His path through the program was a testament to his unwavering commitment to personal and professional growth. Despite facing background barriers for nearly two decades, Michael's determination to pursue a healthcare career remained steadfast.

Completing a pivotal Customer Service Boot Camp in March 2024 and SkillUp™ PA courses equipped him with essential customer service, communication, business etiquette, and data privacy skills. More importantly, these training programs instilled the confidence Michael needed to chase his career aspirations. In April 2024, he successfully completed a Certified Peer Specialist training program offered by Northampton County.

With guidance from his career advisor and the support of the recruiter team, Michael tailored résumés for the logistics and healthcare fields. He proved his dedication by engaging in 93 job search activities, submitting 42 job applications, and attending various job fairs, including a Fair Chance Hiring Event on April 30, 2024.

Leveraging invaluable resources such as the Federal Bonding Program and Pardon Project, Michael tackled his barriers head-on, seizing opportunities in the healthcare industry. His efforts were rewarded when he secured a full-time Psych Rehabilitation Counselor position with Step by Step, Inc. Michael began his role in May 2024, earning $18 an hour. He worked with ten highly functional individuals at an apartment complex and said his job was amazing.

Additionally, Michael volunteered as a Crisis Intervention Team member for a crisis response system program and will join the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Lehigh Valley as a group facilitator. He also plans to maintain a professional relationship with PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley and spread awareness about its services in the community and among other

organizations. Michael already connected NAMI Lehigh Valley and Step-By-Step with PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley's outreach manager to schedule information sessions for their staff to learn more about available employment and training services. Michael is very grateful for all the assistance he received at PA CareerLink® Lehigh Valley and from the WIOA program. He expressed, "That is why I am so successful and what gave me a job." Recently, Michael transitioned to a peer specialist role with Sevita and obtained his state certification credential. His journey embodies perseverance, optimism, and the transformative power of seizing opportunities for a brighter future.

Rhode Island

Governor's Workforce Board

Use of State Funds

During PY23, Governor's Reserve funds were predominately spent on required activities including WIOA monitoring and compliance work of the Department of Labor and Training's Office of Policy, Integrity, and Compliance (formerly known as the Integrity and Compliance Unit), as well as finance and accounting staff and operations. Funding was also used in support of the SWDB staff and operations for WIOA oversight and related activities.

Under-served Populations

No information provided for this section.

Integrated Service Delivery

No information provided for this section.

Yes WIOA Can

No information provided for this section.

Other State Funds Activities

Not applicable.

Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

The Department of Labor & Training (RIDLT) recognized in early 2022 that the state had not been completing regular evaluations of its WIOA Title I program consistent with 20 CFR 682.220. In PY22, RIDLT lead a coalition of partner WIOA state agencies in applying to the 2022–2023 Evaluation Peer Learning Cohort (EvalPLC) hosted by DOL in the hopes that the initiative would offer a shared space where the state could identify collective evaluation needs and wants, receive guidance, support and expertise from experienced facilitators on how to overcome barriers to collaboration, and begin the development of an action plan for joint data analysis and performance evaluation.

The results of that effort were realized in PY23. The various state agencies administering WIOA programs entered an MOU that authorizes cross program evaluations designed and informed by those agencies, as well as by the SWDB. Completed

evaluations, with associated findings and results, will be shared with state and local boards. As State Workforce Agency and administrative agent for the SWDB, the Department of Labor and Training serves as lead for conducting WIOA evaluations. The evaluations will be overseen by the Department's PhD-level Director of Data and Performance, in concert with designated staff from each involved program.

Continuous Improvement

As the State completes additional WIOA evaluations; those assessments and any resulting actions, such as policy changes or adjustment in strategy, will be shared with partner federal agencies at the appropriate time. Furthermore, the state will continue to cooperate with federal requests for data or evaluation; and will make every reasonable effort to respond to such requests in a timely manner.

Reports

In Spring 2024 the state completed its first cross-program evaluation—a study of the geographic location of WIOA service locations and their associated outreach and recruitment networks, as compared to state's communities and subcommunities of greatest economic need. The final report highlighted "service deserts" of severe economic hardship that were not being reflected in collective WIOA enrollment. WIOA agencies are now in the process of strategizing on enhanced recruitment and awareness efforts in these communities. Given the State's small size; any progress in addressing employment barriers and in building economic security in these communities would have an outsized impact on statewide measures of economic stability and growth.

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

The State had three waivers from the DOL-ETA in place for at least one program year in PY23:

1) Waiver of the requirements outlined at Section 107 of WIOA, allowing the state board to function as a local board for the Greater Rhode Island area;
2) Waiver of WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(H)(i) and 20 CFR 680.720(b) to increase on-the-job training (OJT) employer reimbursement up to 90 percent for businesses with 50 or fewer employees; and
3) Waiver associated with the requirement at WIOA Section 129(a)(4)(A) and 20 CFR 681.410 that the State and local areas expend 75 percent of Governor's Reserve youth funds and local formula youth funds on out-of-school youth (OSY).

Strategies

Waiver of the Requirements Outlined at Section 107 of WIOA, Allowing the State Board to Function as a Local Board for the Greater Rhode Island Area

The primary goal and outcome related to the waiver allowing the State Board to function as a local board for the Greater Rhode Island area was to comply with the governance provisions of WIOA and resolve a DOL-ETA compliance finding. WIOA requires Chief Local Elected Officials to administer WIOA Title I funds and to appoint LWDB members. In Rhode Island, dating back to the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), the Governor had performed the functions of the Chief Local Elected Official for the Greater Rhode Island (GRI) LWDA. This means the Governor was appointing both the SWDB and the GRI LWDB.

Under WIOA, the Governor continued to serve as the Chief Elected Official for the GRI LWDB. During a compliance monitoring review conducted in February 2018, DOL regional staff identified that the Governor acting in this capacity was inconsistent with WIOA requirements because the Governor was not a local elected official and, thus, could not appoint the local board. DOL-ETA staff advised finding one or more local elected official(s) to assume the role of Chief Local Elected Official for the area or submit a waiver requesting that the SWDB act as, and carry out roles and responsibilities of, the GRI LWDB. After conferring with the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns (Which represents all 39 municipalities in Rhode Island, including the 37 that make up the GRI area), the State elected to submit a waiver to allow the State Board to function as a local board for Greater Rhode Island. This waiver was initially approved in September 2019 with the condition that the Board ensure continued local input and feedback into decisions impacting the GRI. In response, the Board worked with the League of Cities and Towns to establish a Local Area Advisory Committee for the State Board. This Subcommittee met throughout PY23 to ensure local area ‘voice’ and representation in key WIOA-related matters including policymaking, service data and demographic analysis, modification of the local WIOA plan, overseeing rehabilitation and upgrading of the local area AJCs, and other matters. The ultimate responsibility for these functions remains with the Board.

This waiver was subsequently reauthorized in September 2020, June 2022, and (most recently) May 2024 with conditions related to maintaining proper firewalls and guardrails between the various roles and responsibilities under WIOA; pursue and receive local input into the work of the board; maintain compliance with federal rules and the Uniform Guidance, continue to meet state and local monitoring responsibilities, and continue to allocate funds to both local areas through a transparent allocation process.

Waiver to Increase OJT Employer Reimbursement up to 90 Percent for Businesses with 50 or Fewer Employees

The primary goal and outcomes of the waiver included increased flexibility for smaller Rhode Island businesses to help them ramp up operations and keep pace with evolving market demands as the state recovers from the economic impacts of the pandemic; and to increase the usage of OJT among smaller firms. Per the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 92 percent of Rhode Island entities were those which employed fewer than 20 workers in 2022. The initial waiver was approved in August 2021 and reauthorized in June 2022 and May 2024. Both local areas opted to utilize the flexibility provided through the waiver and passed policy reforms introducing a tiered reimbursement structure for OJTs based on employer size:

- 50 or fewer employees: up to ninety percent (90%) OJT employer reimbursement (or the maximum allowable ($24.84 as of March 2023), whichever is less);
- 51–250 employees: up to seventy-five percent (75%) OJT employer reimbursement (or the maximum allowable reimbursement ($24.84 as of March 2023), whichever is less);

- 250 employees+: up to fifty percent (50%) OJT employer reimbursement (or the maximum allowable reimbursement ($24.84 as of March 2023), whichever is less)

The percentage of smaller employers utilizing these waivers has increased steadily since the implementation of the waiver. In addition, the number of OJTs that smaller businesses have utilized has substantially increased in the past two PYs.

Waiver Associated with the Requirement that the State and Local Areas Expend 75 Percent of Governor's Reserve Youth Funds and Local Formula Youth Funds on OSY

The primary goal of the waiver was to better meet the needs of the youth population and help expand and scale school-to-career programming and drop-out prevention strategies, especially in light of and in response to the challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Impact on Performance

Waiver of the Requirements Outlined at Section 107 of WIOA, Allowing the State Board to Function as a Local Board for the Greater Rhode Island area

The State continues to meet all of these conditions. The waiver has functioned without issue since its initial authorization in 2019. The members of the Local Area Advisory Committee meet regularly and are engaged in decision-making effecting the GRI local area; firewalls and internal controls are working as intended with board and staff taking reasonable precautions against real or perceived biases; the State remains in compliance with federal financial rules and expectations; state and local monitoring continues with regularity, and both local areas receive allocated WIOA funding through a transparent process that is consistent with federal regulations.

Waiver to Increase OJT Employer Reimbursement up to 90 Percent for Businesses with 50 or Fewer Employees

In PY21 (the first year of the waiver) the percentage of OJT contracts issued that were utilized by businesses with under twenty employees was 30.7 percent. In PY22, that percentage increased to 53.8 percent, and subsequently increased again in PY23 to 63.3 percent.

Waiver Associated with the Requirement that the State and Local Areas Expend 75 Percent of Governor's Reserve Youth Funds and Local Formula Youth Funds on OSY

Twenty-four percent of WIOA Youth served in PY18 were ISY, compared to 23 percent in PY19; 31.4 percent in PY20 (above the program maximum and attributed to the disruptions of the pandemic); and 24.3 percent in PY21.

In PY22, 20.6 percent of all WIOA Youth served statewide were ISY, and in PY23, that percentage decreased to 18.2 percent of all WIOA Youth served statewide. Accordingly, the balance of ISY has not yet increased. The State believes this was a byproduct of unique circumstances, including limited opportunities for in-school outreach and programming in a post-pandemic environment. The State nonetheless remains committed to utilizing the flexibility granted by this waiver to promote innovative and flexible in-school service models.

Success Stories

No information provided for this section.

South Carolina

South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce (DEW)

Use of State Funds

South Carolina's Workforce Development Board (SWDB) directs the investment of up to ten percent of the Governor's Reserve funds. The Board invests in meaningful workforce development strategies that align with the State's vision of developing a skilled workforce and a responsive workforce system that meets the needs of business and industry. In PY23, SWDB invested $6.9 million in statewide employment and training programs as well as investments in the infrastructure, technology, outreach, and efficiency of the workforce system.

Under-served Populations

No information provided for this section.

Integrated Service Delivery

Shared Case Management System Project Phase II Implementation

In 2023, SWDB allocated $250,000 to procure a vendor to conduct a feasibility study to evaluate options for integrating case management systems across WIOA Core program partners. The study was completed in November 2023 and resulted in a phased plan to modernize the State's case management and labor exchange systems, with an emphasis on interoperability across agencies and programs. Phase II, implementation, involves developing the scope of work for the vendor/product solicitation. SWDB allocated an additional $69,200 to support the preparation of the scope of work and functional requirements for the case management and labor exchange solicitation and market engagement. Phase II was completed in the fourth quarter, with Gartner Consulting, Inc., presenting the results of Phase II during the June SWDB quarterly meeting.

Streamlining Service Delivery

In the state, the six Core WIOA programs are administered by four state agencies, each with their own case management system. These systems are not currently integrated, which presents service delivery, data collection, and reporting challenges. While the state has established expectations for co-enrollment and referrals, the lack of system integration prevents partner programs and participants from experiencing the full benefit of these efforts. The results of the Shared Case Management System Feasibility Study conducted by Gartner, Inc. that gathered and compiled system requirements across partner programs, evaluated options for achieving a more integrated case management system, and presented recommendations for consideration identified that the six Core WIOA programs did not want a one system case management system, but rather a system that easily integrated with their own system. In PY23 Phase II, implementation, involves developing the scope of work for the vendor/product solicitation.

Yes WIOA Can

Workforce Development Month

The State designates September as Workforce Development Month (WDM) to raise awareness about opportunities and programs available for individuals and employers, celebrate the State's workforce development activities, and recognize the efforts of workforce staff and partner agencies. In PY23, employers across the state participated in the SC@Work: Photo Contest, showcasing their employees at work. This initiative aims to celebrate hard work and dedication in South Carolina by highlighting "SC at Work."

To coincide with this month, the South Carolina Chamber has moved its Annual Workforce Development Symposium—sponsored by DEW and SWDB—to September. LWDBs are asked to nominate one high-performing local workforce development professional from their area. Each nominee receives the Workforce Heroes Award from SWDB in recognition of their contributions.

SWDB allocated $48,000 to promote the SC Works System during WDM, the symposium sponsorship fee, and awards.

SC Works Learning Management System

In support of ongoing staff training and professional development, SWDB allocated $200,000 for the Learning Management System (LMS), which will provide a centralized location for training content accessible across the SC Works workforce system and includes the functionality for staff and managers to track completion of required training. A vendor was procured during the fourth quarter of PY23. The Workforce Learning Manager will oversee the implementation of the LMS, working closely with SC Works Staff and partners to design and facilitate training courses.

Investments for In-Demand/Individual and Employer Training

Jobseekers often need training to reenter the workforce or advance along a career pathway, and employers need resources to provide upskilling and retraining opportunities for their existing workers. SWDB allocated an additional $1,000,000 in training funding enabling the workforce system to provide incumbent worker training, occupational skills training, OJT, and customized training strategies. Local areas were encouraged to align the utilization of training funds to build, retrain, or upskill a local workforce for high-demand occupations and industries, according to the needs of participants and employers and for in-demand training services that align with local area needs.

Workforce Innovation Funding

LWDAs are encouraged to pilot new strategies for delivering workforce development resources in their local communities. Innovation Funding of $3,000,000 was allocated that will be awarded to LWDAs on a competitive basis to implement or scale effective strategies in partnership with local "boots on the ground" organizations.

Targeted Outreach/SC Works Center Signage Refresh Grant

Outreach is a key component of any workforce strategy. Additionally, the SC Works Certification Standards require SC Works centers to display clear, prominent, and unambiguous signage to effectively promote SC Works and ensure that customers can easily locate centers in their community. As such, SWDB has allocated $449,700 to support state-level outreach and promotion of the SC Works system and workforce programs and refresh SC Works center signage. Local workforce areas were invited to request up to $25,000 for center signage, based on a demonstrated need provided within the SC Works Center Signage grant application narrative. Grant awards were provided to eight local areas. The statewide outreach campaign is expected to launch in PY24.

SC Career Readiness Program

WIOA Statewide Program funds were leveraged to launch the SC Career Readiness Program. The program provides access to career readiness courseware and assessments, including academic, digital skills, and soft skills required for a particular job and to facilitate effective job matching. Since initial implementation, 6,846 Work Ready credentials have been awarded. A breakdown of the credentials awarded is provided below:

- 1,236 Essential Soft Skills
- 644 Digital Literacy, and
- 174 SC Professional Skills

Other State Funds Activities

Not applicable.

Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

SC Works Case Management and Labor Exchange Feasibility Study

WIOA envisions a customer-centered workforce system that provides efficient access to a variety of education and training programs and services using a One-Stop model. Partners are encouraged to use common intake applications, co-enrollment strategies, and referral procedures that make it easier for individuals to access the network of partners and services represented in the one-stop. Additionally, partners are encouraged to share data for service delivery and reporting purposes. Currently, SC Works partners use individual systems to manage customer service delivery, data, and reporting.

The lack of connectivity between the systems diminishes the State's ability to create a seamless customer experience. A responsibility of SWDB is to "develop strategies for aligning technology and data systems across SC Works partner programs." To carry out this responsibility, SWDB approved the utilization of Governor's Reserve funding to study the feasibility of

implementing a single case management system to be used across WIOA required partners. The study included a current state assessment, business capability model, market scan, options analysis, and high-level roadmap and recommendations.

The current state assessment included 15 interviews and eight workshops with multiple partners and stakeholders. During these interviews, partners expressed a desire to retain their existing program-specific case management solutions, shifting the focus of the study to an evaluation of options for modernizing the State's existing case management and labor exchange system to allow for interoperability with partner systems.

Continuous Improvement

SC Works Case Management and Labor Exchange Feasibility Study

DEW was provided a roadmap with clear next steps for system selection and implementation. In PY24, a Request for Proposals will be published, starting the procurement process. During the time when potential vendors are submitting proposals, DEW will develop a change management strategy to guide system selection and implementation.

Reports

SC Works Case Management and Labor Exchange Feasibility Study

Key findings from the study included a desired future state that allows for the following:

- A case management/labor exchange system that connects and exchanges information with partner agencies.
- A centralized location to capture the full picture of an individual or business in the case management process.
- A user experience that is intuitive, consistent, and seamless.
- Automation of processes currently being executed manually.
- A better understanding of the efficacy of jobseeker support programs across case management and labor exchange systems.

The market scan identified off-the-shelf, platform, and custom case management and labor exchange solutions that are currently available in the marketplace and provided a map of which states are using the various solutions. An options analysis compared the estimated cost and implementation timeframe for each solution.

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

The State has an approved waiver reducing the WIOA Youth program out-of-school (OSY) expenditure requirement from 75 percent to 50 percent PY22 (04/01/2022–06/30/2025) and PY23 (04/01/2023–06/30/2026) Youth grants.

Strategies

The State submitted the waiver in the third quarter of PY22 and was notified of the decision in the fourth quarter. Guidance was promptly provided to the LWDAs, encouraging program directors to utilize this flexibility to:

- Expand access to employment and training services for ISY in rural communities.
- Increase engagement of and expand services to ISY with barriers to education and employment.
- Increase collaboration with partner programs to assist ISY in foster care, vocational rehabilitation programs, and the juvenile justice system.
- Increase use of work-based learning programs for career exploration and employment preparation.

Through implementation of the waiver, the State will:

- Increase the number of participants provided WIOA Youth work experience, as defined by WIOA regulations, by 10 percent.
- Increase the number of WIOA Youth participants that receive a credential by 10 percent.
- Increase WIOA Youth employment in the second quarter after exit by 10 percent.

Impact on Performance

As of June 30, 2024, the State achieved the following outcomes:

	Baseline Before Waiver	**Planned Outcomes**	**Actual Outcomes PY22**	**Actual Outcomes PY23**
Number of ISY Enrollment in WIOA Youth Program	122 average PY19–PY21	153	78	142
Number of WIOA Youth Provided a Work Experience	339 average PY19–PY21	373	285	196
Number of WIOA Youth Achieved a Credential	722 average PY19–PY21	794	477	405
Number of WIOA Youth Employed 2nd Quarter After Exit	1,216 average PY19–PY21	1,338	914	798

Success Stories

WIOA-Dislocated Worker

Dayna, a former high-ranking manager at TICO Industries in Ridgeland, SC, and a veteran of the United States Marine Corps, found herself unexpectedly facing a significant life change. In January 2024, TICO laid off nearly 100 employees, leaving Ms. Akers without a job, with young children to care for and bills to pay. Serendipitously, she stumbled upon the WIOA program while attending a student career fair with one of her children. During the fair, Career Specialist Ashley Mirelez introduced Ms. Akers to the program's employment and training opportunities. Realizing that her unemployment benefits fell short of her previous TICO salary, Ms. Akers decided to attend the WIOA orientation on a Thursday. It was there that she discovered how the program could assist her, particularly its focus on swift employment placement. With guidance from the Career Specialist, Ms. Akers saw an open position at DEW, housed in the same office as WIOA. Encouraged by the Career Specialist, she applied for the Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER) position, which involved assisting veterans in the community as a Veterans Business Consultant. Ms. Akers proved to be an ideal candidate for the role and was offered a position by DEW, securing stable employment. Ms. Akers brings with her a wealth of experience and a deep commitment to serving the veteran community in her new role. Her journey from facing unemployment to finding a fulfilling position at DEW as a Veterans Business Consultant is truly a testament to her resilience and adaptability.

Saravia

On April 24, 2024, the Santee Lynches DEW staff assisted with Graduate to Greatness event in Sumter, SC which offered job fair and community resources for high school seniors without a plan after graduation. The event was a great success. There were many different activities, presentations, and vendors that engaged the students. Valuable information was given to the students through workshops and seminars on employment topics, college access, and financial strategies. Students were also given the opportunity to interview with different employers and ask questions about the community partners that participated in the event.

During the event, we had the opportunity to talk to Ms. Saravia. Saravia is a senior at Crestwood High School who completed training as a Certified Nursing Assistant and attended the event to better her future after high school. She was offered a full-time Pharmacy Technician position with McLeod Health and a nursing scholarship from them to continue her education, as well. Ms. Saravia was so excited about this opportunity and the DEW staff of Santee Lynches congratulated her on her achievements so far. Saravia's journey from graduating senior to a pharmacy technician at McLeod Hospital, with her nursing school expenses covered, is an inspiring testament to both her dedication and McLeod's commitment to nurturing talent.

By investing in her education, McLeod Hospital not only empowers Saravia but also ensures that she'll contribute significantly to patient care and well-being. Her story serves as a beacon of hope for other aspiring nurses, showing that hard work and determination can lead to fulfilling careers.

Mr. Harper

After serving an eighteen-year sentence, Mr. Harper faced the daunting challenge of reentering society and finding meaningful employment. Determined to turn his life around, Mr. Harper utilized his time in prison to educate himself, earning certifications in relevant skills such as Industrial Manufacturing, Food Service, Custodial Services and Platinum Credentials WIN Test.

Upon his release, Mr. Harper entered SC Works and was referred to the Workforce Consultant by the Workforce Specialist, Catherine Baker in January. The workforce consultant, Courtney Brown was determined to help Mr. Harper get more training to get back into the workforce. Ms. Brown told him about the Back to Work Program that will help him prepare for employment. He attended the class and participated in the Back to Work session. Ms. Brown had a one-on-one job coaching with Mr. Harper and showed Mr. Harper how to apply to jobs online. Mr. Harper faced numerous rejections due to his criminal record. Undeterred, he continued to apply for jobs and network with organizations that supported second chances. His perseverance paid off when a Warehouse Manufacturing Company Pet Supply plus recognized his skills and potential, offering him a position as a Warehouse Team Member in February. Less than one month, Mr. Harper was offered a job.

With hard work and dedication, Mr. Harper excelled in his role, quickly proving himself as a valuable asset to the company. His positive attitude, strong work ethic, and willingness to learn earned him the respect of his colleagues and supervisors.

Today, Mr. Harper is not only a warehouse team member but is also an advocate for criminal justice reform and opportunities for formerly incarcerated individuals. His journey serves as a powerful example of resilience, redemption, and the transformative power of second chances.

This success story highlights the resilience and determination of individuals who have been in prison and showcases how they can overcome challenges to find meaningful employment and make a positive impact in their communities.

Travis

Travis joined A Father’s Place in October 2023, as a father of four daughters, facing challenges related to underemployment, child support arrears, and a history of incarceration. During his time in the program, he suffered an on-the-job injury. Instead of letting it hold him back, he shifted his mindset and took proactive steps to improve his future. With the support of the Intervention Specialist staff at A Father’s Place and the resources at the DEW Connection Point facility, Travis utilized the available computers to create an impressive résumé. Given his passion for electrical and machine work, he was referred to the Building Talent Foundation.

Thanks to this connection and his determination, Travis secured full-time employment with American Electric. Not stopping there, he worked closely with the team at A Father’s Place to further his skills and was awarded scholarships for both the electrician and welder programs. While maintaining full-time employment, Travis diligently attended his classes and graduated in June 2024. His journey exemplifies the transformative impact of A Father’s Place and the DEW Connection Point, empowering him to build a stable and promising future for himself and his family.

Vernon

After 30 years of dedicated service as a dining room attendant at Elmira College in New York, Vernon faced a challenging transition. His mother, with whom he lived in New York, became ill, prompting Vernon to relocate permanently to Florence, South Carolina, at his sister's request. Despite his decades of hard work, Vernon was unable to receive retirement benefits due to age limitations, adding a new layer of uncertainty to his life. Additionally, he struggled with anxiety and learning disabilities, making the prospect of re-entering the workforce discouraging.

Determined not to let his challenges define him, Vernon sought support from Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). His Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor began helping him take small steps to address his anxiety and learning barriers. VR introduced Vernon to job readiness training at the Job Readiness Training Center (JRTC), where he quickly thrived. He demonstrated punctuality, dedication, and a willingness to learn. Vernon mastered the required tasks and developed a strong relationship with the staff, proving that his years of experience had endowed him with a strong work ethic and adaptability.

Thanks to the collaborative effort between Vernon, his VR counselor, Vocational Evaluator, Job Coach, and the JRTC staff, he was deemed career ready. He began actively pursuing employment opportunities that aligned with his skills and interests. Within a few weeks, he was given the opportunity to participate in a job tryout with a local food manufacturer in Florence.

Justin

Justin came to SC Works in August 2023 feeling discouraged. After discussing his previous unsuccessful experience at Richland One Adult Education, he expressed that he needed only two classes—Probability & Statistics and Chemistry—to obtain his diploma but found them too challenging to complete online without assistance. We explored other options, including the GED, and he agreed to take the TABE test to assess whether the GED would be viable. Excited about the incentives for completing his diploma by June 2024, Justin moved forward.

After reviewing his records, I noted that he had earned two credits but dropped two classes. After taking his TABE test and reviewing his scores, he agreed to pursue his high school diploma. He completed the Probability & Statistics course within one month of enrollment, followed by Chemistry, completing his last class on October 13, 2023, reaching his goal of becoming a High School Graduate.

While enrolled in courses, Justin registered with WIOA and Goodwill Life Launch. One week after earning his diploma, he obtained his Forklift License and Welding 1 Certification in March 2024, utilizing the GED by 2024 Scholarship. Justin received his Welding 2 Certification and was one of the speakers at the graduation ceremony in May 2024.

Mr. McManus

Mr. McManus was referred to me on September 21, 2023, by a Workforce Specialist. He was enrolled as a participant in the Wagner-Peyser program on September 25, 2023. Mr. McManus was receiving unemployment benefits. He was seeking a full-time job in production or landscaping but faced barriers, such as an extensive gap in employment, an outdated résumé, lack of

interviewing skills, no transportation, and a criminal record. Additionally, he was mandated by a judge to attend twice-weekly classes at the Aiken Center for drugs and alcohol. Despite these challenges, Mr. McManus remained persistent, actively seeking employment while attending his classes.

Mr. McManus kept every appointment with me and actively participated in workshops and mock interviews. I also referred him to Vocational Rehabilitation, as he had been a client there before. Although he complied with all requirements, Vocational Rehabilitation did not enroll him, stating they needed additional paperwork from Social Security.

We applied for numerous jobs together, despite facing rejections. Each time Mr. McManus secured an interview, he would contact me for preparation assistance, and I would provide guidance over the phone. Additionally, I supplied him with interview clothing from our clothing closet. Ultimately, in his last week of unemployment, Mr. McManus secured a job at SHAW in Aiken as a custodian, earning $15.75 per hour on January 19, 2024.

What impressed me most about Mr. McManus was his eagerness to work and his determination to overcome barriers such as his criminal record. He successfully completed his classes at the Aiken Center, and his case was closed.

South Dakota

South Dakota Department of Labor & Regulation

Use of State Funds

Under-served Populations

Title II: Adult Education and Literacy

As the pass-through state agency for the WIOA Title II program, DLR has long been committed to serving adults who are most in need of literacy services. These individuals may perform at lower educational levels (below the 9.0 grade level equivalency) and generally demonstrate a need for reading, writing, and math skills to obtain or retain employment. Demographics served include adults who are low-income or have minimal literacy skills, learners with disabilities, single parents, displaced or dislocated workers, adults with limited English proficiency, unemployed and underemployed persons, young adults, and justice-involved both in and out of correctional institutions.

Improving the literacy, numeracy, and oracy skills of the workforce leads directly to a stronger economy. The instruction, activities, and services provided by the Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) programs promote family literacy, obtainment of a high school diploma equivalency, employment, and self-sufficiency. The local AEL providers also assist South Dakota's immigrants, secondary migrants, former refugees, and other adult English language learners with their efforts toward achieving linguistic, economic, and civic integration.

During PY23, the State's WIOA Title II Program prioritized student recruitment and retention via a statewide initiative informed by the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education's National Reporting System Regional Training. This Journey to Recruitment and Retention effort supported tandem case management of WIOA co-enrollments and Adult Education students alike.

Another primary emphasis during the year featured an iteration of Adult Numeracy Instruction; this year's cohort met once face-to-face for two days, then convened four subsequent virtual trainings across three months. Because numeracy proves so foundational and integral to both students' needs and goals, the Adult Education and Literacy Program judiciously invests in high-quality professional development designed upon rigorous, scientifically valid research.

National Career Readiness Certificate

DLR offers both employers and jobseekers the ACT National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC®), a key employment tool for WIOA program participants, high school students, incarcerated individuals, and others. As of June 2024, more than 62,000 South Dakotans have earned an NCRC.

Through WIOA Title I statewide funding, any jobseeker registered in SDWORKS can prepare for and complete the three ACT WorkKeys® Curriculum assessments required for certification: Applied Math, Graphic Literacy, and Workplace Documents. South Dakota's NCRC scores consistently rank above the national average.

DLR also offers WorkKeys for skill development at no cost to all program participants and jobseekers interested in earning an NCRC. The use of this curriculum provides a framework to capitalize on skill strengths and to define potential skill training needs during the employment process.

The NCRC program has grown significantly since its 2009 inception. In addition to serving jobseekers across the state through the DLR job service offices, developing partnerships has been a key component in expanding the program.

- More than 6,900 high school students earned an NCRC during the 2023-24 school year. Earning a certificate helps students demonstrate current workplace skills. Additionally, the certificate is utilized for the advanced career endorsement graduation requirement and the Build Dakota scholarship.
- Lake Area Technical College continued to use the WorkKeys assessments as one measure of progress for their students.
- Currently, approximately 1,294 employers in South Dakota recognize the NCRC in their hiring practices.

Family First Initiative

The South Dakota State Legislature allocated general funds for the Family First Initiative, designed to help individuals build skills that promote family stability, achieve economic security through education and career development, and secure meaningful, sustainable employment. DLR collaborated with seven providers to offer family-focused workshops, both virtually and in person, catering to individuals from various economic and educational backgrounds. These workshops deliver practical knowledge in a supportive learning environment. In PY23, providers conducted 284 workshops for 1,173 individuals residing or employed in the state.

DLR continued the Summer Passport program focused on engaging youth in work-based learning activities including business tours, job shadows, and industry speaking events. In PY23, through the efforts of DLR Career Advisors, 47 youth participated in 14 Summer Passport events.

During the 2023–2024 school year, Bring Your ‘A’ Game Anywhere soft skills eLearning was offered to high schools across South Dakota. 484 students in 31 school districts completed the eLearning course.

Integrated Service Delivery

South Dakota continues to innovate workforce opportunities through the Registered Apprenticeship (RA) program model. In PY23, a $7.9 million investment of state funds by Governor Kristi Noem was made to create a foundation for the DLR Start Today SD program. This funding, paired with federal competitive grants, aims to boost the number of apprentices in the state by eliminating obstacles, such as the complexities of program establishment and initial/ongoing costs. This funding allowed the team to assist in supporting developed RA programs with financial resources, including wage reimbursement for both apprentices and mentors during on-the-job learning, mentoring activities, and apprentice incentives. The funding also allowed reimbursement for related instruction impacting 172 apprentices.

Other financial resources were allocated to support efforts of program creation and expansion. Competitive financial incentives were granted to 48 business entities in the amounts of $15,000 for new programs with at least one enrolled apprentice, and $10,000 for programs adding an occupation with at least one enrolled apprentice. While efforts to build these programs remain, in PY23, 43 additional sponsors were registered in South Dakota. The expansion of these programs has led to an increase in the number of apprentices. The number of newly registered apprentices increased from 622 in PY22 to 966 in PY23. The total number of active apprentices (which includes newly registered apprentices and those continuing in their multi-year training) had a steady increase of nearly 19 percent from PY22 to PY23To help bolster awareness of RA and engage employers, sponsors, and apprenticeship champions, a Community of Practice (COP) has been established. The COP is comprised of five members representing employer sponsors, economic development organizations, and secondary and post-secondary institutions. The group was officially announced at the first annual National Apprenticeship Week event where they participated in a panel discussion. Other highlights of the National Apprenticeship Week event included apprenticeship growth in South Dakota, recognition awards, and an apprentice graduation ceremony.

Collaboration remains a priority focus for RAs. DLR collaborated with the South Dakota Board of Regents, Department of Education, Dakota State University, and Northern State University for the first Registered Teacher Apprenticeship in South Dakota. This partnership focused on current para-educators seeking to become teachers for their current school districts. A total of 90 para-educators participated in the first cohort.

Yes WIOA Can

Title I Youth

The Title I Youth program, Career Launch, supports eligible individuals aged 14 to 24, both in and out of school, who face barriers to employment. DLR Employment Specialists enroll eligible youth, assess their skills and needs, and create employment plans to provide or coordinate services to assist youth in accomplishing employment goals.

During PY23, DLR’s efforts centered on providing Youth Participants Reaching Employment Potential (PREP) opportunities and partnering with Boxelder Job Corps. DLR also focused on serving ISY already enrolled and engaged in WIOA.

Participants working towards their GED® benefit from the PREP model, which includes case management from a DLR team member, incentives, and support services alongside GED® coursework and the support of an Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) provider. Incentives are earned by meeting monthly expectations set by the AEL provider. Support services for necessities like housing, transportation, and testing allow students to focus on their educational goals. During PY23, 41.4 percent of individuals participating in PREP earned their GED®.

Boxelder Job Corps continues to be a key partner. DLR has dedicated Employment Specialists offering PREP to Job Corps students pursuing their GED® or high school diploma, providing incentivized services for workforce preparation, and developing and monitoring work experiences for those near completion of their trade.

In recent years, DLR had a close connection to public high schools and their students. This led to an increase in the number of ISY that were enrolled. Often these ISY were enrolled early in their high school careers, resulting in a lengthy relationship between DLR and these students as the State sought high school completion, post-secondary education, and employment for outcomes. As a result, DLR continues to serve many of these ISY.

PY23 was a year of change. With a shortage of funding, incentives were either removed or decreased, the number of work experience hours allowed was reduced, and the amount of funding to assist occupational skills training was lowered. These changes compounded with structural changes in the agency resulted in a year of maintenance as everyone adjusted. As the State closes PY23 and begin PY24, the Career Launch team is developing strategic statewide partnerships to connect with OSY to offer appropriate services with an emphasis on work experience opportunities.

Career Ready

Career Ready serves as a liaison between secondary school districts and industry partners. The goal of Career Ready is to increase student awareness about career opportunities in their communities and help meet South Dakota's demand for a skilled workforce by providing work-based learning (WBL) opportunities. There are six Career Ready Advisors broken up by region across the state of South Dakota to provide support to educators. Career Ready Advisors (CRA) served 119 school districts and 124 schools within those districts during the 2023–2024 school year. The CRAs provided 411 different WBL opportunities for 9240 students in grades 7–12. The opportunities included:

- Week of Work Celebrations
- Bring Your "A" Game Anywhere
- Internships
- Job Shadows
- Mock Interviews
- Career Fairs (virtual and in-person)
- Post-Secondary/Industry Tours

To extend career exploration opportunities during the summer, the Career Ready Team organized nine Summer Passport events. These events introduced 47 students to various college and career opportunities through tours and hands-on simulations. CRA's collaborated with 315 various industry partners across the state, to provide the above opportunities.

Out-of-State Recruitment

Dakota Roots assists in recruiting out-of-state jobseekers by providing local job market insight and personalized job search assistance through DakotaRoots.com, FreedomWorksHere.com, and SDWORKS. The State of South Dakota funds this worker recruitment initiative which continued its 18th year of connecting out-of-state jobseekers with in-state career opportunities.

SDWORKS

SDWORKS completed a seventh full program year as DLR's Management Information System. The program continues to grow and expand in response to the needs of South Dakota jobseekers, employers, and DLR staff and programs. SDWORKS continues to serve as the State's premier and most complete job listing board, employer posting site, and case management system. Enhancements are ongoing to improve data entry, reporting integrity, and program data. New features incorporated in PY23 include:

- Additions of interfaces to the WOTC module that allow SDWORKS to share data with other agency systems to verify eligibility for services with partner agencies and for the system to auto-determine if the individual meets target group eligibility guidelines. This relieves the burden on staff to manually access and review eligibility data, greatly improving staff productivity.
- Addition of automated Adobe Sign Forms processes to allow staff to send documents for electronic signature to an employer and/or participant, and the signed form will automatically upload into the SDWORKS Document Management System. This feature saves staff time and effort from manually uploading documents.
- Addition of an integrated texting feature that allows staff to initiate and carry on communication with participants from SDWORKS via text. SDWORKS captures and archives text conversations, which staff may copy to case notes as appropriate, making client communication and documentation much more efficient.

Other State Funds Activities

Digital Opportunity

PY23 saw the completion of the State's first-ever Digital Opportunity Plan. In partnership with the Governor's Office of Economic Development, DLR conducted a year-long stakeholder engagement process to identify shortcomings, draft a vision, and create strategies for implementation. This engagement included 61 one-on-one entities representing covered populations, six group meetings, presentations/sessions in front of a combined 261 attendees, and tribal consultation with the Rosebud Sioux Tribe.DLR also applied for and received funding through the Affordable Connectivity Outreach Grant Program and participated in grant activities from August 17, 2023, through February 8, 2024. The Department selected digital navigators across the state to inform communities of the federal internet subsidy program and assist eligible households with the enrollment process. These efforts were abruptly halted due to an enrollment freeze from the Federal Communications Commission as the Affordable Connectivity Program was not renewed. During the brief period, DLR held 99 outreach activities/events, reached 45,163 individuals, and enrolled 80 households.

Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

In January of 2024, DLR participated in an Applied Data Analytics training course hosted in part by the Coleridge Initiative, the State of Arkansas, the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA), and the DOL-ETA. Through the Applied Data Analytics course, the State was able to work with de-identified data to prove TANF participants who co-enroll in WIOA Title I have higher employment outcomes than those who were not enrolled in WIOA Title I.

Taking what was learned during that training course, South Dakota looked at similar information for TANF work-ready participants that DLR had enrolled in the Title III program. DLR focused on participants who exited from WIOA Title I and Title III between January 1, 2022, and December 31, 2022, to ensure the State has second and fourth quarter after exit outcomes. Participants were then divided into two groups, those who only enrolled in Title III and those who were co-enrolled in Title I, entailing 111 and 164 participants respectively.

After reviewing the outcome data for both groups, DLR confirmed the results were similar. Individuals co-enrolled in WIOA Title I achieved higher employment outcomes in the second and fourth quarters after exit compared to those enrolled solely in Title III. TANF participants co-enrolled only in WIOA Title III demonstrated better employment outcomes in the fourth quarter than in the second quarter. In contrast, those co-enrolled in WIOA Title I maintained consistent employment outcomes from the second to the fourth quarter, indicating that none of these individuals lost their jobs between the two quarters.

The outcome information is encouraging for leadership as it proves co-enrollment into Title I has positive outcomes no matter what state the participants are in.

Continuous Improvement

No information provided for this section.

Reports

No information provided for this section.

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

The DLR Title I Youth Program has benefited from two approved waivers

- WIOA Section 129(A)(4)(A) and 20 CFR 681.410—Out-of-School Youth (OSY) Expenditure Waiver
- 20 CFR 681.550—Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) Usage for In-School Youth (ISY) Waiver

Strategies

OSY Expenditure Waiver

This waiver allows DLR to expend up to 50 percent of youth funding on ISY. With this waiver in place, DLR has enhanced its partnership with the South Dakota Department of Education and individual school districts throughout the State. Opportunities to connect with industry and local employers enable youth participants to take ownership of their future and arrive at the most informed decision for their path forward.

ITAs Usage for ISY Waiver

This waiver allows DLR to operate the ISY program in alignment with the OSY program. This eases implementation in a small state where staff works on multiple programs. It reduces confusion for partners and increases participation.

Impact on Performance

OSY Expenditure Waiver

Increase Career Exploration services to youth regardless of their educational status

Career Exploration services, including Job Shadows, Labor Market Information, and Leadership Development, declined from 1,157 in PY22 to 370 in PY23.

The major reason for this decline was the restructuring of the Career Advisor positions from directly connecting with students to performing business outreach. This change allows businesses to connect with schools and students for work-based learning opportunities creating a more sustainable model. Having fewer interactions with students at the schools equates to fewer services provided.

Increase Work-Based Learning services to youth despite their education status. This includes work experience, internships, pre-apprenticeships, OJT, and job shadows.

This waiver allows DLR to offer work-based learning services to all youth participants equally, allowing the agency to meet the 20 percent work experience (WEX) expenditure requirement. With the low unemployment rate in the state, it is challenging to connect with OSY seeking a work-based learning opportunity as many are already employed. Utilizing work-based learning as a career exploration opportunity with ISY has been successful. There has been growth in WEX services offered to the ISY population since PY21, with the number of ISY WEX services being higher than OSY since PY20.

Rising wages statewide increased the cost of individual work experiences. ISY were easier to connect with due to the strong partnership with the DOE with staff recruiting students for WIOA enrollment. With the majority of the WEXs provided to ISY, DLR's ISY spending was falling behind. Due to this, the Youth program has shifted focus to out-of-school individuals and connecting with partners who serve that population.

Enhance partnerships with schools and businesses to increase youth apprenticeship opportunities.

Age Distribution of Apprentices by Program Year illustrates a steady increase in the number of apprentices aged 16–24 over the year. This age group experienced a 10 percent rise in participation, with 683 individuals making up 64 percent of the total apprentice population. Through robust partnerships at both the secondary and post-secondary levels, collaboration and innovation are expanding via Pathway Partners and Apprenticeship Intermediary efforts

ITAs Usage for ISY Waiver

Increase enrollment in South Dakota's WIOA Title I Youth program.

Since South Dakota received this waiver, youth enrollments increased from 374 in PY17 (the last year without waivers) to 830 in PY22. PY23 had a total of 174 new enrollments.

While the growth from PY20 to PY22 was notable, it became unsustainable with a reduced number of FTE working the youth program due to budget restraints. The Career Launch Team is now focused on effective case management, building strong participant relationships, and supporting long-term career goals.

Increase post-secondary options for disadvantaged ISY.

Since implementing this waiver, DLR has worked to increase post-secondary options for disadvantaged ISY. In PY23, 39.1 percent of occupational skills training provided to youth participants was for ISY. The number of occupational skills training services has seen significant increases, particularly in PY19, which saw the most success. In recent program years, the number of training opportunities for disadvantaged ISY has remained steady and higher than pre-waiver levels.

Success Stories

Career Lunch

Gay came to DLR with his dad seeking services through the WIOA Title I Youth program. When Gay's parents had divorced, he moved out of state to live with his mom. His mom had recently passed away, so he moved back to South Dakota to live with his father. Gay was an English language learner who had recently dropped out of high school and had no work experience or transportation. Gay had a goal to get a job, earn his GED®, and join the South Dakota Army National Guard.

Gay worked with his DLR Employment Specialist, Tha Gerh, to complete an interest assessment, a master application, develop a résumé, and improve his interview skills allowing Gay to earn a financial incentive. Tha Gerh and Gay completed a Walmart application together. Gay was hired part-time and enjoyed the independence he was gaining by having his own income. WIOA Title I funding was used to assist Gay in obtaining a state ID card, vital to verify eligibility to work, and work attire.

Unfortunately, Gay was not old enough to receive GED preparation services through the local adult education provider, but this did not stop Gay. With no computer or internet service at home, Gay went to his friend's apartment for internet access to study on his smartphone or utilized the DLR resource room. Gay spent over 90 hours studying before earning his GED with college-ready scores! Quite the accomplishment considering the test was in English. During his time studying, the WIOA Title I Youth program

assisted with a financial incentive allowing him to continue his studies. In addition, the program paid for the GED sub-tests and an incentive for earning his GED credential.

A few months later, Gay left for Basic Combat Training through the South Dakota Army National Guard. On the first day of training, Gay was allowed to call or text one person back home to let them know he made it safely. He contacted his DLR Employment Specialist, Tha Gher. He later transitioned to Advance Individual Training as a Unit Supply Specialist. Gay's new goal is to save money and pursue a college degree in Information Technology.

Career Lunch – SNAP E&T

AlexZander had recently graduated high school and was enrolled in the electrical program at Southeast Technical College when he came to DLR to seek services. AlexZander was low-income and required additional assistance to complete his educational program or secure employment as he had not held employment in the last six months. AlexZander's Employment Specialist, Jon, assisted him in using labor market information to research the electrical field in South Dakota. Jon then connected AlexZander to a job shadow in the field, which AlexZander was excited about, and confirmed he was on the right path.

WIOA Title I Youth resources were utilized to assist in paying for tuition, textbooks, tools, and transportation. AlexZander did not miss a class in his first year of school and had a solid grade point average. With a tight WIOA Title I budget, Jon assisted AlexZander in accessing a short-term program that allowed those eligible for or receiving SNAP with tuition. WIOA Title I and SNAP were able to cost share to ensure success for AlexZander's second year of school.

Prior to graduating with honors with an Associate of Applied Science in Electrician, Jon and AlexZander compiled a résumé and began his job search. AlexZander received a position making $24 per hour. Several months later, he is still working there and happily learning and working towards his journeyman's license.

Dislocated Worker + Quest Grant

Joe sought out DLR after a recent layoff that left him wondering what to do next. Joe met with DLR Employment Specialist, Kelsey, for guidance and support to obtain his Class A Commercial Driver's License (CDL) at Southeast Technical College. This decision did not come without its challenges considering Joe no longer had an income and the training lasted four weeks while Joe lived approximately three hours from the training location. However, Joe had a camper and was able to find a campground near the training facility. With a few obstacles out of his way, Joe enrolled in and completed the program earning his Class A CDL. Joe recently reached out to Kelsey to thank her for her assistance during this challenging time. He is loving his new job that takes him out-of-state each week and the paycheck to go with this. The WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker and QUEST Dislocated Worker Grant assisted Joe by paying for his campsite during the training, the drug screen and Department of Transportation physical needed for the training, and the tuition cost for the training.

Dislocated Worker + RESEA

Carol was selected to participate in the RESEA program after being laid off from her position as an accounting clerk/customer service representative. As part of Carol's employment plan, her DLR Employment Specialist contacted at least one employer of Carol's choosing each week to offer an OJT contract. This contract would allow the WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker program to reimburse the employer a portion of Carol's wages while she received training in her new role. Soon, Carol landed an interview with an employer interested in Carol's work history and skills. Nineteen days after her first Reemployment Services appointment, Carol was offered a full-time position with an OJT contract.

The WIOA Dislocated Worker program assisted Carol in preparing for her interview, tires for her pick up that had been deemed unsafe, and business attire for her new position.

Tennessee

Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development (TDLWD)

Use of State Funds

Under-served Populations

Workforce Reentry Tablet Program

TDLWD is spearheading a unique statewide program aimed at curbing recidivism, educating inmates, and creating a new pipeline of qualified workers for employers. The Workforce Reentry Tablet Program has provided funding for specially designed tablets to be placed in each of the State's County jails. The tablets have a concentrated focus on allowing persons incarcerated with the opportunity to complete the required adult education coursework in preparation for the HiSET high school equivalency exam, while also making courses for career training (such as plumbing and HVAC certifications), résumé building, job search support, mental health services, and substance abuse wellness and general life skills available, all at no cost to the user. TDLWD currently has tablets in 88 of the 95 county jail facilities in Tennessee. Currently over 8,630 learner accounts have been created.

As an expansion of the Workforce-Tablet Program, TDLWD recently included third-party requests for use of the tablets. Such requests can be made in two ways:

3) Third parties can request workforce-reentry tablets for on-site usage in facilities that serve justice-involved individuals and that have defined workforce development objectives and/or
4) Third parties can also request to add content to the tablets to educate, develop, and inform the incarcerated users.

The expansion of the program will further maximize the department's reach to justice-individuals and community-based service provision.

Mobile American Job Center (MAJC)

The mission of the MAJC is to provide employment resources and one-on-one assistance to all people across the state of Tennessee, especially those in rural areas who do not have access to the brick-and-mortar locations. Clients with barriers to employment are frequently unemployed, underemployed, skills-deficient, and/or have a lack of transportation, among other barriers.

The lack of access to staff-assisted services is and will continue to be an issue as smaller affiliate AJCs close across the state. For those who lack computer skills, access to employment services is vital. The Mobile AJCs across the state will provide a solution to these issues by bringing workforce services to the public. They are manned by Wagner-Peyser staff, as well as staff

from partner programs, and can aid those who need it most. Any service that is provided in brick-and-mortar is also provided on the MAJC. MAJC staff reaches out to common organizations found in every community to provide employment services. These entities include:

- Homeless Shelters
- Housing Projects
- Prisons
- Faith-Based Organizations
- DHS Offices
- YWCAs and YMCAs
- Local Food Banks
- Senior Citizens Facilities.

Integrated Service Delivery

No information provided for this section.

Yes WIOA Can

Career Pathways

In partnership with the Department of Education, the LWDAs promote career exploration through career pathways also known as TN Pathways allowing students to acquire educational, technical, and social skills that enhance career development. Working with regional councils and including the regional pathways coordinators, the workforce ecosystem has enhanced efforts to improve communication, coordination, and collaboration in preparing youth for post-secondary studies or the world of work. Other strategies include incorporating career pathways system as a model to better guide youth, incorporating pre-apprenticeship programs to offer youth opportunities to gain technical skills that are best learned on the job, and disseminating information regarding future in-demand labor market needs to young adults when entering the workforce system.

Tennessee Pathways has created alignment between K–12, post-secondary education, workforce development, and employers so that students have a clear and guided pathway to gain the knowledge and experience needed to move seamlessly into the workforce. The State believes that all students deserve access to high-quality careers that provide a living wage and opportunities for advancement.

Youth Employment

Tennessee's Youth Employment Program (TYEP) links ambitious young adults aged 14–24 with employers in several industries across Tennessee. Participants dive into hands-on workforce experiences, gaining invaluable skills and test-driving future careers while earning up to $4,000 along the way. This year-round program offers much more than youth job opportunities- it teaches lifelong, and life-changing skills. TYEP is a state-funded youth employment program that Governor Lee included in his Strong Families initiative and was made possible by $15 million in funding approved by the Tennessee General Assembly. Over 4,700 Tennesseans between the ages of 14 and 24 were enrolled in the program, with more than 1,200 employers statewide. Youth were employed across many different sectors, with some of the biggest industries being education, childcare, and public service/government. The TYEP program, when complete, is projected to save employers $12,082,183.57. To date, over 500 youth have been offered non-subsidized employment after completing the TYEP program, and that number is expected to grow as enrolled youth continue to finish the program.

Other State Funds Activities

Metropolitan Development Housing Agency

As an innovative approach to service delivery and immediate needs identified across the state, TDLWD – Division of Workforce Services has partnered with the Metropolitan Development Housing Agency (MDHA) and the American Job Center Network of Partners to provide on-site services at the two local housing developments in the Metro Nashville area. This pilot program provides Title I and Title III Programs, the Youth Employment Program, Homeless Veterans Program (HVRP), reverse referrals for SNAP E&T, Reentry, and Adult Education, as appropriate. Additional supportive services such as childcare, transportation, and partner program training are provided as identified per participant.

Since January 2024, there have been a total of 196 referrals made to partner services including WIOA Title I, Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Education, SNAP E&T, as well as non-profit agencies providing services to low-income individuals. To assist in making referrals and serving individuals at MDHA, a resident at MDHA was hired as a Career Services Assistant. These partner referrals are an increase over what would have occurred within Comprehensive and affiliate AJCs. With these additional referrals and innovative hiring practices, this pilot is proving to be a model moving forward to expand outreach with similar projects, such as Titans Town, to support occupational training and job opportunities.

Virtual American Job Center (VAJC)

VAJC provides a digital experience for Tennesseans to learn about services offered through TDLWD and partner agencies. The goal of the VAJC is to enable a self-service model that will improve the service exploration experience. Through the VAJC website, Tennesseans are able to discover services and programs available through their local brick-and-mortar AJC, understand what they may be eligible for based on personal information provided, and get connected with their local AJC by scheduling an appointment online. A key feature included is the eligibility wizard which helps users understand what services they qualify for based on their demographic information. In PY23, VAJC implemented TDLWD's existing Zendesk ticketing system. This allows jobseekers who were completing the wizard assessment to seamlessly transition into submitting a ticket for an appointment with case managers. Through a triage approach, customers are assigned to available staff and assume their one-on-one services

from there. The Zendesk model provides more oversight for tracking online traffic and created greater opportunity for direct referrals from UI and Adult Education. Additionally, information provided by the jobseeker through the wizard assessment are included in the Zendesk ticket, giving case managers a snapshot of potential eligibility and interest in particular services along with pertinent information to start the Wagner-Peyser process and registration into Jobs4TN.

For PY23 the VAJC had 22,187 unique visitors to the site. Of those visitors, 3,143 completed the wizard assessment and 6,400 either scheduled follow-up appointments or sought out their local AJC for additional services.

Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

RESEA

TDLWD is working with The Policy & Research Group (PRG), an experienced independent evaluator, to conduct its RESEA evaluation. The aim of this study is to determine whether offering the RESEA program to UI claimants improves their employment and earnings outcomes and reduces the number of weeks they receive UI benefits. Though RESEA is a workforce program targeted to claimants who are identified as most likely to exhaust their benefits and are most in need of assistance with reemployment, the study proposed selects claimants randomly. This evaluation is currently ongoing with an anticipated completion date of late 2025 and a results report being issued in early 2026.

The impact study is an individual-level RCT. Both the units of assignment and analysis are the individual participant. Eligible RESEA participants will be randomly assigned to the treatment or control condition at a ratio that is approximately 3:1 (treatment to control). This ratio was ultimately the decision of TDLWD staff to provide services to as many RESEA claimants as possible while still creating a control group. Outcomes for treatment group members who are offered the defined intervention (RESEA) will be compared with those of a control group who are subject to standard UI requirements (i.e., business-as-usual).

Intent-To-Treat Framework

The State proposes an intent-to-treat (ITT) study design. An ITT framework includes all participants enrolled in the impact study, within the treatment condition they were randomly assigned to, regardless of the dosage or exposure to program components. Although this approach can seem obtuse because it fails to account for the variation in participants' actual exposure, researchers adopt it because it provides the most unbiased estimate of program impact. An ITT estimate minimizes the potentially biased post-enrollment self-selection that motivates some people to engage more and others to engage less with the intervention. This estimate also has the added advantage of providing a more realistic estimate of the predicted impact of the program because it factors in the variation of exposure into the estimate, rather than controlling for it statistically.

Primary Research Question

The impact study will assess the following pre-specified primary research questions. These research questions formalize the aim of the impact study, which is to test the impact of Tennessee's RESEA program on the DOL-required outcomes.

1) Unemployment Compensation Duration
   What is the impact of the requirement to complete RESEA reemployment services (treatment) relative to standard UI benefit requirements (control) on claimants' unemployment compensation duration?
2) Employment
   What is the impact of the requirement to complete RESEA reemployment services (treatment) relative to standard UI benefit requirements (control) on claimants' employment status?
3) Earnings
   What is the impact of the requirement to complete RESEA reemployment services (treatment) relative to standard UI benefit requirements (control) on claimants' earnings?

Component-Level Research Questions

TDLWD RESEA staff have identified several component-level research questions that they may like to investigate:

1) What effect does the length of time between a claimant's monetary determination and their selection for RESEA have on employment, earnings, and duration of UI benefits?; and
2) How effective is the profiling score at reducing UI receipt duration and improving employment and earnings outcomes?

PRG will formalize component-level research questions, their proposed designs, data requirements and procedures, operational definitions, and analytic methods necessary to answer them in a future EDR.

KPMG

During PY23 TDLWD partnered with KPMG to evaluate the quality of business service delivery and the customer experience within the AJC. This comprehensive evaluation produced recommendations that will integrate leading practices at the local, state, and national levels to support the needs of jobseekers and businesses.

University of Tennessee Center for Industrial Services (UTCIS)

The Board Excellence Certification Program (the Program) is an integrated system of assessment, feedback, and professional development. It is designed to foster and sustain high performing workforce development boards and facilitate effectiveness and innovation in meeting their obligations and leading into the future. Boards that achieve Board Excellence Certification serve as role models of improvement, innovation, and excellence for the rest of the workforce organization.

The Tennessee SWDB has successfully completed its initial Board Certification Assessment. The Certification Program was developed specifically for the SWDB by the UTCIS.

The Board Certification Program was designed to assess compliance and competence to six Element of Governance:

- Structure, roles, relationships, and terms

- Responsibilities
- Governance System
- Strategic Insights
- Performance Management
- Legal & Ethical Behavior

The six Elements of Governance serve as the intellectual and knowledge foundation for the Board Certification Program and Assessment. To promote a high performing board while also ensuring compliance to Federal rules and regulations, the elements and criteria within each element are founded upon national standards of excellence or federal regulations.

The Elements and associated criteria of Governance System, Strategic Insight, Performance Management, and Legal & Ethical Behavior are designed to promote high performance using the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence for Governance, Strategy, and Performance Management. These four Elements are applicable to any board that desires to meet the highest standards of excellence in governance and are a requirement of the Board Certification Program.

The Elements and associated criteria of Structure/Roles/Relationships/Terms and Responsibilities are designed to evaluate and ensure compliance to WIOA of 2015. These two Elements are applicable to State and LWDBs and provide a customized analysis of the board's compliance and effectiveness.

Approximately 65 percent of the certification assessment is based upon the Elements founded upon the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence, and approximately 35 percent of the certification assessment is based upon WIOA requirements.

Levels of Achievement were assigned to each Element of Governance based on an assessment of policies, procedures, surveys, and interviews. Levels of Achievement include:

- Non-Compliant: Practices are not in place.
- Compliant: Practices are in place. Practices are accessible or known by those responsible for its execution. Compliant is a foundational level of achievement.
- Competent: In addition to meeting the components of Compliant, practices are in place and followed. Some practices may be reviewed, and some indicators or measures are identified. Competent is a more mature level of achievement.
- Role Model: In addition to meeting the components of Competent, practices are evaluated for effectiveness. Practices are determined to be effective and/or continually improved. Role model is the highest level of achievement and indicates practices that others could benefit from learning and implementing.

The overall achievement level for the initial TN SWDB Certification Process is Compliant.

Continuous Improvement

KPMG

Upon the completion of this evaluation, TDLWD has worked to redesign and reimagine the AJC network in Tennessee. This is an on-going project that will continue to see adaptations and adjustments as the State continues to improve customer service delivery within the state.

AJC Redesign: Workforce Reimagined

- Redefined outreach and service strategies
- System Training & Accountability Metrics
- Marketing Campaign

Highlighting Policy Updates to Support AJC Redesign

- One-Stop System Design Policy
- One-Stop Certification Policy
- One-Stop Operator and Career Service Provider Procurement Policy
- Minimum Participant Cost Rate (MPCR) Policy

What's Next in Supporting AJC Redesign

- Staffing Realignment
- Upcoming trainings
- Local Board Actions

Reports

No information provided for this section.

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

In PY23 the State had two WIOA waivers that were approved:

- Waiver associated with the requirement that local areas expend 75 percent of local formula youth funds on out-of-school youth (OSY).

- Waiver to allow WIOA Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for in-school-youth (ISY).

Strategies

Waiver Associated with the Requirement that Local Areas Expend 75 Percent of Local Formula Youth Funds on OSY

The approval of this waiver permits LWDBs the opportunity to determine how best to meet the educational and training needs of youth with other barriers regardless of school status, and specific to the population, geographical location, and economic and employment conditions within each LWDA. Additionally, increasing outreach to ISY while maintaining a focus on serving OSY will help develop a larger pool of young people qualified and prepared to meet the current and future needs of employers in their workforce areas and throughout the state.

Waiver to Allow WIOA ITAs for ISY

The Youth program received a 50/50 waiver from DOL to be able to serve OSY and ISY at the same percentage. Without this waiver the Youth program would have to serve 75 percent OSY and 25 percent ISY.

Impact on Performance

Waiver Associated with the Requirement that Local Areas Expend 75 Percent of Local Formula Youth Funds on OSY

This waiver allowed local areas to consider their demographic needs and provide direct resources to ISY populations determined to have the highest need; in turn creating a stronger workforce pipeline. For several of the areas, ISY enrollment has increased more than 100 percent.

Success Stories

Blount County – Titles I and III co-enrollment

Ms. J co-enrolled with SNAP E&T and Title I as a single mother of four children. She was working part time and asked for assistance with her last two semesters of nursing school. She graduated from a local university, passed the NCLEX, and received her license as a Registered Nurse in July 2023. She started working full time in a hospital at over $25 per hour.

Campbell – Titles I, II, and III Co-enrollment

“Kay” was a long-term unemployed individual receiving public assistance (SNAP plus other benefits) who wanted to return to the workforce. She had worked in the home health field for 15 years prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. She successfully completed Adult Education and gained her HiSET in preparation of entering the Practical Nursing program at TCAT-Jacksboro. She was co-enrolled with SNAP E&T, as well as the WIOA Title I Adult program through the AJC in Jacksboro to provide travel and other supportive service needs throughout participation. She successfully completed her Nursing, obtained her license from the State of Tennessee as a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), and gained employment on July 17, 2023, earning over $35 per hour working

full time as an LPN. She is currently “living her best life” working as an LPN, and traveling the country as her schedule allows. She is proud to have overcome and returned to the workforce without need for any additional public assistance.

Campbell County – Titles I and III Co-enrollment

T. is a young single mother of three children. She came to SNAP E&T asking for help to attend training for needed skills to gain employment to raise her three children. Prior to training T. was a waitress but had been let go. T. received training for Phlebotomy and is currently employed full time as a lab tech making $15 per hour with benefits. T. was co-enrolled with Title I and SNAP E&T.

Title I WIOA program

Amanda, a single mom with two sons, graduated from the Kingsport Christian High School in 1991 and believed she had her life figured out. However, she was wrong. As her sons became older, Amanda realized she wanted more out of her life. She realized that to reach the goals she set forth for herself, she needed to further her education and obtain a degree. To achieve that whilst caring for her two young sons, she quit her full-time job as an Office Manager at a local car dealership.

Amanda knew her return to school was not going to be easy. However, she had the desire to begin this exciting yet terrifying new journey with hopes of a better future for herself and the boys. Amanda sought enrollment in the Northeast State Community College (NeSCC) Cardiovascular Program and was accepted. Because she did not have the resources to cover the cost of training, she applied for federal financial aid and was deemed eligible to receive assistance through the TN Reconnect program. Through the program, she received tuition assistance. However, she needs to source additional support to cover books, supplies, and other requirements. Amanda, a resident of Sullivan County was referred to the AJC in Kingsport by a fellow classmate.

Upon her initial assessment and intake interview, the Title I Career Specialist in Kingsport found Amanda eligible to receive assistance through the Title I WIOA program. One of the requirements of the program is to establish an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) for participants. Within that IEP, individual goals are set for the participant to achieve throughout the program. Amanda successfully completed the Cardiovascular Tech training program at the Northeast State Community College and has full time employment as a Cardiovascular Tech with Ballad Health at Johnson City Medical Center. Amanda states:

> “The Title I WIOA Career Specialist at the Kingsport American Job Center was so kind. She explained how the program worked and gave me comfort that I wasn’t alone on this adventure. This program has helped me in many more aspects than I thought. It would have been very difficult without the assistance, motivation and information that I am grateful to have received. It has been a journey I will never forget and the sense of accomplishment on graduation day lives on”

For additional Success Stories, see the State’s *WIOA Program Year 2023 Annual Report, Appendix 4: LWDA Narratives*.

Texas

Texas Workforce Commission (TWC)

Use of State Funds

The changing labor market and robust economic growth requires TWC to support employers' needs with innovative methods to provide training and work-based learning opportunities in burgeoning occupations, including healthcare and technology. To sustain the State's economic growth, the State is investing more in critical programs to help ensure employers in high-demand industries have the skilled workers they need.

TWC remains dedicated to fostering a healthy economic environment where Texas employers thrive and create high-quality jobs for all Texans. Through the strategic use of statewide funding, in conjunction with other funding where feasible and appropriate, TWC actively promotes innovation in workforce development. This commitment is realized through grants to Boards, institutions of higher education (IHEs), community-based organizations (CBOs), and other eligible entities. This fosters innovation at the local level, with Texas Boards developing promising practices that can be scaled, to better serve Texas employers and jobseekers.

Under-served Populations

Military and Veteran Support Initiatives

Texas is home to 15 major U.S. military installations (including the Army Futures Command headquarters) and more than 1.5 million veterans. Annually, between 22,000 and 25,000 military service members return to the State or remain in the state upon exiting military service. This includes Active Duty, Reserves, National Guard, and U.S. Coast Guard transitioning service members (TSMs). These service members benefit from priority of service and TWC programs specifically designed to ease their transition from military to civilian life.

- College Credit for Heroes
  TWC continues to invest in the College Credit for Heroes (CCH) program, streamlining the path for veterans and service members to enter the State workforce. CCH maximizes the award of college credit for military experience, removing barriers to licensing, certifications, and degrees at both the state and national levels, enabling a faster transition from the classroom to a career. Twenty-five State colleges and universities have received CCH grants, leading to the development of 91 accelerated curriculum courses. This year, TWC reinforced its commitment with an additional $589,633 in grants awarded to three IHEs. These grants will fund the development and enhancement of military credit evaluation processes, including a comprehensive system to identify and track student veterans participating in CCH.
- Hiring Red, White & You!
  The State is connecting veterans, TSMs, and military spouses with fulfilling careers through Hiring Red, White & You! (HRWY). This statewide initiative brings together leading Texas organizations—including TWC, the Office of the Governor, the Texas Veterans Commission, the Texas Medical Center, and a powerful network of employers—to create

impactful employment opportunities. Since 2012, HRWY has connected 137,402 veterans and jobseekers to meaningful employment opportunities with 24,462 employers. The hiring events have facilitated 3,487 same-day hires since the initiative was launched

- Additional Military and Veteran Support Initiatives
    - Veterans Workforce Outreach Initiative
    - Texas Veterans Network
    - Military to Civilian Employment Program
    - Military Family Support Program

Integrated Service Delivery

Focus on Integration

TWC and its network of partners continue to operate a highly integrated workforce system. The Texas workforce system includes programs, services, and initiatives administered in cooperation with LWDBs (Boards), local adult education providers, community and technical colleges, independent school districts (ISDs), eight other state agencies, and other key organizations. Although Texas' comprehensive workforce system remains a national model for workforce development, its integrated structure allows for continuous improvement and adaptability to meet the needs of employers and jobseekers such as improved access and efficiency, along with value-added services. TWC and its system partners continue to explore integrated solutions to further improve services provided to jobseekers and employers, such as training resources, career guidance, and pipelines to lasting, high-demand jobs.

TWC administers all four titles of WIOA, as well as other federal and state programs, including SNAP, TANF Employment and Training (E&T), subsidized Child Care Services, TAA, RESEA, Apprenticeship Texas, and Skills Development Fund (customized training for businesses). Through this highly expansive ecosystem of programs and partners, TWC and Boards are able to provide greater integration of services across the entire workforce system. This integrated workforce service delivery model augments the resources and knowledge of staff at local Workforce Solutions Offices, so they can provide workforce customers with a comprehensive, coordinated, and seamless selection of services in a true One-Stop environment. To this end, TWC and its network of local partners work together across programs and funding streams to help individuals achieve their employment goals and assist employers in hiring and retaining employees.

One notable improvement to the Texas workforce system was initiated when TWC began integrating staff to support the delivery of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services to help individuals with disabilities gain skills to prepare them for sustainable employment. In PY23, VR served 92,791 customers. To date, 22 Boards have completed the integration of VR staff within their LWDAs (workforce areas), and VR staff have collocated in 104 Workforce Solutions Offices. TWC expects to complete ten more

office integrations by federal Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26). TWC fosters partnerships and initiatives to strategically position the statewide workforce system in new directions related to full system integration.

Another example is the Adult Education Employer Engagement project, which was designed to build capacity and expand the deployment of workplace literacy programs that support job advancements, skill gains, and demonstrated approaches to serving employers while improving the transferrable skills of Texans.

The Adult Education Employer Engagement project concluded successfully in January 2024, fostering impactful partnerships between 23 participating employers and over 390 adult learners. Collaborative efforts with grantees resulted in customized milestones for each employer, achieving significant outcomes for 63 percent of participants. To expand on this success, the project's best practices will be disseminated statewide via the Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) Eligible Provider Network, fostering broader employer engagement and creating more opportunities for adult learners across Texas.

Workforce Innovation Fund

TWC has dedicated $1 million in WIOA funding to establish the Workforce Innovation Fund. This fund will empower Boards to develop and implement innovative workforce programs tailored to their specific regional needs. The initiative has been met with considerable enthusiasm from the Boards, who see it as an opportunity to address unique local workforce challenges with creative solutions. Projects selected for funding through this competitive process will be launched and carried out during federal FY25.

Texas Industry Partnership

The Texas Industry Partnership Program fosters strategic collaborations between Boards and private employers, corporate foundations, and most 501(c)6 organizations (collectively referred to as "Industry Partners"). This program leverages matching contributions of cash or qualifying expenditures from Industry Partners to provide occupational job training. All collaborations focus on high-demand target occupations identified through local labor market analysis or alignment with one of the Governor's Target Industry Clusters.

In PY23, TWC awarded $775,113 in grants to nine Boards. These funds were utilized to enhance training programs, expand support services, improve skills assessments, and increase capacity through the purchase of necessary equipment and supplies. The program has already provided immediate training opportunities for 1,448 individuals, equipping them with the skills they need to secure promising careers. This program will continue to empower Texans, preparing them to fill future in-demand jobs and contribute to the growth of the State's economy.

Yes WIOA Can

Youth Initiatives

TWC actively invests in youth career exploration programs for middle and high school students. These initiatives cultivate essential skills and broaden students' understanding of diverse career pathways.

- Texas Science and Engineering Fair
- Governor's Science and Technology Champions Academy
- Texas Interns Unite!
- Next Generation Success
- Virtual Reality Career Exploration
- Empowering the Next Generation
- Connecting Students with Careers
- Learning on the FLY (Financial Literacy for Youth)

Ending the Middle Skills Gap

Addressing the demand for middle-skills workers (individuals with an education level beyond high school, but less than a four-year degree) remains a TWC priority. This is a growing need in the workforce, and preparing workers to fill these jobs is crucial to maintaining a healthy economy. According to TWC's LMI department, the number of job listings in the state for middle-skills occupations exceeded one million in 2023. By 2030, a projected total of at least 6.7 million Texans, approximately 43.8 percent of total employment, will be employed in a middle-skills occupation.

- Rural Training Labs
  As part of the workforce strategy for rural Texas, TWC is investing $1 million in WIOA statewide funds to transform skills training in 229 rural Texas counties. This strategic investment, in collaboration with city or municipal partners, directly addresses critical skills gaps. The core of the initiative is a network of innovative training labs, which are short-term, readily implemented training programs developed through collaborations between Boards, community colleges, and leading training providers. These labs deliver customized solutions to the unique workforce challenges and opportunities of each community, empowering residents with in-demand skills. This is more than funding; it is a proactive strategy to overcome workforce limitations and revitalize rural Texas through impactful, accelerated training.
- Middle-Skills Credentialing
  TWC launched a significant initiative to address barriers to entry for middle-skills occupations, allocating $1 million in WIOA statewide reserve funds. This strategic investment focused on supporting jobseekers who had completed training through high school Career and Technical Education programs, community colleges, or other training providers under a TWC initiative. The funding, distributed through a competitive grant process to eligible Boards, directly covers the costs of licensing and certification examinations, thereby removing a substantial financial obstacle for aspiring professionals in high-demand fields.
- Additional Youth Initiatives

- Lone Star Workforce of the Future Fund
- Metrix Learning
- Texas Credential Library
- Upskilling to Address Skills Gaps
- Pursuit of Advanced Training in High-Demand Skills (PATHS) for Texas

Industry-Related Initiatives

With over 650,000 State employers and three million small businesses, the need for a skilled workforce is greater than ever. TWC is positioned to address this need, helping employers upskill and reskill their current workforces to meet the demands of critical and growing industries. TWC has a long-standing history of engaging with employers in a meaningful way. Together with jobseekers and employees, State employers constitute one of the pillars of the State workforce system.

The States' strong economic foundation is largely a credit to the variety and stability of its private-sector businesses. It is vital that TWC and its workforce partners continue collaborating with local employers and economic development entities to equip Texas employers of all sizes with a highly skilled workforce that will keep jobs in the state and help companies remain competitive in the global marketplace. To that end, TWC and Boards are developing initiatives that serve industry and position Texas for continued economic success.

- Building and Construction Trades
  TWC invested in the future of the building and construction trades through a dedicated workforce development initiative. This initiative assists in providing training in construction and extraction occupations and prepares participants for employment in the building and construction trades. In addition to job training, participants receive employment support, résumé development, and job-seeking skills coaching.

  In federal FY23, TWC awarded over $1.9 million in grants to seven organizations, supporting training programs that lead to industry-based certifications (IBC) and employment in high-demand occupations like carpentry, plumbing, pipefitting, welding, masonry, and electrical work. This funding created training opportunities for 626 individuals. Utilizing an innovative, evidence-based grant-making approach with an outcomes-based payment model, and operating on a new two-year grant cycle, TWC ensures its investments are effective, develop skilled workers, and directly address the needs of the construction industry.
- High-Demand Job Training Program
  The program, a partnership between Boards and local economic development corporations, invests WIOA funds and local economic development sales tax funds to provide training in Board-identified target occupations or in occupations in the Governor's Target Industry Clusters. In PY23, TWC granted $2.3 million to 21 Boards. These grants supported program

enhancements, supportive services for trainees, improved skills assessments, and expanded capacity through equipment and supply purchases. As a result, 2,812 individuals gained immediate access to training, equipping them with the skills needed for promising careers.

- Additional Industry-Related Initiatives
    - Externships for Teachers
    - Skills Development Fund

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Healthcare

As the State's largest employment sector, healthcare plays a crucial role not only in supporting public health efforts but also in driving the Texas economy. TWC anticipates that employment in healthcare occupations will grow 23.9 percent by 2030. To address this growing demand for healthcare professionals in Texas, TWC has prioritized expanding healthcare workforce development opportunities.

TWC has launched the Upskill Texas Healthcare Initiative, which provides up to $2 million in grants to support workforce development in the State's healthcare sector. Eligible healthcare organizations with 100 or more employees may apply for grants ranging from $150,000 to $500,000 for training programs focused on patient care occupations. This initiative is particularly beneficial for healthcare employers seeking to retain skilled personnel and mitigate potential workforce reductions. The grants may be used to support a variety of training needs, including expansion of services, implementation of new technologies, organizational restructuring, and other workforce development strategies.

TWC's three-member Commission approved $1.5 million for community and technical colleges or ISDs for the purpose of developing capacity in licensed vocational nursing and registered nursing training programs and providing training-related supplies and instructor salary costs.

Additionally, the Commission approved $1 million for Boards to support paid internships for youth ages 16–24 and adults in private and public hospitals, healthcare clinics, home health organizations, and skilled nursing facilities. This program is currently under development and will be implemented in federal FY25.

- Healthcare Initiatives
    - Spotlight on Local Healthcare Achievements
    - Addressing a Critical Healthcare Personnel Shortage
    - Certified Nursing Assistant Apprenticeship Training Program

Texas Talent Connection

Governor Abbott's Texas Talent Connection Grant supports innovative education and workforce skills training programs that lead to successful employment placements, increased wages, and job retention, in addition to programs serving workforce populations with special needs. This year, the Governor awarded over $6.3 million to workforce skills training and job placement programs across the state. Among the 20 grant recipients are the following examples:

- Workforce Solutions of Tarrant County
- Valley Initiative for Development Advancement
- American YouthWorks

Other State Funds Activities

ApprenticeshipTexas

Apprenticeship programs play a pivotal role both in helping Texas employers build their current and future talent pipelines and helping workers progress in their careers and move into better-paying jobs. ApprenticeshipTexas provides outreach, engagement, and technical assistance to prospective employers and other workforce stakeholders, including current Registered Apprenticeship ((RA) programs to facilitate the development, implementation, and growth of apprenticeship programs—both DOL-RA and Texas Industry Recognized Apprenticeship (TIRA). TWC achieves this through a variety of federal and state-funded initiatives that support apprenticeship program creation and expansion to provide career-readiness pathways and job-related training.

Through the State's holistic approach, there were 892 RA programs in the state with over 30,000 active apprentices at the conclusion of PY23.

- Apprenticeship Initiatives
    - DOL Expansion Grants
    - Texas Industry Recognized Apprenticeship Grant
    - Texas Education Code Chapter 133 Apprenticeship Training Program
    - Critical Skills Initiative
    - Healthcare Apprenticeship Initiative
    - Local Tech Apprenticeships Innovate Non-traditional Hiring

Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

Collaborative Approach to Actionable Operations Research

TWC relies on a variety of analytical and statistical techniques to conduct evaluations, including quasi-experimental techniques and randomized controlled trials (RCTs). Although not as conclusive as RCTs, TWC frequently uses quasi-experimental study designs because they balance rigor with the ability to implement process changes and new initiatives quickly. Additionally, TWC is exploring how machine learning can identify strengths and weaknesses in its programs and suggest improvements to customer service.

To conduct program evaluations, TWC collaborates with Boards, partners, and academic researchers on evaluations and participates in federal studies, such as the Workforce Investment Act Gold Standard Study. TWC proactively engages with the Secretaries of Labor and Education on studies that further the research priorities of TWC, Boards, and partners. Additionally, TWC believes that the webinars and regional calls held by DOL and the U.S. Department of Education (ED) provide a valuable avenue to coordinate work and share results between the states and the departments. TWC also plays an active role in the Clearinghouse for Labor Evaluation and Research (CLEAR) community and shares results and best practices with other community members.

Continuous Improvement

Collaborative Approach to Actionable Operations Research

To translate evaluation results into systemic improvements and to measure success, TWC has used a blend of Six Sigma, Lean, and Theory of Constraints methodologies for a continuous improvement model called Rapid Process Improvement (RPI). RPI has been used to evaluate dozens of system processes, identify opportunities for improvement, and test the results of implemented changes.

TWC has expanded its continuous improvement model beyond RPI with the introduction of Business Transformation (BT). While RPI focuses on process efficiency and quality, BT addresses systemic issues and limitations, strategically rethinking entire business approaches and value systems to achieve broader, transformational improvements. In PY23, TWC began applying BT methodologies to automate, coordinate, and simplify internal processes. Agency evaluations are dependent on analytics infrastructure such as databases, customer-facing visualizations to help spark research questions, and the development of self-service reports to reduce time spent on non-evaluative *ad-hoc* requests.

Improving Service Delivery

TWC launched a major evaluation project in PY23 to refine service delivery; however, the project is currently on hold due to computational constraints. The project's core hypothesis is that service effectiveness varies across different customer groups. Analyzing all customers together masks these variations. To address this, the project will develop statistically similar customer groups based on factors like education, demographics, and work experience, allowing for a more precise analysis of each group's response to individual services. A customer analysis model will then classify customers into these groups, enabling targeted service recommendations. These recommendations will ideally include a prediction of increased likelihood for success.

Importantly, this project will enhance, not replace, the expertise of caseworkers and maintain participant autonomy, with recommendations entirely optional. Research indicates that such recommendation engines significantly improve staff efficiency, especially for newer staff, potentially offsetting the impact of staff turnover and associated training costs. TWC plans to resume this project in PY24 with the necessary computational resources in place.

Another project, ongoing since PY23, investigates the impact of LinkedIn use in job searches. This quasi-experimental study uses the presence of a LinkedIn profile in the Texas labor exchange system, WorkInTexas.com, as a proxy for LinkedIn usage. Positive results could lead to a joint research project with LinkedIn to identify effective LinkedIn strategies.

Reports

No information provided for this section.

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

The State workforce system and its customers have benefited from DOL-ETA's authority to waive certain statutory and regulatory provisions. These waivers have provided TWC and Boards with the flexibility to be more innovative and efficient in delivering workforce services.

On September 20, 2022, DOL-ETA approved two WIOA waivers regarding the use of individual training accounts (ITAs) for in-school youth (ISY) and local performance accountability and flexibility for Texas for PY22 and PY23 (July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2024). On February 2, 2023, DOL-ETA approved a third waiver regarding reallocation of local funds for PY22 and PY23.

- Use of ITAs for ISY
- Local Performance Accountability Flexibility
- Reallocation of Local Funds

Strategies

Use of ITAs for ISY

This waiver removes the requirement under WIOA rule at 20 CFR Section 681.550 that limits the use of ITAs for youth participants to OSY ages 16–24. This allows TWC to extend the use of ITAs to ISY ages 16–21, thus permitting Boards to serve ISY in the workforce area while maintaining a focus on OSY. Boards exercising this waiver have used ITAs to fund training for ISY enrolled in programs such as welding, nursing, HVAC, emergency medical technician, and accounting. This waiver offers the opportunity to significantly assist ISY living in rural workforce areas overcome the unique economic and employment challenges facing rural and often remote Texas communities.

Local Performance Accountability Flexibility

This limited waiver from WIOA Section116(c) pertaining to local performance accountability measures for Subtitle B provides TWC with greater flexibility when contracting performance measures with Boards. Through the application of this waiver, TWC will:

- increase the integration of services to customers;
- evaluate Boards more effectively, promoting accountability; and
- provide Boards with flexibility in implementing Workforce Solutions Offices services.

Reallocation of Local Funds

Addressing the provisions of WIOA Section 128(c)(3) and Section133(c) and 20 CFR Section 683.140 regarding reallocation of WIOA funds among local areas, this waiver grants TWC flexibility in redistributing funds that have been voluntarily de-obligated.

Impact on Performance

Use of ITAs for ISY

Program Year	Total ISY Participants	ISY Enrolled in Education and Training	ISY Using ITAs	Percentage of ISY in Education and Training Using ITAs
2022	1,070	445	41	9.21%
2023	1,670	539	53	10%

Local Performance Accountability Flexibility

This waiver provides TWC with continued administrative relief that will remove barriers to co-enrollment and promote a more integrated case management system across multiple programs.

Reallocation of Local Funds

This waiver gives TWC the discretion to consider additional factors in determining LWDA eligibility for reallocation of recaptured funds.

Success Stories

Adult

A single parent of two young children sought assistance to pursue a career in healthcare. Despite working for years as a certified nursing assistant, this individual still relied on public assistance to make ends meet. Recognizing their own potential, they enrolled in a licensed vocational nursing program. Their dedication and quick learning impressed instructors, inspiring them to

encourage further education as a registered nurse (RN). Throughout this journey, support services provided include training costs, transportation, and childcare assistance. The individual was also able to secure a part-time position as a licensed vocational nurse while completing their studies. Eventually, the individual graduated as an RN and now holds a full-time position in a critical care unit, earning $40 an hour.

Adult

An individual pursuing Level I RN training at a local community college faced significant financial challenges while supporting a family of three. Despite receiving a partial Pell Grant and SNAP benefits, the individual sought additional support from their local Workforce Solutions Office's Training Services program. Through a collaborative effort, a support plan was developed, including referrals for financial assistance and other resources. The individual's determination led to an internship at a large healthcare employer, providing valuable experience and financial support. With this combined support, the individual successfully completed their registered nursing training and secured a full-time position as an RN in an operating room, earning $30.24 per hour.

Adult

An individual sought a career in healthcare and enrolled in a Workforce Solutions Office's Job Training Services program to pursue a licensed vocational nursing degree. The program provided financial support for tuition, books, and other training supplies, allowing the individual to focus on their studies. With additional support for transportation and job search assistance, the individual successfully completed their training and passed their licensure exam. Upon receiving their licensed vocational nurse credential, the individual secured employment as a home health nurse, earning $28 per hour.

Dislocated Worker

An individual seeking a stable career to support their family approached their local Workforce Solutions Office for assistance in obtaining their Court Reporting Certification. Having recently faced a layoff from their previous position, they were determined to find a fulfilling and financially secure career path. With the guidance and support of their case manager, they diligently pursued their training at Vernon College, successfully completing the program. They are now thriving as a freelance court reporter, working with three different companies.

Adult

A first-time jobseeker with several barriers to employment approached a Workforce Solutions Office seeking assistance. At the 2023 Montague County Job Fair, this individual met with a representative from a local pet clinic. Recognizing similar challenges to those faced by their own parent, the clinic representative felt an immediate connection with this individual. The individual is now thriving in their role at the clinic, enjoying the opportunity to work with animals. They built strong relationships with colleagues, and the individual is highly valued by their employer.

Adult

An individual, seeking a more stable and fulfilling career, sought assistance from a Workforce Solutions Office for assistance. Recognizing the individual's skills and experience, the Career Services staff utilized WorkInTexas.com to identify a potential opportunity that was a match for the individual's background. With assistance in crafting a résumé, the individual secured an interview and was subsequently offered a full-time position with a comprehensive benefits package. This career change not only provided financial security and stability but also eliminated the need for multiple part-time jobs and reliance on plasma donation.

Adult

An individual was introduced to Workforce Solutions while being homeless and unemployed. Although the individual had a vehicle, they were unable to register it due to major mechanical issues. Through the Workforce Solutions Office, they were provided resources toward self-sufficiency, including car repairs. Through assistance with updating their résumé, the individual received an employment offer with Apple, as well as gas cards to travel to work. Ten months later, the individual was earning enough to purchase a home for their family.

Youth

An individual graduated high school unsure if they could gain the skills needed to thrive after high school. Their enrollment in the WIOA OSY program at a local Workforce Solutions Office changed their perspective and put them on the path to success through mentoring and training. Throughout their participation, the individual proved to be an exemplary program participant, which led to a work experience placement with a mechanic shop as an equipment operator. The individual's supervisor consistently praised their performance, which led to the individual being hired full time with the company. Today, the individual stands as a shining example of how the right support and opportunity can transform lives, propelling him toward a future filled with self-reliance and success.

Utah

Department of Workforce Services

Use of State Funds

Workforce Services supports many statewide activities. For example, statewide activity funds are used to disseminate the ETPL and promote information on program services, accessibility, employer services and success stories highlighting effective service delivery strategies. Funding was also used to conduct research and evaluation, customer surveys, program outreach and provide technical assistance to One-Stop partners to meet the goals of Utah's WIOA Plan. Other funded activities include supporting the SWDB, professional development opportunities for staff, monitoring services and administrative costs, such as finance.

The funds spent on the statewide activities have directly and indirectly impacted program performance. For example, Utah's quality control process includes a team of specialized reviewers called the performance review team. This team conducts monthly reviews of WIOA cases. The first type of review involves eligibility criteria. This review ensures that only eligible individuals enroll in a WIOA-funded program. These reviews help Workforce Services reduce findings from audits performed by the state auditor's office. The second type of review is a monthly random selection of all WIOA cases. These reviews monitor adherence to policies and provide targeted individualized training for staff.

The State's AJC partners and staff continue to receive support and necessary training on the partner referral system, which is another statewide activity. The system supports AJCs' ability to refer individuals to partners and track outcomes. The system is utilized by partners of AJCs, including all WIOA Core, required and additional partners. All staff can access information sheets for each partner program or service that display the partner's name and description, services provided, eligibility criteria, referral process and contact information. The partner referral system supports "warm hand off" referrals. The referrals are accepted by a partner and can be tracked. Partners can update their information in the system and offices are encouraged to use the outcomes recorded to continually improve the referral process. On-site community liaisons in each office facilitate the use of the system and provide support to partners located outside the office.

Under-served Populations

Choose To Work

The Utah State Office of Rehabilitation's Business Relations and Choose to Work teams collaborate to support Utah employers in hiring and retaining individuals with disabilities. Their extensive range of services includes employer training, technical support, and guidance on financial incentives available for hiring individuals with disabilities. Additionally, they provide recruitment assistance, placement support and OJT resources. The program is dedicated to expanding its reach to employers in rural communities, where access to these resources can be more limited. It also focuses on building partnerships with employers to create and enhance work-based learning opportunities tailored to students with disabilities. By fostering these connections, the program aims to improve career prospects and employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities across the state.

Re-Entry Partnerships and Services

Workforce Services allows employers to indicate in their job posting if they are willing to hire an individual with a criminal background. Employers can also choose to participate in the Federal Bonding Program and utilize the Work Opportunity Tax Credit. This federal tax credit is available to employers investing in American jobseekers who have consistently faced barriers to employment. Jobseekers can search for job postings where the employer has indicated they would hire someone with a criminal background.

AJC leadership meets regularly with the Utah Department of Corrections to coordinate services and build partnerships to assist individuals exiting incarceration. Additionally, they partner with their local criminal justice systems to provide services where appropriate.

Youth Partnerships

To assist youth facing homelessness in the Salt Lake County area, Workforce Services has partnered with Volunteers of America, Juvenile Justice and Youth Services to support the Youth Resource Center. Workforce Services staff are actively involved at the facility, offering in-person support through WIOA services and connecting to public assistance.

AJC staff partner with local education providers, Catholic Community Services resettlement agency supporting refugee foster care youth to provide WIOA services and share information on services available through Workforce Services.

Juvenile Justice Partnerships

Workforce Services has been building stronger partnerships with Utah's Juvenile Justice and Youth Services to streamline enrollments in WIOA Youth and identify service gaps. This includes regularly presenting information on WIOA services and youth resources to Juvenile Justice staff and youth clients. For example, one employment counselor partnered with local Juvenile Justice to provide services while the youth are still in custody. Juvenile Justice has coordinated with Workforce Services to allow employment counselors to meet with youth at youth centers and detention centers. Employment counselors help youth apply for WIOA, resolve barriers to enrolling in WIOA, connect to resources and begin building a relationship. Juvenile Justice invites employment counselors to attend weekly case staffing to provide wraparound services for youth.

Rural Area Outreach and Partnership

The Southeast area has made great strides in bringing services to remote communities where many customers are over 90 miles from the closest AJC. Some remote communities are part of the Navajo Nation. Workforce Services staff volunteer at events in these communities which includes helping with food distribution. During these events, staff share information on Workforce Services and develop relationships with the community and school partners. Building these relationships opens the door for Workforce Services staff to obtain access to community spaces and schools where they can meet with customers. Staff use laptops to provide services and help customers apply for UI, SNAP, WIOA and other public assistance programs. Some locations require staff to problem solve things such as helping customers connect to power, internet and providing services outside the facility. These efforts have resulted in Navajo youth and adults participating in WIOA services including youth employment

internships. The community centers and schools have asked staff to make regular visits. Workforce Services continues to improve access to services and grow trusting relationships with the Navajo Nation and rural communities.

Integrated Service Delivery

Adult Education Partnerships

Adult education works closely with partners to create programs for students that provide an entry into career pathways with opportunities to explore careers such as automotive technician, welding, engineering, business, transportation and healthcare. Adult education programs continue to work with employers to provide contextualized English language acquisition courses. These partnerships are timely, as the number of multilingual students and workforce needs continue to increase.

Additionally, adult education students succeed as programs collaborate with partner agencies to increase the resources available to students. For example, programs across the state have reached out to other agencies, such as the Utah State School of the Deaf and Blind and the Division of Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DSBVI), to ensure students with disabilities have access to needed resources. Recently, several students with visual and hearing impairments graduated from adult education because of these partnerships. The English Skills Learning Center (ESLC) and Granite Peaks Adult Education, in particular, have worked closely with DSBVI and Vocational Rehabilitation to develop curriculum that will meet the needs of students with disabilities.

Davis Adult Education started a new entrepreneurship course for students between 16 and 18 years old that walked students through the process of running a business. The entrepreneurship course incorporated project-based learning where students learned by running a freeze-dried candy business. One student said, “This class has definitely pushed me out of my comfort zone, but it’s also given me the tools to thrive in whatever I try to do. I’d say it’s amazing. I hope all future students here at Canyon get to experience this opportunity.”

Adult education continues to focus on accelerating students’ pathways through programs such as Integrated Education and Training and contextualized instruction. Adult education is also aligning instruction to the Personalized, Competency-Based Learning framework that aligns with adult learning theory and better meets the needs of individuals. Entrada High School focused on increasing student wellness services by partnering to provide mental health therapy, Dialectical Behavior Therapy classes and Positive Psychology classes. These additional supports provide students with skills to succeed inside and outside of the classroom.

Ogden Adult Education has opened their space to community partners such as Head Start, Community Health Clinic, Cottages of Hope and Suazo Business Center which provide financial literacy, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, a community library and a commercial kitchen open to the public. These partnerships provide additional resources for students and the community at large.

Yes WIOA Can

Virtual Job Fairs

Workforce Services offers virtual job fairs every other month available to all Utah jobseekers and employers who hire Utah residents. The job fairs allow jobseekers from across the state to gather in a virtual environment with employers to find and apply for positions. “Success at a Virtual Job Fair,” workshops are available before each job fair. These workshops provide tips and strategies for jobseekers to ensure they are able to effectively navigate the virtual job fair. Within the job fair platform, jobseekers can upload résumés and professional photos and track the jobs they applied for, and employer booths visited. They can type in a chat or talk with employers on video and search for employment by location and job title. Employers can highlight company profiles, provide links to videos, websites or webcasts, link to social networks, post online applications for open positions and hold on-the-spot interviews through video chat. Employers can view chat histories and view all jobseeker profiles and résumés of those who entered their booths for up to 10 days after the event. During the past year, over 4,300 jobseekers have connected with hundreds of employers through virtual job fairs.

An employer who attended the virtual job fairs stated, “Your virtual job fair is an excellent recruiting tool; I have hired several individuals from these events.”

Staff Development

A team of highly skilled program specialists support individuals and teams across the state to facilitate consistency, quality and accuracy in program delivery and performance across programs. Support includes targeted coaching for individuals and teams, ongoing training on policies and procedures, supporting staff with implementation of statewide initiatives and follow-up activities to assist in implementation. The program specialists partner with supervisors and managers in AJCs to help staff achieve performance outcomes and provide quality customer service. They also partner with state-level staff to identify strategies to improve performance measures and make recommendations for improving policies and procedures.

This team provides new employee training virtually and in person, individual coaching and mentoring. Over the past year, approximately 120 new and incumbent staff have been involved in new employee training, program-specific training or both. Staff training and development is a priority for Workforce Services to provide employees the opportunity to increase their knowledge and skills, as well as facilitate practices to help customers receive quality, consistent and effective services.

Work Experience

The Youth Employment Internship Opportunity program provides youth with short-term work experiences while earning wages. Internships provide youth with employability, workplace skills and soft skills required for the job. Internships provide the opportunity for youth to explore various occupations to assist them with more long-term career planning.

The OJT program is offered to youth and adult jobseekers. The program helps jobseekers who have the education needed to do the job, but lack the necessary work experience for the job, or who lack the credentials. Jobseekers receive OJT and remain employed after completion. The program provides opportunities for jobseekers to return to the workforce, increase their skill sets and become self-sufficient. Workforce Services facilitates a productive employer-employee relationship. This approach helps customers pursue a successful and meaningful career by using an individualized work experience placement strategy.

One-Stop Certifications

Workforce Services recertified the AJCs in Price and Provo, in addition to all affiliate offices this past year. This marks the third recertification for these offices. In addition, the Tooele office was recertified for the second time. The board members attending the certifications during the past seven years noted that the process seems to effectively support and strengthen partnerships across the state demonstrating improvements and expanded services to many of Utah's citizens who are most in need of assistance. Utah's SWDB members alternate participating directly in the certifications which provides members an opportunity to understand the WIOA partner work taking place in centers. It is particularly helpful for new members to help them better understand their overall role on the board.

Workshops

Workforce Services provides a range of professional development workshops designed to support jobseekers. Offerings include pre-recorded, in-person and live virtual sessions tailored to various employment needs. Pre-recorded workshops are accessible 24/7 to individuals registered in the UWORKS system on jobs.utah.gov, focusing on essential employment success skills. Topics include résumé writing, interviewing techniques, networking, job search strategies and workplace professionalism. In-person workshops are held monthly across various offices statewide. These workshops cover job seeking topics such as résumé writing, interviewing skills, job search strategies and LinkedIn essentials. Live virtual workshops address critical job seeking topics, including "How to Succeed at a Virtual Job Fair" and "Find a Job You Love." The "How to Succeed at a Virtual Job Fair" workshop is held the day before the Statewide Virtual Job Fair, which is held every two months, while "Find a Job You Love" is offered weekly. This latter workshop is available in partnership with Reemployment Supportive Services for UI claimants nearing the end of their benefits.

In PY23, Workforce Services conducted nearly 200 in-person and live virtual workshops, reaching over 5,000 participants statewide. These workshops equip individuals with the tools and knowledge needed to advance their employment and career goals.

Job Corps Partnerships

Workforce Services partners with Job Corps to refer eligible youth and provide career services to youth transitioning out of Job Corps.

A young woman in rural Utah came into an AJC seeking assistance with her eligibility case and job search. An employment counselor in the office assisting the customer found that she was trying to finish high school or get her GED. The employment counselor shared several resources and programs available through Workforce Services including information on Job Corps. The employment counselor is a Job Corps graduate and was able to share her personal experience with the program. The young woman was very interested, and the employment counselor connected her to a Job Corps recruiter. She was accepted into the program and is now at the Clearfield Utah Job Corps center. Her mother shared that her daughter is doing well, thanked the employment counselor for the referral to Job Corps and has been telling everyone she knows to come to Workforce Services to get help with their job search and connect with other programs and resources.

Other State Funds Activities

Not applicable.

Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

WIOA Services Evaluation

Workforce Services continued to implement projects developed as a result of the WIOA Evaluation finalized in spring of 2020. Workforce Services program staff, in collaboration with AJC managers, developed an action plan to build on successful program implementation behaviors and recommended program improvements, especially for youth. In PY23 the State implemented several action plan items.

Continuous Improvement

A contract was established with Dynamic Works to assist in increasing youth engagement. As youth are better served, improved outcomes are often achieved. Identified WIOA Youth employment counselors attended a three-part training to include topics such as mentoring, coaching, motivational interviewing, trauma informed case management, techniques to address barriers, connecting and engaging with youth and work experience. This training complements previous training received by employment counselors. Separate training on these topics was provided to leadership staff and department trainers. Ongoing sustainability meetings with leadership have been held to ensure that the skills learned will continue to be part of team culture. Resources and tools have been and will continue to be developed to support ongoing implementation of the learned concepts. This will also allow the information to be shared with new employment counselors and those working with the adult population. New employee training was updated to align with the additional techniques and tools that were learned as part of this training.

A workgroup created training for all employment counselors on careeronestop.org resources. This training increased counselors' ability to perform more in-depth career exploration with their customers and improved counselors' ability to crosswalk skills between different types of employment. The training was provided to employment counselors and is available as a refresher training to incumbent employment counselors.

Utah expanded the opportunities for leadership development across the state including participation in formalized programs (both in-person and virtual), but also allowed youth to write essays and engage in public speaking opportunities around topics that are of interest to them.

To respond to barriers with attending training due to not having reliable childcare, WIOA Program staff partnered with the Workforce Services' Office of Child Care. Workforce Services had previously implemented childcare benefits for customers in training if they were also working a minimum of 15 hours per week. In PY22, the Office of Child Care piloted an exemption for Employment Supported Child Care Benefits. If an applicant was enrolled in WIOA training services they would be exempt from the requirement to work a minimum of 15 hours per week and would receive childcare benefits while in training. In PY23 this

exemption was approved for ongoing implementation. Office of Child Care and WIOA employment counselors have worked together to assist WIOA participants with over $150,000 in Office of Child Care benefits.

During PY22, Workforce Services contracted with the Social Research Institute at the University of Utah to complete a data analysis of WIOA sponsored customers to determine if the training programs they participated in had a positive impact. For each program these questions were addressed:

- What were the completion rates and employment rates?
- Are there common programs or providers with success or failure rates?

This evaluation will be reviewed during PY24.

Reports

WIOA Services Evaluation

The evaluation found that 17 percent of youth customers not currently receiving mental health treatment felt that they needed assistance. During the last program year, Workforce Services braided funding and started having internally licensed clinical therapists provide mental health services to WIOA-enrolled customers. This year, a total of 109 WIOA participants were referred to Workforce Services licensed clinical therapists. The State also developed a youth-specific mental health workshop, Adulting 101. These workshops address healthy relationships, stress management, goal setting and physical and emotional health. This workshop was held twice in PY23 and had a total of 12 attendees. Workforce Services continues to explore other opportunities to support youth and adult mental health services in Utah including increasing mental health workshop attendees. The full report is available on the Utah SWDB website.

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

Providing Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) to In-School WIOA Youth Participants

Strategies

The State continues to use a waiver of the requirement to provide ITAs to OSY ages 18 to 24 enrolled in WIOA Youth. The waiver is used to assist ISY in maintaining focus on education and exploring career options that require post-secondary education. Having more youth interested and engaged in education leading to credential attainment allows the State to increase its supply of workers to in-demand industries and occupations. Workforce Services has been monitoring its progress in implementing the waiver to ensure Utah complies with waiver goals and meets measurable programmatic outcomes.

Impact on Performance

The data shows that Workforce Services is exceeding the requirements for OSY spending. By the end of PY23, 96.75 percent of WIOA Youth funds were spent on OSY and only 3.25 percent on ISY. A quarterly breakdown of ISY versus OSY expenditures indicates that OSY expenditures significantly exceeded the expenditure goal of 75 percent each quarter.

Utah maintains its ISY enrollments at a level that has supported the above indicated increase in OSY expenditures. At the end of PY23, only 133, or 8.83 percent of youth served were ISY, and a quarterly breakdown of enrollments shows a shift towards enrolling more OSY, as agreed upon in the waiver.

Out of the 133 ISY served in PY23, 24 youth were working toward obtaining a post-secondary credential. The remaining ISY were working on completing secondary school requirements with the intent to eventually enroll in post-secondary education. Three ISY attained a post-secondary credential and, so far, one obtained employment. The youth who started post-secondary training and did not complete still benefited from their exposure to post-secondary education and gained additional marketable skills. Out of six ISY who did not graduate, 50 percent obtained employment.

Out of the 133 ISY served in PY23, 16 youth were engaged in work-based learning. Seven youth were still participating in work-based learning at the end PY23, and out of nine youth whose work-based learning agreement ended in PY23, seven (77.78%) successfully completed their work experience program. The impact of connecting ISY to work-based learning was significant, as five out of the seven youth who successfully completed their work-based learning also obtained employment or enrolled in post-secondary education.

Workforce Services has maintained its partnership with the Utah Department of Health and Human Services, who oversees the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program and delegates the administration of the Education and Training Voucher (ETV) program to Workforce services to serve ISY who are preparing for post-secondary education. This federally funded program is designed to assist foster care youth, or youth who have aged out of foster care, with support needed to complete post-secondary education and obtain employment. Since most foster care youth are ISY, the waiver enables Workforce Services to serve this at-risk population and positively impact their ability to earn post-secondary credentials, enter the workforce and become contributing members of society. During PY23, the State served 60 ETV youth and five of them successfully completed the program and earned a credential. Additionally, 71.43 percent of ETV youth had their ETV enrollment closed due to income.

The waiver also positively impacted education providers on the ETPL, as they were not required to go through procurement in addition to completing the list requirements. This encourages providers to continue to be on the ETPL, benefiting both the ISY and OSY. The State continues to certify the education providers and monitor their performance.

Success Stories

Vocational Rehabilitation & Workforce Development: Collaboration for Success

Johnathan’s journey to overcome his substance use-related disabilities led him to a new outlook on life and opportunities. Referred to Vocational Rehabilitation by a community partner, Johnathan expressed his goal of helping others overcome

addiction. With support from his Vocational Rehabilitation counselor and a WIOA employment counselor, he secured transitional employment to gain stability and continue his treatment.

Vocational Rehabilitation and WIOA collaborated to fund his attendance in a peer support certification program and the purchase of a laptop. Vocational Rehabilitation also assisted with transportation and work clothing. After completing his certificate and maintaining sobriety, Johnathan obtained employment as a peer support specialist, eventually earning a promotion to facility manager.

Now, as a role model and advocate, Johnathan mentors others on their sobriety journeys. He credits Workforce Services for equipping him with essential skills in communication, conflict resolution and empathy-building, enabling him to effectively support and guide his clients.

WIOA Mental Health Services

One of Workforce Services' therapists provided therapy to a 41-year-old WIOA customer who was unable to access other resources for 14 months, with services ending in May 2024. He was struggling with issues related to his finances and his small business, as well as deeper clinical issues such as childhood trauma, family cultural issues, a recent divorce, time management skills and motivation. The therapist referred him to the Utah State Office of Rehabilitation and worked with his counselor there to help him get tested for ADHD and start on medication. She also helped him clinically; to work through some erroneous beliefs and fears he had concerning medication. Through their individual therapy sessions, the customer started enjoying successes with his small business and also found other employment that was appropriate for him. The customer had improved relationships with his parents. He has begun processing his divorce and has learned how to better communicate in relationships.

Apprenticeship

A customer came to Workforce Services in 2019 to apply for WIOA services. At that time, he had recently lost his job and was seeking assistance to become a computer programmer. During this time, he found another job but was again laid off in November of 2020. He came to Workforce Services with a high school diploma and work experience as a shop tech, digital pressmen, hydro blaster and customer service. WIOA assisted the customer with multiple technical certificates, and he completed his program in 2021. Following training completion, the customer began to search for employment but was unsuccessful. He was referred to Apprenti by his employment counselor, hoping to find employment as an apprentice in the tech industry. In September of 2022, the customer was accepted into Apprenti's apprenticeship program and began training as a cybersecurity analyst. He was placed with a large employer in the state for his on-the-job learning. In September 2023, he completed his apprenticeship program and was hired as a full-time salaried employee. He expressed gratitude to his employment counselor and is on his way to a stable career.

Adult Education

Ahmed arrived in Utah from Somalia paralyzed by a bullet to his spine. Confined to a wheelchair, he needed many resources: medical treatment, housing, job training and English lessons. His IRC caseworker connected him with the Asian Association of Utah where he began Level 3 English classes. Always grinning with a mischievous sense of humor and undimmed optimism about his future, Ahmed became the “youngest son” and mentee of one of our 78-year-old veteran students.

Transportation to school was a challenge, especially in winter, so his case worker searched for an electric wheelchair that would allow him easier access to the bus and TRAX. The wheelchair changed his life. Eight months later, his English much improved, Ahmed participated in a computer literacy program offered through a collaboration between the Workforce Services Refugee Services and Salt Lake Community College. He finished his computer training and is now working at Amazon. Ahmed often remarked about his unlucky but lucky life. Discussing what it meant to be lucky during class one morning, Ahmed said that he was unlucky a bullet found him, but lucky to be alive.

Foster Care Youth

Reagan enrolled in WIOA when she was aging out of foster care and a senior in high school. She lacked family support and was struggling with her grades and attendance. Her employment counselor provided mentoring to build her confidence and help her overcome barriers. Through completing career assessments, Reagan found she was interested in becoming a lawyer. Reagan graduated from high school and with the help of her employment counselor identified which college would help her get into law school. Reagan graduated with her associate degree in victim’s advocacy and bachelor’s degree in criminal justice. During summer 2024, Reagan participated in a WIOA Youth internship as an administrative law clerk for a local city while she prepared for law school that started in fall 2024.

Refugee

A refugee customer from Ethiopia, who speaks Tigrinya as her primary language, was unsuccessful in retaining employment. A workforce development specialist helped her find an OJT position working in the laundry department of a local motel. The available shift was mornings to early afternoons, which would allow her to balance work with her children’s school schedules. During a visit to the motel to see how things were going for her, the workforce development specialist noticed the instructions to operate the machinery were only posted in English and Spanish. He asked permission to make copies of the signs in her native language. When he returned to the motel and posted the signs in Tigrinya, her face lit up. She appreciates her new position and continues to work with her employment counselor on her long-term goals.

Single Mother

Kristin came to Workforce Services in September 2018. At the time, she was a single mother of three young boys, and just one year prior had lost her daughter. Kristen found herself unemployed and in need of financial assistance. Kristen was enrolled with Adult Education to complete her GED and knew she needed more education to attain a better job to support her young family.

Over the next five years she worked hard, despite setbacks, to complete her associate registered nurse degree. She graduated with a smile on her face and a job offer to work at a hospital in the sepsis and respiratory wing.

Foster Care Youth

John was referred to Workforce Services by the Division of Child and Family Services when he was a senior in high school and in foster care. At that time, he was working at a fast food restaurant and had been promoted to shift lead. John knew that he wanted to do more for himself financially by securing a career with a promising future. John graduated early from high school. After completing career assessments and doing some career exploration he narrowed his career goal to becoming a welder or electrician. Workforce Services identified an electrician employer who was willing to provide an internship opportunity to see if this would be the type of job he could see himself doing for the future. John met with the employer, and they seemed to click right away. John successfully completed his internship learning on-the-job and was retained by the employer as a full-time employee.

WIOA-Adult

Jessica participated in the Family Recovery Court program for the past two and a half years. She struggled due to a learning disability, trauma from childhood abuse and domestic violence in previous relationships. She also lost custody of her children. Jessica worked diligently through all of her challenges to get and remain sober, obtain housing and regain the custody of her two children. An employment counselor assisted Jessica with job seeking skills, provided mock interview opportunities and feedback on soft skills necessary to maintain employment. With the help of her employment counselor, Jessica has been working in retail for almost three months and was recently promoted to assistant store manager. Jessica has attained and utilized the tools, support and involvement in the recovery community to continue moving toward her goals.

WIOA Youth

A WIOA Youth customer with a disability was searching for a job after receiving support from WIOA to complete Information Technology certifications. The youth had no previous work experience. A workforce development specialist and an employment counselor found a suitable placement for the youth customer to complete a WIOA Youth employment internship. After completing his internship successfully, the youth's supervisor advocated with the company to keep the youth in an OJT work experience to continue developing his skills as a system administrator, network administrator, system security and system inventory control.

Single Father

A single father applied for WIOA to receive CDL training because his current employment did not pay enough to meet the needs of his family. He completed the training program and found employment working for a local construction company as a CDL driver. He is now financially stable, works close to home and supports his daughter.

Single Mother Yvelise is a widowed, single mother of ten-year-old twins who relocated to the United States from the Dominican Republic. She was struggling to obtain employment and applied to WIOA for assistance. Her employment counselor spent time

with Yvelise working on job search skills including completing an application, résumé writing, references and interviewing. Due to her hard work and friendly personality, she was referred to an open position with Workforce Services as an employment counselor in another office. Yvelise was hired and is doing a great job supporting customers. Yvelise stated, “For me, it is more than an honor that my story can be used as an example. I hope it will be an inspiration to others.”

Veteran

John applied for WIOA when he was laid off after working 14 years in the information technology field. John had served in the U.S. Marine Corps and was eligible to work with a Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist. The DVOP and employment counselor assisted John with career exploration in a new career path as a Mechanical Engineering Technician. Through collaboration with a workforce development specialist, John was placed in OJT opportunity with an automation company. He completed his OJT and is now earning $30 an hour. John is now enrolling in training to obtain an automation technology certification.

TANF

Jane had been enrolled in the Family Employment Program (TANF) for seven months with minimal participation. She needed support for her mental health, criminal background and lack of motivation, and because she had moved in with her brother after losing her apartment. Jane received mental health services and worked with her employment counselor to find transportation and resolve immediate needs. She was co-enrolled with Vocational Rehabilitation and began training to be a phlebotomist, where she excelled as a model student. Upon completion of the program, she obtained full-time employment paying $20 an hour. Jane has been promoted and she has secured a new apartment for herself and her children.

Vermont

Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL)

Use of State Funds

Under-served Populations

No information provided for this section.

Integrated Service Delivery

No information provided for this section.

Yes WIOA Can

The funds also pay for a portion of the salary and benefits of various staff engaged in provision of technical assistance to state entities and One-Stop partners, or who are engaged in improvement of coordination of activities in the workforce system, or who are engaged in development of staff working in the system. The Workforce Board's One-Stop Operator contract is also paid out of these Reserve funds.

Procurement for New CRM - Ongoing

Vermont completed a Request f or Information and Request for Proposal process during PY21 to solicit proposals from vendors who could improve the VDOL's information management system, including its case and customer management system, job board, financial tracking system, and information display platform. The State's Reserve funds aided in the identification of system requirements and the articulation of an improved future state for VDOL's management information system. This system will disseminate information about eligible and non-eligible training providers, work-based learning and training experiences. These include registered apprenticeship opportunities, best practices in employer recruitment, hiring, and retention. Additionally, it includes toolkits for employers and training providers to ensure accessibility, both physical and programmatic, for individuals with disabilities.

There have been many challenges related to the selected vendor. The VDOL is currently in the recovery phase of the project and is actively working toward securing a vendor to advance the initiative. The State will continue to use America's Job Link Alliance until a replacement system is procured and implemented.

Other State Funds Activities

Not applicable.

Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

No information provided for this section.

Continuous Improvement

No information provided for this section.

Reports

No information provided for this section.

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

The State had no waivers in place during PY23.

Strategies

Not applicable.

Impact on Performance

Not applicable.

Success Stories

Adult

Sean’s Journey to Employment Through Community Support and Training

Sean, a disabled veteran and father of six, was referred to the VDOL by the Unemployment Division after being laid off from his job as a laborer. Living in a rural area without a valid driver’s license due to multiple infractions across several states posed a significant barrier to his employment prospects.

To address this challenge, Sean worked closely with his VDOL Employment and Training Consultant, who coordinated a collaborative effort with multiple partner organizations, including the Department of Motor Vehicles, Community Restorative

Justice Center, veteran support organizations, and the Vermont Judiciary and County Court. Through their collective support, Sean successfully had his driver's license reinstated.

While participating in the WIOA program, Sean pursued three occupational skills trainings: Small Engine Repair, Introduction to Automotive, and Broadband Network Construction. He also gained hands-on experience through a work placement with a local auto mechanic's shop.

Today, Sean has overcome his barriers and is thriving in unsubsidized employment with a local HVAC and plumbing company, exemplifying the transformative power of dedication, training, and community partnership.

WIOA Adult Participant

> "At probably one of my life's most critical moments, and when other systems were failing, Vermont Workforce Development counselors, stepped up and truly helped me. Both the counselor's sincerity of care and consistent follow through, despite the pressure of present day challenges, deserves recognition."

Youth

CDL Success

Sawyer began his journey with VDOL, facing challenges in completing his school credits. Through determination, he entered a work experience program that not only helped him earn those credits but also to develop foundational workplace skills. His dedication, resilience, and enthusiasm impressed his employer, leading to an OJT opportunity with the same organization. This transformative experience boosted his confidence and self-esteem, enabling him to thrive. Sawyer proudly earned his high school diploma, secured full-time employment, and achieved a major milestone by acquiring his CDL-B license.

Youth

At just 19 years old, Skyler had a clear goal: he wanted to become an electrician. With a high school diploma earned and some summer work experience as a dishwasher and supermarket cashier, Skyler's determination was evident. However, turning his aspirations into reality required guidance and support Skyler was referred to VDOL by the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC). Recognizing his eligibility for WIOA as a member of a priority population from an economically disadvantaged household, VDOL quickly stepped in to help Skyler take his first steps toward a promising career.

With VDOL's assistance, Skyler secured an apprenticeship with a local electric company. This opportunity marked the beginning of a hands-on journey in the electrical trade. Skyler excelled in his first year of apprenticeship training. Now, he continues to be an apprentice with the same company and is enrolled in his second year of apprenticeship classes.

VDOL provided critical support along the way, helping Skyler with essential resources such as books for his coursework and car repairs to ensure reliable transportation to training and work.

Skyler's journey is a testament to the power of determination, the value of community support, and the impact of personalized workforce development. His future in the electrical trade shines brightly, thanks to his hard work and the resources and guidance he received through VDOL.

In Skyler's own words:

> "I'd like to say that VDOL has been very helpful, and I am glad for the year that VDOL has been working with me! They put a lot of effort and time into your success! They also help you when you don't have the time for certain things—they put in the extra effort and time for you! When you have your mind set on something, VDOL does not disappoint and will put you on the right track, no matter the circumstances!"

Testimonial: Overcoming Addiction and Rebuilding a Life

> "If you would have asked me a couple of years ago how I saw myself in the future, I would have said dead or in prison. Because eventually, that is where most drug addicts like me wind up. It's a harsh reality most people in my situation don't want to admit. That all changed when I entered the VFOR program, which helps people like me who struggle with addiction. Not using it is not enough. They helped me reset my life. Making plans and setting goals for a more productive life is one way in which they do that. It was recommended to me to set up an appointment with [VDOL]. I met with the Vermont Dept. of Labor and HireAbility of Vermont. It was life changing! I had no real training or trade experience. My jobs up to this point were mostly dead-end jobs with no real future. But with the help I got from VDOL, HireAbility and ICAN, I was able to get my CDL and look forward to having an actual career, not just a job. They enrolled me in a scholarship program which not only paid for my schooling but helped me with clothing and transportation costs as well as financial help to pay for housing while I attended school. These are all things I could not have afforded on my own. They helped me not only with finances, but with their guidance, encouragement, and emotional support. By the time an addict finally reaches out for help, they are usually at the end of their rope. Their life's in a dark pit. The Department of Labor together with HireAbility made a way out of that pit for me! I am forever grateful for their help. I graduated in Nov 2022 with my CDL. Within a few weeks I was employed for seasonal work driving a tri-axel [sic] truck for an excavating company. Before the season ended, I landed a job driving for a long-haul waste removal company. I now take home more money in a week than I used to in a month! I am happy with my career choice and have a great future to look forward to thanks to their help! It is wonderful to know that opportunity is out there, even for people in situations like me!"

Virginia

Virginia Career Works

Use of State Funds

Under-served Populations

SW Virginia Childcare Support

With seed funding provided by the State, United Way of Southwest Virginia, in partnership with the New River/Mount Rogers WDB and the Southwest Virginia (SWVA) WDB, will address regional challenges with Ready SWVA, a multi-million-dollar initiative to increase labor participation by addressing access to childcare. Expended $509,296.

Integrated Service Delivery

VOEE Virginia Skills Initiative

Develop an Alumni Career Data Set and a Virginia Supply Side Skills Data Set. Expended $950,502.

Yes WIOA Can

VEC Workforce Transformation

To optimize workforce readiness for the State's current and future jobs, the State seeks to improve how workforce development programs are managed, delivered, and measured to better equip Virginians with the skills they need, elevate their experience of getting and remaining employed, and increase their earning power. Expended $3,267,744.

Career Technical Education High School Innovation

The Career Technical Education High School Innovation Grant is a two-year planning grant to develop and expand opportunities for secondary students to earn post-secondary credentials and a high school diploma simultaneously. The initiative will support partnerships between a local school division, post-secondary institutions, business and industry, and workforce and economic development entities. Students will be provided with a sequence of courses that start in grade nine and culminate in the attainment of a high school diploma and associate degree in up to five years. The initiative will include authentic work experience, mentorships and internships designed to prepare students for a career in an identified career pathway. Expended $387,551.

AJC Security

Provides funding to support security personnel at Comprehensive AJCs and AJCs that have a Virginia Employment commission physical presence. Expended $23,158.

Workforce Innovation Grant

These funds will support innovative service delivery approaches. Funds will be targeted on getting individuals back into the workforce in economically distressed areas of the State that have an unemployment rate higher than the statewide rate and a poverty rate higher than the statewide rate. Expended $598,978.

HR Strong

WIOA State Set-Aside funds are being provided over an 18-month period for advanced training in shipbuilding, ship repair, offshore wind, and skilled trades workforce development in Hampton Roads in support of increased Navy ship construction, repair, modernization, and maintenance programs, the Coastal Virginia Offshore Wind project, and Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel expansion project. Expended $259,465.

Statewide Grants

These five Set-Aside funding grants, including Supplement Opportunity Grant, Soft Skills, Technical Skills Development, Transportation to Learn, and Youth Marketing and Outreach Development, were targeted to assist the Workforce Boards to increase the number of participants in workforce development training activities statewide, with a specific focus in work-based learning activities, including but not limited to OJT, Registered Apprenticeships, internships, and customized training. The training activities must lead to job placement in demand occupations. Expended $774,374.

Other State Funds Activities

Not applicable.

Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

Virginia's Workforce Delivery System

For many years, the State's workforce delivery system functioned as a decentralized system, with responsibility for the State's workforce development system, comprised of nearly 60 programs, spanning across more than 12 agencies, 9 secretariats, and 14 WDBs. As a first step, effective July 1, 2023, the new state agency Virginia Works was established to consolidate workforce development efforts across the state.

Administrative responsibilities for Title I programs, Title III Wagner-Peyser employment programs, and Registered Apprenticeship programs are now housed within the new agency. This will enable centralized, informed-decision making and create a nation-leading workforce ecosystem hub that proactively connects jobseekers, employers, educational institutions, and government services.

Metrics Journey

As part of the Virginia Works "metrics journey," staff are engaged in an effort to collect metrics across programs involved in workforce development at the statewide level to understand program activity and performance. The effort is:

- ✓ Program-focused—not individual or cohort-focused—as in, the State is gathering overall program data around activity during each reporting period, not tracking cohorts of participants over time.
- ✓ Intended to set baselines only after one full year of data collection.
- ✓ Focused on measuring individual program performance over time—not performance relative to each other.
- ✓ It is not longitudinal—as in, it does not track cohorts of participants and their outcomes over time.
- ✓ It is not gathering individual participant outcomes over time.

The point of having a wide array of workforce development metrics, arrayed in dashboard formats, is to help Virginia executives make decisions that benefit workforce customers—individuals and businesses—which ultimately helps make Virginia the best place to live and work in America.

Workforce Development Customer Discovery Report

In April of PY23, the State contracted with the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) to conduct a Workforce Development Customer Discovery Report. Virginia's workforce agencies worked with BCG to begin collecting qualitative and quantitative data on individual and employer understanding of how workforce services are delivered in the state with a focus on the formal workforce system and community colleges. This effort promoted surveys and focus group opportunities for jobseekers, employers, and workforce practitioners to share their perspectives and insights on Virginia's workforce system. The initial phases of this effort were conducted throughout the end of PY23 and included the VEC, Virginia Works, Adult Education, DARS, DBVI and many other state, local, and private sector partners.

Continuous Improvement

When the State's workforce delivery system gets fully implemented, Virginia Works will enhance service delivery and embrace several key operational characteristics including the opportunity to:

- ✓ Adapt to the accelerated pace of change.
- ✓ Prepare for the demands of tomorrow's workforce.

- ✓ Reimagine the delivery of critical skill-building.
- ✓ Redefine workforce preparedness services.
- ✓ Transform the delivery, message, and measure the success of the workforce programs.
- ✓ Optimize workforce readiness.

Transition to the new agency has been both a complicated and exciting venture. Program workstreams were established and monitored as part of a huge “lift and shift” set of activities to stand up the new agency. The level of inter-agency collaboration and partnership has been remarkable.

In addition, existing law and regulation require that large volumes of workforce development data be collected and reported to federal and state agencies. However, the State is already working to develop a simplified reporting system to better determine the level of progress being made quarterly and annually across all WIOA partners on key indicators, including:

- ✓ How many customers of the system got jobs?
- ✓ Which system programs are leading customers to getting jobs?
- ✓ How long those individuals remained in those jobs? and
- ✓ What were the wages of those jobs?

Reports

Workforce Development Customer Discovery Report

The work of this study is to be completed in PY24 and therefore the conclusions will be a part of next year’s report.

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

The State did not receive any waivers for PY 2023.

Strategies

Not applicable.

Impact on Performance

Not applicable.

Success Stories

WIOA-Adult

The Central Virginia WDB in Lynchburg has successfully supported more than $27,000 in training provided to incumbent workers at four businesses in Virginia's LWDA VII over the past nine months. Each of these employers took advantage of WIOA Title I funding to support their upskilling efforts after engaging with The Central Virginia Business Services Team. Each employer learned about Incumbent Worker Training funds as part of a broad menu of services provided through the One-Stop workforce system. As a result of this successful outreach, the upskilling of 20 workers was supported with $20,525 in WIOA Title I funds provided by the Central Virginia WDB, with matching funds provided by each employer.

WIOA-Youth

Staff of the WIOA Title I program in Virginia's LWDA VII connected with a high school student in Bedford County, VA, who was interested in pursuing carpentry as an occupation after graduation. This student was evaluated and determined to be eligible for support under the WIOA Title I program. After enrollment the student told his Case Manager/Career Navigator that he had a specific interest in working for Wright Choice Construction, a family-owned business that specializes in custom home building. The Case Manager notified the Business Services Coordinator, who then reached out and worked to build a relationship with the owner of Wright Choice Construction. After several phone conversations and an in-person interview with the client, the owner of the construction business agreed to host a work experience. One challenge that had to be navigated was the fact that the business owner was only willing to host a work experience during hours that the student would be attending class at his high school. The student, eager to begin learning about his chosen occupation, agreed to complete his work experience during a two-week break from classes in December. Upon completion of the work experience, the business owner was so pleased that he gave the student a standing offer to come work for him full time, once he graduates from high school in May, at a salary of $20 per hour.

WIOA-Adult

A Farrier's job is physically demanding. Contorting oneself into a pretzel under a 1,100-pound horse for several hours daily can leave even the fittest person with aches and pains.

Savannah always wanted to have a career as a Farrier. She knew she needed advanced training, so she researched training centers all over the country. She landed at the Oklahoma Horseshoeing School in Purcell, OK. The Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) could help her with room and board expenses, but she would need help with tuition. Her DARS Representative contacted SWVA Works' Tazewell County Workforce Specialist, Lisa Hubbard. SWVA Works is funded by the

SWVA WDB's WIOA grant. SWVA Works paid her tuition, and while she was there, she also completed work readiness skills training activities remotely to earn incentive payments. At the end of eight weeks of training, she earned a workplace-recognized credential, and she returned home to Tazewell County, ready to start her own farrier business, but where would she begin?

SWVA Works helped her with small business entrepreneurship training, and DARS helped her with marketing ideas for getting business cards and a business logo. She worked with her Workforce Specialist, Lisa Hubbard, to get supplies, but shoeing horses also needed a reliable truck to haul an anvil and forge. How could she get a truck for her business when she was starting out? Lisa told her about a "Cars to Work" program that the SWVA WDB had available from Tazewell County ARPA funds. Savannah applied and was approved. Staff found her a used Chevrolet Colorado truck with affordable payments for two years.

SWVA Works partnered with other agencies to help Savannah reach her career goal of becoming a Farrier. Now, she can provide farrier services in all surrounding counties.

When asked how SWVA Works assisted her in her career, she stated,

> "Southwest Workforce has helped me with my business in so many ways. They sent me to Oklahoma Horseshoeing School for 8 weeks, and I got my professional horseshoeing certification. They helped pay for my tools, which was a blessing because I didn't need just my tools; I had to have chaps, a hoof stand, a forge, and an anvil. They also gave me a class on how to maintain and manage my own business. They helped me get my truck, which has had no issues, and has gotten me counties away from home to shoe horses. This program has given me many opportunities to meet new people and work on some amazing animals."

WIOA-Adult

Brittany is a mother of four children; she and her husband both work full time, but Brittany wants to do more. The first year of Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) training at the Buchanan County Career and Tech Center (BCTC) has a flexible schedule, and she can work as a Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) and complete training at that same time, but it is not easy. It is a 60-mile round trip just to get to the BCTC. She knows the second year will be even more difficult, with having to travel for clinical training and being unable to work as many hours as possible. Brittany knew she could complete the training, but financially, she would need help paying tuition and the additional travel expenses. When BCTC held LPN interviews, Brittany saw SWVA Works WIOA Workforce Specialist Mike Elswick talking with students. She picked up a brochure and his business card and made the call. Mike enrolled her in the SWVA Works Adult WIOA program. She was able to get tuition and travel assistance. Brittany is grateful for the assistance and can complete her second year more easily while working fewer hours. Becoming an LPN will allow her to contribute more to her family.

Washington

Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (WTB)

Washington State Employment Security Department (ESD)

Washington's LWDBs

Use of State Funds

Under-served Populations

Economic Security for All (EcSA)

EcSA is a poverty reduction program that aims to help participants, namely those experiencing poverty, reach economic self-sufficiency. It launched in 2019 in four pilot areas. In 2021, Governor Inslee expanded EcSA to seven more regions. In 2022, state general funds were dedicated to the program giving additional local flexibility and making EcSA a statewide program. The program was codified by the legislature into law in 2024, ensuring that EcSA will continue to support participants for years to come.

EcSA brings multiple programs together at the local level to help people move out of poverty. EcSA partners with Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and focuses on serving participants that qualify for SNAP benefits and people at risk of experiencing poverty.

Promising developments

- Free college: Employment Security and the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) finalized a partnership that offers EcSA participants automatic income eligibility through Washington College Grant – Connect. This automatic eligibility allows participants to begin pursuing training and academic pathways without completing a Washington Application for State Financial Aid (WASFA) or Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
- Demonstrated success: Independent third-party evaluator, Social Policy Research, indicates:

  "While in many workforce development programs most participants tend to return to their pre-participation earnings level, EcSA completers' post-completion earnings appear considerably higher than their pre-participation levels, with median quarterly earnings increasing by 71 percent. The reason for this appears to be the ability of EcSA to switch participants' employment from lower paying to higher paying jobs."

Significant performance milestones

- EcSA exceeded all statewide enrollment, training, and self-sufficiency goals.
- Helped 844 people reach self-sufficiency, with a median annual income of $42,300.

- EcSA is helping 4,751 people statewide achieve and maintain self-sufficiency. 85 percent of them had annual incomes below $9,860 when they enrolled.
- Total cost for the most recent single year was $11,194,234, including federal and state funding.

Integrated Service Delivery

Career Connect Washington

Career Connect Washington legislation passed in April 2019, along with significant funding to begin implementation. Program builders create, manage, and scale specific career-connected learning programs. To date, 151 unique program builder proposals have been funded, 121 of which were funded by WIOA statewide activities funds allocated by Governor Inslee. During PY23, at the direction of Governor Inslee, 23 proposals were competitively selected, totaling $3.9 million of PY23 WIOA Title I Statewide Activities funds. These program builders will provide professional services to industry, education, and workforce partners to assist them is building, scaling, and enhancing career connected learning programs. These programs will provide access to training, credentials, and career opportunities for populations with barriers to employment in the advanced manufacturing, agriculture, automotive, construction, healthcare, hospitality, information technology, maritime, and life sciences sectors.

Industry and philanthropic leaders from the private sector provide critical feedback on CCW work. This helps ensure that industry voices are represented throughout the system.

The U.S. Department of Commerce awarded $23.5 million of Good Jobs Challenge funds to the Washington Student Achievement Council to support sector-based CCW program expansion. DOL awarded $5.6 million of Apprenticeship Building America (ABA) funds to ESD to develop new registered apprenticeship (RA) and apprenticeship preparation programs. Implementation of both projects began in earnest during PY23. Through the Good Jobs Challenge, CCW Sectoral Partnerships (many of which are led by LWDBs) will train 5,000 Washingtonians and place more than 3,150 into good jobs. ABA is on track to support the development and expansion of more than 20 RAs and 10 recognized pre-apprenticeships.

Five years of WIOA Statewide Activities investments by the Inslee Administration has grown CCW from a Governor's initiative into a comprehensive system supported by state appropriations and numerous federal grants. The approach could be a promising practice for states seeking to scale public and private investment in work-based learning programs to better meet the needs of both young adults and industry.

Yes WIOA Can

No information provided for this section.

Other State Funds Activities

Not applicable.

Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

Net Impact Study

The WTB, per its statute, conducts the net impact and cost-benefit evaluation of Washington's workforce development system every four years. The study uses a control group to evaluate workforce training participants' outcomes. Prior studies were contracted to third parties at considerable expense. The most recent study was done in-house and completed in 2021. The next net impact study will begin in 2025.

The findings inform—in direct quantitative terms—the attributable economic impact of various workforce development programs. More frequent and consistent evaluation of these programs will help economic recovery and future workforce development planning efforts.

All programs evaluated in this study have a positive earnings and employment impact directly attributed to program participation for individuals on average within three years of program exit. Other influencing factors, such as race, education, employment history, and prior earnings, are constant. The remaining net impact is due to program participation itself. Using the net impact findings, it is then possible to use average program costs per person and calculate a program's cost-benefit.

Most programs achieve a measurable positive taxpayer return on investment (ROI), with programs breaking even within that same three-year observation period. However, there are several important considerations. For example, many program benefits are unobserved or intangible. Increased personal satisfaction, social justice, civic engagement, crime reduction, public health, and economic multiplier effects are linked to public investments in education and training. Public costs, such as consumption of welfare benefits, may also be reduced following program participation, which is not accounted for in this study, except for UI and Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income for vocational rehabilitation program participants. For more detail see the *2021 Net Impact and Cost-Benefit Evaluation of Washington State's Workforce Development Programs*.

Workforce Training Results

Workforce Training Results is an annual evaluation of Washington state's workforce development system, studying outcomes of participants from 12 workforce development programs, using a standard set of performance measures. The evaluation uses a data comparison approach to answer this question: Are training programs providing opportunities and positive outcomes? The report describes the demographics and employment outcomes of each population and participant. The evaluation includes representative programs from all four WIOA titles.

ESD Program Evaluation

Employment Security's program evaluation team within the Labor Market Information and Research Division conducts several program evaluations and research projects. These programs tend to benefit WIOA program participants. The evaluations are:

- RESEA Evaluation

- Agricultural and Seasonal Workforce Services Customer Experience Study
- Opioid Disaster Relief Dislocated Worker Grant Evaluation
- The Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Program Evaluation
- Impact Evaluation of Increasing the Minimum Weekly Benefit Amount
- Economic Security for All (EcSA) Evaluation Summary
- Partners for Reentry Opportunities in Workforce Development (PROWD)

Continuous Improvement

Workforce System Matrix

Some of the work of the Net Impact Study feeds into WTB's Workforce System Matrix. For example, the program ROI is updated and used in this product.

Reports

Workforce System Matrix

Summary of Washington's key workforce development programs.

Workforce Training Results

The Workforce Training Results report also includes measures such as hourly wage and hours worked. For the most recent report, the State produced Workforce Training Results reports for the following programs:

- Programs for adults including community and technical college, job preparatory training, private career schools, apprenticeship, and a state-funded worker retraining program at community and technical colleges and WIOA Dislocated Worker services.
- Programs serving adults with barriers to employment including adult basic education, WIOA Adult services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Services for the Blind, and TANF WorkFirst.
- Programs serving youth, including secondary career and technical education and WIOA Youth services.

RESEA Evaluation

The Phase 1 Report assesses RESEA services delivered in 2022. It shows that, on average, being randomly assigned to receive RESEA services:

- Increased the probability of a claimant being employed in the first and second quarter after their claim by 2.4 and 1.7 percentage points, respectively.
- Increased a claimant's earnings in the two quarters following their claim by $842.93.
- Reduced the amount of UI benefits a claimant received by 0.78 weeks or $435.75.
- Decreased the probability that a claimant would exhaust their UI benefits by 2.7 percentage points.
- Increased the probability that a claimant utilized additional WorkSource services by at least 24.3 percentage points.

Subsequent work will include analysis of data from 2023 and 2024. The final report is expected in 2025.

Agricultural and Seasonal Workforce Services Customer Experience Study

The final report contains recommendations for improving Employment Security's agricultural recruitment system, thereby improving the recruitment and hiring experiences and outcomes of agricultural employers and workers. The ASWS Advisory Committee provided input and feedback throughout the study. The first phase of the study was funded by Washington state funds. The second phase was funded by a federal grant via the Washington State Department of Agriculture. In SFY24, evaluation staff spent $210,707, including the cost of the contract.

Opioid Disaster Relief Dislocated Worker Grant Evaluation

The initial Opioid Evaluation Report was published in January 2022. It found that the augmented services offered through the opioid program improve career outcomes for recipients more than if they had received WIOA Dislocated Worker grant services. The second Opioid Evaluation Report was published in October 2023. It assessed whether opioid grant training and service funds are associated with better intermediate outcomes, such as service completion. The research compares program participation and outcomes for dislocated workers served by the opioid program in multiple quarters in 2022 and 2023 to the outcomes of dislocated workers served by the opioid program in multiple quarters in 2019 and 2021. The evaluation team conducted the second stage of evaluation in partnership with PacMtn.

Impact Evaluation of Increasing the Minimum Weekly Benefit Amount (MWBA)

The 2023 Report documents how the MWBA increase resulted in shorter possible claim durations for some MWBA recipients. The ESD Government Relations team is responsible for delivering this report. The Unemployment Insurance Advisory Committee provides feedback throughout the process.

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

The State did not have any waivers in process during PY22.

Strategies

Not applicable.

Impact on Performance

Not applicable.

Success Stories

Olympic Workforce Development Council

- WIOA Title I – Youth Pathways
  One young man enrolled in the program after struggling to complete high school and support himself. With program support, he transitioned to on-line school and secured an internship with Habitat for Humanity. After gaining valuable experience and earning his high school diploma, he found full-time employment, earned a management position, and achieved self-sufficiency.

  Another participant connected with the program after release from juvenile detention. With guidance, she secured employment and earned her GED. Now enrolled in the Welding Program at Peninsula College, she maintains excellent grades and is on track to graduate in 2025 as a certified welder.
- WIOA Title I – Adult and Dislocated Worker
  After the pandemic, Jhon left retail and took an entry-level position at a clinic, aspiring to start a medical career. Realizing that advancement required further training and certification, he sought assistance at WorkSource Sequim. With support from WIOA and WorkSource staff and Peninsula College, they were able to cover educational costs and he was able to enroll. After 10 months of study, Jhon said,

  “I am a proud, nationally Certified Phlebotomist and a Washington state Certified Medical Assistant. I could have not [sic] done this successfully without WIOA, the Sequim office team and the Peninsula team. I am forever grateful. Thank you for changing my life and providing for a brighter future for me and my family.”
- WIOA Title I – Adult and Dislocated Worker
  Alejandra is a single mother and full-time student who struggled with balancing part-time work, school, and childcare, and faced financial hardship and mental health challenges. The WIOA program helped her with childcare assistance and financial incentives eased her transition into a better job. She made the dean’s list, was invited to join the honor society, and will graduate with honors. The support of her WIOA caseworker was especially motivating, providing encouragement and accountability throughout her journey. She expressed deep gratitude for the WIOA program and staff’s unwavering support.

- WIOA Title I – Adult and Dislocated Worker
  Patrick attributes the program's financial and career support to their ability to pursue educational and career goals in environmental science. With financial aid from WIOA's QUEST program, they returned to college to work toward a degree in forestry. This assistance has not only alleviated financial stress but also enabled them to focus on studies, volunteer work, and job training. WIOA covered food and transportation expenses, allowing participation in medical appointments, professional development, and outreach initiatives. They expressed deep gratitude for their Case Manager, whose mentorship and support have been invaluable, inspiring them to achieve their goals. The program provided guidance on financial management and continues to play a vital role in helping them take tangible steps toward a fulfilling career.

Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County

- WIOA-Adult - Shuab's Journey to Stability
  After arriving in the U.S. in December 2023, Shuab, a 38-year-old refugee from Afghanistan, faced unemployment and relied on food stamps to meet his basic needs. Despite these challenges, he came with an associate degree in business administration and certifications in basic accounting and digital literacy from his home country. With the support of his career specialist, Shuab accessed critical job search services, including résumé writing, mock interviews, and job referrals.

  Shuab secured full-time employment as a Ramp Agent at Sea-Tac Airport, earning $20.50 per hour. His journey was further supported by transportation and rent assistance, allowing him to focus on securing stability and self-sufficiency. Shuab's success is a testament to the power of coordinated, holistic support in transforming lives.

- WIOA-Dislocated Worker - MD's journey to stability
  MD, a single mother of two, approached the WIOA Dislocated Worker program after exhausting her unemployment benefits. Facing eviction and struggling financially, MD worked closely with her Case Manager to refine her résumé and prepare for job interviews. With the help of rental assistance and other support services, she secured a role as an Executive Office Administrator at Boeing, stabilizing her financial situation and providing a brighter future for her family. MD's story illustrates the program's ability to transform lives by offering targeted, individualized support.

- WIOA-Youth - Construction Manufacturing Pathway
  A youth referred to the Port of Seattle's Construction Manufacturing program was dealing with homelessness and had dropped out of school. With the support of a Case Manager, the youth enrolled in job training, re-engaged with school, and secured stable housing. He is now on track to graduate in December, works part time near the airport, and receives a stipend for his participation in the program, demonstrating a clear path to long-term stability.

- WIOA-Youth - Oscar's Determination
  Oscar faced language barriers and the challenges of adapting to a new environment after immigrating from Uganda in 2023. He completed job readiness training and an internship but struggled to pass his social studies test, taking it eight

times. On his ninth attempt, he succeeded, and with the support of his Case Manager, Oscar enrolled at Renton Technical College to pursue a business degree. His perseverance exemplifies the transformative power of the program.

- WIOA Business Services - Upskilling at Kaiser Permanente
  The Workforce Development Council's (WDC) Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) program supported Kaiser Permanente in upskilling 17 ophthalmic assistants over 12 weeks. The program helped employees prepare for the Certified Ophthalmic Assistant exam, resulting in a $2.38 per hour wage increase for those who passed. Their job titles were upgraded to certified ophthalmic assistant, while the backfilled positions were sourced through WDC partners, demonstrating the positive ripple effect of upskilling efforts.

WorkForce Central

- WIOA-Youth
  KG was experiencing homelessness and unemployed when he enrolled in the Young Adult program. He was seeking assistance in getting back to work and finding a career pathway he would enjoy. During his time in the program, KG received labor market information services, supportive services, and completed a paid work experience. He is now working as a Security Guard in Seattle, was able to locate housing in Seattle, and hopes to advance in the industry.
- WIOA-Youth

  "My name is Jabez Manuma. I graduated from this 15-week program on May 1, 2024. This was an opportunity I never thought I'd be able to experience. I loved it! I was the only female in the class and that made me even more proud! This program taught me leadership skills, mentorship, communication on a construction site, being mentally prepared for physical challenges and knowing my limitations. I got the chance to be a part of something that not only helped me find my desire for work, but a future career that can set me and my family up for success. Thank you to Palmer Pathways and the mentors that I met there. I am so lucky that I found this life changing program. I am currently working as a flagger using my certification."

SkillSource Regional Workforce Board

- James
  After serving three years in prison, James was released and motivated to make a better life for himself and his family. He was referred to SkillSource by Wenatchee Valley College for assistance with tuition and other expenses for the Automotive Technology Program. State EcSA incentives and food assistance from Washington State Department of Social and Health Services helped him to stay in class and maintain a 3.69 GPA. James was hired by local employer Pat Armstrong Ford before graduation, and he will complete his Associates of Technical Science degree in fall 2024. "James is very enthusiastic and willing to tackle any task he is assigned. He is punctual, always on time and ready to work. He is dedicated to continual progress—both personal and professional—to advance in his career," said Charley Wyatt, service manager at Pat Armstrong Ford.

- Darlene
  In February 2024, SkillSource received a donated car from a member of the Wenatchee community. SkillSource used supportive service funds to get the donated car road-ready so it could be passed along to a participant in need of transportation to get to work and training. Single mother Darlene attended a SkillSource job fair and was connected with the Hiring Manager for Armada Corp., a local collection agency. Shortly thereafter, Darlene was hired to train on the job. SkillSource worked with Armada on a training plan and provided Darlene with support services, including appropriate work attire and connections to housing and other resources. The SkillSource staff in Moses Lake unanimously recommended Darlene as the deserving recipient of the donated car. The entire Armada team came out to the parking lot to celebrate as SkillSource board member Ken Johnson handed her the keys in front of her new workplace. Darlene now has the means to transport herself to work, to support her children as they grow, and to continue confidently on her road to success.
- Antonio and Estephan
  When Antonio came to SkillSource, he was not working and was experiencing homelessness. Despite financial, family, and health obstacles, Antonio set goals to earn his high school equivalency and then worked diligently to successfully complete pre-employment training workshops and two work experiences with SkillSource. In October 2022, Antonio earned his high school equivalency and was ready to pursue a career path in pharmacy education. Antonio was offered a customer service position at Walgreens where he could also train to become a Pharmacy Technician. After completing in-house training and certification as a Technician Assistant, Antonio went on to enroll in the Pharmacy Assistant Program and is on track to complete it by the end of the year. Antonio's success served as an inspiration to his younger brother, Estephan. At 16 years old Estephan entered SkillSource's Youth Program, attended pre-employment workshops, and successfully finished work experience. After completing high school, he was offered a customer service position at Walgreens and now works alongside his brother.

South Central Workforce

- WIOA-Adult - Deylene's Story
  Deylene, a determined single mother, was struggling to make ends meet while living with her parents when she came to our subcontractor for help. Despite the challenges she faced, she had a dream—to become a Substance Abuse Counselor and help others break free from addiction. With a history of justice involvement due to substance abuse, she knew firsthand the obstacles that could stand in the way of her success.

  She shared her aspirations with her Career Development Counselor, Michele. Michele enrolled Deylene in the WIOA Adult and state EcSA Below 200 percent programs, setting her on a path for a brighter future.

  Deylene enrolled at Yakima Valley College, excelling academically, and advocating for those battling addiction. She was even elected president of the campus Wellness Society club!

  Thanks to supportive services and the Community Reinvestment Project (CRP) Career Accelerator Incentive, Deylene found the financial stability necessary to provide for her son and attend school. In May, she graduated from Yakima Valley

College and now works full time as a counselor at Merit Resources, living her dream of helping others overcome addiction.

- WIOA Adult - Omar's story
  Omar's journey is a testament to resilience, determination, and the power of opportunity. Omar faced multiple barriers: low income, single parenthood, basic skills deficiency, justice involvement, and a lack of occupational skills. His career development counselor enrolled Omar in the WIOA Adult, state EcSA Below 200 percent, and federal EcSA programs. Omar enrolled at Perry Technical Institute pursuing an associate degree in Information Technology and Communication Systems.

  Family issues forced him to pause his studies, but his determination brought him back the following quarter. Although he was working part time at Panera, he still needed help making ends meet. The CRP Career Accelerator Incentive proved to be a lifeline. It helped Omar cover rent and provide for his daughter. It even allowed him to quit his part-time job in his final quarter and focus fully on his externship.

  Omar's commitment paid off! He graduated in June and is now employed full time as a Network Operations Technician at Ziply Fiber Internet.

- Additional Success Stories
  - Damien's story
  - Cheyenne's story
  - Casey's story

Benton-Franklin Workforce Development Council

- WIOA-Youth – Lee
  Lee is a 19-year-old who dropped out of high school. Lee needed their GED, employment services and post-secondary education guidance. Lee co-enrolled in the Open Doors program and obtained their GED while enrolled in both Open Doors and OSY. Lee was assisted with career guidance, labor market information, GED services and post-secondary schooling explorations. Lee obtained part-time employment as a janitor for Pacific Clinic, making $16 per hour. Although this job is only part time, this is exactly the supplemental income and employment they need to pursue their main goal of attending post-secondary education at Columbia Basin Colleges (CBC). Lee has a passion for films and would like to pursue a degree in film editing. Lee was able to participate in a paid Internship with Stevens Media Group (SMG), a radio company, where they learned filming, video editing, and voice over methods. Lee gleaned much from their experience at SMG and plans to participate in an internship there while in college. Lee made such an amazing impression on the team at SMG, the staff reached out to their case manager with high praise feedback. Lee wrote the SMG a thank you letter, which showed their gratefulness and professional maturity. Lee is enrolled at CBC taking classes towards an Associate of Arts degree and film classes. They plan to finish up 1–2 years at CBC, then move onto Central Washington University.

During their time of enrollment at TC Futures, Lee was able to obtain their GED, gain employment, and enroll in post-secondary education. They are well on their way in their personal, educational, and professional journey and we could not be prouder of them.

- WIOA-Youth – Alexander
  Alexander is a 21-year-old enrolled in the OSY program, and needs his GED, training, and employment opportunities. Upon enrollment, Alexander faced multiple employment barriers, including an education barrier, disability, being homeless, being justice-impacted, and low income. While enrolled in the program, Alexander was provided labor market information services, financial literacy, support services, and GED, attended job fairs and other workshops, attended driver's education, learned about post-secondary education requirements, and attended occupational skills training. Alexander completed his GED quickly after only 11 days of studying and tested in all subjects in one day. Alexander was originally interested in becoming a cook, but after attending Future Fest, he became interested in construction.

  Alexander soon entered training and completed his flagger certification card, which led to him finding full-time unsubsidized employment with Palouse Power as a flagger after only five weeks in the program. Alexander could also move back in with his family and overcome his homelessness barrier after he and his family successfully lobbied the courts to drop restraining orders due to his success and commitment to change.

  Alexander soon faced his background barrier again after being hired by Palouse Power after his background check returned. Alexander was already a high-performing employee, so his Foreman spoke with the owners, who decided to keep him employed. Flagger work can be seasonal, so Alexander has already talked with his employer about becoming a Lineman with support from Palouse Power. Alexander also believes in giving back to his community and doing whatever he can to keep others from making the same mistakes that he did. Alexander has started volunteering for the Tri-Cities chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI Tri-Cities) as a presenter for their Ending the Silence program designed to educate middle to high school-aged students, school staff, and families about mental illness and drug addiction with a focus on awareness, prevention, and reducing the stigmas associated with them. Alexander successfully exited the program earning $25 per hour.

West Virginia

WorkForce West Virginia (WFWV)

Use of State Funds

Under-served Populations

Region I excels in providing work experience opportunities for youth and adults. Through partnerships with local businesses, the region offers OJT and short-term employment opportunities, equipping participants with real-world skills and professional networks. Programs like Transitional Jobs address barriers to employment, delivering weekly career and employability skills training and offering job search support upon program completion. These initiatives have proven transformative, especially for youth transitioning from education to the workforce.

Integrated Service Delivery

Region IV engages actively with local industries, participating in quarterly meetings with West Virginia University of Parkersburg in the automotive and IT sectors. They are also expanding focus areas to include healthcare, clean energy, and recovery center employers through forthcoming National Dislocated Worker Grant opioid funding. To better understand employer needs, WDB Mid-Ohio Valley is conducting a mass survey to identify trends in training and hiring requirements. Outreach efforts include presentations at chamber of commerce meetings and employer forums, where businesses learn about WIOA programs and share their workforce needs. A dedicated Business Engagement Team, comprising WIOA partners and resource agencies, meets quarterly to coordinate services and address hiring and training needs. Additionally, Career Specialists work closely with business owners to connect them with WIOA Youth program services, including paid work experience and OJT.

Region VI prioritizes seamless coordination between its WDB and the West Virginia State Department of Commerce. By aligning state and local resources, the region maximizes training cost coverage for employers. A pivotal step in 2022 was the introduction of a Community Outreach Coordinator who has enhanced business connections, participated in economic and civic meetings, and led the Region VI Business Service Team. These efforts have improved employer referrals and ensured that services meet local business needs effectively.

Yes WIOA Can

Region VII employs a sector-focused strategy to align workforce training with industry needs. The region’s Employer Advisory Council, which includes leaders from healthcare, manufacturing, and retail, guides the development of relevant programs. Notable achievements include IT certifications and expanded apprenticeships in healthcare and HVAC. The region’s work-based learning programs, including paid internships and transitional job placements, have prepared participants for permanent roles. Incumbent worker training programs have further supported local industries by reskilling employees, improving retention, and fostering career advancement.

Together, these regions exemplify a dynamic and collaborative approach to workforce development. By addressing specific industry needs, enhancing outreach efforts, and delivering innovative training programs, they are creating a robust pipeline of skilled workers while supporting the economic vitality of their communities.

Region III has successfully integrated sector strategies into the monthly Frontline Unity Network (FUN) Meetings. These meetings serve as a collaborative platform where WFWV invites employers from various industries to engage with community organizations/partners that work hands on with individuals upgrading their skills and seeking sustainable employment opportunities. Employers share insights on what they look for in candidates, areas of concerns in workforce, the skills needed for success, opportunities for career growth, and long-term trajectory within their organizations. This engagement helps the teams align workforce development efforts with industry needs.

In collaboration with the State Apprenticeship and Training Representative, Region III aided Charleston Property Restoration (CPR) with navigating the process of establishing a Registered Apprenticeship. Region III also connected CPR with funding opportunities and resources under WIOA. Through a successful hiring event held at the Kanawha County AJC, CPR selected several apprentices who were funded under an ITA and OJT.

By leveraging resources and networks, Region III assisted CentiMark Corporation with outreach and several hiring events to attract a qualified talent pool. These successful events offered employment to 36 jobseekers in a high-demand field, earning a sustainable wage.

Other State Funds Activities

In PY23, Rapid Response (RR) resources and services were provided to dislocated workers by in-person meetings, mailing informational packets, and email communications. Based on completed questionnaires, follow-up with workers was a key component to ensure services and referrals to partner agencies were provided in a timely manner. In addition, the State RR office consistently monitors news articles, company websites, and unemployment management reports to capture both small and large dislocations.

Information on potential layoffs continues to be an on-going process with collaboration from the Governor’s Office, Economic Development Office, local RR Coordinators, Business Services Representatives, Partner Agencies, and AJCs to identify statewide layoffs.

When in-person RR meetings are conducted, tables are set up for partner agency representatives to meet with workers individually to answer questions. Providing this one-on-one interaction has been highly successful because it allows workers to access services and resources immediately such as health plans, retirement options, résumé writing, and interviewing techniques. RR meetings always include a WIOA/TAA representative and a Business Services Representative to discuss key components of their programs and review possible employment opportunities.

During PY23, the State Business Services team held job fairs in conjunction with the RR meetings to promote employer/jobseeker engagement and make the transition back to the workforce less stressful. A monthly Virtual Job Fair

implemented in October 2022 continued throughout the 2023 period as another venue to promote employer/jobseeker interaction. Over 10,000 jobseekers and 1,300 employers attended with 8,000 job postings, and 5,600 résumés were submitted in 2023. The Virtual Job Fair is discussed at all RR meetings and included in all informational packets.

The RR State Office continued to work with the Economic Development Office and the Business Services team to work with employers prior to a layoff. Business Services Representatives attended quarterly meetings with the Economic Expansion and Retention teams to address employers' individual needs and offer resources. Moving forward, the Economic Development and RR State Offices will prioritize a more collaborative and communicative process to address employer needs and concerns.

Evaluations

PY23 has seen WFWV enter a transitional period with several new staff members replacing veteran members who have retired or moved on to new opportunities. This has afforded WFWV the opportunity to take a fresh look at all its policies and practices and to reassess their effectiveness moving forward. WFWV's primary means of evaluation has been the standard WIOA performance metrics, and while these are effective indicators of the effectiveness of the workforce development system broadly speaking, they do not properly evaluate every aspect of the system. WFWV is in the process of developing some new strategies around evaluation to be more in line with the goals set out in the State Plan, and to address the findings laid out in the April 2022 CAP.

Activities and Methodology

Independent Annual Financial Monitoring for Each Subrecipient

While this is a practice that WFWV has always done, efforts have been made during PY23 to standardize and streamline this process and to make it more collaborative. If the independent monitoring agency identifies an area of concern, WFWV is working with the LWDA in question to provide technical assistance to address the issue and making proactive technical assistance available at their request if they feel more assistance is needed outside of the area identified in the monitoring.

EvalPLC

The State has applied and was accepted into the EvalPLC program. While the State was involved in the project previously, the goals and objectives of the state have changed significantly so they have reevaluated how best to take advantage of this opportunity and will be working towards developing a new set of evaluation metrics focused on determining the effectiveness of the collaboration with their partners and the consistency of service delivery across West Virginia's entire workforce development system. West Virginia's EvalPLC group consists of WFWV employees along with representatives from the Governor's office, the LWDAs, WV Adult Education, and WV Division of Rehabilitation Services.

Continuous Improvement

Periodic Programmatic Review

In PY23 WFWV formed an internal review team that periodically reviews case notes, performance metrics, and cash requests for each of the LWDAs to identify deficiencies before they become larger compliance issues. Each region will be given a comprehensive review annually, along with quarterly spot checks to individual programs within each region. The intention behind these reviews is to identify opportunities for technical assistance proactively, to increase each region's effectiveness in serving its participants. Additionally, this process allows WFWV to compare technical assistance needs from region to region, allowing WFWV to tailor its trainings to more specifically fit their needs. So far, this unit has been able to identify several areas of concern before they were able to evolve into larger issues and have provided in person technical assistance to several of the regions as a result. The primary goal of this unit is to work collaboratively with the LWDAs to ensure compliance with all appropriate regulations and to enhance their effectiveness wherever possible. The LWDAs have been very open to this process, and WFWV has had a very positive response and full cooperation so far.

Reports

No information provided for this section.

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

WFWV did not have a waiver in place for at least one program year.

Strategies

Not applicable.

Impact on Performance

Not applicable.

Success Stories

Adult

Mr. Lewis, a former Detroit native who faced years of incarceration due to past choices, made a resolute decision during his last prison term to break free from the cycle. At 53 years old and with limited skills, Mr. Lewis committed to learning new skills to open doors to livable wages. J. Hensley of BridgeValley Community and Technical College played a pivotal role in Mr. Lewis' journey, guiding him to obtain his CDL, a crucial step that immediately expanded his possibilities. Through the support of M. Austin, the Region III AJC Manager, Mr. Lewis connected with several employment opportunities through MACC, eventually securing a position with the WV Department of Transportation. Recognizing Mr. Lewis' need for ongoing support, the Region III WDB, EnAct

Community Action, and BridgeValley CTC collaborated to address overdue expenses, paving the way for Mr. Lewis to thrive in his newfound freedom. Mr. Lewis, now relishing 16-hour shifts, exclaims, “I can do this all day, and I get paid to do it.” His drive extends beyond personal success, as he is determined to give back to the community and guide young individuals away from the mistakes he once made.

WIOA-Dislocated Worker - Garrett

Garrett began receiving unemployment benefits after a complete company closure in the coal mining industry left him with no opportunities for reemployment. As a father of two, he sought assistance from the WIOA program to pursue his interest in obtaining his CDL through Fred Eberle Technical Center in Buckhannon, WV. Garrett successfully completed his course and passed his exam to earn his Class A CDL, along with several endorsements. He then visited the Elkins One-Stop Center, where his career planner assisted him in crafting an outstanding résumé that highlighted his safety experience from working in the mines. After applying to multiple companies, Garrett was hired locally as a Class A Driver to haul heavy equipment. While most companies typically require over-the-road driving experience, a local employer recognized Garrett’s dedication and strong safety background and offered him the position.

Garrett expressed his gratitude for the monthly follow-ups, which provided him with motivation and valuable ideas. He specifically thanked his career planner for going above and beyond in helping him start his career path on the right track. He stated he would not have been able to achieve this success without the support of WIOA.

Adult

Amy is a young woman from Clay County who joined Career Connections after graduating high school. She first met her Career Specialist during a Career Fair at Clay County High School and later visited the office to enroll. During enrollment and testing, it was determined that Amy was basic skills deficient and functionally illiterate. She was unsure of her career pathway and needed to obtain her driver’s license. Amy also struggled with self-confidence and motivation.

With the support of her Career Specialist and the program, Amy was able to earn credentials through Adult Education and gain work experience at Taylor Tots Childcare Center through a paid work experience placement. She attended skill-building workshops and participated in the Entrepreneurial Camp. Although Amy became overwhelmed and was unable to stay for the entire camp, she maintained her commitment to building a relationship with her Career Specialist and working towards her action plan goals.

Amy continued improving her literacy skills through Adult Education and participated in various career and college exploration workshops. During the summer of 2024, she completed another work experience with Legacy Foods in Clay County. The owner, Duane Legg, initially expressed skepticism when Amy arrived, commenting, “When she walked through the door, I wondered what Mary Beth had done to me.” However, he decided to give Amy a chance based on his trust in the Career Specialist. Despite a previous brief and unsuccessful employment experience with Amy the year before, she excelled this time, completing her work

experience and becoming one of Duane's top employees. Amy has arranged to work for Legacy Foods during summer and college breaks.

Amy was also referred to the WV Division of Rehabilitation Services, and together, the three agencies collaborated to help her overcome her barriers. She is now completing her first semester at WVU Potomac State. Amy saved money earned during her work experiences to purchase a car, which has allowed her to drive herself and her roommate to college. According to her Career Specialist, Amy has gained the confidence to participate in campus activities and clubs and has made a few new friends.

Wisconsin

Department of Workforce Development (DWD)

Use of State Funds

Governors have the authority to reserve portions of their state's WIOA allotments as a Set-Aside (or "Governor's Reserve") for statewide workforce development activities or to invest in their highest workforce development priorities. These activities include both required and allowable uses under WIOA.

Under-served Populations

FlexRide

DWD granted funds to Employ Milwaukee to support the FlexRide Milwaukee project. This overarching project was primarily funded through a $4.2 million Workforce Innovation Grant (supported by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)) to the lead agency MobiliSE. The project introduced workforce transportation services throughout the metro Milwaukee area by expanding the FlexRide Milwaukee program into surrounding communities, positioning high quality childcare centers in Milwaukee as "workforce mobility hubs" to connect underserved populations with transportation to and from employment. The Governor's Set-Aside funding provided supportive services to FlexRide participants, including transportation fare reduction and childcare cost assistance.

Integrated Service Delivery

Winning with Wisconsin's Workforce

DWD, together with the State's 11 local WDBs, are using a portion of the Governor's Reserve funds to host statewide Winning with Wisconsin's Workforce events to educate and engage new partners on talent attraction strategies, apprenticeship opportunities, and other resources. These forums are provided at no cost to the attendees and are designed to bring regional business and workforce system partners together to discuss economic and labor market opportunities, resources, and innovative solutions to meet a variety of workforce needs. The 2024 event series showcases state and local resources, training programs, and grant opportunities and cover topics including youth employment, artificial intelligence, and innovative ways to attract, develop, and retain top talent development programs.

Yes WIOA Can

Creation of Governor's Workforce-Focused Task Forces

- Governor's Task Force on the Healthcare Workforce
  In January 2024, Governor Evers established the Governor's Task Force on the Healthcare Workforce by issuing Executive Order #220. He charged the task force with gathering and analyzing information and producing an advisory

action plan for the 2025–27 state budget consideration. From March to August 2024, the Task Force heard from healthcare experts and leaders, analyzed labor market data, and produced an advisory action plan for the Governor's review and consideration. In total, the task force adopted ten recommendations with 26 action items representing a variety of policy and implementation approaches aimed at addressing issues such as education, training, recruitment, and retention of healthcare workers. These recommendations will help to move Wisconsin forward with sustainable solutions to retain, attract, and train talented workers to address the workforce challenges in a high-demand, priority industry. Governor's Reserve funds were used to obtain technical assistance, expert services, and other support for the work of the task force.

- Governor's Task Force on Workforce and Artificial Intelligence (AI)
  In PY23, Governor Evers signed Executive Order #211, creating the Governor's Task Force on Workforce and AI. Envisioned as a mechanism to adapt and equip a workforce capable of capitalizing on the generative AI transformation, creation of the governor's task force set in motion a comprehensive effort to help harness the evolving technologies and strengthen the State's workforce for the 21st century and beyond. The work of the task force culminated in an advisory action plan that was adopted in July of 2024 that offers specific policy proposals based on the collaborative work of the task force and the expertise of leaders from education, government, workforce development, economic development, and the business community. Themes of the policy proposals reflect the need to expand digital literacy; develop more flexible training and credentialing; continue efforts to remove employment barriers and connect underutilized talent pools with AI skills; improve government service delivery through strategic deployment of AI tools; and incent industry adoption of AI tools to enhance competitiveness and create high quality jobs. Governor's Reserve funds were used to obtain technical assistance, expert services, and other support for the work of the task force.

DocuSign

For the fourth consecutive year, DWD has used Governor's Reserve funds to provide grants for Wisconsin's LWDBs to obtain DocuSign licenses. This small amount of money has a large impact in allowing for the expansion of virtual and hybrid service delivery, as well as reducing the administrative burden.

Wisconsin Center Expansion

DWD granted funds to Employ Milwaukee. to expand an innovative program initially funded through a Worker Advancement Initiative Grant (supported by ARPA). This project offers limited term, paid work experiences for Residence Preference Program (RPP) certified participants with contractors Gilbane Construction/CG Schmidt on the Wisconsin Center Expansion worksite. These participants gain construction skills training and career exploration provided by WRTP/BIG STEP and TradeSMART training, in addition to the paid work experience opportunity.

Worker Connection Program Best Practices

The Worker Connection program is funded with ARPA funds and is piloting strategies in Milwaukee County (Workforce Development Area 2) and the Bay area (Workforce Development Area 5) that may be adapted by WIOA Title I and Title III

programs. Specifically, Worker Connection is piloting the use of targeted outreach, one-on-one career navigation services, and WorkAdvance training. The Worker Connection program has been able to reach underserved populations such as individuals who are justice-involved, homeless, and long-term unemployed. DWD is now shifting from the pilot program phase of Worker Connection and taking the lessons learned from the ARPA-funded project and incorporating them more broadly into the state workforce system by using Governor's Set-Aside funds to integrate the best practices into day-to-day operations.

Other State Funds Activities

Not applicable.

Evaluations

WIOA law focuses on evaluation activities that both go beyond measuring performance and includes or informs WIOA Title I programs. Evaluation efforts that meet these criteria are highlighted first within this section. Performance related activities and evaluation efforts of other WIOA title programs and partners are reported after these targeted highlights.

Activities and Methodology

Comprehensive Employment Planning Toolkit (CEPT)

The CEPT Employment Plan pilot was a joint effort by the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD)'s JVSG, TAA, and WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs to use the same electronic employment plan tool developed in the CEPT application available through the Division of Employment and Training's Application (DET APPs) portal. The CEPT includes the following tools:

- Employment Plan
- Action Steps List
- Economic Self-sufficiency Calculator
- Budget
- Community Resources Search
- Links to career exploration and labor market information (LMI) data through WisConomy

WIOA Evaluation Peer Learning Cohort (EvalPLC) Customer Feedback Loop Foundational Fact Finding

Wisconsin participated in the 2023 WIOA EvalPLC. The aim was to improve coordination of Wisconsin WIOA evaluation activities, specifically to learn ways to improve customer feedback loops to better assess program effectiveness and increase customer satisfaction. The Wisconsin EvalPLC workgroup included all WIOA Title programs as well as partners from TANF, SNAP, apprenticeship, and a regional One-Stop Operator. The group shared current customer feedback practices and gathered

information on customer feedback loops from the research literature, other states, and federal partners. The group found that it's important to plan for customer feedback, include feedback throughout the entire process, and incorporate feedback in an iterative process, while also adjusting feedback loops based on collected feedback.

Support to Communities Evaluation

National evaluator Abt Associates, in partnership with the non-profit MDRC, is evaluating Wisconsin's Support to Communities (STC) grant. Evaluation activities include knowledge development, implementation study, analysis, reporting, rapid review of grantee materials, clarification calls, structured video interview, site visits, in-depth interviews, surveys, administrative data collection, document implementation approaches, challenges, and successes. Evaluators share information/feedback during project implementation for reflective practice. MDRC has coordinated with DWD to complete phone and written surveys with all five STC sites and appropriate DWD staff. MDRC did on-site visits with WDAs, 6 and 11 in June 2023, and conducted a virtual visit with DET. Topics covered included project context, grant background and goals, management/staffing, and partnerships. The period of performance for this evaluation is four years and began September 2020. Final reflection calls were completed in spring 2024, with the final report to be completed in 2025.

Worker Connection Evaluation

The Worker Connection program was funded with ARPA funds and piloted strategies that may be adapted by job centers and WIOA Title I programs. Specifically, Worker Connection piloted the use of targeted outreach, one-on-one career navigation service, and WorkAdvance training. Worker Connection began enrolling clients in March 2022, and since then, Worker Connection career navigators have connected to 743 unique community-based organizations and 71 percent of enrollments are due to these connections. Targeted outreach included 488 partnership events, client referrals, and promotions via the Worker Connection website, flyers, and other sources. Through this multifaceted approach, the Worker Connection program has been able to reach underserved populations such as individuals who are ex-offenders, homeless, and long-term unemployed. As of June 2, 2024, 3,378 participants have been enrolled in the Worker Connection program. The 3,378 participants include 61 percent ethnic or racial minority, 28 percent single parents, 15 percent self-identify as having a disability, 17 percent homeless at entry, 24 percent justice-involved, 27 percent not employed for 27 weeks or more at entry, and 33 percent believed to be overqualified at most recent job (underemployed).

Career navigators used evidence-based, human-centered coaching strategies, including rapid engagement, motivational interviewing with a trauma-informed lens, and guide clients through the discovery process, including developing a personal positive profile and identifying conditions of work. As of June 2, 2024, career navigators guided 70 percent of Worker Connection clients through a personal positive profile to identify interest, skills, and abilities and conditions of work to better match participants with local jobs using labor market information (LMI), and 61 percent of participants with a positive profile were employed after enrollment. Career navigators also provided 21,811 services and helped participants connect to 7,448 services from partner organizations. In addition, 641 participants enrolled in WorkAdvance training across 22 training programs including healthcare, manufacturing, construction, transportation, and IT including exploring new high-tech areas in AI.

Worker Connection is also conducting a process evaluation in partnership with the University of Wisconsin Center for Education Research. The evaluation will help further identify the key outreach, career navigation, and training services that lead to improved employment outcomes. The research plan aims to develop a fidelity model for replication and sustainment of improved employment services within job centers and partner programs, and training services within WIOA and partner programs, including how WorkAdvance training can inform training programs available through WIOA Title I programs through the ETPL.

Career Pathways Advancement (CPA) Evaluation

Wisconsin's CPA Initiative is funded by the U.S. Department of Education's (DE) Rehabilitation Services Administration Disability Initiative Fund. Wisconsin's initiative uses career pathways for career advancement, with the aim to improve employment outcomes for people with disabilities and connect vocational rehabilitation consumers to high-quality, high-demand, local jobs. In addition, the grant aims to increase the number of people with disabilities who connect to trainings in manufacturing, construction, digital technology, and healthcare career pathways. The CPA project evaluation, a partnership between DWD staff and University of Wisconsin (UW) researchers, goes beyond DWD's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (WIOA Title IV) consumer services and outcomes to include WIOA title partners including WIOA Title I, II, and III. The evaluation includes co-enrollment across WIOA title partners to encourage coordination of career pathways services.

RESEA Evaluation

In Wisconsin, the RESEA program is administered by DWD's Bureau of Job Service (WIOA Title III Wagner-Peyser). The Bureau of Job Service contracted an outside evaluator, Actus Policy Research, to conduct a confirmatory impact, exploratory, and process/implementation analysis. Random assignment started April 2022 and continued through the fall of 2023. During this time, 48,110 UI claimants were enrolled and randomly assigned to one RESEA meeting (29.4%), multiple RESEA meetings (29.5%), and no RESEA meetings (41.1%). Researchers completed three annual evaluation reports and have determined random assignment is indeed random and enrollment numbers are projected to be sufficient to detect differences between groups. So far, researchers found participants with one or more RESEA meetings had a higher access to job counseling services, as well as statistically significant decreases in the number of benefits weeks UI payments were collected, the benefit amount collected, and the proportion of claimants with exhausted benefits.

Title IV Evaluation

In addition to the Career Pathways Advancement evaluation, Wisconsin's WIOA Title IV, Division Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), continues to engage in evaluation activities in data partnership with the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and Department of Health Services (DHS), with the aim to track and monitor competitive integrated employment (CIE) for individuals with disabilities who receive publicly funded community services. The most recent data is available on the CIE website.

WIOA Title II Action Research

Each year, the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) Office coordinates evaluation of its programming and services. During the 2023–24 fiscal year, the WTCS Office conducted an evaluation of its Integrated Education and Training (IET)

programs. Each Title II provider is required to offer or provide access to IET programs. Over 30 Wisconsin IET programs were available to Title II participants during fiscal year 2023–24 and over 700 Title II participants accessed at least one IET program.

A quantitative study was conducted to investigate the relationship between participation in IET and a series of shorter-term, interim, and longer-term student outcomes. Research methods included the use of propensity score matching, logistic regression analysis, and sensitivity analysis.

Continuous Improvement

CEPT

State staff and researchers surveyed staff and customers to learn more about their experience using CEPT. Customers reported positive experience using the tool to identify their employment plan, action steps and services, and resources to reach their employment goals. Surveyed staff reported concerns with the time it takes to use the tool and noted specific concerns regarding the technology and related policy. State staff have used these reported experiences to improve the tool and the related policy to ease use and complement positive customer experience with CEPT.

WIOA EvalPLC Customer Feedback Loop Foundational Fact Finding

The next phase planned for this effort is for the EvalPLC workgroup to develop a Customer Feedback Iterative Guide on gathering customer feedback. The intention is for the guide to provide examples of short/fast actions and longer, more involved approaches that could be used for different situations (gathering ongoing feedback or getting specific feedback on a new and/or targeted process). The guide would also include details on how to collect information from a wide set of consumers to avoid survey fatigue and to understand a variety of experiences—such as the different perspectives of individuals who actively use program services and those who do not. Further, the guidance will include information on how to combine customer feedback with other data (performance, administrative, stories), and provide guidance on how to use information gathered to address feedback (i.e., close the feedback loop). The aim will be to use the customer feedback to improve services and outcomes.

Career Pathways Advancement (CPA) Evaluation

During the next component of this evaluation effort, researchers will determine if these career advancement strategies lead to increases in wages, hours worked per week, and employer benefits; and decreases in public benefits.

Labor Market Information (LMI) Research and Reports

LMI staff continue to provide support to maintain the DWD Career Pathways website, so jobseekers can navigate labor market information as they explore occupations in 16 career clusters by education level. The website provides career pathway examples with local hot jobs and links users to local trainings for each occupation, apprenticeship opportunities, as well as information about the occupation on the Job Center of Wisconsin's Skill Explorer, which has been updated to reflect the resources and features on the DWD Career Pathways website.

Title IV Evaluation

DVR is also partnering with the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee to implement changes based on the findings from focus groups with Milwaukee consumers. These focus groups provided recommendations on improved outreach, and they engage with local adults with disabilities looking for support to get a job, keep a job, or get a better job.

Reports

CEPT

Findings have been posted on the WDIS website for local WDB and other partners to reference.

Assessing Effectiveness of Co-Enrolling in WIOA and Partner Programs

Wisconsin WIOA Titles I, III, and IV staff partnered to publish a research article titled *The Influence of Demographics and Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) Employment and Training Services on Employment Outcomes for Teenagers Receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and their Parents*, published in the Rehabilitation Counselors and Education Journal. The research article explains how WIOA Title IV services provided by DWD's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation were associated with higher employment rates and Promoting Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income (PROMISE) services were related to improved wages. WIOA Title I and III services were associated with even higher employment rates and wages. More specifically, youth receiving SSI were 5.5 times more likely to be employed if they received WIOA Title I Youth services, whereas their parents were 13 times more likely to be employed if they received WIOA Title III (Wagner-Peyser) and WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker services. Parents' maximum quarterly wages were $3,000 more after receiving WIOA Title III, Wagner-Peyser services and WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated services. Youths' maximum quarterly wages were $2,000 higher after they participated in a youth apprenticeship. In looking at categories of WIOA Title I and IV services, the analyses showed that Job Center of Wisconsin (JCW) self-services, Title I Youth and individualized services, and case management were associated with higher wages. Overall, the study showed that WIOA Title I, III, and IV services together resulted in better employment outcomes than for those that did not receive services, providing evidence to support continued collaboration.

Given that research has demonstrated improved employment outcomes when individuals co-enroll across WIOA programs and partners, Wisconsin WIOA partners use co-enrollment reports to assess prevalence of WI WIOA co-enrollment and discuss additional partnership opportunities. Given the observed higher wages when WIOA participants co-enroll in apprenticeship opportunities, WDIS researchers have built and will continue building quarterly co-enrollment reports across apprenticeship (including both registered and youth) programs and WIOA Title IV, Veterans, and WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs to further inform co-enrollment in partner programs. Further, Wisconsin's WDIS Research and Evaluation workgroup is working on a follow-up research study to learn more about what demographics, employment influencers, and training services funded by different WIOA and partner training programs predict employment outcomes for a larger, more comprehensive group of jobseekers. Initial analyses indicate that training is associated with higher wages. Now, researchers are working on completing the analysis by looking at wage trends across programs and using regression analyses to identify variances across training programs as well as other factors (such as demographics, employment influencers, geography, etc.)

that may influence this relationship. Research and program staff will subsequently write up and share findings on the WDIS website as well as through targeted outreach to partners such as the State's local WDBs.

Labor Market Information (LMI) Research and Reports

Wisconsin continues to provide updated LMI on WisConomy. The website contains interactive tools and reports that include:

- Award winning visual catalog data dashboards, most recently awarded the "Best State LMI Product or Collaboration for Data Collection and Dissemination" at the 2024 Council for Community and Economic Research Annual Conference.
- Wisconsin Recovery Report 2023–2025.
- Registered Nurse Supply and Demand Forecasts 2022–2040.
- Updated projections.
- 2023 Nurse Survey Infographic and Review.

RESEA Evaluation

Researchers found the UI benefit cost savings (i.e., reduction of benefit weeks and amount collected) exceed the cost of the RESEA program. They also found that the RESEA assessment score predicts who will benefit most from RESEA services, which would increase the efficiency of the program rather than randomly selecting participants. Researchers will continue to collect employment outcomes for all participants and conduct a future analysis that may or may not yield a different result. Interim findings from the Wisconsin RESEA evaluation can be found on in the WDIS Resource list.

WIOA Title II Action Research

Results demonstrate that participation in IET programming is significantly and positively associated with each of the analyzed student outcomes including completing college credits in the first semester, college persistence to the second year, achieving a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or greater, and obtaining a WTCS credential. Adult education and literacy providers, two-year colleges, WIOA partners, and stakeholders who benefit from IET should invest in the expansion of these programs as a strategy to provide learners with clear pathways to college credentials, the workforce, and upward economic mobility while achieving organization goals. A list of all conducted evaluations and evaluation findings can be found on the WTCS website.

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

In PY23, DWD had two approved waivers of WIOA Title I Youth program requirements:

1. A waiver of the requirement that states and local areas expend 75 percent of all Governor's Reserve and local area formula Youth funds on out-of-school youth (OSY).
2. A waiver allowing the use of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for in-school youth (ISY) ages 16 and older.

These waivers were initially approved by DOL-ETA on December 31, 2020, renewed for PY22 and PY23 on June 6, 2022.

Strategies

OSY Minimum Expenditure Waiver

Wisconsin lowered the OSY minimum expenditure requirement for local formula Youth funds from 75 percent to 50 percent. Through this waiver's implementation, Wisconsin intended to ensure that local WDAs had sufficient funding to serve eligible ISY. In PY23, 20 percent ($1,653.995.75) of local formula Youth funds were spent on ISY.

ITAs for ISY Waiver

Wisconsin allowed local areas to provide training services through WIOA-funded ITAs to ISY ages 16 and older. Through this waiver's implementation, Wisconsin intended to provide more funding options for local areas to make training services available to ISY participants and increase usage of ITAs by ISY participants.

Impact on Performance

OSY Minimum Expenditure Waiver

The percentage of ISY served by Wisconsin's WIOA Title I Youth program has increased over the last few program years. In PY20, the first year of the waiver's implementation, 21 percent (264) of Youth participants were ISY and 79 percent (1,011) were OSY. In PY23, 33 percent (532) of WIOA Youth program participants were ISY and 67 percent (1,101) were OSY.

ITAs for ISY Waiver

The number of ISY participants who had an ITA established to receive WIOA-funded training increased from 17 in PY22 to 43 in PY23, an increase of 253 percent. This increased usage of ITAs by ISY participants reflects an increased rate of being able to meet the local areas' need for more funding options to make training services available to ISY participants.

Both Waivers

Due to the nature of the two waivers Wisconsin had approved for PY23, some goals were the same. Highlights of achievements relevant to both waivers include:

The waivers allowed for an increased number of youths served by the WIOA Youth program, including the number of youth in local areas who received work experiences. As a result, the State's business community had increased access to qualified workers.

- 395 Youth program participants began work experience services in PY23, compared to 279 in PY22, a 142 percent increase. The number of Youth program participants who engaged in work experience services that began in PY22, compared to those who engaged in work experience services that began in PY23, increased as follows:
    - Employment opportunities increased by 162 percent.
    - Internships increased by 150 percent.
    - OJT increased by 117 percent.
    - Pre-apprenticeship increased by 136 percent.
- The number of ISY participants who received a work experience service that began in PY23 compared to those who received a work experience service that began in PY22 increased as follows:
    - Employment opportunities increased by 268 percent.
    - Internships increased by 158 percent.
    - Job shadowing increased by 200 percent.
    - OJT increased by 100 percent.

The waivers were associated with improvements on state performance outcomes in PY23. In PY23, Wisconsin achieved 131 percent of its Youth Measurable Skill Gains goal, with 691 youth achieving a measurable skill gain. Likewise, Wisconsin achieved 97 percent of its Youth Credential Attainment goal for PY23, with 267 youth earning a credential. These positive impacts on Wisconsin's performance outcomes, further demonstrated through the State's waiver evaluation, encouraged the state to pursue renewal of these waivers in the PY23–24 WIOA Combined State Plan. ETA approved these waivers for Wisconsin's use in PY24 and PY25 on May 30, 2024, and Wisconsin expects to continue building on the successes outlined above.

Success Stories

No information provided for this section.

Wyoming

Wyoming Department of Workforce Services (DWS)

Use of State Funds

The WWDC allocated a portion of the Governor's 15 percent allotment to invest in the workforce system through several key projects. These projects included staff training for AJC staff and purchasing non-upholstered office chairs for participants. Additionally, grants were awarded to Next Generation sector partnerships, enabling them to travel throughout the state and engage with a large number of youth about career pathways and WIOA. The WWDC also made a significant investment in the new Management Information System (MIS), HIREwyo.

Under-served Populations

Rural Outreach

Wyoming is a very rural state. Because of this, DWS is aware of the unique economic, social, and cultural characteristics that shape the way of life for Wyoming residents and the impact of various aspects of its workforce and community development.

Rural communities often face unique economic challenges, including limited job opportunities, lack of access to educational resources, and lower median incomes. WIOA outreach can help address these challenges by providing training, education, and job placement services to improve the overall economic stability of these communities. The Wyoming AJC's launched a series of community engagement initiatives tailored to the unique needs of rural citizens. Collaborating with local organizations, schools, and community leaders, staff held informational workshops and job fairs at accessible locations. These events included local parades, booths at county fairs, career fairs, business expos, and trunk or treating, among others. DWS staff provided vital information about available training programs, career pathways, and WIOA resources, fostering trust and encouraging participation. The Wyoming AJCs also continue to regularly participate in community meetings, such as the Worland Community Resource meeting and the Thermopolis Human Resource meeting; this allows DWS staff to provide information to several community agencies and learn of other available community resources.

The Wyoming One-Stops are focused on meeting Wyoming citizens where they are. This approach has the AJC staff providing office hours within the smaller communities. The office hours have been located in community centers, libraries, community colleges, schools, Adult Education offices, and Department of Family Services locations, ensuring accessibility for citizens. By creating a familiar environment, staff encouraged participation and engagement, increasing program enrollment.

They also began to hold jointly hosted outreach events with partners, specifically with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). To improve service delivery, AJC and DVR staff participated in cross-training sessions. This collaboration ensured that team members were well-versed in each other's programs and could provide holistic support to individuals. By understanding the full spectrum of services available, staff were better equipped to guide participants toward the appropriate resources, enhancing overall service effectiveness. The Wyoming AJCs focused on connecting with the rural communities in PY23. This outreach has

always been important; however, additional innovative outreach activities were provided to strengthen partnerships with local organizations, educational institutions, and businesses, fostering a collaborative approach to addressing the workforce development needs of rural communities.

Integrated Service Delivery

Upskilling Wyoming

These funds will help Wyoming citizens develop new competencies and learn new skills to improve their current roles or maintain employment. The program provides upskilling opportunities and a longer-term investment for individuals to augment the knowledge and skills that help employees advance their careers or maintain careers with self-sufficient wages. The program will serve those impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, low-income individuals (household income of less than 300 percent of the federal poverty guidelines) or unemployed.

Adult Education (AE) co-enrollment (25 years of age and older): The purpose was to strengthen the co-enrollments with AE, Wagner-Peyser, and WIOA for the Adult population. AE received funding to provide more services to adults (i.e., completion incentives paid through AE). This grant required AE adults to be co-enrolled in at least WP Title III; however, it strongly encourages co-enrollment with WIOA Title I. Additional funds are available to participants to cover support services that are not covered in other federal programs.

DWS received the funding during PY23. DWS has created policies and procedures for the ARPA Upskilling Wyoming program and the Adult Education Co-enrollment grants and have started co-enrolling participants.

Adult Education Partnership

The PY23 was a year of planning and expansion. Efforts to co-enroll qualified Title I Youth continued to grow throughout the State because of joint efforts made by local AE providers through the State's One-Stop system. Learners can now meet individually with representatives from DWS at local AE centers. This occurs through regularly scheduled on-site DWS hours at the AE center and/or through the intake and orientation process for AE. DWS representatives explain Title I and Title III benefits to newly enrolling AE students, and efforts to co-enroll begin at the intake process. This coordinated effort by the WIOA Core partners has led to a relatively sustained co-enrollment rate (as reported to OCTAE), of 36 percent across the past two-year period, and the State had the highest rates of co-enrollments with AD in the nation.

To solidify this joint co-enrollment process, multiple AE providers have negotiated contracts with DWS to continue efforts to co-enroll qualified Title I Youth. These contractual efforts have resulted in data sharing between the agencies so that co-enrolled participants simultaneously benefit from Titles I, II, and III. One noteworthy aspect of these contractual agreements has been the rise in AE students participating in Work Experience programs, such as job shadows and internships. These Work Experience placements have been coordinated by DWS or through direct contact with local employers.

In Spring 2024, the State Office for Adult Education met with representatives from Title IV to begin discussions on how the State could replicate a similar system as AE has with DWS and include Title IV. Title II and Title IV fully recognize that the State has

been missing a great opportunity to increase co-enrollments between the two titles as AE data indicated that over 75 percent of AE students who had self-identified a disability were not receiving Title IV benefits. This indicated a great need to increase collaborative efforts to serve these participants better. Because of this, the State will be piloting a fully comprehensive One-Stop system that includes the four titles. Under this new system, enrolling participants can meet with representatives from all four titles at AE intake/orientations and/or through on-site/virtual meetings with DWS and/or DVR.

The year also saw the launch of two distinct new programs, which were funded through the State monies from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). The first ARPA program was a joint program between DWS and AE for Adult High School Equivalency, and it aimed to replicate Title I Youth services for adults aged 25 years of age and older and whose household income was less than 300 percent of the federal poverty level or whose household experienced unemployment during the pandemic. This three-year program aims to provide qualified participants with the skills needed to complete a high school equivalency while providing on-the-job work experience training, other supportive services, and financial incentives for meeting specific benchmarks.

The second ARPA-funded program was overwhelmingly successful as it aimed to provide Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs that utilized contextualized materials in standards-based curricula along identified career pathways tracks. Eligibility for this program required that the participant be co-enrolled with DWS and AE so that the WIOA-offered services could become an integral part of the programmatic services provided. This project enabled AE to partner with training providers to deliver IET programs of study for the healthcare, manufacturing, tourism, and customer services/business industries. Local AE providers with this ARPA grant were allowed to utilize these funds to help pay for the high cost of tuition, which enabled increased access to IETs. By year's end, this joint program had enrolled 110 students into ARPA-funded IET programs of study.

Department of Family Services (DFS) Partnership

DWS and DFS continue to work together to provide a holistic approach to serving individuals with the long-term goal of self-sustainable employment. The Wyoming AJCs provide universal access to all jobseekers through "basic career services" and emphasize providing targeted services to "individuals with barriers to employment," which includes low-income individuals. Low-income individuals, including individuals participating in SNAP and the TANF work program—known as the Personal Opportunities with Employment Responsibilities (POWER) program in Wyoming,—are given priority of service when it comes to receiving higher-intensity services like "individualized career services," training from the WIOA Adult program, and co-enrollment in the WIOA Youth program for OSY.

Since the WIOA Title I Adult program focuses on low-income individuals, DWS and DFS have monthly meetings to discuss strategies and approaches to providing streamlined services and increasing co-enrollments. These strategies embody a "Coaching for Success" philosophy, which includes the following:

- Team approach to case management.
- Funding streams and how to braid funds between TANF and WIOA programs.
- Colors Personality Assessments and how personality impacts relationships.

- Communication—Unconscious Biases and Managing Emotions.
- Coaching skills using several coaching methods.

DFS and DWS partner together to create self-sufficient, responsible, and successful individuals through the POWER program. Using DFS federal TANF funds, POWER allows Wyoming parents with barriers to employment to earn cash assistance through an employment-focused, pay-after-performance program administered by DWS. The individuals who enroll in POWER also meet the eligibility requirements of WIOA. As a result, POWER participants are co-enrolled in the WIOA Adult program when appropriate to meet the needs of each participant.

The Wyoming Child Support Program (CSP), in partnership with DWS, established the Work Initiative Network (WIN) program to improve earning outcomes for Non-Custodial Parents (NCPs). The program uses coaching and a team case management approach that increases the participants' capacity to move toward permanent unsubsidized employment to make reliable child support payments, improving the financial well-being of custodial and NCPs and their children. DWS WIN case managers refer eligible participants to the WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs when appropriate to best meet the needs of each participant.

The Dads Making a Difference (DADS) program is a DWS initiative in partnership with DFS that uses TANF, SNAP Employment and Training (E&T), and private funding. The nationally recognized DADS program was developed in 2007 as a training-to-work program for low-income custodial and non-custodial fathers in Wyoming who experience multiple barriers to self-sufficiency. The DADS program provides services necessary for fathers to actively improve the quality of their lives and the lives of their children and families. All eligible DADS program participants are co-enrolled in WIOA to leverage services and funding.

Yes WIOA Can

The Wyoming AJCs focus on "meeting individuals where they are" as a fundamental principle and have had training and discussions on the "Yes, WIOA Can!" initiative. These discussions centered around remembering the importance of providing customized and accessible services to individuals based on their specific needs, circumstances, and readiness for employment. Staff members recognize that individuals seeking workforce development services may be at different stages of their career paths and may require tailored support to overcome various barriers to employment.

The "Yes, WIOA Can!" philosophy is a client-centric approach that fosters positive engagement between DWS staff members and clients, creating a supportive and collaborative environment for successful employment outcomes. The Wyoming AJCs are focused on facilitating training for sector-based, quality jobs. The State is committed to eliminating barriers and focusing on underserved workers. Wyoming also recognizes the importance of supportive services to ensure participants' success. The State has started thinking of innovative ways they can provide support that may not have been traditionally used. Success is measured not only by whether the participants obtain a job but also by serving and connecting the most vulnerable participants to good quality jobs and providing them with the tools to thrive post-WIOA.

Adult Education Partnership

The State Office for Adult Education (OAE) recognized early in PY23 that these IETs were becoming very popular. Consequently, there was a great need to better educate local AE directors and instructors on delivering these 'new to Wyoming' Adult Education programs. To this end, the OAE enrolled multiple program directors and instructors into an extensive three-month federally sponsored training program. While this training occurred, the Adult Education programs run through the Wyoming Department of Corrections were involved in another multi-month IET training program for Corrections. The culminating results of these trainings have been not only better informed/educated staff but also the development of an IET mission and vision statement for Wyoming, a standardized syllabus template that incorporates a single set of learning objectives, and an IET assessment tool.

The OAE also recognized early in the year that data collection for Barriers to Employment was not being conducted efficiently. A new system was established to improve data collection, resulting in a 25–30 percent improvement in data collected for each Barrier to Employment.

Other State Funds Activities

Not applicable.

Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

Evaluation Component for WIOA Title I

The WWDC contracted with Northern Illinois University's Workforce Policy Lab (WPL) to provide the evaluation component for WIOA Title I. The process was guided by WIOA's purpose, performance metrics, and guidance related to WIOA-defined barriers. For the quantitative analysis portion, the WPL used data from Wyoming's PIRL quarterly reporting files from PYs 2018 through 2022. In addition to evaluating the numeric data, WPL applied qualitative analyses through focus groups aimed at uncovering a deeper understanding of the various components surrounding WIOA participants' journey in the program. Questions posed to focus groups included questions with themes associated with the following stages of the WIOA program: outreach and recruitment, application and intake, assessment of barriers to program completion and employment, assessment of training selection, training placement, and exit outcomes.

Although Adult Education (AE) in Wyoming was not included in the WWDC evaluation component for Title I, AE conducted multiple evaluations through PY23. This began with monthly desk audits at both the local and state levels and reviewed data, career services, and a fiscal review. This was followed with a quarterly narrative report and an end-of-year comprehensive report in which local providers were required to evaluate program performance in narrative form on successes/challenges in:

- Meeting federal targets for measurable skill gains and post-exit outcome measures.
- Alignment to the 13 considerations for AE programs.
- The delivery of career services to qualified enrolled participants.

- Co-enrollments for WIOA Core partners.
- Continuous program improvement.
- Strategic planning for career pathways.
- Referrals to WIOA Core partners and other community service providers.
- Financial reporting.
- Integration with One-Stop Partners.

Continuous Improvement

The AJCs in Wyoming continued to seek innovative and cost-effective procedures and delivery of services throughout PY23. Wyoming utilized One-Stop Center certifications, National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) committee meetings, WorkforceGPS webinars, and discussions with other states when evaluating best practices. During PY23, DWS continues to be in the process of implementing the following:

- All 18 AJCs are utilizing an electronic tracking system for walk-in traffic. The data collected is being reviewed and modified based on feedback received from clients and AJC staff. The next phase will be to determine how to utilize the data to make informed decisions that will strengthen the services provided. Training opportunities were provided to all AJC staff, including:
    - Virtual conference for all AJC staff.
    - Participating in the Workforce 180 Business Services Certification. This included topics on sales management, engaging employers, effective communication, and using social media. This training led to conversations about the role of the business representatives and the importance of being in the community.
    - Participating in the Workforce 180 Case Management Certification series. The DWS team attended all three case management courses. The topics included five frames of coaching, motivating the unmotivated, helping versus empowering, case notes, emotional intelligence, and the WIOA connection.
    - Completing the TANF 14-module program on case management.
    - Attending The Coaching Habit internal training. This training enforced the process of behavioral change and how effective coaching can drive positive changes in others.
    - All Career Compass Program (re-entry staff) and Center Managers participated in the Workforce 180 Reentry Services Certification. This included topics such as de-mystifying and understanding the reentry client, engaging employers to be 2nd Chance Employers, and boosting reentry job readiness skills.

    - DWS and the Wyoming Department of Corrections were able to train on Motivational Interviewing and case management, which provided shared training amongst both agencies for the Career Compass Program team.
- Completing the One-Stop certifications provides more educational materials on the WIOA programs and required partnerships for all staff.
- The Program Compliance Team members attended the annual NASWA conference and also represented Wyoming on various NASWA committees.
- DWS continues to conduct program-specific meetings and all-staff virtual Meetings with all Wyoming AJC staff. These meetings have provided the platform for general information sharing and cross-training opportunities.
- The Wyoming AJC implemented an Employee of the Month program to help staff retention. The recognition program is peer-based, utilizing DWS core values. The department recognizes the importance of staff as a departmental strength and a major resource in achieving departmental objectives. The employee recognition program is intended to acknowledge staff's superior contribution and achievement in meeting the department's mission and vision. It is also designed to promote and encourage a positive climate wherein staff members feel appreciated for their service and affirmed in their employment with DWS as a career of choice.
- During this program year, DWS' AJC Managers and Program Managers completed the Dare to Lead development program. This program was created by Brene Brown and was designed to help the DWS team cultivate courage-based leadership skills and create a culture of courage, trust, and resilience.

Reports

The Research and Planning Division of DWS provides:

- A monthly *Trends* publication
- *2023 Wyoming Workforce Annual Report*
- A series of Labor Market Information webinar videos
- Commuting patterns
- Current employment statistics
- Adult Education reports submitted to OCTAE

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

Wyoming currently does not have any active WIOA Waivers.

Strategies

Not applicable.

Impact on Performance

Not applicable.

Success Stories

WIOA-Dislocated Worker/RESEA

“CK” was a RESEA client and a dislocated worker utilizing UI. He had a difficult time for several months and used our office as a place to come to each day. He utilized our résumé services and our support. We could tell he was really down some days, and we would talk to him about it. “CK” decided to do WIOA and obtained his CDL. He has worked his first season for a construction company but has not been in since because he has been working.

WIOA-Dislocated Worker/RESEA

Jacki was a RESEA client. We worked on her résumé and were able to tailor it to align with her passion for working with older adults. She recently called to let us know she secured a job at the local senior center. She is exactly the kind of person you want doing that work because she loves it.

WIOA-Dislocated Worker/RESEA

“CL,” a 61-year-old from Rawlins who had been working at the local oil refinery for 15 years and was laid off. “CL” is primarily Spanish-speaking (ESL) and only knew his specific job at the refinery. He was not sure how he was going to continue to support his wife, who had a disability and lots of medical bills. “CL” had limited skills outside of his very specific duties at the refinery. As an ESL individual, it was challenging for him to go to job interviews or get hired and make anything close to his wages at the refinery. “CL” participated in a Rapid Response event during the course of his layoff and learned about WIOA through that experience; he wanted to get his CDL so he could get a good job as quickly as possible. “CL” loved the Rawlins community and wanted to find work there so he and his wife could stay, but with limited options for employment, he was worried he would have to move away. Through support services, “CL” was provided new glasses and assisted with tuition to the local CDL training school. We also purchased steel-toed boots and some clothing for him in preparation for his employment. By working with the training provider, we got “CL” all his study materials for his CDL in Spanish, and he was able to take his exam in Spanish to ensure he understood the questions. “CL” worked incredibly hard and obtained his CDL very quickly. “CL” obtained employment as an over-the-road truck driver for a national company.

WIOA-Adult

“RF” initially enrolled at Sheridan College to earn a Certificate in Diesel Technology. His dedication and success in the program motivated him to aim higher, and he pursued an associate’s degree. “RF’s” hard work paid off when he transitioned from working as a dishwasher to securing employment as a mechanic with a friend’s business. His newfound skills and determination have opened doors, and during our last conversation, “RF” shared his exciting plans to explore ways to start his own diesel mechanic shop. “RF” has achieved all this while having a small language barrier. “RF’s” first language is Spanish, and he prefers to communicate that way, but he took it upon himself to study more English and learn to speak better while he was in school.

WIOA-Adult

“BL” is a 45-year-old single father with sole custody of two children. After being laid off in April 2023, he received unemployment benefits and struggled to find work. DVR referred him to the WIOA programs as he was ineligible for DVR services. “BL” wanted to obtain a CDL Class A to secure a stable career that would support his family. We provided training, résumé support, and job search services. Despite challenges, including partial disability affecting his left hand, limited transportation options, and being a single parent, we coordinated with Laramie County Community College (LCCC) to enroll him in the CDL program.

“BL” completed CDL training, earned his Class A license, and added Tank and Double/Triple Trailer endorsements. He initially worked for a company while in training, earning $22 per hour. However, due to scheduling conflicts with his parenting responsibilities, he transitioned to a permanent job with a different company, earning $24 per hour with benefits.

WIOA-Youth

“J” enrolled in WIOA in December 2020, seeking assistance completing her High School Equivalency (HSE) certificate. “J” completed the Sheridan SCOPE program in April 2021 but had not yet attained the HSE certificate. “J” could not start testing until closer to the end of the SCOPE Program due to her accommodations not being approved in time. “J” struggles with a learning disability, and she knew she would need accommodations to be successful. “J” also had to overcome educational deficiencies with a strong will and determination. “J” was patient in waiting for the accommodations and focused on Job Readiness Training provided by the SCOPE Program. By the end of the SCOPE Program, she had only passed one HiSET exam and was struggling to pass her second exam. “J” kept a positive attitude and continued participating in tutoring after SCOPE ended.

In December 2021, “J” had passed 4 out of 5 tests; however, “J” became discouraged from passing the last test after many attempts. She had difficulty motivating herself to attend tutoring sessions, and her work schedule made attending difficult. “J” and the AJC staff did not give up and continued attending tutoring and testing.

In February 2023, “J” passed the 5th and final exam, but she did not have a cumulative score of 45 required to obtain the HSE certificate. “J” was again discouraged. Her current workforce specialist and tutor continued to work with her as she took and failed several more exams. The tutor recommended to “J” that she take the Math HiSET exam, which “J” was initially hesitant about but eventually decided to go for it.

In February 2024, “J” took the Math exam and passed with enough points to obtain her HSE certificate. “J” currently works as a house cleaner but is considering attending cosmetology school. She is happy to have achieved her HSE certificate and looks forward to finally attending the Adult Education’s graduation ceremony this summer.

WIOA-Youth

“CM” was referred to the LYFE program by his high school Counselor. “CM” had dropped out because he became a teen father and wanted to work to support his new family. However, he soon realized that without a diploma, his options were very limited, and he wanted more for his future, but more so for his fiancé and new baby. “CM” always wanted to join the military, but now that he had his own family, he was more determined to make it happen. “CM” completed the career boost activities, but we set him up with a recruiter to discuss his options for a military career. He was working full time and felt he couldn’t join right away and was afraid to leave his family, but the recruiter gave him options and the reality of how his goal could help him and his family long term. The greatest success was watching an overburdened and stressed young man learn how to prioritize and execute. “CM” is committed to joining the Army National Guard, is still in the guard, and is thriving in his position. “CM’s” child is now a toddler, and his life is on track as he envisioned.

American Samoa

Department of Human Resources - Employment & Training Division

Use of State Funds

Under-served Populations

The Older Americans Act of 1965: A Vision for Empowerment and Opportunity in American Samoa.

At the heart of the Territory's mission lies a shared vision, guided by WIOA and propelled by the core partners. The Territory aspires to enhance access to education and economic opportunity for all jobseekers in the territory, with a special focus on those who face significant barriers to employment. The goal is not just to build a skilled and competitive workforce that meets the demands of local employers, but to invigorate communities and cultivate a territorial economy that thrives on the global stage.

The Territory has identified four key priorities that will drive us toward this vision:

- Raising Public Awareness and Access: to ensure that every individual in American Samoa knows about and can access the workforce system.
- Streamlining Business Services: By coordinating services across partners, American Samoa will deliver seamless and high-quality solutions that better meet the needs of the community.
- Empowering Remote and Rural Communities: American Samoa is committed to reaching those in the farthest corners of the territory, bringing resources and opportunities directly to them.
- Establishing Career Pathways and Sector Partnerships: The Territory will foster connections that create clear pathways for advancement and collaboration within key sectors.

In recognition of the unique demographic landscape of the Territory—with its small, dispersed population—the Territory is developing a modified One-Stop system. This approach will not only provide quality services across many locations but also optimize the limited resources to better serve the community.

Expansion of Training Services for All

The Territory is committed to expanding training services for applicants and participants, whether they are just beginning their journey, transitioning, or already engaged in WIOA programs. Offerings include support for adults, dislocated workers, and youth. During PY23, work-based learning and OJT services have opened doors to invaluable paid work experiences. Participants, based on eligibility criteria, benefit from a range of personalized services including basic support, individualized training, and ongoing follow-up—all while gaining hands-on experience in a real workplace. WIOA is dedicated to supporting those who face the greatest obstacles to employment, including single parents, low-income individuals, those with limited English language skills,

ex-offenders, school dropouts, and teen parents. In partnership with the Adult Education Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) team, the Territory is expanding opportunities for participants to enhance their skills and education, ultimately helping them attain certificates of completion. In collaborative efforts with partner agencies, American Samoa is focused on referral services that ensure every individual receives the appropriate support. For those assessed with special needs, American Samoa engages with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation to provide comprehensive assessments and services.

Integrated Service Delivery

Build Infrastructure with Core Partners

To strengthen collaborative efforts, American Samoa is actively engaging with key partners, including the American Samoa Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), the AEFLA/American Samoa Community College (ASCC), the American Samoa Division of Career and Technical Education (AS DOE), and the American Samoa Job Corps Program/The Governor's Office of American Samoa.

The objective is to enhance capacity building through ongoing planning and the initiation of programs and activities, fostering a collaborative environment with core partners.

- Strategy 1: Develop and Update Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs).
  The Territory is in the process of formalizing partnerships by reviewing and updating MOUs between the WIOA agency and core partners, specifically with AEFLA and OVR.
- Strategy 2: Initiate Policies and Procedures.
  Establishing clear internal and external policies will ensure an effective service provision system while aligning with the goals and objectives of all involved parties.
- Strategy 3: Engage in Outreach Programs.
  The Territory will participate in outreach initiatives led by the core partners that are associated with Workforce Education and Training, deepening the understanding of the services they offer.

Yes WIOA Can

Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP)

SYEP concluded in August, marking a remarkable journey for 933 eligible participants who gained invaluable hands-on paid training experience over an enriching 8-week period. Out of these participants, 130 were part of WIOA, showcasing the program's commitment to empowering youth through practical learning opportunities.

SYEP is not merely a job placement initiative or source of summer income; it is a comprehensive framework designed to promote successful youth development. SYEP focuses on facilitating eligible youth in their transition to healthy adulthood and economic independence through the following principles:

- Engagement: Tapping into the talents and interests of youth.
- Skill Development: Enhancing skills and competencies necessary for the workforce.
- Workplace Introduction: Familiarizing participants with the professional environment.
- Support System: Providing guidance and positive role models from adult mentors.

Each year, the SYEP forges partnerships with government agencies, organizations, and private sectors, enabling them to build capacity within their operations without lengthy hiring procedures. This year, a total of 933 participants were registered, selected, and placed in temporary summer jobs.

Funding Support: Under the WIOA Consolidated Youth funding, 130 positions were allocated through a formula grant.

Resource Leveraging: The Governor's Office facilitated the expansion of SYEP, allowing for the employment of 800 participants.

All eligible youth had the opportunity to earn income and gain valuable work experiences, cultivating essential skills and attitudes for success in the modern job market. Participants were exposed to many career fields and engaged with professionals in stimulating and supportive environments.

Other State Funds Activities

Not applicable.

Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

No information provided for this section.

Continuous Improvement

One-Stop Center Implementation

The Enhanced Desk Monitoring Review (EDMR) conducted in August 2024 provided invaluable insights and tools to enhance program services and refine operational frameworks. Key components of the EDMR focused on the development of policies and procedures for program performance and fiscal operations.

Reports

No information provided for this section.

Waivers

Waivers Implemented

The Territory did not have any waivers in process during PY22.

Strategies

Not applicable.

Impact on Performance

Not applicable

Success Stories

The following stories were submitted by the Caseworkers and Managers of the WIOA training programs:

- Mr. Misi
- Uila

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

CNMI Department of Labor – Workforce Investment Agency

Use of State Funds

Under-served Populations

No information provided for this section.

Integrated Service Delivery

To further support the implementation of the CNMI's State Plan, the Governor's Reserve has also been used to fund activities for the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB). These activities have included strategic planning, stakeholder engagement, and ensuring alignment between local workforce needs and state-level initiatives. The SWDB's efforts have been essential in overseeing the execution of the state plan and ensuring that workforce development activities are focused on the region's economic goals.

Yes WIOA Can

The WIOA Statewide Governor's Reserve has been strategically utilized to support key components of the Commonwealth's workforce development system, ensuring the effective implementation of the state plan and overall program operations. A portion of the funds has been allocated to enhancing the data management system, which plays a crucial role in tracking participant outcomes, program performance, and compliance with federal and local regulations. This investment in technology has improved the ability to collect, analyze, and report data, ensuring to make informed decisions and continuously improve service delivery.

Additionally, funds from the Governor's Reserve have been directed towards staff salaries, specifically for fiscal and administrative functions, to support the day-to-day operations of the workforce development system. This ensures that the necessary infrastructure is in place for managing grants, budgeting, reporting, and coordinating services effectively.

ETPL

The Governor's Reserve has supported the identification and certification of eligible training providers through the ETPL. This ensures that the training programs offered are high-quality and aligned with the demands of the labor market, providing jobseekers with the skills necessary to secure employment in in-demand industries. These targeted investments have played a pivotal role in strengthening the workforce development system and ensuring that it meets the needs of both jobseekers and employers across the Commonwealth.

Other State Funds Activities

Not applicable.

Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

The Pre-apprenticeship pilot program, launched in PY23, is still in its early stages of implementation. As such, it is premature to conduct a comprehensive evaluation during PY23. However, the Commonwealth recognizes the importance of assessing the program's effectiveness and plans to conduct a thorough evaluation in PY24.

This evaluation will focus on both participant and employer perspectives, providing valuable insights into the program's impact on skills development, job readiness, and overall success in preparing participants for Registered Apprenticeship programs and long-term careers. By gathering feedback from participants on their experiences with training and internships, as well as from employers on the performance of interns, the evaluation will help gauge the effectiveness of the program and its alignment with local workforce needs.

Continuous Improvement

While the program is still in its infancy, the planned evaluation in PY24 will play a critical role in identifying areas for improvement and refining the program structure to better serve both participants and employers. This will ensure the program continues to provide meaningful career pathways and strengthens the Commonwealth's workforce development efforts in the future.

Reports

No information provided for this section.

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

In the PY24 state plan cycle, the Commonwealth submitted a waiver request to modify the 75 percent funding requirement for out-of-school youth (OSY) to allow for a more balanced distribution of youth funds between in-school youth (ISY) and OSY.

Strategies

This request was driven by a need to better serve both groups of youth and create more opportunities for career development. On May 28, 2024, the waiver was approved retroactively to PY22 state plan modification, which has opened new opportunities to expand youth employment initiatives across the Commonwealth.

With the approval of the waiver, the Commonwealth is now positioned to collaborate more effectively with key local partners, including the Saipan Chamber of Commerce and the CNMI Public School System, to support the Career Exploration Summer

Internship program. This initiative is specifically designed for incoming high school juniors and seniors, providing them with hands-on training, career exploration, and valuable work experience in local industries.

Impact on Performance

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce plays a pivotal role in connecting students with internship opportunities across a range of sectors, ensuring that participants gain exposure to in-demand careers and receive mentorship from local business leaders. The CNMI Public School System helps identify and support students throughout the program, ensuring they are prepared and have the necessary resources to succeed. Together, these partners work to equip students with the skills and knowledge required for future employment in the CNMI's evolving economy.

This collaborative effort not only provides students with critical job experience but also aligns with broader workforce development goals, creating a stronger talent pipeline for local industries. Through this program, the Commonwealth aims to bridge the gap between education and employment, providing students with the tools they need to enter high-demand careers and support the CNMI's economic growth. As the Commonwealth looks to the future, it hopes to expand the program, increase industry involvement, and offer more pathways for students to develop long-term career opportunities.

Success Stories

Adult - Selina

After a virtual semester at the local college, Selina quickly realized that it was not the right fit for her. Taking a break from school, she explored opportunities through the Workforce Investment Agency (WIA) with her brother's advice. After becoming eligible for WIOA services, Selina was assessed for her career interests and objectives. At the time, she worked part time and on call, and her case manager introduced her to training options in line with her interests, including administrative assistance.

Fortuitously, a Work Base Training Sponsor had just been approved for training in this field. Selina interviewed, scored well, and began training with the Northern Marianas Technical Institute (NMTech). Despite her initial lack of experience with office equipment and Excel, she found the team helpful and supportive.

Selina was grateful for the skills she gained, and her supervisor, Ben Babauta, praised her as an excellent and hardworking trainee. After completing her training, she accepted a full-time job at NMTech. However, her passion for nature led her to a new role as an Administrative Assistant at Johnston Applied Marine Sciences (JAMS), where she could combine her love for nature with her skills; some days working in the office or on the field.

Dislocated Worker – Eldin

The COVID-19 pandemic changed life for everyone, including 39-year-old, Eldin, a husband and father of three. After 12 years as a Ramp and Cargo Supervisor, he left his job due to financial struggles caused by reduced hours, pay cuts, and a demotion. "We cut expenses like power, water, and even food," Eldin shared. "I don't know how, but we made it work."

While job searching, Eldin discovered the Department of Correction (DOC) was recruiting for its Correction Cadet Academy. With the support of WIOA, Eldin and 38 other participants qualified for WIOA services, receiving training, guidance, and support as they prepared for careers in corrections.

On October 6, 2022, Eldin graduated from the Academy with an Associate in Basic Law Enforcement: Corrections Officer Track and was promoted to Correction Officer I. Reflecting on the change, he said, “We’re not living the life, but with our salaries, we’ve caught up on bills, paid off debts, and even started saving.” With his youngest son set to graduate and move on in May, Eldin feels peace of mind knowing his civil service job provides stability and hope for the future.

Youth – Tammy

Tammy, an early graduate of Dr. Rita Hocog Inos Jr. Sr. High School on Rota, took significant steps toward her career while still in school. As a junior, she joined the Cooperative Education Class, a work-prep program in partnership with the WIOA and local organizations. After qualifying for services, Tammy sought work experience and guidance, starting as a Counselor Aid at her school for a semester.

As an ongoing WIOA participant, Tammy enrolled in the Career Technical Education (CTE) Nursing Assistant Program. By 16, she became a licensed Nursing Assistant through the Northern Marianas Island Board of Nursing. Her journey was inspired by a personal loss at 13 when she and her sister cared for their mother at the Rota Health Clinic before her passing. Tammy encourages others to persevere stating, “Time does heal, no matter how cliché it sounds. Stay true to yourself, and with dedication to your dreams, you can accomplish anything.”

Tammy worked part time for the local Clinic till she graduated from High School on May 31, 2023. In June 2023 she enlisted and was accepted into the Airforce.

Adult – Ma Sarah

Ma Sarah embarked on a journey through various hospitality gigs, always seeking more fulfillment. She eventually secured a position at the local hospital, where she discovered her true calling. While balancing work and classes, she earned her Certification and Licensure as a Rehabilitation Substance Abuse Counselor. She also welcomed her son. However, she faced the challenges of Postpartum Depression and recognized the need to pause and prioritize her mental health and family. Taking a step back allowed her to regain balance and focus on what mattered most. Feeling recovered and wanting to re-enter the workforce equipped with a High School Diploma, she saw the opportunity to work in the Department of Corrections. With WIA’s partnership with DOC and support, she completed the 9th Cycle Academy as a Correctional Officer I with an Associate in Basic Law Enforcement. In September 2024, she was recertified to be a Rehabilitation Substance Abuse Treatment Counselor and awaits a final transition to provide treatment to inmates.

Dislocated Worker – Jesse

Jesse had been laid off as a Table Games Dealer for over two years when he decided it was time to shift gears and explore a new career path. He set his sights on becoming a Correctional Officer, a role that offered stability and a chance to make a difference. Through Customized Training, the Territory partnered with the Department of Corrections to establish Cycle 9 of the Correction Academy. This collaborative effort provided Jesse with the opportunity to gain the necessary skills and knowledge for his new career. As part of this training program, Jesse completed an Associate in Basic Law Enforcement. Equipped with this education and hands-on experience, he transitioned into his role as a CO1 (Correctional Officer 1). Jesse continues to excel in this position, demonstrating commitment and resilience in his new career path.

Youth – Pritzel

Pritzel attended Tinian Junior Senior High School, where she chose Cooperative Education as an elective during her senior year. This class provided her with an opportunity to gain valuable work experience, which she previously lacked. Additionally, she became eligible for WIOA services due to her Basic Skills Deficiency and her status as a recipient of Medicaid and the Nutrition Assistance Program.

As a WIOA Youth Participant, Pritzel received career counseling, guidance, and career exploration support while earning income through the program. During this time, she gained hands-on experience as a Front Desk Attendant at Uncut Fitness. She completed this training while meeting her graduation requirements, ultimately earning her high school diploma on May 22, 2024.

Shortly after graduation, Pritzel utilized the skills she developed in her Cooperative Education class, along with the support of the WIOA program, to secure a position as a Consumer Sales Representative at Docomo. She continues to excel in her role, showcasing her growth and dedication in the workforce.

Guam

Guam Department of Labor (GDOL)

Use of State Funds

Under-served Populations

No information provided for this section.

Integrated Service Delivery

No information provided for this section.

Yes WIOA Can

Hotel Associate Youth Apprenticeship Program

The Governor's office has launched a new initiative designed to equip the youth with skills and experience for a future in the Territory's hospitality industry. It is called the Hotel Associate Youth Apprenticeship Program (HAYAP) which provides high school students an opportunity to gain hands-on training with hotel partners and pursue careers in the hotel sector.

The program is a collaboration between GDOL and Guam Community College. The Hyatt Regency Guam and Hotel Nikko Guam registered as the first two hotels to employ six paid student apprentices. Other hotels that have joined the Hotel Associate Youth Apprenticeship Program include:

- Dusit Thani Guam Resort,
- Dusit Beach Resort,
- Bayview Hotel Guam, and
- Guam Plaza Resort and Spa.

Several more hotels are lined up to join once they complete their apprenticeship standards.

GDOL Director, David Dell'Isola, said apprenticeship programs are a proven model for success. "We've seen the results with the Guam Registered Apprenticeship Program and similar programs in partnership with GCC. Over the years, thousands have graduated from these programs and have gone on to successful and fulfilling careers, contributing to the local economy," Dell'Isola said in a statement.

Labor now wants to bring that successful apprenticeship model into the classroom and give the Territory's younger generation more alternatives and opportunities for career paths as the government partners with the private sector and identifies areas in

high demand, he said. “This will help our students gain relevant skills and prepare them for the future workforce while also meeting the needs of the job market,” Dell’Isola added. In HAYAP, students get OJT, mentorship, and explore different careers in hospitality and tourism. High school students must be at least 16 years of age to qualify and have completed at least one year of GCC’s Hospitality and Tourism Management Program. Like a Registered Apprenticeship (RA) program, HAYAP is also an employer-driven apprenticeship program where students can work, get paid, earn their Certificate of Mastery, and pursue an Associate of Science in International Hotel Management.

Addressing worker shortage

HAYAP represents an innovative approach to workforce development. This program focuses on cultivating new and up-and-coming talent for the job market. It offers opportunities directly in schools, young people who may choose an alternate path from college can enter the workforce immediately after high school. This pathway provides students with a direct route to career readiness, aligning their interests and skills with industry needs. HAYAP’s success has already sparked interest from other industries.

GDOL is now engaging with employers from industries such as automotive, culinary, early childhood education, and construction to explore youth apprenticeship programs in these fields. Earlier this week, the Governor proclaimed May 5 to 11, 2024, as Youth Apprenticeship Week. Building off the success of National Apprenticeship Week, this year marks the inaugural year of Youth Apprenticeship Week nationwide. Youth Apprenticeship Week highlights the benefits and value of RA program opportunities for youth.

Guam AJC In-School Youth (ISY) Program

The year-round ISY Program Spring Session concluded with a cohort of 101 students who successfully completed training, marking a significant milestone in their journey toward career readiness and personal development. High school juniors and seniors participated in three different courses to prepare them for the paid Summer Work Experience scheduled to begin in June. Partner agencies and organizations who provided the course training include the GCA Trades Academy, Pacific Human Resources Services (PHRS), and the Guam Community College (GCC). GCA Trades Academy’s courses focused on construction-related subjects, which were a continuation of the ISY Winter Session courses. A total of 31 students enrolled and completed the core curriculum. PHRS provided 23 students with Career Readiness courses that use practical skills such as interview and preparation, listening, résumé writing, digital etiquette, and networking for career and life success. GCC’s workshop was related to career interest inventory, résumé writing activity and research, cybersecurity, time management, and work ethic. A total of 47 students participated in and completed GCC’s workshop. The ISY Employment Program is a year-round program open to students enrolled in the 11th or 12th grade and between the ages of 16 to 18. Other eligibility criteria must also be met.

Other State Funds Activities

Not applicable.

Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

GDOL Director was invited to partake of the Evaluation Peer Learning Cohort for state workforce programs on September 11, 2024, from an invite with the DOL-ETA. This is a technical assistance opportunity for the Territory to participate in the 2024 EvalPLC to support AJC workforce development staff with evaluation-related training, planning, research, and implementation of WIOA Title I and III programs. The Evaluation forum is about building capacity with the programs staff and resources. Guam was considered and included in this first-time opportunity to learn how to conduct evaluation readiness assessment and evaluation design and implementation. A capstone project is also included in this training process where components of evaluation plans and technical support is provided to improve building evaluation capacity.

Continuous Improvement

No information provided for this section.

Reports

No information provided for this section.

Waivers

Waivers Implemented

No information provided for this section.

Strategies

Not applicable.

Impact on Performance

Not applicable.

Success Stories

WIOA-Adult/Wagner-Peyser – Mr. Ngiraibuuch

In collaboration with the Guam Behavioral Health & Wellness Center, Guam Department of Corrections, GDOL, and other service providers in the fight against recidivism, Guam started working with justice-involved individuals prior to release and continued after they were released, as the enroll and complete their Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (RSAT) program. Mr. Ngiraibuuch was part of our RSAT group. Shortly after Jenner’s release, we continued our services to help aid in completing his

secondary education. He shared an interest in returning to the community and working for the community. As a justice-involved and a non-high school graduate, his employment goal was to get into the Mayor's Office but lacked the essential education requirements. Through continued monitoring and career services, Jenner was able to successfully complete his RSAT. Enrolled in the Adult program under WIOA where he was able to attain his secondary education, eliminating a barrier to employment and reaching a milestone in his life.

Mr. Ngiraibuuch was then able to enter unsubsidized employment with Dededo Mayor's Office. He now serves the community of the largest village in the Territory as a public servant and as a staff in the Dededo Mayor's Office.

WIOA Dislocated Worker – Jeanell

On March 11, 2022, Jeanell came to the AJC seeking assistance in finding a job. She was going through a separation with her husband and had a child that she needed to support. She shared that she had to move in with her father until she could get back on her feet.

She had some work experience as a Cashier, Bartender, and Sales Associate. But felt that she needed and wanted to get a Job in the health service industry. We explored careers in the medical field, and she chose to take Medical Billing and Coding.

Jeanell was enrolled in the Certified Medical Billing and Coding classes at Guam Marianas Training Center that started on July 25, 2022.

On October 3, 2022, she received her Certification as a Medical Billing & Coding Specialist.

She is now employed as a permanent, full-time employee of Isla Home Infusion, Inc., as a Client Services Coordinator/Medical Biller. She was hired on April 18, 2023, with a rate of pay of $9.50 per hour.

WIOA-Adult/Wagner-Peyser – Valerie

> "On November 8, 2023, Valerie called our reception desk and was scheduled to see a case manager for job placement assistance.
>
> On November 27, 2023, she completed AJC orientation and initial assessment with her assigned case manager. After a thorough assessment, we determined that she lacked significant work experience and was subsequently enrolled in our Adult program under WIOA.
>
> Valerie was enrolled in our Transitional Job Training (TJT) Program and placed at the University of Guam Endowment Foundation on January 3, 2024. Her first day of TJT was on January 22, 2024.

The TJT afforded her the opportunity to obtain the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to fulfil the position. We are happy to report that she is now employed as a permanent, full-time employee of University of Guam Endowment Foundation as an Accounting Assistant. She was hired on April 18, 2024, with a rate of pay of $10.25 per hour."

WIOA-Adult/Wagner-Peyser – Eliza

"On November 4, 2023, Eliza came to the AJC seeking assistance in finding a job. She was young and eager to join the working world. A thorough assessment revealed that she lacked significant work experience and was subsequently enrolled in the adult program under WIOA.

Eliza was enrolled in our TJT Program and placed at Blush Bridal on December 27, 2023. Her first day of TJT was on January 22, 2024.

The TJT afforded her the opportunity to obtain the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to fulfill the position. She is now employed as a permanent, full-time employee of Blush Bridal as a stylist. She was hired on June 10, 2024, with a rate of pay of $10.00 per hour."

ISY Program – Blade

Blade came to the AJC to participate in the ISY Program. At that time, he was a senior at Tiyan High School. He enrolled in the ISY Employment Program to get the classroom training and employability training to help him obtain employment after graduation. He came from a household that met the lower living standard income level, was a SNAP recipient and living in a high poverty area.

Blade was enrolled with GCA Trades Academy where he successfully completed the winter and spring training and gained OJT for the Summer Employment with Hotel Tano under the supervision and training of their maintenance department.

Blade graduated with his high school diploma on June 7, 2024, from Tiyan High School. He is now employed with Fujita Property Guam, Inc., as a maintenance staff/helper earning $9.25 per hour. He is a full-time employee with Fujita Property Guam, Inc. as a maintenance staff/helper earning $9.25 per hour. He is a full-time employee. Blade completed all his Individualized Employment Plan goals.

Palau

State Workforce Development Board (SWDB)

Palau WIOA Office/AJC

Use of State Funds

Palau receives WIOA funds based on a formula established by the Act. These funds are commonly referred to as WIOA "State Formula Funds." The Palau WIOA Title I Office/AJC is the designated administrative entity for WIOA State Formula Funds of Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth. Palau WIOA does not receive Wagner-Peyser and Vocational Rehabilitation funding. On June 22, 2021, the President of the Republic of Palau, Surangel Whipps, Jr., closed the Palau WIOA Office, and through his Executive Order (EO) No. 453, the President re-appointed new members for the SWDB and the LWDB.

Under-served Populations

No information provided for this section.

Integrated Service Delivery

No information provided for this section.

Yes WIOA Can

The implementation of Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) grants, Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) and Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC), and continuous efforts to complete the programs has overwhelmed Palau WIOA Office since April 2020 to present time. Although Palau WIOA Office had to halt the Adult and Dislocated Workers programs due to CARES Act, Palau WIOA was able to implement the Youth Program with the collaboration of the Ministry of Human Resource, Culture, Tourism, and Development (MHRCTD) in the Summer of 2021, and the Summer of 2022. Although COVID-OMICRON found its way into Palau via travelers in early January of 2022, the Republic has slowly adjusted to the pandemic.

As of June 2023, Palau WIOA and MHRCTD collaborated in implementing a newly revised Youth Program that would span a program year. The Youth Program begins June 1st and ends the following year on April 30. However, due to the amount of funding for the Youth Program, Palau WIOA could only enroll a total of 25 youths (OSY and ISY) for PY23–24. These youths were enrolled into a Work Experience program, "OJT." During each WIOA quarter, these youths were placed in employment in the industry he/she has an interest in pursuing. They were paid a stipend through the work program as an incentive while gaining experience in these industries. Palau WIOA is unable to provide the remaining 13 component services to the youth due to outdated policies for PY23–24.

In June 2023, WIOA FPO Jackson informed the Director that the Youth policies currently utilized by Palau WIOA Office were out of date and must be updated. Through DOL, FPO Jackson advocated for a third party, SAFAL Partners – Next Level Now (NLN) to train Palau WIOA Office in revising the policies. After NLN revised the policies and returned to Palau WIOA, Palau WIOA will present to the SWDB for review. When the policies are reviewed and approved, Palau WIOA will be able to proceed program activities. The Youth policies were reviewed by NLN in April 2024 and were approved. However, without a compliant board, the policies have not been reviewed and approved by a compliant SWDB. During the interim, Palau WIOA implemented a youth program for the PY24–2025 following DOL regulations, while waiting for a compliant board to approve the revised Youth policies

Other State Funds Activities

The SWDB was made up of nine members. The members consisted of the President/his designee representing the Office of the President, a representative of President of the Senate, a representative of House of Delegates, the President and the Vice President of the Chamber of Commerce, the Chair of the Palau National Scholarship Board, the Chair of the Foreign Investment Board, the Minister of Finance, and the Minister of Human Resources, Culture, Tourism, and Development. The purpose of the SWDB was to effectuate the requirements of U.S. Public Law 113-128 and supervise the LWDB in its efforts to facilitate job creation and training programs and promote the hiring and retention of Palauan citizens in coordination with national and state entities.

The LWDB consisted of 11 members who represented community stakeholders from the private and public sectors of the Republic of Palau. The members represented the following private and public agencies:

- Palau Livestock Association;
- Palau Taiwan Farmers Association;
- Palau Aquaculture Alliance;
- Palau Chamber of Commerce;
- Palau Community Action Agency;
- Division of Youth and Career Development, through the Ministry of Human Resources, Culture, Tourism, and Development (MHRCTD);
- Palau Tourism and Hospitality School of Excellence, through Palau Community College (PCC);
- Division of Finance and Accounting through the Ministry of Finance (MOF);
- Belau Boater’s Association;
- Bureau of Human Resources through MHRCTD; and
- MOF.

The purpose for the LWDB was to manage the program staff and ensure sufficient training to implement the requirements of U.S. Public Law 113-128; to keep records that are sufficient to permit the preparation of reports under U.S. Federal Law and permit the tracing of funds to a level of expenditure adequate to ensure that the funds have not been spent unlawfully; to maintain records and reports of general performance; and to maintain standardized records that can be reviewed for consistency and compliance with U.S. Federal Law.

After two years and analysis of the effectiveness of EO 453, President Surangel Whipps, Jr., amended the EO reconstituting the board membership of the SWDBs and LWDBs to comply with WIOA. On September 29, 2023, the President signed the amended EO (EO 485). The amended EO added a new member to the SWDB, the Minister of Education (MOE) to meet the WIOA requirement of having a member representing Title II. SWDB now has ten members.

The EO also amended the membership of the Local Board to include:

- The Youth, Media, and Communications Coordinator from the Division of Youth and Career Development from MHRCTD;
- The Dean of Continuing Education of PCC;
- The Director of the Bureau of National Treasury from MOF;
- The Director of the Bureau of Development from MHRCTD;
- The Director of Palau Visitors Authority;
- The Executive Director/designee from Northern Reef Fisheries Cooperative
- A representative from the Bealu Offshore Fisher Incorporated; and
- The Director of the Bureau of Curriculum and Instruction from MOE.

EO 485 removed the following from the LWDB:

- Director of Human Resource – MHRCTD,
- The Chief of the Division of Youth and Career Development, and
- The Director of Palau Tourism and Hospitality School of Excellence from PCC.

The LWDB now has 15 members, which includes the Director of Palau WIOA Office

Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

No information provided for this section.

Continuous Improvement

No information provided for this section.

Reports

No information provided for this section.

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

No information provided for this section.

Strategies

Not applicable.

Impact on Performance

Not applicable.

Success Stories

No information provided for this section.

Puerto Rico

Puerto Rico Workforce Development Program

Department of Economic Development and Commerce

Use of State Funds

Funds reserved by the Governor of Puerto Rico were invested in temporary employment activities in the public sector under waivers approved by the DOL. These activities were carried out through 12 local areas to address critical needs in the community which are heightened during emergencies.

Under-served Populations

One initiative focused on caregiving for senior citizens employing healthcare aides under a waiver granted in response to Hurricanes Irma and María. Another initiative addressed the public health emergency caused by the dengue outbreak in Puerto Rico. Temporary employment included positions such as community health workers, reuse and recyclable material collectors and recycling coordinators. These temporary employment opportunities were funded to aid municipalities facing the emergency ensuring a safer public space through waste removal, elimination of stagnant waters, and reducing mosquito breeding grounds to reduce the dengue virus spread. The initiatives, combined, created 2,906 temporary positions with an investment of $13,037,734.61 during PY23.

Integrated Service Delivery

WIOA Convention

The annual WIOA Convention brought together core partners and stakeholders, providing them with training on WIOA related topics. Networking sessions improve inter-agency collaborations, coordination and partnerships among the AJCs which will result in enhancing the services for both serving both participants and employers.

Inter-Agency Coordination

Periodic meetings with key agencies, including the Puerto Rico Department of Labor, the Department of Education, and the Vocational Rehabilitation Administration, have enhanced collaboration. These efforts ensure the alignment of services and resources to address the various needs of individuals and employers.

Co-Enrollment Policy

The approval and implementation of a co-enrollment policy have streamlined service delivery by integrating resources across programs. This approach maximizes the impact of federal and state funds, enhancing outcomes for participants with complex needs.

Yes WIOA Can

Investments in Technology and Infrastructure

Modernization efforts, including upgrades to information systems, have improved transparency, efficiency, and accessibility for stakeholders. These advancements are critical to maintaining agility and competitiveness in the workforce system.

Other State Funds Activities

Case Managers Training

A comprehensive training initiative for case managers began in PY23, aimed at enhancing their certification and equipping them with the knowledge and specific skills needed to deliver better services to participants. This directly supports the objective of improving assistance and follow-up services.

Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

Incubate a State Project

Platform with Social Impact, alongside Jobs for the Future, carried out the first phase of their Incubate a State project for Puerto Rico. During this first phase, an evaluation of the current work environment and identification of needs for the development of strategies that promote economic growth and competitiveness was carried out. This evaluation sought to understand labor market trends, economic conditions, and the needs of the workforce system in Puerto Rico related to economic security and family mobility in Puerto Rico.

Additionally, an in-depth evaluation of local statutes and regulations regarding family investment policies in Puerto Rico and how those policies impact economic security and family mobility, including tax credits, benefits, access to childcare, and the increase in human capital, were part of the study.

RESEA Program Evaluation

Puerto Rico has been accepted into the DOL-ETA's Evaluation Peer Learning Cohort (EvalPLC) for PY24. This initiative represents a commitment by WIOA Core partners in Puerto Rico to strengthen evaluation capabilities, fulfill this important requirement, and lay the foundation for future evaluation efforts that support continuous program improvement.

Continuous Improvement

Although no study was commissioned during PY23, the Premier Study conducted on PY22 and other federal best practices and recommendations by DOL-R1 have allowed Puerto Rico to establish a blueprint to begin standardizing processes and procedures within all local areas. Policies have been updated, new policies have been enacted, and the State Sanctions Regulations, as well

as the State Monitoring Tools, are being evaluated and redesigned. In addition, as of October 2023, DOL and the Puerto Rico Department of Economic Development and Commerce began to offer state and local areas a series of SMART trainings, with the aim of continuing to improve compliance with WIOA requirements. During PY23 the following SMART training courses were provided:

- October 18, 2023 – Cost Allocation and Indirect Costs
- December 12, 2023 – Cost Principles and Cost Classification
- April 11, 2024 – Budget Management and Grant Modification
- June 25, 2024 – Grants Management, Training and Employment Management

Reports

No information provided for this section.

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

- Waiver of WIOA Section 134(C)(3)(H)(I) and 20 CFR 680.720(B) to Increase On-The-Job Training (OJT) Employer Reimbursement up to 90 Percent.
- Waiver of the Requirement Under WIOA 129(A)(4), and Consistent with 20 CFR 681.410 that States and Local Areas Must Expend a Minimum of 75 Percent Out-of-School (OSY) Formula Funds on Youth Workforce Activities for OSY.

Strategies

Waiver to Increase OJT Employer Reimbursement up to 90 Percent

This waiver will stay in effect until June 30, 2025. It has proved to be very valuable to support local boards in attracting new employers.

Waiver that States and Local Areas Must Expend a Minimum of 75 Percent OSY Formula Funds on Youth Workforce Activities for OSY.

For PY23, the waiver allowing Puerto Rico to lower the OSY expenditure requirement to 50 percent for both Governor’s Reserve youth funds and local youth formula funds was in effect. This waiver has been renewed through June 30, 2025. The approval of waivers in previous years had a significant effect in increasing.

Impact on Performance

Waiver to Increase OJT Employer Reimbursement up to 90 Percent

As an example, during PY23,13 local boards took advantage of this waiver resulting in 181 employers and 1,017 employees served. Of the total of participants served, 432 were adults and 585 dislocated workers. The total investment under this waiver was $7,149,601. The waiver has been responsible for increasing employee and employer participation with extremely satisfactory outcomes.

To comply with this waiver the State Board developed a public policy related to Work-Based Training activities. The policy ensures that the local and state corresponding entities prioritize the Registered Apprenticeship program training model. The waiver allowed Puerto Rico's businesses to adapt to technological and general marketplace changes by improving their capabilities to expand and remain competitive with affordable OJT options exclusively designed to achieve their specific development goals. The reduced match requirement for employers, particularly new start-ups and small to medium-sized businesses, provided an attractive and cost-effective financial incentive, increasing the opportunity to utilize the OJT model for hiring and training new workers. From an economic development standpoint, increasing the number and improving the quality of the labor force stimulates the competence and competitiveness of Puerto Rico's economy.

Based on the labor and business sector backgrounds, the positive impact of this waiver increased the opportunity to promote job skills improvement, job creation, and business sustainability of various economic regions of Puerto Rico. As a result, for PY24, an increase in the participation of employers, adults, dislocated workers, and youth, as well as in the investment of funds, is expected.

Waiver that States and Local Areas Must Expend a Minimum of 75 Percent OSY Formula Funds on Youth Workforce Activities for OSY

The 13 local areas that used the waiver in the aggregate reported expenditures of $6,873,541 during PY23. Funds inversion was almost even with OSY with 51 percent and ISY with 49 percent.

Puerto Rico continues its efforts to provide employment and education services for OSY. New generations present new challenges making it necessary to promote economic and self-sufficiency in creative and holistic ways to foster youth skills that will empower them to work through the barriers to employment and provide ISY and OSY access to education.

Success Stories

WIOA Adult with Barrier to Employment – Norma

A 56-year-old woman who became disabled in 2013 due to a physical condition that forced her to live with limited Social Security benefits. During her time trying to reinvent herself, she felt that she could study something that would make her self-sufficient and perhaps self-employed. Services were provided and she enrolled in pastry confection through an ITA account. After completing the training, she was employed by the Serrant Academy as a pastry teacher. Norma is very grateful for the help she received from the Local Area and very excited about her new position.

WIOA Youth – José

This young man received guidance from a Job Career Coach regarding the youth program and its benefits. He's known for being committed, determined, and persevering. He had no prior work experience and wanted to acquire skills that would enable him to achieve his occupational goal of securing a customer service position. José excelled in the training that assisted him in his post-secondary transition. Currently, José is employed at Ralph's Food Warehouse, where he works in customer service. He is also studying to fulfill his academic goal in Business Administration at Ana G. Méndez University.

WIOA Dislocated Worker – Darlene

This dislocated individual entered the Local Area in April 2023. She was interested in Cosmetology training. Although Darlene always made academic progress, 21 several months later she shared with the case worker her concerns about changing career paths since her occupational expectations have not been met. She shared a renewed interest in the field of mathematics or accounting. The Case Manager gave her an occupational interest test that demonstrated her inclinations towards finances and/or banking. Darlene was referred to a Banking Integral training, which began in September 2023. She successfully completed her training in May 2024. Since her graduation, Darlene works as a Receiving Payer at a Cooperative Bank in the municipality of Cataño.

WIOA Adult with Barrier to Employment – Jonathan

This individual faced significant barriers to employment due to his criminal record as an ex-offender. After serving his time, he was determined to turn his life around but struggled to find employers willing to give him a second chance. Despite his willingness to work and desire to reintegrate as a productive member of society, he encountered constant rejection in the job market.

He was referred to Guaynabo-Toa Baja local area where he met with a career counselor who recognized his potential and eagerness to succeed. They developed an Individual Employment Plan focused on building new skills and identifying meaningful job opportunities. The counselor helped Jonathan enroll in a work experience opportunity at the Municipality of Cataño, providing him hands-on experience in a structured environment.

This placement allowed him to develop new skills, gain confidence, and prove his work ethic. The employer quickly noticed his dedication and progress, despite the challenges he had faced. As his work experience came to an end, the management team at the municipality was impressed by his reliability, growth, and positive attitude, and decided to offer him a full-time unsubsidized position as a landscaping worker. Currently, Jonathan works full time and earns a sustainable wage, providing for his family and serving his employer with a well-executed job.

WIOA Dislocated Worker: More than A Job

A dislocated worker, referred to a local area by the State's Wagner-Peyser Program manager Ms. Fernández, resulted in a life-or-death situation. In the referral, Ms. Fernández mentioned her concerns about the possibility that the woman was a domestic

violence victim. During the first assessment and interview 22 the woman accepted she was being abused by her partner and stayed in the relationship because she needed a place to live.

Immediately, the local area activated the emergency protocol, local law enforcement and the City's Office for the Integral Development of Women. She was escorted to emergency services to attend to her personal situation.

Meanwhile, the local area kept working on her case by updating her résumé and contacting employment agencies to hire her.

Months passed by and she was placed in a transitional home until securing long-term housing and her abuser was arrested and prosecuted. She is currently employed by a private employer. The local area is proud that they contributed to save this woman's life and aided her in her employment journey.

U.S. Virgin Islands

U.S. Virgin Islands State Workforce Development Board (VISWDB)

Use of State Funds

Under-served Populations

Targeted Housing Community Outreach

Through the Territory's partnership with the Virgin Islands Housing Authority (VIHA), they have focused on expanding services to residents in low-income housing. With an estimated 50 percent unemployment rate across 16 communities (based on data provided by VIHA 2023 Community Profile Report), the strategy included distributing tailored marketing materials, conducting needs assessments, and establishing a schedule of bi-weekly workshops within these communities. This dedicated approach is aimed at increasing AJC visibility and meeting the specific needs of low-income residents, especially those facing employment barriers.

Established Partnership with Bureau of Corrections (BOC)

The partnership with the BOC will provide justice-involved individuals with a pathway to reentry through workforce training. This partnership will also reach a previously underserved population and connect them with tools, career workshops and meaningful career opportunities.

Integrated Service Delivery

Second Chance Month

The One-Stop Operator collaborated with Align Community Inc., and the Bureau of Corrections to coordinate Second Chance Month events across both districts of the U.S. Virgin Islands. Representatives from Equus actively participated in these weekly events, engaging with justice-involved individuals and providing guidance on steps toward gainful employment.

The month-long activities culminated in a panel discussion at the University of the Virgin Islands on St. Croix, led by Governor Albert Bryan Jr. The panel featured:

- Adryann Glenn, founder of Align Community Inc., discussed the organization's efforts in supporting reentry programs.
- Attorney Casey Payton, Executive Director and Founder of the VI Justice Initiative, highlighted legal support and advocacy for formerly incarcerated individuals.
- Moleto Smith, Director of the Law Enforcement Planning Commission, who provided insights into policy and planning for effective reentry strategies.
- Antonio Emmanuel, Director of the Office of Gun Violence Prevention, who addressed initiatives aimed at reducing recidivism and promoting public safety.

This panel discussion emphasized the importance of comprehensive reentry programs and community support in reducing recidivism and aiding the successful reintegration of formerly incarcerated individuals into society.

Virgin Islands Department of Education (VIDE) – Second Annual State Office Career and Technical Education Fair

VIDE hosted its Second Annual State Office Career and Technical Education Fair at Buddhoe Park in Frederiksted, St. Croix. The event aimed to showcase career pathways and training opportunities for students and the public from both districts. Representatives from the Equus team participated by setting up an informational table where they provided attendees with resources about training and career opportunities available through the AJC. This event fostered greater awareness of the programs that support workforce readiness and technical education in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Faith-Based Partnerships

Recognizing the pivotal role faith-based centers play in the community, Equus developed a targeted initiative to engage with this community. This strategic outreach was aimed to increase awareness of WIOA services, while leveraging the established credibility of these faith centers to connect with a broader population through community engagement.

Collaborative Outreach with Employers and Agencies

By aligning outreach efforts with organizations like Viya's Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), Equus reaches more WIOA-eligible individuals. This collaborative approach has extended AJC's reach and created synergies with community organizations. Additionally, these partnerships lessen the AJC's financial burden to market and promote events.

Yes WIOA Can

Text-Based Solutions

The Territory launched a text-based outreach platform through Engage by Cell, which has proven to be highly effective. This platform allows case managers to efficiently inform the public of updates and program information, leveraging high open rates to maximize engagement. Studies show that SMS messaging achieves a 97 percent open rate, with 90 percent of messages read within three minutes (compared to email's 20 percent to 30 percent open rates). Utilizing this technology as a part of the strategy allowed for guaranteed distribution of information and calls to action. This practice has led to an increase in marketing impressions and reach. The Territory utilizes this text-based platform to directly communicate with individual participants, keeping them informed of individualized updates, required documentation, training opportunities, and upcoming events specific to their career needs.

Eligible Training Provider (ETP) Events

By hosting informative ETP events at the AJC, Equus provides jobseekers with direct access to training providers, allowing them to explore programs and make informed decisions. This initiative has encouraged participation and engagement with available training pathways.

Other State Funds Activities

No information provided for this section.

Evaluations

Activities and Methodology

No information provided for this section.

Continuous Improvement

No information provided for this section.

Reports

Compliance Monitoring

The Planning Research and Monitoring Unit of the U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Labor conducted a review of several approved Eligible Training Providers. The monitoring report consisted of monitoring overview, eligibility checklist, classroom training, ADA Pre-Award Survey, ADA checklist, findings, corrective actions, areas of concern and on-site photos. All findings have been resolved.

Waivers

Waiver Implemented

Waiver of WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(H)(i) and 20 CFR 680.720(b) to increase on-the-job training employer reimbursement up to 90 percent for businesses with 50 or fewer employees. ETA approves the waiver for PYs 2024 and 2025

Strategies

No information provided for this section.

Impact on Performance

No information provided for this section.

Success Stories

Youth (St. Thomas Participant)

In 2022, Jahiem, a 17-year-old high school graduate, came to an office seeking employment assistance. He had recently completed a summer job at the Judiciary of the Virgin Islands and was eager to pursue a career in auto mechanics. However, Jahiem also needed to work to support himself while living with his mother.

Recognizing his potential and commitment, Jahiem's Workforce Development (WD) Specialist, Tamera Gumbs, quickly assessed his needs and guided him toward the best opportunities. Jahiem enrolled in the two-year Auto Mechanics Program at the Ralph O. Wheatley Skills Center (ROWSC). Understanding his need for financial independence, Tamera recommended a work experience opportunity that would allow Jahiem to gain valuable OJT while still attending school. This dual approach would help Jahiem stay financially stable while working toward his career goal.

Shortly after beginning his training, Jahiem was placed in a three-month paid work experience as an Auto Mechanic Assistant with the Department of Property and Procurement. Jahiem took full advantage of this opportunity, consistently demonstrating his strong work ethic, problem-solving skills, and enthusiasm for learning. His performance stood out, leading the agency to request his work experience be extended for an additional three months, giving him more time to refine his skills.

By the time he entered his second semester of training in 2023, Jahiem's progress had been exceptional. His growth both in the classroom and in the field did not go unnoticed. Recognizing his dedication and the value he brought to the team, the Department of Property and Procurement offered Jahiem a full-time position as an Auto Mechanic.

In May 2024, Jahiem successfully graduated from the Auto Mechanics program and is currently employed with the Department of Property and Procurement at a salary of $37,179.35.

Jahiem's journey is a powerful testament to the impact of combining education, hands-on training, and real-world work experience. Through the personalized guidance and support provided by Tamera Gumbs and the WD program, Jahiem was able to achieve both financial independence and career success, all while pursuing his passion for auto mechanics. His story highlights how the right combination of training, work experience, and mentorship can empower young individuals to reach their full potential and build a successful career.

Youth (St. Croix Participant)

Youth customer, Jahonyah and her mother visited our office with clear vision for her future: she wanted to become a Marshal. Despite having no prior experience or exposure to the field, she was determined that this was the only law enforcement position she wished to pursue. Unfortunately, there were no available marshal positions at the time.

Jahonyah, a recent high school graduate, had been unemployed for the past three months, with her most recent job being a cashier. Determined to help her gain relevant exposure, her Workforce Development Specialist, Meryl Samuel, contacted several agencies, including the District Court and the Virgin Islands Police Department (VIPD). However, she received no responses. Undeterred, the Workforce Development Specialist reached out to the Superior Court's Marshal's Office, where the initial response was skeptical. As a final effort, she contacted the Superior Court's Human Resources (HR) office.

Merlyn explained Jahonyah's determination and proposed that she participate in the Work, Learn, and Earn (WLE) program funded by the Department of Labor. She assured HR that Jahonyah's wages would be covered by the program and offered to sign any required confidentiality agreements. After careful consideration, HR agreed to give Jahonyah a chance.

Soon after, Jahonyah began her placement at the Superior Court as a receptionist through the WLE program. This role allowed her to gain firsthand exposure to her field of interest. Regular check-ins with both Jahonyah and the HR team ensured her progress was monitored closely. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive: HR commended Jahonyah for her professionalism, diligence, respectful demeanor, and ability to fulfill her duties without issue. She also built strong relationships with her colleagues.

As the WLE program neared its conclusion, the receptionist position at the Superior Court was officially advertised. Jahonyah applied for the role and was interviewed after she completed the WLE program. After a lengthy hiring process, Jahonyah's persistence and hard work paid off. She was officially hired as a full-time receptionist at the Superior Court and began her new role as a receptionist.

All of this happened within just six months. Her journey is a testament to the power of determination and opportunity. Her story highlights how tailored support, proactive advocacy, and the willingness to step outside one's comfort zone can lead to meaningful career achievements. Today, Jahonyah is on a path aligned with her aspirations, gaining valuable experience that moves her closer to her ultimate goal of becoming a Marshal.

Supportive Services

Lynnesha completed her WIOA funded Patient Care Technician (PCT) course and returned to the AJC seeking assistance to secure her national certification. Unemployed and unable to afford the exam costs, she was provided with financial assistance to cover the National Healthcare Association exam fees. She successfully passed the Exam and earned her certification. Equus also connected Lynnesha with interview preparation workshops and other career services, ensuring she was fully equipped for her next steps. Today, thanks to her dedication and the services provided by the AJC team, Lynnesha is thriving as a Patient Care Technician at Schneider Regional Medical Center, a testament to the impact of supportive services in helping participants reach their career goals.

Low-Income Adults/Individual Training Account

Bri-Yanah faced unexpected financial hardship after a tragic fire destroyed her workplace. As a result, she lost her sole source of income and her ability to continue paying for medical massage therapy classes, making her dream of becoming a massage therapist uncertain. In desperation, she turned to the AJC for financial support. Bri-Yanah received funding, successfully completed her training, and passed the MBLEX exam, demonstrating her skill and commitment. Today, she is gainfully employed as a therapist at Tropical Bliss Spa and awaiting her official Medical Massage Therapist certification. Her resilience and determination, paired with AJC's support, transformed her challenges into steppingstones toward a bright and rewarding future.

Low-Income Adult/Individual Training Account (ITA)

After months of job searching and struggling to secure employment, Tatiana was beginning to lose hope of career advancement. Her lack of experience made it difficult for her to stand out in a competitive job market. Determined to turn things around, she reached out to the AJC for guidance. With the support of the AJC team and WIOA funding, Tatiana enrolled in CAN Academy's Bookkeeping Course. She successfully earned her certificate of completion which equipped her with the tools to confidently re-enter the workforce. Today, she is thriving in her new role as a Bookkeeper at Sapphire Beach Resort. Tatiana's story highlights the impact our ITA program has in enabling jobseekers to transition from financial insecurity to stable employment.

Supportive Services/Barriers to Work

> "In April 2023, a client expressed interest in the Skills for Today training program. However, he faced significant challenges, including the recent loss of his home in a fire. This devastating event resulted in the loss of essential belongings, such as his DJ equipment, and clothing. Despite these setbacks, our client remained determined. With the support of his dedicated case manager, he attended a Joining Forces career fair in September and identified a company of interest. The case manager proactively submitted a letter of recommendation to the company on the client's behalf.
>
> To enhance the client's job prospects, the case manager enrolled him in OSHA 30 online courses. He visited the AJC every day from 1pm to 5pm, walking over a mile and eventually losing his glasses. The client diligently completed these courses, often working without his glasses.

As the client secured an interview with his dream company, the employment service team collaborated with him to prepare for the interview, including assistance with appropriate attire. This involved sourcing larger-sized shoes to ensure he presented himself professionally.

The client's perseverance, combined with the unwavering support of his case manager and the employment service team, ultimately led to his success. In December 2023, on the same day, he received two job offers, one of which was his dream position.

Happy to say almost a year later, client is still employed with the company. He now has reliable transportation and was able to replace his glasses."

WIOA Annual Statewide Performance Report Narrative

QUICK VIEW: PROGRAM YEAR 2023

Feburary 2025