



1001 North 23rd Street
Post Office Box 94094
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9094

(O) 225-342-3110
(F) 225-342-2051
www.laworks.net

John Bel Edwards, Governor
Ava Cates, Secretary

Office of the Secretary

December 1, 2022

Nicholas Lalpui
United States Department of Labor
Employment and Training Administration
Dallas Regional Office
525 South Griffin Street, Room 317
Dallas, Texas 75202

Re: Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Annual Report Program Year 2021

Dear Mr. Lalpui:

I am pleased to present the 2021 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Annual Report for the state of Louisiana. This document covers the hard work, achievements and challenges of the Louisiana Workforce Commission from July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022.

The Annual Report provides an opportunity to show how the state is implementing the strategies outlined in the Combined State Plan helping to prepare Louisiana workers, educators and workforce partners for the improving employment trend that is projected through at least 2023.

The report will further highlight that the State of Louisiana has been diligent in its efforts to ensure that the workforce needs are met and exceeded across the state. We are so thankful for the opportunity to serve our fellow Louisianans utilizing funding opportunities within the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

Our community partnerships have come to fruition in the form of additional apprenticeship programs, Industry Sector Partnerships, customized trainings and collaborations that continue to fulfill our mission of "Putting People to Work" by providing State support and guidance in implementation.

If you have any questions or need any additional information, please feel free to contact Ms. Andrea Morrison, Assistant Secretary at (225) 342-3483 or via email at amorrison@lwc.la.gov.

Sincerely,

Ava Cates
Secretary



WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND
OPPORTUNITY ACT

ANNUAL REPORT

2021



LOUISIANA
WORKFORCE
COMMISSION

The Department of Labor

Executive Summary

Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards, in collaboration with The Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC), under the leadership of Secretary Ava Cates, work consistently to support and remain committed to workforce progress as a priority for the state of Louisiana. The economy is steadily evolving and parallel to our evolution are the changing needs and demands of our state and nation, resulting in a shift in the business needs and skills demand to meet businesses' needs today and in the future. As the administration continues to keep the promises made during the previous and current terms, LWC has re-energized the Workforce Commission's commitment to increasing business engagement, employer utilization, reducing employer costs, and increasing value received from the workforce system to recruit and hire qualified Louisiana workers. Additionally, we have refocused our commitment to ensuring that working families earn a living wage that strengthens families and support our state's economic recovery.

Workforce Investment Council (State Workforce Development Board)

The Louisiana Workforce Investment Council (WIC) currently consists of 53 members representing an array of business, workforce (i.e. apprenticeship/training, organized labor and community-based organizations), state legislature and government.

The WIC serves to develop a strategic plan to coordinate and integrate a workforce development delivery system to assure efficiency and cooperation between public and private entities, by advising the governor on the needs of Louisiana's employers and its workforce as well as being responsible for occupational forecasting used to drive programs and funding for job training. The council supports development of an employer-led, demand-driven workforce development system based on occupational forecasts in which training, education and services for job seekers prepare Louisiana residents for high wage, high-demand career opportunities in Louisiana.

The WIC achieves its mission by the following listed below:

1. Recommending policy actions to both public and private institutions and creating coalitions to achieve their implementation.
2. Working with Workforce Development Systems partners to integrate workforce development into the decision making of business people, economic developers, educators, and human resource professionals.
3. Raising public awareness of the importance of workforce development for Louisiana's economic future.
4. Ensuring the public accountability by evaluating the effectiveness of the overall workforce development system.

Workforce Investment Council Strategic Vision

Vision

Today's economic landscape and workforce is constantly changing and the demands shift on a regular basis for a growing economy. Louisiana continues to experience growth in numerous in-demand industry sectors of the workforce, including manufacturing, information technology, healthcare and biotechnology, and to name just a few. With the increasing need for skilled workers, the creation of Industry Sector Partnerships aligns education and skills acquisition to meet the general requirements of

workers and businesses. The WIC focuses on creating and sustaining good jobs while identifying strategies that support future-oriented education and training for Louisiana citizens as well as America's Workforce. This vision has continued the mission with which Gov. Edwards charged the people of Louisiana. That shared mission is "Putting Louisiana First" and making it possible for all Louisiana citizens to be healthy and prosperous.

The Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) and Governor John Bel Edwards work consistently to support and remain committed to workforce progress as a priority of Louisiana. Louisiana's economy is evolving. Parallel to our evolution are the changing needs and demands of our state and nation, resulting in a shift in the business needs and skills demand to meet businesses' needs today and in the future.

LWC has re-energized the Workforce Commission's commitment to increasing business engagement, employer utilization, reducing employer costs, and increasing value received from the workforce system to recruit and hire qualified Louisiana workers. We additionally have refocused our commitment to ensuring that working families earn a living wage that strengthens families, creates solutions to lift people out of poverty, and support our state's economic recovery. It is our goal to ignite more enthusiasm in creating solutions pertinent to Louisiana's Labor environment.

We, the people of Louisiana, envision a workforce system that will provide pathways for all Louisianans, including individuals who are receiving public assistance, the unemployed or underemployed, those who are deficient in basic skills, as well as persons with disabilities, including disabled veterans, and others who have significant barriers to employment. All will have access to education, training and supportive services needed to prepare for and secure high-demand occupations that pay family-sustaining wages.

Strategic Goals

Goal 1: Continue to strengthen existing and establish new Career Pathways as a model for skill, credential and degree attainment for Louisiana citizens. This will help to secure jobs that provide opportunities for economic independence and family stability. This goal will be accomplished by executing the following objectives:

1. Workforce development system partners will develop a shared vision and strategy for industry sector-based career pathways for youth and adults. Career pathways are diverse, with multiple entry and exit points allowing individuals of varying abilities, including adults and youth with multiple barriers to employment and in need of skill enhancement, to have realistic access to pathways.
2. Engage employers and integrate sector strategy principles to ensure employers, business associations and organized labor are partners in creating demand-driven career pathways.
3. Increase the identification, prioritization and leverage of workforce system partner resources to provide supportive services and reduce barriers,
4. Strengthen the alignment of K-12 education, workforce, and other viable initiatives such as improving processes for transfer credits through postsecondary, apprenticeships and college coursework as entry and exit points in the career pathways model for in- and out-of-school youth.
5. Expand utilization of registered apprenticeship by employers to train workers and meet industry sector standards and demands.

Goal 2: Expand career services and opportunities for targeted and special populations facing multiple barriers.

1. Expand and incentivize the utilization of evidenced-based workforce strategies that support targeted populations (e.g., the long-term unemployed, individuals with disabilities, veterans, out-of-school youth) into sector-based career pathways leading to gainful employment.
2. Enhance and expand the delivery of integrated reentry and employment strategies to reduce recidivism among Louisiana's returning citizens and meet the skill and workforce needs of business and industry.

Goal 3: Increase the participation and utilization of the workforce system by employers and job-seekers to foster the improvement and expansion of employer-driven regional sector partnerships to meet occupational demands as supported by regional labor market information.

1. Increase the use of labor market and educational data and technology, in coordination with local data, to inform and guide strategic workforce development decisions.
2. Develop focused, regional workforce initiatives that blend partner resources (co-investment) to educate and train workers for jobs within the workforce region.
3. Increase the alignment and efficacy of formula, discretionary and competitive workforce funding in efforts to support regional and local workforce initiatives.
4. Promote meaningful, portable industry credentials supported throughout the workforce delivery system.
5. Fortify a system of accountability for the workforce development system that supports and promotes the evaluation of the effectiveness of state and local workforce development boards in meeting the workforce demands of business and workforce.

WIOA TITLE I - V PERFORMANCE AND ACTIVITIES

WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT WAIVERS

During Program Year 2021, the Louisiana Workforce Commission requested two waivers through U.S. Department of Labor. The agency submitted the waivers on August 13, 2021 after working closing with the Local Workforce Development Boards to develop a comprehensive request in response to the barriers that LWDBs were facing during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Employment and Training Administration approved both waivers through June 30, 2022.

1. Waiver of requirement to expend 75% of youth statewide and local finding on Out-of-School Youth population for Program Years 2020 and 2021.

The approval waives the requirement that the State expend 75 percent of Governor's reserve youth funds on Out of School Youth. In addition, the state may lower the expenditure requirement of Governor's reserve to 50 percent for Out-of-School Youth.

2. Waiver of requirement that only permits WIOA Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for Out-of-School (OSY) for Program Years 2020 and 2021.

The approval waives the states requirement limiting Individual Training Accounts to only Out-of-School Youth, ages 16-24 years of age. Additionally, the approval outlines that the state may use Individual Training Accounts for In-School Youth 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.

WIOA Title I

Performance

Pursuant to WIOA, all states submitting a state plan must propose expected levels of performance for each of the prescribed indicators. Federal guidelines describe the primary indicators of performance as key factors in achieving the goals of WIOA.

Data determining primary indicators of performance are collected from Louisiana's Management Information Systems, Unemployment Wage Records, and from the State Wage Interchange System. These systems gather exit information on participants and provides real-time data elements for case management and performance reporting.

The following tables demonstrations Louisiana's negotiated rate for each of the required indicators of performance along with the actual statewide outcomes achieved. Pursuant to federal policy, states achieving at least 90 percent of the negotiated goal are considered to have met the goal. Louisiana met all performance indicators; Employment Rate Second Quarter after Exit, Employment Rate Fourth Quarter after Exit, Median Earnings, and Credential Attainment for WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs. WIOA Title III Wagner-Peyser participants met all performance indicators for Employment Rate Second Quarter after Exit, Employment Rate Fourth Quarter after Exit, and Median Earnings Second Quarter after Exit. We surpass the 90% threshold of our expected negotiated performance levels as indicated by U.S. Department of Labor for Program Year 2021.

WIOA Title I and Title III PY 2021 Statewide Results

	Negotiated Performance Level PY20	Statewide Performance PY21	Percent of Goal Attained
Adult			
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	67.0%	73.2%	109%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	67.0%	62.3%	93%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$6,000	\$6,697	112%
Credential Attainment	64.3%	72.2%	112%
Dislocated Worker			
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	67.0%	72.6%	108%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	68.0%	61.5%	90%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$7,800	\$8,459	108%
Credential Attainment	70.5%	84.0%	119%
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	73.5%	71.0%	97%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	72.0%	72.4%	101%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$2,900	\$3,673	127%
Credential Attainment	58.0%	62.9%	108%
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	60.0%	58.7%	98%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	62.0%	56.0%	90%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$5,000	\$5,862	117%

WIOA Title I and Title III PY 2021 Over the Year Progress

	Statewide Performance PY20	Statewide Performance PY21	Gain (Loss) PY21
Adult			
Participants Served - Career Services	3,576	3,993	-417
Participants Served - Training Services	\$2,455	2,554	-99
Exiters - Career Services	2,016	2,901	-885
Exiters - Training Services	1,358	1,635	-277
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	60.2%	73.2%	-13.0%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	64.0%	62.3%	-1.7%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$5,900	\$6,697	-797
Credential Attainment	75.5%	72.2%	2.4%
Dislocated Worker			
Participants Served - Career Services	1,868	1,662	206
Participants Served - Training Services	1,313	1,122	191
Exiters - Career Services	984	1,337	-353
Exiters - Training Services	651	873	-222
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	54.9%	72.6%	-17.7%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	68.0%	61.5%	-6.5%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$6,881	\$8,459	-1,578
Credential Attainment	81.2%	84.0%	-2.8%

	Statewide Performance PY20	Statewide Performance PY21	Gain (Loss) PY21
<u>Youth</u>			
Participants Served - Career Services	2,083	2,365	-282
Participants Served - Training Services	809	910	-101
Exiters - Career Services	800	1,343	-543
Exiters - Training Services	385	513	-128
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	65.1%	71.0%	-5.9%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	69.3%	72.4%	-3.1%
Credential Attainment	49.1%	62.9%	-13.8%
<u>Wagner-Peyser</u>			
Participants Served - Career Services	30,866	29,595	-1,271
Participants Served - Training Services			-2,809
Exiters - Career Services	29,878	26,199	-16,746
Exiters - Training Services			-1,889
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	51.1%	58.7%	-7%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	51.4%	56.0%	-10%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$4,733	\$5,862	(\$102)

LOCAL PERFORMANCE

Upon completion of the state's negotiation with U.S. Department of Labor on state performance goals, performance target negotiations were conducted with each LWDB. As a result, expected levels of performance and goals were agreed upon for each local board. The following table summarizes outcomes based on local boards achieving 90% of their respective negotiated performance goals.

WIOA Title I and Title III Program Year 2021 Local Workforce Development Area Results

Measure	State Goal	# LWDBs Achieving Goal	% of LWDBs Achieving Goal
<u>Adult</u>			
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	67.0%	15 of 15	100%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	67.0%	13 of 15	86.6%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$6,000	15 of 15	100%
Credential Attainment	64.3%	14 of 15	93.3%
<u>Dislocated Worker</u>			
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	67.0%	14 of 15	93.3%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	68.0%	9 of 15	60.0%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$7,800	15 of 15	100%
Credential Attainment	70.5%	14 of 15	93.3%
<u>Youth</u>			
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	73.5%	13 of 15	86.6%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	72.0%	13 of 15	86.6%
Credential Attainment	58.0%	14 of 15	93.3%
<u>Wagner-Peyser</u>			
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	60.0%	15 of 15	100%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	62.0%	9 of 15	60.0%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$5,000	14 of 15	93.3%

COMMON EXIT

Louisiana has a Common Exit policy mandating common date of exit for participating across the WIOA Title I, WIOA Title III, and Trade Adjustment Assistance programs. Consistent with ETA guidance, participants enrolled or co-enrolled in one or more of the foregoing ETA programs remain as participants in all programs in which there is a common period of participation until the participant has not received a service in any Common Exit program for ninety days. After ninety days' elapse without receipt of a service in any of the Common Exit programs, the participant will exit all programs, retroactive to the date of the last service received in any enrolled or co-enrolled program.

EFFECTIVENESS IN SERVING EMPLOYERS

In the Employment and Training Administration (hereinafter "ETA") Effectiveness in Serving Employers pilot measure, Louisiana elected to report Employer Penetration Rate and Repeat Business Customers Rate across all programs.

Louisiana reported an Employer Penetration rate of 27.1% for Program Year 2021. This calculation was made by extracting the total number of employers with twenty or more employees receiving at least one of a set of core categories of services including job posting, employer based training, resume search, labor market information, incumbent worker training, seminars & workshops, and apprenticeships divided by the number of employers in Louisiana with twenty or more employees based on Labor Market Information data. We chose this threshold for total employees due to the enormity of the number of employers with fewer than twenty employees, especially self-employer sole proprietors and family businesses who are far less likely to hire a substantial number of new employees. Further, the rate of penetration would be likely be close to or statistically similar to zero, thus useless for analysis, had a denominator of all Louisiana employers been used. However, we have this data available if needed.

Louisiana reported a Repeat Business Customer Rate of 58.7% in Program Year 2021. The Repeat Business Customer Rate was calculated by counting number of businesses that utilized the foregoing core categories of services (for Employer Penetration Rate calculation) or any recorded employer service in our MIS system in the prior PY as the denominator. Of those in the denominator, the businesses that also received any of the mentioned core categories of services (for Employer Penetration Rate calculation) or any recorded employer service in our MIS system in Program Year 2021 were counted as the numerator.

COST OF WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACTIVITIES

During Program Year 2021, Louisiana expended \$28,875,747 on WIOA Title I Career Services and \$17,914,495 on WIOA Title I Training Services for a total of \$46,790,242 in WIOA Title I participant service expenditures. During Program Year 2021, Louisiana expended \$8,578,517 on WIOA Title III Career Services, bringing the total PY2021 expenditures for WIOA Title I and Title III participant services to \$55,368,759.

Please see the charts on the following page for additional details regarding participant and exiter levels, by program, and costs, by program.

WIOA Title I and Title III Cost Summary

WIO Title I and Title III Cost Summary				
Cost Summary Adult				
Service	Participants Served (Cohort Period: 7/1/2021-6/30/2022)	Participants Exited (Cohort Period: 4/1/2021-3/31/2022)	Funds Expended (Cohort Period: 7/1/2021-6/30/2022)	Cost Per Participant Served (Cohort Period: 7/1/2021-6/30/2022)
Career Services	3,993	2,901	\$9,421,442	\$2,359
Training Services	2,554	1,635	\$6,812,300	\$2,667
Percent training-related employment+ (Cohort Period: 7/1/2021-6/30/2022)		Percent enrolled in more than one core program (Cohort Period: 7/1/2021- 6/30/2022)		Percent Admin Expended:
32.10%		95.40%		11.70%
Cost Summary Dislocated Worker				
Service	Participants Served (Cohort Period: 7/1/2021-6/30/2022)	Participants Exited (Cohort Period: 4/1/2021-3/31/2022)	Funds Expended (Cohort Period: 7/1/2021-6/30/2022)	Cost Per Participant Served (Cohort Period: 7/1/2021-6/30/2022)
Career Services	1,662	1,337	\$10,467,054	\$6,298
Training Services	1,122	873	\$4,899,028	\$4,366
Percent training-related employment+ (Cohort Period: 7/1/2021-6/30/2022)		Percent enrolled in more than one core program (Cohort Period: 7/1/2021- 6/30/2022)		Percent Admin Expended:
35.80%		95.60%		13.30%
Cost Summary Youth				
Service	Participants Served (Cohort Period: 7/1/2021-6/30/2022)	Participants Exited (Cohort Period: 4/1/2021-3/31/2022)	Funds Expended (Cohort Period: 7/1/2021-6/30/2022)	Cost Per Participant Served (Cohort Period: 7/1/2021-6/30/2022)
Career Services	2,365	1,343	\$8,987,251	\$3,800
Training Services	910	513	\$6,203,167	\$6,817
Percent training-related employment+ (Cohort Period: 7/1/2021-6/30/2022)		Percent enrolled in more than one core program (Cohort Period: 7/1/2021- 6/30/2022)		Percent Admin Expended:
20.80%		89.80%		13.10%
Cost Summary Wagner-Peyser				
Service	Participants Served (Cohort Period: 7/1/2021-6/30/2022)	Participants Exited (Cohort Period: 4/1/2021-3/31/2022)	Funds Expended (Cohort Period: 7/1/2021-6/30/2022)	Cost Per Participant Served (Cohort Period: 7/1/2021-6/30/2022)
Career Services	29,595	26,199	\$8,578,517	\$290
Training Services				
		Percent enrolled in more than one core program (Cohort Period: 7/1/2021- 6/30/2022)		Percent Admin Expended:
30.90%		24.30%		N/A

DATA VALIDATION

Louisiana receives WIOA funding from the United States Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration based on achieving negotiated performance. ETA's expectations are that work is done in a timely manner and correctly reported on a quarterly basis.

Many aspects of daily work for WIOA programs affect performance reporting for WIOA programs. As part of quality control, OWD will review these functions to determine whether LWDA's are adequately and appropriately meeting deadlines and documentation requirements.

The Office of Workforce Development (OWD) provides quarterly regional training and on-site technical assistance to any LWDA deemed deficient in any of the problem areas related to data collection and quality assurance.

Many elements of WIOA enrollment require appropriate documentation be places in participant files. Documentation sources can be identified within the case management system HiRE – Helping Individuals Reach Employment.

TITLE II ADULT EDUCATION

The Louisiana Technical and Community College system continues to support the integration of activities sponsored under the AEFLA in multiple areas relative to adult education, career development, and employment and training activities.

In accordance with WIOA regulations, shared infrastructure costs of the One-Stop Delivery System was accomplished through equipment contribution at the local level. The WorkReady U-Adult Education comprehensive literacy center in each region provided an interactive kiosk at each certified One-Stop. The interactive kiosk provides direct telephone access and a chat feature for on-demand assistance to trained enrollment management specialists.

TITLE III WAGNER PEYSER

The Louisiana Workforce Commission employment services continues to remain the cornerstone within the American Job Center nucleus. As the primary entry point for many individuals accessing the American Job Center system, Wagner-Peyser staff provided critical services and referrals to an array of American Job Center core and partner programs. These efforts, in combination with a robust system of regional partners, many Louisiana residents were able to achieve a living wage.

The Wagner-Peyser program provides support for many statewide initiatives such as Drive Your Future, Tech Ready Louisiana, and a host of regional job fairs. Wagner-Peyser staff remain committed to achieving the Agency's mission of "Putting People to Work".

Employment and intensive services are provided to an array of customers and co-enrolled customers with varying degrees of service requirements. This integrated approach enables Wagner-Peyser to seamlessly provide services to customers with significant barriers to employment such as homeless veterans, out of school youth, at risk adults, reentry customers etc. Programs that intersect and co-enroll with Wagner-Peyser services are listed and described below.

JOBS FOR VETERANS STATE GRANT (JVSG)

The Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) is committed to serving veterans, transitioning service members, and their families by providing resources to assist and prepare them to obtain meaningful careers and maximize their employment opportunities. This commitment is an important part of fulfilling our obligation to the men and women who have honorably served our country.

The State drives priority of services in referring veterans and other eligible persons to employment opportunities through a standardized review process. Every veteran that qualifies for services are seen by a Disabled Veteran Outreach Representative (DVOP) and given Individualized Career Services under the framework of case management. This process is comprised of a comprehensive assessment and individual employment plan based on the need of each individual veteran. Field leadership receives results of this process quarterly for action when necessary. In addition, Local Veteran Employ Representatives (LVER) are conducting training to the field on veterans' priority of services to the non-veteran staff in the local offices. LVERs are pursuing employers to enroll in the Hire Veterans Medallion Program, which incentivizes companies to hire veterans and provide them with a reward from the Department of Defense.

The State continues to provide Individualize Career Services under the framework of case management for Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) referrals in accordance with directives.

The State embraced the JVSG refocusing through the efforts of the JVSG staff members and their American Job Center partners, the state achieved a 99% Intensive Services Rate compared to the goal of 94%. The driving factor behind this success were the American Job Center staff members conducted initial assessments on incoming Veteran job seekers and only referrals of those identified to have a Significant Barrier to Employment (SBE) to a DVOP.

Below is a comparison of the key JVSG metrics between Program Year 2021 and Program Year 2022.

Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG)

<i>Measure</i>	<i>Negotiated Goal</i>	<i>Statewide Performance PY21</i>	<i>Statewide Performance PY22</i>	<i>Gain (Loss) PY22</i>
Covered Entrants		871	615	(256)
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	52.2%	57.2%	50.7%	(6.5%)
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	50.5%	56.0%	49.7%	(6.3%)
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$5,100	\$5,640	\$6,698	\$1058

Source: ETA 9173

The JVSG program has collaborated with the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP) Grant Awardees, Volunteers of American (VOA) of New Orleans and the Elle Foundation of Shreveport, to ensure individualized career services are provided to all those enrolled in the program.

The State JVSG program has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the local Army Military Installation on Fort Polk; to provide office space for a DVOP twice a week to provide assistance with transitioning veterans to ensure they have access to services.

REEMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENT

The Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program identifies unemployment benefits claimants who are likely to exhaust all unemployment benefits and transitioning veterans receiving Unemployment Compensation for Ex-Service members (UCX), and connects them with reemployment services to help them quickly return to work.

The RESEA program uses statistical modeling to rank unemployment benefits claimants based on their likelihood to exhaust all unemployment benefits. This process includes a statistical evaluation of numerous work and related factors, including but not limited to length of workforce attachment, occupational field, industry, wages, and location. Claimants are assigned a score, with a higher score indicating a greater risk of exhausting unemployment benefits.

In 2021, RESEA operations and personnel were impacted by changes necessitated by the COVID crisis, as well as major Hurricanes. We were having issues with the reporting due to the manual work around as the metrics are being tracked manually. Due to the extended closure of American Job Centers across the state, there was not an opportunity to provide in-person RESEA visits. Most of the American Job Centers remained closed to the public during the first half of 2021, but began reopening in July 2021. In March 2021, OWD began to pursue a virtual platform to provide RESEA services. The RESEA program procured the virtual platform 10to8, in December 2021, to provide virtual RESEA services delivery.

10to8 provides the participants the ability to schedule their appointments, receive reminders via email and SMS, and reschedule if necessary. 10to8 offers calendars for each individual staff member at the AJC providing them notice of upcoming appointments, which also gives them advanced notice of the day-to-day traffic. In addition, 10to8 offers various reporting tools as well as tracking details for completed appointments, no-shows while minimizing no-shows up to 90%.

There were 108,676 individuals profiled for RESEA services in Program Year 2021. Due to the impact of the COVID crisis and major hurricanes, 9,675 participants of scheduled services were successfully completed.

The new RESEA program service flow was restructured in December 2021, to provide virtual services, engage participants sooner after filing a claim, provide more robust services, and require one stop to co-enroll individuals in Title I employment and training services at 10 weeks of unemployment.

The activities provide selected claimants include a virtual orientation, staff assistance with developing an individualized reemployment plan, conducting an unemployment benefits eligibility assessment, providing the claimant with customized labor market information, and other staff-assisted career services at an American Job Center (AJC).

The RESEA has procured The Policy & Research Group (PRG), an experienced independent evaluator, to conduct its evaluation of the RESEA program January 24, 2022. Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) are taking steps to ensure that RESEA interventions or service delivery strategies without a *high or moderate causal evidence rating* will be under evaluation beginning in FY 2020.

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), develop 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.

REINTEGRATION OF JUSTICE - INVOLVED PERSONNEL

Wagner-Peyser funds provide full time dedicated staff working directly in or coordination with Day Reporting Centers (DRC). Louisiana Workforce Commission currently supports four centers in St Tammany, Caddo, East Baton Rouge and combined Orleans/Jefferson parishes.

Staff provide individualized career services to formerly justice-involved persons that contribute to their successful transition to society. A comprehensive assessment and employment plan including follow-up every 30 days ensure gainful employment.

Staff also conduct outreach and advocacy on behalf of the individual 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.

LOUISIANA REHABILITATION SERVICES

The mission of Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) is to assist persons with disabilities in their desire to obtain, maintain, or advance in competitive integrated employment and achieve independence in their communities by providing rehabilitation services and working cooperatively with business and other community resources.

Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) continues to strive for excellence in its endeavors to assist persons with disabilities in becoming competitively employed in integrated environments and reaching their maximum level of independence. LRS values providing flexible and timely services consistent with "informed choice" of the individual and in recognizing individual needs and cultural differences.

Title IV- Vocational Rehabilitation Program (VR)

Vocational Rehabilitation provides a planned sequence of individualized services to assist persons with disabilities reach employment. It is a partnership between a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and the individual with a disability. They work together to develop an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) that is specific to the unique strengths, resources, concerns, abilities, interests, and informed choice of the individual. The plan identifies the VR services the individual needs in order to achieve their employment goals.

These comprehensive services go far beyond those found in typical job training programs, and include such services as:

1. assessment, career guidance and counseling;
2. work readiness and placement;
3. vocational and other training;
4. prosthetics, orthotics, transportation;
5. interpreters and readers; and
6. assistive technology.

As a result of the VR program, 1,277 individuals obtained employment in Program Year 2021. The average hourly earnings of these individuals was \$14.17; with average annual earnings of \$24,384. Of those obtaining successful employment, 54.6% obtained employment in Louisiana's top demand occupations. This can be

attributed in part to training provided to the Rehabilitation Counselors to ensure that they are knowledgeable when providing vocational guidance to individuals so they may choose a career goal that is in demand.

Order of Selection

When LRS does not have sufficient funding or staff to serve all eligible consumers, federal regulations mandate that individuals with the most significant disabilities be given priority for services. LRS determines who has the most significant disabilities by implementing an Order of Selection (OOS) which is derived from an individual's functional limitations and barriers to employment that are directly resultant from their disability. Using this information, the individual is placed in an appropriate OOS Category with ranges from most to least severe. Prior to Program Year 2021, LRS had 5 OOS Categories, with the 5th Category being closed which resulted in consumers found eligible in that category being placed on a deferred waiting list for services. On March 28, 2022, LRS consolidated and reduced the five OOS Categories to three; Category 1 – Most Significantly Disabled, Category 2 – Significantly Disabled, and Category 3 – Non-Significantly Disabled (which remained closed). On August 15, 2022, LRS opened Category 3, which eliminated a deferred waiting list and allows services to be offered to all eligible applicants.

Transition

In Program Year 2021, LRS continued to provide services to students with disabilities as they transition from high school into adulthood to pursue training and employment. LRS is mandated to expend 15% of the VR federal allotment to make available five core Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), including job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or post-secondary educational programs, workplace readiness training, and instruction in self-advocacy. During this time, LRS provided services to 3,711 students with disabilities.

LRS makes these services available through VR counseling staff, fee for service agreements with Community Rehabilitation Programs, and through Third Party Cooperative Arrangement contracts with school districts. LRS currently has 14 active Third Party Cooperative Arrangements with local education providers to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services and is continuing to pursue additional contracts with local education providers.

Customized Employment

The effort to build vendor capacity to provide Customized Employment (CE) services across the state is progressing. As part of the plan to make affordable training in Customized Employment available to LRS vendors across the state, the Louisiana State University Human Development Center (LSU-HDC) is being trained in the ACCESS Customized Employment Training System. This is a competency based, online, training system developed by the University of South Florida (USF). Upon completion of this training LSU-HDC will be able to train and certify LRS vendors to provide CE services to LRS consumers.

The LSU-HDC staff completed the online training modules, began working with LRS consumers to complete Discovery, the customized employment-planning meeting, and customized plan for employment. In the first quarter of 2023, as part of their training, LSU-HDC will offer two courses whereby approved LRS vendors can be certified. The courses are: 1) Customized Employment Overview and Discovery, and, 2) Job Development, SSA Benefits and Systematic Instruction. Each course will consist of online training modules and assessments, scheduled technical assistance webinars and a subsequent community based experiential component involving direct work with a job seeker.

State as a Model Employer (SAME)

Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) is actively involved with the State as a Model Employer (SAME) task force in accordance with Executive Order JBE 18-08. The purpose of the SAME is to develop and recommend strategies to increase the recruitment, hiring, and retention of individuals with disabilities in Louisiana State Government.

The LRS designated Point of Contact, the Statewide Employment Coordinator, for the initiative serves as a conduit to facilitate the sharing of information between LRS and state agency designees relative to persons who are job applicants and who have been determined eligible for LRS' vocational rehabilitation program. The point of contact also notifies Human Resource Managers when LRS consumers apply for jobs at their respective agencies/departments.

In Program Year 2021, forty (40) LRS consumers obtained or maintained employment with the State of Louisiana. These individuals are employed throughout state government, to include universities, state police, hospitals, and correctional facilities. The Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services and Louisiana Workforce Commission were the top two state employers this past year.

Workforce Development

Louisiana Rehabilitation Services is actively involved with the 15 local Workforce Development Areas. LRS is represented on each of the boards and VR staff members have a presence in the American Job Centers. Building relationships with employers and with the business community continues to be a premise in the Employment Initiative as our connections with the Human Resource personnel and hiring managers ultimately connect our consumers with viable jobs. The Rehabilitation Employment Development Specialists and the Statewide Employment Coordinator continue to foster connections with employers and HR personnel though doing so has been somewhat challenging due to COVID restrictions.

Ticket to Work

LRS continues efforts to assist Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) beneficiaries to meet employment goals. LRS continues to collaborate with Employment Networks to ensure Ticket-to-Work is successful in Louisiana. A number of LRS staff received additional training in Program Year 2021 as it related to Social Security (SS) beneficiaries and how employment impacts cash benefits. LRS continues to be committed to referring our consumers that have SS benefits to WIPA Services (Work Incentives Planning and Assistance) as the information obtained from WIPA will enable our consumers to make informed decisions regarding employment and how employment will affect their cash benefits and medical insurance. LRS staff understands that WIPA provides our consumers with SS benefits with valuable information on the work incentives and services available to help them achieve their employment goal. Furthermore, LRS has a Cost Reimbursement Coordinator, and the Cost Reimbursement Coordinator continues to receive ongoing training along with the other CR Coordinators in the 50 other states. The Cost Reimbursement Program was authorized in 1981 and it is only available to State VR agencies. The two purposes of the CR program are:

- To make SVR services more readily available to SS beneficiaries with disabilities.
- To generate savings to the Social Security Trust Fund for SSDI beneficiaries, and to the General Revenue Fund for Supplemental Security Income recipients.

In Program Year 2021, LRS received \$2,303,128.73 from the Social Security Administration's reimbursement program.

Rehabilitation Engineering/Assistive Technology

Rehabilitation & Assistive Technology (RT/AT) services include computer assessment, activities-of-daily living evaluations, augmentative and alternative communication (AAC), home and job- modification evaluations, adaptive driving and transportation evaluations, educational technology assessments, vehicle Rehabilitation Engineering/Assistive Technology modification evaluations, and assessments for seating and wheeled mobility systems. LRS provides these on a fee-for-services basis and utilizes professionals and technical experts on a regional basis.

LRS continues its relationship with the Louisiana Assistive Technology Network (LATAN) with an expanded program, funded by the Rehabilitation Services Administration, to provide statewide demonstration-learning, lending, and purchasing assistance of assistive technology. LATAN provides a device-rental service for LRS consumers to use assistive technology devices on a trial basis. LATAN is an approved Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) vendor/provider for wheelchair, seating, and positioning assessments, as well as assessments for home modifications for accessibility. During the COVID-19 pandemic, and an unusually dynamic hurricane season LATAN was active in assisting LRS consumers and other elderly-disabled individuals to receive needed rehabilitation technology in their evacuation, sheltering and mitigation phases of several hurricane disasters that have severely impacted our state.

Randolph-Sheppard Business Enterprise Program

This program provides employment opportunities for the blind by establishing and maintaining Business Enterprise Facilities. The program currently operates 70 facilities throughout the state, employing 41 individuals.

Although the Gubernatorial declared Healthcare emergency has long expired, The COVID-19 pandemic and the mitigation efforts established to prevent its spread have permanently changed the business landscape and has created economic hardship for many of our blind entrepreneurs in the Randolph-Sheppard Program. Many of the state agencies, federal and municipal locations, which our vendors currently serve, have adopted hybrid attendance policies, which have allowed employees to partially or completely telecommute to their offices. This change in attendance policy has resulted in a marked decrease in the vendor's available customer base by as much as 50% in some state buildings and as high as 75% in many of our federal locations. The depletion of the employee / consumer population has forced nearly all of our blind vendors to modify their staffing levels and menu selections to accommodate for this new business environment.

Other notable challenges faced by our vendors is the continued wholesale price increases on core snack items that far outpace normal inflation. Chocolate candy bars, packaged pasties and potato chips have all risen in price by nearly 100% over the last 15 months. While the vendor must raise their retail price to accommodate for these increased cost, consumer demand is weakened by the higher price point and is resulting in a lower overall profit for the merchant.

With decreased sales due to diminished employee staffing levels due to telecommuting, vendor supply - chain issues, increased wholesale prices, and a challenging labor market, it remains a distinct possibility that many of our locations will never fully recover from the effects of the pandemic. To assist our managers, we are considering merging locations, changing the scope of operations, etc. An example of a

change in scope could be from a cafeteria to a snack bar or from a snack bar to a vending machine only location.

Although the number of locations has remained constant, in the past 4 years, 20 Randolph-Sheppard managers have left the program, either due to pursuit of greater income opportunities, retirement or in some cases death. The SLA was able to place 7 new vendors in the program during this period but the program has experienced a net decrease of 13 blind managers. Because of this, several of our remaining managers are working multiple locations, which has increased income for these blind vendors.

LRS staff are promoting Randolph-Sheppard program opportunities to counselors who work with individuals who are blind, as well as directly to organizations whose membership is comprised of individuals who are blind, including the National Federation of the Blind of Louisiana and the Affiliated Blind of Louisiana. On September 16, 2022, the chair of our Elected Committee of Blind Vendors and the Blind Services Executive Director held a training session with LRS counselors and other staff from around the state who work directly with LRS consumers who are blind to educate them about employment opportunities in the Randolph-Sheppard program.

Independent Living Part B Program

Independent living Centers located across the state provide core services: information and referral; IL skills training; peer counseling; individual and systems advocacy; and services that facilitate the transition from nursing homes and other institutions to the community. During Program year 2021, 3,466 individuals received independent living services at an average cost of \$103.69 per consumer during Program Year 2021.

Independent Living Older Blind Program

The four rehabilitation centers contracting for the provision of Independent Living Older Blind (ILOB) services provided services such as orientation and mobility training; low vision evaluations and handheld and electronic magnifiers; training in performing activities of daily living, etc. to a total of 975 individuals 55 years of age or older and having significant visual impairments.

Many consumers of Independent Living Older Blind services are among the most vulnerable when considering the effects of COVID-19. Not only are these individuals older, the requirement to receive services is that one must be 55 years of age or older, most of these individuals also have significant health conditions, including diabetes, which have caused their failing vision. As a result of this, some consumers remain reluctant to receive in-person services, especially in groups. To compensate, contractors have worked to provide remote services when they can be provided in a safe and effective manner.

ADDITIONAL PROGRAM ACTIVITIES/SUPPORTS

National Dislocated Worker Grant - COVID-19 Disaster Dislocated Worker Grant

COVID-19 Disaster Dislocated Worker Grant

Adapting to the impact of the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic has been a challenge for the state of Louisiana. Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDA) were quickly faced with limitations in the provision of workforce services. Protective measures were implemented by the Governor, which included mask mandates, social distancing, and Stay at Home executive orders. This significantly impacted

Louisiana's economy and resulted in major temporary and permanent layoffs across multiple industries. Louisiana's unemployment insurance claims increased substantially beginning in March 2020 and continued increasing as more workers became unemployed through the 2020 and 2021 program years due to COVID-19. Louisiana paid out more than \$8 billion in unemployment benefits to more than 800 claimants between March 2020 and April 2021. Louisiana's workforce and economy suffered long-term effects as more unemployed workers filed claims.

The Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) was awarded a National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG) under the category of Emergency/Disaster on May 1, 2020 as a direct result of the COVID-19 public health emergency and an additional award amount of \$16,767,303 on September 30, 2021 for a total grant amount of \$22,767,303. Under this grant, the state planned to serve 3,100 eligible participants with temporary disaster-relief subsidized employment including clean up, recovery and humanitarian efforts. The initial period of performance was April 14, 2020 – March 31, 2022; however, as COVID-19 continued to affect Louisiana, disaster relief services were still required as spikes in COVID-related cases were reported throughout the state. The LWC was approved for a no-cost extension on February 14, 2022 to extend the grant through December 31, 2022. This allowed for an additional nine months of disaster-related services to help individuals recover and rebuild economic stability. The Office of Workforce Development manages the COVID-19 Disaster Dislocated Worker Grant (DWG) within 11 LWDAs through sub-recipient awards and contracted service provider CSRS, Inc., a disaster recovery consultant serving as the statewide employer of record.

LWC, along with stakeholders and program partners, have identified labor market needs, specifically in industries hardest hit due to COVID-19, which include Accommodations and Food Services, Retail Trade, and Health Care and Social Assistance. To respond to identified needs within Louisiana communities, LWC provides disaster-relief temporary employment opportunities to eligible DWG participants. Subsidized employment includes clean-up and recovery efforts such as cleaning and disinfecting facilities, quarantine or treatment areas after their use, and worksites including common areas and surfaces; decontamination services in the neutralization or removal of germs; and checking temperatures and tracking customers/visitors to facilities open to the public. Humanitarian assistance includes assistance with the distribution of donated food items; medical and cleaning supplies, etc. for disaster victims at designated locations within declared areas; loading/unloading materials and/or equipment for delivery to disaster victims; providing information on disaster related assistance through verbal, written, and electronic methods; administering vaccines and other disaster-related medical treatment; and organizing and coordinating recovery, quarantine, or other related humanitarian activities. Through employment and training services, eligible participants are provided postsecondary occupational opportunities focusing on in-demand occupations and credential attainment, on-the-job training, apprenticeships, entrepreneurial training, and customized training opportunities to recover from the unexpected job loss and quickly revitalize Louisiana's labor force. Supportive services are also provided to enable individuals to participate in disaster-relief employment and employment and training services, which includes transportation and childcare assistance, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and other related assistance.

The state has enrolled 670 eligible dislocated workers through June 30, 2022, with 486 in temporary employment and 94 enrolled in occupational skills training.

Hurricane Ida Disaster Dislocated Worker Grant

Louisiana experienced significant disaster events over the past 2 years, which include the COVID-19 pandemic, Hurricanes Laura, Delta and Zeta, and most recently Hurricane Ida making landfall as a category 4 hurricane on August 29, 2021 near Port Fourchon in Lafourche Parish. Winds of 150 mph, wind gusts of up to 130 mph, heavy rain, and storm surge left devastation in its aftermath. The storm severely impacted Louisiana's power grids, knocking out power to more than one million customers including the entire city of New Orleans. For many, power remained out for several weeks causing further damage with an increase of mold and mildew due to the sweltering heat. Hurricane Ida hit on the 16th anniversary of the historically devastating Hurricane Katrina and tied the state's most powerful storm ever with Hurricane Laura. High winds and significant flooding caused interstates, highways and roads to be closed, businesses to shut down, and thousands of Louisiana residence seeking refuge in shelters, other parishes and surrounding states. Louisiana suffered devastation once again, especially along coastal parishes, with significant damage to public property and structural damage to thousands of businesses and homes. Hurricane Ida also clogged streams, rivers and bayous with tree branches and other debris, which made waterways more dangerous.

The LWC was awarded a National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG) under the category of Disaster on September 16, 2021 as a direct result of Hurricane Ida with a period of performance from August 26, 2021 through August 25, 2023 for \$5,000,000. Under this grant, the state plans to serve 248 eligible participants with temporary disaster-relief subsidized employment including clean-up, recovery and humanitarian efforts. The Office of Workforce Development manages the Hurricane Ida Disaster Dislocated Worker Grant (DWG) within seven LWDAs through sub-recipient awards. Twenty-five (25) parishes were designated for public assistance and sustained the most damage and in the geographic regions in greatest need. These parishes are Ascension, Assumption, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Iberia, Jefferson, Lafourche, Livingston, Orleans, Plaquemines, Pointe Coupee, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. Helena, St. James, St. John the Baptist, St. Martin, St. Mary, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, Terrebonne, Washington, West Baton Rouge, and West Feliciana.

Hurricane Ida disaster-relief temporary employment includes clean-up and recovery efforts including demolition, repair, renovation and reconstruction of damaged and destroyed structures, facilities and lands located in the disaster area; as well as the delivery of appropriate humanitarian assistance to individuals affected by the hurricane, including those displaced with actions designed to save lives, alleviate suffering, and maintain human dignity in the immediate aftermath of disasters. This assistance includes activities such as the provision of food, clothing, and shelter. Jobs may include, but not limited to general laborer, heavy equipment operator/truck driver, community outreach worker/humanitarian worker, and team leader/supervisor.

Hurricane Ida caused damage to Louisiana's fishery infrastructure, leaving fishermen out of work due to the storms impact to the natural habitat of the fishing industry and for many, the loss of supplies and equipment. Through this DWG, the state is assisting eligible self-employed small business owners struggling to recovery due to the impacts of Ida, especially in the coastal parishes of Terrebonne, Lafourche, Jefferson, St. Bernard and Plaquemines through small business capitalization. Businesses will be required to submit an application to apply for assistance, show proof of their business, and the impact sustained as a direct result of the hurricane.

The state has enrolled 32 eligible dislocated workers through June 30, 2022, with 23 in temporary employment.

THE TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE (TAA)

Trade Adjustment Assistance, or TAA, aids in reducing the negative impacts of foreign imports on the U. S. workforce. The Program offers adversely affected workers (AAWs) assistance in finding suitable employment through paid allowances, training, and case management services. Eligible AAWs may experience reduced work hours, job loss due to a decline in production/sales, or be otherwise negatively impacted by the outsourcing of jobs to foreign countries. TAA offers a variety of benefits and services to eligible workers including training, income support, job search allowances, relocation allowances, and a tax credit to help pay the costs of health insurance. An added TAA benefit is the A/RTAA wage subsidy, which is available to eligible AAWs 50 years of age and older that later obtain qualifying re-employment.

TAA is an essential partner of the WIOA Dislocated Worker and Adult programs. As such, co-enrollment of TAA-certified workers in these programs is a top priority. Co-enrollment grants Trade affected participants' access to all appropriate services offered through their local American Job Centers, including but not limited to, labor market information, testing and training referrals, career planning, and follow-up services, such as childcare, to facilitate their re-entry to the workforce.

Trade reverted to its 2002 version on July 1, 2021 (Reversion 2021). Accordingly, AAWs covered under a certified petition filed after that date were subject to the 2002 rules, significantly limiting case management and employment services. Because Congressional reauthorization did not occur, TAA entered a "sunset" (termination phase) on July 1, 2022, precluding any new worker groups from being certified as TAA eligible. RTAA participants who received at least one payment before July 1, 2022 continue receiving paid subsidies. Potential worker groups/employers that may become TAA eligible after July 1, 2022 are referred to USDOL for archival and future investigation after reauthorization. Existing TAA participants deemed eligible before July 1, 2022 continue to receive benefits and services.

In PY 2022, TAA-Louisiana filed three (3) new petitions and submitted two (2) for archival. None of the new petitions filed could be certified, as they were submitted pending reauthorization. TAA continues providing outreach, benefits and services to existing participants, but was forced to halt enrollment of new participants as Trade transitioned to its sunset phase. Prior to this, Louisiana had eight (8) active petitions affecting 891 workers and provided TAA services to workers under two (2) out-of-state certified petitions. Between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022, the TAA training program served approximately 100 participants. Thirty-five (35) participants completed TAA training and received their credentials in the industries of Transportation, Healthcare, Contracting, Technology Services, Media, Personal Care Services, and Education.

Trade Activity - PY2022 (July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022)	
New Petitions Filed	3
Petitions Certified	0
Estimated Workers Affected	700
Pending Petitions	0 ¹
Number of Active Petitions	8
Total Workers Affected	891
Out of State Petitions Recognized	2

TAA Training Fund Expended	\$415,052.85
Total TAA Participants Served	100 ²
Total RTAA Participants Affected	14
Total Co-enrollments as of 6/30/2022	76
Total TAA Training Completions	35

1. As a result of impending reauthorization, states are unable to submit new petitions.
2. TAA participants served includes those that were eligible for TAA and Case Management services.

STATEWIDE ACTIVITIES

RAPID RESPONSE (RR)

Rapid Response (RR) acted upon 29 notifications of a possible layoff occurrence in PY2021. Eighteen of those came from Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act notices while the others came from news articles, rumors, or other notifications. The Manufacturing and Support Services industries accounted for 38% of our layoff notices for the year. Other industries included Nursing Care Facilities, Restaurants, Supermarkets, and Retail.

Rapid Response delivered 21 separate activities for seven different companies that provided 384 intensive services to impacted individuals. Services provided to the affected workers included general orientation sessions, resume writing workshops, job search workshops, interviewing skills workshops, and job fairs.

Our team has utilized a hybrid approach this year where services are offered in person as well as virtually. Whether the orientations are held in-person or virtually, Rapid Response still invites staff from Unemployment Insurance, the local American Job Center, Trade Adjustment Assistance, and our Veteran's program to participate. Other service providers are also invited if appropriate.

Rapid Response has increased its outreach agenda by requiring a minimum of 10 business contacts weekly. Rapid Response coordinators work with Industry Sector Specialists and Business Services Representatives to outreach to targeted companies, highlighting services available and building a contact network of prospering businesses that could be used for quick placement of workers affected by a layoff. Rapid Response also coordinates with state and local economic development organizations on layoffs. This coordination has allowed Rapid Response to set up direct interaction between hiring employers and available workers.

Rapid Response continues to encourage the hiring of recently laid off workers through the HALOW Initiative, although the low number of layoffs has limited the availability of workers in the database. The employers that have used HALOW to find candidates have been impressed with the quality of workers we have listed.

Rapid Response maintains two Mobile Workforce Centers (MWC) to use in times of disasters. It was deployed after Hurricane Ida in August and tornadoes in March. While deployed, it allowed impacted individuals to have internet access to search for jobs, file claims, and charge devices. When not responding to a disaster, we decided that the Mobile Workforce Centers should be used to advance our mission – We put people to work. Rapid Response has held numerous hiring events for employers using the mobile units. Both of the MWCs have become sought after by employers, community organizations, and government entities and are seen throughout the state each week.

Rapid Response held a Layoff Aversion Training/Technical Expertise (LATTE) workshop to help create a strategic early warning network (SEWN) for layoffs. The Steel Valley Authority, who authored the U.S. Department of Labor's Layoff Aversion Playbook, provided the LATTE training. The program aims to locate at risk companies to provide needed services to help the companies succeed. LWC is currently working with members of Louisiana Economic Development and Manufacturing Extension Partnership of Louisiana (MEPOL) to kick off a pilot SEWN program for Louisiana.

JOBS FOR AMERICA's GRADUATES LOUISIANA (JAG LA)

JAG-LA works with Louisiana students as early as grade 7 through grade 12 and provides services to out-of-school youth who did not thrive in the regular education setting. The core program is dedicated to providing opportunities for students challenged with life and learning hurdles, including academic, social, behavioral and economic. **JAG-LA's** mission is to identify students who face barriers and guide them on to a successful path toward continued education, a meaningful career and productive adulthood.

Jobs for America's Graduates-Louisiana (JAG-LA) Program is an affiliate of the National Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) Program, the nation's largest dropout prevention program and career readiness program serving youth 12-21 years of age.

JAG-LA 2022-2023

JAG Model	Number of Programs	Estimated Students Served
Multi-Year Program	99	5,940
Middle School Program	46	2,760
Out-of-School Program	14	490
TOTAL	159	9,190

BUSINESS SERVICES

REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP

The LWC Apprenticeship Division expanded to 72 apprenticeship programs that provided employment and training to approximately 3,157 registered apprentices across Louisiana in the year. Historically, Louisiana's apprenticeship programs have been centered around occupations with the Construction sector. Louisiana Workforce Commission continues to cultivate prospects in expanding programs to other industry sectors. As result of our efforts, the following programs were added to the state's registered apprenticeship list.

- Aim High Educational Technologies (HVAC)
- North West Arkansas Plumbing School (Plumber)
- American Trucking Associations (ATA) FASTPORT (Truck Driver, Heavy CB)
- Spark Mindset (Cybersecurity Analyst)

The Apprenticeship Division currently has two U.S. Department of Labor grants to expand Registered Apprenticeship including On-The-Job contracts, related instruction and supportive services. Grant initiatives involve creating consortia programs, increasing the number of programs and apprentices, improving apprentice retention, and improving the quality of programs.

Approximately 100 individuals were provided supported services and/or stipends in Program Year 2022. These supportive services included, but were not limited to tools/supplies, gas reimbursement, and child care services.

INCUMBENT WORKER TRAINING PROGRAM (IWTP)

Louisiana's Incumbent Worker Training Program (IWTP) creates training partnerships among the LWC, business and industry, and training providers. The IWTP benefits business and industry by assisting in the skill development of existing employees, thereby increasing employee productivity and company growth. Program funding is through a portion of Unemployment Insurance tax contributions dedicated solely for customized training.

IWTP/SBET FISCAL YEAR PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

Fiscal Year	Total Contracts & Awards	#of Participants Trained	# Employers Represented	# of Jobs Retained	# of Jobs Created	Average Wage Increase
2021-2022	6,888,076.00	9,781	73	9,781	503	6.20%
2021-2022	13,640,629.00	18,781	159	18,265	1,032	7.78%

FY21-22=IWTP-45 contracts for \$5,892,454; SBET 466 awards for \$995,622

FY20-21=IWTP-117 contracts for \$13,640,629; SBET 540 awards for \$1,398,756

Success Stories

Small Business Employee Training (SBET)

The Small Business Employee Training (SBT) program expanded its training services by awards to new training providers, including LSU at Alexandria, Northwestern State University, the Louisiana Life Safety & Security Association, and the Association for Talent Development, making more training possibilities available to small business employers. Training courses also expanded to include employer requests such as safety programs for workplace violence situations and online offerings for business skills and professional certifications. In addition to our highly successful plumbing apprentice training awards, SBET explored possible training in construction trades and inspector's certifications, as well as funding Commercial Drivers' License training and required maritime skills through the community college systems.

Incumbent Worker Training Program (IWTP)

The Incumbent Worker Training program customized contracts resulted in necessary training designed for the specific needs of employers and consortiums of businesses. Comments such as "As inflation continues to increase the cost of running our business as it does all things in general, we feel so very blessed to have been awarded a grant through IWTP. The funds have allowed us to continue to have the highest trained workers

in the industry without enduring the huge financial burden in this already sensitive time” and “so grateful for the opportunity to work with the IWTP. As always, everyone has been incredibly knowledgeable and helpful.”

THE WORK OPPORTUNITY TAX CREDIT (WOTC)

Program Synopsis Work Opportunity Tax Credit

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) Program makes a federal tax credit available to employers who hire individuals from eligible target groups. Louisiana Work is responsible for facilitating this process in Louisiana. WOTC operates under federal law and directives from both the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) and the Internal Revenue Service. LWC, employers, employer’s legal representatives, and newly hired employees are all stakeholders in the success of this program.

In order for employers to benefit from this program, their newly hired employees must be identified as part of at least one of the current active target groups specifically defined by USDOL and certified by LWC.

List the top three goals that the program addresses and LWC leveraging opportunities:

1. Goal 1: Provide a federal tax credit to participating employers (reducing their income tax liability) for hiring individuals from certain target groups who have consistently faced significant barriers to employment.
2. Goal 2: Incentivize workplace diversity and facilitate access to good jobs for American workers.
3. Goal 3: Assist targeted workers in moving from economic dependency into self-sufficiency as they earn a steady income and become contributing taxpayers.

Relevant Historical Information

WOTC was created in 1996, by the Small Business Job Protection Act. The program routinely expires and is often slow in renewal, resulting in the reoccurring circumstance wherein the state must often operate the program with funding coming in arrears.

Since inception, the program has been renewed 13 times:

1. The Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997 extended its original 12-month term an additional 9 months.
2. The Tax and Trade Relief Act of 1998 reauthorized and extended it 12 months.
3. The Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 extended WOTC for an additional 20 months.
4. The Job Creation and Worker Assistance Act of 2002 retroactively reauthorized it to the beginning of the year and extended it for a total of 24 months.
5. The Working Families Relief Act of 2004 retroactively extended WOTC to the beginning of the year and through 2005.
6. The Tax Relief and Health Care Act of 2006 retroactively extended it again to the beginning of 2006 and through 2007.
7. The Small Business and Work Opportunity Tax Act of 2007 extended WOTC for 44 months.

8. The Tax Relief, Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization and Job Creation Act extended it 4 months through the end of 2011.
9. The American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 retroactively extended WOTC to the beginning of 2012 and through 2013.
10. The Tax Increase Prevention Act of 2014 retroactively extended it to the beginning of the year and through the end of 2014.
11. The Protecting Americans from Tax Hikes Act of 2015 retroactively extended WOTC to the beginning of 2015 and through 2019.
12. The Further Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2020 extended WOTC through 2020.
13. The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 reauthorized WOTC through 2025.

During its life, state workforce agencies have issued more than 30 million WOTC certifications, representing millions of historically underemployed Americans going to work, and more than \$1 billion in tax credits earned by US businesses.

According to USDOL statistics, the average WOTC hire's tenure is 2.3 years. It also shows that from 2017-2020 approximately 5.2 million certifications were issued for the SNAP target group. Therefore, the total federal savings for just the SNAP target group (approximately 67 percent of WOTC certifications) is around \$40 billion over that period. Additionally, the estimated state savings over the last ten years from all WOTC certifications is around \$3.5 billion, nationally. Louisiana benefits inclusively.

Based on program history of an ever-evolving list of target groups including various modifications for veterans, SNAP and TANF recipients, designated community residents, at-risk youth, and the long-term unemployed, the WOTC program shows a high degree of flexibility as a policy tool.

As for the future of WOTC beyond 2021, due diligence with research, applications and deadlines will be paramount. Typically, WOTC is reauthorized annually. For the first time Congress reauthorized WOTC for 5 years through December 2025, indicating that there may be growing support for WOTC on a congressional level and support for the push to make WOTC permanent. Staying abreast of these opportunities can significantly impact Louisiana for years to come.

WOTC Unit Operations

1. Partners - Any business or industry who employs individuals from target groups.
2. Financials - LWC WOTC operations are funded by a Calendar Year Grant from USDOLETA, currently January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2022, for a total of \$303,000.
3. Locations - The program is housed in Baton Rouge at LWC Administrative Offices; WOTC staff routinely travel to make presentations to business, industry, and other interested groups statewide.

II. WOTC Program Metrics

	WOTC Certifications Workload			
Applications Denied			67638	
Applications Certified			55085	
			# of Certified Individuals Employed	Total Tax Credit
WOTC Target Group				
IV-A TANF Recipient			331	\$ 794,400.00
Veteran Receiving SNAP Benefits			71	\$ 170,400.00
Disabled Veteran			3	\$ 14,400.00
Disabled Veteran Unemployed for 6 months			11	\$ 105,600.00
Veteran Unemployed for 4 weeks			193	\$ 463,200.00
Veteran Unemployed for 6 weeks			568	\$ 3,180,800.00
Veteran with Vocational Rehab Referral			1	\$ 2,400.00
Veteran not in subgroup			0	0
Ex-Felon			1534	\$ 3,681,600.00
Designated Community (Poverty) Resident			1218	\$ 2,923,200.00
Vocational Rehab Referral			611	\$ 1,466,400.00
Snap Recipient			43958	\$ 105,499,200.00
SSI Recipient			381	\$ 914,400.00
Long term TANF			58	\$ 522,000.00
Unemployed Veteran			0	0
Disconnected Youth			0	0
Long-term Unemployed			6147	\$ 14,752,800.00
Total Calendar Year 2021			55805	\$ 134,490,800.00

III. Outcomes

Louisiana was one of 12 states to receive additional grant money from USDOL in 2021. The grant amount of \$100,000 issued for the purpose of reducing and eliminating backlog, which resulted in efforts to upgrade the online system and hire additional staff.

Each certified application represents an individual from a targeted group (significant employment barriers) that has attained employment.

IMPLEMENTING SECTOR STRATEGIES

Louisiana launched three new sector strategies while maintaining two of critical importance. To assist those industry sectors most in need across the state of Louisiana.

Region 2 - Coastal Restoration

Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) is committed to serving all Louisianans, including those that would like to work in the coastal restoration sector. LWC, in partnership with Coastal Protection and Restoration Agency (CPRA) will identify the needs from businesses awarded contracts for coastal projects throughout the state. LWC will have a series of employer recruitment and engagements activities such as, but not limited to job fairs, on the job training (OJT) and more throughout the duration of the ultimate effort to limit coastal land loss and related flood risk as well as maximizing the amount of land sustained and restored.

Objectives:

- Acquire job orders from coastal employers
- Have a Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) card financial aid application created
- Educate local American Job Centers on TWIC program for coastal jobs
- Collaborate with local colleges to explore training and program options to produce a better-skilled coastal workforce
- Create a roundtable discussion for future careers and skills that will be needed in the coastal sector

Deliverables:

- Qualified Job seekers entering the work field with credentials such as the Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) card
- Assist employers in sourcing candidates from Louisiana to fill jobs created by this initiative
- Sustaining Louisiana land by limiting the land loss and reducing the flood risk
- Establishing framework that can help other agencies understand their relationship to LWC and coastal change
- Partner with local colleges to create programs that will result in skilled workers for the coastal restoration sector

The Management Information Systems Unit created the activity code for Coastal Restoration and therefore jobs can be tracked in Helping Individuals Reach Employment (HiRE). Additionally, on the HiRE homepage there is a link that will direct job seekers directly to open coastal positions.

Region 4 - “Drive Your Future Acadiana”

This initiative spurred by the truck driver shortage and the supply chain crisis the country is facing right now, the “Drive Your Future” program paid for qualifying students across the state to attend certain accredited truck driving schools and earn their Commercial Driver’s License.

This began as a pilot program in the Acadiana Region. Leveraging Louisiana Workforce Commission and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) resources, we were able to collaborate with South Louisiana Community College to expand their Commercial Truck Driver training to underserved rural areas throughout Region 4. This was accomplished by using SLCC’s mobile computer simulation lab and affiliate

sites. By bringing the training resources to those citizens who might not normally have access, we were able to train 78 participants.

- Dislocated Workers and Youth - 57 participants
 - \$292,125.00
- Adults - 21 Participants
 - \$107,625.00
- Total Participants in Region 4 - 78 Participants
 - \$399,750.00

Region 7 - Child Care Assistance for the Hospitality Industry Families

The hospitality industry is critical to the economy of Louisiana. Many of the employees in this industry have children and childcare can be a huge barrier to employment. In order to ease this burden a pilot program launched in Region 7 - Shreveport.

The goal of the project was to pay for childcare costs for workers in the Service Industry in the Shreveport Region - specifically, Caddo Parish. A budget of \$125,000 earmarked for a pilot program that ran through the Shreveport Community Action Agency - Community Services Block Grant.

The Caddo Community Action Agency (CSBG recipient in Caddo Parish) was an outstanding partner in this project. The agency answered many phone calls from prospective applicants, scheduled interviews, completed applications & screening process, and disbursed funds to the qualified Childcare Centers who participated in this project.

We were able to collaborate with employers in the hospitality sector, along with partners in education, economic development, and social service entities. Our partners included the following listed below.

- Margaritaville Resort & Casino
- Boomtown Casino & Hotel
- Sam's Town Hotel & Casino, Shreveport
- Bally's Shreveport Casino & Hotel
- Dimension Hospitality: Hospitality Management Companies (5 Hotels in the Shreveport-Bossier area)
- Griggs Enterprises, Incorporated (12 McDonalds locations in the Shreveport-Bossier area)
- Shreveport-Bossier Hotel & Lodging Association (multi hotels promoting) via the Shreveport-Bossier Convention & Tourist Bureau
- Caddo Community Action Agency (promoting in their Head Start Centers and Community Centers)
- Northwestern State University Child & Family Network is promoting this via their Childcare Network
- Goodwill Industries of North Louisiana
- Ochsner Health System Shreveport
- Greater Shreveport Chamber of Commerce
- The Community Foundation of North Louisiana

- Fairfield Property Management
- North Louisiana Economic Partnership (NLEP)

Through this childcare initiative, we were able to enroll 14 families and provide childcare assistance for 37 children. This initiative afforded the opportunity for all of the families to remain employed.

STATEWIDE INITIATIVES

Drive Your Future

The “Drive Your Future” program a statewide initiative that paid for qualifying students across the state to attend certain accredited truck driving schools and earn a Commercial Driver’s License. The focus was on veterans and the underemployed, the program’s goal was to get Louisianans on the road to a new career.

A 100% of the graduates offered employment at graduation. An intense recruitment push by Louisiana resulted in a large number of applications allowing us to expand the program to other areas of the state. Louisiana Workforce Commission collaborated with Diesel Driving Academy and Coastal Driving School to offer training throughout the state of Louisiana.

- Coastal Driving School
 - 6 Students from St. Tammany Parish - Region 1
 - 2 Students from Franklin Parish - Region 8
 - 11 Students from Ouachita Parish - Region 8
 - Total: 19 students - \$104,405
- Diesel Driving Academy
 - 10 students from East Baton Rouge Parish - Region 2
 - Total: 10 Students - \$64,000

Apprenticeship was also a key partner in the expansion offering classes at Diesel Driving Academy.

- Diesel Driving Academy
 - 6 students started on May 30, 2022
 - 2 students started on June 13, 2022
 - 2 students started on June 27, 2022
 - Total: 10 Students - \$64,000
 -

The “Drive Your Future” initiative was a success and we are in the planning stages to launch “Drive Your Future 2.0” in the near future.

- 117 participants will receive their Commercial Driver’s License*
- Money Spent - \$632,155.00

Grow with Google

This initiative is a direct response to the growth of the Information Technology Sector. Many people have seen how this particular sector continued to expand during the pandemic and individuals were eager to obtain employment in the field.

The Grow with Google scholarships funded through a partnership between the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) and Google, who together are making 30,000 program scholarships available throughout the country. Google offers career certificates in high-growth fields like project management, user experience (UX) design, data analytics, IT support, and digital marketing and e-commerce.

All of the classes are self-paced and offered through the online learning platform entitled Coursera. The certificates require under 10 hours of flexible study per week and take three to six months to complete on average. It utilizes hands-on projects and direct employer connections to help learners fully understand the subject matter. Upon completing the certificate, graduates get free access to career resources like coaching sessions, mock interviews and resume building tools including access to “Big Interview.” Individuals will also have the opportunity to connect with over 150 employers in the Google Career Certificates employer consortium.

Through the partnership with NASWA, Louisiana Workforce Commission has 500 scholarships for job seekers. Potential learners sign-up and are sent an invitation to join the training and then enroll.

- Invitations Sent: 441
- Learners Joined: 317
- Learners Enrolled: 277
- Courses Completed: 219
- Certificates Earned: 6

SUMMARY

We continue to expand partnerships and integration and will continue engagement in partner planning activities and continuous evaluation and quality improvements in WIOA policy implementation.