

**Annual Report Narrative on the
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
to
the United States Department of Labor**

Program Year 2021

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THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

West Virginia's Workforce Development System

The agencies making up WV's Workforce Development System (WDS) work together to provide a comprehensive approach to workforce solutions, through broader and deeper partnerships; shared data and intake systems; braided funding; and leveraged services. Doing so allows each individual agency to focus on their expertise and the value they bring to the table, while relying on coordination with other partners to fulfill any remaining customer needs. By making available the appropriate educational and training opportunities, WV can provide its citizens with the work skills needed by businesses currently in the state or planning a WV location. Simply put, WV's WDS strives to create a clearer path to jobs for West Virginians so it's easier for citizens to be successful. This takes getting state agencies on the same page, eliminating duplication, and improving outreach to business and industry.

Each agency makes their services available physically and/or electronically to meet the needs of their customers. Physical locations vary across the state; the most recognizable and convenient being the American Job Centers (AJC). One-Stop Centers, also known nationally as AJCs, are the heart of the WDS, offering individuals and employers ready access to the many WDS resources funded by federal and state dollars. States, local elected officials, local boards, one-stop centers, and one-stop partners work together to create a "go-to" system for job seekers, workers, and business. The services being presented to businesses are customized and based on the expressed needs of the business, instead of being agency-siloed or menu-driven. Partners from various agencies coordinate with the workforce system to provide a seamless delivery of services and branding through a "no wrong door approach".

- WV is comprised of seven regions/Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDA)
- There are 18 AJCs statewide
- 30,820 unique individuals accessed the AJCs in person or virtually in 2021 statewide

Local Workforce Development Areas/Regions

- **Region One** consists of two comprehensive centers and four affiliate centers. The Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) oversees service delivery in 11 counties of southeastern WV: Fayette, Greenbrier, McDowell, Mercer, Monroe, Nicholas, Pocahontas, Raleigh, Summers, Webster, and Wyoming. The region is mountainous and rural in nature. The coal industry continues to fluctuate throughout the region with extensive layoffs and hiring taking place on a frequent basis. Employers are hiring. Unemployment has decreased in the region. Virtual job fairs, promotion of positions available, and partner services are being offered to aid employers with hiring needs. Career and employability services are offered to assist job seekers who seek aid with resumes, job search, and other employment activities. Industry expected growth in the area includes but is not limited to: Ambulatory Health Care Services, Hospitals, Social Assistance, Nursing and Residential Care Facilities, Administration and Support Services.
- **Region Two** consists of one comprehensive center, two satellite sites, and six affiliate sites-including four Community and Technical College (CTC) sites throughout the counties of Boone, Cabell, Logan, Mingo, Putnam, and Wayne. The affiliate sites provide Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) services in all locations. Medical related occupations make up 16 of the top 25 occupations in the region. Non-Medical occupations are led by: Market Research Analysts, Photographers, Personal Financial Advisors, Nonfarm Animal Caretakers, Hair Stylists, Plumbers, CDL Truck Drivers, and Computer and Information.
- **Region Three** consists of Kanawha County with a population of approximately 180,745 people, making it West Virginia's most populous county. Its county seat is Charleston, the state capital. Kanawha County is part of the Charleston, West Virginia Metropolitan Statistical Area, the state's business, financial, medical, and governmental center. Kanawha County encompasses 902 square miles. Within Kanawha County there are eight cities, eight towns and 12 unincorporated communities; 75% of the county is urban, 25% rural. Kanawha County serves as the central employment location for a nine-county area.

- **Region Four** consists of nine counties, comprising rural and urban populations and served by one comprehensive center and six affiliate centers. Those counties are Calhoun, Clay, Jackson, Mason, Pleasants, Ritchie, Roane, Wirt, and Wood. The population of the combined nine counties is just under 200,000 individuals.
- **Region Five** has two comprehensive AJCs in the cities of Weirton and Wheeling and one satellite AJC in the city of New Martinsville. The LWDB's region of services includes Hancock, Brooke, Ohio, Marshall, Wetzel, and Tyler Counties. As of July, 2021 population estimates for the Northern Panhandle regions was 145,012. As of September, 2022, the total civilian labor force was 65,520 and the total unemployment rate was 4.6%. WIOA and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) funding is used to assist eligible individuals and area employers with their training, support, and hiring needs. Ohio County residents have the highest income levels in the State. Marshall, Ohio and Wetzel Counties rank 1st, 3rd, and 5th in the State in terms of coal production among the two dozen or so coal-producing counties in WV. Education and health services contain nearly one-in-five of the region's jobs. Some of the top industry sectors in the region are: Personal Care Aides, Rehabilitation Counselors, Medical Assistants, Registered Nurses, Food Service Managers, Nursing Assistant and Chemical Equipment Operators and Tenders. Job gains are expected in high-wage industries such as public infrastructure, construction activity, natural gas and manufacturing.
- **Region Six** consists of one comprehensive center and three affiliate centers serving 13 counties in North Central West Virginia: Barbour, Braxton, Doddridge, Gilmer, Harrison, Lewis, Marion, Monongalia, Preston, Randolph, Taylor, Tucker, and Upshur. In PY21 the area's unemployment rate average of 9.8% continued to fall, closing out the year at 4.3%. The public sector was still the main feature of North Central WV's economic development with the presence of many higher education institutions, correctional facilities and the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in Harrison County. Healthcare services represented a major cornerstone to the North Central region with WVU Medicine's continuing expansion throughout the area including the newly dedicated Children's Hospital in Monongalia County. This state-of-the art facility will treat children for a wider range of illnesses that they would have otherwise been sent to Pittsburgh or Cleveland by adding 150 pediatric beds and creating opportunities for pediatric research. Also, Mon Health recently unveiled the first of several new "micro" hospitals in Region 6, with the first one opening in Marion County named the Mon Health Neighborhood Hospital. Region 6 is also home to three airports including the North Central WV Airport in Bridgeport, which is presently implementing an expansion project projected to create more than 1,000 jobs and double the annual economic impact of the airport to \$2 Billion. The Airport was awarded \$15 million from the Federal Aviation Administration through the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act for the construction of a new terminal. In addition, the state of WV committed \$20 million to expand the airport's existing runway. Moreover, Region 6's location along the I-79 corridor is advantageous in that it includes some of the state's biggest technology driven employers all located in the I-79 Technology Park which also houses Pierpont CTC (North Central) Advanced Technology Center (ATC). Workforce participation tended to exceed the statewide averages here in North Central West Virginia with a mix of employment opportunities available at the Region's top employers, including WVU Medicine, Walmart, Mon Health, Gabriel Brothers, Inc., McDonalds, Arch Coal, Kroger, Monongahela Power Company and Davis Health System.
- **Region Seven** consists of two comprehensive centers. Eight counties are served by the LWDB. The region offers a contrast of the rural in western counties and fast-paced suburban sprawl of the eastern counties, part of the Washington D.C. Metropolitan Statistical Area. The region expects the population in the easternmost counties to continue to show rapid growth. The western counties are also anticipated to show growth, albeit at a slower pace. Healthcare, Transportation, Agriculture, Cyber Security, Computer Science, Warehousing, Advanced Manufacturing, Professional Services, as well as Leisure and Hospitality are all primary contributors to the expanding regional economy.

WAIVERS

WorkForce West Virginia (WFWV) did not have a waiver in place for at least one program year.

EFFECTIVENESS IN SERVING EMPLOYERS

While WFWV has always offered, and continues to offer, many and varied services to employers, WFWV focused on “Retention” and “Repeat” as pilot approaches, and primary indicators of performance, when measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers:

- Approach 1: **Retention with Same Employer** addresses program efforts to provide employers with skilled workers. PY21’s Retention with Same Employer rate was 72.3%.
- Approach 2: **Repeat Business Customer** addresses program efforts to provide quality engagement and services to employers and sectors and establish productive relationships with employers and sectors over extended periods of time. PY21’s Repeat Business Customer rate was 58.8%.

A Business Services Unit was established under the Employment Services Division in PY21. The primary goal of Business Services Representatives (BSRs) is to collaborate and coordinate services to employers, promote employer engagement /retention, assess employer needs, and meet those needs through the WDS. On-going communication and consistency of specific activities with the LWDBs and partner agencies are integral in achieving successful employment outcomes and matching job seekers with the right employer. In addition, with lingering concerns about the COVID-19 pandemic, the implementation of a Statewide Virtual Job Fair Platform created another venue for employers to find qualified job seekers. The Virtual Job Fairs are conducted monthly and offer job seekers the opportunity to video chat with employers, upload a resume, and apply for available positions. Programs and initiatives offered by the BSR’s are available to employers, which will enhance the labor force, by utilizing the following programs/services:

- Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)
- Federal Bonding
- On-the-Job Training (OJT)
- Apprenticeship promotion
- Recruiting employers to the AJC
- Connecting jobseekers by facilitating relationships
- Rapid Response
- Veteran Services
- Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker
- Facilities usage for recruiting and interviews
- Assistance with job fairs
- Assistance in providing accommodations for employees [WV Division of Rehabilitation Services (WVDRS)]
- Educational assistance programs
- Labor Market Information
- Employer engagement in unemployment adjudication
- Resume workshops
- Interviewing workshops
- Job development assistance
- Early intervention strategies for layoff aversions (WV Development Office)
- Industry and Sector Strategies

WVDRS coordinated with employers from across the state to provide over 300 students with disabilities (ages 14-21) with work-based learning experiences and summer employment opportunities.

EVALUATIONS

Closing out PY21, WDS partners considered the following information as one way to evaluate activities; performance accountability measured the following indicators from respective core programs:

Indicator	Baseline	PY21
Job seekers receiving services in required quarters	10,547	17,760
Job seekers receiving referrals to partner services in required quarters	3,521	7,329
Customers placed in employment in required quarters	457	544
Employer contacts made in required quarters	2,445	7,305
Median earnings of customers placed in employment	\$3,952.36	\$3,092.20
Credential attainment	76.9%	61.9%
Measurable skill gains	10.4%	68.8%

Having established baseline numbers early on, and now with the benefit of having at least two years worth of data collected, reports can be compiled and analyzed to make necessary enhancements to program and service delivery. WFWV implemented a customizable “point-menu” system awarding points based on the degree of intensity and value of the workforce services provided. Services earning high points clearly reflects deeper relationships with employers and activities resulting in longer-term relationships. Coupled with the survey (described below), WV’s WDS partners are better equipped to discuss and make the educated decisions necessary to meet the goals outlined in the Combined State Plan (refer to pages 7-13).

During the summer of 2021, WFWV deployed a Workforce Development survey to West Virginia employers. The survey was designed to gather employer feedback on the preparedness and job-readiness of WV’s workforce. Additionally, WFWV sought insight into the recruiting and retention obstacles facing WV employers. What follows below is a high-level summary of some of the key take-aways from the survey:

- The survey received 1,158 responses from a variety of industries within WV. Of the 1,158 responses, 21% of respondents did not identify an industry. Of the remaining respondents, the industries with the largest quantity of responses were as follows in descending order: 1) Healthcare/Medical employers, 2) Construction employers, 3) Travel/Accommodation/Food Service employers, 4) Retail/Trade employers and Government/Education/Public Service employers. In reviewing the survey results, the following key findings can be determined:
 - Data Analysts divided the survey findings into four parts:
 - The first part of the survey provides information on labor force readiness, labor force description, difficulty hiring and employment gaps. Labor Force readiness, for qualified and skilled workers, is being described more often by all industries at 14%, “fair” and 43% “poor” at this time. When providing an open response survey inquiry, overall by all industries, the current labor pool is being labeled as 44% “unsatisfactory/inadequate” at this time. Recruiting, overall by all industries, is being described as 33% “very difficult.”
 - The second part of the survey provides information on recruitment areas of inquiry, education and skills areas of inquiry and hiring considerations. Current ease of recruitment is being described, overall by all industries, as 69% “more difficult”. Future ease of recruitment is being described, overall by all industries, as 48% “more difficult.” Industries have responded with a higher percentage, over all by all industries, that industries are 40% “not very confident” students entering the workforce with a 4-year degree have the necessary skills and training for the current employer demand whereas there is a higher response that employers are 31% “very confident” students with

degrees/certifications in trades, technical or vocations do have the necessary skills for the demands of current employers.

- The third part of the survey provides information on industry barriers for applicants, criminal background check and drug testing relationships in hiring, workforce development initiatives and training investments and barriers. Overall, by all industries, when provided an open response option, employers indicated qualified applicants are rejected more often due to 42% “lacking work ethic/dependency on unemployment benefits”. When provided with an open response option, employers overall, by all industries, indicated that 42% “adult life skills” are the credentials missing from today’s applicants or job seekers. Overall, by all industries, employers indicated that more often, 48% “no,” they do not provide financial compensation or other monetary support for professional training, credentials, or advanced degrees. Employers, overall by all industries, indicated job applicants more often, 36% “rarely” fail to pass criminal background checks and also that more often, 25% “rarely” fail to pass drug tests as a condition of employment. Overall, by all industries, employers were more often 44% “not at all familiar” with workforce development initiatives such as empowered employment or federal bonding programs.
- In part four, the survey provides information on workforce development concentration, projections on industry openings and growth and survey respondent information. Overall more often, by all industries, employers indicated that the budget for resources available for workforce development is 25% “adequate.” Employers indicated more often that 37% “no,” they do not anticipate starting or increasing funding for employee training and/or workforce development in the upcoming year. Survey respondents, overall by all industries, indicated that more often their job title or position could be described as 33% “CEO/President/Chairman/Owner/ Partner” followed by 20% Administrative/clerical/support staff.” Employers indicated, over all industries, that more often they plan to hire at a percentage of 27% who answered “under 5 employees” in the upcoming year.

WV’s WDS commits to create a comprehensive approach to evaluation and research. WFWV, WVDRS, and WV Adult Education have the capacity and expertise to convene the various partners to ensure coordination and effectiveness. The modification of WV’s Combined State Plan during the last half of PY21 opened the WDS to a “new way of thinking” when it comes to conducting evaluations and research and will be evidenced in PY22.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

The LWDAs have the flexibility to utilize their own customer satisfaction (CS) surveys/questionnaires. LWDAs continue to implement innovative ways to reach the customer base and obtain satisfaction surveys. Examples include Zoom, Duo and Teams meetings, web-based portals, more frequent email, and cell phone communication.

Region 1 added Survey Monkey linking a QR code to their toolkit linking customers to the Region 1 CS to encourage participation in our local customer satisfaction survey. Although survey results are challenging, the overall results received are positive with an approval rating of 89% to 100% outcomes.

Region 6 moved from mostly hard copy paper CS surveys to an on-line survey option going into last program year. Although paper copies were still accepted, a QR code was established to access the CS survey and QR Code stickers were distributed to all Region 6 AJC partners to add to partner brochures, flyers, etc. Because of this change, Region 6 saw a decrease in the number of surveys participants completed but the overall satisfaction rating of those completed was 96.8%. The region continued to send out WIOA Training Exit survey links to participants who exited WIOA and were in follow-up. Last year only one exit survey completed with a 100% satisfaction rating. At the end of PY21, Region 6’s Business Service Team (BST) developed an employer survey

which can be utilized by the LWDB and BST members to assist in improving the types of and delivery of business services. Statistics regarding the employer survey will be shared in the upcoming program year. Region 7 developed a satisfaction survey that will be distributed to all employers. The region also hired a Business Analyst to meet with employers. The Business Analyst will discuss the region's OJT program and other business needs with employers, communicating with partners as necessary.

As part of its program improvement efforts, WVDRS continued to support the implementation of CS surveys of its clients to ensure quality services for WVDRS consumers. The WV State Rehabilitation Council (WVSRC) conducted the surveys (with full WVDRS assistance and cooperation). WVSRC is primarily responsible for completion of the consumer satisfaction survey for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) consumers. WVDRS continued to provide and supplement fiscal and human resources needed for its successful completion. WVSRC members selected a survey method that allowed former WVDRS clients and individuals who were not accepted for VR services to be contacted via mail surveys as soon as they exit WVDRS from various statuses throughout the fiscal year. The findings were based on consumer satisfaction information gathered from 120 responses across the six WVDRS districts. Respondents to the consumer satisfaction survey were asked to rate their agreement with statements about their interactions with WVDRS. The ratings were "strongly agree," "agree," "neutral," "disagree," and "strongly disagree." Respondents were provided an option to indicate replies that were neutral or that the survey item was not applicable. Selected highlights of the November 2021 Consumer Satisfaction Survey of WVDRS clients as reported by the WVSRC were: Overall, responses for the 2020-2021 survey were slightly higher than the reported satisfaction in previous years. The mean rating across the ten satisfaction items was 86% for 2020-21 compared to 86% for 2019-2020, 80% for 2018-2019, 78% mean rating for 2017-18 and 76% for 2016-17. Major findings of the consumer satisfaction survey included: (1) respondents felt their rehabilitation counselor treated them with respect (95%), (2) their questions were answered clearly by WVDRS (90%), (3) they were involved in their plan development (76%), (4) their counselor stayed in contact, so they knew what was happening (89%), and (5) they received the services they needed (84%). Respondents also reported they knew what each step of their Individual Plan of Employment (IPE) would be (82%) and their counselors told them about job opportunities (72%). Consumers also reported high ratings ("Above Average" or "Excellent") for accessibility of local offices (93%), and the overall experience with WVDRS (90%).

COMBINED STATE PLAN GOALS

Goal 1: Maximize Efficiency of the Workforce Development System (WDS)

Region 1 partners conducted cross training during the quarterly meetings which were held by conference call and in-person. Updates and information sharing regarding program changes, serving customers, operational guidelines of the AJCs, and safety were some of the topics covered.

WVDRS staff at the state and local level continued to engage with other agencies in the WV WDS, including participation in state and regional workforce development boards, job fairs, and employer-centered events. In July, WIOA core partner agencies, WFWV, WVDRS, and WV Adult Education and partner agencies and programs from across the state held a joint training conference in Morgantown, WV. Over 200 attendees representing over 80 different agencies, programs, and stakeholder groups took part in informative cross training sessions and developed service delivery and consumer engagement strategies to implement across the state. This event was a great step to kick-off the implementation of the new PY22 WV Combined State Plan.

To make referrals more efficient across the programs for both potential consumers and program staff, WVDRS and Region 7 WDB collaborated to expand the Job Action Community Knowledge (J.A.C.K.) referral system. This online-based referral system is accessed by potential consumers through kiosks, QR codes, or a website. After answering a few brief questions, the individual is provided with contact information of each agency in their county for which they may be eligible to receive services. In addition, a point of contact at each agency also received the individual's contact information so they can begin the appropriate referral or application process.

Though still in a pilot phase, the J.A.C.K. has provided WVDRS and other partner agencies in Region 7 with dozens of referrals in an efficient and effective manner.

Goal 2: Strengthen Relationships with Employers

WVDRS used its Employment Specialists (ESs) to gather information regarding employers at the local level, including information regarding job placements for individuals with disabilities and regarding current and expected employer needs. WVDRS has an in-house Employer Services Section (ESS) specializing in providing employers with disability-related information, services, and pre-screened job seekers. The WVDRS ESS employs nine ESs covering all 55 counties in WV. Each ES possesses a unique understanding of local labor market information (LMI) including what jobs are available, what jobs are in demand or decline, and employer networks. WVDRS' team of ESs provided business owners and employers with critical business options and assistance in staffing, employee retention strategies, education on disability-related issues, job accommodations, and information about financial incentives for employers who hire individuals with disabilities. Direct contact with employers is a key strategy to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities for VR consumers, including students with disabilities. ESs, therefore, contact employers directly to identify current and future job openings. To facilitate this, WVDRS utilized LMI provided by WFWV to identify the top employers in each county; contact is always made with the top ten employers in each county on a quarterly basis. WVDRS ESs conducted over 500 employer visits in PY21. Information from these employer visits is entered into State MIS (Management Information System/MACC) and is available to all partner agencies. When meeting with employers, ESs provided valuable information, including the WVDRS Employer Resource Guide. The Resource Guide provides information regarding staffing services, training programs, and incentives for hiring people with disabilities, financial incentives, accessibility assessments, accommodating employees with disabilities, basic disability etiquette, attitudinal barriers, the Americans with Disabilities Act, locating a WVDRS office, and where to find additional resources. Each LWDB partners with a WVDRS representative who is active in the WDB's activities and decision-making process. If needed, a referral to the WVDRS Rehabilitation Technology Unit was made to address workplace accommodations. A Direct Contact Employer database is maintained within the unit to showcase the employers who have special or preferred hiring practices for WVDRS job seekers. To highlight successes and promote employer engagement, WVDRS awarded exemplary employers in each of its six districts, recognizing employers who collaborated with WVDRS to create and promote a diverse workforce, including providing additional employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Additional information can be found on the agency's website at www.wvdrs.org under the "News/Info" tab.

WVDRS ESS increased business engagement strategies by promoting the OJT program statewide. In order to be successful at this, the unit received training on how to approach businesses, discussed ways on making stronger job matches between consumers and employers, and were encouraged to go out in the community to create a larger network by joining a local Chamber of Commerce. As a result of this concerted effort, OJT services increased from 11 total in the 2020-2021 performance year to 22 in the 2021-2022 performance year, doubling employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Further employer relationships were developed and strengthened through organizing and attending over 150 job fairs, often in conjunction with WFWV, and providing technical assistance to over 300 employers statewide. WVDRS ESs entered data and information for over 500 employers into the MACC system of WFWV to ensure awareness of job openings across agencies. WVDRS also participated in Chamber of Commerce events to make employer contacts and provide information about services WVDRS and other WDS agencies can provide employers. WVDRS business engagement strategies were conducted in both in-person and virtually. Through collaboration with a national network of other VR agencies, WVDRS is able to provide information from employers on a national level to WVDRS job seekers. The collaboration with other states included Pennsylvania, Washington DC, Kentucky, Ohio, and Virginia. Virtual events such as Employer Spotlight, Partner Spotlight, and job readiness workshops including Virtual Job Club were provided during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic and in-person activities have begun to resume. The Job Club provided work readiness skills to job seekers to prepare for the world of work. Topics included

positive attitude, skill assessment, interviews, resumes, job search process, self-advocacy, transportation, social media, and maintaining a job.

Goal 3: Overcome Employment Barriers of Individuals

Region 1 used comprehensive interviewing, educational assessment, and counseling to identify barriers and utilize support services when needed, so individuals will be successful in obtaining training and employment goals. To ensure support services needs are being met, individuals were co-enrolled in programs with partnering agencies. The Region 1 youth program made referrals to WV Adult Education to assist with increasing basic skills levels. The youth program staff worked closely with employers and participants to develop work experience training. Mentorship is an important part of this component. The employers and youth staff worked one-on-one with participants to address existing, and new barriers they may have had such as childcare, transportation, food insecurity, appropriate tools and clothing. Supportive services were provided as needed to address the barriers, and referrals to other resources were made as appropriate, to ensure participants receive guidance and support when facing life's challenges. Region 1 continued to assist with combating the opioid crisis by offering the transitional jobs program to those who have barriers to employment, such as a previous substance problem. There were 52 participants placed in work-based experiences and provided extensive career services training and supportive service assistance. Four certifications were obtained in areas such as Peer Recovery and Customer Service. Staff continued to work one-on-one with individuals to assist with overcoming barriers through career counseling, employability skills training, and referrals to partner agencies such as WV Adult Education and the Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR). The LWDB partnered closely with Jobs & Hope WV with many participants being dual enrolled in both programs to increase the number of services provided. Region 1 is proud to partner with Communities of Healing which provides extensive training and a certificate to cohorts of businesses to hire those in recovery. The LWDB has been exploring working with local correctional centers to offer those ready to re-enter society assistance to enter occupational training programs.

Region 6 WDB encouraged cross-program funding and programmatic integration of workforce preparation activities to develop employability skills, adult education, and occupational training, supplemented by supportive services, as part of career pathway models to ensure the critical needs of individuals (including those with basic skills deficiencies) were met, allowing the greatest opportunity for employment success. Support services were provided to those with specific barriers or referrals to other partners were made if further resources were required but not available through WIOA funding. When appropriate, job seekers were co-enrolled between two or more core programs to accomplish this goal. One example of co-enrollment was the individuals who were cross-referred through the Jobs & Hope WV program. Staff from Region 6, including the Region 6 One Stop Coordinator visited some of the correctional facilities in our area to provide assistance, counseling and resource information to incarcerated individuals who were soon to be released in order to ease the burden of re-entry into the community. Some examples of assistance provided were Mock Interviewing and Resume Writing. The LWDB continued to work with entities such as, but not limited to, Job Squad and PACE Enterprise to support the entry of persons with disabilities into the workforce through Transitional and OJT programs, which included supportive services for those who were assessed to need them.

WVDRS continued assessing skill gaps and needs of individuals seeking employment and/or training throughout PY21. Regions continued to work with area schools and institutions in examining/analyzing existing curriculum against the needs of targeted industry-related skills certifications. Area schools and institutions are doing a better job identifying gaps in existing curriculum and developing new curriculum to fill skills gaps. WVDRS completed IPEs for over 3,200 individuals with disabilities in PY21. These IPEs follow an assessment made by counselors to determine the individuals' skills, needs, and desires pertinent to employment, as well as vocational counseling and guidance to help determine an appropriate employment goal. The WDS ensured individuals with barriers, especially those with disabilities, had increased access to and for opportunities for employment, education, training, and support services. WVDRS continued to be available in the setup and design of AJCs to enhance the

delivery of services to individuals with disabilities. WVDRS continued collaborative efforts with organizations who support efforts to expand employment opportunities for individuals with behavioral health challenges. WVDRS maintained its partnership with the WV Behavioral Health Planning Council, meeting quarterly and updating the council on the agency's efforts to effectively serve and help individuals with behavioral health conditions meet their employment goals. WVDRS was also a committed partner in the Jobs & Hope WV program and has continued to make referrals to the program whenever appropriate. This program was established by the Governor and Legislature and aims to address the substance use disorder crisis through a statewide collaboration of agencies to provide linked services to participants.

Goal 4: Promote Career Pathways

Region 1 worked closely with WV Adult Education and employers to identify literacy skills and develop career pathways for participants. Our challenge is engaging with those who are not currently in the labor force and to inform them of the training and career options available in our region. Career specialists with the Career Connections Youth Program assisted participants with college books and materials and referred enrolled in-school and out-of-school youth to the LWDB and WVDRS for financial aid assistance for unmet tuition and transportation costs to help them achieve their training and career goals. Region 1 connected employers with the state Registered Apprenticeship Program to develop programs to increase recruitment, retention, and training efforts and to provide clear pathways for job seekers, and incumbent workers, to advance their skills and career goals.

WVDRS counselors provided Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to students with disabilities, especially job exploration counseling, to give students with disabilities and their parents/guardians a better understanding of labor market conditions, current and emerging career opportunities, and the necessary education and training requirements related to those opportunities. WVDRS provided work-based learning experiences to over 300 high school students with disabilities and held Career Exploration Opportunity (CEO) Summits across the state, as well as virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. WVDRS worked with Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) around the state to provide the Summits and other employment-related services in as many local areas as possible including virtual services to over 500 students with disabilities. Attendance for the CEO Summits was approximately 489 students, covering all six WVDRS districts. A concerted effort was made to introduce Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math (STEAM) to students in the CEO Summits. Topics covered included career planning, career preparation, Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance information, understanding the importance of necessary personal documents, communication, conflict management, employer expectations, attendance and punctuality, timeliness of task completion, being able to work without supervision, positive work ethic, managing multiple tasks, high-growth jobs, personal brand, and job hunting tools such as resumes, cover letters, interviews, and digital profiles. In addition to the CEOs, over 100 students with disabilities participated in courses in self-advocacy and STEAM-related topics. Throughout the academic year, WVDRS ESs also provided Pre-ETS at the local high schools, whenever possible. The ESs conducted mock interviewing, career exploration, and discussions regarding other employment related topics. WVDRS also continued to conduct virtual and in person Job Clubs for students with disabilities to continue to gain valuable employment-related skills training and career exploration opportunities. WVDRS continued to maintain and enhance its "Pathways to the Future" website (www.pathwayswv.org), which serves as a self-service resource for students with disabilities statewide to receive Pre-ETS. The website provides valuable information and tools regarding career planning, education planning, independent living, self-determination, and work-based learning. The website was bolstered by banners placed in high schools in all 55 counties of the state. Additionally, several pages of the College Foundation of WV's website (www.cfww.com) have links to the Pathways website. These banners and links directed students with disabilities to the website and its resources.

Goal 5: Identify and Maximize Postsecondary and Employment Opportunities for Youth

The Region 1 youth program, Career Connections, offered participants a work training experience. This allowed our participants to gain the abilities and training necessary in transitioning into gainful careers. The youth employment program offered opportunities to help disadvantaged youth gain financial knowledge, skills, and resources to gain permanent employment. Monthly workshops were provided to participants to teach life skills, job readiness, and workplace skills. Quality partnerships with employers are an essential part of our work training experience. WV Adult Education, in collaboration with WFWV, employers, CTCs, Career and Technical Education Centers, etc. continued with WV Adult Education offering Integrated Education and Training (IET) Prep programs for students accepted into Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), Certified Nursing Assistant, Electrical, Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning, Surgical Tech, and Cosmetology Adult programs. For example, LPN Bridge II Adult Career Pathway IET programs were held in 11 different counties. These IET programs helped prepare students entering LPN Adult programs by providing adult education and literacy skills in the context of health science and offered employability skills to better prepare students for the in-demand LPN job market.

Region 6 supported the development of transitional jobs, social enterprises and other work experience strategies to help out of school youth with limited work histories to develop the skills needed for workplace success. The LWDA continued to work with the Human Resource Development Foundation, Inc. (HRDF; Youth Contractor) to expand the use of transitional jobs, OJT, and work experience for youth. Region 6 continued to co-enroll as needed and appropriate high-risk individuals, ages 18 to 24, as both WIOA Adult and WIOA Youth participants to leverage funds and provide necessary services. Co-enrollment could have occurred in WV Adult Education, Employment Assistance Resource Network (EARN), TANF, or other partner programs. Region 6 utilized Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for 18 to 24 year olds in combination with work-based learning opportunities. Region 6 collaborated with YouthBuild and AmeriCorps sites and encouraged inclusion of those partnerships in the region. The youth program in Region 6 partnered with YouthBuild to enroll their participants in the WIOA program. The Employment for Independent Living Program, which serves foster youth, also worked with and co-enrolled in the Region 6 YouthReady program.

WVDRS continued to provide a large percentage of its participants with postsecondary training assistance, including four-year college/university, community college, and career technical training for over 1,500 individuals with disabilities in PY21. This postsecondary training enabled individuals to gain high quality, in-demand employment.

Goal 6: Align WV's Labor Force Participation Rate with the National Labor Force Participation Rate

Region 1's transitional jobs program offers individualized career services and work-based learning opportunities to those with substance abuse backgrounds and those in re-entry. These individuals are one example of an untapped labor force. Region 1 has grown partnerships by developing an outreach plan and conducting virtual and in-person presentations with Q&A sessions. This has helped to identify individuals with skill gaps, introduce them to career pathways, and assist them with entering training and education programs.

Over 900 WVDRS consumers were successfully employed in the program year. WVDRS provided individualized services to consumers with disabilities and employers to enable individuals with disabilities to gain, maintain, or advance in employment. WVDRS served individuals with disabilities, ages 14 and above, seeking competitive integrated employment and worked with each participant to maximize their career potential through training, assistive technology, and other services necessary to meet their individualized employment goal.

SECTOR STRATEGIES AND CAREER PATHWAYS (GOAL 4)

Business Engagement Strategies

Partnerships continued to be a key component of assisting customers to reach their fullest potential. Examples include:

- WFWV established a monthly Statewide Virtual Job Fair Platform to promote employer engagement and job seeker participation. The Virtual Job Fairs are promoted through various media resources, WFWV local offices, LWDBs, and partner agencies.
- Region 1 services are implemented to businesses include assistance with recruitment of employees through in-person and virtual job fairs and promotion of positions available. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Region 1 assisted employers by promoting virtual job fairs throughout the region in which we use today. Follow up services were offered after the job fairs, follow up services took place for customers requesting additional services or information Zoom, Teams and conference calls were implemented to counterbalance COVID-19 after restrictions lessened to reach as many employers as possible. In-person and virtual platforms are available and are currently being utilized. Relationships with chambers of commerce, local economic development authorities, and partnering with LWDBs across regional lines has increased outreach efforts and increased the number of employers benefiting from WIOA programs. New businesses have surprisingly sprung up during the COVID-19 pandemic and some are taking advantage of WIOA programs such as OJT. Region 1 partnered with a local airport, a local economic development authority, a local CTC, and a research team to identify the need and the potential to develop an aerospace technology program in our region.
- The Region 6 Executive Director participated on several Economic Development Boards and currently holds a position on the Executive Team of the Tri State Energy and Advanced Manufacturing (TEAM) Consortium as co-chair of the Workforce and Economic Development Working Group. The TEAM Consortium partners share a regional vision of guaranteeing an adequate supply of properly skilled workers for the critical energy and advanced manufacturing sectors in the tri-state initiative. Region 6 continued to promote to employers and support the creation of pre-apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship Programs in non-traditional occupations as part of a relevant career pathway model. The LWDB continued to fund the WV Women Work Pre-Apprenticeship program as a non-traditional career pathway into specific trade apprenticeships and started working with the West Virginia Rural Water Association (WVRWA) to promote their nationally recognized Workforce Development Apprenticeship program in the region. Staff from LWDB met with multiple county water and wastewater boards to discuss WIOA funding options for the WVRWA program. There are currently 73 water and 43 wastewater systems located in the region. The LWDB ensured apprenticeship opportunities within the WDS would be promoted as job training options to individuals during the assessment and counseling process and to employers when meeting to discuss opportunities for the employers to utilize workforce services. In addition, Region 6 provided career guidance to individuals with barriers, especially those with disabilities, regarding programs and services, providing an effective pathway to their career goals. In recognition of the statewide shortage of LPN/RN's, Region 6 instituted a pilot program in May of 2022 to fund this critical "in demand" occupation at a higher tuition reimbursement rate than other occupational training programs in the region, in order to encourage WIOA eligible participants to choose the nursing pathway. Statistics regarding the success of the nurse pilot program will be available next program year.
- The Region 7 AJCs had active BSTs made up of key One-Stop staff, community college representatives, and other representatives from the local area to serve business needs. In order to facilitate engagement of local employers in in-demand industry sectors, the AJC's BSTs actively participated, and will continue to participate, in area business advisory councils and boards to bring together business and educational leaders in-demand occupations and industry sectors. Through these councils and advisory boards, workforce development and educational leaders communicated directly with area business leaders regarding the in-demand human resource needs, training needs, and skill sets currently sought after by area businesses. BST members frequently and actively partnered with Chambers of Commerce/Economic Development entities throughout the LWDA. In coordination with Blue Ridge CTC and Eastern WVCTC, the LWDB conducted quarterly Sector Partnership Strategy Meetings with key stakeholders including but not limited to industry and workforce development partners. These meetings help assess the needs of industry and align educational programs and offerings. One of the key strategies the LWDB has

been able to effectively implement through Sector Partnership meetings is the capability of portable and stackable industry-recognized certifications. For example, the partnership with Blue Ridge CTC; their Advanced Manufacturing A.A.S. program has been divided into multiple six week cohorts with open entry points and certifications at the end of each six weeks. This is an example of allowing clients the opportunity to easily access and obtain the skills required by industry. The stackable components allow individuals to ultimately obtain an Associate's Degree. However, the certifications earned at the end of six weeks cohorts allow for immediate employment opportunities. Similar programmatic designs are currently in development with Eastern West Virginia CTC.

STATE'S PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM

Exit

WIOA Guidance Notice No. 7-16 states: For purposes of performance calculations, exit is the last date of service after which an individual received services through the adult, dislocated worker, or youth program under WIOA Title I, the Adult Education and Literacy program under WIOA Title II, or the employment services authorized by Wagner-Peyser as amended by WIOA Title III, and no future services other than follow-up services are planned. (20 CFR 677.150) Ninety days of no service does not include self-service or information-only activities or follow-up services. (20 CFR 677.150)

Negotiated Performance Levels

Titles I and III core programs' state and local area negotiated performance levels are as follows:

WIOA Performance Measures	West Virginia	
	Final Negotiated Goals	
	PY 20	PY 21
WIOA Adults		
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	69.3%	69.3%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	69.6%	69.6%
Median Earnings	\$ 6,251.00	\$ 6,251.00
Credential Attainment Rate	78.0%	78.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	28.0%	33.0%
WIOA Dislocated Workers		
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	81.2%	81.2%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	83.2%	83.2%
Median Earnings	\$ 9,719.00	\$ 9,719.00
Credential Attainment Rate	83.0%	83.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	27.5%	35.0%
WIOA Youth		
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	63.3%	63.3%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	69.7%	69.7%
Median Earnings	\$ 3,182.00	\$ 3,182.00
Credential Attainment Rate	73.3%	73.3%
Measurable Skill Gains	34.4%	34.4%
Labor Exchange (LEX)*		
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	61.0%	61.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	62.5%	64.0%
Median Earnings	\$ 5,093.00	\$ 5,093.00

PY 2021 FINAL NEGOTIATED GOALS

WIOA Performance Measures	West Virginia	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Region 7
WIOA Adults								
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	69.3%	67.0%	72.0%	69.3%	70.0%	70.0%	69.3%	69.3%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	69.6%	67.0%	73.0%	69.6%	70.0%	70.0%	69.6%	70.0%
Median Earnings	\$ 6,251.00	\$ 5,800.00	\$ 6,500.00	\$ 5,800.00	\$ 6,500.00	\$ 6,500.00	\$ 6,251.00	\$ 6,231.00
Credential Attainment Rate	78.0%	74.0%	78.0%	78.0%	80.0%	80.0%	75.0%	78.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	33.0%	29.7%	31.0%	28.0%	33.0%	33.0%	33.0%	33.0%
WIOA Dislocated Workers								
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	81.2%	78.0%	81.2%	81.2%	81.2%	81.2%	81.2%	81.2%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	83.2%	77.0%	78.0%	83.2%	83.2%	83.2%	83.2%	83.2%
Median Earnings	\$ 9,719.00	\$ 9,100.00	\$ 9,719.00	\$ 9,600.00	\$ 9,719.00	\$ 9,800.00	\$ 9,719.00	\$ 9,000.00
Credential Attainment Rate	83.0%	77.0%	84.0%	83.0%	83.0%	83.0%	79.5%	83.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	35.0%	31.5%	30.0%	27.0%	35.0%	35.0%	35.0%	35.0%
WIOA Youth								
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	63.3%	60.0%	64.0%	56.0%	63.3%	63.3%	63.3%	63.3%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	69.7%	67.0%	72.0%	65.0%	69.7%	69.7%	64.0%	69.7%
Median Earnings	\$ 3,182.00	\$ 2,950.00	\$ 3,200.00	\$ 2,700.00	\$ 3,182.00	\$ 3,182.00	\$ 3,182.00	\$ 2,534.00
Credential Attainment Rate	73.3%	70.0%	76.0%	72.0%	73.3%	71.0%	70.0%	73.3%
Measurable Skill Gains	34.4%	31.0%	34.4%	30.0%	34.4%	34.4%	34.4%	25.0%

WVDRS continued to develop baseline levels for performance measures, except the Measurable Skills Gain (MSG) Rate, which was expected to be 42.0%. The actual MSG Rate for WVDRS was 49.9%. Actual PY21 performance on the remaining measures, still under baseline development, are as follows: Employment Rate Second Quarter after Exit-69.9%; Employment Rate Fourth Quarter after Exit-67.9%; Median Earnings Second Quarter after Exit-\$6,308; and Credential Attainment Rate-44.3%.

Fiscal and Program Monitoring/Data Validation

Financial management and program operations reviews of the WIOA activities related to the statewide system continued to be conducted annually on the seven LWDB offices, including the National Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWG) fund allocations and other NDWG awards to project operators for clean-up services caused by severe storms and flooding, job driven opportunities for the long term unemployed and career retraining for those impacted by mass layoffs throughout the state. The reviews were conducted to evaluate fiscal and program activity accuracy and ensure integrity and to determine their compliance with federal and state regulations. Work papers developed by WFWV staff enabled reviewers to document specific information obtained from the reviewed entity for evaluation. Other related materials were also examined, and office staff activities were observed for determining execution effectiveness. The results are then reported out. The financial management portion of the on-site visits is designed to determine if expenditures are made against the appropriate cost categories; if they are within the cost limitations specified; if there is compliance with other provisions, regulations, and applicable laws; and to provide technical assistance as needed and appropriate.

The program operations portion of the on-site visits included WFWV staff verifying and validating performance data prior to federal reporting by checking the accuracy of a sample of computerized records and comparing keyed entries against the original source(s). Although the MACC is equipped with automatic/internal data validation controls, on-site visits included reviews of WIOA participant files (hardcopy and electronic/MACC). On-site visits also include reviews of LWDB and committee memberships and equipment/inventory systems procedures to determine their compliance with federal provisions, regulations, and other applicable laws and to provide technical assistance as needed. WFWV continues to be committed to continuous improvement of its information and data systems and ensuring the integrity of program operations. On-site reviews of participant files revealed Findings and/or Concerns in three main categories: Eligibility and Documentation, Excessive Service Durations, and Data Mismatches or Entry Errors. While there were other broader areas, such as Case Notes and Supportive Services, all issues seemed to fit into these categories. Of the samples reviewed, it was determined the following percentages of files had issues:

FINDINGS

Adult	42.00%
Dislocated Worker	42.00%
Youth	16.00%

CONCERNS

Adult	50.00%
Dislocated Worker	50.00%
Youth	00.00%

Comprehensive reviews documented effective practices being used by the State WDS and identified training and/or technical assistance needs of staff. Evaluations resulted in implementing methods for continuous improvement in the efficiency and effectiveness of the State WDS and improving employability for job seekers and competitiveness for employers. WFWV staff provided an overview of the results and recommendations of the evaluations during exit meetings with LWDB directors and staff. Compliance findings require submission of corrective action plans offering solutions. In addition to the monitoring reviews, WFWV conducts meetings or site visits with LWDBs and NDWG project operators to provide additional technical assistance, as necessary.

STATE FUNDED ACTIVITIES

Rapid Response

Rapid Response (RR) services and activities were provided to:

- 259 employers, most of whom had small dislocations affecting one to three employees
- 577 dislocated workers

In PY21, RR services were delivered by in-person meetings and through mail delivery. Employers were anxious to resume business, and small layoffs were the majority of the dislocations. RR state staff offered follow up services to workers who received informational packets to assist in answering questions, registering with WFWV, and completing questionnaires. The questionnaires assist local office staff in determining needed services and partner referrals.

Local RR Coordinators from each region conducted follow-up to dislocated workers by phone and email when necessary. Construction Works of WV, the peer support labor liaison partner, also conducted follow-up. News of businesses who will be experiencing layoffs or closure are received through various avenues: AJC staff, Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notifications (WARNs), news outlets, employees, BSRs, and unemployment reports showing noticeable claims. When unemployment reports reveal noticeable claims, the coordinator investigates to

determine if services are needed. Currently, layoff aversion strategies continue with the WV Development Office and the State RR Unit.

Wagner-Peyser Activities

Developing working relationships with employers and job seekers is a vital component of WV's Combined State Plan. WFWV collaborated with mandated partners and external customers to educate employers on available services and the promotion of WFWV and the AJCs. WFWV secured 90,181 job openings with 66,368 job orders in PY21. As WV's economy recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of employers using our services has increased from the previous year. WFWV designated four local offices as Employment Service offices. The staff will focus primarily on providing services to employers by contacting employers on a weekly basis to assist with filling job openings and do a more intensive job search in the MACC. Additionally, weekly contact was made with job seekers in those areas to provide job placement assistance and referrals to partner or community agencies.

NATIONAL DISLOCATED WORKER GRANTS

WFWV continued to administer four NDWG awarded by the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL). The data used to apply for these discretionary grants and to project the number of participants to serve with these funds is based upon RR activities, WARNs, and Unemployment Compensation records. More detailed information regarding each NDWG is outlined below:

- **WV Statewide Coal Mining II NDWG**-With the large number of mine closures and subsequent layoffs that have already occurred, and the projection there will be on-going permanent downsizing statewide in the mining industry, this grant provided training programs to refocus this target population to career pathways outside of the mining industry and long-term re-employment opportunities. It was a continuation of the previous Coal Mining Grant which completed and closed June 30, 2018. The Coal Mining II grant was awarded on March 12, 2018, in the amount of \$1,056,000.00 from the USDOL, to continue providing re-employment/retraining services to coal miners who are still being impacted by mass layoffs and mine closures. On September 26, 2019, a supplemental funding modification request was approved by USDOL awarding \$1,056,000 in additional funds and a grant performance period extension to March 31, 2020. On April 16, 2020, \$2,429,090.00 was awarded and the performance period was extended until March 31, 2022. The projected number to serve under this grant was 368 which included participants enrolled in ITA services and those receiving only individualized career services. Below are the completed statistics for the grant as of its completion March 31, 2022:
 - 555 dislocated coal miners/displaced homemakers registered
 - 344 enrolled in training
 - 341 received supportive services
 - 546 soft-exited, nine are still receiving job search assistance from local eligibility staff
 - 462 entered employment after exit
- **2021 Severe Winter Storms NDWG**-Based on the severe ice storms which resulted in widespread damage consisting of downed trees, powerlines, and structural damage to public buildings and roads during February 10-16, 2021, and February 27-March 1, 2021. FEMA Disaster Declarations were issued on May 13, 2021 (Disaster Declaration, DR-4603) and May 20, 2021 (Disaster Declaration, DR 4605), for the following seven counties: Boone, Cabell, Lincoln, Logan, Mingo, Putnam, and Wayne. A total of 88 worksites that included streams, rivers, culverts, city parks and public areas were identified and included in clean-up and debris removal activities. A request for funding was submitted to USDOL and a total of \$3,050,768.00 was awarded. The grant is awarded incrementally, with the first increment of \$684,940.00 being awarded to Region 2 Workforce Investment Board and \$293,546 being awarded to Workforce Development Board of Kanawha County on August 20, 2021, with a period of performance of August 20, 2021-July 31, 2022. 70 Participants were to be served. An extension was awarded on July 26,

2022 to bring the total period of performance to August 20, 2021-July 31, 2023 and the participants to be served total to 140. As of June 30, 2022 the total grant numbers were:

- 79 participants enrolled in temporary disaster relief employment
- 35 participants received support services
- 26 exited

- **National Health Emergency-Disaster Recovery National Dislocated Worker Grants to address the Opioid Crisis**-This is a special grant based on the Secretary of Health and Human Services, at the White House's direction, declaring a national public health emergency. This grant was submitted October 5, 2018, and awarded to WFWV on May 24, 2019, in the amount of \$10,000,000.00 with an initial increment amount of \$3,333,333.00. The targeted communities to be served with this grant were Huntington Area/Cabell and Wayne Counties, Charleston Area/Kanawha and Clay Counties, Beckley Area/Raleigh and Wyoming Counties, Bluefield Area/Mercer and McDowell counties, Parkersburg Area/Wood and Jackson Counties, Martinsburg Area/Berkeley and Hampshire Counties, Morgantown Area/Monongalia, Preston, Taylor, and Marion Counties and Wheeling Area/Northern Panhandle. This grant offered disaster-relief employment, training activities, and supportive services, to address economic and workforce impacts related to widespread opioid use, addiction, and overdose. It also provided temporary employment opportunities aimed at alleviating humanitarian and other needs created by the opioid crisis. This grant provided services to reintegrate eligible participants affected by the crisis into the workforce. The grant also trained individuals to work in areas such as mental health treatment, addiction treatment, and pain management. The total number of participants to serve in this grant was 534 during a period of performance of July 1, 2019-June 30, 2022. In June of 2020, WFWV awarded funding for grant activities to four Project Operators: HRDF, Inc. serving Regions 3, 4, 6, and the Metropolitan areas of Charleston, Parkersburg, and Morgantown; Ascension Recovery Service, serving Regions 1, 2, and the Metropolitan areas of Huntington, Beckley, and Bluefield; Region 5 WDB serving Region 5 and Metropolitan area of Wheeling; Region 7 Eastern WV Community Action Agency, Inc. serving, Region 7 and the Metropolitan area of Martinsburg. In December 2021, Ascension Recovery Service notified the state WFWV office they were withdrawing from the grant. HRDF, Inc. agreed to take over Regions 1, 2, and the Metropolitan areas of Huntington, Beckley, and Bluefield and to continue working with the participants and their employers. The transfer was completed on January 31, 2022. Below are participant statistics as of June 30, 2022:

- 292 participants registered in temporary disaster relief employment
- 213 participants received Disaster Relief Employment services
- 135 participants received support services
- 53 enrolled with an ITA
- 190 exited

- **Covid-19 Disaster Recovery Dislocated Worker Grant**-In August 4, 2020, WFWV applied to USDOL to request emergency funds for the purpose of developing and delivering an initiative to provide temporary disaster relief employment to eligible individuals focused in areas to assist the state with efforts to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. On September 4, 2020, USDOL awarded WFWV \$1,500,000. The performance period was September 20, 2020-September 30, 2022, with 45 participants to be served with temporary disaster work relief employment. Arbor, Inc, dba Equus Workforce Solutions was awarded the funding as the sub-recipient through WV's Procurement Process. Equus focused on developing disaster temporary work relief employment opportunities in the following areas: Receptionist/Information Clerk placement with DHHR for work focused on scheduling COVID-19 vaccinations, "cold call" promoting the benefits of being vaccinated, and any required follow up contacts to recently vaccinated residents; a Janitor/Cleaner placement focused on cleaning and sanitizing state, regional, local offices, state and local public park facilities and access points, AJC locations within the seven LWDA's, as well as private employers, assisted in preventing the potential spread of the COVID-19 virus; and a File Clerk placed with DHHR and local/regional Health Departments focused on assisting

with contract tracing focused on notifying in and potentially out state residents of exposure to the COVID-19 virus. After a miscommunication with the USDOL, it was determined the grant end date should have been September 30, 2022. This was relayed to Equus Workforce Solutions staff and reports have been updated. Below are participant statistics as of June 30, 2022:

- 56 participants enrolled in temporary disaster relief employment
- 2 participants enrolled in training
- 29 participants received support services
- 24 exited

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

WFWV provided statewide technical assistance to Region 3 periodically during May and June. Intake, case management, MACC data entry, and reporting were areas of focus. The 3rd and 4th Quarters of PY21 consisted of several weekly and monthly partner meetings focused on the modification of WV's State Plan, providing technical assistance on service delivery, referrals, and training/employment outcomes.

PROMISING PRACTICES

The R1WDB saw success promoting programs and services through social media platforms and in-person meetings with partners and community agencies and encouraged employers who have utilized programs to refer others. Virtual job fair options opened new avenues for recruitment of employees and allowed employers to conveniently seek employees.

The Region 6 BST continued to use the BST Resource Guide for team members and AJC staff to utilize when working with employers. The guide is posted on www.regionviwv.org under the "Employers" tab. The guide is updated continuously to add new resources and or update current resource information. In addition to this guide, an AJC partner services guide was made available in print at each comprehensive and affiliate center in the region. The guide is also available on the website under the "AJC Partner Network" tab. Both resource guides are aimed at providing information to the staff of the AJCs and the members of the BST in support of their work with regional employers. The region continued to reach out to the public about employment, partner agency and community resource information on the Region 6 Partner Network Facebook Page as well as on Instagram and LinkedIn. On social media platforms, the region shared job opportunities, resources available for partners, employer services available to businesses, community resources, etc. There was an unprecedented increase of 79.9% in Facebook page activity, reaching 76,784 people during the program year. Partner meetings and partner cross training continued to be conducted through virtual platforms such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams and Survey Monkey. The year closed with a total of three Partner Cross Trainings via Powerpoint followed by a SurveyMonkey questionnaire with a total of 147 partner staff earning Cross Training Certificates. The cross training included information on AJCs (102 series), Apprenticeships and Council of Three Rivers American Indian Center (COTRAIC). The One Stop Coordinator sent out a Cross Training Powerpoint Series to each and every staff involved in the four AJCs on a quarterly basis. At the end of PY21 a new initiative was implemented to reach the outer lying rural areas of the 13 county region-the Mobile American Job Center (MAJC). The first MAJC was held in the most rural area of the region in Gilmer County. Several partners from Region 6's AJC partner network participated in the MAJC by taking resource material on programs and services and sharing with the community. Partners included DHHR, WV Adult Education, WIOA, SNAP E&T, Family Resource Network, and others. The AJC outreach committee agreed a MAJC would be set up monthly in a high traffic area of the chosen county, such as a local grocery store, Walmart, courthouse, etc. The first MAJC was very successful, and participating partners received positive feedback from the public.

Wagner Peyser continued to work with LVERs, AJC partners, and BSTs/BSRs to contact employers and provide information on AJC services. This shared information consists of registering employers in the MACC to search

for qualified applicants, OJT information, WOTC information, Federal Bonding, and any other services partners may offer employers to assist in finding qualified applicants.

After trying to work through the “aftermath” of the COVID-19 pandemic, the year 2022 kicked us off almost immediately with a pretty significant difference to how WV operates-WV's WDS changed its State Plan type from a Unified to Combined. While the agencies/programs involved were not new to us, they were new to the process and as such, added an additional layer of accountability and expectations than was the norm. It's an exciting change; definitely one for the better. WFWV's programs have taken a step back to reassess what we do and how/why we do it. Doing so has and will continue to help determine what improvements can/should be made to workforce system programs in order to ultimately serve customers and partners better. Throughout PY21, concepts/terms such as-getting back to basics, collaboration, transformation, removing barriers, reassessing policies/processes, transparency, communication, coordination, etc., were discussed and action plans developed. Examples of activities include:

- Creation of the “No Wrong Door” initiative
- Establishment of a Resiliency Office
- State Board and committee restructure
- Weekly communication/info blasts to ensure partners are “in the know”

WVDRS continued working with agencies within the criminal justice system to improve services to individuals with disabilities who are justice involved. WVDRS was actively involved in various reentry councils across the state. Partnerships were also developed with organizations such as CORE (Creating Opportunities for Recovery Employment) and staff participated in the Criminal Justice Reform Summit and exhibited at the WV Peer Recovery Support Services Conference. WVDRS also continued partnering with and participating on various statewide councils including the Olmstead Council, the Achieving a Better Life Experience in WV (WVABLE) Advisory Committee, and the Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Advisory Board. WVDRS worked with CRPs around the state to provide the CEO Summits and other employment-related services in as many local areas as possible including a number of high schools. Approximately 489 students attended the CEO Summits, covering all six WVDRS districts. A concerted effort was made to introduce STEAM to students in the CEO Summits. Topics covered included career planning, career preparation, Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance information, understanding the importance of necessary personal documents, communication, conflict management, employer expectations, attendance and punctuality, timeliness of task completion, being able to work without supervision, positive work ethic, managing multiple tasks, high-growth jobs, personal brand, and job hunting tools such as resumes, cover letters, interviews, and digital profiles. Efficiency was enhanced by developing and providing services virtually, in addition to partnerships at various locations in which partners contributed free classroom space, facility or campus tours, information, or other services.

WVDRS, in partnership with employers and CRPs, also provided work-based learning experiences for over 300 students with disabilities across the state. These work experiences, ranging from 2-12 weeks, enable students to work with local employers in a real job setting to gain a true understanding of work and earning a paycheck. WVDRS and CRPs also provided specialized Science, Technology, Engineering Math (STEM) and Assistive Technology camps to over 285 students with disabilities, including those with sensory impairments. These camps provided students with the opportunity to explore STEM-based employment opportunities as well as learn about new technology to assist them in their daily lives and future training and employment.

WorkForce West Virginia Collaboration and Partnering

The WV Legislature continued to work closely with the WFWV system in PY21. Legislators continually received updates and information from various partners within the WFWV system via an oversight commission composed of members from both the Senate and House of Delegates. In 2007, legislation passed consolidating the “State of

the One-Stop System” report, and the “Funding Stream Report”. This consolidation allows WFWV to identify all workforce development training funds within the state and how they may or may not be distributed throughout the AJCs. WFWV continued to update the State of the State report as appropriate.

WFWV leadership worked diligently with USDOL’s Veterans’ Employment and Training Service (VETS) to strategically place veterans’ representatives throughout WV. WFWV employed nine Disabled Veterans’ Outreach Specialists (DVOPS) and five Local Veterans’ Employment Representatives (LVER) in PY21 who provided coverage to every WFWV AJC for provision of services to eligible veterans and spouses. WFWV DVOPS perform outreach to find and provide intensive services to eligible veterans with significant barriers to employment. Through the provision of intensive services, veterans gain long term sustainable employment. WFWV LVERs provide outreach to business and industry to promote the hiring of veterans and facilitate the veterans’ program within WFWV. WFWV provides priority of service to veterans.

On-line Marketing and Services

The agency’s website www.workforcewv.org had over 3.054 million page views; an average of 254,547 page views per month. Website visitors spent the most time searching WFWV’s Unemployment Compensation pages.

SUCCESS STORY

In December 2021, the Workforce Development Board of the Mid-Ohio Valley initiated and secured partnership with TransfrVR (a career and technical virtual reality platform) which led to the incorporation of Career Exploration and Training into WIOA outreach and Workforce Development programming. The pure intent of this initiative is to forge relationships and a working environment to build talent pipelines for employers and the skilled trades. The VR program played a significant role in building the partnerships between secondary education and the trades. This success led to the development of “Seeing WV’s Future through a Different Lens” initiative funded by WFWV discretionary funds and the Appalachian Regional Commission’s POWER Grant. The initiative brings career exploration and training to three target markets: Workforce partners, education (secondary/post-secondary), and employers. Some of the successes to date:

- Facilitated a joint Superintendent and building trades meeting
- Facilitation of all secondary education Counselors of the VR potential
- Conducted multiple School Based Career Exploration Events (over 300 8th graders at one event)
- Certification programs for WIOA Youth and workforce partner clientele (Workplace Safety, Customer Service, Precision Measurement)
- Week-long summer camp focused on various career pathways engaging secondary and post-secondary education, the trades, students, and their families
- Ongoing monthly Career Exploration with special populations including Adult Education, Rehabilitation Centers, Circle Campaign (transition from poverty), WVDRS’ Pre-ETS (Workplace Safety/Customer Service), Employer specific pre-employment training (Workplace Safety)
- Schoolwide student accounts in rural high school for ongoing scheduled sessions
- Ongoing curricular support for STEM and career planning high school classes
- Integration into Options program combining Career and Technical Education (CTE) and HiSet for students as alternative to HS Diploma
- Upcoming collaboration with county 4H extension offices for short term specialized career exploration clubs
- Career Fairs (based in schools and AJCs)
- Employer Forums
- School Open Houses

Over the past year, over 1,600 unique users were served in career exploration and through ITAs. Post surveys were administered to several groups with universally positive feedback.