

CNMI WORKFORCE INVESTMENT AGENCY

WIOA ANNUAL STATEWIDE NARRATIVE PERFORMANCE REPORT

PY 2022



The image shows a vertical banner on the left side of the page. The top portion of the banner features a close-up of the American flag, showing the stars and stripes. Below the flag, there is a blue section with a white graphic that resembles a stylized 'S' or a similar shape. The background of the banner is a blurred autumn scene with orange and red foliage.

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OVERVIEW

Similar to many states and territories, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, is gradually overcoming the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite these hurdles, there is progress in the direction of economic recovery, marked by the revitalization of the business community and the enhancement of the current workforce.

This Annual Performance Report sheds light on the initiatives undertaken by the CNMI's Workforce System. This system encompasses the Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs, which is overseen by the CNMI Department of Labor Workforce Investment Agency. Additionally, it includes Title II Adult Basic Education Program, managed by the Northern Marianas College, and the Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation Services, administered by the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation under the Governor for program year 2022.



WAIVER

No waivers were requested by the CNMI Department of Labor Workforce Investment Agency for Performance Year 2022.

EFFECTIVENESS OF SERVING EMPLOYERS

In our ongoing efforts to enhance our service delivery system for business customers, the CNMI's core programs continue to actively participate in the Effectiveness in Serving Employers pilot, reaffirming our commitment to evaluating employer engagement activities. We maintain our focus on assessing the metrics established by USDOL, specifically focusing on the approaches to Employer Penetration and Repeat Business Customers.

We concluded the program year with a 28.0% rate for the metric Employer Penetration and 65.9% in Repeat Business Customers. Collectively, the core programs reached a total of 172 businesses or employers across the CNMI's three populated islands - Saipan, Tinian, and Rota - an increase of twenty-eight (28) businesses from the previous year.

As we conclude the program year, the results of our unwavering commitments to improving the service delivery strategies for business customers through the pilot are evident. These achievements underscore the effectiveness of our tailored approaches and the dedication to foster lasting partnerships with the business community.

The CNMI's WIOA Core Partners comprised of the Titles I, II, and IV participated in the Effectiveness In Serving Employers indicator pilot for Program Year 2021. Continued efforts were performed during Performance Year 2022 through mutual understanding, group sessions, and professional developments.

STATE: Northern Marianas		PROGRAM YEAR: 2022	Certified in WIPS: 10/4/2023 12:46 A
PERIOD COVERED			
From (mm/dd/yyyy) : 7/1/2022 8:00 AM EDT		To (mm/dd/yyyy) : 6/30/2023 8:00 AM EDT	
REPORTING AGENCY:			
EFFECTIVENESS SERVING EMPLOYERS			
Employer Services		Establishment Count	
Employer Information and Support Services		172	
Workforce Recruitment Assistance		116	
Engaged in Strategic Planning/Economic Development		98	
Accessing Untapped Labor Pools		91	
Training Services		145	
Incumbent Worker Training Services		84	
Rapid Response/Business Downsizing Assistance		27	
Planning Layoff Response		28	
Pilot Approaches		Numerator	Rate
Retention with Same Employer in the 2nd and 4th Quarters After Exit Rate		Denominator	
Employer Penetration Rate		172	28.0%
		615	
Repeat Business Customers Rate		172	65.9%
		261	
State Established Measure			

The CNMI Workforce Investment Agency actively forges relationships with businesses across diverse sectors, emphasizing the significance of establishing a statewide network. This comprehensive network includes WIOA Title I Core partners, various government agencies, non-governmental organizations, the CNMI Public School System, Northern Marianas College, industry sector organizations, and entities directly or indirectly involved in workforce development.

Our outreach initiatives and business engagements employ a multifaceted approach. A major part of our outreach involves information tables at partner meetings, conferences, and special events, where our dedicated staff disseminates program details, distributes brochures and applications, and assists individuals in the application process. We extend community resources, such as those from CNMI Nutrition Assistance Program, CNMI Scholarship Office, and CNMI Medicaid Office. A contemporary outreach approach involves leveraging our social media platforms, resulting in increased engagement and inquiries.

Similarly, our business engagements encompass both direct and indirect methods. Direct approaches involve reaching out to different businesses to arrange presentation meetings or responding to business/employer requests. Presentations provide comprehensive WIOA Title I program information, discuss specific workforce needs, and align programs accordingly. Post-meeting, recap emails and work-based training sponsor applications are sent, followed by a strategic series of follow-up emails over a month. Indirect business engagements often involve larger audiences, with presentations conducted during organizations' monthly membership meetings, such as the Saipan Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club of Saipan, and the Society for Human Resources Management. These organizations serve as crucial intermediaries between our agency and businesses.

Moreover, direct referrals from our network of partners contribute to business engagements. For instance, the Division of Youth Services sends clients seeking training and employment opportunities to our office. Collaboration with the Drug Court System provides resources for participants engaging in various programs related to basic career services, continuing education, and community resources like NAP or Medicaid.

We also prioritize providing training and workshops to our partners, aiming to equip them with essential information about our programs and services, fostering ongoing referrals. Workshops occur as needed, providing updates on services or introducing new initiatives. An exemplary joint professional development training with a core partner, the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, underscores our commitment to aligning services, streamlining processes, and avoiding service duplicates, ensuring mutual support and collaboration.

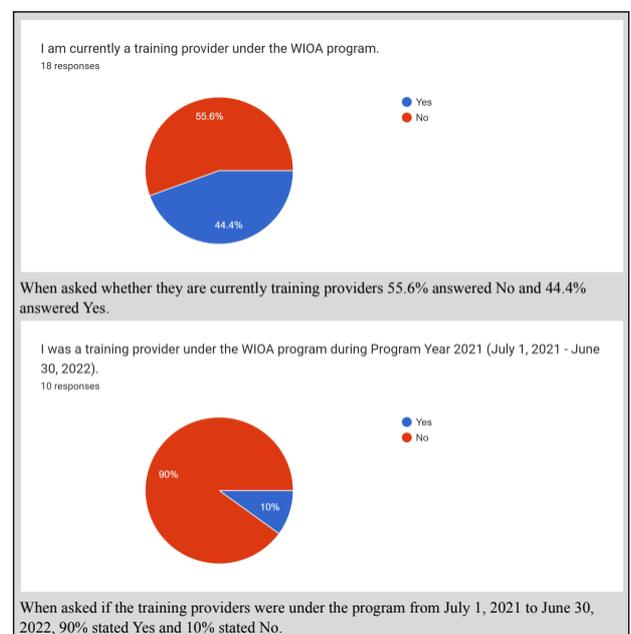
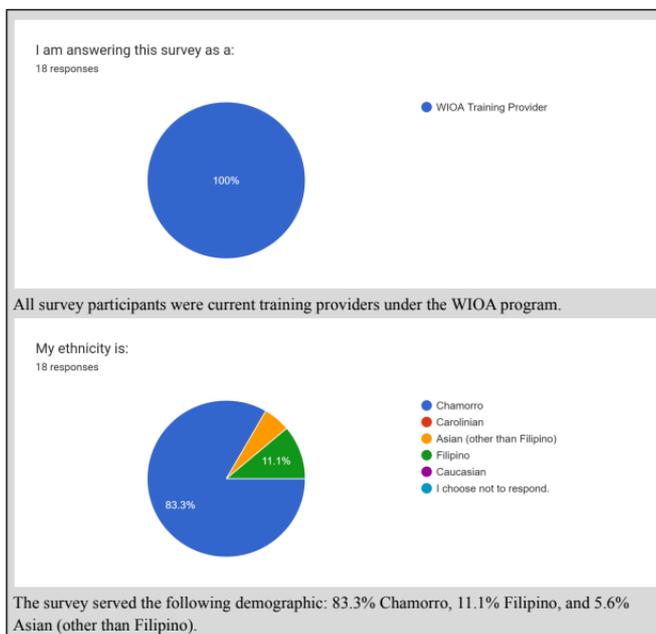
EVALUATION AND RESEARCH

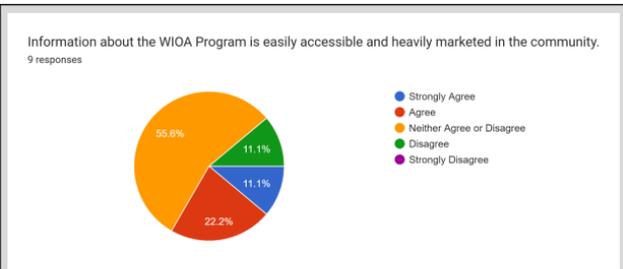
The University of Guam's Public Administration Graduate Program Saipan Cohort, in collaboration with the CNMI's State Workforce Development Board and the WIOA Title I program administrator, has initiated an evaluation study under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I Program. Mandated by WIOA, this study assesses the efficiency and impact of Title I core program activities to optimize federal funds. Focused on continuous improvement, the evaluation specifically examines the effectiveness of WIOA business services in influencing employment hiring and retention, especially within work-based training programs.

The study evaluates the WIOA business customer base during Program Year 2021 (July 01, 2021 - June 30, 2022) in Saipan, Rota, and Tinian. It covers all Title I programs, including Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs.

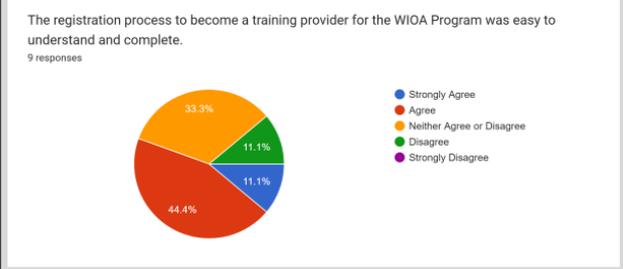
An evaluation of WIOA's Title I core program activities is crucial to measure federal funding efficiency and effectiveness for continuous improvement. The impact study assesses the effectiveness of WIOA Business Services, comparing the impacts on employment hiring and retention between employers engaging in work-based training programs and those not receiving WIOA services. A supplemental survey gauges awareness of WIOA services and explores potential partnerships for building a skilled workforce and reducing turnover. This comprehensive approach provides insights into the broader impact and potential enhancements of the WIOA Title I program activities.

The survey was distributed to WIOA training providers and businesses that attended WIOA outreach presentations. Below are the results of this study.

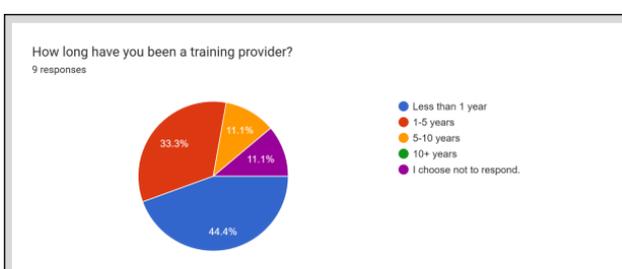




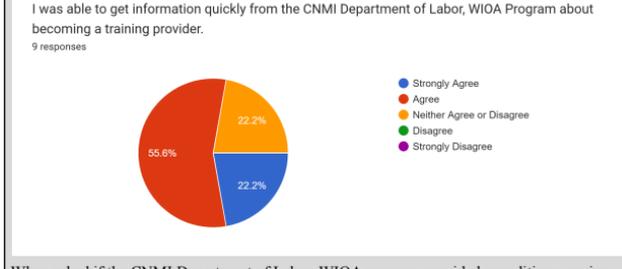
When asked if information about the WIOA program was easily accessible and heavily marketed within the community, 55.6% of respondents answered Neither Agree nor Disagree; 22.2% of respondents Agree; 11.1% of respondents Strongly Agree; and 11.1% Disagree.



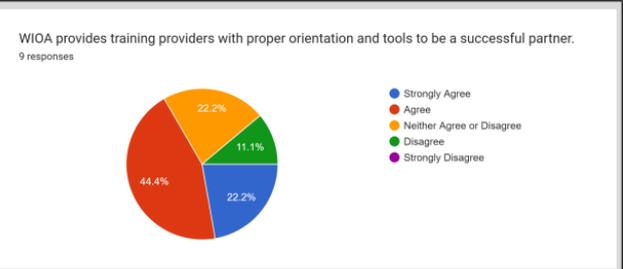
When asked if the WIOA program's registration process to become a training provider was easy to understand and complete, 44.4% respondents answered Agree; 33.3% Neither Agree or Disagree; 11.1% Disagree; 11.1% Strongly Agree.



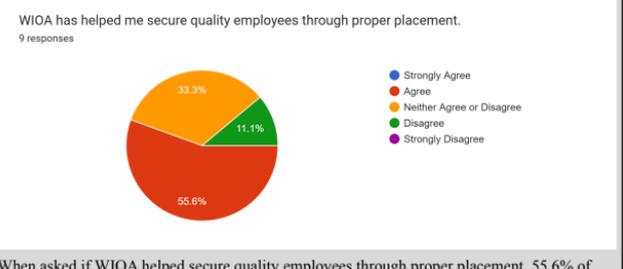
When asked how long they were training providers, 44.4% answered Less than 1 year, 33.3% answered 1-5 years, 11.1% answered 5-10 years and 11.1% chose not to respond.



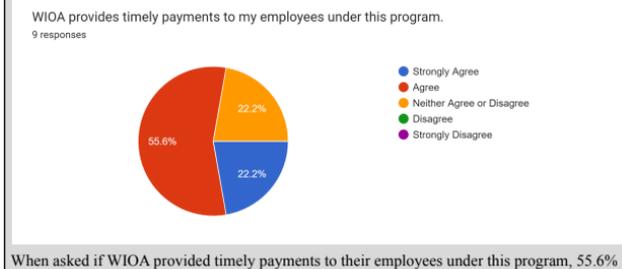
When asked if the CNMI Department of Labor, WIOA program provided expeditious service in providing information regarding the program, 55.6% of respondents Agree, 22.2% Strongly Agree, and 22.2% responded Neither Agree nor Disagree.



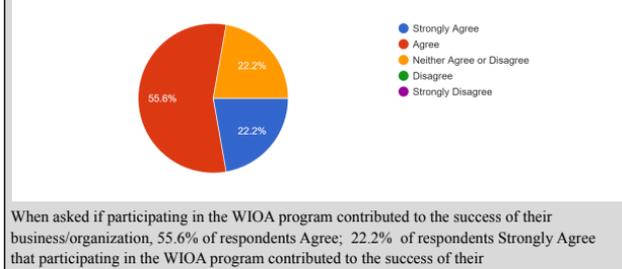
When asked if WIOA provided training providers with proper orientation and tools to be a successful partner, 44.4% of respondents Agree; 22.2% Neither Agree or Disagree; 22.2% Strongly Agree; and 11.1% of respondents Disagree.



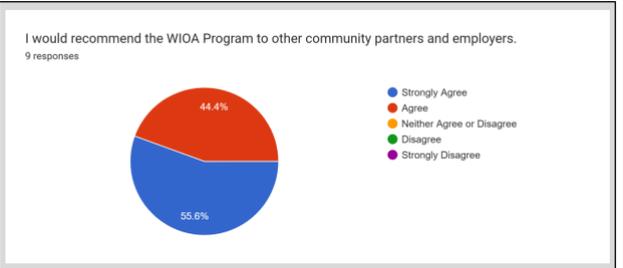
When asked if WIOA helped secure quality employees through proper placement, 55.6% of respondents Agree; 33.3% Neither Agree or Disagree; and 11.1% of respondents Disagree.



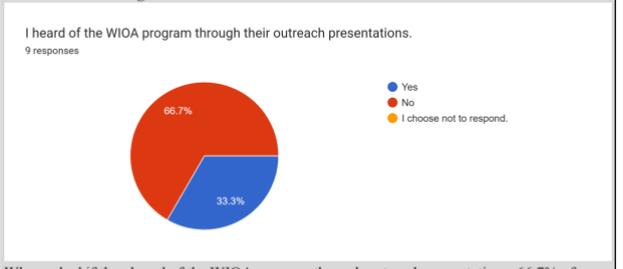
When asked if WIOA provided timely payments to their employees under this program, 55.6% of respondents Agree; 22.2% Neither Agree or Disagree; and 22.2% Strongly Agree.



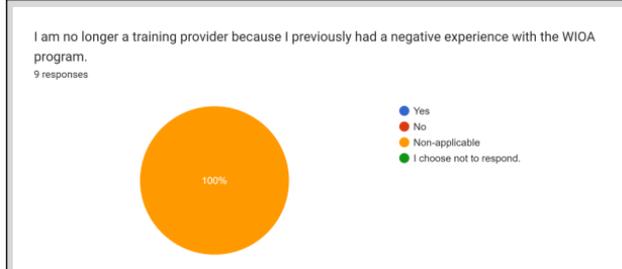
When asked if participating in the WIOA program contributed to the success of their business/organization, 55.6% of respondents Agree; 22.2% of respondents Strongly Agree that participating in the WIOA program contributed to the success of their business/organization; and 22.2% of respondents Neither Agree or Disagree that participating in the WIOA program contributed to the success of their business/organization.



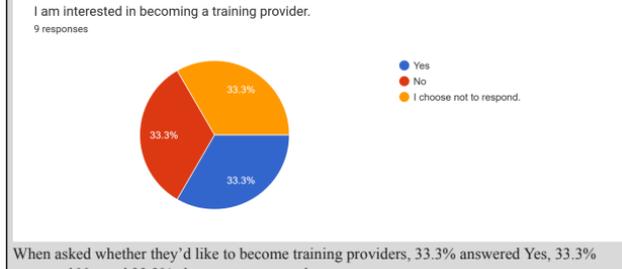
When asked if they would recommend the WIOA Program to other community partners and employers, 44.4% of respondents Agree; and 55.6% Strongly Agree.



When asked if they heard of the WIOA program through outreach presentations, 66.7% of respondents stated No; and 33.3% of respondents state Yes, they have heard of the WIOA program through their outreach presentations.



When asked if they were no longer a WIOA training provider because of previous negative experiences, 100% of the respondents stated that this question was Not Applicable to them.



When asked whether they'd like to become training providers, 33.3% answered Yes, 33.3% answered No, and 33.3% chose not to respond.

The study provided the following recommendations and conclusion:

Recommendations

- If there are no personnel onboard the WIOA agency to conduct the survey, the identified budget could be used to contract a certified, unbiased third-party consultant to design, conduct, analyze and present the data to the governing board or party of the WIOA program
- Throughout the process of contacting the training providers, the cohort observed that some participants did not recognize they were part of the program. The cohort is unsure of how this could be possible, but to help mitigate confusion or miscommunication, the cohort respectfully recommends conducting regular check-ins with registered participants of the program to see how services are being provided and to open lines of communication between the WIOA agency and the training participants. This will also allow for more feedback from both parties on how they can improve services.
- The cohort is not familiar with the budget constraints of the program or that any exists; however, the cohort respectfully recommends conducting public outreach activities to increase awareness within the community specifically, the business community, so that they are made visible to employers who need financial employment assistance to help with their day-to-day operations with their businesses.
- The cohort recommends a possible rebrand of the agency to keep up with the times in an effort to stay relevant within the Commonwealth.
- The cohort also respectfully recommends that WIOA put together a living workbook subject to ongoing revision that will list and detail the different types of training available for those seeking assistance from the WIOA program. This could easily be done by requesting from various training providers a summary of what types of training trainees may expect if they were to participate in the WIOA program under their organization/company. This will offer insight into what types of services may be made available and paint a clearer picture of what exactly the trainee will be trained on when signing up for that particular company.
- Likewise, the WIOA program coordinators can be provided access to the types of training each organization offers to conduct better placement increasing program satisfaction between trainee and trainer.
- Evaluations are often an overlooked process in an organization. Oftentimes, evaluations help save an organization when key repeated factors of failure and even success are brought to light. Evaluations are what help an organization improve services and is what can make or break the success of a program.
- WIOA can identify a budget to conduct evaluations on performance and output keeping in mind that the survey should be tailored to obtain a general feel on program satisfaction.
- And finally, the cohort recommends maintaining current data within the WIOA program to keep the information as accurate as possible. This is especially important during audit processes and in ensuring that the correct information is provided to those conducting oversight on the program for compliance.
- Maintenance of accurate data is also important to maintain the efficacy of the program so that maximum output of performance is realized during the duration of the existence of the WIOA program.

Conclusion

“The WIOA program benefits both industry professionals as well as individuals who are looking to join the workforce. This study provided significant findings including data to assist in providing information to better support the program as a whole. In a professional capacity, training providers will be able to identify the different skill sets necessary for each specific job function in their company. Upon assessment of the needs regarding positions and job placement in their company, training providers will have a better understanding of what type of individuals with particular skills could be the best fit for that position. Once an individual has been identified for a position, trainers will be able to help them succeed in the position by offering hands-on training to hopefully employ the trainee to a more permanent role within the company.”

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

The CNMI Title I program consistently utilizes the HireMarianas Virtual One Stop (VOS) to assess customer satisfaction. Following successful registration, both individual jobseekers and businesses on the platform receive a survey sent to their recorded email addresses. This survey is designed to gather feedback on several key aspects, such as user type, purpose of use, ease of access and comprehension, individual needs, and the overall experience with the VOS.

In the initial phases of organizing the Skillup CNMI project, we have integrated a survey for participants attending the scheduled Expo events from July through August. Our plans encompass community outreach events strategically located in four Saipan locations, and one each for the islands of Tinian and Rota. The surveys distributed during these events are designed to gather valuable data, including attendee satisfaction levels, projected career goals and interests, and overall feedback on the quality of customer service provided. These surveys will play a pivotal role in refining and tailoring our project strategies to better meet the needs and aspirations of our participants.

Moreover, there is a proposal to introduce a survey for customers to complete during application intake, after assessment, and upon program exit, further enhancing the program's ability to gather valuable insights at various stages of engagement.



PROGRESS TOWARDS STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS

The CNMI's SWDB together with the Core Programs, remain steadfast in their vision:

"to integrate a seamless workforce development system that meets the needs of employers, job seekers, workers, and youths in order to supply quality employees for the dynamic economy of the CNMI."

Furthermore, the CNMI's SWDB's mission is:

"Empowering, integrating, implementing, and innovating the workforce needs of the CNMI"

In the current program year, following the submission of modifications to the Unified State Plan by the CNMI's SWDB, the newly constituted board is actively reinforcing its position. This effort involves incorporating updates to enhance the goals for continuous improvement within the workforce system. The overarching objective is to augment the pipeline of skilled workers and align the system with the evolving needs of employers, thereby fostering economic growth and promoting economic self-sufficiency. The fundamental goals of the SWDB have been retained and are outlined below:

Goal 1: Strengthen the collaboration of the workforce development system for the expansion of a comprehensive, integrated, effective, and streamlined service delivery system.

Goal 2: Enhance Business Service strategies to increase strategic partnerships and engagement to develop customized services that aligns with the present-day economy across programs of the workforce development system.

Goal 3: Integrate an innovative customer-centered service delivery model focused on the customer's job-driven occupational and training needs that includes enhanced supportive services to address barriers that may impede participation.

Goal 4: Increase the skills of jobseekers for high-quality jobs and careers in demand-driven industries that align with the workforce needs of employers that lead to employment, reemployment, and retention.

As previously mentioned, the State Workforce Development Board welcomed new members as a result of the CNMI Government's new administration. Along with this change, was the reorganization of the core programs.

The following activities were conducted to meet each of the goals set by the board.

1. Met with Northern Marianas Technical Institute and the Guam Contractor's Association to entice the construction industry/businesses to avail of services and resources provided including a Registered Apprenticeship Program to strengthen and expand its current workforce.
2. Collaboration meeting with the Disability Network Partners to enhance the delivery of services across all of their audience. Included in this network is one of our core partner, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation.
3. Marketing strategies meeting with Northern Marianas College, State Apprenticeship Expansion Program to invite more RAP sponsors and apprentice candidates.
4. Outreach presentation at the Saipan Chamber of Commerce: The Saipan Chamber of Commerce is comprised of different businesses from various industry sectors.
5. Attended the Hawaii Convening with Federal partners for technical assistance and updates with current grant activities.
6. Conducted various business engagement meetings from each priority industry.
7. Apprenticeship State Expansion Program Manager attended the Association Career and Technical Education Vision Conference in Las Vegas to enhance partnership with the CTE program leading individuals to a career pathway that includes a registered apprenticeship program.
8. Participated in the National Apprenticeship Week activities highlighting our current RAP sponsors and apprentices.
9. Participated in the Northern Marianas College Spring 2023 Community Resource Fair.
10. Joint OVR and WIA Outreach presentations on the islands of Tinian and Rota.
11. Hosted a field trip event for Marianas High School students: Students were provided an orientation of WIOA Programs, including Hawaii and Maui Job Corps.
12. Strategic Planning meeting with Northern Marianas Technical Institute.
13. Meeting with Department of Public Safety to plan for the creation of a new academy.
14. Reorganization of SWDB and core programs.

PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY

Goal

Our overarching goal is to not only meet but rather exceed our negotiated performance targets across all programs. To achieve this goal, we recognize the need to conduct a comprehensive analysis to identify the underlying causes of our shortcomings, provide targeted training to build capacity; develop a robust monitoring and evaluation procedure while allowing for open communication and feedback, and identifying best practices to achieve our goals.

WIOA Primary Indicators of Performance

Amidst the economic challenges triggered by the global pandemic, the CNMI's WIOA Title I programs not only withstood but also surpassed the approved negotiated targets in the following established indicators of performance:

Title I Adult Program - Entered Employment 2nd Quarter After Exit; Entered Employment 4th Quarter After Exit; Median Earning; and Measurable Skill Gains.

Title I Dislocated Worker Program - Entered Employment 2nd Quarter After Exit; Entered Employment 4th Quarter After Exit; Median Earning; and Measurable Skill Gains.

Title I Youth Program - Entered Employment 2nd Quarter After Exit and Median Earnings.

The CNMI failed short of the expected benchmarks across all programs in the indicator Credential Attainment along with the Entered Employment 4th Quarter After Exit and Measurable Skill Gains for the Title I Youth program.

Common Exit Policy

The CNMI's Common Exit Policy, collaboratively developed with the SWDB Policy Committee, comes into play when a participant enrolled in multiple DOL WIA-administered partner programs has not received services from any applicable DOL WIA-administered program for a continuous period of at least 90 days, and no future participant-level services are scheduled.

For a "common exit" to take effect, a participant receiving concurrent services from the partner programs listed below must complete participant services from all co-enrolled programs. The auto-exit date is determined by the most recent qualifying participant-level service end date when a participant receives services from multiple programs. It's important to note that follow-up services, self-service, and informational-only services provided to participants do not extend the exit date.

This common exit policy applies to participants co-enrolled in the following DOL-WIA administered programs utilizing the same Management Information System or MIS:

1. WIOA Adult Program;
2. WIOA Dislocated Worker Program;
3. WIOA Youth Program; and
4. National Dislocated Worker Grant Programs
5. Apprenticeship State Expansion

The Common Exit Policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure our policy is current with the governing federal requirements.

Negotiated Performance Targets

Following thorough and comprehensive discussions with designated USDOL personnel, program administrators, and staff, the agreed-upon performance levels for Program Year 2022 are outlined below:

WIOA Title 1 - Adult	PY2022
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit	52.6%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit	50.0%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after Exit	\$4,200
Credential Attainment Rate	80.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	75.9%

WIOA Title 1 - Dislocated Worker Program	PY2022
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit	50.0%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit	50.0%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after Exit	\$4,200
Credential Attainment Rate	66.5%
Measurable Skill Gains	71.4%

WIOA Title 1 - Youth	PY2022
Education and Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit	57.8%
Education and Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit	50.0%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after Exit	\$4,000
Credential Attainment Rate	66.6%
Measurable Skill Gains	70.0%

Despite the economic impacts stemming from the pandemic, the agreed performance levels in Program Year 2022 for the WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs were increased from the previous year. These negotiated levels serve as a benchmark for our programs, providing a framework for assessing and enhancing our effectiveness.

Data Validation and Integrity

To ensure the integrity and quality of our data, the Workforce Investment Agency Division has instituted procedures for designated program staff to examine all active and exited participant records. This entails a complete review upon eligibility and individualized career services to identify the appropriate services that aligns with the participants goals.

For the purposes of the data element validation, a random sampling of 50% of active participant and exiter records are selected for quality assurance on the accuracy, validity, and reliability of the required data element validation. A pass/error ratio below a 5% reporting error is considered a pass and anything above a 5% error rate is a fail.

The table below offers a summary of each program category's average, median, highest, and lowest scores.

	Adult Served	Adult Exit	DW Served	DW Exit	Youth Served	Youth Exited	TOTAL AVERAGE
Average	98%	98%	97%	95%	98%	98%	97%
Median	99%	99%	100%	95%	98%	98%	98%
Highest Score	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Lowest Score	95%	95%	90%	90%	96%	95%	94%

In accordance with our approved Data Validation Policy, a passing score is set at 95% or higher. Allowable source documents for various Data Elements include an electronic record, self-attestation or credible records to substantiate the element. Although some data elements could be satisfied with the electronic record, it is essential to our program continuity that electronic records be hard-filed to guarantee the alignment of services, dates, and documents between physical files and VOS are mirrored. This measure ensures that all participant activity is accurately reflected in both physical and virtual records. If there is a discrepancy between hard files and participant VOS records for a specific element number, a "fail" is given to the data element number.

Assigned Case Managers were given notification when their assigned participant record scored lower than 95%. The notification, lists the participant's WIOA Application Number, User ID, failed elements, and instructions on how to rectify the element (if possible). Opportunity is given to Case Managers to satisfy the failed element if documentation or justification can be provided before certification of the respective quarter. To this avoidance, the Career Services Team may also generate a "soon to exit" report, which identifies if any further action is needed before a premature soft exit; reducing unwanted and unnecessary soft exits.

Data Validation - continued

Certain elements not relevant to the Territory or Program were excluded from the overall scoring during data validation of participant records. The participant data validation score was determined by dividing the total number of "passing" elements (numerator) by the total number of "applicable" elements (denominator). For instance, data element number 600, pertaining to "Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)," was excluded from the denominator as the CNMI does not participate in that program.

In good practice, maintaining regular quarterly reviews, training and monitoring will increase the achievement of performance target goals. The Career Services Team may also generate "soon to exit" reports, which identify if any further action is needed before a premature soft exit. This sharing of reports helps mitigate premature or unnecessary soft exits. The review of case files requires scheduled blackout periods to ensure advance notice to Program Staff and timely completion. To this effort, the 15th of the second month of each quarter. If modifications or amendments are necessary, Program staff must email their requests with justifications. These emails will be jointly reviewed by the Director and Program Coordinator to determine the appropriate course of action that aligns with the federal records retention policy. These established conditions provide checks and balances for any amendment requests.

Statewide Activities



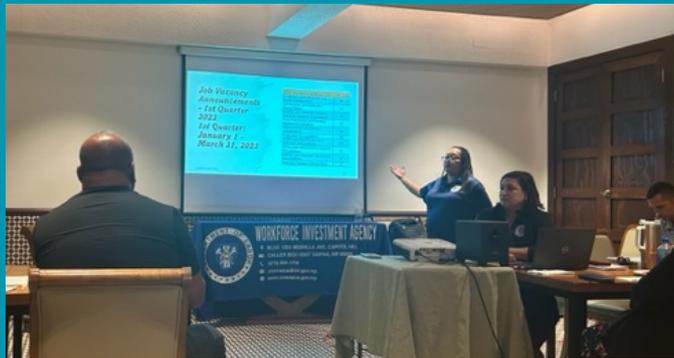
National Disability Awareness Month: DNP statistics meeting



Workforce Investment Agency
National Disability Awareness Month Outreach



Rotary Club of Saipan monthly membership meeting



Professional Development with Core Partner, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation



NMTECH Graduation: Current apprentice receiving her level 1 electrical certificate



Presentation at NMTECH with Guam Contractor's Association

Sector Strategies and Career Pathways

Sector partnerships remains a priority of the CNMI's workforce system to ensure we meet existing and future needs of employers and jobseekers. Registered apprenticeships (RA) has been the driving force in engagements with business networks to promote customized sector strategies and career pathways to meet their respective workforce needs.



The CNMI remains driven to actively recruit employers and enlist incumbent and prospective workers into an RA through participation in outreach events and individualized meetings targeting businesses in demand driven industries that include Construction and Maintenance; Related Hospitality Industry Sectors; Food Service Industry; Allied Health and Safety; Management and Accounting; and Information Technology.

In the current program year, the CNMI Registered Apprenticeship Program is actively expanding its influence through strategic engagements with employers. The primary goal is to collaboratively establish policies and innovative hiring strategies that seamlessly integrate registered apprenticeship programs. Notably, a partnership with Northern Marianas College's State Apprenticeship Expansion Program marked National Apprenticeship Week with a series of activities, including impactful marketing campaigns, radio and TV advertisements. The celebrations also featured a radio interview with two local stations and a video showcasing some of our current Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) sponsors and apprentices.

Furthermore, as part of the broader framework of WIOA Title I programs, an integrated pre-apprenticeship initiative has been introduced to amplify and nurture registered apprenticeship programs across all demand-driven industries. This multi-faceted approach underscores our commitment to fostering robust apprenticeship opportunities and ensuring a skilled workforce that aligns with the evolving needs of industries.

To foster sector partnerships and delineate career pathways, various strategies have been implemented. These include providing work-based learning opportunities such as work experience and internships, transitional jobs, customized training, incumbent worker training, and on-the-job training.

Governors Statewide Reserve

Of the fifteen percent of the Governor's set aside, five percent is reserved for costs of administration of the Title I WIOA programs. The remaining ten percent is used for associated expenditures in continuous improvement activities, pilot programs such as the development of pre-apprenticeship programs, dissemination of information through websites and information systems on the training services such as the ETPL, performance, supportive services, ect. This is inclusive of participation in Career Fairs, Joint Partner Outreaches, Financial Aid Clinics and Industry specific Membership Meetings that fostered great connections with both Job Seekers and Employers.

These engagements have led to the recruitment of Participants and leads to new and returning Training Partnerships. A collaborative approach in providing Joint Outreach with our one of Core Partners the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation has created more accessibility to participants with barriers, better communication regarding mutual consumers and leveraging of resources.

Outreach or exhibits at Training Provider Scholarship Clinics has also provided opportunities for financially strapped individuals to get one-on-one assistance with applications, navigation of the scholarship process and access to support services from our Program. These outreach events create a supportive environment where financially challenged individuals can receive personalized guidance, answer specific questions, and receive valuable insights tailored to their unique circumstances. The one-on-one assistance goes beyond mere information dissemination; it demystifies the process by creating a clearer understanding of eligibility criteria, requirements, and the overall scholarship landscape. In essence, these outreaches and exhibits become catalysts for breaking down financial barriers to education by providing direct, hands-on support to those who need it the most.

Customized presentations for industry specific organizations have developed increased understanding of workforce development opportunities, tailored training strategies, and proactive approaches to their dynamic challenges and needs. For Program Year (PY) 2022, the CNMI actively engaged in a total of seventy-one (71) events, which significantly influenced participant recruitment, the establishment of returning work-based training partnerships, and the onboarding of new training providers. Our outreach efforts nearly doubled compared to PY 2021, during which we provided a more modest outreach of thirty-seven (37) engagements. In PY 2022, we also observed a fifty percent (50%) increase of approved Work Based Training (WBT) Sponsors and forty-nine (49) Trainee Participants transitioned to employment with the WBT Sponsor or obtained external job placement. The upsurge in engagement opportunities can be attributed to the easing of COVID-19 health measures, exodus of CNMI-Only Transitional Workers (CW1), and migrant workforce both indigenous & non-indigenous.

Rapid Response

In response to the unprecedented challenges posed by the pandemic, our Rapid Response activities have been instrumental in mitigating the impact on both companies and individuals across all industries and sectors. We reached over a hundred businesses within the private for profit sector, the non-profit sector, or the public sector during this reporting period. The Effectiveness in Serving Employers section provides full details on our Rapid Response activities for Program Year 2022.

At the CNMI's career center, we have designed and implemented seamless processes to link individuals to all available programs and services. Our management information system (HireMarianas) is designed to determine eligibility across all programs for co-enrollment, providing eligible individuals optimizing access to an array of services to achieve their full potential towards their desired career goals. We continuously aim to establish a continuum of services, enabling individuals to effortlessly transition from one program to another for their successful reintegration into the workforce.

In our comprehensive approach to rapid response and layoff aversion strategies, we prioritize the development and tracking of key metrics and outcomes that showcase the efficacy and economic benefits of our Rapid Response initiatives. Our focus extends beyond the immediate goal of preventing layoffs, aiming to measure the long-term impact on workforce stability, economic resilience, and return on investment. We utilized the USDOL established metrics to measure Effectiveness in Serving Employers and the Primary Indicators of Performance for the Dislocated Worker Program. These metrics not only quantify the success of our layoff aversion strategies but also underscore the broader positive impact on both employers and employees, contributing to the overall economic health and vitality of our community.

A strategy that we continue to promote is the "Upskill Backfill Model" offered through a culmination of work-based learning strategies such as Registered Apprenticeships, On-the-Job Training for incumbent workers and Work Experience or Internships and Transitional Jobs for new entrants or returning jobseekers. Employers will have access to a host of resources to support the training needs to retool the skills of incumbent workers for high-quality jobs while averting layoffs and providing opportunities to backfill vacated positions with new entrants to the workforce or transitional jobseekers.

Our Rapid Response and layoff aversion activities are seamlessly aligned with our broader business engagement, sector strategy, and career pathway efforts. We have implemented robust systems, tools, and networks designed to proactively identify companies in distress, ensuring that we deliver necessary solutions as early as possible. These initiatives not only facilitate early intervention but also contribute to the equitable access of services for all. We strive to provide comprehensive and transparent information about the array of services available at the career center. This approach fosters equity, accessibility and inclusivity, ensuring that businesses and individuals, regardless of their circumstances, can benefit from the full spectrum of services and support offered.

National Dislocated Worker

The CNMI remains actively engaged in administering and executing the National Dislocated Worker Grant to address the economic repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic. This grant facilitates the provision of disaster-relief temporary employment and supportive services for eligible individuals, aiming to mitigate the adverse employment and economic effects of the disaster. Priority is accorded to individuals whose employment was directly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, in alignment with established federal and local policies and subsequent eligibility criteria.

WIPS certified Program to Date data as of quarter ending 06/30/2023 reported one hundred seventy-six (176) individuals served. Accordingly, three (3) individuals were placed in a disaster relief temporary employment. Individuals that meet eligibility as a dislocated worker, as defined in WIOA, are co-enrolled in WIOA Title I and may receive expanded career services to support their education, employment, training, and support services needs to enhance their employability not otherwise supported by the NDWG grant.

WIOA ETA 9173 Quarterly Report

PIRL File Type: PIRL by Program
 Program: Adult
 LWDB: Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI)
 Office: Department of Labor-WIA Division
 Grant Type: National DW Grant (NDWG)
 Report Period: 4th Quarter 2022
 Quarter Type: Rolling 4 Quarters

Performance Items	Basic Career Services (other than self service)	Individualized Career Services	Training Services	Total Current Period	Total Previous Period
A. SUMMARY INFORMATION					
1. Total Exiters (Cohort Period: 4/1/2022 - 3/31/2023)	<u>2</u>	<u>54</u>	<u>42</u>	<u>98</u>	<u>95</u>
2. Total Participants Served (Cohort Period: 7/1/2022 - 6/30/2023)	<u>2</u>	<u>93</u>	<u>80</u>	<u>176</u>	<u>163</u>
3. Total Reportable Individuals (Cohort Period: 7/1/2022 - 6/30/2023)	-	-	-	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

PROMISING PRACTICES, LESSONS LEARNED, AND SUCCESS STORIES

The innovative model, “Upskill, Backfill,” represents a promising approach to addressing the evolving demands of the present and future job market in the CNMI. In this model, it focuses on both upskilling the existing workforce and strategically backfilling critical positions within industries and sectors. Simultaneously, the Workforce Investment Agency collaborates closely with employers to identify specific skills gaps and develop initiatives to train new hires or existing staff to meet those needs. This dual-pronged approach strategy not only supports individual career growth but also contributes to the overall resilience and competitiveness of the workforce, aligning skill development with the requirements of industries. The “Upskill, Backfill” model showcases a forward-thinking approach that emphasizes continuous learning, industry collaboration, and strategic workforce planning.

In its impact, the global pandemic has been a force that transformed how we work. It made us rethink how important it is to be adaptive and resilient. Remote work became a necessity, prompting a reassessment of traditional office structures as well as service delivery systems. Digital literacy and the need for technological infrastructures is now necessary to support remote collaboration for individuals and businesses to access workforce services. Amid the multi-faceted challenges, there lies a silver lining - an opportunity for innovative approaches to work, service delivery, and collaboration underscoring a critical lesson for innovation in addressing the evolving needs of the broad landscape of the workforce system.

SUCCESS STORIES

This section highlights the successful partnerships with our business customer and participants. Participants featured received WIOA Title I training activities that lead to their gainful employment and/or credential attainment:

David Mafnas - Youth

I was a little anxious to be in a new setting when I began this WIA program with Priority Care, but I was also eager to advance in the career I wanted. This program was a huge assistance for me because before I knew about WIOA, I was interested in the DFEMS Fire Academy, which had to be canceled due to tragic circumstances. With the WIA program, I was able to advance my knowledge, abilities, and experience as an EMT while pursuing the field I am passionate about. Being a fast-paced sailing course, the training was challenging to begin with, but we are grateful for the curriculum and instructors. This course gave me the knowledge I needed to become an EMT.



Justice Aldan - Adult

During my first month in training, I ran into several challenges, such as having to arrive early and learning the typical routes taken to our patient's homes. However, after my first and second months, I started to manage my time more effectively and I began memorizing the routes to our patients. I started looking more into medical fields after training to become more knowledgeable about medicine. Although I first struggled, I can now claim that the training has helped me mature and learn more about the medical industry while also helping me comprehend my job better. I've already attended two emergency calls during my training, which has also helped me gain new perspectives in life. The WIOA program has helped me in numerous ways, especially as someone just starting a career after high school.

Steve King - Youth

My abilities as an emergency medical technician have improved so far in this work. I now understand the various components of our body and how they function. I'm grateful that I had the opportunity to participate in the WIA program since it helped me land this job. It had a profound effect on my life and improved who I am as a person and as a father. I wasn't doing anything before this program, to be honest. I was simply looking for a solid, stable career when the WIA program helped me locate one.

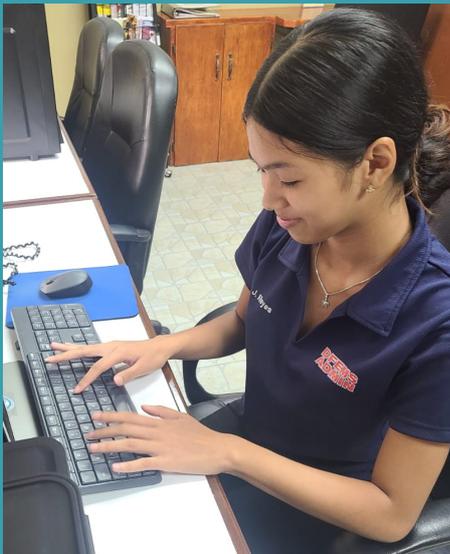


Estefania M. Reyes - Adult

I first began my journey as an Administrative Assistant trainee within the Department of Fire and EMS under the WIA Program. I received training services such as clerical duties that involved filing of documents, assisting clients within the intake office, understanding the roles and duties within the chain of command, assisted with the routing of documents for travel and time keeping for EMS personnel, learned about the data processing specifically for EMS and provided additional assistance pertaining to my duties as an Administrative Assistant within the EMS office when needed. Since the transition



from being a WIA-Trainee within the Department of Fire and EMS, I have gained several skills and acquired a great deal of knowledge within the last seven months. In addition, I was afforded the opportunity to travel alongside several other EMSC personnel to the state of Nevada, namely Reno, to meet with and understand the vital roles that our EMSC key partners play within the EMSC state partnership program. Lastly, I would like to thank my caseworker's Donyale Deleon Guerrero and Jackie Castro and the rest of the WIA team for their services and hard work that contributed to my success within the Department of Fire and EMS.



Jessie Rae Reyes - Youth

I am currently a Clerk II at the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical services. Overall, my experience in the work field has been remarkable. If it weren't for being a WIA-Trainee in the beginning, I would have never made it this far with becoming a Civil Service employee here at the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services. Since the process of being transitioned, I am confident to say that I have gained many skills and experiences that benefit me now and in the near future. I was able to attend different trainings and gain knowledge about different topics such as etiquette, leadership teamwork, communicating, etc. Those which I am

Those which I am putting to practice every day. Although, the work field could be overwhelming at times, but I have met wonderful people throughout this journey who encourage and motivate me to be better than I was yesterday. I am grateful that I was given this opportunity, especially at this young age and straight out of high school. I continue to look forward to see what the Department brings me.

Santos, Frances Anne H. - Dislocated Worker

Frances transitioned immediately to permanent employment with the Office of the Mayor of Tinian and Agrigan as a Community Outreach Worker after the successful completion of the program. She was receiving services under the DWG COVID-19 for temporary employment from August 16, 2022, to March 31, 2023. She continues her work serving the community of Tinian in emergency management preparedness and aiding in other community events and is appreciative of the WIOA program in the opportunities that she was able to avail of at the time.



Clara Joyce Baysa - DWG

Clara participated as a Disaster Relief Employee under the DWG COVID-19 assigned to the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force. During this quarter exit, she was able to secure employment at Marianas Medical Center as a full-time front desk assistant starting on April 25, 2023, as a result to her successful work experience as a COVID-19 Logistics and Humanitarian Support Assistant in aiding recovery efforts, maintaining COVID-19 data of outbreak increases and positive cases through community and travel surveillance, and assisting quarantined facilities.

Challenges

In PY2022, the CNMI's workforce system was confronted with a range of challenges spanning policy, implementation, and other critical areas. Policy challenges were imperative to set the guidelines for the flexibilities with the Yes, WIOA Can! Initiative and the evolving landscapes of the economy and the impacts on the workforce. The recent change of administration brought about significant reorganization of the CNMI's State Workforce Development Board, which plays a vital role in the oversight of the WIOA Title I programs that include policy development.

The CNMI experienced encountered a substantial blow to its primary economic driver, Tourism, directly impacting the trajectory of economic growth during and in the aftermath of the global pandemic. The widespread travel restriction, lockdowns, and safety measures implemented to curb the pandemic had an immediate and enduring impact on the islands' hospitality, accommodation, and service industries. This unprecedented hit to the tourism sector not only crested economic challenges but also underscored the vulnerability of single-industry economies, necessitating a reassessment of the CNMI's economic diversification strategies. This island now face the imperative task of rebuilding a more resilient and diversified economy, exploring alternative avenues for sustainable growth in the post-pandemic era.

PAY FOR PERFORMANCE

The CNMI has yet to implement the WIOA provisions related to Pay for Performance.