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John Bel Edwards, Governor
Ava Dejoie, Secretary

Office of the Secretary

January 8, 2020

Mr. Nick E. Lalpui
Regional Administrator
Office of Employment and Training Administration
United States Department of Labor
525 S. Griffin Street, Room 317
Dallas, Texas 75202

Dear Administrator Lalpui,

I am pleased to submit the 2019 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Annual Report for the State of Louisiana. This report covers activities and achievements, as well as challenges, of the Louisiana Workforce Commission for the reporting period of July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020.

The past program year has shown continued workforce successes throughout the agency even in the midst of COVID-19 spreading rapidly throughout the State of Louisiana.

Louisiana has experienced record numbers as it relates to unemployment in the latter months of program year 2019. This unfortunately has left many citizens of our great state unemployed and unable to return to work. However, we are prepared to continue to build upon our statewide partnerships and continued commitment to workforce progress as a priority of Louisiana.

Louisiana met or exceeded all performance measures under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I and III programs with the exception of Credential Attainment for the youth program. We are currently working with our local areas to provide guidance and technical assistance to ensure performance improvement statewide.

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

This Annual Report provides a review of how we are implementing the strategies outlined in the WIOA Combined State Plan that are helping to prepare Louisiana workers, educators and workforce partners.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ava Dejoie", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Ava Dejoie
Secretary



Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

Annual Report

Program Year 2019



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STRATEGIC VISION

The Louisiana Workforce Investment Council (WIC), the state's workforce board, supports development of an employer-led, demand-driven workforce development system based on occupational forecasts in which training, education and services for job-seekers prepare Louisiana residents for high wage, high-demand career opportunities in Louisiana.

Louisiana's stakeholders envision a workforce system that will provide pathways for all Louisianans. Today's economic landscape and workforce is constantly changing and the demands shift on a regular basis for a growing economy. All will have access to education, training and the supportive services needed to prepare for and secure high-demand occupations that pay family-sustaining wages.

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

To achieve this, LWC set forth Strategic Goals and Objectives. The following outlines the objectives that received particular focus and contributed to success.

Goal: Establish Career Pathways as a model for skill, credential and degree attainment for Louisiana citizens to secure jobs that provide opportunities for economic independence and family stability.

The objectives for this goal in which LWC was largely successful during the 2019 program year included:

1. Louisiana Workforce Commission working in partnership with the Louisiana Board of Regents, are co-chairs of Governor Edwards' "Education and Workforce Task Force". Members include state and local workforce agencies, education, economic development, chambers, and employers. The Task Force works together to align workforce, education, and economic development activities promoting career pathway models and implementing best practices. Work includes reviewing workforce, education, and economic strategic plans, identifying employer needs and training gaps, and evaluating and providing recommendations on work-based and occupational training opportunities. These efforts support a diverse population and creates career pathways that lead to increased credential attainment and job opportunities. With the change in service delivery and advances through technology, strategies include enhancing virtual and online platforms supporting postsecondary coursework.
2. Louisiana Workforce Commission continues to engage employers, business associations, and organized labor in creating demand-driven career pathways through the Governor's initiative to expand work-based learning and apprenticeships. The Registered Apprenticeship Unit, through grant funds from the State Apprenticeship Expansion (SAE) Grant, the Apprenticeships State Expansion (ASE) Grant and the State Apprenticeship Expansion 2020 (SAE 2020) Grant, Louisiana has expanded the utilization of registered apprenticeships by increasing the number of apprentices by 14 percent statewide. Through concentrated efforts, apprenticeship programs have increased through the development and implementation of new non-traditional programs such as Apprenti Louisiana, Oceaneering International, Inc., Ochsner Clinic

Foundation, and the Alliance for Media Arts + Culture, Inc. thus expanding industry sector training for workers and meeting industry sector standards and demands.

Goal: Expand career services and opportunities for populations facing multiple barriers to close the gap in educational attainment and economic advancement through career pathways and improved career services and the expansion of bridge programs.

The objectives for this goal in which LWC was largely successful during the 2019 program year included:

1. Through a partnership with the Louisiana Department of Corrections (DOC), LWC has expanded its footprint in the delivery of integrated re-entry and employment strategies through DOC's Day Reporting Centers. Staff housed at these facilities provide WIOA and other employment and training services to formerly incarcerated individuals (justice-involved) in an effort to reduce recidivism and meet the skill and workforce needs of business and industry. Employers are able to use business supports including work-based training (On-the-Job Training and apprenticeships), Fidelity Bonding and Work Opportunity Tax Credits.

Through these efforts, using our integrated service delivery system with community and State partners, implementation of new Industry Sector relationships, quality Career and Training services, and continuous quality improvement Louisiana met or exceeded overall performance in all measures.

WIOA TITLE 1 -IV PERFORMANCE AND ACTIVITIES

Waivers

In Program Year 2019, the Louisiana Workforce Commission did not request any additional waivers related to performance.

WIOA Title I

Performance

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

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

The table below displays Louisiana's negotiated rate for each of the required indicators of performance along with the actual statewide outcomes achieved. Pursuant to federal policy, states achieving at least 90 percent of the negotiated goal are considered to have met the goal. Louisiana's PY 2018-2019 performance exceeded the federal criteria for each of the indicators of performance with the exception of Credential Attainment for the Youth program.

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WIOA Title I and Title III PY 2019 Statewide Results

	Negotiated Performance Level PY19	Statewide Performance PY19	Percent of Goal Attained
Adult			
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	64.5%	71.3%	111%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	64.4%	70.5%	109%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$4,900	\$6,095	124%
Credential Attainment	64.3%	73.1%	114%
Dislocated Worker			
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	64.3%	72.7%	113%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	67.2%	72.0%	107%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$6,800	\$7,898	116%
Credential Attainment	70.0%	77.3%	110%
Youth			
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	67.0%	71.9%	107%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	67.0%	76.6%	114%
Credential Attainment	60.2%	57.1%	95%
Wagner-Peyser			
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	61.0%	57.9%	95%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	62.7%	61.5%	98%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$4,700	\$4,835	103%

WIOA Title I and Title III PY 2019 Year-to-Year Progress

	Statewide Performance PY18	Statewide Performance PY19	Gain (Loss) PY19
Adult			
Participants Served-- Career Services	5,578	5,128	-450
Participants Served-- Training Services	2,487	2,558	71
Exiters--Career Services	4,319	4,719	400
Exiters--Training Services	1,335	1,764	429
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	68.1%	71.3%	3%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	67.6%	70.5%	3%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$6,009	\$6,095	\$86
Credential Attainment	63.2%	73.1%	10%
Dislocated Worker			
Participants Served-- Career Services	1,292	1,673	381
Participants Served-- Training Services	567	596	29
Exiters--Career Services	1,095	1,436	341
Exiters--Training Services	383	387	4
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	67.1%	72.7%	6%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	67.9%	72.0%	4%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$7,563	\$7,898	\$335
Credential Attainment	72.9%	77.3%	4%

	Statewide Performance PY18	Statewide Performance PY19	Gain (Loss) PY19
Youth			
Participants Served-- Career Services	1,879	1,961	82
Participants Served-- Training Services	563	764	201
Exiters--Career Services	898	1214	316
Exiters--Training Services	285	447	162
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	73.0%	71.9%	-1%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	72.9%	76.6%	4%
Credential Attainment	51.8%	57.1%	5%
Wagner-Peyser			
Participants Served-- Career Services	50,811	47,273	-3,538
Participants Served-- Training Services	2,545	2,809	264
Exiters--Career Services	47,427	46,624	-803
Exiters--Training Services	1,441	1,889	448
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	61.4%	57.9%	-4%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	62.5%	61.5%	-1%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$5,119	\$4,835	(\$284)

Local Performance

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

WIOA Title I and Title III PY 2019 Local Workforce Development Area Results

Measure	State Goal	# LWDBs Achieving Goal	% of LWDBs Achieving Goal
Adult			
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	64.5%	15 of 15	100.0%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	64.4%	15 of 15	100.0%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$4,900	15 of 15	100.0%
Credential Attainment Rate	64.3%	13 of 15	86.7%
Dislocated Worker			
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	64.3%	14 of 15	93.3%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	67.2%	14 of 15	93.3%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$6,800	15 of 15	100.0%
Credential Attainment Rate	70.0%	12 of 15	80.0%
Youth			
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	67.0%	14 of 15	93.3%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	67.0%	15 of 15	100.0%
Credential Attainment Rate	60.2%	10 of 15	66.7%
Wagner-Peyser			
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	61.0%	12 of 15	80.0%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	62.7%	13 of 15	86.7%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$4,700	10 of 15	66.7%

Common Exit

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

Effectiveness in Serving Employers

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

Louisiana reported an Employer Penetration Rate of 22.7% for Program Year 2019. This calculation was made by extracting the total number of employers with twenty or more employees receiving at least one of a set of core categories of services, including job positing, employer based training, resume search, labor market information, incumbent worker training, seminars & workshops, and apprenticeships divided by the number of employers in Louisiana with twenty or more employees, based on our Labor Market Information data. We chose this threshold for total employees due to the enormity of the number of employers with fewer than twenty employees

being far less likely to hire a substantial number of new employees. Further, the rate of penetration would likely to be close to or statistically similar to zero, thus useless for analysis, had a denominator of all Louisiana employers been used. However, we have this data available if needed.

Louisiana reported a Repeat Business Customers Rate of 55.4% in Program Year 2019. The Repeat Business Customers Rate was calculated by counting number of businesses that utilized the foregoing core categories of services (for Employer Penetration Rate calculation) or any recorded employer service in our MIS system in the prior PY as the denominator. Of those in the denominator, the businesses that also received any of the mentioned core categories of services (for Employer Penetration Rate calculation) or any recorded employer services in our MIS system in PY 19 were counted as the numerator.

Cost of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Activities

During Program Year 2019, Louisiana expended \$23,936.727 on WIOA Title I Career Services and \$16,131.831 on WIOA Title I Training Services, for a total of \$40,068,558 in WIOA Title I participant service expenditures. During Program Year 2019, Louisiana expended \$6,979,626 on WIOA Title III Career Services, bringing the total expenditures for WIOA Title I and Title III participant services to \$47,048.184 in Program Year 2019.

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

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WIOA Title I and Title III Cost Summary

Cost Summary: Adult

Service	Participants Served (Cohort Period: 7/1/2019-6/30/2020)	Participants Exited (Cohort Period: 4/1/2019-3/31/2020)	Funds Expended (Cohort Period: 7/1/2019-6/30/2020)	Cost Per Participant Served (Cohort Period: 7/1/2019-6/30/2020)
Career Services	5,128	4,719	\$7,215,254	\$1,407
Training Services	2,558	1,764	\$5,466,277	\$2,137
Percent training-related employment+ (Cohort Period: 7/1/2018-6/30/2019)		Percent enrolled in more than one core program (Cohort Period: 7/1/2018-6/30/2019)		Percent Admin Expended:
19.4%		85.30%		12.70%

Cost Summary: Dislocated Worker

Service	Participants Served (Cohort Period: 7/1/2019-6/30/2020)	Participants Exited (Cohort Period: 4/1/2019-3/31/2020)	Funds Expended (Cohort Period: 7/1/2019-6/30/2020)	Cost Per Participant Served (Cohort Period: 7/1/2019-6/30/2020)
Career Services	1,673	1,436	\$9,657,685	\$5,773
Training Services	596	387	\$4,877,330	\$8,183
Percent training-related employment+ (Cohort Period: 7/1/2018-6/30/2019)		Percent enrolled in more than one core program (Cohort Period: 7/1/2018-6/30/2019)		Percent Admin Expended:
18.8%		89.2%		12.4%

Cost Summary: Youth

Service	Participants Served (Cohort Period: 7/1/2019-6/30/2020)	Participants Exited (Cohort Period: 4/1/2019-3/31/2020)	Funds Expended (Cohort Period: 7/1/2019-6/30/2020)	Cost Per Participant Served (Cohort Period: 7/1/2019-6/30/2020)
Career Services	1,961	1,214	\$7,063,788	\$3,602
Training Services	764	447	\$5,788,224	\$7,576
Percent training-related employment+ (Cohort Period: 7/1/2018-6/30/2019)		Percent enrolled in more than one core program (Cohort Period: 7/1/2018-6/30/2019)		Percent Admin Expended:
20.1%		66.2%		11.2%

Cost Summary: Wagner-Peyser

Service	Participants Served (Cohort Period: 7/1/2019-6/30/2020)	Participants Exited (Cohort Period: 4/1/2019-3/31/2020)	Funds Expended (Cohort Period: 7/1/2019-6/30/2020)	Cost Per Participant Served (Cohort Period: 7/1/2019-6/30/2020)
Career Services	47,273	46,624	\$6,979,626	\$148
Training Services	2,809	1,889	\$0	\$0
Percent training-related employment+ (Cohort Period: 7/1/2018-6/30/2019)		Percent enrolled in more than one core program (Cohort Period: 7/1/2018-6/30/2019)		Percent Admin Expended:
17.9%		14.5%		N/A

Data Validation

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

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

The Office of Workforce Development provides quarterly regional training and onsite technical assistance to any LWDA deemed deficient in any of the problem areas related to data collection and quality assurance.

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

Title II Adult Education - Integration with One-Stop Partners

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

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

Title II infrastructure contribution will be evaluated on a periodic and/or annual basis to determine effectiveness. Data reports will be collected from the kiosk system to support the return-on-investment.

Title III Wagner Peyser

The Louisiana Workforce Commission reemployment services capitalizes on the integrated service delivery model to ensure a robust and agile approach to offering services to all customers. Wagner Peyser is often the first point of entry for many customers within the American Job Center network of partners. As a result, Wagner Peyser is the primary feeder program to many WIOA partner programs. Employment and intensive services are provided to an array of customers and co-enrolled customers with varying degrees of service requirements.

This integrated approach enables Wagner Peyser to seamlessly provide services to customers with significant barriers to employment such as: homeless veterans, out of school youth, at risk adults, reentry customers etc. Programs that intersect and co-enroll with Wagner Peyser services are listed and described below.

Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG)

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

The State drives priority of service in referring veterans and other eligible persons to employment opportunities through a standardized review process. Every veteran that qualifies is seen by a Disabled Veteran Outreach Representative (DVOP) and given Individualized Career Services under the framework of case management, which is comprised of a comprehensive assessment and individual employment plan based on the need of each individual veteran. Field leadership receives results of this process quarterly for action when necessary. In addition, Local Veteran Employment Representatives (LVER) are conducting training in the field on veterans' priority of service to the non-veteran staff in the local offices. Regional Priority of Service training was conducted for all American Job Center (AJC) state staff members and follow up training by LVERs will be conducted for every AJC in the state by the end of this fiscal year. LVERs are pursuing employers to enroll in the Hire Veterans Medallion Program, which incentivizes companies to hire veterans and provide them with a reward from the Department of Defense.

The State continues to provide Individualized Career Services under the framework of case management for Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) referrals in accordance with directives. The Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Specialist (DVOP) assigned to St. Bernard AJC coordinates and monitors case assignment as part of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Office of Veteran Affairs. The State also has a DVOP in Shreveport, LA that coordinates and monitors case assignment for VR&E clients that have a geographical location near the northern part of the state. These partnerships have resulted in an increase in the number of disabled veterans that we provide intensive services to the State Workforce Agency (SWA), Veterans Administration Regional Office (VARO), DVOP Intensive Service Coordinator (ISC), and Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS) reviewed the report. There were no "anomalies" reported. The VARO closed cases and provided a date with the "rehabilitated status." The DVET received and accepted the report.

The State embraced the JVSG refocusing through the efforts of the JVSG staff members and their One-Stop partners. The state achieved a 99% Intensive Services Rate during PY 17 compared to a goal of 94%. The driving factor behind this success were One Stop staff members conducted initial assessments of incoming Veteran job seekers and only referrals of those identified to have a Significant Barrier to Employment (SBE).

Below is a comparison of the key JVSG metrics between PY18 and PY19.

Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG)

Measure	Negotiated Goal	Statewide Performance PY18	Statewide Performance PY19	Gain (Loss) PY19
Covered Entrants		891	878	(23)
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	43.7%	57.9%	57.2%	(.08%)
Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	41.7%	58.8%	56.8%	(2.2%)
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$5,038	\$5,692	\$5,675	(\$17)

Source: ETA 9173

The JVSG staff visited various prison facilities throughout the state to assist returning citizens, instead of the five parishes originally fostered with this program in PY16. The JVSG staff has garnered partnerships by working closely with agencies such as: Louisiana Probation and Parole, Volunteers of America, and the Louisiana Prison Reentry Initiative (LAPRI). The JVSG program has also conducted combined training with these partner organizations in an effort to streamline processes and to understand what each entity can do to assist returning citizens.

The State JVSG program collaborated with the local Army Military Installation on Ft. Polk to have a DVOP come on post twice a week to provide assistance with transitioning veterans to ensure they have access to services.

Re-employment Services

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

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

In 2019, the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) modernized its approach to operating the RESEA program in order to improve opportunities for success of participants and remain in compliance with federal grant requirements. These changes were necessary to optimize outcomes for claimants determined to be most likely to exhaust unemployment benefits.

There were 28,766 individuals scheduled for RESEA services in Program Year 2019. On average, 76% of scheduled services were successfully completed. The RESEA4 program implemented the new RESEA4 process on Nov 21, 2019. The new RESEA program service flow was restructured to engage individuals sooner after filing a claim, provide more robust services, and require one stops to co-enroll individuals in Title I employment and training services at 10 weeks of unemployment.

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

STEP Program - Strategies to Empower People

The Strategies to Empower People (STEP) program is a statewide program operated by Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) designed to assist Louisiana families. More specifically in becoming self-sufficient and no longer dependent on government assistance, and actively engaged in meaningful activities designed to enable their transition.

The further intent was that cash assistance recipients demonstrate active and diligent personal responsibility in achieving self-reliance through employment and increased workplace literacy. All appropriate state agencies responsible for employment, training, and educating Louisiana's citizens must cooperate in the pursuit of this goal.

To this end, DCFS and LWC entered into a three-year interagency collaborative contract October 1, 2017, with the general intent that LWC would, through its American Job Centers, provide case management to those individuals identified by DCFS as program participants and referred to LWC.

LWC provides basic employment services, comprehensive skills, needs, and interest assessment which result in development of both a Family Success Agreement, and Individualized Employment Plans. LWC and DCFS share data electronically and co-manage these participants through constructive communication between LWC case workers and DCFS consultants. DCFS and LWC share reporting and responsibility for success.

Program Year 2019 Highlights:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------|
| • Referred by DCFS | 2,055 |
| • Enrolled in Wagner Peyser | 1,802 |
| • Wagner Peyser Case Managed | 1,564 |

ABAWD - Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents

LWC provides opportunities for this subset of the population needing SNAP benefits to participate in specific work or training activities in order to continue receiving assistance as set forth in the federal regulation under the Governor's Executive Order 16-12, through March 30, 2020 and in partnership with DCFS through its Business and Career Centers by providing basic skills assessment and remediation and assistance with resume preparation, job searches, and enrollment in education and training courses. This is accomplished by a partnership referral system by way of electronic data exchange for co-managing scheduling, compliance, reporting, and sanction. Participants in this program are routinely scheduled for a minimum of two service points after which they may be enrolled in intensive case management.

During calendar year 2019:

- 34,342 individuals were contacted and provided an orientation to services
- 19,129 were enrolled into employment services through Wagner Peyser
- 2,470 Youth (18-24)
- 20,870 Adults (24-49)
- 52 received individualized intensive services
- 169 were placed in WIOA title I funded training
- 49 received WIOA title I funded supportive services
- 99 achieved direct job placement

Reintegration of Ex-Offenders

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

Staff provide individualized career services to formerly incarcerated persons that contribute to their successful transition to society. Each individual is given a comprehensive assessment and employment plan including follow-up every 30 days ensure gainful employment.

Additionally, staff also conduct outreach and advocacy on behalf of the individual to coordinate with local service agencies to provide various needs such as housing, clothing, transportation, legal assistance, etc. coordination with the local shelters – housing, other partners

Efforts to support Transition Centers were in early partner planning stages during PY18. These centers avail incarcerated individuals, within a year of release, access to services and job preparation activities, that prepare them for reintegration back into society.

In the coming year plans are to expand on these efforts.

Louisiana Rehabilitation Services

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

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

Title IV - Vocational Rehabilitation Program (VR)

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

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

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

In Program Year 2019, 1,357 individuals obtained employment as a result of the VR program. The average hourly earnings of these individuals was \$13.18; with average annual earnings of \$22,881. Of those obtaining successful employment, 83% obtained employment in Louisiana's top demand occupations. This can be attributed in part to training provided to the Rehabilitation Counselors to ensure that they are knowledgeable when providing vocational guidance to individuals so they may choose a career goal that is in demand. The top three top demand occupations for LRS consumers who successfully exited the program were as follows: Hospitality and Tourism (329), Business Management/Administration (192), and Transportation, Distribution and Logistics (162).

Order of Selection

When LRS does not have sufficient funding and/or staff to serve all eligible consumers, federal regulations mandate that individuals with the most significant disabilities be given priority for services. LRS determines who has the most significant disabilities by using an Order of Selection having five categories ranging from most severe to least severe. An individual's limitations resulting

from their disability is considered in terms of barriers to employment. Using this information, the individual is placed in the appropriate Order of Selection Category. In Program Year 2019, LRS continued to have Categories 1 – 4 open and Category 5 remained closed. On October 4, 2019 LRS served 2 people from the waiting list in Category 5. On January 2, 2020 LRS served 2 additional people from the waiting list in Category 5. Categories 1 – 4 remain fully open.

Transition

In Program Year 2019, LRS continued to provide services to students with disabilities as they transition from high school into adulthood to pursue training and employment. LRS is mandated to expend 15% of the VR federal allotment to make available five core Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), including job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or post-secondary educational programs, workplace readiness training, and instruction in self-advocacy. During this time period, LRS provided services to 3,775 students with disabilities.

LRS makes these services available through VR counseling staff, fee for service agreements with Community Rehabilitation Programs, and through Third Party Cooperative Arrangement contracts with school districts. LRS currently has 13 active Third Party Cooperative Arrangements with local education providers to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services and is continuing to pursue additional contracts with local education providers.

Customized Employment

LRS continues efforts to implement Customized Employment (CE) statewide in Louisiana. LRS has explored different avenues to make training available to LRS vendors to ensure they have quality instruction to prepare them to provide CE effectively to LRS consumers. LRS has been working with the Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center (WINTAC) to make affordable training available in Louisiana. In partnership with WINTAC and the University of South Florida (USF), LSU-HDC staff have been participating in training being conducted by the USF staff in order to be able to train and certify LRS vendors to provide CE services to LRS consumers. LSU-HDC is being trained in the ACCESS Customized Employment Training System, a competency based, online, training system developed by the USF. In addition to online training, LSU-HDC staff are also receiving mentoring from the USF team. The next step will be the experiential component with LRS referred job seekers. LSU-HDC staff will train a select group of Community Rehabilitation Program staff, while receiving mentoring and technical assistance provided by USF.

LRS also takes part in a national Community of Practice in Customized Employment also guided by WINTAC.

State as a Model Employer (SAME)

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

The LRS designated Point of Contact, the Statewide Employment Coordinator, for the initiative serves as a conduit to facilitate the sharing of information between LRS and state agency designees relative to persons who are job applicants and who have been determined eligible for LRS' vocational rehabilitation program.

The Point of Contact meets with State Human Resource Managers to nurture relationships, develops and presents disability and employment related training to Human Resource and

management personnel across state government, and provides consultation relative to employment related accommodations. The Point of Contact also notifies Human Resource Managers when LRS consumers apply for jobs at their respective agencies.

In Program Year 2019, forty-two (42) LRS consumers obtained or maintained employment with the State of Louisiana, which represents a 13.5% increase over the previous year. These individuals are employed throughout state government, to include universities, state police, hospitals, and correctional facilities. The Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services and Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism were the top two employers this past year.

Workforce Development

VR is actively involved with the 15 Workforce Development Areas (WDA's). LRS is represented on each of the boards and VR staff members have a presence in the comprehensive one stops and in many of the other affiliates. In addition, the agency's Rehabilitation Employment Development Specialists (REDS) serve as the liaison for the centers within their region and provide services to individuals who participate in the VR program.

Building relationships with employers and with the business community continues to be a premise in the Employment Initiative as our connections with the Human Resource personnel and hiring managers ultimately connect our consumers with viable jobs. The Rehabilitation Employment Development Specialists and the Statewide Employment Coordinator continue to be active in the community by participating in various events such as Career fairs throughout the state, and by speaking at various re-entry events and conferences. Our Employment Specialists also continue to be active in the Workforce Development Board One Stop committee meetings, the Mayor's Commission on Disability and Re-Entry meetings as well as attending the Business Service meetings within the American Job Centers that are held in various regions.

LRS continues efforts to assist SSI and SSDI beneficiaries to meet employment goals. LRS continues to collaborate with Employment Networks, as well as other state agencies and stakeholders to ensure Ticket-to-Work is successful in Louisiana. LRS maintains a statewide 1-800 ticket hotline number for individuals interested in learning more about their ticket and how Vocational Rehabilitation would be able to assist them. In Program Year 2019, LRS received \$943,044 from the Social Security Administration's reimbursement program.

Rehabilitation Engineering/Assistive Technology

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

These AT/RT providers are vetted and determined to be certified by national professional and federal standards by the AT Program Coordinator, and the Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) Administrator. When verified, these are listed in the LRS Technical Assistance and Guidance Manual and in the AWARE™ case management system for the LRS Counselor to utilize for specialized assessments, evaluations and AT acquisition as elements of the consumer's Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

Transportation services are one of the support services for LRS consumers, and the AT Program Coordinator has been the liaison between LRS/LWC and the Louisiana Department of

Transportation Development (LaDOTD) which provides state-wide funding for the USC-49 Federal Transit Administration (FTA) 5310 "Elderly & Disabled" transportation network. These are ADA-accessible transit buses and vans that can accommodate our job-seekers.

LRS continues its relationship with the Louisiana Assistive Technology Network (LATAN) with an expanded program, funded by the Rehabilitation Services Administration, to provide statewide demonstration-learning, lending, and purchasing assistance of assistive technology. LATAN provides a device-rental service for LRS consumers to use assistive technology devices on a trial basis. Since 2016 LATAN has been an approved Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) vendor/provider for wheelchair & seating & positioning assessments, and home modifications for accessibility.

Randolph-Sheppard Business Enterprise Program

This program provides employment opportunities for the blind by establishing and maintaining Business Enterprise Facilities. The program currently operates 71 facilities throughout the state, employing 49 individuals.

The COVID-19 Pandemic and subsequent closure of most Randolph Sheppard food service facilities has had a devastating effect on sales and profitability for our Randolph-Sheppard blind managers, not only in Louisiana, but across the nation. Most facilities completely closed in March, 2020, and remain either partially or completely closed to this day.

Of the facilities which are 100% dependent on vending machine sales, low building occupancy due to telecommuting by employees has diminished sales by 50-90 percent in most instances. In addition, every manager in the program has suffered some level of inventory loss due to product spoilage or expiration.

Independent Living

Independent Living Part B Program

Independent Living Centers located across the state provide core services: information and referral; IL skills training; peer counseling; individual and systems advocacy; and services that facilitate the transition from nursing homes and other institutions to the community. More than 3,574 individuals received independent living services at an average cost of \$96.19 per consumer during Program Year 2019.

Independent Living Older Blind Program

The four rehabilitation centers contracting with the Independent Living Older Blind (ILOB) program provided services such as orientation and mobility training; low vision evaluations and handheld and electronic magnifiers; training in performing activities of daily living, etc. to a total of 938 individuals 55 years of age or older and having significant visual impairments.

Many consumers of Independent Living Older Blind services are among the most vulnerable when considering the effects of COVID-19. Not only are these individuals older, the requirement to receive services is that one must be 55 years of age or older, most of these individuals also have significant health conditions, including diabetes, which have caused their failing vision. As a result of this, some consumers have elected to forego in-person services. Additionally, contractors are unable to effectively provide services to groups of individuals. As a result of this, they have worked to provide remote services when they can be provided in a safe and effective manner. When contractors are able to meet with individuals face-to-face, they are having to spend a significant amount of time in preparing for the meeting, including sterilizing items that may have been touched by a previous consumer.

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction surveys were conducted by Local Workforce Development Areas throughout the year. The methodology varies between local areas. Many areas initially designed surveys for either every customer or those whom received specific services, depending on the area. Local areas use these results to make adjustments and implement changes within a one stop center.

In the coming year, Louisiana will be developing policy and a standardized survey that will enable the state to better assess the one stop centers and services that truly meet the needs and expectations of business and job seekers.

ADDITIONAL PROGRAM ACTIVITIES/SUPPORTS

The Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)

The TAA program helps workers who have lost their jobs as a result of international trade get back to work. These workers have been adversely affected by foreign trade such as having lost their jobs due to a decline in production or sales, or the outsourcing of jobs to foreign countries. The TAA program offers a variety of benefits and services to eligible workers, including job training, income support, job search and relocation allowances, a tax credit to help pay the costs of health insurance, and a wage subsidy to workers 50 years of age and older.

TAA is a critical partner of the WIOA Dislocated Worker and Adult programs. As such, co-enrollment of workers covered under certified petitions (TAA-certified workers) in partnership with the WIOA Dislocated Worker or Adult Program is a priority of LWC and its TAA program. In order to accomplish this, TAA-certified workers are referred to, and encouraged to access, all appropriate services offered through their local One Stop Centers. In addition to the services offered by TAA, these services include, but may not be limited to, labor market information, training referrals, career planning, and follow-up services to assist them in reentering the workforce.

For PY 2019, Louisiana instituted nine (9) new petitions. Five (5) out of the nine (9) petitions instituted were certified, covering an estimated 874 workers. During the program year, Louisiana had a total of thirteen (13) active petitions affecting a total of 2,172 workers. In addition, Louisiana provided TAA services to workers under two (2) out-of-state certified petitions. Between July 1, 2019 and June 30, 2020, the TAA training program served approximately 100 participants. Fourteen (14) participants completed TAA training during the program year and received the following credentials:

1. Bachelors of Science Degree in Industrial Engineering
2. Associate Degree in Nursing/ RN License
3. Technical Diploma in Industrial Maintenance Technology
4. A.A.S. Degree in Industrial Instrumentation Technology
5. CDL Certifications and Licenses
6. Real Estate License
7. NCCER Certifications
8. A.A.S. in Business & Technology
9. Certificate of Technical Studies/ Medical Coding Specialist
10. Certificate of Technical Studies/ Accounting Technology

Eight (8) of the most recent graduates have reported that they are gainfully employed. The professions in which they are employed include:

1. Truck Drivers / Transportation Industry
2. Accounts Receivable Clerk / Industrial Machinery & Equipment, Manufacturing Industry
3. Registered Nurse / General Medical and Surgical Hospitals Industry
4. Quality Control / U.S. Poultry Industry
5. Maintenance Technician, and / HVAC Industry
6. Business Account Specialist / Retail Industry

Trade Activity - FY 2019(October 1, 2018 - September 30, 2019)	
Number of Petitions Instituted	9
Certifications	5
Estimated Workers Covered	874
Training Fund Allocation	\$896,048
Total TAA Funding (TAA, TRA, A/RTAA)	\$1,074,070
New TAA Participants	25
Total TAA Participants	111
New Training Participants	9
Total Training Participants	17
Participants in Training on Last Day of Quarter	7
New TRA Recipients	1
Total TRA Recipients**	6
Total Exits	12

Success Story

Canese's Story: (Trade Affected Worker from Franke' Kitchen Systems,)

"The TAA Program was a blessing. I had reached a point in my education where loans were no longer an option to cover tuition, so I had to pay a good deal out of pocket. Not only did I not have the money for tuition, I barely had money to pay for expenses that were not month to month such as oil changes, a tire, a trip to the clinic, and so on. I was trying my best to get my Bachelor's, majoring in Industrial Engineering. As an African-American female, I was already discouraged going into a field where I did not see people who looked like me. Yet, it was my dream to do what I love (make things easier).

My college journey was pretty tough, I honestly thought getting to a point where I literally had no way to continue was a sign to just give up. Especially because I was faced with so much during my college career. I spent two years going in and out of the hospital before being diagnosed with endometriosis. The hospital and medical bills got so severe that I ended up being homeless about 3 times. At one point in time, I ended up working three jobs to barely get by. Then I got a call to work at Franke. I was finally able to get a good night's sleep and only work one job. I learned about my field and was able to focus

more on school and managing my autoimmune disease. Within a year and a few months of getting one job that allowed me meet my needs, I was jobless.

After a very emotional talk with Ms. Gwen, I was set on graduating and not letting a layoff be the end of my fight for a brighter future. After two quarters in the TAA Program, I walked across the stage as the first person in my family to graduate college with a scientific degree. My dreams, or rather, the start of my dreams coming true. I literally was able to focus on my schooling. It felt surreal. For the first time in college, my focus wasn't on "how am I going to buy the books to do the homework and study" or "will I be able to pay for these courses or will this be yet another thing added to my credit score" or "was this journey a lost cause." I am sure I will never be able to fully show how grateful I am for the peace, the direction, the encouragement, and the accountability. "

STATEWIDE ACTIVITIES

Rapid Response(RR)

Rapid Response (RR) acted upon 138 notifications of a possible layoff occurrence in Program Year 2019. A total of 65 of those came from Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act notices while the others came from news articles, rumors, or other notifications. Retail sales accounted for 32% of our layoff notices for the year as large chains continue to shutter their operations. Many of the retail layoffs occurred in 2019 or early 2020. Hospitality and Tourism accounted for 29% of the layoffs in PY2019 but accounted for 51% of the layoffs once the COVID-19 pandemic hit in mid-March. Manufacturing accounted for 12% of the layoffs and the Energy sector 9% mainly due to the low price of oil.

Rapid Response delivered 89 separate activities for 26 different companies that provided 1,361 intensive services to impacted individuals. Services provided to the affected workers included general orientation sessions, resume writing workshops, job search workshops, interviewing skills workshops, and job fairs. During this time Rapid Response held its first virtual orientation sessions through Zoom and continues to offer sessions both virtually and in-person. Rapid Response also started recording recruitment videos from prospective employers to send to laid off workers instead of in-person recruitment. These videos are also available to view on our homepage and YouTube.

Whether the orientations are held in person or virtually, Rapid Response still invites staff from Unemployment Insurance, the local American Job Center, TAA, and our Veteran's program to participate. We have also invited Louisiana Rehabilitation Services, Louisiana Housing Authority, and Medicaid when appropriate. Rapid Response also assists in the gathering of information and submission of a Trade petition and works with our TAA unit to help facilitate TAA services with the employer and impacted workers. Rapid Response continues to encourage the hiring of recently laid off workers through the "Hire A Laid Off Worker (HALOW) initiative. Staff promotes the use of the HALOW database during their weekly outreach to employers. Rapid Response coordinators work with Industry Sector Specialists and Business Services Representatives to target companies to showcase available services and build a contact network of prospering businesses that could be used for quick placement of workers affected by a layoff. Rapid Response also coordinates with state and local economic development organizations on layoffs. This coordination has allowed Rapid Response to set up direct interaction between hiring employers and available workers. This interaction comes in many forms: job fairs, employer specific hiring events, candidate referrals, and employer participation in orientation efforts.

Business Services

Registered Apprenticeship

The LWC Apprenticeship Division expanded to 69 apprenticeship programs that provide employment and training to approximately 4,000 registered apprentices across Louisiana. Historically, Louisiana's apprenticeship programs have been centered around occupations within the Construction sector. LWC continues to cultivate prospects in expanding programs to other industry sectors. As result of our efforts, the following programs were added to the state's registered apprenticeship list.

- Alliance for Media Arts + Culture (Digital Video Editor, Multimedia Producer)
- Morton Salt (Industrial Electrician, Industrial Mechanic)
- Nexus LA/ Apprenti Louisiana (Cyber Security Support Technician, IT Support Professional, Software Developer, and Systems Administrator)
- Oceaneering (Non-Destructive Testing Technician, Remotely Operated Vehicle Junior Tech, and Service Tech)
- Bossier Parish Community College (Electrical Technician, Industrial Maintenance Technician)
- IBM (11 occupations including Application Developer, IT Specialist, and IT Lab Technician)
- Noranda Alumina (General Repairer)
- Schneider National, Inc. (Truck Driver)
- National Restaurant Association Education Foundation (Line Cook, Restaurant Manager)

The Apprenticeship Division currently has three USDOL grants to expand Registered Apprenticeship and supplement WIOA funds, including OJT contracts, tuition for training, and supportive services. Grant initiatives involve creating consortia programs, increasing the number of programs and apprentices, improving apprentice retention, and improving the quality of programs.

Approximately 70 individuals were provided supportive services and/or stipends in PY 19 to supplement WIOA funding and the initial periods of apprenticeship when wages are lowest. These supportive services included, but were not limited to: tools/supplies, gas reimbursement, and child care.

Incumbent Worker Training Program (IWTP)

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

IWTP/SBET Fiscal Year Performance Summary

Fiscal Year	\$ Total Contracts & Awards	# of Participants Trained	# of Employers Represented	# of Jobs Retained	# of Jobs Created	Average Wage Increase*
2019-2020	\$21,604,682.74	47,962	630	21,349	1,148	11.33%
2018-2019	\$26,820,025.08	60,255	774	29,177	1,400	13.56%

* Average among those who actually received an increase in pay

FY 19-20 = IWTP - 113 contracts for \$18,356,731; SBET 1316 awards for \$3,247,951.74.

FY 18-19 = IWTP - 126 contracts for \$22,654,388; SBET 1660 awards for \$4,165,637.08.

Success Stories

(SBET) Porche' Plumbing & Piping Co., Inc. - The Small Business Employee Training program has enabled us to recruit qualified candidates who, in four short years, become essential licensed journeyman plumbers (through apprenticeship training). The SBET creates opportunity for people of all ages to enhance their career opportunities and also fulfill a critical need for qualified tradesmen in Louisiana. This program has enabled me, as a small business owner, to recruit and compete for good applicants due to its educating and equipping them for a successful future.

(SBET) Laborde Therapy Center - I think the training I provide would have to be cut by 70-80% if the funds were to dry up. All of my employee's love to get out of the office and learn new things. This program has been vital to not only keeping them here long term, but constantly growing them.

(IWTP) Ardagh Glass Inc. - The IWTP has made a huge difference in our facility in Ruston. From every level of hourly utility and Apprentice Electro-Mechanic. We have gained training in all aspects of our jobs from safety to technical skills to Leadership Development. The funding has made it possible to attain training and competencies, which we had only wished for in the past. Your training dollars has allowed us to become the Ardagh Subject Matter Experts on several pieces of our equipment, which has put the Ardagh plant into a strong position for continued growth and refurbishment.

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)

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

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

Goals

1. Provide a Federal tax credit to participating employers (reducing their income tax liability) for hiring individuals from certain target groups who have consistently faced significant barriers to employment.
2. Incentivize workplace diversity and facilitate access to good jobs for American workers.

3. Assist targeted workers in moving from economic dependency into self-sufficiency as they earn a steady income and become contributing taxpayers.
4. Continue to be a national best practice state for automation in processing of certifications.

USDOL statistics that the average WOTC hire's tenure is 2.3 years. Also, from 2015-2019 approximately 1 million certifications were issued for the TANF and long-term TANF target groups. Additionally, the total federal savings in entitlement spending over the past 10 years is around 202 billion. WOTC has generated an estimated \$3.5 billion in state savings, nationally; and Louisiana benefits inclusively.

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

Outcomes

USDOL has named Louisiana a national best practice because of work in automating this program. We are able to process more than 80,000 applications annually with only three full time and two-part time staff.

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

Implementing Sector Strategies

Louisiana has launched Industry Sector Partnership throughout the state in the past. The state is still in the planning phase of launching new partnerships but has been delayed due to COVID-19.

Region 2 - Information Technology

Apprenti Louisiana is the first Information Technology (IT) apprenticeship program in the state. The second cohort for Apprenti with the role of IT Support Professional commenced in February 2020. After receiving over 300 applications, 159 individuals complete the assessment and 105 candidates qualified with Apprenti's standards by achieving 80 or above. Of those that passes assessment, 76 applicants were phone screened, while 33 were brought in for subsequent face-to-face interviews.

Five apprentices were selected by the three participating companies - Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana, General Informatics, and Louisiana Office of Technology Services. The cohort consisted of five men - 3 minorities, 4 unemployed/dislocated worker, 1 underemployed; 2 no college degree and 3 with two-year degree. The apprentices started their very intense 10-week training with the training provider, Baton Rouge Community College, on February 3, 2020. During this training the Network+ industry based certification.

All five apprentices completed the training at Baton Rouge Community College and passed the A+ certification without error. These apprentices then moved on to their respective employers in May - July 2020 (dependent on employer's availability to open due to COVID-19), for the six month on the job training portion of their apprenticeship. The five apprentices are flourishing in their roles as IT Support Professionals.

Region 2 - Flood Ready Workforce

The Resilient Workforce Development program (RWD) has been established by the Office of Community Development (OCD) and the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) who will provide funding to training facilities to create sector-based initiatives to address 1) the need for more trained workers, and 2) the need for more resiliency-based education to support more resilient building practices of the areas impacted by 2016 Floods, as well as the long-term mitigations projects to benefit of the State's overall economy. Current, and future, mitigation projects require a highly skilled and well-educated workforce to meet the immediate needs of sectors critical to the physical construction of mitigation of the regions impacted by the floods. Some of the sectors identified as critical are: Green Infrastructure, Resilient Construction, Water and Wastewater Management.

The program is centered on three inter-related factors:

- The employment of the workforce that would benefit mitigation efforts in the areas affected by the 2016 Floods;
- The retention of the existing workforce; and
- A concentrated effort to educate and increase skills development for new jobs in sectors related to resiliency efforts and a future growth economy.

Region 8 - Healthcare

The NELA Healthcare Alliance represents nearly forty diverse healthcare organizations in Northeast Louisiana. The alliance is comprised of hospitals, long term care facilities, skilled nursing facilities, home health organizations and other who together, in addition to providing critical needed healthcare to community members, providing nearly twenty percent of all jobs in the region. These healthcare organizations have come together in an ongoing network (The Northeast Louisiana Healthcare Alliance) to tackle the most pressing healthcare issues of this region together, including workforce issues, networking opportunities, and pressing policy topics that warrant a collective action.

Alliance Wins

- Prompted the re-establishment of the Ambulance Advisory Committee and secured membership appointments for healthcare representations.
- Expanded working network and networking opportunities – both with healthcare and community partners and peer to peer networking.
- The NELA Healthcare Alliance hosting a Nursing Symposium to address the need to up skill incumbent nurses. A total of 50 nurses were in attendance.
- Submitted Alliance Support for a regional candidate for the Louisiana Board of Pharmacy to the Governor for appointment. Dr. J. Robert Cloud was confirmed by the Governor as his appointee to serve in this capacity.
- Applied for and was awarded a Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation Collective Impact Grant of \$300,00, and a Living Well Foundation Grant award for \$44,000 for funding opportunities to support adjunct faculty to teach nursing clinicals at regional healthcare facilities. The clinicals will be conducted at nontraditional times (evening shift & weekends) as to not compete with existing clinical rotations and utilizing qualified nurses to teach the clinicals. This will be a regional effort benefitting multiple training providers, utilizing multiple healthcare facilities and most importantly taking a step to address the

critical nursing shortage we are experiencing regionally by expanding the capacity of accepted applicants for each training provider.

Summary

Louisiana Workforce Commission will continue to address the immediate and changing needs of employers in Louisiana. We will continue to expand partnerships and program integration, especially across workforce and education agencies in aligning service delivery. A focus on shared goals through engagement in partner planning activities and continuous evaluation and quality improvements in WIOA policy implementation will lead to a stronger, more resilient, and vital workforce.