

WORKFORCE INNOVATION & OPPORTUNITY ACT - 2019

STATE OF NEW MEXICO ANNUAL REPORT



PROGRAM YEAR 2019 / FISCAL YEAR 2020

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INTRODUCTION:

As we reflect upon Program Year 2019, we are struck by the contrasts of optimism that quickly pivoted to crises management. Indeed the challenges the workforce system faced this past year are historical and the ability of the system to respond quickly was tested. Program Year 2019 began with focused attention on the development of a new Combined State Plan with core agencies and partner organizations. The process included several facilitated meetings and town hall convenings which resulted in agreement and enthusiasm for focused work that aligns across several agencies. Optimism quickly gave way to crisis management and a shift was made to turn New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (NMDWS) staff and resources to respond to massive layoffs and a barrage of individuals applying for unemployment benefits following the statewide shutdown in response to public health orders to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. NMDWS deployed all internal resources to support numerous calls, all while also moving our entire unemployment call center and statewide job centers to a virtual model. This consumed resources, time and energy, and required new ways of thinking to be completed quickly and although it was a daunting task it was remarkably done within record time.

New Mexico was fortunate because our unemployment system was modernized and able to provide online access to the application and weekly certification. This afforded access to the majority of our citizens, however, the lack of equitable access to broadband/WiFi crippled many communities, especially those in remote and rural areas and required additional customer service staff to support the application and weekly certification process. It is also important to note our Information Technology team was also hard at work to assure our online system was prepared to support new requirements and to sustain the system due to the high volume of online users. These were no small feats and like all workforce systems across the country, seemed impossible and yet was accomplished. Undoubtedly, researchers and evaluators will look back on the efforts and much will be learned and discussed about the response.

As we successfully moved through the unemployment crisis, it became clear that many of our workforce development processes were also tested. Services for job seekers and businesses required virtual platforms and the strategies for conducting career exploration and readiness, onsite testing, business outreach and career counseling needed to also change significantly. Addressing these needs using virtual tools and approaches were quickly adapted and emerging practices evolved weekly and continue to evolve to this day. The ability to serve individuals with major barriers and challenges to virtual services became an issue especially for customers residing in rural and remote areas of the state. Efforts are ongoing to address these disparities and will require additional resources and new ways of thinking to resolve. We know New Mexico is not the only state experiencing this concern and it is quite clear the work ahead for workforce development at a national and state level will need to implement significant changes to meet what lies ahead.

PY2019 will certainly always be remembered as a year of contrasts and will also be remembered for the dedication and commitment from internal and external staff and partners, national and state leadership and local community and neighborhoods all working together to adapt and create solutions. Although much of what was planned at the beginning of the year may have come to a halt, New Mexico's workforce system remains strong and optimism remains high. New Mexico job seekers and businesses are indeed faced with a changing workforce landscape and when and how businesses emerge or new industries develop in our state, New Mexico will have a network of committed agencies, organizations and partners prepared to take on the challenges. The following is a narrative and reflection of PY2019, our accomplishments, our vision and goals, challenges, and opportunities. New Mexico worked hard and we are proud to say, we did a great job.

NEW MEXICO COMBINED STATE PLAN – GOALS AND STRATEGIES:

The workforce system in New Mexico is a network of state, regional, and local agencies and organizations that provide many employment, education, training, and related services and supports. The workforce system includes services for the general public and people with barriers to employment; including veterans, individuals with disabilities, dislocated workers, adults and youth. New Mexico's workforce service delivery system provides services to jobseekers and business customers throughout thirty-three counties where an estimated 2,085,572 people call New Mexico home.

The four Local Workforce Development Areas in New Mexico include Central, Eastern, Northern and Southwestern. Each Workforce Development Area has a Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) that is responsible for overseeing employment and training programs through the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers. New Mexico's Workforce Connection Centers are proud partners of the American Job Center Network. Workforce Connection Centers serve as the central point for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) partners. Strengthening services involves co-location of partners, where appropriate; collaborative partnerships to stop duplication and improve efficiency; organizing staff by function instead of funding streams for seamless service delivery within each center and strong customer service to job seekers and business outreach to employers.

Through the Combined WIOA State Plan, New Mexico aims to share an understanding of the workforce needs across the state and add more comprehensive and streamlined approaches for addressing the needs of businesses and job seekers. Core partners and various community stakeholders, including youth, came together to prioritize, strategize and to create goals that would lead to a more competitive and responsive workforce. In addition, the State Workforce Board is working to convene committees to guide ongoing strategic planning, address challenges and gaps and identify opportunities for innovation.

New Mexico's Combined State Plan required programs:

- Adult Program (WIOA Title I)
- Dislocated Worker Program (WIOA Title I)
- Youth Program (WIOA Title I)
- Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program (WIOA Title II)
- Wagner-Peyser Act Program (Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III)
- Vocational Rehabilitation Program (Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV)
- Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (Programs authorized under 38, U.S.C. 4100 et. seq.)
- Senior Community Service Employment Program (Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (TANF)
- Employment and Training Programs under the Supplemental and Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers Program

Partners representing the various programs are commitment to:

- Meet regularly at state/regional level to inform strategy and partner with local boards and business leaders.
- Develop common messages and metrics across programs.
- Shared and integrated learning across programs (Workforce Conference, shared summits, workgroups, tools, resources).
- Identify opportunities to share and leverage resources to maximize efficiency and effectiveness (co-location, shared case management, coordinated business outreach).

The partners discussed and agreed to the following principles:

- Committed to working through partnerships at all levels to balance the needs and the assets of employees and employers in the public and private sectors to build a sustainable and thriving talent pipeline.
- Build a human-centered, inclusive, and innovative workforce development system that grows the talent, knowledge, and skills of people in our diverse communities.
- Create culturally and linguistically responsive strategies that are developmentally appropriate and geared toward equitable opportunities that will advance meaningful independence, self-sufficiency, and economic well-being across the lifespan.
- Data-informed, coordinated, and integrated strategies are higher quality and strengthen life-long education, training, and work-based learning experiences.
- Strategies to build competency in work and life skills that are foundational to the ongoing economic vitality of individuals, families, communities, and the state as a whole.
- The vision demonstrates a shared commitment to more resilient, responsive, and results-oriented workforce development system that move New Mexicans toward greater economic prosperity.

WHAT IS THE VISION OF NEW MEXICO’S WIOA PLAN?

Michelle Lujan Grisham, Governor of the State of New Mexico has shared a vision for the state workforce development system which incorporates six specific goals to create a more resilient, responsive, and results-oriented workforce development system that moves New Mexicans toward greater economic prosperity and strengthens the talent pipeline.

1. Work across public and private partnerships to create a workforce development system that builds sector strategies that are responsive to employers.
2. Make lifelong learning a reality so that New Mexico’s workforce is able to attract economic development that results in high-paying jobs.
3. Make cultivate community colleges a driver of workforce and economic development.
4. Grow apprenticeship opportunities across sectors to systematically build and sustain a high-skilled workforce.
5. Identify and remove barriers to employment and training.
6. Stop New Mexico’s brain drain by creating viable economic opportunities for youth and young adults.

GOVERNOR’S 2019 PRIORITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SECTORS & WORKFORCE GOALS

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health • Aerospace and STEM • Intelligent Manufacturing • Sustainable and Value-added Agriculture • Sustainable and Green Industries • Film and Digital Media • Tourism and Recreation • IT and Cyber Security • Education • International Trade 	<p>Goal 1- Make <i>lifelong learning</i> a reality so that New Mexico’s workforce is able to attract economic development that results in high-paying jobs.</p> <p>Goal 2- <i>Grow apprenticeship</i> opportunities across sectors to build and sustain a high-skilled workforce.</p> <p>Goal 3- Identify and <i>remove barriers</i> to employment and training across the lifespan.</p> <p>Goal 4- Stop New Mexico’s brain drain by creating <i>economic opportunities for youth and young adults</i>.</p>
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NEW MEXICO'S WIOA GOALS

Goal 1- Make *lifelong learning* a reality so that New Mexico's workforce is able to attract economic development that results in high-paying jobs.

Goal 2- Grow apprenticeship opportunities across sectors to build and sustain a high-skilled workforce.

Goal 3- Identify and *remove barriers* to employment and training across the lifespan.

Goal 4- Stop New Mexico's brain drain by creating *economic opportunities for youth and young adults*.

NEW MEXICO'S WIOA STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES AND PY2019 PROGRESS:

The following includes a description of the key strategies and activities outlined in the PY2020-2023 Combined State Plan, along with bulleted summary of progress:

Strategy 1- Public and private partnerships to build *sector strategies* that are responsive to employers & employees and *engage industry leaders, K-12 and higher education leaders, and the workforce*.

Strategy 1 Activities:

- 1) Focus on the Governor's economic development priority sectors when building out sector strategies as they are most closely linked to needed jobs that pay well.
- 2) Use data to inform strategy and investments by seeing how priority areas continue to stack up across the four-years of the plan.
- 3) Use data to *map* sector approaches throughout regions based on local economic development opportunities, assets, and needs.
- 4) Create a data dashboard to measure progress on sector strategies within each region.
- 5) Build a statewide communication campaign to guide and connect talented workers with leading edge education and training opportunities for in-demand career opportunities.

PY2019 Progress:

- All four LWDBs used Labor Market Information (LMI) to guide sector strategy planning with local industry. Decisions were based on industry identified needs and planning began to create/sustain workforce development strategies based on priority needs at regional level. All four LWDBs identified sector strategy activities/investments that are aligned with state priorities. A full summary of sector strategy/career pathway activities is included in a dedicated section of this report.
- NMDWS prepared LMI information for each LWDB to help guide their decision making. A dashboard was also created that shows job postings and total employment by specific sector. The intent is to give both the job seeker and workforce boards a quick, high level view of the employment situation in various sectors. Without the dashboard, an individual would have to look up several different industries and occupations. The dashboard has all this information in one place, making it easier for the user and workforce boards as they strategize and plan with key industry leaders.

Strategy 2- Make *lifelong learning* a reality so that New Mexico's workforce is able to attract *economic development* that results in *high-paying jobs*.

Strategy 2 Activities:

- 1) Develop cross-system expectations so that workers, employers, and educators/ trainers anticipate and respond to the need for lifelong learning that is responsive to needs that change over time.

- 2) Create career pathways with on and off ramps that allow workers to come into and out of the workforce at various points with skills that can serve them and industry across the board.
- 3) Plan and use data to create shared metrics across partners to measure the impact of lifelong learning.
- 4) Longitudinal database to inform implementation, planning and policies across programs

PY2019 Progress:

- **NM Longitudinal Data System Project (NMLDS): Description:** The overall objective is to link Department of Workforce Solutions (DWS), Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD), Higher Education Department (HED), Public Education Department (PED) data into a system which collects, validates and combines key child, student, and worker data into a single federated data warehouse. This solution will help educators, workforce developers and policymakers identify student challenges early on, make targeted interventions, and investments, and determine what educational practices and programs drive student success from childhood into the workforce. This is a 4-year effort with the first year's focus being on discovery activities to refine the project's scope, consider technical approach alternatives, and define the expected outcomes. The procurement approach for scope implementation will be via Request For Proposal (RFP), the result being an agencies-selected, vendor-provided COTS solution. Years 2-4 will focus on project planning and implementation activities of the solution. (For more, visit <https://hed.state.nm.us/data-reports/nmlds>.)

Status: We are in month three of the first year and Initiating Phase of the project. A memorandum of agreement committing DWS, ECECD, HED, and PED to the project was executed in October 2020. A project manager to lead NMLDS was hired November 5th and is in the process of forming a project team, formulating a plan and schedule for the requirements collection and analysis, and drafting the first monthly executive status update for the project (due November 24th). We have also begun working with the Federal Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems Grant Program to obtain best-practices information and explore other available resources.

- Youth engagement efforts also included ongoing awareness and training for K-12 teachers and career counselors on career pathway planning to guide youth decision making and preparedness for post-secondary and credential attainment.

Strategy 3- Build *partnerships* between job developers, workforce systems, and *community colleges*.

Strategy 3 Activities:

- 1) Work with the 19 community colleges to strengthen education and training opportunities that are linked to the Governor's vision and economic development priorities.
- 2) Align training with sector strategy work so that the voices of business, workers, and educators lead to successful priority setting at community colleges.
- 3) Emphasize partnerships with community colleges and industry so that students have preparation that leads to employment and retention.
- 4) Pay attention to quality and keep asking each other, "What isn't working?" and "What could work better?"

PY2019 Progress:

- Continued technical assistance and training was provided to community colleges on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) requirements and elements. Information was provided about access to WIOA funds and performance requirements to meet priority industry needs;

- Targeted convening with all 19 Community College Presidents was held to share State Plan and to provide guidance on strategies to align with priority industries;
- Regularly scheduled meeting with ETPL leads from each LWDB to conduct ongoing review of training providers to assess listings and to assure adequate number of training providers/programs within in each region. Virtual/remote learning enhanced as a result of pandemic and boards utilizing training program across region.

Strategy 4- Grow *work-based learning experiences*, such as apprenticeships, internships across sectors.

Strategy 4 Activities:

- 1) Create a survey of current work-based learning experiences related to Governor's priority sectors to set a baseline and measure progress related to work-based learning experiences such as apprenticeships, internships, and mentorship.
- 2) Strengthen coordination with higher education, public education, local boards, and industry to expand and improve work-based learning experiences for people coming into or transitioning within the workforce.

PY2019 Progress:

- The State Apprenticeship program registered two new programs in PY19. They include Newport News Nuclear (N3B) for positions related to nuclear operators and waste handlers, and New Mexico Rural Water Association for water systems operation specialists and waste water systems operation specialists. Four additional programs were registered at the beginning of PY20 in solar technology, fire sprinkler fitters, CDL drivers and testing, adjusting and balancing technicians.
- During PY19 there was an increase amount of WIOA funding being utilized to support apprenticeship training programs, primarily for on-the-job training costs);
- A partnership was also established with University of New Mexico (UNM) Project Echo to provide education to inmates prior to release on work-based learning opportunities, the application process and eligibility information.
- The State Apprenticeship Office also participated in a work-based learning strategic planning session with Northern New Mexico University to identify and address effective work-based learning practices to meet the needs of both secondary and post-secondary students in the northern region.

Strategy 5- Identify and *remove barriers* to employment and training.

Strategy 5 Activities:

- 1) Build on learning from the NMDWS and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) to address life challenges such as child care, transportation, mental health, substance use, and other concrete barriers to successful employment and training opportunities.
- 2) Create shared metrics with partner agencies to measure regional success in building programs that actively remove barriers to employment and training by addressing basic needs.
- 3) Develop a system to provide technical assistance at the regional and local levels to promote strategies that work in removing barriers and creating successful employment outcomes.

PY2019 Progress:

- The New Mexico Human Services Department (HSD) partnered with NMDWS to identify strategies to streamline services to customers receiving TANF, enhancing overall participation in workforce development programs and reducing barriers to employment. The overarching goal is to deliver services, efficiently and effectively, and increase positive workforce development outcomes for TANF recipients.

Further, the partnership will ensure TANF recipients have access to “one-stop” services available through the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers statewide. Ongoing planning continues and includes a full transition of the TANF Career Link and Wage Subsidy programs beginning January 2021.

Performance metrics will be developed jointly and outcomes will be monitored for effectiveness.

- HSD - Child Support Enforcement Division (CSED) is the Title IV-D entity for New Mexico to establish and enforce court ordered child support obligations owed by parents to reduce the number of families reliant on public assistance. As an alternative from utilizing harsh and ineffective enforcement practices, New Mexico CSED has partnered with NMDWS – Title III to implement the Supporting, Training, and Employing Parents (STEPup!) statewide to assist noncustodial parents find stable employment so that they can meet their monthly child support obligations. From June 30, 2019 thru June 2020, the pilot initiative has assisted 69 STEPup! participants. The pilot program was set up for services at three New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers: Albuquerque, Rio Rancho, and Las Cruces. Because of the success of the program, HSD is now funding a designated Employment Services staff member for each of the HSD offices and noncustodial parents now have access to the program statewide.
- The New Mexico Department of Environment partnered with NMDWS – Title III program to administer and proctor assessments for water operators. Over 400 water operators require this assessment for federal compliance, and it is vital to maintaining this certification for employment. Individuals who require this exam can now schedule an appointment to complete this assessment. The project was officially launched in June 1, 2020. Successes include a 50% increase in pass rates now that the test is available electronically.
- ***Title III - Project: Virtual Hiring:*** to facilitate a COVID-19 safe environment, this project was implemented to assist the need of employers to recruit talent. The platform base used was Zoom, where breakout rooms were utilized to facilitate numerous employers (we learned that up to 8 employers is most manageable, though the capacity can be greater in one session). From late March to June New Mexico’s Workforce Connection Centers assisted 60 employers through virtual hiring events. One example is Albuquerque Police Department which had utilized our virtual service and has conducted three events from April to June and received over 200 applications to their department.

The virtual events occur in all four workforce regions. Each region has designated a specific team to facilitate, monitor, and set up each of the events. Title III has also implemented virtual recruitment/readiness activities which include workshops in soft skills, resume writing, and interviewing techniques. Additionally, each of the four workforce regions are showcasing “Hot Jobs” using social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. The video highlights in-demand jobs currently available and describes key requirements and application process. The video also provides information on employment resources and training opportunities available in addition to contact information. Goals for the “Hot Jobs” videos is to support recruitment for employers and share opportunities with those who have barriers to employment, including individuals with disabilities, veterans, and those who are cycling off unemployment benefits.

Strategy 6- Stop the *brain drain* and workforce opportunities for youth and young adults.

Strategy 6 Activities:

- 1) Regional boards need to develop statewide and local youth advisory groups which give youth and young adults the opportunity to work with educators/trainers and industry to strengthen how workforce development systems respond to youth.
- 2) Strengthen relationships among the private and non-profit business sector, middle schools, high schools, colleges, and universities to increase work-based learning opportunities for youth/young adults.

- 3) Use youth informed approaches to adapt or retire approaches that do not address the needs of youth to prevent the brain drain.

PY2019 Progress:

- **Work Based Learning (WBL) Position/Initiative:** As part of Perkins Leadership funding, The Public Education Department (PED) College and Career Readiness Bureau (CCRB) is funding a three-year Work-Based Learning Initiative (WBLI). This competitive grant offered \$60k per LEA as salary support for a work-based learning coordinator. 10 positions were funded, the specific sites are listed below. In addition, the PED and NMDWS state agencies coordinate to share a staff position who works in support of these 10 coordinators and to serve as a liaison between the two agencies.
 - Aldo Leopold Charter
 - Grant-Cibola County Schools
 - Farmington Municipal Schools
 - Media Arts Collaborative Charter School
 - Monte Del Sol Charter
 - Roswell Independent School District
 - Vista Grande High School
 - Las Cruces Public Schools
 - Region 9 Education Cooperative (2 positions)
- **Perkins V (NM CTE) Plan Development:** In the fall of 2019, the PED facilitated 6 stakeholder engagement meetings which initiated authentic collaboration between workforce partners, businesses, chambers of commerce and the educators and families to address the vision for CTE as integral in the state workforce system. The stakeholder meetings were followed by additional webinars which led to 10 regional Comprehensive Local Assessment meetings in the Spring of 2020. These meetings supported the development of a 4-year plan that continues to refine the state's vision for CTE based on feedback received, whereby business and industry engage in collaboration with K-12 and postsecondary educators, guided by relevant state agencies including Public Education, Higher Education, Workforce Development, and Economic Development (see attached Carl Perkins Regional Plan).
- **Division of Vocational Rehabilitation:** An additional six counselors were hired to work directly with public and charter schools to support students with disabilities with career exploration and readiness. The services directly support the goals of Perkins V and New Mexico career technical education. As a result, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) has a specific goal to provide outreach and engage with all public and charter schools in an effort to link students with tool, resources and programs to prepare them for their future. PY2020 will include broadening support for these counselors by including them in the workshops and training planning for youth providers and business engagement professionals.

NEW MEXICO'S SECTOR STRATEGIES AND CAREER PATHWAY DEVELOPMENT:

Improving New Mexico's workforce talent is a key focus for the State Workforce Development Board. Sharing a common vision and approach among the LWDBs and core partners is a key strategy NMDWS is using to implement this vision. NMDWS hired Maher & Maher to provide one-on-one coaching with each of the LWDBs to develop a sector strategy plan. This included providing guidance on how to organize and articulate a plan across partners, including economic development, at a regional level. Each of the LWDBs were prepared to begin fully implementing activities but were slowed due to COVID-19. The following is a brief update on the status of sector strategy activities throughout the program year conducted by each of the LWDBs:

Northern Area Workforce Development Board (NAWDB): The NAWDB began working on a Sector Strategy plan following on-site coaching visit on January 16, 2020. Following the coaching visit, four priority sectors – Information Technology, Healthcare, Education and Hospitality – were identified based on regional LMI and discussion with industry leaders. An inaugural convening event was hosted and facilitated focusing on Information Technology in March 2020. Information Technology was selected as the first priority due to the overwhelming demand as well as how the occupation was central to several employers. Although COVID-19 slowed many activities, the NAWDB hosted a follow up convening with employers with a focused conversation on challenges/opportunities to improve education/training offerings with post-secondary institutions. Attendees helped identify key qualifying skills, knowledge, and abilities and credentials that are common among most employers. The group plans to meet again in PY2020 to develop strategies to create training programs that are responsive to meeting needs. The group also identified additional employers to invite to the next discussion.

Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board (SAWDB): The SAWDB held a WIOA Partners Forum in Las Cruces January 2020 to discuss the implementation of sector strategies in the workforce region. The event was directed by the consulting group of Maher & Maher and included training on key elements of building a local system approach of building effective partnerships.

The partners developed an action plan for the region that was presented to the SAWDB planning committee and board of directors. The plan identified potential partners as well as strategic objectives to implement a program for the two industries identified by the board. The planning committee met in February 2020 to further develop action steps for program development. The proposed plan also focused on career pathways to align with proposed sector strategies. The SAWDB approved healthcare and education industries. COVID-19 slowed progress and the SAWDB plans to resume activities in PY2020, to meet with administrators to continue developing the programs.

The Workforce Connection of Central New Mexico (WCCNM): WCCNM sector strategies progressed with the IT/tech and healthcare industries. For IT/tech, the WCCNM and its partners continue to leverage the employer and industry relationships that have been established with other sector work, including the TechHire Advisory Council, formed under the TechHire New Mexico program, a \$4 million, four-year grant to support and fund IT/tech training opportunities in the region. WCCNM also is coordinating with other existing IT/tech efforts that are currently occurring in the region, including New Mexico Information Technology Apprenticeship Program, the only registered IT apprenticeship program statewide, and the City of Albuquerque Job Training Assistance, etc.

For healthcare subsectors, an inventory and assessment of existing healthcare-related business and community relationship will be used to facilitate meetings and strategy sessions based on feedback from employers, associations, educational institutions, economic development, and other stakeholders. As part of future discussions and meetings within both of these key industry sectors, there will be a focus on various activities including strategic plans establishing industry-driven workforce goals and career pathways to make it easier for individuals to access the opportunities in healthcare and IT/tech in the Central Region. The WCCNM will review board policy to determine what can further promote a focused strategy for the two primary industries identified.

Additionally, the WCCNM will explore ways to support and engage with county-specific leading & emerging sectors to include: Bernalillo - Film; Sandoval - Advanced Manufacturing; Torrance - Sustainable energy; and Valencia - Manufacturing/Construction. The WCCNM will facilitate county-level advisory meetings in PY20 to bring together employers, industry representatives, education/training providers, community-based organizations and workforce to discuss workforce development challenges, workforce supply training/education needs, and how to maximize career technical education to better prepare our workforce for current and future careers.

Eastern Area Workforce Development Board (EAWDB): Much of the focus for the Eastern Area Workforce Development Board (EAWDB) revolved around increasing the number served and increasing alignment of training

with the sector strategies identified by the board in June 2019. The sectors targeted are healthcare, including paraprofessionals and support staff, education, and energy.

The energy sector, both green and oil and gas production, have large impacts on employment projections and economic health for the area and for the state. New green jobs continue to emerge in the region and includes both solar and wind energy. The EAWDB continues to work with employers and training providers to meet the needs for skilled workers in both of these areas. In PY19 the number of customers trained in the health care industry was 253, well over half of the total number of individuals trained. The increased outreach for the education industry also resulted in 17 new training enrollments in this sector and is expected to more than double in PY20 as schools reopen classrooms.

Statewide Career Pathway Planning PY2019:

During PY2019/2020, the Adult Education Division of the New Mexico Higher Education Department (NMHED-AE) continued to step up their WIOA partnership engagement and efficacy efforts on several levels, beginning with the provision of increasingly strong leadership and technical support to New Mexico's 24 local Adult Education programs in all workforce regions of the state. Of particular interest to WIOA partners was the launch of NMHED-AE's longitudinal Career Pathway Initiative, a comprehensive professional development effort designed to uniformly strengthen New Mexico's local Adult Education program provider's career pathway-oriented service delivery models, for the benefit of all WIOA partners and all program participants. One of many critical aspects of this service delivery model includes the formation of effective partnerships, and many WIOA partners outside Adult Education were invited to participate in Phase I of this planned three-year initiative.

Noteworthy efforts with local programs also included facilitating stronger connections between local Administrative Entity (AE) programs and local workforce development boards, resulting in the appointment of new Adult Education representatives and the formation of critical new formal agreements between contracted service providers and higher education institutions/local AE programs.

The Accelerated College and Career Education (ACCE) program is funded by the New Mexico Human Services Department (HSD) to provide instruction leading to high school equivalency attainment for adults receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). While NMHED-AE has supported an HSD/Adult Education partnership on this front for years, just last year the Mountain Road American Job Center in Albuquerque began providing designated space for classes to be conducted on-site for these participants, both to expand ACCE program capacity and to help align workforce system provider efforts. This is another excellent example of Adult Education and other WIOA partners coming together to facilitate the common WIOA mission.

In addition to providing support on the local programmatic level, NMHED-AE spearheaded several large statewide initiatives in PY2019/2020 that contributed significantly to facilitating partnerships and serving individuals with barriers to employment. First, NMHED-AE held two statewide grant competitions designed to support partner connection and efficacy around serving individuals with two specific barriers: (1) very low literacy levels, and (2) involvement with the criminal justice system. Significant resources were invested in the "Adult Education Justice Initiative" grant competition in particular, and while the resources for these grants were from a one-time legislative appropriation, the competition was designed to encourage WIOA and community partner collaboration and to plan for project sustainability.

In addition, there was an intentional tie-in with another statewide leadership initiative spearheaded by NMHED-AE in PY 2019/2020: A formal partnership forged with national nonprofit Jobs for the Future (JFF) designed to strengthen statewide equitable Career Pathway access and infrastructure in New Mexico.

In fall 2019 after extensive research into JFF’s “Pathways to Prosperity” Network and related efforts, NMHED-AE engaged Jobs for the Future with a proposal to work with New Mexico on a unique Career Pathways system design project that would be: (1) an inter-agency effort, (2) intentionally executed in stages, (3) intentionally target multiple “talent pipelines” from the outset, including both the K-12 system and adults, and (4) involve New Mexico formally joining JFF’s Pathways to Prosperity Network to support longitudinal work. In February 2020, NMHED-AE invested \$100,000 to allow JFF to begin the initial research/asset mapping phase of this work, with a focus on (but by no means limited to) Adult and Corrections Education in New Mexico. With a grant provided by NMHED-AE, New Mexico officially joined the Pathways Network, and the following state agencies collaborated with HED in earnest to contribute to Phase I efforts: The Department of Workforce Solutions (DWS), the Public Education Department (PED), the Economic Development Department (EDD), and the New Mexico Department of Corrections (NMCD). Higher education institution leadership and other key state leaders (e.g. Los Alamos National Labs, United Way of Central New Mexico, the Bridge of Southern New Mexico) were instrumental in Phase I of this work as well, work designed to serve as a springboard for sustained efforts. PY 2019/2020 Phase I efforts culminated in a comprehensive report and JFF’s valuable Strategic Roadmap recommendations for New Mexico, which partners are currently using to plan next steps.

NEW MEXICO’S SET-ASIDE FUND INVESTMENTS:

State set aside funds are utilized to support the following ongoing costs that support statewide systems/operations to support and enhance workforce development activities:

- ***New Mexico Workforce Connection Online System:*** funding utilized to sustain a virtual system available 24/7 to support access to services and supports including, unemployment benefits, career exploration/readiness tools, resume development, links to labor market information and access to career professionals to provide one-on-one assistance and career counseling. The New Mexico Workforce Connection Online System is a state of the art system that is also utilized to manage and report performance, maintain accountability, and support case management work statewide.
- ***Personnel Costs of WIOA Program Coordinators and Monitoring.*** Staff assigned provide ongoing support to each of the four LWDBs, including consultation for local board and chief elected officials on best and promising practices; Title I program implementation for youth, adult, and dislocated workers, fiscal compliance, policy development, local/regional planning, sector strategy and career pathway implementation, and partnership engagement at federal, state and local levels.
- ***New Mexico Performs Data Dashboard/System:*** The dashboard system is licensed from FutureWork System. The *NM Performs* system performance monitoring data views and reports are designed to provide timely and accurate data on activities and outcomes to assist NMDWS leadership, including SWDB and LWDBs, to set priorities, target resources, review and report on program goals.
- ***Career Solutions and Why I Work:*** online tools/resources designed to support career readiness/exploration for youth and young adults. The Career Solutions tools also includes a curriculum that can be utilized by public/charter schools to support classroom instruction. These two tools have quickly become recognized and valued for their ability to connect

Targeted projects and activities with set aside funds:

- ***New Mexico Native American Summit:*** On November 14, 2019 NMDWS hosted a meeting with the WIOA Native American funded projects statewide. A total of 15 tribal communities attended. The agenda topics included a listening session to learn about services available in each community, identify opportunities to improve communication and coordination with NMDWS and local workforce

development boards, identify specific challenges and opportunities necessary to assure inclusion of Native Americans in workforce development activities, and outline action steps/strategies to include specific efforts into the Combined State Plan. As a result of this activity, the programs were provided comprehensive training and technical assistance on tools and resources including, the New Mexico Workforce Connection Online System, Career Solutions and Why I Work. There was also a marked increase in coordination with tribal communities with each local workforce board resulting in an increase in the number of Native American's receiving workforce development service. Tribal communities also attended state planning sessions and provided input/feedback on sections discussing services/supports for Native Americans. Plans were underway to include focused presentations on the needs of Native Americans at an annual workforce conference. Due to COVID-19 the conference was cancelled. NMDWS will continue to include these programs in all ongoing technical assistance, conferences and workshops in PY2020.

- NMDWS Statewide Youth Engagement Coordinator partnered with the ***ABC Community Schools Partnership*** to provide Career Readiness programming in five high schools located in the largest school district in the State: Albuquerque Public Schools: Highland High School, Manzano High School, West Mesa High School, Rio Grande High School, and Atrisco Heritage High School. Funding was used to staff, create, and coordinate career exploration and readiness efforts in all five high schools. Community School Coordinators received training on how to utilize and navigate NMDWS resources and how to present tools to students. Participating students received lessons on career exploration, labor market information, resume building, and concluded the program by participating in a mock interview event at each school. ABC Community Schools engaged businesses to participate in all aspects of the project, exposing students to various careers, providing guidance and feedback on resume writing, and participating as interviewers at several mock interview events. Highland High School also hosted a 2 week Virtual Career Readiness program for students in partnership with the Boys & Girls Club, providing over 20 students with extended career exploration experiences and assisting with summer job searches. Summer job placement was not as successful as planned due to COVID-19 that resulted in several business closures.
- ***Statewide Youth Workforce Readiness Activities:*** The commitment to improve services under the WIOA Youth Program for in-school and out-of-school youth are evident through the activities at the state and local level in New Mexico. NMDWS has dedicated resources to youth workforce efforts by creating a youth focused team which includes a Statewide Youth Engagement Coordinator and a Work Based Learning Coordinator. The youth team is responsible for ensuring compliance with state and federal statute, regulation and policy requirements for the implementation of services and programs specifically designed for youth. The youth coordinators also provide technical assistance and training to WIOA core partners, as well as schools, youth serving organizations and other state agencies such as child welfare, juvenile justice, and Native American pueblos and tribes. Training and technical assistance focuses on best practices in youth engagement, strategies for strengthening coordination with youth organizations, including secondary and post-secondary programs in order to promote statewide awareness of workforce needs of youth both in and out of school.

NEW MEXICO'S EVALUATION & QUALITY IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITIES:

The following is a list of research and evaluations conducted by NMDWS Economic Research & Analysis Bureau. These studies were used to inform and guide state and local planning for the Combined State Plan, LWDB local plans and for response/recovery related to COVID-19. Research included focused data studies and publications which were used to facilitate discussions for economic recovery and workforce planning. Additional agencies benefitting from evaluation/research documents included Department of Health, Economic Development, Senior Employment, and legislative staff and representatives.

- ***New Mexico Data Focus on Veterans:*** As of 2017, approximately 148,310 veterans were living in New Mexico, representing 9.3 percent of the adult population. Of this population, 45.7 percent are employed in New Mexico's labor force or are actively seeking work with an average annual income of \$39,049. This group also has a high attainment of post-secondary education with 39.1 percent with some college or associate degree and 31.4 percent achieving a bachelor's degree or higher.
https://www.dws.state.nm.us/Portals/0/DM/LMI/NM_Data_Focus_Veterans.pdf
- ***Poverty in New Mexico:*** According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2018 American Community Survey, New Mexico had the second highest poverty rate in the U.S. at 19.5 percent. Of this population, we saw a rise in the adults who are 65 and older at 13.3 percent; growing 9 percent from 2015. Some of the reasons we saw this growth was due to high medical expenses and increased number of persons in this age group. Articles was specifically used to guide state planning discussions with core partners.
https://www.dws.state.nm.us/Portals/0/DM/LMI/Poverty_in_NM_2018.pdf
- ***Unemployment Insurance Claims:*** As of May 15, 2020, there were 124,903 unemployment insurance claimants receiving benefits or pending certification. 80.5 percent of those claimants were eligible under the Standard Unemployment Insurance (STUI) program. Claimants who did not meet eligibility requirements for STUI, received benefits from Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA), Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC), or Trade Readjustment Allowance (TRA). More than half of the claimants were women and more than one in five worked in the accommodation and food service industry.
https://www.dws.state.nm.us/Portals/0/DM/LMI/Data_Focus_Employment_and_Unemployment_for_NM_Municipalities.pdf
- ***Data Focus on Youth: Ages 16-24:*** The youth population equate to 12.5 percent of New Mexico's population with a total number of 261,489 persons. Roosevelt County held the highest percentage of the population at 20.7 percent, while Harding County had the lowest population of youth at 2.2 percent. Nearly one in four New Mexico youth, between the ages of 16-19, were enrolled in school and employed. However, more than half of this same age range were not enrolled in school and were either unemployed or not in the labor force. Information was used to develop and inform Youth Summit Workshop hosted and facilitated by NMDWS for youth serving organizations statewide.
https://www.dws.state.nm.us/Portals/0/DM/LMI/NM_Data_Focus_Youth_2019.pdf
- ***Data Focus on Female, Young Adult Unemployment Claimants:*** The Covid-19 pandemic has shaken multiple occupations and industry to their core, but the greatest industry to feel its affects in New Mexico has been the food preparation and serving related industry. Claimants for unemployment insurance increased from 319 claims in April of 2019 to 11,791 for the week ending on April 11, 2020; a 3,593.2 percent increase. 54 percent of this industry consists of female workers and 39.9 percent were younger than 25 years of age.
https://www.dws.state.nm.us/Portals/0/DM/LMI/Increase_Female_Young_Adult_UI_Claims.pdf

- **Data Focus on Seniors:** The 2018 U.S. Census Bureau's 2014-2018 five year estimate concludes that 16.3 percent of New Mexico's population (341,515 people) are 65 years of age and older. Grant County contained the highest population at 25.6 percent and Lea County with the least at 11 percent. 16.3 percent of this age group are participating in the labor force (1.4 percent lower than the national average) and their unemployment rate is 4.1 percent (0.6 percent higher than the national average).
https://www.dws.state.nm.us/Portals/0/DM/LMI/NM_Data_Focus_Seniors.pdf
- **New Mexico Business Employment Dynamics (BED):** Third Quarter 2019: Business Employment Dynamics (BED) tracks gross and net job gains and job losses of private businesses to help understand the dynamic changes of the labor market in a specific area. From the second to the quarter of 2019, there were 3,806 net gain in jobs (43,749 gross job gains), 39,943 gross job losses, and 83,692 job churn. Information developed to guide regional discussions hosted by NMDWS in partnership with LWDBs to guide reopening and recovery strategies.
https://www.dws.state.nm.us/Portals/0/DM/LMI/NM_BED_ThirdQtr_2019.pdf
- **Data Focus on NM Hospital Industry:** In 2018, the average weekly wages for works in the New Mexico Hospital industry was \$1,264 and over one in four of those who worked in the industry were Registered Nurses. Employment in the New Mexico hospital industry increased by 31.1 percent since 2005. That is an average employment of 29,638 in 2005 to 38,843 in 2018. Information used to guide planning and partnership with Department of Health to organize and facilitate emergency recruitment and hire for healthcare workforce. https://www.dws.state.nm.us/Portals/0/DM/LMI/NM_Data_Focus_Hospitals.pdf

NEW MEXICO'S PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY & INTEGRITY:

During PY2019 New Mexico provided career services to 2,584 adults with an average cost per participant of \$1,190. The adults receiving additional training services were 2,358 with an average cost per participant of \$3,318. The number of participants receiving services reflects a 24% increase in services to English Language Learners. The Dislocated Worker program provided career services to 627 participants with an average cost per participant of \$3,397 and training services to 469 participants with an average cost per participant of \$2,770. New Mexico saw an increase in the Dislocated Work program of 11%. This was driven by 74% increase in services to displaced homemakers, 55% increase in services to long-term unemployed, and a 25% increase in services to low income individuals. The Youth program provided career services to 1,116 participants with an average cost per participant of \$2,555 and training services to 954 participants with an average cost per participant of \$1,577. These number reflect a decrease in services in the Youth program of 11%. We can account for the decreased numbers in an underperforming local board that has transitioned youth services to a new service provider. New Mexico has been providing technical assistances to both the board in question and the new service provider to increase services delivery. The WIOA Title III Employment Services program served 19,405 participants with an average cost per participant of \$239. Title III saw a reduction in the number of participants served, this is attributed to the low level of unemployment during a majority of program year 2019.

The WIOA Adult program met two (2) of the primary indicators of performance and failed one (1). The WIOA Dislocated Worker program met two (2) of the primary indicators of performance and met one (1). For the Youth program the state failed two (2) primary indicators of performance and exceeded one (1). The WIOA Title III Employment Services program met one (1) primary indicator of performance and failed one (1). During the program year New Mexico provided multiple technical assistance opportunities to the local areas and service providers. In 2019 New Mexico held a two-day technical assistance training around the WIOA Title I Youth program issues and best practices. A second technical assistance training was held to address issues with

Dislocated Workers. The technical assistance was accompanied by a revised dislocated worker policy strengthening and clarifying services to dislocated workers in New Mexico.

Data Analysis: To assist the state, local boards, and service providers in better understanding the regional workforce data including the primary indicators of performance, the agency purchased a program called FutureWorks Systems. This software is a data analytic tool that allows the state and local areas to isolate specific performance measures and explore the data to better understand populations and circumstances affecting the primary indicators of performance. FutureWorks Systems provided a two-day on-site training for all New Mexico users in July 2019. The training included hands on use and written instructional material guiding staff in utilizing data analytics, FutureWorks site navigation, utilizing pre-built data views, and how to build custom data views within the FutureWorks Systems. The FutureWorks System organization provides on-going product training and support by providing previously held recorded webinar training sessions, conducting New Mexico specific online training sessions and provides online technical assistance as requested by the user group.

FutureWorks System has been utilized throughout the program year by the WIOA state staff as well as the core partners, providers, and program staff. This tool has been invaluable and provides multi-faceted insight to the workforce system in terms of progress towards state and local area performance measures, as well as providing a focus on the demographics of the populations served (ethnicity, education level, barriers to employment). It allows staff to measure and understand the volume of customers entering and exiting the workforce system as well as give clarity to the occupations customers are being trained in.

FutureWorks has been a critical component in providing the state workforce boards timely and accurate information regarding how each of the local area workforce development boards have been performing. This data has been utilized in past WIOA Workforce Conferences, provided data for in the state workforce board business engagement subcommittee, and again utilized for the state board in providing data for the local area designation initiative.

FutureWorks System was critical in establishing challenging yet attainable performance measures for each of the local workforce development boards for program years 2020 and 2021. It allowed for the state to quickly understand each local areas proposed plans, the populations they intend on serving and negotiate performance levels within reason.

Common Exit policy: Under New Mexico's common exit policy, a participant must complete services from all programs in which the participant is co-enrolled in order to exit from the system. Common exit is required for WIOA Title IB, WIOA Title III, Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG), Migrant and Season Farmworker (MSFW), and Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) programs.

Data Validation: The agency, in accordance with U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) federal requirements, is establishing and finalizing a data validation policy for the six core WIOA programs. The purpose of data validation is multi-faceted and is intended to enhance data integrity and authenticate that workforce services and funds are being provided to eligible individuals by verifying that the performance data reported by local workforce development boards to the state and to USDOL are valid, accurate, reliable, and comparable across programs. The process includes verifying relevant source documentation defined by federal code of regulation and Training and Employment Guidance Letters (TEGLs)

The workforce system benefits from establishing data validation policy and practices as it will enhance the agency's ability to identify anomalies in the data and resolve issues that may cause inaccurate reporting; identify allowable source documentation required for common data elements; and improve program performance accountability through the results of data validation efforts.

Effectiveness in Serving Employers:

States were given the options by USDOL of selecting two of three proposed methodology to calculate the states effectiveness in service employers. The two methods New Mexico has selected to calculate the effectiveness in service employers are:

- Rate of repeat business services to employers; and
- Employer market penetration rate.

Upon review of data, a total of 16,628 employers were served over the last three years and of those, 4,785 returned for services during PY19 for a repeat business service rate of 28.80%. In market penetration, the workforce system services impacted 11.9% of all employers within the state.

All four local boards are utilizing WIOA funds earmarked for adults and dislocated workers to support training and on-the-job training to support businesses in the recruitment and hiring of employees to meet their needs. The response to their needs and the effectiveness in meeting their demands can be seen in the types of occupations supported statewide.

The following tables depict the top ten occupations supported through Individual Training Accounts, On-the-Job Training and Customized Training with WIOA Funds.

Individual Training Accounts Statewide	Count
Registered Nurses	332
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	272
Medical Assistants	172
NULL	95
Dental Assistants	71
Nursing Assistants	65
Medical Records and Health Information Technicians	58
General and Operations Managers	49
Computer and Information Systems Managers	37
Administrative Services Managers	37

On-the-Job Training Statewide	Count
General and Operations Managers	28
Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	23
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	16
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	14
Welders, Cutters, and Welder Fitters	13
First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers	12
Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	12
Helpers--Production Workers	11
Customer Service Representatives	9
Software Developers, Systems Software	8

NEW MEXICO'S RAPID RESPONSE PY2019:

In PY19, a total of 46 companies reported layoffs affecting 5,263 employees. The industries most impacted by layoffs were Manufacturing/Oil & Gas (2236), call centers (586 employees), Health Care/Social Assistance (644), and Service/Hospitality (1513). Areas impacted by region – Central (2264), Southwest (1460), Eastern (840), and Northern (699). All companies were offered Rapid Response services.

Exhibit 8: New Mexico's Rapid Response- Eight Year Data

Program Year – July 1 to June 30	Participants	RR Meetings
2011-2012	2,225	59
2012-2013	1,422	56
2013-2014	3,481	72
2014-2015	1,886	22
2015-2016	2,029	30
2017-2018	2,840	42
2018-2019	3,238	26
2019-2020	5,263	46
Totals	22,384	353

Rapid Response and TAA: Rapid Response and Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program are working in partnership on researching more companies and their reasons for layoffs and/or closures. This enables information to individuals sooner than in prior years and allows for more enrollments in TAA benefits. It's also increased the number of TAA submission on behalf of employees and companies. For FY 2019-2020 program year, 6 certified petitions were approved for 714 impacted workers, with 80 participants enrolled in a training program at community colleges and/or universities in the state.

Freeport-McMoRan Drive Thru Expo: A drive thru training expo was held for 850 furloughed employees from Freeport-McMoRan. Western New Mexico University hosted the event on September 30, 2020 from 3-5pm. *"The Drive Thru Training Expo is a culmination of months of collaboration with partners all focused on providing resources for employees who have been impacted during the past months, said Laura Phelps, who is Strategic Community Development Manager for Freeport-McMoRan New Mexico Operations. "It's clear, the pandemic hasn't changed our community's willingness to rally and support each other. If anything, it's strengthened our resolve. The expo exemplifies how innovation and partnership can overcome barriers and get resources where they are needed most"* The Expo provided a critical opportunity for the NMDWS Rapid Response Team/WIOA/TAA reps to interact with potentially eligible TAA and WIOA participants.

Cibola County Virtual Job Fair Event: Cibola County is headed for additional economic hard times with the layoffs and closure of three major employers in the area. In response to the closing of Escalante Power Plant in Prewitt and Marathon Oil Refinery, and layoffs at the Peabody Coal Mine, New Mexico State University - Grants Campus and NMSU Extension collaborated with Cibola Communities Economic Development Foundation, NMDWS Rapid Response Team, and the local job center to host a virtual job fair. The virtual event was held October 7, 2019 and eleven businesses participated, including Los Alamos National Laboratory, Spaceport America, Kairos Power, New Mexico Department of Transportation, New Mexico Correction Facility, Pueblo of

Laguna, Pueblo of Acoma, IBEW Local Union, City of Grants, Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act, and Solo Works Cibola.

Transition Resource Fair - Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association: NMDWS and Congresswoman Xochitl Torres Small hosted a transition resource fair for employees affected by the Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association closure in Prewitt, New Mexico. Over 60 employees attended the event on February 17, 2020 at New Mexico State University in Grants. Of the 60 participants, 40 went through a pre-qualification process for paid education training through WIOA. Employers remarked on the level of qualifications of the participants and many employers scheduled future interviews immediately. *"The Governor cares deeply about an economy that works for everyone, and that means we have to do everything in our power to help the workers and communities affected by this closure," said Department of Workforce Solutions Cabinet Secretary Bill McCamley. "Our team is dedicated to providing career pathways, skills development, and connections to resources for everyone that needs assistance."* Participating employers and service providers included Los Alamos National Laboratory, Peabody Energy, Western Correction Facility, Intrepid, New Mexico State Police, Sacred Wind Communications, DePaul Engineering, Bonaguili Construction, Four Corners Welding, Fire Rock Casino, Murphy Builders, Grater Gallup Economic Development, Small Business Development Center – Grants, SER Jobs for Progress, and New Mexico Human Services Department. NMDWS has scheduled follow up workshops next week for former Escalante employees on resume and interviewing tips

Rapid Response and All Hands New Mexico!: On June 2020 NMDWS announced the start of the All Hands New Mexico! program. The goal of this program is to support both employers ready to reopen and job seekers ready to get back to work, as the state continues economic recovery from COVID-19. Employers looking for well-qualified workforce talent can quickly post their positions on the NMDWS website at <https://www.dws.state.nm.us/COVID-19-Post-Jobs>. Staff from the local job centers contact employers for additional information and then match and screen well-qualified candidates from our online job system to expedite the hiring process. Job seekers can use the NMDWS site to upload their resume to their account at <https://www.jobs.state.nm.us>, as well as search available job openings. Having their information already in system provide job seekers with real-time alerts to well-matched job opportunities in their region Program.

"COVID-19 recovery requires we do all we can to support our businesses in reopening as quickly and safely as possible," said Tracey Bryan, Chair of the New Mexico State Workforce Board. "The workforce system has become the single best source for identifying potential talent, based upon the unprecedented number of people who filed unemployment claims and are now seeking employment assistance through Workforce Connection. This includes thousands of experienced workers, some facing unemployment for the first time, who are ready to get back to work and start a new chapter in their careers." To date, All Hands New Mexico! has assisted 155 employers and 100+ job seekers have gained employment.



Self-Employed Stimulus Payment (SESP): NMDWS offered a one-time grant to self-employed individuals impacted by COVID-19 in the amount of \$750.00. The Self-Employed Stimulus Payment (SESP) was made available to the first 2,000 applicants that qualified. This opportunity was funded by \$1.5 million from the Rapid Response Layoff Aversion program. Eligibility requirements were established, and the intent of the grant funding was to provide temporary assistance to self-employed individuals until funding from the CARES Act became available. A total of 1,321 applications were received and 770 were approved; the total grant amount expended was \$577,500.00.

Economic Development partnership: NMDWS is working in collaboration with the New Mexico Economic Development Department (NMEDD) to enhance the layoff aversion program in our state. The agencies have hired two full time staff who will become part of the employer retention program team lead by NMEDD. This team works with businesses statewide to address company challenges that many times include workforce issues. The new staff will focus on assessing vulnerabilities in businesses that may lead to layoffs, RIFs or closures. Staff will then identify partnerships – EDD, DWS, Title I, etc., that can provide businesses with the support and resources needed to overcome the vulnerabilities and minimize adverse impacts to staff.

COVID-19 and Layoff Aversion: With the COVID-19 pandemic, Rapid Response has moved its service to a virtual platform via Zoom. This approach offers a safe environment to connect with employees' virtually. Providing resources and information on unemployment insurance and how to navigate the system. We also, invite partners from our job centers, New Mexico Human Services Department and BeWellNM to present information on behavioral health services support, affordable health insurance programs, and outplacement support.

In PY19, a total of 46 companies reported layoffs affecting 5,263 employees. The industries most impacted by layoffs were Manufacturing/Oil & Gas (2236), call centers (586 employees), Health Care/Social Assistance (644), and Service/Hospitality (1513). Areas impacted by Region – Central (2264), Southwest (1460), Eastern (840), and Northern (699). All companies were offered Rapid Response services.

New Mexico continues to shift its model from a reactive to a proactive approach to layoffs. NMDWS staff work in partnership with the LWDBs to contact individuals immediately after filing an Unemployment Insurance claim to engage in re-employment activities. Our business teams utilize this information to match with current vacancies with employers in their community to fill the gaps quicker. This strategy will contribute to lowering exhaustion and duration rate, but in some instances could get the laid off individual back to work even prior to filing a claim.

NEW MEXICO LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARDS:

PY 2019 has been a unique and challenging year for all of four of New Mexico LWDBs. Each LWDB encountered new opportunities unforeseen and quite unpredictable. COVID-19 hit every community in the United States very hard; and the four local areas in New Mexico are no exception. The pandemic created a scenario of uncertainty and anxiety among our citizens and priorities shifted from serving the community to protecting the community.

COVID-19 opened a window of creativity and innovation for the LWDBs, One Stop Operators and workforce partners agencies as they worked together to create ways to serving and engaging with participants and businesses using remote and virtual tools. Each LWDB experienced varying degrees of efficiency and effectiveness with virtual delivery and it's important to note our rural areas experienced problems with connectivity due to lack of broadband access. COVID-19 forced each board to accelerate remote work from home for staff and partner agencies and pushed limits to address challenges of connectivity.

Each LWDB did a good job this year meeting performance measures, implementing remote work and staff/partner training; and monitoring for customer and business participation in virtual programming. An area of improvement

for all LWDBs is a need for focused work in continuous quality improvement and acceleration of sector strategy work. The following are key highlights from each of the LWDBs in New Mexico.

Workforce Connection of Central New Mexico

The Workforce Connection of Central New Mexico (WCCNM) and their Workforce Connection Centers continue to move forward with strategic approaches to meet the needs of priority industries and assist businesses to become competitive and profitable. They use a regional business-driven system to meet the needs of businesses and job seekers in a four-county area. PY2019 challenges with the COVID-19 crisis, WCCNM continued to enhance services to job seekers as well as the business community using virtual services and limited appointment in their job centers.

WCCNM continues to convene a group of partners to brainstorm and improve ways in which services can be delivered effectively in a remote and virtual mode. WCCNM is incorporating all available technologies and tools, in addition to investing and developing much needed tech upgrades. WCCNM and their partners continue to pursue region-wide and county-specific sector strategies by collaborating with education and economic development entities in support of a robust talent pipeline and career pathways. The WCCNM has leveraged opportunities to foster relationships with both WIOA mandated partners and community-based organizations to pursue important objectives and innovative approaches for workforce development. With these efforts and diligent support from the board, staff and our many partners, the Central Region continues to be a leader for the New Mexico workforce and business community. *(See Attached LWDB Reports)*

Northern Area Workforce Development Board

The Northern Area Workforce Development Board started and concluded the Program Year under Administrative Oversight from New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (NMDWS). NMDWS worked with the Board providing technical assistance on several aspects to improve Board performance and compliance, including, Board governance, staff development, program performance, selection and orientation of new training providers and CEO engagement.

There were significant changes within Board staff and personnel, including dismissal of the Administrator which resulted in disruption of operations. Board membership was also in noncompliance and a new One Stop Operator was selected. Additionally, additional fiscal guidance was provided to improve fiscal controls and fiscal management in partnership with the CEOs and their fiscal agent.

The Northern Area Board also had a setback when Dislocated Worker and Youth funds were reverted to NMDWS due to inability to meet spend down deadlines. Consequently, this resulted in not meeting some performance measures. The LWDB and its staff, and CEOs have been very responsive to guidance and technical assistance and they are rebuilding relationships with each other and the community.

In closing, the NALWDB for PY19 had numerous obstacles and challenges but persevered. Services to clients were minimally disrupted as they transferred to a new provider and business engagement is strengthening. NALWDB has improved significantly and is meeting important targets and goals established by NMDWS. *(See attached LWDB Reports)*

Eastern Area Workforce Development Board

The Eastern Area board transitioned to a new youth provider that overhauled and redesigned the youth program to make it more innovative and more structured than what was previously in place. The new youth provider began July 1, 2019 and has focused heavily on improving staff training plans, improving the quality of case management and establishment of effective service delivery models. The youth provider is also working to bring up a virtual

platform called, “*CareerEdge*” that would allow a wide array of virtual services to be made available in the rural communities utilizing virtual resources. It is expected that this platform will not only increase the level of engagement of youth in the program but increase the number of youths served in areas where there is not a job center.

When COVID-19 started effecting the area, the Eastern Board took the approach to invest in staff and partners training at the job centers to support virtual/remote service delivery. The crisis pushed the workforce to respond to the needs of tens of thousands of individuals overnight while facing closure of the offices. The increased stressors the pandemic placed on the workforce system shined a light on the fractures and weak points of the system. Successfully responding to the needs of system customers necessitated a shift in board priorities, new approaches to service delivery, and new ways of thinking about workforce development and employer services. The crisis created opportunity and the perfect environment to foster innovation, increased partnership, and system growth.

Partners were challenged to find solutions for making those services available through online, virtual, or telephonic means. Most partners developed a variety of solutions to provide access to those services in a virtual or telephonic format through a variety of means with varying degrees of success. The New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers were no different. The Board, its staff and the One Stop Operator (OSO) worked to identify system needs and priorities for staff, help identify partner needs and resources, and establish methods to increase collaboration across the system, and to share knowledge and lessons learned in the wake of school and community closures. It was concluded that increasing the quality and availability of virtual services had to be at the core of system goals and preparing center and partner staff to operate in this environment.

The Eastern Board, Title III partner, and OSO are also focused on establishing strategies to help employers in the area recover from the impact of the pandemic. As a part of this Unemployment Insurance claimants are being grouped by occupations, and those with the slowest recovery projections are being targeted for skills upgrading to move them into occupations that are showing faster recovery and career pathways that provide for future growth through upskilling. For example, they are working to help build a model for hotels to share employees across various brands e.g. Holiday Inn Express and Days Inn, to recruit and hire positions that currently are not full time employment but where a shared employee could achieve full times status through sharing hours across hotels. *(See LWDB Reports)*

Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board

The Adult and Dislocated Worker service provider provided services through the entire seven-county region. They fulfilled 104 Individual Training Account (ITA) contracts and 135 On-the-Job Trainings (OJTs). The Adult program had an increase in the total number of exiters from PY18 to PY19, 251 participants versus 305. They also served a total of 490 participants in PY19, close to the 528 served the previous year.

Prior to and during the initial months of COVID-19, the demand for dislocated worker services decreased as unemployed workers received unemployment benefits without the need to conduct job searches. Beyond the initial months of COVID-19, the dislocated worker and youth service providers conducted outreach operations and began enrolling more individuals into training programs, while also working with employers to fill positions through on-the-job training contracts.

A new youth service provider was selected and was focused early in the PY to hiring and training of staff, purchasing equipment, supplies, securing office space, and developing partnerships in the region. A large caseload from the previous youth provider was successfully transferred. They quickly established relationships with employers for work experience sites that provided an array of different opportunities for youth participants.

Alamo Navajo School Board, Inc. (ANSBI) is another youth service provider serving the Alamo Chapter of the Navajo Nation in Socorro county. ANSBI served 31 youth participants, exceeding their annual goal of 30. Ten participants graduated from high school, four entered postsecondary education, one entered the military, and one enrolled in an industry-recognized credential program for welding.

Due to the pandemic, the board continues to focus on meeting the needs of customers through virtual and limited in-person appointments. Exploring virtual platforms and other types of technology that can deliver effective and efficient services is a board goal. The public workforce system has adapted quickly to meet the needs of its customers and will continue to work with its partners to provide positive outcomes to those served in accordance with the board's four-year plan.

Attachments:

[New Mexico WIOA Plan – Executive Summary](#)

Jobs for the Future: New Mexico Pathways Full Report

Mock Interview School Guidelines

Local Workforce Development Board Annual Reports