

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

Program Year 2019

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Scott A. Adkins, Acting Commissioner

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1900 Kanawha Blvd. East \* Building 3 Suite 300 \* Charleston, WV 25305

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## THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

### **Local Workforce Development Areas/Regions**

One of the goals of WorkForce West Virginia (WFWV) American Job Centers (AJCs) is to offer job seekers and employers ready access to the many Workforce Development System (WDS) resources available in a local region. A brief description of the seven local areas/regions and the WFWV AJCs are as follows:

- **Region One** consists of two comprehensive centers, three satellite centers, and one affiliate center. The Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) oversees service delivery in 11 counties of southeastern WV: Fayette, Greenbrier, McDowell, Mercer, Monroe, Nicholas, Pocahontas, Raleigh, Summers, Webster, and Wyoming. The region is mountainous and rural in nature. The coal industry continues to fluctuate throughout the region with extensive layoffs and hiring taking place on a frequent basis. Additionally, many retail chains, restaurants, and small businesses have suffered during the COVID-19 crisis with many closings, eliminating positions or altering hours. Career and training services are being utilized to assist many residents in the local area to retrain in new career pathways. Additionally, career and employability services are offered to assist those who seek aid with resumes, job search, and other employment activities. Industry expected growth in the area includes but is not limited to: Ambulatory Health Care Services, Social Assistance, Waste Management and Remediation Service, Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction, and Construction of Buildings.
- **Region Two** consists of one comprehensive center, two satellite sites, and six affiliate sites- including four Community and Technical College (CTC) sites. The affiliate sites provide Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) services in all locations. Medical related occupations make up 16 of the top 25 occupations in the region. Non-Medical occupations are led by: Market Research Analysts, Photographers, Personal Financial Advisors, Nonfarm Animal Caretakers, Hairstylists, Plumbers, and Computer and Information.
- **Region Three** consists of one comprehensive center serving the citizens of Kanawha county including dislocated workers, adults, and youth. The region is mostly urban but has a significant outlying rural population. In years past, the region was economically driven by Chemical, Manufacturing, and Coal industries. Although Chemical and Manufacturing were still an economic force, neither have shown significant growth in the last three years. Although coal had seen some growth in Kanawha county recently, it is still a volatile occupation seeing openings and layoffs. Because of this shift in the economic climate, the largest industry sectors are Health Care, Hospitality, Recreation, Retail, Educational Services, and Manufacturing. As Charleston is the county seat, there is growth in local, state, and federal government jobs. The region has three main rivers, the Kanawha, Elk, and Great Coal. With the decline of coal, significant river and train traffic also decreased. On the upside, three main interstate systems converge in Charleston, increasing the trucking industries with hubs such as FedEx and United Parcel Service (UPS) located

at strategic exits. There have been investments in the local economy by companies engaged in the Technology and Construction sectors, including roadways repair and maintenance, which always see an uptick in the spring and summer months.

- **Region Four** consists of nine counties that comprises a region of rural and urban populations. It is served by one comprehensive center and six affiliate centers. Those counties are Calhoun, Clay, Jackson, Mason, Pleasants, Ritchie, Roane, Wirt, and Wood. The population of the combined nine counties is just under 200,000 individuals. Overall Labor Force Participation rate for Region 4 is 47.5%, and the unemployment rate is 5.8% for the region. Each of the nine counties has a diversity of employers/businesses. The top five growing industries in the region are contained largely within Health Care and Construction. The Health Care sector contains the greatest numeric growth of industries on the list and includes Ambulatory Health Care Services, and Social Assistance. Other growing industries include Waste Management and Remediation Service, Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction, and Construction of Buildings. The greatest declines in the region are found in Miscellaneous Manufacturing, Real Estate, Publishing Industries (except Internet), Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, and Music Stores, and Support Activities for Mining.
- **Region Five** consist of two comprehensive centers and one satellite site. The LWDB's region of services is the following six counties in the Northern Panhandle: Hancock, Brooke, Ohio, Marshall, Wetzel and Tyler. WIOA, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and National Health Emergency Grant (NHEG) funds are used to assist eligible residents and area employers with their training and support needs. During the past few years, the region has seen an economic resurrection due to the natural gas industry and remediation projects. Although Manufacturing has declined over the years, the area still contains a sizeable concentration of Manufacturing activity, particularly Chemicals, Plastics and Metals Manufacturing. Education and Health Care Services account for nearly one-in-five of the region's jobs. Leisure and Hospitality Services account for an above-average share of the region's economy due primarily to the presence of two gaming establishments. In PY19, the region had a civilian labor force of 69,800 individuals and an unemployment rate of 5.4%. It is anticipated that the following Industries will need individuals to be trained and ready to fill available job openings: Ambulatory Services, Health Care and Social Assistance, Educational Services, Nursing and Residential Care Facilities, Construction and Administrative and Support Services to name a few.
- **Region Six** consists of one comprehensive center and three affiliate centers that serve the following 13 counties in North Central West Virginia: Barbour, Braxton, Doddridge, Gilmer, Harrison, Lewis, Marion, Monongalia, Preston, Randolph, Taylor, Tucker, and Upshur. The unemployment rate for the region averaged 4.9% from July 2019 through March 2020 and increased substantially with the onset of the COVID-19 crisis in the last quarter of the program year to an average of 12.7%. The public sector is the main feature of North Central WV's economic development with the presence of higher education institutions. Healthcare services represents another cornerstone to the region's economy with the presence of several hospitals and various other healthcare facilities. The region's location along the I-79 corridor is advantageous in that it includes some of

the state's biggest technology driven employers all located in the I-79 Technology Park which also houses the Pierpont Community and Technical College (North Central) Advanced Technology Center (ATC).

- **Region Seven** consists of two comprehensive centers. Eight counties are served by the LWDB. The region offers a contrast of the rural in western counties and fast-paced suburban sprawl of the eastern counties, part of the Washington D.C. Metropolitan Statistical Area. The region expects the population in the eastern most counties to continue to show rapid growth. The western counties are also anticipated to show growth, albeit at a slower pace. Healthcare, Transportation, Agriculture, Warehousing, Advanced Manufacturing, Professional Services, as well as Leisure and Hospitality are all primary contributors to the expanding regional economy.

### WAIVERS

WFWV did not have a waiver in place for at least one program year.

### EFFECTIVENESS IN SERVING EMPLOYERS

While WFWV has always offered, and continues to offer, many and varied services to employers, PY19 saw the implementation of an approach proposed by Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 10-16. WFWV chose to focus on "Repeat" and "Retention" as pilot approaches and primary indicators of performance for measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers.

- Approach 1: **Retention with Same Employer** addresses the programs' efforts to provide employers with skilled workers. During PY19, the Retention with Same Employer rate was 52%.
- Approach 2: **Repeat Business Customer** addresses the programs' efforts to provide quality engagement and services to employers and sectors and establish productive relationships with employers and sectors over extended periods of time. During PY19, the Repeat Business Customer rate was 71%.

During PY19, WFWV hosted five Business Services Team (BST) meetings. Members include:

- Employer Representatives from all seven LWDBs
- WFWV Local Veteran Employment Representatives (LVERs)
- Representatives from WV Department of Rehabilitation Services (WVDRS)
- Representatives for Adult Education (WVAdultEd)
- Representatives from Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP)

Programs and initiatives offered by the BST are available to employers, which will enhance the labor force, by utilizing the following programs/services:

- Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)
- Federal Bonding
- On-the-Job Training (OJT)
- Apprenticeship promotion

- Recruiting employers to the AJC
- Connecting jobseekers by facilitating relationships
- Rapid Response
- Veteran Services
- Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker
- Facilities usage for recruiting and interviews
- Assistance with job fairs
- Assistance in providing accommodations for employees (WVDRS)
- Educational assistance programs
- Labor Market Information
- Employer engagement in unemployment adjudication
- Resume workshops
- Interviewing workshops
- Job Development assistance
- Early intervention strategies for layoff aversions (WV Development Office)
- Industry and Sector Strategies

During PY19, WVDRS coordinated with employers from across the state to provide 531 students with disabilities (ages 14-21) with work-based learning experiences and summer employment opportunities.

### EVALUATIONS

WFWV and state agencies are partnering on a comprehensive approach to evaluation and research. WFWV has the capacity and expertise to convene the various partners to ensure coordination and effectiveness. Performance accountability measures the following indicators from respective core programs:

| <b>Indicator</b>   | <b>Baseline</b> | <b>PY19</b> |
|--|-----------------|-------------|
| Job seekers receiving services in required quarters                      | 10,547          | 38,525      |
| Job seekers receiving referrals to partner services in required quarters | 3,521           | 15,243      |
| Customers placed in employment in required quarters                      | 457             | 725         |
| Employer contacts made in required quarters                              | 2,445           | 7,775       |
| Median earnings of customers placed in employment                        | \$3,952.36      | \$2,886.46  |
| Credential attainment  | 76.9%           | 71.2%       |
| Measurable skill gains   | 10.4%           | 51.9%       |

Evaluations are conducted based on the indicators listed above. WFWV established baseline raw numbers for the indicators. Now that baseline numbers are established, data will be compiled into bi-annual reports and analyzed. WFWV implemented a customizable “point-menu” system awarding points based on the degree of intensity and the value of workforce services provided. Services earning high points would clearly reflect deeper relationships with employers and activities that are the result of longer-term relationships.

## CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

During PY19 the LWDBs were given the flexibility to utilize their own surveys/questionnaires. The survey participation rate was lower than anticipated; however, the feedback received was positive. LWDBs continue to implement innovative ways to reach the customer base and obtain satisfaction surveys. Examples include: Zoom, Duo and Teams meetings, web-based portals, more frequent email, and cell phone communication.

As part of its program improvement efforts, WVDRS continues to support the implementation of consumer satisfaction surveys of its clients to ensure quality services for WVDRS consumers. The WV State Rehabilitation Council (WVSRRC) conducts the consumer satisfaction surveys (with full WVDRS assistance and cooperation). WVSRRC is primarily responsible for completion of the consumer satisfaction survey for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) consumers. WVDRS continues to provide and supplement fiscal and human resources needed for its successful completion. WVSRRC members selected a survey method that allows former WVDRS clients and individuals who were not accepted for VR services to be contacted via mail surveys as soon as they exit WVDRS from various VR statuses throughout the fiscal year. Selected highlights of the 2019 Consumer Satisfaction Survey of WVDRS clients as reported by the WVSRRC are presented below:

The latest consumer satisfaction report, entitled, Consumer Satisfaction: Report of Survey Findings, was prepared by the WVSRRC in December 2019. The findings were based on consumer satisfaction information gathered from 150 responses across the six WVDRS districts. Respondents to the consumer satisfaction survey were asked to rate their agreement with statements about their interactions with WVDRS. The ratings were "strongly agree," "agree," "neutral," "disagree," and "strongly disagree." Respondents were provided an option to indicate replies that were neutral or that the survey item was not applicable. Responses for the PY19 survey, overall, are slightly higher than the reported satisfaction in previous years. The mean rating across the ten satisfaction items is 80% for the 2019 report versus a 78% mean rating for PY18 and a 76% for PY17. The data generally show that those whose cases are closed as "unsuccessful" (i.e., closed without an employment outcome) are less likely to report high levels of satisfaction with the services they received. This year, while that pattern held, the observed differences were slightly less extreme than in previous years. This year, the mean rating for the "successful" group (i.e., closed with employment) was 96% versus a mean rating of 65% for the "unsuccessful" group.

Major findings of the consumer satisfaction survey include: respondents felt that their rehabilitation counselor treated them with respect (78%), their questions were answered clearly by WVDRS (83%), they were involved in their plan development (74%), their counselor stayed in contact so they knew what was happening (79%), and they received the services they needed (72%). Respondents also reported that they knew what each step of their Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) would be (85%) and their counselors told them about job opportunities (89%). Consumers also reported high ratings for accessibility of local offices (89% gave an "Above Average" or "Excellent" rating), their counselors (83%), and the overall experience with WVDRS (79%).

The consumers were asked to recall which client's rights information had been explained to them. There were 121 individuals who responded that at least one right had been explained (81% of the sample). Most individuals indicated that they had received several rights explanations. The most commonly explained rights to consumers were 1) their participation in developing the rehabilitation plan (92%) and 2) choice of how services were provided (74%). When asked about needs that were not met by WVDRS, 64 of the 113 consumers who responded to this question reported that they had no additional needs (57%). Consumers who did report additional needs most commonly requested education/training, employment-related services, medical services, and financial services.

The survey participants were asked for comments on their experience with WVDRS. A total of 69 people provided feedback to this question. Of these, 29 expressed praise or gratitude for WVDRS services, 19 made other statements of explanation or inquiry, and 21 offered criticism. Overall, the level of satisfaction reported for the period continues to be high, as the overall satisfaction increased from 78% to 80%. To maintain high quality of services and promote a greater satisfaction level for consumers, WVDRS welcomes and considers compliments, complaints, suggestions, and recommendations that clients reported in the consumer satisfaction survey.

The WVSRC and WVDRS were also interested in examining the pattern of responses for transitioning youth (clients who were age 24 or younger). Youth surveys were color-coded so the participants could be isolated. Their responses formed a subset of 78 returned surveys. Overall, youth satisfaction was equivalent to the responses of the whole group, at 80%. Transitioning youth respondents felt that their rehabilitation counselor treated them with respect (79%), their questions were answered clearly by WVDRS (78%), their counselor stayed in contact so they knew what was happening (76%), and they received the services they needed (73%). Youth respondents also reported that they knew what each step of their IPE would be (86%), WVDRS counselors helped them develop a plan to get a job (75%), and their counselors told them about job opportunities (90%). Transitioning youth also reported high ratings for accessibility of local offices (90% gave an "Above Average" or "Excellent" rating), their counselors (84%), and the overall experience with WVDRS (81%).

### **UNIFIED STATE PLAN GOALS**

#### **Goal 1: Workforce Development System Integration**

Cross training of WDS staff continued to be a priority during PY19. To ensure that all staff are knowledgeable of the wide array of services available, a website-based assessment on statewide workforce services was developed by WFWV utilizing the WV Office of Technology's Learning Management System (LMS). The LMS provides e-learning infrastructure, allowing the delivery of online content as well as instructor led course registration. The assessment, consisting of 78 questions, was piloted during PY18 to select staff and was improved upon during PY19. The assessment was to be rolled out during PY19, however, the COVID-19 pandemic shifted WFWV's focus. The assessment will be administered during PY20. A certificate will be awarded once a score of at least 80% is obtained.

## **Goal 2: Customer-Driven Approach (Individual and Employer)**

WVDRS used its Employment Specialists (ESs) to gather information regarding employers at the local level, including information regarding job placements for individuals with disabilities and regarding current and expected employer needs. WVDRS has an in-house Employer Services Section (ESS) that specializes in providing employers with disability-related information, services, and pre-screened job seekers. The WVDRS ESS employs nine ESs that cover all 55 counties in WV. Each Employment Specialist possesses a unique understanding of local labor market information (LMI) including what jobs are available, what jobs are in demand or decline, and employer networks. WVDRS' team of ESs provided business owners and employers with critical business options and assistance in staffing, employee retention strategies, education on disability-related issues, job accommodations, and information about financial incentives for employers who hire individuals with disabilities. Direct contact with employers is a key strategy to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities for VR consumers, including students with disabilities. ESs, therefore, contact employers directly to identify current and future job openings. To facilitate this, WVDRS utilizes LMI provided by WFWV to identify the top employers in each county; contact is always made with the top ten employers in each county on a quarterly basis. WVDRS ESs conducted over 500 employer visits in PY19. Information from these employer visits is entered into State MIS (Management Information System/MACC) and is available to all partner agencies. When meeting with employers, ESs provide valuable information, including the WVDRS Employer Resource Guide. The Resource Guide provides information regarding staffing services, training programs, and incentives for hiring people with disabilities, financial incentives, accessibility assessments, accommodating employees with disabilities, basic disability etiquette, attitudinal barriers, the Americans with Disabilities Act, locating a WVDRS office, and where to find additional resources. Each LWDB partners with a WVDRS representative who is active in the Board's activities and decision-making process. If needed, a referral to the WVDRS Rehabilitation Technology Unit is made to address workplace accommodations. A new ESS Manager was hired in March 2020. As a part of the new Manager's initiative, a Direct Contact Employer database has started within the unit to showcase the employers who have special or preferred hiring practices for WVDRS job seekers. From March 2020 to June 2020, eight employers were added to this list. Several employers throughout WV send job leads directly to ESS staff and that information is dispersed to all field offices and applicable job seekers.

Considering the COVID-19 pandemic, the ESS developed a system for providing virtual services to WVDRS staff, job seekers, and employers. WVDRS ESs realized that in order to stay connected with job seekers and employers, ESs must adapt to conducting face-to-face services through a wide array of virtual platforms. WVDRS business engagement strategies starting March 2020 were all conducted via virtual platforms. The ESS maintained regular contact with job seekers and employers by making individual meetings through Virtual Services, which also began in March 2020. Through collaboration with a national network of other VR agencies, the idea of Employer Spotlight events and Virtual Job Club services was developed. This collaboration started in April 2020 between WVDRS and regional VR partners to include Pennsylvania, Washington DC, and Virginia. Virtual events such as Employer Spotlight and Job Club are projected to be provided in Fiscal Year (FY)20, starting July 2020. Employer Spotlight services are developed to encompass business engagement strategies by connecting statewide Employers with WVDRS job seekers and VR staff. This event allows the employer to discuss



the mission of the business, inform the participants of their hiring practices, and provide insight into what type of candidates they are searching for. This also allows job seekers and VR staff to have direct contact with employers, ending the event with an interactive Q&A session. The Virtual Job Club will provide work readiness skills to job seekers. These skills will assist the job seeker in preparing for the world of work. Topics include positive attitude, skill assessment, interviews, resumes, job search process, self-advocacy, transportation, social media, and maintaining a job.

Assessing skill gaps and needs of individuals seeking employment and/or training continued throughout PY19. Regions continued to work with area schools and institutions in examining/analyzing existing curriculum against the needs of targeted industry-related skills certifications. Area schools and institutions are doing a better job identifying gaps in existing curriculum and developing new curriculum to fill skills gaps. WVDRS completed IPEs for 1,360 individuals with disabilities in PY19. These IPEs follow an assessment made by counselors to determine the individuals' skills, needs, and desires pertinent to employment, as well as vocational counseling and guidance to help determine an appropriate employment goal. The WDS ensured that individuals with barriers, especially those with disabilities, had increased access to and for opportunities for employment, education, training, and support services. WVDRS continues to be available in the setup and design of AJCs to enhance the delivery of services to individuals with disabilities.

WVDRS continues collaborative efforts with organizations who support efforts to expand employment opportunities for individuals with behavioral health challenges. WVDRS was selected to participate in a technical assistance project through the Boston University Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation and developed an online training curriculum that will help staff and our partner agencies learn effective strategies for helping people with psychiatric disabilities find and maintain integrated competitive employment. During PY19, the online training curriculum was released and utilized by various partner agencies and continued to be utilized by our staff. WVDRS was asked to participate in a second round of online technical assistance and during PY19, WVDRS partnered with the West Virginia Bureau for Behavioral Health and began work on developing a pilot project to enhance employment services for people with mental illness. WVDRS also enjoys a partnership with the WV Behavioral Health Planning Council, meeting quarterly and updating the council on Agency efforts to effectively serve and help individuals with behavioral health conditions meet their employment goals. During PY19, WVDRS was a committed partner in the Jobs & Hope WV program. Jobs & Hope WV was established by the Governor and Legislature and aims to address the substance use disorder crisis through a statewide collaboration of agencies to provide linked services to participants. WVDRS referred over 25 individuals to the program during PY19.

### **Goal 3: Career Pathways Development**

Discussed in the following section of this report.

### **Goal 4: Increase Opportunities for Youth**

WVDRS counselors provided Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to students with disabilities, especially job exploration counseling, to give students with disabilities and their parents/guardians a better understanding of labor market conditions, current and emerging career

opportunities, and the necessary education and training requirements related to those opportunities. During PY19, Career Exploration Opportunity (CEO) Summits were held across the state, as well as virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. WVDRS worked with Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) around the state to provide the Summits and other employment-related services in as many local areas as possible including virtual services to over 200 students with disabilities. Attendance for the CEO Summits was approximately 780 students, covering all six WVDRS districts. A concerted effort was made to introduce Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math (STEAM) to students in the CEO Summits. Topics covered included career planning, career preparation, Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance information, understanding the importance of necessary personal documents, communication, conflict management, employer expectations, attendance and punctuality, timeliness of task completion, being able to work without supervision, positive work ethic, managing multiple tasks, high-growth jobs, personal brand, and job hunting tools such as resumes, cover letters, interviews, and digital profiles. Throughout the academic year, WVDRS ESs also provided Pre-ETS at the local high schools. The ESs conducted mock interviewing, career exploration, and discussions regarding other employment related topics. WVDRS ESs also developed virtual Job Clubs for students with disabilities to continue to gain valuable employment-related skills training and career exploration opportunities during the COVID-19 pandemic. WVDRS continues to maintain and enhance its “Pathways to the Future” website ([www.pathwayswv.org](http://www.pathwayswv.org)), which serves as a self-service resource for students with disabilities statewide to receive Pre-ETS. The website provides valuable information and tools regarding career planning, education planning, independent living, self-determination, and work-based learning. The website was bolstered by banners that were placed in high schools in all 55 counties of the state. Additionally, several pages of the College Foundation of WV’s website ([www.cfww.com](http://www.cfww.com)) have links to the Pathways website. These banners and links directed students with disabilities to the website and its resources.

### **SECTOR STRATEGIES AND CAREER PATHWAYS (GOAL 3)**

#### **Business Engagement Strategies**

During PY19 partnerships continued to be a key component of assisting customers to reach their full potential. Examples include:

- Region 1-WVAdultEd is a vital partner in the apprenticeship programs in the region. The LWDB has been working with an emergency medical service business to assist with funding for career pathways and an apprenticeship program. The region continues to work with the WV Laborer’s Training Trust Fund, Brick Layers Union, and a local barber to assist customers with funding to enter apprenticeship programs. A new business in Region 1, with more than 100 job openings, was referred to WVAdultEd for pre-employment training to increase the pool of eligible applicants. Additional services offered to the business include referral to partner agencies and assistance with recruitment of employees. Zoom, Teams, and conference calls have been implemented to counterbalance COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. The BST continues outreach to our local employers. Relationships with chambers of commerce, local economic development authorities and partnering with LWDBs across regional lines has increased the amount of marketing and increased the number of employers benefitting from programs, such as OJT, Incumbent Worker Training (IWT), and job placements. New businesses opening in the

region are being contacted and services being presented. The LWDB continues to assist with combating the opioid crisis that runs rampant in the region by offering the Empowered Employment program to those who have barriers to employments, such as a previous substance abuse problem. There were 40 participants placed in work-based experiences and provided extensive career services training and supportive service assistance. Twelve certifications were obtained in areas such as Peer Recovery and Customer Service. The program had to be adapted during COVID-19 with participants not being permitted to work, which extended their timeframe on the program. Career Services Coordinators remained in constant contact during that time, offering support and assistance and vetting any issues that arose. The LWDB also partners closely with the Jobs & Hope WV program with many participants being dual enrolled in both programs as to increase the amount of services provided. Jobs & Hope WV Transition Agents work closely with the BST to refer back and forth with the Empowered Employment program. Three fourths of participants on Empowered Employment also receive services from Jobs & Hope WV. Additionally, referrals are made for those not in a specific program but who could benefit from Jobs & Hope WV services.

- Region 3-The LWDB hired a Business Services Representative and increased the number of OJT contracts from one to ten during this program year. For the first time since operating under WIOA, the agency wrote four IWT contracts providing training for 58 employees and increasing business opportunities. The Transitional Jobs program was very successful, 22 contracts were entered into and helped staff several recovery homes with peer recovery coaches, also having a positive effect on the substance use disorder crisis in our county and state. One Career Pathway that we were honored to support was the Recovery Coach Academy through Bridge Valley Community and Technical Center. Some of the individuals receiving this training were placed into employment via the Transitional Jobs Program making on average \$12.00 per hour. The LWDB entered a Memorandum of Understanding with Recovery Point of Charleston (for females) and Recovery University (for males) to serve residents who completed their individual program for recovery and are ready to transition to full time employment. This path from recovery program to work experience and/or training continues to be successful. The LWDB has had a positive influence on two businesses in the Kanawha Valley who increased their business due to training staff by utilizing funding from the IWT program. One employer who provides Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) services were able to upgrade the skill set for ten employees, expanding the commercial business for the employer. We partnered with Bridge Valley Community Technical Center to train employees over two years in HVAC, earning credentials for the employees, and increasing the business opportunities for the employer. Another employer provides Information Technology and Cloud Storage services and the incumbent worker training provided will enable the employer to be FedRamp certified, positioning them to compete for federal contracts. The company expects the business to grow, hiring an additional 100-150 employees and committing to hiring 25% of the new hires as WIOA eligible individuals.

- Region 4-The LWDB Career Connections program continues to address the needs of the at-risk population served by the Career Connections program. These youth receive individualized services and training to address their specific needs to help them to obtain and retain unsubsidized employment. The LWDB created a Youth Employer Service Specialist (YESS) position to work directly with employers in the region. The YESS has been able to work directly with the youth in paid work experience, recruit employers, and address any needs or concerns. This position has allowed Region 4 to more than double the number of employers served by the youth program. The LWDB's WIOA Adult and Career Connections Youth Program have successfully collaborated in providing a menu of services to dually enrolled program participants. The collaboration of training services includes work-based learning (such as, WIOA Youth Work Experience, Transitional Jobs, OJT, and Apprenticeship OJT). In addition to WIOA training services, the dually enrolled participants also receive specific basic/informational and individualized career services [such as an Individual Training Account (ITA)], from the WIOA Youth and Adult Career Specialist assigned to serve the participant. For instance, at the completion of the youth's paid work experience, the work-site employer may choose to extend the youth's placement by adding to or changing the youth's previous paid work experience job title and job duties. At that point, the youth Career Specialist completes the partner referral form/service to refer the youth to the Adult Career Specialist for a WIOA Adult eligibility determination; reviewing eligibility (based on LWDB policy) for work-based learning services; such as, Transitional Jobs or OJT. Another instance, the Career Connections Career Specialist assist will assist enrolled youth participant with exploring post-secondary education options. Once a career pathway is identified, the Career Connections Career Specialist assist with enrollment prerequisites, such as, completing the financial aid application. The Career Connections Career Specialist then completes a partner referral form/service, referring enrolled youth to the Adult Career Specialist for an Adult eligibility determination and potential assistance with post-secondary tuition/fee and required supplies cost through the LWDB ITA program. While the youth is dually enrolled, both program Career Specialists maintain contact during training to address any barriers or situations the dually enrolled youth may encounter in a collaborated manner.
- Region 6-The Executive Director participated in several Economic Development Boards in addition to representing WV on the Tri State Energy and Advanced Manufacturing (TEAM) Consortium Executive Team, as a co-chair of the Workforce and Economic Development Working Group. The TEAM Consortium operates as the workforce development arm of the Tristate Shale Coalition and a six-billion-dollar investment in building three ethane cracker plants in the region. The TEAM Consortium continued to meet quarterly throughout PY19. They opened their new website which provided a window into the energy and advanced manufacturing landscape in the tristate region ([www.connect2team.org](http://www.connect2team.org)). TEAM members provided junior and senior high school Guidance Counselors with brochures on the opportunities emerging in the tri-state area. During PY19, the LWDB Region 6 wrote 17 OJT contracts, 18 IWT contracts, 2 Customized Training contracts, and 2 Transitional Training

contracts with approximately 14 unique employers and obligated training funds totaling over \$147,429.

- Region 7-AJCs have active BSTs made up of key AJC staff, community college representatives, and other representatives from the local area that serves business needs. In order to facilitate engagement of local employers in in-demand industry sectors, the AJC BSTs actively participate, and will continue to participate, in area business advisory councils and boards that bring together business and educational leaders in-demand occupational and industry sectors. While this is a fluid list, current in-demand occupations receiving the most attention from our BST members include: Construction Trades, Culinary/Hospitality, Energy, Healthcare, Information Technology, Advanced Manufacturing and Transportation and Logistics. Through these councils and advisory boards, workforce development and educational leaders communicate directly with area business leaders regarding the in-demand human resource needs, training needs, and skill sets that are currently being sought after by area businesses. BST members frequently and actively partner with Chambers of Commerce/Economic Development entities throughout the region. BST representatives provide extensive outreach to employers in the region. This is accomplished through employer visits (including cold calls), community presentations, and hosting and/or participating in job fairs, community fairs, and recruiting events. Employer information is also disseminated through communication outlets such as press releases, the company's website and social media outlets. The BST operates within the AJCs and is integrated with the WIOA program, TANF/SNAP, and Wagner-Peyser/Re-employment programs. All job orders, job fairs, and recruiting events are accessible to and communicated to all AJC staff and BST members. Career pathways involve a range of stakeholders. In addition to state and LWDBs and agencies, potential partners should include education and training providers, community colleges, community-based organizations, support service providers, and employers. Examples of cross-program collaboration with key workforce development stakeholders developing career pathways in the region include:
  - The LWDB, in coordination with Blue Ridge Community and Technical College (BRCTC) and Eastern West Virginia Community and Technical College (E WVCTC), conduct quarterly Sector Partnership Strategy Meetings with key stakeholders including but not limited to industry and workforce development partners. These meetings help assess the needs of industry and align educational programs and offerings.
  - One of the key strategies the LWDB has been able to effectively implement through Sector Partnership meetings is the capability of portable and stackable industry-recognized certifications. For instance, in partnership with BRCTC, their Advanced Manufacturing A.A.S. program has been divided into multiple, six-week cohorts with open entry points and certifications at the end of each six weeks. This is an example of allowing clients the opportunity to easily access and obtain the skills required by industry. The stackable components allow the individual to ultimately obtain a two-year Associate's Degree. However, the certifications earned at the end of six-week cohorts allow for immediate employment opportunities. Similar programmatic designs are currently in development with E WVCTC.

Additional examples of collaboration during PY19 are: leveraging the existing career pathways system to promote a comprehensive career pathway system that combines education, training, counseling, and support services from the core partner agencies; ensuring career pathways are aligned to occupations that are high-demand and are likely to pay family-sustaining wages in our region; supporting placement of individuals with barriers to employment, especially those with disabilities, into quality entry-level jobs that provide the work experience and non-technical skills necessary to lead to employment in high-demand jobs; continuing to link OJT to career pathways; promoting and supporting the creation of pre-apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship programs as part of relevant career pathway models; helping in the establishment of statewide and regional lists of industry-recognized credentials with a focus on identifying credentials along established career pathways; enhancing career guidance to individuals with barriers, especially those with disabilities, to employment and education and into programs and services that will provide them with an effective pathway to their career goals; and adding information to its website regarding career pathways.

- WVAdultEd continued to move forward with Adult Career Pathways (ACP) Programs and Integrated Education and Training (IET) Programs. During PY19, ACP programs were completed with 692 students. A total of 358 students enrolled into IET Programs. Two new exciting collaborations were developed despite the COVID-19 pandemic shut-down. The first IET Program partnership was developed between the Jefferson County Adult Learning Center and WV Choice. WV Choice offers in-home care services to empower individuals to remain in their own home and independent. This partnership is working to redesign WV Choice's exiting training program and develop a state-of-the-art virtual training package for the 2,200+ direct care workers that currently serve over 3,000 clients statewide. The Jefferson County Adult Learning Center instructors prepared an impressive online course in Schoology with links to Edgenuity in collaboration with the WV Choice administration staff and nursing instructors. The program is currently being piloted in Jefferson County with the goal of statewide availability. Alorica/Intuit selected Bluefield WV for its Customer Service Call Center and will be hiring 400 customer service representatives to service their Intuit Quickbooks and Mint (online budget planner) customers. Mercer County Adult Learning Center instructors partnered with Alorica/Intuit to develop an exceptional customized online IET Program to assist the company with hiring activities and aid individuals in preparing for this career opportunity. Another IET Program offered in partnership with Pleasant Valley Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, along with WFWV, included a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) Apprenticeship Program in Mason County. This IET Program was designed to assist students participating in the CNA training by facilitating 24 hours of Related Training Instruction (RTI) for those accepted into the CNA training. Participants who were WIOA eligible also received Apprenticeship Training Account (ATA) funds through the Region 4 LWDB to help compensate with their training costs. Additionally, WVAdultEd continued to collaborate with local Community and Technical Colleges, Career and Technical Education Centers, WFWV, employers, etc. offering Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), CNA, Electrical Prep, HVAC Prep, Surgical Tech, and Cosmetology IET Programs. For example, LPN Bridge II Adult Career Pathway IET Programs were held in six different counties. These IET Programs helped prepare students entering LPN Adult Programs

by providing adult education and literacy skills in the context of health science and offered employability skills to better prepare students for the in-demand LPN job market. WVAdultEd is committed to work with local and regional employers to develop partnerships which allow students to earn industry recognized credentials and workplace employability skills while moving them to training for in-demand occupations.

### **STATE'S PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM**

#### **Exit**

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

#### **Negotiated Performance Levels**

For Titles I and III core programs, the local areas' negotiated performance levels were the same as what had been negotiated for the state.

#### **Fiscal and Program Monitoring/Data Validation**

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

The program operations portion of the on-site visits include WFWV staff verifying and validating performance data prior to federal reporting by checking the accuracy of a sample of computerized records and comparing keyed entries against the original source(s). On-site visits also include reviews of WIOA participant files, LWDB and Committee memberships, and equipment/inventory systems procedures to determine their compliance with federal provisions, regulations, and other applicable laws and to provide technical assistance as needed. WFWV continues to be committed to continuous

improvement of its information and data systems and ensuring the integrity of program operations. On-site reviews of participant files revealed Findings and/or Concerns in two main categories: Eligibility and Documentation, and Data Mismatches or Entry Errors. While there were other broader areas, such as Case Notes and Supportive Services, all issues seemed to fit into these categories. Of the samples reviewed, it was determined that the following percentages of files had issues:

| <b>FINDINGS</b>          |       |
|--------------------------|-------|
| <b>Adult</b>             | 4.7%  |
| <b>Dislocated Worker</b> | 5.3%  |
| <b>Youth</b>             | 65.6% |

| <b>CONCERNS</b>          |       |
|--------------------------|-------|
| <b>Adult</b>             | 14%   |
| <b>Dislocated Worker</b> | 21.1% |
| <b>Youth</b>             | 31.3% |

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

### **STATE FUNDED ACTIVITIES**

#### **Rapid Response**

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

- 73 employers
- 967 dislocated workers

Each RR meeting includes representatives from our AJCs to discuss their services and contributions to assist dislocated workers, including (but not limited to) unemployment, Wagner-Peyser, career planners for training eligibility purposes, WVDRS, Department of Health and Human Services, and the LWDBs. For all dislocations, excluding coal, we explore Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) potential; for coal, we invite the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) Career Center to discuss potential training opportunities available through our coal grant. The UMWA Career Center also distributes applications to individuals interested in participating in the coal grant. After every meeting, each dislocated worker is registered for RR in the MACC by the RR team. Additional services are organized at RR meetings such as a special session with unemployment to answer more in-depth questions, resume writing and interviewing skills workshops which take place either on-site or at an AJC. Sometimes these workshops are incorporated into the RR meeting. This year the COVID-19 pandemic



impeded our ability to serve dislocated workers in-person. Therefore, we shifted our practices to mailing packets to affected workers. Local RR Coordinators from each region conducts follow-up to dislocated workers by phone, and email when necessary. Construction Works of WV, our peer support labor liaison partner, also conducts follow-up. We receive news of businesses who will be experiencing layoffs or closure through various avenues: AJC staff, Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notifications (WARNs), news outlets, employees, and unemployment reports showing noticeable claims. When unemployment reports reveal noticeable claims, the RR Coordinator investigates to determine if RR services are needed. At this point in time, layoff aversion strategies are handled by the West Virginia Development Office or the LWDBs.

### **Wagner-Peyser Activities**

Developing working relationships with employers and job seekers is a vital component of WV's strategic plan. WFWV collaborates with mandated partners and external customers to educate employers on available services and the promotion of WFWV and the AJC. WFWV secured 63,432 job openings with 47,365 job orders in PY19. The increase is a direct result of successful cross training models for WFWV field staff and partners. To further this initiative, each AJC continues to enhance the job seeker experience to include resume development and employer testing services using the Public Computer Centers. WFWV updated computers in each AJC with a kiosk desktop to make it easier for customer use. In addition, staff provide soft skills (interviewing, test preparation, etc.), career counseling/guidance, networking opportunities, job and apprenticeship referrals, and follow-up services.

Early intervention strategies are in place for Unemployment Compensation (UC) claimants. In depth-in person interviews can begin at week four of the claim cycle utilizing the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) workshop. Employability development plans that identify barriers and actions to overcome are developed and referrals made to AJC and external partners. Regional LMI and local resource guides are distributed. Available job orders are reviewed, and customers are referred to openings and training for which they qualify. In order to provide better service to claimants and to ensure correct payment all WFWV AJC staff received UC training during the program year. Career services are available for special need groups, particularly for those individuals who may have barriers to employment. AJC staff participate in specialized training segments that increase awareness and offers knowledge on developing resource pools and partner positioned solutions to ensure successful employment outcomes leading to economic self-sufficiency. Funds are used for these customer support initiatives enabling these job seekers and the staff who serve them navigate among multiple services provided.

### **NATIONAL DISLOCATED WORKER GRANTS**

WFWV continues to monitor and manage five NDWG previously awarded from the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL). WFWV has been awarded one new NDWG from the USDOL. The data used to apply for these discretionary grants and to project the number of participants to serve with these funds is based upon RR Activities, WARNs, and UC records. More detailed information regarding each NDWG is

outlined below.

**WV Statewide Coal Mining II NDWG**-With the large number of mine closures and subsequent layoffs that have already occurred and the projection there will be on-going permanent downsizing statewide in the mining industry. The intent of the coal mining NDWG is to provide training programs that will refocus this target population on new career paths outside of the mining industry and long-term re-employment opportunities is a continuation of the previous Coal Mining Grant that completed and closed June 30, 2018. The Coal Mining II grant was awarded on March 12, 2018, in the amount of \$1,056,000.00 from the US DOL, to continue providing re-employment/re-training services to the coal miners who are still being impacted by mass layoffs and mine closures.

On September 26, 2019, a supplemental funding modification request was approved by USDOL awarding \$1,056,000 in additional funds and the grant performance period was extended until March 31, 2020. However, as it got closer to March 2020 it was determined that there is still a need to continue to serve dislocated coal miners and displaced homemakers. Therefore, another a supplemental funding request was submitted to USDOL. On April 16, 2020, \$2,429,090.00 was awarded and the performance period was extended until March 31, 2022. The projected number to serve under this grant is 368 participants which includes participants in ITAs and participants taking part in an Intense Job Search Assistance Plan only. The new period of performance is now March 12, 2018-March 31, 2022. Below are the statistics as of June 30, 2020:

- 332 dislocated coal miners/displaced homemakers registered since July 1, 2019.
- 108 enrolled in training
- 106 received supportive services
- 99 soft exited
- 29 entered employment after exit

**2018 Severe Storm/Eastern Panhandle NDWG**-Based on the severe storms, flooding, landslides, and mudslides that took place on May 28, 2018 to June 3, 2018 a major disaster declaration was declared on July 12, 2018. The following seven counties were affected by the disaster: Grant, Hampshire, Hardy, Jefferson, Mineral, Morgan, and Pendleton. A total of 54 worksites have been assessed for clean-up and flood prevention. Worksites consist of streams, rivers, culverts, city parks and public areas and clean-up activities of removing debris, down trees, trash etc. A request for funds to provide temporary disaster relief employment in the counties affected was submitted to USDOL and WFWV was awarded \$975,000.00 on September 14, 2018. The period of performance was October 1, 2018 to September 30, 2019. The number of participants to serve in this grant was 60. On September 3, 2019, a modification requesting additional time to complete the worksites that were assessed with damage was submitted to USDOL for a period of performance extension and it was approved. The new period of performance is now October 1, 2018 to June 30, 2020. Below are the statistics as of June 30, 2020:

- 70 registered participants enrolled in temporary disaster relief employment
- 10 soft exited

**2018 Severe Storm/Ohio Valley Region NDWG**-Based on the severe storms, flooding, landslides, and mudslides that took place on February 14 to 20, 2018, a major disaster declaration was declared on

April 17, 2018. The following 21 counties were affected by the disaster: Brooke, Cabell, Calhoun, Doddridge, Hancock, Harrison, Lincoln, Logan, Marshall, Mason, Monongalia, Ohio, Pleasants, Preston, Ritchie, Taylor, Tyler, Wayne, Wetzel, Wirt and Wood counties. A total of 138 worksites have been assessed for clean-up and flood prevention. Worksites consist of streams, rivers, culverts, city parks and public areas and clean-up activities of removing debris, down trees, trash etc. A request for funds to provide temporary disaster relief employment in the counties affected was submitted to USDOL and WFWV was awarded \$2,500,000.00 on September 14, 2018, with an initial increment in the amount of \$833,325.00. The period of performance was October 1, 2018 to September 30, 2019. The number of participants to serve in this grant is 140. On June 13, 2019, a modification requesting a second supplement of funds in the amount of \$1,666,675.00 to continue and complete the clean-up of the worksites was submitted to USDOL. On July 26, 2019, an increment of \$800,000.00 was awarded. On September 26, 2019, a modification for a period of performance extension was approved extending the period of performance until September 30, 2020. On October 31, 2019, modification requesting the remainder of the increment in the amount of \$866,675.00 was submitted. On December 5, 2020, it was approved. The period of performance is now October 1, 2018-September 30, 2020. Below are the statistics as of June 30, 2020.

- 119 registered participants enrolled in temporary disaster relief employment
- 68 soft exited

**2019 Severe Storm NDWG**-Based on the severe storms, flooding, landslides, and mudslides that took place on June 29-30, 2019 a major disaster declaration was declared on September 3, 2019. The following five counties were affected by the disaster: Grant, Pendleton, Preston, Randolph, and Tucker. A total of 54 worksites have been assessed for clean-up and flood prevention. Worksites consist of streams, rivers, culverts, city parks and public areas and clean-up activities of removing debris, down trees, trash etc. A request for funds to provide temporary disaster relief employment in the counties affected was submitted to USDOL and WFWV was \$975,000.00 was awarded on August 16, 2019. The period of performance was September 18, 2019-September 30, 2020. The number of participants to serve in this grant is 65. At this time, no statistics are available.

**National Health Emergency -Disaster Recovery National Dislocated Worker Grants to address the Opioid Crisis**-This is a special grant based on the Secretary of Health and Human Services, at the White House's direction, declaring a national public health emergency. This grant was submitted October 5, 2018 and awarded to WFWV on May 24, 2019 in the amount of \$10,000,000.00 with an initial increment amount of \$3,333,333.00. The targeted communities to be served with this grant are Huntington Area /Cabell and Wayne Counties, Charleston Area/Kanawha & Clay Counties Beckley Area/Raleigh & Wyoming Counties, Bluefield Area/Mercer & McDowell counties, Parkersburg Area/Wood & Jackson Counties, Martinsburg Area/Berkeley & Hampshire Counties, Morgantown Area/Monongalia, Preston, Taylor, & Marion Counties and Wheeling Area/Northern Panhandle. This grant offers disaster-relief employment, training activities, and supportive services, to address economic and workforce impacts related to widespread opioid use, addiction, and overdose. It also provides temporary employment opportunities aimed at alleviating humanitarian and other needs created by the opioid crisis. This grant provides services to reintegrate eligible participants affected by the crisis into the workforce. Lastly, this grant trains individuals to work in areas such as mental health

treatment, addiction treatment, and pain management. The total number of participants to serve in this grant will be 534. The period of performance is July 1, 2019-June 30, 2021. At this time, no statistics are available.

### **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

WFWV provided statewide technical assistance to LWDB career planners/staff on October 17, 2019. The following elements made up the basis of the agenda:

- MACC Enrollment/Navigation
  - Common abbreviations/terms
  - Devstaff-training site
  - What's New tab
  - O\*Net
- Program Eligibility/Registration
  - Youth Needing Additional Assistance
- Service Assignment/Maintenance
  - Timely, accurate, and value added
  - Services and case notes contradicting
  - IEP/ISS
  - Training service eligibility
  - Referrals
- Case Notes/File Maintenance
- Soft Exit/Follow Up
  - Scheduling services
  - TEGL 10-16, Change 1, page 34
  - TEGL 21-16, page 19
  - Exception vs. Exclusion
- Outcomes
  - Supplemental wage
  - Youth status at exit
- Reports
  - Available 24/7
- WFWV Monitoring Reports/Desk Reviews
- Resources

### **PROMISING PRACTICES**

In Region 3, one employer was able to prevent a lay-off of employees by taking advantage of the Transitional Jobs program, which provides wage reimbursement for employees who either do not have a work history or a very spotty work history. The employer receives 14 weeks of wage incentive payments. A few employees have progressed from transitional jobs to OJT contracts with employers. At this stage, the employer has an employer/employee relationship and most likely will keep the

person employed full time at the end of their training commitment. By receiving wage incentives, an employer was able to purchase a piece of equipment that allowed for expansion of his printing business.

During PY19, training of Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist (DVOPS) was performed each quarter and as needed to ensure USDOL VETS program requirements and expectations are administered. WFWV completed the necessary paperwork and approval to reclassify two vacant DVOPS position as Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER). The LVERs and DVOPS staffing were evaluated causing this reclassification and physical location moves for better outcome of veterans in the state.

During PY19, Wagner-Peyser staff were invited to the local high schools to inform students about services offered at the AJC, registering for work, and how to use the MACC to search for employment. Visiting high schools was assisting students that want to work immediately after graduation. Wagner-Peyser work with LVERs, AJC partners and the BST to contact employers and provide information on AJC services. The information shared consist of registering employers in the MACC to search for qualified applicants, OJT information, WOTC information, and any other services partners may offer employers to assist in finding qualified applicants. Wagner-Peyser staff assist job seekers with information on Federal Bonding. Federal Bonding is successful because it helps the job seeker obtain a bond which assist ask risk persons obtain a job, while at the same time it provides the employer with a bonded employee. Federal Bonding promoted at job fairs, regional jail events, and partner events.

WFWV provided training to all staff, local office managers, regional managers, and UC Claims Deputies, ensuring staff are update on processes and policies related to Unemployment Compensation. Information reviewed during the training included the following: processing new, reopened, and additional claims, exploring the alternate base period, detecting potential issues, fact finding, determining detection dates, and requesting missing wages.

WVDRS continues to work with agencies within the criminal justice system to improve services to individuals with disabilities who are justice involved. During PY19, WVDRS was actively involved in reentry councils, career fairs within correctional facilities and second chance job fairs, and reentry simulations. Along with partner agencies, WVDRS staff have been involved in looking at issues we are currently facing including the opioid epidemic, generational incarceration, and the collateral consequences to a felony conviction and how we can start to eliminate and navigate these barriers through legislative changes, community partner collaboration, and more. In terms of the opioid epidemic, WVDRS is actively involved in helping create employment opportunities for those in recovery. WVDRS is actively involved in Jobs & Hope WV, the State's comprehensive response to the substance use disorder crisis. In PY19, WVDRS trained the Jobs & Hope WV Transition Agents on the availability of WVDRS and educated them on the process of making referrals. WVDRS also trained career specialists and teachers who work in the adult correctional facilities across the state on the availability of VR services to help connect returning citizens with disabilities to employment resources. In PY19, WVDRS partnered with Disability Rights of West Virginia (DRWV), the federally mandated protection and advocacy system for people with disabilities in WV to better serve individuals residing

in child placement facilities across the state. WVDRS sent certified letters describing VR services and the availability of those services to each of the child placement facilities in the state. Additionally, the letter was sent to the West Virginia Bureau for Behavioral Health so they could encourage the facilities they oversee to utilize VR services when appropriate. WVDRS also did a presentation to the WV Child Care Association where many administrators of child placement facilities were present. These efforts resulted in several connections between child placement facilities and local WVDRS offices. This will be an ongoing project and one that will need revisited as the COVID-19 pandemic presented challenges especially for those living in group facilities. WVDRS staff were encouraged to participate in trainings such as “Locating, Serving, and Supporting Youth with Disabilities Involved in the Justice System” and “Engaging Partners and Students in the Juvenile Justice System”. In PY19, WVDRS also continued partnerships with and participation on various statewide councils that have employment components including the Olmstead Council, the WVABLE Advisory Committee, and the TBI Advisory Board.

During PY19, Career Exploration Opportunity (CEO) Summits were held across the state, as well as virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. WVDRS worked with Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) around the state to provide the Summits and other employment-related services in as many local areas as possible including virtual services to over 200 students with disabilities. Attendance for the CEO Summits was approximately 780 students, covering all six WVDRS districts. A concerted effort was made to introduce STEAM to students in the CEO Summits. Topics covered included career planning, career preparation, Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance information, understanding the importance of necessary personal documents, communication, conflict management, employer expectations, attendance and punctuality, timeliness of task completion, being able to work without supervision, positive work ethic, managing multiple tasks, high-growth jobs, personal brand, and job hunting tools such as resumes, cover letters, interviews, and digital profiles. Efficiency was enhanced by developing and providing services virtually, in addition to partnerships at various locations in which partners contributed free classroom space, facility or campus tours, information, or other services.

### **WorkForce West Virginia Collaboration and Partnering**

The WV Legislature continued to work closely with the WFWV system during PY19. Legislators continually receive updates and information from various partners within the WFWV system via an oversight commission comprised of members from both the Senate and House of Delegates. In 2007, legislation passed consolidating the “State of the One-Stop System” report, and the “Funding Stream Report”. This consolidation allows WFWV to identify all workforce development training funds within the state and how they may or may not be distributed throughout the AJCs. WFWV continues to update the State of the State report as appropriate.

WFWV leadership worked diligently with USDOL VETS to strategically place veterans’ representatives throughout WV. WFWV employs 12 DVOPS who provides coverage to every WFWV AJC for provision of services to eligible veterans and eligible persons. WFWV DVOPS perform outreach to find and provide intensive services to eligible veterans with significant barriers to employment. Through the provision of intensive services, veterans gain long term sustainable employment. WFWV employs four

LVERs who provide outreach to business and industry to promote the hiring of veterans. They also facilitate the veterans' program within WFWV.

### **Drug Testing**

On April 24, 2012, the Governor of WV signed Executive Order 8-12, charging WFWV to develop and implement a drug screening policy for WIOA Title I training-level services. WFWV Guidance Notice 12-12, Change 2, provides guidance to LWDBs and their operators regarding mandatory drug screening for WIOA training-level participants. Section 181(f) of Title I of the WIOA specifically provides states the authority to test and sanction WIOA participants for the use of controlled substances. Effective July 16, 2012, all participants that entered into training-level services funded by WIOA Title I ITAs and OJTs, were required to be screened utilizing urinalysis for the use of the following controlled substances prior to the beginning of training:

- Amphetamines
- Cannabinoids/THC
- Cocaine
- Opiates
- Phencyclidine (PCP)
- Benzodiazepines
- Propoxyphene
- Methadone
- Barbiturates
- Synthetic narcotics

A total of 1,619 drug screenings were completed during PY19. Only 1.4% of these screenings resulted in a sanction.

### **On-line Marketing and Services**

During PY19, the agency website [www.workforcewv.org](http://www.workforcewv.org) had over 12 million page views, an average of 1,001,124 page-views per month. Website visitors spent the most time searching on WFWV's Unemployment pages.

## **SUCCESS STORIES**

A veteran was referred to WFWV on May 30, 2020 for job placement services through the Memorandum of Agreement with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment (VR&E) program as he has a service-connected disability and recently graduated from West Virginia University (WVU) with a Master's Degree in Social Work. Additionally, he had already taken and passed the Licensed General Social Worker (LGSW) exam. The DVOPS first met with him to conduct an assessment interview and provided LMI for positions in the area. The veteran was hoping to secure a social worker position at the Louis A. Johnson VA Medical Center (VAMC) in Clarksburg after he was advised during an internship there that the facility was expanding. The DVOPS and the veteran searched USAJOBS database for federal employment but did not locate any vacancies for social

workers at the nearby VAMC. The DVOPS encouraged the veteran to consider other opportunities such as “Mental Health & Substance Abuse Social Workers” or “Social & Human Service Assistants” as it was discovered the VA no longer hires social workers with the entry level license (LGSW) that the veteran had recently obtained and candidates would also need to possess at least two years of clinical experience. The DVOPS and veteran discussed alternative employment with WVU Medicine at Ruby Memorial Hospital in Morgantown. The veteran lives in Morgantown, WV and considered the benefits of the proximity of the hospital to his residence. The DVOPS shared information about an upcoming career day that WVU Medicine was having at the Fairmont AJC so he could attend and suggested that he register online with WVU Medicine and conduct a job search under their career page before the event. The DVOPS followed up with the veteran the day prior to the fair to confirm that he had completed the registration and also applied for two social worker positions. Four days after attending the career day the veteran received a call from the HR department at WVU Medicine. A phone interview was conducted, and an in-person interview was scheduled. The DVOPS provided interview coaching. He reviewed the types of questions that might be asked, the veteran answered the questions and the DVOPS provided some positive feedback on how to improve his responses. When following up with the veterans the day after the interview, the veteran indicated that many of the questions that the DVOPS prepped him with were, in fact, asked and he felt he did well. At the conclusion of the interview he was invited to participate in a job shadow but was uncertain about what that process entailed. The DVOPS explained the job shadow process, what questions to ask during and afterward, and appropriate professional attire to wear. After the job shadow, the veteran advised the DVOPS that he was offered and accepted a full-time social worker position in the Care Management department of Ruby Memorial Hospital as part of the staff of WVU Medicine. Employment shortly after with a base annual salary of \$47,881.60 with a full benefits package including 23 sick/vacation days. Zachary was thrilled that the hospital is just a short 15-minute walk from his residence. The veteran thanked the DVOPS for his assistance throughout his tenure in case management. The DVOPS informed the Veteran that at the beginning of the process that it was a partnership, and without the veteran putting forth the effort he did, and without him heeding the DVOPS’ advice, not only listening, but embracing the process, the outcome may have been different. The DVOPS thanked the veteran for his willingness to be part of the partnership and wished him the best in his new career field.

The mayor of a small town contacted our Career Connections WIOA Youth program about helping a young man. I noticed when I first met the participant that his jeans were so big on him, he had to hold them up and his shoes were very worn. The mayor informed me that this young man was currently homeless. The mayor and I began to work on a plan of action. It was arranged for the participant to begin staying with a schoolteacher. We began helping by getting legal documents he needed. We were able to place him on a paid work experience and began teaching participant life skills through workshops. We determined that the participant wanted to go to college to become a teacher with the intention of moving back to McDowell County. With that goal clearly established we began working with him in preparation for enrolling in a college. The participant took advantage of every tool and opportunity we gave him and completed each assigned task. After a workshop on budgeting he began saving his money and bought a car. Then he applied for college after attending our workshop on Careers and Post-Secondary Education. The participant is now a student living on campus at Concord



University seeking a degree in education. He is now receiving financial assistance from multiple opportunities he had been seeking out. The Career Connections Program was able to assist with the purchasing of school supplies for the participant to get him started with his classes.

Fresh out of prison and fresh out of hope, this participant was living in a faith-based recovery center in southern WV. She needed a job and she wanted to regain custody of her children. No matter how many applications she filled out, none of the employers called her in for an interview. She felt ready to turn her life around, but no one would give her a chance with her background. Her recovery center recommended the Transitional Jobs program to her, and she felt like she could see the light at the end of the long, dark tunnel she had struggled through for so long. She was finally given an opportunity to prove herself to an employer. In fact, her host site loved her so much that they transitioned her to a regular employee at the end of her agreement. However, her success does not end there. The customer service skills, resume help, and newfound confidence that she gained during her experience helped her seek out and secure another job with higher pay on her own. Now, she has her own home, a job she excels at, and was able to reestablish custody of both of her children. Most importantly, she has hope and a positive outlook for the future.