

WORKFORCE INNOVATION & OPPORTUNITY ACT - 2020

STATE OF NEW MEXICO ANNUAL REPORT



PROGRAM YEAR 2020/FISCAL YEAR 2021

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DECEMBER 2021



NOTE FROM STATE WORKFORCE BOARD CHAIR



As the COVID-19 pandemic first ebbed, and then resurged with the Delta variant, the nation continued to struggle with the shift in workforce development that began in 2019. Labor participation rates remained low, businesses scrambled for workers, and, as national studies have revealed, the relationship between employers and job seekers may be forever changed.

The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (NMDWS), Workforce Connections Centers and the State Workforce Board stepped boldly into this enormous societal shift with new partnerships and new initiatives, while simultaneously working to meet the needs of tens of thousands of workers and solopreneurs whose careers had been disrupted by the pandemic. A first-of-its-kind partnership between NMDWS and the New Mexico Higher Education Department (HED) produced a one-stop portal, Ready.NM.gov, that supported job seekers with clear paths and locations for shorter-term credentials that could help them up-skill or re-skill to secure new careers in industries vital to the economic health of New Mexico and that offered living wages and opportunities for career growth.

At the same time, state staff and local workforce regions forged a new path to more quickly connect employers with the skilled talent they needed through All Hands New Mexico and the Ready.NM.gov site, inviting businesses that may never have used the system before to find their preferred talent there. Some industries struggled more mightily than others to recover in 2020, especially the hospitality and tourism industry. Others remained steady or grew, thanks to incredible opportunities to capitalize on the exodus of businesses from higher-cost, lower-quality of life states, as well as efforts to re-shore and near-shore critical supply lines in New Mexico's

well-positioned International Trade industry.

The State Workforce Board also continued its work to holistically transform the system from one that is low-performing to one that is growing, thriving, and more strategically meeting the needs of New Mexico's job seekers and businesses. This strong and thoughtful board of leaders and entrepreneurs collectively brought their wisdom, resources, and knowledge of what was happening on the ground to challenge the system to rise up and meet the challenge of the moment. A renewed commitment to Sector Strategies, the investment of workforce resources in key industries vital to economic development, will ensure that these federal dollars generate the greatest possible recovery and return on investment to the New Mexico economy.

In 2021, the board rolled up its sleeves to expand the reach and voice of business and economic development through its efforts. A new vision for governance and alignment put forth by the board will shatter the systems that are holding problems in place and lay the foundation for transformation systemwide. The work going into 2021-22 will prioritize working alongside stakeholders to bring transformation to reality.

The path forward is clear. The need for change is urgent. New Mexicans deserve and want a system that is dynamic and thriving. Together, we will write a new chapter...one that changes the story of workforce development in our state for years to come.

Tracey Bryan, Chair
State Workforce Development Board
President/CEO – The Bridge of Southern New Mexico
<https://thebridgeofsnm.org/>

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 2,117,522 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.

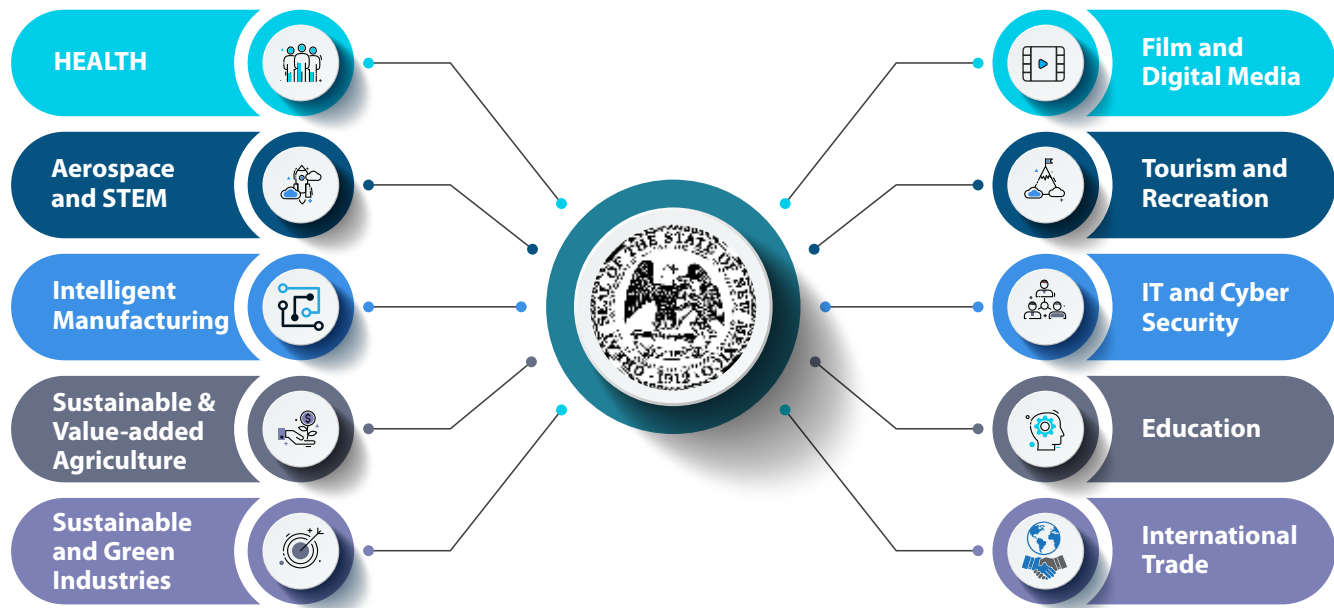
NM's Combined State Plan Required Programs:

- 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)

GOVERNOR'S PRIORITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SECTORS & WORKFORCE GOALS



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 PY2020 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.

PY2020 Progress:

- The Unemployment Services Division created a specific tool for the Local Workforce Development Boards call the “Cliff Report.” The list included contact information of individuals who were identified as “self-employed” and who had exhausted benefits. Each of the LWDBs utilized this list to identify potential eligible applicants for short-term training and/or direct referral or employment. Unlike the RESEA list – this list provided direct access to individuals who would require little to no training to return to work. The purpose of the “Cliff Report” is to quickly identify potential job seekers by industry and occupation with the goal of making quick referrals and job matches for open positions.
- NMDWS and the NM Higher Education Department implemented an initiative entitled “Ready NM.” The project is a comprehensive strategy that called on several partners, both public and private to create a hub for workforce development opportunities, direct job referrals, resources to overcome work-related barriers and guidance on safe return to work practices. Among the strategies was development of a marketing and outreach campaign promoting training opportunities that prepare citizens for in-demand occupations in their region. Marketing included development of messages that were distributed in various mediums, including statewide billboards, social media and local media outlets, including radio, television and newspaper. Distribution began June 2021 and has been running to the present.
- NMDWS updated and created new interactive dashboards that could be utilized by local workforce development boards and partners agencies. Information includes access to unemployment rates by state and county. The data and graphics can be customized and are downloadable. Dashboards were utilized by senior leadership to help follow trends, gaps and other issues that were changing throughout the pandemic to support up-to-date information for the Governor and legislators throughout the year. For more information on NMDWS Dashboards visit: <https://www.dws.state.nm.us/en-us/Researchers>.
- **CARL PERKINS:** PED conducted Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA) meetings throughout each of 10 CTE regions to identify key economic and educational funding priorities. All Carl D. Perkins funds are being allocated toward programs of study that were identified as regional economic priorities based on biennial stakeholder review of regional economic data. To map out sector approaches throughout regions, each region uses regional labor market information to identify priorities.

Strategy 2

Make *lifelong learning* a reality so that NM’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

PY2020 Progress:

- **Partnership with JFF & New Mexico state “PtoPN” Membership:** In 2019, the NMHED Adult Education Division began exploring formal partnership options with Jobs for the Future (JFF), a well-respected and well-resourced national nonprofit that drives change in the American workforce and education systems with a pointed focus on equity. <https://www.jff.org/> In 2020, NMHED-AE awarded a grant to JFF to engage in an extensive landscape analysis and asset mapping process that involved collaboration with multiple state agencies, nonprofit organizations, businesses, institutions of higher education, and other stakeholders to begin a deep dive into the status of New Mexico’s statewide Career Pathway access and infrastructure--with an initial focus on *Adult and Corrections Education*--to better understand how well existing infrastructure is working to both serve employers and to help individual New Mexicans enter and progress along career pathways that will lead to sustainable, rewarding jobs with advancement opportunity, jobs that provide living wages for families and ultimately contribute to strengthening our state’s social and economic well-being.

This work culminated in a set of report deliverables and was intended to serve as a springboard for a more comprehensive, longitudinal cross-agency/institution/organization partnership — a statewide effort to intentionally coordinate and strengthen equitable Career Pathway access and opportunities in New Mexico. To this end, NMHED-AE has again taken the lead to mobilize key state agency stakeholders, including Higher Education, Public Education, NMDWS, Corrections Department,

Human Services and Economic Development, including a coalition of leaders from higher education institutions and other organizations/entities from around the state to formally launch Phase II of this effort. Partners will engage in a refined strategic planning process and subsequently act on collectively defined shared priorities and strategies related to statewide career pathway infrastructure development. This will be done in continued formal partnership with JFF. New Mexico is now a proud state member in the national Pathways to Prosperity Network ("PtoPN") via a second grant awarded by the Higher Education- Adult Education Department June 2020. PtoPN is a collaboration among JFF, the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and heavily invested member states, regions, and entities across the country. The customized membership will serve as both anchor and vehicle for collective Phase II efforts. Initially, a dedicated JFF team will help guide NM through a collaborative process to formulate and prioritize chosen action items suggested by Phase I research findings, starting internally with Higher Education and Adult Education, with a goal to quickly fan out to include our state agency partners and leadership coalition. Shared vision, priorities, strategies, and ownership will be key. Timing dovetails nicely with New Mexico's revisiting and revising its Combined State Plan and other ongoing workforce development initiatives including READY NM.

- **The NM Longitudinal Data System (NMLDS):** Project was kicked off December 2020. Collaborative partners include NMDWS, NM Early Childhood Education & Care Department (ECECD), NM Higher Education Department and the NM Public Education Department. The goals for the project include standing up a system, produce policies and process and training that will help educators, workforce developers, policymakers, legislators, researchers and other see and utilize data to understand student and workforce performance, improve outcomes and equity and to perform predictive analysis. A project steering committee was formed and ongoing monthly meetings are in process to develop the platform. Activities such as gathering requirements, identifying a vendor and phased development schedule underway.
- **Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI):** NMDWS successfully applied for and was awarded a Workforce Data Quality Initiative grant. The WDQI grant will be used to support a Workforce Longitudinal Data System project which is planned to be strongly aligned with the Statewide Longitudinal Database System that is already underway. Specifically, the new Workforce components will bolster the collection, preparation, and accessibility of data relating to workforce programs and their partners. This new scope will be above and beyond what had previously been planned for the NMLDS project alone, and will help the State of New Mexico work towards our

more complete P-20W vision. DWS is currently in the process of initiating and planning the WLDS project. This includes creating the project plan and schedule, hiring staff and contractor support, establishing Data Governance stakeholders and committees, refining project scope, and outlining preliminary data architectures.

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?"

PY2020 Progress:

- **Ready NM (Formerly known as RestartNM):** Ready NM is a statewide initiative that includes several partners, both public and private to create a hub for workforce development opportunities, direct job referrals, resources to overcome work-related barriers, and guidance on safe return-to-work practices. Ready NM targets funding resources to create short term training programs (12 weeks or less) designed to get New Mexicans prepared for diverse work opportunities that lead to immediate and direct employment in in-demand jobs. Additionally, Ready NM coordinates access and amplifies awareness of services by implementing the following strategies:
 1. A comprehensive statewide Ready NM marketing and outreach campaign.
 2. Website (Ready NM) dedicated to information to short and long-term educational and work pathways. <https://ready.nm.gov/>
 3. Implementation of a central chat and phone line that allows New Mexicans to direct-connect with a career consultant. (1-800-303-3599)
 4. Partnership with NM postsecondary institutions and Adult Education programs to develop boot camp and short-term training programs for in-demand occupations.

- NMDWS Provided ETPL policy training for new providers focused on understanding post-secondary credentials, attributes of high-quality credentials and ways the public workforce system can expand the use of credentials to meet workforce needs. NMDWS – WIOA Lead meets regularly 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. Additionally, there has been an increase in the number of Registered Apprenticeships Providers, both in-state and out-of-state, opting to be on the ETPL.
- New Mexico was selected and participated as a grantee for the National Governors Association – Workforce Innovation Network during March 1, 2020 – July 31, 2021. NMDWS convened an interagency partnership consisting of representatives from Human Services, Public and Higher Education, and Early Childhood and Education Department. Key outcomes from this team included, implementation of a marketing and outreach campaign, design and implementation of a new website tool designed to support job seekers and employers, deployment of a statewide “800” call line to support virtual “one-stop” system to connect job seekers and employers with career specialists statewide, design and implementation of an evaluation plan for Ready NM, and engagement in discussions about workforce system design and potential transformation to improve outcomes (this discussion is ongoing.)
- **CARL PERKINS:** Partnerships underway between secondary and postsecondary stakeholders to enhance and increase access to dual credit and certificate programs statewide. Advisory boards are meeting together to improve communication with industry partners in an effort to prepare students and create leads for employment and retention. Carl Perkins staff also initiated a monthly CTE Newsletter which highlights programs, best practices and success stories in each monthly issue, to help promote them throughout the state.

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.

PY2020 Progress:

- The State Apprenticeship office registered nine new apprenticeship programs in FY 20. Four of the newly registered programs were in the building and construction industry, two fire sprinkler fitter programs, one residential HVAC and plumbing program and one testing, adjusting and balancing technician program. Collaboration with partner agencies led to the registration of the first healthcare apprenticeship program in the state; the program is a Registered Nurse (RN) Residency apprenticeship and will assist new RN's with the transition from practice to the work setting. San Juan Community College registered three new apprenticeship programs in PY 20, including, commercial driver’s license, diesel mechanic, and automotive technician. A solar technician program was also registered. The solar technician is a state registered program and is not nationally recognized. Despite not being nationally recognized it does meet all of the same quality standards as a nationally recognized program. The majority of the newly registered apprenticeship programs are "group" programs and will therefore involve partnerships with employers within the specific industries to provide the apprentices with the on-the-job training portion of their apprenticeship.
- During PY 20 the number of employers affiliated with registered apprenticeship and utilizing WIOA funding for customized training and also On-the-Job (OJT) training increased. Strengthened communication with the four local workforce boards during PY2020 led to stronger partnerships and assurances that Title I WIOA funding is accessed more frequently by apprenticeship program sponsors and their employer members, to include support services, individualized training accounts, customized training and OJT.
- The State Apprenticeship Director is a member of the Northern New Mexico Work-Based Learning Coalition. The group has established an action committees designed to identify and increase effective work-based learning practices opportunities to meet the needs of both secondary and post-secondary students in the northern region.
- Apprenticeship leads were recruited and hired in each local workforce region to assist in strengthening and creating new partnerships with the educational systems, workforce boards and industry to increase work-based learning and registered apprenticeship opportunities statewide.
- Four employer convening’s were conducted to educate and bring awareness to hospitals and clinics about the newly registered RN Residency apprenticeship program. The convening’s were well received and have generated employers teaming with the apprenticeship sponsor to train RN Residency apprentices.

- **CARL PERKINS:** received federal pandemic recovery funds. The funds were used to create the Summer Enrichment Internship Program (SEIP). SEIP provided internships for high school students statewide. Partners included, Public Education, NMDWS, County, Tribal and Municipal governments, and other youth organizations to create meaningful work-based learning experiences for students.

Strategy 5

Identify and *remove barriers* to employment and training

Strategy 5 Activities:

1. Build on learning from the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Cross to address life challenges such as childcare, 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.

PY2020 Progress:

- **TANF/ New Mexico Works Program:** In PY2020 the TANF-NM Works Program began transition from the Human Services Department. On January 1, 2021, NMDWS began phase I of a three phased approach to move the TANF- NM Works Program. NMDWS began managing the Career Link and Wage Subsidy programs aimed at placing participants into work-based learning opportunities aligned with individual career goals. The goals of the program are for participants to gain important work experience necessary to transition into full-time, unsubsidized employment. Career Link participants are placed into part time positions with private sector employers while wage subsidy participants are placed into full time positions with State Government agencies. The Career Link program has the capacity to place 400 participants and wage subsidy has the capacity to place 100 participants. In addition to gaining the two new programs, NMDWS added 25 new staff members, many of which came from the previous contractor. The new staff brought with them key experience and knowledge needed to work with the participants in each program. With the addition of the TANF-NM Works Program, NMDWS business

teams have expand partnerships with employers by offering Career Link and Wage Subsidy opportunities as part of overall services. Phase II of the transition began July 1, 2021, and included a full transition of all participants currently enrolled in the NM Works Program. This phase also expanded NMDWS' presence to Human Services field offices, offering a "one-stop" experience for TANF customers to career specialists statewide. NMDWS' staffing is expected to grow to over 120 full time employees. Full transition of TANF to NMDWS will be completed on July 1, 2022.

Other ongoing partnerships/strategies:

- NMDWS has also has an ongoing partnership with the Human Services Department, Help-NM, the Governor's office and the NM-National Governor's Association Team to expand partnerships and offer resources for the new SNAP E&T (Education and Training) program. NMDWS is in the process of creating a referral process with Help-NM to expand opportunities for apprenticeships and WOTC eligibility to SNAP recipients. This partnership is also fostering greater collaboration and focus for some of the top Governor back-to-work initiatives.
- NMDWS is also working with the Early Childhood Education Department to streamline the childcare eligibility process for all job seekers. Together with the Early Childhood Education Department, NMDWS Career Consultants will receive eligibility training to better assist job seekers in the childcare assistance process. NMDWS staff will be able to provide job seekers the information and access they need to apply for and receive childcare assistance.
- Ready NM partnered with the Early Childhood and the Human Services department to include information and direct links to resources for housing, health/mental services, childcare, transportation and other social services, including COVID Safe Practices, testing and vaccination. <https://ready.nm.gov>
- **CARL PERKINS:** The Summer Enrichment Internship Program included technical assistance and guidance for county coordinators to assure comprehensive skills to evaluate barriers for students. Weekly technical assistance meetings with the on-site coordinators and mentors provided opportunities to network and problem solve barriers. Resources and direct contacts were available for participating internship program location staff to reach out if additional assistance is needed.

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.

PY2020 Progress:

- **Summer Enrichment Internship Program:** NMDWS Youth Team participated and assisted in coordination of the Public Education Department's 2021 Summer Enrichment Internship Program. NMDWS suggested/recruited various partners from around the state to provide input and act as subject matter experts. Partners included Future Focused Education, Farmington Municipal Schools – Work-based Learning Team, LANL Foundation and Las Cruces Public Schools – Work-based Learning Team. The goal was to provide high school students with the opportunity to participate in high-quality internships (20 hours per week for 6 weeks) in government agencies, including county, tribal, and/or municipal placements. Program was launched end of March and ran through mid-May. A total of 23 agencies received funding to provide paid work-based learning experiences statewide, over 1,500 students hired as Summer Enrichment Interns.

Following the success of the Summer Enrichment Internship Program, a phase II program has been approved. Phase II's Near Peer Tutoring Program provides paid tutoring opportunities for high school students interested in learning more about the education career pathway. PED recognizes the need to attract and retain quality teachers from diverse backgrounds to teach New Mexico's multicultural student population. It is also imperative that PED provide students with a rigorous and relevant high school curriculum that prepares them to succeed in college and the workplace. High school students who participate in work-based learning programs gain rewarding experience in the work setting, acquire an increased awareness of the world via the workplace in their communities, broaden their appreciation of the need for postsecondary training, gain

perspective on the important role they will play in their communities as employees, and develop a commitment to finding meaningful, fulfilling careers for themselves that are relevant to their communities

- **NDWS Internship Portal Update:** Updates to the NMDWS Internship Portal began in 2020 but were delayed due to various projects that took priority. The Internship Portal will be transitioned into a Work-based Learning HUB which was identified as a needed resource in New Mexico based on a Bellwether summary report. Bellwether Education Partners is a national non-profit focused on dramatically changing education and life outcomes for underserved children. NMDWS and PED had the opportunity to review the Bellwether summary of NM work-based learning resources. Based on the Bellwether report, areas of improvement were identified. The original request (from PED) to create a work-based learning booklet has evolved into updating the existing Internship Portal into an online work-based learning hub. Updates will include requested information such as:

- Alternative work-based learning ideas not limited to internships
- Business engagement tips and tricks
- How-to videos to increase accessibility
- Work-based learning continuum
- Youth worker liability and incident reporting resources
- Updated WIOA youth policy
- **Career Readiness Resources Presentations/Tabling provided to various organizations;** Career Readiness presentations include (but are not limited to) overview of the following tools and resources, NMCareerSolutions, Why I Work, Internship Portal, and the NMDWS Apprenticeship websites. Information regarding New Mexico labor law, obtaining a work permit, and allowable occupations for youth is often provided. The youth team provided informational sessions on LMI tools, WIOA services and how to access all career readiness resources through our contracted youth providers at our Workforce Connection offices throughout the state. Over 18 virtual sessions were hosted statewide.
- **Partnership:** New partnership was created with New Day Youth and Family Services drop-in center called "The Space." The Space supports youth experiencing homelessness and marginalization in the Albuquerque area. NMDWS is working in partnership with the WIOA youth provider to coordinate career readiness and WIOA

services to The Space participants on a weekly basis. In PY20 approximately 20 youth qualified for services.

- NMDWS WIOA Youth Team continues to participate in ongoing community meetings with; several youth organizations statewide including:

- NMCAN – Engaging young people impacted by foster care, the juvenile justice system, and/or homelessness to advocate for systems change that improves their transition to adulthood and positively transforms our community.
- ABC Community Schools – Providing support to school districts in the development of high-quality, impactful community schools.
- Interagency Transition Alliance - Created to support young people throughout New Mexico that are deaf and/or hard of hearing. The committee consists of members from Commission for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing, New Mexico School for the Deaf, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and NMDWS. NMDWS will be the Chair of the Committee for the 2022 calendar year.
- The Albuquerque Hispano Chamber of Commerce Education Committee - Providing recognition for educational achievement, the committee is responsible for awarding scholarships to Hispanic high school seniors that will be attending an institution of higher learning or trade school or non-traditional adults looking to obtain a degree or certificate.
- Junior Achievement - Positively impacting young people's views on the importance of education, as well as critical life skills.
- Technology Student Association (TSA) - As a career and technical student organization (CTSO), the TSA helps teachers meet criteria for STEM education goals for students.
- Job Training Incentive Program (JTIP) - funds classroom and on-the-job training for newly created jobs in expanding or relocating businesses for up to 6 months.

- **Mock Interviews:** Although mock interviews were limited in the 2020-2021 school year, the youth team does anticipate growth for the 2021-2022 school year. Online registration for Mock Interviews was not required for 2020-2021, below are the events NMDWS was invited to participate in as volunteer interviewers.

- 2021 City of ABQ Youth Job Fair
- Laguna Middle School
- Las Cruces Public Schools
- Farmington Municipal Schools

- **Carl Perkins: NM Public Education** is in the process of identifying potential funding sources to expand Work-Based Learning and provide sustainability moving forward. With expansion of Work Based Learning (WBL) and increased Career Technical Education (CTE) throughout the state, students are made aware of learning opportunities across sectors which will help them attain high-skill, high-demand, living wage jobs. The College and Career Readiness Bureau of the PED has established a Quality Indicators Work Group that is working on reviewing WBL data throughout the state to identify statewide needs. The goals are to provide increased access and participation and to build high-quality programming. PED will be partnering with Mentoring Kids Works New Mexico to provide opportunities and support to high school students. They will explore the teaching career pathway while providing tutoring services to elementary students.

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. 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):

San Juan College offers an IT program through their Center for Workforce Development which offers courses that enrich an individual's skills and knowledge, or to grow their skill set in the IT field.

CompTIA IT Fundamentals+ is a fundamental course where participants gain know on whether they are interested in knowing if a career in IT a good fit is, develop a broader understanding of IT and gaining fundamental IT skills such as establishing network connectivity, identifying common software applications and their purposes, and best practices for security and web browsing. WIOA participants leave with the knowledge necessary to pass a certifying exam. Once they have successfully completed the fundamental courses, they move into the CompTIA A+. With this course, participants join the ranks of certified CompTIA A+ professionals, proven problem solvers supporting today's core technologies from security to cloud to data management, and more. They each master nine core skills, including installing operating systems, operational procedures, and software troubleshooting. Upon completing this course, participants will be prepared to take the two qualifying exams leading to CompTIA A+ certification, the industry standard for launching IT careers into today's digital world.

Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board (SAWDB):

The local board prioritized healthcare and education as the two industries of focus for the board and its providers. Both these industries have been upended during the pandemic, slowing progress in developing and expanding networks to create a long-term solution to a skilled worker shortage. Throughout the program year, both targeted industries experienced an unprecedented need for a skilled workforce and have even struggled to motivate and keep existing staff due to the many changes and challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. The SAWBD will focus on leading this initiative by continuing to provide a labor market analysis for identification of in-demand jobs within these sectors and identifying skill gaps to aid businesses in finding talent, create jobs, and support our local communities.

The Workforce Connection of Central New Mexico (WCCNM):

The WCCNM sector strategies have progressed with the IT/tech and healthcare industries. For IT/tech, the WCCNM and NWMC partners continued 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 that ended in December 2020.

Also, the NMWC partners coordinated with other existing IT/tech efforts that are currently going on in the region that are also engaging key industry representatives including programs such as NMITAP, the City of Albuquerque Job Training Assistance, etc. For healthcare subsectors, an inventory and assessment of existing healthcare-related business and community relationship was 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 facilitated county-level advisory meetings in PY20 to bring together employers, industry representatives, education/training providers, 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):

Healthcare: The area worked with employers in the health care industry to identify "new needs" and anticipated future needs in a post-Covid health care environment. Hiring freezes and "slows" resulting from low hospital census numbers changed the immediate needs for local health care positions. However, the industry is reporting a higher number of individuals leaving the industry, particularly in nursing, as a result of the pandemic. Even with challenges brought on by the pandemic, the area still reflects a shortage of healthcare occupations and in response outreach and enrollments for healthcare continued in an effort to move individuals into this priority sector. Training in this sector was impacted due to constraints on clinical affiliations because of the pandemic and risk and deferred completions of semesters or training for several individuals which did have an impact on performance. For PY20 the area had 339 individuals training in healthcare sectors.

Education: The teacher shortage in the area saw an increase due to many teachers electing to change careers or retire because of the many challenges they faced with virtual learning. In PY 20 the area trained 30 individuals in the education pathway, with some earning their alternative teaching credential. The youth

program also worked to engage young people in interest for this career pathway. As part of this, youth participants can be placed in Work Experience in an education, early childhood, and/or tutoring environment pathway.

During PY 20 the board and the OSO began working with communities and local colleges to promote alternative licensure programs for teachers. There was an increase in outreach and enrollment in those programs. Gathering school district officials for strategic planning was difficult due to their being inundated with changes and needs of the districts as a result of the pandemic.

Statewide Career Pathway Planning PY2020:

Adult Education Career Pathways Initiative (CPI) update + PD System Development

With the increasingly complex demands of the workplace and Adult Education's WIOA-driven role as a core workforce development partner, NMHED has devoted considerable resources to ramping up professional development and training efforts, including the 2019 roll out an intensive longitudinal statewide Adult Education Career Pathways Training Initiative. This initiative was designed to ensure that all local Adult Education providers fully understand both the spirit and the key technical components of WIOA legislation, including definitions and requirements, and that they use this knowledge to inform their self-evaluation efforts, service delivery model, and collaborative efforts with partner agencies and organizations. Accordingly, providers were encouraged to involve core workforce agency partners in the training and action planning for this initiative, where strategic implementation and sustainability were heavily emphasized.

Training and action planning have centered around ten (10) critical service delivery components, including partnerships, fostering a career culture, utilizing labor market information, onboarding, education and career planning with students, advising, instruction, alignment, special populations, and wrap around support services. In addition to the uniform focus on individuals with low basic and English skill levels, special focus was placed on a target population with additional barriers to employment: The incarcerated, and other "justice- involved" individuals. Within this global orientation, all local Adult Education providers specifically required to assess services they provided to the incarcerated and other justice- involved individuals. Participant programs were asked to systematically address how they might provide better access to services for such individuals, as well as more relevant, higher quality services. This assessment was to include an exploration of potential partnership activities which might help the statewide Adult Education system reach into underserved pockets of people who need our services, including places like local detention facilities and court diversion programs.

Not only was this initiative intended to raise awareness and prompt shorter-term programmatic change for local Adult Education programs and providers, it was also designed to lay

the groundwork for even larger efforts related to partnership development, barrier removal, and overall systems change that fundamentally involves all State Plan partners and stakeholders.

NMHED has just wrapped up the second year of this planned 3-year initiative. Highlights of tangible outcomes related to local program CPI participation include: (1) Increased collaboration with local workforce development boards and their contractors, as well as with other community partners and local businesses - many resulting in new formal agreements; (2) Enhanced contextualized curriculum and instruction development, including incorporating workforce preparation activities and focus on 'soft skills'; (3) More effective onboarding and other evidence-based strategies to support student retention and progress; (4) A stronger postsecondary education and training / career pathway focus, with nearly a third of the

programs incorporating a career navigator role in their programs; (5) Nearly a dozen new Integrated Education and Training programs either launched or in development (some had to be put on hold due to COVID, and many other existing IET programs were strengthened), with a focus on LMI and in-demand employment sectors; (6) Implementation of a region-wide pilot entrepreneurial program in collaboration with workforce partners; (7) Extensive program-to- program peer coaching model execution; (8) The creation of a base set of Adult Education- friendly Career Pathway maps for use in student advising and collaboration between Adult Education programs and other layers of their Higher Education Institutions.

This state-sponsored longitudinal initiative reflects continuing efforts to design and implement a coordinated statewide Adult Education professional development system, including the design of a centralized professional development portal (PROPEL) slated to roll out this fall and ongoing research and planning around the creation of an Adult Education credentialing system.

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
- *Ready NM Initiative* included efforts to grow additional short-term certificate and credential training programs. A total of \$1.5 million of set-aside funds were available to eligible institutions for financial resources needed to design and implement boot camp and short-term trainings developed in partnership with business partners to prepare job seekers for in-demand occupations. Boot camp and short-term trainings are defined as workforce development opportunities that prepare participants for immediate employment opportunities in a specific field that results in a certificate of content mastery or credential in an in-demand occupation. Awarded training programs would be funded to a ceiling of \$80,000 inclusive of allowable indirect costs; the funding would permit New Mexicans enrolled in an approved training program to attend at no cost to the individual. During PY21, Ready NM received seven proposals from four post-secondary institutions, obligating

\$366,199 to approved programs. Efforts continue into PY21 to development additional programs. (See Attached Ready NM Request for Proposal).

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: There were 144,977 veterans living in New Mexico as of 2019. Veterans represented 9.1 percent of the civilian population 18 and older. About 46.6 percent of the veteran population in New Mexico were participating in the labor force in 2020 (i.e., they were employed or actively seeking work). The median annual income of veterans in New Mexico in 2019 was \$41,047. Veterans had a high attainment of post-secondary education with 38.7 percent with some college or associate degree and 32.1 percent achieving a bachelor's degree or higher.

https://www.dws.state.nm.us/Portals/0/DM/LMI/2021_Veterans_Profile.pdf

Poverty in New Mexico: According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2019 American Community Survey, New Mexico had the third highest poverty rate in the U.S. at 18.2 percent. Nearly one in four New Mexican children under 18 years of age (24.9 percent, or about 115,997 children) lived in poverty in 2019. The poverty rate for New Mexicans 65 years and over was 13.5 percent, the highest in the country and 4.1 percentage points higher than the national average of 9.4 percent.

https://www.dws.state.nm.us/Portals/0/DM/LMI/Poverty_in_NM_2019.pdf

2021 State of the Workforce Report. This report includes analyses of New Mexico's population; educational attainment; labor force participation and demographics; unemployment, income, wages, and poverty; and projected industry and employment growth. Analysis was made in this year's report to better align with WIOA activities. Those include state-to-state migration flows and the labor force and unemployment of youth.

https://www.dws.state.nm.us/Portals/0/DM/LMI/State_of_the_Workforce_2021.pdf

Data Focus on Youth: Ages 16-24: The youth population equate to 12.3 percent of New Mexico's population with a total number of 258,275 persons. Roosevelt County held the highest percentage of the population at 21.0 percent, while Harding County had the lowest population of youth at 6.3 percent. Exactly one in four New Mexico youth, between the ages of 16-19, were enrolled in school and employed. However, slightly more than half of this same age range were not enrolled in school and were either unemployed or not in the labor force.

https://www.dws.state.nm.us/Portals/0/DM/LMI/NM_Data_Focus_Youth_2021.pdf

New Mexico Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics 2020 at a Glance: The occupational groups with the most employment in New Mexico was office and administrative support (14.1 percent of total employment) and food preparation and serving related (9.0 percent). But they had annual median wages below New Mexico's annual median wage of \$37,380. Office and administrative support and food

preparation and serving related had annual median wages of \$34,780 and \$21,080, respectively. The low wages of food preparation and serving related is most likely a cause of the worker shortage in this industry. https://www.dws.state.nm.us/Portals/0/DM/LMI/NM_OEWS_2020.pdf

Current Evaluation Projects

NMDWS is currently evaluating the effectiveness of the Ready NM initiative. The initiative focuses on providing a centralized source (<https://ready.nm.gov/>) for information about training and education opportunities as well as information about employment and career opportunities for job seekers, and support for businesses, such as information about state hiring assistance and hiring incentives.

NM DWS staff developed and distributed a survey to the Cabinet Secretaries for the NM DWS, the New Mexico Higher Education Department (NM HED), and other key stakeholders in these agencies. The survey asked respondents to identify up to three of the most difficult challenges faced in implementing Ready NM. The survey then asked respondents to describe why they believed each of these challenges were among the most difficult and what actions they took to help overcome these challenges. Respondents were also asked about lessons learned, and what they would you do differently next time.

NM DWS staff has evaluated the challenges observed by key stakeholders, their lessons learned, and their suggestions for improving the process in the following areas: 1) Marketing, 2) Staffing, 3) Interagency Coordination and Collaboration, 4) Education and Training for DWS staff, 5) providing Participants and Job Seekers with information about training opportunities, and 6) Other Areas the key stakeholders identified. The small sample size (n = 10) and the nature of the questions (open-ended) precludes statistical analysis on the results, therefore staff analyzed the data using qualitative methods.

The Ready NM initiative was initially developed as a response to the impact of COVID-19, public health orders implemented by the Governor to control the spread of the disease, and layoffs and business closings that resulted from social distancing requirements and other restrictions on mass gatherings. Public health orders on social distancing requirements and other restrictions on mass gatherings also impacted the business operations of the NM DWS, including the shuttering of New Mexico Workforce

Connection Centers and the transition to telework for NM DWS staff and Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) One-Stop Operators and the implementation of a remote training program for DWS staff.

NM DWS staff developed and distributed a survey to Business and Career Consultants answering calls from jobseekers and employers, direct and indirect supervisors of Business and Career Consultants, and DWS Training staff, to assess the impact of transitioning from in-person training to remote training on the preparation of to Business and Career Consultants. The initial results are currently being compiled and analyzed. Questions for the Business and Career Consultants focused on their experience level, how much training they received from the NMDWS in skills identified in the position descriptions in job postings and the SPO Classification Description for *Employment, Recruitment and Placement Specialist*, and on their knowledge and use of employment and labor market information posted on the NMDWS website as well as the NMDWS case management system, Workforce Connection Online System, WCOS. Training staff were asked to provide their insights into the advantages and disadvantages of both in-person and remote training provided for the Business and Career Consultants.

Planned Evaluation Projects

NMDWS designated a portion of its WIOA Administrative funding to support the development and implementation of new training programs for displaced workers. The grant process was open to all public institutions of higher education within New Mexico, and approved initiatives could be awarded up to \$80,000 per new program. This initiative is on-going. The grant cycle ends in December 2021, and several programs awarded funding will not be delivered until early 2022. NMDWS will evaluate the effectiveness of these programs to provide participants with in-demand skills after all programs funded in this cycle have delivered and the awardees submit their results to the NMDWS.

The NMDWS plans to send surveys to three categories of employers: 1) employers registered in WCOS who have submitted a job order through the system, 2) employers registered in WCOS who have not submitted a job order through the system, and 3) employers not registered in WCOS. The questions will be, in the main, open-ended. All employers will be asked to provide information on the: which positions in their business currently have the most openings, which positions are hardest to fill, and why they think it is so hard to fill them. Each category of employers will then be asked series of questions that pertain to them. For example, employers submitting job orders through WCOS will be asked to evaluate how well qualified and prepared were the employees you hired using the NMDWS' job orders; employers registered in WCOS but not submitting job orders will be asked why they have not done so, and employers not registered in WCOS will be asked a series of questions to ascertain their level of knowledge about the services NM DWS provides to employers.

NMDWS currently captures data for WIOA Titles I (Workforce Development Activities) and III (Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended). The NM DWS worked with the NM HED to gain access to Title II (Adult Education) data and will develop an evaluation plan within the next two years.

NMDWS staff developed and forwarded a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to the NM HED for their review. The MOU requests the NM HED provide NM DWS with data that will be used to evaluate the success of Ready NM grants funded by NMDWS. Additionally, the data requested will enable NM DWS and NM HED to evaluate the success of undergraduate Career and Technical Education (CTE) certificate programs by comparing the wage and occupation of participants before and after the completion of their undergraduate CTE certificate program.

NMDWS has evaluated the challenges observed by key stakeholders, their lessons learned, and their suggestions for improving the process in the following areas: 1) Marketing, 2) Staffing, 3) Interagency Coordination and Collaboration, 4) Education and Training for DWS staff, 5) providing Participants and Job Seekers with information about training opportunities, and 6) Other Areas the key stakeholders identified. NMDWS senior leadership has reviewed the report and DWS staff have forwarded it to the NM HED for review and comment. NMDWS senior leadership is waiting on the results of the remainder of the surveys before developing and implementing continuous improvement strategies.

NEW MEXICO'S PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY & INTEGRITY:

During PY2020 New Mexico provided career services to 1,981 adults with an average cost per participant of \$1,995. The adults receiving additional training services were 1,729 with an average cost per participant of \$3,073. There was a 23% reduction in participation from the program year 2020 compared to program year 2019. There was an 8% increase in low-income participants as well as proportional increases in participants reporting as homeless, long-term unemployed and displaced homemakers.

The Dislocated Worker program provided career services to 898 participants with an average cost per participant of \$2,813 and training services to 664 participants with an average cost per participant of \$3,183. New Mexico saw an increase in the Dislocated Work program participation of 43% from program year 2019 to program year 2020. This was driven by 29% increase in services to low-income individuals, as well as proportional increases in participants reporting as long-term unemployed, single parents and ex-offenders.

The Youth program provided career services to 1,332 participants with an average cost per participant of \$4,278 and training services to 304 participants with an average cost per participant of \$4,981. These number reflect an increase in services in the Youth program of 19% from program year 2019 to program year 2020. This increase is reflected with a 5% increase in services to English language learners, 5% increase in services to low-income participants as well as proportional increases in participants reporting as single parents and youth in foster care.

The WIOA Title III Employment Services program served 13,172 participants with an average cost per participant of \$395. Title III saw a reduction 32% of participants served, this is attributed to a combination of the Workforce Connection Center (WCC) staff being shifted to unemployment insurance duties, WCC office closures, WCC services being provided virtually and limited WCC in-person services, which were restricted, by capacity limits. In addition, the work search requirement and the requirement to register for work with the Workforce Connection Center/Online system were both suspended for a majority of program year 2020.

The WIOA Adult program met four (4) of the primary indicators of performance and failed one (1). The WIOA Dislocated Worker program met four (4) of the primary indicators of performance and failed one (1). For the Youth program the state met three (3) primary indicators of performance and failed two (2). The WIOA Title III Employment Services program met three (3) primary indicator of performance and failed zero (0). During the program year New Mexico provided multiple technical assistance opportunities to the local areas and service providers. Numerous technical assistance trainings were provided both virtually and one performance training was provided in person at a local board retreat.

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 continues to utilize the 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 has provided numerous trainings program year 2020. The trainings virtual 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 19,080 employers were served over the last three years and of those, 4,081 returned for services during PY20 for a repeat business service rate of 21.40%. In market penetration, the workforce system services impacted 10.0% 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.

NEW MEXICO'S RAPID RESPONSE PY2020

In PY20, 16 companies reported layoffs affecting 2,668 employees. The industries most impacted by layoffs were Manufacturing/Oil & Gas (1,318), call centers (94), Health Care/Social Assistance (256), and Service/Hospitality (1,000). Areas impacted by region – Central (781), Southwest (1084), Eastern (323), and Northern (480). 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
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
2020-2021	2,668	16
Totals	22,872	310

Rapid Response and TAA

Rapid Response and Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program have a cohesive partnership. When Rapid Response is notified of an impending layoff or closure, the TAA program Coordinator is notified to begin research. This contributes to more participation in the TAA program because more companies are notified of potential program benefits and depending on their reasons for layoffs and/or closures more petitions are filed with USDOL for investigation. With Rapid Response and TAA working together allows for benefits information to be dispersed to individuals sooner and leads to more participants/enrollments in TAA benefits. During this fiscal year, the COVID pandemic impacted how TAA provided services, however, TAA enrolled more than 80 participants and continues to grow.

In the previous FY, NMDWS Rapid Response, TAA, and WIOA partnered with the Training provider in Silver City to host a Drive-Thru information Expo to serve the individuals who were impacted by layoff from Freeport McMoran Mines. This proved to be beneficial to all parties and our participants provided positive reactions to this type of information expo. This initiative will be used again for future layoffs and TAA-Certified petitions. New Mexico has not had any new petitions certified during this FY year as regulations have changed and are more limited. Currently, there are 167 TAA training participants enrolled in programs. The programs they are enrolled in vary from Welding programs, Commercial Driver's License Certification to Registered Nursing, Accounting, and Computer Programming. Participants are attending various training programs throughout

the state: NM State University, Dona Ana Community College, Western NM University, University of New Mexico, Central NM Community College, Northern NM College as well as online providers such as DeVry University, Purdue Global University, Colorado State University Global and Grand Canyon University.

Rapid Response All-Hands New Mexico Program

In June 2020 NMDWS initiated 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 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 resumes to their account at <https://www.jobs.state.nm.us>, as well as search available job openings. Having their information already in the system provides job seekers with real-time alerts to well-matched job opportunities in their region. To date, 180 employers have utilized the program and have posted 1,991 jobs with Job Centers throughout the State of New Mexico.

"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."

Rapid Response and Economic Development Partnership

NMDWS is working in collaboration with New Mexico Economic Development Department (NMEDD) to enhance the layoff aversion program in our state. The agencies have hired two full-time staff who have become part of the employer retention program team led by NMEDD. This team works with businesses statewide to address company challenges that many times include workforce issues. The new staff 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. Initiatives that have been implemented through this partnership:

- Community Outreach through Economic Development - Continued the partnership with Economic Development to outreach and make significant connections and better relationships with all the needs of new businesses and

businesses that need employment services. During the initial meetings through economic development, we were able to guide new businesses and interest into our state on all services provided from the onset of building and developing their business, offering training, recruitment events, financial assistance, and access to skilled workers.

- Roswell Economic Development- In partnership with the Roswell Economic Development team on we were able to host an in-person Business forum where we heard from all businesses and were able to address the current state of the workforce with accurate and updated numbers for Chavez County. We were able to provide them with tools that are available through the department for training and recruitment. Workforce and Rapid Response were also on hand to develop a streamlined-on site Job Fair for all interested in on-site hiring. 30 employers and 148 job seekers attended.
- New Mexico's long-term economic development rests in large part on its workforce ecosystem. Developing a highly skilled and versatile workforce, and the conditions to sustain it, is critical to drawing industry and businesses to the state. In partnerships with our local education institutes, we have begun to implement a targeted curriculum to assist the workforce in high-skilled jobs such as Aerospace, Manufacturing, and Healthcare. Stakeholders believe that building stronger ties between educational institutions and existing employers is critical to both worker retention and industry development. This involves improving the career services and resources offered to college students so that more students begin career planning when they enter college and developing partnerships with employers to better align curricula, match students to jobs and internships, and build an alumni network that strengthens the education-to-workforce pipeline. Competition for talent is not a zero-sum game, and cooperation between government labs, private sector businesses, and educational institutions can serve the workforce needs of all parties. Talent sharing arrangements and public-private partnerships in workforce education, for example, are two ways in which labs, businesses, and schools can collaborate to develop and utilize local talent.
- Workforce Compatibility. Stakeholders routinely cited New Mexico's workforce as a deterrent for businesses moving to or expanding within New Mexico. Common issues with the state's workforce include the lack of necessary skillsets to support businesses in a variety of industries. These skillsets include soft "people" skills, industry-relevant technical knowledge, and general workplace skills. Additionally, the exodus of younger talent from the state combined with the influx of retirees further limits the availability of skilled workers for New Mexico's employers. With continued outreach between Workforce Solutions and in partnership with Economic Development, we have begun the process of educating businesses, entrepreneurs,

and potential workforce i.e., unemployed individuals and rural areas of the opportunities in training and soft skills needed to obtain a more skilled job opportunity.

Rapid Response 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. 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 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 prior to filing a claim.

Ready NM

Ready New Mexico is a new partnership between the New Mexico Higher Education Department, the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions, and the New Mexico Workforce Connection that was developed in February of 2021. Ready NM is an initiative that was initiated as an economic recovery effort to quickly assist job seekers in their employment and educational training needs and to assist employers with their staffing shortages. The initiative is a two-part system that allows customers to utilize either the Ready NM website, <https://ready.nm.gov/> or to call the Ready NM designated line and speak to a live representative. The Ready NM website is composed of training- educational resources, fast track programs aimed to help New Mexicans prepare for in-demand jobs, business support aids, a full list of community resources across New Mexico, up to date labor market information, and current jobs availability in the state of New Mexico. The website and call line have been active since March of 2021. From March 2021 thru June 2021, The Ready NM website has had 1,551 visits. The Ready NM live call line has assisted 1,263 jobseekers and 137 employers from March 2021 thru June 2021.

Human Services Department

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. The initiative originally started as pilot program assisting non-custodial parents in three of our New Mexico cities, Albuquerque, Rio Rancho, and Las Cruces; to date all New Mexico Workforce Connection Offices statewide are in partnership with a respective New Mexico Child Support Enforcement Division.

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation-E3

The goal of Project E3 is to provide State Vocational Rehabilitation agencies and their partners, such as Workforce Connection with the skills and competencies needed to address barriers effectively and efficiently to integrate employment and community involvement for people with disabilities who live in poor communities. New Mexico is among the 12 states across the country who are in partnership with the Project -E3 initiative. The Southwest cities of Deming and Silver City have been recognized by Project -E3 as areas of high need for individuals who live in an economic disadvantage community. Our Southwest Workforce Connection Offices are working in direct partnership with Project-E3 and meet every month. From June 2020 thru June 2021 the partnership has consisted of addressing community participation and awareness of those with disabilities, employer

outreach that encourages the employment of individuals with disabilities and or special needs, conducting soft skills training for those individuals with special needs.

Public Education Department

The Career to Classroom Initiative was a partnership with NM Public Education, CNM and Workforce Connection Offices. In February of 2021 CNM offered a Career & Technical Education support cohort for Teacher Training Programs in STEM. Approved applicants received support for applying for grants and scholarships to cover tuition, books, and fees. In the course of one week, the Department of Workforce Solutions Career Consultants were responsible for calling over 900 identified individuals who had applied for Unemployment Insurance benefits and had either an associate's or bachelor's degree in a STEM related field. There were approximately 198 individuals who showed interests in a career to become a teacher. Each of our 4 Title 1 providers were responsible for working with NMPED and assisting in the qualification of the individuals to receive the funding allocation for the CTE Teacher Training Program. Because of the success of the initiative, the Department of Workforce Solutions will now be assisting in 3 yearly CTE cohorts for the Spring, Summer and Fall to recruit individuals to become teachers in STEM.

DWS: Outreach

The DWS Career Consultants across the state made weekly calls to individuals who filed for Unemployment Insurance for that week. The goal was to get these individuals back into the workforce quickly. Because our list of applicants was large, our offices were able to break down the lists by the occupation of the applicant which helped to better meet the needs and or requirements of employers recruiting for talent. The following are highlights of two specific outreach activities successfully implemented in PY2020:

- The NM Department of Environment partnered with Title III 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 on June 1, 2020. Successes include a 50% increase in pass rates now that the test is available electronically. From July of 2020 thru June, 30th of 2021 our Department of Workforce Solutions staff had administered 343 tests in our Workforce Connection Offices throughout the state where COVID-19 guidelines were carefully and cautiously followed.
- 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). For this fiscal year, New Mexico's Workforce Connection Centers assisted 200 employers through virtual hiring events. 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.

NATIONAL DISLOCATED WORKER GRANT:

New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (NMDWS) was awarded a National Dislocated Workers Grant to aid in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. NM Department of Workforce Solutions sought partnership and guidance from key state leaders to address DISASTER RELATED EMPLOYMENT activities in partnership with the New Mexico Environment Department and EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING SERVICES and in partnership with the Central Workforce Development Board.

Disaster Relief Employment: Department of Workforce Solutions and NM Environment Department – Office of Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

The Disaster Related Employment focused on supporting statewide goals to minimize the spread of COVID, improve the health and safety of our citizens and reduce the overall infection and crisis hospitalization. NMDWS in partnership with the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) through its Occupational Health and Safety Bureau hired 26 dislocated workers to serve as COVID *Health and Safety Inspectors and Health and Safety Logistics Staff*. The *Health and Safety Inspectors and Health and Safety Logistics Staff* targeted unemployed individuals with specific credentials and or expertise in health and safety, science, health education, or individuals such as medical assistants and technicians, certified nurse assistants. All eligible participants were recruited from those currently receiving unemployment benefits.

The number of potential businesses statewide impacted by this health and safety effort was estimated at 59,780. The proposed health and safety activities included: rapid worksite safety inspections following reports of positive COVID onsite, contact tracing following positive COVID-19 results of employee(s); response and surveillance to identify potential employees infected with COVID, training for businesses on COVID Safe Practices, disinfecting and quarantine measures. The Health and Safety Inspectors and *Health and Safety Logistics Staff* provided ongoing consultation and technical assistance to businesses statewide to assure health and wellbeing and safe opening following positive COVID in the workplace. This was viewed as a very critical disaster recovery response in order to reduce the impact of infection, save lives and support successful economic recovery.

The COVID *Health and Safety Officers and Health and Safety Logistics Staff* with the New Mexico Environment Department went beyond contact tracing, as efforts also included health and safety training, education and direct consultation with businesses to help them meet ongoing needs to maintain a healthy, safe and COVID free environment to remain open and sustainable. Individuals employed in these positions gained important skills, knowledge and direct work experience that made them marketable as work-site health and safety officers for jobs that are sure to grow as a direct result of the pandemic.

The success of this endeavor resulted with COVID Health and Safety Officers and *Health and Safety Logistics Staff* achieving the following milestones:

- Contact Tracing – Over 47,300 Rapid Response reviews or contacts
- Positive impact on 546,474 workers and 13,656 employers
- 26 FTE hired resulting in 9 permanent hires with NMED, 1 with NMDOH, 1 external with Public Education and 6 remaining staff being carried over with NMED to join NM Department of Health on a joint venture.

Employment and Training for Dislocated Workers: Central Workforce Development Board.

The Central Region Adult & Dislocated Worker (DW) program has two projects. The first is the transitional jobs project that strives to enable individuals with a limited work history or industry to experience the opportunity to gain meaningful work skills that lead to gainful employment. The target population is individuals with nonviolent criminal backgrounds who are currently unemployed or have been unemployed for 27 weeks or more. Transitional jobs participants are placed at worksites and with employers across a range of occupations and industries in the four-county region. As of June 30, 2021, 14 participants were placed in transitional work opportunities.

Secondly, under the NEG-DWG, the Central Region continues a partnership with CNM Ingenuity to focus on short-term training certificates and other training/education opportunities for unemployed individuals hardest hit by COVID-19 and looking for careers in the IT/tech industry. The IT/tech training opportunities align with the overall sector strategy in the Central Region that is currently underway. As of June 30, 2021, 48 participants were enrolled with “Individual Training Accounts” (ITA) in IT/tech training.

The Workforce Connection of Central New Mexico (WCCNM) increased access and opportunities for employment, education, training, and support services to individuals who are dislocated from employment and those that were self-employed, contract, gig and other workers not eligible for regular unemployment benefits with the launch of the new federal and temporary Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program.

The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions was recognized by the Education & Training Administration of the US Department of Labor for its work of innovative promising practices with its partnership with the Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) of the New Mexico Environment Department. The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions was selected to participate in a podcast that includes an interview regarding their experiences developing, modifying, and managing a DWG project that required significant course correction in light of rapidly changing circumstances.

Podcast 3: National Dislocated Worker Grants - The Value of Creativity and Collaboration to DWGs <https://ion.workforcegps.org/resources/2020/10/19/12/50/National-Dislocated-Worker-Grants-Disaster-Relief-COVID-19-Grantee-Training>

NEW MEXICO'S STATE AND LOCAL WORKFORCE BOARD ACTIVITIES:

The State Workforce Development conducted a thorough examination of the effectiveness and efficiency of the workforce system capacity and operations as well as a comprehensive review of the current local area designations. In December 2019, the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) voted to create a subcommittee dedicated to initiating a process to evaluate the current structure based on reported and observable problems related to governance, fiscal and performance outcomes. After much discussion and collaboration, the following report summarizes their analysis of the system and includes a bold recommendation for consideration in the post-pandemic world.

After careful consideration and review, following the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) guidance, the SWDB recommends a conversion from four local areas to two, consisting of a Metro and a Rural area. The development of two workforce regions provides several benefits for a sparsely populated state like NM, namely, focus and attention to communities facing similar workforce needs and circumstances. Furthermore, coordination, development and implementation of workforce services and supports can be improved by organizing around common purposes and common industry partners and sectors, including the Governor's priority economic development sectors.

Communication and collaboration across training providers, workforce partners, chambers of commerce and local governments can be aligned more effectively and efficiently, while keeping the needs of the target recipients and employers at the forefront.

This recommendation comports to the recommendation of the LFC Spotlight Report, Workforce Development Post- COVID 19 Pandemic. "If New Mexico were to reduce the number of boards to an urban and a rural board, there could be administrative savings in addition to improved communication of urban versus rural needs."

Once this recommendation is approved, the SWDB will engage in further planning and partnership with county chief elected officials, local workforce development boards, and key workforce partners to develop a comprehensive implementation plan that will be fully operational by July 1, 2022. The following is a link to the report outlining key findings and objectives of planned transformation and redesign of the NM Workforce Development System.

https://www.dws.state.nm.us/Portals/0/DM/PARTNERS/SWDB_Recommendation_04_2021.pdf



Success Stories from the Field

As the pandemic embarked on the State of New Mexico during program year 2020 (PY20), our local workforce development boards were forced to adjust and innovate their practices to reach participants through unprecedented methods. As the human spirit would have it, many of the local boards embraced the virtual platform and were able to deliver services such as entrepreneurial opportunities with a focus on employability skills, tuition assistance for Commercial Drivers Licenses (CDLs), and provisions to wrap around services that would allow individuals to remain employed. *(See Attached Local Workforce Development Board Reports for full details of PY2020 activities for each local area).*

- **EASTERN AREA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

In PY20, the Eastern Area Local Workforce Development Board and new partner, Startup Generation, developed a curriculum that focuses on solid workplace skills, such as team building, research, and critical thinking for youth participants. All the skills gained in the program are transferrable within a workplace environment and as the participant's progress, local employers are identified to assist with mentoring through the enhancement of networking and communication/presentation skills. One specific example of this success occurred in quarter four when Rainie, a 20-year-old single mother, who dropped out of high school during her senior year, became a participant for the pilot cohort. Not only did Rainie succeed in the program and strengthen her leadership skills, she captured the attention of local investors in her in/outdoor arena proposal and was able to build her confidence to pass all five exams for her high school equivalency.

- **NORTHERN AREA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

Participants in the Northern region experienced multi-household member layoffs during the Pandemic. Bruce and his longtime partner experienced layoffs, which made it difficult for them to care for your two young children. He sought assistance through WIOA in October 2020 for help to gain a Commercial Driver's License (CDL), an occupation he felt would be lucrative for his family. On February 8, 2021, Bruce successfully passed his exams and graduated from the CDL training program, which led to immediate employment with Werner Enterprises.

- **WORKFORCE CONNECTION of CENTRAL NEW MEXICO**

In many instances, a family member's success under WIOA encourages others to follow. In the Central Region, this was the fact for Vanessa. She is a mother of four children and long-time military wife to her husband. She had some work experience with short-term jobs, but because the military moved the family often, she became increasingly

aware that her skills needed enhancement to advance her into a career. After he husband graduated from Pima Medical Institute (PMI), Vanessa enrolled in the same institution's Radiography Program. Vanessa excelled and with the help of WIOA, was able to graduate and gain immediate employment as a Radiography Technician at the same clinic she completed her clinical rotations.

- **SOUTHWEST AREA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

With hospitals in an extreme shortage of nurses, the Southwest region delivered by assisting participants with support to complete nursing programs. From dislocated workers like Ms. Sanchez, to adult participants like Mr. Alcheikh, both who received tuition assistance, that allowed them to successfully complete their studies and graduate with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. Ms. Sanchez sought help from her local workforce connection center after being laid off and not receiving a call back to work, made a career change and graduated in the fourth quarter of program year 2020. Mr. Alcheikh, a Syrian medical professional who relocated to Deming, New Mexico, quickly realized that he needed assistance when his medical credentials from Syria were not recognized by the United States. He learned English quickly and attempted to enroll as a nursing student, but because he already had a degree from his home county, Federal Financial Aid was not available to him. This is where WIOA was able to step in to assist and will graduate as a registered nurse this Fall of 2021.

New Mexico has been a remarkable state of resilience and continues the work to empower its constituents to further and more rewarding employment. In partnership with the Local Workforce Development Boards and the State Workforce Development Board, the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions continues to lead the state in innovative and supportive initiatives. Undoubtedly the work ahead will be challenging. The pandemic has taught us the importance of flexibility and has certainly laid bare disparities, our strengths, and areas for improvement. The State Workforce Board, NMDWS, along with our workforce partners certainly forged new alliances during the crisis and created new ways to work together. There is a renewed sense of commitment to move with urgency to address the workforce needs for our businesses and job seekers who require quick, short-term solutions to move into employment. We will also remain steadfast on key initiatives that require a longer-term vision and solution. NMDWS appreciates the ongoing technical assistance and support from our federal program staff and look forward to continued opportunities to engage at a national level to inform workforce development strategies, best and promising practices; especially those that impact small states with large rural/frontier and Native American communities.

ATTACHMENTS

Local Workforce Development Board Annual Reports

Eastern Area Workforce Development Board:

https://eawdb.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/EAWDB-PY2020-Annual-Report_.pdf

Southwest Area Workforce Development Board: Attachment included.

Central Area Workforce Development Board: Attachment included.

Northern Area Workforce Development Board: Attachment included.

ReadyNM Request for Applications:

[Ready NM - Request for Applications \(RFA\) | NM Higher Education Department \(state.nm.us\)](https://state.nm.us/highered/ready-nm/)



EASTERN AREA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

A Proud Partner of the American Job Center Network

PROGRAM YEAR (PY) 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

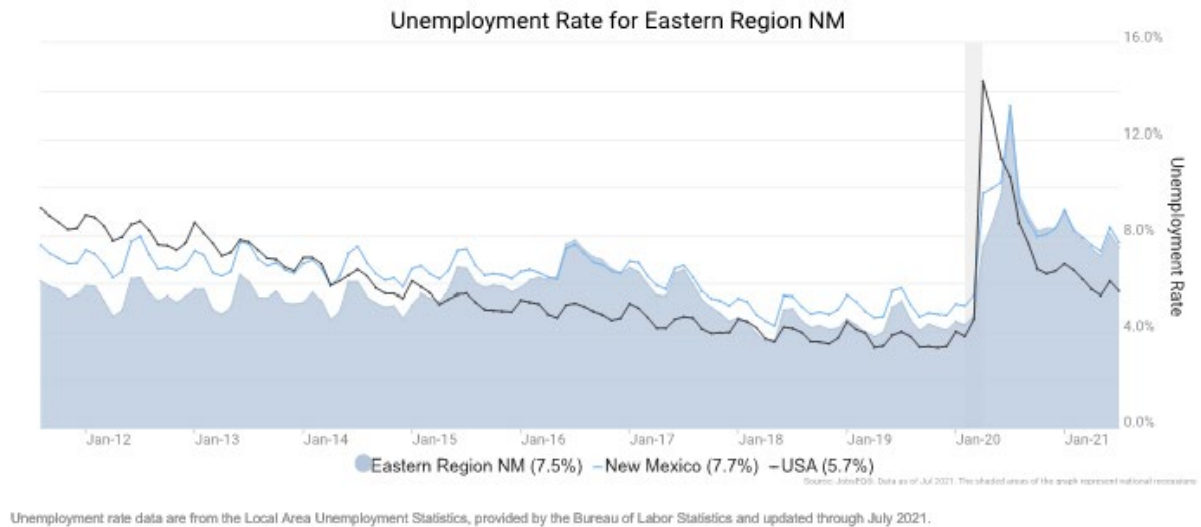
General Overview

Operation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) job centers in Eastern NM in PY 20 has presented many challenges due to the pandemic as it has throughout the country. The area's unemployment rate and numbers of new claims were the highest they have been in over twenty years including during the recession. The effects of the pandemic were compounded by the decline of the oil and gas industry which is responsible for a significant portion of not only the regions economy but the state's revenue as well. The board, operator, service providers and offices struggled to find ways to assist employers with retention and hiring during this time while they too were struggling to retain and hire employees.

Despite the many challenges, PY 20 began with the East's workforce system partners working collaboratively to align multiple workforce and education/training efforts. The board continued to focus on several ongoing initiatives in addition to some newly identified opportunities including, but not limited to: the youth entrepreneurial training pilot project; the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) co-enrollment model; development and utilization of a new youth service platform (Career EDGE); the development of a Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) referral and co-enrollment pilot project; identification of new and creative ways to partner and utilize technology to improve services in rural areas; and identifying and developing robust Apprenticeship opportunities in the area.

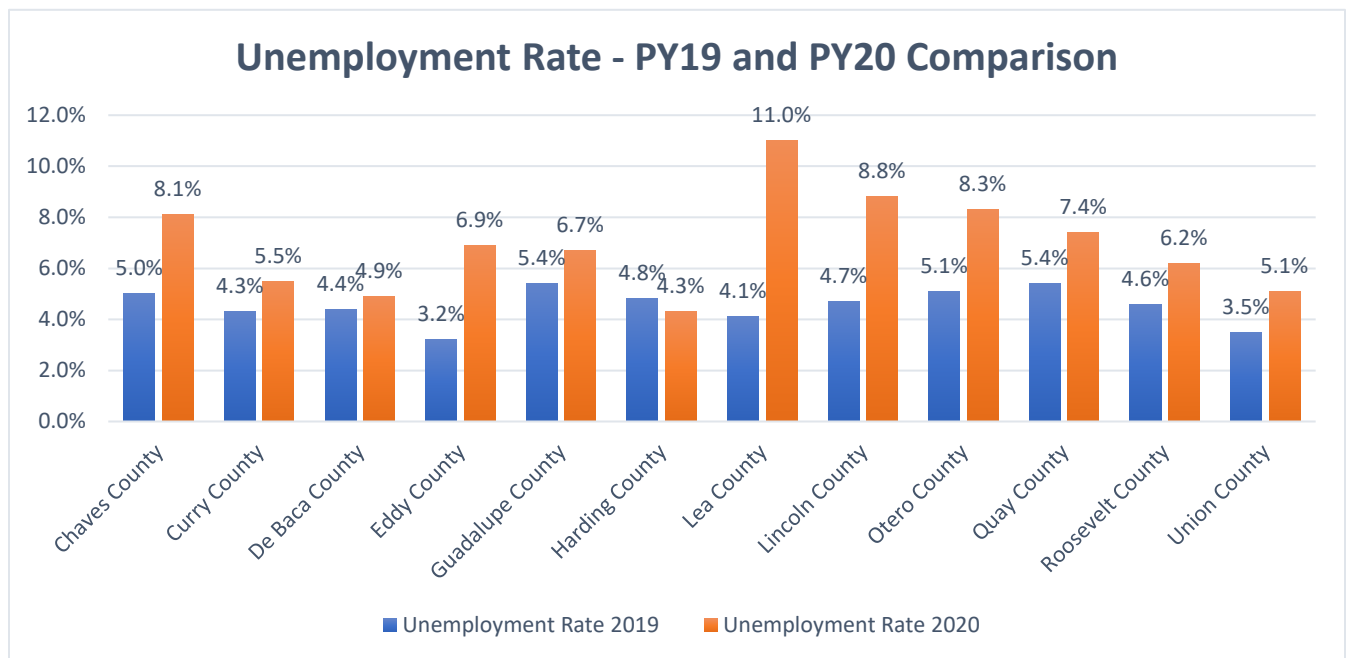
Labor Market

As previously mentioned, the pandemic presented many challenges during PY 20. The unemployment rate at the beginning of the year the unemployment rate had significantly increased due to the pandemic, however, saw a slow decline over the course of the year. The unemployment rate for the Eastern Area was 7.5% as of July 2021. The regional unemployment rate was higher than the national rate of 5.7%. One year earlier, in July 2020, the unemployment rate in the Eastern Region NM was 13.1%.



Source: JobsEQ

Below is a graph that shows unemployment rate comparisons between the end of PY 19 and the end of PY 20.



Source: NMDWS, Local Area Unemployment Statistics program in conjunction with U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Output: EconoVue, RegionVue

Sector Strategies

Healthcare

The area worked with employers in the health care industry to identify "new needs" and anticipated future needs in a post-Covid health care environment. Hiring freezes and "slows" resulting from low hospital census numbers changed the immediate needs for local health care positions. However, the industry is reporting a higher number of individuals leaving the industry, particularly in nursing, as a result of the pandemic. Even with challenges brought on by the pandemic, the area still reflects a shortage of healthcare occupations and in response outreach and enrollments for healthcare continued in an effort to move individuals into this priority sector. Training in this sector was impacted due to constraints on clinical affiliations because of the pandemic and risk and deferred completions of semesters or training for several individuals which did have an impact on performance. For PY20 the area had 339 individuals training in healthcare sectors.

Demand Material Change – Healthcare			
Year	Material Change Description	Businesses	Employment
2020	Decrease in Scale	28	1,685
2020	Early Signs of Decay	50	2,182
2020	Organic Growth	37	316
2020	Spend Growth	64	1,286
2020	Stable	893	12,359
2020	Decrease in Demand	38	213
2020	Increase in Borrowing	44	379
2020	Increase in Demand	9	48
2020	Increase in Scale	21	782
2020	Leverage for Growth	16	132

Education

The teacher shortage in the area saw an increase due to many teachers electing to change careers or retire because of the many challenges they faced with virtual learning. In PY 20 the area trained 30 individuals in the education pathway, with some earning their alternative teaching credential. The youth program also worked to engage young people in interest for this career pathway. As part of this, youth participants can be placed in Work Experience in an education, early childhood, and/or tutoring environment pathway.

During PY 20 the board and the OSO began working with communities and local colleges to promote alternative licensure programs for teachers. There was an increase in outreach and enrollment in those programs. Gathering school district officials for strategic

planning was difficult due to their being inundated with changes and needs of the districts as a result of the pandemic.

Information Technology

The OSO, board staff and the service provider director began conversations with the training coordinator at ENMU Ruidoso, a cyber security center of excellence, to identify telework opportunities within the area. During PY 20 the school began collaborating as part of a consortium of schools that received a grant to provide Information Technology (IT) training with a direct pathway to employment with several employers including the Department of Defense. Although we didn't see much movement on this, we are anticipating a higher number of individuals training in this sector pathway during PY 21.

Business Services

The board, its operator and partners have been working to promote services to local businesses to support their needs throughout the pandemic. While in person services were not possible, services via Zoom and other video conferencing software were utilized. While some employers needed support and training to learn new ways of working remotely, required assistance with finding employees. The local offices created Zoom meetings and social media platforms to allow employers to promote their positions and to give job seekers the ability to connect with them virtually.

The local offices began creating a "Hot Jobs" YouTube video each week promoting jobs in each county. The videos were posted on Facebook and each county's open position was posted as a picture for job seekers to easily access the information. Along with the job openings, these videos provided information about services being offered by the Workforce offices to support the employment as well as other services available. Social media platforms were also heavily utilized to promote job openings and hiring events.

The OSO and local offices also worked with DWS's "All Hands" project. All Hands New Mexico was created as a way for employers to promote job openings they were looking to fill immediately. During an unsure time, this gave employers a place to post jobs they were sure they could hire for rapidly. Jobs were posted in the NMWCOS, promoted on Facebook, and a full New Mexico Workforce Connection Online System (NMWCOS) candidate search was completed on the jobs posted.

On-the-job (OJT) training placements continue to be to a focus for the area as OJT's benefit both local employers and job seekers. There was a 10.6% decrease in the overall utilization of OJT's from PY19 to PY20, however, the Roswell and Hobbs offices both had significant increases in the numbers of OJT's provided. The decrease in the other counties is a result of the pandemic and slowed economies. As of the beginning of PY 21 OJT contracts appear to be increasing again and we are hopeful there will be an increase in OJT placements in the coming year.

Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Services

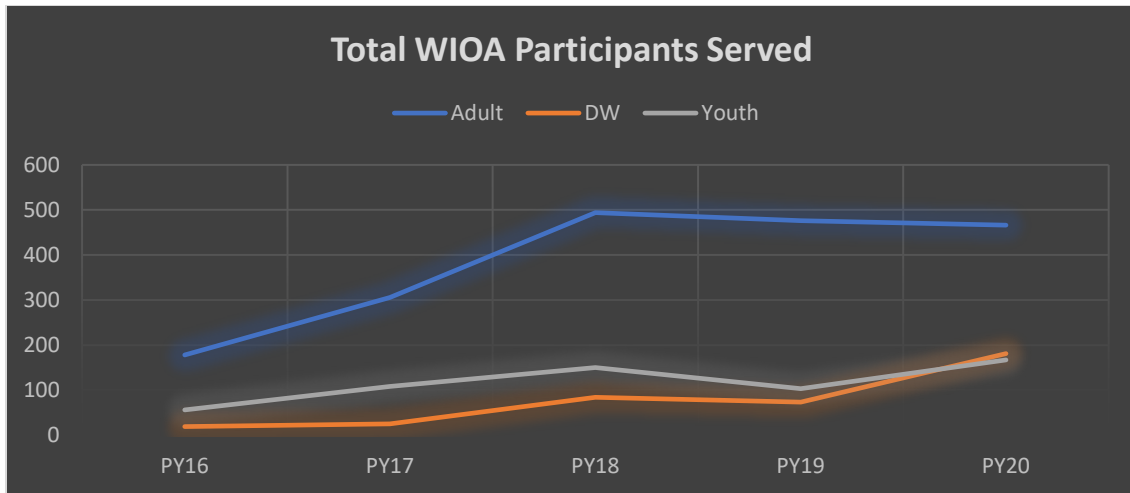
A continuing challenge in the East is service delivery in the more rural areas. This was made even more difficult and important during the pandemic. The OSO, Site Manager, and IT staff worked together to create a “lab to go” to help mitigate this issue. The lab consists all-in-one contains laptops, a printer, and a hot spot that can be taken out in the communities to provide services such as hiring events or job search outside the offices. To date the lab has been utilized for three job fairs where job seekers were able to apply for jobs being promoted by the companies participating in the job fairs as well as update their resumes and search additional open positions. This will be promoted heavily in the upcoming months to reach the more rural areas and assist businesses and job seekers.

The OSO and WIOA partners worked with the DVR program to streamline the referral process and increase co-enrollment across Titles I, III and VR. The project began with DVR transitioning youth and worked to move them from high school to post-secondary education or directly to the workforce. This referral pilot began during the third quarter and has resulted in approximately 20 co-enrolled youth participants. We plan to expand this referral process to include adult participants in the coming months.

In keeping with the Secretary's focus on apprenticeship training, the area has funded apprenticeship training in the areas of automotive, plumbing, solar installation, and metal fabrication in PY 20. The effort to locate businesses interested in using the apprenticeship program greatly increased during the year and despite the pandemic, the number of people in the East participating apprenticeship programs has more than doubled from the previous year. Work in this area is ongoing and expanding and we anticipate good results in PY 21.

Title I staff statewide has struggled with Title I enrollments during the pandemic. This was also true of the East though we only saw a decline numbers of adults served and it was less than other regions in the state. To help support continued enrollment, the area established options to support individuals enrolled or interested in training with Internet connectivity and hardware. This combined with other policy and process modification provides increased access to services more streamlined services for individuals with diminished resources. The team continues to develop new outreach and service delivery methods to improve access and value of services to continue to increase the number of individuals served. Since 2016, there has been a consistent increase in all programs despite the slight 2% decrease in participant's served in the Adult program between PY 19 and PY 20. Specifics on the numbers served in Title I is included below.

Program	PY16	PY17	PY18	PY19	PY20
Adult	178	306	494	476	466
DW	19	25	84	73	181
Youth	56	108	150	103	167



The Title I service provider has been able to continue spending momentum in the adult and dislocated worker programs. Although less money has been expended on youth participants, the momentum gained in youth enrollments at the end of the year indicates a likelihood for significant improvement in the current program year.

PY 19 and PY 20 Program Expenditures Comparison

Program	PY19	PY20	Percent Increase
Adult	\$1,554,378.83	\$1,854,514.61	19.30%
DW	\$59,238.51	\$144,320.72	143.62%
Youth	\$416,658.88	\$576,366.54	38.33%

Adult Services

As the COVID-19 Pandemic continued throughout PY 20, employers were frustrated and desperate due to the lack of applicants for their available positions. The area began working on various initiatives across the East to support local businesses and their worker shortages. One of these was increased work with employers and training providers to create new apprenticeship and apprenticeship pathways to give businesses the opportunity to develop their talent and fill vacancies more quickly.

The Apprenticeship Coordinator worked closely with a local contractor and was able to place participants in various trades such as plumbing, welding and sheet metal fabrication and is currently working to place more. Partnerships were developed with an auto dealership and training providers to develop trainings that utilize the apprenticeship model combining hands on and classroom training concurrently. The apprenticeship model was utilized to place an individual on a master mechanic pathway/ladder while other trainings were developed for more positions. This model allows the business to access a wider

pool of applicants and afforded the job seeker the opportunity to continually transition to higher wage positions in the pathway as training is completed. Working with this employer has resulted in additional businesses reaching out to the apprenticeship coordinator to develop similar models for their businesses. There are currently 3 additional automotive related training placements and has resulted in additional employers reaching out for similar assistance with training development for their positions.

Performance

Performance of the adult program continued to meet or exceed negotiated goals and increased its impact on the overall state performance for some measures. The adult program met or exceeded all measures for the year with an increase in the number of individuals that were in the denominator.

	PY 20 Adult Performance			
Measure	Actual	Target	% Achieved	Met/Exceeded/Failed
Employment Q2	74.57%	79%	94.39%	Met
Employment Q4	80.21%	71%	112.97%	Exceeded
Credential	65.87%	69.20%	95.18%	Met
Skills Gain	70.18%	67%	104.74%	Exceeded
Median Earnings	\$8728.30	\$8000	109.10%	Exceeded

Dislocated Worker (DW) Services

The RESEA co-enrollment project was rolled out to all offices during the second quarter after an all-staff training took place in the first quarter. There were some initial challenges with staff training and consistency in application of the processes, however the OSO and board staff have been diligent in provided ongoing technical assistance and guidance to the Eastern Area RESEA team. A major challenge when developing this project was pandemic mandates which resulted in local office closures. Office staff were then tasked with providing RESEA services to customers via Zoom Teleconference. This led to more than a 200% increase numbers of dislocated workers enrolled in Title I over PY 19. The area served 20% of the state's DW cohort and was 2nd in the state for numbers served behind the Central Region.

Total Dislocated Workers Served - PY 2020				
LWDB	Total Dislocated Workers	Basic Career Service	Individual Career Service	Training Service
Central Area Workforce Development Board	430	2	9	417
Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board	148	1	50	97
Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board	140	4	29	107
Eastern Area Workforce Development Board	181	7	137	37

Total Records:	899	14	225	658
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Source: New Mexico Workforce Connection Online System

The RESEA program has had low participation and appointment completions due to pandemic waivers of program requirements, but we expect this to improve as we move into PY 21 and anticipate increases in the numbers of dislocated workers engaged in training. Overall, the results of this project were increased access to and participation in services of individuals that have become dislocated from employment or disengaged from the workforce.

It is expected that the DW numbers will increase as we continue the RESEA co-enrollment model. The board staff, OSO and Title I managers have collaborated on developing short-term training options for DW's. These short-term trainings will give DW's the opportunity to receive training to improve their skills without taking several months; we anticipate these trainings will be 5-6 weeks long. These trainings are in the process of being designed with local community colleges and some online resources to create a coursework catalog sufficient to satisfy the needs of individuals we serve in the East. The team is hoping that by having these short-term trainings UI recipients will participant in skill-building activities that improve their employability skills.

Performance

The Dislocated Worker (DW) program exceeded two of the negotiated levels of performance but increased the number of DW's served. Although there was an increase of DW's served in the East, this still resulted in low numbers of individuals that were in the denominators which impacted the overall performance. While the RESEA co-enrollment project served as a means to increase the numbers of the DW's served, we were aware that it may have a negative impact on PY 20's performance measures. We anticipate an uptick in the DW measures as results of the project will increase access and participation in services of individuals that have become dislocated from employment.

	PY 20 Dislocated Worker Performance			
Measure	Actual	Target	% Achieved	Met/Exceeded/Failed
Employment Q2	54.41%	72%	75.57%	Failed
Employment Q4	64.10%	73%	87.81%	Failed
Credential	52.94%	65%	81.45%	Failed
Skills Gain	76.32%	63%	121.14%	Exceeded
Median Earnings	\$7350	\$5600	131.25%	Exceeded

Youth Services

In early PY 20, the board and Title I youth program partnered with Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) providers to provide entrepreneurial training to Title I youth participants co-enrolled in AEL. The training model was developed through StartUp Generation as a

project-based team learning concept that places priority on the development of workforce preparation skills such as working in teams, critical thinking, problem solving, public speaking and presentations, planning, goal setting, and budgeting. Outreach and recruitment of students proved challenging due to the pandemic and the curriculum having to be retooled for delivery in a virtual environment. But though the first cohort was small, the project was an overall success. The training culminates in a business investor “pitch” presentation by the team to a panel of entrepreneurs in the state and the team is required to respond to project questions posed by the panel. Feedback from students, facilitators, the panel and stakeholders has been very enthusiastic. Of the twenty that started the project, fourteen completed, of those six received their HSE and four were making plans to enroll in post-secondary. Those outcome percentages far exceeded those typically seen in the AEL program. At the conclusion of the initial pilot project, best practices were shared between the facilitators and some of the curriculum was reworked in preparation for the fall cohorts that will begin in the first quarter of PY 21.

The youth services platform Career EDGE began testing and debugging in the first quarter. The platform allows youth participants to access a large array of virtual services from a computer or smart device which gives them the ability to sign and route documents electronically such as timesheets or contracts through a secure environment. This streamlines processes for participants, coaches, employers and training instructors. Career EDGE users have access to 18 self-paced training content modules include but not limited to: time management, on the job success, resume and cover letter branding, preparing for an interview, goal setting, effective communication and networking, and financial literacy. The Title I Youth program staff have worked with their participants to engage in Career EDGE to build skills tied directly to work experiences and work readiness.

At the end of PY 19 and early PY 20, there was almost a complete staff turnover in the youth program due to challenges in service delivery during the pandemic. This slowed the growth of the youth program but as new staff were hired and trained, youth enrollment numbers began to improve again. The most successful initiative the youth program had during PY 20 was is the Entrepreneurial Training Pilot Program. As previously mentioned, this pilot was developed in collaboration with AEL, and assisted participants in obtaining their High School Equivalency (HSE) and learn valuable entrepreneurial skills. Because of challenges with modifying the program for virtual service delivery only one small cohort was able to participate in the pilot. Because of its success, the pilot will continue, and next cohort is due to being in the first quarter of PY 21.

Another major accomplishment during the year was the launch of the Career EDGE Learning Management System (LMS). Career EDGE LMS includes content that introduces retention-promoting skills such as self-discovery and a transformation of thought patterns and beliefs regarding achievement and success. Each lesson commences with a review of the learning objectives. Career EDGE offers interactive, dynamic activities to inspire excitement and engagement with content in a variety of ways: reading content, listening to audio, and watching videos. After interacting with the

material, job seekers apply their knowledge by completing written exercises and contributing to lively discussions. Finally, job seekers culminate each lesson with a variety of activities including quizzes, projects, presentations, and role-plays. As job seekers work their way through modules and tools, they are given points, awarded badges and can achieve different “user levels”. This provides immediate feedback for the job seeker after they accomplish something. This tool has allowed the service provider to assist youth participant’s in improving their soft skills prior to placing them in a full work experience.

Overall, the Provider has shown constant improvement in the provision of services, initiatives, payments, staff retention and increased participants enrollment. With continued support from board staff and the OSO it is expected that this momentum will continue into next year.

Performance

The Youth program met three of the negotiated levels of performance. The provider has been diligent during PY 20 in working to improve the overall youth program design to ensure that oversight of performance measures. In PY 19 the Youth program were failing all measures but because of the goals set by the provider, they saw a vast improvement in PY 20.

	PY 20 Youth Performance			
Measure	Actual	Target	% Achieved	Met/Exceeded/Failed
Employment Q2	66%	67%	98.51%	Met
Employment Q4	60.23%	67%	89.89%	Failed
Credential	32.81%	47%	69.81%	Failed
Skills Gain	46.05	51%	90.30%	Met
Median Earnings	\$3169.80	\$3225	98.29%	Met

Surveys

To aide in identifying customer needs at the height of the pandemic in PY 19, the board developed customer needs surveys. This initiated the development of virtual workshops and utilizing them through the local area’s YouTube channel. Because feedback is extremely important when establishing improved service delivery, in PY 20 more surveys were developed. The surveys the EAWDB used were:

- Resume Virtual Workshops
- Online Interviewing Virtual Workshop
- WIOA Adult/Dislocated Worker Exit
- WIOA Youth Program Exit
- Entrepreneurial Training
- OJT Employer
- Customer Service Survey

A preview of the results of each survey are highlighted below

Resume Virtual Workshops

Surveys sent: **100**
Responses received: **42**
Response rate: **42%**

4.4 of 5.0
average rating

95% recommend
this workshops to
others

41% of First time users
54% of Beginner users
50% of Intermediate users
were satisfied and confident in using virtual
services

82% felt the
workshop was
valuable and
worth their time

Open comments in survey:

"It was very informative; and gave me essential tips and guidelines that I was not aware of."

"Yes. Especially since you have someone you can ask questions etc."

"Yes it was... I learned a few things I didn't know."

"I have already recommended this workshop to others. Very informative."

Online Interviewing Virtual Workshop

Surveys sent: **93**
Responses received: **38**
Response rate: **45.2%**

4.2 of 5.0
average rating

100% recommend
this workshop to
others

Satisfied and confident in using virtual services:
46% of First time users
70% of Beginner users
74% of Intermediate users

95% felt the
workshop was
valuable and worth
their time

Open comments in survey:

"Very user friendly. Very in formative and understand."

"The Zoom meeting was easily accessible and user friendly. The moderators/coaches were professional, organized, and professional."

"Very dynamic and it was nice to see services being provided by staff."

WIOA Adult/Dislocated Worker Exit Survey

4.1 of 5.0
Quality of
service
received

Surveys sent: **355**
Responses received: **55**
Response rate: **19%**

4.0 of 5.0
Communication
rating between
participant and
career coach

**80% successfully
completed training**

**67% received
Supportive
Services**

"This office made my dreams come true. Being a new mother and in nursing school was very tough. I am so blessed I was able to receive assistance. Thank you for all you do and please do not stop helping my generation. God bless you all."

"The team worked in a timely & professional manner. I would recommend this program to anyone."

"I honestly loved being a part of this program and am so grateful to have been able to participate."

WIOA Youth Program Exit Surveys

4.8 of 5.0
Quality of service
received

Surveys sent: **62**
Responses received: **3**
Response rate: **4.8%**

4.5 of 5.0
Communication rating
between participant
and career coach

**50% obtained High
School Equivalency
within WIOA
enrollment**

**75% received
Supportive Services**

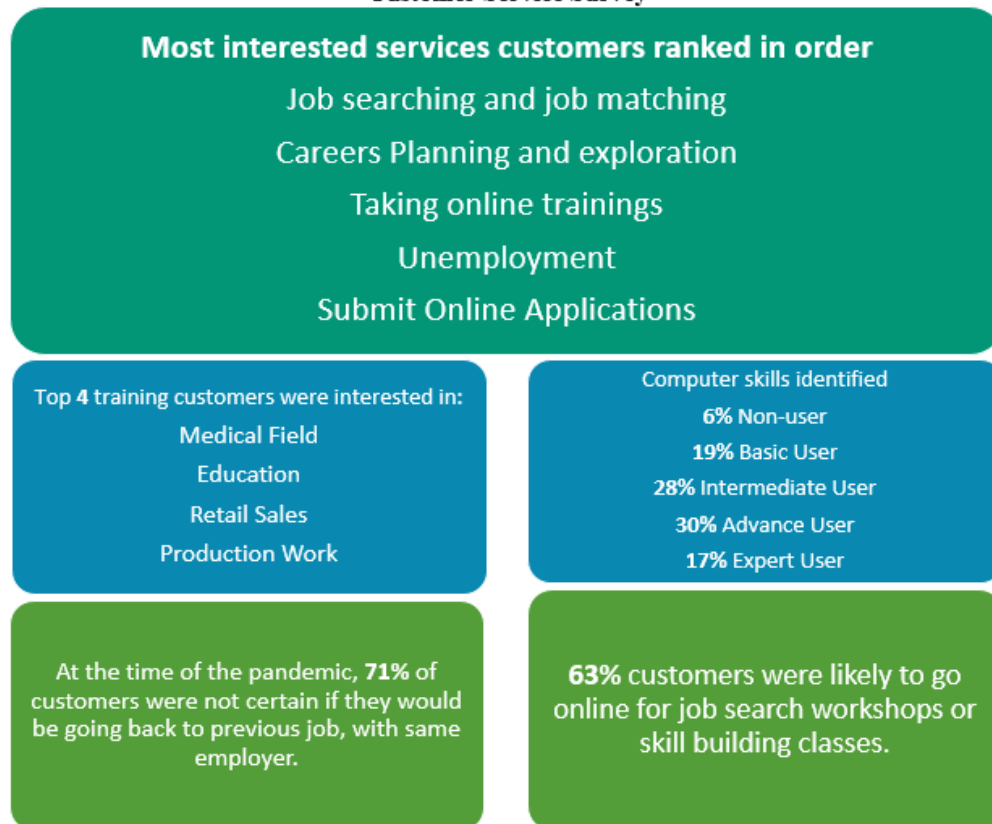
Entrepreneurial Training Survey Results



OJT Employer



Customer Service Survey



Success Stories

Esperanza Chavez (Adult)

Esperanza Chavez came into the Ruidoso office on June 24th, 2019 to inquire about WIOA funding assistance for the Radiology Technician program at DACC. During her initial assessment the career coach found that Esperanza was a 19-year-old high school graduate who resided with her parents and one other sibling. Esperanza's household was low-income, her parents did not have an education and worked low paying jobs giving them a \$20,000 annual family income. Ms. Chavez was so determined to attend college, she decided to look for work and save money for tuition. After weeks of looking Esperanza found a part time job at a seasonal amusement park making \$13.00 an hour. Once she received her first check, she realized that making the amount she aimed for was going to be a difficult task. As time progressed Esperanza felt like giving up as she was disappointed and discouraged, knowing it would take the whole summer just to cover her first semester's tuition, books, and uniforms to become a Radiology Technician.

Esperanza decided to apply for financial aid to see if she could receive some assistance in her pursuit of a better future. Ms. Chavez was awarded the Pell Grant and Leap

scholarship which covered a percentage of her costs but not the whole amount. After learning about the WIOA program Ms. Chavez sat down with a career coach in July of 2019 to do her enrollment and see if she qualified for the program. After becoming eligible Esperanza was finally able to start her degree plan.

Feeling she had an opportunity offered to her through WIOA assistance, Esperanza studied diligently every semester and gave it her all. She passed most of her classes with A's and was able to finish all her coursework with 3.90 overall GPA. On May 14th, 2021 Esperanza graduated from NMSU with an Associates of Applied Science. After completing her degree Esperanza stated she was the first in her family to graduate from college making her parents proud of such an accomplishment. Ms. Chavez knows that she now possesses the tools to have a better future and can become an inspiration to other people looking to better themselves.

In June 2021 Esperanza passed her AART (board exams) test officially making her a licensed Radiology Technician. With a degree and license in hand Ms. Chavez was hired at Lincoln County Medical Center starting at \$19.36 an hour. Esperanza was grateful for the WIOA program and her career coaches because they helped her to make her dream of becoming a Radiologic Technician come true.

Rainie Shaw (Youth)

Rainie Shaw is a 20-year-old, single mother that dropped out of high school in her senior year because of bullying. It got so bad that she just could not handle it anymore. Rainie is unemployed but had some experience being a server in a local restaurant. Otherwise, she has no employment experience or skills to assist her in getting a job that will allow her to support her family. For that support, she currently relies on public assistance for her and her beautiful daughter.

Rainie made some poor decisions along the way and ended up on probation. She is very apologetic and feels ashamed of those decisions and has since turned a new leaf. She understood that she needed to get her GED and get on a better path for herself and her child. She enrolled in Adult Education (AE) at New Mexico Junior College (NMJC) and was referred to WIOA by AE director Kathleen Ferrell.

WIOA Youth and NMJC AE were gearing up for a pilot cohort for a new Entrepreneurial program with Startup Generation. Her career coach and Kathleen gave her the information for the project and Rainie was very interested and excited to be a part of it. Rainie and her team were very successful in the project and she became a strong leader for her team. She was so vested in the project that her proposal "Rapture" captured the attention of all the investors in the presentation. Her team came up with an indoor/outdoor arena where families could enjoy time together close to home as Hobbs does not have access to an activity center like the one Rapture Team proposed. She adapted and overcame many challenges after some of her teammates dropped out of the training and led the rest of her team to win the investor pitch competition.

Not only did she successfully complete her entrepreneurial skills training on May 11th, 2021, but she also finished her high school equivalency on May 3rd, 2021. She passed all five exams with flying colors giving her the boost in confidence she needed to pursue post-secondary education. Rainie is currently working on pre-employment training through Career Edge, giving her the soft skills she needed to become more employable. Ms. Shaw would like to pursue a career in the criminal justice field soon, something she and her sibling have been striving for since they were small children. WIOA will continue to assist her in her post-secondary transition and with a potential work experience in the criminal justice field.

Jimmy McCarty (Youth)
ENMU-Ruidoso AEL, Startup Generation Training Program

Jimmy McCarty was 16 years old when he began the Startup Generation program. Months before starting, he would have never guessed he would be learning the skills needed to open a business. Jimmy had been struggling in school since he began High school. Despite many efforts and failed attempts at staying in school, Jimmy and his parents decided to enroll him in the ENMU-Ruidoso Adult Education Program to attain his High School Equivalency (HSE) diploma. The first time he had heard about the Startup Generation Program was during his orientation. He took the initiative to talk to the course instructors Ashley Prelo and Jessica Ortiz. Jimmy told them that he was interested in being a business owner in the future.

Jimmy developed strong leadership skills, became a great public speaker by speaking to business owners in the community to research and gather information, and was a wonderful team player. He took initiative to encourage other students to strive ahead. The team successfully pitched their business idea and earned third place against five other teams from across the state's Eastern region. Today, Jimmy is still working toward attaining his HSE. He was promoted to assistant manager at his job and assists in managing his family's businesses.

Laura Price (Dislocated Worker)

Laura Price came to the Roswell office on January 2nd, 2020 to inquire about how WIOA could aid with her post-secondary financial needs. Ms. Price is a 43-year-old single mother who lived with her mom rent free due to harsh economic struggles she recently experienced. She was a stay-at-home mom for several years which had made her skills and experience outdated. After going through a divorce, she started struggling for income as she lacked skills to be employable and her ex-husband stopped paying alimony. Due to the time she was away from the workforce Ms. Price became eligible as a Displaced Home Maker which allowed her to be considered for WIOA Dislocated Worker funds.

Ms. Price made the decision to attend nursing school as she felt it was a high demand career and the pay would allow her to become financially independent to provide for her

child. After enrolling at ENMU-Roswell Laura had access to financial aid and a scholarship but it was not enough to cover all her financial needs. Throughout her post-secondary training Ms. Price was a great student and received good grades.

Laura was enrolled in the Nursing Program, and with great determination, she completed the program on May 4, 2021, with honors. With the assistance of the Dislocated Worker program, Laura can now provide for herself and her family. She is currently working at Lovelace Hospital in the intensive care unit and is making \$27.00 an hour. Ms. Price expressed how grateful she was to her Career Coach and the WIOA program as she has become fully independent and no longer must rely on credit cards to survive.

WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT (WIOA)
TITLE I AND TITLE III
ANNUAL STATEWIDE PERFORMANCE REPORT
PROGRAM YEAR 2020

NORTHERN AREA LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

From the Board Chairman

As the Chairman of the New Mexico Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB), I have the honor of presenting our Program Year 2020 annual report. It is designed to give readers a closer look at our programs, highlight the year's accomplishments, and demonstrate the board's core values, transparency and results.

The focus of the NALWDB is to provide individuals the tools they need to enhance and sustain their employability. And, through the education and skills training offered to job seekers, employers are reducing hidden costs associated with lost production time and turnover rates by hiring qualified workers.

The NALWDB, with leadership from the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (DWS), the State Workforce Board and the Governor, is motivated to build strong partnerships among the State's workforce system stakeholders, job seekers and employers. This involves creating meaningful linkages between the education and workforce systems, aligning data so that metrics can be better defined and more easily measured; and helping people of all backgrounds gain employment and prosper in an ominous and rapidly changing economy.

Education and workforce development opportunities are critical to a strong economy. To aid in meeting these demands, the NALWDB will continue to collaborate with its partners and work closely with employers and job seekers to develop initiatives and offer effective programs and services to enrich the economic growth of Northern New Mexico.

Together we are preparing today's workforce for tomorrow's careers.

Sincerely,

Joseph Weathers

INTRODUCTION

Last year, 1,442 Northern New Mexico residents accessed the State's workforce system for assistance in acquiring or retaining employment. They came from a wide array of demographics, characteristics, backgrounds and experiences, low-income, single parents, migrant and seasonal workers, employers and workers displaced by a worldwide pandemic, veterans returning from active duty, and an ever-changing economy. Two of the primary funding sources for these basic, individualized services are the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I and Wagner-Peyser Title III programs. This report provides an in-depth look at the impact those funds have had in the Northern Area in Program Year 2020, July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2021.

Overview of the NALWDB's Workforce Development System

The Northern Area's workforce development system is a coordinated and collaborative network of services, programs and investments with a shared goal of improving the skills of the State's workforce. In order to meet the challenge of the 21st century global economy, the public workforce system works in partnership with businesses, educators, organized labor and community leaders to foster economic development and high-growth opportunities in regional economies. This network further helps potential job candidates, specifically, low-income youth, adults and displaced workers, overcome obstacles to successful employment. These services are coordinated through Workforce Connection Centers, the State's one-stop delivery system.

Primary funding for the Northern Area Workforce Center operations and many of the basic and individualized services is provided by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I and the Wagner-Peyser Act. Other formula-based and competitive federal, State and local resources and services that support our workforce system include but not limited to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), veteran services, United States Department of Labor (USDOL) National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG), Trade Adjustment Assistance, Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Assistance and other partner program funds.

At the heart of the public workforce system, the Northern Area Workforce Centers are made up of one-stop career centers, affiliate, and connection sites. Workforce Centers are the primary access point to qualified workers, as well as to a multitude of resources for businesses and job seekers. The Centers serve thousands of individuals who are seeking employment, changing jobs, reentering the workforce or learning new skills. This makes them the ideal venue for workforce solutions for job seekers and businesses alike.

At Northern Area Workforce Centers throughout the region, individuals can open a claim for unemployment insurance, find job openings, receive other job search assistance and attend workshops that can improve employability. Qualified individuals can find assistance with specific training in high demand occupations. Businesses can get help with workforce needs including recruitment, screening, employee training, layoff aversion, and employee retention.

ADULT/DISLOCATED WORKER

In PY20, the Northern Area achieved success in the development and/or provision of ongoing training services. Eighty-two adult and 13 dislocated worker On-the-Job Training (OJT) contracts follows”

- ◇ Fifty-two active OJT contracts from the previous program year were carried into PY20.
- ◇ Eighty-eight individuals to include those carried over from PY19 were placed in hands-on, job-specific training that resulted in the development of customized training agreements. Overall, this resulted in 37 adults, two (2) dislocated workers and 49 incumbent workers in the adult category being assisted.
 - For example, a need was identified in the fire and police departments for additional trainings and recruitment of new cadets. To address the need and lack of department funding, a collaborative effort was made through customized training contracts as well as the use of OJT contracts for new cadets. The Farmington Fire Department, the City of Farmington Police Department and San Juan County Sheriff’s Department expressed their gratitude for the needed WIOA services and hope to continue this collaboration if funds allow.
- ◇ Of 691 total adults and dislocated workers served, 520 adults and 171 dislocated workers received support through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs). Also, through these ITAs, credential attainment, occupational skills and overall employability positively impacted Northern Area performance and respective community economic growth.
- ◇ 597 individuals received training services, including transitional job training, customized training and ITAs. Within these specific training activities, 80 received a support service (i.e. transportation, books, licenses, fees).
- ◇ Increased business participation and expenditures in the Business Services component of customized training and OJT resulted in an expenditure of over \$750,000. Businesses that were struggling to stay afloat due to the pandemic and inability to find employees willing to work were able to access WIOA services. Some of the businesses and entities that took advantage of such WIOA services included:
 - Krossroads Behavioral Health (OSY WE co-enrolled)
 - El Centro Health (OJT)
 - Z Pet Hotel (OJT)
 - CareSource Health (OJT)
 - Woodruff Scientific, Bluestone Solutions (OJT)
 - Beehive Homes (OJT)
 - Cibola Communications Center, (OJT)
 - Jack’s Plastic Welding (OJT)
 - ABC Canvas, Guardian (OJT)
 - Angel Home Health Hospice (OJT, CT)
 - Farmington Fire Department (OJT, CT)
 - San Juan County Sheriff’s Office (OJT, CT)
 - Farmington Police Department (OJT, CT)
 - Highway 64 Auto Salvage (OJT, WE)
 - Kare Drug (OJT)

The NALWDB also has provided support to employers through employer services available (schedule job interviews, virtual recruitment, etc.), and through assistance in providing OJTs and transitional job training which, allows a WIOA-qualified applicant to be trained on-the-job for the advertised position.

WIOA staff continue to work closely together in conducting outreach efforts in all 10 counties encompassing the Northern Area and provided support to employers in many ways. NALWDB WIOA staff are able to upload job announcements and assist with training programs available through assistance in an OJT contract and transitional job training. which allows a WIOA-qualified applicant to be trained on-the-job for the advertised position. This activity appeared beneficial to the business community as they were able to re-build and increase their human capital after the daunting pandemic period which inevitably saw the end to several businesses. Partners include:

- | | |
|---|---|
| ◇ Best Western | ◇ Collins Lake Ranch |
| ◇ PIMA Medical Institute | ◇ Pedro's Bakery |
| ◇ David Silva Law Office | ◇ To Your Health |
| ◇ Herrera Auto Body | ◇ Mora Valley Spinning Mill |
| ◇ Canyon City Landscaping | ◇ Phillip 66 Roybal's |
| ◇ Los de Mora Local Growers | ◇ Gallegos Scrap Iron |
| ◇ Rincones Presbyterian Credit Union | ◇ Northeastern Land Appraisal |
| ◇ HR Vigil Small Products | ◇ New Beauty Hair Salon |
| ◇ SPC Office Supplies | ◇ Collaborative Visions |
| ◇ Prestige NAPA | ◇ Jacy's |
| ◇ Amistad y Resolana | ◇ Mora Valley Ranch Supply |
| ◇ Summit Home Carte and Property Services | ◇ City of Farmington Police Department |
| ◇ ET Organic Farm and Ranch | ◇ Woodruff Scientific |
| ◇ Los Vallecitos LLC | ◇ Krossroads Behavioral Health |
| ◇ Guardian Angel Home Health | ◇ Cibola Regional Communications Center |
| ◇ Beehive Homes Staffing Services | ◇ Jack's Plastic Welding |
| ◇ The Samaritan House | ◇ GeoMat, Inc. |
| ◇ Mora Valley Community Health | ◇ Hwy. 64 Auto Salvage |
| ◇ Penderies Village Community | ◇ Fred Cadrain & Associates |
| ◇ James Weidner | ◇ Karedrug |
| ◇ ABC Canvas | ◇ Hatchas |
| ◇ Major Market Inc. | ◇ Rehoboth Christian School |
| ◇ Taos County Court House | ◇ Village of Wagon Mound |
| ◇ Mora Valley Community Health Services | ◇ Mora County Manager's Office |
| ◇ Collins Lake Ranch | ◇ Escapology |
| ◇ Pedro Bakery | ◇ Santa Fe County Assessor's Office |
| ◇ Mora Valley Spinning Mill | ◇ Santa Fe County Treasurer's Office |

- ◇ Phillips 66 Roybal's
- ◇ Gallegos Scrap Iron LLC
- ◇ New Beauty Hair Salon
- ◇ In your dreams Barber Shop
- ◇ Collaborative Visions
- ◇ Jacy's
- ◇ Mora Valley Ranch Supply

Rapid Response Events

In PY20, the NALWDB implemented “Rapid Enrollment/Hire Events”, which included working closely with training programs, staff reaching out to potential participants/ITA students to inform them of the events and explaining the process in which they had the opportunity to immediately be interviewed and hired. If the participant was able to bring in all the required documents, staff were able to match participants with employers and submit paperwork for final eligibility determination and placement into a WIOA activity.

Also, during the last week of March 2021, the Santa Fe Workforce Connection Center hosted a three (3) day parking lot event, *Spring into Summer with WIOA*. This event was a pilot project, due to the COVID-19 restrictions that were imposed by the Governor. In preparation for this event, the NALWDB collaborated with the Central Area Workforce Board to develop flyers, radio advertisements, community public service interviews, as well as conducting outreach on social media platforms. Collectively, the Northern and Central area partnership reached out to their networks. The combined efforts yielded successful participation despite the fear of the pandemic. Each day had a program/service focus:

- Day One-Youth,
- Day Two - Adult/DW, and
- Day Three-Business Services.

While advertising for this event, the WIOA team invited other resources and businesses to participate in person and encourage others to attend and/or set up an information table. The following partners were arranged to participate with the assistance of HELP-NM:

- | | |
|---|--|
| • DVR (all 3 days) | • Allied Universal |
| • Youth Shelters | • Buffalo Thunder |
| • Growing Up with New Mexico | • Christus St. Vincent Regional Medical Center |
| • HELP-NM, Community Services Block Grant | • Santa Fe County Sheriff's Office |
| • Los Alamos Retirement Community | • Krossroads Behavioral Health |
| • Santa Maria el Mirador | • Comfort Keepers |

Attendance at the event was captured and consisted of 38 attendees; 12 individuals were determined eligible and were hired on the spot. Along with in-person intakes being conducted,

the WIOA team was able to connect and discuss the benefits of the business services available with participating partners. All partners, and those that were contacted to participate were extremely excited about the services offered and intend on using WIOA support in the future.

Apprenticeship

Aligned with the WIOA State Plan, one NALWDB focus has been placed on apprenticeship, one example is the construction industry. Thereto, the NALWDB continued to assist mainly the identified construction industry by funding apprenticeship trainings. Northern Area WIOA staff worked closely with training institutions and businesses to determine credentials required for employment, to advocate for stackable and universally accepted accreditations in support of the industry and the employees. Staff collaborated with Associated Builders and Contractors of New Mexico (ABC) to assist with WIOA funds to offset some of the costs of the classroom training expenses that are required for their apprentices. This was done by utilizing the basic career training or supportive services for WIOA-qualified applicants.

The emphasis of apprenticeship programs began in PY20 and will continue into PY21. A partnership with TruMont, a registered nurse resident apprenticeship program in Gallup and Los Alamos will align with our sector strategy, targeted at increasing employment opportunities in the Health Care industry.

Dislocated Worker Strategies

The NALWDB Adult Dislocated Worker Program continued to recruit dislocated workers. Due to the pandemic, the Dislocated Worker Program did not have the participation we anticipated due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Unemployment Benefits were supplemented with additional funding, businesses were shut down, in-person school was prohibited, and the fear of exposure were all barriers to families. The efforts to conduct outreach utilizing the bridge report and presenting at various events to spread the word about dislocated worker services are being conducted daily by the service provider. This demographic of individuals will be the focus of the new year.

Based on information provided by NALWDB Administrative Entity (AE) staff (i.e. ongoing monitoring, performance reports, quarterly reports), the following has been discussed in length by the Board rendering concern of the need for implementation of system changes in PY21:

- Identifying ways to better align career and training services and provide funding to address skill gaps and support in-demand industries within the Northern Area will be critical. The focus of the adult/dislocated worker and youth programs training, and education opportunities will continue to focus on the NALWDB identified sector strategies, which include Healthcare, Information Technology and Education.
- Opportunities afforded utilizing the NALWDB Transitional Jobs policy may be significant for dislocated individuals, such as former prisoners and long-term unemployed, with a goal to reduce recidivism and poverty within the Northern Region. The WIOA program continues to expand outreach efforts and explore strategies to

engage more dislocated workers, including strengthening the partnership with the RESEA program.

- Establish more tailored and measurable marketing efforts and initiating needs-related-payments for dislocated workers that remain in training after exhausting Unemployment Insurance benefit payments.
- Working with local partners in higher education to provide condensed training programs that lead to immediate employment in our 10 counties will be a focus of our strategies. This will require the support of educational and training partners working closely with the business community.

The NALWDB continues to expand outreach efforts and explore other strategies to engage more dislocated workers, including strengthening the partnership with the Reemployment Services Eligibility and Assessment (RESEA) RESEA is a grant program for states to assist individuals receiving unemployment insurance (UI) benefits. The funds are used to connect participants with in-person assessments and reemployment services through American Job Centers. The NALWDB Dislocated Worker Program will continue to collaborate with various employers and industries to promote paid work experience/internships, transitional jobs, and OJTs to create a continuum of services designed to allow participants to work and learn.

YOUTH

PY20 saw a significant growth in youth participation in the Northern Area. This is attributed to the NALWDB youth service provider who developed innovative winter and summer youth services included in their program design. Various partnerships and collaborations were established to build and encourage young people to become engaged in workforce development. WIOA staff attended five (5) outreach events and conducted ten (10) presentations to new and potential partners and agencies. Staff recruited in local high schools, community colleges, and other youth affiliated community organizations, and provided outreach material to 1500 individuals within the Northern Region.

The increase in youth population is attributed to the NALWDB youth service provider who uses seasonal youth academies in part of their youth program design. The diversity of the population targeted for youth can be challenging in rural communities; however, the NALWDB youth provider, HELP-NM, was able to provide an innovative approach with seasonal youth academies. The *Winter Youth Academy* served 65 youth, and the *Spring Into Summer Academy* hosted an additional 16 youth. These initiatives added to the 169 students that participated in the youth program. Of the 250 young people served, 90 were provided supportive services, including transportation, uniform/work clothing and supplies.

The NALWDB service provider utilizes a “youth development framework” to access each participant’s strength in order to address areas of growth. With this methodology in place, participants are required to develop an educational and employment goal that will guide them to a future career. This methodology encourages and motivates young adults to stay focused on their future career choice.

In effort to form various partnerships and collaborations being established to build and encourage young people to become engaged in workforce development, one opportunity that was successful was the CLEAR program with San Juan College. Staff worked closely with five (5) San Juan College CLEAR students throughout the enrollment and case management process. The students participated in the program and received career readiness, workforce preparation activities, and paid work experience--all of which led to a certificate upon completion. WIOA staff worked closely with businesses to secure worksites that were able to provide the support and mentorship required for successful completion of the program. This is a demonstration of the amount of care and level of participation from multiple partners to build a positive experience for a successful outcome.

Career Development curriculum via virtual platforms/online resources as well as computer-based instruction includes providing financial education and money smart modules that cover topics such as the basics of borrowing money wisely, use a spending plan to achieving financial goals and how to use banking products effectively.

Community Service Learning allows youth to demonstrate the relevance and impact of volunteering in their communities, their studies, and themselves. This is shown to improve self-image and self-esteem, help them develop valuable study habits, teach importance of communication and job skill, and instill a lifelong ethic of service and good citizenship.

Youth Partnerships

The NALWDB partnered with the Santa Fe Community College (SFCC) and the Workforce Action Team, to utilize an Integrated Education and Skills Training Program (I-BEST). I-BEST is a nationally recognized model that quickly boosts students' literacy and work skills so that students can earn credentials, get living wage jobs, and put their talents to work for employers. The NALWDB engaged 18 youth participants working towards a Certified Nursing Assistant and Phlebotomy certificates in this collaboration.

In PY 20 the Northern Region partnered with Breakthrough Leadership. They implemented a Virtual Leadership Program to support WIOA youth with a total of 15 youth participating. "Breakthrough Leadership", through a system of teaching and learning that is free of judgement, competition, grades, or exams, allows participants to engage in a series of interactive modules constituting a 'Breakthrough Experience'. They define a breakthrough experience as an experience that imposes a 'net-positive affect' on the trajectory of a young person/student's life, and is marked by a shift in self-perception and worldview in relation to self, community, nation, and world, resulting in a more thoughtful, broader and deeper view of themselves, the other, and how they will engage the world we live in. This learning experience breaks through old paradigms about oneself and others while making space for collective learning, the fostering of empathetic wisdom, enabling of self-compassion, the cultivation of character, and the development of a 'leadership instinct'" -*Breakthrough Leadership Team*.

Partnerships and Commitments for Enrollments

- Farmington Municipal schools projected to enroll up to 50 in-school Work Experience (WE) participants at 200 hours each in their Work-Based Learning. Interns are responsible for completing 100 hours minimum at the intern worksite during the semester to receive academic credit beginning SY 2020-21. The program is designed to fill talent gap needs in the San Juan County workforce through a selection process of identifying, recruiting & qualifying the right intern. A student internship is an experience where a student, 11th-12th grade, works for an employer for a specified period to learn about a particular industry or occupation. Internships are linked to a related internship class, time limited, connected to career goals and student(s) Next Step Plan; offering opportunities to explore high growth and/or high need and/or high wage career options at local thriving businesses.
- Youth Works has been referring potential clients who have barriers, they will be enrolled in a high equivalency program.
- CompTIA/ IT Fundamentals, 12 students currently being enrolled in Certificate program at San Juan College.
- TANF Partnership, 30 youth referrals, barriers are pregnant, parenting youth.
- Luna Community College, 10 GED students will be participating in WE with Power Up Program. With new enrollments projected.
- San Juan College CLEAR Program-All participants were covered this semester with other funding. WIOA will support a WE program while participants continue with their basic skills training.
- Carry-over 11 participants- enrollment into work experience and supportive services
- Projected enrollment of 12-20 new participants

Youth Outreach and Recruitment

Recruitment efforts were successful in PY20 due to the development of stronger partnerships and increasing outreach efforts in conjunction with all Northern Area Workforce Connections partners throughout the year. New outreach materials were developed by way of flyers, radio advertisements, community public service interviews, social media platforms, and presentations at various schools are a few of the outreach methods used.

Partnerships have been critical to the success of youth programming. Under the guidance of the NALWDB Youth Committee, a multi-agency team, including voices from all titles and of youth-serving in partner organizations work together to ensure programming has a youth voice. Expansion of referrals and stronger communications across organizations, will align services and eliminate the duplication of services provided to our youth across the region.

Youth – Major Challenges for Improvement

Based on information provided by NALWDB Administrative Entity (AE) staff (ongoing monitoring, performance reports, quarterly reports etc.), the following has been discussed in length by the Board rendering their concern of the need for implementation of system changes to improve overall performance in PY21:

- The implementation or expansion of regional and local sector strategies will be a significant opportunity for the NALWDB Youth Programing during the next program year. As data has shown, the overwhelming need for young people to join the workforce to replace the retiring population is in demand.
- The Northern Regions Workforce Connection Centers and the Youth Program will work closely with stakeholders to develop pathways that align with the workforce needs of target industry sectors and provide career advancement opportunities for young adults.
- The Northern Region is focused to address the youth shortage issue with a system-wide approach versus isolating it as a youth program problem. The NALWDB is dedicated to ensuring that youth participants that complete their high school equivalency and then decide not to continue with education enroll in additional training (i.e. co-enrolled in career services).
- The major focus of the NALWDB Youth Program is to ensure that the youth participant is fully capable to acquire and maintain employment prior to exiting the workforce system. Our reviews suggest that these efforts should have a positive effect upon the Credential Attainment and Measurable Skills Gains performance measures.

BUSINESS SERVICES

The Northern Region's Business Team is continually engaged with our employers and business customer base to better understand their immediate and future workforce needs and gain a snapshot of their industry and organizations culture and strategic business objectives. The primary goals of the Business Services function is to increase the number employers using services, enhance the quality of those services, improve the satisfaction of employer with services received, and develop more services that directly connect Center and program job seekers with employment opportunities by:

1. Outreaching employers who have jobs matching the Centers' talent pool and inventory
2. Promoting qualified candidates from the Centers' talent pool
3. Staff-assisting employers in posting jobs
4. Managing and filling staff-assisted job postings
5. Ensuring referral quality control for staff-assisted job postings
6. Offering pre-referral/pre-hiring testing and skill verification services to employers
7. Arranging for and coordinating in-center hiring events for pre-screened center talent
8. Coordinating with WIOA partners' outreach and promotion of the Centers' talent pool

Services are delivered to meet the commitments that the NALWDB makes to all businesses and employers who contact and are served by the system:

- a. Staff-assisted service when needed and wanted,
- b. Competent and useful workforce services from the time of job posting to talent recruitment,
- c. Maximum exposure of job openings to the full-range of talent available at all Centers,
- d. High quality control (when requested) for referred applicants (with skill verification, when possible) and with follow-through on and fulfillment of staff-assisted job postings, and
- e. The opportunity to partner with the Centers in tapping a full range of recruitment opportunities, including in-Center recruitment of pre-screened talent, pre-employment and pre-referral testing and skill validation, access to hiring and training subsidies, customized training, and others

During PY20, WIOA Business Services staff worked closely with multiple business partners to build meaningful partnerships that create and stimulate economic growth within our ten county communities. These partnerships create a bridge to employment for our participants. Participants are afforded a hand up, as they have the opportunity to explore and train in new areas of employment. Businesses are happy to work with Title 1 to recruit and train their workforce. For example, in the Santa Fe Workforce Connection Center, one of our most meaningful partnerships began with Z Pet Hotel. Z Pet Hotel was in desperate need for a Kennel Tech as their new business was to open. After numerous failed interviews from Indeed and their own outreach, they came into contact with Title 1 staff. With the help of WIOA staff, who took the time to learn about the needs of the business and the job requirements, they were able to conduct their internal screening process of candidates. Through this process WIOA staff was able to provide a candidate for Z Pet Hotel to interview. The candidate interviewed well and was a perfect fit for the position. The OJT allowed the participant to train as a Kennel Tech which led to a promotion to Supervisor. Z Pet Hotel found the WIOA services provided to be of value to their business and are happy to support those seeking employment by being a business that will continue to train and hire qualified participants. Due to the success of this pilot, the owner is now utilizing the services for another business that they own, Outer Edge Pizzeria, which can train employees for management positions.

Priority Industries and Sector Strategies

The NALWDB has identified Health Care, Information Technology and Education as priority industries in the Northern Area. Sector Strategies were developed based on labor market information and industry/occupation projections to address employer needs in the ten (10) northern counties. Based on data and anecdotal input from the business community, NALWDB identified first tier industries as construction (commercial), healthcare/social services, and professional, scientific & technical services. Second tier industries include: accommodations/hospitality; tourism/art; entertainment & recreation; agriculture, forestry,

fishing & hunting; call center; educational services; government; green energy; manufacturing; and retail trade/service.

Health Care

The Northern Region worked with SJC-CWD and Guardian Angel Home Health to put 51 employees through Customized Training. The training provided certificates for all 51 team members at the end of their three classes: Essential Communication for Healthcare Workers, Healthcare Customer Service Essentials, and Ethics in Healthcare.

A three (3) day job/career fair was held with 15 participants and 12 employers participating. Twelve individuals were hired on the spot.

Education

NALWDB area has successfully started six (6) Work Experience activities in partnership with Farmington Municipal Schools and their Work Based Learning (WBL) program. These participants did not only complete Work Experience training hours but received Supportive Services and additional Workforce Preparation incentives throughout the remainder of their semester. The seniors in the group now have the opportunity to transition into OJTs or ITAs following the completion of youth activities.

Information Technology

The NALWDB service provider, HELP-NM, has been working closely with Four Corners Economic Development on establishing strategies to address the Northern Area has the skilled workforce necessary to fill current and future positions in sectors that have been identified as in-demand. As part of the effort, we have been included in a strategy team that creates focus groups for these individual sectors. One of these focus groups included inviting local IT employers and outside employers to discuss the needs to successfully bring broadband into new areas, more specifically, San Juan County. From this focus group, the NALWDB is able to determine skill gaps. Subsequently, the NALWDB is working with Northern Area training providers to create a program that will upskill our local workforce and assure we get dislocated workers and out-of-school youth into a career pathway.

procedures, and software troubleshooting. Upon completing this course, participants are prepared to take the two qualifying exams leading to CompTIA A+ certification, the industry standard for launching IT careers into today's digital world. We continue to collaborate and cross refer to recruit participants.

Additionally, San Juan College in Farmington offers an IT program through their Center for Workforce Development, which offers courses that enrich an individual's skills and knowledge, or to grow their skill set in the IT field. Also, the NALWDB is using CompTIA IT Fundamentals, a course where participants gain perspective on whether they are interested in a career in IT while developing a broader understanding of the subject and gaining fundamental skills such as, establishing network connectivity, identifying common software applications and their purposes, and best practices for security and web browsing. WIOA participants leave with

the knowledge necessary to pass a certifying exam. Once they have successfully completed the fundamental courses, they move into the CompTIA A+. With this course, participants join the ranks of certified CompTIA A+ professionals, proven problem solvers supporting today's core technologies from security to cloud to data management, and more. They each master nine core skills, including installing operating systems, operational procedures, and software troubleshooting. Upon completing this course, participants are prepared to take the two qualifying exams leading to CompTIA A+ certification, the industry standard for launching IT careers into today's digital world.

Major Challenges and Opportunities for Improvement

- The Northern Area business teams, including staff from adult, dislocated worker, youth, Career Services, Veterans, and NMDVR, continue to work together in order to avoid multiple contacts with same businesses, associations, etc., through use of documented partner referrals and ongoing collaboration.
- Over the PY20, the Northern Board worked with its provider, Help NM, to create professional business material and launch a new Northern Workforce Connections website www.nnmworkforceconnection.com that provides improved information to the entire customer base, including the business community.
- In PY 20, outreach and acclimation of the new service provider was a challenge, as well as acclimation of the new service provider, HELP- NM. the NALWDB Sector Strategy Committee is at a transition point and exploring next steps regarding business engagement, metrics, and priorities. In conjunction with HELP -NM's Business Engagement Team, the Committee is constructing a plan to meet the challenge of fully reaching and engaging regional employers based on best practices currently being researched, including those in other states. Bridging this gap will finally provide the Board, along with Labor Market Information (LMI), a complete picture for meeting employer needs in the three (3) identified areas.
- Business partners are hesitant to participate in Work Experience programs, especially with youth, for fear of not having the confidence participants will following COVID safe practices away from the job site. We have seen a decline in participation in our rural community businesses, which many were temporarily inoperable or just closed permanently due to the pandemic.
-
- Connectivity remains an issue throughout the ten counties being served. However, now it is more critical to the participation and ability for people to be able to successfully participate in programming. Broadband and technology are vital to our rural communities, as we encourage them to practice COVID-safe enrollments.
- Additional WIOA training is needed to be provided by the State Administrative Entity (SAE) Much of the guidance/instruction/documentation is outdated and training which does occur is provided at initial hire of new WIOA staff. Knowledge of the Workforce Connection Online System (WCOS) is a training that needs to be provided on a regular, scheduled basis due to its complexity and everchanging requirements. The same can be

said of training on WIOA forms, monitoring, performance, etc. The NALWDB has been provided trainings via request to NMDWS; however, timing lagged between request and provision of training, training provided was overview material or a module for training being requested had not been developed by NMDWS training staff.

PERFORMANCE METRICS

	Adult			
	Actual	Negotiated	% Met	Meet/Exceed/Failed
Employed in Q2 Rate:	72.2%	78%	92.6%	Meet
Median Wages in Q2:	7,217	7100.00	101.65%	Exceed
Employed in Q4 Rate:	59.4%	75%	79.2%	Failed
Credential Attainment Rate:	30.6%	67%	45.7%	Failed
Measurable Skills Gains Rate:	6.7%	61.5%	11.0%	Failed

	Dislocated Worker			
	Actual	Negotiated	% Met	Meet/Exceed/Failed
Employed in Q2 Rate:	65.4%	75%	87.2%	Failed
Median Wages in Q2:	7,628	7650.00	99.72%	Meet
Employed in Q4 Rate:	48.8%	73%	66.8%	Failed
Credential Attainment Rate:	43.8%	60%	72.9%	Failed
Measurable Skills Gains Rate:	30.0%	60%	50.0%	Failed

	Youth			
	Actual	Negotiated	% Met	Meet/Exceed/Failed
Employed in Q2 Rate:	37.7%	63%	59.8%	Failed
Median Wages in Q2:	3,433	3400.00	100.98%	Exceed
Employed in Q4 Rate:	44.4%	63%	70.5%	Failed
Credential Attainment Rate:	34.8%	45%	77.3%	Failed
Measurable Skills Gains Rate:	15.0%	48%	31.2%	Failed

As noted, in PY20 the Northern Area continued to address several challenges which impacted WIOA service delivery and performance in the region. Of the 15 core performance measures, the Northern Area exceeded two (2), met two (2), and failed 11 performance measures. This information has been a source of concern by NALWDB members; peer partners and WIOA staff in collaboration have indicated the following:

- The COVID-19 health crisis is an unprecedented event that has impacted the lives and livelihoods of individuals. Its effects are likely to extend beyond the short term. The severe health impacts have been matched by sharp declines in economic activity and upheavals of labor markets. This has certainly been the case in the Northern Area, especially due to the ruralness of the region. This became an issue in service delivery as individual participation could only be addressed via remote activity; not all areas could

accommodate this, or some individuals simply dropped off due to their lack of technology. Consequently, this detrimentally affects WIOA performance. The NALWDB and its service provider, HELP-NM tackled the continuum of services problem and took every effort to continue to serve its WIOA population during the pandemic.

- HELP-NM, the NALWDB's service provider for youth, adults and dislocated worker, are in their first year of their WIOA contract with the NALWDB; therefore, they are a fairly new WIOA provider who have worked tirelessly to gain knowledge and procedures for delivery of services. This required hiring new staff, developing policy and procedures, and program service delivery. HELP-NM has done an excellent job of WIOA service delivery; however, they have had some "growing pains", from training issues to data entry to dealing with COVID-19 changes within the system, therefore affecting service delivery in the Northern Region.
- Due to all that is noted above, the NALWDB has engaged in various discussions as to how to improve performance and service delivery. The NALWDB expects to see the results of this collaboration by end of first quarter in PY21.

CONTINUED EMPHASIS ON PERFORMANCE MONITORING

The current NALWDB program monitor is running Workforce Connection Online System (WCOS) reports weekly to monitor the entry of performance metrics to make sure that the provider is improving on their current performance trends. The Board has also done several presentations and trainings with the service provider to clarify what is needed regarding performance moving forward. This includes, but is not limited to, data entry for measuring performance, how performance is recorded, timeframe in which performance can be recorded, case-noting to correctly indicate services have taken place, and expectations regarding performance moving forward.

SUCCESS STORIES

Adult Success

Joslyn is an adult transitional jobs training participant, who has faced numerous barriers as an ex-offender and is in recovery with limited employment experience. Since the very first day of enrollment, Ms. Herrera has demonstrated the drive and determination to utilize all that WIOA has to offer, including coaching and referrals from HELP-NM's Community Support Advocate. Monetary earnings were non-existent prior to Ms. Herrera's participation, but as the weeks turned into months and with her own perseverance, Ms. Herrera began to show great strides in her training and WIOA staff began to receive calls from her training site with direct praise from her supervisor. Ms. Herrera was placed at the Santa Fe Recovery Outpatient Rehabilitation Center, located in Espanola, New Mexico, under the direct Supervision of Behavioral Health Therapist Ruth Oswod. Joslyn completed her Training on April 16, 2021 and began her full time position with the Santa Fe Recovery Center on April 19, 2021, she works 30 hours a week for 12.50 per hour. She is also in the process of obtaining her LSAA and CPSW certifications with the assistance of her new employer. Joslyn received full employer insurance benefits for the first time in her life and is now no longer dependent on public assistance.

In Joslyn's own words: "Every person on this earth is full of great possibilities that can be realized through imagination, effort and perseverance. This experience has completely changed my life; I would probably still be without purpose now I have a career!"

Dislocated Worker Success

Joseph is a 50-year-old gentleman from Las Vegas, New Mexico. He is a lifelong resident of his community. After many years of work with several types of experiences such as a handy man to automotive repair and working as a laborer in construction and masonry jobs to have employment, he wasn't able to ever secure a long-term position. With Covid-19 impacting his ability to get work after March 2020, he has been unemployed with no income. He came to HELP-NM, the NALWDB service provider, to get assistance finding a job. Joseph was made aware of the program through a flier that he saw that gave an outline of the programs that existed to help people find work and to get their education. From that flier Joseph called and made an appointment to complete an application to participate in the WIOA adult program. Joseph was placed at Resolana Y Amistad in a facility maintenance position.

The opportunity to receive training through HELP-NM has given Joseph a new perspective on his capabilities and in turn given him confidence. Asking for help from HELPNM has provided him with the various options he has in, not only in gaining a job, his educational options and support through our program that exist. This has emboldened him in his motivation to find stability in work and the confidence to pursue his continued education

His placement has also been a big factor in his success. Amistad Y Resolana provided him with the perfect atmosphere to transition into his new work environment. With a variety of maintenance repairs and projects to be completed, Joseph is having a broad experience to learn from. Second, yet equally important, is the work environment. Amistad Y Resolana operates as a treatment center for adults in the Las Vegas community. This atmosphere, as witnessed by HELPNM's local CSA, has been beneficial to Joseph because of its philosophy of not being incapable. Regardless of age or background you have value. Not only to yourself but to someone you work for. That you can add to your value through effort and education. Being in this environment has allowed Joseph to blossom in his confidence to continue his personal and professional growth.

"It's been hard for a while... without work I felt lost. Now I'm receiving training in a new field! WIOA is giving me courage to learn a new job and confidence to get my GED."

Youth Success

Nathaniel (Nate) came to the WIOA program through the Career Life Engagement and Readiness Program (CLEAR) back in August 2019. Since then, WIOA funds have helped pay for his tuition and fees that came with the Fall 2019- Summer 2020 semester. In Fall 2020 COVID-19 had an impact and unfortunately Nate could not start his work experience. Fast forward to March 2021, after some discussion with Nate about his interest, HELP-NM's Community Support Advocates and Nate came to an agreement that Escapology, a set of escape

rooms, would be a perfect fit for him. Nate was hesitant at first and the first couple of days was a challenge for Nate, but the WIOA program is happy to say that Nate has now entered his sixth week with Escapology and has adjusted well to the work environment. His supervisor has given great feedback to help Nate overcome some obstacles and has seen great improvement since the first week. Nate will graduate the CLEAR program on May 15, 2021.

Business Success

In the Farmington area, WIOA staff has fostered a long-standing partnership with the Farmington Fire Department. In the past, the Farmington Fire Department had used Customized Training and OJT services to bring in new cadets. WIOA staff has continued with support and strengthened this partnership throughout PY20, not skipping a beat due to a new provider being brought on board. WIOA staff does their due diligence to support businesses most in need, and it was discovered that 60% of the Fire Department would be graying out within three (3) years. As with much of today's workforce, the NALWDB is trying to assist in creating a pipeline to replace the retiring workforce. With the Farmington Fire Department, the need for skilled cadets, engineers, trainers, and several other positions is overwhelming. WIOA staff have made efforts to assist with recruitment of new cadets and assisted with Business Services such as Customized Training. In collaboration, the Farmington Fire Department and WIOA-San Juan County trained and employed 25 participants.

LABOR MARKET INFORMATION

Most of New Mexico's major technological industries and businesses are located in this region, which is the State's most populous but geographically smallest region. The demand for a qualified workforce in the Northern Region and the alignment of sector strategies and priority industries is reflected in labor market information and economic data as follows:

Total nonfarm employment in the [Santa Fe Metropolitan](#) was up 1,500 jobs, or 2.7 percent. All gains were in the private sector, which was up 2,300 jobs, or 5.5 percent. Public sector employment was down 800 jobs, or 5.7 percent.

In the private sector, leisure and hospitality reported a gain of 1,400 jobs, or 18.2 percent. Education and health services was up 400 jobs, or 4.3 percent. Professional and business services was up 200 jobs, or 3.8 percent. Trade, transportation, and utilities was up 200 jobs, or 2.1 percent. Information (up 14.3 percent) and miscellaneous other services (up 3.1 percent) each added 100 jobs. Mining and construction was down 100 jobs, or 3.3 percent.

In the public sector, State government was down 500 jobs, or 7.0 percent, and local government was down 300 jobs, or 5.0 percent. Federal government employment was unchanged from the level in August 2020.

The Farmington MSA's total nonfarm employment was up 1,100 jobs, or 2.6 percent. All gains were in the private sector which was up 1,100 jobs, or 3.5 percent. In the public sector, a gain of

100 jobs, or 1.3 percent, in local government, was offset by a loss of 100 jobs, or 6.3 percent, in federal government. State government was unchanged from its level in August 2020.

The Santa Fe MSA had the lowest not seasonally adjusted unemployment rate among the State's MSAs at 5.9 percent.

The unemployment rate for the Farmington MSA had the largest decrease, dropping 3.7 percentage points since August 2020. The Santa Fe MSA had an unemployment rate decrease of 3.5 percentage points

Largest Industries by County

- ◇ Accommodation & Food Services- Colfax
- ◇ Professional & Scientific Services- Los Alamos
- ◇ Health Care & Social Assistance- McKinley, Mora, Rio Arriba, San Juan, San Miguel, Santa Fe, and Taos

Los Alamos County had the lowest unemployment rate in the state, at 2.7 percent.

McKinley County lands in 3rd highest unemployment rate at 8.5 percent

The top ten occupations with fastest projected growth in the Northern region along with projected job openings:

	Occupation	Projected Growth	Projected Annual Job Openings
1	Solar Photovoltaic Installers	72.2%	9
2	Information Security Analysts	42.9%	32
3	Home Health & Personal Care Aids	34.4%	1,694
4	Computer & Information Researcher	30.4%	45
5	Physician Assistant	29.6%	16
6	Speech- Language Pathologists	29.3%	10
7	Nurse Practitioners	28.7%	28
8	Health Specialties Teachers, Postsecondary	24.2%	11
9	Physical Therapists	24.1%	21
10	Nursing Instructors & Teachers, Postsecondary	22.5%	5

Employers with the highest amount of job openings who WIOA staff continue to coordinate with for upcoming program participation:

- ◇ Los Alamos National Laboratory (573 Job Openings)
- ◇ The state of New Mexico (295 Job Openings)

- ◇ CHRISTUS St. Vincent (290 Job Openings)
- ◇ Santa Fe Public schools (286 Job Openings)

And:

In Santa Fe County, the movie, "Dead for a Dollar", will employ 80 New Mexico crew members, 20 local actors, and 40 local background performers.

In San Miguel County, Harbor Freight Tools will open a new location in Las Vegas this fall. The retail store will employ 25 to 30 workers.

In McKinley County, Maverik is opening two gas station convenience stores in Gallup. The stores will employ 15-20 employees each and will open in late 2021.

Additionally:

At its August meeting, the New Mexico Economic Development Department's Job Training Incentive Program (JTIP) board approved \$2,260,407 in funding to support the creation of 143 jobs and 11 interns with 17 New Mexico companies, including:

- Santa Fe Brewing Company, Santa Fe (3 jobs)
- Earth Traveler Teardrop Trailers, Santa Fe (6 jobs)
- UbiQD, Los Alamos (4 jobs)
- Specifica, Los Alamos (4 jobs)
- Solstar Space Company, Santa Fe (4 jobs)
- Dee Dee's Finest Beef Jerky, Espanola (8 jobs)
- BMR Corporation, Santa Fe (1 job)

Job Losses-

In McKinley County, Rehoboth McKinley Christian Health Care Services announced that it would be eliminating 78 positions in Gallup. There will be 33 layoffs, 18 contracts with temporary or traveling workers ended, and 27 vacant positions that won't be filled.

In San Juan County, the San Juan Mine plans to lay off at least 115 workers on July 31. The mine currently employs about 200 workers.

CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

Survey Outcomes

Continuous quality improvement activities were implemented throughout PY20 and continued to focus on workforce system improvements. This included developing a summary description of customer/business surveys activities, and how data from these surveys is reflected in direct changes to system and/or program delivery.

The Workforce Connection offices conducted several customer and business surveys across multiple core WIOA programs for PY 20 to capture service delivery feedback and opportunities for improvement for the upcoming year. For the Title I.B Adult & Dislocated Worker Program, 703 surveys were sent to participants, and 109 responses were received (15.5% response rate) and these were the results:

- 83.3% of participants were satisfied with the program's services in Quarter 3
66.7% of participants were satisfied with the program's services in Quarter 4.
- 83.3% of participants reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the professionalism and accessibility of staff in Quarter 3.
50% of participants reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the professionalism and accessibility of staff in Quarter 4.
- 75% of participants responded that the program either met or exceeded their expectations in Quarter 3.
80% of participants responded that the program either met or exceeded their expectations in Quarter 4.
- 2,000 – 3,500 Surveys for DWS, several hundred for WIOA.
- 53.8% of participants felt the services met their needs very well or extremely well, and 19.2% reported that the services met their needs somewhat well.
- 27.3% of participants reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the professionalism and accessibility of staff.
- 66.9% of participants responded that the program either met or exceeded their expectations.
- Businesses completed 61 surveys in the Northern Region in PY20.

CHANGES TO SYSTEM AND PROGRAM DELIVERY

The Northern Region will use the customer survey results on an ongoing basis to gauge the service delivery areas in each of the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers that need improvement. There are many changes that will be made to the flow of resource room activities and pre-screening efforts based on the feedback from customers and the frequency that they reported needing these services. There will also be improvement to the survey process itself with the Youth Program survey, and the new Northern Workforce Connections website www.nnmworkforceconnection.com that provides improved information to the entire customer base, including the business community and encourage a higher response rate. The business survey will be instrumental in developing more impactful marketing material and information, as well as in maintenance of the new, user-friendly website.

Dislocated Worker (DW) Program Continuous Quality Improvements will continue to promote efforts to identify and enroll participants that are not engaged in a career pathway consistent with acquiring meaningful employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency. These efforts include:

- Continued collaboration with RESEA;
- Developed an additional targeted outreach efforts and products to feature benefits of the DW training program;
- Promote short-term training and credential programs for in-demand occupations such as IT Bootcamps, Apprenticeships, Fast-track Associate Degree Programs, etc.;
- Provide needs related payments for DW clients that exhaust UI benefits to ensure successful completion of approved training.

PARTNERSHIP ENGAGEMENT AND SYSTEM-WIDE APPROACHES

- ◇ The NALWDB One Stop Operator established quarterly meetings for ALL Title I,III, and IV staff in each regional office to keep each other informed of their activities and discuss possible collaboration. Quarterly gatherings are 1/2 day to full day sessions that include all partners listed previously (co-located, core, mandatory, and additional) across the Northern Area to share information, celebrate achievements, recognize best practices, and allow for cross-training and networking.
- ◇ The NALWDB has been working closely on a Four Corners Economic Development (4CED) team to interview focus groups leading to the developing of programs to close the local workforce gap.
- ◇ 4CED is also creating virtual and traditional business resource guides to be disseminated across the four corners and has forged a partnership with the Southwest Colorado Accelerator Program for Entrepreneurs (SCAPE) to create a San Juan County leg of the program. SCAPE works with start-up companies to provide education, mentoring, and access to funding.
- ◇ The Greater Gallup Economic Development Corporation with its Industrial Workforce Program has a certification program that was created in response to the needs of industrial employers in McKinley County. Five participants are participating with a new cohort of students being referred for enrollment. Goal is to serve 45 students in this program. Cohort two will be starting this month, with anticipated enrollments of 20.

System-wide Training Strategy

The NALWDB realizes that successful partnerships are the impetus of the WIOA program. To that end, the NALWDB will continue to foster implementation of such partnerships in an effort to bolster cross-training opportunities and ensure consistency in pre-screening and partner referrals.

Communication and Marketing Efforts

The Northern Region has had great success with Team Coordination Meetings held regularly and consistently with managers and supervisors of all Northern Area programs, and representation from the comprehensive and affiliate centers. The NALWDB One Stop Operator provided all partners direct assistance in social media efforts, including direct access to a media contractor. Staff also produced multiple Tik-Tok's as part of collaborative promo effort in Santa Fe and Farmington.

The group comes together to discuss upcoming events and outreach opportunities, staffing challenges, customer flow issues, and infrastructure needs. The Team Coordination attendees also approve all operational policies and procedures.

Opportunities for Improvement or focus for the upcoming year

The PY20 target is out-of-school youth and the dislocated worker population. The focus will be OJT, WE and Occupational Skills Training that aligns with the three (3) identified sectors: Information Technology, Healthcare & Education.

Coordination/collaboration activity with the One-Stop-Operator (OSO) and regional partners will be increased on events in the Northern Region to include the following planned goals thereto:

- ◇ Increase enrollments services for OSY and Dislocated Worker.
- ◇ Enroll an additional 117 OSY clients and additional 80 Dislocated Worker .
- ◇ Create/Execute 10 recruitment events in the Northern region in high retail service areas such as malls & Walmarts).
- ◇ Coordinate with the One Stop Operator to lead partners and employers to scheduled outreach events:
September – San Miguel/Mora; October – Farmington/Gallup; November – Taos;
December – Colfax; January - Rio Arriba/Los Alamos; February –Santa Fe; March – Farmington/Gallup; April – Cibola; May –Farmington/Gallup.
Follow-up service after each event to collect and determine eligibility.
- ◇ Coordinate with different agencies who work with population clients such as DW Eligible Spouse/Veteran.
- ◇ Increase coordination/collaboration with different entities who work with population clients such as OSY and Dislocated Worker.
- ◇ Coordinate with employers and training institutions to design and implement career pathways leading to employment, such as with Compa, N3b, hospitals, banks, and construction.
- ◇ Improvement in follow-up services
- ◇ Increased collaboration with Wagner-Peyser on Eligibility Explorer intake process and enrollment
- ◇ Develop outreach efforts that are more effective for recruitments.

Partnership Engagement That Improved or Enhanced the WIOA Experience

- Wager-Peyser and WIOA staff jointly participated in several hiring events including in Las Vegas, Farmington and Grants.
- Wagner-Peyser and WIOA staff jointly visited Santa Fe Recovery rehabilitation facilities on a biweekly basis to work with clients exiting rehab on finding employment and receiving any appropriate services.
- Multiple partner intake event in Santa Fe (3-day event)
- Wagner-Peyser and WIOA partnered with the Public Education Department (PED) to identify candidates, determine eligibility and enroll them in alternative licensure programs for teaching certification.
- Weekly meetings were held between all Wagner-Peyser office managers, OSO, and other partners leadership positions to keep each other informed of activities and collaboration.

First Quarter Report – PY21

	Adult			
	Actual	Negotiated	% Met	Meet/Exceed/Failed
Employed in Q2 Rate:	77.8%	78%	99.7%	Meet
Median Wages in Q2:	6,005	7100.00	84.58%	Failed
Employed in Q4 Rate:	85.3%	75%	113.7%	Exceed
Credential Attainment Rate:	68.8%	67%	102.6%	Exceed
Measurable Skills Gains Rate:	56.9%	61.5%	92.5%	Meet

	Dislocated Worker			
	Actual	Negotiated	% Met	Meet/Exceed/Failed
Employed in Q2 Rate:	60.0%	75%	80.0%	Failed
Median Wages in Q2:	7,296	7650.00	95.37%	Meet
Employed in Q4 Rate:	64.3%	73%	88.1%	Failed
Credential Attainment Rate:	66.7%	60%	111.1%	Exceed
Measurable Skills Gains Rate:	66.7%	60%	111.1%	Exceed

	Youth			
	Actual	Negotiated	% Met	Meet/Exceed/Failed
Employed in Q2 Rate:	79.2%	63%	125.7%	Exceed
Median Wages in Q2:	4,095	3400.00	120.44%	Exceed
Employed in Q4 Rate:	57.1%	63%	90.7%	Meet
Credential Attainment Rate:	25.0%	45%	55.6%	Failed
Measurable Skills Gains Rate:	56.1%	48%	116.6%	Exceed

The 1st quarter of PY21 showed significant improvement in performance for the Northern Area. As noted above, (4) performance measures were met, seven (7) were exceeded, and four (4) failed. It was determined by WIOA staff that in PY20, participants were being served but the required documentation at the case management level was not being conducted and was found to be a training issue. This has been addressed, as well as other aspects of service delivery (i.e. outreach, follow-up, detail of case notes, uploading documents in NMWCOS). This 1st quarter information shows that the Northern Area is on track and moving forward in its efforts to meet performance and provide quality workforce training services to Northern New Mexicans.

PY20 Workforce Connection of Central New Mexico (WCCNM)

Annual Report

In accordance with §677.205 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) regulation and WIOA Law Sections 101 and 116, the Workforce Connection of Central New Mexico (WCCNM) submits the Program Year 2020 (PY20) Annual Report to the State of New Mexico, Department of Workforce Solutions, State Administrative Entity (SAE) on October 15, 2021. The report will be incorporated into an expanded annual report for the region that will be available on the WCCNM website at www.wccnm.org.

The Workforce Connection of Central New Mexico (WCCNM) and the New Mexico Workforce Connection (NMWC) centers continue to move forward with strategic approaches to meet the needs of priority industries and assist businesses to become competitive and profitable. Our region's business-driven system allows us to be a qualified and valued resource for businesses and job seekers in the four-county area. This past year, while faced with significant challenges related to the COVID-19 crisis, the WCCNM has continued to enhance services to job seekers as well as the business community through the many resources offered via the NMWC centers.

In March 2020, the WCCNM suspended all in-person services in the New Mexico Workforce Connection (NMWC) centers across the four-county region. Services provided by the WCCNM and all NMWC partners to job seekers and the business community were quickly and successfully adapted for virtual platforms. One year later, in March 2021, the NMWC offered in-person appointments for employment, education, and career-related services and programs on an as-needed basis. Today, the NMWC centers are open for walk-in customers and in-person appointments and robust virtual and remote services also continue. However, many lessons learned during the pandemic have been invaluable, with services via phone, email, and video conferencing remain at high levels.

VIRTUAL SERVICE HIGHLIGHTS

- Title I.B Adult & Dislocated Worker program YouTube videos
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Application and Orientation videos
- Virtual recruitment events recorded and streamed in-house at the New Mexico Workforce Connection in Albuquerque
- Weekly "Hot Jobs" announcement on IGTV and social media sites
- Efforts to convert all forms to electronic fillable PDFs

Throughout the pandemic, the WIOA Title I.B Adult & Dislocated Worker program, the WIOA Youth program, and other workforce partner programs are working to best support students through digital learning challenges. The WIOA Youth program produced a series of short 15-second videos about training/education programs, on-the-job training, and work experience airing on KRQE and social media.

TECH UPGRADES

The WCCNM also invested in much-needed infrastructure and tech upgrades, including:

- a cloud-based communications system for phone, text, and video conferencing
- a new WCCNM website (www.wccnm.org)
- an online partner referral system embedded in the WCCNM intranet;
- an employer/business services inquiry tool on the new website that allows for businesses to quickly submit their workforce needs.

Despite all of the challenges due to the pandemic, the customer services levels in the Central Region New Mexico Workforce Connection centers have remained high, and we continued to strive to meet the needs of job seekers and employers with our flexible service delivery modes. The WCCNM has also maintained high performance levels while also taking on new grants and strategic initiatives.

1 SUMMARY OF THE WIOA TITLE I.B ADULT & DISLOCATED WORKER PROGRAM

1.1 MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Title I. B Adult & Dislocated Worker (DW) Program was very successful in PY20 as they developed 206 new On-the-Job Training (OJT) contracts, with hands-on job specific training for 232 individuals in the Central Region. In addition, 31 Customized Training Agreements were executed and training/retraining of 137 individuals (12 under the Customized Training category and 125 under the Incumbent Workers category), 92 clients participating in apprenticeship programs and 31 work experience/internships. Furthermore, 712 people received Individual Training Accounts (ITA) and 350 adults received supportive services, thus increasing job seekers' credential attainment, occupational skills, and overall employability. Overall, 1,192 individuals received Title I.B training services in the Central Region.

Using the Unemployment Insurance "Reemployment Bridge Report," the Adult & DW program continued a telephone and email campaign throughout the program year to directly reach out to individuals filing and claiming benefits, providing information about the Title I.B program and other New Mexico Workforce Connection (NMWC) services. In particular, they targeted individuals from occupations (i.e. the service industry) that may not return to work and thus could use short term training to change career paths, as well as those with potential to enter the healthcare and information technology fields, where high demand for employees is likely to continue. The Adult & DW program utilized technology to reach out to potential dislocated worker participants, holding Zoom information sessions and phone orientations for those without access to technology, and adapting their enrollment process to ensure seamless service continuation. They also developed and updated informational flyers listing short-term training and on-the-job training opportunities available to dislocated workers.

Staff developed videos of the "WIOA Orientation" and "Labor Market Information (LMI)" workshops, which have been posted to YouTube, so applicants can attend the workshops virtually. This saved significant staff time trying to offer orientation and LMI guidance on a one-to-one basis and is convenient option for customers to view and refer back to the detailed program information.

1.1.1 Facebook Career Connections

In 2020, the Title I.B Adult & Dislocated Worker (DW) program was one of the first WIOA programs in the country to successfully partner and fund internships through Facebook Career Connections. Career Connections is a Facebook initiative that helps motivated job seekers (18+) prepare for a career in digital marketing. Their trainings cover topics like interviewing techniques and mastering digital media marketing. The WIOA matched individuals with a competitively paid virtual internships funded and administered by the WCCNM.

With a focus on underserved communities, the Career Connection Program also dedicates resources to employer partners, including \$500 in Facebook and Instagram ad credits, access to exclusive training, and online recognition. They also benefit from a pool of career-ready, technically trained employees from which to fill future positions and reduce recruitment costs. The WIOA program provides additional funded services for employers who transition interns to full-time permanent employment through on-the-job training (OJT) opportunities.

In 2020, close to fifty people obtained internships. Once these ended, more than half were offered full-time permanent employment. Fast forward to 2021, and the Career Connections program has expanded to 11 additional regions, including Austin, TX; Las Vegas, NV; and six cities in California, using best practices and outreach strategies developed here in the Central Region. The Central Region WIOA program placed 27 interns with the Career Connections program this year.

1.1.2 NEG-DWG Grant

National Emergency Grant - National Dislocated Worker Grants (NEG-DWGs) under WIOA provides resources to states and other eligible applicants to respond to large, unexpected layoff events causing significant job losses. Under the NEG-DWG, the Central Region Adult & Dislocated Worker (DW) program has two projects. The first is the transitional jobs project that strives to enable individuals with a limited work history to experience the opportunity to gain meaningful work skills that lead to gainful employment. The target population is individuals with nonviolent criminal backgrounds who are currently eligible dislocated worker or long-term unemployed. Transitional jobs participants are placed at worksites and with employers across a range of occupations and industries in the four-county region. As of June 30, 2021, 14 participants were placed in transitional work opportunities.

Secondly, under the NEG-DWG, the Central Region continues a partnership with CNM Ingenuity to focus on short-term training certificates and other training/education opportunities for unemployed individuals hardest hit by COVID-19 and looking for careers in the IT/tech industry. The IT/tech training opportunities align with the overall sector strategy in the Central Region that is currently underway. As of June 30, 2021, 48 participants were enrolled with "Individual Training Accounts" (ITA) in IT/tech training.

1.2 MAJOR CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

The COVID-19 pandemic posed challenges to the Title I.B Adult & Dislocated Worker (DW) program's operations during PY20. The Adult & DW program has been continuing to reach out to dislocated workers thorough referrals, social media, phone, and email.

The shift to virtual service delivery during the pandemic has created an opportunity for the Adult & DW program to implement new data-driven approaches for outreach and recruitment strategies, as the use of virtual platforms allows for data to be collected, tracked, and analyzed in new ways. New data sources that were accessible during the pandemic, such as the "Reemployment Bridge Report," have also allowed Adult & DW staff to pilot new methods of targeted outreach and recruitment, and offering virtual service options has reduced barriers such as

distance, transportation, and childcare that may make it difficult for individuals to visit NMWC centers in person. Thus, program staff have an unprecedented opportunity to examine service data from before and after the pandemic, to see how changes in service delivery have impacted how they serve individuals. This will also help staff evaluate service delivery elements to see if there are programmatic changes that may be possible to better serve unemployed individuals. Increased data collection and analysis also presents an opportunity to implement continuous quality improvement plans, which will allow staff to test these programmatic changes and evaluate their effectiveness via increased data collection, monitoring, and analysis.

Referrals from educational institutions remained high throughout PY20 but individuals self-navigating to the New Mexico Workforce Connection to inquiry about the Adult & DW program has decreased. Virtual and remote services were instrumental in helping connecting individuals to the program, but there are still different approaches that need to be explored to increase potential participants since walk-in traffic is not projected to increase substantially during the pandemic.

The expansion of regional and local sector strategies and an apprenticeship model is a significant opportunity for the Adult & DW Program during the next program year. Identifying ways in which to better align career and training services through the Adult & DW Program and funding to address skills gaps and in-demand industries will be critical, particularly in the healthcare and IT/tech industries.

The Adult & DW Program will continue to collaborate with various employers and industries to promote paid work experience via internships, transitional jobs, and OJT to create a continuum of services designed to allow participants to work and learn. Opportunities afforded via the “Transitional Jobs” policy may be significant for disadvantaged individuals, such as formerly incarcerated and long-term unemployed, with a goal to reduce recidivism and poverty within the Central Region.

2 SUMMARY OF THE WIOA TITLE I.B YOUTH PROGRAM

2.1 MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Youth Program enrolled 229 new young adults into the program carried over 399 (active caseload and/or in follow up) youth from the previous year. In PY20, 134 youth participated in work experience activities and 58 new participants received ITAs. In addition, participants received a total of 350 supportive services and incentives. Overall, 628 youth received WIOA Title I.B Youth services throughout the PY20 year.

The Youth Program utilizes a “Positive Youth Development Framework” to access each participant’s strength in order to tackle areas of growth. With this methodology in place, participants are required to develop an educational and employment goal that will guide them to a future career. This methodology encourages and motivates young adults to stay focused on their future career choice.

The Youth Program continues to integrate “Career Solutions” and “Why I Work” into program delivery to better gauge career interests. The Youth staff developed an Individualized Service Strategy (Education and Employment Goal), and implemented Basic Employability Skills Training (BEST) and SMART (Strategic, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Timely) goals strategy for work placement.

The Youth Program successfully established several pre-apprenticeship programs during PY20. The pre-apprenticeship/high school equivalency pilot project with the Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) and

Albuquerque Adult Learning Center (ABQ ALC) was going well at the close of PY20. The program maintained 14 active participants. The program began its core courses on May 15th which continued through the summer.

The Albuquerque EMS Corps program, which provides training to become a certified emergency medical technician (EMT) to youth ages 16-24, was also progressing well at the close of PY20. Participants have entered into the Basic Life Skills portion of their training and are completing exams. Participants receive a weekly calendar of programming including sessions on different areas of EMT training, mentorship, wellness, life coaching, group and advocate meetings. They are also provided with regular supplies, such as snacks, hygiene, and gift cards. Participants also participate in community service on the weekends when projects are available.

Youth Program staff are also working with Associated General Contractors (AGC) to develop a pre-apprenticeship program focused on in-school youth. In April, staff met with AGC to review their proposed plan for the program. The next step is adding the program to the ETPL, and then Youth Program staff will begin recruiting for the program, with an initial recruitment goal of 10-12 in-school youth. Staff look forward to kicking off this new program during PY21.

2.2 MAJOR CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

Continuing normal programming during the COVID-19 pandemic was challenging for the Youth Program. Work experience placements were on temporary holds throughout PY20 due to various stay-at-home orders, pandemic shutdowns, and public health orders. When possible to place participants, worksite attestations were obtained from all worksites agreeing to comply with CDC and State of New Mexico public health orders. Online tutoring was available for participants who were not able to resume or start work experience.

Other challenges related to COVID-19 include the inability to conduct face-to-face meetings/services and varied engagement of youth throughout most of PY20. The Youth program conducted virtual services through computer or phone and encouraged youth to work through their IEP and other career services. Occasional face-to-face meetings were held one-on-one outside of the workforce center when needed with all safety pre-cautions being adhered to.

There is an opportunity to take a deep dive into the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on youth and young adults in the Central Region. The Operations Team and the Youth Program can evaluate if there are improvements that can be made in the customer flow, referral process, and program service delivery model to strengthen the connection between young people's immediate needs and paths to success in a very different economy than existed in pre-pandemic times.

The implementation or expansion of regional and local sector strategies will be a significant opportunity for the Youth Program during the next program year. The WCCNM and the Youth Program will work closely with stakeholders to develop pathways that align with the workforce needs of target industry sectors and provide career advancement opportunities for young adults.

3 BUSINESS SERVICES

3.1 MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

WCCNM has experienced tremendous success with the management of the WIOA system and the NMWC centers in the Central Region with the goal of delivering upon the needs of the employers and the businesses in our

regional economy. The WCCNM's Business Team is continually engaged with our employer and business customer base to better understand their immediate and future workforce needs and gain a snapshot of their industry and organization's culture and strategic business objectives.

The WCCNM has many long-standing and newly developed collaborations and partnerships with community-based organizations, employers, chambers of commerce, industry associations, local government, and more that have proved to be even more valuable during the challenging times of COVID-19. This have allowed the WCCNM to explore and pursue additional funding and program opportunities, leverage additional programs, and increase capacity to improve services, including virtual services, for individuals and employers.

These partnerships are critical in growing the Central Region's talent pipeline, and the WCCNM plays a role in not only recruiting and connecting qualified candidates to the employers and businesses but in helping to respond to the workforce gaps with linkages to training, education opportunities, and skill development strategies.

SECTOR STRATEGIES

The WCCNM sector strategies have progressed with the IT/tech and healthcare industries. For IT/tech, the WCCNM and NWMC partners will 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 that ended in December 2020.

Also, the NMWC partners will coordinate with other existing IT/tech efforts that are currently going on in the region that are also engaging key industry representatives including programs such as NMITAP, 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; Tarrant - Sustainable energy; and Valencia - Manufacturing/Construction. The WCCNM facilitated county-level advisory meetings in PY20 to bring together employers, industry representatives, education/training providers, 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.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

A new WCCNM Board subcommittee, the WCCNM Economic Development Committee, was established during PY20, hosting its kickoff meeting in April. The mission of the WCCNM Economic Development Committee is to forge alliances with Central Region economic development organizations, businesses, communities and training providers; identify workforce needs; develop strategies for county level planning; bridge skill gaps; and support

economic development initiatives. WCCNM worked in collaboration with the City of Albuquerque to launch the committee, and membership includes representative from economic development agencies, chambers of commerce, local government, and workforce development. This committee will bring these varied stakeholders together to support both larger sector strategies areas for the Central Region (healthcare and IT) as well as county-specific leading and emerging industries.

WORK-BASED LEARNING

The WCCNM has increased the number of work-based learning opportunities available through the public workforce system in the Central Region. The WCCNM passed multiple policies to increase internships, transitional jobs, and work experiences in the region. Projects such as the Facebook Career Connections program, have resulted in successful internships, and in many cases, full-time permanent employment with some on-the-job training opportunities. Opportunities afforded via the WCCNM “Transitional Jobs” policy may be significant for disadvantaged individuals, such as former prisoners and long-term unemployed, with a goal to reduce recidivism and poverty within the Central Region.

There has been increased support for apprenticeship in the Central Region as the WCCNM promotes that the “earn and learn” approach helps workers start new careers and helps businesses recruit and retain a highly-skilled workforce. The Adult & Dislocated Worker Program and the Youth Program will continue to work with trade associations and apprenticeship programs to use WIOA funds in a variety of ways to help individuals prepare for, enter, and complete apprenticeship programs. Additionally, in partnership with the NMDWS State Apprenticeship Office, the NMWC Central Region Apprenticeship Coordinators work closely with employer/sponsors to review and prepare their program standards for submission and approval of formal registered apprenticeship programs.

Outreach to employers will continue with the goal of identifying needs that fall into the apprenticeship or apprenticeship pathway arena. As outreach to employers, current apprentices, and prospective apprentices increases, the WCCNM will leverage a new referral and inquiry tracking system to capture the ROI of various outreach methods, contact information, program referrals, and many other data elements. The referral and inquiry tracking system is built into the WCCNM intranet that is available to all Central Region partners, both co-located and non co-located.

3.2 MAJOR CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

WCCNM Business teams, including staff from Adult & Dislocated Worker, Youth, Career Services, Veterans, and NMDVR, continue to work together in order to avoid multiple contacts with same businesses, associations, etc. by leveraging the communication tools. In PY20, the WCCNM continued work on new updated, professional business material and launched a new WCCNM website that provides improved information to the entire customer base, including the business community. As part of the new website that launched in PY20, there is an employer/business services inquiry tool under final development that allows for businesses to quickly submit their workforce needs to business team representatives with a defined process, workflow, and tracking database on the backend.

Repeat business may be a significant challenge for the Central Region. Although the WCCNM and NMWC partners have been successful within the area of business services, it is important that we pursue business services with strategic intent to ensure that we address business needs from a workforce system-wide perspective versus individual partner program goals and performance criteria. The WCCNM is building additional capacity, expertise and dedicating significant investments in technology and partner training. Opportunities for improvements is

possible by leveraging industry sector strategies and “work and learn” initiatives, and also with significant investments in technical solutions to promote quality business engagement and increased customer satisfaction.

The WCCNM is fortunate to have a variety of service providers, funding streams, grant opportunities, and programs and services; however, there are sometimes obstacles that many of the programs and funding streams have their own unique set of eligibility requirements and outcome measurements which can be limiting as well as create confusion for the customer including the business community. The WCCNM will continue to promote an operational approach in the NMWC Centers that promotes collaboration, strengthens programs, and encourages innovation in the delivery of services to individuals and employers in the Central Region.

4 PERFORMANCE

4.1 MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

PY20 performance results for the Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, and Wagner-Peyser programs are detailed in the corresponding table for *Employment Q2*, *Median Wages in Q2*, *Employment Q4*, *Credential Attainment Rate*, and *Measurable Skill Gains Rate*. All performance indicators percentage indicate that performance primarily was exceeded and/or met in all five categories, with an exception of the *Youth Credential Attainment Rate*.

In late PY18, the WCCNM approved a change to the on-the-job (OJT) policy in an effort to positively impact the *Median Wage* performance measure. The change included a minimum of OJT reimbursable training cost in the amount of \$13.30 for participating businesses in Albuquerque and Rio Rancho. Under this policy change, this performance measure has improved during PY19 and again in the PY20 and has helped the Adult and Dislocated Worker provider meet the performance goals.

In the previous program year (PY19), the Youth credential performance measure of 89.36% was not reached by a narrow 0.64% margin. The WCCNM met with the Youth Program throughout PY20 and provided technical assistance to make strides towards increasing the *Credential Attainment* measure. Gains and improvement in this area are evident as a result of the efforts to drill down into the applicable participant cohort by the Youth Program staff and to capture missed follow-up data and/or by determining errors in data entry when students obtain their credentials. Because of this effort, this indicator remained at the *Exceeds* level throughout the whole year.

PERFORMANCE PY2020 – ROLLING FOUR QUARTERS – FINAL

	WIOA Title I.B Adult			
	Actual	Negotiated	% Met	Meet/Exceed/Failed
Employed in Q2 Rate:	80.68%	78.00%	103.44%	Exceeds
Median Wages in Q2:	\$8,893.81	\$7,577.00	117.38%	Exceeds
Employed in Q4 Rate:	79.74%	78.70%	101.32%	Exceeds
Credential Attainment Rate:	74.26 %	72.00%	103.15%	Exceeds
Measurable Skills Gains Rate:	71.56%	72.00%	99.38%	*Meets

Future Works data extracted 9/27/2021. *MSG is an Annual Rate and determined in the Rolling Four Quarters Report.

	WIOA Title I.B Dislocated Worker			
	Actual	Negotiated	% Met	Meet/Exceed/Failed
Employed in Q2 Rate:	69.66%	76.00%	91.65%	Meets
Median Wages in Q2:	\$8,161.00	\$8,500.00	96.01%	Meets
Employed in Q4 Rate:	73.65%	73.00%	100.89%	Exceeds
Credential Attainment Rate:	72.57%	68.00%	106.72%	Exceeds
Measurable Skills Gains Rate:	68.83%	68.00%	101.22%	*Exceeds

Future Works data extracted 9/27/2021. *MSG is an Annual Rate and determined in the Rolling Four Quarters Report.

	WIOA Title I.B Youth			
	Actual	Negotiated	% Met	Meet/Exceed/Failed
Employed in Q2 Rate:	64.14%	66.50%	96.44%	Meets
Median Wages in Q2:	\$4,268.46	\$3,200.00	133.39%	Exceeds
Employed in Q4 Rate:	70.42%	66.25%	106.29%	Exceeds
Credential Attainment Rate:	60.26%	45.00%	133.90%	Exceeds
Measurable Skills Gains Rate:	35.80%	48.10%	74.42%	*Failed

Future Works data extracted 9/27/2021. *MSG is an Annual Rate and determined in the Rolling Four Quarters Report.

	WIOA Title III Wagner-Peyser			
	Actual	Negotiated	% Met	Meet/Exceed/Failed
Employed in Q2 Rate:	58.28%	64.00%	91.06%	Meets
Median Wages in Q2:	\$6,027.31	\$6,000.00	100.46%	Exceeds
Employed in Q4 Rate:	61.40%	62.40%	98.39%	Meets
Credential Attainment Rate:	N/A	0.00%	0%	N/A
Measurable Skills Gains Rate:	N/A	0.00%	0%	N/A

Future Works data extracted 9/27/2021.

4.2 MAJOR CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

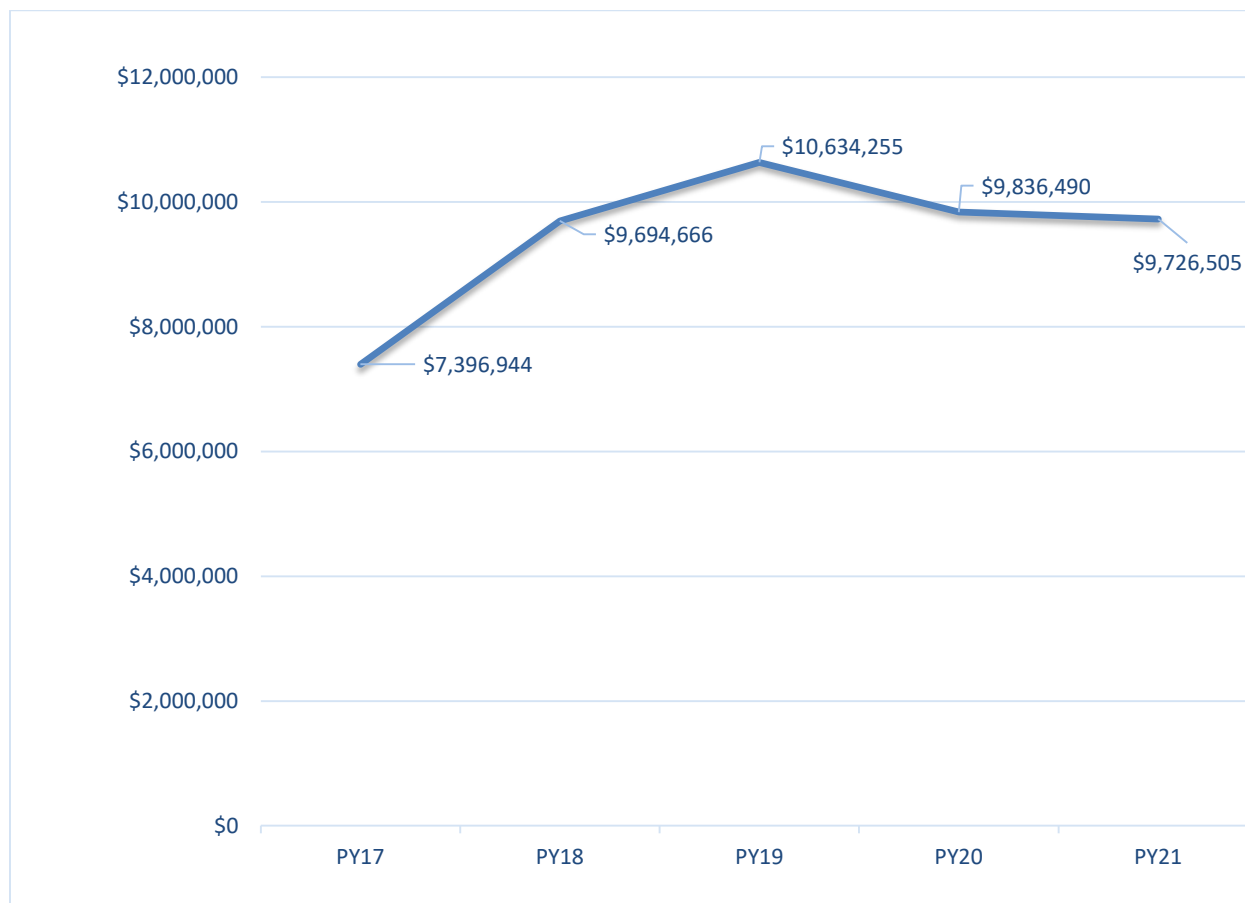
The Youth Measurable Skill Gains (MSG) indicator was not reached by a 15.58% margin and resulting in a 74.42% achievement. MSG was new requirement in PY20 and posed a challenge with the Youth Program. WCCNM met with the Youth Program throughout the year and provided technical assistance on achieving this metric goal. Gains and improvement in this area were evident to a large degree with the efforts to drill down into the applicable participant cohort by the Youth Program staff and capturing missed follow-up data and/or by determining errors in data entry when students obtain their credentials. Unfortunately, this indicator was not met, and it appears that additional technical assistance and training may be needed to meet and exceed this indicator.

4.3 FUNDING

The WCCNM has assumed responsibility for many workforce related special projects and grant opportunities from the USDOL and the State of New Mexico. These include successful completion of ARRA American Recovery

Reinvestment Act, SESP State Energy Sector Partnership Act, NEG National Emergency Grants, NM's TechHire H1B Grant, Apprenticeship, and other workforce related initiatives. There have been no forfeitures of granted WIOA or other appropriations and the Central Region has managed to remain in good standing with clean third-party independent audits for over 15 years.

The following graph demonstrates the WCCNM WIOA Title I Formula funding allocation for recent years. The Program Year (PY) 21 (7-1-21 through 6-30-22) the WCCNM was awarded at \$9,726,505, representing \$109,985 decrease overall from the PY20's \$9,836,490 formula funding and resulting in a 1% decrease.



WCCNM's success is very much related to the structure of Central Region's Board members & Board Officers with active involvement. Additionally, the region's current and past business leaders, community development partnerships, and competent training institutions are also an important consideration in measuring WCCNM's success.

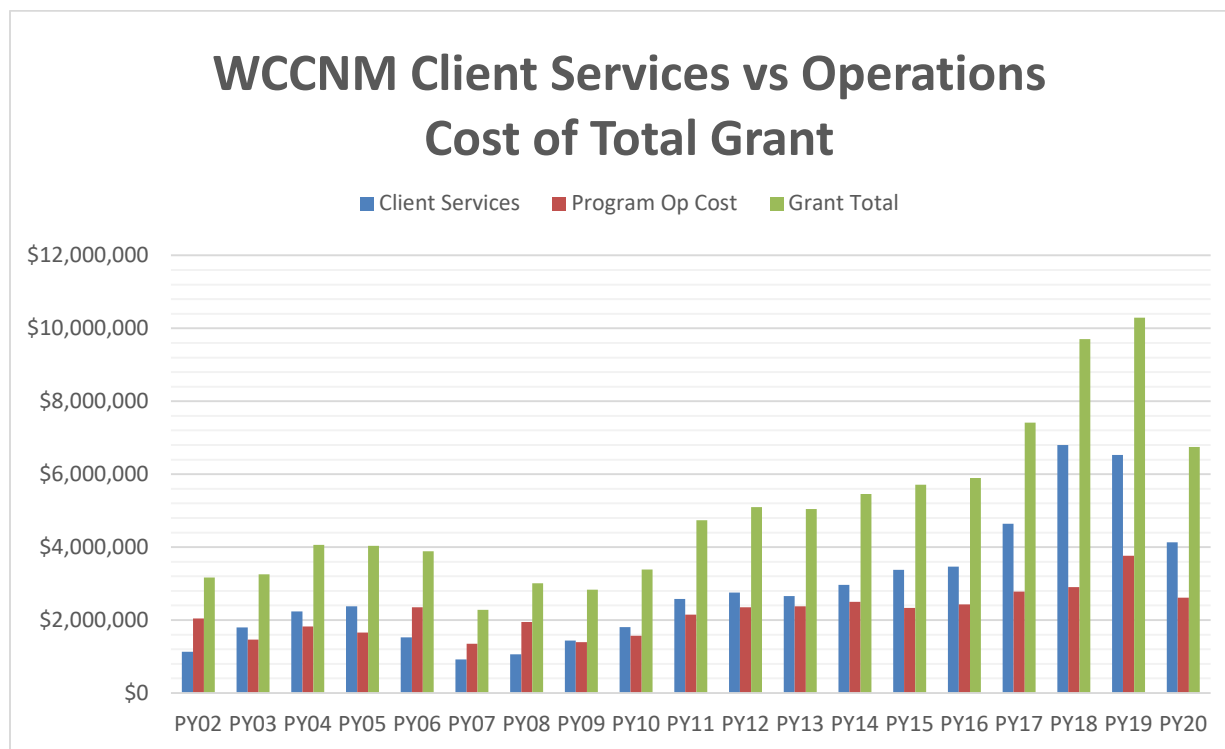
One particular success for the Central Region is budget management. The board members do not direct their particular interests to contractors or sub recipients and avoid any appearance or potential for conflict of interest. County board representatives work together recognizing the four-county region as one area, serving customers based upon individual needs via the New Mexico Workforce Connection centers without a focus on budget allocations or expenditures to each county. Therefore, the region's partner activities and direction may be quickly adjusted to address new demands and WIOA initiatives, while maintaining what is best for business leaders as a region versus a siloed approach.

Furthermore, the WCCNM has managed to perform USDOL directives and maintain costs at a reasonable level by sharing of resources and leveraging costs amongst WIOA mandated partners. The WCCNM provides the One-Stop Operator authority to navigate complexities of bureaucracies with a focus on customer service and flexibility in all the Central Region's workforce centers, including the operation of New Mexico's premier comprehensive jobs center in Albuquerque. In support, the WCCNM provides significant investments for development of a comprehensive communications and internet-based infrastructure that allows for a combination of in-person and virtual services which promotes robust service strategies and an enhanced customer experience.

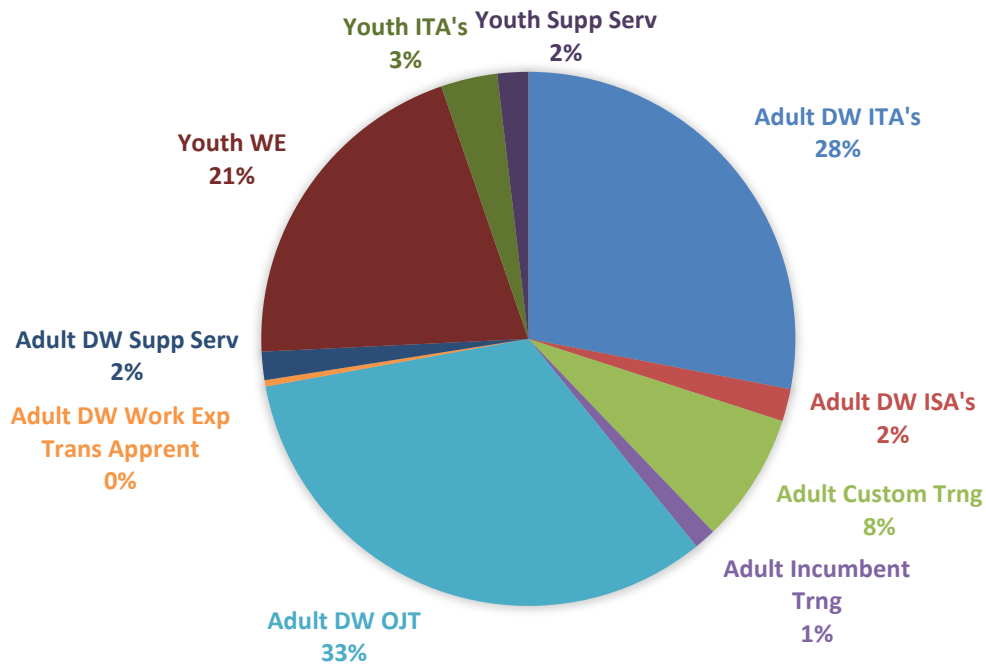
The WCCNM operates under a grant requirement to expend 60% of WIOA monies on client or participant services, with 40% available for infrastructure and administrative costs such as facilities, staff and other board related expenses. The WCCNM exceeds this threshold and is at a 70% expenditure rate for PY20 training services.

The WCCNM has three subrecipients (One-Stop Operator, Adult & Dislocated Worker and Youth service providers) receiving monies for their staff's payroll costs and indirect business expenses. The Mid-Region Council of Governments (MRCOG), serving as the WCCNM's Fiscal Agent, is responsible for all fund draw downs and management of capital improvement, administrative and operational monies, and the majority of participant fund distributions for payments. The MRCOG's comprehensive internal controls and procedures limits any financial risks and increases the capacity for the WCCNM to function and perform at a high-level.

Please see the charts below depicting a breakdown of costs by PY periods to include Program Year 2002 through 2020.



WCCNM INCEPTION PY02 TO PY20 CLIENT SERVICES BY % TOTAL



Adult DW ITA's	\$ 14,853,275
Adult DW ISA's	\$ 1,040,444
Adult Custom Trng	\$ 4,164,730
Adult Incumbent Trng	\$ 700,225
Adult DW OJT	\$ 17,479,884
Adult DW Work Exp Tra	\$ 203,663
Adult DW Supp Serv	\$ 907,708
Youth WE	\$ 10,855,019
Youth ITA's	\$ 1,813,991
Youth Supp Serv	\$ 987,708
	\$ 53,006,647

5 SUCCESS STORIES

5.1 ADULT SUCCESS STORY: VANESSA

Vanessa is a mother of four children and moved often as her husband was in the military. As a result, she held a few odd jobs for several months at a time. After working short-term jobs, she saw how competitive the job market was and knew she needed to enhance her skills in order to advance her career, gain long-term employment and self-sufficiency.

Vanessa was motivated by her husband who graduated from Pima Medical Institute (PMI). She took the initiative and enrolled in the Radiography Program at PMI and excelled in her studies while maintaining her busy home life. Vanessa performed her clinical rotation at Renal Medical Associates, and they liked her so much that they offered her a position as a Radiography Technician earning \$24.00 hour. Vanessa is thrilled and thankful for the assistance of the WIOA program, and loves her new job!

5.2 ADULT SUCCESS STORY (FACEBOOK CAREER CONNECTIONS INTERNSHIP): FAITH

Faith began her journey with the WIOA program through the Facebook Career Connections internship program. At that time, she was attending CNM and working towards her Associates in Liberal Arts. She was also working part-time at Bob's Burgers but did not enjoy working in the fast food industry. Having recently graduated from high school, she had minimal work experience aside from some house sitting and helping a small Etsy business.

When Faith learned about the Facebook internship, she was hopeful, as this was exactly the type of opportunity she had been looking for. Faith enrolled in the program and was matched with Don Smith Designs. She thrived there right away, and within a few months of working as an intern, she was rolled over to an OJT with a full-time, permanent position.

Faith loves the experience she is gaining and enjoys the work at Don Smith Designs. Faith is nearing graduation, and she plans to continue embracing employment and education opportunities as she moves ahead in her new career path.

5.3 DISLOCATED WORKER SUCCESS STORY: SHERI

Sheri was employed with Verizon for eight and half years, advancing up the career ladder within the company. In January 2019, Verizon announced a series of layoffs, and unfortunately, Sheri was laid off from her job. After more than eight years with the same company, Sheri was unsure what her next step should be. She has always wanted to be a nurse, and she felt that this might be a good opportunity for her to change careers. Sheri's family fully supported her decision to return to school and pursue her goal of moving into the healthcare industry.

Sheri enrolled in the WIOA Adult & Dislocated Worker program in May of 2019, and the program helped her to afford the tuition cost for her registered nursing program. Sheri graduated from Carrington College on 12/16/2020 and obtained her RN license on February 17, 2021. Since she graduated, Sheri has received seven job offers. She ultimately decided to accept her offer from Presbyterian Hospital, where she is currently in the Nursing Resident Program, working 40 hour per week and making \$29.85 per hour. Sheri remains grateful for the support and opportunity that she received from the Adult & Dislocated Worker program and her Career Development Specialist.

5.4 YOUTH SUCCESS STORY: JOHN

Sixteen-year-old John was referred to the WIOA Youth Program in October 2020 by the Youth Development Incorporated (YDI) Project Adelante, where he was enrolled in the HSE preparation program and was hoping to find employment opportunities.

During his time in the WIOA program, John has shared with his Youth Development Practitioner (YDP) the obstacles he continues to overcome. John is raised by his elderly grandmother. He and his grandmother also both battled COVID-19 and are happy to report they are now in good health. More recently, the family lost a loved one to age and illness and have been keeping John's great-aunt company. John also discussed his difficulties during

his time attending public schools and a charter school, where he felt that his needs as a student were being overlooked. John knew he needed to find an alternative for his education that worked for him, believing that he could succeed if provided the right opportunities.

On January 11, 2021, John completed his final HiSET exam and is now a high school graduate. John called his YDP immediately after his exam to share the news and proudly shared that in school he would have been “lost among the crowd but instead graduated two years ahead of his class.” John has also mentioned many times that he is grateful to the WIOA Youth Program for all of their support.

John’s positive attitude and perseverance have paid off for him and opened doors for employment opportunities. In November, he was placed for work experience with Art Carrasco at Creative Foods USA aka Creative Lending as an administrative assistant. John received excellent reviews on each of his biweekly timesheets. Recently, John was offered and accepted employment with the City of Albuquerque Parks & Recreation, and loves his new position.

6 LABOR MARKET SUMMARY

The Central Region and Albuquerque MSA, comprising Bernalillo, Sandoval, Torrance, and Valencia counties, surrounds the Sandia Mountains and includes the cities of Albuquerque and Rio Rancho. Most of the state’s major technological industries and businesses are located in this region, which is the state’s most populous but geographically smallest region. The income in the Albuquerque MSA represents 44.4% of the state’s income per the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, and 46.8% of the employees in the state per current QCEW data.

The demand for a qualified workforce in the Central Region and the alignment of WCCNM sector strategies and priority industries is reflected in labor market information and economic data. The top ten industry sectors in the region are represented in the corresponding table (Source: NMDWS, QCEW Q1 2021). The largest employers in the region are the University of New Mexico, Sandia National Laboratories, Optum Care, Presbyterian Hospital, and Intel.

Rank	Industry Sector	Number of Establishments	Number of Employees
1	Health Care and Social Assistance	4,942	70,567
2	Retail Trade (44-45)	2,376	40,416
3	Professional and Technical Services	3,557	33,633
4	Accommodation and Food Services	1,819	31,013
5	Construction	2,238	24,929
6	Administrative and Waste Services	1,380	24,250
7	Public Administration	355	23,893
8	Manufacturing (31-33)	858	15,762
9	Finance and Insurance	1,344	12,734
10	Transportation and Warehousing (48-49)	569	11,826

At the end of PY20, the unemployment rate in June for the Albuquerque MSA was 8.1 percent, a not seasonally adjusted unemployment rate slightly above the state’s rate of 7.9 percent. The Albuquerque MSA grew by 15,300 jobs in total nonfarm employment, representing an over the-year gain of 4.2 percent.

The following private sector industries added jobs: leisure and hospitality (up 5,800 jobs, or 17.6 percent); education and health services (up 4,900 jobs, or 8.1 percent); professional and business services (up 3,300 jobs, or 5.6 percent); mining and construction employment (up 3,100 jobs, or 13.0 percent); trade, transportation, and utilities (up 3,000 jobs, or 5.1 percent); manufacturing (up 600 jobs, or 3.8 percent); miscellaneous other services (up 300 jobs, or 2.8 percent); and information (up 100 jobs, or 2.1 percent). Financial activities was down 1,200 jobs, or 6.3 percent.

Within the public sector, local government was down 5,500 jobs, or 14.9 percent; federal government was down 100 jobs, or 0.7 percent; and state government was up 1,000 jobs, or 4.0 percent.

Source: NMDWS, Labor Market Review, Vol. 50 No. 6 Published July 23, 2021. Continuous Quality Improvement Activities

6.1 CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENTS SUBCOMMITTEE

In June 2021, the WCCNM Board established a new Board subcommittee focused on implementing continuous quality improvements. This committee, named the Continuous Improvements subcommittee, will identify areas of performance in greatest need of improvement and will develop and monitor continuous improvement plans to boost performance in these areas. Administrative Entity staff supporting this committee will work to develop a larger Continuous Improvement Plan for WCCNM as well as a process for creating, implementing, monitoring, and assessing the success of continuous improvement interventions. The committee will begin by focusing on performance for the WIOA Youth program, as this program was hit particularly hard by the COVID-19 pandemic, but will eventually expand to implementing plans for all WIOA Title I programs, as well as for Operations and the Administrative Entity (AE).

It is a success that the WCCNM Board subcommittee has officially been established to focus solely on continuous improvements. AE staff have also been assigned to work on continuous improvements and to formalize the process for Continuous Improvement planning, which will lay the groundwork for a robust and productive continuous improvement process going forward. AE staff will attend a training focused on Continuous Improvement planning in PY21, including templates and tools that can be specifically used in developing plans and processes, which will be of great value in getting this initiative off the ground.

While the WCCNM and the NMWC centers have implemented significant continuous improvements already, Workforce Partners had difficulty in embracing these methods and the process for capturing these plans or assessing their impacts. Staff will need to spend significant time developing and testing processes for continuous improvement planning. Staff will also need to retroactively write plans for continuous improvement processes that have already been implemented so that these interventions can be tracked and assessed going forward.

6.2 SURVEY OUTCOMES

The WCCNM conducted several customer and business surveys across multiple core WIOA programs for PY20 to capture service delivery feedback and opportunities for improvement for the upcoming year.

- For the Title I.B Adult & Dislocated Worker Program, 654 surveys were sent to participants, and 85 responses were received (13.0% response rate).
 - 81.2% of participants were satisfied or very satisfied with the program's services.
 - 78.6% of participants felt that the services met their needs very well or extremely well.
 - 82.1% of participants reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the professionalism and accessibility of staff.
 - 86.7% of participants responded that the program either met or exceeded their expectations during COVID-19.
- For the Title I.B Youth Program, 139 surveys were sent to participants, and 10 responses were received (7.2% response rate).
 - 100% of participants were satisfied or very satisfied with the program's services.

- 60% of participants felt that the services met their needs very well or extremely well, and 40% reported that the services met their needs somewhat well.
- 70% of participants reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the professionalism and accessibility of staff.
- 90% of participants responded that the program either met or exceeded their expectations during COVID-19.
- For Title III Career Services, 2,088 surveys were sent to participants, and 167 responses were received (8.0% response rate).
 - It is important to note that although messaging was included on the initial survey email, as part of the survey instructions, and as an alert on the survey itself that the survey was specific to career services provided by the New Mexico Workforce Connection, the majority of responses centered around the Unemployment Insurance Program, administered by the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions. With this considered, the survey results may not accurately reflect the customer service experience of the Career Services team during PY20.
 - 66.3% of participants felt that the services met their needs somewhat well, very well or extremely well.
 - 59.0% of participants reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the professionalism and accessibility of staff.
 - 62.7% of participants responded that the program either met or exceeded their expectations.
- Businesses completed 14 surveys in the Central Region in PY20. The WCCNM will be sending an additional survey to businesses regarding immediate and projected workforce needs in PY21 Q2.
 - 96% reported that employment events met their needs.
 - Nearly 60% of business responding to the survey requested information on additional services and programs available at the New Mexico Workforce Connection.
 - They reported that staff were knowledgeable, friendly, and helpful. Virtual recruitment events also received very positive feedback as an excellent service during the pandemic to reach out to prospective candidates.

6.3 CHANGES TO SYSTEM AND PROGRAM DELIVERY

The WCCNM uses the customer survey results on an ongoing basis to gauge the service delivery areas in each of the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers that need improvement. There are many changes that will be made to the flow of resource room activities and pre-screening efforts based on the feedback from customers and the frequency that they reported needing these services. The surveys are also instrumental in finalizing the content and flow of the new WCCNM and NMWC Central Region website. There will also be improvement to the survey process itself with the Youth Program survey in particular, and the WCCNM will send surveys via text rather than email to encourage a higher response rate.

Dislocated Worker (DW) Program Continuous Quality Improvements promotes efforts to identify and enroll participants that are not engaged in a career pathway consistent with acquiring meaningful employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency. These efforts include:

- Continued collaboration with RESEA;
- Develop additional targeted outreach efforts and products to feature benefits of the DW training program, especially for release on the WCCNM social media platforms;

- Promote short-term training and credential programs for in-demand occupations such as IT Bootcamps, Apprenticeships, Fast-track Associate Degree Programs, etc.;
- Provide needs related payments for DW clients that exhaust UI benefits to ensure successful completion of approved training.

7 PARTNERSHIP ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

The WCCNM continues to pursue innovative approaches that produce long-term improvements across workforce system and to provide cost-effective outcomes for job seekers and businesses while supporting the local economy. Partnership engagement strategies and system-wide approaches have been at the center of these efforts.

The WCCNM partner network in the Central Region continues to grow, and now includes: WIOA Title I.B Adult & Dislocated Worker (WCCNM Contracted Provider – MRCOG); WIOA Title I.B Youth Program (WCCNM Contracted Provider – YDI); WIOA Title III Career Services – Wagner-Peyser Services (NM Department of Workforce Solutions); WIOA Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation (NM Division of Vocational Rehabilitation); Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Program (NM Department of Workforce Solutions); Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments (RESEA) Program (NM Department of Workforce Solutions); Veteran Services Program (NM Department of Workforce Solutions); MET, Inc.-National Farmworker Jobs Program-Employment and Training Grant; New Mexico Works-Wage Subsidy & CareerLink Programs (NM Department of Workforce Solutions); UNM Valencia Accelerated College & Career Education (ACCE); WIOA Title II (Albuquerque Adult Learning Center); WIOA Title II (Catholic Charities); WIOA Title II (CNM Adult Basic Education Program); WIOA Title II (UNM Valencia- Adult Basic Education); WIOA Title II (Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute); CNM Carl D. Perkins Grant; Five Sandoval Pueblos Inc. - WIOA Program; SCSEP (Goodwill); SCSEP (NM Aging and Long-Term Services Department); SCSEP (NICOA); Help NM-Community Based Service Grant; New Mexico Works - TANF Program (NM Department of Workforce Solutions); Isleta Pueblo - WIOA Program; Job Corps; Unemployment Insurance Program (NM Department of Workforce Solutions); Santo Domingo Pueblo WIOA Program; National Indian Youth Council WIOA Program; Innovate+Educate; HopeWorks LLC; and Gordon Bernell Charter School

7.1 TECHHIRE NEW MEXICO

TechHire New Mexico, the four-year, four million-dollar USDOL Employment and Training grant awarded to WCCNM, was designed to provide innovative Information Technology (IT) job training and placement for residents in the Central Region and was in its final grant year, including a six-month extension in PY20.

TechHire New Mexico began serving participants and IT employers in December 2016 by providing paid IT occupational training opportunities for individuals ages 17-29 who experience barriers to training and employment. The grant also focused on identifying and mitigating IT-related staffing challenges by developing and enhancing a more effective IT talent pipeline for future growth.

Over the past four years, the TechHire New Mexico program experienced many successes. As of December 31, 2020, TechHire New Mexico enrolled 439 participants, of whom 432 received training. Close to 350 participants completed education and training activities, and 315 of these participants received a degree or credential. Nearly 330 unemployed or underemployed individuals gained new employment, 234 unemployed participants gained employment, and 93 incumbent workers advanced into a new position.

Of the 439 enrolled participants, 83% were Bernalillo County residents, 12% were Sandoval County residents, 5% were Valencia County residents, and < 1% were Tarrant County residents. All TechHire New Mexico participants received paid IT related training leading to a nationally recognized certificate or credential and benefited from the program's exceptional training partners: CNM, CNM Ingenuity (nationally recognized Tech/IT training bootcamps), UNM Continuing Education, UNM Valencia Campus, Cultivating Coders, Diverse IT, and many more.

Through the TechHire New Mexico program, the WCCNM and the New Mexico Workforce Connection developed an enhanced IT/tech sector strategy that brings together employers, economic development, the public workforce system, and the community college to meet the workforce needs and the business demand in the region.

A key component of the IT sector strategy has been the TechHire New Mexico Advisory Committee which is composed of accomplished education, business, and IT experts who offer innovative advice and dynamic perspectives on employer needs to guide the TechHire New Mexico program and provide guidance on IT curriculum development and training to support employer and participant needs. The TechHire New Mexico Advisory Committee met every quarter, and the committee wants to expand the scope in PY20/PY21. The IT/tech sector strategy will not only leverage the resources and program elements of TechHire New Mexico, but also will incorporate all paid training opportunities for IT/tech careers and job placement/recruitment strategies from the entire partner network within the New Mexico Workforce Connection in the Central Region.

7.2 PARTNERSHIP ENGAGEMENT AND SYSTEM-WIDE APPROACHES

7.2.1 Intake and Referrals

Many of the programs and services in the large Central Region partner network have their own set of reporting requirements and performance measures. Each program, including some core partners, often has a unique case management system, different data entry requirements, and intake paperwork. The lack of having a common intake, referral and data system across the workforce system creates an additional burden for both the customer and staff. The WCCNM began to explore a common intake process and system in PY20, and has several referral system pilots underway, including with the New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (NMDVR) that has 102 referrals that were submitted and tracked in PY20. The general referral and inquiry tracking system, built within the Central Region intranet, is available to all Central Region partners, both co-located and external, and has data detailing over 10,000 inquiries and referrals that have been received in the Central Region since the beginning of the pandemic.

7.2.2 Quarterly Gatherings

Quarterly Gatherings are very successful one-half day to full day sessions that include all partners listed in the previous (co-located, core, mandatory, and additional) across the Central Region to share information, celebrate achievements, recognize best practices, and allow for cross-training and networking. Two Quarterly Gatherings were held in PY19 before COVID-19, and each event had a tailored agenda depending on current training needs, new approaches, and upcoming initiatives/strategies. Training and guest speaker presentations included sessions on each of the WIOA core programs, additional programs such as TechHire and Grad! ABQ, core partner performance measures, Carl D. Perkins funding, sector strategies, EEO and ADA process, sector strategies, Unemployment Insurance meaningful assistance, and guidelines and best practices for serving individuals with disabilities. The events also provide an opportunity to meet with program directors and leaders to discuss infrastructure funding agreements and operating budgets. The Quarterly Gatherings are held offsite, often at partner organization locations and educational institutions such as CNM and have 80-100 attendees. The WCCNM

explored virtual options for the Quarterly Gatherings, and an event was successfully held in May 2021 for all co-located and external partners as well as WCCNM board members. The WCCNM and NMWC centers look forward to possible in-person events possibly in the last half of PY21.

7.2.3 System-wide Training Strategy

The WCCNM and New Mexico Workforce Connection Training Strategy continued in PY20 to bolster cross-training opportunities and to ensure more consistency in pre-screening and partner referrals. The strategy includes three levels: LEVEL 1 (Training covering all “core” WIOA programs and legally-required/mandated training, COVID-19 Preventative Measures training); LEVEL 2 (Training covering all “participating” partners programs and system training such as the NM Workforce Connection online system); and LEVEL 3 (Professional development, additional partner and program training). Trainings are provided at the Quarterly Gatherings, as requested, and online. The Operations Manager maintains a training database to record all completed training for all Central Region staff. WCCNM is also incorporating a nationally recognized career counselor/workforce development professional certification into the current training strategy to build the overall capacity of staff working in counseling roles across the four-county region.

7.2.4 Bi-Weekly Team Coordination Meetings

The WCCNM has had great success with Team Coordination Meetings held regularly and consistently with managers and supervisors of all Central Region programs and representation from the comprehensive and affiliate centers. The group comes together to discuss upcoming events and outreach opportunities, staffing challenges, customer flow issues, and infrastructure needs. The Team Coordination attendees also approve all operational policies and procedures.

7.2.5 Communication and Marketing Efforts

The WCCNM implemented several new approaches in PY20 to strengthen communication and marketing efforts with all partners in the Central Region. To communicate the system-wide activities on a routine basis, the “Monthly Report” is provided to WCCNM board members and includes the program status and performance of all partners. Also, the “Weekly Connection” is a regular e-newsletter for all partner staff to share information, new partnership opportunities, upcoming events, ideas and best practices, important dates, and much more.

As an effort to better coordinate outreach events and leverage these opportunities as much as possible for all of the programs, partners are required to check out an official “event kit” with the Operations Manager that includes marketing collateral for all partner programs in the Central Region. This has maximized the exposure of all of the New Mexico Workforce Connection services, increased brand consistency, and has encouraged partners to embrace cross-training opportunities so that they can represent all services at a high-level to various audiences.

The WCCNM is enhancing online communication via a new intranet that was launched in September 2019. The intranet provides all partners with easily accessible alerts, calendar of events and outreach activities, training modules, policies & procedures, contact information, IT work tickets, event kit requests, and room reservations. The WCCNM launched new website (www.wccnm.org) in order to tailor information for our various customer bases, better reach job seekers and businesses, improve our ranking in search engines, provide consistent and updated program information, announce events, integrate our social media, measure the interest in the programs across our network, and highlight our achievements and successes.



**State Workforce
Development Board:**

Making the Case for Transformation and Redesign of the New Mexico Workforce Development System

Executive Summary

New Mexico's workforce is unique in its diverse cultural and geographical needs, therefore this impact upon the workforce system requires a contextualized delivery of services that meets the sense of urgency to prepare job seekers in a dynamic economy. The workforce system has routinely struggled, even during times of economic prosperity, to support workers seeking stable employment, while also creating and sustaining a talent pipeline that encourages an engaged partnership with employers across the state.

"According to national FY19 performance data reported by the U.S. Department of Labor, NM ranked in the bottom one-third of states and territories for employment and earning outcomes for laid-off workers. Given this poor performance, NM is likely not getting the expected return on investment for programs. NM ranked below the national for the percent of individuals entering employment or obtaining a credential after exiting either the adult or youth training programs. NM ranked 45th out of the 55 states and territories for adult credential attainment and 46th for youth" (Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) Spotlight – August 2020).

The competition for business investments, jobs and economic prosperity is intense. Therefore, without innovation, New Mexico's available workforce will not be skilled and ready for the transformation of the economy that lies ahead. There remains a mismatch between the skills that workers possess and the skills employers need. New Mexico also needs to maximize alternative paths to securing careers that increase their earning power. The key to this effort is increasing credential attainment rates for those completing two- and four-year degrees and certificate programs, and offering stacked credentials to enable workers to learn new information and skills in manageable, incremental chunks.

In December 2019, the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) voted to create a subcommittee dedicated to initiating a process to evaluate the current structure based on reported and observable problems related to governance, fiscal and performance outcomes. After much discussion and collaboration, the following report summarizes their analysis of the system and includes a bold recommendation for consideration in the post-pandemic world.

After careful consideration and review, following the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) guidance, the SWDB recommends a conversion from four local areas to two, consisting of a Metro and a Rural area. The development of two workforce regions provides several benefits for a sparsely populated state like NM, namely, focus and attention to communities facing similar workforce needs and circumstances. Furthermore, coordination, development and implementation of workforce services and supports can be improved by organizing around common purposes and common industry partners and sectors, including the Governor's priority economic development sectors. Communication and collaboration across training providers, workforce partners, chambers of commerce and local governments can be aligned more effectively and efficiently, while keeping the needs of the target recipients and employers at the forefront.

This recommendation comports to the recommendation of the LFC Spotlight Report, Workforce Development Post-COVID 19 Pandemic. *"If New Mexico were to reduce the number of boards to an urban and a rural board, there could be administrative savings in addition to improved communication of urban versus rural needs."*

Once this recommendation is approved, the SWDB will engage in further planning and partnership with county chief elected officials, local workforce development boards, and key workforce partners to develop a comprehensive implementation plan that will be fully operational by July 1, 2022.

"The unprecedented demand for both target audiences of the system, employer and job seeker, undoubtedly requires a pivotal transformation in how New Mexico's workforce system operates."

Background Information:

Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) sec. 101(d)(6), the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) must assist the Governor in the “the review of statewide policies, programs and recommendations on action that must be taken by the State to align workforce development programs to support a comprehensive and streamlined workforce development system.” Additionally WIOA sec. 101 (d)(3)(f) directs the SWDB to assist the Governor in the “identification of regions, including planning regions for the purposes of WIOA sec 106(a), and the designation of local areas under WIOA sec 106, after consultation with local workforce development boards and chief elected officials.”

The requirements for identifying and assigning local regions include (20 CFR 679.210) consideration of the extent to which the local areas in a proposed region:

1. Share a single labor market;
2. Share a common economic development area; and
3. Possess the Federal and non-Federal resources, including appropriate education and training institutions, to administer activities under WIOA Subtitle B.

In addition, the required criteria includes other factors the Governor may also consider, such as:

1. Population centers;
2. Commuting patterns;
3. Land ownership
4. Industrial composition;
5. Labor force conditions;
6. Geographic boundaries and
7. Additional factors as determined by the U.S. Secretary of Labor.

The purpose of the local area is to serve as a jurisdiction for the administration of workforce development activities and execution of adult, dislocated worker, and youth funds allocated by USDOL to the State. Such areas may be aligned with a region identified in WIOA sec. 106(a) (1) or may be components of a planning region, each with its own local workforce development board (LWDB). Finally, local areas are the areas within which LWDBs oversee their functions, including strategic planning, operational alignment and service delivery design and jurisdiction where partners align resources.

Under the WIOA (20 CFR 679.250 (d) (1)), the Governor, “may review a local area designated at any time to evaluate whether the area continues to meet the requirements for subsequent designation”. For purposes of subsequent local area designation, **the local area must have performed successfully; sustained fiscal integrity; and must have met the regional planning requirements described in WIOA sec.106 (b) (3).** In December 2019, the State Workforce Development Board voted to create a subcommittee dedicated to initiating a process to evaluate the current structure based on reported and observable problems related to governance, fiscal and performance outcomes. The SWDB agreed to submit a recommendation for consideration that could dramatically improve the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the workforce system statewide.

Review and Analysis of Current System:

The current four (4) local workforce boards were required to resubmit their redesignation requests for approval in 2019 and were invited by the current SWDB to present their plans. Presentations from all four LWDBs took place October 2020, and although were approved for the purposes of continued funding, the SWDB announced they were continuing efforts to review and analyze the system. New Mexico currently has with four areas that were designated in 2001 under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and these four areas were simply “redesignated” under WIOA without engagement of the local chief elected officials. A comprehensive review was not conducted by the previous SWDB and the areas were simply approved in an effort to assure an appropriation from USDOL.

Beginning In 2018, The State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) engaged in a comprehensive review of the current status of the local workforce development board regions, within the state. The first activity began with a convening September 26, 2018 that included a facilitated meeting with all four local workforce development boards, their lead chief elected officials and members from the SWDB. The discussion included a review of current designations, economic development and industry located within each area, commuting patterns for workers, and availability of education institutions and services. The conversation included identification of strengths and challenges with the current designations and recommendations for potential changes to support improvements and efficiency. Following the election of Governor Lujan-Grisham, the current SWDB continued with this discussion. Activities to-date include a literature review of best/influential practices, one-on-one interviews with states that have transformed their workforce systems, thorough reviews of local area designation plans submitted by the local workforce development boards, consultation with the US Department of Labor – Education and Training Assistance team to assure compliance with federal processes and guidance, review of federal/state performance metrics and funding allocation rules and regulations, and an exploration of alternative structural scenarios for maximizing the impact of the system. The SWDB meetings have focused on current practices, including updates of performance outcomes, challenges and barriers faced by each workforce region following onsite reviews by both state and federal monitors. The SWDB members have also attended LWDB board meetings and technical assistance training sessions and conferences designed to promote awareness and understanding of workforce operations, namely Workforce Development Conferences, Sector Strategy Development, career and technical education planning/implementation, and state and local workforce development planning.

In FY19, NM’s four (4) local workforce boards received \$25 million in WIOA funds. NM’s allocation per capita was higher than for the majority of states in FY17. NM is likely still funded above average on a per capita basis, because the funding is based on a formula that includes the state unemployment rate, the rate of economic disadvantage and similar factors. “LFC has suggested, NMDWS work with the local boards to identify and eliminate potential duplication of administration. The federal WIOA legislation aims for state agencies receiving WIOA funds to collaborate.” (LFC Spotlight: Workforce Development Post COVID-19 Pandemic, Aug.2020)

Table I: Comparison of similar states for Program Year 2018

State	Funding in Millions	Total Participants Served
Kansas	\$13.203	4,338
Iowa	\$11.480	17,320
Oklahoma	\$24.384	8, 912
Oregon	\$28.154	185,906*
New Mexico	\$22.906	4,587

*Questionable results that may or may not only include WIOA participants

Table II - Current Workforce Regions and Funding Allotments by category and total amount:
New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions: PY 2019 / FY 2020

Northern Region - Cibola, Colfax, Los Alamos, McKinley, Mora, Rio Arriba, San Juan, San Miguel, Santa Fe, and Taos Counties (10 counties)

Central Region - Bernalillo, Sandoval, Torrance, and Valencia Counties (4 Counties)

Eastern Region - Chaves, Curry, De Baca, Eddy, Guadalupe, Harding, Lea, Lincoln, Otero, Quay, Roosevelt, and Union Counties (12 counties)

Southwestern Region - Catron, Dona Ana, Grant, Hidalgo, Luna, Sierra, and Socorro Counties (8 counties)

PY20/FY21	7,778,323.00
ADULT	
1,651,656.00	21% NORTHERN
3,016,938.00	39% CENTRAL
1,201,291.00	15% EASTERN
1,369,647.00	18% SOUTHWESTERN
538,791.00	7% Navajo Nation
7,778,323.00	100%

PY20/FY21	10,849,581.00
DISLOCATED WORKER	
2,455,813.00	23% NORTHERN
4,196,034.00	39% CENTRAL
1,559,286.00	14% EASTERN
2,100,895.00	19% SOUTHWESTERN
537,553.00	5% Navajo Nation
10,849,581.00	100%

PY20/FY21	8,033,885.00
YOUTH	
1,394,076.00	17% NORTHERN
2,623,518.00	33% CENTRAL
1,118,008.00	14% EASTERN
2,043,478.00	25% SOUTHWESTERN
854,805.00	11% Navajo Nation
8,033,885.00	100%

Total Local Board Allocations 24,730,640.00

Program Year P20	
5,501,545.00	22% NORTHERN
9,836,490.00	40% CENTRAL
3,878,585.00	16% EASTERN
5,514,020.00	22% SOUTHWESTERN
24,730,640.00	100%

Table III – Participants Served by Workforce Region

Total Participants		PY14	PY15	PY16	PY17	PY18	PY19
Central	Adult	2,112	3,354	730	722	969	1,026
	DW	198	486	242	184	235	277
	Youth	441	1,112	510	433	703	552
Eastern	Adult	345	674	178	306	494	476
	DW	52	72	19	25	84	73
	Youth	50	130	56	108	150	103
Northern	Adult	888	1,544	453	613	814	598
	DW	228	654	252	210	152	135
	Youth	114	182	97	80	154	238
Southwestern	Adult	616	1,140	305	341	451	489
	DW	84	130	45	54	94	146
	Youth	204	304	190	213	305	226
Total Annual		5,332	9,782	3,077	3,289	4,605	4,336

- Numbers dropped significantly after PY15 due to change in eligibility and reporting requirements
- All four boards served fewer numbers of youth, even though NM has one of the highest rates of out-of-school youth experiencing barriers to employment (drop out, homeless, juvenile justice). NMDWS is seeking a waiver to serve more “in-school” youth for PY22 to promote retention.
- Largest Metropolitan Serving Areas – Albuquerque (Central Board) and Las Cruces (Southwestern Board) show dramatically different outcomes. The Southwestern Board continues to lag significantly in number of individuals served, while the Central Board continues to carry the weight of the state in terms of meeting targeted outcomes for the populations served.
- All four boards underperformed in the Dislocated Worker category. This is notable given the high number of unemployed individuals in NM and the dramatic increase in job seekers post-COVID in this category.

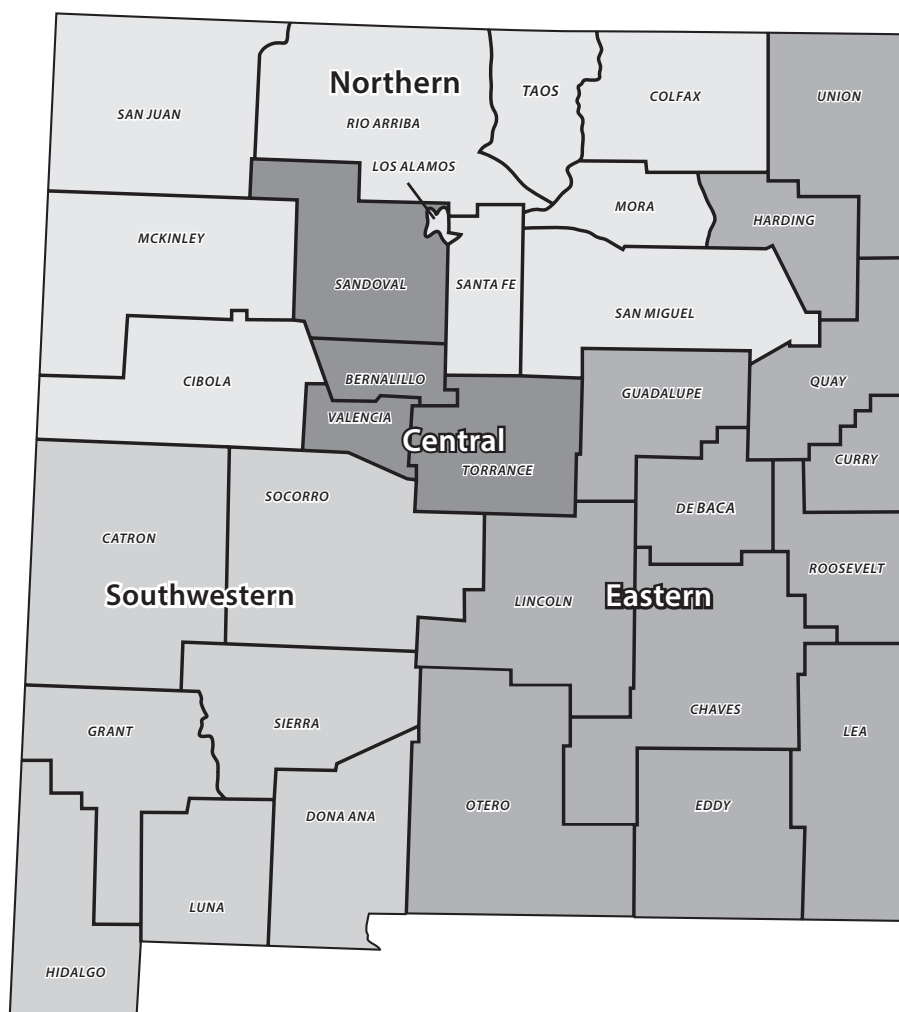


Table IV – Fiscal Performance (Highlighted areas indicate fund transfers)

	Admin	Youth	Adult	DW	DW to Adult	Total
PY20						
Central	\$983,650.00	\$2,361,166.00	\$2,715,244.00	\$3,776,430.00	\$0.00	\$9,836,490.00
Eastern	\$387,859.00	\$1,006,207.00	\$1,081,162.00	\$1,403,357.00	\$0.00	\$3,878,585.00
Northern	\$550,155.00	\$1,254,668.00	\$1,486,491.00	\$2,210,231.00	\$0.00	\$5,501,545.00
Southwest	\$551,401.00	\$1,839,130.00	\$1,232,683.00	\$1,890,806.00	\$0.00	\$5,514,020.00
Total	\$2,473,065.00	\$6,461,171.00	\$6,515,580.00	\$9,280,824.00		\$24,730,640.00
PY19						
Central	\$1,029,591.00	\$2,292,125.00	\$2,612,080.00	\$4,362,116.00	\$0.00	\$10,295,912.00
Eastern	\$402,205.00	\$940,073.00	\$1,034,097.00	\$1,645,679.00	\$0.00	\$4,022,054.00
Northern	\$554,810.00	\$1,312,825.00	\$1,482,255.00	\$1,692,203.00	\$506,000.00	\$5,548,093.00
Southwest	\$546,705.00	\$1,727,100.00	\$1,188,933.00	\$1,004,307.00	\$1,150,000.00	\$5,617,045.00
Total	\$2,533,311.00	\$6,272,123.00	\$6,317,365.00	\$8,704,305.00	\$1,656,000.00	\$25,483,104.00
PY18						
Central	\$967,858.00	\$2,354,415.00	\$2,645,649.00	\$1,725,633.00	\$1,985,022.00	\$9,678,577.00
Eastern	\$429,289.00	\$1,113,290.00	\$1,152,146.00	\$282,869.00	\$1,315,285.00	\$4,292,879.00
Northern	\$572,525.00	\$1,473,130.00	\$1,611,062.00	\$358,200.00	\$1,710,323.00	\$5,725,240.00
Southwest	\$552,294.00	\$1,873,957.00	\$1,343,344.00	\$655,440.00	\$1,097,915.00	\$5,522,950.00
Total	\$2,521,966.00	\$6,814,792.00	\$6,752,201.00	\$3,022,142.00	\$6,108,545.00	\$25,219,646.00

- All four boards transferred funds from Dislocated Worker to Adult category in PY18 and PY19. NMDWS increased level of justification for transfers beginning PY19 to encourage outreach and service to dislocated worker population following a Federal review and technical assistance from USDOL.
- The Central Board is the only board that has consistently met federal fiscal requirement of 80% obligation of program year funds, including current PY21.
- Eastern, Northern and Southwestern recently received requests from NMDWS – WIOA Team for a fiscal spend down plan for PY19 funds due to expire June 30, 2021. Total of \$5,247,616 in jeopardy of reversion.
- Northern Board reverted unspent youth funds PY17 in the amount of \$408,089.88
- Northern Board was placed under administrative oversight beginning July 1, 2019, primarily to provide direct governance and shore up fiscal operations following a federal review that identified disallowed and questioned costs.
- Southwestern Board began receiving intensive technical assistance and support from NMDWS - WIOA Team beginning PY18 through the present to address underspending, fiscal controls and budget management. The board has improved spending allocations following a change in providers, however, the region continues to lag in dislocated and youth allocations.

Table V – Negotiated Performance Outcomes

Central Region	PY 2018	PY 2019	PY 2020
Adult Employment Q2	Met	Met/Exceeded	Met/Exceeding
Adult Employment Q4	Met	Met/Exceeded	Met/Exceeding
Adult Credential	Met/Exceeded	Met/Exceeded	Met/Exceeding
Adult Skill Gain	N/A	N/A	Failing
DW Employment Q2	Met	Met/Exceeded	Met
DW Employment Q4	Met/Exceeded	Met/Exceeded	Met/Exceeding
DW Credential	Met/Exceeded	Met/Exceeded	Met/Exceeding
DW Skill Gain	N/A	N/A	Failing
Youth Employment Q2	Met	Met	Met/Exceeding
Youth Employment Q4	Met	Met/Exceeded	Met/Exceeding
Youth Credential	Failed	Failed	Met/Exceeding
Youth Skill Gain	N/A	N/A	Failing
Southwest Region	PY 2018	PY 2019	PY 2020
Adult Employment Q2	Met	Met/Exceeded	Met
Adult Employment Q4	Met	Met	Met/Exceeding
Adult Credential	Failed	Failed	Met/Exceeding
Adult Skill Gain	N/A	N/A	Failing
DW Employment Q2	Met/Exceeded	Met	Met/Exceeding
DW Employment Q4	Met/Exceeded	Met/Exceeded	Met
DW Credential	Failed	Failed	Met/Exceeding
DW Skill Gain	N/A	N/A	Failing
Youth Employment Q2	Met/Exceeded	Failed	Met/Exceeding
Youth Employment Q4	Failed	Failed	Failing
Youth Credential	Met	Failed	Failing
Youth Skill Gain	N/A	N/A	Failing
Northern Region	PY 2018	PY 2019	PY 2020
Adult Employment Q2	Failed	Met	Failing
Adult Employment Q4	Met	Met/Exceeded	Meeting
Adult Credential	Failed	Failed	Failing
Adult Skill Gain	N/A	N/A	Failing
DW Employment Q2	Met	Failed	Met/Exceeding
DW Employment Q4	Met/Exceeded	Met/Exceeded	Failing
DW Credential	Failed	Failed	Failing
DW Skill Gain	N/A	N/A	Failing
Youth Employment Q2	Failed	Met	Met/Exceeding
Youth Employment Q4	Met	Met/Exceeded	Failing
Youth Credential	Failed	Failed	Failing
Youth Skill Gain	N/A	N/A	Failing

Eastern Region	PY 2018	PY 2019	PY 2020
Adult Employment Q2	Met	Met	Met/Exceeding
Adult Employment Q4	Met/Exceeded	Met/Exceeded	Meeting
Adult Credential	Met	Met/Exceeded	Met/Exceeding
Adult Skill Gain	N/A	N/A	Failing
DW Employment Q2	Met/Exceeded	Met	Failing
DW Employment Q4	Met/Exceeded	Met	Met/Exceeding
DW Credential	Met/Exceeded	Met/Exceeded	Met/Exceeding
DW Skill Gain	N/A	N/A	Failing
Youth Employment Q2	Failed	Failed	Failing
Youth Employment Q4	Failed	Failed	Met
Youth Credential	Failed	Failed	Failing
Youth Skill Gain	N/A	N/A	Failing

Monitoring and Federal On-Site Reviews:

- October 2018 federal onsite review of the Northern LWDB found several governance, performance and fiscal integrity issues. Findings included questioned costs, failure to adequately engage with the CEO's, several fiscal compliance issues specifically a failure to have financial and administrative policies and procedures following WIOA rules and regulations. Following this federal review NMDWS placed the LWDB under administrative oversight and has continued to provide intensive technical assistance to-date. NMDWS currently reviews cash requests, participates in CEO and LWDB meetings to assure compliance and currently reviews and approves all policies and procedures to assure they comport with WIOA.
- February 2019 federal onsite review of the Southwestern LWDB found several programmatic concerns, namely low levels of performance, failure to implement career pathways within its local area, failure to provide in-demand occupational training for adults and dislocated workers, failure to follow up with youth participants resulting in a denial of additional services if needed, and a failure to have written financial/administrative policies and procedures required by Uniform Guidance.
- Monitoring and compliance reviews are conducted annually by an internal NMDWS. Reviews focus on Governance, Program Implementation/Performance and Fiscal integrity.
 - Governance concerns are present across all LWDBs including failure of meaningful engagement with CEOs. CEO input in the development of local plans, budget and certification of LWDB membership is missing.
 - Three of the four LWDBS failed to execute infrastructure funding agreements with partnering agencies and organizations in a timely manner.
 - Programmatic concerns across all four areas includes inadequate implementation of sector strategies and career pathway planning, inconsistencies with eligibility documentation (especially with youth), failure to meet negotiated performance and low enrollment for all categories.
 - Fiscal integrity concerns are primarily found in two areas, Southwestern and Northern, including failure to meet obligation/expenditure rates, inadequate or inconsistent budget planning, unreliable fiscal controls, and insufficient documentation of expenditures. The Central and Eastern LWDBs have more consistent practices, and when concerns arise, are quickly and adequately addressed in a manner that results in sustainable change.

Recommendation

Two Workforce Regional Areas - Urban and Rural

After careful consideration and review following WIOA guidance. The SWDB recommends conversion from four workforce regions to two workforce regions consisting of a Metro and a Rural Area.

- The development of two workforce regions provides several benefits for a sparsely populated state like NM, namely, focus and attention to communities facing similar workforce needs and circumstances.
- Reduction of administrative efforts can also lead to increased funds for job seekers and businesses who utilize the system.
- Increased competition for high-quality service providers prepared and able to meet the needs of each region, as evidenced by meeting or exceeding targets in their work with culturally and economically diverse populations and consistency of service across the state.
- Coordination, development, and implementation of workforce services and supports can be better organized to support regional economies and economic development efforts unique to each area, including the in-demand sectors defined in the Four Year Combined State Workforce Development Plan.
- Communication and collaboration across training providers, workforce partners, chambers of commerce, economic developers, and local governments can be aligned more effectively and efficiently based on the unique regional priorities and economic development plans.

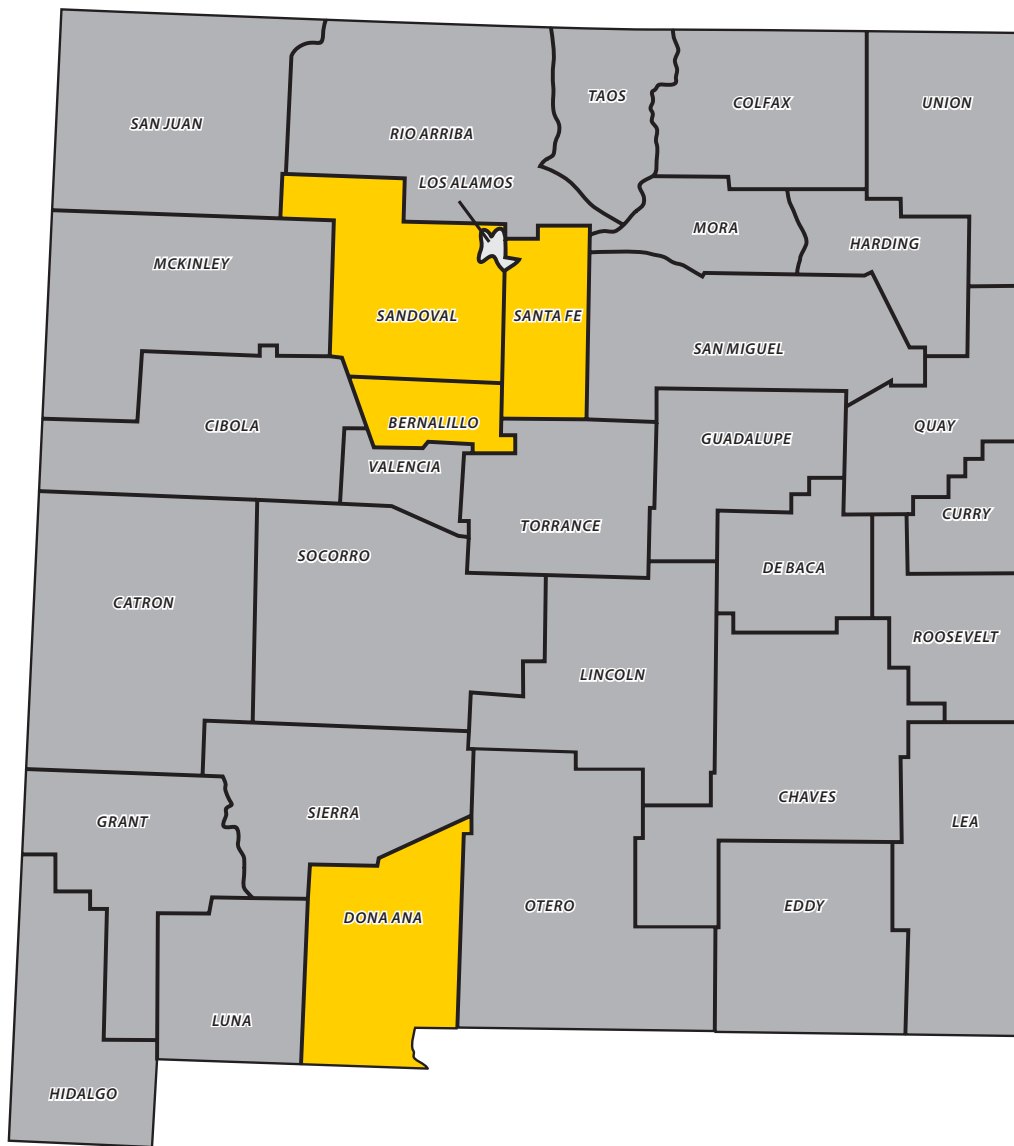
This recommendation comports to the recommendation of the LFC Spotlight Report, Workforce Development Post-COVID 19 Pandemic. "If New Mexico were to reduce the number of boards to an urban and a rural board, there could be administrative savings in addition to improved communication of urban versus rural needs."

The following table describes the proposed workforce regions, counties and potential funding using USDOL formula for distribution. (Funding allotment subject to change. Allotments are based on PY20 award to NMDWS. Award may be higher).

Metro Area = Four Counties = Bernalillo, Sandoval, Dona Ana, Santa Fe.

Rural Area = Balance of state, remaining 29 counties

ADULT			
4,172,764.00	53.646%	1-Metro Area	
3,106,156.00	39.933%	2-Rural Area	
499,402.00	6.420%	Navajo Nation	
7,778,322.00	100.000%		
DISLOCATED WORKER			
5,915,799.00	54.53%	1-Metro Area	
4,422,827.00	40.76%	2-Rural Area	
510,955.00	4.71%	Navajo Nation	
10,849,581.00	100.000%		
YOUTH			
3,722,228.00	46.33%	1-Metro Area	
3,543,002.00	44.10%	2-Rural Area	
768,655.00	9.57%	Navajo Nation	
8,033,885.00	100.00%		
Estimated Program Year Allotment Per Region			
13,810,791.00	55.50%	1-Metro Area	
11,071,985.00	44.50%	2-Rural Area	
24,882,776.00	100.00%		



Rationale:

- “According to national FY19 performance data reported by the U.S. Department of Labor, NM ranked in the bottom one-third of states and territories for employment and earning outcomes for laid-off workers. Given this poor performance, NM is likely not realizing the expected return on investment for programs.” (LFC Spotlight - August 2020)
- “NM ranked below the national for the percent of individuals entering employment or obtaining a credential after exiting either the adult or youth training programs. NM ranked 45th out of the 55 states and territories for adult credential attainment and 46th for youth.” (LFC Spotlight – August 2020)
- Like other states, NM primary source of workforce development funding is through USDOL – WIOA. Similar to most states, the bureaucratic and segmented style of the federal workforce act, is difficult to implement and is often characterized as having too many rules and restrictions and not being nimble or flexible. As a result, NMDWS WIOA staff and LWDB staff are hampered by numerous processes resulting in ongoing oversight burdens that slow progress. Reducing the number of onsite monitoring visits and subsequent technical assistance can create opportunities for quality and innovation of best and promising practices, centers of excellence for each workforce region and improved sector partnership development.
- The overall performance to-date within the four-region structure has demonstrated little to no growth in total number of job seekers served or successfully placed or businesses served.

Opportunities

- Proposed areas support regional COVID-19 restarts, sector-based workforce development strategies, and the opportunity to create a skill-based model to improve labor market alignment tailored to the unique, diverse needs of urban or rural settings. The proposed approach simplifies and encourages a focused approach to support communities with unique concerns and similarities. (Urban to Suburban) and (Rural to Frontier).
- Part of the complexity of WIOA is managing the employment and training programs across a region. Navigating the web of programs can create barriers for strategy and program development. The proposed two-region structure opens an opportunity for training providers/programs to create 'centers of workforce excellence' specifically designed to address the needs of urban and rural communities. Additionally, WIOA state set-aside investments can be better directed and aligned to address urban/rural communities and performance measures can follow success and/or challenges for each area. Set-aside funds are often earmarked for special projects and activities to demonstrate best and promising practices, initial investments in centers of excellence for each region would be a priority.
- Aligning and communicating the needs of the business community is often thwarted by competing and unique needs, depending on the size and complexity and geographical location of the employer. The proposed approach provides an opportunity to address these needs and ensures voice and concern of employers operating in rural and frontier areas. Likewise, urban employers, whether small or large, also face unique challenges and their needs can be pinpointed, as well.
- Funds for development of workforce training programs and subsequent support services are undoubtedly unique depending on location, and, again, design and implementation is influenced by location. Rural training programs tend to rely more on distance learning strategies, while urban programming is more face-to-face instruction. Support services for programs vary depending on location, and although both may struggle with transportation or childcare, the solutions are solved differently depending on the community's unique needs.
- Simplification of the statewide structure provides an opportunity for improved coordination and collaboration with chief elected officials and economic development entities, as they strategize and plan to attract businesses and solve talent development and acquisition needs based on location. Again, the needs of urban and rural areas are significantly different, and by aligning with the proposed two region approach, the opportunities to fully align activities even amongst connected urban/rural geographies can be improved and highly focused.

Challenges:

- Change could result in short-term disruption of service delivery for job seekers and businesses, as we convert from four to two local areas. However, the process will be structured to limit or eliminate that challenge.

Next Steps:

- Engage with County Commission Association to facilitate an orientation for county commissioners on the roles and responsibilities of Chief Elected Officials required by WIOA – Scheduled March 29 - April 1, 2021.
- Present work to-date from SWDB and consult with Chief Elected Officials on proposed two region structure. Obtain feedback and challenges and discuss strategy moving forward with LWDBs. Scheduled to be completed by May 2021.
- Consult with four LWDBs, obtain feedback and challenges and discuss strategy moving forward in partnership with Chief Elected Officials and SWDB. Complete by June 2021
- SWDB negotiates with Chief Elected Officials to finalize workforce region recommendations based on feedback and input and publish for public input. Complete by September 1, 2021
- SWDB and Chief Elected Officials work in partnership to develop a comprehensive timeline for transition to present to USDOL for review and approval. Complete by October 2021.
- Transformation process implemented and complete by July 2022.

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