

State of Rhode Island WIOA PY2020

Narrative Performance Report



PY2020 was defined by the state's response to, and recovery from, the Covid-19 pandemic. In July 2020, Rhode Island's unemployment rate was 10.2%, a rate not seen since the 2009 'Great Recession'. The immediate economic challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic were severe, widespread, and were particularly felt by populations already facing economic insecurity such as low-income communities, and those with a high school degree or less.

By June 2021, the state's unemployment rate was 5.9%, and the total of unemployed Rhode Islanders had dropped by over 40%; from 16,308 in July 2020 to 9,484 in June 2021. Rhode Island took an unprecedented 'all hands on deck' approach to mitigating the damage and speeding the recovery from the pandemic; bringing together state, federal, and private/nonprofit workforce programs in statewide effort to sustain Rhode Island families and employers during the toughest days of the pandemic, and helping them return to prosperity as quick as possible. This included partnering with vendors like Google, Research Improving People's Lives, and Maven Wave to create an innovative suite of digital tools to help provide the full range of career services and employment services to unemployed Rhode Islanders in a virtual setting. These tools integrate machine learning, virtual connectivity, and advanced analytics to near seamlessly match, and in some instances exceed, the level of service provided in our in-person American Job Centers. The Rhode Island approach quickly become recognized regionally and nationally as a model for innovative virtual service delivery. These virtual offerings have become a permanent part of our service delivery model

Rhode Island also launched *Back to Work RI*, a public-private partnership between the state and business community to reconnect thousands of talented Rhode Islanders to in-demand, resilient jobs. Industry leaders, training providers and community-based organizations immediately got to work recruiting and training Rhode Islanders who had lost their jobs due to COVID-19 and by June 2021 the program had helped returned thousands of Rhode Islanders to employment.

There is critical work ahead to ensure economic stability and security for Rhode Island's businesses and our community. And the state workforce development network is prepared to do its part. We look forward to our continued collaboration in responding to the challenges ahead.

- **Progress made in achieving the state's strategic vision and goals, as described in the state's Unified or Combined State Plan, for developing its workforce and meeting employer needs in order to support economic growth and economic self-sufficiency.**

Rhode Island's 2020 WIOA Plan outlines the following goals:

1. Implement a demand-driven, sector-based strategy to meet employer demand and establish a pipeline of skilled workers for future demand
2. Advance a career pathway strategy to provide employment, education, training and support services for individuals, particularly those with barriers to employment, that will

ensure an opportunity to develop their education and skills to prepare them for a job at various points in their life.

3. Align policy and leverage existing government structures and resources so that government is “networked” and coordinated to achieve efficiencies and effectiveness throughout the workforce system.
4. Use data to inform policy-making decisions, guide investments and evaluate performance to measure return on investments

Despite the challenges of COVID-19 (and in some instances, because of them) Rhode Island made measurable progress in achieving the state’s strategic vision and goals as described in our 2020 State Plan. PY 2020 saw the early stages of developing a statewide client referral system, which reflects a key plan priority for better interconnectivity and integration between WIOA and non-WIOA programs. The Plan also sought to elevate the quality and consistency of case management and career counseling services throughout the state through the establishment of a systemwide Community of Practice around matters such as work readiness and career counseling; COVID-19 saw the launch of the Governor’s Coaching Corps - a virtual seminar series that invited frontline workers from throughout the workforce development and social service network to learn and share best practices, set standards for quality of service, and develop a universal understanding of the various programs, practices, and processes throughout the state.

The state also made tangible progress in better integrating our industry sector partnerships into the Title I and other workforce programming. As described below, the state’s industry sector partners were critical allies during the response and recovery from the pandemic. During PY 2020, the workforce system successfully utilized a portion of Title I training dollars through these employer-led partnerships. The partners also helped facilitate virtual job fairs, recruitment events, and employer information sessions.

Another key priority of the Board as stated in the Plan is “to increase the awareness and availability of services beyond the One Stop location and within the community.” As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the workforce network was forced to expedite this priority and adapt direct client services to a socially distant virtual environment. Counseling and intake/enrollment for Title I programming was done over the phone and/or through videoconferencing; virtual job fairs and interviews became a regular feature, and advanced web tools were made available to clients in all four corners of the state.

Lastly, using lessons learned from the pandemic and the pronounced need for support services and assistance among pandemic impacted clients, the state made substantial progress the goal of reviewing “policies and definitions around the provision of support services within Title I to maximize the depth and breadth of these services.” The state ‘modernized’ its WIOA support services policy to increase its flexibility and responsiveness to client needs.

- **Progress made in implementing sector strategies and career pathways. The discussion may include: business engagement strategies, work-based learning (including apprenticeship), work experiences for youth and adults, transitional jobs, and incumbent worker training strategies and policies in the state**

Sector Strategies

Rhode Island continued to promote and position its industry sector partnership initiative, Real Jobs RI, as the key intermediary between the workforce development network and employers in the state's largest and growing industries. The industry sector partnerships proved critically important throughout the COVID19 pandemic response and recovery and kept lines of communication open with Rhode Island's key industries and employers. The network helped disseminate clear and unambiguous guidance to employers around evolving health and safety guidance and new or expanded programs for employers, employees, and the unemployed. The partnerships allowed the state to rapidly identify and deploy resources and personnel to employers and industries that were struggling. And, perhaps most importantly, the network allowed the state to quickly respond to, and take advantage of, unforeseen and unexpected economic and employment opportunities brought about by the pandemic, such as the repurposing of a large manufacturing facility to make N95 respirator masks resulting in the hiring of hundreds of Rhode Islanders, or the training and placing of hundreds of healthcare workers at congregate care facilities to address labor shortages brought about by the pandemic.

Career Pathways

In addition to the afore-mentioned expansion of virtual and distance career services, and the revisions to the state's support services policy to increase flexibility and responsiveness; Rhode Island made measurable progress in expanding work-based learning models such as apprenticeship. While the process did not complete until the first few weeks of PY2021; efforts to add the first apprenticeship programs to the state ETPL began in PY2020. The state is now preparing technical assistance, desk guidance, and additional documents to help career counselors understand and effectively utilize registered apprenticeship programs to meet employer talent needs and help job seekers find employment.

If the state has received a small state minimum allotment exception to decrease the minimum out-of-school youth expenditure requirement, describe how the exception has impacted services provided to both in-school youth and out-of-school youth, including specific strategies for serving each population, as well as how the state and/or local area is ensuring serving out-of-school youth remains a priority.

N/A.

- **The state’s performance accountability system, including:**
 - **Any specific state performance measures or goals and progress towards meeting them.**
 - **Any performance deficiencies on the primary indicators of performance, which may include descriptions of any factors impacting performance.**
 - **The state’s common exit policy, including which ETA-funded partner programs are included in the state’s common exit policy.**
 - **Negotiated performance levels for local areas for titles I and III core programs for program years 2016-2017.**
 - **The state’s approach to data validation and ensuring data integrity, including a description of the methodology of any validation activities that occurred.**

State Specific Measures

Rhode Island has not identified any state-specific performance measures; however, the PY2020-2023 State Plan commits the state to exploring and considering such measures. The Covid-19 pandemic interrupted much of this work, but the Board remains committed to the effort and hopes to restart the work during the 2021 program year.

Performance Deficiencies

The Table on page 6 displays the negotiated goal, actual state performance, and percent of goal attained as reported for Program Year 2020 to the Employment and Training Administration. State performance goals are negotiated with DOL-ETA. A state level percent of goal below 50% of negotiated target is considered a performance failure.

Rhode Island - Statewide	PY 20		
	Negotiated Perf Goal	Actual Perf	% of Goal
Employment (2nd Q after Exit)	Exiters 07/01/19-06/30/20		
Title III - Wagner-Peyser	73%	58.10%	79.59%
Adult	81%	74%	91.36%
DW	81%	83.10%	102.59%
Youth	68%	69.20%	101.76%
Employment (4th Q after Exit)	Exiters 01/01/19-12/31/19		
Title III - Wagner-Peyser	68%	63.60%	93.53%
Adult	79%	76.20%	96.46%
DW	81.70%	83%	101.59%
Youth	68%	69.80%	102.65%
Median Earnings (2nd Q after Exit)	Exiters 07/01/19-06/30/20		
Title III - Wagner-Peyser	6,200	7,280	117.42%
Adult	6,600	6,243	94.59%
DW	7,200	8,923	123.93%
Youth	2,980	3,504	117.58%
Credential Attainment Rate	Exiters 01/01/19-12/31/19		
Title III - Wagner-Peyser			
Adult	53%	77.50%	146.23%
DW	75%	79.60%	106.13%
Youth	53%	73.60%	138.87%
Measurable Skills Gains	Active 07/01/20-06/30/21		
Title III - Wagner-Peyser			
Adult	38%	62.70%	165.00%
DW	40%	54.10%	135.25%
Youth	40%	39.40%	98.50%

The Covid-19 pandemic and the associated economic challenges and disruptions had an outsized influence on the state's PY 2020 performance. 2nd and 4th Quarter Employment Rates for Title I Adult and Title III participants were lower than target as was Earnings for Title I Adults. We believe that these deficiencies are almost fully attributable to the pandemic: job seekers from both programs entered a compromised job market with a substantial reduction in available jobs; many Wagner-Peyser clients abruptly Exited services as the state went into the covid 'lock down'; and the availability of enhanced and/or expanded unemployment insurance compensation such as Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC), Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) and Extended Benefits (EB) influenced the decision of many participants whether or not to seek employment.

Rhode Island is confident that as the effects of the pandemic subsides, these Employment and Earnings performance deficiencies will mitigate.

RI Based Jobs - January 2020 through September 2021



Common Exit Policy

For the purposes of performance calculations in all WIOA core programs, except Vocational Rehabilitation, exit is the point after which an individual who has received services through any program meets specific criteria (§677.150(c)). This criterion is:

- i. 90 days of no services has elapsed, and
- ii. No future services are planned

For the purposes of this definition, a participant's use of self-service or the provision of information-only activities or follow-up services will not prevent a participant's exit. For the Vocational Rehabilitation program, an individual would be determined to have exited the program on the date the individual's case is closed in accordance with the Vocational Rehabilitation program requirements. Under Vocational Rehabilitation, those individuals who have achieved a supported employment outcome at a subminimum wage are excluded from the definition of "exit".

PY2020-2021 Negotiated Performance Levels

Performance Measures		PY 2020	PY 2021
WIOA Title I Adults			
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)		81.0%	82.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)		79.0%	80.0%
Median Earnings		\$6,600.00	\$6,800.00
Credential Attainment Rate		53.0%	58.0%
Measurable Skill Gains		38.0%	40.0%
WIOA Title I Dislocated Workers			
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)		81.0%	82.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)		81.7%	82.2%
Median Earnings		\$7,200.00	\$7,700.00
Credential Attainment Rate		75.0%	76.0%
Measurable Skill Gains		40.0%	42.0%
WIOA Title I Youth			
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)		68.0%	70.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)		68.0%	69.5%
Median Earnings		\$2,980.00	\$3,050.00
Credential Attainment Rate		53.0%	55.0%
Measurable Skill Gains		40.0%	42.0%
WIOA Title III Labor Exchange (LEX)*			
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)		73.0%	73.5%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)		68.0%	69.0%
Median Earnings		\$6,200.00	\$6,400.00

Data Validation

The Integrity and Compliance Unit conducts data element validation to ensure data elements in participant records used to calculate aggregate reports are accurate, valid and reliable. Data element validation involves reviews of a sample of participant records against source documentation for multiple programs to ensure compliance with federal definitions. Sample files are selected from reported participants and exiters and verified for accuracy. Inaccuracies are addressed by program management to ensure accurate reporting and improve performance accountability.

- **Activities provided with the funds reserved by the governor, which can be up to 15% of the state's allotment. In this section of the narrative, states may describe activities undertaken in whole or in part with their Governor's Reserve and how those activities have directly or indirectly impacted performance.**

During PY 2020, Governor's Reserves funds were predominately spent on required activities including the WIOA monitoring and compliance work of the Department of Labor and Training's Integrity and Compliance Unit, as well as finance and accounting staff. A portion of state workforce development board staff time was also charged to the Governor's Reserve for oversight and related activities.

- **Rapid response activities and layoff aversion, which may include:**
 - **Data on number of companies served and number of individuals served.**
 - **Discussion of strategies for linking Rapid Response recipients to American Job Centers and processes for intake or co-enrollment in the Trade Adjustment Assistance and the Dislocated Worker programs.**
 - **Discussion of layoff aversion strategies, including any metrics/outcomes developed and/or tracked by the state with respect to layoff aversion, such as return on investment or measures showing the economic benefits of Rapid Response and layoff aversion.**
 - **Discussion of how Rapid Response and layoff aversion activities are aligned with business engagement, sector strategy, and career pathway efforts, which may include a discussion of any systems, tools, networks or approaches designed to identify companies in distress and strategies to deliver necessary solutions as early as possible, as well as outcomes of the use of such systems or tools.**
 - **Discussion of specific types of services or workshops provided to both companies and affected workers.**

PY2020 Rapid Response and layoff aversion continues to be proactive and reactive activities for outreaching to employer and/or impacted workers to assess layoff needs. Layoff aversion activities are essential part to the State to assist employers with strategy planning to avoid permanent layoffs. Rhode Island continues to maintain collaborate partnerships with organizations to identify and prevent layoffs. These partners include Rhode Island Commerce Corporation, US Department of Commerce of Trade Adjustment Assistance for Firms the Governor's Workforce Bard, the Department of Labor and Training's Workshare program, and the Department of Labor and Training's Labor Market Information Division. . Rapid Response services include but not limited to, federal and state programs to transition impacted workers into other employment to avoid separation.

Rapid Response offers resources to employer an impacted worker including, filing for unemployment insurance, reemployment services, Trade Adjustment programs and supporting filing TAA petitions, WIOA training and Real Jobs Rhode Island training, Affordable Care Act Information (Healthsource RI), and Retirement and Health Care Coverage by US DOL Employee Benefits Security Administration.

When appropriate, additional services may be provided to employees, which may include:

- Group or Individual Registration
- Job Search Assistance
- Individual Assessments/Counseling
- Job Search Strategies and Techniques
- Resume Writing
- Interviewing
- TAA orientations
- Job Fairs/Company job matching
- Other services as necessary

Rhode Island strives to provide Rapid Response services as early as possible. In PY2020, Rapid Response assisted 74 employers and 3,385 workers.

In April 2021, Rhode Island launched a virtual platform to hosting 31 Virtual Job Fairs to varies industry. Prior to the launch of the new platform Rhode Island partner with the City of Central Falls and hosted a virtual job fair, streaming live to provide those job seekers an opportunity to learn about the employer who participated in the event. The industry that participated in these events are, Manufacturing, Hospitality, Food Services, Transportation, Professional Services, Education and Retail.

- **Activities provided under the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service section 7(b) (e.g., services to groups with special needs or extra costs of exemplary models for delivering services).**

N/A

- **Any National Dislocated Worker Grants (DWGs) awarded to or within the state and how those funds are coordinated with state rapid response activities and dislocated worker programs, as well as how the DWGs fit in with state co-enrollment policies and disaster/emergency management activities, as applicable.**

Rhode Island was awarded a COVID-19 Disaster Recovery National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG) in April 2020. While the grant was received in PY19, the bulk of the grant performance occurred in PY20. Rhode Island’s activities included primarily Disaster-Relief Employment placements. In PY21, grant funds also provided Career and Training Services for a separate cohort of individuals apart from those who were placed in Disaster-Relief Employment. The Period of Performance for Rhode Island’s COVID-19 grant is April 13, 2020 through March 31, 2022. BY June 30, 2021; the state had 187 Disaster-Relief Employment participants.

- **Any technical assistance needs of the state workforce system. 2 See WIOA section 128(a)(1).**

N/A.

- **Promising practices, lessons learned, and success stories that focus on serving employers, communities, and individuals with barriers to employment, including information based on the state's evaluation and related research projects. This discussion should cover a broad range of at-risk and priority populations served, including out-of-school youth, low-income adults, dislocated workers, individuals who are basic skills deficient, individuals with limited language proficiency, individuals with disabilities, veterans, the long-term unemployed, and any other individuals with barriers to employment, or other populations the state may wish to discuss.**

The COVID-19 pandemic presented Rhode Island with the dual challenge of helping those displaced by the pandemic return to the workforce while closing legacy opportunity gaps facing many communities in our state. The state responded aggressively, entering into partnerships with vendors like Google, Research Improving People’s Lives, and Amazon Web Services to create an innovative suite of digital programs to help provide a full range of career services and employments tools to unemployed Rhode Islanders in a virtual setting. Through these partnerships Rhode Island migrated nearly all career service functions available in the state to a virtual environment and created a suite of virtual tools and platforms to supplement those services which are now viewed as among the most cutting-edge nationally. The effort was not just limited to WIOA Title I and partners but included a community of practice as all public and nonprofit agencies offering employment services to job seekers were invited to join the virtual career center. These virtual tools were crafted with the job seeker user in mind and are designed to meet and, in some instances exceed, the in-person service experience. The Rhode Island approach quickly become recognized regionally and nationally as a model for innovative virtual service delivery. These virtual offerings have become a permanent part of our service delivery model.

- **Any challenges the state workforce system faces, which may include policy, implementation, or other relevant challenge.**
N/A.
- **Any strategies/policies relating to Pay-for-Performance contracting, which may include examples from local areas**
N/A.
- **Identify each waiver that the state has had in place for at least one program year and provide information regarding the state's progress toward achieving the goals and performance outcomes in ETA's letter of approval for the waiver (sec 189(i)(3)(C)(ii)) and outlined in the state's waiver request (when applicable). Discuss how activities carried out under each approved waiver have directly or indirectly affected state and local area performance outcomes. To the extent possible, provide quantitative information.**

Rhode Island had two waivers in place for at least one program year in PY2020: (1) a waiver of the requirements outlined at Sec. 107 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, allowing the state board to function as a local board for the Greater Rhode Island area; and (2) a waiver from the requirements outlined in the WIOA at Sections 116 and 122, and at 20 CFR 677.230 and 20 CFR 680.400 thru 680.530, which require the collection and reporting of performance related data on all students participating in training programs listed on the state's ETPL.

The primary goal and outcome related to the *waiver allowing the state board to function as a local board for the Greater Rhode Island area* was to comply with the governance provisions of WIOA. WIOA requires Chief Local Elected Officials to administer WIOA Title I funds and appoint Local Workforce Development Board members. In Rhode Island, as far back as the Jobs Training Partnership Act, the Governor had performed the functions of the Chief Local Elected Official for the Greater Rhode Island (GRI) LWDA. This means the Governor was appointing both the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) and the GRI LWDB.

Under WIOA, the Governor continued to serve as the Chief Elected Official for the GRI LWDB. During a compliance monitoring review conducted in February 2018, United States Department of Labor (USDOL) regional staff identified that the Governor acting in this capacity was inconsistent with WIOA requirements because the Governor was not a local elected official and, thus, cannot appoint the local board. Regional staff advised finding one or more local elected official(s) to assume the role of Chief Local Elected Official for the area or submit a waiver requesting that the SWDB act as, and carry out roles and responsibilities of, the GRI LWDB. After conferring with the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns (Which represents all 39 municipalities in Rhode Island, including the 37 that make up the Greater Rhode Island area), the state elected to submit a waiver to allow the state board to function as a local board for

Greater Rhode Island. This waiver was initially approved in September 2019 with a condition that the Board ensure continued local input and feedback into decisions impacting the Greater Rhode Island area. In response, the Board worked with the League of Cities and Towns to establish a Local Area Advisory Committee for the State Board. This Subcommittee met throughout PY2020 and helped ensure local area 'voice' and representation in key WIOA-related matters including policymaking, service data and demographic analysis, development of the GRI local WIOA plan and other functions. The ultimate responsibility for these functions remains with the board.

This waiver was subsequently reauthorized in September 2020, with the conditions that the State meet the following requirements:

- Establish a written agreement delineating the roles of and firewalls among the state board, board staff, fiscal agent, and service providers;
- Demonstrate administrative procedures and policies consistent with Uniform Guidance;
- Conduct regular and complete monitoring of local areas.

In response to condition one; on March 29, 2021, the state provided USDOL regional staff a copy of the document entitled "Firewalls and Internal Controls Re: State and Local Board Responsibilities." This document memorializes the internal controls that all staff must adhere to when fulfilling State and Local Workforce Board responsibilities in order that business will be conducted in a manner that will prevent actual, potential, or questionable conflicts of interest and will provide clear separation of duties.

In response to condition two; the Board's administrative and fiscal agent, the Department of Labor and Training, continues to conduct the responsibilities and functions of both boards consistent with Uniform Guidance.

In response to condition three, the state continues to conduct regular monitoring of local areas. Consistent with the terms of the waiver, the state revised its statewide monitoring policy (Page 174 in the state WIOA Policy Manual <https://gwb.ri.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/WIOA-Policy-Manual-June-2021.pdf?7ed86f>) to ensure that local monitoring decisions were free from any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest.

The primary goal and outcomes of the *waiver of the obligation of eligible training providers (ETPs) to collect performance data on all students in a training program* included: Increased consumer choice and opportunity for more diverse training programs, particularly those focused on high wage, high demand occupations; Increased competition among eligible training providers; and Enhanced ability of local workforce development boards to respond to the diverse needs of employers in their area.

Initial approval of this waiver was received in February 2019, with the condition that Rhode Island continue to take into account the outcomes of all students in an ETP program of study, with respect to their employment and earnings. Policy and procedures through which the state could receive and consider such information was finalized in May 2019. By June 2021, the state ETPL had 29 different providers and 89 programs. At that time, 10 providers had submitted aggregate all-student employment and earnings information for 32 programs, consistent with Board requirements and the terms of the waiver. This information is taken into consideration by the state as part of their renewal application.

During PY 2020 Rhode Island witnessed some important positive outcomes as a result of the waiver. Multiple training providers that previously indicated they would leave the Eligible Training Provider List if asked to meet the 'all student' reporting requirement, instead chose to remain. This includes several large providers that are one of few (and in some instances, the only) provider(s) of training for industries and occupations that are high wage and high demand in the state. Keeping these training institutions on the ETPL benefits WIOA clients and employers.

- **Identify the two approaches the state has chosen for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers performance indicator pilot. If the state is piloting a state-established measure of Effectiveness in Serving Employers, or has any other metrics to assess employer engagement, describe the measure or metric as well.**

WIOA sec. 116(b)(2)(A)(i)(VI) requires the US Departments of Labor and Education to establish a primary indicator of performance for effectiveness in serving employers. In December 2016, the Departments announced they will be piloting three approaches designed to gauge three critical workforce needs of the business community.

Approach 1 – Retention with the same employer

Approach 2 – Repeat Business Customers

Approach 3 – Employer Penetration Rate

Since this indicator is a new approach for measuring performance under WIOA's six core programs, the Departments have implemented a pilot program during which States must select two of the three approaches. The Departments will evaluate state experiences with the various approaches and plan to identify a standardized indicator that the Departments anticipate will be implemented no later than the beginning of Program Year 2019.

Rhode Island elected to adopt Approach 1 (Retention with the same employer) and Approach 3 (Employer Penetration Rate) at this time. The Board may revisit these measures in future and may adopt additional measures. These two approaches are measured as follows:

Approach 1 – Retention with the same employer: The number of participants with wage records who exit during the reporting period and were employed by the same employer during the second quarter after exit and the fourth quarter after exit DIVIDED by the number of participants with wage records who exit and were employed during the second quarter after exit.

Approach 3 – Employer Penetration Rate: The total number of establishments, as defined by the BLS QCEW program, that received a service or, if it is an ongoing activity, are continuing to receive a service or other assistance during the reporting period DIVIDED by the total number of establishments, as defined by BLS QCEW, located within the State during the final month or quarter of the reporting period.

The state’s PY 2020 Performance on these measures is included below. Rhode Island believes these are highly competitive rates and is eager to see how they compare to peer states nationally.

Pilot Effectiveness Measure	PY20 Rate
Retention with Same Employer in the 2nd and 4th Quarters After Exit Rate	67.90%
Employer Penetration Rate	7.60%
Repeat Business Customers Rate	36.90%

- Include brief descriptions of: (a) current or planned evaluation and related research projects, including methodologies used; (b) efforts to coordinate the development of such projects with WIOA core programs, other state agencies and local boards; (c) a list of completed evaluation and related reports and links to where they were made accessible to the public electronically; (d) State efforts to provide data, survey responses, and timely site visits for Federal evaluations; and (e) any continuous improvement strategies utilizing results from studies and evidence-based practices evaluated.**

Perhaps the most effective evaluation tool that the state will have available, upon its completion, is the RI Talent Dashboard. Leveraging Rhode Island’s longterm investment in a robust and comprehensive Longitudinal Data System, the Talent Dashboard will be Rhode Island’s public transparency portal for measuring statewide progress towards meeting the state’s goals in key areas of education and workforce development. Measures will not only include important indicators as graduation rates, math proficiency, post-secondary enrollment, completion rates and employment and wage outcomes for workforce training participants; but will go beyond these static figures to establish the true impact of the state’s investments. For example, using deidentified employment and outcome data, the dashboard will be able to determine the aggregate impact that workforce programming has on an individual’s economic status by querying employment and earnings several quarters before enrollment, and multiple

quarters after completion. This 'delta' or difference in economic circumstance helps to illustrate the real impact of workforce and education programming while putting different programs within the workforce network on the same 'footing' from an analysis perspective. Collectively assessing the long-term trajectory of Rhode Islanders as they move through the public system continuum, will assist policy makers and key stakeholders ensure Rhode Islanders have the skills they need to compete for good jobs now, and in the future.

The Dashboard will be built on the foundation of Rhode Island's already existing public data analysis and evaluation tool; the RI Data Hub. As the state's dedicated Longitudinal Data System, the Data Hub already securely integrates data from several of the WIOA core programs and has the ability to integrate others. Multiple WIOA core and non-core programs are integrated into the Hub, including:

DLT

- Adult
- Dislocated Worker
- Youth
- Wagner-Peyser
- Trade Adjustment Assistance

RIDE

- Adult Education and Family Literacy
- Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education

In PY2021, the state board intends to undertake a comprehensive analysis and review of WIOA service levels and participant demographics. Initial work on this analysis began in PY 2020 with a general overview of Title I participant demographics. The Board hopes to work with the DLT Data and Performance Unit on more in-depth analysis and breaking demographic totals down further by service received and outcome.

- **Describe the state's approach to customer satisfaction, which may include such information used for one-stop center certification, in accordance with 20 CFR 678.800. This description should include: 1) the state's methodologies; 2) the number of individuals/employers who were provided customer satisfaction outreach, the response rate, and efforts made to improve the response rate; 3) the results and whether the results are generalizable to the entire population of customers; and 4) a description of any continuous improvement processes for incorporating the customer satisfaction feedback.**

Each program under the WIOA network utilizes its own approach to querying and documenting customer satisfaction.

For Title I job seeker services; a number of different surveys were conducted during PY2020 covering a range of programs and activities including the Eligible Training Provider list, job fairs, and others. The results of these surveys indicate a generally high level of customer satisfaction with the state’s workforce development offerings.

In June 2021, a Manufacturing-Specific Virtual Job Fair Survey was held. Afterwards, job seeker attendees were sent a brief email with a link to a satisfaction survey. While a large majority of respondents stating that the sign-up and attendance process at least ‘Somewhat Easy,’ scores across the four event-specific question were mixed. Feedback from this event was critically important to inform the design and delivery of future virtual job fairs.

Survey Question:	How would you rate this job fair overall?	How would you rate the quality of employers who attended?	How would you rate the quality of jobs being offered?	How would you rate the organization/set up of the job fair?
Average Score:	2.8 / 5.0	3.0 / 5.0	3.1 / 5.0	2.6 / 5.0

Later in June 2021, a cross-industry Virtual Job Fair Survey, was held. Once again, job seeker attendees were sent a brief email with a link to a satisfaction survey. In addition to a large majority of respondents stating that the sign-up and attendance process was “Extremely Easy,” scores across the four event-specific question indicated that participants were very satisfied with the experience.

Survey Question:	How would you rate this job fair overall?	How would you rate the quality of employers who attended?	How would you rate the quality of jobs being offered?	How would you rate the organization/set up of the job fair?
Average Score:	4.3 / 5.0	4.30 / 5.0	3.7 / 5.0	4.2 / 5.0

Rhode Island plans on a more comprehensive approach to customer feedback and satisfaction in PY2021, including a strategic partnership with Brown University to evaluate the state's Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment services. A profile of that planned initiative is below:

Brown Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Survey

The Brown University Policy lab was contracted in 2020 to implement an independent evaluation of the efficacy of RI DLT RESEA interventions. The Policy Lab brings together experts from public and private sector as well as the community to use data driven research to inform policy and programming across the state of Rhode Island

The goal of this evaluation is to see if Rhode Island DLT's career services intervention leads to positive outcomes for those selected to participate in RESEA compared to those who are available for selection but not selected. This evaluation serves two purposes. The first is to see if the resources offered by DLT are comparatively better than the baseline (no services). The second is to refine which members of the population selected for the RESEA program most benefit from the current intervention.

In addition to a larger data driven analyses, the Policy Lab created a customer satisfaction survey to assess the qualitative measures of RIDLT career services. The survey is formulated not only to address the questions of efficacy of the individual intervention with a DLT career counselor, but also to examine overarching level of trust of government services within the State, as well as to gather information on any barriers that participants may face in their career journey. In addition to RESEA participants, this survey will be given to all clients who meet with a career counselor in order to help RIDLT assess efficacy of services and to address individualized client needs.

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