



# VIRGINIA CAREER WORKS

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WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT (WIOA) PROGRAM YEAR 2020

## ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 1, 2020 TO JUNE 30, 2021

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## I. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This year's WIOA Annual Report is dedicated to the workforce development professionals across the Commonwealth and acknowledges their extraordinary efforts in providing ongoing services in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## II. INTRODUCTION NARRATIVE

Virginia is pleased to submit the Program Year 2020 WIOA Annual Statewide Performance Report Narrative for WIOA Titles I and III. For Program Year 2020 (PY20), Virginia's WIOA Title I and Title III programs (Workforce Partners) were able to pivot quickly during the COVID-19 Pandemic and provide quality programming and services to meet our customer needs by holding virtual career fairs, providing grant awards to businesses to support their efforts to hire employees or prevent layoffs, and expanding use of technology for workforce service delivery. Furthermore, Virginia continued to focus on the implementation of the WIOA Combined State Plan through strengthening workforce partnerships and cross-agency collaboration

In PY20, WIOA Title I programs effectively served 5,405 Virginians through Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs. Virginia's Rapid Response team provided services to a total of 128 WARN notices that impacted over 11,153 workers. WIOA Title III programs served 399,240 individuals who utilized self-service employment assistance, and 33,234 participants who received staff assisted services through Wagner-Peyser. In addition, 10,843 businesses were served by both WIOA Title I and Title III programs and 14,760 businesses were served by all four WIOA Titles.

**The following are highlights of Virginia's WIOA Workforce activities in PY20:**

### Virtual Service Delivery and Technology

Providing and enhancing virtual service delivery was a key focus area for Virginia in PY2020. Virginia was able to meet customer needs by providing virtual services to customers during the pandemic in a timely manner.

Virginia was the first state to utilize the Veteran owned virtual platform: Premier Virtual (July 2020) for a Statewide hiring Event garnering over 125 employers, 5,946 positions and 5,350 registered and participating job seekers. Over the past eighteen months, the Virginia Employment Commission (WIOA Title III) has partnered with the LWDBs (WIOA Title I) and other key stakeholders to conduct over 12 Statewide and regional hiring events throughout the Commonwealth, resulting in over 50,000 job position postings, 25,000 resume submissions and over 5,000 chats or job seeker/employer direct interactions.

American Job Center (AJC) frontline staff and workforce partners demonstrated their commitment to their work by serving our customers through flexible work schedules and ability to transition to virtual services during uncertain times. AJC staff learned to use new technology tools such as the Referral Portal, DocuSign, and other applications accommodating virtual work.

From a technology perspective, Virginia continued the implementation of the Workforce Portal and enhancements to the related Data Trust, including integration of other workforce development technology systems. Virginia continued work on modernizing the Unemployment Insurance Benefits System.

## Collaboration/Partnerships

Virginia worked to expand workforce partnerships and increase collaboration in utilizing enhanced technology and virtual service delivery,. Virginia provided cross-agency professional development training on Accessibility, Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), Trauma Informed Care and the Sector Strategies and Career Pathways Academy. The Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) created a Covid-19 Relief Program Resource Guide that was utilized by all workforce partners.

Another example of collaboration and partnership occurred when the VEC (WIOA Title III) subcontracted their Wagner-Peyser services to the Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs). This partnership enabled the VEC to focus on serving Unemployment and PUA (Pandemic Unemployment Insurance) claimants. Virginia also demonstrated partnership and collaboration through continued support from workforce partner programs (representatives from WIOA Titles I, II, III, IV and the Department of Social Services) to provide staff to directly support the work of the Virginia Board of Workforce Development (VBWD). Through a collaborative effort, these key workforce partners developed statewide policies and provided leadership and support for developing and implementing the VBWD strategic plan. Collaboration among partners during PY2020 and Covid-19 helped position Virginia to better meet the needs of businesses and participants.

## Special Initiatives

The Governor's office was proactive in implementing initiatives to help meet customer's needs during the pandemic. For example, the Governor's COVID-19 Lay-off Aversion Business Support Rapid Response Initiative provided LWDBs grants to help businesses retain staff through support for personal protective equipment (PPE), additional cleaning/sanitation, and other needs that enabled businesses to remain open. The Re-Employing Virginians (REV) educational initiative, supported by CARE Act funds, provided training vouchers for Virginia residents who were unemployed and underemployed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Return to Earn Grant provided support to small businesses to encourage unemployed Virginians to return to work. Virginia also received the DOL Covid-19 Disaster Recovery National Dislocated Worker Grant to provide dislocated workers training and disaster relief employment in positions such as community health workers and temperature takers. Additionally, Virginia conducted a comprehensive workforce system evaluation. This evaluation examined the American Job Centers provision of workforce services, conducted interview/focus group discussions, and provided recommendations to the Governor's Office and the VBWD to enhance Virginia's workforce system.

Overall, Virginia's WIOA Titles I and III programs had a successful PY20 in terms of meeting WIOA performance measures, designing and implementing new programs, utilizing virtual service delivery, implementing new technology applications, and engaging partners in a collaborative effort.

## III. APPROVED WAIVERS

*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 ET A'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.*

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In accordance with the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor and the guidance from TEG-18, the Commonwealth of Virginia received one waiver for Program Year 2020.

The Commonwealth of Virginia requested and was approved for a waiver of the obligation of eligible training providers (ETPs) to collect and report on the performance data on all students in a training program at WIOA Sections 116(d)(4)(A) and (B), and 122(d)(2)(A), and 20 CFR 677.230(a)(4) and (5), and 20 CFR 680.430(b)(5). The United States Department of Labor (USDOL) under the Secretary of Labor’s waiver authority approved the waiver request through Program Year (PY) 2020 (July 1, 2020, to June 30, 2021).

In accordance with achieving the goals and outcomes in ETA’s letter of approval for the Eligible Training Provider (ETP) Performance for Non-WIOA Students waiver (sec 189(i)(3)(C)(ii)), and as outlined in the state’s waiver request, the Commonwealth continued to develop processes and procedures for collecting performance outcomes for all students in a WIOA-eligible program of study. These outcomes include employment and earnings, as required for the demonstration of continued eligibility in 20 CFR 680.460(f)(l)(iii) and WIOA Section 122. To accomplish this, a data collection tool was developed to assist eligible providers in tracking enrollment, program completion, credential attainment, employment, and wages for all students in WIOA-eligible programs. Based on student data tracked by providers, this tool produces aggregate data that will be submitted to the state and included in the required ETP reports. During PY2020, training and guidance was developed on the use of this tool, and eligible providers were instructed to begin tracking student data as of July 1, 2021. As such, the Commonwealth will be prepared to comply with the requirement to report performance data on all students in WIOA-eligible training programs, starting in PY2021. The team continues to review challenges and opportunities associated with collecting Social Security Numbers for non-WIOA participants from eligible providers, with the goal of using a wage match to determine employment and earnings outcomes, whenever possible.

The Commonwealth reported data for all WIOA-funded participants during PY2020 in accordance with all statutory and regulatory requirements, including WIOA Sections 116 and 122, and as specified at 20 CFR 677.230 and 680.460.

Activities carried out under the ETP Performance for Non-WIOA Students waiver have affected state and local area performance outcomes by allowing the capacity of the ETP list to remain at a consistent level. Reducing ETPs’ reporting requirements to include only WIOA-funded participants saved considerable time and expense by allowing ETPs to focus more time and resources on successful education and training outcomes for all students while still providing the required data on WIOA-funded participants. As the Commonwealth transitions to reporting on all students in WIOA-eligible programs, any impact to the ETP list will be closely monitored and assessed.

#### **IV. EFFECTIVENESS IN SERVING 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/metric as well.*

The Commonwealth of Virginia selected the Effectiveness in Serving Employers pilot measures of Retention with the Same Employer and Employer Penetration Rate. The total result of the joint efforts of the WIOA funded programs yielded the following results:

- Retention with the Same Employer: 59.1%
- Employer Penetration Rate 5.2%

The Commonwealth of Virginia saw a rebound in business services in the year following the initial COVID-19 outbreak. Although current levels of service have not yet reached the level of service provided in PY18, the increase in business services provision is largely seen as a step in the right direction following the initial COVID outbreak.

The data collection on employer services, which included activities supported by WIOA funded programs and other non-WIOA funded workforce programs, provided the following results:

- 18,197 unduplicated businesses were served.
  - This number represents approximately 8.4% of the total employers in the Commonwealth.
- Workforce Recruitment Services were the most common type of service delivered.
- The top three types of businesses served by North American Industry Classification Systems (NAICS) were:
  - 31-33: Manufacturing
  - 62: Healthcare and Social Assistance
  - 44-45: Retail Trade
- 80% of the businesses served employed less than 250 individuals by establishment.

## V. STATE EVALUATION ACTIVITIES AND RESEARCH PROJECTS

*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.*

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### 2021 Workforce System Evaluation

In February 2021, Virginia began an evaluation of its workforce development system. This evaluation includes a scope focusing on an analysis of state oversight, LWDBs, and the customer experience. Input from state workforce leadership, representatives from peer states, LWDA executive directors, LWDB chairs, Chief Local Elected Officials, regional economic development representatives, American Job Center operators, and other workforce experts served as the foundation for the assessment and resulting recommendations.

One part of the assessment was a review of workforce development programs in peer states, including Alabama, California, Colorado, Indiana, North Carolina, and Washington. The six peer states selected reflect differing workforce system structures and strategies, approaches to respond to the pandemic, programs to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion, and preparations for the future of work. LWDB assessments included evaluations of local governance and service delivery models at comprehensive AJCs. Given the pandemic and its impact on regional operations, the customer experience analysis focused on customer demographics and engagement metrics. The evaluation will be completed in the fourth quarter of 2021.

Lastly, the Portal is structured to drive new traffic into the America Job Centers and reflect credibility by way of its quality design. Its design incentivizes clients to disclose information pertinent to accurate referrals by providing the rationale and benefit for each information request that will be specific to their directed need. As such, the Portal has increased communication and efficiency, while reduced duplication and waste, and enhanced meaningful customer outcomes.

## VI. VIRGINIA'S APPROACH TO CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

*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.*

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### Virginia's Customer Satisfaction Approach for PY20

Virginia's Customer Satisfaction Approach for PY20 was primarily based upon a multi-pronged method of surveying the jobseeker and business customers. As verified through the One-Stop Certification Process every three years, and through the statewide WIOA Title I monitoring team's annual review activities, the Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs) work with their American Job Center partners to implement a customer survey process for each American Job Center. The One-Stop Certification Process and the monitoring process are used to assure that each center has been determined to meet uniform certification standards. Additionally, several of Virginia's agencies providing workforce services conduct agency specific customer surveys to validate the quality and appropriateness of their specialized workforce services. The Virginia Employment Commission (VEC), the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), and the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI) each provide the opportunity for agency specific customer feedback during their service provision processes. These agency specific customer surveys allow for an in-depth analysis of the specialized services provided. The Adult Education program is a decentralized, grant-funded network of providers, each of which has mechanisms to solicit and collect customer (student) feedback and suggestions that are acted upon by the grant administrative team. Additionally, in accordance with the *Virginia Combined State Plan 2020-2023*: "Effectiveness in Serving Employers" is still being piloted and this data will not be entered for 2020 State Plans (p.206).

Virginia's primary approach to evaluating customer satisfaction for the network of American Job Centers relies on the Local Workforce Development Boards to develop and implement customer satisfaction surveys. The fifteen individual local workforce development boards each have a customer satisfaction survey for their job seeker customers and for their business customers. In each of the areas, a customer satisfaction survey is made available to the job seeking customers through various means, such as available in the resource room in paper and electronic versions, offered to customers at the end of workshops/meetings/events in either an electronic or printed format, and some are made available on the Local Workforce Development Area website as well. The business customers are also offered an opportunity to provide customer service feedback at the LWDA level after each event/provision of service. Virginia also relies on the agencies providing specialized workforce services to develop and implement agency specific customer satisfaction surveys.

For Title III services, provided by the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC), customer satisfaction is a critical component of the services Virginia provides to Wagner-Peyser, Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA), Trade Act, Workforce Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC), and Jobs



for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) customers. The Virginia Workforce Connection, an electronic service provision and tracking tool and the state system of record for Title I and Title III, offers customers the opportunity to complete a satisfaction survey once they have received WIOA Title III services. Both employers and job seekers can respond to the survey.

The Title IV general vocational rehabilitation (VR) agency, the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), works in partnership with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) to assess the perspectives of Title IV VR consumers who have not yet entered employment. **Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2020 was the seventh year of assessing DARS satisfaction for consumers in service delivery** (post Individualized Plan for Employment but prior to Employment). This innovative approach permits real-time assessment of services, allowing issues to be addressed prior to consumers exiting the program. Each month, a stratified sample based on office proportion is used to ensure that the sample matches as closely as possible the population proportions for DARS' offices as of survey selection. DARS also offers consumers the option of completing either a paper or online survey.

The Title IV VR agency that serves individuals who are blind, vision impaired, or deafblind, the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI), partners with its State Rehabilitation Council for DBVI (SRC) in reviewing the effectiveness of, and individual satisfaction with the VR services provided. All eligible individuals, who receive services, are provided the opportunity to participate in VR program evaluation through a customer satisfaction survey. The survey is provided with several ways for individuals to respond, in paper form by mail, online, or by telephone. The survey provides a systematic method of hearing the point of view of individuals being served. It is one measure of program effectiveness and a quality-of-service indicator. In the survey, participants can provide their level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with received services, VR staff, and various aspects of the VR process. DBVI administers and distributes monthly surveys to assess consumer satisfaction with VR services. All survey recipients are provided with an explanation regarding (a) the purpose of the study; (b) voluntary participation; (c) the due date for completion of the survey; (d) confidentiality of personal information and responses; and (e) alternative options to complete the survey if additional help is required.

Due to the combined nature of the approach to evaluating customer service, tracking the customer service feedback process and outcomes for the American Job Centers is done at the local level; while agency specific customer feedback for the specialized services provided by the VEC, DARS, and the DBVI is done through the state agencies. Each workforce customer is offered avenues for providing feedback that reflect their unique experience within the workforce system. Evidence from the One-Stop Certification Process and statewide monitoring indicates that all job seeker and business customers are provided an opportunity to participate in a American Job Center customer service feedback survey. PY20 response rates were lower than in PY19 for both jobseekers and businesses, which may reflect the challenges of providing services in a more remotely based environment. Several of the local areas have updated customer satisfaction surveys to include more accessible electronic versions, as the LWDAs have moved to a more technology-based service delivery system. For the VEC, in PY20, a total of 15,533 surveys were submitted via the Virginia Workforce Connection (VaWC).

In the VR area, 2,788 consumers were selected to participate in the Fiscal Year 2020 DARS survey. Per recommendation of the Virginia State Rehabilitation Council, VR consumers participating in the survey are offered the opportunity to waive their rights to confidentiality so that their responses can be shared with DARS staff. Thus, survey responses and comments for clients who desire to share their responses are provided in a summary document throughout the survey period. An annual document with survey highlights is developed after the end of each survey period. This document includes overall percentages for questions related to counselor relationship and consumers offices. Additionally, summary percentages for categories related to the following areas are included: the best thing that has happened to help them move towards their job goal and areas that would help them move closer to their job goal.

For the DBVI, during the Fiscal Year 2021 cycle of the evaluation program several changes have been implemented in order to improve response rate and enhance the feedback received. With the addition of human resources, DBVI also adjusted outreach of eligible individuals who may participate in the evaluation, including the re-introduction of providing the option to complete the survey by mail, and increased follow up activities by phone and email.

The addition of resources was implemented in March 2021. The updates implemented to the evaluation program show indications of improvement in response rate. In FY21 139 individuals were provided the opportunity to participate in the DBVI VR consumer satisfaction survey. The current response rate is approximately 30%, up from 10% in FFY20. DBVI anticipates the response rate will continue to rise and subsequently, enhance the valuable feedback received. The overall satisfaction rate remains high, with 75% of participants responding as very satisfied or satisfied with VR services received from DBVI.

Currently the Virginia Career Works center customer service feedback results are only generalizable to the individual populations for each of the individual Local Workforce Development Areas, while the VEC, DARS, and DBVI customer feedback was specific to the customers receiving their unique program services respectively. For the most part, VEC specific customers who reported poor experiences cited system problems with Unemployment Insurance transactions, while the DARS and DBVI specific responses cannot be overly generalized due to the unique nature of the combination of services provided to each customer.

Each Local Workforce Development Board has a process for collecting, analyzing, and incorporating the customer satisfaction survey results into their daily operations. The survey results are collected and analyzed by program managers or One-Stop operators. The results are shared with the partner team members, and any resulting actions needed to improve operations are implemented through the appropriate partnership of American Job Center staff.

For the Title III specific surveys, the VEC Unemployment Insurance transaction difficulties were exacerbated during PY2020 by COVID-19, which in turn, created numerous UI programs that the VEC had to administer; during this time, the VEC also cross-trained Title I partner on Title III (Wagner Peyser) duties during COVID to temporarily assist with job matching for both job seeker and employer. This was accomplished by way of an MOU that continued until July 1, 2021 when the VEC then reassumed administration of Title III services. For the Title IV agencies, DARS survey responses and comments for DARS clients who desire to share their responses are provided in a summary document throughout the survey period. The summary documents are then shared with the DARS Division of Rehabilitative Services (DRS) Director and District Directors to allow for continuous improvement for incorporating the consumers satisfaction feedback. For DBVI, a summary of the evaluation is provided to agency VR leadership and to the SRC in the fall for inclusion in the SRC annual report. Survey results are reviewed monthly within the DBVI Policy and Evaluation team and the VR team, regarding data quality, and continuous program improvement opportunities. Topics for VR staff training are considered based on findings from the surveys. The SRC also reviews survey results quarterly. Revisions are made to the evaluation process as new areas of interest are identified. Data review and analysis continues to take place during the annual cycle to provide quarterly updates to the SRC and as needed.

These combined mechanisms ensure that continuous improvement is an integral part of the customer satisfaction feedback processes for both the Virginia Career Works centers jobseeker and business customers, and for the specialized agency specific workforce services being provided by the VEC, DARS, and DBVI as a part of the workforce system in Virginia.

## VII. DATA VALIDATION

Virginia has established processes for data validation that meet all federal guidelines issued by USDOL, which help to ensure the accuracy of the annual statewide performance reports, safeguards data integrity, and promote the timely resolution of data anomalies and inaccuracies as required by 2 CFR 200.328.

Quarterly performance reviews are completed to monitor for data errors, missing data, out-of-range values, and anomalies. These reviews assure compliance with applicable Federal requirements, and programmatic performance expectations are achieved. Annual data element validations are conducted to ensure the completeness of data and to identify and correct specific issues within the reporting process. The effectiveness of the data validation process will be assessed annually, and revisions will be made as needed. Staff will be trained regularly on data validation processes.

### Quarterly

The Participant Record Individual Layout (PIRL) report is run every quarter for local areas (WIOA Title I programs) and American Job Centers (WIOA Title III programs). The information from the extracted file is checked against our state system to ensure the information contained in all federal extract files are accurate. Data is reviewed for errors, inconsistencies, missing data out of range values and any anomalies. Virginia Career Works Centers (VCWC) are contacted to make corrections. The reviews are done prior to their submission in the federal reporting system WIPS. This proactive approach is conducted on a quarterly basis to ensure the local areas are aware of any issues and can receive technical assistance all year round. Local areas and VCWCs are required to address all findings or concerns that are identified in a timely matter.

### Annual

The annual report is run at the end of the program year, and the sample for data element validation is generated. For WIOA Title I programs, the sample is roughly 15% of the total program exiters (or a minimum of 650 participants) for the program year identified for review. For each sample file, the relevant required data elements listed in TEGl 23-19 are assessed. Each data element that is required to be validated and that is supported by acceptable documentation will be scored as “pass”. Conversely, each data element that is not supported by acceptable documentation, is scored as a “fail”. Validators use a combination of self-attestation (client statement with certification), cross-matching (i.e. wage data and employer documentation), detailed case and program notes (statements by VCW staff entered into the Virginia Workforce Connection (VWC) that identify the specific data element, the status of the element, the date information was obtained, staff name, and other relevant information), and electronic records (participant records stored in numeric and text formats) to validate the elements. The results of the element validation are shared with the local areas and kept on file according to records retention requirements. The Data Validation process was recently updated to include the additional required data elements listed in TEGl 23-19.

### Training

Annual data validation training is provided to appropriate program staff. Training includes information on the importance of validating the data, what needs to be validated, and how data validation works.

# RECOMMENDED ACTIVITIES

## VIII. WIOA COMBINED STATE PLAN PROGRESS

### 2020-2021 Combined State Plan Implementation

During last fiscal year, the Title I team began executing the finalized 2020-2023 Combined State Plan (CSP). All Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) worked to ensure the alignment of their local strategic plans with the CSP. At the state level, Title I instituted a state-level team with representation from all WIOA titles and other key workforce partners to drive the delivery of the plan's strategic and operational elements. The team identified the highest priority initiatives and is developing an implementation plan. These initiatives include further development and enhancement of the referral portal, increased engagement with business services teams, upgrading state and local outreach and communication strategies, and expanding partnerships with social services.

## IX. SECTOR STRATEGIES AND CAREER PATHWAYS IMPLEMENTATION

*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.*

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Virginia is making progress with sector strategies and career pathways via the Sector Strategies and Career Pathways Academy (SSCPA). The SSCPA is a statewide initiative to provide professional development for Virginia's workforce professionals to further operationalize career pathways and sector strategies in the Commonwealth. The Academy had its first cohort of participants in May 2019. Since its implementation, Virginia has had over 455 workforce professionals participate in the Academy and five peer regional workgroups to plan and implement sector strategies and/or career pathways projects. Traditionally, the Foundations Course portion of the SSCPA was held in person, however, during the pandemic we were able to pivot and provide the Foundations Course online. For additional information, see our SSCPA website at <https://www.sscpa-va.com/>

During PY20, Virginia updated the [Business Services Requirements](#) and [Registered Apprenticeship Programs](#) policies. Additionally, Virginia awarded two grants (Return to Earn and the Layoff Aversion Rapid Response Initiative) as tools to engage businesses and provide financial support during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, Virginia is engaging businesses and implementing WBL strategies such as on-the-job-training and incumbent worker training through local board outreach.

## X. OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH (OSY) EXPENDITURE REQUIREMENT

### WIOA Title I Youth Program – 75% Expenditure Requirement for OSY and 20% Expenditure Requirement for Work Experience

The Commonwealth of Virginia, WIOA Title I Youth Programs are on track for meeting both the out-of-school youth (OSY) 75 percent expenditure and the youth, work experience, 20 percent expenditure requirements. During PY20, COVID-19 brought many challenges to the local Title I Youth service delivery in serving the youth populations. Many of the LWDBs enrollments and work experience expenditures decreased in number. In efforts to mitigate and increase the expenditures, Virginia developed and conducted a statewide technical assistance (TA) training that provided guidance for reporting programmatic and fiscal performance related to work experience. Virginia also conducted a webinar showcasing three LWDB's youth program design framework and best practices in tracking and implementing youth work experiences. With this and many other statewide efforts, Virginia can continue to meet both required WIOA Title I Youth expenditures.

Virginia continues to provide statewide TA training and encourage LWDBs to work closely and collaborate with other state agencies serving the same youth populations with similar goals and leverage local resources through braiding funds with the agencies serving OSY (YouthBuild, Job corps, Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice, DVR, Dept. of Social Services, and Local High School Dual Enrollment/CTE Programs).

## XI. VIRGINIA'S PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM

The following is an update on Virginia's Performance Accountability System:

- Any specific state performance measures or goals and progress towards meeting them.

The Virginia Acts of Assembly 2015 session amended the Code of Virginia to require that Local Workforce Development Boards allocate a minimum of 40 percent of the WIOA Adult and Dislocated Workers funds to training services as defined under Section 135 (c)(3)(D) of the WIOA. These training services must lead to recognized postsecondary education and workforce credentials aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area or region. Local compliance with this requirement is reviewed on an annual basis.

- Any performance deficiencies on the primary indicators of performance, which may include a description of any factors impacting performance.
- During PY2020, there were no deficiencies noted in primary performance indicators. Virginia continues to conduct training for the LWDBs in an effort to improve their ability to provide participants with follow-up services.
- The state's common exit policy, including which ETA-funded partner programs are included in the state's common exit policy.

The following ETA-funded programs are included under the common exit requirement:

- Title I – Adult, Dislocated Workers and Youth
- Title III – Wagner-Peyser

- Trade Act
- National Dislocated Worker Grants

Virginia uses the Geographic Solutions Virtual One-Stop application and established the common exit policy within the application.

- Negotiated performance levels for local areas for Titles I and III core programs and for program years 2020 and 2021. See Appendix for WIOA Title I Performance Levels for program years 2020-2021.

For PY 2020 annual WIOA performance reporting, the Virginia Community College System and the Virginia Department of Education exchanged administrative data to support Title II reporting. This collaborative effort supported more comprehensive reporting of outcomes on postsecondary enrollments and postsecondary credentials earned by Title II participants. Credentials reported included academic awards, as well as third-party industry certifications and professional licenses earned as the result of community college training.

## XII. ACTIVITIES FUNDED BY THE STATE'S WIOA TITLE I SET ASIDE FUNDS

*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 the performance year, the following initiatives and services were supported with Title I state set-aside funds:

- **Trauma Informed Training:** The key objective of this 6-hour training course was to provide information about identifying and responding to trauma with evidence-based resilience strategies. 251 workforce professionals from around the state completed the training course. A total of four virtual sessions were held in the summer of 2021. Expended \$9,375
- **Dual Enrollment Study:** A research team from George Mason University studied the dual enrollment program expenses in Virginia. The evaluation study was comprised of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies including over 40 interviews with individuals from VCCS, K-12 schools, Virginia Department of Education, State Council of Higher Education of Virginia, and the Governor's Office. Recommendations were made to increase dual enrollment programs to serve all Virginia students. Expended \$34,654
- **Virginia Career Works Referral Portal COVID19 Enhancements:** This Workforce System Integration Referral Portal Project will provide an integrated Virginia Career Works System referral process among the four WIOA Titles: Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth (VCCS); Adult Education and Literacy (VDOE), Employment (VEC), Vocational Rehabilitation (DARS/DBVI); and TANF and SNAPET (DSS) Services. Job seekers will benefit from a single workforce system registration and request for services. Expended \$409,978
- **Workforce Services Expansion to Increase Economic Equity Initiative:** These funds will support outreach and service delivery approaches for workforce training and job placement support programs of out of work subpopulations. Programs will focus on employment, credentials, and

wage performance outcomes consistent with WIOA Title I. Activities under this grant must emphasize services to be provided to participants enrolled in social benefits programs. With low unemployment rates, businesses are struggling to find talent to fill jobs. The workforce system needs to build a bridge between the out-of-work population and business needs. This work will also lay the foundation and establish service delivery practices for implementing the legislated Medicaid work requirement. Expended \$1,230,498

- Network2Work Pilot: The Network2Work framework aligns the three networks that are essential for creating pathways to jobs and careers offering family-sustaining wages: the employer network, the job-seeker network, and the provider network. Four pilot communities include Charlottesville Region, Shenandoah Valley, Southeastern Virginia, and Richmond Region. Expended \$877,805
- LinkedIn License: The LinkedIn Learning license will provide jobseekers access to over 5,000 training and certification courses. The pilot program runs from March 31, 2021-March 31, 2022. Expended \$265,200
- System Evaluation: Evaluation of statewide and regional aspects of the workforce system including the role of the statewide workforce administration, a peer state analysis, regional business and operations analysis, regional leadership and governance analysis, and visitor experience analysis. The evaluation will serve as a bridge to the incoming administration in 2022. Expended \$61,726

### XIII. RAPID RESPONSE AND LAYOFF AVERSION ACTIVITIES

#### Rapid Response

In accordance with Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act requirements, Rapid Response staff contacted company officials within 48 hours of receipt of a WARN, held employer briefings with management, and planned employee briefings as desired by the employer. Most briefings were held before the workers left their respective companies. A team of local workforce development partners who offered direct services to impacted workers provided employee briefings, led by one of five Regional Rapid Response Coordinators. The Rapid Response Coordinators were instrumental in planning and resourcing job fairs, on-site employer resource centers, customized transition workshops and registration for WIOA and partner services.

#### WARN NOTICES FILED BY EMPLOYERS AND NON-WARN INFORMATION OBTAINED BY RAPID RESPONSE COORDINATORS:

PY 2020 WARN AND NON-WARN DATA	
WARN Notices	128
Number of Impacted Workers	11,153
<hr/>	
Non-WARN	14
Number of Impacted Workers	425

## SUMMARY OF RAPID RESPONSE INITIATIVES FOR PY20

- Two Rapid Response sub-grants were given a no-cost extension of three months to end in June 2021 instead of March 2021.
- National Dislocated Worker Grant for individuals affected by COVID-19 was implemented through local workforce development boards.

## DATA ON NUMBER OF COMPANIES SERVED AND NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS SERVED

In PY2020 Virginia continued to address the layoff fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic. Many layoffs transitioned from a temporary to a permanent status. Rapid Response Coordinators continued to reach out to businesses that had initially provided temporary layoff notices to keep abreast of their individual situations, deliver services virtually as needed, and deliver information materials to impacted businesses and individuals. Coordinators also found a large majority of their time dedicated to helping individuals impacted by these layoffs in navigating issues with unemployment insurance applications.

As businesses began hiring in large numbers in Q3 of PY20, many businesses reached out to local business services teams for assistance in their recruitment.

## 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

The five Rapid Response Coordinators in Virginia each cover multiple local workforce development areas (LWDA), and each LWDA has a “go to” group of professionals in the American Job Centers who assist in providing services to impacted employees and companies. Rapid Response participants are provided the informational services required by the regulations and an additional survey on service needs and workshop interests is provided to the impacted employees to complete. Based on this information, additional services are provided on-site if allowed by the company. Whenever feasible, a targeted hiring event will be carried out for these employees. In addition to these services, the Virginia Employment Commission’s (VEC) Economic Information and Analytics (EIA) division creates a workbook on open employment opportunities in the area based on the skills of the impacted workforce and this information is provided to the employees. Dislocated Worker program enrollment opportunities are offered to impacted workers, including opportunities to start the enrollment onsite if possible. To document services provided to workers on-site, Rapid Response Coordinators add services to a generic program module in the Virginia Workforce Connection to track. Rapid Response Coordinators continued to work with businesses during the pandemic to continue to provide information and referral services to the TAA and Dislocated Worker program.

## THE STATE WITH RESPECT TO LAYOFF AVERSION, SUCH AS RETURN ON INVESTMENT OR MEASURES SHOWING THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF RAPID RESPONSE AND LAYOFF AVERSION.

Virginia’s layoff aversion strategy is focused on connecting workers to new employment opportunities prior to layoff and connecting workers to training opportunities such as on-the-job training (OJT), individual training accounts, TAA, and state funded training programs. To track the return on investment in Rapid Response services, the VBWD created metrics for the WIOA Title I Administrator and VEC to track, including information on training program enrollment, average duration of unemployment insurance benefits collected, return to work wages, and the estimated economic impact on state tax revenue of dislocated workers returning to employment.



During PY 2020 layoff aversion tactics utilized in previous years proved salient during the continuing COVID-19 pandemic. In PY 2021, Virginia will be reevaluating how layoff aversion is implemented and start looking at additional strategies that can be utilized in extenuating circumstance such as COVID-19 in addition to restarting many of the older tried and true methods of layoff aversion.

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.

Business services teams in the field identify companies that may be in distress and refer those companies to the WIOA Title I Administrator, LWDB, and Economic Development. Once such a company is identified, team members will identify potential strategies to assist the company in avoiding layoffs and provide those services as appropriate. Virginia employed grants such as the COVID-19 Lay-off Aversion Business Support Rapid Response Initiative to help businesses retain staff through support for personal protective equipment (PPE), additional cleaning/sanitation, and other needs that enabled businesses to remain open. Also, the Return to Earn Grant provided support to small businesses to encourage unemployed Virginians to return to work.

SPECIFIC TYPES OF SERVICES OR WORKSHOPS PROVIDED TO BOTH COMPANIES AND AFFECTED WORKERS.

Services provided to companies include the basic host of informational services to employees, workshops such as resume writing, job search strategies and interviewing, targeted hiring events, and program enrollment opportunities for WIOA Title I and Affordable Care Act Coverage. If an impacted company is assessed as being potentially TAA impacted, TAA Navigators consult with the company and assist in preparing TAA Petitions. If petitions are certified prior to the layoff occurring, TAA Information sessions are held at the employment site for the impacted employees. Companies identified as being in distress are referred to state economic development and local workforce development boards to determine what efforts and funding may help the company retain jobs.

#### **XIV. ACTIVITIES PROVIDED UNDER THE WAGNER-PEYSER ACT EMPLOYMENT SERVICE SECTION 7(B)**

Ten percent of the Wagner-Peyer Act funds allotted to the Commonwealth of Virginia are reserved for use by the Governor. These funds are identified and reported to DOL quarterly. The affiliated activities are tracked by job service staff time allocated to each identified group, grant, or program. These activities are found below.

Additionally, during this time the VEC was heavily impacted during the pandemic and needed to prioritize assisting unemployment claimants. Many services were switched to virtual format and the VEC collaborated with the Title I to deliver job services via MOU through July 1, 2020.

##### **1. EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROVIDED TO UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE CLAIMANTS**

Time spent by Employment Services (or Workforce Services) staff providing services to Unemployment Insurance claimants.

Workforce Services staff provided a host of re-employment services, to unemployment insurance claimants, with the goal of returning to employment that provided a family sustaining wage. After addressing unemployment insurance questions, Workforce Services staff would immediately pivot the conversation to returning to work. Services were provided in-person, via Google Meet, or by phone. These re-employment services included initial needs assessments, registration in the Virginia Workforce Connection and overview of the site, resume assistance, referral to jobs, labor market information, and referrals to training and supportive services.

## 2. DEPARTMENT OF AGING AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES/USDOL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVE GRANT

Time spent in support of the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services Disability Employment Initiative Grants and the programs supported by the grants.

Workforce Services staff have provided support to our DARS partners and the DEI Initiative during the past year by making both warm hand-off job seeker referrals to DARS staff whenever possible and by properly established protocol when DARS staff were not immediately available in the Career Works Centers (CWC's) while the customer was present. During initial contact with customers if Workforce Services staff became aware that a customer may have a disability that could affect employment, the customer was provided a general overview of DARS and possible services that they could provide. If the customer was agreeable the staff made the referral per DARS staff availability or by following procedure using a paper or electronic form based on location. In addition, VEC Workforce Services staff participated in the VCCS's Sector Strategies Career Pathways training that is designed to promote employment opportunities for all job seekers, including individuals with disabilities, in identified high demand employment sectors and to establish career pathways for job seekers to enter and prosper in these high demand occupations. Virginia's DARS/DEI initiative has identified SSCP and its intended goals for developing career opportunities for all job seekers in high demand occupations to be one of many ways the workforce community ensures job seekers with disabilities are able to enter the workforce and receive a living wage. Part of the SSCP training addresses how the workforce community ensures full participation of all job seekers, including those with disabilities, through strong outreach and effectively sharing information about high demand high growth employment with targeted special populations. By receiving this training Workforce Services staff are better informed and thus able to ensure that job seekers with disabilities they serve are provided information about high demand/high growth employment opportunities to which they may be qualified. This is in support of the DEI goal to increase participation of individuals with disabilities in WIOA funded employment and training services.

## 3. HAMPTON ROADS VETERANS EMPLOYMENT CENTERS

Staff activity taking place at the Hampton Roads Veterans Employment Centers in the region.

The Hampton Roads metropolitan statistical area (MSA) has the highest percentage of Veterans compared to other MSAs that are over 1,000,000 in population, with an estimated population of 205,400 military Veterans and approximately 4,500 Transitioning Service Members. To serve such a large population of Veterans, Active-Duty Spouses and Transitioning Service Members, the local Workforce boards and the Jobs for Veterans State Grant have partnered to now staff two Veteran Employment Centers – one located at 861 Glenrock Road in Norfolk, Virginia and the other located at 600 Thimble Shoals Blvd, Newport News, VA 23606.

#### 4. SERVICES TO MEDICAID RECIPIENTS

Time spent providing Employment Services to any verified recipient of Medicaid health benefits.

Workforce Services staff have conducted outreach activities to Department of Social Services (DSS) local offices and to Community Based Employment Support Organizations (CBO's) throughout Virginia to ensure that DSS and CBO staff are knowledgeable of VEC workforce services and to seek to develop referral protocol that would afford seamless access of DSS and CBO clients, many of whom are Medicaid recipients, to meaningful workforce services provided by the VEC Workforce Services staff and other WIOA partners. This outreach has increased DSS and CBO staff awareness of CWC/WIOA employment services available to their clients and in many cases increased referrals to VEC workforce services such as resume and interviewing assistance, employment training and skill certification programs, and referrals to employment opportunities to which the DSS/CBO Medicaid client is qualified. Overall service delivery has been increased to recipients of Medicaid health benefits because of these outreach initiatives.

#### 5. SERVICES TO TRANSITIONING SERVICE MEMBERS

Time spent providing employment services to any verified transitioning service member or to the spouse of a verified transitioning service member. For Employment Services purposes, a transitioning service member (TSM) is a service member in active-duty status (including separation leave) who participates in employment services and is within 24 months of retirement or 12 months of separation from military or naval service.

Virginia's Jobs for Veterans State Grant personnel have been instrumental in assisting the local Virginia Career Works Centers getting connected to military base transition activities and to establish individual relationships with their closest installations. Such relationships have facilitated TSM and Veteran enrollments in the Title III program Wagner-Peyser and subsequently, if qualified, referrals to the appropriate Jobs for Veterans State Grant or Title I personnel for additional assistance.

In addition, Virginia's Jobs for Veterans State Grant and Virginia Career Work Centers have provided Wounded Warrior Transition Unit Members Intensive Service Delivery at their respective unit locations to include quarterly presentations about available Virginia Career Works services and locations which facilitate refresher training on key transition skill sets (resumes, labor market information, networking, and interview skills) learned during the Department of Labor Employment Workshops.

#### 6. SERVICES TO THE LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED (NON RESEA)

Time spent providing Employment Services to unemployed persons who have been unemployed more than 20 weeks and are not eligible for unemployment insurance, who have exhausted unemployment benefits, or who completed RESEA programming without securing employment.

Workforce Services staff provided follow-up services to unemployed persons that have completed RESEA programming, those that were unemployed more than 20 weeks, and those that exhausted unemployment insurance and were enrolled in Wagner-Peyser. Follow-up services included reevaluation

of the initial needs assessment, identifying barriers that were impacting the individual from returning to work, suitable referrals to workforce partners, and re-focused job referrals and labor market information. These services were provided in-person, via Google Meet, and by phone.

## XV. NATIONAL DISLOCATED WORKER GRANTS AWARDED

In PY20, Virginia was awarded \$3.3MM for the Covid-19 Disaster Recovery National Dislocated Worker Grant. These funds are being used to provide dislocated workers training and disaster relief employment in positions such as community health workers and temperature takers. Eight of the fourteen local workforce development areas requested disaster relief employment and training funds under this grant.

During the program year, local areas saw low interest from potential dislocated workers for services or employment provided by the grant. At the end of PY20, Virginia's COVID-19 NDWG enrolled 15 participants in disaster relief employment services and 35 participants in training services. Additionally, with the low enrollment, spending on the grant also remained low, with \$175,000.00 spent by the local areas, which is approximately 7% of the award. The COVID-19 NDWG is scheduled to end in March 2022 and VCCS is in the process of determining local workforce area interest in pursuing a no-cost extension so that the commonwealth may make additional progress in achieving the grant employment and training goals.

## XVI. SUCCESS STORY

### COVID-19: Turning a Challenge into an Opportunity

When COVID-19 forced the physical closing of Virginia's American Job Centers (AJCs) in March 2020, workforce partners across the state scrambled to support businesses and job seekers virtually. AJCs across Virginia asked themselves what they could do to continue offering a high level of services. Their answer: they just needed to "up their game" – the same thing they had been doing for years.

It was clear at the AJC's in Alexandria/Arlington that virtual services that worked before COVID were not going to cut it during the pandemic. This included job boards (two local and the Virginia Employment Commission boards, online labor market information, Microsoft Teams virtual meetings with employers, phone/text/email conversations with job seekers and an informational web site.

A shift in virtual services was made to include the following:

- MS Teams/ZOOM/Signup Genius: Virtual scheduling for online meetings and workshops
- Secure FTP/DocuSign: Ability to securely exchange Personal Identifiable Information (PII) virtually & move to full electronic records management
- Premier Virtual: Online job fair platform that simulates the live experience
- Metrix/LinkedIn Learning: Distance learning platforms containing over 5000+ courses
- Interactive Web sites

And to say this pivot in virtual services was a success is an understatement. Since implementing their new virtual services, the Alexandria/Arlington AJC's have hosted 15 virtual job fairs, serving over 430 employers and 18,000 job seekers. These job fairs include two Northern Virginia-wide and one state-wide virtual events so that Alexandria/Arlington's employers could market their openings beyond the region's borders.

In addition, the Alexandria/Arlington AJCs offered over 5,000 free virtual education courses to residents through a partnership with Metrix and LinkedIn Learning. Approximately 1,000 residents are using these virtual tools to improve their knowledge and workforce competitiveness.

And most importantly, the AJCs are meeting the customers where they are, in a safe and secure way. Over 2,000 Alexandria/Arlington residents accessed workshops, career counseling, and job referral services during FY21.

## **XVII. PAY FOR PERFORMANCE CONTRACTING**

### **The SkillSource Group, Inc., and Virginia Career Works – Northern (Area #11)**

The Northern Virginia Team Independence (NVTI) project restarted in late Fall 2020, after The SkillSource Group, Inc. and the Virginia Career Works Northern received updated approval and guidance from the U.S. Department of Labor and the Virginia Community College System. NVTI utilizes WIOA Pay for Performance practices to increase the numbers of justice-involved and foster care young adults in the Northern Virginia WIOA Youth Program and improving their education and employment outcomes. Currently, nearly 23% of the VCW Northern WIOA Youth Program participants have been involved in the justice or foster care systems, a substantial increase from prior program years.

As of September 2021, 23 young adults that meet NVTI criteria have been enrolled in the WIOA Youth program, with three (3) clients earning certifications and nine (9) clients currently in training. The three (3) certifications earned are: CompTIA Security+, Dental Assistant, and GED. Additional training that NVTI clients are currently enrolled in include Medical Assistant, Paralegal, Nurse Aide, and CDL. One WIOA Youth client exited the Program with part-time employment as a Customer Service Associate earning \$10.40/hour.

In Fall 2021, The SkillSource Group, Inc. intends to finalize all remaining contractual details, including identifying a third-party validator organization to review the outcomes of the WIOA Youth Pay for Performance Program in Northern Virginia.

The Area #11 WIOA Youth team has continued to engage in extensive outreach to both foster care and justice Partner Organizations throughout the Northern Virginia region. In January 2021, the WIOA Youth program invited justice-involved and foster care partners to a virtual outreach event and 50 organizations participated to learn about the WIOA Youth Program and the Pay for Performance project. In April 2021, the WIOA Youth program coordinated another outreach event, in which all Partner Organizations were invited, and approximately 100 participants were actively engaged.

## XVIII. APPENDIX

### WIOA Title I and Title III Negotiated Performance Measures

WIOA TITLE I PERFORMANCE MEASURES		
Adult	PY 20 Negotiated Level	PY 21 Negotiated Level
Employment 2nd Quarter after Exit	79.00%	79.00%
Employment 4th Quarter after Exit	85.00%	85.00%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after Exit	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00
Credential Attainment within 1 year	72.00%	74.00%
Measurable Skills Gain	55.00%	58.00%
Dislocated Workers		
	PY 20 Negotiated Level	PY 21 Negotiated Level
Employment 2nd Quarter after Exit	85.00%	85.00%
Employment 4th Quarter after Exit	90.00%	90.00%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after Exit	\$8,700.00	\$8,700.00
Credential Attainment within 1 year	70.00%	70.00%
Measurable Skills Gain	55.00%	57.00%
Youth		
	PY 20 Negotiated Level	PY 21 Negotiated Level
Employment 2nd Quarter after Exit	70.00%	72.00%
Employment 4th Quarter after Exit	62.80%	62.80%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after Exit	\$3,500.00	\$3,500.00
Credential Attainment within 1 year	70.00%	70.00%
Measurable Skills Gain	55.00%	55.00%
WIOA TITLE III PERFORMANCE MEASURES		
Wagner-Peyser	PY 20 Negotiated Level	PY 21 Negotiated Level
Employment 2nd Quarter after Exit	75.00%	75.00%
Employment 4th Quarter after Exit	75.00%	75.00%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after Exit	\$5,650.00	\$5,650.00