

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

Program Year 2020

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THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

Local Workforce Development Areas/Regions

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

- **Region One** consists of two comprehensive centers and four affiliate centers. The Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) oversees service delivery in 11 counties of southeastern WV: Fayette, Greenbrier, McDowell, Mercer, Monroe, Nicholas, Pocahontas, Raleigh, Summers, Webster, and Wyoming. The region is mountainous and rural in nature. The coal industry continues to fluctuate throughout the region with extensive layoffs and hiring taking place on a frequent basis. The dynamics of the workforce have drastically changed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Employers are now hiring, but job seekers are not applying for jobs and re-entering the workforce as rapidly as employers need. Virtual job fairs, promotion of positions available, and partner services are being offered to aid employers with hiring needs. On a positive note, program participation increased during the pandemic. Career and employability services are offered to assist job seekers who seek aid with resumes, job search, and other employment activities. Industry expected growth in the area includes but is not limited to: Ambulatory Health Care Services, Social Assistance, Waste Management and Remediation Service, Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction, and Construction of Buildings.
- **Region Two** consists of one comprehensive center, two satellite sites, and six affiliate sites—including four Community and Technical College (CTC) sites throughout the counties of Boone, Cabell, Logan, Mingo, Putnam, and Wayne. The affiliate sites provide Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) services in all locations. Medical related occupations make up 16 of the top 25 occupations in the region. Non-Medical occupations are led by: Market Research Analysts, Photographers, Personal Financial Advisors, Nonfarm Animal Caretakers, Hair Stylists, Plumbers, CDL Truck Drivers, and Computer and Information.
- **Region Three** consists of Kanawha County with a population of approximately 180,745 people, making it West Virginia's most populous county. Its county seat is Charleston, the state capital. Kanawha County is part of the Charleston, West Virginia Metropolitan Statistical Area, the state's business, financial, medical, and governmental center. Kanawha County encompasses 902 square miles. Within Kanawha County there are 8 cities, 8 towns and 12 unincorporated communities. 75% of the county is urban; 25% rural. Kanawha County serves as the central employment location for a nine-county area. More than 11,000 people commute from neighboring Putnam County, while more than 2,000 people commute from Boone and Lincoln counties combined. It is not uncommon for talented workers to enjoy the quality of life of a less populated area of West Virginia and travel up to an hour one-way for work in the Capital City region. Kanawha County has nearly 80,000 employed, an unemployment rate of 5.4% and a labor force participation rate of 53%. In April, the unemployment rate in Kanawha County reached a record high of 17.10%. Over the past year, the unemployment rate has decreased by 1.1 percentage points. Adjustments were made to how Region III provides services to employers and participants during the Covid-19 pandemic. We were the first to purchase the Premier Virtual Platform that allowed staff to provide services, connect participants

with our partner agencies, and host job fairs. The AJC was closed to the public most of 2020, however Region III continued daily operations and adapted where necessary to offer support and assistance serving over 500 job seekers. We also increased outreach efforts to employers which resulted in two On-the-job training (OJT) contracts being written and fifteen individuals placed in temporary employment through the Empowered Employment (EE) Program. Employers were also provided with opportunities through the Incumbent Worker (IW) program resulting in thirty-two employees receiving additional training in Phlebotomy (Simpson Dental), Tool and Die (Gestamp), and HVAC (Casto Technical Services).

- **Region Four** consists of nine counties that comprises a region of rural and urban populations. It is served by one comprehensive center and six affiliate centers. Those counties are Calhoun, Clay, Jackson, Mason, Pleasants, Ritchie, Roane, Wirt, and Wood. The population of the combined nine counties is just under 200,000 individuals.
- **Region Five** has two comprehensive AJCs in the cities of Weirton and Wheeling and one satellite AJC in the city of New Martinsville. The LWDB's region of services includes Hancock, Brooke, Ohio, Marshall, Wetzel, and Tyler Counties. WIOA, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and National Health Emergency Grant (NHEG) funds are used to assist eligible individuals and area employers with their training, support and hiring needs. The COVID-19 pandemic has taken a toll on the labor force, and economy in general, in the region. In 2020, the unemployment rate in the Northern Panhandle region rose to 9.4%; up from 5.5% in 2019. And, in 2020, there were approximately 60,750 in the labor force; down from 64,750 in 2019. Thus, the economic recovery in the region has been slow-going due in large part to individuals not interested in entering/re-entering the workforce at this time. Long term occupations by industry in the region include Health Care & Social Assistance, Ambulatory Health Care Services, Nursing and Residential Care Facilities, Construction, Hospitals and Educational Services. High demand occupations for a ten-year period in the region include Registered Nurses, Home Health Aides, Nursing Assistants, Clergy, Construction Laborers, Light Truck and Tractor Trailer Operators and Secondary School Teachers.
- **Region Six** consists of one comprehensive center and three affiliate centers that serve the following 13 counties in North Central West Virginia: Barbour, Braxton, Doddridge, Gilmer, Harrison, Lewis, Marion, Monongalia, Preston, Randolph, Taylor, Tucker, and Upshur. Following an unprecedented high unemployment rate of 14.7% coming into the current program year, Region 6 closed out the program year with a significantly lower unemployment rate of 4.9%. The public sector is still the main feature of North Central WV's economic development with the presence of many higher education institutions, correctional facilities, and the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in Harrison County. Healthcare services represents another cornerstone to the North Central Region 6 economy with the presence of several hospitals and various other healthcare facilities, most notably WVU Medicine who is supposed to increase their footprint in the area with the forthcoming opening of WVU Children's Hospital in Monongalia County. This state-of-the art facility will treat children for a wider range of illnesses that they would have otherwise been sent to Pittsburgh or Cleveland. Region 6 is also home to three airports including the North Central WV Airport in Bridgeport which is currently implementing a \$20 million renovation and expansion project that is projected to create more than 1,000 jobs and double the annual economic impact of the airport to \$2 Billion. Moreover, Region 6's location along the I-79 corridor is advantageous in that it includes some of the state's biggest technology driven employers all located in the I-79 Technology Park which also houses Pierpont CTC (North Central) Advanced Technology Center (ATC). Despite the downturn of the coal industry, Region 6 continues to list several coal companies on the annual top 10 employer list,

such as Arch Coal and Murray American Energy. At the end of Program Year 2020, Region 6 suffered a devastating loss with the closure of Viatris (Mylan Pharmaceuticals) in Monongalia County. Nearly 1,500 Viatris employees lost their jobs at one the region’s long-standing top 10 employers. Luckily, Region 6 will share the spotlight, along with Region 7, with the \$500 Million development project centered around the construction of the Virgin Hyperloop located on an 800-acre tract that encompasses both Grant and Tucker counties. The construction of the high-speed pod-and-tub transportation loop is projected to bring thousands of construction jobs and millions of dollars in economic impact to the State.

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

WAIVERS

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

EFFECTIVENESS IN SERVING EMPLOYERS

While WFWV has always offered, and continues to offer, many and varied services to employers, WFWV focused on “Repeat” and “Retention” as pilot approaches, and primary indicators of performance, for measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers.

- Approach 1: **Retention with Same Employer** addresses the programs’ efforts to provide employers with skilled workers. During PY20, the Retention with Same Employer rate was 62.7%.
- Approach 2: **Repeat Business Customer** addresses the programs’ efforts to provide quality engagement and services to employers and sectors and establish productive relationships with employers and sectors over extended periods of time. During PY20, the Repeat Business Customer rate was 46.3%.

During PY20, WFWV deployed a new business engagement model creating a state level Business Engagement Team. The focus is employer relations, coordination of services to employers, the assessments of their needs, and meeting those needs through the workforce delivery system. The team consists of one manager and seven staff members geographically assigned to each of the seven LWDBs. A kickoff meeting was conducted in March, and a Business Engagement Representative Manual created. The Business Engagement Staff will coordinate with local partners, including economic development, education, and community-based entities.

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

- Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)
- Federal Bonding

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

During PY20, WV Division of Rehabilitation Services (WVDRS) coordinated with employers from across the state to provide 169 students with disabilities (ages 14-21) with work-based learning experiences and summer employment opportunities.

EVALUATIONS

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

Indicator	Baseline	PY20
Job seekers receiving services in required quarters	10,547	11,427
Job seekers receiving referrals to partner services in required quarters	3,521	5,912
Customers placed in employment in required quarters	457	457
Employer contacts made in required quarters	2,445	5,245
Median earnings of customers placed in employment	\$3,952.36	\$4,166.20
Credential attainment	76.9%	77.4%
Measurable skill gains	10.4%	63.4%

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

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

During PY20 the LWDBs were given the flexibility to utilize their own customer satisfaction (CS) surveys/questionnaires. The survey participation rate was lower than anticipated; however, the feedback received was positive. LWDBs continue to implement innovative ways to reach the customer base and obtain satisfaction surveys. Examples include Zoom, Duo and Teams meetings, web-based portals, more frequent email, and cell phone communication.

In Region 1, employers and participants who utilize OJT, EE, and IW programs were provided surveys. During PY20, nine OJT Employer surveys were returned with 89% of the employers rating the program and services as “strongly agree” and 11% rating as “strongly agree” or “agree.” One IW Training Employer survey was returned with a 100% rating of “strongly agree.” Eight EE Employer surveys were returned with an 87% rating of “strongly agree” and a 13% rating of “strongly agree” or “agree.” One OJT participant survey was returned with a 100% rating of “strongly agree.” Ten EE participant surveys were returned with an 82% rating of “strongly agree” and an 18% rating of “strongly agree” or “agree.” It is of interest to note that most of our employers who utilize OJT and EE programs are repeat customers.

Region 4 continues to use SurveyMonkey as the platform to garner CS surveys. All surveys were trending in positive or favorable satisfaction. Getting survey results still proves to be a challenge through survey monkey or paper surveys. Of the 1,619 surveys conducted in PY20, there was only a completion rate of 28%, mostly from One-Stop programs.

Region 5 had 317 CS Surveys completed with a response rate of 98%. This rate is mostly due to One Stop Operator staff ensuring that all customers visiting an AJC in the region complete a survey while onsite. Of the 317 respondents, 285 rated services at “5” and 32 rated services at “4” on a 1 to 5 scale. Results of customer feedback are used to improve existing customer service processes or develop new ones. Regular meetings will continue to be held between NPWDB, Inc. Job Center Operator and Core and Required Partner Staff to share information about programs and services and work for continuous improvement of customer-focused processes at regional AJCs.

Region 6 moved from hard copy surveys to an on-line survey option going into last program year. Because of this change, there was a decrease in the number of surveys that participants completed, but the overall satisfaction rating of those completed was 98.26 %. The region continues to send out WIOA Training Exit survey links to participants who were in WIOA follow-up and ended the year with a 95.55% satisfied rate.

As part of its program improvement efforts, WVDRS continues to support the implementation of CS surveys of its clients to ensure quality services for WVDRS consumers. The WV State Rehabilitation Council (WVSRRC) conducts the surveys (with full WVDRS assistance and cooperation). WVSRRC is primarily responsible for completion of the consumer satisfaction survey for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) consumers. WVDRS continues to provide and supplement fiscal and human resources needed for its successful completion. WVSRRC members selected a survey method that allows former WVDRS clients and individuals who were not accepted for VR services to be contacted via mail surveys as soon

as they exit WVDRS from various statuses throughout the fiscal year. Selected highlights of the 2020 Consumer Satisfaction Survey of WVDRS clients as reported by the WVSRC are presented below:

The latest report, entitled, *Consumer Satisfaction: Report of Survey Findings*, was prepared by the WVSRC in November 2020. The findings were based on consumer satisfaction information gathered from 196 responses across the six WVDRS districts. Respondents to the consumer satisfaction survey were asked to rate their agreement with statements about their interactions with WVDRS. The ratings were "strongly agree," "agree," "neutral," "disagree," and "strongly disagree." Respondents were provided an option to indicate replies that were neutral or that the survey item was not applicable. Responses for the PY20 survey, overall, are notably higher than the reported satisfaction in previous years. The mean rating across the ten satisfaction items is 86% for the 2020 report versus a 80% mean rating for PY19 and a 78% for PY18. The data generally show that those whose cases are closed as "unsuccessful" (i.e., closed without an employment outcome) are less likely to report high levels of satisfaction with the services they received. The difference between the responses of those whose cases were closed successfully versus unsuccessfully has decreased over the past few years and that trend continued this year as well. Major findings of the survey include respondents felt that their rehabilitation counselor treated them with respect (76%), their questions were answered clearly by WVDRS (91%), they were involved in their plan development (77%), their counselor stayed in contact, so they knew what was happening (87%), and they received the services they needed (83%). Respondents also reported that they knew what each step of their Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) would be (84%) and their counselors told them about job opportunities (93%). Consumers also reported high ratings for accessibility of local offices (92% gave an "Above Average" or "Excellent" rating), their counselors (89%), and the overall experience with WVDRS (88%).

The consumers were asked to recall which client's rights information had been explained to them. There were 173 individuals who responded that at least one right had been explained (88% of the sample). Most individuals indicated that they had received several rights explanations. The most explained rights to consumers were 1) their participation in developing the rehabilitation plan (91%) and 2) choice of how services were provided (84%). When asked about needs that were not met by WVDRS, 97 of the 144 consumers who responded reported that they had no additional needs (67%). Those who did report additional needs most requested employment-related services and medical services. The participants were also asked about their experience with WVDRS. A total of 90 people provided feedback to this question. Of these, 60 expressed praise or gratitude for WVDRS services, 17 made other statements of explanation or inquiry, and 13 offered criticism. Overall, the level of satisfaction reported for the period continues to be high, with an increase from 80% to 86%. To maintain high quality of services and promote a greater satisfaction level for consumers, WVDRS welcomes and considers compliments, complaints, suggestions, and recommendations that clients report. The WVSRC and WVDRS were also interested in examining the pattern of responses for transitioning youth (clients who were age 24 or younger). Youth surveys were color-coded so the participants could be isolated. Their responses formed a subset of 65 returned surveys. Overall, youth satisfaction was equivalent to the responses of the whole group, at 83%. Transitioning youth respondents felt that their rehabilitation counselor treated them with respect (75%), their questions were answered clearly by WVDRS (88%), their counselor stayed in contact, so they knew what was happening (84%), and they received the services they needed (79%). Youth respondents also reported that they knew what each step of their IPE would be (78%), WVDRS counselors helped them develop a plan to get a job (74%), and their counselors told them about

job opportunities (92%). Transitioning youth also reported high ratings for accessibility of local offices (87% gave an "Above Average" or "Excellent" rating), their counselors (83%), and the overall experience with WVDRS (82%).

UNIFIED STATE PLAN GOALS

Goal 1: Maximize Efficiency of the Workforce Development System (WDS)

Region 1 partners conducted cross-training during the quarterly meetings which were held by conference call during the pandemic. Updates and information sharing regarding program changes, serving customers, operational guidelines of the American Job Centers, and safety were some of the topics covered.

Goal 2: Strengthen Relationships with Employers

WVDRS used its Employment Specialists (ESs) to gather information regarding employers at the local level, including information regarding job placements for individuals with disabilities and regarding current and expected employer needs. WVDRS has an in-house Employer Services Section (ESS) that specializes in providing employers with disability-related information, services, and pre-screened job seekers. The WVDRS ESS employs nine ESs that cover all 55 counties in WV. Each Employment Specialist possesses a unique understanding of local labor market information (LMI) including what jobs are available, what jobs are in demand or decline, and employer networks. WVDRS' team of ESs provided business owners and employers with critical business options and assistance in staffing, employee retention strategies, education on disability-related issues, job accommodations, and information about financial incentives for employers who hire individuals with disabilities. Direct contact with employers is a key strategy to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities for VR consumers, including students with disabilities. ESs, therefore, contact employers directly to identify current and future job openings. To facilitate this, WVDRS utilizes LMI provided by WFWV to identify the top employers in each county; contact is always made with the top ten employers in each county on a quarterly basis. WVDRS ESs conducted over 1000 employer visits in PY20. Information from these employer visits is entered into State MIS (Management Information System/MACC) and is available to all partner agencies. When meeting with employers, ESs provide valuable information, including the WVDRS Employer Resource Guide. The Resource Guide provides information regarding staffing services, training programs, and incentives for hiring people with disabilities, financial incentives, accessibility assessments, accommodating employees with disabilities, basic disability etiquette, attitudinal barriers, the Americans with Disabilities Act, locating a WVDRS office, and where to find additional resources. Each LWDB partners with a WVDRS representative who is active in the Board's activities and decision-making process. If needed, a referral to the WVDRS Rehabilitation Technology Unit is made to address workplace accommodations. A Direct Contact Employer database is maintained within the unit to showcase the Employers who have special or preferred hiring practices for WVDRS job seekers. From July 1, 2020, to June 30, 2021, 25 Employers were added to this list. Several employers throughout WV send job leads directly to ESS staff and that information is dispersed to all field offices and applicable job seekers.

Considering the COVID-19 pandemic, the ESS developed a system for providing virtual services to WVDRS staff, job seekers, and employers. WVDRS ESs realized that to stay connected with job seekers and employers, ESs must adapt to conducting face-to-face services through a wide array of

virtual platforms. WVDRS business engagement strategies starting July 1, 2020, were all conducted via virtual platforms. A blend of in-person and virtual business engagement strategies began March 2021. ESs maintained regular contact with job seekers and employers by holding individual meetings through Virtual Services, which also began prior to July 1, 2020, and continued through PY20. Through collaboration with a national network of other VR agencies, WVDRS was able to provide information from employers on a national level to WVDRS Job Seekers. The collaboration with other states to include Pennsylvania, Washington DC, Kentucky, Ohio, and Virginia. Virtual events such as Employer Spotlight, Partner Spotlight, and job readiness workshops including Virtual Job Club were provided July 2020-June 2021. The Virtual Job Club provides work readiness skills to job seekers that will assist the job seeker in preparing for the world of work. Topics include positive attitude, skill assessment, interviews, resumes, job search process, self-advocacy, transportation, social media, and maintaining a job. Virtual events such as Employer Spotlight and Job Club are projected to be provided in Fiscal Year (FY)20, starting July 2020. Employer Spotlight services are developed to encompass business engagement strategies by connecting statewide employers with WVDRS job seekers and VR staff. This event allows the employer to discuss the mission of the business, inform the participants of their hiring practices, and provide insight into what type of candidates they are searching for. This also allows job seekers and VR staff to have direct contact with employers, ending the event with an interactive Q&A session.

Goal 3: Overcome Employment Barriers of Individuals

Region 1 uses comprehensive interviewing, educational assessment, and counseling to identify barriers and utilize support services when needed, so individuals will be successful in obtaining training and employment goals. To ensure support services needs are being met, individuals are co-enrolled in programs or partner agencies. The Region 1 youth program makes referrals to WVAdultEd to assist with increasing basic skills levels. The youth program staff work closely with employers and participants to develop paid work experiences. Mentorship is an important part of this component. The employers and youth staff work one-on-one with participants to address existing, and new barriers they may have such as childcare, transportation, and appropriate tools and clothing. Supportive services are provided as needed to address the barriers, and referrals to other resources are made as appropriate. Region 1 continues to assist with combating the opioid crisis by offering the EE program to those who have barriers to employment, such as a previous substance problem. There were 54 participants placed in work-based experiences and provided extensive career services training and supportive service assistance. Four certifications were obtained in areas such as Peer Recovery and Customer Service. Staff continue to work one-on-one with individuals to assist with overcoming barriers through career counseling, employability skills training, and referrals to partner agencies such as WVAdultEd and DHHR. The R1WDB also partners closely with Jobs & Hope WV with many participants being dual enrolled in both programs to increase the number of services provided. Region 1 is proud to partner with Communities of Healing which provides extensive training and a certificate to cohorts of businesses to hire those in recovery. The R1WDB has been exploring working with local correctional centers to offer those ready to re-enter society assistance to enter occupational training programs.

WVDRS continued assessing skill gaps and needs of individuals seeking employment and/or training throughout PY20. Regions continued to work with area schools and institutions in examining/analyzing existing curriculum against the needs of targeted industry-related skills certifications. Area schools and institutions are doing a better job identifying gaps in existing curriculum and developing new curriculum

to fill skills gaps. WVDRS completed IPEs for 1,686 individuals with disabilities in PY20. These IPEs follow an assessment made by counselors to determine the individuals' skills, needs, and desires pertinent to employment, as well as vocational counseling and guidance to help determine an appropriate employment goal. The WDS ensured that individuals with barriers, especially those with disabilities, had increased access to and for opportunities for employment, education, training, and support services. WVDRS continues to be available in the setup and design of AJCs to enhance the delivery of services to individuals with disabilities. WVDRS continues collaborative efforts with organizations who support efforts to expand employment opportunities for individuals with behavioral health challenges. WVDRS was selected to participate in a technical assistance project through the Boston University Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation and developed an online training curriculum that will help staff and our partner agencies learn effective strategies for helping people with psychiatric disabilities find and maintain integrated competitive employment. During PY20, the online training curriculum saw increased utilization and was evaluated for effectiveness. Ninety-six (96) % of survey respondents felt the training ideas and activities could be incorporated into their jobs. WVDRS maintained its partnership with the WV Behavioral Health Planning Council, meeting quarterly and updating the council on the agency's efforts to effectively serve and help individuals with behavioral health conditions meet their employment goals. WVDRS was also a committed partner in the Jobs & Hope WV program. This program was established by the Governor and Legislature and aims to address the substance use disorder crisis through a statewide collaboration of agencies to provide linked services to participants. WVDRS referred over 35 individuals to the program during PY20.

Goal 4: Promote Career Pathways

Region 1 works closely with WVAdultEd and employers to identify and develop career pathways for participants. Our challenge is engaging with those who are not currently in the labor force and to inform them of the training and career options available in our region. Region 1 continues to work with the WV Laborer's Training Trust Fund to assist customers with funding to enter apprenticeship programs. Career specialists with the Career Connections Youth Program assists participants with college books and materials and refers enrolled out-of-school youth to the R1WDB and WV DRS for financial aid assistance for unmet tuition and transportation costs to help them achieve their training and career goals. Region 1 connects employers with the state Registered Apprenticeship Program to develop programs to increase recruitment, retention, and training efforts and to provide clear pathways for job seekers, and incumbent workers, to advance their skills and career goals.

Region 5, to date, has developed Career Pathways Services in the following "high demand" occupations in the region: Advanced Manufacturing; CDL; Health Care; and Welding. The goal is to create a Career Pathways system where education and training are provided and offers credentials that prepare individuals, regardless of their skill level(s) at the point of entry, for post-secondary education, training and/or employment. Services are diverse with multiple entry and exit points that allow adults and youth customers with varying degrees of ability, including low - skilled Adults and Youth with multiple barriers to employment, especially those with disabilities, to have realistic access to available pathways in the region.

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

opportunities, and the necessary education and training requirements related to those opportunities. During PY20, WVDRS provided work-based learning experiences to 169 students with disabilities and held Career Exploration Opportunity (CEO) Summits across the state, as well as virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. WVDRS worked with Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) around the state to provide the Summits and other employment-related services in as many local areas as possible including virtual services to over 200 students with disabilities. Attendance for the CEO Summits was approximately 285 students, covering all six WVDRS districts. A concerted effort was made to introduce Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math (STEAM) to students in the CEO Summits. Topics covered included career planning, career preparation, Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance information, understanding the importance of necessary personal documents, communication, conflict management, employer expectations, attendance and punctuality, timeliness of task completion, being able to work without supervision, positive work ethic, managing multiple tasks, high-growth jobs, personal brand, and job hunting tools such as resumes, cover letters, interviews, and digital profiles. In addition to the CEOs, over 200 students with disabilities participated in courses in self-advocacy and STEAM-related topics. Throughout the academic year, WVDRS ESs also provided pre-ETS at the local high schools, whenever possible. The ESs conducted mock interviewing, career exploration, and discussions regarding other employment related topics. WVDRS also continued to conduct virtual Job Clubs for students with disabilities to continue to gain valuable employment-related skills training and career exploration opportunities during the COVID-19 pandemic. WVDRS continues to maintain and enhance its “Pathways to the Future” website (www.pathwayswv.org), which serves as a self-service resource for students with disabilities statewide to receive pre-ETS. The website provides valuable information and tools regarding career planning, education planning, independent living, self-determination, and work-based learning. The website was bolstered by banners that were placed in high schools in all 55 counties of the state. Additionally, several pages of the College Foundation of WV’s website (www.cfwv.com) have links to the Pathways website. These banners and links directed students with disabilities to the website and its resources.

Goal 5: Identify and Maximize Postsecondary and Employment Opportunities for Youth

The Region 1 youth program, Career Connections, offers participants a 90-day paid work experience. This allows our participants to gain the abilities and training necessary in transitioning into careers. The youth employment program offers opportunities to help disadvantaged youth gain financial knowledge, skills, and resources to gain permanent employment. Monthly workshops are provided to participants to teach life skills, job readiness, and workplace skills. Quality partnerships with private sector and nonprofit organizations are an essential part of our paid work experience program.

WVAdultEd in collaboration with WFWV, employers, Community and Technical Colleges, Career and Technical Education Centers, etc. continued with WVAdultEd offering IET Prep Programs for students accepted into Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), Certified Nursing Assistant, Electrical, Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning, Surgical Tech, and Cosmetology Adult Programs. For example, LPN Bridge II Adult Career Pathway IET Programs were held in 11 different counties. These IET Programs helped prepare students entering LPN Adult Programs by providing adult education and literacy skills in the context of health science and offered employability skills to better prepare students for the in-demand LPN job market.

Goal 6: Align WV's Labor Force Participation Rate with the National Labor Force Participation Rate

Region 1's Empowered Employment Program offers intensive career services and work-based learning opportunities to those with substance abuse backgrounds and those in re-entry. These individuals are one example of an untapped labor force. Region 1 has grown partnerships by developing an outreach plan and conducting virtual presentations with Q&A sessions. This has helped to identify individuals with skill gaps, introduce them to career pathways, and assist them with entering training and education programs.

SECTOR STRATEGIES AND CAREER PATHWAYS (GOAL 4)

Business Engagement Strategies

During PY20 partnerships continued to be a key component of assisting customers to reach their full potential. Examples include:

- Region 1- Services offered to businesses include assistance with recruitment of employees through in-person and virtual job fairs and promotion of positions available. In May 2020, an in-person and virtual job fair for Pipestem State Park was held concurrently in four locations to reach as many potential job seekers as possible. Follow-up services were offered after the job fairs. Zoom, Teams, and conference calls have been implemented to counterbalance COVID-19 restrictions and reach as many employers as possible. Relationships with chambers of commerce, local economic development authorities, and partnering with LWDBs across regional lines has increased outreach efforts and increased the number of employers benefiting from WIOA programs. New businesses have surprisingly sprung up during the pandemic and some are taking advantage of WIOA programs such as OJT. Region 1 has partnered with a local airport, a local economic development authority, a local community and technical college, and a research team to identify the need and the potential to develop an aerospace technology program in our region.
- Region 4 LWDB MOV has been successful in partnering to provide sector strategies with WVUP for the IT and manufacturing sectors. Through this partnership apprenticeship, customized and incumbent worker training has been provided to serve the needs of the IT and manufacturing sectors. Region 4 continues to work towards developing additional non-traditional career pathways to continue serving the employers and participants in the region. Region 4 continued to implement an Employer Solutions team that focused on businesses within the region. This team is composed of regional partners that meet to discuss the opportunities and challenges those businesses face in the region. It has helped businesses work with one contact and minimize the amount of time various partners reach out to the business. This team moved to virtual meetings with employers during the COVID pandemic. The team continues to use forums in person and virtually, educating businesses on what services and opportunities are available to them. Region 4 Employer Solutions team has been very active and has exceeded the goal of business visits, contracts, and engaging employers within the region.
- The Region 6 Executive Director continues to participate on several Economic Development Boards and currently holds a position on the Executive Team of the Tri State Energy and Advanced Manufacturing (TEAM) Consortium as co-chair of the Workforce and Economic Development Working Group. The TEAM Consortium partners share a regional vision of guaranteeing an adequate supply of properly skilled workers for the critical energy and advanced

manufacturing sectors in the tri-state initiative. TEAM is currently seeking additional funding to broaden the geographic footprint of the original partnership to add 18 new counties for a total service area of 45 counties where Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia intersect. This program year TEAM established clear career pathways by sharing curriculum and agreeing to transfer credits among partner institutions and across state lines. Using the US DOL pyramid graphic, TEAM developed and then evolved 13 comprehensive pathway stackable credential models to date. The next phase of this collaborative system-alignment work will shift workforce programs to a skills-based approach, with wide adoption of curriculum modules that can be combined to obtain certifications and degrees and making use of new website tools to connect people to relevant training and jobs. TEAMS website (www.connect2team.org) showcases TEAM's education and training partners and 47 occupational profiles in Energy and Advanced Manufacturing and is continually adding new content to offer "A window into the energy & advanced manufacturing landscape in the tri state region". The TEAM Consortium operates as the workforce development arm of the Tristate Shale Coalition and a \$6 Billion investment in building 3 ethane cracker plants in the region.

- WVAdultEd continued to move forward with Adult Career Pathways (ACP) Programs and Integrated Education and Training (IET) Programs. During FY21, ACP programs were completed with 1301 students. A total of 1358 students enrolled into IET Programs.

STATE'S PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM

Exit

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

Negotiated Performance Levels

Titles I and III core programs' state and local area negotiated performance levels are as follows:

WIOA Performance Measures	West Virginia	
	Final Negotiated Goals	
	PY 20	PY 21
WIOA Adults		
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	69.3%	69.3%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	69.6%	69.6%
Median Earnings	\$ 6,251.00	\$ 6,251.00
Credential Attainment Rate	78.0%	78.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	28.0%	33.0%
WIOA Dislocated Workers		
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	81.2%	81.2%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	83.2%	83.2%
Median Earnings	\$ 9,719.00	\$ 9,719.00
Credential Attainment Rate	83.0%	83.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	27.5%	35.0%
WIOA Youth		
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	63.3%	63.3%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	69.7%	69.7%
Median Earnings	\$ 3,182.00	\$ 3,182.00
Credential Attainment Rate	73.3%	73.3%
Measurable Skill Gains	34.4%	34.4%
Labor Exchange (LEX)*		
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)	61.0%	61.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)	62.5%	64.0%
Median Earnings	\$ 5,093.00	\$ 5,093.00

WVDRS continued to develop baseline levels for performance measures during PY20 for all measures except the Measurable Skills Gain (MSG) Rate. During PY20, WVDRS had an expected MSG Rate of 41.0%. During PY20, the actual MSG Rate for WVDRS was 54.9%. For PY21, WVDRS has an expected level of performance of 42.0% on the MSG Rate measure.

Fiscal and Program Monitoring/Data Validation

Financial management and program operations reviews of the WIOA activities related to the statewide system continued to be conducted annually on the seven LWDB offices, including the National Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWG) fund allocations and other NDWG awards to project operators for clean-up services caused by severe storms and flooding, job driven opportunities for the long term unemployed and career retraining for those impacted by mass layoffs in the coal industry throughout the state. The reviews are conducted to evaluate fiscal and program activity accuracy and ensure integrity and to determine their compliance with federal and state regulations. Work papers developed by WFWV staff enable reviewers to document specific information obtained from the reviewed entity for

evaluation. Other related materials are also examined, and office staff activities are observed for determining execution effectiveness. The results are then reported. The financial management portion of the on-site visits is designed to determine if expenditures are made against the appropriate cost categories; if they are within the cost limitations specified; if there is compliance with other provisions, regulations, and applicable laws; and to provide technical assistance as needed and appropriate.

The program operations portion of the on-site visits include WFWV staff verifying and validating performance data prior to federal reporting by checking the accuracy of a sample of computerized records and comparing keyed entries against the original source(s). On-site visits also include reviews of WIOA participant files, LWDB and Committee memberships, and equipment/inventory systems procedures to determine their compliance with federal provisions, regulations, and other applicable laws and to provide technical assistance as needed. WFWV continues to be committed to continuous improvement of its information and data systems and ensuring the integrity of program operations. On-site reviews of participant files revealed Findings and/or Concerns in two main categories: Eligibility and Documentation, Excessive Service Durations, and Data Mismatches or Entry Errors. While there were other broader areas, such as Case Notes and Supportive Services, all issues seemed to fit into these categories. Of the samples reviewed, it was determined that the following percentages of files had issues:

FINDINGS

Adult	12.61%
Dislocated Worker	10.92%
Youth	15.13%

CONCERNS

Adult	15.97%
Dislocated Worker	8.4%
Youth	19.33%

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

STATE FUNDED ACTIVITIES

Rapid Response

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

- 60 employers
- 2,246 dislocated workers

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the State encountered new challenges regarding how we delivered RR services from in person meetings to a virtual service delivery. Recordings were created and placed on our website to include Benefit Rights Informational Meetings (BRIMS) for the Trade Adjustment Assistance Program. Meetings were conducted by Zoom and all CDC guidelines were followed for social distancing. We also shifted our practices to mailing packets to affected workers sharing program information and services with program contacts listed. Local RR Coordinators from each region conduct follow-up to dislocated workers by phone and email when necessary. Construction Works of WV, our peer support labor liaison partner, also conducts follow-up. We receive news of businesses who will be experiencing layoffs or closure through various avenues: American Job Center staff, Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notifications (WARNs), news outlets, employees, and unemployment reports showing noticeable claims. When unemployment reports reveal noticeable claims, the coordinator investigates to determine if services are needed. At this point in time, layoff aversion strategies are handled by the West Virginia Development Office or the LWDBs.

Wagner-Peyser Activities

Developing working relationships with employers and job seekers is a vital component of West Virginia's strategic plan. WFWV collaborates with mandated partners and external customers to educate employers on available services and the promotion of WFWV and the AJC. WFWV secured 58,495 job openings with 39,866 job orders in PY20. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of employers using our services decreased as many businesses temporarily closed, permanently shut down or downsized.

NATIONAL DISLOCATED WORKER GRANTS

WFWV continued to administer five NDWG awarded by the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) and was awarded one new grant, COVID-19, during PY20. The data used to apply for these discretionary grants and to project the number of participants to serve with these funds is based upon RR Activities, WARNs, and UC records. More detailed information regarding each NDWG is outlined below.

WV Statewide Coal Mining II NDWG-With the large number of mine closures and subsequent layoffs that have already occurred and the projection there will be on-going permanent downsizing statewide in the mining industry. This grant is to provide training programs that will refocus this target population to career pathways outside of the mining industry and long-term re-employment opportunities is a continuation of the previous Coal Mining Grant that completed and closed June 30, 2018. The Coal Mining II grant was awarded on March 12, 2018, in the amount of \$1,056,000.00 from the US DOL, to continue providing re-employment/re-training services to the coal miners who are still being impacted by mass layoffs and mine closures. On September 26, 2019, a supplemental funding modification request was approved by USDOL awarding \$1,056,000 in additional funds and a grant performance period extension to March 31, 2020. On April 16, 2020, \$2,429,090.00 was awarded and the performance period was extended until March 31, 2022. The projected number to serve under this grant is 368 which includes participants enrolled in ITA services and those receiving only Individualized Career Services. The current period of performance is now March 12, 2018, to March 31, 2022. Below are the statistics as of June 30, 2021:

- 370 dislocated coal miners/displaced homemakers registered since July 1, 2020.
- 247 enrolled in training

- 248 received supportive services
- 305 soft exited
- 172 entered employment after exit

2018 Severe Storm/Eastern Panhandle NDWG-Based on the severe storms, flooding, landslides, and mudslides that took place on May 28, 2018, to June 3, 2018, a FEMA Disaster Declaration was issued July 12, 2018. The following seven counties were affected by the disaster: Grant, Hampshire, Hardy, Jefferson, Mineral, Morgan, and Pendleton. A total of 76 worksites, that included streams, rivers, culverts, city parks and public areas, were identified for clean-up and debris removal. A request for funds to provide temporary disaster relief employment in the counties affected was submitted to USDOL and a grant was awarded for \$975,000.00 on September 14, 2018, with a period of performance from October 1, 2018, to September 30, 2019. This grant was to serve 60 participants. On September 3, 2019, a modification requesting additional time was submitted to USDOL for a period of performance extension and it was approved. The new period of performance is October 1, 2018, to June 30, 2020. Below are the statistics as of June 30, 2021:

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

2018 Severe Storm/Ohio Valley Region NDWG-Based on the severe storms, flooding, landslides, and mudslides that took place on February 14 to 20, 2018, a FEMA Disaster Declaration was issued on April 17, 2018. The following 21 counties were affected by the disaster: Brooke, Cabell, Calhoun, Doddridge, Hancock, Harrison, Lincoln, Logan, Marshall, Mason, Monongalia, Ohio, Pleasants, Preston, Ritchie, Taylor, Tyler, Wayne, Wetzel, Wirt, and Wood counties. A total of 165 city parks and public areas were identified and included in clean-up and debris removal activities. A request for funds to provide temporary disaster relief employment in the counties affected was submitted to USDOL and WFWV was awarded \$2,500,000.00 on September 14, 2018, with an initial increment in the amount of \$833,325.00. The period of performance was October 1, 2018, to September 30, 2019. The number of participants to be served was 140. On June 13, 2019, a modification requesting a second supplement of funds in the amount of \$1,666,675.00 to continue and complete the clean-up of the worksites was submitted to USDOL. On July 26, 2019, an increment of \$800,000.00 was awarded. On September 26, 2019, a modification for a period of performance extension was approved extending the period of performance until September 30, 2020. On October 31, 2019, modification requesting the remainder of the increment in the amount of \$866,675.00 was submitted. On December 5, 2020, it was approved. The period of performance is now October 1, 2018-September 30, 2020. Below are the statistics as of June 30, 2021.

- 125 participants enrolled in temporary disaster relief employment
- 125 soft exited

2019 Severe Storm NDWG-Based on the severe storms, flooding, landslides, and mudslides that took place on June 29-30, 2019, a FEMA Disaster Declaration was issued on September 3, 2019, for the following five counties: Grant, Pendleton, Preston, Randolph, and Tucker. A total of 165 worksites that included streams, rivers, culverts, city parks and public areas were identified and included in clean-up and debris removal activities. A request for funding was submitted to USDOL and \$975,000.00 was

awarded on August 16, 2019, with a period of performance of September 18, 2019-September 30, 2020. The number of participants to be served with this grant is 65.

National Health Emergency-Disaster Recovery National Dislocated Worker Grants to address the Opioid Crisis-This is a special grant based on the Secretary of Health and Human Services, at the White House's direction, declaring a national public health emergency. This grant was submitted October 5, 2018, and awarded to WFWV on May 24, 2019, in the amount of \$10,000,000.00 with an initial increment amount of \$3,333,333.00. The targeted communities to be served with this grant are Huntington Area /Cabell and Wayne Counties, Charleston Area/Kanawha & Clay Counties Beckley Area/Raleigh & Wyoming Counties, Bluefield Area/Mercer & McDowell counties, Parkersburg Area/Wood & Jackson Counties, Martinsburg Area/Berkeley & Hampshire Counties, Morgantown Area/Monongalia, Preston, Taylor, & Marion Counties and Wheeling Area/Northern Panhandle. This grant offers disaster-relief employment, training activities, and supportive services, to address economic and workforce impacts related to widespread opioid use, addiction, and overdose. It also provides temporary employment opportunities aimed at alleviating humanitarian and other needs created by the opioid crisis. This grant provides services to reintegrate eligible participants affected by the crisis into the workforce. The grant also trains individuals to work in areas such as mental health treatment, addiction treatment, and pain management. The total number of participants to serve in this grant will be 534. The period of performance is July 1, 2019-June 30, 2022. In June of 2020, WorkForce West Virginia awarded funding for grant activities to 4 Project Operators: HRDF, Inc serving Regions 3, 4, 6, and the Metropolitan areas of Charleston, Parkersburg, and Morgantown; Ascension Recovery Service, serving Regions 1, 2, and the Metropolitan areas of Huntington, Beckley, and Bluefield; Region 5 WDB serving Region 5 and Metropolitan area of Wheeling; Region 7 Eastern WV Community Action Agency, Inc serving, Region 7 and the Metropolitan area of Martinsburg. Below are participant statistics as of June 30, 2021:

- 172 participants enrolled in temporary disaster relief employment
- 35 participants enrolled in training
- 79 exited

COVID-19 Disaster Recovery Dislocated Worker Grant-On August 4, 2020, WFWV applied to USDOL to request emergency funds for the purpose of developing and delivering an initiative to provide temporary disaster relief employment to eligible individuals focused in areas to assist the state with efforts to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. On September 4, 2020, USDOL awarded WFWV \$1,500,000. The performance period is September 20, 2020- June 30, 2022, with 45 participants to be served with temporary disaster work relief employment. Arbor, Inc, dba Equus Workforce Solutions was awarded the funding as the sub-recipient through West Virginia's Procurement Process. Equus is focused on developing disaster temporary work relief employment opportunities in the following areas: Receptionist/Information Clerk will be placed with West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR) with work focused on scheduling COVID-19 vaccinations, "cold call" promoting the benefits of being vaccinated, and any required follow up contacts to recently vaccinated residents; Janitor/Cleaner will be placed and focused on cleaning and sanitizing state, regional, local offices, state and local public park facilities and access points, American Job Center locations within the seven (7) Workforce Development Board Regions, as well as private employers will assist in preventing the potential spread of the COVID-19 virus; and File Clerk placed with DHHR and local/regional Health Departments to focus on assisting with contract tracing focused on notifying in and potentially out state residents of exposure to the COVID-19 virus. Below are participant statistics as of June 30, 2021:

- 2 participants enrolled in temporary disaster relief employment
- 0 participants enrolled in training
- 0 exited

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

WFWV provided statewide technical assistance to LWDB career planners/staff as described below:

Session 1, January 12, 2021, Agenda Topics:

- Overview of October 2019 TA Powerpoint
 - Case Note handout
 - IEP handout
- MACC Navigation
 - Production and Development Sites
 - MACC Basic Navigation handout
 - § Reports
 - § Ad Hoc Reports
 - § Case Activity
 - § Veteran's Characteristics
 - § Printing Case Notes
 - § Document Uploads
- WFWV Webpage and Resources
 - <https://workforcewv.org/>
 - WFWV Webpage and Resources handout
 - § LMI
 - § Guidance Notices/Policies
 - § Job Seeker Steps
 - § Employer Steps

- § Career Centers
- § Partner Services
- § State Plan
- § Annual Report Narrative

Session 2, January 26, 2021, Agenda Topics:

- Overview 2018/2019 Deskaid
- Address LWDB Topic-IEP/ISS (Case Management Emphasis)
- Address State Topic-Service Durations and IEP/ISS

Session 3, February 9, 2021, Agenda Topics:

- Presentation-MACC Live Demo
- How to Create Folders
- MACC Features for Day-to-Day Work and Uploading Documents
- MACC Navigation Items
- Image Categories

Session 4, February 23, 2021, Agenda Topics:

- Resource Documents
 - The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)-A Guide for Chief Local Elected Officials (CLEOs)
 - PIRL Reporting Online Resource
- ETPL
 - ETA 9171-ETP Definitions
- Drug Testing

Session 5, March 9, 2021, Agenda Topics:

- Presentation-Monitoring Tool
 - Services
 - Local Governance Tool

Session 6, March 23, 2021, Agenda Topics:

- Region Reports (Best Practices/Initiatives etc.)
 - Region 3
 - Region 4
 - Region 5
- Address LWDB Topic-Customized Reports/Open Discussion
- Address State Topic-MACC/Open Discussion-Programmers available for TA

Session 7, April 13, 2021, Agenda Topics:

- Business Services Update
- The PIRL
- Employment Service Division Programs

Session 8, May 11, 2021, Agenda Topics:

- Performance: E-Learning Series Open Discussion

PROMISING PRACTICES

The R1WDB has seen success promoting programs and services through virtual meetings with partners and community agencies and by encouraging employers who have utilized programs to refer others. Program participation increased even during the pandemic. Virtual job fair options have opened a new avenue for recruitment of employees and allows employers to conveniently seek employees.

In Region 3, one employer was able to prevent a lay-off of employees by taking advantage of the Transitional Jobs program, which provides wage reimbursement for employees who either do not have a work history or a very spotty work history. The employer receives 14 weeks of wage incentive payments. A few employees have progressed from transitional jobs to OJT contracts with employers. At this stage, the employer has an employer/employee relationship and most likely will keep the person employed full time at the end of their training commitment. By receiving wage incentives, an employer was able to purchase a piece of equipment that allowed for expansion of his printing business.

The Employer Unemployment Compensation Contribution (EUCC) admin system was leveraged to send a message on Feb 22, 2021, promoting the HIRE Vets Medallion Program (HVMP) and the application submission deadline. The message also included HIREVets.gov and WorkForce Vets email address to obtain additional information. Emails were received almost immediately from employers who were interested in HVMP. Those emails were delegated to the closest LVER who, in turn, conducted outreach to the employer to promote the program, provide additional details and answer questions. This technique was utilized again on Apr 01, 2021, leading up to the application deadline. Over 40,000 messages were sent between the two efforts.

Wagner Peyser continues to work with LVERs, AJC partners, and the Business Services Team to contact employers and provide information on AJC services. This shared information consists of registering employers in the MACC database system to search for qualified applicants, OJT information, WOTC information, Federal Bonding, and any other services partners may offer employers to assist in finding qualified applicants. WFWV has provided access to a virtual platform for the Workforce Development Boards to use for employers to conduct virtual job fairs.

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

During PY20, WVDRS continued to work with agencies within the criminal justice system to improve services to individuals with disabilities who are justice involved. WVDRS was actively involved in various reentry councils across the state. Partnerships were also developed with organizations such as CORE (Creating Opportunities for Recovery Employment) and staff participated in the Criminal Justice Reform Summit and exhibited at the WV Peer Recovery Support Services Conference. WVDRS also continued partnering with and participating on various statewide councils including the Olmstead Council, the WVABLE Advisory Committee, and the TBI Advisory Board.

During PY20, Career Exploration Opportunity (CEO) Summits were held across the state, as well as virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. WVDRS worked with Community Rehabilitation Programs

(CRPs) around the state to provide the Summits and other employment-related services in as many local areas as possible including virtual services to over 200 students with disabilities. Attendance for the CEO Summits was approximately 285 students, covering all six WVDRS districts. A concerted effort was made to introduce STEAM to students in the CEO Summits. Topics covered included career planning, career preparation, Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance information, understanding the importance of necessary personal documents, communication, conflict management, employer expectations, attendance and punctuality, timeliness of task completion, being able to work without supervision, positive work ethic, managing multiple tasks, high-growth jobs, personal brand, and job hunting tools such as resumes, cover letters, interviews, and digital profiles. Efficiency was enhanced by developing and providing services virtually, in addition to partnerships at various locations in which partners contributed free classroom space, facility or campus tours, information, or other services.

West Virginia was selected as one of only six states to participate in the IET Program in Corrections Technical Assistance (TA) pilot project through the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE). The purpose of the initiative is to help correctional adult education programs develop and implement Integrated Education and Training (IET) Programs. WVAdultEd Correctional Instructors are funded through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act and follow the West Virginia Department of Education, Office of Adult Education (WVAdultEd) Integrated Education and Training (IET) Program policies and approach. WVAdultEd programs throughout WV correctional facilities are known as the West Virginia Schools of Diversion and Transition (WVSDT) and provide educational services to over 6,000 juveniles and adults at 12 prisons and 10 regional jails throughout the state. WVSDT was chosen for the IET Program in Corrections Technical Assistance (TA) pilot project and is receiving coaching, training, and customized TA. The lessons learned from this initiative will be summarized in an IET Program manual that will be shared nationwide with the field in 2022.

WorkForce West Virginia Collaboration and Partnering

The WV Legislature continued to work closely with the WFWV system during PY20. Legislators continually receive updates and information from various partners within the WFWV system via an oversight commission composed of members from both the Senate and House of Delegates. In 2007, legislation passed consolidating the “State of the One-Stop System” report, and the “Funding Stream Report”. This consolidation allows WFWV to identify all workforce development training funds within the state and how they may or may not be distributed throughout the AJCs. WFWV continues to update the State of the State report as appropriate.

WFWV leadership worked diligently with USDOL VETS to strategically place veterans’ representatives throughout WV. WFWV employed 9 DVOPS and 7 LVERS in PY20 to provide coverage to every WFWV AJC for provision of services to eligible veterans and eligible persons. WFWV DVOPS perform outreach to find and provide intensive services to eligible veterans with significant barriers to employment. Through the provision of intensive services, veterans gain long term sustainable employment. WFWV employs four LVERs who provide outreach to business and industry to promote the hiring of veterans. They also facilitate the veterans’ program within WFWV.

Drug Testing

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

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

A total of 1,397 drug screenings were completed during PY20. Only 1.7% of these screenings resulted in a sanction.

On-line Marketing and Services

During PY20, the agency website www.workforcewv.org had over 11.444 million page views, an average of 953,666 page-views per month. Website visitors spent the most time searching on WFWV's Unemployment pages.

SUCCESS STORIES

- A local veteran was referred to the DVOPS as he served more than 180 days active military duty and had Significant Barriers to Employment (SBEs) which included being low-income and prior incarceration. He was originally enrolled upon his release from incarceration in July of 2015 as a condition of his stay at Dismas Charities, a residential community re-entry program, located in the greater Kanawha Valley. The veteran needed both immediate and stable employment, and the DVOPS had to tailor their approach to meet the veteran's needs considering probational limitations in that use of technology and the types of employment he could accept were both restricted. To accomplish his goals, an email address was established with the sole purpose of submitting online employment applications. The DVOPS would monitor the email account several times each week on behalf of the veteran and provide him with status updates. Under the direct supervision of the DVOPS, the veteran would submit online applications during his weekly visits to the office; however, the local AJCs were closed to the public in March of 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic which put the burden of completing any online applications solely with the DVOPS. Multiple applications were submitted each week to various employers.

He was informed about the tools available to assist him during the hiring process, including the Federal Bonding Program (FBP) and the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC), and coaching was provided to assist him with addressing his background issues with employers. Still, there were two occasions when he obtained employment but was quickly released when the results of his background screening revealed that he was not forthcoming about his involvement in the justice system. On Nov 16th an opportunity with Goodwill presented itself. Through determination and patience, he secured meaningful employment with Goodwill Industries of Kanawha Valley, Inc., as a stocker at their Oak Hill retail location working 30 hours per week initially and earning \$10.04/hr. Employment began on Dec 7, 2020. The position was offered to the veteran only after the employer received the results of a background screening.

- After being in active addiction for seven years, she had burned several bridges with the limited employment options in her small area. She had held a few part-time jobs, but her number one priority during this time was always feeding her addiction. Thankfully, she was finally able to break free of this vicious cycle when she was sentenced to drug court. However, she found it nearly impossible to find a job near her small town due to her actions while she was still in active addiction. Finally clean and ready to start a new life, none of the local employers were willing to take a second chance on her. She heard about the Empowered Employment (EE) program through word of mouth while at Drug Court and found out the place where she was attending meetings was interested in becoming one of the worksites. She flourished at her host site and in her recovery and was able to work in an environment where her passion was welcomed. She developed great relationships, and when the Director position came open, she was the obvious candidate for the job. Now, she runs the site and is ready to help others along in their journey by accepting EE participants of her own.
- The VP of a security company was interested in further developing a group of employees which would allow them to offer additional services to customers. After researching, an online training program was found that would serve the purpose. She inquired about the possibility of Incumbent Worker Training from the LWDB for assistance in this effort. After providing the requested documentation, submitting her course outline from, and offering her list of potential trainees, the plans moved forward. On August 5, 2020, the course was presented to 6 trainees. Afterwards, the participants were tested, and each passed with excellent scores. They obtained their NFPA Standard #10 Certifications and were licensed by the WV State Fire Marshal's Office for 3 years. This upskilling and the additional service for the customers this company could now provide was a win/win for this area. The owner was pleased with the ease of the process and would recommend this program for the training needs of other businesses.
- Mountain Laurel Learning Cooperative located in Tucker County, WV, is a Montessori Learning center/child-care facility for children ages 3-12. In the process of expanding its staff, the Center turned to developing a DOL approved apprenticeship program for Apprenticeship Teacher Aide/Montessori Primary/Elementary/Assistant Guide. One of the potential hires under the apprenticeship program was a participant determined eligible under the WIOA Adult Funding

Stream. The participant had no prior work experience in elementary education but was deemed a good fit for the Cooperative—they just needed the training. The participant was enrolled and started out with the Montessori certified online classroom training, paid for through an Individual Training Account, which the participant completed in July of 2021. As part of the apprenticeship, OJT is a requirement, which the participant started in January of 2021, and has since completed. The Center requested the participant to attend an additional training through an online course on how to best set up a Montessori classroom, which was approved and paid for through Incumbent Worker Training. This course was completed, and a certificate of completion received in September of 2021. The Center made full use of WIOA programs to provide intensive training for this participant, resulting in them obtaining a trained and valuable member of their staff and providing permanent employment for the participant.

- One Youth participant resided at the Kenneth Honey Rubenstein Juvenile Center in Thomas, WV while enrolled in the WIOA Youth Program. During his time in the Youth Ready program, the participant obtained a NCCER Certification in Building Construction and Asbestos Contractor/Supervisor Certificate. He also participated as a Page in the Legislative Session, volunteered in the Rubenstein Center kitchen and with the Grounds Crew, and worked on the maintenance crews at Blackwater Falls State Park and the City of Thomas. During his downtime he learned how to speak German. In July of 2020 the youth was released from the Kenneth Honey Rubenstein Center and moved back to his hometown and in December of that year, enlisted in the Army. He has since completed his basic training in Savannah, Georgia and is now an 11 Bravo, which is an infantryman in the United States Army. He is stationed at Fort Drum in Watertown, NY where he will continue training for the next three years. Once his training is complete in NY, he plans on reenlisting to go to Alaska, then enlist in the Army Reserves with a future goal of becoming a state trooper.