



WIOA & WP Annual Report PY 2023

Puerto Rico's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

DEPARTAMENTO DEL
**TRABAJO Y
RECURSOS HUMANOS**



CONEXIÓN
LABORAL

December 2nd, 2024

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Puerto Rico's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, WIOA 2023 Annual Report Narrative – Titles I and III

The **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)** aims to provide workforce development activities to help youth with barriers to education, adults and dislocated workers acquire the skills, competencies, and credentials necessary to obtain and retain employment in addition to long-term economic self-sufficiency. The Workforce Development Program under Title I of WIOA works closely with the Employment Services provided under Title III (Wagner-Peyser Act) to strengthen the public workforce system. This partnership ensures a comprehensive approach by integrating additional required partners, enabling job seekers to access employment opportunities, education, training, and support services. Together, Titles I and III promote labor market growth and a cohesive strategy for workforce development.

This 2023 Annual Report Narrative is structured in alignment with Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 5-18, with the listed prompts preceding each response.

Introduction

On behalf of the Governor of Puerto Rico, the Honorable Pedro R. Pierluisi-Urrutia, the two agencies leading WIOA efforts, the Puerto Rico Department of Economic Development and Commerce (PRDEDC) and the Department of Labor and Human Resources (PRDOLHR) and the Puerto Rico Workforce Development Board, we are pleased to present the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Annual Narrative Report for the Program Year 2023. WIOA requires that each state that receives an allotment under WIOA Section 127 (Youth) or Section 132 (Adult and Dislocated Workers) prepare and submit an Annual Report on performance progress to the United States Secretary of Labor. This submission adheres to the guidelines outlined in the Training and Employment Letter (TEGL) 5-18, issued on November 7, 2018. The WIOA Annual Report is based on the Workforce Integrated Performance System (WIPS) files.

This report includes participants who received formula financially assisted services and statewide reserve funds under **Youth, Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs**. In addition, it includes services provided under the Employment Service of the Wagner Peyser Act. Additionally, this report includes a detailed list of waivers approved during the Program Year, along with an analysis of the activities conducted under these waivers, and the outcomes achieved at both state and local levels. Moreover, the report highlights initiatives and achievements, including those under the Rapid Response Program, the Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP), Special Projects funded by the Governor's State Reserve Funds, Local Areas accomplishments, Success Stories and Title III Wagner Peyser Employment Service.

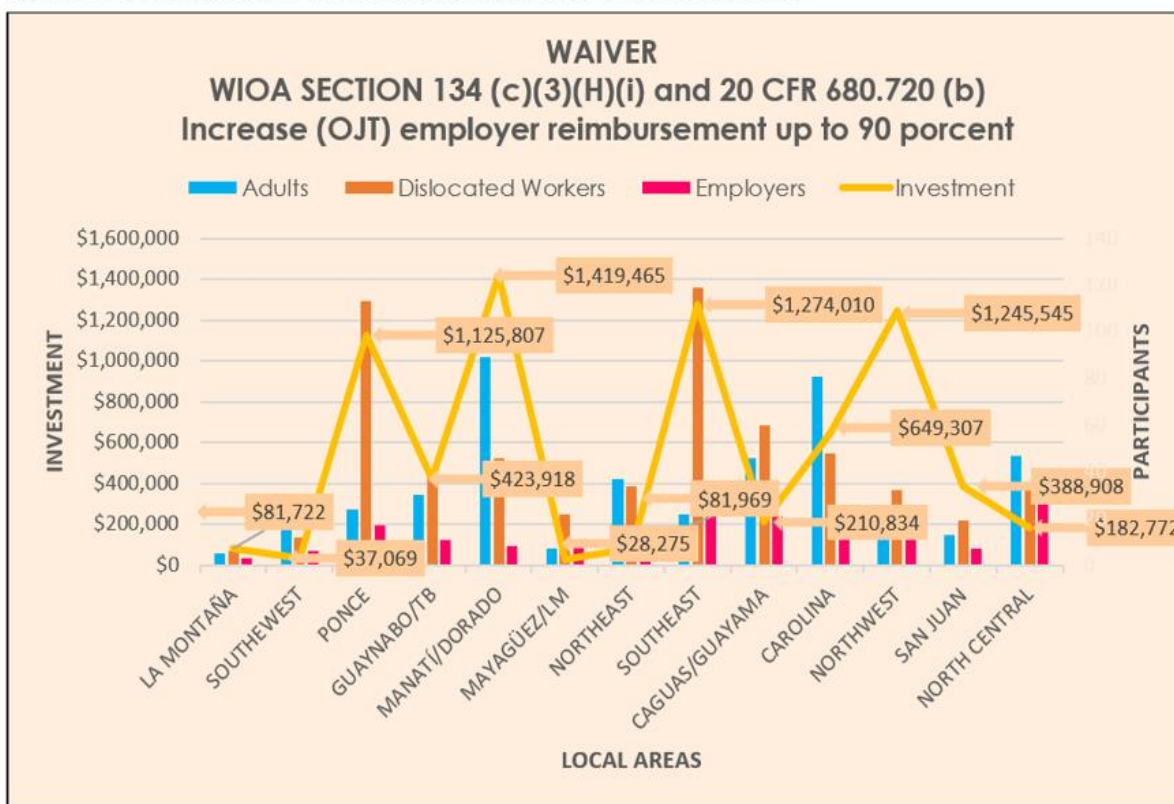
Moving forward, the Puerto Rico Workforce System will continue to aid in the provision of reliable and cutting-edge training and work opportunities for all eligible individuals under WIOA that are eager to learn new or improve existing skills and/or obtain a job.

State Waivers

WAIVER OF WIOA SECTION 134(C)(3)(H)(I) AND 20 CFR 680.720(B) TO INCREASE ON THE JOB TRAINING (OJT) EMPLOYER REIMBURSEMENT UP TO 90%.

This waiver will stay in effect until June 30, 2025. It has proved to be very valuable to support local boards in attracting new employers. As an example, during PY 2023, thirteen (13) local boards took advantage of this waiver resulting in 181 employers and 1,017 employees served. Of the total of participants served, 432 were adults and 585 dislocated workers. The total investment under this waiver was \$7,149,601. The waiver has been responsible for increasing employee and employer participation with extremely satisfactory outcomes.

Table 1: PY 2023 Total Services and Investment Under Waiver to WIOA Section 134



To comply with this waiver the state board developed a public policy related to Work-Based Training activities. The policy ensures that the local and state corresponding entities prioritize the Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) training model. The waiver allowed Puerto Rico's businesses to adapt to technological and general marketplace changes by improving their capabilities

to expand and remain competitive with affordable on-the-job training (OJT) options exclusively designed to achieve their specific development goals. The reduced match requirement for employers, particularly new start-ups and small to medium-sized businesses, provided an attractive and cost-effective financial incentive, increasing the opportunity to utilize the OJT model for hiring and training new workers. From an economic development standpoint, increasing the number and improving the quality of the labor force stimulates the competence and competitiveness of Puerto Rico's economy.

Based on the labor and business sector backgrounds, the positive impact of this waiver increased the opportunity to promote job skills improvement, job creation, and business sustainability of various economic regions of Puerto Rico. As a result, for PY 2024, an increase in the participation of employers, adults, dislocated workers, and youth, as well as in the investment of funds, is expected.

WAIVER OF THE REQUIREMENT UNDER WIOA 129(A)(4), AND CONSISTENT WITH 20 CFR 681.410 THAT STATES AND LOCAL AREAS MUST EXPEND A MINIMUM OF 75 PERCENT OUT-OF-SCHOOL-FORMULA FUNDS ON YOUTH WORKFORCE ACTIVITIES FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH (OSY).

For PY 2023, the waiver allowing Puerto Rico to lower the OSY expenditure requirement to 50 percent for both Governor's Reserve Youth Funds and Local Youth Formula Funds was in effect. This waiver has been renewed through June 30, 2025. The approval of waivers in previous years had a significant effect in increasing participation. The thirteen (13) local areas that used the waiver in the aggregate reported expenditures of \$6,873,541 during PY 2023. Funds inversion was almost even with OSY with 51% and ISY with 49%.

Puerto Rico continues its efforts to provide employment and education services for out-of-school youth (OSY). New generations present new challenges making it necessary to promote economic and self-sufficiency in creative and holistic ways to foster youth *skills* that will *empower* them to work through the barriers to employment and provide in and out of school youth access to education.

Effectiveness in Serving

The PRDEDC has adopted Retention with the Same Employer in the 2nd and 4th quarters after exit as the performance indicator measure since PY 2023. A 72.8% of employment retention with the same employer was achieved.

Evaluation and Research Projects

(a) current or planned evaluation and related research projects, including methodologies used

Platform with Social Impact (PSI), alongside Jobs for the Future (JFF), carried out the first phase of their *Incubate a State* project for Puerto Rico. During this first

phase, an evaluation of the current work environment and identification of needs for the development of strategies that promote economic growth and competitiveness was carried out. This evaluation sought to understand labor market trends, economic conditions, and the needs of the workforce system in Puerto Rico related to economic security and family mobility in Puerto Rico. Additionally, an in-depth evaluation of local statutes and regulations regarding family investment policies in Puerto Rico and how those policies impact economic security and family mobility, including tax credits, benefits, access to childcare, and the increase in human capital, were part of the study.

Additionally, Puerto Rico has been accepted into the DOL-ETA's Evaluation Peer Learning Cohort (EvalPLC) for PY 2024. This initiative represents a commitment by WIOA core partners in Puerto Rico to strengthen evaluation capabilities, fulfill this important requirement, and lay the foundation for future evaluation efforts that support continuous program improvement.

(b) Efforts to coordinate the development of such projects with WIOA core programs, other state agencies and local boards





As the EVALPLC forum opportunity establishes, the learning cohort experience will provide the opportunities to expand collaborations with other WIOA core programs. This initiative seeks to enhance the network of this federal-state partnership providing the evidence-based development needed to address Puerto Rico's evolving labor force needs and improve workforce development approaches.

(c) State efforts to provide data, survey responses, and 3 timely site visits for Federal evaluations

Through PY 2023, continuous data entry into the PRIS database was conducted with the State Planning Office performing constant data validation. No surveys were conducted during this period.

(d) Any continuous improvement strategies utilizing results from studies and evidence-based practices evaluated

Although no study was commissioned during PY 2023, the Premier Study conducted on PY 2022 and other federal best practices and recommendations by DOL-R1 have allowed Puerto Rico to establish a blueprint to begin standardizing process' and procedures within all local areas. Policies have been updated, new policies have been enacted, and the State Sanctions Regulations, as well as the State Monitoring Tools, are being evaluated and redesigned. In addition, as of October 2023, the US DOL and PRDEDC began to offer state and local areas, a series of SMART trainings, with the aim of continuing to improve compliance with the WIOA requirements. During PY 2023 the following SMART training courses were provided:

-  October 18th, 2023 – Cost Allocation and Indirect Costs
-  December 12, 2023 – Cost Principles and Cost Classification
-  April 11th, 2024 – Budget Management and Grant Modification
-  June 25th, 2024- Grants Management, Training and Employment Management

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction feedback has been gathered through informal ways, however, there is a policy under development to establish a simple methodology which will include questions/opinions, frequency and tabulation procedures.

State's Unified or Combined State Plan and Progress

Progress Made in Achieving the State's Strategic Vision and Goals

As outlined in the Unified State Plan, Puerto Rico has made significant strides in achieving its strategic vision for workforce development. Expanding access to education, training, and employment opportunities for all populations, especially those with barriers to employment, continues to guide our efforts. Many accomplishments can be mentioned, but the following are considered key in aligning the state's vision and goals:

Expansion of Apprenticeship Programs

The number of apprenticeship programs had been expanded, offering participants structured pathways to acquire in-demand skills and secure well-paying jobs. This aligns with the goal of preparing an educated and skilled workforce while meeting employers' needs.

Case Managers Training

A comprehensive training initiative for case managers began in PY 2023, aimed at enhancing their certification and equipping them with the knowledge and specific skills needed to deliver better services to participants. This directly supports the objective of improving assistance and follow-up services.

WIOA Convention

The annual WIOA Convention brought together core partners and stakeholders, providing them with training on WIOA related topics. Networking sessions improve inter-agency collaborations, coordination and partnerships among the American Job Centers which will result in enhancing the services for both serving both participants and employers.

Inter-Agency Coordination

Periodic meetings with key agencies, including the Puerto Rico Department of Labor, the Department of Education, and the Vocational Rehabilitation Administration, have enhanced collaboration. These efforts ensure the

alignment of services and resources to address the diverse needs of individuals and employers.

 **Co-Enrollment Policy**

The approval and implementation of a co-enrollment policy have streamlined service delivery by integrating resources across programs. This approach maximizes the impact of federal and state funds, enhancing outcomes for participants with complex needs.

 **Investments in Technology and Infrastructure**

Modernization efforts, including upgrades to information systems, have improved transparency, efficiency, and accessibility for stakeholders. These advancements are critical to maintaining agility and competitiveness in the workforce system.

Puerto Rico remains committed to fostering a skilled and responsive workforce through innovative strategies and strong partnerships. The achievements to date demonstrate an ongoing dedication to creating an inclusive, agile, and competitive workforce system that meets the needs of employers and supports the economic growth of the island.

Performance Accountability System

- (a) Any specific state performance measures or goals and progress towards meeting them

Table 2: PY 2023 Puerto Rico Performance Report

| Puerto Rico Annual Performance Report PY 2023 | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------|-------------|--|-------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| WIOA PERFORMANCE INDICATORS | Performance Indicator | Numerator | Denominator | Performance | Score | Difference (negative cases) | Cases to Achieve 100% of Goal | Cases to Achieve 90% of Goal | Exceeds, meets or Does Not Exceed? | Cohort date |
| ADULTS PROGRAM | | | | | | | | | | |
| Employment Rate 2nd Quarter | 53.5% | 670 | 933 | 67.5% | 126 | 323 | N/A | N/A | Exceeds | Periodo entre: 7/1/2022 - 6/30/2023 |
| Employment Rate 4th Quarter | 49.0% | 645 | 938 | 68.8% | 140 | 293 | N/A | N/A | Exceeds | Periodo entre: 1/1/2022 - 12/31/2022 |
| Median earnings 2nd Quarter | \$2,500 | \$3,993 | | \$3,993 | 160 | | | | Exceeds | Periodo entre: 7/1/2022 - 6/30/2023 |
| Credential Attainment Rate | 42.0% | 73 | 114 | 64.0% | 152 | 41 | N/A | N/A | Exceeds | Periodo entre: 1/1/2022 - 12/31/2022 |
| Measurable Skill Gains Rate | 80.0% | 149 | 169 | 88.2% | 110 | 20 | N/A | N/A | Exceeds | Periodo entre: 7/1/2023 - 6/30/2024 |
| Effectiveness in Serving Employers | Pre-established | | | | | | | | | |
| DISLOCATED WORKERS PROGRAM | | | | | | | | | | |
| 0 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Employment Rate 2nd Quarter | 52.5% | 426 | 687 | 62.0% | 118 | 261 | N/A | N/A | Exceeds | Periodo entre: 7/1/2022 - 6/30/2023 |
| Employment Rate 4th Quarter | 52.0% | 442 | 670 | 66.0% | 127 | 228 | N/A | N/A | Exceeds | Periodo entre: 1/1/2022 - 12/31/2022 |
| Median Earnings 2nd Quarter | \$2,600 | \$3,705 | | \$3,705 | 143 | | | | Exceeds | Periodo entre: 7/1/2022 - 6/30/2023 |
| Credential Attainment Rate | 51.0% | 57 | 85 | 67.1% | 132 | 28 | N/A | N/A | Exceeds | Periodo entre: 1/1/2022 - 12/31/2022 |
| Measurable Skill Gains Rate | 58.0% | 180 | 229 | 78.6% | 136 | 49 | N/A | N/A | Exceeds | Periodo entre: 7/1/2023 - 6/30/2024 |
| Effectiveness in Serving Employers | Pre-established | | | | | | | | | |
| YOUTH PROGRAM | | | | | | | | | | |
| 0 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Employment/Education Rate 2nd Quarter | 50.0% | 154 | 245 | 62.9% | 126 | 91 | N/A | N/A | Exceeds | Periodo entre: 7/1/2022 - 6/30/2023 |
| Employment/Education Rate 4th Quarter | 50.0% | 144 | 223 | 64.6% | 129 | 79 | N/A | N/A | Exceeds | Periodo entre: 1/1/2022 - 12/31/2022 |
| Median earnings 2nd Quarter | \$1,800 | \$2,920 | | \$2,920 | 162 | | | | Exceeds | Periodo entre: 7/1/2022 - 6/30/2023 |
| Credential Attainment Rate | 20.0% | 38 | 81 | 46.9% | 235 | 43 | N/A | N/A | Exceeds | Periodo entre: 1/1/2022 - 12/31/2022 |
| Measurable Skill Gains Rate | 32.1% | 49 | 73 | 67.1% | 209 | 24 | N/A | N/A | Exceeds | Periodo entre: 7/1/2023 - 6/30/2024 |
| Effectiveness in Serving Employers | Pre-established | | | | | | | | | |
| Performance Indicators Exceeded (scoring of 100 or more) | | 15 | | *Records with exit dates on/or after the start date plus participants without an entered exit date | | | | | | |
| Performance Indicators Attained (scoring from 99 to 90) | | 0 | | | | | | | | |
| Performance Indicators Not Attained (scoring is less than 90) | | 0 | | | | | | | | |
| Performance Indicators Without Data to Calculate | | 0 | | | | | | | | |

- (b) Any performance deficiencies on the primary indicators of performance, which may include descriptions of any factors impacting performance

The delay of local areas to enter data in a timely and accurate manner limits the reliability and the up-to-date queries and data extraction which are indispensable for decision making and reporting. Emphasis will be placed on data reporting and data quality. Additionally, during PY 2023, there were challenges in meeting the Measurable Skills Gain indicator in the Adult Program. To address this, technical assistance was provided to local areas to ensure they understood the correct methods for collecting this information, with the goal of meeting the performance indicator.

- (c) The state's common exit policy, including which ETA-funded partner programs are included in the state's common exit policy

The Puerto Rico common Exit Policy is in its final draft, and it is expected to be approved and implemented by PY 2024. It will be executed through the PRIS

2.0 database. This policy requires that an individual participating in any program covered by the common exit policy will not be exited (and thus no counted in performance metrics) until the individual is no longer being served by any program to which the policy applies.

- (d) Negotiated performance levels for local areas for titles I and III core programs for program years 2022-2023.

Table 3: Negotiated Performance Levels

| WIOA PERFORMANCE LEVELS | PY 2022 | PY 2023 |
|---------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Second Quarter Employment Rate | 53.5% | 54% |
| Fourth Quarter Employment Rate | 40% | 51% |
| Median Earnings | \$2,500.00 | \$2,600.00 |
| Credentials Achievement Rate | 42% | 42.5% |
| Measurable Skills Gain | 80% | 80.5% |
| Effectiveness Serving Employers | N/A | N/A |

- (e) The state's approach to data validation and ensuring data integrity, including a description of the methodology of any validation activities that occurred

The Puerto Rico Data Validation Policy – DDEC-WIOA 05-2021 includes written procedures, regular training, monitoring protocols, review of program data, documentation, and regular assessment. For further review, refer to attachment 2 for this report.

Activities Provided by State Funds/Funds Reserved by the Governor

Funds reserved by the Governor of Puerto Rico were invested in temporary employment activities in the public sector under waivers approved by the USDOL. These activities were carried out through twelve (12) local areas to address critical needs in the community which are heightened during emergencies.







One initiative focused on caregiving for senior citizens employing healthcare aides under a waiver granted in response to Hurricanes Irma and María. Another initiative addressed the public health emergency caused by the dengue outbreak in Puerto Rico. Temporary employment included positions such as community health workers, reuse and recyclable material collectors and recycling coordinators. These temporary employment opportunities were funded to aid municipalities facing the emergency ensuring a safer public space through waste removal, elimination of stagnant waters, and reducing mosquito breeding grounds to reduce the dengue virus spread. The combined initiatives created 2,906 temporary positions with an investment of \$13,037,734.61 during PY 2023. These initiatives will continue through December 31, 2024.

On-the-Job Training Customized Training and/or Training under the Registered Apprenticeship Program




Work-based training activities, including On-The-Job Training, Customized Training and/or training under the Registered Apprenticeship Program resulted in the creation of 811 new jobs. As part of the strategy to prevent layoffs or closures, the Workforce Development Program has offered the Registered Apprenticeship Program as an excellent alternative for employers who need to retrain their workforce due to the acquisition of new technology, new processes, and/or the requirements of new or advanced skills. The following list details the initiative carried out with each company under the Apprenticeship Program:

-  **WEST, LLC** – A local company founded in 1970 operating in the construction industry with 144 regular employees and facilities located in the west side of the island at Mayagüez and the San Juan metropolitan area. West, LLC requested \$190,341.35 of WIOA funds to offer a Registered Apprenticeship Program to three (3) new workers and four (4) incumbent workers. The program included 2,000 hours of On-the-Job Learning (OJL) and 198 hours of Related Instruction. The apprentices received a National Certification in Home Improvement Labor. This project was reimbursed through a federal waiver, allowing for an increased reimbursement for the employer, up to 75%, for work-based apprenticeship activities.
-  **APPLICA** – Located in San Juan, the company has 38 employees. APPLICA specializes in medical record digitization, medical billing data entry, design and supply of digital products and systems for document management, data handling, electronic information management, information connectivity, data entry and classification, report preparation, statistical data, security, and information distribution. workers under the Registered Apprenticeship Program, APPLICA re-trained 33 incumbent workers with 4,000 hours of on-the-job learning with an investment of \$1,260,702.00 with 90% of reimbursement. Each worker received a Photocomposing Perforator-MA or Data Entry Specialist certification.
-  **Kandor Manufacturing** – A local company at Arecibo incorporated in 1997, dedicated to the garment industry, specifically to uniform manufacturing for the US Department of the Defense. Kandor had an active workforce of 240 people. It recruited 160 new Industrial Sewing Operators and re-trained 190 incumbent workers under the Registered Apprenticeship Program. Through this training, apprentices received 2,310 hours of On-the-Job Learning and 150 hours of Related Instruction. The investment was \$5,881,786.88. Apprentices received a national certification from the Regional Apprenticeship Office.
-  **Nouvelle D'Spa** – A company in San Juan dedicated to providing a variety of services aimed at relaxation, rejuvenation, and overall well-being. Founded in Puerto Rico in 2008, Nouvelle D'Spa had 39 employees and

requested \$319,907.50 to offer a Registered Apprenticeship with Related Instruction for 8 incumbent workers in the positions of Spa Operations Manager, Spa Front Desk and Esthetician.

-  **Planet Solar Antilles, LLC** – A local company founded in 2013 located in Caguas, dedicated to providing services for energy independence and solar related. The company employed 150 people and requested a Registered Apprenticeship Program for 159 new employees and 103 incumbent workers. The total cost of the apprenticeship program was \$10,422,000.00. The workers underwent 4,000 hours of On-the-Job Learning and were certified in various related occupations.
-  **Beauty Artist Aesthetic** – A local company in Carolina specializing in aesthetics, particularly facial rejuvenation, as well as offering hair treatment services. Founded in 2022, the company had 2 employees recruited 5 new employees for the position of estheticians and re-train 2 incumbent workers under the Registered Apprenticeship Program with 2,000 hours of On-the-Job Learning (OJL) and 144 hours of Related Instruction. The total cost of the training was \$164,578.14 from Reserve Funds.
-  **Antilles Cleaning Services** – Antilles Cleaning Services a company based in Guaynabo, provides pharmaceutical and manufacturing industries with specialized cleaning services. With 1,053 employees, the company sought to expand its workforce and recruited 235 new employees for the position of Maintenance(janitor) Technician. They requested \$1,026,950.00 to train these new workers through On-the-Job Training (OJT) activities.
-  **North Janitorial Services** – The company based in Guaynabo specializes in cleaning services in in hospitals and health clinics. With 264 employees, the company recruited 85 new employees for the position of Maintenance Technicians. A total of \$371,450.00 was awarded by State Reserve funds to train these new workers.
-  **North Enterprise** – Provides cleaning, landscaping, and pest control services for commercial facilities and is in Guaynabo Municipality. With 225 employees, the company recruited 20 new employees for the position of Maintenance Technician. A total of \$131,100.00 was awarded by State Reserve funds to train these new workers.
-  **Q Construction & Maintenance** – A company founded in 2009 in Camuy that develops private and federal construction projects, both residential and commercial. It employed approximately 18 workers and planned to retrain its workforce through a Registered Apprenticeship Program to enhance its workforce skills to address new challenges and trends. It received \$501,112.00 to offer 8 incumbent workers 4,000 hours of On-the-Job Learning (OJL) and 288 hours of Related Instruction. Workers received a national certification in Carpentry.



- 
Caguas Arcade Facility – Established in Puerto Rico in 2021. The company operates an entertainment center specializing in bowling alleys and rope mazes. The company employed 1 person and recruited 94 new employees. A total allocation of \$523,564.56 was granted to provide On-the-Job Training (OJT) to the new employees.
- 
Caguas Karting Facility – A company located in Caguas founded in Puerto Rico in 2021. The company operates an entertainment center dedicated to electric go-kart tracks. It employed one person and recruited 50 new employees. A total of \$331,308.00, with 90% reimbursement, were allocated to recruit and train the new workers through On-the-Job Training (OJT).
- 
Politécnico Amigó – A non-profit organization incorporated in 1999, offering vocational training programs targeted at teenagers and young people ages 16 to 21, both in and out of school. Services were provided to 50 school dropouts and/or at-risk youth who are still in school. The goal is that they can earn an academic degree and up to two credentials in one of the following vocational courses: beauty apprentice, pet grooming, barber apprentice, computer assembly and repair, computer course, electrician apprentice, refrigeration and air conditioning apprentice technician. A total of \$513,000.00 was invested in this project.

Rapid Response

Rapid response activities, number of companies and individuals served; types of services or workshops provided to both companies and affected workers

The purpose of Rapid Response activities is to bring together the efforts of all core and optional partners under WIOA to plan, organize, develop, and provide services that help workers avoid or minimize the impact of layoffs, ensuring that the transition process occurs as smoothly as possible. Below is the Puerto Rico State Unit's report for Dislocated Workers and Employers (UETDP) for PY 2023:

For the PY 2023, the UETDP received, evaluated and responded to five (5) formal WARN Notices. Additionally, the Unit offered Rapid Response Services to eleven (11) companies that announced closures and/or layoffs throughout the island. The total number of projected dislocated workers was 960.

All dislocated workers' profiles were completed, distributed and compiled; they were entered into the Data Entry System for Dislocated Worker Profile System in the Participant Individual Record Information Layout (PIRL) and can be easily accessed by local areas.

As part of the employer effectiveness services, the Workforce Development Program served approximately 585 employers through employer's orientation sessions regarding WIOA Title I services, participation in events organized by

employers, and outreach throughout Puerto Rico. The table below summarizes the services provided under Rapid Response:

Table 4: Rapid Response Services provided PY 2023

| BASIC SERVICES UETDP | | | | | | | | INFORMATIVE WORKSHOPS | | | | | | GOVERNMENT AGENCIES ORIENTATIONS | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------|---|----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------|--------------------|---|---|--|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Number of Projected Affected Workers | Number of Dislocated Workers | Number of Initial Orientations | Number of Profiles Completed | Number of Local Areas Orientations | Number of Resumes Written | Number of Orientations and Psychological Support Services | Number of TAA Orientations | Transitional Management | Talks about resume Writing | Job Interview Technics | Job Search Assistance | Transition to a New Stage | Thougn Job Interview Questions | Strategic Resume | Cooperativism | Financial Planning | Employment Service and Unemployment Insurance | Department of Family Affairs – Administration for Child Support | Department of Family Affairs -Nutritional Assistance Program | Economic Development Bank for Puerto Rico | Puerto Rico Trade and Export Company | Department of Health- Medicaid | Social Security | Vocational Rehabilitation | Department of Labor- Legal Division |
| 960 | 911 | 467 | 125 | 467 | 143 | 208 | 467 | - | 30 | | | | - | - | - | 233 | 208 | 422 | - | - | 393 | | | - | - |

The most frequent services provided to dislocated workers were psychological support services, workshops on job readiness, job search, job retention and financial planning. Furthermore, dislocated workers were assisted in the drafting and updating of their resume. The investment for these services to 4,937 dislocated workers and citizens during recruitment fairs was:

Table 5: Investment in Dislocated Workers Services in Recruitment Fairs PY 2023

| Services | Provider | Investment |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|
| Psychological Support | Lucy Lopez Roig | \$6,312.50 |
| Informative Workshop: Job Preparation, Job Search And Job Retention | CDE DEVELOPMENT INC | \$24,580.00 |
| Informative Workshop: Financial Planning | CDE DEVELOPMENT INC | \$23,310.00 |
| Resume Services | MPA CONSULTING INC | \$144,050.00 |
| Sign Language Services | RITA, INC | \$8,175.00 |
| Total investment | | \$206,427.50 |

As part of the Rapid Response services, the UETDP organized recruitment fairs. These fairs aimed to assist the private sector meet their needs in addition to helping dislocated workers reintegrate into the workforce or find a better opportunity in the current job market. Recruitment fairs are a one-stop activity where participants get direct access to employers willing to recruit, workshops on interviewing techniques, financial planning and resume writing. In every recruitment fair health service required by employers to recruit, such as drug

testing and health certificate evaluations, were offered and conducted on-site. These services are free of charge to the recruiter and the potential employee. The following table summarizes the type of services, participants and investment for the recruitment fairs:

Table 6: Type of Services, Number of Participants and Investment during Recruitment Fairs PY 2023

| COMPANY | Number of Fairs | Numbers of Participants | Health Certificate | Available Job Openings | Hired | Investment in Health Certificate |
|--|-----------------|-------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|------------|----------------------------------|
| Recruitment Fair | 11 | 2,571 | 0 | 8,765 | 624 | 0 |
| Caparra Occupational Medical Services, LCC | 0 | 0 | 403 | 0 | 0 | \$15,841.00 |
| Laboratorio Clínico Principal San Fernando | 0 | 0 | 221 | 0 | 0 | \$19,890.00 |
| TOTAL | 11 | 2,571 | 624 | 8,765 | 624 | \$35,731.00 |

The UETDP has participated in multiple Service Fairs or Activities throughout the island where a variety of services such as resume writing, WIOA orientations and assistance in accessing employment opportunities are offered to individuals. During PY 2023, the Unit participated in 45 service fairs or activities for employers or participants. Services were provided at educational institutions, public housing complexes and other underserved communities. In addition, the Unit was invited to give orientations to groups of employers seeking information on the benefits of WIOA. Summary of the services provided in the Fairs or Activities:

Table 7: Participants and Services Provided During Employment Fairs PY 2023

| Participants | WIOA Services Orientations | Resumes Services |
|--------------|----------------------------|------------------|
| 1,425 | 1,021 | 488 |

Under the Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) several initiatives were undertaken to boost and expand the program. Key activities included renewable energy industry and RAP workshops with local areas so that their staff are knowledgeable and can provide support in the state's efforts to expand RAP across the island. As a result of these efforts, Puerto Rico registered 36 new programs, 947 active apprentices and awarded credentials to 286 apprentices in the occupations for which they were trained. Through the RAP, both newly hired and incumbent workers, were provided training to improve their skills and meet employer's and their own needs, when faced with new equipment, technology and/or processes in the workplace. Several industries that were registered included construction, education, renewable energy, manufacturing and programming and/or technology. As a result of these trainings efforts, five (5) Local Areas implemented specific training programs, resulting in an investment of WIOA funds for OJL/OJT and related training activities of \$3,380,381.57 across 8

programs. The state invested \$18,740,427.87 in the new RAP, with 7 sponsors from industries including construction, services, renewable energy, and manufacturing.

Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)




The TAA program has not been recertified by Congress, therefore, during the program year we have continued to provide services to participants who were still eligible for certification. The services provided were the RTAA/ATAA for 2 eligible participants. The services offered to program participants are summarized as follows:

Table 8: Trade Adjustment Assistance PY 2023

| Services | Number of Requests and/or Claims | Number of Participants | Investment |
|----------|----------------------------------|------------------------|------------|
| RTAA | 6 | 2 | \$1,110.20 |

Layoff aversion strategies

The Workforce Development Program through the UETDP has established three fundamental strategies for layoffs prevention:

-  support of employers' needs through recruitment fairs
-  expansion of the RAP offering training and upskilling opportunities to current and future employees
-  outreach and promotional efforts to disseminate available services under WIOA.

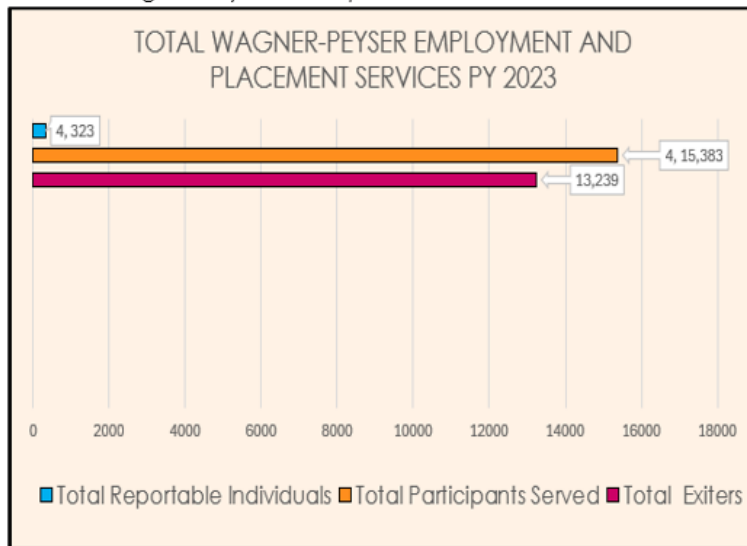
All these strategies targeting employers, employees and dislocated workers are aimed at preventing closures and/or layoffs while making sure that citizens have access to Good Jobs.

Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service (complete report is attached)

During PY 2023 Wagner-Peyser provided employment and placement services to 15,383 individuals with 13,239 exiters during the cohort period of 4/1/2023-3/31/2024. Exiters are used to determine the performance outcomes for PY 2023. During PY 2023 a total of 323 OR 2.4% of individuals were categorized as reportable individuals.

The Puerto Rico's Wagner-Peyser Program provided the most services to individuals with limited proficiency in English (51.49%), followed by low-income individuals (16.99%) and older individuals (14.44%). These three (3) groups constitute the largest number of clients and/or participants who approach the American Job Centers in search of employment, placement and/or training services through Wagner-Peyser. Participants in the category of Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers (MSFW) represent only .99% when compared to PY22 of 2.72%, a reduction of 1.73%.

Table 9: Wagner-Peyser Participants & Services PY 2023



2.72%, a reduction of 1.73%.

The Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) program provides federal funding to hire dedicated staff to provide individualized career and training-related services to disabled and long-term unemployed veterans with significant barriers to employment. During PY 2023, 48 total covered entrant persons were served.

Unemployment Insurance delegates to the Wagner-

Peyser Program the responsibility of providing information to claimants regarding UI programs and their rights and responsibilities under UI. In addition, claimants

Table 10: Total Outcomes for RESEA PY2023

| Scheduled | Completed | FTR | FTR % | RTW |
|-----------|-----------|-------|-------|-----|
| 11,067 | 8,137 | 2,080 | 18.80 | 159 |

who received first payment during a giving week are selected to receive reemployment services through RESEA/WPRS which are provided by Wagner-Peyser staff. RESEA provides

reemployment services to UI claimants for them to return to the labor market before they exhaust their benefits. A total of 5,886 follow-up services were provided to UI claimants.

Technical Assistance

Technical Assistance Plan was coordinated with DOLHR, Region 1.

Table 11: Technical Assistance Plan

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

PR TA PLAN – YEAR 1

New Leadership Onboarding and Staff Capacity Building (DOLHR/DDEC)

- State, Local, Chief Elected Officials
- On-site: **March 2025**

DUEC/DOLHR: Partnership and Collaboration

- Cross-Agency TA Plan and Activity Calendar – **Finalized September 2024**
- Trade Training
- Refresher Trainings (State and Local)
- ES/WIOA Collaboration:
 - Duplication of Services and Partner integration to AJC
 - RESEA
 - LMI – **December 2024**
- MOU/IFAs - **November 2024**

Business Engagement:

- RAP and OJC Opportunities
- BET SWOT Analysis informed TA

Youth: OSY and ISY

DDEC/DOLHR: Fiscal TA

- MOU/IFA - **November 2024**
- Internal Controls – **October 2024**
- CAP - Finding Resolution
- Local Area Fiscal Training

DOLHR: Unemployment Insurance (UI) TA

- Data Validation – **March 2025**
- BAM - M&P Review – **March 2025**
- ARPA - Integrity Review/TA – **Jan 2025**
- RESEA – Monitoring and TA – **July 2025**

2

Detailed Experiences

(a) Success stories that focus on serving employers, communities and individuals with barriers to employment:

When developing strategies to engage with business and employers, some activities proved to be more appealing and effective: informative workshops and gatherings, job fairs and economic and commerce development forums. These activities bring together local, state economists and businesses, providing a safety space for meaningful networking, encouraging partnerships and coalitions.

Southwest Economic Development FORUM

Approximately a 110 people assisted to this summit which main speaker was Mr. Heriberto Martínez, Economist and Executive Director of the League of Cooperatives of PR. He exposed the new trend for small and medium size businesses to explore “Non-Traditional Financing as an Alternative for Economic Development of the Southwest”. He presented the benefits of having a Cooperative Bank as part of a financial strategy to maximize the business economic resources in a serious but friendly environment comparable with

traditional banking. Other small business owners presented their experiences. To culminate the forum a round table was conducted to present the topics of ecotourism, renewable energy and SMEs as alternatives to explore within this region. Professionals from the fields such as the Regional Director of the Puerto Rico Tourism Company, a representative of the Puerto Rico Trade and Export Program and an Economic Development Specialist for the PR&IV District Office of Small Business Administration and Project Officer of Center for the Development of Small Businesses and Technology for Puerto Rico. The forum was a wonderful experience for professionals from the commerce and financial field to engage and network with each other.

Bayamón- Comerío Local Workforce Development Area & Local Permits Office Alliance

The Bayamón Municipality Permits Office has established an alliance with the Bayamón-Comerío Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA). The permits office provides information on newly registered business in the area. The LWDA, then, can contact all new commerce's and offer orientation on how the LWDA can be a resourceful tool to connect with future employees and training availability. In addition, recruit referrals are made to the Job Center to provide all types of assistance to the employers such as public announcements, support and a place to conduct interviews, among other services.

WIOA Adult with Barrier to Employment- Norma

A 56-year-old woman who became disabled in 2013 due to a physical condition that forced her to live with limited social security benefits. During her time trying to reinvent herself, she felt that she could study something that would make her self-sufficient and perhaps self-employed. Services were provided and she enrolled in pastry confection through an ITA account. After completing the training, she was employed by the Serrant Academy as a pastry teacher. Norma is very grateful for the help she received from the Local Area and very excited about her new position.

WIOA Youth- José

This young man received guidance from a Job Career Coach regarding the youth program and its benefits. He's known for being committed, determined, and persevering. He had no prior work experience and wanted to acquire skills that would enable him to achieve his occupational goal of securing a customer service position. José excelled in the training that assisted him in his post-secondary transition. Currently, José is employed at Ralph's Food Warehouse, where he works in customer service. He is also studying to fulfill his academic goal in Business Administration at Ana G. Méndez University.

WIOA Dislocated Worker: Darlene

This dislocated individual entered the Local Area in April 2023. She was interested in Cosmetology training. Although Darlene always made academic progress,

several months later she shared with the case worker her concerns about changing career paths since her occupational expectations have not been met. She shared a renewed interest in the field of mathematics or accounting. The Case Manager gave her an occupational interest test that demonstrated her inclinations towards finances and/or banking. Darlene was referred to a Banking Integral training, which began in September 2023. She successfully completed her training in May 2024. Since her graduation, Darlene works as a Receiving Payer at a Cooperative Bank in the municipality of Cataño.

Incumbent Workers Trainings:

The first incumbent worker training developed by Guaynabo Local Area was a collaboration with CLARO Mobile. With the objective of preventing the layoff of 40 employees, the project focused on providing training and skills to these workers to enable them to adapt to the evolving demands of the labor market. All participants completed their training in June 2024 and kept their positions within CLARO.

WIOA Adult with Barrier to Employment: Jonathan

This individual faced significant barriers to employment due to his criminal record as an ex-offender. After serving his time, he was determined to turn his life around but struggled to find employers willing to give him a second chance. Despite his willingness to work and desire to reintegrate as a productive member of society, he encountered constant rejection in the job market.

He was referred to Guaynabo-Toa Baja local area where he met with a career counselor who recognized his potential and eagerness to succeed. They developed an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) focused on building new skills and identifying meaningful job opportunities. The counselor helped Jonathan enroll in a Work Experience (WEX) opportunity at the Municipality of Cataño, providing him hands-on experience in a structured environment.

This placement allowed him to develop new skills, gain confidence, and prove his work ethic. The employer quickly noticed his dedication and progress, despite the challenges he had faced. As his work experience came to an end, the management team at the municipality was impressed by his reliability, growth, and positive attitude, and decided to offer him a full-time, unsubsidized position as a landscaping worker. Currently, Jonathan works full-time and earns a sustainable wage, providing for his family and serving his employer with a well-executed job.

WIOA Dislocated Worker: More than a Job

A dislocated worker, referred to a local area by the state's Wagner Peyser Program manager Ms. Fernández, resulted in a life-or-death situation. In the referral, Ms. Fernández mentioned her concerns about the possibility that the woman was a domestic violence victim. During the first assessment and interview

the woman accepted she was being abused by her partner and stayed in the relationship because she needed a place to live.

Immediately, the local area activated the emergency protocol, local law enforcement and the City’s Office for the Integral Development of Women. She was escorted to emergency services to attend her personal situation.

Meanwhile, the local area kept working on her case by updating her resume and contacting employment agencies to hire her.

Months passed by and she was placed in a transitional home until securing long-term housing and her abuser was arrested and prosecuted. She is currently employed with a private employer. The local area is proud that they contributed to save this woman’s life and aided her in her employment journey.

Priority populations served

Table 12: Total Participants and Services Provided Dislocated Workers Program PY 2023

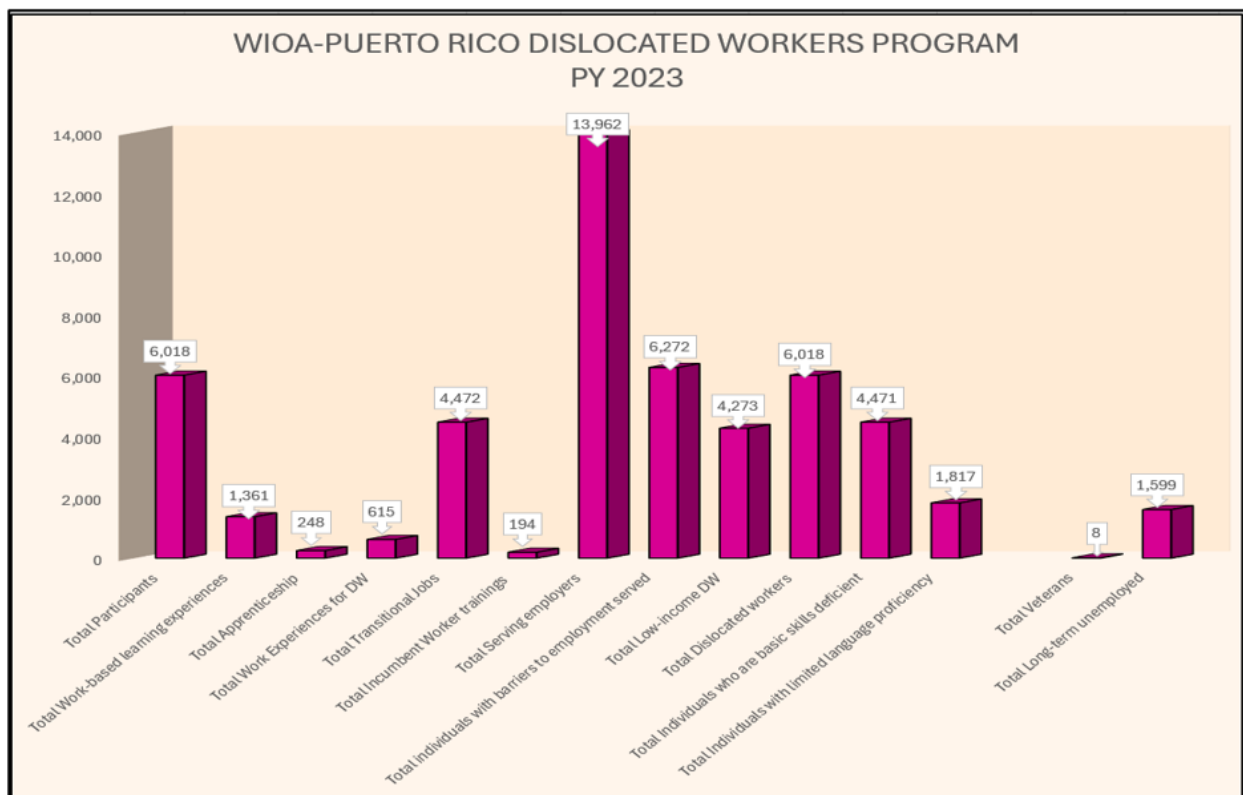


Table 13: Total Participants and Services Provided Adults Program PY 2023

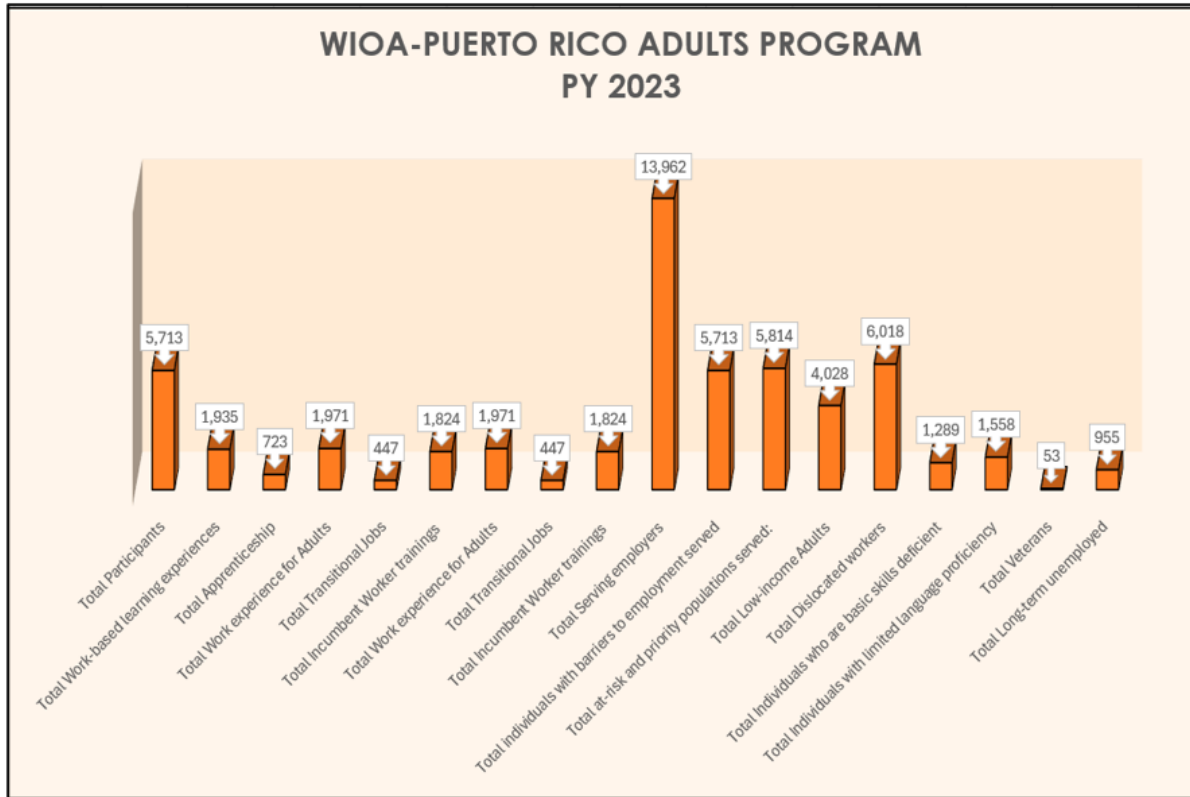
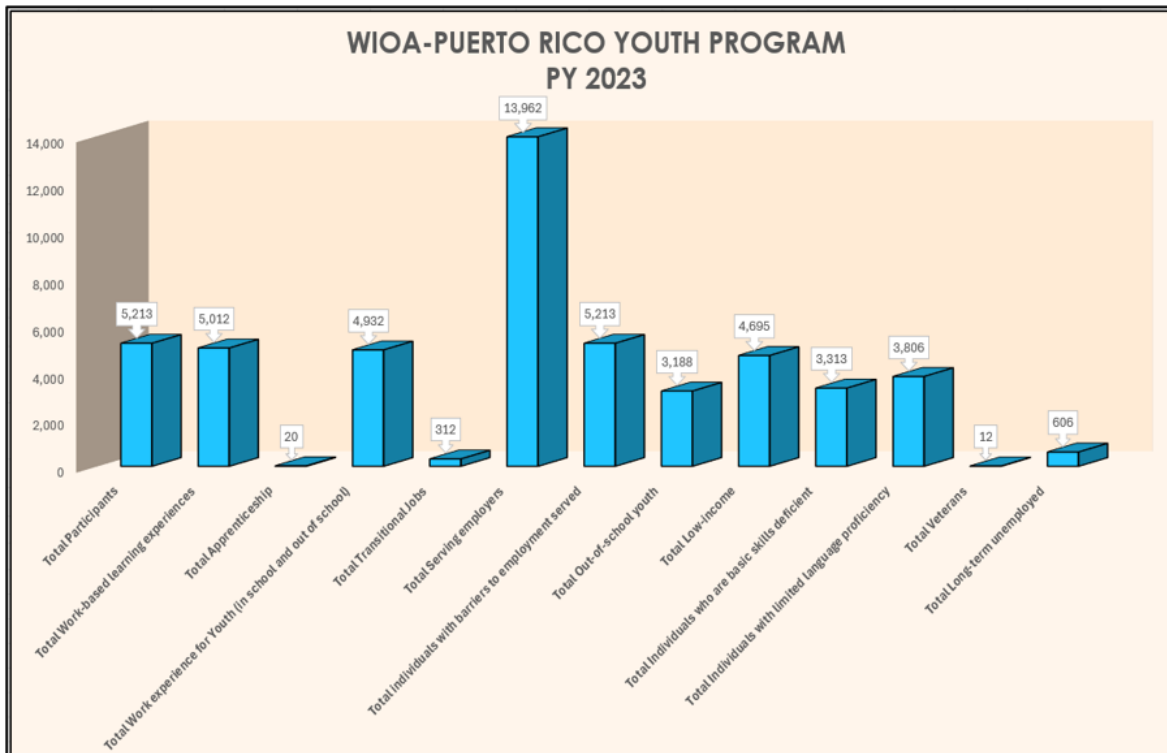


Table 14: Total Participants and Services Provided Youth Program PY 2023



Challenges

Ensuring compliance with WIOA regulations presents ongoing challenges. From addressing workforce shortages to maintaining timely entries in the PRIS database, the Puerto Rico Department of Economic Development and Commerce, as a grantee, bears the responsibility of overseeing these critical components and finding solutions. A persistent issue remains: the lack of timely and accurate data entry into the PRIS database by local areas.

Despite advancements in technology and its ubiquitous role in our lives, data entry for served participants and services continues to pose difficulties. This lack of timely and accurate data compromises the reliability of the data extracted for reporting purposes. To address this, it is crucial to implement new mechanisms for identifying data entry issues, providing follow-up support, and offering education and technical assistance on the efficient use and management of the PRIS database.