



# Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

## Wyoming Annual Narrative Report Program Year 2023 (July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024)



## Wyoming's Annual Narrative Report for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) for Program Year 2023.

The Wyoming Department of Workforce Services (DWS), in partnership with its collaborators, is proud to present the Program Year (PY) 2023 Annual Report. This report is a collective effort that encompasses six core programs: Title I—Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Title II—Adult Education (AE), Title III—Wagner-Peyser, and Title IV—Vocational Rehabilitation. Through collaboration, effective communication, and resource optimization, these partnerships highlight the successes of the WIOA program in Wyoming.

### WIOA Waivers

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Wyoming currently does not have any active WIOA Waivers.

### Approaches in Effectiveness in Serving Employers

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The Wyoming Workforce Development Council (WWDC) elected *Employer Penetration Rate* and *Retention with the Same Employer* as Wyoming's focus for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers performance pilot indicators. Wyoming continues to focus on business engagement and outreach to educate, develop, and maintain business relationships. During PY 2023, the labor force participation rate was relative to other years. The main focus has been on recruitment and retention strategies. DWS is currently reviewing and updating our business services policy and procedure to provide more consistent services and support to employers throughout the state. Special attention is being placed on outreach and coordination efforts of WIOA case managers for participant placement and referrals. Wyoming currently does not have any state-established measures.

### Current and Planned Evaluation

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The WWDC contracted with Northern Illinois University's Workforce Policy Lab (WPL) to provide the evaluation component for WIOA Title 1. The evaluation model utilized by WPL incorporated the disproportionate impact method to identify indicators of inequitable outcomes for WIOA participants and included a sequential mixed method design to identify strategies for continuous program improvement. The process was guided by WIOA's purpose, performance metrics, and guidance related to WIOA-defined barriers. For the quantitative analysis portion, the WPL used data from Wyoming's Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL) quarterly reporting files from program years 2018 through 2022. In addition to evaluating the numeric data, WPL applied qualitative analyses through focus groups aimed at uncovering a deeper understanding of the various components surrounding WIOA participants' journey in the program. Questions posed to focus groups included questions with themes associated with the following stages of the WIOA program: outreach and recruitment, application and intake, assessment of barriers to program completion and employment, assessment of training selection, training placement, and exit outcomes. The evaluation concluded with the use of the disproportionate impact method to identify equity gaps for WIOA participants. Here is the evaluation report for [Wyoming's Title 1 program for 2023](#).

Although Adult Education (AE) in Wyoming was not included in the WWDC evaluation component for Title I, AE conducted multiple evaluations through PY 2023. This began with monthly desk audits at both the local and state levels and reviewed data, career services, and a fiscal review. This was followed with a quarterly narrative report and an end-of-year comprehensive report in which local providers were required to evaluate program performance in narrative form on successes/challenges in:

- Meeting federal targets for measurable skill gains and post-exit outcome measures.
- Alignment to the 13 considerations for AE programs.
- The delivery of career services to qualified enrolled participants.
- Co-enrollments for WIOA core partners.
- Continuous program improvement.
- Strategic planning for career pathways.
- Referrals to WIOA core partners and other community service providers.
- Financial reporting.

- Integration with One-Stop Partners.

Additionally, in Fall 2023, the State Office of Adult Education conducted a research review project on program performance and found one provider needed help to meet federally negotiated targets for its English as a Second Language (ESL) population. As such, the provider was placed on an eight-month Targeted Monitoring and Evaluative Review process where the State, in conjunction with the local provider, identified areas of concern and addressed these issues monthly. By the end of the year, the local provider had shown significant improvement and, by year's end, had met the federally negotiated targets for ESL.

### **Completed Evaluations and Related reports**

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The Research and Planning Division of DWS provides:

- A monthly Trends publication is available to the public at: <https://doe.state.wy.us/lmi/trends.htm>.
- 2023 Wyoming Workforce Annual Report: [https://doe.state.wy.us/LMI/annual-report/2023/2023\\_Annual\\_Report.pdf](https://doe.state.wy.us/LMI/annual-report/2023/2023_Annual_Report.pdf).
- A series of Labor Market Information webinar videos: <https://doe.state.wy.us/lmi/presentations.htm>.
- Commuting patterns: <https://doe.state.wy.us/lmi/commute.htm>.
- Current employment statistics: <https://doe.state.wy.us/lmi/CES/TOC.HTM>.

Adult Education reports submitted to OCTAE are available at:

- <https://nrs.ed.gov/rt/wy/2023>

### **Efforts to provide data, survey responses, and timely site visits for Federal evaluations.**

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All data, survey responses, and other information related to these projects are and will be available for Federal evaluations.

### **Efforts to Coordinate the development of WIOA core programs, other state agencies, and local boards.**

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#### Rural Outreach

Wyoming is a very rural state. Because of this, DWS is aware of the unique economic, social, and cultural characteristics that shape the way of life for Wyoming residents and the impact of various aspects of its workforce and community development.

Rural communities often face unique economic challenges, including limited job opportunities, lack of access to educational resources, and lower median incomes. WIOA outreach can help address these challenges by providing training, education, and job placement services to improve the overall economic stability of these communities. The Wyoming AJC's launched a series of community engagement initiatives tailored to the unique needs of rural citizens. Collaborating with local organizations, schools, and community leaders, staff held informational workshops and job fairs at accessible locations. These events included local parades, booths at county fairs, career fairs, business expos, and trunk or treating, among others. DWS staff provided vital information about available training programs, career pathways, and WIOA resources, fostering trust and encouraging participation. The Wyoming AJCs also continue to regularly participate in community meetings, such as the Worland Community Resource meeting and the Thermopolis Human Resource meeting; this allows DWS staff to provide information to several community agencies and learn of other available community resources.

The Wyoming One-Stops are focused on meeting Wyoming citizens where they are. This approach has the AJC staff providing "office hours" within the smaller communities. The "office hours" have been located in community centers, libraries, community colleges, schools, Adult Education offices, and Department of Family Services locations, ensuring accessibility for citizens. By creating a familiar environment, staff encouraged participation and engagement, increasing program enrollment.

They also began to hold jointly hosted outreach events with partners, specifically with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). To improve service delivery, AJC and DVR staff participated in cross-training sessions. This collaboration ensured that team members were well-versed in each other's programs and could provide holistic support to individuals. By understanding the full spectrum of services available, staff were better equipped to guide participants toward the appropriate resources, enhancing overall service effectiveness. The Wyoming AJCs focused on connecting with the rural communities in PY 2023. This outreach has always been important; however, additional innovative outreach activities were provided to strengthen partnerships with local organizations, educational institutions, and businesses, fostering a collaborative approach to addressing the workforce development needs of rural communities.

### “Yes, WIOA Can!” Initiative

The Wyoming American Job Centers (AJCs) focus on “meeting individuals where they are” as a fundamental principle and have had training and discussions on the “Yes, WIOA Can!” initiative. These discussions centered around remembering the importance of providing customized and accessible services to individuals based on their specific needs, circumstances, and readiness for employment. Staff members recognize that individuals seeking workforce development services may be at different stages of their career paths and may require tailored support to overcome various barriers to employment.

The "Yes, WIOA Can!" philosophy is a client-centric approach that fosters positive engagement between DWS staff members and clients, creating a supportive and collaborative environment for successful employment outcomes. The Wyoming AJCs are focused on facilitating training for sector-based, quality jobs. We are committed to eliminating barriers and focusing on under-served, under-represented workers. Wyoming also recognizes the importance of supportive services to ensure our participants' success. We have started thinking of innovative ways we can provide support that may not have been traditionally used. Success is measured not only by whether or not our participants obtain a job but also by serving and connecting the most vulnerable participants to good quality jobs and providing them with the tools to thrive post-WIOA.

### Upskilling Wyoming:

These funds will help Wyoming citizens develop new competencies and learn new skills to improve their current roles or maintain employment. The program provides upskilling opportunities and a longer-term investment for individuals to augment the knowledge and skills that help employees advance their careers or maintain careers with self-sufficient wages. The program will serve those impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, low-income individuals (household income of less than 300% of the federal poverty guidelines) or unemployed.

Adult Education Co-enrollment (25 years of age and older): The purpose was to strengthen the co-enrollments with AE, WP, and WIOA for the Adult population. AE received funding to provide more services to adults (i.e., completion incentives paid through AE). This grant required AE adults to be co-enrolled in at least WP Title III; however, it strongly encourages co-enrollment with WIOA Title I. Additional funds are available to participants to cover support services that are not covered in other federal programs.

DWS received the funding during PY 2023. We have created policies and procedures for the ARPA Upskilling Wyoming program and the Adult Education Co-enrollment grants and have started co-enrolling participants.

### Department of Family Services Partnership

DWS and the Department of Family Services (DFS) continue to work together to provide a holistic approach to serving individuals with the long-term goal of self-sustainable employment. The Wyoming AJCs provide universal access to all job seekers through “basic career services” and emphasize providing targeted services to “individuals with barriers to employment,” which includes low-income individuals. Low-income individuals, including individuals participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) work program (which is known as the Personal Opportunities with Employment Responsibilities (POWER) program in Wyoming), are given priority of service when it comes to receiving higher-intensity services like “individualized career services,” training from the WIOA Adult Program, and co-enrollment in the WIOA Youth Program for out-of-school youth.

Since the WIOA Title I Adult Program focuses on low-income individuals, DWS and DFS have monthly meetings to discuss strategies and approaches to providing streamlined services and increasing co-enrollments. These strategies embody a “Coaching for Success” philosophy, which includes the following:

- Team approach to case management.
- Funding streams and how to braid funds between TANF and WIOA programs.
- Colors Personality Assessments and how our personality impacts our relationships.
- Communication - Unconscious Biases and Managing Emotions.
- Coaching skills using several coaching methods.

DFS and DWS partner together to create self-sufficient, responsible, and successful individuals through the POWER program. Using DFS federal TANF funds, POWER allows Wyoming parents with barriers to employment to earn cash assistance through an employment-focused, pay-after-performance program administered by DWS. The individuals who enroll in POWER also meet the eligibility requirements of WIOA. As a result, POWER participants are co-enrolled in the WIOA Adult program when appropriate to meet the needs of each participant.

The Wyoming Child Support Program (CSP), in partnership with DWS, established the Work Initiative Network (WIN) program to improve earning outcomes for Non-Custodial Parents (NCPs). The program uses coaching and a team case management approach that increases the participants’ capacity to move toward permanent unsubsidized employment to make reliable child support payments, improving the financial well-being of custodial and noncustodial parents and their children. DWS WIN case managers refer eligible participants to the WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs when appropriate to best meet the needs of each participant.

The Dads Making a Difference (DADS) program is a DWS initiative in partnership with DFS that uses TANF, SNAP Employment and Training (E&T), and private funding. The nationally recognized DADS program was developed in 2007 as a training-to-work program for low-income custodial and noncustodial fathers in Wyoming who experience multiple barriers to self-sufficiency. The DADS program provides services necessary for fathers to actively improve the quality of their lives and the lives of their children and families. All eligible DADS program participants are co-enrolled in WIOA to leverage services and funding.

During this last year, the DADS program was asked to participate in Everyone Works: A Wyoming Behavioral Health in Employment Summit. This summit brought together state and federal leaders from Workforce Development, Health and Human Services, and community organizations to a first-of-its-kind event focused on transforming how we support low-income parents’ mental health as they enter the workforce. The summit consisted of breakout work sessions focused on practical solutions to current issues and a panel discussion led by graduates from employment programs, including DADS.

During the Federal Fiscal Year 2024, these programs served the following:

- POWER – Served approximately 554 individuals each month. This included adults and children within POWER families.
- WIN – 65 participants
- DADS – 64 participants were served in pre-program and program activities.

### Adult Education Partnership

The PY 2023 was a year of planning and expansion. Efforts to co-enroll qualified Title I youth continued to grow throughout the State because of joint efforts made by local AE providers through the State’s One-Stop system. Learners can now meet individually with representatives from DWS at local AE centers. This occurs through regularly scheduled on-site DWS hours at the AE center and/or through the intake and orientation process for AE. DWS representatives explain Title I and Title III benefits to newly enrolling AE students, and efforts to co-enroll begin at the intake process. This coordinated effort by the WIOA core partners has led to a relatively sustained co-enrollment rate (as reported to OCTAE), of 36% across the past two-year period, and we had the highest rates of co-enrollments with AD in the nation.

To solidify this joint co-enrollment process, multiple AE providers have negotiated contracts with DWS to continue efforts to co-enroll qualified Title I youth. These contractual efforts have resulted in data sharing between the

agencies so that co-enrolled participants simultaneously benefit from Titles I, II, and III. One noteworthy aspect of these contractual agreements has been the rise in AE students participating in Work Experience programs, such as job shadows and internships. These Work Experience placements have been coordinated by DWS or through direct contact with local employers.

In Spring 2024, the State Office for Adult Education met with representatives from Title IV to begin discussions on how we could replicate a similar system as AE has with DWS and include Title IV. Title II and Title IV fully recognize that the State has been missing a great opportunity to increase co-enrollments between our two titles as AE data indicated that over 75% of AE students who had self-identified a disability were not receiving Title IV benefits. This indicated a great need to increase collaborative efforts to serve these participants better. Because of this, we will be piloting a fully comprehensive one-stop system that includes the four titles. Under this new system, enrolling participants can meet with representatives from all four titles at AE intake/orientations and/or through on-site/virtual meetings with DWS and/or DVR.

The year also saw the launch of two distinct new programs, which were funded through the State monies from the American Rescue Plan (ARP). The first ARP program was a joint program between DWS and AE for Adult High School Equivalency, and it aimed to replicate Title I: Youth services for adults aged 25 years of age and older and whose household income was less than 300% of the federal poverty level or whose household experienced unemployment during the pandemic. This three-year program aims to provide qualified participants with the skills needed to complete a high school equivalency while providing on-the-job work experience training, other supportive services, and financial incentives for meeting specific benchmarks. By year's end, this joint program of study had co-enrolled 40 qualified adult participants who:

- Had an overall measurable skill gain rate of 81%.
- 55% of these participants fully completed their high school equivalency, and another 43% began taking their high school equivalency test.
- Saw 10% of participants enroll in postsecondary/education training programs.

The second ARP-funded program was overwhelmingly successful as it aimed to provide Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs that utilized contextualized materials in standards-based curricula along identified career pathways tracks. Eligibility for this program required that the participant be co-enrolled with DWS and AE so that the WIOA-offered services could become an integral part of the programmatic services provided. This project enabled AE to partner with training providers to deliver IET programs of study for the health care, manufacturing, tourism, and customer services/business industries. Local AE providers with this ARP grant were allowed to utilize these funds to help pay for the high cost of tuition, which enabled increased access to IETs. By year's end, this joint program had enrolled 110 students into ARP-funded IET programs of study. Performance for these participants was extremely high, as noted by:

- 92% level of performance on measurable skill gains.
- 42% of these individuals completed a high school equivalency.
- 13% of participants passed a national technical/occupational skills exam.
- 7% enrolling in postsecondary for two or more consecutive terms.
- 81% showing progress towards individual milestones.

The State Office for Adult Education (OAE) recognized early in PY 2023 that these IETs were becoming very popular. Consequently, there was a great need to better educate local AE directors and instructors on delivering these 'new to Wyoming' Adult Education programs. To this end, the OAE enrolled multiple program directors and instructors into an extensive three-month federally sponsored training program. While this training occurred, our Adult Education programs run through the Wyoming Department of Corrections were involved in another multi-month IET training program for Corrections. The culminating results of these trainings have been not only better informed/educated staff but also the development of an IET mission and vision statement for Wyoming, a standardized syllabus template that incorporates a single set of learning objectives, and an IET assessment tool.

The OAE also recognized early in the year that data collection for Barriers to Employment was not being conducted efficiently. A new system was established to improve data collection, resulting in a 25-30% improvement in data collected for each Barrier to Employment.

## Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

The AJCs and DVR work together to provide comprehensive support to individuals with disabilities, addressing vocational rehabilitation needs and broader workforce development requirements.

The collaboration between the AJCs and DVR begins with DWS leadership and is fostered throughout the state. The AJC Managers and DVR Regional Managers meet frequently and encourage all staff members to work in tandem. This allows for a holistic approach to addressing the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities, combining vocational rehabilitation services, job training, and employment support to facilitate their successful transition into the workforce.

The AJC staff's collaborative meetings with the DVR team help eliminate duplication of services and resources, ensuring that individuals with disabilities receive tailored support without redundancy or unnecessary overlap.

General rehabilitation services are delivered through 17 field offices staffed by 28 DVR counselors and 17 assistants. Area managers manage these offices in four service regions. Evaluation of rehabilitation needs, rehabilitation counseling and guidance, referral services, assistive technology, and job development are core services available to clients. In Prior Program Year (PPY) 2022, DVR served 4,072 Wyoming citizens with disabilities who received various individualized services, such as vocational rehabilitation evaluation and eligibility determination, medical treatment, counseling, training, and job placement. In addition, 407 persons were successfully rehabilitated by DVR in PPY 2022. Seventy-five percent (75%) of the individuals served were significantly disabled. Eighty percent (80%) of the individuals who were successfully rehabilitated (returned to work) were significantly disabled. The average hourly wage for those who returned to work was \$15.25. The top five (5) occupations in which participants obtained competitive integrated employment were customer service, stockers, freight handlers, truck driving, and food service.

During PY 2023, DVR collaborated with other state agencies and the University of Wyoming to increase services to youth and students. A few highlights from PY 2023 include the continued collaboration between WY DVR and the University of Wyoming's Innovation Wyrkshop to build and sustain a statewide and united network of mini-makerspaces. The partnership not only supports the continued growth and accessibility of makerspaces for pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) but also supports community inclusion in each of the five maker space locations throughout the state. The goal of these mini-makerspace extensions is to provide a greater diversity of participants with access to training using technologies found throughout an increasing number of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) industries. Particular emphasis on training content developed for Pre-ETS students focuses on providing accessible learning and growth opportunities for youth ages 14-21 with physical and/or mental disabilities or encountering other roadblocks to employment. The Innovation Wyrkshop brand and the unique content provided by this program provide significant opportunities to provide skill-based training, kinesthetic learning paths, broader community engagement, and continued relationship building with community partners and stakeholders.

DVR continued to work closely with the Department of Education to provide comprehensive services to students with disabilities. A formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was updated and fully executed, outlining each agency's responsibilities in providing and supporting student transition services. DVR has continued to work to develop high-quality relationships with each of the 48 individual school districts. The goal for each agency is to provide transition outreach and education services, aiming to connect with all 48 individual school districts and disseminate information about DVR Pre-ETS services to students, parents, and educators with vision or hearing disabilities. The agreement aims to increase the number of potentially eligible students participating in and accessing Pre-ETS services. DVR also engaged in various other transition workshops and activities across the state to provide diverse services and experiences to youth with disabilities.

In PY 2023, Wyoming DVR was awarded a Pathways 2 Partnerships Disability Innovation Fund (DIF) Grant. This is a \$10 million grant to be implemented over five years. The DIF grant was written to provide innovative services to students and youth with disabilities ages 10-21 with the goal of enhancing transition services, mental health awareness, and access to technology for eligible students. The DIF grant emphasizes partnerships between DVR, the two Wyoming Centers for Independent Living (CILs), and local school districts. DVR will partner with the two CILs to offer instruction on Independent Living skills to youth enrolled in the DIF program. In partnership with the local school districts, DVR contracted with up to four "job exploration transition navigators" throughout the grant to

coordinate student services, as well as to work directly with the students on independent living skills, employment services, and other needs as identified during the grant.

The Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS), pursuant to Title IV of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), is designed to provide universal telephone service for all Americans, including people who are deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind, and/or speech-impaired. Wyoming law authorizes TRS and an Equipment Distribution Program funded by a telephone line surcharge. Between July 1, 2023, and June 30, 2024 (PY 2023), Wyoming Relay processed 10,726 traditional relay calls, 2,554 captioned telephone calls, and four relay conference captioning events, which amounted to 15,217 session minutes of traditional relay service, 4,780 session minutes of captioned telephone service, and 240 session minutes of relay conference captioning.

The Federal Communications Commission has strict rules regarding users' confidentiality and call content. Therefore, data is collected on the number of unique phone numbers that call into Wyoming Relay each month. The area code (307) and the first three digits of the phone number (NXX) allow us to identify the communities in Wyoming, including 92 for PY 2023, and other areas across the nation where the calls originate. For PY 23, an average of 224 unique telephone numbers were used to place traditional relay calls each month. A new contract for captioned telephone service with a new provider began on February 1, 2024. NPA/NXX data on the number of unique telephone numbers calling in the captioned telephone service is no longer available. From July 2023 to January 2024, an average of eight unique telephone numbers were used to identify captioned telephone calls each month.

The Wyoming Relay equipment distribution program served 77 individuals in PY 2023, permanently distributing 91 pieces of equipment. The total cost for the equipment distributed was \$56,819.42. Total expenditures for the Wyoming Relay program for PY 23 were \$704,405.59.

### Independent Living

Wyoming is served by two Centers for Independent Living (CILs): 1) Wyoming Independent Living, Inc. (WIL) in Casper, Wyoming, and 2) Wyoming Services for Independent Living (WSIL) in Lander, Wyoming. These CIL programs provide services to persons with significant disabilities, including maintaining employment. Wyoming Services for Independent Living (WSIL) serves Western Wyoming, and Eastern Wyoming is served by Wyoming Independent Living (WIL). The two CILs served 887 consumers from July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024. The CILs also participated in 1,161 outreach activities during this period.

Independent Living for Older Individuals Who Are Blind—This program provides services to individuals 55 years old or older whose vision loss makes employment difficult but for whom independent living goals are feasible. DVR has an Interagency Agreement with the Wyoming Department of Education—Vision Outreach Services (WDE-VOS) for WDE-VOS to provide services. The program served 359 clients from July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024.

### The Business Enterprise Program

The Business Enterprise Program (BEP) serves those DVR clients interested or involved in self-employment. Self-employment includes various businesses, from home-based micro-enterprises to retail shops and other significant ventures. BEP can provide technical and financial assistance, such as helping a client start a new business that may be home-based or acquire an existing one. Occasionally, assistance in modifying a business for its owner is necessary when needed to accommodate the client's disability. In PY 2023, BEP provided business assistance services to 57 individuals, and 12 new small businesses were started. The types of businesses started included the following industries: energy consultant, musician (playing in paid events and repairing harmonicas), computer repair, sewing machine repair, hair and nail salon, barbershop, tattoo shop, home inspection, and customized printing and art sales.

During PY 2023, DVR continued collaborating with the following divisions: Employment and Training, Unemployment Insurance, the Business Training and Support Unit, Workers' Compensation, and Disability Determination Services. The administrators and managers of each unit would frequently meet with the DVR Administrator and DVR leadership team to develop and discuss training for staff and collaborative efforts to serve participants and community partners.



Most DVR offices are co-located with local AJC, allowing individuals to work with both programs easily. Both programs are thus committed to increasing collaboration to assist individuals. These efforts include 1) Cross-training and knowledge-sharing opportunities, 2) Exploring more co-enrollment, and 3) Joint meetings with clients when they are working with both divisions.

### Department of Corrections

DWS continues to work closely with the Department of Corrections (DOC) on the Pathway Home 3 Grant. This grant opportunity provides justice-involved individuals and incarcerated adults with critical skill-building and supportive services prior to and after release so that they can successfully re-enter their communities and the labor force. The Pathway Home 3 Grant is job-driven and builds connections to local employers to enable returning citizens to secure employment while advancing equity for individuals facing significant barriers to labor market reentry, including incarcerated women.

Through this grant, Pathway Home 3 Grant Case Managers refer and co-enroll into WIOA services. DWS and DOC will teach returning citizens foundational skills, such as job readiness, employability, digital literacy, and job search strategies. They will also provide occupational training leading to industry-recognized credentials, access to employment, and a reduced likelihood of recidivism. Both agencies will collaborate to serve 400 participants over the three-year grant.

DWS already provided services to ex-offenders through the Career Compass program; however, the Pathway Home 3 Grant will allow DWS to expand these services to all five correctional facilities. This grant also:

- Increases the collaboration with case management strategies between DWS and DOC to assist individuals in gaining self-sustaining employment.
- Increases technology and software programs to provide information (education, career services, career exploration, and training) to incarcerated individuals via a secured internet connection prior to their release.
- Streamlines industry-needed training to participants prior to release.
- Provides a virtual job fair platform for participants during the pre-release period.
- Increases employment opportunities for participants post-release in critical industry sectors facing increased demands, workforce gaps, or supply chain challenges.

DWS is committed to using the additional funding to support continued comprehensive services for justice-involved individuals pre- and post-release. DWS started enrolling participants in the Career Compass Program in March 2023. Through the end of June 2024, the program has enrolled 264 participants. DWS's partnership with DOC has been essential for receiving referrals. Prior to enrollment, DOC had already submitted approximately 615 referrals. DWS and DOC continue to meet on a regular basis to discuss best practices and how to continue the efforts to ensure the enrollment goals within the grant are met. This commitment to communication and teamwork is continually critical to the program's success. The Second Chance Task Force, in collaboration with the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services (DWS), has previously worked with employers to foster greater understanding and support for this critical program. Both entities have been enhancing employer involvement by collaborating with multiple agencies and community members, but these efforts have been impacted by the shift in engagement. Despite this, we will continue our efforts by engaging additional agencies and focusing on addressing reentry needs for justice-involved individuals across the state. This will include discussions around employment, housing, and other barriers to employment that affect successful reentry and long-term stability

DWS has partnered with Premier Virtual to offer virtual job fairs to the participants. Before this, DOC was only able to offer one resource fair per quarter. This allows DWS and DOC to provide more opportunities for participants to search for resources and available jobs before release.

### Job Corps

DWS AJC Staff work closely with Job Corps and provide referrals for those out-of-school youth who may be interested in the program. Job Corps collaborates efforts with the Business Outreach team to participate in job fairs and resource events. DWS staff also participate in the quarterly Wind River Job Corps Community Relations Council meetings, student graduations, and special events.

The Riverton AJC provides the “Introduction to the AJC Services” sessions to all new Job Corps participants at the Wind River Job Corps Center. This includes an introduction to the “basic career services” provided. Through the relationship with the Job Corps students, discussions are tailored to each group's Job Corps trades and occupational interests in relation to the local labor market open jobs report. Information on the basics of employability skills, including application completion tips and tricks, resume techniques, and interviewing practices, are highlighted. AJC staff also provide information about the WIOA Title I Program, which has led to additional co-enrollments.

During the last year, the Riverton AJC and the Wind River Job Corps Center have collaborated to provide Job Corps students with additional training opportunities through MedCerts. Job Corps students were co-enrolled in the WIOA Title I Youth Program and completed a variety of medical training certifications, which strengthened their career pathways and employment opportunities.

#### Unemployment Insurance (UI)

During PY 2023, the AJCs worked in collaboration with the Unemployment Insurance division on the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) grant. The Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments (RESEA) program has played a vital role in supporting individuals receiving unemployment benefits under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Through collaborative efforts, DWS staff members have effectively enhanced service delivery and improved outcomes for participants facing employment challenges.

A key component of Wyoming’s One-Stop strategy has been implementing co-enrollment initiatives, which enhance the services provided to participants and facilitate a more integrated approach to workforce development. Co-enrollment refers to enrolling participants in multiple workforce programs simultaneously, allowing them to access a broader range of services and resources. By combining RESEA with other WIOA programs, DWS can provide a comprehensive support system that addresses the diverse needs of job seekers, particularly those facing barriers to employment.

#### Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP)

During PY 2023, the Torrington and Wheatland AJCs have continued to host participants from the AARP Foundation, the National Sub-Grantee for the Senior Community Service Employment Program. The Douglas AJC is a host agency for Goodwill, the State Sub-Grantee, currently hosting one participant. The purpose of SCSEP is to foster individual economic self-sufficiency and to assist in developing skills and experience to transition to unsubsidized employment. The training provided to participants based at AJCs to date includes proper phone etiquette, basic computer skills, general data entry, filing, paper shredding, cyber security training, and customer service skills.

DWS plans to no longer use a sub-grantee for the SCSEP State Grant after PY 2023. Toward the end of PY 2023, the SCSEP Program Manager started working on a transition plan to seamlessly adjust from Goodwill to DWS running SCSEP in-house.

WIOA staff continue to meet with the SCSEP program staff to learn more about the program and to provide services to co-enrolled SCSEP participants.

#### **Continuous Improvements Strategies**

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The AJCs in Wyoming continued to seek innovative and cost-effective procedures and delivery of services throughout PY 2023. Wyoming utilized One-Stop Center certifications, National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) committee meetings, WorkforceGPS webinars, and discussions with other states when evaluating best practices. During PY 2023, DWS continues to be in the process of implementing the following:

- All 18 AJCs are utilizing an electronic tracking system for walk-in traffic. The data collected is being reviewed and modified based on feedback received from clients and AJC staff. The next phase will be to determine how to utilize the data to make informed decisions that will strengthen the services provided. Training opportunities were provided to all AJC staff, including:
  - Virtual conference for all AJC staff.

- Participating in the Workforce 180 Business Services Certification. This included topics on sales management, engaging employers, effective communication, and using social media. This training led to conversations about the role of the business representatives and the importance of being in the community.
  - Participating in the Workforce 180 Case Management Certification series. The DWS team attended all three case management courses. The topics included five frames of coaching, motivating the unmotivated, helping vs. empowering, case notes, emotional intelligence, and the WIOA connection.
  - Completing the TANF 14-module program on case management.
  - Attending The Coaching Habit internal training. This training enforced the process of behavioral change and how effective coaching can drive positive changes in others.
  - All Career Compass Program (re-entry staff) and Center Managers participated in the Workforce 180 Reentry Services Certification. This included topics such as de-mystifying and understanding the reentry client, engaging employers to be 2nd Chance Employers, and boosting reentry job readiness skills.
  - DWS and the Wyoming Department of Corrections were able to train on Motivational Interviewing and case management, which provided shared training amongst both agencies for the Career Compass Program team.
- Completing the One-Stop certifications provides more educational materials on the WIOA programs and required partnerships for all staff.
  - The Program Compliance Team members attended the annual NASWA conference and also represented Wyoming on various NASWA committees.
  - DWS continues to conduct program-specific meetings and all-staff virtual Meetings with all Wyoming AJC staff. These meetings have provided the platform for general information sharing and cross-training opportunities.
  - The Wyoming AJC implemented an Employee of the Month program to help staff retention. The recognition program is peer-based, utilizing DWS core values. The department recognizes the importance of staff as a departmental strength and a major resource in achieving departmental objectives. The employee recognition program is intended to acknowledge staff's superior contribution and achievement in meeting the department's mission and vision. It is also designed to promote and encourage a positive climate wherein staff members feel appreciated for their service and affirmed in their employment with DWS as a career of choice.
  - During this program year, DWS' AJC Managers and Program Managers completed the Dare to Lead development program. This program was created by Brene Brown and was designed to help the DWS team cultivate courage-based leadership skills and create a culture of courage, trust, and resilience.

## Wyoming's Approach to Customer Satisfaction

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### The state's methodologies.

DWS utilized an online survey system that was emailed to email addresses obtained by DWS staff. Additionally, social media posts, the agency's website, flyers, and other communications were used to gather feedback. The surveys were available for completion for six weeks.

**1) The number of individuals/employers who were provided customer satisfaction outreach, the response rate, and efforts made to improve the response rate.**

A total of 414 respondents stated they had interacted with DWS services as an employer within the past two years, 723 respondents stated they had interacted with DWS as a client within the past two years, 408 selected "Don't know/not sure," and were not asked to complete the survey, and 160 had interacted with DWS as both a client and employer.

**2) The results and whether the results are generalizable to the entire population of customers.**

Nearly 87% of employers stated they got what they needed from all DWS programs. Areas of challenge noted by employers included the user interface of the new labor exchange system and slow or unclear communication.

Around 75% of individuals indicated receiving what they needed through the one-stop system. Areas of challenge for individuals included the new labor exchange system and inefficient communication.

**3) A description of any continuous improvement processes for incorporating customer satisfaction feedback.**

The One-Stop System in Wyoming has looked at many ways to implement continuous improvement throughout PY23. We researched and are in the process of implementing the following:

- Completing the One-Stop certifications provides more educational materials on the WIOA programs and required partnerships for all staff.
- DWS continues to work with the vendor for the MIS system/labor exchange to improve the public offering and ensure it meets the needs of job seekers and employers.
- All DWS staff (which includes AJC and one-stop staff) will be required to complete customer service training during the current year in an effort to enhance customer service and improve communication with the public being served.

**Progress made in achieving the state's strategic vision and goals**

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The following outlines the vision, mission, and goals outlined in Wyoming's Unified State Plan:

Vision: Wyoming's Workforce System fosters a vibrant Wyoming economy through collaborative industry-led partnerships that provide diverse and comprehensive services to job seekers and employers.

Mission: Develop a quality and diverse workforce to meet the needs of Wyoming employers.

**Goal #1: Use an integrated approach to increase the effectiveness of the Workforce Development System.**

DWS is working to build cross-program knowledge for all AJC staff. The use of cross-training has provided a strong foundation for increasing staff's effectiveness in delivering services within the Workforce Development System. By better understanding the programs and services available, DWS staff can ensure a unified delivery of services for all populations across all AJC locations. DWS continually works to ensure that staff are educated and aware of the available veteran services and the specific veteran staff who can best assist this population. Providing immediate connections to veteran-specific staff for assistance helps ensure an effective delivery of services.

In collaboration with DWS, Adult Education continued with quarterly 'Meet and Greets' to continue cross-training efforts. These meetings were often supplemented with individual meetings between local AE center directors and DWS managers to discuss successes/challenges at that level. In addition, efforts were also made to extend this collaboration to include Title IV representatives.

During the program year, there was a great focus on the collaboration between DVR and WIOA Title I. Initiatives such as joint career fairs and training workshops exemplified this. For instance, at a recent career fair, DVR provided staff members to attend. The two programs have also collaborated on workshops focused on resume writing and interview preparation, ensuring that participants gain essential skills to compete in the job market. This partnership has also enabled streamlined access to supportive services, such as transportation assistance and adaptive technologies, which are crucial for individuals with disabilities to secure and retain employment. By leveraging each program's strengths, DVR and WIOA Title I are creating a more inclusive workforce development system that empowers all job seekers to achieve their career goals.

**Goal #2: Increase internal and external communication and outreach efforts.**

DWS has identified a need to strengthen our public outreach and communication. The public-facing website has been redesigned to provide a better platform for initial outreach and communication efforts. The redesign of the public website provides an up-to-date platform to publish various announcements and/or updates directly to the public. It also allows for a more seamless user experience, providing better references when searching for specific information or materials. DWS has launched a new and improved intranet site to strengthen internal communication,

and the department is building up internal policy and procedure and utilizing technology solutions, such as virtual meetings and reporting forms, to bridge communication gaps.

The Office of Adult Education launched a new website in the fall of 2023 to strengthen public outreach and communication. Through this redesigned website, interested participants and other stakeholders can find the following:

- A registration portal for all AE programs in Wyoming,
- Information on the AE program,
- High school equivalency testing centers,
- AE policies,
- Professional development training modules,
- Career pathways information,
- Forms for reporting and
- Various other information.

**Goal #3: Provide customized support and resources to meet the diverse needs of Wyoming employers and job seekers.**

Wyoming's launched a new Management Information System (MIS) in January of 2024 - [HireWYO.com](https://www.hirewyo.com) to provide a customized resource for employers and job seekers to meet the needs of job posting, recruitment, skill evaluation, job searching, resume posting, skills training, and a variety of additional services. The MIS, coupled with AJC staff, provides tailored support to Wyoming's diverse job seekers and employers. AJC staff are experts in available community services and provide outside referrals and recommendations for additional support and services whenever possible. DWS strives to provide customized support for individuals within the transitioning military personnel and Veteran population by ensuring that AJC staff are current on the most relevant training and operating procedures. DWS is also looking to identify further community partnerships to provide veteran-specific services.

Adult Education is uniquely qualified to provide customized educational training to Wyoming's employers so that employees are better equipped to fulfill/complete job tasks. To this end, the Adult Education program in Jackson, Wyoming, launched a new workplace literacy program with St. John's Hospital. This program provided English as a Second Language (ESL) and Integrated Education and Training (IET) opportunities to non-native-speaking employees on-site at St. John's Hospital. Employer contributions to this project have included classroom space and access to other facilities as needed, considerations in employee promotions and/or pay raises for employees who complete the program, and the development (in progress) of a single set of learning objectives. Efforts are underway to expand these program offerings to other employers throughout the State.

**Goal #4: Develop and strengthen partnerships to leverage available resources.**

DWS will work closely with local areas to strengthen existing working relationships and establish new relationships for greater utilization of resources. DWS is looking to strengthen its partnership with local employers to provide better employer service delivery and to foster increased employer participation. DWS routinely reviews its outreach delivery methods in an effort to develop additional community partnerships and increase the ability to provide referral or collaboration of services.

DWS has recently added a new grant writer position that will focus on collaborating with community partnerships. This position has encouraged agencies and organizations to reach out to us as a source of support for their grants. In addition, it has opened up the dialogue about the WIOA program, how it can be utilized, as well as what other partners have to offer us. Wyoming has enrolled in the Wyoming Grant Services Coalition and has joined community cohorts to discuss and problem-solve ongoing community issues.

The WIOA core partners fully participate in the Adult Education orientation process by presenting information to students about the resources available through each partner and various community resources so that any barrier to successful employment/education can be addressed in the best way possible. These presentations are also supported through a state-level referral process.

**Goal #5: Use the Career Pathways System to prepare the Wyoming workforce for career opportunities in all industries.**

The AJCs utilize Career OneStop tools to explore personalized career pathways across all industries. This tool is routinely used in conjunction with [O\\*Net occupational data](#) to provide individuals with a broad view of an industry and adequately prepare individuals for pursuing opportunities within a specified industry. Direct access to these tools is available through the state’s MIS, HireWYO, as well as a variety of other Labor Market tools for exploring career pathways.

In PY 2023, Adult Education expanded its career pathways initiative. This began with the launch of student center career maps, which all students are required to complete upon enrollment into Adult Education. These career pathways maps are aligned to the most in-demand industries in the state and are available to all stakeholders on the [Wyoming Community College website](#). Phase two of this initiative saw the development of a local provider’s career pathways strategic planning document that aligned AE programming to the 13 considerations for Adult Education. Local AE programs have also begun to employ career navigators and career counselors to assist enrolled participants identify and achieving individual career goals.

Wyoming continues to utilize the Next Generation Sector Partnership model. These are partnerships of businesses from the same industry and in a shared labor market region who work with education, workforce development, economic development, and community organizations to address the workforce and other needs of the targeted industry. Community partners face increased pressure to engage the industry more deeply. Secondary and postsecondary educational institutions are called upon to engage with industry and align curriculum and programming in new innovative ways. Workforce boards are called upon to increase partnerships with the industry through sector partnerships.

Through the Next Generation Sector Partnership initiative, regional employers have identified talent as one of the greatest needs, and training programs have been developed in Wyoming to meet those needs. These include a dual enrollment program between K–12 and post-secondary education and developing and implementing new programs at Wyoming’s community colleges and in Wyoming’s Adult Education programs.

The Next Generation Sector Partnerships continue to work on a talent pipeline to establish opportunities for direct access to available employees and services in ways that better suit their needs. The pipeline will provide potential employees with more efficient access to employers.

**Wyoming**  
**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**  
COUNCIL

**Healthcare**

- Laramie County Healthcare
- Tri-County Healthcare
- Central Wyoming Healthcare
- North East Wyoming Healthcare (launching)

**Hospitality & Tourism**

- Big Horn Basin Hospitality & Tourism
- North East Hospitality & Tourism (launching)

**Manufacturing**

- Southwest Manufacturing
- High Altitude Manufacturing

**Construction**

- Laramie County Construction

**NextGen Sector Partnerships**

Here are a few examples of the recent progress throughout the state.

In February 2024, the Laramie County Health Sector Partnership was successfully launched with approximately 20 senior healthcare executives who committed to four shared priorities for action. Over two days, March 21-22, the group formed four Action Teams that identified key 90-day deliverables, or "early wins," to achieve before their next quarterly meeting in June.

At the September 30 quarterly meeting, the Partnership reviewed survey results to identify the highest-priority careers within the healthcare industry. Based on these findings, they focused on strengthening the nursing talent pipeline, specifically from CNA/MA to AND/LPN to BSN. They are already discussing with the local AJC to develop an innovative approach for preparing students to earn CNA/MA qualifications.

Additionally, the Partnership collaborated with the state behavioral health task force, offering to serve as an industry sounding board to help shape potential strategies. Another priority is partnering with Wyoming 211 to ensure better coordination among providers, facilitating stronger connections for patients needing services.

In October 2023, Big Horn Basin successfully launched a new Next Generation Experience Industry Sector Partnership. They are working with local organizations (like chambers of commerce) to identify additional businesses and assets that could be included in an archive from which people could construct customized itineraries to fully experience the region. This is the first step in growing the membership of the sector partnership. As they work with the businesses to create the archive, they are also recruiting them for the sector partnership. The goal is to increase the partnership membership by 50% next year.

The Central Wyoming Healthcare Partnership was relaunched in spring 2024. The convening team held a follow-up Partnership meeting on Aug. 6 to focus on implementing the next steps in career awareness building and talent development. This included specific actions to be taken to prepare for the October and November career events, a tour of Banner Health Services, and strategic planning around expanding Casper College's capacity in key healthcare programs.

In addition, the Partnership decided to form an action team to focus on early career awareness building and specifically to explore the possibility of ramping up a "medical explorer" program in the region. Finally, Casper College committed to creating an action team to work on creative solutions for college capacity constraints, focusing specifically on the clinical placement system.

Two more partnerships are planning to launch in northeast Wyoming later this year.

### **DWS Apprenticeship State Expansion**

DWS applied for and received a \$283,754.00 State Apprenticeship Expansion Formula Funds (SAEF) from the U.S. Department of Labor in late Summer of 2023. The grant is being used in DWS' Business Training and Support Unit (BTSU) to expand and build capacity for registered apprenticeship program opportunities throughout Wyoming. DWS continues to provide technical and financial support to businesses seeking to develop an apprenticeship program. Coupled with Wyoming's existing apprenticeship training funds, these funds allow workers to earn progressive pay while learning valuable skills through supplemental education. The Apprenticeship Team collaborates with the one-stop business representatives to educate and provide opportunities for businesses to expand and develop apprenticeships.

The DWS Apprenticeship Team has applied for a second round of the SAEF funding. During this round of the SAEF funds, funding will be used as a one-time incentive to support the expansion and development of Registered Apprenticeship Programs in Wyoming.

In addition, BTSU received pre-apprenticeship program funds from ARP. The purpose of this grant is to develop a pre-apprenticeship program focusing on career pathways for in-school youth (16-24 years old) whose households are below the 300% federal poverty guideline or who have experienced unemployment/underemployment as a result of the pandemic. This funding will support youth completing a pre-apprenticeship program and provide necessary supportive services.

This program has rolled out an extensive outreach campaign, including a Hub that has served as an apprenticeship website for the state of Wyoming. This website (Wyapprenticeships.com) and outreach campaign have been live since November 2023.

Wyoming seeks career pathways that connect youth more innovatively by integrating the technologies that youth are more apt to use in the Career Pathways System, thereby strengthening their career and college readiness. Wyoming is also developing more apprenticeship opportunities by launching apprenticeships in non-traditional occupations and in at least one of Wyoming’s correctional facilities.

**Allotment Exception**

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Wyoming has not received an allotment exception for the out-of-school youth expenditure requirement.

**Wyoming’s Performance Accountability System**

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**Specific state performance measures or goals and progress toward meeting them**

Wyoming has not established state-specific performance measures or goals for WIOA Adult, WIOA Dislocated Worker, WIOA Youth, AE, or Wagner-Peyser Programs.

**Performance deficiencies on the primary indicators of performance**

Wyoming did not meet at least 90% of the goal for each Title I program on Measurable Skill Gains due to the low population numbers; an increase of just a couple of individuals having a documented MSG would have led Wyoming to meet these goals. This is usually an area where Wyoming excels; however, due to the MIS system transition, Wyoming was unable to complete its quarterly reporting after Q1, which meant that staff were unaware of the deficiencies in this area. Wyoming anticipates that MSGs will rebound in PY24 and has plans to provide extra training and support to ensure these goals are met.

Additionally, Wyoming did not meet the Employment after Exit for Q2 or Q4 and credential rate in the Dislocated Worker program. Again, the low population and low participation numbers in these programs mean that just one more participant in each of these categories would have allowed Wyoming to meet at least 90% of these goals. Wyoming is exploring technical assistance opportunities to help boost each of these categories.

**Program Year 2023 Performance Indicator Attainment**

Program	Rate	Emp. Q2 after Exit	Emp. Q4 After Exit	Median Earnings	Credential Rate	Measurable Skill Gains
Adult	Neg. Rate	75.6%	70%	\$5,900	67%	72.2%
Adult	Actual Rate	75.6%	71.4%	\$12,562	67.7%	61.3%
Adult	% of Goal	100%	98%	213%	99%	85%
Dislocated Worker	Neg. Rate	82.1%	79.1%	\$9,700	74.5%	80%
Dislocated Worker	Actual Rate	73.2%	70%	\$27,164	64.7%	70.0%
Dislocated Worker	% of Goal	89%	88%	280%	87%	88%
Youth	Neg. Rate	70.3%	67%	\$3,300	54.5%	67.5%



Youth	Actual Rate	64.3%	73.8%	\$5,062	60.0%	26.6%
Youth	% of Goal	91%	110%	153%	110%	39%
Wagner-Peyser	Neg. Rate	63.6%	63.5%	\$5,500	N/A	N/A
Wagner-Peyser	Actual Rate	63.4%	63.3%	\$7,192	N/A	N/A
Wagner-Peyser	% of Goal	99%	99%	131%	N/A	N/A
Adult Education	Neg. Rate	45.50%	44%	\$3,600.00	59%	55.50%
Adult Education	Actual Rate	60.23 %	62.78 %	\$4,099.500	78.96%	68.47 %
Adult Education	% of Goal	132 %	143 %	114 %	134%	123 %
Vocational Rehabilitation	Neg. Rate	43.5%	35.6%	\$4350	27.8%	N/A*
Vocational Rehabilitation	Actual Rate	47%	52.4%	\$6137	27.9%	N/A*
Vocational Rehabilitation	% of Goal	108%	121.5%	135.8%	100%	N/A*

\*RSA did not assess Measurable Skill Gains in PY 2023, nor did it assess Overall State Program Scores.

**The state’s common exit policy, including which ETA-funded partner programs are included in the state’s common exit policy.**

A common exit occurs when a participant who is enrolled in multiple DOL-administered partner programs has not received qualifying participant-level services from any DOL-administered program listed below for at least 90 consecutive calendar days, and no future services are planned (except self-service, information-only activities, or follow-up services).

A participant is only exited when all the criteria for exit are met for the WIOA Titles I and III Core and Trade programs. The WIOA Title I and Title III core programs and the Trade Act are:

1. WIOA Title I Adult Program;
2. WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker Program;
3. WIOA Title I Youth Program;
4. Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service Program;
5. Trade Adjustment Act (TAA); and
6. National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG).

**Negotiated performance levels for local areas for titles I and III core programs.**

Wyoming is a single-area state without local areas. Below are the negotiated performance levels for Wyoming.

**Employment Second Quarter After Exit**

Program	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
Adult	75.6	75.6
Dislocated Worker	82.1	82.1
Youth	70.3	70.3
Wagner-Peyser	63.6	63.6

**Employment Fourth Quarter After Exit**

Program	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
Adult	70.0	70.0
Dislocated Worker	79.1	79.1
Youth	67.0	67.0
Wagner-Peyser	63.5	63.5

**Median Earnings Second Quarter After Exit**

Program	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
Adult	\$5900	\$5900
Dislocated Worker	\$9700	\$9700
Youth	\$3300	\$3300
Wagner-Peyser	\$5500	\$5500

**Credential Attainment Rate**

Program	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
Adult	67.0	67.0
Dislocated Worker	74.5	74.5
Youth	54.5	54.5
Wagner-Peyser	N/A	N/A

**Measurable Skill Gains**

Program	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
Adult	72.2	72.2
Dislocated Worker	80.0	80.0
Youth	67.5	67.5
Wagner-Peyser	N/A	N/A

**Effectiveness in Serving Employers**

Measure	PY 2022 Negotiated Level	PY 2023 Negotiated Level
Employer Penetration	Baseline	Baseline
Retention with the same Employer 2nd & 4th quarter after exit	Baseline	Baseline

**The state's approach to data validation and ensuring data integrity, including a description of the methodology of any validation activities that occurred.**

This year, Wyoming's Title I and III programs underwent a change in the management information system (MIS). Throughout the process leading up to the annual performance reporting, data validation was used to ensure the reported information matched the historical data that was migrated into the new MIS and was reported accurately. Throughout this process, files were

randomly selected from the various programs, including each AJC location. Wyoming is additionally working on developing a new data validation process to enhance data integrity moving forward.

Wyoming's AE programs use a multi-tiered approach to data validity. Written protocols for data validation follow Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education guidance and contain a description of the processes for identifying and correcting errors of missing data. Monthly, quarterly, and end-of-year provider reports and state monitoring reports are geared toward ensuring data validity.

### **Activities provided by Governor's Reserve funds**

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The WWDC allocated a portion of the Governor's 15% allotment to invest in the workforce system through several key projects. These projects included staff training for AJC staff and purchasing non-upholstered office chairs for participants. Additionally, grants were awarded to Next Generation sector partnerships, enabling them to travel throughout the state and engage with a large number of youth about career pathways and WIOA. The WWDC also made a significant investment in the new Management Information System (MIS), HIREWyo.

Regarding the set aside for Rapid Response, Wyoming takes a unique approach by treating all layoffs, regardless of size, as a Rapid Response since Wyoming has few qualifying events. With this strategy, Wyoming's Rapid Response Team contacted 15 employers during PY 2023 affected by closures or layoffs, and approximately 565 affected employees have been reached across these layoffs and/or closure situations. Rapid Response packets containing information for affected employees were available in hard copy and digital format. Wyoming continues to include community resources such as 211 and EnrollWyo to provide as many wrap-around services for affected workers as possible.

This year, DWS continued to strengthen its Rapid Response by working to connect with more community partners to participate in these efforts, including AE, Unemployment Insurance (UI), 211 services, and Enroll Wyoming in Wyoming's Rapid Response efforts. DWS has completed a review and reorganization of procedures to ensure rapid responses will have a consistent approach and provision of services across the state. This reorganization also includes collecting additional data from these events to help DWS continually improve our processes.

### **Rapid Response Intake and Co-Enrollment Strategies**

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Staff within the AJCs continue to receive training opportunities and access to resources and tools during outreach for Rapid Response services, including layoff aversion strategies. Rapid Response resources are provided digitally and in hard copy to ensure recipients have access to needed information. DWS is reviewing additional strategies to increase communication and collaboration with Dislocated Worker Workforce Specialists to better serve Rapid Response recipients with available services. DWS has identified conducting a one-month follow-up to affected workers after Rapid Response events. The goal of bolstering information and services available to this customer group leads to additional program enrollment; DWS outlines strategies to implement this. Each Rapid Response event is reviewed for possible Trade Adjustment Assistance for co-enrollment when applicable.

### **Layoff Aversion Strategies**

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The Rapid Response program served employers and affected employees where announced business closures and layoffs occurred, and aversion efforts were unsuccessful. The local AJCs conducted Rapid Responses in coordination with the UI Division, DVR, AE, 211 Services, Enroll Wyoming, and community resources to assist affected employees as requested by employers. UI has implemented the Short-Time Compensation (STC) program, incorporated into Rapid Response and layoff aversion materials. Ten employers have participated since the program's inception, resulting in 83 employees receiving STC benefits. Wyoming experiences few formal Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notifications (WARN) since it offers Rapid Response services to all employers experiencing layoffs.

### **Rapid Response and layoff aversion activities**

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The AJC managers work directly with the UI. DWS incorporates Short-Time Compensation (STC) into its Rapid Response services portfolio. The Rapid Response team will follow up with employers at risk of layoffs with information about STC during the initial contact/meeting with the business as an alternative to implementing layoffs. Outreach for the STC program will

include secondary or tertiary employers that may be impacted. The Rapid Response team will ensure that the business services toolkits have information on the STC program. A statewide toolkit has been developed for use by all the AJC's throughout the state.

### **Services or workshops provided to both companies and affected workers.**

Wyoming implements Rapid Response presentation events and job fairs, both in-person and virtual, as the primary modality for providing information and services to affected companies and workers. Rapid Response activities are carried out by the AJC, as designated by the State of Wyoming, and in conjunction with UI, statewide, and local area resources. Presentations can be customized to fit the needs of the affected workers and that specific region, which includes looking for transitional career opportunities or interest in retraining. UI staff readily attend Rapid Response activities to answer questions and provide more specific help when signing up for UI benefits. The AJC encounters some hesitation from employers on providing information sessions on-site so that innovative sessions can be offered through community sites or virtually.

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

Wyoming's population has slightly increased, but the state still has more job opportunities and economic growth than the population to fill those needs. The Wyoming Grown program is one initiative utilized to reach out to potential employees. Promoting Wyoming's opportunities to the new mobile workforce is vital. With its open spaces and abundant outdoor recreation opportunities, Wyoming provides the perfect backdrop to capitalize on this national trend.

The Wyoming Grown Program connects individuals who desire to return to Wyoming with high-paying, in-demand career opportunities. It recruits skilled professionals back to their home state, seeking individuals who have left Wyoming but are considering relocating to the State. The Wyoming Grown Program partners with DWS's statewide network of AJC staff to work hand-in-hand with participants to connect them with employment opportunities and businesses throughout Wyoming.

The Wyoming Grown Program worked closely with the Wyoming Business Council and the Wyoming Office of Tourism to develop and deploy a recruitment strategy and marketing campaign to target the millions of Americans who seek life and work outside of urban areas. Wyoming Grown continues to work closely with these partners to identify ways to grow and promote program outreach.

Another unique program for Wyoming is the Workforce Development Training Fund (WDTF), a grant program created to assist businesses with funding needs for professional development opportunities to increase employee skill attainment. Grant options include Business Training Grants, Pre-Hire Economic Development Grants, Pre-Obligation Grants, Internship Grants, and Apprenticeship Grants.

### **National Dislocated Worker Grants (DWGs) and Co-Enrollment Activities**

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In PY 2023, DWS continued its efforts to enroll and co-enroll eligible participants into the Quality Jobs, Equity, Strategy, and Training (QUEST) program under the Disaster Recovery National Dislocated Grant (DWG).

Wyoming's QUEST grant is strategically focused on industries that align with the WWDC Next Generation Sector Partnerships. The WWDC has promoted the Next Generation Sector Partnership initiative for over 15 years to foster the growth of these partnerships by bringing together public and private sector industry partners to support the growing industries throughout Wyoming. These sectors are Healthcare, Hospitality and Tourism, Manufacturing, Transportation, Construction and Trades, and Technology. Through this grant opportunity, DWS continues to aim to utilize these funds to identify individuals who have been temporarily or permanently laid off as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic disaster, long-term unemployed individuals, dislocated workers, and self-employed individuals who became unemployed or significantly underemployed due to the COVID-19 pandemic disaster.

### **Technical assistance needs of the state workforce system**

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During PY 2023, DWS has utilized its Federal Project Officers for guidance and will continue to reach out for technical assistance as needed. The collaborative relationship that Wyoming has developed with our Federal Project Officers has been instrumental this past year and has provided us with immense support as we work through our MIS upgrade.

## Promising practices, lessons learned, and success stories

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### Lessons Learned

Wyoming Department of Workforce Services (DWS) continues to utilize a virtual platform to customize services to those most in need and focus outreach efforts to individuals in rural areas to receive employment services. Through the new MIS, the state continues to refine its approach and ensure that it can have services readily available in a manner that will be accessible and easy to use for businesses and individuals throughout the state.

DWS continues to offer a hybrid working model that allows staff to split their time between the workforce and a home office. This approach has proven helpful in retaining employees, as the agency places significant importance on work-life balance and has increased staff flexibility.

**Success Stories** - All names used in this section are pseudonyms.

### WIOA Dislocated Worker/RESEA

“CK” was a RESEA client and a dislocated worker utilizing UI. He had a difficult time for several months and used our office as a place to come to each day. He utilized our resume services and our support. We could tell he was really down some days, and we would talk to him about it. “CK” decided to do WIOA and obtained his CDL. He has worked his first season for a construction company but has not been in since because he has been working.

Jacki was a RESEA client. We worked on her resume and were able to tailor it to align with her passion for working with older adults. She recently called to let us know she secured a job at the local senior center. She is exactly the kind of person you want doing that work because she loves it.

“CL,” a 61-year-old from Rawlins who had been working at the local oil refinery for 15 years and was laid off. “CL” is primarily Spanish-speaking (ESL) and only knew his specific job at the refinery. He was not sure how he was going to continue to support his wife, who had a disability and lots of medical bills. “CL” had limited skills outside of his very specific duties at the refinery. As an ESL individual, it was challenging for him to go to job interviews or get hired and make anything close to his wages at the refinery. “CL” participated in a Rapid Response event during the course of his layoff and learned about WIOA through that experience; he wanted to get his CDL so he could get a good job as quickly as possible. “CL” loved the Rawlins community and wanted to find work there so he and his wife could stay, but with limited options for employment, he was worried he would have to move away. Through support services, “CL” was provided new glasses and assisted with tuition to the local CDL training school. We also purchased steel-toed boots and some clothing for him in preparation for his employment. By working with the training provider, we got “CL” all his study materials for his CDL in Spanish, and he was able to take his exam in Spanish to ensure he understood the questions. “CL” worked incredibly hard and obtained his CDL very quickly. “CL” obtained employment as an over-the-road (OTR) truck driver for a national company.

### WIOA NDWG - QUEST

“MJR” is a 48-year-old woman, originally from the Philippines, who lives in Rawlins. She is a single mother of a young child, and her husband, who was the sole income earner, passed away some years ago. After her husband passed away, she had to figure out how to support her young son, who was only three at the time. When she did find work, her son was abused at daycare, which forced her to leave her job. “MJR” moved back to the Philippines for a short time, but due to the length of time in the US, she lost her citizenship, and she had to return to the US. Her son was also diagnosed with some disabilities, so she desperately needed to find stable employment. As a single mother who is primarily Spanish-speaking (ESL), with little to no work experience, “MJR” faced many challenges in supporting herself and her son. She came to the office to learn about employment opportunities, was referred to WIOA, and ultimately enrolled in QUEST. She desperately needed an eye exam and

glasses and was provided with those things through the program. “MJR” was then enrolled in the CNA program, and we purchased her uniforms. Her lack of work history was the biggest hurdle for “MJR,” but she was determined to learn the skills needed to support her son and make their life sustainable in Rawlins. “MJR” had to take her time, but she did pass her CNA course and exam, completed her CNA, and became employed in the field.

### **JVSG**

A justice-involved veteran struggling with addiction and mental health issues came to us looking for a fresh start, leaving behind trouble from back east. He was searching for hope, purpose, and a way to rebuild his life. His goal was not just to find a job but to become job-ready and build a meaningful career. We worked to establish trust, provide emotional support, and ensure his basic needs were met—housing, food, medical care, and safety—especially his mental health, as we were concerned he might be at risk for suicide.

We developed an Individualized Employment Plan (IEP) with him, focusing on his interest in pursuing a degree in Wildlife Biology. We broke the goal into manageable steps, starting with exploring options at Northwest College (NWC) and connecting him with the TRIO program for support. Throughout the process, we ensured he stayed on track with therapy and medications, and we made sure he knew he could reach out anytime he needed someone to talk to.

While his past continued to weigh on him, he made progress. He faced setbacks, including moments where he relapsed, but each time, he reached out for help and got back on track. He distanced himself from a person with a similar drug history, showing that he was committed to making better choices. He’s enrolled in four college classes, maintaining a “B” average, and is thriving in his studies. His attitude has dramatically improved, and while challenges remain, I no longer have concerns about his mental health or suicidal risk. He’s still working hard and truly enjoying his academic journey.

A 63-year-old decorated veteran came into the Cody AJC looking for work but felt his age was deterring people from hiring him. He was looking for options and was open to suggestions to help him find suitable employment. He was connected with a Veterans Service Officer to look at VA Disability. In addition, our Disabled Veterans’ Outreach Specialist worked with him to revamp his resume. It was decided that we would phrase things in a way that was not so “military” and would be easier for civilians to understand. He was hired locally by a company that could use his military expertise, and they still employ him today.

### **WIOA Adult**

“RF” initially enrolled at Sheridan College to earn a Certificate in Diesel Technology. His dedication and success in the program motivated him to aim higher, and he pursued an associate’s degree. “RF’s” hard work paid off when he transitioned from working as a dishwasher to securing employment as a mechanic with a friend’s business. His newfound skills and determination have opened doors, and during our last conversation, “RF” shared his exciting plans to explore ways to start his own diesel mechanic shop. “RF” has achieved all this while having a small language barrier. “RF’s” first language is Spanish, and he prefers to communicate that way, but he took it upon himself to study more English and learn to speak better while he was in school.

“BL” is a 45-year-old single father with sole custody of two children. After being laid off in April 2023, he received unemployment benefits and struggled to find work. DVR referred him to the WIOA programs as he was ineligible for DVR services. “BL” wanted to obtain a CDL Class A to secure a stable career that would support his family. We provided training, resume support, and job search services. Despite challenges, including partial disability affecting his left hand, limited transportation options, and being a single parent, we coordinated with Laramie County Community College (LCCC) to enroll him in the CDL program.

“BL” completed CDL training, earned his Class A license, and added Tank and Double/Triple Trailer endorsements. He initially worked for a company while in training, earning \$22/hour. However, due to scheduling conflicts with his parenting responsibilities, he transitioned to a permanent job with a different company, earning \$24/hour with benefits.

## **WIOA Youth**

“J” enrolled in WIOA in December 2020, seeking assistance completing her HSEC. “J” completed the Sheridan SCOPE program in April 2021 but had not yet attained the HSEC. “J” could not start testing until closer to the end of the SCOPE Program due to her accommodations not being approved in time. “J” struggles with a learning disability, and she knew she would need accommodations to be successful. “J” also had to overcome educational deficiencies with a strong will and determination. “J” was patient in waiting for the accommodations and focused on Job Readiness Training provided by the SCOPE Program. By the end of the SCOPE Program, she had only passed one HiSET exam and was struggling to pass her second exam. “J” kept a positive attitude and continued participating in tutoring after SCOPE ended. In December 2021, “J” had passed 4 out of 5 tests; however, “J” became discouraged from passing the last test after many attempts. She had difficulty motivating herself to attend tutoring sessions, and her work schedule made attending difficult. “J” and the AJC staff did not give up and continued attending tutoring and testing. In February 2023, “J” passed the 5th and final exam, but she did not have a cumulative score of 45 required to obtain the HSEC. “J” was again discouraged. Her current workforce specialist and tutor continued to work with her as she took and failed several more exams. The tutor recommended to “J” that she take the Math HiSET exam, which “J” was initially hesitant about but eventually decided to go for it. In February 2024, “J” took the Math exam and passed with enough points to obtain her HSEC. “J” currently works as a house cleaner but is considering attending cosmetology school. She is happy to have achieved her HSEC and looks forward to finally attending the Adult Education’s graduation ceremony this summer.

“CM” was referred to the LYFE program by his high school Counselor. “CM” had dropped out because he became a teen father and wanted to work to support his new family. However, he soon realized that without a diploma, his options were very limited, and he wanted more for his future, but more so for his fiancé and new baby. “CM” always wanted to join the military, but now that he had his own family, he was more determined to make it happen. “CM” completed the career boost activities, but we set him up with a recruiter to discuss his options for a military career. He was working full time and felt he couldn't join right away and was afraid to leave his family, but the recruiter gave him options and the reality of how his goal could help him and his family long term. The greatest success was watching an overburdened and stressed young man learn how to prioritize and execute. “CM” is committed to joining the Army National Guard, is still in the guard, and is thriving in his position. “CM’s” child is now a toddler, and his life is on track as he envisioned.

## **State workforce system challenges**

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Eligible Training Provider reporting requirements continue to be a work in progress for the State of Wyoming and its training providers. The reporting requirements impact the number and types of programs that request inclusion on Wyoming’s Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), impacting customer choice. Wyoming’s rural nature and size cause natural challenges to ETPs being accessible throughout the state, and the stringent reporting requirements continue to challenge DWS’ ability to provide sufficient consumer choice. The WIOA program management team continues to conduct outreach efforts to Wyoming’s ETPL providers to explain the importance of reporting.

Adequate funding remains a challenge for the State of Wyoming on an ongoing basis. Due to the state's rural, spread-out nature, it is challenging to provide services in each community because of insufficient funding. Rising costs and inflation add to the concerns about DWS's ability to continue to provide and maintain AJC centers in each community. Specifically, among other increased expenses, DWS has experienced significant challenges due to rising lease rates for rented spaces for AJC centers around the state.

DWS has been undergoing a transition to a new Management Information System over the past year. This process has presented various challenges throughout the year in different areas. However, staff have developed processes to work through the unique situations.

Similarly to other employers, DWS has experienced higher turnover within the AJCs. This has a significant impact on all programs delivered and outcomes. Often, there is a loss of valuable institutional knowledge and expertise. The DWS AJCs

Manager and staff cannot be effective programmatically as they are continuously retraining and onboarding new staff members. The frequent turnover can create a sense of instability and low morale, affecting motivation and commitment to our mission. Overall, the increased recruitment costs strain the DWS budgets to a state that is already minimally funded. DWS attempts to implement strategies addressing employee retention, professional development, and job satisfaction. However, high turnover rates remain a challenge.

### **Strategies/policies relating to Pay-for-Performance**

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Wyoming does not have any strategies or policies to report for PFP Contracts.