



# **WIOA ANNUAL STATEWIDE PERFORMANCE REPORT NARRATIVE**

**QUICK VIEW: PROGRAM YEAR 2021**

APRIL 2023



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# INTRODUCTION

## Overview

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires states to prepare and submit annual reports describing the progress in meeting their strategic vision and goals for the workforce system. In their narratives, and in accordance with WIOA Section 185(d) specifications, states and territories report on a variety of items, such as waiver requests, success stories, performance accountability, and promising practices.

This interactive document showcases a synthesis of the reported narratives from 57 states and territories and organizes them in two main sections: Section I – State Narrative Highlights and Section II – State Narrative Excerpts. Section I highlights common items from the Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) No. 5-18 and expands on other topics, such as COVID-19 Response, that arise from the syntheses, and how states and territories converge under such topics; these include:

- Use of State Funds
- Evaluations
- Waivers
- Success Stories

Section II provides a summary of the same items for each reporting state and territory, pursuant to TEGL No. 5-18.

All the information in this document comes directly from the Program Year (PY) 2021 States' WIOA Annual Report Narratives and it has been edited for clarity, consistency, and concision purposes. To access the complete annual report narratives for each state and territory, please visit the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Employment and Training Administration (ETA) website at: [dol.gov/agencies/eta/performance/results](https://dol.gov/agencies/eta/performance/results).

## Overview Use of State Funds

In accordance with Section 128(a)(1) of WIOA, states and territories may undertake activities with funds reserved by the governor, which can be up to 15 percent of their allotment. This section shares ways states and territories described activities undertaken in whole or in part with their governor's reserve and how these activities have directly or indirectly impacted performance.

## Overview Evaluations

In their annual report narratives, states and territories discuss several elements relating to current, planned, or completed evaluation and research projects. This section focuses on highlighting evaluation and research activities, including methodologies; continuous improvement strategies utilizing results from studies and evidence-based practices evaluated; and a summary of completed evaluations and reports.

## Overview Waivers

Waivers, contingent to approval, aim at helping states and territories, particularly if affected by disasters or extraneous circumstances, to “improve jobseeker and employer outcomes, or otherwise achieve positive outcomes.” Most states and territories applied and received approval for at least one WIOA waiver, and many received several. This section focuses on the most common types of waivers, the purposes for which states and territories received waivers, and highlights shared features of how states and territories executed those waivers.

## Overview Success Stories

In their annual report narratives, states and territories share individuals' success stories that highlight how services, such as industry-specific training, employment assistance and placement, certification programs, and vocational rehabilitation, helped them gain economic self-sufficiency. There are several programs that work specifically with priority populations such as veterans, individuals with a criminal history, and individuals struggling with substance use. WIOA also serves businesses through customized services, such as recruitment events and job fairs, human resource consultation, industry sector strategies, and providing labor market information. Success stories highlight WIOA title I programs, including WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs, and WIOA non-core programs.

## SECTION I

### STATE NARRATIVE HIGHLIGHTS



## Use of State Funds

### Overview

This section presents select examples of how states and territories share activities undertaken in whole, or in part, with their governor's reserve and how they have uniquely reached recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, individuals who are basic skills deficient and veterans through adult priority of service as outlined in [TEGL No. 7-20](#) "Effective Implementation of Priority of Service Provisions for Most in Need Individuals in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Adult Program."

Additionally, this section illustrates ways states and territories addressed the impact of COVID-19. The highlighted practices include innovative approaches such as virtual and/or hybrid services, advanced resource toolkits, and expanded support services.

### Use of State Funds Highlights

#### COVID-19 Response

##### Colorado

The State developed resources to advance economic mobility for frontline workers:

- The Colorado Workforce Development Council (CWDC) developed and released *Upskilling Frontline Retail Employees A Statewide Approach to Preparing Hospitality, Tourism, Food and Beverage Services, and Retail Employees for the Future of Work*. This whitepaper shares lessons learned from Colorado's Lives Empowered initiative, which sought to pilot upskilling training programs for incumbent retail workers.
- *Lives Empowered Step-by-Step Guide: How to Implement Talent Development and Upskilling Initiatives in Communities*. This guide provides step-by-step instructions for cities, local workforce boards, counties, or regions interested in advancing the economic mobility and training of frontline workers. The resources in this guide combine national promising practices with lessons learned through the Lives Empowered initiative in Colorado to provide a high-level compilation of actions taken to create employer-led and locally designed upskilling programs.
- EmpowermentScore.org.  
In early 2022, Lives Empowered partners launched EmpowermentScore.org to measure indicators of economic mobility for Colorado's frontline workforce. The Empowerment Score aims to measure individual, community, and economic characteristics that lead to greater employment stability and increased wages for Colorado workers and empower state and local decision makers to increase opportunities for individuals to improve their economic status.

### *Kansas*

Mental health issues have been a growing concern in society and the recent COVID-19 pandemic has only elevated those issues. WSU identified and hired a mental health trainer to provide basic tips on assisting people searching for employment with mental health issues. The session focused on common issues, identifying signs, communication tips and community resources. The sessions were designed to provide basic information and practical tips for assisting those with mental health issues.

### *New Hampshire*

The pandemic caused changes to the State's workforce development system, including use of many virtual services. For this and other reasons, the State decided to award a contract through a competitive procurement process, to conduct a state workforce assessment.

### *New York*

Many Career Centers throughout the State were closed as part of the effort to decrease the spread of COVID-19. In June 2022, most State Career Centers re-opened to serve customers through virtual and in-person services. The State explored virtual platforms to be used to serve customers and has been successful in efforts to maintain connection with customers through a virtual environment. In response to these changes, the State is currently rolling out a pilot program utilizing a Virtual Career Center (VCC) to select local areas. The goal is to utilize a Case Manager function and incorporate this virtual tool into each appointment with a customer. Customers are automatically enrolled in the VCC and will work closely with a Case Manager to ensure a customer profile is crafted based on skills and previous work experience. The goal is to train other Case Managers in each region. The VCC integrates with the State's case management system to track services provided to business and job seeking customers as well as related outcomes.

### *Ohio*

The COVID-19 health crisis revealed gaps in broadband coverage that left many Ohioans unable to participate in employment, education, and healthcare. In response, significant investments are being made to expand broadband access. This will create an estimated 32,000 network infrastructure jobs in Ohio.

The Ohio Broadband and 5G Sector Partnership was launched in September 2021 to implement a statewide strategy to address shortages in skilled workers so that the buildout of broadband and 5G infrastructure could occur quickly. This partnership, which is led by The Ohio State University and the Wireless Infrastructure Association, includes Ohio Departments of Education, Higher Education, Job and Family Services (ODJFS) and several other state agencies.

### *Rhode Island*

A key priority for Rhode Island's career pathways system throughout PY21 was the expansion and elevation of support services throughout the WIOA system. Using lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic including the pronounced role and oversized impact that support services had on participant completion and employment, Rhode Island sought to significantly expand the

scope, availability, and flexibility of support services under WIOA. Through voluntary collaboration with both local workforce development areas, the State raised local caps/limits on support services and expanded the range of covered services and costs to include, but not be limited to: Heating and utilities assistance (if determined necessary for continued participation in WIOA programming); Background checks (BCI) as required; Child or dependent care assistance; Clothing and hygiene assistance; Emergency food assistance (if determined necessary for continued participation in WIOA programming); Emergency housing assistance (if determined necessary for continued participation in WIOA programming); Healthcare or medical assistance; Legal aid services as required; Technology such as reasonable assistance with internet or computing equipment as required; and Tools, equipment, and uniforms.

### *Wyoming*

During the pandemic, many Workforce Centers, also known as One-Stop Centers and American Job Centers, provided paid work experiences to DVR clients, opening the door to training, and providing clients with additional job skills. This process has continued and is now being offered throughout the State.

## Evaluations

### Overview

TEGL No. 5-18 asks states and territories to include descriptions of current or planned evaluation and related research projects, including any efforts to coordinate the development of such projects with WIOA core programs, other state agencies, and local boards in their narrative reports. States and territories also include continuous improvement strategies utilizing results from studies and evidence-based practices evaluated. State and territory evaluation and research projects fall into several broad categories such as the assessment of toolkits and supporting products, workforce training processes and outcomes, agency services to participants, and labor force participation and barriers of entry, to list a few.

### Evaluation Highlights

#### *Colorado*

##### **Evaluation Initiative with Northern Illinois University (NIU)**

Working with Northern Illinois University (NIU), Colorado Department of Labor and Employment's (CDLE) Workforce Development Programs (WDP) has established a model for WIOA program evaluation with a focus on the Office of the State Auditor requirements involving training related placements. During PY21, WDP and NIU provided technical assistance and training for a statewide cohort of local area staff to build their capacity to employ a mixed-method evaluation approach, which involved both quantitative and qualitative strategies. Training Placement and Outcomes in Colorado Workforce Areas identified best practices in each local area and incorporated recommendations to improve outcomes for the WIOA participants.

#### *Florida*

##### **Advancing Postsecondary Career and Technical Education Data Quality Initiative**

CareerSource Florida continues to participate in research and evaluation with the Florida Department of Education's Division of Career and Adult Education on the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Data Quality Initiative grant. Florida's goal is to ensure the ability of the State's workforce education system to meet the demands of the Florida economy and the future of work through data-driven decision making. This research will lead to the development of a process to collect system-wide data for measuring quality work-based learning opportunities in the technical college and state college systems.

#### *Minnesota*

##### **Net Impact Analysis**

This analysis uses a quasi-experimental design to determine if participants in title I programs have statistically significant impacts on employment, wages, and benefit usage compared to a matched control group. (Completed in 2017).

**Social Vulnerability Study (Phase I completed)**

This study uses the Center for Disease Control's social vulnerability index to assess if title I programs are serving Minnesotans from the most marginalized parts of the State.

**Family Sustaining Wage Calculation and Attainment study (in progress)**

This study has two parts. The first involves working with the Labor Market Information (LMI) team to calculate individual level family sustaining wage thresholds of participants based on their family size and location. The second part involves analyzing when participants exit a program and if they attain a family sustaining wage within a year after exit. This study helps programs better understand if participants can support themselves post-exit. (Phase I soon to be complete).

**Study of changing populations (in progress)**

This study includes partnering with the LMI team to see if programs are properly set up to serve Minnesotans most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The study has two main research questions:

- Have participants in title I Adult programs changed since COVID-19 pandemic? And
- Are current title I adult participants disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 pandemic?

**Study on barriers (in progress)**

Building off the datasets created for the WIOA local area statistical adjustment model, this study hopes to answer the following research question: What is the biggest negative determinant of placement?

*New Jersey*

**PY20 WIOA Evaluation: A Study of WIOA Title I Services and Service Delivery in PY20**

The New Jersey Department of Labor contracted with the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers University to conduct a process evaluation study of services provided through WIOA during PY20 to fulfill New Jersey's WIOA evaluation requirement for PY20. The purpose of this process study is to broadly document the impact of the pandemic on the State's ability to provide title I WIOA services. This study will examine WIOA title I service for Adult, Dislocated Workers, and Youth, covering both career and training services. Researchers will aim to gain an understanding of how the transition of WIOA title I services during the COVID-19 pandemic in PY20 took shape in local workforce areas in the State of New Jersey. Researchers will investigate the variety of interventions employed to mitigate the effects of the unprecedented levels of unemployment within the State and how local workforce areas may have adapted service provision to be virtual. The study will also examine how virtual services may have impacted overall WIOA title I service delivery in PY20.

The findings from this process study will provide a broad picture of WIOA title I services and service delivery in PY20, and identify modifications made to service delivery that are perceived by local area staff to have worked most efficiently and are recommended to be continued as part of the WIOA title I's efforts to continuously improve services for WIOA customers. Findings and recommendations from this study will not only help New Jersey provide better, more customer-centered services but will also help to inform the NJ Department of Labor, and local workforce areas, on how to modify typical operations to accommodate

periods of disruption to traditional service delivery and/or disaster recovery and potentially where to invest future resources in a more virtual world.

Additionally, Heldrich Center researchers are utilizing the knowledge and expertise garnered from the Center's Suddenly Virtual and Strategically Virtual series to guide this study.

### *Oregon*

#### **Program Evaluations and Continuous Improvement**

The Oregon Legislature passed, and Governor Brown signed into law Senate Bill 623 (2021), requiring Oregon's Workforce and Talent Development Board (WTDB), and the State's nine local workforce development boards, to jointly create a Continuous Improvement Committee (CIC) to evaluate and assess the effectiveness of Oregon's public workforce development system, including WorkSource Oregon (WSO) and its various component programs. The CIC is responsible for completing evaluations and producing a continuous improvement assessment of WSO every even-numbered year, with an initial baseline assessment completed in PY21.

The WTDB, in partnership with local workforce development boards, initiated the work of the newly established CIC. The CIC's charge is to assess the effectiveness of Oregon's public workforce development system, including the perspectives of underrepresented populations.

The WTDB contracted with the Coraggio Group, and began this work by engaging in external research, and reviewing documents and data provided by the CIC. Coraggio then facilitated a series of work sessions, with a working group of the CIC members, to gain an understanding of WSO services and processes, the interdependencies, pain points and opportunities for improvement.

### *Rhode Island*

#### **Effectiveness of its Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA)**

At this time, the Department of Labor and Training is utilizing an independent study to assess the effectiveness of its RESEA program.

The State's RESEA program connects select unemployment insurance (UI) claimants with a career counselor who helps them navigate the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training's (RI DLT) resources with the objective of facilitating gainful and sustainable employment. RI DLT contracted the Policy Lab at Brown University to evaluate how well Rhode Island's RESEA program meets its mission objectives. Through a randomized controlled trial to measure the causal effects of enrollment in RESEA on several key metrics, such as how soon participants find employment and how much they earn while at those new jobs, the Policy Lab will provide objective data to assess the effectiveness of current programs. The goal of this evaluation is to see if Rhode Island's specific intervention leads to positive outcomes for those selected to participate in RESEA compared to those not selected. This evaluation serves two purposes. The first is to see if the resources offered by RI DLT are comparatively better than the baseline (no services). The second is to refine which members of the population selected for the RESEA most benefit from the intervention.

*Utah***WIOA Services Evaluation**

Workforce Services continued to implement projects developed as a result of the WIOA Evaluation finalized in spring of 2020. One project implemented this program year was providing mental health services to WIOA-eligible participants. The evaluation identified that 17 percent of customers not currently receiving mental health treatment felt that they needed assistance. Youth were more likely to report that in the last 12 months their mental health was such a problem that they could not work or attend school. The evaluation also identified that 62.5 percent of youth customers have four or more adverse childhood experiences and most of the youth had never received mental health support.

*Washington***Net Impact and Cost-Benefit Evaluation**

The evaluation of Washington state's Workforce Development System is conducted every four years by the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (WTECB or WTB), as per its statute. The study uses a control group approach to evaluate workforce training participants' outcomes.

Prior studies were contracted out to third parties at considerable expense, but the most recent one was done in-house and completed in 2021. In mid-2019, the WTB research unit began working with partner agencies, including representatives from all four WIOA titles, to provide administrative data for the study. Since that time, Washington has been severely disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic—with various state agencies scrambling in the public health and economic recovery effort. Workforce development plays an important role in both overcoming this disaster and setting a future course for talent and prosperity for all.

The findings of this study inform—in direct quantitative terms—the attributable economic impact various workforce development programs have. More frequent and consistent net impact and cost-benefit evaluation of these programs will be helpful to on-going economic recovery, and future workforce development planning efforts.

All programs evaluated in this study have positive earnings and employment impact directly attributed to program participation for individuals on average within three years of program exit. Other influencing factors, such as race, education, employment history, and prior earnings, are held constant. The remaining net impact is due to program participation itself. Using the net impact findings, it is then possible to use average program costs per person and calculate a program's cost-benefit.

**Opioid Disaster Relief Dislocated Worker Grant evaluation**

The Pacific Mountain (PacMtn) Workforce Development Council (WDC) received an Opioid Disaster PY18 National Dislocated Worker Grant (the Opioid program hereafter) in May 2019. The Opioid program is targeted to people adversely affected by the opioid crisis with the goal of improving employment and health outcomes of these individuals. The Opioid program offers an augmented version of the services provided under the Dislocated Worker Grant (DWG). The DWG offers reemployment services targeting individuals who have been affected by adverse economic events, including plant closures and mass layoffs. In addition to reemployment services, the Opioid program offers temporary employment opportunities, as well as finance training opportunities for individuals transitioning into health care careers related to the opioid epidemic.

The evaluation assesses the efficacy of these services and whether they are associated with higher earnings and decreased use of unemployment insurance benefits. Guidelines for the Opioid Disaster Relief Dislocated Worker Grant evaluation are provided in TEGL No. 04-18 and TEGL No. 16-21. The evaluation team is responsible for conducting the evaluation. The PacMtn WDC has been involved in planning and development of the evaluation. The details of the initial evaluation were discussed in the *PY20 WIOA Annual Performance Report*. The initial evaluation report was published in January 2022. This report finds that the augmented services offered through the Opioid program improve career outcomes for recipients more than if they had received standard dislocated worker grant services: the marginal services provided through the augmented version of the dislocated workers program resulted in a \$3,050 increase in earnings over the study period.

### Wisconsin

#### **Comprehensive Employment Planning Toolkit (CEPT) Evaluation**

The CEPT Employment Plan pilot is a joint effort by the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD)'s Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG), Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), and WIOA title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs to use the same electronic employment plan tool developed in the Comprehensive Employment Planning Toolkit (CEPT) application available through the Division of Employment and Training's Application (DET APPs) portal.

#### **Worker Connection Evaluation**

Worker Connection is funded with American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds but is piloting strategies that may be adapted by WIOA title I programs, depending on the results. Specifically, Worker Connection is piloting the use of targeted outreach, one-on-one career navigation service, and work advance training. Wisconsin received consultation from Data Labs: Roadmap to Recovery for assistance in the evaluation of Wisconsin's Worker Connection program. In partnership with the Beeck Center for Social Impact + Innovation, the Worker Connection team developed processes to track progress, evaluate success, and advance Worker Connection's mission. Worker Connection is also partnering with University of Wisconsin Center for Education Research, University of Wisconsin - Institute for Research on Poverty, and University of Wisconsin - Stout Vocational Rehabilitation Services to conduct a process evaluation. The evaluation will identify the key outreach, career navigation, and training services that lead to improved employment outcomes. It aims to develop a fidelity model for replication and sustainment of improved employment and training services, including WIOA title I.



## Waivers

### Overview

In their submission of the PY21 WIOA Annual Report Narrative, most states and territories reported at least one WIOA waiver, while others reported more. This section shares the common purposes for which states and territories received waivers and highlights how states and territories executed those waivers. Although some states and territories did not have waivers in place long enough to report outcomes, many were able to share anticipated outcomes or the initial impacts related to the approved waivers.

Generally, waivers helped increase flexibility for local workforce systems. States relied on various waiver flexibilities to respond to business needs and administrative challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. Waivers were also used to help:

- Adjust reimbursement rates;
- Support in-school youth who were at risk for disengagement;
- Increase the number of eligible and qualified training providers;
- Reduce administrative and reporting burdens on eligible and qualified training providers; and
- Build effective reporting systems or partnerships so eligible and qualified training providers could collect and submit WIOA required performance data.

Overall, state narratives described 73 waivers. Most states reported on the following:

- 21% Waiver of the requirement that states and local areas expend 75 percent of all Governor's reserve and local area formula youth funds on out-of-school youth (OSY).
- 19% Waiver allowing the use of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for in-school youth (ISY).
- 13% Waiver to increase on-the-job training (OJT) reimbursement up to 90 percent for businesses with 50 or fewer employees.

### Waiver Highlights

*Waiver of the requirement that states and local areas expend 75 percent of all Governor's reserve and local area formula youth funds on out-of-school youth (OSY)*

#### *Colorado*

The Tri-County local area implemented this waiver in PY21 to target ISY with drop-out prevention services. Through partnerships with Arvada and Littleton NEXT, Project Search, School to Work Alliance Program, Jefferson County Human Services, and

Jefferson County Public Schools, Tri-County engaged and supported 37 young adults to continue and complete their education goals while supporting work readiness prep activities.

Tri-County set the following goals in PY21 and exceeded both.

- PY21 Goal: 80 percent of ISY participants will succeed in dropout prevention by staying enrolled in school and/or graduating high school. The outcome was 93.10 percent.
- PY21 Goal: Increase credential attainment rate for all youth participants from 67 percent (PY20 goal) to 69 percent. The outcome: was 80 percent.

### *Illinois*

The State's current efforts for aligning education, workforce, and economic development are laying a solid foundation for promoting leading career pathway models and best practices. Career pathway development in Illinois is being expanded to encompass every level of the education system as well as across the needs of the State's population, including those that face multiple barriers to achieving self-sufficiency.

Of importance to the Governor's vision, the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board Strategic Plan, and the Unified State Plan is the expansion of career pathway systems into the secondary system for opportunity youth. This waiver will allow the State to provide youth with the necessary support to successfully equip them with the academic and technical skills necessary to improve their employability. Furthermore, the State anticipates that this waiver will provide greater opportunity for blending funds at the federal, state, and local levels across the partners to increase innovative strategies for improving career pathway opportunities for youth.

The State has seen an increase in the number of in-school youth (ISY) served every program year; however, out-of-school youth served decreased during the same timeframe. Performance accountability outcomes for overall WIOA Youth (including both ISY and OSY) slightly decreased in PY20, which is the latest year performance outcomes are available, is a direct result of the lower OSY served due to the Illinois workNet centers and program service providers being closed during the COVID-19 pandemic. The majority of the WIOA Youth performance indicators are on track to either remain steady or increase for PY21.

### *Indiana*

The State Workforce Development Boards (WDBs), or local areas, in WDB regions 3, 5, and 6 utilized a Waiver associated with the requirement at WIOA Section 129(a)(4)(A) and 20 CFR 681.410 that the State and local areas expend 75 percent of Governor's reserve youth funds and local formula youth funds on out-of-school youth during PY21. These WDBs continue to receive decreased funding for support of in-school youth programming such as the State's Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) program; funding decreases were due to COVID-19 reversions affecting state sponsored funding and WIOA formula youth allocations.

The WDBs in Indiana rely on programs like JAG, which is a 40-year nationally recognized workforce preparation and dropout prevention program, to improve high school graduation rates, increase post-graduation employment, and to increase access to,

and utilization of, postsecondary education and training by Indiana's new high school graduates. Despite the overall reduction in funding to WDBs for youth services, which has continued for three years, regional workforce boards were able to utilize the Waiver on Youth Funding Expenditures to ensure that Indiana's JAG program continues to outperform both peer states and Indiana's own programmatic goals.

During WIOA PY21 the State's JAG program was able to achieve the following results for Hoosier students: Graduation Rate 94 percent; Entered Employment 69 percent; Full-time Employment 85 percent; Full-time Positive Outcomes 82 percent; Postsecondary Outcomes 39 percent.

The most notable improvement from PY20 to PY21 is the increase in postsecondary education matriculation and retention, which rose by six percent from the prior year. Also of note, JAG Indiana students continue to outperform all other JAG affiliated states in scholarship funds secured for postsecondary enrollment, to the tune of \$24 million for the Class of 2022. These funds reflect strong partnerships between in-school JAG programming and Indiana's higher education system, including the 21st Century Scholars program.

The flexibility allowed by the Waiver on Funding Youth Expenditures has contributed to the success of Indiana's JAG program—a program that serves over 65,000 at-risk youth annually across the national network—by allowing JAG to continue in-class instruction, student mentoring, and participant follow-up services. Included in JAG outcomes are nearly 2,500 in-school youth in the follow-up phase of services and over 4,000 junior and senior students in classrooms across the State. The 94 percent graduation rate is 8 percent better than that of all Indiana Class of 2021 high school seniors, and 12 percent better than all low-income high school students in Indiana.

Additionally, enrollment partnerships with the State's Vocational Rehabilitation Pre-Employment Transition program have created more access for students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) or 504 plans to enroll in JAG classes; 94 percent of these JAG students graduated high school, compared to 74 percent of their special education peers not enrolled in JAG.

These outcomes demonstrate the effectiveness of Indiana's JAG program, effectiveness made possible in part by utilization of the Waiver on Funding Youth Expenditures, at reducing the State's overall high school dropout rate, while also preparing participants for entry into the 21st century workforce.

### *Maine*

This waiver was approved for the full period of PY20 and PY21 and will end June 30, 2023. Maine is a vast rural state, so one key objective of this waiver is to engage youth with significant barriers to education and employment before they leave high school to ensure they are not lost to the workforce development system. Another essential purpose is to align the workforce development system with Maine Children's Cabinet's goal of ensuring all high school students have the opportunity to engage in paid work experience.

While longitudinal studies, such as the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth on the effects of educational attainment of those who worked during high school, titled "Effects of High School Work Experience a Decade Later," shows that a moderate number of working youth are less likely to attend or complete four or more years of college, the study identified positive effects on a

variety of labor force outcomes. These effects included labor force participation, employment status, and earnings, that resulted in the authors of the study to conclude that those gains offset the educational decrements related to working while in high school.

Positive outcomes of paid work experience include student understanding of the value of money and the importance of budgeting, expanded time management skills, understanding of the relationship between earnings and education, and confidence building. Additionally, reports show a reduction in violence for disadvantaged youth engaged in summer work experience activities.

During PY20 and PY21 there were significant gains in secondary level ISY enrollments with similar levels continuing during the first five months of PY22. Evidence of successful high school completion rates will not be available until all secondary ISY have exited title IB program services. Maine will continue to monitor these outcomes going forward and will be submitting a request to extend this waiver to the DOL.

#### *Waiver allowing the use of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for in-school youth (ISY)*

##### *Arizona*

Arizona had a waiver for ITAs for in-school youth. 136 training services funded by ITAs were delivered to 124 ISY participants. Of the participants who qualified to achieve positive outcomes, 86.4 percent did so in the rate in the second quarter after exit with ITA-funded training, compared to 72.6 percent of all qualified ISY. 75.0 percent of qualified youth receiving ITA-funded training attained a credential compared to 47.1 percent of all qualified ISY. 69.4 percent of qualified ISY achieved a measurable skill gain with ITA-funded training, compared to 60.6 percent of all qualified youth.

##### *Ohio*

The intent of ITAs for the WIOA out-of-school Youth program is to expand training options, increase program flexibility, enhance customer choice, and reduce paperwork. Ohio desired the same benefits for the in-school Youth program. This waiver encourages ISY to explore in-demand occupations and career pathways and to take responsibility for planning their futures. During PY20, ITAs were provided to 553 ISY. That was an increase from PY19, when 491 ITAs were provided. In PY21, Ohio served 588 ISY with ITAs (participant counts based on quarters 1–3).

##### *Illinois*

This waiver is intended to let Local Boards use the State's Eligible Training Provider list to secure training for all youth preparing to graduate, and to expand training opportunities without having to register in-school youth into the Adult program. Illinois expects this waiver will increase the number of local areas offering ITAs to in-school youth, increase the number of youths earning a credential, and show increases in performance accountability measures. In PY21, 16 of the 21 local areas used the waiver and the number of In-school youth enrolled in ITAs increased by more than 12 percent.

### *South Dakota*

This waiver allows the State's Department of Labor and Regulation (DLR) to operate our in-school Youth program in alignment with our out-of-school Youth program.

- Increase enrollment in South Dakota's Youth program. DLR Job Service offices responded quickly to the opportunities provided by the waiver and raised enrollments by 43 percent in PY18 and by another 44 percent in PY19. While COVID-19 contributed to a slight decrease in PY20, it roared back in PY21, outpacing previous years of enrollment.
- Increase post-secondary options for disadvantaged in-school youth. Since the implementation of this waiver, DLR has worked to increase post-secondary options for disadvantaged in-school youth. There have been marked increases in occupational skills training services since implementation of this waiver, countering the pandemic dip in PY20.

### *Tennessee*

The approval of this waiver permits Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) the opportunity to determine how best to meet the educational and training needs of youth with other barriers regardless of school status, and specific to the population, geographical location, and economic and employment conditions within each Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA). Additionally, increasing outreach to ISY while maintaining a focus on serving OSY will help develop a larger pool of young people qualified and prepared to meet the current and future needs of employers in their workforce areas and throughout Tennessee.

This waiver allowed local areas to consider their demographic needs and provide direct resources to ISY populations determined to have the highest need; in turn creating a stronger workforce pipeline. For several of the areas, ISY enrollment has increased more than 100 percent.

### *Texas*

This waiver removes the requirement under the WIOA rule at 20 CFR Section 681.550 that limits the use of individual training accounts (ITAs) for youth participants to out-of-school youth (OSY) ages 16 to 24. This allows TWC to extend the use of ITAs to ISY, thus permitting Boards to serve ISY in the workforce area while maintaining priority of service for OSY.

Boards exercising this waiver have used ITAs to fund training for ISY enrolled in programs such as welding, nursing, HVAC, and business management. In PY20, 30 percent of ISY enrolled in postsecondary training programs used ITAs to fund training. Boards view this waiver as an excellent opportunity to promote apprenticeship programs and the application of pre-apprenticeship standards, with a focus on nontraditional industries and occupations. The State submitted a renewal request for this waiver with its WIOA Combined State Plan Two-Year Modification for PY20–PY23, and the waiver request was conditionally approved through June 30, 2022.

### *Utah*

The waiver is used to assist in-school youth in maintaining focus on education and exploring career options that require postsecondary education. Having more youth interested and engaged in education leading to credential attainment allows Utah to

increase its supply of workers to in-demand industries and occupations. Workforce Services has been monitoring its progress in implementing the waiver to ensure Utah complies with waiver goals and meets measurable programmatic outcomes.

The data in the State's report shows that Workforce Services is exceeding the requirements for OSY spending. By the end of PY21, 94.31 percent of WIOA Youth funds were spent on OSY and only 5.69 percent on in-school youth (ISY).

A quarterly breakdown of ISY versus OSY expenditures indicates that out-of-school youth expenditures significantly exceeded the expenditure goal of 75 percent in each quarter.

The State maintains its ISY enrollments at a level that has supported the above indicated increase in OSY expenditures. At the end of PY21, only 139 (15.38%) of youth served were ISY, and a quarterly breakdown of enrollments shows a shift towards enrolling more OSY, as agreed upon in the waiver.

Out of the 139 ISY served in PY21; 40 youth (29%) were working toward obtaining a postsecondary credential. Remaining ISY were working on completing secondary school requirements with the intent to eventually enroll in postsecondary education. The impact of ISY's engagement in postsecondary education on their access to employment opportunities is evident in their employment rate. Out of eight ISY who obtained a postsecondary credential during PY21, six youth (75%) obtained employment. The youth who started postsecondary training and did not complete it still benefited from their exposure to postsecondary education and gained additional marketable skills. Out of the 11 ISY who did not graduate, seven obtained employment (64%).

The waiver also positively impacted education providers on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), as they were not required to go through procurement in addition to completing the list requirements. This encourages providers to continue to be on the ETPL, benefiting both ISY and OSY. The State continues to certify the education providers and monitor their performance.

*Waiver to increase on-the-job training (OJT) reimbursement up to 90 percent for businesses with 50 or fewer employees*

### *Illinois*

The State is seeking expansion of the authority to the current allowable employer reimbursement for the wage rate of an OJT participant for the extraordinary costs of providing training and additional supervision related to the OJT as described in WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(H)(i) and further outlined at 20 CFR 680.720(b).

The State is proposing a sliding reimbursement scale to the employer based on its size and capability. Under this waiver, employers with 50 or less employees would be reimbursed up to 90 percent, those with between 51 and 250 employees up to 75 percent reimbursement and all other employers up to the statutory limit of 50 percent. Further, the State will develop policy as documentation of the factors used when deciding to increase the wage reimbursement level above 50 percent as required under WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(H)(i)(I) and 680.730. This waiver is being requested to apply for all OJT contracts supported by WIOA formula funds, including Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth, as appropriate.

This waiver is being requested to apply for all OJT contracts supported by WIOA formula funds, including Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth, as appropriate. Many small businesses are facing unprecedented demands to keep their doors open and avoid layoffs. Extra incentives such as the increased wage reimbursement is a tool to support a strengthened recovery strategy.

The State needs to have the flexibility to provide an increased incentive to establish new OJT opportunities during a time of uncertainty and recovery.

As a result of this waiver, the number of OJT placements (including those in apprenticeships) and the number of unique OJT employer worksites has steadily increased each program year. Additionally, most of the OJT placements have been in the manufacturing sector.

For PY20, which is the latest year performance outcomes are available, employment retention rates for OJT participants that exited with a job in a related industry in which they were trained in the second and fourth quarters following exit has decreased. This may be a direct result of the shuttering of employers in the manufacturing industry during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### *Missouri*

DOL approved the State's waiver request to increase OJT employer reimbursement up to 90 percent through June 30, 2022, for WIOA title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth formula funds. The results of the pandemic continue to affect the delivery of the OJT program. Compared to PY19 data, OJT is down 43 percent. However, compared to PY20 data, OJT developments are roughly the same. The report provides a table showing OJTs by region per program year, comparing PY19, PY20, and PY21. In PY21, OWD brought all OWD employer outreach staff under one team, referred to as the Employer Relation and Engagement Team. This strategic staffing alignment will assist in delivering a consistent message regarding the availability of OJT services, among other work-based learning options, in each local area. OWD ensured each local plan included engagement with this team during the required two-year plan modification period.

During PY21, 64 people were served through OJT. Job Centers continue to promote OJT as WIOA programmatic support for apprenticeships. One LWDB utilized the 90 percent waiver amount for its OJT agreements, while all others utilized the standard 50 percent reimbursement rate. Two additional LWDBs provided OJT services compared to the previous program year.

### *Nevada*

This waiver is approved through June 30, 2022, for WIOA title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth formula funds. The waiver permits the State and its local workforce areas to increase the reimbursement rate for OJT contracts up to 75 percent. The State may also reimburse up to 90 percent for OJT for businesses with 50 or fewer employees. DOL-ETA expects the operation of OJTs to increase in the State as a result of the waiver.

Utilization of the 90 percent OJT waiver was 29 or 16.4 percent with over 72 percent completing an OJT successfully. The participants who benefited from the OJTs had an average wage of \$16.15 per hour as compared to a wage of \$15.65 for all OJT participants. Approximately 76 percent of the participants served identify as African American/Black; Asian; or more than one race with 6.9 percent identifying as Hispanic or Latino. The participants had the following barriers: 31 percent re-entry; 6.9 percent veteran; and 6.9 percent persons with a disability. Statewide performance was not measurably impacted by the waiver.



*Rhode Island*

The primary goal and outcomes of the waiver included: increased flexibility for smaller Rhode Island businesses to help them ramp up operations and keep pace with evolving market demands as the State recovers from the economic impacts of the pandemic; and to increase the usage of OJT among smaller firms. Per the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 91.1 percent of Rhode Island entities were those which employed fewer than 20 workers in 2021. The initial waiver was approved on August 13, 2021. During the months of September and October 2021, the State board conferred with staff and thought leadership on the best approach to operationalizing this waiver among the local areas and raising employer awareness. In December guidance was issued by the State Board to all local areas and state staff was made available to answer any questions. The Greater Rhode Island local area issued enabling policy changes, with required procedural changes and guidance in early February 2022; the Providence/Cranston local area issued enabling policy with required procedural changes and guidance in late March.

During PY21, 81 percent of OJT establishments contracted in the Greater 18 Rhode Island workforce area alone employed fewer than 50 individuals, and 59 percent employed fewer than 20 employees. It is anticipated that this ratio will be maintained or increased as both local areas continue to build employer awareness and outreach regarding the enhanced match.

*Waiver associated with the requirement that local areas expend 75 percent of local formula youth funds on OSY*

*Minnesota*

The State secured a waiver from DOL that assures the Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs) have the flexibility to target services to in-school youth (ISY) who meet DOL's definition of homeless youth. A Minnesota Department of Education survey identified over 3,600 youth in grades 8–12 statewide who were homeless; over 75 percent were youth from communities of color. This waiver allows the State to reduce the required OSY expenditure rate from 75 percent to 60 percent for LWDAs who prioritize ISY who are homeless or foster youth.

Minnesota's Homeless Youth/Foster Youth waiver provided seven LWDAs, in PY21, with the flexibility to target homeless youth and foster youth while they are still in school. Services include provision of critical employment and training services to at-risk ISY without jeopardizing the delivery of services to OSY participants. This waiver supports one of the goals of Minnesota's State WIOA Plan: to increase the high school graduation rate for under-represented youth.

Overall, of the 2,422 served, 373 (15%) were homeless/runaway youth. Of these 373, 66 were ISY homeless youth without a high school diploma at enrollment. A total of 115 youth identified as either in foster care, or previously in foster care. Out of the 115, 37 were ISYs.

*Mississippi*

The State requested that this percentage be lowered to 50 percent retroactively for PY21 and as a result there was an increase in connection between education and training providing work-based learning opportunities that include work experience and pre-apprenticeship and increasing access to workforce services to disadvantaged youth.



- Approximately three out of every four public school children in Mississippi live below the poverty guidelines.
- Research shows that students from low-income families are more likely to drop out of high school than their more advantaged classmates.
- With more than 60 percent of Mississippi jobs requiring postsecondary education and training, intervention strategies that increase a student's opportunity to remain in school and graduate are critical to the success of the State's youth.

As a result of the waiver, there was an increase in connection between education and training providing work-based learning opportunities that include work experience and pre-apprenticeship and increasing access to workforce services to disadvantaged youth.

For PY21, a partnership between Twin Districts Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) and Kemper County School District provided students enrolled in the Work-Based Learning program job placements previously unavailable. The Workforce area staff worked closely with students to ensure that they developed proper job search skills and were hired with the soft skills and work ethics needed to succeed. Using the Kemper County model, the LWDA replicated the program and expanded it to the Hattiesburg Public School District, and they anticipate more growth throughout the workforce area in 2022.

The Mississippi Partnership LWDA was the first workforce area in the State to begin implementing the 50/50 strategy, using the waiver during PY18–PY20. Although youth participation dropped in PY19 and PY20 due to COVID-19, enrollment increased in PY21. And the two areas that used the waiver extensively in PY21—the Mississippi Partnership and Twin Districts—both increased Youth Median Earnings (42.47 percent and 29.61 percent, respectfully), enough to raise the Statewide Youth Median Earnings performance in the first three reportable quarters. Statewide and in both LWDAs, OSY increased median earnings by a larger margin than in-school youth did.

### *South Dakota*

This waiver allows The State's Department of Labor and Regulation (DLR) to expend up to 50 percent of youth funding on ISY. With this waiver in place, DLR has enhanced its partnership with The State Department of Education and individual school districts throughout The State. This waiver is crucial to the State's efforts to expose students to local employment and education opportunities in their communities.

The States low employment numbers make businesses increasingly interested in building student relationships. This waiver allows DLR to offer services to all youth participants equally, resulting in a sizable increase in the number of Work-Based Learning services offered to youth in The State's Communities.

Career Exploration services include Job Shadows, Provision of Labor Market Information, and Leadership Development Services. With the approval of this waiver in PY18, there have been significant gains in the number of Career Exploration Services provided to youth in The State except for PY20 (due to the reassignment of job service staff to assist with unemployment insurance from March through November of 2020, as a response to the COVID-19 Pandemic). The number of career explorations offered in PY21 dwarfs all previous years and is a positive indicator of DLR's commitment to serving the youth of The State.

Title I Youth Work-Based Learning Services: DLR provided 218 opportunities in PY18, then saw a decrease in PY19 and PY20, a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, in PY21, DLR provided 237 work-based learning services to youth in the State.

Apprentices are generally between the ages of 16 and 34. With the launch of the Pathway Partnership initiative, there has been a steady increase in the number of youths entering apprenticeships. This past program year saw an increase of 95 percent in participation of the 16–24 –year-old age group from the previous year.

### *Waiver to allow the State Board to act as the Local Board*

#### *Alaska*

The modified role of Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB) representing two local areas consisting of Anchorage/Mat-Su and the remainder of the State is essential to offset excessive administrative costs, thwart inconsistencies in services, and maximize overall performance in a large state whose small population is nevertheless dispersed over a vast area of economically distinct regions.

The State has made significant progress towards the goals outlined in the approved waiver. Two nonvoting seats consisting of local elected officials were created during PY21, along with a subcommittee that ensures local area priorities are represented. Functioning as a single State Board has streamlined the process and timeliness of awarding grants by the elimination of multiple layers of administrative entities, has allowed consistent eligibility standards across the State, and improved both visibility and accountability of workforce investment programs. The AWIB continues to engender local participation and points of view, consulting local elected officials from the State's boroughs and cities in regional and statewide planning efforts. For example, the Workforce Readiness and Employment and Placement Committee provides oversight for training and employment programs that are delivering education and training relevant to local employer needs. AWIB has prioritized attendance at gatherings surrounding local workforce issues, as well as informational events focused on Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funding opportunities for rural Alaskan communities. Additionally, the waiver allows the AWIB to foster regional collaboration among job centers, educational institutions, labor, and nonprofits, and to work with employers to determine local or regional hiring needs that informs responsive training programs to ensure that sector needs are met and all geographic regions are served.

#### *Idaho*

The primary goal sought by this waiver is to reduce administrative costs and maximize the available money directed to career and training services, including work-based learning, and services to business and jobseekers. The eventual programmatic outcome results in service to a larger number of participants than would otherwise be served due to higher administrative costs. To maximize resources available for service delivery, the State continues to use the flexibility of this waiver to allow the WDC to serve as the local workforce board. When initially implemented, this move saved the State WIA program \$1,482,788 by removing the required maintenance of six local areas throughout the State. These former administrative funds have been utilized as program funds allowing for more participants to be served, which permits the State to maintain service levels despite funding cuts over the years. In today's dollars, the costs easily translate to a programmatic infusion of \$2,253,473 which, in 2022, amounts to just over 30.4 percent of the State's total WIOA title IB allotment from DOL for PY21.

The single statewide planning structure helps reduce annual overhead, emphasizing spending program funds towards direct training and support of businesses and participants. By strengthening administrative oversight and accountability processes, it has helped significantly in eliminating administrative deficiencies over the years that may have resulted in disallowed costs. As state education policy aligns with the State's workforce development goals, the Statewide structure enhances efforts to transform its workforce development system into a demand driven system. Having the State Board provide the functions of both the State and local board provides an additional benefit to board members, as they can gain a full perspective of WIOA activities throughout the State and recognize that all areas of the State face similar challenges.

### *Montana*

Under this waiver, the State continued to allocate WIOA title I funds by local area. From each local area, funds are allocated to counties utilizing local unemployment and poverty data to ensure funds are distributed as to maximize service delivery. County-elected officials sit on the State Board and were able to provide local input into activities carried out throughout Montana.

### *Rhode Island*

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

Under WIOA, the Governor continued to serve as the Chief Elected Official for the GRI LWDB. During a compliance monitoring review conducted in February 2018, DOL regional staff identified that the Governor acting in this capacity was inconsistent with WIOA requirements because the Governor was not a local elected official and, thus, cannot appoint the local board. Regional staff advised finding one or more local elected official(s) to assume the role of Chief Local Elected Official for the area or submit a waiver requesting that the SWDB act as, and carry out roles and responsibilities of, the GRI LWDB. After conferring with the State League of Cities and Towns (Which represents all 39 municipalities in The State, including the 37 that make up the Greater Rhode Island area), the State elected to submit a waiver to allow the State board to function as a local board for Greater Rhode Island. This waiver was initially approved in September 2019 with the condition that the Board ensure continued local input and feedback into decisions impacting the Greater Rhode Island area. In response, the Board worked with the League of Cities and Towns to establish a Local Area Advisory Committee for the State Board. This Subcommittee met throughout PY21 and helped ensure local area 'voice' and representation in key WIOA-related matters including policymaking, service data and demographic analysis, modification of the local WIOA plan, overseeing rehabilitation and upgrading of the local area American Job Centers, and other matters. The ultimate responsibility for these functions remains with the board.

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

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

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

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

In response to condition three, the State continues to conduct regular monitoring of local areas. Consistent with the terms of the waiver, the State revised its statewide monitoring policy to ensure that local monitoring decisions were free from any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest.

#### *Other Waivers*

*Waiver to allow local workforce development areas to count both WIOA local youth formula funds and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds toward the minimum 20 percent expenditure requirement for paid or unpaid work experience.*

#### **Kansas**

Local Area I had plans to implement a pilot program with the Kansas Department for Children and Families, where youth would be co-enrolled in TANF and WIOA Youth programs. As youth were set up on work experiences, TANF funds would be used to pay the wages.

Implementation of this pilot program proved to be a challenge as the Department of Children and Families had very low enrollments this last program year. Local Area I also had fewer WIOA Youth enrollments than expected, and they were only able to develop five new youth Work Experiences this past program year. As a result of low enrollment totals and undeveloped work experiences, the State decided to let this waiver expire on June 30, 2022, without requesting an extension.

#### **Ohio**

The large infusion of TANF dollars allows WIOA Youth dollars to have a greater impact, and it also allows more disconnected youth to be served. Using this waiver, the out-of-school youth expenditure statewide rate for the PY20 funds was 79.3 percent and for the PY21 funds was 81.5 percent. The number of WIOA participants co-funded with TANF dollars was 4,721, which was a decrease from the previous program year (5,312 participants). Also, the overall percentage of co-funded participants decreased from 28 percent to 24.9 percent in PY21.

*Waiver to allow local areas to reserve more than 20 percent of Adult and Dislocated Worker funds for incumbent worker training.*

**Illinois**

This waiver is intended to eliminate a barrier to provide incumbent worker training faced by workers and employers struggling to stay competitive. The State expects increases in the number of local area incumbent worker training projects, the number of businesses using incumbent worker training, and the number of workers eligible to receive incumbent worker training. From PY20 to PY21, the number of incumbent worker training projects has nearly doubled from 33 to 64, the number of businesses using incumbent worker training has doubled from 31 to 62, and the number of workers able to receive this training has increased from 72 to 125.

*Waiver of the state Workforce Development Board membership requirements*

**Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands**

The waiver on the statutory and regulatory provisions of the WIOA Section 101(b)(1)(c)(ii) and the corresponding regulation at 20 CFR 679.110(b)(3)(ii)(B) remained active in the first quarter of PY21 or through September 30, 2021 (waiver the statutory requirement on the membership to the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB)).

Since the approval of the above-mentioned waiver, the Commonwealth's Registered Apprenticeship Program established its first approved RAP with Pacific BioMedical Services, Inc. Its Vice-President, Stan Benavente, was appointed in January 2022 to serve on the Commonwealth's State Workforce Development Board as the representative of Joint Labor/ Management Registered Apprenticeship.

**Indiana**

During the 2018 Legislative Session, the Indiana General Assembly created the Governor's Workforce Cabinet (GWC) and designated it with the responsibilities of the State workforce board in addition to assigning GWC the authority to direct the State agencies required to strategically address current and future workforce and education needs.

The Cabinet is experiencing continued success and has met the goals established for PY21 by continuing to bring together key partners, determine strategy and drive change for individuals and employers. The Cabinet is comprised of 31 members, representing different areas of the State, and includes business and community leaders, K–12 representatives, appointees from postsecondary institutions, Indiana lawmakers and experts from state agencies.

The Cabinet has been successful in breaking down bureaucratic silos that previously existed and the work of the Cabinet is moving forward with purpose and intensity following the COVID-19 pandemic. Collaboration and engagement have never been higher.

In PY21, the Governor appointed a new chairperson and executive director, both with private sector and government experience.

Addressing feedback provided by DOL-ETA pursuant to the approved 2022 waiver request, the Cabinet appointed two state representatives to provide unique representation for adult education and vocational rehabilitation. In addition, seven board members were added during this period to address vacancies and term limits.

With additional Cabinet appointments, industry/employer representatives remain a majority. Toward the end of PY21, industry representatives worked closely with the Chair and Executive Director to lead member working groups, which culminated in the Cabinet's first formal set of legislative recommendations. These recommendations were prepared for the Governor and Indiana General Assembly and propose solutions for helping employers find skilled workers, removing barriers to employment for potential workers and preparing the future workforce.

In addition, Cabinet meetings have been restructured to meet in Indiana's 12 economic development regions, with the intent of learning about each region's unique strengths, challenges and programs producing successful outcomes. The local workforce board presents an overview of the region, including local data and how that compares to state numbers. In addition, a local employer showcases an initiative that is taking a novel approach to workforce and education issues. Local business and civic leaders, economic development organizations, postsecondary institutions, and community partners from the local region attend and discuss priority topics with Cabinet members. Where opportunities exist to champion and replicate regional success, or identified barriers can be addressed, the Governor's Workforce Cabinet can serve as a change agent.

As the eligible agency for Perkins, the Cabinet's CTE staff fully redesigned 65 secondary programs of study—"Next Level Programs of Study"—which fully launched in the 2022–2023 school year. The Cabinet's placement at the intersection of K–12, postsecondary training and workforce has allowed the CTE team to bring together the right stakeholders to execute the vision laid out by one of the Cabinet's initial working groups (the "CTE Action Team").

### **Michigan**

The State was approved for a waiver to substitute the WIOA state board membership requirements with alternate requirements which specify board membership, chairperson, and category/sub-category representation requirements for PY21.

Projected programmatic outcomes resulting from alternate state workforce development board composition would include better support for true engagement of employers and education providers with the State's workforce development system. The composition also provided an enhanced opportunity for the creation of innovative solutions to the challenges employers in key sectors are facing. An increase in Michiganders possessing postsecondary credentials was also anticipated to occur. As of 2021, the percentage of working-age adults with a certificate, associate degree or higher had increased to 49 percent.

## Success Stories

### Overview

States and territories are encouraged to include information on customer accomplishments and successes. This section highlights a variety of success stories and provides valuable examples of how states and territories are implementing WIOA to help adult and youth jobseekers gain skills and employment. Other examples include how states and territories are implementing WIOA to assist dislocated workers, as well as create and maintain successful business partnerships with employers.

### Success Stories Highlights

#### *WIOA Adult Program*

##### *Illinois*

The Workforce Connection was first introduced to Christopher through a referral from the Rockford Rescue Mission. He was homeless and wanted to work in an office or customer service setting, but he lacked the experience. His previous work experience was in retail and factory work. He wanted to change careers. Living at the Mission and contending with COVID-19 restrictions and lockdowns made the situation even more difficult. The staff's first interactions were over Zoom, but even then, they could see that he was kind, bright, polite, and driven to improve his situation. The Workforce Connection Career Center, which was within walking distance of the mission, hired him into the WIOA temporary work experience program as a Career Center Assistant WEX. He performed so well that when a full-time Career Center position became available, he was hired to fill that role. His life challenges and positive attitude make him uniquely qualified to assist participants in the Career Center.

“By going through the Work Experience program, I was able to learn the office skills I had been lacking and unable to learn on my own, enabling me to be able to find employment, first as human resources at a security company and then being hired full time with The Workforce Connection as a Community Navigator,” Christopher said. “I was also able to get linked up with services allowing me to rent my own apartment, help paying for electricity through Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and get connected with SNAP assistance for food. With my job at The Workforce Connection, I can connect people with resources of their own to both help them through hard times and get them training or assistance with finding a job. It is my chance to give back to those who are in a similar or even worse position than I was at the time. I am grateful to be able to give back to the community in such a way.”

##### *Connecticut*

Carlos had been out of the workforce for ten years dealing with illness. Although fearful of reentering the workforce, the staff at the AJC reassured him they would provide coaching and support at every point in his journey to employment. Carlos' dream was to land a job driving for CTtransit; he had applied several times, but never received a call back. He was awarded a WIOA training



scholarship, completed CDL training in 2019, and, with the help of the Disability Resource Coordinator, reapplied to CTtransit in July 2020. The company informed Carlos that if he obtained his F Endorsement he would be hired, so the AJC provided funding for the training and, in July 2021, Carlos received a call from CTtransit to begin training. He successfully completed training and was hired.

### *Virginia*

In December 2021, George was experiencing homelessness after losing his father to cancer. George connected with Virginia Career Works Northern and with Shelters to Shutters. George was invited to a hiring event in January 2022 with multiple Shelters to Shutters Industry Partners. George did not have experience in the multifamily industry, but his background in customer service, his positive attitude, and his motivation made him stand out at the event.

George was offered a full-time position as a Resident Coordinator with Bonaventure Property Management. He was provided with a discounted apartment large enough for his daughter to have her own play area. As part of the Shelters to Shutters program, George was paired with a mentor to walk alongside him and offer support as he navigated multiple life transitions.

Within three months, George was promoted to Leasing Consultant and now has his eyes set on continuing to advance and grow as a multifamily professional.

### *WIOA Youth Program*

#### *Arizona*

Prior to enrolling in the ARIZONA@WORK Youth program in May 2021, Airlin struggled as a 20-year-old unemployed youth, living in a low-income neighborhood. Airlin stated that she is an English language learner with her native language being Spanish. Airlin immediately identified her goal of entering the dental field, spoke about the field with great passion, and understood this would require extensive education.

Entering the program as an in-school youth, Airlin was determined to complete a dental assisting occupational skills training program to further employability in the field. In the justification letter for the training, Airlin expressed a “thirst for developing new skills and knowledge” and further stated, “I am seeking training to keep the dream alive and achieve becoming a Certified Dental Assistant. I am motivated in this dental training because I want to build upon it and attend Dental Hygiene School in the future and keep furthering my education.” Airlin attended the American Institute of Dental Assisting in July 2021 and completed the 13-week course with a cumulative grade of 93 percent.

In November 2021, Airlin was placed in a work experience at OoLi Orthodontics making \$14.00 an hour and in February 2022, accepted a full-time dental assistant position with the same employer, making \$15.00 an hour. Airlin’s passion, hard work, dedication, and the Individual Training Account for in-school youth led to a dream realized and a promising start to a new career.



### *Mississippi*

Ms. Ellis entered SMPDD's Youth Workforce Training Program as an in-school participant enrolled in Hattiesburg High School. Ms. Ellis's father is a welder and her mother is an elementary school teacher. Ms. Ellis successfully completed a rigorous curriculum, which included work ethics, financial literacy, job skills training, and career readiness training. She was an active member of the Beta Club, Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA), the National Technical Honor Society (NTHS), and Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) while simultaneously participating in our program.

Ms. Ellis participated in the work experience program and was placed at a local coffee shop called, "Java Werks" where she continued to learn. Java Werks and SMPDD were happy with her performance. Soon after, Ms. Ellis graduated from high school with special honors and was ranked fourth in her class based on scholastic achievements. She received five scholarships in total including a Career & Technical Scholarship to Pearl River Community College (PRCC) and an Honors scholarship to PRCC. She also received scholarships from Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc., and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc., and from Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA). Currently Ms. Ellis is a full-time student at Florida A&M University, appreciative of her offers, which was the best option for pursuing her career path. She plans to work as a robotics engineer for The United States Department of Defense by constructing robots to be used in military combat, hospitals, etc. Additionally, when she gains enough experience, she plans to start her own business building robots that can be used to help nurses complete non-invasive tasks in healthcare settings.

Ms. Oakes graduated from Hinds Community College with an associate degree and entered the registered nursing (RN) program at Delta State University. She successfully participated in the Nursing Externship Program then went to the WIN Job Center to get financial assistance for her last semester. Ms. Oakes was awarded a WIOA ITA and was able to complete the final semester and receive her RN License. Prior to nursing, Ms. Oakes was a waitress earning \$2.15 per hour and a hostess earning \$7.25 per hour. Now as an RN employed at Baptist Medical Center in Arkansas where the average salary for a RN is \$24.00 per hour, she is earning a sustainable income.

### *New Hampshire*

When Zack first entered the Dislocated Worker program, his parents explained it as a last resort to try and motivate their son to become more communicative and independent. Zack had been struggling with mental health issues since middle school and as a result, barely spoke or socialized with anyone while in school, or since he graduated. He did not have the energy or social understanding to socialize in person or enter the workforce. He was living with his parents with no plans for a career, to get his driver's license, or move out on his own. Zack was barely communicative with Staff upon starting, and it was challenging to create plans because of his limited feedback.

However, through many months of consistent meetings and case management to remove barriers, Zack has now transformed. Zack has removed significant personal barriers by going back to seeing a counselor regularly. This has helped him learn the tools to put himself in new experiences and become more comfortable speaking with others and showing his personality. Staff have

seen him become more and more communicative and has even been smiling and cracking jokes in recent months. A complete change from the beginning!

Zack has always had excellent attendance with Staff and because of that, many skills have been tackled and accomplished. Zack has completed his PEWMS and has obtained a MSG. Zack has learned many other independent adult skills such as doing his own laundry, how to grocery shop, budget his expenses, build his credit score, be a good roommate, prepare healthy meals, and study for the written driver's exam.

With all the successes from his counseling sessions and My Turn appointments, Zack has succeeded in obtaining his first job and saving up enough to move out of his parent's house. He is living with his friend in their own apartment. Zack's full-time job not only covers all of his expenses but allows him to save each month as well. Zack will be taking his DMV written exam in the month of January and will begin driving lessons this month as well. Staff could not be prouder of his progress and know with these barriers removed, his future has many more options available to him. Cannot wait to see what he accomplishes next!

### *WIOA Dislocated Worker Program*

#### *Alaska*

Joshua is a 41-year-old single father of one child. Joshua had a total of 14 years in the oilfield industry and had last worked for two years as a derrickman but was laid off due to recent instability of the local industry after receiving a Reduction in Force letter.

At the time of enrollment, he was unemployed and collecting unemployment insurance. He had already approached the Operating Engineers Local 302 for training and apprenticeship and was advised that obtaining a Class A Commercial Driver License (CDL A) would make it easier to receive dispatches for employment until their classroom training would begin in the spring of 2022. After applying for jobs, seeking labor market information, and discussing his goals, Peninsula Job Center resource room staff referred Joshua to CSTS. He was determined eligible and suitable for the WIOA Dislocated Worker and TET DWG programs to pay for tuition, fees, and supportive services to attend CDL A training, and successfully completed Kenai Peninsula Driving Instruction's 40-hour Commercial Truck Driver training program. Joshua first found employment as a Commercial Driver with Peterkin Distributors earning \$18 per hour but was receiving minimal hours. He continued looking for full-time employment and was hired into his current position as a Long-Haul Driver with JNS Trucking, where he is paid by the load and averages \$4,500 a pay period, or \$9,000 per month, plus benefits.

#### *Kansas*

Courtney was referred to the Workforce Center in July of 2020 due to a layoff from his employment in the aviation industry. Prior to his layoff, Courtney was working full time as an Engine Mechanic making \$33.20 per hour. Courtney was seeking training to upgrade his skills to stay in the Aviation industry but in a different occupation. Courtney is a single father to three children, so it was crucial for him to be able to match or exceed the income he earned prior to his layoff.

After working with a Workforce Professional, Courtney decided on training at a local community college for Non-Destructive Testing. He began training in August of 2020. While attending training he took advantage of fuel assistance supportive services to

assist him in traveling to school. Courtney was able to gain entry level employment at a local aviation employer towards the end of his training to assist in providing for his children. While this entry level employment led to less income than prior to his layoff, he was able to gain experience and earn income while attending school. Courtney graduated in June 2022 with his NDT Technical certification. This certification allowed him to obtain a promotion and wage increase at the aviation employer he was working at. Courtney is now earning \$39.56 per hour with full benefits and is again able to support his family.

### *Michigan*

Trent was permanently laid off from his job at Metal Works in Ludington after the company faced challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Trent immediately connected with Northwest Michigan Works! for employment and training services, as well as guidance with his Unemployment Insurance Agency claim.

Michigan Works! provided Trent with job referrals, employer advocacy, résumé development, interview skills, Career Connection Meetings, Virtual Job Fairs, and travel reimbursement by providing gas cards for long distance travel in job search activity. Trent received guidance, reassurance, and encouragement from the Business Service Representative, Career Services Specialist, and Career Advisor as he worked toward developing his career path and understanding/resolving unemployment issues.

Trent secured employment as a Purchasing Coordinator at Cherry Capital Foods in Traverse City earning \$38,000/year.

Trent stated,

“I was grateful to be able to utilize the Michigan Works! resources of online job fairs, Career Connection, networking, unemployment insurance assistance, and staff’s flexibility of meeting with me. I also appreciated the Business Service Representative advocating for me to become employed with my current employer. My job and company I work for has been a great match for my passion and enthusiasm.”

### *Mississippi*

Ronnie, a member of a family of five receiving public assistance, visited the local WIN Job Center with a desire to become self-sufficient. Mr. Bang had no meaningful credentials or transferable occupational skills, which made it difficult to earn enough wages to feed his family without assistance. He went to the WIN Job Center, was enrolled in WIOA, and Ingalls HireUP Program. Mr. Bang completed the program and is working at Ingalls with a starting pay of \$24.79 per hour. This job has changed his circumstances, and he no longer requires public assistance to feed his family. There is some truth to the saying, “the second time is a charm.”

### *Oregon*

Christina reached out to the Clackamas Workforce Development Department because she needed retraining to get back into the workforce. Her husband was in the Navy and she stayed home taking care of her children for many years. Christina completed an associate of arts Oregon transfer degree in 2012 at Clackamas Community College and also obtained a vocational certificate in

hair design in 2015 at Northwest College of Beauty. She also had three years of experience as an administrative assistant and her last job was as a hairstylist.

Christina was very interested in working in the healthcare field as a medical billing and coder. She was co-enrolled in the Strategic Innovation–COVID-19 Response Grant and the National Dislocated Worker Grant-Disaster Recovery to receive assistance with tuition, textbooks, and any other support services for her training.

Christina began the Medical Billing and Coding program at Coding Clarified LLC. This is a fully online training. She demonstrated her commitment to being successful from the very beginning. In the sixth week she reported,

“Things are going wonderfully with the program. I am currently at about 38 percent completion and feeling really good about the material. This course has been a godsend and I feel like I am really absorbing the material. I just completed a really difficult chapter (the cardiovascular system) and did fairly well!”

Christina successfully completed her training program three months later. She took her certification exam the following month and passed. She then began an internship with the Coding Clarified program on the same date.

Four months later, Christina was offered a remote full-time position as a Medical Billing and Coder. She was very excited about this opportunity and started her new job at \$18/hr., with full benefits. Christina was able to complete her training program and get a full-time job in less than one year and states “I’m excited for the opportunities that have been made available to me. Thank you again!”

### *Employer Services*

#### *Kansas*

Wyandotte County Workforce Center is fortunate to have built strong relationships with multiple companies in Kansas City, Kansas. Every week employers are scheduled to host targeted, onsite hiring events. MPS Group reached out to the Wyandotte County Center and requested space and times they could recruit, screen, and hire jobseekers for their General Motors worksite in the Fairfax manufacturing districts of Kansas City, KS.

MPS Group is an enterprise specializing in creative and comprehensive service solutions in the areas of Waste & Byproduct Management, Specialized Industrial and Technical Cleaning and Industrial Wastewater Treatment. MPS Group has partnered with General Motors and Ford Motor Corporation in Detroit for the past 20 years. MPS hosted an event in the Wyandotte Center on March 9th. Flyers were distributed to Community Partners and Center staff to promote the event, and flyers were posted in high-visibility areas of the Center for the two weeks leading up to the event. MPS met with 32 jobseekers and made offers to 30 of them. Both MPS Recruiters who worked at this event expressed their surprise and delight with the jobseeker turnout, given the tight labor market the State has been experiencing. They stated a similar event recently held in Springhill, TN, produced only one hire over the course of three days. And another event in Fort Wayne, IN, which lasted two days only produced seven hires. This single-session March 9th event at the Wyandotte County Workforce Center easily surpassed those results, and far exceeded the Recruiters’ expectations coming into the event.

Wyandotte County Workforce Center also has been a go-to location for hiring events for ABM Industries, Inc. A new \$110 million dollar fulfillment center located at 9700 Leavenworth Road is bringing 500 additional jobs to the Kansas City, KS area. ABM Industries is a facility management provider for various client business across the U.S., to include, notably, Amazon. As of 2013, the company is one of the largest facility management providers in the U.S., with 130,000 employees across 350 offices and various international locations, with a corporate office located in Kansas City, MO.

On September 14th and 15th, a Recruiter from ABM scheduled interviews with jobseekers for placement at one of the Amazon facilities in Kansas City, KS. Positions being filled included janitorial and warehouse jobs, with starting pay ranging from \$15.00 to \$18.00 per hour and offering full benefits packages. The Recruiter's goal was to screen and make offers to 37 jobseekers. After two days recruiting and interviewing in the Wyandotte County Workforce Center, the ABM Recruiter reported 39 hires, exceeding the desired goal.

### *Michigan*

Glenn from 876 came into the Michigan Works! West Central Baldwin location to inquire about what services could be provided for a new business coming into Baldwin. A Talent Specialist explained that there were several ways to assist him, but one great idea was holding job fairs either at Michigan Works! or at the 876 location. Michigan Works! would also advertise on social media to get the word out.

Glenn decided to go ahead and post his job openings and set up the first job fair, which would take place at the Baldwin Michigan Works! Service Center. As a result of the first job fair, he filled five of the open positions and was very pleased with the response to the job fair.

With the first job fair being such a success, he decided to schedule a second job fair, which also proved to be a success as all the remaining positions were filled. Being a new business, Glenn knew he would have to hold another job fair, because from his past experience, some of the new hires would not make it through the training and those positions would need to be refilled. Just as expected, there were new hires who did not make it. A third job fair was set up, but this time it would be at the 876 restaurant site. The job fair was successful, and two more positions were filled.

"Michigan Works! West Central Baldwin location has been such a great help in the process of opening the new 876 Restaurant," Glenn said. "I was not having any success in the different avenues that I have pursued, so I entered the Michigan Works! Baldwin location to see if they would be able to assist in my hiring needs. The staff was very helpful and assisted by setting up numerous job fairs, and they turned out better than I could have ever expected. The positions were filled with success."

### *North Carolina*

STI Fabrics, a local, family-owned business that manufactures and distributes one of the most in-demand performance fabrics in the home furnishings industry, is a major employer and community partner in workforce development. For several years, the company has worked with the Gaston Correctional Center's work release program to provide a variety of job opportunities for

inmates. Several of these workers have joined STI as full-time employees after they reentered the community. In March 2022, STI sponsored a successful local event with the NC Department of Public Safety as an example of the company's commitment to the justice-involved population. Called "In Their Shoes: A Prison-to-Community Simulation," the event included participants from community colleges, resource agencies, local industries, the judicial system, community corrections, and chambers of commerce. The simulation was designed to show the public how difficult it is to navigate society upon release from jail or prison. Meanwhile, during the past year, STI has opened up opportunities for high school students to work part time. This allows them to become knowledgeable about manufacturing and could lead to full-time positions in the future. STI also offers apprenticeships and on-the-job training.

### *Other Success Stories*

#### *Illinois*

##### **REO-Adult**

Marshall went through a re-entry program before the end of a seven-year prison stint to prepare him for a return to normal life. Marshall arrived in Carlinville homeless and met the local Catholic Charities, which guided him through the process of obtaining a State ID as well as possible assistance with rent while he found housing and employment.

As part of his return to civilian life, Marshall came into the Carlinville Job Center to search for jobs. Since he did not have his own phone, he used the Job Center phone to look for housing. During the heavy rains the staff at the job center would try to find shelter for Marshall and continued to assist him with his search for housing assistance. Until Marshall obtained his own phone and found safe and secure housing, it would be hard for him to obtain permanent employment. Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) assisted him in creating a résumé and job search on Illinois Job Link along with the Job Center staff assisting with his job search. Marshall took the train to Springfield for a job opportunity, but that situation did not work out.

Back to the housing and job search, Don Adams from Express Personnel was hosting a Job Fair at R&R Bindery in Girard, Illinois. Marshall attended a job fair in Girard, Illinois, where he found an opportunity, applied, interviewed, and was hired on the spot. But Marshall had one more obstacle to overcome, housing.

The Job Center staff continued to help him in his search. A staff member told Marshall about a family that tries to help the "underdog." It was a weekend and bad weather was expected again. The staff provided drinks, snacks, gift cards and made a make-shift bedroll from whatever items they could find in the center. The staff left work Friday night giving Marshall access to stay outside the building if needed. Marshall proceeded to stop by and see the caring family in Carlinville. The family offered Marshall temporary shelter at their home. Marshall started working full-time at his new position, found an apartment in Carlinville and was subsequently offered a permanent position after a 90-day probation period.

#### *Wyoming*

##### **TANF and WIOA Dislocated Worker Participant Program Co-enrollment**

Bob was working at Halliburton and was laid off. He came to the WFC to apply for his unemployment insurance (UI) benefits. Bob

lacked computer skills and requested one-on-one assistance with his UI claims. We shared information about the WIOA Dislocated Worker program and eventually enrolled him in the program. Bob became very interested in a new program at Western Wyoming Community College, Mine Maintenance/Control Room Operator.

Within a few months, Bob started college and just recently graduated. There were many struggles throughout the time Bob was attending school. He exhausted his UI and he was not able to work and be successful in school. Therefore, the WIOA case manager made a referral to the POWER program. Both Bob and his wife became POWER participants and were able to utilize this program to meet their family's day-to-day financial needs. Other referrals were made to help with housing, SNAP benefits, and to DVR.

After completion of the Mine Maintenance/Control Room Operator program, Bob was hired by Genesis. He is a full-time, permanent employee, and started at \$34.00/hour.

## SECTION II

### STATE NARRATIVE EXCERPTS



## Alabama

Alabama Department of Labor  
Alabama Department of Commerce

### *Use of State Funds*

#### *Adult Priority Service*

Priority of services has been established through policy from the State Workforce Development Board (WDB) in accordance with TEGL No. 7-20, for public assistance recipients, individuals with low incomes, and those who are basic skills deficient to receive the highest priority for WIOA services after all eligible veterans and eligible spouses of veterans have been considered for services.

#### *COVID-19 Response*

Local Career Centers across the State continued to remain open to serve the needs of employers and jobseekers. COVID-19 unemployment rates with some monthly highs of 14 percent continued to gradually decline with the end of PY21 seeing a June rate of 2.6 percent with a new record low of unemployed persons. As the unemployment rate continues to drop and employers continue to fill jobs, Alabama once again demonstrated, it is open for business. Career Centers were assisting employers in job orders, participating, and creating local/regional job fairs, and teaming up with training providers to certify jobseekers eligible for job training programs. It was very necessary to cross-train almost all Career Center staff just to meet the needs of everyone visiting their Center. Career Center staff responded to the challenge of aiding those affected by the pandemic receiving unemployment and basic needs to assisting some of those same people in finding employment.

### *Other State Funds Activities*

#### **Incumbent Worker Training Program (IWTP)**

The State's IWTP was funded through the Governor's ten percent funds in PY21. The IWTP assists Alabama employers with expenses associated with new or updated skills training of current, full-time, employees. For-profit companies, nonprofits, and governmental organizations in operation in Alabama for at least two years are eligible to apply for IWTP funds. An interested company must have at least one full-time, permanent employee other than its owner. Companies seeking IWTP funding must also be current on all state and federal tax obligations. Applicants must provide a dollar-for-dollar "soft" match to requested funds. A soft match can include, but is not limited to, employee wages, benefits, and cash payments to vendors. Each applicant was eligible to apply for up to \$30,000 of IWTP funds in PY21 subject to not exceeding the lifetime award of \$60,000.00.

Successful IWTP applicant companies contract with outside training providers to provide basic work skills training to existing employees. Applicants must demonstrate a need for upgraded skill levels for existing employees. Within their applications, IWTP companies anticipate measurable training outcomes. IWTP skills upgrade training should support company efforts to minimize lay-offs (lay-off aversion) and/or help the company remain competitive. The technical and professional training programs provided with the assistance of these funds, equip incumbent workers with specific workplace skills required to provide optimal

performance within existing jobs, and may enable them to broaden the scope of their workplace responsibilities. Successful training completion should allow greater opportunities for employee retention and increased earnings potential, thus achieving one of the major DOL goals for the IWT Program, which is layoff aversion.

#### **WIOA Supportive Services including Relocation Assistance**

The State through WIOA Governor's Set Aside funds provides relocation assistance to participants in need of assistance to accept employment in another location. It is intended to serve eligible adults and dislocated workers, who are unable to find suitable employment in their local area and who have secured employment outside of their commuting area (more than 75 miles) necessitating a move. This service is available statewide through the Alabama Career Center System, and information about the program is provided to Dislocated Workers by the State's Rapid Response Team when responding to mass layoffs. No individuals requested this service during PY21. This is probably due to the favorable job market. There were few layoffs, and individuals did not need to move to find work.

In April 2021, the State developed a concept and conducted a pilot for providing other supportive services for WIOA participants such as reimbursement of exam and licensing fees and training materials not covered by Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) or On-The-Job Training (OJT). This service was fully expanded in PY21. One hundred and eighty-nine participants were served, and reimbursements totaling \$58,840 were provided to support participants.

#### *Evaluations*

#### *Activities and Methodology*

During PY21, the State initiated and furthered several new and ongoing process evaluation activities as defined under WIOA Section 116(e).

- Ongoing evaluations of WIOA title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth program performance
- Implementation of discretionary grant performance evaluation policy
- Development of the State Evaluation Plan and revisions to the sanctions policy
- Continued improvement of Quarterly Reporting Analysis element accuracy
- Research into the Employment Related to Training metric
- State of Alabama PY21 State Plan
- Updates to the State Data Validation policy
- Interfacing with SNAP and TANF to populate key priority target data
- Creation of the WIOA Provider Performance evaluation process
- Evaluation of Career Center traffic and marketing activities

- Analysis of stakeholder and customer feedback
- Fiscal and Programmatic Monitoring and Technical Assistance
- Continuous training for all stakeholders and employees including:
  - State and Local Workforce Board Training
  - Administrative and Case Management Training
  - Monitoring and Oversight Training

During PY21 several efforts to coordinate projects with WIOA, partner agencies, and workforce boards solidified a thoroughly developed working relationship with all required and optional partners and stakeholders to the workforce system. All process evaluation activities detailed above are presented to these partners and boards on at least an annual basis.

To ensure protection of restricted participant information and in compliance with digital privacy requirements, the State does not make publicly available the evaluation reports developed by the State Reporting Section or the Program Integrity Section. These sections are tasked with the creation and retention of these deliverables; the authority to disseminate such reports rests with the Workforce Development Division (WDD) management.

In PY21, Alabama began the development of an Evaluation Design Plan which is set to be completed and implemented during PY21. This Plan will serve as a State Reporting Section policy guide and as reference for the workforce system using the DOL definition of evaluation described in WIOA 116(e). This multi-year evaluation plan focuses on Alabama's key and immediate research questions in addition to complying with existing Federal requirements regarding continuous improvement.

#### *Continuous Improvement*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Reports*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Waivers*

#### *Waiver Implemented*

The State of Alabama had two waivers in place during PY21.

- Waiver Allowing the Use of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for In-School Youth (ISY), Ages 14–21.
- Waiver of the Requirement that states and local areas expend 75 percent of all Governor's reserve and local area formula youth funds on out-of-school youth (OSY).

### *Strategies*

#### **Waiver of the requirement that states and local areas expend 75 percent of all Governor's reserve and local area formula youth funds on OSY**

This waiver of the requirements of WIOA Section 129(a)(4)(A) and 20 CFR 681.410 allowed the State and local areas to lower the minimum expenditure of funds expended on out-of-school youth from 75 percent to 50 percent. Expected measurable programmatic outcomes include:

- An additional 200 ISY will be served each year because of this waiver.
- The decreased dropout rate will result in a shrinking pool of potential OSY by 10 percent of the number of dropouts.

The State did not use this waiver. This waiver expired at the end of PY21.

#### **Waiver allowing the use of ITAs for ISY**

The waiver enhanced the State's ability to serve ISY with ITAs. A total of 17 ISY were enrolled in ITAs during PY21. Expected programmatic outcomes included:

- Serving 100 ISY per year who would not be eligible for an ITA otherwise (i.e., as an adult participant),
- Fifty percent of ISY enrolled in ITAs will earn a credential, and
- Forty-five percent of ISY enrolled in ITAs will obtain a Measurable Skills Gain.

### *Impact on Performance*

#### **Waiver allowing the use of ITAs for ISY**

This waiver has not boosted participation numbers as expected. Two youth were enrolled statewide during PY21 who would not have been eligible for an ITA as adults (ages 16 or 17). However, there are currently 92 youth who entered into ITAs during previous program years at ages 16 or 17. One hundred percent earned a credential, and 100 percent earned a Measurable Skills Gain.

This waiver will continue to be available in PY22. Participation rates will be considered prior to any applications for the waiver to be extended is submitted.

#### **Waiver of the requirement that states and local areas expend 75 percent of all Governor's reserve and local area formula youth funds on OSY**

The State did not use this waiver. This waiver expired at the end of PY21.

## *Success Stories*

### *WIOA Adult Program – Kip*

Kip came to the Foley Career Center in June of 2021 seeking full-time employment. He was eligible through WIOA and placed in an on-the-job training (OJT) with the City of Foley. He had previously been employed with various restaurants in the area and was looking for something with more responsibility and benefits.

“After having spent my entire adult life jumping from job to job in dead end kitchen positions, I realized I was treading water. I decided cooking was not the profession for me anymore; I can cook at home every day. I took a job with the local Walmart and ended up in asset protection. After three years in this position, I had formed numerous relationships with the men and women at the Foley Police Department. A position at the police department jail became available. I was encouraged to apply for the position, and I did. I got the job! After meeting with Kristi at the Alabama Career Center, I was enrolled in an OJT program to help with hands on practical training that would help me succeed in my new profession as a Corrections Officer. I am almost a year in and my training is still rolling in, whether it is field sobriety testing training, taser use and safety training, leadership training, de-escalation training or CPR, the training I have received has allowed me to flourish in my new career, and I cannot wait to see what the future holds!”

### *WIOA Adult Program – Jamie*

Jaimie, a single head-of-household parent of two school-aged children and a recipient of SNAP services, approached the Troy Career Center staff in January 2022 to seek information on WIOA services to attend Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) training. For over a year and a half before seeking WIOA assistance, she had been providing caregiver services to her critically ill spouse under the guidance of his physicians and nurses. This life-changing experience led her to want to use the knowledge she had gained to help others in need.

She completed the CNA program through Easter Seals of Central Alabama on April 13, 2022, with a 98 average. The instructor stated that she came to class every day with a smile, a positive attitude, and an eagerness to learn, and she would be an asset to the CNA field.

In August 2022, she went to work with New Beacon Healthcare in Montgomery, Alabama, as a CNA and is loving her new job. Her job covers Montgomery and Bullock counties.

### *WIOA Dislocated Worker Program – Jowanna*

Jowanna came to the Birmingham Career Center to seek employment after a layoff at the State of Alabama office. Jowanna was assessed and interviewed by staff. She was determined to be eligible as a Dislocated Worker due to her layoff. Jowanna was seeking a training program in which she could flourish. After working with her case manager, she decided to pursue the Medical Support Specialist program at Jefferson State Community College - Birmingham campus.

Jowanna successfully completed the program with an associate degree on December 14, 2021 and gained employment with another State of Alabama office until her probationary period ended. Jowanna's previous wage was \$17.12 per hour. Through her hard work and tenacity, Jowanna gained employment with another State agency, where she now earns \$18.05 per hour.

#### *WIOA Dislocated Worker Program – Joe*

This past spring, Fayette had an employer abruptly close, which displaced more than 80 workers. Several of those displaced workers came to the Career Center seeking assistance. One of those was Joe. He is a 58-year-old veteran looking for a stable day-shift job to support his family. Fayette staff member Rita Meadows worked with Joe revising his résumé, assisting with job search and filing applications, and providing assistance with filing for unemployment. Joe was certified eligible for the OJT program and accepted a local Delivery Driver position with a Home Medical Employer. Joe completed the OJT in August and is still employed. Joe states that he is excited about the opportunity to work in a job where he is providing service to others, and as a bonus, he is getting to spend more time with his family!

Joe had this to say about working with Fayette staff: "Rita Meadows was an asset to me while looking for work. Ms. Meadows even did an excellent job on [sic] redoing my résumé and answered any questions I had." She made the transition easier in a crisis of being laid off.

#### *WIOA Youth Program – Zharia*

Zharia graduated from Job Corps with a high school diploma. Zharia came to the Dannon Project out-of-school youth (OSY) program through the Central Alabama Partnership for Training and Employment (CAPTE) referral process. The pre-TABE assessment determined she was basic skills deficient. She was referred to the Dannon Project through community outreach. She came into the program to study and obtain a certification as a CNA. Zharia's goal was to obtain a certification that led to stable employment in the medical field. Zharia worked diligently with her case manager to identify her weaknesses and overcome them. She was also able to accentuate her strengths to provide her best chances for success. Zharia obtained her CNA certification and gained employment at a rehabilitation facility earning a starting salary of \$12 per hour. She was also able to gain some independence by obtaining her own apartment.

#### *WIOA Youth Program – Braden*

Seventeen-year-old (turning 18) Braden came into the Anniston Career Center with his grandmother, Mrs. Phyllis. Immediately, they noticed that this young man was focused on his career as a Utility Line Worker. He assured them several times that this is what he wanted to do. He said that he had done his research and even had a company that was interested in hiring him. He began his training with Calhoun Community College and received his OSHA Certification and Class A Commercial Driver's License earlier than normally scheduled for the class. Braden graduated, at the top of his class, and accepted employment with Petty Line Construction as a Grounds man.

*For more information, visit:*

*Reports*

Alabama Department of Commerce & Alabama Department of Labor (Nov. 2022). State of Alabama *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Titles I & III Program Year 2021 Annual Report*.

*Links*

Alabama Department of Labor

Alabama Department of Commerce

WIOA-Alabama.org

- Information Management Reporting

## Alaska

### Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development

#### *Use of State Funds*

##### *Adult Priority Service*

Some highlights of Division of Employment and Training Services (DETS) efforts have been collaboration with Alaska's Division of Public Assistance to streamline referrals of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients to Career Support and Training Services (CSTS) for WIOA Adult program enrollment. This process helped make connections for a priority population, build partnership between agencies for customer success, and decrease duplication of services.

Throughout its One-Stop Job Center network, providing services in accordance with Priority Populations Policy 07-517.1, CSTS case managers actively worked with 767 Adult participants, of whom 435 were new registrants during the program year.

##### *COVID-19 Response*

After Alaska's job centers reopened to public access in June 2021, they continued to incorporate best practices in virtual and distance delivery developed and implemented to adapt during the COVID-19 pandemic to expand access to rural areas and for the segment of the population who prefer virtual services. During PY21, the department continued to improve and promote AlaskaJobs, its new online labor exchange and case management system, to enhance user experience, co-locate data, and provide a single sign-on between WIOA title I, II, and III programs, Trade Adjustment Assistance, and the Unemployment Insurance program. AlaskaJobs allows individuals to enter core information into one location when applying for multiple programs and benefits, supports common WIOA participant federal reporting, increases self-service options for external users, and allows staff the ability to provide improved services to customers.

##### *Other State Funds Activities*

No information provided for this section.

##### *Evaluations*

##### *Activities and Methodology*

#### **Quality Pre-Apprenticeship (QPA)**

During PY21 through PY23, the Division of Employment and Training Services (DETS) will combine forces with Alaska Works Partnership (AWP) and the Research and Analysis unit (R&A), as well as consult with state and federal offices, apprenticeship providers, employers, and participants to gauge satisfaction with the Quality Pre-Apprenticeship (QPA) framework, as well as compare the rate of indenture, employment, and wage outcomes of QPA completers with other types of construction training from providers across the State including programs leading to National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) credentials. The results of this study will inform further development and use of the QPA framework in construction and other



trades in the State. During PY21, data was collected from AWP’s QPA completers through December 31, 2021, for analysis. Because Alaska gained a new healthcare PATH Academy QPA offered by a healthcare apprenticeship provider, the parameters of this evaluation project may change during PY22.

### **Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA)**

The State initiated RESEA evaluation according to the requirements of the Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) No. 06-19 to conduct evidence-based analysis to determine and deploy optimal interventions and service delivery during PY20. The DETS RESEA coordinator worked with the division’s Unemployment Insurance (UI) program and with R&A as the third-party evaluator.

During PY21, a second RESEA interview requirement was selected as the intervention subject to evaluation based on a comparison to single—interview data, where a randomly selected sample of first interview completers (75%) will be selected for a second interview. The State’s third-party evaluator will compare this group against the single interview control group (25%) to determine how successful an additional intervention is for individuals gaining and maintaining long-term employment based on four potential points: employment, median earnings, benefit weeks claimed, and benefit funds expended.

DETS worked with its system developer and the department’s Data Processing unit to implement a second RESEA interview in AlaskaJobs, with completion anticipated by the end of 2022. RESEA evaluation will continue through PY22 and beyond.

### *Continuous Improvement*

#### **JOBZ Club and S’Cool Store**

In PY18, the state’s Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) and school district staff began working with Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) to evaluate the effectiveness of JOBZ Club and S’Cool Store in increasing graduation rates and post-school outcomes for students with disabilities as identified in DEED’s State Systematic Improvement Plan. PY18 was the first year of collecting data at the student level and this will be an on-going evaluation through 2025. DVR will also be providing data to DEED on employers who provide opportunities for high school students with disabilities. DVR has been extremely successful in providing statewide services to transition age students in urban, rural, and remote locations. This has been accomplished through partnerships with school districts, specialized Pre-Employment Transition Services Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs), and other organizations that assist with coordinating transportation and enrollment. As part of this project, DVR also increased the distribution of training materials and resources specifically those that include culturally responsive programming for rural districts with large Alaska Native students with disabilities by:

- Changing the Pathways curriculum to include subsistence and self-employment through subsistence activities.
- Distributing “Picture Your Future—Exploring Your Transition Goals” which is a culturally responsive assessment tool and transition planning guide.

## *Reports*

### **Nonresidents Working in Alaska Report**

Published in February 2022, the report examines the industries, occupations, and regions with high percentages of nonresident workers. The Alaska Workforce Investment Board and other policymakers use this information to identify where to develop training programs that will prepare more Alaskans for high-paying jobs.

### **Recidivism and Employment Outcomes Analysis**

R&A produced a special analysis that examined employment outcomes for individuals who were previously incarcerated. The analysis looked at what training opportunities people took while incarcerated and how their employment outcomes in terms of wages and length of employment differed for those received training and those who did not.

### **Analyses of Unemployment Insurance Claimants**

During the pandemic, claims for UI benefits in Alaska reached unprecedented heights. To better understand the impacts of the elevated claims load and educate policymakers, R&A published new analysis of claims patterns and the structure and health of the UI system in April 2022.

### **Training Program Performance Report (TPPR)**

The TPPR report details the employment and earnings for participants of several WIOA training programs in Alaska. These include Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, and other programs. R&A uses Occupational Data Base (ODB) data to compare trainees' occupations and earnings from the year before training to the year after.

### **Special Labor Market Topics**

R&A published multiple articles over the past year on the pandemic and its effects on the economy and labor market, ranging from impacts on specific industries to shifts in broad employment trends.

## *Waivers*

### *Waiver Implemented*

Waiver to WIOA Section 107(b) allows the Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB) to carry out the roles of a Local Board.

### *Strategies*

The modified role of AWIB representing two local areas consisting of Anchorage/Mat-Su and the remainder of the State is essential to offset excessive administrative costs, thwart inconsistencies in services, and maximize overall performance in a large state whose small population is nevertheless dispersed over a vast area of economically distinct regions.

### *Impact on Performance*

The State has made significant progress towards the goals outlined in the approved waiver. Two nonvoting seats consisting of local elected officials were created during PY21, along with a subcommittee that ensures local area priorities are represented.

Functioning as a single State Board has streamlined the process and timeliness of awarding grants by the elimination of multiple layers of administrative entities, has allowed consistent eligibility standards across the State, and improved both visibility and accountability of workforce investment programs. Operating under the waiver, the AWIB draws representation from all areas of the State and from various interest groups such as organized labor, business and industry, state agencies, native organizations, educational institutions, individuals experiencing disabilities, and other relevant groups. Similarly, by ensuring representation on the AWIB, the interests of a wide range of at-risk and priority populations are served, such as veterans, low-income youth and adults, dislocated workers, and rural residents. The AWIB continues to engender local participation and points of view, consulting local elected officials from the State's boroughs and cities in regional and statewide planning efforts. For example, the Workforce Readiness and Employment and Placement Committee provides oversight for training and employment programs that are delivering education and training relevant to local employer needs. AWIB has prioritized attendance at gatherings surrounding local workforce issues, as well as informational events focused on Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funding opportunities for rural Alaskan communities. Additionally, the waiver allows the AWIB to foster regional collaboration among job centers, educational institutions, labor, and nonprofits, and to work with employers to determine local or regional hiring needs that informs responsive training programs to ensure that sector needs are met and all geographic regions are served.

### *Success Stories*

#### *WIOA Adult Program – Jamie*

Jamie is a 25-year-old woman who had been working as a commercial pilot, earning about \$2,300 per month. She had logged over 1,500 flight hours and had her Commercial Pilot's License with Single- and Multi-Engine Land, and Instrument and Single-Engine Sea ratings. To ensure success as a pilot in Alaska and earn a living wage, she needed to obtain her FAA Airline Transport Pilot (ATP) license. While there were no training facilities in Alaska offering the Certified Training Program (CTP) component of the ATP license training, Career Support and Training Services (CSTS) was able to find a provider on Colorado's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) and assisted Jamie with tuition and travel expenses. When she returned to Alaska, the Adult program also funded her completion of the ATP flight portion of her program. Once Jamie received her new FAA license, she was hired as an Airline Transport Pilot with Bering Air in Nome, flying a 19-passenger Beechcraft 1900C. Jamie transports people from village to village, earning \$200 a day plus per diem. As she continues to build experience and training, she can become type-rated for additional aircraft and will be eligible to work for large cargo or passenger airlines, increasing her earning potential even further. The training that CSTS funded will allow Jamie to be financially secure, earning a wage that will result in self-reliance throughout her adult life.

#### *WIOA Adult Program – Desiree*

Desiree visited the Peninsula Job Center, where resource room staff conducted an initial assessment which indicated insufficient skills to be competitive in the local labor market and assisted her with labor market information. Desiree also received a referral to CSTS, where she was assessed to need assistance with tuition, fees, Department of Transportation (DOT) drug screening, DOT physical, IDs, and licensing to attend the Entry Level Driver Training Program at Alaska Driving Academy. After successfully

completing training, she worked with her CSTS case manager and was soon hired with DOT in a temporary position which led to her full-time permanent position as a Commercial Truck Driver at a starting wage of \$23.80 per hour, plus benefits.

#### *WIOA Dislocated Worker Program – Joshua*

Joshua is a 41-year-old single father of one child. Joshua had a total of 14 years in the oilfield industry and had last worked for two years as a derrickman but was laid off due to recent instability of the local industry after receiving a Reduction in Force letter.

At the time of enrollment, he was unemployed and collecting unemployment insurance. He had already approached the Operating Engineers Local 302 for training and apprenticeship and was advised that obtaining a Class A Commercial Driver License (CDL A) would make it easier to receive dispatches for employment until their classroom training would begin in the spring of 2022. After applying for jobs, seeking labor market information, and discussing his goals, Peninsula Job Center resource room staff referred Joshua to CSTS. He was determined eligible and suitable for the WIOA Dislocated Worker and Trade and Economic Transition Dislocated Worker Grant (TET DWG) programs to pay for tuition, fees, and supportive services to attend CDL A training, and successfully completed Kenai Peninsula Driving Instruction's 40-hour Commercial Truck Driver training program. Joshua first found employment as a Commercial Driver with Peterkin Distributors earning \$18 per hour but was receiving minimal hours. He continued looking for full-time employment and was hired into his current position as a Long-Haul Driver with JNS Trucking, where he is paid by the load and averages \$4,500 a pay period, or \$9,000 per month, plus benefits.

#### *WIOA Youth Program*

In June 2022, WIOA Youth subrecipient, Alaska Vocational Technical Center (AVTEC), hosted a 10-day Hospitality Career Boot Camp for 17 at-risk youth experiencing barriers to employment. The project was developed through partnerships between AVTEC, the National Restaurant Association, the Alaska Workforce Investment Board, and the Alaska Job Center Network. Youths ages 18 to 21 came from several regions in Alaska to live and learn on the AVTEC campus in Seward. Participants spent each day immersed in hospitality career readiness training, culinary training with AVTEC instructors, and ServSuccess training with David Faro, Workforce Director of the National Restaurant Association.

#### *Veteran's Program – Noah Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG)/WP*

Noah, a U.S. Army veteran, obtained employment with ASRC Federal as a laborer with a starting pay of \$22 per hour at Eareckson Air Station in Shemya. He initially made contact with AJC staff on June 24, 2022, with the intention of obtaining information about apprenticeship opportunities. Noah was determined eligible for Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) services. DVOP staff provided résumé, labor market information, and interviewing strategies to Noah. The Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) followed up with ASRC Federal staff for Noah. Since he is a recently separated service member, Noah was also able to fulfill the requirement of providing an active security clearance necessary due to Eareckson Air Station's sensitive radar and communications equipment. His start date was July 28, 2022.

### *Apprenticeship Program – Dallas*

After finishing high school, Dallas jumped right into working for a local concrete pumping business, but always knew he wanted to be in the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) union. After taking the telecommunications training, receiving “Top 5” and a glowing evaluation, Dallas was accepted into the IBEW Telecom apprenticeship and is already dispatched out to work.

*For more information, visit:*

### *Reports*

Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development. *Alaska WIOA Annual Report Narrative PY 2021*.

Kreiger, R., et al (Feb. 2022). *Nonresidents Working in Alaska*. Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

Alaska Economic Trends Magazine

- Fried, N. (Dec. 2021). *Alaska's job openings rise in 2021*; (Feb. 2022). *Highest inflation in 30+ years*; and (Mar. 2022). *Average wages grew over decade*.
- Kreiger, R., & Schultz, G. (Mar. 2022). *COVID-19 and worker counts*.
- Robinson, D (Sept. 2021). *COVID-19 and states' job recovery*; (Apr. 2022). *COVID and the missing workers*; and (Aug. 2022). *Job openings near all-time high*.
- Schultz, G. (Aug. 2022). *Air transportation's COVID years*.
- Teel, S. (Apr. 2022) *Why child care is hard to find*.
- Weller, L. (Apr. 2022). *How long the unemployed collect: Alaska's benefit duration over time and how it's set [Analyses of Unemployment Insurance Claimants]*.
- Wiebold, K. (Jan. 2022). *Statewide forecast for 2022*.

### *Links*

Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development

Alaska Economic Trends Magazine

## Arizona

Arizona@Work

Arizona Department of Economic Security

### *Use of State Funds*

### *Adult Priority Service*

No information provided for this section.

### *COVID-19 Response*

No information provided for this section.

### *Other State Funds Activities*

No information provided for this section.

### *Evaluations*

### *Activities and Methodology*

### **ARIZONA@WORK Training Program Effectiveness**

The objective of the study is to evaluate the effectiveness of workforce training programs provided by eligible training providers within the title I Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. The analysis is intended to help workforce policymakers adopt training program strategies that align with the goals of the ARIZONA@WORK system: promoting resources that lead participants to meaningful employment with livable wages.

The study will include Adult and Dislocated Worker participants who exited the workforce system between fourth quarter Calendar Year (CY) 2018 and fourth quarter CY22. The study will compare employment and wage outcomes of two groups of participants: those who completed at least one training program and those who did not complete a training program. The purpose is to identify if training programs are effective in improving participant employment and wage results. The study will examine participant employment and wage outcomes by training subjects to better understand the differences in effectiveness between training programs. Finally, the study will review participant training completion rates to highlight training programs with above-and below-average completion rates.

To determine the quality of available training programs, this study reviewed participant performance across four outcome measures for participants who completed a training program. These measures included: Employment rate two quarters after exit; Employment rate four quarters after exit; Average quarterly wage received two quarters after exit; and Sustained employment (difference between second quarter and fourth quarter employment rates).

Actual participant performance by training program was compared to the predicted participant performance estimated by the Statistical Adjustment Model (SAM) for Training Programs. The SAM for Training Providers estimates performance outcomes for each participant who completed a training program based on that participant's demographic and economic characteristics. A training program was determined to be effective if participants who completed a training program had higher performance outcomes on average in all four categories than the estimated lower bound performance results calculated by the SAM for Training Providers model.

The model's predicted results of a training program were compared to the average results of all programs. Lower predictions indicate the training program served a harder-to-serve group.

The completion rate of training programs was also analyzed to identify training programs with favorable employment and wage outcomes, but below-average training completion rates. The training completion rate was calculated by dividing the number of participants who completed a training program by the number of participants who started a training program.

Training programs are classified into four categories based on their employment outcomes and average wages. The programs are mapped into four quadrants based on the following criteria. With the employment outcomes and average wages on the x-axis and y-axis, the training programs' contrasting, or similar attributes can be approached differently.

#### **Barriers to Employment Consideration Using the SAM for Training Programs**

The SAM for Training Programs evaluates the employment and wage outcomes of a training program, taking into consideration the characteristics of the participants served. The model attempts to identify and manage factors outside of the control of training providers/programs. Factors could include barriers to employment as defined under WIOA along with other characteristics such as previous employment, education level, age, etc. A lower-than-average prediction results generated by the model indicate that the training program served a harder-to-serve population. A training program's actual employment outcomes will be compared to the model predictions, anticipating participants' characteristics that the training provider cannot control. In other words, each training provider's employment outcomes are only compared to a standard based on the group of participants it served.

Tables containing each training program's actual performances and average results of all programs by local area and occupation groups have been created. Initial sets of parameters for the SAM for Training Programs model were produced to predict each training program's performance, which considered participants' barriers to employment and other characteristics.

#### *Continuous Improvement*

Statewide and local area surveys were used to evaluate service delivery as well as identify and address areas of improvement in the workforce system as a whole. For instance:

- Jobseeker comments led the State to examine how unemployment insurance claimants receive meaningful assistance at job centers and reaffirm the importance of stronger communication and collaboration among the workforce system partners, including the Unemployment Insurance program.



- Customer feedback also led one local area to make adjustments to its hiring event preparation and its hours of operation.

The Arizona Department of Economic Security (ADES) Employer Engagement Administration (EEA) has taken the following steps to help ensure that the Arizona Job Connection (AJC) System facilitates appropriate matching of qualified applicants with employers, a Statewide customer satisfaction indicator:

- Using the Advanced Résumé search function in AJC, the Employer Engagement team began to isolate expired résumés, so they no longer appeared during the résumé search. Through this activity, the team discovered a system glitch that was reported to the system vendor America’s Job Link Alliance (AJLA). AJLA in turn designed a system update to correct the issue, to be shared with all states in its network. The EEA team has thus far “resolved” over 10,000 résumés that should not have appeared in search results.

The EEA team refined and honed the Advanced Search or résumé match process to help employers find qualified candidates.

### *Reports*

#### **ARIZONA@WORK Training Program Effectiveness**

The study’s end product will consist of tables for each training program to identify its performances compared to average performances and whether or not it served a harder-to-serve population. Training programs will be ranked and programs with good or poor performances will be defined. Training programs will also be classified into four groups based on employment outcomes and average wages.

The project started in April 2022 and is expected to be completed by June 2023. The information, likely a report, methodology document, and tableau data visualization tools, will be published on the ARIZONA@WORK website.

The report would include summary analysis and tables containing each training program’s actual performances and average results of all programs by local area and occupation groups. The methodology document would include an explanation of the State’s modeling process, along with the initial sets of parameters for the SAM for Training Programs model produced to predict each training program’s performance.

### *Waivers*

#### *Waiver Implemented*

- Individual Training Account for in-school youth.

### *Strategies*

Activities that impact jobseekers’ readiness for entry into the workforce include the use of individual training accounts (ITAs) to fund training for in-school youth (ISY), ages 16–21.



### *Impact on Performance*

The waiver, which allows ITAs for ISY, continued to benefit participants in PY21, when 136 training services funded by ITAs were delivered to 124 in-school youth participants.

The State reports in the *PY21 Performance Indicators Comparison* table that ISY who received training via ITAs were more likely to be employed in the second quarter after exit, attain a credential, and achieve a measurable skill gain.

While the impacts of the waiver on WIOA performance indicators appear promising for PY21, it is important to consider the size of the cohorts when compared to the broader ISY population. The waiver was approved in late 2019, with 2020 being the first full calendar year (CY) in which ITA funding was accessible to participants. Only 16 individuals who participated in ITA-funded training exited during CY20, thus impacting the PY21 credential attainment rate. Similarly, just 22 individuals exited between July 1, 2020, and June 30, 2021, and were counted in the second quarter placement rate.

However, the measurable skill gains rate as a “real-time” indicator offers a larger sample. As of PY21, this may be the most informative indicator as to the impact of the waiver on performance outcomes. The impact of the waiver will continue to become clearer in future program years as the cohort sample sizes increase.

### *Success Stories*

#### *City of Phoenix – WIOA Adult Program Participant*

A veteran experiencing homelessness was enrolled in the Adult program. He is a father of two who resides with his wife and sons at UMOM New Day Center. He received training and support services funds to attend Apartment Maintenance training at RSI Refrigeration School. He graduated and earned an industry certification in building and property maintenance and was hired as a Maintenance Technician at the Palazzo Townhomes for \$23.00 per hour.

#### *Coconino County – Lisa*

With the help of ARIZONA@WORK Coconino County, Lisa earned a Class A Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) through Phoenix Truck Driving School, in partnership with Coconino Community College.

#### *Maricopa County – Airlin*

Prior to enrolling in the ARIZONA@WORK Youth program in May 2021, Airlin struggled as a 20-year-old unemployed youth, living in a low-income neighborhood. Airlin stated that she is an English language learner with her native language being Spanish. Airlin immediately identified her goal of entering the dental field, spoke about the field with great passion, and understood this would require extensive education.

Entering the program as an in-school youth, Airlin was determined to complete a dental assisting occupational skills training program to further employability in the field. In the justification letter for the training, Airlin expressed a “thirst for developing new skills and knowledge” and further stated, “I am seeking training to keep the dream alive and achieve becoming a Certified Dental

Assistant. I am motivated in this dental training because I want to build upon it and attend Dental Hygiene School in the future and keep furthering my education.” Airlin attended the American Institute of Dental Assisting in July 2021 and completed the 13-week course with a cumulative grade of 93 percent.

In November 2021, Airlin was placed in a work experience at OoLi Orthodontics making \$14.00 an hour and in February 2022, accepted a full-time dental assistant position with the same employer, making \$15.00 an hour. Airlin’s passion, hard work, dedication, and the Individual Training Account for in-school youth led to a dream realized and a promising start to a new career.

#### *Mohave – La Paz Counties – Justin*

Justin came into the Kingman job center seeking a career change that will lead to economic self-sufficiency. He is a 41-year-old male with an extensive criminal history and was placed on parole. Justin’s work history was in construction and food and beverage. When Justin enrolled into the WIOA Adult program, he had a career goal of earning his CDL-A. The only support Justin had was his parole officer, his two children, and his ARIZONA@WORK career coach. He was dedicated and motivated to earn his license. While Justin was in training, he successfully completed parole and was able to discharge his ADCRR number. Justin noted that all he has ever been known by was a number. Justin reclaimed his identity as his past does not define him as the person he is today. Justin successfully completed training and earned his CDL-A. He is now gainfully employed with Western Express and earning a wage higher than his previous employment. Justin has been able to provide for himself and his children and reduce the cycle or recidivism.

*For more information, visit:*

#### *Reports*

Arizona@Work. *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Annual Statewide Performance Report Narrative for Titles I and III.*

#### *Links*

Arizona@Work

Arizona Department of Economic Security

## Arkansas

### Arkansas Division of Workforce Services

#### *Use of State Funds*

#### *Adult Priority Service*

No information provided for this section.

#### *COVID-19 Response*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Other State Funds Activities*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Evaluations*

#### *Activities and Methodology*

#### **Asset Mapping**

The State's Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) team surveyed and studied asset mapping approaches from Oklahoma, Florida, Pennsylvania, and Northern California as well as asset mapping resources from DOL-ETA, DePaul University, WorkforceGPS, the U.S. Department of Education, AmeriCorps, and others.

Based on best practices and alignment with the State's needs, a scalable asset map framework was developed to support stewardship of services provided by organization and service location. In alignment with WDQI programs of interest, it is currently populated with information related to all Arkansas Workforce Centers (American Job Centers), postsecondary institutions, and Department of Human Services offices in Arkansas, which covers all WIOA, SNAP, and TANF service delivery and will continue to expand.

#### *Continuous Improvement*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Reports*

#### **Work-Based Learning (WBL) Applied Data Analytics Training Program Reports**

- Work-Based Learning: What is the Current Reality in Arkansas?
- From Trained to Retained: An Analysis of Retention Outcomes for RAP Completers

- Apprenticeship Experience of Justice-Involved Individuals in Arkansas: Barriers to Success
- Retention Trends within Arkansas' WBL-to-Workforce Pipeline
- Registered Apprenticeship Programs: Does Completion Matter?

## **Underserved Communities Analysis Report**

### *Waivers*

#### *Waiver Implemented*

The State operated under two waivers during PY21, both of which ended on June 30, 2022.

- 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 percent for businesses with 50 or fewer employees.
- Waiver to allow flexibility in the use of funds reserved by the Governor to provide statewide rapid response activities under WIOA Section 134(a)(2)(A) to also provide statewide employment and training activities under WIOA Section 134(a)(2)(B) and WIOA Section 134(a)(3), including disaster-relief employment to affected areas.

### *Strategies*

#### **Waiver to increase OJT employer reimbursement up to 90 percent for businesses with 50 or fewer employees**

ETA reviewed the State's waiver request and plan and has determined that the requirements requested to be waived impede the ability of Arkansas to implement its plan to improve the workforce development system. Existing statutory authority permits the State and its local workforce areas to increase the reimbursement rate for OJT contracts up to 75 percent. The State may also reimburse up to 90 percent for OJT for businesses with 50 or fewer employees. ETA expects the utilization of OJT to increase in the State as a result of this waiver.

#### **Waiver to allow flexibility in the use of funds reserved by the Governor to provide statewide rapid response activities**

ETA approved the waiver under the following conditions:

- The Governor, or any federal agency, declares an emergency in the local area (or areas) where the State wishes to use statewide funds for the purpose of public service employment;
- WIOA-funded public service employment opportunities are short-term in nature;
- WIOA-funded public service employment opportunities increase the likelihood of participants entering unsubsidized employment; and
- The State collects and tracks use of funds under this waiver and complies with all WIOA-required performance and fiscal reporting.

*Impact on Performance*

In PY21, the waivers were not utilized by the State or local areas. DOL provided technical assistance to the State and by the State to Local Areas. The State did not submit waiver requests as a part of its PY22–23 WIOA state plan modification.

*Success Stories**WIOA Youth Adult Program– TJ*

TJ was raised by a single mom who passed away in 2017. After her death, he tried to manage on his own but had fallen on hard times. Life had become so difficult that he was homeless living under a bridge and fishing from a creek for food. A good Samaritan found him and took him to the Mississippi County Union Mission. The Mission provided him with a warm place to stay and nourishing meals. While staying at the Mission, he obtained his GED and began looking for employment. TJ may have had a hard life, but he was determined to overcome his obstacles to become self-sufficient. Since he had never worked before, he was having a hard time finding a job. He would apply for jobs but was unable to find an employer who was willing to give him an opportunity. The Mission referred him to WIOA for assistance. WIOA staff went to meet with TJ and determined him eligible for the Youth program as an out-of-school youth (OSY). After an assessment and discussion with TJ, it was determined that he would benefit from work experience. He was placed at the worksite, Arkansas Northeastern College, as a Grounds/Maintenance Assistant. TJ quickly excelled at the worksite by performing any of the tasks requested and what he lacked in skills, he made up for in enthusiasm. He continuously went above and beyond what was asked of him and learned many job skills. Throughout the experience, he kept setting goals for himself. One goal was obtaining a driver's license. TJ always maintained a smile on his face with a can-do attitude and his co-workers noticed. They helped him study for the written portion of the driver's license exam. After the fourth try, he passed the written test and driving portion and obtained his driver's license. TJ made such an impression on the worksite that when a job came open in the department, they notified him of the open position. TJ quickly applied for the position, was hired, and entered unsubsidized employment on December 1, 2021. TJ is thankful for the opportunity and skills learned through the WIOA Youth program.

*WIOA Youth Program– Javion*

Javion was introduced to workforce programs, through his previous participation in the Arkansas PROMISE program, a project that provided transformational job training and paid work experiences for 1,000 low-income teenagers with disabilities across the State. While doing so, he enjoyed working with the staff from the Arkansas Workforce Center. When Javion graduated from Osceola High School, he reached out to WIOA staff for assistance in obtaining full-time employment. WIOA staff determined him eligible for the Youth program as an OSY. One obstacle facing Javion was his previous problems with law enforcement while in high school. During his interview with WIOA, Javion was quiet and unsure about what path he wanted to take in life. During the assessment, it opened the dialogue on his goals/desires in a job. He was interested in working outside and being hands on with materials. He was assigned at the worksite, City of Osceola, in the maintenance department. While working for the city, supervisors noticed his respectful and hardworking attitude. During his two-month review by his supervisor, Javion was already scoring above average marks on his job duties. The employer was pleased with his performance and let him know that a driver's license would be required for full-time employment. The worksite and WIOA staff encouraged him to take his driver's license test

in November 2021. With persistent encouragement and guidance, he successfully passed his test. While in the work experience program, the worksite supervisors discussed the different positions available through the City of Osceola (Academic and Occupational Education Component). One of the positions discussed was Code Enforcer and Javion expressed his excitement for a career of that nature. The City of Osceola offered him a full-time position in the Code Enforcement department. Since he knew the details of the position, he jumped at the opportunity and was hired in December 2021. Javion is thankful for the WIOA staff who helped him succeed.

#### *WIOA Dislocated Worker Program – Paycia*

Paycia is a 32-year-old mother of two who had been laid off from United Cerebral Palsy in Jonesboro, Arkansas. Paycia heard about the WIOA program and hoped they would work with her to further her education in becoming a Registered Nurse (RN). She went to her local Arkansas Workforce Center and was enrolled in the WIOA Dislocated Worker program. When her case manager met with her, she was receiving Unemployment Insurance (UI) and SNAP. She had finished her basic classes for nursing and had been accepted into the RN program at Black River Technical College (BRTC) in Pocahontas. She needed assistance with her books and transportation. WIOA, along with the Career Pathways Initiative program, provided her with the necessary assistance to complete the RN training program. Paycia graduated from BRTC in May of 2022. She was hired full time at NEA Baptist Hospital in Jonesboro, Arkansas as an RN. Paycia appreciates everything that WIOA was able to do for her.

#### *WIOA Adult Program– Melody*

Melody came into the Arkansas Workforce Center at Harrison requesting assistance with enrolling in a training program that would lead to a rewarding career and sustainable wage. She had not worked since 1986 and was a stay-at-home mom while also volunteering at her church. Melody's husband receives benefits for a disability, but the income was not enough to live on. She was approved for the Adult WIOA program after completing the necessary steps for assessment and enrollment. The Career Advisor provided career counseling and it was determined that Melody had an interest in driving big trucks. She was connected with a local eligible training provider with the assistance of the WIOA staff and began training in the Fall of 2021. Melody completed the CDL training program at North Arkansas College on December 2, 2021. Melody had a few interviews, but the companies did not give her a chance. Melody applied at Roehl, and she said the interview process was easy and went fantastic! Melody was hired on December 5, 2021, and is currently working for Roehl Transport. Roehl flew her to Atlanta for orientation and Melody passed Roehl's driving inspections. Roehl then flew Melody to Chicago to meet up with a woman truck driver trainer. Melody now has her own routes and said it is a challenge, but it is fun!

*For more information, visit:*

#### *Reports*

Arkansas Division of Workforce Services. *Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I & Title III Annual Statewide Performance Report Narrative Program Year 2021.*

Arkansas Department of Transformation and Shared Services

- Anderson, C., et al. *From Trained to Retained: An Analysis of Retention Outcomes for Registered Apprenticeship Program Completers.*
- Ariola, D., et al. *Work-Based Learning: What is the Current Reality in Arkansas?*
- Bettadapura, N., et al. *Retention Trends Within Arkansas' WBL-to-Workforce Pipeline.*
- Levitskaya, E., et al. *Apprenticeship Experience of Justice-Involved Individuals in Arkansas: Barriers to Success.* Final Project Report.
- Jahnke, A., et al. *Does Completion Matter: Measuring the Disparity in Wage Outcomes between Completers and Non-Completers of Apprenticeship Programs in Arkansas.*

*Report of the 2022 Arkansas Women's Commission – Analyzing the Role of Arkansas Women in the Labor Market and Economy.* Arkansas Women's Commission.

Wiegand, E., Goerge, R., & Gjertson, L. (July 2017). [Chapin Hall TANF Data Model] *Family Self-Sufficiency Data Center Creating a Data Model to Analyze TANF Caseloads.* The Consortium. Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

### *Links*

Arkansas Division of Workforce Services

Evaluation Peer Learning Cohort (EvalPLC)

### [Coleridge Initiative](#)

- Applied Data Analytics Training Program
- Administrative Data Research Facility

WIOA State Plan for Arkansas PY20–23

## California

### California Workforce Development Board

#### *Use of State Funds*

#### *Adult Priority Service*

#### **Veterans' Employment-Related Assistance Program**

The goal of this initiative is to promote the use of regional industry-sector strategies as the framework to help unemployed and underemployed veterans with significant barriers to employment transition from military careers to rewarding civilian employment. This year, there is an additional focus on addressing the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. Organizations that aim to serve veterans impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and/or that implement technology-enabled education and training to ensure safe participation in compliance with COVID-19 regulations were especially encouraged to apply.

The Employment Development Department (EDD), in coordination with the California Workforce Development Board (CWDB) and the Labor and Workforce Development Agency (LWDA), awarded WIOA funds to serve veterans and military spouses. The goal of this initiative is to promote the use of regional industry-sector strategies as the framework to help unemployed and underemployed veterans with significant barriers and military spouses to employment transition from military careers to rewarding civilian employment. There is an additional focus on addressing the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. The grant funds are to be used to provide services that align and leverage resources, identify sector related training, and provide supportive services that promote career pathways and skill attainment for veterans. The intention is to fund solutions that eliminate barriers to employment that veterans face in the current labor market.

#### *COVID-19 Response*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Other State Funds Activities*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Evaluations*

#### *Activities and Methodology*

#### **America's Job Center of California (AJCC)**

The AJCC evaluation is a mixed-methods evaluation of the Statewide AJCC system, focused on identifying determinants of success for participants in the title I Adults and Dislocated Workers Program. The quantitative evaluation utilizes participant service data from 2016 to 2020, while the qualitative evaluation relies on in-depth case studies (interviews and focus groups with staff, local leaders, and participants) based on a sample of Local Boards that has been selected for the range of service approaches, economic and geographic conditions, and outcomes. Both the quantitative and qualitative evaluation address



different aspects of the same question: “Which interventions in AJCC design and service approach produce the greatest benefits for participants?” The set of interventions considered includes: AJCC service delivery model type; the political jurisdiction in which a Local Board sits; relative expenditures on service and non-service costs; and the mix of services offered.

#### **Breaking Barriers to Employment Initiative (AB 1111)**

The third-party evaluation will primarily investigate how well the Initiative was implemented. Research questions include: (1) how well did the Initiative recruit individuals with significant barriers to employment; (2) how well did the Initiative help individuals transition into the broader workforce and education systems; and (3) how well did the Initiative promote sustainable partnerships between local workforce boards and community-based organizations? All three research questions will be analyzed with a mixed-methods approach that employs both quantitative and qualitative methods. Data sources include administrative data, a survey of service providers, and interviews with service providers.

#### **CAAL-Skills Impact Study**

The evaluation by the California Policy Lab from the University of California measures impacts from 11 California workforce programs (WIOA and non-WIOA) on participant employment and earnings outcomes for individuals enrolled in services in State Fiscal Years (FY) 2014–2015 and 2015–2016. The non-experimental model, which relies on matching training recipients to a similar-at-entry population of non-trainees (in most cases, from the Wagner-Peyser program), allows researchers to reliably isolate impacts from the training received. Results of the evaluation include a finding that training through the title I Adults and Dislocated Workers Program produces statistically significant and economically meaningful positive impacts on employment and earnings.

#### **Other Evaluation Activities**

- The California Workforce Development Board (CWDB) Approach to Assessment and Evaluation
- Education Stabilization Fund-Reimagine Workforce Preparation (ESF-RWP)
- High Road Training Partnerships/High Road Construction Careers June 2021
- Prison to Employment (P2E) Initiative
- Regional Plan Implementation (RPI)
- Workforce Accelerator Fund (WAF)

#### *Continuous Improvement*

The CWDB Research and Evaluation Team has been completing interim and final reports for the CWDB initiatives mandated by state and federal legislation, and it is anticipated that program evaluation will be conducted in-house. The CWDB Research and Evaluation Team is also developing a common evaluation framework to assess the collective impact of all CWDB grants and programs.

Over the past year, the CWDB Research and Evaluation Team has worked on the following:

- Developing a Request for Application (RFA) template for all third-party evaluations which can be customized for the grant type and the grant target population(s).
- Serving as CWDB point of contact on ongoing and current evaluations given that the researchers are Ph.D. trained social scientists and are well-versed in the techniques and tools to conduct full-scale evaluations.
- With the long-term goal of moving all data collected under the different state grants to a Sales Force platform, an intermediate safe and secure portal has been developed for housing all current and upcoming grants.
- Providing insights to distinguish between technical assistance and assessment and evaluation, as well as the need to develop databases used for compliance and reporting and create analytical databases for assessment and evaluation.
- CAAL-Skills program
- The CWDB is mandated to start a joint application design and data sharing between community colleges for HRTPs and HRCCs.
- The CWDB Research and Evaluation Team is tasked with the proposed Cradle-to-Career Data System that will link existing education, workforce, financial aid, and social service information to better equip policy makers, educators, and the public in addressing disparities in opportunities and improve outcomes for all students throughout the State.

The State will continue to emphasize the use of demand-driven skills attainment to facilitate upward mobility for populations with barriers to employment. To build the regional skills infrastructure, connecting program participants to good jobs in growth sectors requires partnerships that align programs and coordinate services, including supportive services, across programs and funding streams.

The CWDB will continue to prioritize activities designed to help achieve the State Plan's three primary policy objectives:

- (1) demand-driven skills attainment;
- (2) upward mobility for populations with barriers to employment; and
- (3) program alignment.

### *Reports*

- CAAL-Skills Workforce Metrics Dashboard Report
- CAAL-Skills Impact Study Report
- America's Job Center of California (AJCC)
- Breaking Barriers to Employment Initiative (AB 1111) (in progress)

- CAAL-Skills Impact Study (in progress)
- CAAL-Skills Workforce– Metrics Dashboard
- Education Stabilization Fund-Reimagine Workforce Preparation (ESF-RWP) (in progress)
- High Road Training Partnership: California Climate Investments (in progress)
- High Road Construction Careers: California Climate Investments and SB 1 (in progress)
- Prison to Employment (P2E) Initiative (in progress)
- Regional Plan Implementation (RPI) 3.0
- Regional Plan Implementation (RPI) 4.0 (in progress)
- Workforce Accelerator Fund (WAF) (in progress)

### *Waivers*

#### *Waiver Implemented*

- Waiver of WIOA Section 134(d)(5) - Allows up to 30 percent of WIOA title I adult and dislocated worker local formula funds to be used for the provision of transitional jobs.
- Waiver of WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(H)(i) - Allows up to a 90 percent reimbursement of on-the-job training (OJT) costs for businesses with up to 50 employees.
- Waiver of WIOA Section 129(a)(4)(A) - Allows the State and Local Boards to decrease the federal 75 percent out-of-school youth (OSY) expenditure requirement to 50 percent to increase the allowable expenditures for serving in-school youth (ISY) at risk for disengagement.

### *Strategies*

To provide Local Boards with additional flexibility when assisting individuals affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, the State requested three WIOA waivers from DOL during PY21 and established an application process for Local Boards to access the DOL-approved waivers. Local Boards were required to outline how each of the waivers would impact their participants, community, and service delivery. Local Boards also had to provide their own projected programmatic outcomes for the State to track their progress via CalJOBS and fulfill DOL reporting requirements.

### *Impact on Performance*

The California Workforce Development Board (CWDB) has worked extensively to create enduring policies that reduce the administrative burden to Local Boards and establish consistency in processes and procedures by publishing formal guidance on the WIOA Waivers and providing technical assistance directly to the Local Boards.

### *Success Stories*

No information provided for this section.

*For more information, visit:*

### *Reports*

California Workforce Development Board. *CAAL-Skills Workforce Metrics Dashboard Report 2022*.

Corporation for a Skilled Workforce (Dec. 2020). *California Workforce Development Board, Regional Plan Implementation. 2.0 Evaluation Report*.

*Results Achieved Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) - Program Year 2021*.

Rothstein, J., et al (May 2022). *CAAL-Skills: Study of Workforce Training Programs in California*. California Policy Lab.

### *Links*

California Workforce Development Board

California Policy Lab

Corporation for a Skilled Workforce

RegionalCA

## Colorado

### Colorado Workforce Development Council

#### *Use of State Funds*

#### *Adult Priority Service*

#### **Adult Priority of Service and Additional Underserved Populations**

Colorado has implemented a robust adult priority of service policy with local service providers seeking to achieve 100 percent of participants meeting the statutory categories.

Local service providers are actively pursuing outreach to individuals with barriers to employment as defined in WIOA.

#### *COVID-19 Response*

Managing the COVID-19 pandemic and the varying adaptations that took place in PY21 continued to be a primary challenge for the workforce development system. This has led to the further refinement and redesign of the service experiences using in-person and virtual services, as we settled into the reality that the pandemic was not going to be resolved quickly. Redesigning services has remained paramount, and many services were successfully redesigned and made available to customers (businesses and jobseekers) in a virtual format. On June 1, 2022, Larimer County Economic and Workforce Development (LCEWD) will formally adopt a staffing approach that includes a combination of in-person and remote work options. The formality of this hybrid work arrangement recognizes that our workforce has demonstrated an effective ability to serve the public from remote locations and has learned that a variety of our customers value this access to services, while also recognizing that some portions of our community continue to seek an in-person service connection.

#### *Other State Funds Activities*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Evaluations*

#### *Activities and Methodology*

#### **Adult Education Evaluation Efforts and Outcomes**

The Adult Education Initiatives Office (AEI) offered opportunities for all title II Adult Education programs to gather, share best practices, learn about current state data trends, and ask questions. These “Office Hours” provided space to dig further into state data and demographic information. Additionally, the Adult Education Program Coordinators and the Data Coordinator met routinely with title II Adult Education providers to assess program specific data and talk through areas of success while offering suggestions on ways to improve learner retention and credential access. Other evaluation efforts regarding grant compliance also took place throughout the year.

### **Evaluation Initiative with Northern Illinois University (NIU)**

Working with Northern Illinois University (NIU), Colorado Department of Labor & Employment (CDLE) Workforce Development Programs (WDP) has established a model for WIOA program evaluation with a focus on the Office of the State Auditor requirements involving training related placements. During PY21, WDP and NIU provided technical assistance and training for a statewide cohort of local area staff to build their capacity to employ a mixed-method evaluation approach, which involved both quantitative and qualitative strategies. Training Placement and Outcomes in Colorado Workforce Areas identified best practices in each local area and incorporated recommendations to improve outcomes for the WIOA participants. This work has greatly improved the capacity of state and local workforce area staff to conduct independent program evaluations, improve local planning and to make data-driven recommendations that maximize program performance for all customers.

### **Re-Envisioning the Workforce System through Appreciative Inquiry**

CDLE's WDP conducts a strategic planning process every 3–5 years using Appreciative Inquiry to ensure that its priorities are aligned with the current needs of its stakeholders. From February through June 2022, WDP conducted 35 Appreciative Inquiry interviews with 120 state and local stakeholders, with a focus on workforce leadership staff. WDP's primary objectives in conducting Appreciative Inquiry interviews during PY21 were to re-envision the relevance of the Statewide workforce system for businesses and jobseekers; discover opportunities and technical assistance needs for the workforce system; and recommend specific actions that local areas and CDLE can take to come back better from the pandemic with a targeted focus.

### **Workforce Intelligence Data Expert Workgroup (WIDE)**

During the implementation of WIOA, local workforce directors designated their local staff to participate in a statewide data expert group to ensure consistency of workforce-related data. WIDE worked closely with directors, State MIS, and other stakeholders to create a data system that provides actual wage data for WIOA title I and title III workforce programs to evaluate the effectiveness of programming through earnings outcomes for any program year back to 2010.

Based on the methodology, the following measures were found for the Colorado Workforce System after WIOA implementation:

- Colorado statewide cost per participant for individuals receiving career services through any title I or III programs.
- Colorado statewide cost per participant for individuals receiving training services through any title I or III programs.
- In addition, WIDE has compiled the Return on Investment (ROI) for all programs in the previous two bullet points that are outlined in the charts below.

Please note that to look at wage outcomes over time, ROI data lags by up to 18 months. Currently PY20 data is the most recent program year available. PY21 will be available in the 4th quarter of 2023.

The WIDE group had several other accomplishments during PY21. WIDE presented various data on pre- and post-wage outcomes and other relevant labor market and economic data to several different local, statewide, and national groups. The WIDE group has also provided data support for several different grants, including the Technology Employment in Colorado – Partnership (TEC-P 2.0), Regional Resiliency and Recovery Road Maps, and the Ready to Rise initiative. WIDE members also participated in several national focus groups including a Harvard group. WIDE members are working closely with and have

substantial overlap with WIOA evaluation efforts led by CDLE with support from NIU. WIDE members presented a pre-conference workshop at RMWDA on utilizing data resources to support business needs in the workforce system. The group has been critical in facilitating best practices training across the regions on labor market data including use of CO LMI Gateway, BLS, U.S. Census, Lightcast, and Chmura Jobs EQ. WIDE is also working on streamlining and establishing consistency in regional reporting around labor market data and Connecting Colorado outputs.

### *Continuous Improvement*

#### **Evaluation Initiative with NIU**

Colorado will participate in and align its current evaluation efforts with those of DOL when requested (to date this has not occurred). By providing training to local workforce area staff to employ a mixed-method evaluation approach, Colorado will identify best practices and incorporate recommendations to further evaluate outcomes of WIOA programs. It is anticipated that this increased emphasis on serving barriered populations will increase enrollments and expand service delivery.

#### **Re-Envisioning the Workforce System through Appreciative Inquiry**

In 2022-23, WDP will develop actionable goals around the report's recommendations to support local and state planning, inform legislation and policy, guide grant applications, enhance programs in alignment with evaluation recommendations, and enable stronger partnership development.

### *Reports*

#### **At-A-Glance Reports**

A key support to these reviews is the quarterly At-A-Glance reports that capture critical performance indicators for each local area. This report contains data from the WIOA reporting system and the State financial system; it paints a picture of the current progress toward program and fiscal performance goals.

#### **Re-Envisioning the Workforce System through Appreciative Inquiry**

The Preparing Colorado's Workforce System for the Future through Appreciative Inquiry report documents the themes identified in these interviews.

#### **WIDE**

In this report, the WIDE group is able to evaluate outcomes utilizing actual median earnings data for any exit cohort based on the following data points: 2 Quarters Prior to Program Registration; Entry Quarter Registration; 2 Quarters Post Exit; 4 Quarters Post Exit; Year 2 Post Exit; Year 3 Post Exit; Year 4 Post Exit.

### *Waivers*

#### *Waiver Implemented*

#### **Active Waivers**

- Ability to change youth expenditures from 75 percent out-of-school/25 percent in-school to 50 percent out-of-school/50 percent in-school for PY20 funds at the State and local levels (conditionally approved in PY20 through June 30, 2023).

#### **Active Waivers That Were Not Utilized**

In PY19, Colorado engaged in the development of 10 waiver requests that the State submitted to DOL for COVID-19 pandemic policy relief. The following time-limited waivers were approved by DOL through June 30, 2022:

- Allow local areas to increase on-the-job training (OJT) employer reimbursement up to 90 percent of the wage rate.
- Allow local areas to reserve more than 20 percent of Adult and Dislocated Worker funds for incumbent worker training (IWT).
- Allow local areas to adjust the six-month employment requirement for IWT.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Colorado sought the maximum policy flexibility to adapt to changing workforce conditions. Ultimately, these waivers were not needed, and no local areas utilized these approved waivers in PY20 or PY21.

#### *Strategies*

Through its active participation on workforce committees within the National Governors' Association and the National Association of State Workforce Agencies, Colorado has taken a leadership role to shape and align waiver initiatives across multiple states and affect workforce policies at the national level.

#### *Impact on Performance*

#### **Ability to change youth expenditures from 75 percent out-of-school/25 percent in-school to 50 percent out-of-school/50 percent in-school for PY20 funds at the State and local levels**

The Tri-County local area implemented this waiver in PY21 to target in-school youth (ISY) with drop-out prevention services. Through partnerships with Arvada and Littleton NEXT, Project Search, School to Work Alliance Program, Jefferson County Human Services, and Jefferson County Public Schools, Tri-County engaged and supported 37 young adults to continue and complete their education goals while supporting work readiness prep activities.

Tri-County set the following goals in PY21 and exceeded both.

- PY21 Goal: 80 percent of ISY participants will succeed in dropout prevention by staying enrolled in school and/or graduating high school. The outcome was 93.10 percent.
- PY21 Goal: Increase credential attainment rate for all youth participants from 67 percent (PY20 goal) to 69 percent. The outcome: was 80 percent.

Tri-County will continue to utilize this waiver in PY22 with the following goals:



- PY22 Goal: 82 percent of in-school participants will succeed in dropout prevention by staying enrolled in school and/or graduating high school.
- PY22 Goal: Increase credential attainment rate for all youth participants from 69 percent (PY21 goal) to 71 percent.

Tri-County will track and report on the dropout prevention rate for participants on a quarterly basis to the Colorado Department of Labor & Employment (CDLE). CDLE will monitor credential attainment rate for the participating local area.

### *Success Stories*

#### *Workforce Development Success – Nick*

Nick lived out of a camper and was close to being homeless. He was receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits and had no income when he went into a Colorado workforce center. He wanted to change his career during the pandemic by seeking out a Commercial Driver's License (CDL). WIOA funds paid for Nick's CDL training and certification. While in training, Nick received assistance for lot rent for his camper, travel, training, and other services needed to ensure his success. After earning his certification, Nick was hired by a national trucking company and received a signing bonus with guaranteed earnings of \$1,000 a week.

#### *Workforce Development Success – Trisha*

Trisha's husband had been laid off due to the COVID-19 pandemic. She needed to return to work after a hiatus caring for her daughter with special needs and felt renewing her Registered Nurse (RN) license was the best option. Trisha researched training providers specializing in RN refreshers and found The Health Education and Resource Institute; however, she was unable to pay for training as her husband was not working and the family was receiving SNAP benefits. Trisha met with a Career Support Specialist (CSS) at Workforce Boulder County and was enrolled in the WIOA program as well as Reskilling, Upskilling, and Next-skilling Workers funds to help pay for the training she needed to regain her RN license. During her training, the family had difficulty meeting their car payment so her CSS referred the family to a partner agency, Sister Carmen, which was able to assist the family with their financial difficulty. The final step in Tricia's journey was when funds were also available to help fund the required fingerprinting and Department of Regulatory Agencies reinstatement for her RN license renewal. Tricia has now been hired making \$39 per hour as a registered nurse and highlights Governor Polis's key priority on the Healthcare industry.

#### *Workforce Development Success*

At the beginning of the pandemic, a participant was laid off from two jobs on the same day and was forced into a career change. They decided that they wanted to become a real estate agent and since they were a disabled veteran, they were encouraged to seek assistance from Vetworks. Because most programs for veterans revolve around technical or medical professions, they honestly did not have a lot of faith that Vetworks could help them but met with the Mesa County Workforce Center and the participant was approved for the Vetworks program. They started their real estate classes in May of 2020 and by September 2020, they had their license. Vetworks paid for their real estate classes, licensing, and most startup costs. They have been licensed for one year now and have already been incredibly successful. They cannot thank Mesa County Workforce Center and

the Networks program enough for helping them get started in this new career. They have found their calling and cannot believe a veteran program helped them get here.

An individual went to the Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) who was involved with gangs, several convictions and some additional pending legal cases. He was also a new father. While receiving support from CEO, he had to navigate probation, work through pending cases, distance himself from gang life, and develop as a father. At the same time, he received support to develop professional communication, interview, and job search skills. This individual was coached to apply for and interview only for jobs that he would take if they were offered. This focus helped him to land a job with Big O Tires where he learned that he would like to become a mechanic. He was excited because Big O Tires trains and promotes internally. This experience allowed the individual to learn that he is capable of success.

*For more information, visit:*

### *Reports*

*A Guide to the Quantitative and Qualitative Evaluation of WIOA Programs.* Center for Governmental Studies, Northern Illinois University.

Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (October 2022). *Appreciative Inquiry Report*. Workforce Development Programs, Division of Employment & Training.

*Programmatic Accessibility Self-Evaluation Toolkit.* Colorado Department of Labor and Employment.

Richard, B., & Clark, Y.J. (June 2021). *Training Placement and Outcomes in Colorado Workforce Areas: A Sequential Mixed-Methods Evaluation.* Center for Governmental Studies, Northern Illinois University.

### Lives Empowered

- *Upskilling Frontline Retail Employees: A Statewide Approach to Preparing Hospitality, Tourism, Food and Beverage Services, and Retail Employees for the Future of Work.* Colorado Workforce Development Council.
- *Lives Empowered Step-by Step Guide: How to Implement Talent Development and Upskilling Initiatives in Communities*

### *Links*

Colorado Workforce Development Council

- Lives Empowered

### Empowerment Score

Evaluation Tool: *A Guide to the Quantitative and Qualitative Evaluation of WIOA Programs.* Northern Illinois University-Center for Governmental Studies.

*Programmatic Accessibility Self-Evaluation Toolkit.* Colorado Department of Labor and Employment

## Connecticut

Connecticut Department of Labor  
Governor's Workforce Council Connecticut

### *Use of State Funds*

#### *Adult Priority Service*

#### **Jobs First Employment Services (JFES) Integration in the American Job Centers**

In partnership with the DSS and the five Workforce Development Boards (WDBs), CTDOL administers the JFES program which provides a host of employment-related services to recipients of Temporary Family Assistance (TFA), the State's federally funded cash assistance program for low-income families under TANF. The WDBs operate as intermediaries that subcontract with other organizations to provide direct services to JFES participants in AJCs around the State.

On March 14, 2020, Governor Lamont issued a COVID-19 Executive Order that included the temporarily waiving of all in-person TFA interview requirements. Since TFA could be granted without mandated participation in employment services, JFES was temporarily suspended at the AJCs. During this time, CTDOL's JFES Unit Director, a member of the 2Gen Steering Committee that focuses on a family-centered, results-oriented approach in serving children and families to ensure education, workforce training, and social supports are in place so generation-to-generation economic stability and well-being may be sustained, took the opportunity to look at the entire JFES program through the 2Gen lens to suggest and implement enhancements to JFES.

With the reopening of the JFES program on July 26, 2021, came dramatic changes to the foundational rules of the JFES program such as the development of a virtual JFES Orientation; increases in transportation supports and the participation allowance benefit; more in-depth assistance with barrier intervention and resolution; and other significant program modifications. Also, while JFES staff began receiving new referrals from DSS upon the reopening, all current TFA recipients reconnected virtually, with the exception of participants requesting an in-person appointment due to lack of access to technology. Virtual case management services included:

- Holding meetings/communication by email, phone, and/or video conferencing;
- Assisting participants with online career guidance and job search assistance efforts; and
- Connecting participants to local resources and supports to assist families with barriers and those that may be in crisis due to COVID-19.

In addition, CTDOL's JFES Unit oversaw or implemented the following services and programs:

- CT Association for Human Services (CAHS) Financial Literacy Workshops
- Refugee Services for JFES Participants in the New Haven Region
- JFES Staff Professional Development

### *COVID-19 Response*

As reported in Connecticut's PY20 WIOA Annual Report, the decrease in the number of WIOA participants (adults and youth) compared to PY19 was attributed to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as to the length of time unemployment benefits were disbursed in Connecticut under the CARES Act's multiple Unemployment Insurance (UI) programs. The benefits continued in Connecticut into PY21, until September 4, 2021. Ultimately, as the program year progressed, the number of individuals seeking job search and other assistance grew, and PY21 concluded with a greater number of adults served than in PY20. While the cessation of UI benefits likely played a role; the increase also followed the State's and nation's determined efforts, across government-funded programs, private industry, education and training sectors, and other workforce-based areas, to resumé regular activities. Vaccinating against COVID-19 was essential to reopening and Connecticut quickly became a leader with its vaccination rates, resulting in a positive turn for the health and safety of the state's residents and businesses. Connecticut's workforce system was soon operating in a "new normal" mode; in-person services resumed, but virtual or blended options were also offered given the persistent nature of the COVID-19 virus.

### *Other State Funds Activities*

Statewide activities, delivered in Connecticut with 15 percent reserve funds during PY21, included:

- Maintaining the state list of eligible training providers;
- State administration of the adult, dislocated worker and youth workforce development activities, by conducting performance evaluations, including programmatic monitoring and customer satisfaction surveys;
- Assisting in the operations of the American Job Centers;
- Operating fiscal management and performance accountability system activities; and
- Supporting CTHires, the state's WIOA case management information system.

Activities related to monitoring, evaluation, and accountability provide essential information and guidance for the state and its workforce development partners regarding continuous improvement and program efficiencies. Also, of particular value to the WDBs in achieving programmatic goals is performance data that is made available through CTHires. By having timely access to this data, WDBs can analyze performance, determine areas in need of attention, and focus on solutions.

### *Evaluations*

#### *Activities and Methodology*

##### **Status of State Evaluation Activities**

Pursuant to 2021 Connecticut legislation, development of a plan to compile, analyze, and report on data for the purpose of assessing the performance of the State's workforce system was designated to the Office of Workforce Strategy (OWS). The resulting annual report will include the number of individuals served, demographic information about such individuals, and

outcomes achieved after completion of a workforce training program. Following a transition period, the report shall replace the Connecticut Higher Education/Workforce Legislative Report Card (LRC), developed by the Connecticut Department of Labor's (CTDOL's) Office of Research.

#### *Continuous Improvement*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Reports*

##### **Status of State Evaluation Activities**

This report includes information on employment by industry and average wages of recent graduates of Connecticut's public colleges and universities.

#### *Waivers*

##### *Waiver Implemented*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Strategies*

Not applicable.

#### *Impact on Performance*

Not applicable.

#### *Success Stories*

##### *Job Corps – Sylvia*

Thanks to Job Corps and a focus on personal development, health management, and pursuit of higher education, Sylvia gained academic confidence and is well on her way to success. Raised and educated in Tennessee, Sylvia found the rigors of college coursework combined with health issues challenging to the point that she withdrew from the university she was attending. After learning about Job Corps from a flyer at an American Job Center (AJC), Sylvia planned to attend the Memphis Job Corps, but applied to Hartford when her family decided to move to the East Coast. When the COVID-19 pandemic forced the closure of the Hartford campus shortly after her arrival, she continued attending the Insurance and Financial Services program via distance learning. Once in-person classes resumed, she became Treasurer of the Student Government Association and served as a Peer Math Tutor. Upon completing her program of study in August 2021, she was accepted into Job Corps' Advanced Career Training Program and began attending Capital Community College where she achieved Dean's List. She was also accepted into a 2,100-hour apprenticeship program with a prominent insurance company and will be eligible to apply for full-time opportunities in the

company upon training completion. Sylvia, whose career goal is to become a Certified Public Accountant, credits her success to Job Corps' structure and the teachers who believed in her abilities and provided constant support.

#### *WIOA Adult Program – Carlos*

Carlos had been out of the workforce for ten years dealing with illness. Although fearful of reentering the workforce, the staff at the AJC reassured him they would provide coaching and support at every point in his journey to employment. Carlos's dream was to land a job driving for CTtransit; he had applied several times, but never received a call back. He was awarded a WIOA training scholarship, completed CDL training in 2019, and, with the help of the Disability Resource Coordinator, reapplied to CTtransit in July 2020. The company informed Carlos that if he obtained his F Endorsement he would be hired, so the AJC provided funding for the training and, in July 2021, Carlos received a call from CTtransit to begin training. He successfully completed training and was hired.

*For more information, visit:*

#### *Reports*

Connecticut Department of Labor (Dec. 2022). Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Annual Report.

Status of State Evaluation Activities.

#### *Links*

Connecticut Department of Labor

Governor's Workforce Council Connecticut

LRC Online Tool

## Delaware

### Delaware Workforce Development Board

#### *Use of State Funds*

#### *Adult Priority Service*

#### **Blue Collar**

Blue Collar provides funds to state agencies and public sector organizations to train economically disadvantaged individuals and others with barriers to employment and served 723 youth and adults in PY21.

#### **Elevate Delaware**

Elevate Delaware provides payments for tuition and auxiliary expenses, up to \$10,000, for individuals to attend an approved non-credit certificate program. Individuals are eligible for Elevate Delaware if they are employed by an employer with under 51 employees and are subject to Delaware income tax.

#### **Today's Reinvestment Around Industry Needs (TRAIN)**

TRAIN allows opportunity for providers to develop strategic workforce training plans to support employers in identifying workforce training need(s) and create a solution. The intent is to provide targeted education and training to individuals, with a focus on serving the unemployed and/or underemployed, to ensure Delaware employers have the talent they need to compete and grow. This program is a two-step grant. Phase I propose creating Strategic Workforce Training Plans that meet employers' workforce needs and advance the skills of Delaware workers. Phase II is the implementation of selected Strategic Workforce Training Plans developed as part of Phase I.

The total amount of state funds allocated is \$630,000 per year. In PY21, TRAIN engaged 21 employers and trained over 110 individuals in Phase II.

#### **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)**

Delaware's TANF Team is administered through a joint effort between the Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Social Services, and DOL-ETA. The goal of Delaware's TANF program is to provide a welfare system based on a philosophy of mutual responsibility. In working toward that goal, the State will strive to place individuals in private or public sector unsubsidized employment that enables them to enter and maintain family sustaining employment. To that end, the TANF program provides individualized supports and programming to assist families to become employed and expects families to accept responsibility to become self-supporting.

#### *COVID-19 Response*

No information provided for this section.



### *Other State Funds Activities*

#### **Learning for Careers (LFC)**

LFC works to engage Delaware’s business community in a planning process that results in the creation or expansion of paid work experiences for youth and adult learners in Delaware. The purpose of the investments that result from this Request for Proposal (RFP) is to increase employer participation in student education, training, and employment programs.

LFC is a two-step grant:

- Planning Phase (Phase I) supports employers through employer association, employer chambers, employer groups, or state agency acting on behalf of a group of employers in Delaware to engage their business membership/community in identifying how they can partner with education and training providers to create and/or expand their use of paid work experience for youth and adult learners. Multi-employer solutions are required.
- Implementation Phase (Phase II). The plan developed in Phase I will then be used to request additional funds for Phase II. The intent of Phase II funds is to provide funding to eligible recipients to empower their employer members to support student participation in paid work experiences that align with:
  1. Summer youth employment programs or other DOL funded programs included in the definition of Employment and Training Providers other DOL funded programs; or
  2. Secondary school work-based learning and/or co-operative education programs; or
  3. Postsecondary work-based learning and/or clinical/experiential learning programs.

In PY21, the funding available for Phase I awards was \$120,000 and Phase II awards was \$380,000. This program engaged over 130 students in work-based learning in PY21.

#### **APEX**

The APEX program provides opportunities to individuals with criminal histories who wish to obtain gainful employment. The program aims to accomplish this by helping clients through the pardons and expungement process, providing employer education, and advancing legislative reform.

### *Evaluations*

#### *Activities and Methodology*

##### **Workstream 1: Business Decision Maker Survey**

DWDB contracted with Zogby Analytics to conduct the Business Survey, which was later dubbed the “Business Decision Maker Survey.” Zogby completed the survey and published its final report in August 2022.

DWDB worked with Tech Impact’s Data Innovation Lab (DIL) to further analyze the data from the Business Decision Maker Survey, identify and define the principal questions of interest, and develop data-driven recommendations. The eight-week data

analysis project with DIL began in late July 2022. Since the project launch, DIL has met on a weekly basis to discuss progress and develop easy-to-understand summary materials (e.g., charts and graphs) to present to Board members, media, and the public. DIL's Final Report was made available in mid-October.

### *Continuous Improvement*

### *Reports*

#### **Workstream 1: Business Decision Maker Survey Report**

Some key findings from the project analysis which included inputs from 251 businesses:

- Majority of the surveyed businesses have 100 or less staff.
- Businesses expect to grow over the next three years.
- Manufacturing, Educational Services, and Finance and Insurance are expected to have the most open positions in the next five years due to retirement.
- Lack of experience, self-motivation and initiative are the most common barriers preventing decision-makers from hiring job candidates or them taking the jobs.
- Four out of five businesses report that they offer jobs without a college degree and half of those businesses accept individuals coming out of the criminal justice system.
- The top skills lacking among job applicants were software proficiency in Microsoft Excel, data analysis, self-motivation, and communication skills.
- Approximately one quarter of surveyed decision-makers currently use Delaware JobLink.

### *Waivers*

#### *Waiver Implemented*

No information provided for this section.

### *Strategies*

No information provided for this section.

### *Impact on Performance*

No information provided for this section.

## *Success Stories*

### *WIOA Youth Program – Micah*

Micah and his mother lived in an area “with a lot of distractions.” Micah shared, “I had a lot of weight on my shoulders and felt like I did not have much going for myself. Pathways gave me a purpose and helped me to know I am better than my circumstances.” His participation in the PTS Gentlemen’s Society served a purpose he desperately needed. “I was able to learn from successful male mentors from all different backgrounds who showed me there were many ways to be successful. They showed us how to be men and taught us the life lessons we needed at that time in our lives.” Micah emphasized how Pathways exposed him to things he would never have experienced outside of the program. “I remember going to the Holocaust Museum, it was mind blowing and something I would have never experienced on my own.” “Pathways will help you to be whatever you want to be in life.” Micah was employed through the WEX program to work at the Boys and Girls Club where he became a certified childcare worker. “The experience helped prepare me for adulthood.” After graduation, we helped Micah get his flagger credentials. “I am now employed full-time as a DOT Certified Flagger.” He will soon be attending school to obtain his HVAC certification. “Because of Pathways I am motivated to have a successful future.”

### *WIOA Youth Program – Tazi'eh*

Tazi'eh described the environment he grew up in.

“Where I am from not many young men get the kind of opportunities that Pathways gave to me. So many young men become products of their environment and end up on the wrong side of the law. I could see myself heading in that same direction, but Pathways showed me there was more to life.”

Tazi'eh said he would tell current students to take advantage of everything Pathways has to offer. This includes learning about money management, communication skills, time management, and being able to meet and connect with Pathways students from other schools. Tazi'eh was employed through the WEX program at CHASAD Construction where he learned about construction and how homes are built. There he learned to take pride in his work. “I worked on beautiful condos near the beach. It made me feel good that I had a hand in helping to build them.” After graduation in 2021, we equipped Tazi'eh with his flagger credentials. Now he has taken it upon himself to help other young men in his community learn how to obtain their DOT Flagger License. He wants to take additional construction courses and work toward obtaining an HVAC Certification. “Pathways gave me an opportunity to do something better with my life. The sky's the limit.”

### *Jobs for Delaware Graduate – Tamere*

Tamere is a JDG WIOA DOL student who recently graduated from Delmar High School. Throughout the school year, Tamere worked as a cashier at his local Food Lion. During that time, Tamere also enlisted in the Army National Guard reserves, where he completed training one weekend during each month, in Dover, Delaware. Juggling schoolwork, a part-time job, and the National Guard was a difficult task. However, Tamere put his best foot forward and graduated from Delmar High School this past June. Determined young Tamere, went on to complete and graduate from the Army National Guard’s boot camp. Tamere has since

enrolled in an advanced training through the ROTC that will commission him as an officer upon completion. Future plans for Tamere include attending college, while in the National Guard, and receiving a degree in Information Technology. Tamere is a great example of what hard work and dedication looks like.

#### *Jobs for Delaware Graduate – K'Zyiah*

K'Zyiah, a Jobs for Delaware Graduates (JDG) BC DOL student attended Middletown High School and just graduated this past May. K'Zyiah expressed her interest in Pediatric Physical Therapy and has known for a long time that she has always wanted to be a Physical Therapist and she loves children, so what better way to combine what she loves and aspires to be in her future. K'Zyiah was offered a paid work experience opportunity provided by JDG and immediately knew she wanted to work at a physical therapy office. She was offered an internship at PIVOT Physical Therapy in Middletown, where she interned from May 2022 until September 2022. K'Zyiah quickly knew that this internship was what she needed to confirm what she wanted her future career to look like. Monthly check-ins were made with her supervisor, Nick, and he stated that she is a bright and driven student and knows that she has a great future ahead of her. Nick expressed that this internship was beneficial for not only him, but to her as she has learned quickly and was very client-oriented and personable. K'Zyiah had expressed she was interested in college after her internship and would begin looking but did not have the resources or information to get enrolled. A student Outreach Coordinator offered guidance and transportation and a week before classes began at Del Tech Community College, K'Zyiah was enrolled into the Physical Therapy program and is now a full-time student and plans to transfer to a four-year college and receive her bachelor's degree. K'Zyiah is currently being assisted by JDG in finding a part or full-time job depending on her schedule to work at a Pediatric Physical Therapy office and possibly another paid work experience to assist her with her future career and education goals.

#### *WIOA Youth Program – Celeste*

Celeste enrolled with the Career Team WIOA Out-of-School Youth (OSY) Program. She was a high school graduate who needed to enhance her skills to gain sustainable employment. She was interested in the Code Differently IT Program, where she was able to learn the skills required to be a certified IT Tech. Celeste had a couple of challenges when she first started the IT program such as how to maximize her time management since she had to be in class everyday Monday–Friday for eight hours. Career Team staff met with Celeste and provided on time management that would be beneficial. Staff assigned modules on the Career Edge platform that would be with one of those modules focusing on time management. Celeste did not have to worry about income due to her paid WEX Placement while she completed the program. Celeste successfully completed her modules on Career Edge and applied them to her everyday life. With her time management in order, Celeste was ready to focus on her coursework. Her study habits and dedication soon separated her from her peers. Her instructor saw how dedicated she was, and she was nominated as the team lead. In the role of team lead, she was the group lead on projects and assignments and tutored her peers who struggled with the course. Celeste passed her Scrum Certification and was recognized for her competency in Scrum Project Management Principles. This allowed her to be a candidate for a Scrum Master, which allowed her to take on the role of Project Manager for various projects. Celeste graduated from the Code Differently IT Program and applied to three different jobs but was denied due to her lack of experience. She was determined to succeed and was offered a paid part-time

position as a tutor with Code Differently while she continued to search for an IT position. Celeste did not let the previous rejections stop her from reaching her goals. She is now employed with a new technology firm, making a great wage, and achieving her goals. Through the WIOA-OSY Program at Career Team, Celeste found a way to prevail despite having obstacles along the way.

*For more information, visit:*

#### *Reports*

Delaware Works. *Annual Report Program Year 2021*. Delaware Workforce Development Board.

#### *Links*

Delaware Workforce Development Board

Zogby Analytics

## District of Columbia

### District of Columbia Department of Employment Services

#### *Use of State Funds*

#### *Adult Priority Service*

No information provided for this section.

#### *COVID-19 Response*

Due to COVID-19, the American Job Centers (AJCs) had to adjust service delivery methods. The AJCs continued to operate during the pandemic's peak due to the rise in unemployment and the growing need to provide employment and training services to unemployed and underemployed District residents. As a result, the District of Columbia Department of Employment Services (DOES) found innovative ways to offer programming and service delivery by moving all Wagner-Peyser and Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) workshops 100 percent remotely, utilizing the Adobe Connect platform. Customers can register for upcoming Wagner-Peyser workshops on the DOES website. Moving the workshops completely remote decreased the risk of the spread of COVID-19 to DOES employees and customers.

#### *Other State Funds Activities*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Evaluations*

#### *Activities and Methodology*

The District has initiated an experimental evaluation of the District's RESEA program. The evaluation is a mandate by DOL, in accordance with the statutory provisions for RESEA contained in the Social Security Act (SSA) Section 306, and the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 (P.L. 115-123) states are expected to begin conducting interventions and service delivery strategies to support building new evidence on effective RESEA interventions that all states can rely on in designing and delivering the RESEA program. DOL requires that beginning in the 2023 RESEA program year, grantees must dedicate a share of awarded grant funds to interventions or strategies which lack sufficient evidence. Unemployment Insurance Program Letter (UIPL) No. 1-20 defines and provides the criteria for assigning evidence-based ratings of the effectiveness of a grantee's interventions and strategies. Specifically, an evidence-based intervention is defined as one that reduces claimants' average duration on Unemployment Insurance (UI) by improving their employment outcomes. The proposed RESEA evaluation plan encompasses the guidelines and processes as outlined in UIPL No. 1-20.

The evaluation will assess the impact of being selected for RESEA (vs. not being selected for RESEA) on individuals:

1. UI weeks paid in the first six months of the initial claim;

2. Employment status in the second calendar quarter following the calendar quarter of the initial claim; and
3. Earnings in the second calendar quarter following the calendar quarter of the initial claim.

Specifically, the evaluation will compare outcomes across claimants randomly assigned to the treatment group (i.e., selected for RESEA) or to the control (i.e., not selected for RESEA) group. The evaluation will then attribute any differences in those outcomes to the treatment group's having been selected for RESEA participation. To the extent possible, the evaluation will also explore how RESEA impacts vary with characteristics at the initial claim (e.g., age, race/ethnicity, gender, education, weekly benefit amount, profiling score) and with the local economic conditions (e.g., the unemployment rate). Finally, throughout the random assignment period, the evaluation will monitor and report on program outputs (i.e., RESEA workshop attendance rate, held UI payments for failure to report).

The evaluation kicked off in January 2022. The random assignment will start in 2022 and will continue for three years (through August 2025). The data collection is expected to be complete by June 2026. This includes 12 quarters of random assignment, plus two follow-up quarters for measuring employment outcomes and one additional quarter to account for data reporting lags.

#### *Continuous Improvement*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Reports*

While there will be partial evaluation reports available for the RESEA evaluation in option year 1, 2, and 3, the final evaluation report is expected to be complete in 2026.

#### *Waivers*

##### *Waiver Implemented*

The District did not have any approved WIOA waivers during PY21.

#### *Strategies*

Not applicable.

#### *Impact on Performance*

Not applicable.

#### *Success Stories*

##### *Wagner-Peyser Program*

A participant had relocated to the District from the Mid-West region and was actively seeking employment. The participant had served in many human service roles including a role as an Employment Specialist. During a brief counseling session, American

Job Center (AJC) HQ Manager advised Participant One on the many options and resources available in the AJC. A Case Manager provided the participant with multiple job leads while AJC HQ Manager simultaneously provided résumé recommendations according to the description of the open positions. Over time the participant was referred to multiple Career Club positions where the participant's résumé was screened for at least five positions. After going through the job referral and résumé screening process, the participant acknowledged that it had secured employment with Reynolds & Associates as a Case Manager with a salary of \$42,000. The participant was thoroughly pleased with career coordination services from AJC staff as all the staff working on this case were "invested and present" when the participant needed them. The participant is still utilizing AJC services to navigate new employment opportunities and prepare for opportunities in the future.

#### *WIOA Adult Program*

A participant came to the AJC with the goal of obtaining a Commercial Driving License (CDL) Class B license. The participant also came with a barrier of not having a driver's license that would seemingly make it impossible to enroll in this program. At the time, the participant was in pursuit of a learner's permit and subsequent provisional license, and COVID-19 made it very difficult to obtain appointments to schedule tests accordingly. Not letting this deter them, the participant notified the workforce development staff of successfully obtaining a driver's license and two weeks later, arrived at the office to complete a WIOA application. After having to change the training provider unexpectedly, the participant was accepted for enrollment and began training beginning December 2021, with a 1st CDL of Northern Virginia. The first week of class did not go smoothly, but the participant was prepared to do all that was necessary to not only make up missed hours, but to complete training on time. The participant successfully completed training with the required completion hours. Just days after completion, the participant was scheduled for his road test and successfully obtained a CDL Class B license. Upon attainment, the participant utilized various resources including DC Networks to perform job search. The participant found it difficult to locate employers willing to take a chance on someone having minimal OTR experience, but subsequently, the participant shared two offers of employment from Academy Transportation and Vulcan Materials Company. The participant officially accepted the Vulcan opportunity and was scheduled to begin a new career as a CDL Class B Driver.

#### *Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG)/WP*

A participant was a 100 percent disabled Army veteran with a Bachelor of Arts in Logistics Management, enrolled into Jobs for Veteran's State Grants (JVSG). The participant was referred to Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER) and other employers (Manpower/American jobs/Federal Government). The participant applied for 3–5 jobs weekly. The participant informed the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) that they were offered a job and accepted. The veteran started the new job as a Government Contractor at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. The veteran's position is a Performance Specialist position, full time with full medical benefits.

#### *SCSEP/WP/WIOA*

A participant was hired by the United Planning Organization (UPO) to work as an Assistant. The participant stated:



“I thank you and the team for pushing and encouraging me to stay focus and I thank you all for opportunities and doors that were open I did not even know I could go through until I came in the SCSEP Program and received training at such great worksites. SCSEP is a Program where the money is well spent providing training for seniors to get back in the workforce. Seniors especially with all the new technology and with the pandemic we need to work. I had no knowledge of computers or any administrative duties until coming to the program. I will always appreciate program staff and thank God for the SCSEP Program.”

### *WIOA out-of-school Youth*

A participant attended one of the out-of-school youth (OSY) programs orientation, hosted for young adults interested in exploring their training and career opportunities at the DC Department of Employment Services. The participant was referred to a Case Manager, who assisted the participant in enrolling in Unarmed Security Officer training. The participant successfully completed his security training after months of training and interning. Due to licensing delays, it took a little while for the participant to obtain a security license after successfully passing the exam. After patiently waiting, and encouragement from the provider and the Department of Employment Services for processing, DC Regulatory Affairs provided the participant with a Security Officer license. The participant is officially an unarmed licensed security officer. The participant has been provisionally hired at Infinity Solutions.

Another participant reported to the DC Department of Employment Services (DOES) to receive services and complete the intake process as it expressed interest in attending training with OIC/DC. The participant was enrolled and attended training while working eagerly to obtain a National Retail Federation Credential in Customer Service & Sales Certified specialist. The participant obtained credentials after a second attempt. The participant was offered a full-time position shortly following successfully completing the training program. The participant's training provider, OIC/DC reported an increase in their confidence as a result of the training and development during participation.

*For more information, visit:*

### *Reports*

District of Columbia Department of Employment Services. *PY 2021 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Annual Narrative Report.*

### *Links*

District of Columbia Department of Employment Services

## Florida

CareerSource Florida

Florida Department of Economic Opportunity

*Use of State Funds*

*Adult Priority Service*

### **Get There Faster WIOA Competitive Grant Opportunities**

The State board approved \$19.1 million in grant funding to ensure Floridians have greater access to education, workforce training and good jobs. These grants were made available to address priority populations and emphasized the long-term impacts of enabling participants to gain and retain employment and attain self-sufficiency. Dollars allocated focused on the following targeted opportunity groups:

- Veterans and Military Spouses
- Low-Income Returning Adult Learners
- At-Risk Floridians

For all three Get There Faster Grants, a total of 322 participants were enrolled with 283 receiving training services. Outcomes from these two-year grants continue to be monitored.

### **Paychecks for Patriots**

This is a partnership with the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, the CareerSource Florida network, the Florida National Guard, the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs, and participating Florida employers to hold job fairs for veterans and their families. CareerSource Florida centers across the State host Paychecks for Patriots events throughout November each year to build connections between veteran jobseekers and Florida's employers. Participating employers include national companies and many local businesses. More than 4,300 veterans and their family members participated in prior Paychecks for Patriots events and 2,100 gained employment.

### **Veterans**

With funding from the U.S. Department of Labor Veterans' Employment and Training Service (DOL-VETS), the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity administers the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) program in coordination with Florida's 24 local workforce development boards. The JVSG provides funding to support the staffing of Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists, Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVERs), and Consolidated Positions (CPs) throughout the CareerSource Florida network. The JVSG also supports the State Veterans' Program Office, including the State veterans program coordinator (SVPC), regional veterans program coordinators and intensive service coordinators. The State Veterans' Program Office ensures consistency and excellence in program service delivery through technical assistance, policy, training, and monitoring.

### **Additional Adult Priority Services Activities**

- Department of Defense SkillBridge Program
- Veterans Workforce Summit
- HIRE Vets Medallion Program
- Military Family Employment Advocacy Program
- Substance Dependency Recovery and Reentry Navigators
- Florida Council on Homelessness

### *COVID-19 Response*

No information provided for this section.

### *Other State Funds Activities*

#### **Florida Ready to Work Foundational Skills Initiative**

CareerSource Florida previously released a Florida Skills Gaps and Job Vacancy Study which identified a range of foundational skills necessary for employment that employers ranked as a primary barrier to business and economic growth. Through the Governor's state set-aside funds, the State board allocated \$1 million to provide foundational and soft skills training to WIOA eligible participants to address skills gaps that impede workforce readiness and competitiveness.

### *Evaluations*

### *Activities and Methodology*

#### **Advancing Postsecondary Career and Technical Education Data Quality Initiative**

CareerSource Florida continues to participate in research and evaluation with the Florida Department of Education's Division of Career and Adult Education on the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Data Quality Initiative grant. The State's goal is to ensure the ability of the State's workforce education system to meet the demands of the Florida economy and the future of work through data-driven decision-making. This research will lead to the development of a process to collect system-wide data for measuring quality work-based learning opportunities in the technical college and state college systems.

#### **Career Ladder Identifier and Financial Forecaster (CLIFF) Dashboard**

CareerSource Florida, through a partnership with the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, launched the Florida CLIFF Dashboard in early 2022. This dashboard helps families visualize salary increases along specific career pathways and the monetary impact of the loss of public benefits as salary increases. Nine local workforce development boards representing urban, rural, small, mid-size, and large areas piloted the dashboard as a case management tool. Each local board chose specific customer groups with whom they would deploy the tool and reported usage data throughout the four-month pilot. Customer groups included: veterans;

WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth populations; and recipients of Unemployment Insurance, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits.

### *Continuous Improvement*

#### **Career Ladder Identifier and Financial Forecaster (CLIFF) Dashboard Report**

The University of Florida's Anita Zucker Center conducted a third-party evaluation of the pilot and published a final research report. Findings from the pilot are resulting in improvements to the dashboard, including the addition of more occupations, development of a Spanish version, and the ability to identify in-demand occupations. Statewide implementation of this tool, continuing in PY22–23, will also explore the next phase of evaluative studies

#### **Comprehensive Employment, Education and Training Policy**

The State has a policy that calls for local workforce development boards to collaborate with all workforce partners to develop innovative strategies that focus on:

- Creating simplified access to and providing excellent customer service for the State's workforce;
- Focusing on continuous improvement, strengthening partnerships to leverage shared resources and eliminate duplication of services;
- Aligning programs and resources to meet local market demand in occupations that lead to self-sustaining jobs; and
- Implementing data-driven accountability measures and quantifiable outcomes for training programs, employment services and services to the State businesses.

Under this policy, local workforce development boards are called to leverage all allowable tools and resources within their authority to assist Floridians in securing employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency, to ensure workforce development programs are responsive to the needs of State employers, and to develop collaborative partnerships that leverage multiple sources of funding to provide services to Floridians, especially vulnerable populations.

### *Reports*

#### **Career Ladder Identifier and Financial Forecaster (CLIFF) Dashboard Report**

In this report, the evaluation team has learned that most of the stakeholders support continued use of the tool and have identified some modifications to the design of the tool that will increase the useability, relevance, and resonance of the information shared through the CLIFF Dashboard tool. These modifications include:

1. Assessing client education and openness to career planning prior to using the CLIFF Dashboard;
2. Introducing additional locally relevant career paths; and
3. An interface including language translations and simplified result documents.

### *Waivers*

#### *Waiver Implemented*

There were no waivers in place during PY21–22.

### *Strategies*

Not applicable.

### *Impact on Performance*

Not applicable.

### *Success Stories*

#### *Florida Unique Abilities Partner Program*

The Florida Unique Abilities Partner Program, established in 2016, was designed to celebrate businesses and organizations that provided career or financial opportunities to individuals with disabilities and to raise awareness of the economic and social benefits of employing these individuals. Employing people with unique abilities is a direct and cost-effective means to assist them in achieving independence and fulfillment while contributing their talents to the workforce. Hiring someone with a disability demonstrates an employer's dedication to strengthening communities and the economy and helps the employee gain confidence, acceptance and financial security.

Florida Unique Abilities Partner Program demonstrates their social values, networks with like-minded businesses and organizations, and displays the Unique Abilities logo to the public. They are also recognized with a searchable Employ Florida designation and an entry on the Partner List on the Florida Unique Abilities Partner Program website, which also hosts applications, nominations, resources, and other information on the program.

*For more information, visit:*

### *Reports*

CareerSource Florida. *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Annual Statewide Performance Report*.

Schreiber, M., Daley, D., & Knopf, H.T. (June 2022). *Evaluation of the Career Ladder Identifier and Financial Forecaster (CLIFF) Dashboard*. Deliverable 6: Final Research Report. University of Florida's Anita Zucker Center.

### *Links*

CareerSource Florida

Employ Florida

FloridaJobs

- Paychecks for Patriots

IPS Employment Center

Employment First Florida

Family Café

## Georgia

WorkSource Georgia (The Technical College System of Georgia's Office Workforce Development)  
Georgia Department of Labor

### *Use of State Funds*

### *Adult Priority Service*

#### **Sector Partnerships and Career Pathways**

A key and ongoing byproduct of Georgia's sector partnership activities and investment are accessible and aligned career pathways that ensure individuals in Georgia, specifically those from special and marginalized populations, have access to quality and sustainable careers. To accomplish this, WorkSource Georgia pivoted both its sector partnership and business services strategies to strengthen the connection and services available to employers and individuals from special populations.

Examples of career pathway development within sector partnerships include:

- Integrating registered apprenticeships into sector partnership activities;
- Incorporating employability skills training into occupational training programs; and
- Creating structured internship programs that connect to emerging careers fields, such as IT and Cybersecurity.

To learn more about WorkSource Sector Partnerships and the innovations they bring across Georgia's workforce system, WorkSource Georgia has published *WorkSource Sector Partnership Regional Guide*.

#### **Veterans**

The State serves a large veteran community, with over 629,302 Veteran residents. A unique and innovative way in which the state is serving veterans is through The Georgia Veterans Education Career Transition Resource (VECTR) Center in Warner Robins, GA. The VECTR Center serves as a gateway for veteran's re-entry into Georgia's public educational systems and workforce. The VECTR Center continued to prepare veterans and transitioning service members for suitable employment in a post COVID-19 environment. The Center also assisted employers and HR professionals to be uniquely positioned to create, foster, and sustain a culture inclusive of the veteran community. Additionally, the VECTR Center is expanding its community reach through a new center location at Chattahoochee Technical College in Marietta, GA. This second location is expected to be open to veterans by late 2022.

### *COVID-19 Response*

No information provided for this section.

### *Other State Funds Activities*

No information provided for this section.

*Evaluations**Activities and Methodology***Workforce Statistics (LMI) division**

Under the PY21 ETA Workforce Information Grant, the State of Georgia Workforce Statistics (LMI) division produced and disseminated industry and occupational employment projections and conducted and published relevant economic analyses and economic studies. The division's Workforce Information Database is currently populated with statewide two-year (2021–2023) short-term industry/occupational projections and statewide and sub-state 10-year (2020–2030) long-term industry/occupational projections. Dissemination of various projections data are in the form of: Georgia Jobs–Short-term Employment Projections; Georgia Workforce–Long-term Employment Trends; Georgia Area Workforce Trends (for each of Georgia's 19 Local Workforce Development Areas); Georgia Hot Careers; Georgia STEM Careers; Licensed and Certified Occupations in Georgia.

Economic analyses were conducted in the form of customer defined labor-shed analyses, workforce area and workforce commuting analyses, detailed commuting reports and summary commuting Infographic reports, standardized industry analysis reports, wage studies, trend analysis reports, and other customer requested data research projects in support of the economic development needs of a wide array of workforce system stakeholders, including State Workforce Agencies, State and Local Workforce Development Boards (WDBs), economic agencies, workforce development organizations, chambers of commerce, education and training institutions, community colleges, and other state-identified strategic partners and stakeholders.

Labor shed analyses are designed to provide special focus on centralized areas regarding the supply and demand of employment, skills transfer ability, basic education requirements, occupational staffing, and a wide variety of wage options. Customers may request prospect reports based on a regional commission area (Georgia has 12 designated Regional Commissions), a Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA), (Georgia has 19 designated LWDAs), an MSA area (Georgia has 14 metropolitan statistical areas) or statewide data. A custom report or series of reports are created with employment (skilled labor), entry and average wage data for the requested area(s) and standardized education and training levels.

*Continuous Improvement*

No information provided for this section.

*Reports***Workforce Statistics (LMI) division**

During PY21, staff worked on over 200 assorted economic projects to provide support and analysis for a wide variety of economic development projects across the State. Reports ranged from comprehensive studies of special target groups across the State and in specific geographical areas, customized reports providing for a comparison of detailed employment and wage data, and occupational wage reports for a specific county and/or Labor Draw Area. Georgia Department of Labor (GDOL) works closely with the Department of Economic Development, Chambers of Commerce, Development Authorities, and other local government agencies regarding new business prospects. Through these collaborations, staff have been often asked to provide more report



customization utilizing data from GDOL as well as data from other sources such the U.S. Census Bureau. Close partnerships with GDOL Regional Coordinators, who serve as local community brokers to request and deliver specialized data requests, benefit local WIBs and partner agencies, local businesses, and prospective businesses by making them aware of the availability of quality workforce information.

### *Waivers*

#### *Waiver Implemented*

The Office of Workforce Development (OWD) currently has a Youth Expenditure Waiver active until June 30, 2024, which lowers the expenditure requirements established by WIOA of at least 75 percent of funding to be spent for the out-of-school youth (OSY) population to 50 percent.

### *Strategies*

The flexibility afforded by the waiver has allowed Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs) to expand in-school youth (ISY) programming within their service area, create valuable partnerships with school districts, technical colleges, and other education and community partners throughout their area.

### *Impact on Performance*

When OWD polled the LWDAs on PY21 use of the waiver, they expressed a desire to continue to expand their community partnerships through innovative services for youth in general, including ISY and OSY. Furthermore, LWDAs expressed they expected to double the number of ISY participants they would serve during PY22 and PY23.

### *Success Stories*

#### *WIOA Youth Program – “B”*

The WIOA title I program at Rome High School is vital to a number of at-risk students each school year. Many students lack any work experience and encounter significant life challenges that discourage them from full participation in school or employment. A recent student that comes to mind is “B”. The State started working with B during the Spring semester of his Junior year. He was living in an unstable home with a parent and sibling, but never disclosed the extent of his challenges. B suffered from anxiety, had no work experience, and by the time he completed high school, he relocated at least five times. B was placed at the local public library through work experience. After he started receiving WIOA title I services and supports he would ask why the staff wanted to help him. B soon trusted the staff assisting him and enjoyed his work. Toward the end of his senior year, B had enough desire and confidence to interview for a full scholarship. He was awarded the Gate Scholarship. B is currently majoring in Physics with a minor in Business. He is also planning to obtain a master’s degree in the near future. B is definitely a success story of how a little extra assistance through WIOA title I services and encouragement can change the trajectory of a young person’s life.

*For more information, visit:*

*Reports*

WorkSource Georgia. *State Of Georgia PY21 WIOA Annual Narrative Report*.

WorkSource Georgia (Aug. 2022). *WorkSource Sector Partnership Regional Guide*. Technical College System of Georgia Office of Workforce Development.

*Links*

WorkSource Georgia (The Technical College System of Georgia's Office Workforce Development)

Georgia Department of Labor

Assessment Tool: My Next Move (O\*NET Interest Profiler)

## Hawaii

### State of Hawaii Department of Labor and Industrial Relations

#### *Use of State Funds*

#### *Adult Priority Service*

No information provided for this section.

#### *COVID-19 Response*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Other State Funds Activities*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Evaluations*

The State conducts evaluations to access the needs and to identify viable solutions to the problems located in its inquiries. The completed research was selected and supported in collaboration with local boards.

#### *Activities and Methodology*

##### **Statewide evaluation of Eligible Training Providers (EDSI)**

Twenty-three Eligible Training Providers and 203 programs were evaluated via survey and interview with provider staff interview broken down by LWDB (Maui, Hawai'i, and Oahu) beginning in July 2021 through October 2021. Conclusions drawn were that the programs were generally of high quality but reporting data, credential attainment tracking, and employment placement outcomes need to be improved to track long-term outcomes.

##### **Statewide digital literacy and readiness survey (Omnitrak)**

Hawai'i's DLIR with Omnitrak created a Workforce Resiliency Initiative (WRI) to help lead Hawai'i's economy towards recovery and resiliency. The National Skills Coalition estimates that 30 percent of the U.S. workforce lacks basic, fundamental computer skills. In Hawai'i, that is roughly 200,000 people who are struggling with day-to-day computer tasks. One core aspect of the WRI is ensuring that everyone in the workforce is digitally literate, ready, and capable. The multi-modal approach targeted a sample of Hawai'i residents (n=893) aged 18 to 65, representative of the State's population with telephone and on-line surveys regarding digital literacy and readiness. Results identified a "digital divide" of digital skills versus digital use, compound digital divides, and sequential digital divides. Those results have spurred on future efforts reaching into PY22, including future evidence-based interventions and initiatives that will address educating the workforce on using technology.

##### **Statewide evaluation of service providers (SMS Research and Chamber of Commerce)**

The evaluation consisted of qualitative and quantitative methods, surveys, review of case files, and interviews. On-site visits to each of the four counties' s American Job Centers (AJCs) formed the foundation of the study, which encompassed 2018 to June

2021. AJCs were rated as either mainly Exceeding Expectations, Meeting Expectations, or Approaching Expectations based on several indicators including program management and regulatory compliance that measured organizational expectations. Outreach was also evaluated with measures of capacity and effectiveness that focused on how vulnerable populations with barriers to employment were prioritized.

#### **Understanding the on-demand workforce (DBEDT) and Anthology**

The Research, Economic Analysis Division (READ) of DBEDT worked with Anthology, a local research firm to survey both Hawai'i employers and employees to address business readiness and household appetite for remote work. Surveys were presented to a random sample of employers and employees. Matches were conducted using this data and the established wage match process.

- Employers n=1,600
- Employees n=4,700

The data were analyzed using SPSS version 27. Frequency programs, which show the number and percentage of respondents who select each answer, were produced, and used as the basis for this report.

#### *Continuous Improvement*

##### **Hawai'i Career Acceleration Navigator (HI CAN) User Research Testing Project - by Omnitrak Group (in progress)**

Omnitrak will conduct research on a statewide level to assess digital readiness specifically via HI CAN, the digital hub for jobseekers and employers. In order to better identify barriers to employment, Omnitrak will link results from the 2021 Digital Literacy and Readiness Study. Research investigators will collaborate with Research Improving People's Lives (RIPL) to conduct interviews, conduct surveys, and collect data about their job seeking and training experiences, needs, and challenges. Comparison of WIOA participants outcomes to all-student data is to be included in a proposed addendum.

##### **Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Evaluation (Planned)**

Proposed research will include evaluation of Wagner-Peyser/RESEA programs and length of interventions. Evaluation design and research questions have yet to be determined. Engaged partners and key stakeholders will be appropriate program providers via the local boards and/or AJCs. The timeline will be set to begin in PY22 following technical assistance from ETA.

#### *Reports*

- Statewide digital literacy and readiness survey by Omnitrak.
- Statewide evaluation of Eligible Training Providers by EDSI.
- Statewide evaluation of service providers by SMS Research and Chamber of Commerce and Addendum.
- Understanding the On-demand Workforce by DBEDT and Anthology: Remote Work in Hawai'i Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Hawai'i's Remote Work Marketplace.

*Waivers*

The State no longer has any waivers since the beginning of PY21. Hawai'i previously requested and was granted an Eligible Training Provider's Waiver for the all-student data collection requirement for continued eligibility assessments of all training providers. The waiver was granted in September 2020 and lapsed as of July 1, 2021.

*Waiver Implemented*

Not applicable.

*Strategies*

Not applicable.

*Impact on Performance*

Not applicable.

*Success Stories**WIOA Youth Program (In-School) – Ulili*

Ulili enrolled in Ola's WIOA in-school program as she had very little work experience. After attending several job readiness training and leadership development classes, the youth was placed at her first Community Work Experience Program (CWEP) location—Pet's Avenue where she gained entry-level work experience in the customer service field. After some time, Ulili was informed that the business she was placed at would be closing its doors. Ulili resumed meeting with Ola staff to work on finding unsubsidized employment. Finding work was difficult for Ulili as she was a full-time student at UHH. The challenge was finding employment that would work around her school schedule. As time passed, another CWEP opportunity arose as the AJCH needed assistance in welcoming back the general public. Ulili participated in CWEP while continuing to attend UHH.

With her friendly personality and strong work ethic, Ulili was offered a permanent, full-time position at the AJCH as a Rapid Response team member. In July 2022, Ulili accepted the position and is now employed with the County of Hawai'i. After gaining unsubsidized employment, Ulili agreed to be placed on a 12-month follow-up period. Ulili is the second Ola youth participant to become employed with the County of Hawai'i.

*WIOA Adult Program – Dereck*

Dereck first came to Goodwill as someone who had recently moved to Hawai'i, with no financial support or experience in the workforce within the community. He had heard about on-the-job training (OJT) from an employer. After meeting with an Employment Counselor (EC), Ja'ie, who explained OJT and how the program could assist him, Dereck was set. He quickly enrolled with the program and began his first day as an OJT employee in March 2022. Dereck has been taken on as a full-time employee by Mr. K's Recycling and Redemption Center, now eligible to receive medical benefits.

“I absolutely adore my EC and have enjoyed working with her. The whole program is amazing because it lets you find work as well as assisted me with being able to have the support and tools to be successful at work. My job at Mr. K’s is by far the best job I have ever had and I would not be here if it was not for this program. I plan on recommending it to all my family and friends!”

#### *WIOA Adult Program – Cheryl*

Cheryl is a high school graduate, a wife, and a mother. She worked as a seasonal farm worker for almost twelve years and also as a cashier for three years. After being laid-off as a farm worker, she did not work; and it would normally take eight months before she went back to work. When not working, she collected unemployment benefits. In PY21, she was selected to participate in the mandatory Re-Employment Services and Eligibility Assessment program. She then had to comply with all Unemployment Insurance (UI) requirements, including applying to at least three jobs per week. During individualized counseling, she realized that she had lost many opportunities when she was unemployed despite collecting UI benefits. She persevered, applying to jobs and interviewing, this time for a housekeeping job. She knew that the job could require a lot of physical effort, but it would be worth it. After almost six months of being unemployed, she got hired as a housekeeper with better pay compared to that of a farm worker. She now will also receive health benefits (medical, dental and vision), vacation, sick leave, and holiday pay. She takes delight in her new job and is determined to continue to work in this chosen field as long as she is able.

#### *TAA and WIOA Dislocated Worker Program – Dean*

Hawai’i’s last sugar plantation closed after 138 years, due to foreign trade. As a heavy equipment mechanic for 19 years, Dean decided on a career change to the public sector, as he was actively involved in his Maui community. Counselors helped Dean develop his Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers (TAA) plan to obtain an AA degree in Liberal Arts, leveraged with State Re-Training and WIOA Dislocated Worker programs to earn his B.A. in Public Administration. Dean completed challenging online classes from the University of Hawai’i system coordinated between campuses on two separate islands. The other challenge was transitioning from Workforce Development Division (WDD) to a partnering agency that took over the WIOA program midway of his last semester. On top of it all, Dean’s family moved to California while he stayed in Hawai’i to complete his program. Dean’s TAA counselor on Maui continued to counsel him after moving to California. Long distance calls and emails proved helpful in seeing him through the countless job applications and referrals. Dean accepted a Clerk position in the U.S. Federal Courts and said, “I am grateful for the unwavering service the Workforce Development Division has provided me to fulfill my goal of working in the public sector.”

#### *TAA – Kalua*

Kalua was laid off from Boeing where he worked as an Aircraft Test Technician. His division was impacted by foreign trade competition and without a job, he decided to return home to Hawai’i to complete his studies in Aeronautics Maintenance Technology. The TAA staff under the Hawai’i State Labor Department/WDD coordinated the TAA program with the helpful TAA staff from the liable State of Washington/Employment Security Department. Kalua successfully completed his AA Degree in Aeronautical Maintenance Technology from the local community college, using the many benefits of the TAA program for tuition,

TRA, exams and travel-related training costs. In the meantime, the only FAA Examiner in the State of Hawai'i retired, and a qualified examiner could not be found, so Kalua had to fly back to the Northwest to successfully take his Federal Aviation Administration exams and earned his FAA licenses in December 2021. The timing was perfect as the nation lifted travel restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic and airline mechanic recruitment resumed. Kalua received job offers from two major airlines and accepted a job as a Line Technician in Seattle, Washington. He now earns more than he did prior to his layoff.

*For more information, visit:*

### *Reports*

Anthology Research (Feb. 2022). *Remote Work in Hawai'i Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Hawai'i's Remote Work Marketplace*. Prepared for the State of Hawaii Department of Labor and Industrial Relations.

EDSI (Dec. 2021). *Hawaii Statewide Evaluation of Eligible Training Providers – Findings and Recommendations*. Prepared for the Hawaii Workforce Development Council.

Omnitrak (Sept. 2021). *Hawai'i Digital Literacy & Readiness Survey*. Prepared for the State of Hawaii Department of Labor and Industrial Relations.

SMS (Nov. 2021). *Statewide Evaluation of WIOA Title I Service Providers at American Job Centers in Hawai'i* and addendum *WIOA Title 1 Case Managers Survey Results*.

State of Hawaii Department of Labor and Industrial Relations. *PY 2021 Annual Narrative Report*.

### *Links*

State of Hawaii Department of Labor and Industrial Relations

## Idaho

Idaho Workforce Development Council  
Idaho Department of Labor

### *Use of State Funds*

#### *Adult Priority Service*

#### **WIOA Title I-B Adult – Serving Disadvantaged Adults**

Basic services are available to all adults with minimal eligibility criteria. Basic, individualized, or training services are authorized for adults who face significant barriers to employment. In some cases, these services are available to underemployed workers who need more help to reach self-sufficiency. Priority is given to veterans and eligible spouses, low-income individuals, and recipients of public assistance. For each customer, the overarching goal is employment or enhancement within their occupation.

Between July 1, 2021, and June 30, 2022, Idaho WIOA staff provided more in-depth, one-on-one assistance to 634 jobseekers, and 208 of those jobseekers received training services. Idaho spent \$1,347,426 on employment and training services to adult participants during this time.

The program prepares individuals 18 years and older for participation in the labor force by providing basic services and access to job training and other services. Services are coordinated through the State's workforce development system, facilitated through its American Job Centers (AJCs) found throughout Idaho. Basic services include skill assessment, labor market information, consumer reports on training programs, and job search and placement assistance. Individualized and training services include more intensive assessments, work experiences, and occupational skills training.

#### **Veterans**

During PY21, veterans' representatives and other workforce staff registered 1,029 Idaho veterans for assistance with workforce services, administering career services to 961 veterans, and aiding 339 veterans with barriers to employment. All Employment Services (ES) staff serve veterans. However, Jobs for Veterans State Grant's (JVSG) Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists (DVOPs) work to provide intensive case management services exclusively to a veteran population which served more than 180 days in active duty and meet one of the defined significant barriers to employment (SBE). Other categories of veterans were served, but the majority of who still meet the 180-day requirement. JVSG staff participate in annual training sessions that provide them with the most up-to-date information and resources needed to deliver the highest quality of services to veterans.

The JVSG program also includes Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs) and consolidated positions that perform both DVOP and LVER activities. The LVER duties include outreach to employers regarding the benefits of hiring a veteran, helping to arrange job fairs, and training AJC staff on program changes. The DVOPs provide a list of work-ready veterans to the LVER and consolidated positions to inform employers of potential candidates during employer outreach. Idaho Department of Labor received a grant to implement the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program in the spring of 2022. The grant award—\$75,000 a year for three years—is designed to serve homeless veterans with short-term training to obtain unsubsidized



employment. The grant allows for the provision of supportive services such as transportation and work clothing, minor car repairs, and required tools.

#### *COVID-19 Response*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Other State Funds Activities*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Evaluations*

##### *Activities and Methodology*

In the fall of 2019, Idaho Department of Labor (IDOL) implemented a bold and innovative service delivery model that saw the department decrease its number of brick-and-mortar buildings by almost 60 percent, while simultaneously doubling the number of remote locations where services were provided. Through collaboration with local libraries, social service agencies, schools, local city halls, and other civic entities, predominantly in underserved rural areas, in-person services that were previously limited to 14 communities expanded to 50 different communities and locations throughout the State.

A robust evaluation and research project was initially developed to analyze the impact of the new model, but the COVID-19 pandemic suspended mobile services in March 2020, less than six months after being implemented. Mobile services were slowly reintroduced in May of 2021, but many things had changed with how customers access services, and the prior plan to compare service levels before and after the change to mobile service delivery was no longer a valid approach.

#### *Continuous Improvement*

In conjunction with IDOL's Research and Analysis division, the State developed an updated research plan to evaluate the penetration of workforce program services in all regions of the State.

#### *Reports*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Waivers*

##### *Waiver Implemented*

Waiver to allow the State Board to act as the Local Board - WIOA Section 107(b).

#### *Strategies*

In PY05, the State's Governor consolidated the six workforce development areas at the time into two local areas. These two areas entered into an agreement, which is still in place, to have the State function as a single statewide planning area. By

requesting the waiver to have the Idaho Workforce Development Council (WDC)/the WIOA State Board conduct the functions of the local board, the State has been able to reduce its overall state and local administrative costs, which its governors have supported since the waiver's initial implementation. This move has become even more important since WIOA imposed increased reporting and administrative requirements upon states considering the significant funding reductions the State has faced since 2012.

The primary goal sought by this waiver is to reduce administrative costs and maximize the available money directed to career and training services, including work-based learning, and services to business and jobseekers. The eventual programmatic outcome results in service to a larger number of participants than would otherwise be served due to higher administrative costs. To maximize resources available for service delivery, the State continues to use the flexibility of this waiver to allow the WDC to serve as the local workforce board. When initially implemented, this move saved the State WIA program \$1,482,788 by removing the required maintenance of six local areas throughout the State. These former administrative funds have been utilized as program funds allowing for more participants to be served, which permits the State to maintain service levels despite funding cuts over the years. In today's dollars, the costs easily translate to a programmatic infusion of \$2,253,473 which, in 2022, amounts to just over 30.4 percent of the State's total WIOA title IB allotment from DOL for PY21.

### *Impact on Performance*

The single statewide planning structure helps reduce annual overhead, emphasizing spending program funds towards direct training and support of businesses and participants. By strengthening administrative oversight and accountability processes, it has helped significantly in eliminating administrative deficiencies over the years that may have resulted in disallowed costs. As state education policy aligns with the State's workforce development goals, the Statewide structure enhances efforts to transform its workforce development system into a demand driven system. Having the State Board provide the functions of both the State and local board provides an additional benefit to board members, as they can gain a full perspective of WIOA activities throughout the State and recognize that all areas of the State face similar challenges.

### *Success Stories*

#### *WIOA Adult Program – Max*

Seeing no future working dead end jobs, Max came to WIOA ready for a career so he could support his family. Motivated to someday be his own boss, he felt that obtaining a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) would allow him to start a high-paying job, and eventually own his own company. Max completed training several days ahead of schedule and passed his test with ease. Eager to start that high-paying job, he found employment with a local waste company, earning \$20/hour and is eligible for a pay raise in 30 days.

#### *WIOA Adult Program – Jackson*

Tired of frying chicken all day, Jackson noted the demand for truck drivers and became determined to turn himself into a self-sufficient truck driver. Once enrolled in WIOA, he attended a CDL training where he not only completed the training a week ahead

of schedule; he received the highest passing score for the CDL test ever obtained at the school! The instructors at the CDL school, including the director, simply raved about that achievement—missing only one question out of 75. With his high score, he found work with a local distributor, earning \$23/hr. Jackson proudly rang the bell of success in the local office and serves as a true example of achievement.

#### *WIOA Dislocated Worker Program – Sheldon*

Unemployed since 2018, honorably discharged veteran, Sheldon, visited the WIOA program. After enrollment, he entered an on-the-job training (OJT) with a locally owned plumbing company where Sheldon has excelled, finding success in an enjoyable, high paying, in demand career. Retaining full-time employment, he now attends a local college's apprenticeship program and maintains a high-grade point average. Sheldon continues to receive rave reviews from his employer, along with a substantial pay raise.

#### *WIOA Dislocated Worker Program and TAA– Amanda*

Amanda found both the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) and WIOA programs after being laid off from her job after sixteen years of employment. Co-enrolled as a determined TAA and Dislocated Worker participant, she successfully completed Medical Assistant, EKG, and Phlebotomy training and began a new career search. Being the only wage-earner in her home placed additional pressure on her to succeed in securing employment. Motivated to find a job, she followed through on all the job leads provided to her. After several interviews that did not lead to success, she interviewed with a local company, leaving such a good impression with them that she was hired immediately through an OJT. During this time, Amanda worked diligently to learn all aspects of her job. In less than a month, she won the trust and respect of both the management and her peers, earning the responsibility of managing the front office by herself! Through WIOA and TAA, Amanda exceeded her own expectations and overcame many of life's obstacles.

#### *WIOA Youth Program – Travis*

Vocational Rehabilitation reached out to partner efforts to help Travis, a 24-year-old male. He obtained an associate degree in Cybersecurity Information Assurance from a local community college, but without any real-world experience, he struggled to find employment in this area. The WIOA Youth Program stepped in to help him with a paid internship at a local technology company. His wage for this internship began at \$12.50 per hour. During the internship, he completed all his assigned tasks. He was hired as a permanent employee three months later, receiving a raise to \$13.00 per hour. His education in cybersecurity also continues with online classes as he hopes to obtain his bachelor's degree. His ability to obtain employment and continue his studies is a tribute to his commitment to improve his situation.

#### *WIOA Youth Program – Kaley*

Kaley sought to obtain her GED and Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) designation when she enrolled in WIOA. Approximately one month after entering the program, she achieved her first goal—she completed her GED requirements. Several weeks later, she began her CNA classes, with the WIOA Youth program covering costs for her tuition, books, supplies and two sets of scrubs. She

scored 90 percent on her mid-term and graduated with a 94 percent on her final. During this time, WIOA career planning staff also helped Kaley develop an adaptable, basic résumé that could be tailored to and used to apply for new positions. She had worked for an assisted living center for some time but was not offered a raise after she obtained her CNA certification, although they did raise her hours. She asked WIOA career planners for job search assistance to improve her employment outlook. WIOA staff helped her use the State's labor exchange system, where she found two positions that piqued her interest. She applied to both, and was hired at one location, earning \$12.70/hr. with a raise within 60 to 90 days after hire. We are happy to say that she's still gainfully employed there.

*For more information, visit:*

### *Reports*

Idaho Workforce Development Council & Idaho Department of Labor. *Annual Report Narrative Program Year 2021.*

### *Links*

Idaho Workforce Development Council

Idaho Department of Labor

Additional Success Stories

- Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Career and Technical Education

## Illinois

Illinois Workforce Innovation Board

Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity

### *Use of State Funds*

### *Adult Priority Service*

### *COVID-19 Response*

No information provided for this section.

### *Other State Funds Activities*

- The Governor's Healthcare Workforce Initiative directs the Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS) to reinvest \$180 million to preserve and grow the healthcare workforce, with a focus on Medicaid providers and providers in underserved areas of the State, including rural areas. This significant infusion of revenue will provide funding for staff bonuses, continuing education trainings for providers and other vital investments in staff retention and recruitment that result in expanded healthcare access. Funding will be available to a broad range of healthcare providers, including hospitals, clinics, behavioral health providers, home health workers and more. This new workforce initiative is in addition to the almost \$1 billion the State has invested through appropriations to healthcare providers from federal COVID-19 response and recovery funds. It is also in addition to the significant investment that was made in safety net hospitals through over \$80 million in new funding beginning in fiscal year 2020 and approximately \$800 million provided through rate increases to medical providers such as hospitals, nursing homes, physicians, and other providers in the last two years.

### *Evaluations*

### *Activities and Methodology*

### *Continuous Improvement*

#### **Evaluation Toolkit**

The evaluation workgroup continues to meet quarterly to discuss potential updates to the toolkit, ensuring it remains relevant and meaningful, and to discuss strategies to disseminate this toolkit to local level workforce system staff.

#### **Develop Strategic Indicators, Benchmarks and Related Planning Data Resources**

The IWIB CIC continued to research and identify metrics that determine whether the Unified State Plan and other WIOA requirements are being carried out effectively; and identify opportunities to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of Illinois' workforce development system during PY21.

As part of the 2022 WIOA Unified State Plan modification process, the CIC mapped commitments and outcomes made in the plan to ensure activities were being addressed effectively.

### *Reports*

No information provided for this section.

### *Waivers*

#### *Waivers Implemented*

1. Waiver to reduce out-of-school youth (OSY) expenditure rate from 75 percent to 50 percent.
2. Waiver of 20 CFR 681.550 to allow individual training accounts (ITAs) for in-school youth (ISY).
3. Waiver of 20 CFR 680.780 to adjust the six-month employment requirement for incumbent worker training (IWT).
4. Planning Region Alignment - Waiver of WIOA Sec. 106(a)(2) and 20 CFR Section 679.210 (preamble).
5. Waiver of WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(H)(i) and 20 CFR 680.720(b) in order to increase on-the-job training (OJT) employer reimbursement up to 90 percent for businesses with 50 or fewer employees.
6. Waiver of WIOA Section 134(d)(5) and 20 CFR 680.195 to allow up to 20 percent of WIOA title I Adult and Dislocated Worker local formula funds (Act and Final Rules allows up to 10 percent) to be used for the provision of transitional jobs.
7. Waiver to use statewide funds for qualifying events.

### *Strategies*

#### **Waiver to reduce OSY expenditure rate from 75 percent to 50 percent**

Of importance to the Governor's vision, the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board's (IWIB's) Strategic Plan, and the Unified State Plan is the expansion of career pathway systems into the secondary system for opportunity youth. This waiver will allow the State to provide youth with the necessary support to successfully equip them with the academic and technical skills necessary to improve their employability. Furthermore, the State anticipates that this waiver will provide greater opportunity for blending funds at the federal, state, and local levels across the partners to increase innovative strategies for improving career pathway opportunities for youth.

#### **Waiver to allow ITAs for ISY**

The request is made to permit Local Workforce Innovation Boards (LWIBs) to use the State's list of eligible training to secure training for all youth including the ISY who are preparing to graduate and extend their educational goals into postsecondary opportunities. The waiver is designed to increase program flexibility, enhance informed customer choice, allow all youth to benefit from services provided by the State's certified training providers, and expand training options without requiring Illinois workNet (One-Stop) operators to register ISY participants 18 years old or older in the Adult program. Funds used for ITAs would be tracked separately for each funding stream. Using ITAs also allows youth service providers an opportunity to promote and

encourage training as another option to entering an increasingly tough labor market. Approval of this waiver would allow youth to select approved training programs from the State's list of demand occupation training programs.

#### **Waiver to adjust the six-month employment requirement for IWT**

The request is made to eliminate an arbitrary barrier to providing incumbent worker training to companies and workers struggling to stay competitive. Removing this barrier aligns directly with priorities espoused by the Department of Labor, the Governor's Executive Order #3, the Five-Year Economic Development Plan and WIOA Unified State Plan to: Be more responsive to the needs of businesses; Support establishing long-term relationships between businesses and the workforce system; Promote the expansion of Registered Apprenticeships to more businesses to meet their workforce needs; Provide upward mobility for workers into career pathways; and Promote increased use of work-based learning that allows workers to learn and earn at the same time.

#### **Planning Region Alignment**

This waiver will provide the State with the flexibility to remove a regulatory barrier for counties that have demonstrated the ability to plan and deliver services in the context of the current local workforce area and regional planning area boundaries. The intent of the waiver is to not impose an unviable mandate on local Chief Elected Officials (CEOs) and workforce boards not able to restructure their county alignment at this time.

#### **Other strategies discussed in the State's Report:**

- Waiver to increase OJT employer reimbursement up to 90 percent for businesses with 50 or fewer employees.
- Waiver to allow up to 20 percent of WIOA title I Adult and Dislocated Worker local formula funds to be used for the provision of transitional jobs.
- Waiver to use statewide funds for qualifying events.

#### *Impact on Performance*

##### **Waiver to reduce OSY expenditure rate from 75 percent to 50 percent**

The State has seen an increase in the number of in-school youth (ISY) served every program year; however, out-of-school youth (OSY) served decreased during the same timeframe. Performance accountability outcomes for overall WIOA Youth (including both ISY and OSY) slightly decreased in PY20, which is the latest year performance outcomes are available, is a direct result of the lower OSY served due to the Illinois workNet centers and program service providers being closed during the COVID-19 pandemic. The majority of the WIOA Youth performance indicators are on track to either remain steady or increase for PY21.

##### **Waiver to allow ITAs for ISY**

Through PY21, 16 of the State's 22 local workforce innovation areas, spread across eight of the ten Economic Development Regions, have ISY into ITAs, indicating a broad geographic use of the waiver. The number of ISY enrolled in ITAs has increased over 12 percent since the inception of the waiver. For PY20, which is the latest year performance outcomes are available, ISY that received an ITA have successfully exited the program with the following characteristics: Measurable Skill Gains; Completed Training; Earned Industry-Recognized Credential; Entered employment.

**Waiver to adjust the six-month employment requirement for IWT**

From PY20 to PY21, the State has seen the number of local workforce innovation area incumbent worker training projects increase from 33 to 64, the number of businesses utilizing IWT increased from 31 to 62, and an increase in the number of incumbent workers able to receive training from 72 to 125.

**Planning Region Alignment**

The projected outcome of the waiver is to avoid creating a dysfunctional and disorganized environment that ultimately would have a negative impact on service delivery and customer outcomes if realignment were forced on local Chief Elected Officials (CEOs). The local areas that were allowed not to realign have continued to effectively plan and deliver services while maintaining fiscal sustainability and performance accountability under the current local workforce area and regional planning boundaries.

**Other impacts on performance discussed in the State's Report:**

- Waiver to increase OJT employer reimbursement up to 90 percent for businesses with 50 or fewer employees.
- Waiver to allow up to 20 percent of WIOA title I Adult and Dislocated Worker local formula funds to be used for the provision of transitional jobs.
- Waiver to use statewide funds for qualifying events.

*Success Stories**WIOA Youth Program – Jodin*

Jodin always listened to his grandmother and knew when she suggested he visit the Job Center of Lake County to help with his job search he should listen. Jodin graduated from high school in 2017 and worked a variety of labor jobs but wanted to begin a business career and it was through the Job Center and his participation in employment and training programs that helped him get a job at the Lake County Treasurer's Office as a real Estate Tax Information/Collections Specialist and on a career pathway in business. Jodin participated in career awareness and job readiness activities including résumé assistance, financial literacy, and leadership development. Ready to go to work, Jodin was a candidate for an internship/ work experience opportunity and was placed at the Lake County Treasurer's Office in June 2021. During his six-month internship, Jodin was exposed to different roles and responsibilities in the office while receiving on-the-job training (OJT), coaching, and mentoring. He stated that the position allowed him to improve his customer service and math skills and increased his attention to detail. He describes the Treasurer's Office as "the best place I have worked so far." Jodin's supervisor said that he grew in confidence throughout the internship. After successful completion of the internship and demonstrated job skill gains, Jodin was hired permanently as a Real Estate Tax Information/ Collections Specialist at the Lake County Treasurer's office. He works the front line of the busy office, interacting with property owners in Lake County. He resolves problems concerning accounts, analyzes statistical data, and prepares reports. Jodin's long term goal is to complete a college degree in business and gain financial stability to buy a house. In his current role, he is learning different rules and regulations for home ownership and says that he will have a better understanding about buying and keeping a home. Lake County Workforce Development is dedicated to working with young people ages 18 to 24 as they enter the workforce. "The Youth program and services remained mission-focused during the pandemic," explained Jennifer



Everett, Program Manager. “Young people need to be connected to careers regardless of environmental pressure. This is the start of their professional lives.”

#### *Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers (TAA) – Cali*

Cali’s job layoff started a string of positive career and life changing decisions. That layoff was impacted by foreign trade and Cali was eligible for TAA benefits. The first tool needed was occupational skills training through the TAA grant. Her father had recently passed and there were other things in her life that needed her attention at the time, but she had to decide on training. She worked with McHenry County Workforce to pull together all the Trade requirements to start her occupational training. Through an assessment process with her career planner at McHenry County Workforce she realized that her original choice of an accounting career was not the best fit for her, so she decided on office management. Cali started her classes at McHenry Community College for Administrative Office Management Certificate training. She attended classes full time, cared for an infant and toddler while also working part time as a waitress. With determination she completed the training as scheduled. Cali started a Work Experience through McHenry County Workforce at Miller Formless to put her classroom skills into practice. After two weeks she received an offer for a position as Office Administrator. McHenry County Workforce assisted her to continue her skill and career development in a Department of Labor Registered Apprenticeship. Cali started a Human Resource Registered Apprenticeship. She receives OJT through Miller Formless and the related classroom instruction through the Society of Human Resource Management, SHRM. She currently represents the company at job fairs as well as other recruitment and Human Resources duties while contributing to a growing company. “Without the assistance of the McHenry County Workforce, I would not have known about the agencies and programs available to assist me in furthering my career,” Cali said. “This knowledge gave me the confidence to obtain my goals and to keep striving for more.”

#### *WIOA Adult Program– Christopher*

The Workforce Connection was first introduced to Christopher through a referral from the Rockford Rescue Mission. He was homeless and wanted to work in an office or customer service setting, but he lacked the experience. His previous work experience was in retail and factory work. He wanted to change careers. Living at the Mission and contending with COVID-19 restrictions and lockdowns made the situation even more difficult. The staff’s first interactions were over Zoom, but even then, they could see that he was kind, bright, polite, and driven to improve his situation. The Workforce Connection Career Center, which was within walking distance of the mission, hired him into the WIOA temporary work experience program as a Career Center Assistant WEX. He performed so well that when a full-time Career Center position became available, he was hired to fill that role. His life challenges and positive attitude make him uniquely qualified to assist participants in the Career Center.

“By going through the Work Experience program, I was able to learn the office skills I had been lacking and unable to learn on my own, enabling me to be able to find employment, first as human resources at a security company and then being hired full time with The Workforce Connection as a Community Navigator,” Christopher said. “I was also able to get linked up with services allowing me to rent my own apartment, help paying for electricity through Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and get connected with SNAP assistance for food.” “With my job at The Workforce Connection, I can connect people with resources of their own to both help them through hard times

and get them training or assistance with finding a job. It is my chance to give back to those who are in a similar or even worse position than I was at the time. I am grateful to be able to give back to the community in such a way.”

### *Reentry (REO) – Marshall*

Marshall went through a re-entry program before the end of a seven-year prison stint to prepare him for a return to normal life. Marshall arrived in Carlinville homeless and met the local Catholic Charities, which guided him through the process of obtaining a State ID as well as possible assistance with rent while he found housing and employment. As part of his return to civilian life, Marshall came into the Carlinville Job Center to search for jobs. Since he did not have his own phone, he used the Job Center phone to look for housing. During the heavy rains the staff at the job center would try to find shelter for Marshall and continued to assist him with his search for housing assistance. Until Marshall obtained his own phone and found safe and secure housing, it would be hard for him to obtain permanent employment. Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) assisted him in creating a résumé and job search on Illinois Job Link along with the Job Center staff assisting with his job search. Marshall took the train to Springfield for a job opportunity, but that situation did not work out. Back to the housing and job search, Don Adams from Express Personnel was hosting a Job Fair at R&R Bindery in Girard, Illinois. Marshall attended a job fair in Girard, Illinois, where he found an opportunity, applied, interviewed, and was hired on the spot. But Marshall had one more obstacle to overcome, housing. The Job Center staff continued to help him in his search. A staff member told Marshall about a family that tries to help the “underdog.” It was a weekend and bad weather was expected again. The staff provided drinks, snacks, gift cards and made a make-shift bedroll from whatever items they could find in the center. The staff left work Friday night giving Marshall access to stay outside the building if needed. Marshall proceeded to stop by and see the caring family in Carlinville. The family offered Marshall temporary shelter at their home. Marshall started working full-time at his new position, found an apartment in Carlinville and was subsequently offered a permanent position after a 90-day probation period.

*For more information, visit:*

### *Reports*

Illinois Workforce Innovation Board. *WIOA Annual Statewide Performance Report Narrative PY 2021*.

### *Links*

Illinois Workforce Innovation Board

- Evaluation Toolkit

Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity

Illinois Performance Accountability and Transparency System (IPATS)

## Indiana

### Indiana Department of Workforce Development

#### *Use of State Funds*

#### *Adult Priority Service*

No information provided for this section.

#### *COVID-19 Response*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Other State Funds Activities*

#### **Workforce Read Grant (WRG)**

During PY21, Indiana continued to serve Hoosiers through components of Governor Holcomb's Next Level Jobs program through the WRG. The grant has provided free workforce education and training to over 12,000 Hoosiers in PY21; and has allowed many of the State's WRG participants to find and keep meaningful employment that can support both individuals and families.

#### **Employer Training Grant program**

This program serves to bridge the gap between the needs of both Indiana's employers and the needs of the individuals who work for them by reimbursing employers in high-demand business sectors up to \$5,000, with a cap of \$50,000, for each new employee that is hired, trained or re-trained, and employed for at least six months.

#### *Evaluations*

#### *Activities and Methodology*

The State's Legislative Service Agency (LSA) conducted virtual interviews with agencies and providers, examined state and national survey data, and reviewed relevant literature to complete the *Indiana Workforce-Related Program Report*.

The State's Department of Workforce Development (DWD) continued its Federal Quarterly Performance Report Dashboard in PY21. This dashboard allows staff and workforce partners to quickly analyze both individual quarterly and yearly rolling WIOA performance data for local areas in one location.

The State also utilizes both WIOA and non-WIOA data to measure the effectiveness of its programs in serving the needs of both Hoosiers and Indiana's employers. The State continues to publish its annual *Workforce Programs Report* that tracks expenditures, participation, and outcomes for all state programs. The report is designed to help legislators and administrators analyze all the State's workforce programs based on outcomes that are closely aligned to WIOA performance metrics.

The Indiana State Legislature conducts an annual review, analysis, and evaluation process for the State's workforce and workforce related programs (*Indiana Workforce-Related Program Review*). The Office of Fiscal and Management Analysis (OFMA), a division of the State's LSA, conducted this review during PY21.

The State also compiled its annual *Indiana Economic Analysis Report*, which uses industry, employment, and other labor market information made available through DOL.

### *Continuous Improvement*

The agency continues to develop internal and stakeholder/partner metrics to measure efficacy of workforce programs across the State. The metrics and reports are utilized as measures for continuous improvement.

In partnership with the Coleridge Initiative and their Administrative Data Research Facilities (ADRF – Coleridge Initiative), DWD developed unemployment insurance (UI) claimant dashboards with demographic, industry, and occupation data to identify areas across the State with high need within industry, demographic criteria, and occupation. The statistics are generated from the initial and continued claims reported to the Employment and Training Administration (ETA). The creation of this dashboard was the immediate response to the growing need to understand weekly claimant data in a quick and easily understandable manner. The dashboard continues to be updated weekly. It can be accessed through a password-protected interface and thus allows the user to view the data at a less-suppressed level than what would be available to the public.

Dashboards created include initial and certified (continued) weekly UI claimants data from January 2020 through September 2022:

- UI Claimants by Occupation;
- Distribution of UI claimants in Indiana by Industry; and
- UI Claimants by Demographics (see graphic below for initial claimants).

At the occupation level, users can select a county to determine the number and percent of claimants within specific occupation groups and industry families using week ending data reported to ETA. Time series data is available at the occupation family level to determine historical impact across occupations. Indiana UI claimants' data is available by county and by Economic Growth Region. Users can select non-neighboring counties and Economic Growth Regions for comparison. Similar dashboards have been created for Illinois and Tennessee. The State has access to both Illinois' and Tennessee's dashboards for weekly breakdowns for certified (continued) UI claimants by demographics and industry.

Industry-level dashboard displays industry of choice with percent of total initial claimants by county, initial claimants by industry as a percent of total initial claimants. Demographic dashboard for Initial UI Claimants includes county level demographic breakdown of gender (M/F), age range, education attainment level, veteran status, ethnicity, and race by week ending report to ETA. The State report includes examples of the industry-level and demographic dashboards.

In addition to the State's continued participation in the ADRF, Indiana's Regional 2021 Performance Grant (PSG 21) Application process provided DWD information from several regions which indicated that Case Management training for the WorkOne, American Job Center (AJC), staff was needed. Regional personnel noted that staff turnover and monitoring case notes of incumbent staff demonstrated a need for case management training for all staff.

Instead of awarding PSG 21 funding to multiple regions to procure case management training, the State decided to form a focus group made up of regional personnel and DWD staff to determine what the case management training curriculum needed to entail. DWD found already created training through funding from DOL which met the State's case management training needs and was available to us at no cost. The new DWD learning management system (LMS) will launch later this year.

While the Indiana State Personnel Department (SPD) has a LMS platform for state employees, the SPD platform will not support learners who do not have an Indiana government email address ("@in.gov"). This limited DWD's ability to use this platform to train both state, and non-state WorkOne staff. Therefore, to be able to build the State's case management training to sit on a LMS for easy access by all learners, DWD procured both a vendor to build the training and an LMS platform for the agency.

The first training on the DWD LMS platform for WorkOne staff will be a training that DOL and Maher and Maher created for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and DWD. Case management training will be a cross training event between Indiana VR staff and DWD WorkOne (AJC) staff. Cross training will be housed on both the VR and DWD LMS learning platforms. The DWD/VR cross-training curriculum covers foundational learning for both agencies in the areas of working together, case management between agencies, regular communication, and using shared resources for a successful customer outcome experience.

### *Reports*

- Federal Performance Metrics Dashboard
- Indiana Workforce Programs Report
- LSA 2021 Indiana Workforce-Related Program Review
- LSA 2022 Indiana Workforce-Related Program Review
- 2021 Indiana Economic Analysis Report and 2020 Indiana Economic Analysis Report

### *Waivers*

#### *Waiver Implemented*

- Waiver to require that State and Local Areas spend 75 percent of the Governor's Youth Reserve on out-of-school youth (OSY).
- Waiver on WIOA State Board membership requirements.

### *Strategies*

#### **Waiver to require that State and Local Areas spend 75 percent of the Governor's Youth Reserve on OSY**

The State Workforce Development Boards (WDBs), or local areas, in WDB regions 3, 5, and 6 utilized a Waiver associated with the requirement at WIOA Section 129(a)(4)(A) and 20 CFR 681.410 that the State and local areas expend 75 percent of Governor's reserve youth funds and local formula youth funds on OSY during PY21. These WDBs continue to receive decreased funding for support of in-school youth programming such as the State's JAG program; funding decreases were due to COVID-19 reversions affecting state sponsored funding and WIOA formula youth allocations.

The WDBs in Indiana rely on programs like Jobs for American Graduates (JAG), which is a 40-year nationally recognized workforce preparation and dropout prevention program, to improve high school graduation rates, increase post-graduation employment, and to increase access to, and utilization of, postsecondary education and training by Indiana's new high school graduates. Despite the overall reduction in funding to WDBs for youth services, which has continued for three years, regional workforce boards were able to utilize the Waiver on Youth Funding Expenditures to ensure that Indiana's JAG program continues to outperform both peer states and Indiana's own programmatic goals.

#### **Waiver on WIOA State Board membership requirements**

During the 2018 Legislative Session, the Indiana General Assembly created the Governor's Workforce Cabinet (GWC) and designated it with the responsibilities of the State workforce board in addition to assigning GWC the authority to direct the State agencies required to strategically address current and future workforce and education needs.

### *Impact on Performance*

#### **Waiver to require that State and Local Areas spend 75 percent of the Governor's Youth Reserve on OSY**

During WIOA PY21 the State's JAG program was able to achieve the following results for Hoosier students: Graduation Rate 94 percent; Entered Employment 69 percent; Full-time Employment 85 percent; Full-time Positive Outcomes 82 percent; Postsecondary Outcomes 39 percent.

The most notable improvement from PY20 to PY21 is the increase in postsecondary education matriculation and retention, which rose by six percent from the prior year. Also of note, JAG Indiana students continue to outperform all other JAG affiliated states in scholarship funds secured for postsecondary enrollment, to the tune of \$24 million for the Class of 2022. These funds reflect strong partnerships between in-school JAG programming and Indiana's higher education system, including the 21st Century Scholars program.

The flexibility allowed by the Waiver on Funding Youth Expenditures has contributed to the success of Indiana's JAG program—a program that serves over 65,000 at-risk youth annually across the national network—by allowing JAG to continue in-class instruction, student mentoring, and participant follow-up services. Included in JAG outcomes are nearly 2,500 in-school youth (ISY) in the follow-up phase of services and over 4,000 junior and senior students in classrooms across the State. The 94 percent graduation rate is 8 percent better than that of all Indiana Class of 2021 high school seniors, and 12 percent better than all low-income high school students in Indiana.

Additionally, enrollment partnerships with the State's Vocational Rehabilitation Pre-Employment Transition program have created more access for students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) or 504 plans to enroll in JAG classes; 94 percent of these JAG students graduated high school, compared to 74 percent of their special education peers not enrolled in JAG.

These outcomes demonstrate the effectiveness of Indiana's JAG program, effectiveness made possible in part by utilization of the Waiver on Funding Youth Expenditures, at reducing the State's overall high school dropout rate, while also preparing participants for entry into the 21st century workforce.

#### **Waiver on WIOA State Board membership requirements**

The Cabinet is experiencing continued success and has met the goals established for PY21 by continuing to bring together key partners, determine strategy and drive change for individuals and employers. The Cabinet is comprised of 31 members, representing different areas of the State, and includes business and community leaders, K–12 representatives, appointees from postsecondary institutions, Indiana lawmakers and experts from state agencies.

The Cabinet has been successful in breaking down bureaucratic silos that previously existed and the work of the Cabinet is moving forward with purpose and intensity following the COVID-19 pandemic. Collaboration and engagement have never been higher.

In PY21, the Governor appointed a new chairperson and executive director, both with private sector and government experience.

Addressing feedback provided by DOL-ETA pursuant to the approved 2022 waiver request, the Cabinet appointed two state representatives to provide unique representation for adult education and vocational rehabilitation. In addition, seven board members were added during this period to address vacancies and term limits.

With additional Cabinet appointments, industry/employer representatives remain a majority. Toward the end of PY21, industry representatives worked closely with the Chair and Executive Director to lead member working groups, which culminated in the Cabinet's first formal set of legislative recommendations. These recommendations were prepared for the Governor and Indiana General Assembly and propose solutions for helping employers find skilled workers, removing barriers to employment for potential workers and preparing the future workforce.

In addition, Cabinet meetings have been restructured to meet in Indiana's 12 economic development regions, with the intent of learning about each region's unique strengths, challenges and programs producing successful outcomes. The local workforce board presents an overview of the region, including local data and how that compares to state numbers. In addition, a local employer showcases an initiative that is taking a novel approach to workforce and education issues. Local business and civic leaders, economic development organizations, postsecondary institutions, and community partners from the local region attend and discuss priority topics with Cabinet members. Where opportunities exist to champion and replicate regional success, or identified barriers can be addressed, the Governor's Workforce Cabinet can serve as a change agent.

As the eligible agency for Perkins, the Cabinet's Career and Technical Education (CTE) staff fully redesigned 65 secondary programs of study—"Next Level Programs of Study"—which fully launched in the 2022–2023 school year. The Cabinet's



placement at the intersection of K–12, postsecondary training and workforce has allowed the CTE team to bring together the right stakeholders to execute the vision laid out by one of the Cabinet’s initial working groups (the “CTE Action Team”).

### *Success Stories*

#### *ER-DWG LDWA – Indiana Region 3*

An Indiana Region 3 participant was enrolled with WorkOne Northeast in November 2021. He previously worked in the steel industry and was interested in pursuing a career in the transportation industry. After meeting with WorkOne Northeast and discussing his options, he contacted Truck Drivers Institute of Indiana and was able to secure a seat in their training. Working jointly with the customer and the training provider, WorkOne Northeast was able to provide funding for the three-week course through the Employment Recovery Grant. The participant successfully completed his training and received his CDL Class A license. He updated his résumé to reflect his new license and his new career goals. He began applying to different companies that met his career aspirations and was hired by Universal Dedicated in Roanoke at \$25 an hour. He remains employed with the company.

#### *ER-DWG LDWA – Indiana Region 5*

An Indiana Region 5 participant came into the Lebanon WorkOne office in early December 2020. Due to COVID-19 she had recently lost her job with RCI Wyndham Destinations, where she had worked for 36 years. She had the responsibility of taking care of her parents and husband, who all had pre-existing health issues. Ready for a change, she had been speaking with Badger Engineering about coming on board as the bookkeeper. The WorkOne business service representative worked with Badger Engineering to qualify for, and utilize, the on-the-job training (OJT) program. She was able to begin working there as the bookkeeper. She has since conveyed that she loves her new job, is learning a lot, and even went on site with the owner of the company to look at potential work sites. She was learning both the administrative and front-line side of the business. She also appreciated the flexibility of a smaller company during the COVID-19 pandemic. Once the OJT ended in late February of 2022, she was hired by Badger Engineering where she continues to work as the Bookkeeper. The OJT in which she participated was funded by WorkOne utilizing the Employment Recovery Grant.

#### *ER-DWG LDWA – Indiana Region 6*

An Indiana Region 6 participant came to the United States with plans of making a better life for his family. With the aid of WorkOne services his American dream is coming true. With no friends, and two brothers living in other states, his support system was extremely limited. After working two minimum wage jobs, he desired a change. A local business directed him to visit WorkOne. He expressed interest in becoming a long-distance truck driver. After initial assessment, career planning, and counseling an individual employment plan was developed that supported his interest in obtaining full-time employment for an in-demand career. WIOA Adult, Performance Support Grant, and Workforce Ready Grant funds were braided to provide the services he needed to succeed. While his plans for training did not go as planned due to COVID-19 related delays and language issues, with the support of his WorkOne case manager, he stayed focused. They worked on ways to improve communication, note taking, and studying on the perquisites of getting a learner’s permit. By November he completed his training and earned a



credential. Staff contacted a local transportation business about his skills and interests. While entry wages were different from other companies, it was their unique training plan for new employees and support that would be provided that seemed to be a good fit. A job offer soon followed and he began working in January 2022.

#### *Out-of-school youth – Economic Growth Region (EGR) 1*

A participant entered the workforce system through the Adult Education (WIOA title II) partnership at Crown Point Adult Education Center in Indiana's EGR 1 while employed at a local restaurant as a server. The participant began classes to attain her high school equivalency degree and worked with her career counselor to complete assignments demonstrating her career readiness. This participation led to a work experience placement with an employer specializing in her desired field of interest—esthetics.

She successfully completed the work experience and was subsequently hired by the employer, Skinologie Studio, where she began a training program on a path to certification and licensure as an esthetician. The participant is currently still working at Skinologie as a receptionist while enrolled at Tricoci University of Beauty Culture in Highland, Indiana. The participant also cites gaining communication and money management skills, as well as an increase in her self-motivation through her participation in the local WorkOne Young Adult Services programming.

*For more information, visit:*

#### *Reports*

Indiana Department of Workforce Development

- *WIOA Annual Performance – Report Narrative.*
- *Indiana Workforce Programs Report.*
- *2020 Indiana Economic Analysis Report.*
- *2021 Indiana Economic Analysis Report.*

Legislative Service Agency

- *2021 Indiana Workforce-Related Program Review.*
- *2022 Indiana Workforce-Related Program Review.*

#### *Links*

Indiana Department of Workforce Development

- [Federal Quarterly Performance Report Dashboard](#)

## Iowa

### IowaWorks

#### Iowa Workforce Development

##### *Use of State Funds*

##### *Adult Priority Service*

##### **Home Base Iowa (HBI)**

HBI is a one-of-a-kind program connecting Veterans, service members, and their families with resources and opportunities in Iowa. As a core component of the IowaWorks system, HBI helps provide jobseekers with a wide range of reemployment services to find meaningful employment in Iowa and to connect Iowa businesses with qualified and skilled employees. Home Base Iowa also serves as a recruitment program for the State of Iowa, connecting Veterans and their families with resources and the support to call Iowa home.

In PY21, Home Base Iowa was marked by programmatic change to increase overall efficiency and effectiveness of the program. Additionally, HBI focused on increasing engagement with key partners to best meet the needs of Iowa businesses to find and hire skilled workers.

##### *COVID-19 Response*

No information provided for this section.

##### *Other State Funds Activities*

##### **The Offender Reentry Program**

The State appropriates \$418,312.69 in general fund dollars to Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) for the purpose of placing four state merit Workforce Advisors in the Iowa Correctional Institution for Women in Mitchellville, North Central Correctional Facility in Rockwell City, Newton Correctional Facility in Newton, Mount Pleasant Correctional Facility in Mount Pleasant, Fort Dodge Correctional Facility in Fort Dodge and the Clarinda Correctional Facility in Clarinda. This funding also covers one state merit Reentry Program Coordinator to oversee operating procedures and partners with the Iowa Department of Corrections (IDOC) and other offender-related partners throughout Iowa, to assist in the overall goal of reducing recidivism. IDOC has nine correctional institutions that house around 8,130 individuals in Iowa.

Nearly 90 percent of individuals will return to their communities; just over 4,000 were released in PY21. Community Based Corrections (CBC) has eight judicial districts that supervise about 38,500 individuals on probation, parole, special sentence, and pretrial release. CBC also has 22 residential facilities that house and supervise around 2,060 individuals. Nearly 40,000 individuals are currently incarcerated or under community supervision. The average daily cost of incarceration per individual is \$106.69, totaling just under \$39,000 per individual per year.

IDOC reports that the three-year recidivism rate for FY22 is 37.0 percent; or 1.7 percent lower than the recidivism rate observed in FY21. These numbers show two consecutive years of reduction in the systems overall recidivism rate. The national average for state prisons is around 70 percent. Training is in progress so that the Workforce Advisors in Iowa institutions are certified as an Offender Workforce Development Specialist (OWDS). This certification requires a person to utilize 12 specific competencies and their related skills to assist incarcerated individuals to make informed decisions about jobs and career paths, based on knowledge of their interests, skills, abilities, and values; educational and occupational opportunities; and the realities of the world of work.

Currently, two out of six Workforce Advisors that are working in the correctional institutions are OWDS certified. This is due to staff turnover. The State's re-entry program supports WIOA through recording registered-only individuals and program enrollment into Wagner-Peyser. The goal is to teach work-related skills, find a career pathway, job placement prior to release from the institution, and network with employers and community reentry service providers to ensure a successful transition for the returning citizen. The institutional Workforce Advisors help create résumés, assist with mock interviews, and proctor the National Career Readiness Assessment (NCRC) and O\*NET assessment, teach classes (soft skills, conflict resolution, money management), act as a sponsor for the IDOC Registered Apprenticeship programs and host career fairs inside the institution.

They also network with employers and educate them on incentives to hire returning citizens, including the Federal Bonding program, Work Opportunity Tax Credit program, and the Iowa income tax benefit. They perform individualized job referrals based on skill set and job search three weeks prior to the incarcerated individual's release, including referrals to IowaWorks Centers in the area the individual will return to. Referrals also happen through an electronic referral form for apprentices that need to continue in their program after release. During PY21, the institutional Workforce Advisors served 2,578 individuals, which is nearly 32 percent of the incarcerated population in Iowa. This number is larger compared to the last program year as these positions were fully staffed. Iowa is using the added function to the State's current IowaWorks case management system that allows registered employers to designate their business as second chance friendly. A second chance friendly designation means that the employer has agreed to hire an individual that has a criminal background. Jobseekers that have a criminal background can search for jobs listed with employers that have this designation, removing one barrier to their successful reentry.

### **The State of Iowa General Fund Appropriations**

State General Fund Appropriations IWD received just over \$11 million in state combined general fund dollars in FY20, legislated for the operations of the IowaWORKS Centers. This funding supports the state merit staff, state merit management, salaries and benefits as well as IWD's infrastructure cost shares of those centers. On average, 65 percent of state general fund dollars cover these costs, with 25 percent Wagner-Peyser and 10 percent Unemployment funding covering the balance of staffing and infrastructure from IWD's portion of center operations. IowaWORKS Centers are the vehicles that drive WIOA services in Iowa.

During the pandemic our IowaWORKS Centers were open for limited services. IWD team members assisted the Unemployment Division by providing unemployment assistance to claimants. They assisted by answering calls from claimants, assisting with the delivery of the Federal UI programs and facilitated fact finding interviews.

IowaWORKS Centers are comprised of a network of 15 comprehensive, four satellite and eight expansion offices that connect and deliver WIOA funded programs like title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth, title III Wagner-Peyser. State initiatives like

Home Base Iowa that connect veterans to employers, and Future Ready Iowa that assist with bridging Iowa's skills gap by connecting training, career pathways, and dollars to assist with education and employer innovation. Other programs/services delivered include reentry services and tax credit education at the local county level, in-person and virtual unemployment services, in-person and virtual workshops, Registered Apprenticeship development, business engagement, Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker services and other grant funded projects that come into Iowa. IWD also administers the Promise Jobs (TANF) program and the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) program.

### *Evaluations*

Evaluation of activities under the WIOA title I core programs is an essential tool to ensure and promote continuous improvement, identify innovative services and strategies, and achieve higher levels of performance and outcomes. While Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) did not complete an official evaluation of programs in PY21, the State understands the importance of this requirement and included in the State Plan Modification that IWD will utilize the Evaluation Readiness Assessment tool in the Evaluation Toolkit available on WorkforceGPS during PY22 and will utilize this to develop a strategy to begin evaluation in PY23.

### *Activities and Methodology*

#### **Re-employment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Evaluation**

DOL requires each state that participates in the RESEA program to conduct an impact evaluation. Specifically, the evaluation must be designed to provide evidence of a causal relationship between program interventions and outcomes. The RESEA program is administered from all IowaWorks Centers. The program assists individuals receiving unemployment benefits to return to work (RTW) and reduces the time an individual receives unemployment benefits by providing re-employment services. The RESEA theory of change holds that unemployed individuals re-enter the workforce at a more rapid rate when provided re-employment services and unemployment insurance requirements are enforced. These individuals also engage in more re-employment services, are referred to more partner programs/services, receive more individualized résumé assistance and have more able and available issues resolved.

Iowa's RESEA program is currently structured to allow in person and virtual initial appointments and reemployment services. Program staff theorize that expanding the method to receive virtual services will increase the participation of initial appointments and reemployment services. Iowa offers additional individualized RESEA meetings and believes this will assist the customer to update their re-employment plan, gain additional reemployment services, obtain more referrals to partner programs/services and can troubleshoot job-seeking issues with their RESEA Career Planner.

The overall objective of this evaluation is to assess the effect of the RESEA program on individuals receiving unemployment insurance benefits who are required to look for employment. Iowa has secured a professional evaluator and the evaluation started October 2022.

### *Continuous Improvement*

No information provided for this section.

### *Reports*

No information provided for this section.

### *Waivers*

#### *Waiver Implemented*

Waiver of the requirement at WIOA Section 121(d)(2)(B) that the One-Stop Operator be “located in the local area.”

### *Strategies*

This waiver is designed to allow for greater flexibility under WIOA for the selection of One-Stop Operators.

### *Impact on Performance*

Throughout PY21, four local areas took advantage of the flexibility this waiver provided. Those included Northwest, North Central, Northeast, and Western who are all using SPPG, an entity who provides services and support to organizations to promote public policy. With the pandemic and the advancement of virtual meetings, this has been an even more feasible option, especially for more rural local areas. The State will continue to monitor the use of this waiver and the progress of local areas who are working to procure One-Stop Operators throughout PY22.

### *Success Stories*

No information provided for this section.

*For more information, visit:*

### *Reports*

Iowa Workforce Development. *PY21 Iowa WIOA Annual Report*.

### *Links*

IowaWorks

Iowa Workforce Development

## Kansas

### KansasWorks State Board

#### *Use of State Funds*

##### **Neosho County Community College**

The Kansas Department of Commerce continued its project with Neosho County Community College to provide underserved youth postsecondary education and training in preparation for demand occupations.

Funds were granted for a January 15, 2022, start date with the emphasis of youth aging out of foster care. The program start-up period resulted in the selection and hiring of a program/case manager and outreach to youth aging out of foster care through public schools, state agencies and social media. As of June 30, 2022, eight participants had been enrolled and had begun both High School/GED preparation and/or postsecondary education programs. The purpose of this project is to demonstrate effective strategies for reducing the multiple barriers this youth population faces when trying to make it on their own when services and support from foster care ends.

#### *Adult Priority Service*

No information provided for this section.

#### *COVID-19 Response*

##### **Supplemental Funds at Work in Johnson and Wyandotte Counties**

As a follow up to the CARES Act funding in PY20, Workforce Partnership (WFP) was the proud recipient of a \$2 million grant from Johnson County. This funding allowed WFP to continue its “JoCo KS Works” program, expanding the eligibility criteria for both individuals and businesses. The new program kicked off in March 2021. It served Johnson County residents whose employment/earnings were negatively impacted by COVID-19, who were unemployed or who were low-to-moderate income and wished to pursue short-term vocational training, job upskilling or reskilling, digital literacy training, essential skills training, basic skills development, ESL learning and/or work-based learning. It also provided funding to businesses located in Johnson County that needed to train, re-skill, or upskill incumbent workers or new hires. The program also funded case management services, marketing, and some administrative costs. WFP served 157 jobseekers in the program and invested approximately \$509,000 in their training. In addition, WFP served 24 businesses and 710 workers with those businesses by providing approximately \$301,172 in job training funds.

In Wyandotte County, WFP partnered with the Mid-America Regional Council on a grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration to provide training dollars for low-to-moderate income Wyandotte County residents wishing to upskill or reskill. WFP used these funds to continue the WyCo Works program that was started with CARES Act funding in the prior program year. In PY21, WFP served 39 jobseekers in the WyCo Works program investing approximately \$229,235 in their training.

**Mental Health**

Mental health issues have been a growing concern in society and the recent COVID-19 pandemic has only elevated those issues. WSU identified and hired a mental health trainer to provide basic tips on assisting people searching for employment with mental health issues. The session focused on common issues, identifying signs, communication tips and community resources. The sessions were designed to provide basic information and practical tips for assisting those with mental health issues.

*Other State Funds Activities***My (Re)Employment Plan (MRP)**

Beginning June 2021, MRP was revived and updated in HB2196. The program is a collaboration between the Kansas Departments of Commerce and Department of Labor and KANSASWORKS Workforce System and provides enhanced reemployment services to Kansans who are unemployed and looking for work. The program connects unemployment recipients who have received three consecutive unemployment insurance payments with KANSASWORKS.com. Selected claimants are required to complete a Job Search Plan and have an active résumé in KANSASWORKS.com. Customers needing assistance are encouraged to visit their nearest Workforce Center. During the month of June, 14,773 claimants were notified of their required participation in the My (Re)Employment Plan program. 11,785 have successfully completed all program requirements, the remaining 2,988 potentially returned to work prior to completion or other unknown factors. 848 were waived from participation, mainly due to returning to work. Phase 2 of the My Reemployment Plan program has Workforce Center Staff providing customized staff assisted services to claimants who have completed their requirements. Staff in each local area review active résumés for MRP participants and make contact providing an overview of Workforce Center services and tailored services dependent on their job search plan and needs. These services consist of résumé reviews, mock interviews, partner referrals and other reemployment services deemed necessary to assist them in their job search efforts.

**KANSASWORKS.COM**

The Website continues to adapt to the needs of Kansas employers and jobs seekers as well as expansion of programs. KANSASWORKS.com, hosted by America's JobLink Alliance (AJLA), expanded to include additional enrollments for new grants such as RETAINWORKS and SAEEL as relates to the case management modules of the system. The State continues to strive to make routine adjustments to the site to foster a welcoming appearance for all users.

**KANSASWORKS State Board Strategic Plan**

Every two years the State board develops a new strategic plan to guide the focus, oversight, and investments of the KANSASWORKS State Board. Additional details are available on the KANSASWORKS State Board website.

**Registered Apprenticeship**

The Registered Apprenticeship training programs are available in 1,500 occupations across 170 industries found in businesses of all sizes and last from 1–5 years. Apprenticeship programs are for people of all ages who want to earn a salary while they learn, gaining skills and knowledge. These programs offer employers the opportunity to strengthen and build their workforce providing a high-quality talent pipeline. Registered Apprenticeship programs meet the needs of both employers and jobseekers.

**WorkReady!**

The Kansas WorkReady! Certificate is a nationally recognized certificate that lets Employers know a job candidate's skills before they even walk into the interview. Jobseekers present their Bronze, Silver, Gold, or Platinum Certificate to Employers as proof of skills in reading, locating information, and mathematics.

*Evaluations**Activities and Methodology*

The State partnered with Wichita State (WSU) on this project. In the fall of 2021, WSU sent surveys to both employers and jobseekers. For employers, the purpose was to engage with them to understand how KANSASWORKS can best meet their needs related to finding and training employees. For jobseekers, the purpose was to engage with individuals who were either currently or recently seeking employment to understand what supports and services they found helpful, how they anticipate using supports and services in the future and what additional supports and services they would like to have available.

As follow-up to the surveys, WSU hosted five virtual focus groups for employers and reached out to jobseekers via phone interviews. These follow-up activities were conducted to gain a more in-depth look at the information gathered from the surveys.

Participants were asked to provide more details beyond the survey questions. In addition, WSU gathered feedback from front-line Workforce Center staff, also through surveys. For feedback regarding customer service, it is important to ensure staff's voices are heard as well.

*Continuous Improvement*

Another avenue to ensure continuous improvement of customer service has been the sustained usage of the customer service kiosk surveys within each Workforce Center. As they leave the Centers, customers are encouraged to fill out a survey regarding the services they received during their visit.

*Reports*

A summary report is in the works from WSU. This report will be shared with local board Executive Directors, Regional Operations Managers, One-Stop Operators, local boards, and the State board. Each of these groups will meet to determine actionable next steps based on the results of the report. Again, this is to ensure continuous improvement of customer service.

*Waivers**Waiver Implemented*

In the fall of 2021, the State submitted a waiver request which was approved on December 1, 2021. This waiver of WIOA Section 129(c)(4) and 20 CFR 681.590(b), allows workforce development areas to count both WIOA local youth formula funds and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds toward the 20 percent expenditure requirement for paid and unpaid work experience.



### *Strategies*

Local Area I had plans to implement a pilot program with the Kansas Department for Children and Families, where youth would be co-enrolled in TANF and WIOA Youth programs. As youth were set up on work experiences, TANF funds would be used to pay the wages.

### *Impact on Performance*

Implementation of this pilot program proved to be a challenge as the Department of Children and Families had very low enrollments this last program year. Local Area I also had fewer WIOA Youth enrollments than expected, and they were only able to develop five new youth Work Experiences this past program year. As a result of low enrollment totals and undeveloped work experiences, the State decided to let this waiver expire on June 30, 2022, without requesting an extension.

### *Success Stories*

#### *WIOA Adult/Vocational Rehabilitation Direct Service – Crystal*

Upon receiving a direct linkage referral from Vocational Rehabilitation, Kansas WorkforceONE Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Direct staff reached out to Crystal to begin providing intensive workforce supports and services to assist her in identifying her employment goals, her strengths, and opportunities to help her overcome her barriers to employment. Crystal lived in a small town in western Kansas and felt that because she was previously involved in the justice system, that she would have difficulty in securing and retaining employment that she could also find rewarding. Crystal was also concerned that her disability might interfere with her goals of securing gainful employment, allowing her to earn a living in her community.

Kansas WorkforceONE and VR Services staff met with Crystal and developed an action plan that included services that would teach her how to speak with employers about her justice involvement, how to highlight her strengths, and the positive steps that she was taking to create change in her life. Crystal's Workforce Development Specialist, who is also an Offender Workforce Development Specialist, met with her and discussed how she could present herself and her previous experiences to potential employers. Kansas WorkforceONE staff also taught Crystal about the Federal Bonding program and the Work Opportunity Tax Credit, while practicing her speeches on these topics so that she would feel comfortable and confident in discussing this with employers. Additionally, they discussed the importance of medication management, especially as she prepared to begin working consistently and in a new, unfamiliar environment.

Crystal set an initial employment goal of securing a general labor position, specifically in refuse services. One of Crystal's longer-term goals was to obtain her Commercial Driver's License (CDL) and find employment in the transportation sector. Crystal's Workforce Development Specialist talked with administrative staff at a local city office, introducing them to the opportunities that Crystal was eligible for, which they showed interest in reviewing an application from Crystal. Upon interviewing, Crystal was offered a position with the city's Street Services Department as a Street Maintenance Worker.

Crystal excitedly accepted the position, especially because they agreed to train her to obtain her CDL when the next class opens in a few months. In the meantime, Crystal is learning how to operate tractors, backhoes, and other types of large equipment.

Crystal is now earning a sustainable wage, has full benefits, and can take care of her children and her elderly mother who also lives in the home. Crystal will begin classes for her CDL no later than January of 2023 and is thrilled with it, telling her WF1 Workforce Specialist, “Thank you. I could not have done this without your support. You guys are wonderful.”

#### *WIOA Adult Program/Vocational Rehabilitation Direct Provider – Jacob*

Jacob visited the Great Bend KansasWorks Workforce Center seeking assistance in securing employment. Jacob worried that because he used a wheelchair, it would be more difficult to find a job. He also reported a history of substance abuse and was residing in a local Oxford House.

Kansas WorkforceONE staff began working with Jacob and made a direct referral to VR Services to partner with them to assist with Jacob’s job search and identifying resources that could assist with clothing and or transportation needs. Kansas WorkforceONE staff contacted the manager of a local hotel, and they discussed potential employment opportunities at the hotel and how the jobseeker might fit the needs that the employer was looking to fill. Following this conversation, the manager agreed to interview Jacob and subsequently offered him a part-time position as a night auditor.

Jacob has now been employed with the Holiday Inn for approximately one year and the manager reports that he has mastered all the skills needed for each of the shifts of the front desk. When Kansas WorkforceONE staff last visited Jacob to provide follow-up services, he was standing behind the front desk and walked into the conference room. Jacob reports that he is in better physical condition, in large part because of his employment and staying physically active. The stability that has developed in Jacob’s life has truly been transformational. Jacob is not only successful in his job, but he is also regularly active in the leadership of the Oxford Houses in his district. He is an inspiration!

#### *Employer Spotlight – Claudia*

Kansas WorkforceONE staff have the opportunity to engage with many employers, representing all workforce sectors. The Holiday Inn Express in Great Bend, Kansas is an employer that local WorkforceONE staff chose to spotlight. Claudia, General Manager of the Holiday Inn Express, has been an integral employer partner for staff in the Great Bend area. Over the last several years, Claudia has “answered the call” anytime that staff have a jobseeker customer who they want to refer for an interview. The trust that has been developed through this relationship with WorkforceONE staff, has resulted in employment opportunities for customers who are directly referred to her, even for jobseekers who are working through various levels of barriers to employment. While not every referral has resulted in a successful match, Claudia and the Holiday Inn Express, have continued to provide opportunities to customers who staff refer for employment; Claudia is always willing to “give someone a chance.” WorkforceONE staff report that “she [Claudia] is straight forward about her expectations and does not pull any punches,” adding that “she is one of the most positive and best Second Chance Employers” in the Great Bend area.

#### *WIOA Youth Program/Pre-Employment Transition Services – Lee*

Lee enrolled in the Pre-Employment Transition Services (ETS) program through VR and was then referred to Kansas WorkforceONE to enroll into the WIOA in-school youth (ISY) program at which point he had the opportunity to participate in a

work experience. Lee's Employment Specialist contacted the city office in Garden City and developed a work experience for Lee working in one of the maintenance departments. Lee had the opportunity to work outside and with staff that instructed and assisted him in learning his daily duties. Lee was excited to begin his work experience as outdoor work is something in which he was extremely interested. Lee completed his work-based experience with the Garden City Cemetery Department. He worked well with the staff and learned essential workplace skills. Lee will be able to continue with his work experience in May 2023. Lee did such an excellent job with his work experience that the Cemetery Department celebrated Lee on his last day, gifting him with a cowboy hat and belt buckle for his last day. Lee's mother said that he wears his hat and belt buckle everywhere he goes.

*For more information, visit:*

### *Reports*

KANSASWORKS. *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Program Year 2021 Annual Report.*

### *Links*

KansasWorks

- KansasWorks State Board

My (Re)Employment Plan

Kansas WorkforceONE

## Kentucky

### Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board

#### *Use of State Funds*

#### *Adult Priority Service*

The Bluegrass Workforce Innovation Board (WIB) serves the 17 counties of the Bluegrass region. In the past program year, Bluegrass enrolled 411 adults, dislocated workers, and trade participants, and 129 youth participants. In business services, of the 151 employers who signed master agreements for on-the-job training (OJT), internships and work experience, 124 agreed to hire individuals with barriers such as criminal backgrounds and in recovery.

Bluegrass continued to focus on its priority of services populations, including ensuring veterans are connected to as many services as possible. Veterans seeking employment have unique needs and specific training as they transition from military to civilian life. In 2021, the Bluegrass Local Workforce Development Area hired a talent development specialist dedicated to partnering with other veteran-specific community organizations to promote and provide veterans services.

#### *COVID-19 Response*

#### **The Bluegrass WIB**

During the pandemic, Bluegrass recognized that one of the biggest issues in the rural counties is the lack of clothing stores and free clothing for individuals starting employment. The new larger Kentucky Career Center - Bluegrass in Lexington features a clothing closet for clients who may need necessities such as clothing, shoes, shampoo and deodorant to start a new job. The closet is currently supplied by donations from a direct service provider and board support staff, as well as clothes from a closed “Dress for Success” program. Bluegrass wants to develop partnerships with local businesses for additional donations to keep this much needed program going.

#### *Other State Funds Activities*

#### **The Bluegrass WIB**

During PY21, Bluegrass partnered with Taylor Made Farm to provide apprenticeship and internship opportunities to individuals in recovery. The horse industry is a staple for the economy of Kentucky and there is a great need for individuals who can work on horse farms. Horses also are known for their therapeutic ability, so the development of the Equestrian Initiative was a great opportunity for the Transitions 2 Transformation (T2T) program. This initiative began as a conversation between The Fletcher Group, a local recovery center; the Kentucky Career Center – Bluegrass; and Taylor Made Farm. T2T clients are trained in the horse industry in jobs from day-to-day care, grooming, veterinarian assistance, jockeying, training the horses and barn management. After the first year, many of the participants are traveling the United States with Ready Made Racing grooming and training the million-dollar horses as they prepare for races.

### *Evaluations*

#### *Activities and Methodology*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Continuous Improvement*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Reports*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Waivers*

##### *Waiver Implemented*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Strategies*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Impact on Performance*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Success Stories*

##### *Kentuckiana Works*

- A rural client connected with the mobile team to complete the WIN Virtual Customer Service training to earn a Kentucky Essential Skills Certificate. The career coach referred her to several leading employers, and she ultimately accepted a customer service representative job at Charter Communications for \$20.75 per hour.
- A Bullitt County customer who wanted to earn a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) but could not afford the training. Working with his career coach, he found a job as a bus driver at Jefferson County Public Schools, receiving the CDL training there and meeting his financial goals of earning \$20.50 per hour.
- Another customer in Louisville came to a career coach with a high school diploma working as a forklift operator through a temp service. After his meeting, he decided to enroll in a welding program and earned his certificate in MIG welding. He was hired at a local manufacturing company, Wirecrafters, earning \$21.50 an hour.

*For more information, visit:*

*Reports*

Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board. *2021 Team Kentucky Workforce WHERE Report*.

*Links*

Kentucky Workforce Innovation Board

## Louisiana

Louisiana Department of Labor,  
Louisiana Workforce Commission

### *Use of State Funds*

### *Adult Priority Service*

#### **Drive Your Future**

The “Drive Your Future” program is a statewide initiative that paid for qualifying students across the State to attend certain accredited truck driving schools and earn a Commercial Driver’s License. The focus was on veterans and the underemployed, the program’s goal was to get Louisianans on the road to a new career.

One hundred percent of the graduates were offered employment at graduation. An intense recruitment push by Louisiana resulted in a large number of applications allowing the program to expand to other areas of the State. Louisiana Workforce Commission collaborated with Diesel Driving Academy and Coastal Driving School to offer training throughout the State of Louisiana.

Apprenticeship was also a key partner in the expansion offering classes at Diesel Driving Academy. The “Drive Your Future” initiative was a success and they are in the planning stages to launch “Drive Your Future 2.0” soon.

### *COVID-19 Response*

No information provided for this section.

### *Other State Funds Activities*

#### **Grow with Google**

This initiative is a direct response to the growth of the Information Technology Sector. Many people have seen how this sector continued to expand during the pandemic and individuals were eager to obtain employment in the field. The Grow with Google scholarships funded through a partnership between the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) and Google, who together are making 30,000 program scholarships available throughout the country. Google offers career certificates in high-growth fields like project management, user experience design, data analytics, IT support, and digital marketing and e-commerce.

All the classes are self-paced and offered through the online learning platform entitled Coursera. The certificates require under 10 hours of flexible study per week and take three to six months to complete on average. It utilizes hands-on projects and direct employer connections to help learners fully understand the subject matter. Upon completing the certificate, graduates get free access to career resources like coaching sessions, mock interviews and résumé building tools including access to “Big Interview.” Individuals also have the opportunity to connect with over 150 employers in the Google Career Certificates employer consortium.

Through the partnership with NASWA, Louisiana Workforce Commission has 500 scholarships for jobseekers. Potential learners sign-up and are sent an invitation to join the training and then enroll.

### *Evaluations*

#### *Activities and Methodology*

##### **Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA)**

There were 108,676 individuals profiled for RESEA services in PY21. Due to the impact of the COVID-19 crisis and major hurricanes, 9,675 participants of scheduled services were successfully completed. The new RESEA program service flow was restructured in December 2021, to provide virtual services, engage participants sooner after filing a claim, provide more robust services, and require one stop to co-enroll individuals in title I employment and training services at 10 weeks of unemployment.

The activities provide selected claimants include a virtual orientation, staff assistance with developing an individualized reemployment plan, conducting an unemployment benefits eligibility assessment, providing the claimant with customized labor market information, and other staff-assisted career services at an American Job Center (AJC).

RESEA has procured the Policy and Research Group (PRG), an experienced independent evaluator, to conduct its evaluation of the RESEA program January 24, 2022. Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) are taking steps to ensure that RESEA interventions or service delivery strategies without a high or moderate causal evidence rating will be under evaluation beginning in FY22.

PRG will work with LWC to decide which RESEA program component(s) to evaluate and conduct an Evaluability Assessment of the RESEA program component(s), develop research questions that explore the RESEA program's influence on a particular population's outcomes of interest (e.g., employment, benefit duration, earnings), and develop a Logic Model of the RESEA component(s) to be evaluated and assess existing data and data systems.

### *Continuous Improvement*

No information provided for this section.

### *Reports*

No information provided for this section.

### *Waivers*

#### *Waiver Implemented*

During PY21, the Louisiana Workforce Commission requested two waivers through DOL. The agency submitted the waivers on August 13, 2021, after working closing with the Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) to develop a comprehensive request in response to the barriers that LWDBs were facing during the COVID-19 pandemic. ETA approved both waivers through June 30, 2022.



1. Waiver of requirement to expend 75 percent of youth statewide and local funding on out-of-school youth (OSY) population for PY20 and PY21.
2. Waiver of requirement that only permits WIOA Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for OSY for PY20 and PY21.

### *Strategies*

#### **Waiver of requirement to expend 75 percent of youth statewide and local funding on OSY**

The State may lower the expenditure requirement of Governor's reserve to 50 percent for OSY.

#### **Waiver of requirement that only permits WIOA ITAs for OSY**

The approval waives the States requirement limiting ITAs to only OSY, ages 16–24 years of age. Additionally, the approval outlines that the State may use ITAs for in-school youth (ISY) ages 16–21 years of age. The approval of this waiver should not impede the State's efforts to prioritize OSY, including outreach to the OSY population.

### *Impact on Performance*

No information provided for this section.

### *Success Stories*

No information provided for this section.

*For more information, visit:*

### *Reports*

Louisiana Workforce Commission. *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Annual Report Program Year 2021*.

### *Links*

Louisiana Department of Labor – Louisiana Workforce Commission

## Maine

### Maine Department of Labor

#### *Use of State Funds*

##### *Adult Priority Service*

The Worker Employment, Education, and Training Committee is working to align workforce training and education programs, with a focus on in-demand occupations for priority populations, to ensure workers have the resources needed to increase their skills and education and to access employment.

##### *COVID-19 Response*

#### **Progress On Achieving State Plan Strategic Goals**

In an effort to increase average wages, work has been done to support the creation of a Maine Industry Partnership grant program, which will help build out career pathways in industries most impacted by COVID-19. There are several pending initiatives that highlight a focus on connecting workers to jobs with the intent of helping them work in in-demand, high-wage positions and clarifying career paths.

To ensure individuals and businesses most affected by COVID-19 can connect to much-needed social supports, training programs, and job opportunities—and help employers connect more easily with jobseekers—funding will be used to develop a centralized online career portal, focused on the workforce system. Maine’s career portal, MyWorkSourceMaine.com, will include links to career exploration, training, employment, and support services, and will brand and market Maine’s workforce system in a transparent and easily accessible way.

##### *Other State Funds Activities*

Set aside funds in Maine are used to pay for required activities related to grant and financial administration, monitoring and oversight, reporting, and disseminating and updating Eligible Training Provider data, providing technical assistance to local areas, and staffing the State Workforce Board and performance accountability team. Additionally, set-aside funds support maintenance of the management information system for WIOA also known as Maine JobLink.

#### **Use of Wagner-Peyser Set-Aside Funding**

In addition to past practice of utilizing Wagner-Peyser ten percent to support CareerCenter access for speakers of languages other than English, funds are used to support staff development. An assessment of skill needs was conducted through worker and supervisor questionnaires. Digital training recordings were made by workforce program experts and are housed in a newly developed video library. The program overviews are used to train new staff and refresh existing staff on workforce system programs and services. It also houses other training opportunities that are beneficial to system staff. The library is accessed through a new portal where staff can access training, policies, and other resources as well as where they can document and track their staff development accomplishments.

## *Evaluations*

### *Activities and Methodology*

The Center for Workforce Research and Information (CWRI) collaborated with the Maine Bureau of Employment Services (BES) on a study measuring the long-term earnings outcomes of Maine's WIOA Adult participants who received training in entry-level healthcare occupations to identify if this investment launches them on a career pathway with opportunity for upward mobility over time. Using the Department of Labor Data Warehouse, established by MaineEARNs using the Workforce Data Quality Initiative grant, CWRI was able to match Maine employment records to completer records using a similar methodology as its *Postsecondary Outcomes Report*.

Researchers found that although full-time earnings are below the median wage of all occupations in the State, wages and employment increased considerably after completion of WIOA Adult Healthcare trainings. The large wage gain demonstrates completers are more attached to their employment, either working more regular or consistent hours or a higher rate than before the program.

This partnership highlighted the value of the warehouse and wage outcome matching. Soon after this report, MDOL staff continued making progress toward establishing a larger connection with the Maine Job Link (MJL) and Maine Department of Labor Data Warehouse (MDOLDW). By the end of PY21, DOL had already begun building, testing, and deploying queries to extract program, service, participant, and financial data. Once this data transfer is complete, MDOL hopes to be able to obtain more informative data about their programs and outcomes of participants after completion.

In addition, CWRI developed a Local Area Statistical Adjustment Model (LSAM) used to set and evaluate five key performance measures for three WIOA title IB programs. This project supported BES in meeting mandated reporting requirements and advanced the use of data-driven program evaluation methods within MDOL. Creation and implementation of this model took place over many months and involved regular meetings with BES to understand program and reporting requirements.

### *Continuous Improvement*

Using feedback from BES and guidance from DOL and other states, two ordinary least squares regression models specific to the State of Maine were developed using program participant data and local economic condition data. The models were selected after completing diagnostic checks and thorough performance assessment. Once finalized, the LSAM was used to evaluate past performance and predict outcome levels for the upcoming program year for local workforce areas. CWRI also worked with BES to communicate with local workforce boards about the implementation and use of the LSAM. In future program years, CWRI will continue maintaining, updating, and advising on the use of the LSAM.

## *Reports*

### **Postsecondary Outcomes Report**

The report provides information on employment and wage outcomes for Maine workers who graduated from partnering postsecondary institutions.

## *Waivers*

### *Waiver Implemented*

Maine received the following two waivers on May 5, 2021:

1. Waiver to Allow Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for in-school youth (ISY)
2. Waiver of requirement to spend 75 percent of Youth funds on out-of-school youth (OSY)

### *Strategies*

#### **Waiver of requirement to spend 75 percent of Youth funds on OSY**

This waiver was approved for the full period of PY20 and PY21 and will end June 30, 2023. Maine is a vast rural state, so one key objective of this waiver is to engage youth with significant barriers to education and employment before they leave high school to ensure they are not lost to the workforce development system. Another essential purpose is to align the workforce development system with Maine Children's Cabinet's goal of ensuring all high school students have the opportunity to engage in paid work experience.

While longitudinal studies, such as the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth on the effects of educational attainment of those who worked during high school, titled "Effects of High School Work Experience a Decade Later," shows that a moderate number of working youth are less likely to attend or complete four or more years of college, the study identified positive effects on a variety of labor force outcomes. These effects included labor force participation, employment status, and earnings, that resulted in the authors of the study to conclude that those gains offset the educational decrements related to working while in high school.

### *Impact on Performance*

#### **Waiver of requirement to spend 75 percent of Youth funds on OSY**

Positive outcomes of paid work experience include student understanding of the value of money and the importance of budgeting, expanded time management skills, understanding of the relationship between earnings and education, and confidence building. Additionally, reports show a reduction in violence for disadvantaged youth engaged in summer work experience activities.

During PY20 and PY21 there were significant gains in secondary level ISY enrollments with similar levels continuing during the first five months of PY22. Evidence of successful high school completion rates will not be available until all secondary ISY have exited title IB program services. Maine will continue to monitor these outcomes going forward and will be submitting a request to extend this waiver to the DOL.

#### **Waiver to allow ITAs for ISY**

Unfortunately, very few ISY benefitted from this waiver, partly due to the short one-year timeframe during which time 16 ISY received occupational training, five of which are still in training, six did not complete, and five completed training. Payment of Individual Training Accounts only occurred for four of these participants. The State will not request a renewal of this waiver.

## Success Stories

### *OPIOID Dislocated Worker Grant – Michael*

Michael was enrolled in the grant just prior to release from incarceration. Prior to incarceration, he was self-employed selling souvenirs at fairs and as a part-time personal care attendant, a flagger, and a flooring installation helper for which he earned nominal wages. Although Michael had earned his GED, and attained a Serve Safe Certificate, and a Master Gardener Certificate, at time of enrollment he had significant barriers to obtaining full-time employment including lack of marketable skills, minimal natural supports, a fragile housing situation, and a criminal record. Michael is now employed full-time at a local bakery and is being trained to operate industrial size ovens. His starting wage is \$17 per hour, and he received a sign-on bonus of \$1,500 in two installments. Michael worked closely with his workforce development specialist to address supportive services needs which included assistance with car repair, clothing, and a computer.

### *OPIOID Dislocated Worker Grant – 19-year-old Participant*

The service provider worked with a pregnant, 19-year-old female who was seriously affected by the opioid crisis. At the beginning of her participation, she was staying in a shelter without a permanent place to live, was long-term unemployed, had not completed high school, and did not have a working phone. Staff were able to place her in a paid work experience at a local recovery center, which allowed her to remain active in her personal recovery. Through the work experience, she gained confidence seeing what she was able to accomplish every week. She received assistance with the cost of workplace-appropriate clothing, which added to her confidence and self-esteem. For the first time, she now has her own checking account with her own debit card. She was able to buy herself a working phone in minutes, allowing her to be in touch with distant family. Transitional housing programs have been responsive, and she is actively seeking permanent housing. She plans to complete her HiSet and hopes to enter postsecondary training to increase her marketable skills.

*For more information, visit:*

### *Reports*

Maine Department of Labor (Dec. 2022). *Maine Annual Report WIOA Program Year 2021*.

Maine Earns. *Maine Postsecondary Outcomes Report*.

### *Links*

Maine Department of Labor

## Maryland

### Maryland Department of Labor

#### *Use of State Funds*

#### *Adult Priority Service*

#### **Reentry Navigators**

Maryland Department of Labor (MD Labor) used \$500,000 of WIOA Governor set-aside funding to hire five Reentry Navigators. The Reentry Navigators serve the following Local Areas: Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, the Lower Shore, Prince George's County, and Western Maryland. They interface with inmates in correctional education programs (both academic and occupational) and serve as the critical point of contact to the local AJCs. In addition, Reentry Navigators interact with businesses who hire ex-offenders.

#### *COVID-19 Response*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Other State Funds Activities*

#### **School-to-Apprenticeship Pathway - International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW)**

MD Labor funded the Baltimore Electrician Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee (JATC) to continue expansion of its apprenticeship program by working with participating local public school systems to offer a School-to-Apprenticeship pathway.

#### **Baltimore Alliance for Careers in Healthcare (BACH)**

BACH is a nonprofit dedicated to eliminating the critical shortage of qualified healthcare workers in the Baltimore area by working with local agencies, healthcare institutions, and other entities to create opportunities for residents to pursue careers in health professions.

#### **Center for Applied Technology North**

In April 2022, a total of \$8,657 was awarded to the Center for Applied Technology North (CAT North), a Career and technical Education public high school in Anne Arundel County. This allocation funds an annual grant/scholarship of \$8,500 to help support our students to participate in the SkillsUSA experience. The funds assisted current students in attending the National SkillsUSA Leadership Conference, and also helped future students attend the Maryland State Fall Leadership Conference in October and offset SkillsUSA membership, regional and state competition fees for the 2022–2023 school year.

#### **Independent Electrical Contractors (IEC)–Charles County Public Schools (CCPS), Apprenticeship \$73,748.95**

The IEC-CCPS pre-apprenticeship grant is designed to serve a total of 13 CCPS seniors during the 2020–2021 school year. All 13 participants received OSHA-10 and Red Cross CPR Certifications along with their high school diplomas. Eight of the participants completed the entire pre-apprenticeship Electrical Pathway Program. Two of the 10 immediately entered employment and were registered or are in the process of being registered as apprentices with an average starting wage of \$12.80 per hour.

The remaining eight are all in the process of receiving their driver's licenses. They meet on a weekly basis with IEC staff to provide updates on their progress. Upon receipt of their licenses, they will begin employment and be registered as apprentices.

**Independent Electrical Contractors (IEC) - Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), Apprenticeship \$74,392.93**

The IEC-MCPS pre-apprenticeship grant was designed to serve a total of 10 MCPS seniors during the 2020–2021 school year.

**Tranzed Apprenticeship Services \$87,320.64**

Tranzed Apprenticeship Services received a grant designed to expand registered apprenticeship programs in the information technology industry by recruiting 100 new apprentices to at least 25 employer-partners.

**Maryland Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MD MEP) \$250,000**

The MD MEP received a grant designed to expand registered apprenticeship programs in the manufacturing industry by creating new registered apprenticeship programs, reactivating inactive registered apprenticeship programs, registering new manufacturing occupations, and bringing new employers into their Group Non-Joint Program.

**Career Pathways**

The State has invested \$1.5 million of its WIOA Governor's set-aside funding in local workforce entities since 2018 to support career pathway initiatives developed in partnership with title II Adult Education providers. This program formally concluded in 2022. A total of 190 individuals were served, with 123 completing training, and 118 entering employment, which was 100 percent of the goal set.

Local workforce entities had the opportunity to apply for up to \$250,000 in funding to develop innovative demonstration projects with a consortium of local partners, including adult education providers and business partners. Eligible applicants were provided with a menu of interventions that were selected by the department after careful consideration and review of national best practices.

Most of Maryland's local boards applied for this funding, and ultimately the state selected seven career pathway projects over three rounds of funding to offer adult learners innovative career pathways. Through strategic investments such as these, the department is changing the way the state approaches workforce development. The projects created with this funding began on April 1, 2018. All but one has been completed.

**EARN Maryland (EARN)**

This is a state-funded, competitive workforce development grant program that is industry-led, regional in focus, and a proven strategy for helping businesses cultivate the skilled workforce they need to compete.

EARN has been recognized as a national best practice for its innovation in sector strategies and is a model that many states seek to emulate. Currently, there are more than 60 Strategic Industry Partnerships in operation, targeting a wide array of industries. More than 6,000 unemployed and underemployed Marylanders have obtained employment as a result of EARN training, and over 8,600 incumbent workers have received training. In addition to targeted investments in Cyber/Information Technology and Green and Clean Jobs training, EARN received additional funding in FY20 and FY21 to serve residents and employers in and around Opportunity Zones.

**Maryland Business Works (MBW)**

MBW is an incumbent worker training program administered by the Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning (DWDAL) in consultation with Commerce. During PY21, 218 incumbent workers received training and industry recognized credentials with the support of the MBW program. \$235,244.46 was spent for training—for an average cost per participant of \$1,079.10. Businesses increased wages for 205 individuals, and 212 new positions were planned. In addition, registered apprenticeships utilized funding to train 202 registered apprentices in Maryland. Industries utilizing the grant included construction trades, manufacturing, IT/Cyber, and professional services.

*Evaluations**Activities and Methodology*

The Division of Unemployment Insurance (DUI) set aside funds from the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) grant to evaluate Maryland's RESEA program. The W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research is currently undergoing an in-depth analysis of the program. The Process Analysis Report is the first of three RESEA PY19 evaluation reports Upjohn is conducting with the Jacob France Institute (JFI) at the University of Baltimore for the State.

*Continuous Improvement*

The final report will set the plan for the RESEA PY20 evaluation. That will promise an incremental improvement over the PY19 evaluation. The Process Analysis Report suggests improvements in program management and data systems. The Formative Evaluation Report will identify if there are any differences in effectiveness between component services of RESEA and Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services, and whether there are any gaps in service needs. Future evaluation results may suggest improvements that could be tried in a randomized controlled trial context. These include such things as nudges for participation, making ineffective services optional, and testing new required services.

*Reports***Career Pathway Connections for Adult Learners Grant**

The State produced the *Career Pathway Connections for Adult Learners: Moving the Needle on Service Integration* report to promote best practices and share lessons learned from Maryland's innovative Career Pathway Connections for Adult Learners grant program. The State invested over \$1.5 million of WIOA Governor's set-aside funds in the competitive grant program in 2018 and 2019 to expand use of the career pathways model and increase co-enrollment rates in WIOA titles I and II. The new report, which provides a retrospective analysis of best practices and lessons learned from the five projects implemented by Local Areas across the State, was developed to offer guidance to other Local Areas interested in promoting greater integration of title I and II programs. The report includes detailed profiles of each project's design to illustrate diverse approaches, and offers in-depth input gathered during extensive interviews with Local Areas teams.

**Other reports**

- Process Analysis Report



- Formative Evaluation Report
- Plan for Annual Assessments with Incremental Improvements

### *Waivers*

#### *Waiver Implemented*

The State currently does not have any waivers in place related to WIOA.

### *Strategies*

Not applicable.

### *Impact on Performance*

Not applicable.

### *Success Stories*

#### *WIOA Youth Program – Karmen*

Karmen was a 19-year resident of Montgomery County, Maryland who participated in the local workforce area's Adult Basic Education program. Karmen was interested in pursuing a profession in healthcare and enrolled in a healthcare training program but struggled to stay engaged. Shortly after her training began, Karmen revealed that she had become pregnant with twins. Unfortunately, she suffered a miscarriage early in her second trimester. Naturally, she was devastated. The American Job Center (AJC) staff who had worked with Karmen from the beginning were right there during this personal crisis to connect her with the mental health resources and support she needed to recover from her devastating loss. Karmen was soon able to get back on track with her program, and she has since applied for, interviewed, and been awarded a year-long position with the Public Health AmeriCorps program. The caring workforce system staff who stood by Karmen through her darkest hours have since followed up to see how she is doing in her new role. Karmen shared that she loved the work experience and is learning something new every day.

#### *WIOA Youth Program and Businesses Services – Zachary*

Zachary was a 19-year-old high school dropout. He wanted to secure a career and become financially stable, but he knew that his lack of education and occupational skills would be daunting barriers to overcome. Zachary learned, with help from the Western Maryland Consortium, that challenges are much easier to face when you have support. The staff Zachary with whom worked at the Western Maryland Consortium's (WMC's) AJC said he was not only inspired, but he brought with him a passion and drive to accomplish his goals. In January of 2021, AJC staff began working with Zachary to help him study and take practice exams to achieve his first milestone of earning a high school degree. His hard work and determination paid off in April of 2021 when he earned his Maryland High School Diploma. Zachary recalls: "Honestly, I don't think I could have done it without them

[Consortium Staff]. When I tried to do things myself, I wasn't moving forward. They kept me motivated, and I never fell behind. My foot was on the gas the whole time."

Zachary knew he had accomplished something big, but he also recognized that it was only one piece to the puzzle. His next big step was enrolling at Hagerstown Community College with ambitions of following in his grandfather's steps and becoming a welder. To support Zachary along the way, WMC staff helped him access funding to cover the cost of training as well as a welding jacket and helmet. Just like his journey to obtaining his high school diploma, Zachary met this new challenge with passion and drive. Six months later, Zachary was able to add the newly earned American Welding Society certifications to his résumé.

Now Zachary was ready to enter the workforce. He met with a WMC Business Service Representative to develop a work experience plan at a local scrap metal recycling center, Conservit. The company created a temporary entry level "Junior Welder" position specifically for Zachary. Conservit could immediately see Zachary's value, and converted the temporary position to a permanent, full-time welder position. "They are great to work with," Zachary said. "Working with them, I always felt like I had their help and support all along the way. They just give you the push that you need."

#### *WIOA Adult Program/WIOA Dislocated Worker Program – Veronique and Jan*

Veronique and Jan were two unemployment insurance claimants who had attended virtual RESEA workshops. The next steps for each of them involved participating in onsite staff-guided follow-up activities selected to help them find new jobs. There was just one problem: neither had transportation to get to the sites where the follow-up activities would be conducted. To ensure Veronique and Jan could access these vital services, Workforce Development Specialist Andrea Kinney leveraged the Local Area's AJC Mobile Workforce Unit to bring the resources of the workforce system to the women. Scheduling them for appointments at the AJC Mobile Workforce Unit posted at their community's public library made it possible for Veronique and Jan to complete mock interview exercises, and Andrea was also able to utilize the computers on the Mobile Unit to assess their job skills. Both were happy the Mobile Workforce Unit had been an option, and plan to use it again. Jan reached out to Andrea a few months later to schedule a refresher mock interview to prepare for an interview she was having the next day.

#### *Veteran Services – Charlotte*

A former Navy Corpsman came to the Frederick County American Job Center in late April and was screened for Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) eligibility and provided basic services. She qualified as a veteran eligible for JVSG case management services due to a service-connected disability. She made an appointment with the Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialist for early May. Starting at that point, the veteran worked toward objectives on her Individual Employment Plan and completed an updated modern résumé with DVOP assistance. She was asked to upload her job search info and résumé into the Frederick County Workforce Services job candidate profile on the website, which connects the vet's résumé to Business Services Team members, who assist with job matching. The veteran customer went through a mock interview with the DVOP while still job searching to assist her with any upcoming interviewing issues. She also took a Career Assessment Test for additional career discernment assistance.

One of the Business Services team members read the veteran's résumé in the job candidate profile and spoke with the DVOP about current Medical Lab positions open at Frederick Health Hospital. The DVOP passed this information along to the veteran customer, and she applied, interviewed, and was hired. She started working at this full-time position on July 11, 2022. During a retention check initiated in September, the veteran still reported having the position and was starting a new shift soon.

#### *WIOA Adult Program/Dislocated Worker Program/Veteran Services – Tifiney*

Tifiney was referred to Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) Cordia McArthur by her contact and relationship with the Clinton, Maryland Veterans Administration office. At the time of the referral, Tifiney was homeless. Although she had a job offer with Wounded Warriors, she needed a stable and reliable space and computer for the two-week onboarding and training process. Cordia helped Tifiney access a variety of resources that helped her secure housing, gas for her car, and food, so that she could move forward.

Cordia consulted with the Local Area's Labor Exchange Administrator (LEA), who found Tifiney a safe and quiet space at the AJC where Tifiney could complete the required training. She successfully completed the training and was on her way with her new employer, Wounded Warriors. The LEA was so impressed with Tifiney's professional presentation and attitude when she came for training, that she asked Cordia to consider Tifiney for an opening at the AJC. Tifiney persevered and did everything asked of her. With the facilitation and support of DVOP, Cordia and LEA, Tifiney has achieved stable employment and a much more stable life.

*For more information, visit:*

#### *Reports*

Maryland Department of Labor. *WIOA 2021 Annual Report*.

#### *Links*

Maryland Department of Labor

- Career Pathways Program - Workforce Development & Adult Learning

## Massachusetts

### Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development

#### *Use of State Funds*

#### *Adult Priority Service*

No information provided for this section.

#### *COVID-19 Response*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Other State Funds Activities*

#### **The Massachusetts Workforce Training Fund Program (WTFP)**

WTFP, operated by Commonwealth Corporation, provides Massachusetts businesses with resources to invest in the skills of their workforce. Financed by Massachusetts employers, WTFP offers matching grants up to \$250,000 to offset the costs of training workers. In PY21, the Workforce Training Fund Program awarded two types of grants to Massachusetts businesses. Businesses who are eligible to participate must contribute to the Workforce Training Fund Program via a surcharge on Unemployment Insurance payments. These grants support training for thousands of workers and improving the competitiveness and productivity of hundreds of businesses across the Commonwealth. The types of grants are:

- General Program Training Grant: Businesses of any size are eligible to apply. Intermediaries may lead a consortium application. They may request up to \$250,000, for up to two years, to support training for their workforce. Grant funds must be matched dollar-for-dollar. The match may be cash or in-kind (including wages paid to employees during training).
- Express Program Grant: Businesses of any size are eligible to apply for grants to cover training selected from a database of registered courses. Businesses may receive up to \$30,000 per calendar year; the maximum payment per trainee, per course is \$3,000.

#### *Evaluations*

#### *Activities and Methodology*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Continuous Improvement*

No information provided for this section.

### *Reports*

No information provided for this section.

### *Waivers*

#### *Waiver Implemented*

DOL approved the Massachusetts on-the-job training (OJT) waiver for small employer reimbursement effective through June 30, 2022. Due to pandemic-related reduced customer interest in training opportunities, the State did not utilize the waiver between July 2021 and present.

The State did not request the approval of the continuation of the OJT for Small Employers waiver with the submission of the State's WIOA PY22 State Plan modification.

### *Strategies*

No information provided for this section.

### *Impact on Performance*

Not applicable.

### *Success Stories*

No information provided for this section.

*For more information, visit:*

### *Reports*

MassHire Department of Career Services (Apr. 2021). *Rapid Response COVID-19 Employer Information*.

Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (Dec. 2022). *Massachusetts Program Year 2021 WIOA Annual Report Narrative*.

### *Links*

Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development

## Michigan

State of Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity

### *Use of State Funds*

#### *Adult Priority Service*

#### **Integrated Education and Training (IET)**

The Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity, Workforce Development's (LEO-WD) has allocated funding to IET programs that have already been developed by adult education providers and/or that will be developed jointly by local Michigan Works! Agencies (MWAs) and adult education providers. The intent of IET programming in Michigan is for WIOA title II adult education providers to partner with a local MWA and/or an existing training provider to co-enroll participants in WIOA title I and title II services, when appropriate.

The IET program must be part of a regionally or locally defined career pathway. The IET program must include three required components:

1. Adult education and literacy activities,
2. Workforce preparation activities, and
3. Occupational training.

The three required components must occur simultaneously within the overall scope of the IET program and must each be of sufficient intensity and quality.

### *COVID-19 Response*

No information provided for this section.

### *Other State Funds Activities*

#### **The Young Professionals Initiative**

The purpose of the Young Professionals initiative is to reduce youth unemployment and increase career awareness and preparation by introducing underrepresented young adults, ages 14–24, to the world of work while providing participants and their families with income. Young persons were supported with stipends for career exploration and preparation, or wages earned for participation in work experiences. Services provided through this initiative placed young persons on the right path to gain the skills necessary to achieve lifelong economic self-sufficiency.

In accordance with the WIOA, LEO-WD allocated WIOA Statewide Activities funding in PY21 to support the Young Professionals initiative. The MWAs that received funding for these initiatives were selected through a Request for Proposal process and

received awards of up to \$450,000 to support the development and/or enhancement of career and career-related educational opportunities for young persons.

The Young Professionals initiative is not limited to the work experience activity defined at 20 CFR 681.600. Additional activities that support career exploration and preparedness are allowable. Due to the prioritization of our citizens' health and safety, service delivery largely pivoted to a virtual environment in PY20, continuing into PY21.

### **Career Exploration and Experience Events**

Funding has been awarded to the local areas to further expand career exploration and experience events. It supports Talent Tours that introduce young adults, parents, and educators to available career paths in their region by offering a behind-the-scenes look into in-demand businesses and industries. Talent Tours provide real time information regarding employers, education, and training requirements necessary to secure employment. Impacts include relationship building, establishing a talent pipeline, talent retention, and the opportunity to see real life application of coursework. The funding awarded will support similar career exploration and experience of multiple businesses and industries at a single, coordinated location instead of individual, on-site efforts at single institutions.

MWAs will organize and coordinate multiple business and industry representatives at a single location, similar to “MiCareer Quest™” style job fairs. The MWAs ensure these career events include the following components:

- Local in-demand businesses and industries are targeted. These industries will be identified regionally and locally.
- An overview of the industry and key positions in demand.
- Hands-on activities, whenever possible, to provide practical knowledge of the positions available in the various industries.
- Information pertaining to the educational requirements for key positions in-demand (certificate, apprenticeship, two- or four-year degree, etc.).
- Highlight the key aspects of an “average day on the job.”
- Potential should exist for job shadowing, internships, and/or other work experiences with participating employers after the conclusion of the event.

### **Stellantis (Formerly Fiat Chrysler Automobiles)**

LEO-WD established grants with Detroit Employment Solutions Corporation (DESC) and Southeast Michigan Community Alliance (SEMCA) for the purpose of supporting Stellantis in identifying, preparing, and hiring Detroit residents to fill new positions at the Jefferson North Assembly Plant and the Mack Avenue Engine Plant. As a result of the expansion of the Jefferson North Assembly Plant and the Mack Avenue Engine Plant, Stellantis hired more than 4,000 new employees in Detroit. DESC, the City of Detroit, and the State of Michigan were committed to supporting Stellantis in identifying, preparing, and hiring Detroit residents and applicants surrounding Detroit to fill these new positions. The DESC developed and implemented a comprehensive plan for marketing, outreach, preparation, and screening to assist Detroit residents in obtaining employment with Stellantis.

SEMCA was designated as the single point of contact for recruitment outside of the City of Detroit for the skilled trades and salaried workforce needed to launch and sustain the new plant. Due to the high demand for workers with credentials, Stellantis anticipated recruitment for these positions required a timeframe extending into 2021 to reach full capacity. The targeted nature of the recruitment, the technical expertise required, as well as the scale and intensity of the project required a significant amount of staff time and resources. Over 6,900 Detroiters participated in work readiness workshops, training, and barrier removal activities. Over 6,700 Detroiters were ultimately interviewed.

### *Evaluations*

#### *Activities and Methodology*

An evaluation of the WIOA Youth program commenced during PY20 and continued throughout PY21. The purpose of this evaluation is to compare and evaluate trends in WIOA Youth program participation related to program eligibility barriers. Barriers and characteristics identified for youth participants are compared to those seen in the general population within a specific region and statewide. Findings from this evaluation will assist the State in identifying where there may be gaps in service delivery and highlight best practices in serving vulnerable populations. This evaluation is in the final stages of internal review and approval necessary prior to public posting.

#### *Continuous Improvement*

No information provided for this section.

### *Reports*

#### **Labor Market News Annual Economic Analysis Report**

This report is a useful general narrative on trends in the Michigan labor market in 2021. This issue focuses on historical trends in the State's labor market as well as recovery from the impacts in 2020 and insight into how the market may progress. The report highlights the State's labor force and unemployment rate, industry jobs, wages, employment projections, and population. The population section also includes the State's ranking by natural population change, compared to other states.

LMISI issues monthly publications highlighting workforce data which incorporates relevant ongoing evaluations.

### *Waivers*

#### *Waiver Implemented*

The State sought and was granted approval for the following:

1. Waiver to lower the minimum out-of-school youth (OSY) expenditure requirement to 50 percent for formula funding at both the State and local levels.
2. Waiver to eliminate the minimum OSY expenditure requirement for WIOA Statewide Activities funding when providing direct services to youth.



### 3. Workforce Development Board membership requirements waiver.

Flexibility of funding has increased the State's ability to provide resources to meet the needs of all youth populations to ensure they have access to quality workforce development programming.

#### *Strategies*

##### **Youth Waivers**

The State tracks these expenditures quarterly and annually in the Management of Awards to Recipients System. Should any area be identified as at-risk following a quarterly review, technical assistance is available and immediately provided. Contracts were already in place based on the 75 percent OSY minimum when the waiver was granted. Changes to program planning and contracts take time to implement, so the effects of the waiver will also take time to evaluate.

##### **Workforce Development Board Membership requirements**

The State was approved for a waiver to substitute the WIOA state board membership requirements with alternate requirements which specify board membership, chairperson, and category/sub-category representation requirements for PY21.

#### *Impact on Performance*

##### **Youth Waivers**

Flexibility of funding has increased Michigan's ability to provide resources to meet the needs of all youth populations to ensure they have access to quality workforce development programming.

Each of the State's local areas is meeting or exceeding a minimum of 50 percent for Appropriation Year 2021 in compliance with the waiver approval. The State reports that the implementation of these waivers has not negatively impacted state or local area performance outcomes.

Receipt of these waivers has resulted in an increase of 13.3 percent of in-school youth (ISY) served in PY21 compared to PY20. The State's Narrative Report shows that PY20 and PY21 Employment Rates for the second and fourth quarter after participant exit for in-school youth increased by three percent and eight percent respectively. The State experienced a five percent decrease in the Credential Attainment Rate from PY20 to PY21. Michigan attributes this decrease to the mandatory shutdown of training facilities and educational institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

##### **Workforce Development Board membership requirements**

Projected programmatic outcomes resulting from alternate state workforce development board composition would include better support for true engagement of employers and education providers with the State's workforce development system. The composition also provided an enhanced opportunity for the creation of innovative solutions to the challenges employers in key sectors are facing. An increase in Michiganders possessing postsecondary credentials was also anticipated to occur. As of 2021, the percentage of working-age adults with a certificate, associate degree or higher had increased to 49 percent.

## *Success Stories*

### *WIOA Adult Program – Shannon*

Shannon contacted Berrien/Cass/Van Buren Michigan Works! inquiring about CDL-A training. She had been a Flagger working on a road crew and was laid off due to seasonality of the position. She mentioned that she used to ride over the road with her father who had since passed away. It was always her dream job to obtain a CDL-A license.

Shannon overcame several obstacles in her quest to obtain her CDL-A license. When she first applied, she was on a waiting list due to COVID-19 and the requirement for smaller classes. During this time, she took it upon herself to study for the learners permit and obtained this prior to her training. Once her turn came up for training, the instructor of Tri-Area Trucking went on a three-month leave, forcing Shannon to wait once again. Finally, after a four-month delay, Shannon began the two-week CDL training.

Shannon graduated from training and received her certificate of completion towards her CDL-A training. She needed to pass the driving portion which would enable her to receive the actual license. Shannon did not pass the driving test the first time. She was devastated and was ready to give up. With the support of the staff from Berrien/Cass/Van Buren, Shannon was scheduled for a second driving test, which she passed. Shannon received her CDL-A license. She was so excited, she connected with Michigan Works! immediately to thank them for all they did for her.

Shannon is employed with Michigan Paving in their apprenticeship program making \$26.40/hour with full benefits and a 401k. Shannon now can drive due to her CDL-A license and will also be trained as a Roller. Shannon not only succeeded within the parameters of what she needed to do to get her license, but also in a non-traditional role.

“Thank you for helping my dream come true!”—a quote from Shannon.

### *WIOA Dislocated Worker Program – Trent*

Trent was permanently laid off from his job at Metal Works in Ludington after the company faced challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Trent immediately connected with Northwest Michigan Works! for employment and training services, as well as guidance with his Unemployment Insurance Agency claim.

Michigan Works! provided Trent with job referrals, employer advocacy, résumé development, interview skills, Career Connection Meetings, Virtual Job Fairs, and travel reimbursement by providing gas cards for long distance travel in job search activity. Trent received guidance, reassurance, and encouragement from the Business Service Representative, Career Services Specialist, and Career Advisor as he worked toward developing his career path and understanding/resolving unemployment issues.

Trent secured employment as a Purchasing Coordinator at Cherry Capital Foods in Traverse City earning \$38,000/year. Trent stated,

“I was grateful to be able to utilize the Michigan Works! resources of online job fairs, Career Connection, networking, unemployment insurance assistance, and staff’s flexibility of meeting with me. I also appreciated the Business Service

Representative advocating for me to become employed with my current employer. My job and company I work for has been a great match for my passion and enthusiasm.”

#### *WIOA Youth Program – Jason*

Jason was referred to GST Michigan Works! by his brother who had previously sought out GST Michigan Works! to obtain employment. Jason was working part-time at a retail store making minimum wage but wanted a full-time position at a company where he could grow.

After speaking with a Career Coach, Jason realized his résumé may have been hindering him in obtaining interviews. His Career Coach worked with him to update his résumé and mock interview via Zoom. Jason’s résumé was forwarded to Business Services for multiple openings with The Food Bank of Eastern Michigan.

Jason started at The Food Bank of Eastern Michigan for a youth work experience as an Operations Warehouse Worker making \$11.00/hr. Jason called his Career Coach after his first day and said he loved his new job. When the Career Coach followed up with The Food Bank of Eastern Michigan regarding Jason’s performance they stated, “Jason is doing great, and his hiring is a big win.”

Jason still stays in contact with his Career Coach to update her on his advancement. Most recently Jason completed forklift training and The Food Bank of Eastern Michigan asked him to oversee meat deliveries. He just started receiving full benefits as well.

Jason stated,

“Michigan Works! really changed my life for the better. I was able to obtain my first full-time job during a pandemic and I know the work that I am doing with The Food Bank of Eastern Michigan is helping feed so many families. When I go home at the end of the day, I know I have helped make a difference in so many lives.”

#### *WIOA Youth Program – Emily*

Emily came to Michigan Works! West Central as a junior heading into her senior year who had several barriers to overcome. She had some physical barriers, was lacking self-confidence, and her father was ill.

Emily became enrolled in the WIOA in-school youth program. She was also referred to a partner agency, Michigan Rehabilitation Services. Emily attended a job tour with other youth in the program and accepted a job through West Wind Stables for the summer. She was also enrolled in the National Retail Federation’s Rise Up program and earned a credential.

Emily completed her job at West Wind Stables and returned to school. She is now taking driver’s training and on track to graduate. Emily has grown by leaps and bounds in terms of her self-confidence. She is now considering a job with the Department of Natural Resources when she graduates from school.

She is grateful for Michigan Works! West Central for giving her this opportunity to work and earn a good wage during the summer. Emily was able to earn money to help her mother and father out during this difficult time for her father. Emily's advice for other students who may need the extra encouragement is, "No matter how you feel, get up, dress up, and show up."

*For more information, visit:*

#### *Reports*

Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity, Workforce Development. *Annual Statewide Performance Report Narrative State of Michigan Program Year 2021*.

Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives (Sep. 2022). *Labor Market News: Special Issue - 2021 Annual Economic Analysis*. 78(7).

#### *Links*

State of Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity

Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives - Publications

## Minnesota

### Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

#### *Use of State Funds*

#### *Adult Priority Service*

No information provided for this section.

#### *COVID-19 Response*

In early 2021, the Governor’s Workforce Development Board continued to host virtual Workforce Roundtables with members of priority industry sectors—Healthcare and Social Assistance, Manufacturing, Construction, Professional and Business Services and Natural Resources (including Agriculture and Mining). The purpose was to support members and gather information on the challenges they have faced during the global pandemic. Discussion centered on the following broad topics:

1. Changes to workforce needs of businesses/industries due to COVID-19 Pandemic.
2. Strategies companies are deploying, not just to recruit new workers, but also to create career pathways for workers.
3. Hiring, retaining, training, or supporting immigrants/refugees and individuals with disabilities in the workplace.
4. The special challenges of the hospitality and service industries, and how the workforce development system can support employers and career seekers who require a family-sustaining wage.

Quarterly business meetings of the Board have been convened virtually throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic including an “Alignment Summit” with the Minnesota P-20 Education Partnership in July 2021.

#### *Other State Funds Activities*

#### **Career Pathways Pilot Project (CP3 Project)**

Minnesota awarded \$500,000 of Governor’s reserve funds to four LWDAs through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process. These funds were used to start the CP3 project which covered 36 rural counties statewide. The CP3 projects focused on providing outreach to under-served youth in rural Minnesota. WIOA eligible youth obtain paid work experiences and concurrent training on high-growth and in-demand career pathways. The projects began providing services to youth on July 1, 2020. Minnesota secured a waiver to allow flexibility for CP3 projects to determine mix of in-school youth (ISY) and out-of-school youth (OSY). Services targeted under-represented youth and the projects operated during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Partnerships with the Lower Sioux Indian Community have expanded under the CP3 grant opportunity. This ongoing partnership supports Native American youth to access WIOA services via the LWDAs, while also receive cultural supports and development from their community.

Overall, the CP3 project served 154 youth. Of these youth, 58 percent were women, 45 percent youth of color, 61 percent youth with disabilities. The CP3 grant achieved its three goals of increasing services to youth, increased business partnerships, and expanded partnerships with tribal governments.

### *Evaluations*

#### *Activities and Methodology*

#### **Wagner-Peyser**

The Job Service team gauges performance of the Wagner-Peyser Act funded Employment Service (ES) Program throughout the year through close collaboration with DEED's Performance and Technical Management (PTM) team. PTM assembles quarterly and annual PIRL reports and submits them to DOL. The Employment Services (ES) team routinely runs reports to evaluate the impact of the ES Program. Reports include demographic data on the number of customers reached; types of service delivered; co-enrollment information that is used to monitor connections to other WIOA programs and unemployment insurance; and other data points used to evaluate the effectiveness of the delivery of services.

Additionally, PTM provides ES with data on the services offered to different demographic populations. Recent data reports compared ES with the Social Vulnerability Index (SVI). The SVI ranks each zip code on 15 social factors, including poverty, lack of vehicle access, and crowded housing, and groups them into four related themes. The SVI assigns quartiles of vulnerability from most vulnerable (Q1) to least (Q4).

Minnesota uses MinnesotaWorks.net, the State's labor exchange, SharePoint, and Microsoft Excel as tools to track the administration of ES. MinnesotaWorks.Net provides the data for Minnesota's reportable individuals under WIOA. In Minnesota, all WIOA titles require customers to register with MinnesotaWorks.Net to ensure reportable individual activities are tracked.

The ES program takes the reportable individual tracking one step further by tracking the specific basic career services delivered in MinnesotaWorks.Net.

The ES Program Coordinator facilitates referrals and outreach calls coordinated with the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program through data sharing via Microsoft Forms, Power Automate, SharePoint and Teams. This additional component allows the ES Program Coordinator to monitor delivery and recording of services. The ES Program Coordinator meets regularly with ES staff to ensure they are complying with program guidelines.

#### **Dislocated Worker and Adult**

All title I Adult and Dislocated Worker programs are required to participate in the State of Minnesota's Uniform Outcome Report Card. This mandated report includes several measures that DOL does not. Including: Median wage change by previous employment status, Retention in Q3 and Q8 after exit and Occupation of employment in Q1, Q3, Q8.

The State evaluates WIOA programs under 20 CFR Section 682.200. For title I Adult and Dislocated Worker programs, the following evaluations have been or will be conducted:

1. **Net Impact Analysis**  
This uses a quasi-experimental design to determine if participants in title I programs have statistically significant impacts on employment, wages, and benefit usage compared to a matched control group. (Completed in 2017).
2. **Social Vulnerability Study (Phase I completed)**  
This study uses the Center for Disease Control's social vulnerability index to assess if title I programs are serving Minnesotans from the most marginalized parts of the State.
3. **Family Sustaining Wage Calculation and Attainment Study (in progress)**  
This study has two parts. The first involves working with the LMI team to calculate individual level family sustaining wage thresholds of participants based on their family size and location. The second part involves analyzing when participants exit a program and if they attain a family sustaining wage within a year after exit. This study helps programs better understand if participants can support themselves post-exit. (Phase I soon to be complete).
4. **Study of changing populations (in progress)**  
This study includes partnering with the LMI team to see if programs are properly set up to serve Minnesotans most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The study has two main research questions:
  - Have participants in title I Adult programs changed since the COVID-19 pandemic? and
  - Are current title I adult participants disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic?
5. **Study on barriers (in progress).**  
Building off the datasets created for the WIOA local area statistical adjustment model, this study hopes to answer the following research question: What is the biggest negative determinant of placement?

Planning for DOL monitoring visits begin with coordinating with local areas to inform of the planned visit and to prepare files for the monitoring visit. DEED is already unified with local areas via Workforce One. Minnesota responds to DOL monitoring reports in collaboration with LWDA's.

## Youth

Minnesota contracts with FutureWorks to provide State and LWDA-level managers with detailed, on-demand performance reports that are updated monthly via a secure website. The available analytical tools use PIRL data to identify reporting and/or possible data entry issues and provide detailed information to evaluate performance.

## *Continuous Improvement*

### **Wagner-Peyser**

ES leadership meets regularly with ES staff to receive and provide input on the best ways to operate and improve the CareerForce system. These meetings provide an opportunity for open communication, brainstorming and collaboration with the Wagner-Peyser team, and leads to improved service delivery.

Minnesota uses Objectives and Key Results (OKRs) to goal set and guide strategic initiatives. Every year, OKRs are established, and all DEED teams strive to achieve key results with the intent to improve program performance. The key results statements are evaluated quarterly and are made public.

One OKR that applies directly to the ES Program for 2021–2022 includes the following: Build a new customer experience in the CareerForce system, rooted in a proactive approach to broadening outreach and delivery of services to the most in need of the CareerForce Services.

### *Reports*

- Wagner-Peyser
  - Annual Program Summaries
  - CareerForce Division - DEED CareerForce Division 2022 Annual Report
- Social Vulnerability Study

### *Waivers*

#### *Waiver Implemented*

The State plans to renew the following waivers for PY22:

- Homeless Youth/Foster Youth Waiver.
- In-school youth (ISY) Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) Waiver.
- Waiver of 75 percent out-of-school (OSY) expenditure requirement: Governor's reserve funds for direct services.

### *Strategies*

The waivers provide Minnesota WDAs with the flexibility to provide high-quality, cost-effective services to both OSY and in-school youth (ISY).

#### **Homeless Youth/Foster Youth Waiver**

The State secured a waiver from DOL that assures the Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs) have the flexibility to target services to in-school youth who meet DOL's definition of homeless youth. A Minnesota Department of Education survey identified over 3,600 youth in grades 8–12 statewide who were homeless; over 75 percent were youth from communities of color. This waiver allows the State to reduce the required OSY expenditure rate from 75 percent to 60 percent for LWDAs who prioritize ISY who are homeless or foster youth.

#### **Waiver of 75 percent OSY expenditure requirement: Governor's reserve funds for direct services**

In PY20, Minnesota awarded (Competitive Request for Proposal Process) \$250,000 of State Set-Aside funds/Governor's reserve funds to two agencies serving under-represented youth, using the Youthbuild program model: Goodwill/Easter Seals of



Minnesota (targets OSY) and Southeastern Minnesota Workforce Development, Inc (targets ISY). Both agencies provided services to youth between the ages of 16 and 24.

### *Impact on Performance*

When WIOA is reauthorized, states and local areas will have more flexibility in determining eligibility for services. In the meantime, the waivers allow the State the flexibility to offer cost-effective, high-quality services to both ISY and OSY. For these reasons, Minnesota Youth will renew/extend all current waivers.

### **Homeless Youth/Foster Youth Waiver**

Minnesota's Homeless Youth/Foster Youth waiver provided seven LWDAs, in PY21, with the flexibility to target homeless youth and foster youth while they are still in school. Services include provision of critical employment and training services to at-risk ISY without jeopardizing the delivery of services to OSY participants. This waiver supports one of the goals of Minnesota's State WIOA Plan: to increase high school graduation rate for under-represented youth.

Overall, of the 2,422 served, 373 (15%) were homeless/runaway youth. Of these 373, 66 were ISY homeless youth without a high school diploma at enrollment. A total of 115 youth identified as either in foster care, or previously in foster care. Out of the 115, 37 were ISYs.

### **Waiver of 75 percent OSY expenditure requirement: Governor's reserve funds for direct services**

The waiver eliminated the requirement that 75 percent of the funding be spent on OSY: the agencies had the flexibility to determine the mix of ISY and OSY.

### **ISY ITA Waiver**

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted Minnesota's use of ITAs: 112 were set up statewide. In PY21, 16 ITAs were set up for ISY and another 96 ITAs were set up for OSY. Overall spending on training for ISY (credentialed/noncredentialed) is down due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### *Success Stories*

No information provided for this section.

*For more information, visit:*

### *Reports*

Employment and Economic Development. *Minnesota Annual Report Program Year 2021.*

Career Pathways Pilot Project (CP3). Final Report.

*DEED CareerForce Division 2022 Annual Report.* CareerForce division of the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development.

*Links*

Employment and Training Funding Dashboard

Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

MinnesotaWorks.Net

Annual Program Summaries

CP3 Project Success Story

## Mississippi

### Mississippi Works - Mississippi Department of Employment Security

#### *Use of State Funds*

#### *Adult Priority Service*

#### **Dependable Source Corp. (DSC)-CDL Program**

The DSC Center for Community & Workforce Development is a non-profit workforce and community development corporation whose goal is to provide a clear pathway to high wage careers for Mississippians. DSC's goal is to empower individuals and communities with the skills they need to affect change within their own communities. DSC used the Governor's Discretionary Grant to train 42 recipients (men, women, veterans, and formerly incarcerated) as commercial truck drivers and connected at least 93 percent of the participants to transportation industry employers. This training covered the complete cost of classroom, yard, and road instruction, all CDL and medical fees, including background checks and application processing. Participants graduating from the program received Class A or B certificates of certification and job placement in the trucking industry.

#### **Adult and Career Education Services (ACES)**

ACES is designed for out-of-school youth (OSY) and adults facing employment or job promotion challenges because of basic skill deficiencies, justice system offenses, or lack of High School Equivalency (HSE), college degree, or job readiness training. Participation helped individuals discover a new path for their future with features to assist them with increasing skills and creating a pathway to gainful employment. ACES activities include Adult Basic Education, HSE examination preparation, computer-assisted academic instruction, employability skills training, online soft skills/workforce development courses, development of career pathways, and workforce training.

#### **Immersive Virtual Reality Nursing Training (VRNT)**

VRNT provides basic skills training to licensed nurses, including certified nursing assistants, licensed practical nurses, and registered nurses in the Mississippi healthcare system. This project's purpose is to show how innovative virtual reality (VR)-based training tools can be used to reduce nurse recruitment costs, increase nurse retention, and assist in the development of the nursing workforce. The IVRNT program trains nursing skills including safety self-awareness, patient assessment and prioritization, and professional interaction with patients experiencing psychological distress.

#### **The Utility Lineman Program at the Meridian Community College**

The program is a 16-week noncredit class to prepare students for entry level employment in the field of utility power transmission and distribution construction, troubleshooting, and repair. Upon successful completion, students should be prepared for Climbing in Elevated Work Site (Pole Climbing), Overhead Construction, System Design and Operation, National Electric Safety Code, AC and DC Circuits, and Electric Power.

#### *COVID-19 Response*

No information provided for this section.

*Other State Funds Activities***Jobs for Mississippi Graduates, Inc. (JMG)**

For PY21, JMG implemented the “Gateway to Work” program. JMG was able to provide workforce readiness and job placement for 1,214 youth who were 16 to 24 years of age. The services were in the form of paid and unpaid work experiences, financial literacy, labor market information, and academic skill training. Additional services included leadership development, supportive services, adult mentoring, college preparation, and entrepreneurial skills training.

**Cyber4Work**

Cyber4Work program is a partnership between the University of Southern Mississippi (USM) and the Mississippi Coding Academies (MCA) that will provide an on-ramp to higher wage jobs and a bridge to higher education. The MCA-USM partnership piloted rapid upskilling for post-secondary learners with a curriculum that prepared participants for the CompTIA Security+ entry-level certification that is prevalent in the cybersecurity workforce. Locations included Choctaw (the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians), south Jackson, and Biloxi.

According to the (ISC)<sup>2</sup> Cybersecurity Workforce Study in 2021, a Cybersecurity Workforce Estimate and Gap Analysis revealed that the global cybersecurity workforce needs to grow 65 percent to effectively defend critical assets. (ISC)<sup>2</sup>'s research also indicates that 48 percent of cybersecurity stakeholders seek to retrain existing staff to close the cybersecurity skills gap. In addition to providing upskilling opportunity, Cyber4Work provides reskill training for those currently employed who want to transition to a cybersecurity role, both for their own professional development and to help their employer meet cyber defense needs.

**Additional State Funds Activities**

- Enhancing Manufacturing Skills for Mississippians (EMSM) program
- Goodwill Industries of Mississippi - Digital Skills Training
- MSU Advanced Composites Institute (ACI) High-Rate Resin Infusion Manufacturing (HiRIM) Training Academy

*Evaluations**Activities and Methodology*

No information provided for this section.

*Continuous Improvement*

No information provided for this section.

*Reports*

No information provided for this section.

*Waivers**Waiver Implemented*

- Waiver associated with the requirements at WIOA Section 129 (a)(4)(A) and 20 CFR 681.410, which requires not less than 75 percent of youth funds be used for OSY.

*Strategies*

The State requested that this percentage be lowered to 50 percent retroactively for PY21 and as a result there was an increase in connection between education and training providing work-based learning opportunities that include work experience and pre-apprenticeship and increasing access to workforce services to disadvantaged youth.

- Approximately three out of every four public school children in Mississippi live below the poverty guidelines.
- Research shows that students from low-income families are more likely to drop out of high school than their more advantaged classmates.
- With more than 60 percent of Mississippi jobs requiring postsecondary education and training, intervention strategies that increase a student's opportunity to remain in school and graduate are critical to the success of the State's youth.

*Impact on Performance*

As a result of the waiver, there was an increase in connection between education and training providing work-based learning opportunities that include work experience and pre-apprenticeship and increasing access to workforce services to disadvantaged youth.

For PY21, a partnership between Twin Districts Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) and Kemper County School District provided students enrolled in the Work-Based Learning program job placements previously unavailable. The Workforce area staff worked closely with students to ensure that they developed proper job search skills and were hired with the soft skills and work ethics needed to succeed. Using the Kemper County model, the LWDA replicated the program and expanded it to the Hattiesburg Public School District, and they anticipate more growth throughout the workforce area in 2022.

The Mississippi Partnership LWDA was the first workforce area in the State to begin implementing the 50/50 strategy, using the waiver during PY18–PY20. Although youth participation dropped in PY19 and PY20 due to COVID-19, enrollment increased in PY21. And the two areas that used the waiver extensively in PY21—the Mississippi Partnership and Twin Districts—both increased Youth Median Earnings (42.47 percent and 29.61 percent, respectfully), enough to raise the Statewide Youth Median Earnings performance in the first three reportable quarters. Statewide and in both LWDAs, OSY increased median earnings by a larger margin than in-school youth (ISY) did.

## *Success Stories*

### *Jobs for Mississippi Funding (JMF) – Tallas*

Tallas is a 2022 graduate of Noxubee County High School who participated in JMG. He graduated with a cumulative GPA of 3.5. While in high school, Mr. Brown took advantage of the dual enrollment program and earned his Associate Degree from East Mississippi Community College. Tallas is attending Alcorn State University, majoring in Agricultural Science, with a concentration in soil tooling and ag-engineering. He is actively seeking to join the Tennis Team, The Sounds of Dynamite Band, and other student organizations.

### *Jobs for Mississippi Funding (JMF) – Skyler*

Skyler was delivering pizza before beginning training with the Cyber4Work program. Skyler has completed the cybersecurity training at the Biloxi training site and the CompTIA Security+ certification exam voucher has been provided to him. Skyler is currently in the interview process at Mississippi-based GeoJobe. The expected starting salary is \$48,000.

### *Adult Education Providing the Opportunity – Lee*

Lee made his decision to join the military in a roundabout way. He finished high school with a certificate of attendance and found a job soon after at Southern Hens. He quickly decided that was not the path for him and moved on to a job at Howard Industries where some of his coworkers discussed their plans about joining the military.

“They talked about benefits like the military paying for college, teaching you a trade, and letting you travel the world. That sounded like a good path for me, too!” he said. After considering the Army and Navy, Lee decided to become a Marine. “The Marines take a lot of pride in being a Marine. Plus, I like the feeling they promote of being a family.”

He contacted a Marine recruiter online, and his counselor directed him to the Wayne County location of the Jones College Adult Education program where he could earn the required high school equivalency (HSE).

There, he was able to participate in the OSY program that allowed him to receive soft skills and work ready training through the Smart Start class where he earned the MS Smart Start Credential along with the National Career Readiness Certificate.

The Smart Start program also helped him get a job at the Samaritan’s Closet while he was working on his HSE.

Lee first thought it would be a quick, one-to-two-month process to get his HSE, but he remained in the program a little over a year. “I do not mind the hard work. I like a challenge, and this program really made me push myself. I think it has helped prepare me to take on the challenge of joining the military!” said Lee.

### *Immersive Virtual Reality Nursing Training – Steven*

Steven, a military veteran with 15 years of nursing experience, used the VR training tool to refresh and improve his nursing skills. After the training, he realized that this tool could fundamentally change nursing education and allow nurses to maintain and

improve their skills at a much lower cost. He has already recommended this tool to his colleagues and would like to continue using this VR tool to improve his skills to pursue other nursing career opportunities.

*Enhancing Manufacturing Skills for Mississippians (EMSM) program – Andrew*

Andrew, Owner and President of BSP Filing Solutions, who recently had three team members participate in the master level training, stated,

“Management of BSP was very happy with the results achieved. The class pushed each team member to lead an improvement project and was an excellent training tool for teaching their leaders to lead. Each team member completed a valuable improvement project and set the example for teammates of the continuous improvement culture that Lean training imparts to trainees.”

BSP management stated that they look forward to sending more team members to this class in the future.

*MSU Advanced Composites Institute (ACI) High-Rate Resin Infusion Manufacturing (HiRIM) Training Academy – Mr. Morgan*

Mr. Morgan is a native of Jackson, the father of four children, and happily married. He was incarcerated at the age of 17 and sentenced to serve 25 years at the Mississippi State Penitentiary (MSP). While incarcerated for 23 years, Mr. Morgan worked as a janitor, clerk, and trustee within MSP. He also earned his GED and completed two vocational trainings: Horticulture/Landscaping and Basic Construction. He completed the Life Skills, Alcohol and Drug, Anger Management, and Bible Correspondence courses. Upon his release, MAGCOR staff provided supportive services and Job Readiness that connected Mr. Morgan to an employer who would hire formerly incarcerated individuals. He has been on the job for nine months and has already been promoted to Crew Leader.

*For more information, visit:*

*Reports*

Mississippi Works. *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act in Mississippi: Program Year 2021 Annual Report.*

*Links*

Mississippi Works - Mississippi Department of Employment Security

Mississippi Annual Reports Archive

## Missouri

Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development  
Missouri Job Center

### *Use of State Funds*

### *Adult Priority Service*

No information provided for this section.

### *COVID-19 Response*

#### **COVID-19 Humanitarian Grant**

OWD was awarded \$1.3 million in spring 2020 to support Missourians dislocated or impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Ten of the 14 Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) regions are participating in this grant. The COVID-19 Humanitarian Grant provides for disaster relief employment in a variety of positions, such as contact tracers, sanitation workers, community service workers, meal delivery, and other key positions. These temporary employment opportunities will support each local community to respond to, and recover from, the COVID-19 pandemic based on the community's needs. Additionally, residents are enrolled to receive career and training services to assist in obtaining employment and staying employed.

Before submitting the initial application to the DOL, OWD asked each region to complete a worksheet to assess the needs of the region. This approach allowed a collaborative effort between OWD and the LWDB regions. Further, it permitted the LWDB regions to directly contribute ideas, temporary employment occupations, and training programs based off relationships each LWDB previously established. This practice will be used when applying for emergency grants.

By the end of PY21, the grant placed 57 participants into temporary employment opportunities, with 130 enrolled in career and training services. A total of 151 participants completed grant activities, 75 earned credentials, and 76 entered into unsubsidized employment.

OWD received a one-year period of performance extension for the COVID-19 Humanitarian Grant, which will allow for continued activities through June 30, 2023. Local areas continue to consider new worksites and offer disaster relief temporary employment opportunities. However, there is a shift to serve more residents through career and training services.

OWD requires a co-enrollment process for all National Dislocated Worker Grants to also be enrolled in the Wagner-Peyser program. Additionally, all participants enrolled based on WIOA Dislocated Worker status must be co-enrolled in the local WIOA Dislocated Worker program. OWD encourages other co-enrollment practices, and in some local workforce development areas, participants enrolled under long-term unemployed status are often co-enrolled into the WIOA Adult program.



### *Other State Funds Activities*

#### **CompTIA Partnership**

The Office of Workforce Development (OWD) expanded partnerships with organizations, such as CompTIA, to provide enhanced opportunities for residents. This partnership allows residents to obtain stackable credentials and establish clear career pathways through virtual learning. By modernizing how the Missouri Job Centers offer services, residents can learn essential skills to find employment or elevate their careers.

#### **Coursera**

OWD also established a partnership with Coursera, a learning platform that collaborates with more than 275 leading universities and companies to provide Missourians with transformative learning experiences and career development. This free program is offered statewide.

#### **Missouri Job Center Connect**

After conducting journey mapping through the Job Centers of the Future process, it was determined the Wagner-Peyser enrollment experience was time-consuming. OWD created a plan to standardize this process through each Job Center. In November 2021, OWD piloted the project in one of the Job Centers where data showed it took up to three hours for enrollment or a first-time visit. The standardization during the pilot was successful and revealed many duplicative processes that were eliminated. This reduced the resident experience from up to three hours to 30 minutes. The Wagner-Peyser Standardization process was then delivered, in person, to the 26 Job Centers across the State and was fully implemented in August 2022.

### *Evaluations*

#### *Activities and Methodology*

Data is ingrained in the culture of OWD and is used throughout the organization for making decisions, policy recommendations, and forming new workforce strategies. Dashboards are sent to staff members and local partners each week as the first look at performance. A standing agenda item on the weekly Director's Meeting invites conversation on the numbers and performance for the previous week. Job Center Supervisors can provide daily numbers for enrollments, services, and traffic. OWD's focus is not just on the numbers, rather staff understands each number represents a person receiving assistance on the path to finding a job and remaining employed.

Part of Missouri's informal evaluation process involves comparing the performance of Missouri's public workforce system to 14 surrounding states. Data and information used in the State-to-state comparison help to understand effective workforce strategies used by other states and local workforce development directors that may be replicated in Missouri.

Comparing PY20 (most recent) performance to PY18, Missouri improved performance on most measures and rankings. Missouri moved up in the rankings for all programs in the category of Median Earnings and percentage achieved for Credential Attainment.

*Continuous Improvement*

Missouri is working toward formal evaluation projects. As a state, they participate in the monthly Region 5 Technical Assistance sessions, learning best practices and methodologies used by other states. Missouri was also chosen to participate in the 2022 Evaluation Peer Learning Cohort (EvalPLC). Representatives from across Missouri's public workforce system will learn about the evaluation process by building an evidence-based framework to be replicated and used to build future projects. The team's 13 members include staff from data teams and Equal Opportunity in OWD, Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Education and Literacy, Rehabilitation Services for the Blind, Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, Department of Social Services, and LWDBs in urban and rural areas of Missouri.

*Reports*

No information provided for this section.

*Waivers**Waiver Implemented*

Missouri was approved for four waivers to support workforce development activities and provide flexibility for individuals accessing WIOA programs.

1. On-the-Job Training (OJT) Waiver - WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(H)(i) and 20 CFR 680.720(b).
2. Incumbent Worker Training Waiver - WIOA 134(d)(4) and 20 CFR 680.800(a).
3. Youth Expenditure Waiver - WIOA Section 129(a)(4)(A) and 20 CFR 681.
4. Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) Waiver - 20 CFR 681.550.

*Strategies***OJT Waiver**

DOL approved the State's waiver request to increase OJT employer reimbursement up to 90 percent through June 30, 2022, for WIOA title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth formula funds. The results of the pandemic continue to affect the delivery of the OJT program. Compared to PY19 data, OJT is down 43 percent. However, compared to PY20 data, OJT developments are roughly the same. The report provides a table showing OJTs by region per program year, comparing PY19, PY20, and PY21. In PY21, OWD brought all OWD employer outreach staff under one team, referred to as the Employer Relation and Engagement Team. This strategic staffing alignment will assist in delivering a consistent message regarding the availability of OJT services, among other work-based learning options, in each local area. OWD ensured each local plan included engagement with this team during the required two-year plan modification period.

**Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) Waiver**

DOL approved a waiver request to allow local areas to reserve more than 20 percent of Adult and Dislocated Worker funding for

IWT through June 30, 2022. This waiver was requested to aid local response to an increased demand for workers during the pandemic. This request permits local areas to increase the allowable threshold for IWT from 20 percent to 50 percent. The State's Apprenticeship and Work-based Learning Unit serves as the subject matter expert for the IWT. The unit continues to host regular calls with participating LWDB directors to discuss the IWT program, provide technical assistance, and promote continuous improvement efforts.

#### **Youth Expenditure Waiver**

DOL approved the State's waiver request to lower the expenditure requirement to 50 percent for out-of-school youth (OSY) for state and local funds for PY19, PY20, and PY21.

#### **ITAs Waiver**

DOL approved the waiver request to allow WIOA ITAs for in-school youth (ISY) through June 30, 2022, which allows the State to use ITAs for ISY ages 16-21. This waiver request provides the LWDBs the flexibility to serve more youth and young adults in work-based learning and the apprenticeship model regardless of school status.

#### *Impact on Performance*

#### **OJT Waiver**

During PY21, 64 people were served through OJT. Job Centers continue to promote OJT as WIOA programmatic support for apprenticeships. One LWDB utilized the 90 percent waiver amount for its OJT agreements, while all others utilized the standard 50 percent reimbursement rate. Two additional LWDBs provided OJT services compared to the previous program year.

#### **Incumbent Worker Training Waiver**

Through this waiver, Missouri increased awareness and access to IWT training and boasts a record-high of 171 individuals and 34 employers served throughout the State for PY21. The participation rate for the IWT program continues to increase substantially. Since the waiver, two additional workforce regions have joined in operating this type of training, individuals served have increased by more than 400 percent, and employers served has increased by more than 400 percent. An overview of incumbent worker training activity before the waiver and through the end of PY21 is provided in the report.

Two waivers are being utilized to increase the number of ISY supported throughout Missouri with WIOA services. Missouri continues to support work-based opportunities for students and workers in high-growth industries in the State, including health care, information technology, and advanced manufacturing sectors. OWD is working with the 54 Career and Technical Education (CTE) Centers to establish pre-apprenticeships through the Missouri Apprentice Ready program, which is funded with WIOA Statewide funds. Because of these waivers, Missouri increased the number of ISY receiving services to pre-COVID-19 numbers (see chart in *WIOA Missouri Annual Report*). This waiver will continue to support the Governor's initiatives to increase the number of students receiving WIOA services.

#### **ITAs Waiver**

During PY21, 48 ITAs were used for ISY. There was a slight decrease from the previous year's enrollments.

The goals initially set for the two youth waivers included all youth participants and incremental increases for each program year. In PY21, the actual achieved Measurable Skills Gain was 52.28 percent for all youth and 62.59 percent for ISY. The actual achieved Credential Rate was 58.64 percent for all youth and 65.61 percent for ISY.

### *Success Stories*

No information provided for this section.

*For more information, visit:*

### *Reports*

Missouri Job Center (Dec. 2022). *WIOA Missouri Annual Report*. Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development.

### *Links*

Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development

Missouri Job Center

## Montana

### Montana Department of Labor & Industry

#### *Use of State Funds*

#### *Adult Priority Service*

No information provided for this section.

#### *COVID-19 Response*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Other State Funds Activities*

#### **Become an Alum**

The Become an Alum program offered employed workers an opportunity to improve their skill set or finish a credential. During PY21, \$75,754 was spent on Become An Alum activities across the following Job Service Montana (JSM) locations: Kalispell, Missoula, Helena, Billings, Glendive, and Miles City.

The Become an Alum office teams coordinated with 11 statewide higher education campuses and multiple businesses to identify skills or credentials in high demand regionally. The team called and/or emailed former students with unfinished credentials to ask what kind of support they needed to complete their degree or improve their skills. The team also assisted individuals to obtain employment based on their current skills or connected them with additional resources.

#### **Tribal Computer Coding Pilot Program**

The Montana Department of Labor & Industry (MDLI) provided grant funds to qualifying organizations that deliver a self-paced computer coding training program to eligible youth in tribal communities to prepare students for in-demand technology occupations. The grant of \$50,000 was awarded to Code Girls United during PY21 and \$14,327 was spent on the project. This project ended December 31, 2022.

#### *Evaluations*

#### *Activities and Methodology*

MDLI produced the *Post-Secondary Workforce Report*, research that synthesized data on Montana's labor market demand with statewide training program graduation information to provide a broad assessment of the supply and demand of workers in the State. This study combined occupational employment projections data alongside Montana University System graduate data and Post-Secondary Employment Outcomes (PSEO) by degree and certification type to assess the numbers of people being trained each year compared to the projected demand for those skillsets in the workforce. The report also included graduates from private

and tribal educational institutions, along with the Montana Registered Apprenticeship Program, providing a comprehensive analysis of workforce gaps in the State. This analysis also looked at wage and employment outcomes of graduates to determine what trainings lead to worker retention in local labor markets, as well as which result in the highest earnings.

MDLI continued to complete in-depth reports on workforce programs in the State. Every year, MDLI updates its report on participants in the Montana Registered Apprenticeship Program (MRAP) to analyze program participation trends and apprentice outcomes. This consistently identified positive program outcomes that demonstrated the value of apprenticeship, while also providing information that can be used for continuous improvement within MDLI. Additionally, MDLI produced a report summarizing the Return-to-Work Bonus program implemented by the State under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), incentivizing unemployment insurance claimants to find new jobs.

MDLI also produced information on topical issues in the labor market. This included producing a report on nursing that sought to describe and identify trends in the nursing workforce, as well as highlighting supply and demand issues that the occupation faced. This report consisted of an analysis of data from the State occupational licensing board for nurses, supplemented by the National Council State Board of Nursing's national survey of nurses. Similarly, child care deserts (areas where childcare availability is extremely undersupplied) were studied and summarized in a report that analyzed childcare licensing data alongside population estimates of the number of children and working parents in the State. MDLI also worked with local organizations to produce local area labor reports that described local markets and challenges that they faced. In PY21, MDLI produced the *Helena Area Labor Report*.

MDLI planned for (with the intention of beginning in 2023) a Randomized Control Trial evaluation of a new virtual services platform that the department created in Moodle. MDLI will evaluate this new service using the RESEA program, creating a new requirement for a randomized selection of participants in the program. In doing so, MDLI intends to measure the impact of the new services on unemployment duration, wages, and employment outcomes. Additionally, the evaluation will examine the impacts on enrollment in WIOA training programs compared to the existing program that does not offer this service.

### *Continuous Improvement*

MDLI continued to improve the agency's access to program-related data in a variety of forms. MDLI distributed the research and reports to the WIOA core programs, along with presentations and question and answer opportunities with core program managers so that the information is understood and applied effectively. Additionally, MDLI generated new data dashboards and data visualization tools to support the use and accessibility of the information created in this research. These tools provided visual analytics of labor market information and program activities to inform managers, workforce consultants, and other staff for decision-making purposes. Easy access to downloadable data on program activities provided improvement in monitoring and auditing, information sharing, and management decisions.

The planned evaluation of the new virtual service platform will provide key information about the ability to utilize virtual tools more broadly across all WIOA programs. By evaluating wage and employment outcomes and the medium for which assistance is being provided, valuable knowledge will be gained about whether barriers such as internet access or computer literacy are significant impediments to the widespread adoption of the new services.

Finally, the knowledge gained from research on childcare, nursing, and apprenticeship has been applied to ongoing practices. This information is used to provide better service to businesses seeking assistance, as well as better service to jobseekers either interested in or affected by the issues that were studied.

### *Reports*

- Apprenticeship Report
- Childcare Deserts
- Helena Area Labor Report
- Montana Post-Secondary Workforce Report
- MT Nursing Report
- Return to Work Bonus Program

### *Waivers*

#### *Waiver Implemented*

During PY21, the State had one approved waiver.

- Waiver to allow the State Board to carry out the functions of the Local Board.

### *Strategies*

No information provided for this section.

### *Impact on Performance*

Under this waiver, the State continued to allocate WIOA title I funds by local area. From each local area, funds are allocated to counties utilizing local unemployment and poverty data to ensure funds are distributed in away to maximize service delivery. County-elected officials sit on the State Board and were able to provide local input into activities carried out throughout Montana.

### *Success Stories*

#### *WIOA Adult Program– Sarah*

Sarah, a single mother of three, enrolled in the WIOA Adult program to gain assistance with the costs to complete a dental hygiene program. When she applied for the program, she was unemployed and received Medicaid and SNAP. Once Sarah was accepted, she and her children moved from Arlee to Great Falls. Throughout the two-year program, she overcame several barriers, daycare, and financial issues, as well as a lack of a support system. Sarah completed training in May 2022 and is employed at Tribal Health as a dental hygienist with a wage of \$40 per hour.

After Rachel was laid-off from her seasonal job, she contacted JSM in Thompson Falls. She wanted to train for a different occupation that offered full-time, year-round work. Rachel enrolled in the WIOA Adult program and completed CDL training. To increase her employability, she requested additional assistance to obtain her Hazmat endorsement. That goal was added to her employment plan, and she attained the endorsement. Rachel is currently employed as a truck driver, earning a wage of \$31.28 per hour. She stated this opportunity provided the chance to earn a sustainable wage and no longer live in poverty.

#### *Department of Corrections (DOC) Re-entry and JSM – J.H.*

J.H. was released from prison and needed a fresh start. He contacted JSM in Polson to inquire about Commercial Driver's License (CDL) training. J.H. enrolled in the WIOA Adult program to assist with completion of a postsecondary highway construction program, obtaining Class A CDL and flagging and heavy equipment certificates. In March 2022, he passed the State driving exam on his first try. He graduated in June 2022.

#### *Jobs for Veterans – Keith*

Keith, a veteran employed by Idaho Forest Group, was laid off in November 2021 when the business closed permanently. He attended the rapid response workshop, learning about WIOA Dislocated Worker-funded training opportunities. Shortly afterwards, he followed up with JSM in Thompson Falls, gathering additional information about the Dislocated Worker program and developing a training plan to obtain a Class A CDL. He completed the training, attained his CDL, and works full-time as a truck driver.

#### *WIOA Dislocated Worker Program*

In a participant's own words,

“JSM in Helena provided me with information, resources, and support to be successful in the Local 400 union apprenticeship programs in my first year. Through the WIOA Dislocated Worker program, they assisted me with my rent several times, purchased needed work clothing and tools, and paid my union initiation fee and dues. They also advocated for me with unemployment so I could participate in the apprenticeship program and still receive my unemployment benefits. I have been working for a company named Ceccanti Inc. in Coram, Montana since May as part of the union. I am making the best money of my life, currently \$2,000 per week. This has allowed me to buy a camper to live near the work site, so I do not have to sleep in my truck. Most importantly, I am learning about operating a wide range of heavy equipment and a lot about life and myself.”

*For more information, visit:*

#### *Reports*

MDLI:

- Bradley, C. (Jan. 2022). *Return to Work Bonus Program*. Wrap-up Report. Workforce Services Division.



- Holom, N. (Nov. 2021). *Registered Apprenticeship Program - Data Report*.
- Trautman, E. & Watson, A. (July 2021). *Helena Area Labor Report*; and (Nov. 2021). *The Status of the Nursing Workforce in Montana - A Summary of the Results from the National Council State Board of Nursing 2020 Survey*.
- Watson, A. (Aug. 2021). *Childcare Deserts: An Analysis of Child Care Supply and Demand Gaps in Montana*; and (Oct. 2022). *Montana Post-Secondary Workforce Report: A Report on Workforce Needs and Labor Market Outcomes of Graduates*.
- *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Annual Statewide Performance Report Narrative – PY 2021*.

#### *Links*

Montana Department of Labor & Industry

Montana Labor Market Information, Job Tracking Dashboards

## Nebraska

### Nebraska Department of Labor

#### *Use of State Funds*

#### *Adult Priority Service*

#### **Reentry**

During PY21, Governor's reserve funds continued to support projects that expands employment and training services for incarcerated individuals who will reenter the workforce upon completion of their time in Nebraska's corrections system. During PY20, a pre-apprenticeship training project sponsored by the Nebraska Department of Labor and Nebraska Department of Correctional Services Tecumseh State Correctional Institution in partnership with Home Builders Institute was designed and partially implemented. The project was fully implemented during PY21 and trains incarcerated individuals in electrical and carpentry occupations. Upon completion of the occupational skills training component of the project, the individuals receive an industry-recognized Pre-Apprenticeship Certificate Training (PACT) credential for their respective trade, as well as an OSHA-10 certification. This short-term reentry occupational skills training program has the capacity to train 12 participants per cohort. In December 2021, graduation was held at the Tecumseh facility to celebrate the accomplishments of the project's first successful cohort. While this project provides these individuals with occupational skills needed to successfully reenter the workforce in high skill, high wage, and high demand occupations, it also introduces them to the public workforce system and resources available to support them throughout their reentry/reemployment journey.

#### *COVID-19 Response*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Other State Funds Activities*

#### **American Public Human Services Association partnership**

The Nebraska Departments of Labor and of Health and Human Services have partnered to participate in a technical assistance grant through American Public Human Services Association (APHSA). This grant focuses on enhancing and refining the career pathways model for the State and involves Blue Cross Blue Shield, SNAP Next Step Employment & Training program, and Equus Workforce Solutions (TANF subrecipient service provider), as well as leadership from the Nebraska Departments of Labor and Health and Human Services. The group is currently working to better understand how jobseekers, workers, and employers experience the workforce system and identify ways to streamline that experience by focusing on alignment of resources along career pathways for in-demand industry sectors and developing a model that works across partner programs.

#### **Economic Mobility Task Force**

The Nebraska Economic Mobility Task Force comprises Nebraska Departments of Labor and Health and Human Services and other State agencies and community-based organizations having similar goals aimed at reducing unemployment,

underemployment, and poverty in the Nebraska. The Economic Mobility Task Force established three separate subcommittees focusing on the benefits cliff, industry sector initiatives, and policies and procedures.

### *Evaluations*

#### *Activities and Methodology*

WIOA title I evaluations were not completed during PY21. However, the Nebraska Department of Labor is currently in the design phase of a multiyear mixed-methods evaluation of its Statewide Rapid Response program. Specifically, the evaluation will seek to determine the level of impact that Rapid Response event attendance has on the performance outcomes of WIOA title I Dislocated Worker participants. Evaluation findings will be utilized to make strategic program improvements and expand identified best practices. This Statewide Rapid Response evaluation directly intersects with the WIOA title I Dislocated Worker programs in all three local workforce development areas in Nebraska, including their respective local boards and title I service providers.

Regarding efforts to provide data, survey responses, and timely site visits in relation to Federal evaluations, Federal evaluations involving the State were not performed during PY21.

#### *Continuous Improvement*

The Nebraska Department of Labor, though, became a member and active participant in the DOL Region V Evaluation Team. Nebraska's participation has increased its technical evaluation knowledge and better prepares the State to collaborate with the Department during future Federal evaluations.

### *Reports*

No information provided for this section.

### *Waivers*

#### *Waiver Implemented*

During PY21, the State did not have waivers in place.

### *Strategies*

Not applicable.

### *Impact on Performance*

Not applicable.

## *Success Stories*

### *Greater Lincoln Workforce Development Area – Derek*

Derek came to the Greater Lincoln American Job Center from Community Corrections. He knew he wanted to build a résumé, use a computer, reintegrate into the community, and find employment. Derek worked with American Job Center (AJC) staff to create an email account and began searching for employment. Derek stated, “Staff were nice, so I felt comfortable and could let my guard down.” With assistance from AJC staff, Derek successfully gained full-time employment as a freight stocker with BMS Logistics and is now living on his own. Derek shared, “I love it here in the AJC and I look forward to coming down here to encourage others from the center and to tell them to stay focused and do not lose sight of their freedom and family.” According to Derek, the AJC is a learning place that he recommends to everyone. “I tell everyone, even people who are homeless, you don’t have to sleep on the street, and you can find a job with help from the AJC.”

### *Greater Lincoln Workforce Development Area – Tara*

Tara lost her job in 2019 and enrolled in Greater Lincoln’s Dislocated Worker program. The following year, she completed classes for her Drug and Alcohol Counseling certificate. Now, Tara is employed as a tech at Drug and Alcohol Solutions while she completes her remaining internship hours. Tara persevered through pandemic-induced hiring freezes and is now working in her field of choice while pursuing her provisional license for Alcohol and Drug Counseling.

### *Greater Nebraska Workforce Development Area – David*

David came to Grand Island AJC seeking assistance with obtaining employment as a truck driver. He was struggling with a lack of insurance and food insecurity after losing his previous job due to a failed drug test. David was co-enrolled in title I and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Next Step Employment & Training programs for assistance with occupational skills training and supportive services (transportation). David completed his program and obtained his Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) with additional endorsements. David obtained a local driving job where he is home every night, with a starting wage of \$25.45, benefits, and received a \$3,000 sign on bonus.

### *Greater Nebraska Workforce Development Area – Carmon*

Carmon was residing at the Crossroads Mission Center. She had been working two part-time jobs to make ends meet but was laid off from one job and the other job was temporary. Carmon’s remaining position did not provide steady hours or medical insurance. She had applied for unemployment and was denied Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits. She came to the Grand Island AJC seeking job search assistance and supportive services. Carmon was enrolled in a title I program and referred to the SNAP Next Step Employment & Training program. Carmon received assistance with transportation services in the form of gas vouchers and insurance/auto registration assistance. Through participation in both programs, Carmon obtained full-time employment with Estes Express, earning a wage of \$18 per hour.

### *Greater Omaha Workforce Development Area – Ann*

Ann's employer decided to reorganize into a franchise structure and her position was eliminated during restructuring in December 2019. Having worked in the administrative field for nearly 30 years, Ann had vast experience in support roles, starting right out of high school as an entry-level assistant and steadily moving up to an executive office manager role. Although Ann earned several certifications through a professional association, she had not pursued a degree.

When her position was eliminated after working for so many years, it was a real blow to her self-worth. I had to apply for unemployment. Ann said,

“It's hard to sell yourself in a positive light when you're feeling 'less than'. Just a few short months later, COVID-19 shut things down for a lot of people, and I gained a new perspective on life. The desire to work suddenly took a backseat to the overwhelming need to keep my family and those I love safe. I reflected on how I wanted to spend the rest of my working years and decided I needed a change in my career path.”

Through the Greater Omaha AJC, Ann was enrolled in the title I Adult program, affording her an opportunity to go back to school and get a degree. Ann enrolled as a full-time student at Metropolitan Community College (MCC) in the general human services associate degree program. In just 24 months, Ann graduated with honors and earned a certificate in gerontology, saying “My passion is to serve the aging population in my community and ensure they are treated with the dignity and respect they deserve.” Ann had written a letter of intent in March 2020 saying that this new career focus had been her goal all along. She did not waiver. Her last course at MCC was a practicum with an organization that serves the aging population, and Florence Home was a perfect fit. After graduation, Ann was hired full time as the Director of Life Enrichment. Ann remarked, “I have an opportunity to serve long-term care residents in my community every day, and I couldn't be happier. I appreciate the opportunity I have been given to work with National Able [title I Dislocated Worker service provider] to earn my college degree and change the course of my career...and my life.”

*For more information, visit:*

### *Reports*

Nebraska Department of Labor (Nov. 2022). *Annual Performance Report Narrative Program Year 2021*.

### *Links*

Nebraska Department of Labor

## Nevada

Nevada's Workforce Development Boards

State of Nevada Department of Employment Training and Rehabilitation

### *Use of State Funds*

#### *Adult Priority Service*

No information provided for this section.

#### *COVID-19 Response*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Other State Funds Activities*

No information provided for this section.

### *Evaluations*

#### *Activities and Methodology*

In November 2021, the State participated in the 2021 Evaluation Peer Learning Cohort (EvalPLC) which took a deep dive into Nevada's current capacity for evaluation, expanded the evaluation framework and developed a capstone project to support the learning cohort and implement into best practices. The EvalPLC provided the opportunity to learn from each other through assessment tools and draw upon subject matter experts knowledge with the leadership and guidance of a designated EvalPLC coach. Through this process representatives from all WIOA titles were able to work together to provide advice and relevant examples of strategies to develop an evaluation action plan. The Nevada team was comprised of representatives from Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation (DETR), Nevada Adult Education, and DETR's Research and Analysis Bureau, along with the Governor's Office of Workforce Innovation (GOWINN) leading the team. This process included representatives from previous EvalPLC states to share their experience and expand the network of federal-state partnerships for program development and improvement.

The cohort identified Nevada's strengths as the Nevada PWR (NPWR) SLDS system, expandable architecture, and governance structure for supporting detailed research and protecting confidentiality. The Nevada team is enthusiastic and engaged in the process of creating a strong foundation to build upon. However, there were few logic models and implementation of research models to reference. There was also a need to better identify the research agenda to proceed with performing research.

#### *Continuous Improvement*

The cohort was complete in April of 2022, with Nevada planning to build on the strengths of launching the NPWR research portal and the research governance team ensuring any IT needs are addressed. This includes launching the NPWR research portal and

onboarding WIOA core partners into NPWR. The team identified the following areas of weakness to be addressed by the WIOA core partners to identify and document logic models for core activities and input; this includes key areas that need to be tested (e.g., budget, target population, alignment with state goals). Additionally, the State needs to identify and test the effectiveness and provision of wrap-around services. The use of the logic model developed during this cohort will assist in achieving these goals.

Based on this cohort the following are Nevada's goals over the next three years:

- Year One Goals:
  - Researcher Portal active and ready for use.
  - Titles I and II added to NPWR.
  - Titles III and IV working toward NPWR integration.
  - Logic models used to identify research agenda.
- Year Two Goals:
  - Identify researcher(s) and question(s) from research agenda.
  - Conduct initial round of research and produce results.
  - Titles III and IV are integrated in NPWR.
- Year Three Goals
  - Build on original research, develop a pipeline to researchers and higher education institutions for further research.
  - As actionable, apply lessons learned from research, modify logic models, and prepare to retest.
  - Ongoing identification and documentation of logic models among core partners.
  - Review research agenda and revise to capture key activities, opportunities, and investments.
  - Broader expansion of NPWR participants and data to develop more robust data landscape for research.

### *Reports*

No information provided for this section.

### *Waivers*

#### *Waiver Implemented*

- Waiver to allow WIOA individuals training accounts (ITAs) for in-school youth (ISY).

- Waiver to increase on-the-job training (OJT) employer reimbursement up to 90 percent for businesses with 50 or fewer employees.
- Waiver to allow State and local areas to expend 75 percent of Governor's reserve youth funds and local formula funds on out-of-school youth (OSY).

### *Strategies*

#### **Waiver to allow WIOA ITAs for ISY**

This waiver allows the State to waive the requirement limiting ITAs to only OSY, ages 16–24; the State may use ITAs for ISY ages 18–21. The approval of the waiver should not impede State's efforts to prioritize OSY, including outreach to the OSY population.

#### **Waiver to increase OJT employer reimbursement up to 90 percent for businesses with 50 or fewer employees**

This waiver is approved through June 30, 2022, for WIOA title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth formula funds. The waiver permits the State and its local workforce areas to increase the reimbursement rate for OJT contracts up to 75 percent. The State may also reimburse up to 90 percent for OJT for businesses with 50 or fewer employees. DOL-ETA expects the operation of OJTs to increase in the State as a result of the waiver.

#### **Waiver to allow State and local areas to expend 75 percent of Governor's reserve youth funds and local formula funds on OSY**

The waiver is approved for PY21 which includes the entire time period for which the State is authorized to spend PY21 funds. Nevada may lower the expenditure requirement of Governor's reserve funds to 50 percent for OSY.

### *Impact on Performance*

#### **Waiver to allow WIOA ITAs for ISY**

Utilization of the ISY ITA waiver was 10 or 3.3 percent of ISY. Approximately 33 percent of participants identified as African American/Black with 80 percent identifying as Hispanic or Latino. The largest barrier identified was Basic Skills Deficient (BSD) at 80 percent.

#### **Waiver to increase OJT employer reimbursement up to 90 percent for businesses with 50 or fewer employees**

Utilization of the 90 percent OJT waiver was 29 or 16.4 percent with over 72 percent completing an OJT successfully. The participants who benefited from the OJTs had an average wage of \$16.15 per hour as compared to a wage of \$15.65 for all OJT participants. Approximately 76 percent of the participants served identify as African American/Black; Asian; or more than one race with 6.9 percent identifying as Hispanic or Latino. The participants had the following barriers: 31 percent re-entry; 6.9 percent veteran; and 6.9 percent persons with a disability. Statewide performance was not measurably impacted by the waiver.

#### **Waiver to allow State and local areas to expend 75 percent of Governor's reserve youth funds and local formula funds on OSY**

Utilization of the ISY waiver in Nevada has allowed ISY enrollments to grow to 23.5 percent of total enrollments with enrollments



for PY22 expected to approach 40 percent. Approximately 58 percent of the participants served identify as African American/Black; Asian; or more than one race with 44 percent identifying as Hispanic or Latino.

The participants had the following barriers: 18 percent re-entry; 62 percent Basic Skills Deficient (BSD); and 23 percent persons with a disability. High School diploma rates for ISY were 44 percent compared to OSY drop-out recovery diploma rates of 24 percent. Also entered employment was 82 percent for ISY as compared to 77 percent for OSY.

### *Success Stories*

#### *90 percent OJT*

When participant was asked about her experience with the Workforce Connections (WC) One-Stop office she responded,

“The first time I heard about the One-Stop office was from my teacher at Magnet High School in Las Vegas. She advised me that after graduating if I would like to have more than just a job but rather a career path then WC would be the place to seek assistance. The career path I chose is dentistry. Helping people is my passion, and I have always had an interest in people’s smiles. Part of my training was learning the importance of dental hygiene, including deep cleaning so that my clients have a better understanding of the effects it has on their life. I would definitely recommend WC One-Stop office. My Career Coach was very helpful when I was in a tough spot in my life. She was able to guide me through the entire process of enrollment and took me from point A to point B. She was knowledgeable, honest, and caring. Thank you.”

*For more information, visit:*

### *Reports*

Nevada’s Workforce Development Boards (Dec. 1). *Annual Narrative Report Program Year 2021*. State of Nevada, Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation.

### *Links*

Nevada’s Workforce Development Boards

State of Nevada Department of Employment Training and Rehabilitation

## New Hampshire

State Workforce Innovation Board  
New Hampshire Business and Economic Affairs

### *Use of State Funds*

#### *Adult Priority Service*

#### **WorkNow New Hampshire (WorkNowNH)**

During this program year, Employment Security continued with the WorkNowNH program through the Granite State Jobs Act of 2019. The WorkNowNH program provides extensive case management services to individuals receiving either Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits, to assist participants with training and resolving barriers to employment. The program was also developed to provide employers with needed employees by matching participants with job opportunities in high demand industries. The program provides the participant with funding for training, travel, books, fees, supplies, travel, childcare registration and on-the-job training funds to employers.

#### *COVID-19 Response*

In PY21, \$296,500 of Governor's discretionary funds was allocated for the purpose of hiring a contractor to complete a workforce development system assessment which includes strategy and implementation plans. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant changes to the New Hampshire (NH) workforce system, including but not limited to virtual job fairs, remote positions, online trainings, childcare shortages, increased starting wages, etc. Due to these and many other factors, an evaluation of the NH workforce system is needed.

The contractor will identify the strengths, weaknesses and gaps that may be present in the NH Works system and/or service providers capacity to provide career training services in accordance with Federal, State and local policies. The contractor will evaluate the current NH workforce system and identify the needs of both individuals and businesses as well as identify existing resources and gaps in the system. The contractor will also develop a strategy for implementation of action items identified and well as provide a set of practical recommendations that the State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB) can follow up on to improve the services that are provided through the NH Works system. Work on this assessment is ongoing.

#### *Other State Funds Activities*

#### **Sector Partnership Initiative (SPI)**

These funds supported the continuation of sector advisors and sector related development activities beyond those supported by the previous SPI grant. The SPI was initiated by the NH Works System to establish a pipeline of skilled and educated workers for the major economic sectors of New Hampshire. In addition, the SPI was designed to assist jobseekers find appropriate education and training that provides them with productive career paths. Five sectors were launched: manufacturing; hospitality; healthcare; technology; and construction. Each of the five sectors has an advisory board that meets regularly, as well as regional groups, and

a sector advisor who assists in finding and coordinating resources needed by the sector. WIOA Governor’s discretionary funds were used to support the SPI initiative through February 4, 2022.

### **Interagency Business Team (IBT)**

The state’s IBT, led by the Office of Workforce Opportunity’s (OWO) Workforce Development Administrator continues to coordinate efforts to streamline business services and jointly track business contacts in an effort to leverage resources available to the business community and minimize redundancy.

### *Evaluations*

#### *Activities and Methodology*

Through competitive procurement, the State awarded a contract to Thomas P. Miller and Associates (TPMA) to conduct a Statewide Workforce Assessment. This Workforce Assessment has multiple deliverables including but not limited to:

- A feasibility study on pay-for-performance.
- A workforce development system assessment including strategy and implementation plans.
  - Identify the strengths, weaknesses, and gaps that may be present in the NH Works system and/or the service providers capacity to provide career and training services in accordance with Federal, State, and Local policies.
  - Evaluate the current workforce system and identify the needs of both individuals and businesses as well as identify existing resources and gaps in the system.

The assessment is well underway as the team from TPMA has been meeting with state staff since August. The next phase of the evaluation will be conducting a secret shopper experience at some of the NH Works/American Job Centers as well as holding strategic partner focus groups. The evaluation is due to be delivered to the State’s workforce board in October 2023.

### *Continuous Improvement*

Program Monitoring, including federal reviews are an important component of system evaluation for compliance with WIOA regulations, as well as State policy and procedures for program and financial management. PY21 WIOA monitoring activities included the following major activities.

- OWO staff completed 20 individual program and fiscal desk reviews.
- This year, annual on-site visits resumed. These reviews generated 15 programs and fiscal reports. There were no major corrective action items or disallowed costs resulting from these monitoring activities.
- On-site reviews with service providers included Equal Opportunity monitoring.

- Desk reviews and on-site reports document the on-going concerns regarding the under-enrollment and under-expenditure of funds for the WIOA Dislocated Worker program. This program faced challenges meeting performance throughout the program year. New service strategies are in place to correct these deficiencies.

### *Reports*

The report will:

- Provide a set of practical recommendations that the SWIB can follow up on to improve the services that are provided through the NH Works system.
- Develop a strategy for implementation of action items identified.

### *Waivers*

#### *Waiver Implemented*

- Waiver through June 30, 2023, from the requirement to expend all WIOA Dislocated Worker and Governor's discretionary funds for PY19/FY20 which are not expended in the required three-year period. 20 CFR 683.110(b)(1).

### *Strategies*

This waiver will allow the State access to WIOA PY19 funding for an entire year through June 30, 2023. With the unprecedented circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, the State has seen NH Works Offices close only to reopen part time, significant reductions in customer traffic, and decreased spending on WIOA programs. As the New Hampshire economy has opened back up, the State has seen a decrease in those seeking career and training services. However, the State does anticipate an influx of customers who will require WIOA services and programs in the coming months. To address the financial demand of this influx, the Office of Workforce Opportunity (OWO) believes that the State should have PY19 WIOA funding available for an additional program year. This will allow the State to continue to offer training programs, on-the-job training (OJT) programs, and virtual seminars for WIOA customers and prevent any denials to these programs based on the lack of available funding. In addition, the ability to retain PY19 discretionary funds will allow the State to develop and implement new initiatives to deal with the aftereffects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the New Hampshire workforce system.

Approval of this waiver would support DOL's strategic priorities to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of workforce development programs. ETA made it an objective in the FY18–22 Strategic Plan to support flexibility for governors and Local Workforce Development Boards, to enable them to effectively tailor their workforce strategies to meet state and local needs. This support is needed more than ever as we adapt to serving citizens and businesses through the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

### *Impact on Performance*

The waiver will positively impact all eligible participants as identified at WIOA Section 129 and 134 and 20 CFR 680.120, 20 CFR 680.130, and 20 CFR 681.200. These participants include Adults, Dislocated Workers, in-school and out-of-school youth.

The waiver would secondarily benefit people who are not WIOA eligible recipients but who have an economic relationship with recipients. These include businesses and employers, residents, and other individuals and entities affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

### *Success Stories*

#### *WIOA Adult Program – Fatima*

Fatima was enrolled in the WIOA Adult program in PY21. She was a single female living in Nashua with her two sons. Fatima's barriers consisted of long-term unemployment, public assistance dependency, Unemployment Insurance (UI) exhaustee, lack of marketable skills for the current labor market, English language learner, Basic Skills Deficient (BSD) in reading and math, single parent, low-income, and lacking reliable childcare.

Fatima was unable to secure reliable childcare during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic and she was forced to leave the workforce to care for her children. As they transitioned back to in-person learning, she was finally ready to focus on herself and embark on an entirely new career path. As she learned more about employment and training opportunities within the manufacturing industry, she was very intrigued by the Microelectronics Boot Camp offered at Nashua Community College (NCC).

Fatima applied for and was ultimately accepted into the Microelectronics Boot Camp training. This provided her with the basic military standards and assembly techniques for radio frequency (RF) and microwave (MW) electronic assemblies. The WIOA Adult program was able to cover the entire cost of the program's tuition, as well as the required books and supplies. She consistently showed up on time and did not miss a single class. Her timesheets regularly included positive comments from her instructor about her active participation and the progress she had been making.

Fatima successfully completed her training and was able to earn an industry recognized credential, putting her one step closer to securing her dream job. Upon completion, her Career Navigator was able to work with her to update her résumé and strategize her job search. While she dedicated herself to job searching, Southern New Hampshire Services (SNHS) was able to alleviate some of her financial hardships, by approving support services to cover her rent and utility payments. Before long, Fatima accepted a full-time job offer from BAE, officially marking the beginning of her new career. She is now earning a livable wage with a generous benefits package. Her time with the WIOA Adult program has been life changing and she is very thankful for this opportunity.

#### *WIOA Adult Program – Raymond*

Ray is 50 years old and enrolled in the WIOA Adult program looking to overcome some significant barriers to employment, such as a history of opioid misuse, a felony conviction, no high school diploma or GED, mental health challenges, homelessness, sporadic employment history, and lacking marketable occupation skills, credential, or any kind of certification. Given his criminal background, Ray believed his career choices were limited. He came to SNHS wanting to become a CDL-A truck driver, and his vocational assessments determined this to be an appropriate match. The WIOA Career Navigator explained to Ray that CDL

drivers were in high demand and that there was a critical shortage of drivers. Ray felt this was a great choice and could see himself having a long-term career in this industry.

Unfortunately, Ray's communication with his Career Navigator abruptly stopped one day. He missed a scheduled appointment and was unable to be reached by phone or email. Eventually we mailed Ray a letter, informing him that his case would soon be exiting WIOA, due to lack of contact. Once Ray received the letter, he immediately contacted his Career Navigator. He admitted to having a recent relapse and that he enrolled in a recovery and treatment program. Ray was devoting a lot of time to his recovery plan but was still able to re-engage with WIOA and continue exploring his training options.

Ray eventually enrolled in a CDL-A training program that offered some scheduling flexibility, which allowed him to maintain part-time employment. The WIOA Adult program was able to offer Ray mileage reimbursement to help reduce the cost of traveling to and from training. Other bills began to pile up while he was in training, so SNHS was also able to offer Ray rental support while he committed himself to the program.

Ray persevered and within two weeks of completing his CDL-A training, Ray secured full-time employment with Western Express, working 40+ hours a week and making \$25 per hour. His new employer also offered a generous benefits package that finally provided him with full medical coverage. Ray was very appreciative of all the guidance, support, encouragement, and resources that his Career Navigator and the WIOA Adult program were able to provide him with.

#### *WIOA Dislocated Worker Program – Kyle*

Kyle entered the WIOA Dislocated Worker program on March 30, 2021, and expressed his interest in attaining his CDL-A through the program. Kyle entered training through Commercial Driving School in Concord, New Hampshire on May 9, 2022. Due to the financial circumstances of Kyle's family, WIOA Dislocated Worker was able to grant a waiver to increase the available funding for Kyles training and provide \$8,000 toward his CDL-A training.

Kyle was enthusiastic, diligent, and achieved the highest GPA in the class according to James D'Amico, owner of Commercial Driving school. Kyle received his CDL-A Certificate on Friday June 25, 2002, and passed his State CDL-A driving test the following day.

Using his CDL-A Kyle was able to establish his own towing company KTR Automotive under KTR LLC and has gone into business for himself.

#### *WIOA Dislocated Worker Program – Patrick*

When Patrick was laid off back in January of 2021, he thought it would be temporary. However, after eight weeks he had not been called back and decided to look for work. Patrick applied for several customer service positions but was never called for an interview. He has a master's degree in writing but does not see that now as a stable and reliable path to employment.

Patrick entered the WIOA Dislocated Worker program and chose to pursue training in Web Design through Professional Development and Training at the University of New Hampshire (UNH). Patrick started his training on March 2, 2021, and

completed his training and achieved his credential on August 19, 2021. Patrick received a certificate in Full Stack Web Development.

Upon completion of training and receiving his certificate from UNH, Patrick resumed his job search, now as a programmer/web designer. He was able to secure full-time employment through Madison Resources in Portsmouth, NH as a Junior CMS Developer at the rate of \$25 per hour with benefits. Before this the most Patrick had made was \$17.00 per hour working as a customer service representative.

Patrick stated at his six-month follow up that he was still employed with Madison Resources as a Junior CMS Developer and enjoys what he is doing.

*For more information, visit:*

#### *Reports*

NHWorks. *Annual Report for the Period July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022.*

#### *Links*

State Workforce Innovation Board

New Hampshire Business and Economic Affairs

NHWorks

## New Jersey

### New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development

#### *Use of State Funds*

#### *Adult Priority Service*

No information provided for this section.

#### *COVID-19 Response*

In PY21, the State saw service levels begin to increase after the shutdowns of PY20 due to COVID-19. As the State's One Stop Career Centers (OSCCs) continued to expand virtual services and reopened for targeted in person services, more individuals returned for service. However, even with these increases, the pandemic continued to impact the number of individuals that the system supported—resulting in lower enrollments in PY21 that also impacted performance.

COVID-19 has posed considerable challenges to local areas in continuing to provide integrated services. Access to technology and the skills to use it made it more difficult to move customers from one service area to another.

#### *Other State Funds Activities*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Evaluations*

#### *Activities and Methodology*

#### **PY20 WIOA Evaluation: A Study of WIOA title I services and service delivery in PY20**

NJDOL contracted with the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers University to conduct a process evaluation study of services provided through WIOA during PY20 to fulfill New Jersey's WIOA evaluation requirement for PY20. The purpose of this process study is to broadly document the impact of the pandemic on the State's ability to provide title I WIOA services. This study will examine WIOA title I service for Adult, Dislocated Workers, and Youth, covering both career and training services. Researchers will aim to gain an understanding of how the transition of WIOA title I services during the COVID-19 pandemic in PY20 took shape in local workforce areas in the State of New Jersey. Researchers will investigate the variety of interventions employed to mitigate the effects of the unprecedented levels of unemployment within the State and how local workforce areas may have adapted service provision to be virtual. The study will also examine how virtual services may have impacted overall WIOA title I service delivery in PY20.

#### **Methodology:**

- Review of existing WIOA documentation, materials, and data for WIOA title I core program populations—Adult, Dislocated Workers, and Youth.



- Examination of Workforce Integrated Performance System (WIPS) PY18, PY19, and PY20 customer data.
- Analysis of State and local program and policy documentation of WIOA title I services for the core program populations—Adult, Dislocated Workers, and Youth.
- Administer one bifurcated survey of local area One-Stop personnel to document and collect WIOA title I service adaptations in PY20.
- Structured interviews (2-3) with state-level NJDOL Workforce staff who are responsible for the implementation of WIOA title I services.
- Structured interviews with local area One Stop staff (2 interviews) at up to six One-Stop locations, interviewees include the following job titles—Adult & Dislocated Workers’ Services Director and Youth Services Director.
- Focus groups (2) with customers who received WIOA title I services—one geared towards Adult and Dislocated Workers customers and one geared towards Youth customers, age 18 or older, with a maximum of eight participants per focus group.
- Analysis of state and local program and policy documentation for all three title I core program populations—Adult, Dislocated Workers, and Youth.
- Analysis of surveys, interviews, and focus group findings.
- Analysis of PY20 outcomes data from NJDOL WIPS quarterly reports.

The findings from this process study will provide a broad picture of WIOA title I services and service delivery in PY20, and identify modifications made to service delivery that are perceived by local area staff to have worked most efficiently and are recommended to be continued as part of the WIOA title I’s efforts to continuously improve services for WIOA customers. Findings and recommendations from this study will not only help New Jersey provide better, more customer-centered services but will also help to inform the NJ Department of Labor, and local workforce areas, on how to modify typical operations to accommodate periods of disruption to traditional service delivery and/or disaster recovery and potentially where to invest future resources in a more virtual world.

#### **State Employment and Training Commission (SETC) Performance Dashboard**

In 2017, the SETC began implementation of a dashboard to display high-level performance data to support evidence-based policy decisions. The dashboard enables the SETC members to better understand the scope of State programs and their related populations. Additionally, the dashboard helps the SETC explore data trends, highlight potential program issues, and coordinate with other State Agencies to advance New Jersey’s workforce needs. The SETC continues to work with NJDOL on enhancing the value of its dashboard so that it displays high-level performance data to support evidence-based, policy decision-making. At regular Commission meetings, the SETC members are given a presentation from SETC staff and NJDOL program staff, on the

updated, enhanced dashboard which includes performance and demographics data from all four WIOA titles, and local area data breakdowns as well.

#### **Other research and evaluation activities**

- Application of a new statistically adjusted quality score to ETPL training programs.
- Feasibility Study for an Enhanced Wage Record Pilot Program in New Jersey.
- PY19 WIOA Evaluation: A Process Evaluation of the Integration of title I (Workforce Development) and title II (Adult Literacy) Services Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) in New Jersey.
- RESEA Evaluation: Impact Evaluation Study.
- RIPL engagement to build research data lake with workforce and Unemployment Insurance (UI) dashboards.
- Reanalysis of the UI profiling model.
- Worker Experience Project Portfolio.

#### *Continuous Improvement*

All workforce programs for Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth are subject to continuous improvement efforts. Based on recent monitoring and programmatic reviews from both federal and State staff, NJDOL has identified multiple areas that will benefit from improvement efforts, including specifically strengthening local governance structures and processes in the Local Workforce Development Areas and the expansion of service delivery to support more individualized career support and work-based learning opportunities.

NJDOL's continuous improvement strategies are driven by the partnership between the Office of Research and Information (ORI) and Workforce Development (WFD), ensuring that the State is linking what they are learning through data analysis and research, as well as through monitoring, with the on-the-ground practices in One-Stop Career Centers (OSCCs) supporting jobseekers, worker, and employers in NJ.

In addition to the multiple projects and efforts listed above that focus on evaluation and improving data collection and use, the State also are supporting the development of capacity and targeting strategies within WFD to support changes in practice related to what we are learning from data and evaluation. So, for example, the recent evaluation of title II and title I services is informing current efforts to develop stronger Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) and Infrastructure Funding Agreements (IFAs) and ensure that these processes result in increased integration of title II services in the OSCCs.

Overall, WFD supported continuous improvement efforts in PY21 through three primary streams of work: (1) Monitoring, (2), Technical Assistance (TA), and (3) Policy and Resource Development.

In PY21, NJDOL reorganized its teams and strengthened capacity to better support these unique functions. Specifically, Monitoring and TA functions for title I programs had been carried out within the same role; in PY21 these roles were separated creating distinct Monitoring and TA teams. In addition, they continued to build capacity of the Policy unit through additional staffing to support the expansion of this unit's focus on title I to focus on all WIOA partners and programs. In addition, a deeper focus on TA has been integrated across within WFD, including specifically teams working with title II, Work First New Jersey and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment and Training, and Business Services programs.

### *Reports*

#### **PY19 WIOA Evaluation: A Process Evaluation of the Integration of Title I and Title II Services Under the WIOA in New Jersey**

The report examines the services offered in New Jersey for two programs that are part of the WIOA. The title I program covers workforce development activities, including job training and services to individuals who are either unemployed or underemployed. The title II program focuses on adult educational and literacy services, including basic skills, secondary education, and literacy. Examines the degree to which services under these programs are integrated in New Jersey. Also identifies the challenges local areas in the State are facing when implementing various forms of title I and title II services integration.

### *Waivers*

#### *Waiver Implemented*

No information provided for this section.

### *Strategies*

Not applicable.

### *Impact on Performance*

Not applicable.

### *Success Stories*

No information provided for this section.

*For more information, visit:*

### *Reports*

State of New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development. *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Annual Report Narrative PY 2021.*

Harrington, L.M., et al (May 2022). *A Process Evaluation of the Integration of Title I (Workforce Development) and Title II (Adult Literacy) Services Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act in New Jersey*. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development, Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers University.

*Links*

New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development

State Employment and Training Commission – Performance

Heldrich Center

- Suddenly Virtual
- Strategically Virtual

SETC Performance Dashboard

## New Mexico

### New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions

#### *Use of State Funds*

#### *Adult Priority Service*

No information provided for this section.

#### *COVID-19 Response*

#### **All-Hands New Mexico**

In June 2020, New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (NMDWS) started the All-Hands New Mexico program. The goal of this program was to support both employers ready to reopen and jobseekers ready to get back to work post COVID-19. Employers looking for well-qualified workforce talent can quickly post their positions on the NMDWS website. Staff from local job centers contact employers for additional information and then match and screen well-qualified candidates from the State's online job system to expedite the hiring process. Jobseekers can use the NMDWS site to upload their résumés to their account, as well as search for available job openings. Having their information already in the system provides jobseekers with real-time alerts to well-matched job opportunities in their region. To date, 180 employers have utilized the program and have posted 1,991 jobs with Job Centers throughout the State.

#### **Apprenticeships**

Due to the impact of the hospitality/tourism and healthcare industries during the COVID-19 pandemic, a modification was submitted to request additional target industries to include energy, information technology, and building/construction trades. The grant funding provided the apprenticeship office with three new staff members and funding to support apprenticeship expansion efforts. The ASE grant funds were able to pay the related instruction costs for approximately 11 RN residency apprentices and will provide approximately 440 apprentices with supportive services assistance (transportation, uniforms, tools, etc.). The grant ended on December 31, 2022.

#### *Other State Funds Activities*

#### **New Mexico Workforce Connection Online System**

Funding utilized to sustain a virtual system available 24/7 to support access to services and supports including, unemployment benefits, career exploration/readiness tools, résumé development, links to labor market information, and access to career professionals to provide one-on-one assistance and career counseling. New Mexico DWS also uses the New Mexico Workforce Connection Online System to manage and report performance, maintain accountability, and support case management work statewide.

#### **Personnel Costs of WIOA Program Coordinators and Monitoring**

Staff assigned provide ongoing support to each of the four LWDBs, including consultation for local board and chief elected

officials on best and promising practices; title I program implementation for Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Workers, fiscal compliance, policy development, local/regional planning, sector strategy and career pathway implementation, and partnership engagement at federal, state, and local levels.

#### **New Mexico Performs Data Dashboard/System**

The Department licenses the dashboard system from Future Works Systems. The New Mexico Performs system performance monitoring data views and reports are designed to provide timely and accurate data on activities and outcomes to assist New Mexico DWS leadership, including SWDB and LWDBs, to set priorities, target resources, review, and report on program goals.

#### **Career Solutions and Why I Work**

Online tools/resources designed to support career readiness/exploration for youth and young adults. The Career Solutions tools also includes a curriculum that can be utilized by public/charter schools to support classroom instruction. These two tools have quickly become recognized and valued for their ability to connect.

#### **New Mexico Hospitality Training Program**

New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (DWS) in partnership with New Mexico Tourism Department created the Hospitality Industry Training Reimbursement Program, which provided training assistance to support business in the hospitality industry. The program provided compensation for the costs associated with training workers, and the lower productivity of new employees and investment in their skill development. These critical training services helped 56 employers provide a pipeline for 409 skilled workers.

#### **Ready New Mexico Project**

Ready New Mexico is a statewide initiative that includes several partners, both public and private to create a hub for workforce development opportunities, direct job referrals, resources to overcome work-related barriers, and guidance on safe return-to-work practices.

#### *Evaluations*

#### *Activities and Methodology*

#### **RESEA**

In 2019 the Eastern Workforce Board began rolling out a revised participant intake model. In February 2019 staff in the Clovis office began providing all Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) participants with wrap-around services which included title I intensive training services and easy access to external partners, including providers of title II and title IV services, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). The new model was implemented in Roswell in June 2019. The planned rollout to the other offices in the region was scheduled for March 2020, however, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and public health orders implemented to contain the spread of the disease, the rollout for the remainder of the region's office was delayed until October 2020.

The staggered rollout of the new RESEA model facilitates three types of evaluations. The first set of evaluations will examine participant success in exhausting unemployment benefits before and after the model was implemented in the office serving them.

The second evaluation will compare participant success in not exhausting unemployment benefits in the Clovis and Roswell office between July 2019 and September 2020 with the success of participants in the rest of the region. These two comparisons have the advantage of minimizing differences in the type of employers and employment opportunities, and other labor market factors. A potential third analysis would compare the results in the Eastern Board region with the State as a whole, however, the variations in the type of employers and employment opportunities, and other labor market factors, may bias the analysis.

### *Continuous Improvement*

#### **Ready NM**

Ready NM is a comprehensive plan to train New Mexicans for various work opportunities and refer them directly to employment opportunities within the State. One of the strategies pursued to achieve this was to use WIOA funding to support the development of short-term certificate trainings aligned with in-demand occupations. Ten Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) submitted 22 grant applications for the 2021–2022 grant cycle. Eleven applications were originally approved, although one applicant withdrew their application due to a conflict of interest, and 11 were not approved. Only one of the State’s research universities and one of the State’s comprehensive colleges and universities applied for a WIOA grant. Of the State’s 10 branch campuses, half applied for a WIOA grant, and less than half of the State’s seven independent community colleges applied for a WIOA grant. None of the State’s four tribal colleges and universities, nor any of the State’s special schools, applied for the WIOA grant. Additionally, no adult education programs affiliated with a public institution or organizations collaborating with institutions of higher education submitted applications, although there were instances where a collaborating institution provided the courses for the awarded HEI. Less than half (\$750,506.80) of the funds allocated (\$1,504,035.27) to the WIOA Grant program were distributed to WIOA Grant applicants. Most awardees overestimated the appeal of their courses to the targeted populations, and many courses had much lower enrollment than the awardees anticipated, however 453 course slots were filled, and 337 successful course completions (77.83 percent) were recorded.

To improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Ready NM WIOA Grant Award procedures in future years, staff developed and distributed a series of surveys to NMDWS staff ranging from front-line Career and Business Consultants through the Cabinet Secretary. Input was also solicited from the Local Workforce Board Chairperson, the Chief Elected Officials in each Board region, and each Workforce Board’s Operator. NMDWS staff reviewed and analyzed the survey input and developed a set of process improvement recommendations for the Cabinet Secretary’s consideration.

Findings for participant success in completing courses funded through the Ready NM initiative were reported to NMDWS Senior Management, as detailed above. The next step is to evaluate participant success in pursuing new or enhanced careers, and higher remuneration, based on their recently upgraded skills. The analysis will examine the wage and industry of all participants, including those not completing their courses, for the two quarters prior to their enrollment in the WIOA supported courses, and the wage and industry data for all participants in the third, fourth and sixth quarter after the conclusion of their course.

## Reports

### 2022 State of the Workforce Report

Economic Research and Analysis Bureau (ER&A) staff started work on this report during PY21. It was published in early September 2022 and meets the TEGL's definition of the required product of a statewide annual economic analysis report. It includes analyses of New Mexico's population; educational attainment; labor force participation and demographics; unemployment, income, wages, and poverty; and projected industry and employment growth. This year, a page was added that discusses unemployment insurance claims.

### Highlights from the New Mexico 2021 State of the Workforce

New Mexico had a total population of 2,106,319 as of 2020. New Mexico's population increase of 0.7 percent between 2016 and 2020 lagged the U.S. population increase of 2.0 percent. Population growth in New Mexico between 2016 and 2020 was entirely driven by natural increases (births). For most of the decade, New Mexico experienced a negative net migration. Overall, the educational attainment of New Mexico's population is lower than the educational attainment of the country's population. Persons with a bachelor's degree or higher comprised 27.4 percent of the State's population, a share that was 4.8 percentage points lower than the U.S. share of 32.2 percent. From 2007 to 2020, New Mexico lost about 45,600 nonfarm jobs, a decline of 5.4 percent.

### New Mexico Data Focus: STEM Occupations

STEM occupations are defined as those in science, technology, engineering, and math. About 6.7 percent of all occupations in New Mexico in 2020 were STEM. The average wage of all STEM occupations in New Mexico was \$94,599, more than twice that of non-STEM occupations. The STEM occupation with the highest wage in New Mexico in 2020 was Architectural and Engineering Managers (\$172,910). The STEM occupation with the most employment in New Mexico in 2020 was Software Developers and Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers, with 3,380 workers.

### New Mexico Alternative Measures of Labor Utilization

Total unemployed, as a percent of the civilian labor force (the definition used for the official unemployment rate), was 6.0 percent in the U.S. and 7.2 percent in New Mexico for the year 2020Q4 to 2021Q3.

### Other reports:

- Workers During the COVID Pandemic: A Cohort Analysis.
- New Mexico Data Focus: Job Openings and Labor Turnover
- New Mexico Data Focus: Employment and Unemployment for New Mexico's Municipalities
- Why is New Mexico's Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) So Low?
- New Mexico Data Focus: Youth
- How Many New Mexico Businesses Opened and Closed During the Pandemic?



- 2021 Veteran's Profile
- New Mexico Health Care Workforce Committee 2021 Annual Report.

#### *Waivers*

##### *Waiver Implemented*

No information provided for this section.

##### *Strategies*

No information provided for this section.

##### *Impact on Performance*

No information provided for this section.

##### *Success Stories*

No information provided for this section.

*For more information, visit:*

#### *Reports*

New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions

- (Aug. 2019). *New Mexico Data Focus: Youth.*
- (Aug. 2021). *Highlights from the New Mexico 2021 State of the Workforce.*
- (Aug. 2021). *New Mexico Data Focus: STEM Occupations.*
- (Dec. 2021). *New Mexico Data Focus: Job Openings and Labor Turnover.*
- (Sept. 2022). *2022 State of the Workforce Report.*
- *2021 Veterans Profile.*
- Friedman, N. (Oct. 2021). *New Mexico Alternative Measures of Labor Utilization; and New Mexico Data Focus: Employment and Unemployment for New Mexico's Municipalities.*
- Moskowitz, R. (Nov. 2021). *Workers During the COVID Pandemic: A Cohort Analysis; (Apr. 2022). Why is New Mexico's Labor Force Participation Rate So Low?; and (June 2022). How Many New Mexico Businesses Opened and Closed During the Pandemic?*

- *Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act – 2021, State of New Mexico Annual Report.*

University of New Mexico - Health Sciences Center (2021). *New Mexico Health Care Workforce Committee 2021 Annual Report.*

*Links*

New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions

Ready NM initiative

## New York

### New York State Department of Labor

#### *Use of State Funds*

#### *Adult Priority Service*

No information provided for this section.

#### *COVID-19 Response*

##### **Career Centers**

Many Career Centers throughout the State were closed as part of the effort to decrease the spread of COVID-19. In June 2022, most New York State (NYS) Career Centers re-opened to serve customers through virtual and in-person services. NYS explored virtual platforms to be used to serve customers and have been successful in efforts to maintain connection with customers through a virtual environment. In response to these changes, NYS is currently rolling out a pilot program utilizing a Virtual Career Center (VCC) to select local areas. The goal is to utilize a case manager function and incorporate this virtual tool into each appointment with a customer. Customers are automatically enrolled in the VCC and will work closely with a case manager to ensure a customer profile is crafted based on skills and previous work experience. The goal is to train other case managers in each region. The VCC integrates with NYS' case management system to track services provided to business and job seeking customers as well as related outcomes, and is inclusive of the following:

- Virtual Meetings and Events Tool,
- Virtual Career Fairs,
- Comprehensive Online Training Solution, and
- Enhanced Job Search.

#### *Other State Funds Activities*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Evaluations*

#### *Activities and Methodology*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Continuous Improvement*

No information provided for this section.

## *Reports*

### **The COVID-19 Disaster Recovery (DR) and Employment Recovery (ER) NDWGs**

Quarterly reports include a summary of grant progress including total expenditures; challenges and concerns; key issues and technical assistance needs; and significant activities, accomplishments, and success stories. Internal bi-weekly reports are compiled by New York State Department of Labor (NYSDOL) staff and reviewed to track grant progress.

### **The Fidelity Bonding Demonstration Grant**

The report includes cumulative bonds purchased within a quarter; the number of bonds issued within a quarter; any issues or concerns related to grant implementation; and outreach, education, and marketing activities directed to stakeholders within the State regarding the Federal Bonding Program.

### **The Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG)**

The report includes information about outlays, expenditures, and obligations related to the budget; staffing expenses; performance goals and outcomes; the individualized career services rate for JVSG staff; services to non-veterans rate; staffing changes and vacancy information; and best practices for the Hire a Veteran Medallion Program.

### **Justice-Involved Individuals**

A report developed for the program assisting these individuals shows the number of formerly incarcerated participants in the State that were served or hired during specific timeframes. The report also shows the State's job development with businesses interested in hiring participants in the program. Lastly, the report shows services and employment outcomes for justice-involved individuals referred to NYSDOL by the NYS Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) in several pilot locations including Albany, Buffalo, Syracuse, Bronx, Brooklyn, and both Nassau County (Hicksville, Hempstead, and Massapequa) and Orange County (Middletown and Newburgh).

### **New York Systems Change and Inclusive Opportunities Network (NY SCION)**

The report includes a summary of grant progress including participants served, total grant allocations, and accrued expenditures.

### **Syracuse I-81 Project**

The bi-weekly report includes a summary of grant progress including participants served, total grant allocations, and accrued expenditures.

## *Waivers*

### *Waiver Implemented*

Waiver associated with the requirement at 20 CFR 683.110(c)(1) and (2), which limits the period of local WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth funds availability to the program year of allotment and the succeeding year.

## *Strategies*

No information provided for this section.

### *Impact on Performance*

This waiver extended through the duration of PY21 and assisted the State and the LWDBs in recovering from the unprecedented effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, including significant reductions in customer traffic and decreased spending on WIOA programs. As the State reopens, this waiver helps ensure the influx of customers who require WIOA services and programs receive the services they need.

### *Success Stories*

No information provided for this section.

*For more information, visit:*

### *Reports*

New York State Department of Labor. *Annual Statewide Performance Report Narrative - Program Year 2021*.

### *Links*

New York State Department of Labor

Work for Success Program

## North Carolina

### North Carolina Department of Commerce, Division of Workforce Solutions

#### *Use of State Funds*

#### *Adult Priority Service*

#### **Veterans**

The Division of Workforce Solutions is also partnering with the North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) to implement initiatives resulting in improved services to veterans and those employers' supporting veterans. As part of the North Carolina for Military Employment (NC4ME) initiative, Division of Workforce Solutions (DWS) conducts ten NC4ME Hiring Events across the State throughout the year (adapted to a virtual format after the pandemic began). These events entail veteran jobseeker résumé and interview preparation, jobseeker skill set matching with employer needs, and on-site interviews during the hiring event. A supporting effort of this initiative is formal training for employer Human Resources Directors on interpreting/cross-walking service member skills into civilian parlance, and on the benefits of hiring veterans. DWS also partners with DMVA to publish the annual State Veterans Resource Guide as an all-encompassing reference for veterans and employers.

#### *COVID-19 Response*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Other State Funds Activities*

The Division of Workforce Solutions partnered with local area workforce development boards and community colleges on the Finish Line Grants initiative to help North Carolina's community college students address financial hardships that could otherwise prevent credential completion. Based on the continued success of this initiative, the Division of Workforce Solutions continued the program in PY21. As of June 30, 2022, the program helped over 5,400 students stay in college, with grants totaling about \$4.7 million.

The Division of Workforce Solutions is also continuing its support of local area economic development and workforce efforts by continuing to fund work-based learning and focused employer services. Additionally, the Governor's reserve is resourcing NCWorks Commission Local Innovation Grants, Reentry-focused supportive services, major economic development project support and assisting local areas with county transfers as part of the State's workforce alignment initiative.

#### *Evaluations*

#### *Activities and Methodology*

#### **Employer Needs Survey**

The NCWorks Commission partners with the North Carolina Commerce Labor and Economic Analysis Division (LEAD) to gather and use relevant data to inform strategies that enable the State's workforce and businesses to compete in a global economy. The

2022 Employer Needs Survey was an update to reports published in 2014, 2016, 2018 and 2020, which have collectively been used to track the needs of employers over time, and to ensure that the State's workforce strategies meet those needs. The 2022 survey was the first such survey conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic.

LEAD also created a separate "Business Pulse Survey" of employers in 2021 to track pandemic impact over time. Immediate feedback showed hiring challenges, as expected.

Based on Employer Needs Survey results, the NCWorks Commission Employer Leadership and Engagement committee (with DWS support) embarked on two statewide, focused employer outreach initiatives. The first was a direct employer outreach campaign by local area staff to employer respondents to the Employer Needs Survey. Sharing valuable information about workforce programs and services was the goal. At the end of the three-month outreach timeframe, 17 of 23 local board staff participated, reaching 57 percent of employers. The second initiative was hosting eight regional employer roundtables to gauge the awareness, regularity and effectiveness of employer services offered by local area staff and partners. As those roundtables are completed and a report shared, recommendations to improve employer services will follow.

### *Continuous Improvement*

No information provided for this section.

### *Reports*

- 2022 Employer Needs Survey

### *Waivers*

#### *Waiver Implemented*

The State did not have any approved waivers in place for PY21.

### *Strategies*

Not applicable.

### *Impact on Performance*

Not applicable.

### *Success Stories*

#### *WIOA Adult Program – Tabitha*

With support from a workforce training scholarship through the NCWorks Career Center in Burke County, Tabitha graduated from the Interpreter Education program at Western Piedmont Community College in 2021, as the first college graduate in her family. She remained focused on her educational goals while also working two jobs and raising two young children as a single mother.

Tabitha draws upon her personal experience of growing up as the only hearing person in a household where all her other family members were deaf. Therefore, American Sign Language was her primary language at home. Upon graduating from WPCC, Tabitha obtained her state Transliterator license and worked at the college for a time, assisting deaf and hard-of hearing students. She also served as a staff interpreter for the North Carolina School for the Deaf. More recently, she has joined Purple Communications as a sign language interpreter.

#### *WIOA Adult Program – Joshua*

Born with a condition that rendered him legally blind and growing up in economic distress, Joshua has overcome numerous obstacles. In the fall of 2020, he enrolled in the high school equivalency program at Davidson-Davie Community College and in the NCWorks “NextGen” Youth program through Piedmont Triad Regional Workforce Development Board. The NextGen program helped Joshua complete his high school credential and obtain a better job, as he rose to become a manager at a local grocery store. That success led Joshua to enroll as a full-time student at DDCC. In one year, he had gone from having an eighth-grade education to holding a high school diploma and becoming the first person in his family to attend college. He has excelled academically at the college and was awarded a scholarship allowing him to study abroad in France in the summer of 2022. Joshua plans to earn an associate degree in Information Technology at DDCC and transfer to UNC-Charlotte to study Computer Science and Criminal Justice, with a goal of working in the field of cybersecurity.

#### *WIOA Youth Program – Levi*

Levi of Kings Mountain: Outstanding Teen. With support from the NCWorks “NextGen” Youth program through Foothills Workforce Development Board, Blanchard has completed the Adult High School program at Cleveland Community College, continued his education and obtained employment. His Youth program case manager provided Blanchard with strategies, guidance and counseling that helped him graduate with his adult high school diploma in 2021. He has also participated in leadership development, soft skills training, and financial literacy through the workforce program, and has begun postsecondary education, again at Cleveland Community College. NCWorks has given Blanchard the opportunity, and the support, to pursue a college degree in Business Administration without having to take on debt. His dream is to one day start his own business.

#### *Workforce Development – Jalie*

Jalie is a talent development program assistant at the Capital Area NCWorks Career Center in Raleigh. She is part of a team that provides virtual employment services to customers through the “Access NCWorks” contact center. Her responsibilities include providing referrals and guidance to customers, assisting customers with navigating NCWorks Online, creating profiles, registering jobseekers in NCWorks, providing overviews of NCWorks programs and services, completing initial assessments and enrollments, helping people develop résumés, providing labor market information, and assisting with scholarship and training information for in-demand jobs. Jalie also serves as the career center’s Limited English Proficiency staff person and fulfills the role of an administrative assistant for the Talent Development Department. Colleagues appreciate her thoughtful, positive demeanor, attention to detail and commitment to superior customer service—whether customers are served in-person or not.



*Workforce Development – AI*

AI, the senior director for transportation/logistics with Smithfield Hog Production, is a member of the Eastern Carolina Workforce Development Board (ECWDB), currently serving in his second term as board chair. He joined ECWDB in 2011 and has served in various leadership capacities, championing workforce development causes to build a talent pipeline that results in upward mobility and success for individuals and businesses. Earlier, AI was also the chair for the region's Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics career pathways efforts, and in this role, he brought industry leaders together to address solutions for workforce challenges. He represents North Carolina on the national level as a member of the board of directors of the National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB). His decades of workforce experience in the private sector brings an invaluable perspective to the ECWDB, the NCWorks system and the national workforce development community. AI speaks with passion about education and training and enjoys collaborating with economic development organizations, school systems and other partners to meet the community's talent needs.

*Workforce Development – STI Fabrics*

STI Fabrics, a local, family-owned business that manufactures and distributes one of the most in-demand performance fabrics in the home furnishings industry, is a major employer and community partner in workforce development. For several years, the company has worked with the Gaston Correctional Center's work release program to provide a variety of job opportunities for inmates. Several of these workers have joined STI as full-time employees after they reentered the community. In March 2022, STI sponsored a successful local event with the N.C. Department of Public Safety as an example of the company's commitment to the justice involved population. Called "In Their Shoes: A Prison-to-Community Simulation," the event included participants from community colleges, resource agencies, local industries, the judicial system, community corrections, and chambers of commerce. The simulation was designed to show the public how difficult it is to navigate society upon release from jail or prison. Meanwhile, during the past year, STI has opened opportunities for high school students to work part time. This allows them to become knowledgeable about manufacturing and could lead to full-time positions in the future. STI also offers apprenticeships and OJT.

*For more information, visit:*

*Reports*

North Carolina Department of Commerce - Division of Workforce Solutions. (Dec. 2022). *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Annual Statewide Performance Report Narrative State of North Carolina Program Year 2021*.

NCWorks Commission. *2022 Employer Needs Survey*. NC Department of Commerce Labor and Economic Analysis Division.

*Links*

North Carolina Department of Commerce - Division of Workforce Solutions

NCWorks.gov



## North Dakota

### Job Service North Dakota

#### *Use of State Funds*

#### *Adult Priority Service*

#### **North Dakota Department of Corrections**

In cooperation with the North Dakota Department of Corrections, statewide funds were used to provide a full-stack web development curriculum and will be taught to 48 residents of the State penitentiary over the next 24 months. The program includes equipment to train residents with industry-leading courses with remote instruction designed specifically for correctional facilities. This initiative supports the Workforce Development Council's recommendation for bridging the technical skills gap and supporting those with barriers to employment. The curriculum provides a certificate of completion in alignment with WIOA requirements.

#### *COVID-19 Response*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Other State Funds Activities*

#### **JobUPND**

Statewide funds were used for a statewide promotional campaign called JobUPND. This was a council sponsored initiative that highlighted industries across the State who were hiring, promoted title I and III services in the nine One-Stop Centers, and drove jobseekers and employers to the website. This was done through social media platforms like Facebook, Linked-In, and Instagram. This twelve-week campaign was seen 3.3 million times and drove 142,000 visitors to the labor exchange website jobsnd.com.

Through the activities supported by these funds, the State's One-Stop Delivery System provides high-quality, outcome-focused workforce development services consistent with the State's four-year plan, while tracking progress toward meeting strategic goals and implementing the Governor's vision for the State's workforce system.

#### **TalentSpace**

Statewide funds were used to purchase a virtual job fair platform called TalentSpace. This is being used not only for job fairs, but also for statewide employer workshops. Funds were also used to purchase an ETPL module from the vendor Geographic Solutions. This has enhanced the efficiency and accuracy of the ETPL and ties it into the case management and labor exchange system allowing direct reporting into the PIRL.

### *Evaluations*

#### *Activities and Methodology*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Continuous Improvement*

No information provided for this section.

### *Reports*

No information provided for this section.

### *Waivers*

#### *Waiver Implemented*

The State did not have any waivers in place for PY21.

The State requested and received a waiver of the obligation of eligible training providers (ETPs) to collect and report performance data on all students in a training program. The waiver was in effect July 1, 2018, through June 30, 2021.

### *Strategies*

Not applicable.

### *Impact on Performance*

A direct result of this waiver was an increase of public colleges and universities with programs in registered nursing, teaching degrees, and several additional training program options.

Almost all ETP providers have chosen to remain on the list without the waiver in place, choosing to provide data on all students. Just one training provider declined to provide the data, unwilling to provide the required data on all students.

### *Success Stories*

#### *WIOA Adult Program – Sandy*

Sandy was 26 years old with a high school diploma and working multiple jobs when she came to the workforce center. Her two to three jobs at any given time included seasonal cleaning, maintenance, and convenience store clerk. She additionally picked up overtime at these jobs, when available. She worked with her case manager and applied to attend Commercial Driver's License (CDL) training through TrainND Southwest and earned her Class A driver's license. Sandy's highest hourly rate before she applied for training was \$16.80, and she began her job as a CDL driver at \$26.80 per hour.

*WIOA Adult Program – Maame*

Maame was taking a language class at the Adult Learning Center when she was referred to Job Service for WIOA services. Maame entered the training program for Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) at Bismarck State College and completed her language work at the same time. Once certified, she was hired as a CNA with a \$5,000 sign-on bonus and now earns \$19 an hour. Maame wrote recently to thank her case manager for the opportunities made available through WIOA and included a picture of her wearing the scrubs that WIOA funds were able to help purchase.

*VETS, Youth & Partnerships with Adult Education – Rhonda and Rachel*

Rhonda was a separating service member who completed the Transition Assistance Program in September 2021 and started her Terminal Leave in February of 2022. She was anticipating her official retirement from the military and was in the process of filing her disability claim. When she initially contacted the VETS program staff, she was concerned with not only finding employment for herself, but also for her 18-year-old daughter, Rachel.

Rachel had been struggling to make up missing credits to complete high school and whose only job experience was as a certified babysitter on the Airforce base. When Rachel connected with a local WIOA Youth program advisor, she was enrolled in the program and simultaneously referred to Adult Education. She immediately began classes to complete her GED, which she did in less than a semester, and moved on to discuss work readiness skills and employability with her advisor.

Rachel quickly began a work experience position at a local, recently opened grocery store, and after her first progress report, it was clear that Rachel was thriving in all areas of her work experience. Rachel found the confidence to pursue other avenues of career and educational development, weighing options like enrolling in college or attending an occupational training program as she moves forward.

With her daughter's newfound independence, Rhonda was able to focus on taking care of her medical needs with the Veterans Administration and on conducting her work search. She worked with a County Veteran Service Officer to complete her medical evaluations and enrolled in online courses in the meantime to progress towards her Bachelor's in Mechanical Engineering. After discussing interview practices with the VETS staff, Rhonda applied at multiple daycares and garden centers in her area, ultimately procuring a position with one of the garden centers.

*Business Services & WIOA Adult Program – Tom*

A local business was having a difficult time filling a Two-Way Radio Communication Technician position due to the specialized nature of the position. When a Business Services representative learned about the difficulty in hiring, she educated the employer about the WIOA on-the-job training (OJT) recruitment strategy. Following this discussion, the business referred Tom, one of their previous applicants, to the WIOA Adult program for eligibility determination.

Tom, a 21-year-old from a rural community in North Dakota, had limited work experience, was basic skills deficient, and had a two-year vocational technical degree in Electronics Technology. There were limited employment opportunities in his community for this field, so Tom had been working as a retail sales associate, earning \$12.25 per hour when he applied for the Two-Way

Radio Communication Technician position. Tom was selected for the position and began in June 2021 with a wage of \$20 per hour at 40 hours a week.

During the OJT, Tom successfully completed the following recognized trainings from AA Motorola Solutions, exhibiting competency, ability, and knowledge: AEE0402 Mobile Radio Installation, Professional and Commercial Radio Technical Associate, LTE Technical Associate, Professional and Commercial Radio Sales Associate, Public Safety LTE Sales Associate, P25 System Technical Associate, and Armada Programmer Version 1.32.9 training and certification process (through EF Johnson technologies Training Department).

Tom successfully completed his OJT in December 2021 and a follow-up phone call by Business Services in February 2022 confirmed that he was still employed with the company, earning \$21 an hour with benefits (vacation and sick time and a 401k plan).

#### *BEST Program – Monica*

Monica had been referred to the Basic Employment Skills Training (BEST) program and attended an orientation, completing her Individual Employment Plan (IEP) and Assessment on the same day. While completing her IEP and working on updating her résumé, Monica's case manager noted that she currently worked in furniture sales and inquired about her interest in automotive or clothes sales. Although the Capital Area Transit (CAT) bus was her only means of transportation, she returned to the workforce center multiple times to attend workshops on résumés, interviewing, and completed an online training module for job readiness. Throughout her work with the BEST program, Monica completed weekly job searches and interviewed for multiple jobs, ultimately getting a second interview, and then hired for a position as an assistant manager at a retail store. Monica expressed her gratitude to her case manager and other workforce center staff, saying that had her eyes not been opened to other related careers, she never would have the job she has now.

#### *WIOA Youth Program, JOBS, & Vocational Rehabilitation – Marias*

Marias is a youth single parent who expressed a desire to become a welder when she first began working with her case manager. She worked with the JOBS and Vocational Rehab programs and had been on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) in high school. Upon enrolling in her welding program, she excelled in her classes and had perfect attendance for the duration of the program. In fact, Marias was one of only two graduates that received all certifications, passed all tests on the first try and graduated on time. She recently accepted employment at Norwood Sales in Horace, ND.

*For more information, visit:*

*Reports*

*WIOA PY 2021 Annual Report.*

*Links*

Job Service North Dakota

Data Validation Policy

## Ohio

### Department of Job and Family Services

#### *Use of State Funds*

#### *Adult Priority Service*

#### **Individual Microcredential Assistance Program**

In July 2020, the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation (OWT), in partnership with the Ohio Department of Development, launched the Individual Microcredential Assistance Program (IMAP). This program reimburses training providers when a low-income Ohioan who is partially or totally unemployed earns a technology-focused credential.

Training providers can include universities, colleges, Ohio technical centers, and private sector training businesses. They can be reimbursed up to \$3,000 for each completed credential issued, up to \$250,000 per provider. Eligible Ohioans work directly with the awarded training provider of their choice to enroll in the most-suitable training program at no cost to them. As of December 2021, 11 training providers had received awards. They offered 54 training programs to 1,592 Ohioans.

#### **Veterans' Employment Services**

OhioMeansJobs centers offer a full range of individualized employment and training services for veterans and eligible spouses who are unable to obtain employment through basic career services. Emphasis is placed on meeting the employment needs of veterans who are economically or educationally disadvantaged, with priority service offered to disabled veterans and those with significant barriers to employment. The Veterans Program continues to build a strong social media presence with @OMVetJobs to promote OhioMeansJobs center services, including job fairs, other events, and veteran community resource information.

The program continues to conduct Transition Assistance Program briefings at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. Staff members also visit large military transition bases outside Ohio and attend Ohio Inter-Service Family Assistance Committee meetings to target transitioning service, National Guard, and Reserve members. All transitioning service members receiving unemployment benefits are given priority of service in the RESEA program to help with their transition to civilian life. Wagner-Peyser also identifies veterans on registration reports, providing reemployment services and partner program referrals.

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted veteran services significantly. Veterans Program staff began PY21 working remotely and later returned to the OhioMeansJobs centers four days a week, working remotely one day a week. The staff also adapted their case management services to the new case management system, ARIES.

The Veterans Program promoted its "Hire a Veteran Month" in November. Online training was shared with WIOA partners to promote consistency in the veteran intake process and to increase their awareness of community resources for veterans.

Through the efforts of Ohio's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program specialists, the Jobs for Veterans State Grants program served 997 veterans in PY21. More than 64 percent of participants were employed in the second quarter after they left the program; more than 61 percent were employed during the fourth quarter after they left the program. Furthermore, the median



earnings of these participants in the second quarter after their program exit was \$9,278. All performance measures exceeded standards negotiated with the DOL.

#### **Other Adult Priority Service Activities**

- In-Demand Occupations
- Individual Microcredential Assistance Program
- OhioMeansJobs Centers
- Ohio's Workforce Mission
- Path of OhioMeansJobs Center Customers/InnovateOhio

#### *COVID-19 Response*

##### **Broadband and 5G Sector Partnership**

The COVID-19 health crisis revealed gaps in broadband coverage that left many Ohioans unable to participate in employment, education, and healthcare. In response, significant investments are being made to expand broadband access. This will create an estimated 32,000 network infrastructure jobs in the State.

The partnership was launched in September 2021 to implement a statewide strategy to address shortages in skilled workers so that the buildout of broadband and 5G infrastructure could occur quickly. This partnership, which is led by The Ohio State University and the Wireless Infrastructure Association, includes Ohio Departments of Education, Higher Education, Job and Family Services (ODJFS) and several other state agencies.

The primary objectives are to raise awareness about occupations and career pathways in the telecommunications industry; to identify existing or to establish new education and training programs; and to leverage state and federal funding streams that can support the implementation of broadband and 5G workforce strategies.

As the central convening entity, the partnership will reduce duplicative efforts among regions and share best practices. The goal is to make the State a prime destination for new, innovative technology companies to form and utilize the next generation of wired and wireless communications.

##### **Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Workforce**

Despite businesses re-opening, restrictions loosening, and unemployment rates dropping, the labor market is not seeing the influx of returning workers that was initially expected. Using WIOA statewide funds, Ohio conducted two research projects aimed at understanding the influences, perceptions, barriers, and shifts in behavior of both current workers and would-be workers who have not returned to Ohio's labor force (see Evaluations).

*Other State Funds Activities***Ohio's Workforce Mission**

Throughout PY21, the Governor's OWT continued to work in collaboration with the ODJFS, and the Department of Development to close the gap between growing workforce needs and the goals of jobseekers. The mission of the OWT is to connect Ohio's business, training, and education communities to build a dynamically skilled, productive, and purposeful workforce.

Advancing the DeWine-Husted Administration's commitment to leading an aggressive, innovative path toward a better and stronger Ohio, InnovateOhio's mission is to examine every state service with an eye on the customer's experience—looking at the customer's journey through different interactions with the state—to find ways Ohio can serve its customers better and at a lower cost. The InnovateOhio Platform provides integrated and scalable capabilities that enable state agencies to become more customer-centric and data-driven, delivering on InnovateOhio's vision to better serve Ohioans.

**Additional State Funds Activities:**

- Path of OhioMeansJobs Center Customers/InnovateOhio
- Ohio to Work
- The ARIES Project
- TechCred

*Evaluations**Activities and Methodology***Department of Labor Behavioral Insights Pilot**

DOL's Behavioral Insights team, which includes researchers from the American Institutes for Research, is working with approximately 10 Ohio counties to design, implement, and assess a texting behavioral intervention to encourage Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program (CCMEP) participants to maintain engagement in the program and benefit fully from available program services. Selected CCMEP participants are randomly placed in either one of two groups: intervention (treatment) or no intervention (control). Participants in the treatment group will receive encouraging text messages once per week over 12 weeks to foster engagement and prompt continuation with the CCMEP program. Outcome measures, including services received and completed, will be compared for the two groups to understand the effectiveness of utilizing an external prompt (the text messages) on CCMEP participants' engagement and success.

**The Ohio Labor Force: An Analysis of Participation in Ohio's Labor Force 2020-2021**

The Greater Ohio Workforce Board (Area 7), through a contract with a research company, conducted a study that examined social media analytics, survey responses, and focus group feedback. The following findings were identified:

- Among prime-age workers, one of the most common obstacles cited was the lack of opportunities that match their qualifications. Self-employment has provided many working-age people with a sense of stability.
- For those who decided to retire during the pandemic, health concerns or the desire for a better work-life balance were among the major decision factors for leaving their jobs.
- Both those surveyed and those who participated in the focus group had positive outlooks.

#### **Working Age Adult Survey of Summit, Medina, and Portage Counties**

The Summit Medina Workforce Development Board (Area 2) contracted with a research company to survey Northeast Ohioans and conduct focus groups to understand individuals' perceptions and values regarding work. The following findings were identified:

- Salary information in job postings was very important to respondents.
- Most respondents said they had done freelance or contract work in the past 12 months to earn money.
- COVID-19 has had a significant impact on experiences and views on employment.
- Most respondents said they were somewhat or very likely to seek additional education or job training in the next three years.

#### **Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Program**

Abt Associates, the Urban Institute, Capital Research Corporation, and the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (the Abt team) contracted with the DOL to conduct a study to provide an in-depth assessment of the RESEA state programs.

An important goal of this DOL-funded study was to assess the current RESEA program operations and how states plan to meet the requirements of the Bipartisan Budget Act (BBA) of 2018 (Public Law 115-123). Work began in October 2018 and was scheduled to be completed in 2021. The Abt team conducted site visits to 10 states and visited two local workforce areas in each of those states, to better understand the program components and plans for modification and development.

In Ohio, in-person and virtual interviews were conducted with the RESEA program administrator, direct delivery staff, and supervisors, as well as staff from the Ohio Departments of Education, Higher Education, Job and Family Services (ODJFS) Office of Unemployment Insurance Operations, Bureau of Labor Market Information, and workforce development board directors. The Abt team held interviews privately to ensure participants spoke candidly. Ohio is awaiting the publication of the study results.

#### **Retaining Employment and Talent After Injury/Illness Network (RETAIN)**

RETAIN is a research project studying how to help workers with medical conditions that occur off-the-job remain at work and avoid disability. ODJFS joined forces with Bon Secours Mercy Health and five local workforce areas to obtain this \$18.8 million grant for the implementation of innovative stay-at-work/return-to-work services in coordination with health and employment services.

This grant serves 18- to 65-year-old workers in the regions of Youngstown (Columbiana, Mahoning, and Trumbull counties), Toledo (Lucas County) and Cincinnati (Butler, Clermont, Hamilton, and Warren counties) who are patients of Bon Secours Mercy Health and have non-occupational illnesses or injuries that impact their ability to perform their job.

Eligible patients who agree to participate are randomly assigned to either a care coordination group or comparison group. Those in the comparison group receive standard medical care. Those in care coordination are assisted by a health services coordinator who communicates with the individual's employer and health care provider to increase the participant's probability of returning to work. Examples of solutions have included transitional work assignments and physical accommodations that enable the worker to perform essential job functions. In some cases, the coordinator may refer the individual to OhioMeansJobs center partners for employment, training, or vocational rehabilitation services. In addition, a nurse hotline, access to a social worker, and supportive services are available to the participants in care coordination.

Enrollment and service delivery began in January 2022. ODJFS and its partners will continue the intervention strategies for 27 months, followed by 12 months for close-out and final assessment activities.

A third-party evaluator will use rigorous methodology to identify program outcomes. In addition, throughout the project, a RETAIN Roundtable comprised of medical, industry, and government stakeholders will identify and share best practices.

The project's leadership team includes representatives from the Governor's Executive Workforce Board, Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation, Ohio Department of Health, Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities, Bon Secours Mercy Health, and Workforce Development Boards in Areas 9, 12, 13, 17, and 18.

### *Continuous Improvement*

#### **OhioMeansJobs Certification**

Local workforce development boards are responsible for certifying the OhioMeansJobs centers in their local workforce areas and ensuring the effectiveness and efficiency of their local workforce systems. The boards must evaluate the centers to ensure that they are quality-focused, employer-driven, customer-centered, and tailored to meet their areas' economic needs. WIOA requires the boards to certify OhioMeansJobs centers every three years. The State completed the ongoing continuous improvement phase of certification in June 2022. Progress made in obtaining quality assurance and continuous improvement was reviewed with the same benchmarks established in earlier phases. For the next phase of OhioMeansJobs certification, Ohio is planning to update the certification materials and simplify the certification process. The next certification will be due by 2025.

### *Reports*

No information provided for this section.

## Waivers

### Waiver Implemented

The State requested and received approval in June 2020 for three DOL waivers to support workforce development activities and provide flexibility for individuals using WIOA programs. Two of these waivers were approved through PY21. In PY21, Ohio requested and received approval of an additional waiver to increase the allowable threshold available for incumbent worker training from 20 percent to 35 percent through June 30, 2022. The following are the approved waivers with supporting documentation collected from the State's database and fiscal reports:

1. Allow Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds to count toward the 75 percent expenditure requirement for out-of-school youth (OSY) and allow the expenditure requirement to be calculated on a statewide basis.
2. Allow the use of individual training accounts (ITAs) for in-school youth (ISY).
3. Allow local areas to reserve more than 20 percent of Adult and Dislocated Worker funds for incumbent worker training to address the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Strategies

These waivers were consistent with key guiding principles that outcomes are improved through cross-program alignment, increased streamlined services, increased accountability and accessibility, state and local flexibility, and fewer administrative burdens. The State tracks waiver usage for reporting and evaluation purposes.

#### **Allow TANF funds to count toward the 75 percent expenditure requirement for OSY and allow the expenditure requirement to be calculated on a statewide basis**

This waiver supports the implementation of Ohio's expanded Youth program, Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program (CCMEP), by using both WIOA and TANF funding sources to support the unique needs of the same customer while easing administrative burdens associated with managing two federal funding streams. The large infusion of TANF dollars allows WIOA Youth dollars to have a greater impact, and it also allows more disconnected youth to be served. Additionally, by allowing the expenditure rate to be calculated statewide, the waiver gives local workforce development areas more flexibility to address the unique needs of participants in their communities.

To recognize the TANF dollars invested in WIOA OSY under CCMEP, the Ohio Departments of Education, Higher Education, Job and Family Services (ODJFS) includes the amount of TANF dollars spent on co-enrolled WIOA OSY during a program year in both the numerator and denominator of the OSY rate calculation.

#### **Allow the use of ITAs for ISY**

The intent of ITAs for the WIOA OSY program is to expand training options, increase program flexibility, enhance customer choice, and reduce paperwork. Ohio desired the same benefits for the ISY program. This waiver encourages ISY to explore in-demand occupations and career pathways and to take responsibility for planning their futures.

The State is working to achieve the following goals and programmatic outcomes:

- Improve the ability of local workforce development boards, Youth program providers, and CCMEP lead agencies to respond quickly to the needs of ISY.
- Increase the quality of learning opportunities.
- Increase employment and training opportunities.
- Improve coordination by reducing fragmentation of service delivery.
- Improve customer choice and empower youth to make responsible career choices.
- Reduce unnecessary paperwork.
- Develop an emerging workforce of prepared candidates ready for work.
- Increase accountability.

**Allow local areas to reserve more than 20 percent of Adult and Dislocated Worker funds for incumbent worker training to address the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic**

Although incumbent worker training activity increased across the State in PY21, none of the local workforce areas utilized this waiver to increase the allowable threshold of 20 percent to 35 percent. Multiple training and technical assistance sessions were provided in PY21 to encourage local areas to take advantage of this waiver.

*Impact on Performance*

**Allow TANF funds to count toward the 75 percent expenditure requirement for OSY and allow the expenditure requirement to be calculated on a statewide basis**

Using this waiver, the OSY expenditure statewide rate for the PY20 funds was 79.3 percent and for the PY21 funds was 81.5 percent. The number of WIOA participants co-funded with TANF dollars was 4,721, which was a decrease from the previous program year (5,312 participants). Also, the overall percentage of co-funded participants decreased from 28 percent to 24.9 percent in PY21. A review of the demographics of PY21 WIOA Youth participants identified the following: 85 percent were low-income individuals; 63 percent were English language learners with basic skills deficiency, low literacy, and cultural barriers; and 20 percent were single parents (including single pregnant women). The percentage of WIOA Youth who obtained employment or enrolled in training and were able to maintain employment or training was 72.0 percent, which was a decrease from PY20 (72.7%).

**Allow the use of ITAs for ISY**

During PY20, ITAs were provided to 553 ISY. That was an increase from PY19, when 491 ITAs were provided. In PY21, Ohio served 588 ISY with ITAs (participant counts based on quarters 1-3). ODJFS anticipates serving 615 ISY by the end of PY23.

### *Success Stories*

No information provided for this section.

*For more information, visit:*

### *Reports*

*Ohio Annual Report Program Year 2021.*

### *Links*

Department of Job and Family Services

- ODJFS Opioid Grants

OhioMeansJobs

Ohio to Work

## Oklahoma

### Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development

#### *Use of State Funds*

#### *Adult Priority Service*

#### **Oklahoma Department of Libraries Programmatic Partnership**

In PY21, OOWD revisited their partnership and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Oklahoma Department of Libraries (ODL). Throughout PY21 they worked with ODL to expand access to WIOA services focused on the shortage of high school diplomas in Oklahoma. Working with five pilot sites, ODL administered funds provided by OOWD to provide adults in each community with the opportunity to finish or start their high school education earning a diploma from an accredited online program. Moving forward, this project is expanding across the State allowing public libraries to apply for funding through ODL.

#### *COVID-19 Response*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Other State Funds Activities*

#### **Mobile Unit Planning Efforts**

Throughout the State's continued recovery, they took the opportunity to identify weaknesses in their service delivery methods and explore potential solutions. Over the course of the last program year, OOWD started planning for the purchase and operations of mobile American Job Centers. The State's rural population has always played its role in keeping people from education and employment but coupled with the struggles during recent years it was obvious there was a need to meet people where they are, and in smaller sized groups. David Crow, a member of the OOWD team, met with several of the surrounding states who use mobile units in their service delivery strategies. The State appreciates the assistance and support provided by Arkansas, Kansas, and Texas. The plan developed analyzed budget, outreach, staffing, logistics, leveraging employer relationships, safety, security, and accessibility. While initial funding requests for federal funds provided to the State were denied, the State has not given up on identifying ways to fund this initiative.

#### **Oklahoma Department of Corrections Programmatic Partnership**

In August 2021, OOWD, COWIB, and the Oklahoma Department of Corrections met to discuss employment and training opportunities for individuals incarcerated, but eligible to work. This partnership's primary goal was to provide individuals nearing the end of their incarceration (within six months of release) work and character skills necessary to gain full-time employment. Additionally, the program provided individuals with an opportunity for on-the-job training (OJT) that provided them an income during their time of transition. OOWD supported the partnership financially and by being an active member at the table when needed but the initiative was successful due to the partnerships COWIB developed with local nonprofit organizations, TEEM, and Dynamic Workforce Solutions. As an ongoing program, the conversations are now shifting to other work experience and



transitional employment opportunities. DOC was, and is, a valued partner in the State's workforce system over the last program year and they hope to continue expanding their work with them.

#### **BT40 Digital Transformation**

Prior to PY21, the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission (OESC) announced an 18-month rollout plan for transformations to the State's digital infrastructure. The plan aims to help the organization operate more efficiently for citizens, employers, and the State.

BT40 product launches are all about support. Some of the new technologies are not obvious to users but are instrumental in supporting the State's current processes and laying the groundwork for future launches. This foundational support provided within OESC allowed the BT40 teams to focus more of their efforts on creating innovative and user-friendly experiences for the citizens of Oklahoma.

#### **Unemployment Insurance Integrity and Improper Payment Detection and Prevention**

During the COVID-19 pandemic state agencies across the nation saw an increased number of perpetrators filing fictitious unemployment insurance (UI) claims using stolen or synthetic identities. In efforts to continue recovery and prevent future instances of fraudulent claims, OESC made several advancements over the last program year toward top-notch cybersecurity and the protection of both claimants' and employers' information.

#### **Additional State Funds Activities**

- Sector Strategies & Career Pathways
- Service Provision Analysis Pilot

#### *Evaluations*

#### *Activities and Methodology*

#### **Participant Wage Outcomes**

OOWD performed a pre-post wage evaluation on participants employed second quarter after exiting one of the WIOA core programs. For this analysis, the State followed the cohort reported in the Annual Report (ETA-9169) for each program year for employment 2nd quarter after exit. The purpose of this evaluation is to further evaluate the median earnings between participant cohorts in PYs20–21 to identify differences that might exist between the median earnings of participants before and after their participation in the State's WIOA title I programs.

#### *Continuous Improvement*

In August 2021, a Continuous Service Improvement working group was created to convene stakeholders across the workforce system and gather expertise on training and continuous improvement priorities. The group includes system partners and local workforce development stakeholders at varying levels. The group has identified and prioritized system training needs and will be

advising on the implementation of a statewide learning management system as an ongoing professional development platform as well as future training content.

## Reports

### Critical Occupations

The State also updated their Critical Occupations list in PY21. This list is released annually to show the in-demand occupations across the State. Occupations are selected based on several factors including support of target sectors, statistical relevance, median wages, and growth.

### Economic Data & Trends Analysis

The OESC produced a variety of reports compiled from data created through their Economic Research and Analysis division. In PY21, and currently, the State's labor market conditions have been unusually tight. With high job openings, low turnover, below average unemployment, and robust nominal wage gains, it has been critical to regularly communicate with stakeholders. OESC's monthly *Economic Indicators* publication provided a timely look at the State's data and trends throughout PY21. A current *Economic Indicators* publication is always available online at [Oklahoma.gov](http://Oklahoma.gov).

### Participant Wage Outcomes

The purpose of this report is to further evaluate the median earnings between participant cohorts in PY20 and PY21. Specifically, what differences might exist between the median earnings of participants before and after their participation in the WIOA title I Programs in Oklahoma.

The report, *Oklahoma WIOA Wage Progression Evaluation*, presents results from the WIOA Youth program for program years 2020 and 2021. Both cohorts appear to show a similar trend: participants experience an increase in their wages after exiting the WIOA Youth program in Oklahoma. In general, they regain a higher level of earnings than they had before exiting the program. For example, during the 3rd quarter prior to entry, the 2020 and 2021 cohorts' median quarterly wages were \$2,299 and \$2,700, respectively. By the 4th quarter after exit, participants in PY20 were earning \$3,589 while participants in PY21 earned \$5,267. Although, the 4th quarter wages after exit are slightly lower than the 3rd quarter wages after exit, there is overall improvement in the amount of earnings in the WIOA Youth program. Overall, participants in PY20 saw an increase of \$1,290 in their quarterly wages by the 4th quarter after exit while participants in PY21 earned \$2,567 more. The Adult and Dislocated Worker results can be found in the full report.

### Workforce Area Labor Market Briefings

Following the State's annual practice, OOWD updated the Workforce Area Labor Market Briefings. The briefings examine the current and projected status of the geographic area, its citizens, and the workforce. A briefing is completed for each LWDA and for the State, and includes data on populations, education, labor force, target sectors, etc.

### *Waivers*

#### *Waiver Implemented*

The State did not have any waivers during PY21.

### *Strategies*

Not applicable.

### *Impact on Performance*

Not applicable.

### *Success Stories*

#### *Central Oklahoma – Madison*

Enrolled as an OSY just before the start of the program year, Madison had been out of work since November 2020. After receiving training to develop character skills and completing a Work Experience program with Farmers Insurance Okemah, Madison transitioned into an OJT program with the same employer. During her OJT she learned the ins and outs of being an insurance producer; she was able to help customers select the appropriate insurance policies for their needs explaining the features, advantages, and disadvantages of the many options. In December 2021, Madison completed her OJT and was hired for full-time, unsubsidized employment.

#### *Central Oklahoma – Travis*

Travis had a history of stable employment and sustainable wages. Unfortunately, Travis underwent spinal surgery negatively impacting his physical abilities and “slowing him down.” Adding to the weight of Travis’s situation, he lost his employment during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Travis, the world was closing in but at the same time someone was coming to his rescue. Working with his case manager, Jessica, and with funding made available to the Local WDBs through the Trade and Economic Transition grant (originally awarded to the OESC) Travis was able to enroll in training for a Class A CDL Driver’s License. The entire cost of the training was covered through services offered by the Central WDB and upon completion Travis gained full-time, unsubsidized employment with Amazon. Travis is once again self-sufficient.

#### *South Central Oklahoma – Robert*

After losing his job Robert, a husband and father of three young children, was facing difficult circumstances. He had no high school diploma but did have a criminal background. Robert began classes to earn a high school equivalency degree but it was clear that even with Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits Robert would not be able to provide for his family. Robert was then enrolled as an Adult participant and his case manager worked with him to develop an individualized employment plan around the significant barriers he and his family faced. Following his individualized plan Robert enrolled at the CBM Driving Academy in Duncan. Even after his program, as life does, Robert faced unexpected barriers which he faced with the

support of his case manager. Robert received his CDL and despite his background gained full-time employment. He is working and providing for his family.

#### *Oklahoma Green Country – Camille*

A mother of three, at 31, Camille is not only able to provide for her family, but also show her children what one can do with hard work. Camille was unsure what her future held, but knew she needed to continue her professional growth. After scrolling through Facebook one day, she reached out to the Green Country Workforce Development Board. Camille was then connected with a case manager who explained the WIOA program and worked with her to assist in her success. Working with her case manager Camille enrolled at Wings Healthcare Training and became a Certified Medical Administrative Assistant. Camille's only worry was passing her classes, her support team ensured she had everything she needed to do just that.

#### *Western Oklahoma – Kristen*

After losing her employment during the heights of the COVID-19 pandemic Kristen enrolled as a Dislocated Worker through the TET funds the board helped OESC expend. Kristen always wanted to work in the healthcare field with the ultimate goal of becoming a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN). Co-enrollment in the Dislocated Worker program provided Kristen with the additional services she needed. Kristen completed the LPN training program at Southwest Technical Center and secured employment quickly.

#### *Northeast Oklahoma – Alisha*

With a history of substance abuse leading to time in prison and the losing custody of her children, Alisha found herself at a crossroads. Through the help of His House Ministries and their She Brews program Alisha was given an on-the-job training (OJT) opportunity. Alisha trained as an event coordinator/operations manager where she was able to enhance her skills. After the completion of her training Alisha is now working full time for His Vision Eyecare as an optician tech and office assistant. Alisha is earning a livable wage and doing what she loves most, working with children. Alisha is also working on obtaining full custody of her children, something she attributes being able to do because of programs she had access to and the services they provided her.

*For more information, visit:*

#### *Reports*

Evans, M. (Sept. 2022). *Oklahoma Economic Indicators*. Oklahoma Employment Security Commission.

Oklahoma Works

- *Oklahoma WIOA Wage Progression Evaluation - Program Years 2020 and 2021.*
- *Annual Performance Narrative Program Year 2021.*

*Links*

Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development – Oklahoma Works  
State and Local Area Labor Market Briefings

## Oregon

### State of Oregon Employment Department

#### *Use of State Funds*

#### *Adult Priority Service*

No information provided for this section.

#### *COVID-19 Response*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Other State Funds Activities*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Evaluations*

#### *Activities and Methodology*

#### **Continuous Improvement Committee (CIC)**

The State's Workforce and Talent Development Board (WTDB) contracted with the Coraggio Group, and began this work by engaging in external research, and reviewing documents and data provided by the CIC. Coraggio then facilitated a series of work sessions, with a working group of the CIC members, to gain an understanding of WorkSource Oregon's (WSO) services and processes, the interdependencies, pain points and opportunities for improvement.

The CIC completed an *Initial Assessment Report* that resulted in several recommendations. The CIC's ongoing work includes a biennial assessment every even-numbered year.

#### **RESEA**

The State Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program staff conducted pre-planning and strategizing sessions in PY21 to establish a path forward for the formal evaluation, slated to start in 2023.

#### **State Efforts to Support Federal Evaluations**

The State was asked to provide applicant data to a research firm under contract with Department of Labor (DOL) to conduct an evaluation of reentry programs supported by several DOL grant programs: Training to Work, the four Reentry Demonstration Project, and the Reentry Project. These programs provide job training and employment support to participants as they work toward economic and social self-sufficiency.

### *Continuous Improvement*

#### **Continuous Improvement Committee**

The State Legislature passed, and Governor Brown signed into law Senate Bill 623 (2021), requiring The State's WTDB, and the State's nine local workforce development boards, to jointly create the CIC to evaluate and assess the effectiveness of the State's public workforce development system, including WSO and its various component programs. The CIC is responsible for completing evaluations and producing a continuous improvement assessment of WSO every even-numbered year, with an initial baseline assessment completed in PY21.

The WTDB, in partnership with local workforce development boards, initiated the work of the newly established CIC. The CIC's charge is to assess the effectiveness of the State's public workforce development system, including the perspectives of underrepresented populations.

### *Reports*

#### **Continuous Improvement Committee**

The *Initial Assessment Report* resulted in the following recommendations:

1. Review and redesign the jobseeker welcome and intake process, with the goal of identifying different tracks and process steps based on customer need.
2. Evaluate the core purpose and functionality of iMatchSkills, as a job matching and capability assessment tool, to inform, and potentially expedite, OED's planned modernization effort.
3. Explore a single point of contact (e.g., Navigator role) through the WSO system (e.g., one stop centers, through community-based organizations, or accessible through an online intake process) to efficiently guide next steps that match the unique needs of each customer.
4. Clarify and communicate the current WSO accountability and evaluation system.

The 2022 Assessment focused on workforce system governance, and carried forward recommendation number four, above, from the initial assessment. Results of the 2022 Assessment will be presented to the WTDB in December 2022.

### *Waivers*

#### *Waiver Implemented*

The State had no WIOA waivers in place during PY21.

### *Strategies*

Not applicable.

### *Impact on Performance*

Not applicable.

### *Success Stories*

#### *Business Services – Traverse PC*

“In October of 2021, we received an email from The State WorkSource, offering to help Traverse PC fill needed positions at no cost. They would help us advertise positions and screen applicants. We are a small company without an HR department, so this was welcome news. We eventually connected with Tracy, the local WorkSource representative who put us in touch with Susie at Lane WorkSource in Eugene.

The first position we posted was for a marketing person, knowing full well that in a small company, they would wear many hats. We settled on advertising the position as Lead Acquisition/User Experience. Susie was a big help through the whole process of researching a competitive salary and outlining the required job skills. Ultimately, we developed a screening assignment Susie could provide to applicants she felt might be a good fit. As she passed on applicants to interview, we then asked them to submit the assignment, which was indispensable in helping us qualify the applicants. In the end, we chose Jay for the position. We started this whole process in February and Jay started work for Traverse PC at the end of April. He is already a valued employee.

The second position was for an entry/mid-level software developer. We repeated the same process with Susie, providing a different screening assignment for the applicants she would forward on to us. That job was posted in early May and by mid-June we had hired Daniel, a new computer science graduate from Southern California. He is now one week into his new job, and we like him already. For both positions, Susie did the early leg work of monitoring responses to the job postings, extending the reach when needed to other platforms like LinkedIn, and walking through that important first contact and screening. In both cases, we were provided with good, viable candidates for the positions and were able to step into the interview and hiring process with a level of confidence in the qualifications of the applicants we worked with. We appreciate Susie and the entire WorkSource team, for helping us build our team.”

– John, MSE, LS, GISP and Owner of Traverse PC.

#### *Training and Employment Program (STEP) – Shelby*

Shelbie went to the Salem office of WorkSource Oregon (WSO) last November 2021 and met Tracy, STEP Program Specialist. Tracy provided Shelby with #SupportServices including gas vouchers, interview clothing, guidance with her job applications, résumé, and cover letter, and interview practice sessions. Tracy also enrolled Shelby in the Employer Launch Pad Virtual Workshop Series where Shelby earned a certificate and enhanced her soft skills.



As Tracy shared: “Shelbie stepped out of her comfort zone many times to discover new #opportunities and find her way into a career in the healthcare field. It’s been amazing seeing Shelbie reach out for advice regarding her #CareerPath and watching her reach her goals.”

In mid-December, Tracy referred Shelbie to Neil, Career Development Coordinator for the Mid-Valley. Neil found success in connecting with local non-profits and helping Shelbie secure interviews with several employers. Neil coached Shelbie with her interview skills and also provided feedback to boost her #confidence with each interview opportunity. All the preparation worked out, as in February, Shelbie was offered a position with Maxim Healthcare Services.

### *Training and Employment Program (STEP) – Jordan*

Jordan, a SNAP Recipient, was referred to the Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council (COIC). Jordan lives in Central Oregon, is homeless, turns 60 years old this year, unemployment insurance claimant, WIOA title I Adult, and Dislocated Worker.

COIC partially funded Jordan’s CDL training and I connected them with Baker Technical Institute, who is also a STEP provider. Our three organizations were able to fund the complete tuition to become CDL A Truck Driver. Jordan passed all the knowledge tests and drive test on the first try and was very proud of their accomplishments (as was I!).

Jordan was living in a motel and then in their car throughout the whole training, parking in more rural areas (Madras and Prineville). Even with this barrier, Jordan communicated throughout the training and never missed a case management meeting. They were able to do virtual meetings from a cell phone and become more comfortable with technology skills. We worked on an updated résumé and the second version of the résumé was much stronger after we met. They are now in contact with the business team to find a placement! With their goal of truck driving, there should be no problem finding employment in Central Oregon.

Previously, Jordan worked in warehouse positions, but with the Class A CDL, they are expected to gain employment between \$25-\$35 an hour. We still have plans to purchase work and interview clothes and I believe Jordan would be a great candidate for the housing support service once employed.

Both are in a much better place than a few months ago, with a new CDL A license, training experience, new work boots, and updated résumé. I asked Jordan to describe the time in the STEP program: “I believe the STEP program is awesome! It has assisted me in achieving my goals for bettering my life and I have an amazing STEP Coach Hannah who has helped me with so much with the achievement of life goals.”

### *Training and Employment Program (STEP) – Dustin*

Dustin is a justice involved Oregonian who was introduced to the STEP program by his probation officer. He met Annie and Elvis, STEP Coaches at WorkSource Gresham, and at the time was in the process of renewing his commercial driver’s license. Annie and Elvis developed an Opportunity Plan with Dustin to help him achieve his occupational goal of becoming a truck driver. During his coaching meetings Dustin displayed a high level of determination and contacted several employers in the area. The STEP program assisted Dustin with the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) physical, drug screen, and renewed his CDL

license and tanker endorsement. In a very short period of time, he was employed as a commercial driver, and the program supported Dustin with gas to get to work, provided work clothes and shoes.

Dustin kept in touch with Annie and Elvis and had this to say about the STEP program:

“Due to STEP program and a few good friends, I was employed and emboldened to transition out of prison back into society and the economy. Without STEP, Elvis, and Annie being so over the top professional and right there every step of the way and ‘available’ pretty much on-call as needed, my employment readiness and employability would not have come to fruition in a timely and needful way. I could not be so appreciative. I am very emotionally touched by the kindness of Annie and Elvis and their assistance with STEP. You have no idea how moved I am because of how helpful this has all been to me. Thank you so much.”

*For more information, visit:*

### *Reports*

Oregon Employment Department

- Kaylor, C. (Jan. 2022). *50 Jobs That Pay Well... No College Necessary!*
- Ramos, N. (Mar. 2022). *Occupations in Human Resources*.
- WorkSource Oregon (Dec. 2022). *State of Oregon: Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Annual Performance Report Narrative*. Higher Education Coordinating Commission.

Coraggio Group (Dec. 2021) *Initial Assessment Report*. WorkSource Oregon Continuous Improvement Committee.

### *Links*

State of Oregon Employment Department

- Help Wanted in Oregon: Results from the 2021 Oregon Job Vacancy Survey (PowerPoint Presentation)
- Help Wanted in Oregon: Results from the Winter 2022 Job Vacancy Survey (PowerPoint Presentation)

Rethinking Job Search

Qualityinfo.org

Oregon’s Workforce and Talent Development Board: Priority of Service Policy.

## Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Workforce Development Board  
Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry

### *Use of State Funds*

#### *Adult Priority Service*

#### **Adult Basic Education**

WIOA titles I and III staff and other workforce development partners continue to work with WIOA title II providers at the local level to support the needs of individuals who are basic skills deficient and English language learners. Title I and III staff visit adult basic education programs to explain the services available through the PA CareerLink® system and provide help with résumé writing and job search activities. Other examples of collaboration include the co-enrollment of youth in WIOA title I Youth and title II Adult Basic Education services, and the use of local workforce dollars to support the training costs of integrated education and training activities provided by title II providers. Title I staff in one local area work closely with multi-lingual staff in the title II program to make trainings and services available to English language learners.

#### *COVID-19 Response*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Other State Funds Activities*

#### **Agribusiness Workforce Services Engagement**

In collaboration with the Department of Agriculture, The State Bureau of Workforce Development Administration (BWDA) revised the structure of agriculture initiatives and plans to solicit proposals beginning in August 2022. A selected vendor for this project will connect small agribusinesses to workforce development resources and offices; they will also develop training and guidance for navigating the unique workforce circumstances in the agribusiness industry. The program will educate eligible farmers and agribusiness owners to ensure that they understand and have access to the services offered through the PA CareerLink®/PA Workforce Development System, including tax credits, on-the-job training contracts, apprenticeship opportunities, writing effective job postings and job descriptions, and recruitment of populations not traditionally employed in agriculture.

#### **Digital Literacy and Workforce Development Grant-Round 1**

Digital literacy skills are a vital component of promoting problem-solving and critical thinking skills necessary to effectively navigate most platforms used in the job search process and in the workplace. The State Department of Labor & Industry's (L&I's) \$1.2M Digital Literacy & Workforce Development Grant supports 31 effective programs that enhance foundational digital literacy skills for these jobseekers in their local communities. This grant has a period of performance from July 1, 2021, through September 30, 2022. These grants support The State's vision to prepare individuals for job searching and emerging employment opportunities, to gain access to employment with family sustaining wages, and to increase communities' infrastructures for

providing foundational digital literacy skills. Acquiring these skills will prepare today's jobseekers and employees for success in the 21st century labor market.

### **Digital Literacy and Workforce Development Grant-Round 2**

L&I selected 21 recipients for Digital Literacy and Workforce Development Grants, which will help workers develop basic digital skills they need to apply for jobs and succeed in new careers. The award totals nearly \$900,000 and will connect State workers with the skills they need to effectively navigate the technology platforms used in today's workplaces. This grant has a period of performance from May 1, 2022, through July 31, 2023. This is a second round of digital-literacy funding that builds on \$1.3 million awarded in April 2021 to support local programs that provide computer-skills training to help people find good jobs in The State. Digital literacy grants support the Commonwealth's WIOA Combined State Plan and are 100 percent federally funded.

### *Evaluations*

#### *Activities and Methodology*

### **Digital Literacy Grant Round 1 - 3rd Party Evaluation**

L&I developed a statement of work to bring on a 3rd party vendor to evaluate the effectiveness, impact, return on investment, and overall success of the Digital Literacy and Workforce Development Grant (DLWDG). A vendor was selected in late 2021 and started in January 2022. The vendor's responsibilities include the collection, evaluation, and preparation of reports. The vendor performed one site visit per grantee, for a total of 31 grantee sites. Monthly Status Reports highlight factors such as each grantee's quality of curriculum, best practices, challenges observed, technical assistance needs, success stories, and any other information requested by Bureau of Workforce Development Administration (BWDA). A final report will be submitted in February 2023 that will address each of the DLWDG grant recipient's implementation, instructor-based learning for digital literacy programming, outcomes and statistics, cost evaluation, positive themes and challenges, replicability, and sustainability. This report will also summarize best practices and lessons learned so L&I can evaluate the need for additional support and initiatives that will promote high-level performance and outcomes.

### **Digital Literacy Grant Round 2 - 3rd Party Evaluation**

L&I developed a statement of work seeking services from a vendor with knowledge and experience in research and evaluation methodologies and WIOA workforce development systems to evaluate the efficacy and impact of the DLWDG. The goal of this project is to evaluate the effectiveness and return on investment of the DLWDG to promote high-level performance within and high-level outcomes from the workforce development system. This will be accomplished through a review of each of the 21 Digital Literacy grant awards to determine if the grant was effective in addressing the digital literacy skills of the target population and to determine what additional needs remain to address for the coverage areas and unserved or underserved populations. The grantee will:

1. Propose and utilize research and evaluation methodologies to provide quantitative and qualitative information to the department.
2. Propose an implementation and data collection plan to address the Stated needs.

3. Collect, evaluate, and report data and information as specified in the deliverables section to determine the success of the Digital Literacy Notice of Grant Availability (NGA).
4. Provide summary information related to best practices and lessons learned so that the department can evaluate the need for additional support or initiatives.
5. Schedule and perform one site visit per Grantee.

### **Financial Aid Utilization**

L&I recently evaluated the availability, barriers, utilization, and needs of workforce system customers regarding financial aid for training activities. This evaluation included a summary of what is currently occurring and recommendations for improving customer access to all sources of financial aid. The White Paper will help inform decision-makers so that resources and policy can be aligned to address customer barriers in accessing and maintaining financial assistance.

### **Grant Performance Evaluation**

In collaboration with the Center for Workforce Information and Analysis (CWIA), the Apprenticeship Training Office (ATO), and the State Workforce Development Board (WDB), the Grants Unit in BWDA drafted a Statement of Work to contract with a vendor who will provide full-time staff to:

- Analyze existing grants and new NGAs and recommend improvements to performance monitoring strategies;
- Create data collection tools and performance report dashboards; and
- Evaluate incoming grant performance data and produce summary documents, reports, dashboards, and infographics for department leadership and other stakeholders as requested.

### **Other Evaluation Activities**

- Digital Literacy Phase II – Communication Toolkit
- Pre-Apprenticeship Success in Serving Youth and Integration into the Secondary School System
- Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment Program (RESEA)

### *Continuous Improvement*

#### **Business Service Delivery Evaluation**

Initiated by The State Keystone Command Center, L&I and the Department of Community & Economic Development (DCED) are evaluating whether the workforce and economic development (WED) system is effectively serving businesses and if the system infrastructure is sufficient to support service delivery. The lessons learned from the pandemic and the needs of the post-pandemic labor force and businesses are explored to ensure that services match existing needs. The goals of this evaluation are to outline the existing model, determine what existing services are effective, identify where gaps in the service delivery may exist, and establish and measure a new-post pandemic minimum standard of services. The analysis will also be used to identify and

standardize key performance indicators and data collection protocols that could be used to measure outcomes. The evaluation will be completed on March 30, 2023.

#### **Digital Literacy Phase II – Communication Toolkit**

The Digital Literacy Evaluation of PA CareerLink® to better understand customer levels of digital literacy, conducted in 2021, indicated a need to reevaluate and realign the messaging for PA CareerLink® for consistency at all centers. As a result of the evaluation, a Communication Toolkit will be developed to communicate about the program and how it assists employers, jobseekers, and other state and community agencies to increase referrals to workforce programs.

#### **Grant Performance Evaluation**

The Grants Unit continues to gather information and feedback on the work's scope and design; Bureau of Workforce Development Administration (BWDA) expects to solicit proposals to complete this work beginning in Fall 2022. A selected vendor's staff would integrate themselves with the Grants Unit to provide support in performance evaluation for all grants.

In addition, L&I has been working with the Harvard Kennedy School Government Performance Lab to build on efforts to improve grantmaking processes, including principles of Active Grant Management.

#### **Training Initiatives**

In addition to Professional Development Day, BWDA has been creating training opportunities for staff including Individual Employment Plan/Individual Service Strategy (IEP/ISS); Interval Training; and CWDS General Training.

#### **Other Continuous Improvement Activities**

- Digital Intake
- State Longitudinal Data System
- National Governors Association Workforce Innovation Network Digital Literacy Grant
- Pre-Apprenticeship Success in Serving Youth and Integration into the Secondary School System

#### *Reports*

#### **Keystone Economic Development and Workforce Command Center**

This report outlines the work of the Command Center over the last year, the comprehensive review and intake of information surrounding the workforce system and initiatives in The State and the dedicated effort of time, resources and critical thinking put forth by each agency and organization named in the Executive Order. Agencies that were not originally named as a part of the Command Center have joined the conversations to further elaborate on the topics covered.

*Waivers**Waiver Implemented*

The State had no WIOA waivers in place during PY21.

*Strategies*

Not applicable.

*Impact on Performance*

Not applicable.

*Success Stories**Adult Overcomes Troubled Past to Obtain CDL – Corey*

Corey contacted the PA CareerLink® to inquire about possible funding opportunities offered for Commercial Driver's License (CDL) training. Corey was recently released from prison after serving eight years. He was able to secure a place to live by working with the Housing Specialist for Bradford County and was also hired full-time in a local factory. Corey scheduled an appointment to come in and discuss the programs and funding. His goal was to get his Class A CDL, as he was aware of several available job opportunities that would pay significantly more than his current wage. The only way Corey could attend training was to work around his swing shift schedule at the factory. The training site he chose required one week of classroom training with the rest of the training consisting of forty-four hours of one-on-one driving time with an instructor. The training site was willing to work around Corey's factory work schedule. Corey was close to earning his first week of vacation, so he was able to use this time off to cover the week of classroom training. For his one-on-one driving times Corey worked closely with the training site to come up with a schedule to complete this requirement on his days off. It was hectic, but Corey was able to successfully finish his training on July 14, 2022, with a GPA of 97.91 percent and passed his road test without problems. After considering several offers, Corey chose a local employer and is working full time hauling sand to natural gas fracking sites. Corey is making \$24 per hour with benefits and says he "couldn't have done it without the WIOA staff and appreciates all the help."

*Class Salutatorian – Delicia*

A recently divorced Mom of four young girls was at a time in her life when she was uncertain of what would come next. One of her twin daughters with special needs required 24-hour nursing care due to her tracheostomy. Delicia worked at Future's Community Support Service in Towanda until June of 2021, helping other people who had developmental disabilities. Due to missing too much time at work when her daughter's nursing staff called off, her employer had to let her go. The employer understood Delicia's situation but unfortunately, they had to look out for the interest of their client's needs. In trying to find a solution for Delicia's family situation, she discussed options with her daughter's nursing agency. They strongly suggested that Delicia pursue her LPN license so that they could hire her through a program they have through the State. This program could pay her to care for her daughter, this would take away the call-offs and her finding an employer willing to work with her around

her family's needs. Delicia enrolled in July of 2021, at Susquehanna County Career Technology Center and started the LPN program. She was then referred to Trehab Workforce to seek assistance in the WIOA Adult program and was enrolled on September 7, 2021. With a determined spirit, Delicia maintained the drive and commitment she needed to complete the training and on June 24, 2022, she graduated at the top of her class earning the title of Class Salutatorian. She stated, "It was a very long year, but I persevered and was very proud of my 3.83 GPA." Delicia is now preparing for her state boards for her license and together with her girls, they are ready to tackle the next chapter!

*For more information, visit:*

### *Reports*

(Jan. 2020). *Keystone Economic Development and Workforce Command Center*. Annual Report. Keystone Economic Development and Workforce Command Center.

Pennsylvania Workforce Development Board (Dec. 2022). *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Annual Statewide Performance Report Narrative*.

### *Links*

Pennsylvania Workforce Development Board

Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry

WIOA Combined State Plan: Pennsylvania PYs 2020-2023



## Rhode Island

### Governor's Workforce Board

#### *Use of State Funds*

#### *Adult Priority Service*

No information provided for this section.

#### *COVID-19 Response*

#### **Career Pathways**

A key priority for The State's career pathways system throughout PY21 was the expansion and elevation of support services throughout the WIOA system. Using lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic including the pronounced role and oversized impact that support services had on participant completion and employment, The State sought to significantly expand the scope, availability, and flexibility of support services under WIOA. Through voluntary collaboration with both local workforce development areas, the State raised local caps/limits on support services and expanded the range of covered services and costs to include, but not be limited to:

- Heating and utilities assistance (if determined necessary for continued participation in WIOA programming);
- Background checks (BCI) as required;
- Child or dependent care assistance;
- Clothing and hygiene assistance;
- Emergency food assistance (if determined necessary for continued participation in WIOA programming);
- Emergency housing assistance (if determined necessary for continued participation in WIOA programming);
- Healthcare or medical assistance;
- Legal aid services as required;
- Technology such as reasonable assistance with internet or computing equipment as required; and
- Tools, equipment, and uniforms.

Offering a wide net of support services was crucial to the success of many of the Department's employment and training initiatives during the pandemic; providing a responsive and customized approach to barrier mitigation that was widely praised by participants and employers, while maintaining fiscal accountability and integrity.

*Other State Funds Activities*

No information provided for this section.

*Evaluations**Activities and Methodology*

The Department of Labor and Training has brought on a Ph.D.-level Director of Data and Performance who, in partnership with the State Workforce Development Board has begun overseeing a series of comprehensive evaluation projects of core and partner program services delivered through the Job Centers. This effort will include participation by the staff who represent the core programs under WIOA and additional programs. The assessment evaluation will also include information obtained from assessments conducted by federal agencies such as the DOL and Department of Education.

**National Health Emergency Demonstration Grants to Address the Opioid Crisis**

In October of 2020 the Department began participation in an evaluation of the National Health Emergency Demonstration Grants to Address the Opioid Crisis. These grants, administered by the Employment and Training Administration (ETA), provided funding to states to test innovative approaches to addressing the economic and workforce-related impacts of the opioid epidemic. The DOL contracted with Mathematica and its partner, Social Policy Research Associates (SPR), to collect and analyze the data for the evaluation. The evaluation team used the study findings to provide DOL with a report documenting the activities that grantees are implementing, including populations targeted and reached, challenges experienced, and promising practices or lessons learned. As part of the evaluation, the State Department of Labor & Training (DLT) worked with Mathematica and SPR to ensure there was full access needed to perform the evaluation. This included collecting data, virtual site visits, and interviews with relevant individuals involved in implementing the grants, including the State grant director, state administrator, frontline staff, external partners, and grant participants. The State established connections between Mathematica and SPR and two local sub-awardees, as well as facilitated the scheduling of multiple focus groups including participants affected by the crisis receiving grant services and participants in occupational training to address the crisis.

**Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA)**

At this time, the Department of Labor and Training is utilizing an independent study to assess the effectiveness of its Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program. The State's RESEA program connects select Unemployment Insurance (UI) claimants with a career counselor who helps them navigate the State DLT resources with the objective of facilitating gainful and sustainable employment. STATE DLT contracted the Policy Lab at Brown University to evaluate how well the State's RESEA program meets its mission objectives. Through a randomized controlled trial to 21 measure the causal effects of enrollment in RESEA on several key metrics, such as how soon participants find employment and how much they earn while at those new jobs, the Policy Lab will provide objective data to assess the effectiveness of current programs. The goal of this evaluation is to see if the State's specific intervention leads to positive outcomes for those selected to participate in RESEA compared to those not selected. This evaluation serves two purposes. The first is to see if the resources offered by DLT are comparatively better than the baseline (no services). The second is to refine which members of the population selected for

the RESEA most benefit from the intervention. The results of this multi-year evaluation will directly speak to future service delivery. The evaluation will also help make appropriate updates to the State's WIOA Plan as needed. Such evaluation and resulting actions, such as policy changes or adjustment in strategy, will be shared with the federal agencies at the appropriate time.

### *Continuous Improvement*

No information provided for this section.

### *Reports*

No information provided for this section.

### *Waivers*

#### *Waiver Implemented*

Rhode Island had four waivers in place for at least one program year in PY21:

- Waiver of the requirements outlined at Section 107 of the WIOA, allowing the State board to function as a local board for the Greater Rhode Island area.
- 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 percent for businesses with 50 or fewer employees.
- Waiver associated with the requirement at WIOA Section 129(a)(4)(A) and 20 CFR 681.410 that the State and local areas expend 75 percent of Governor's reserve youth funds and local formula youth funds on out-of-school youth (OSY).
- Waiver of 20 CFR 680.780 to adjust the six-month employment requirement for incumbent worker training (IWT).

### *Strategies*

#### **Waiver to increase On the Job Training (OJT) employer reimbursement up to 90 percent for businesses with 50 or fewer employees**

The primary goal and outcomes of the waiver included: increased flexibility for smaller State businesses to help them ramp up operations and keep pace with evolving market demands as the State recovers from the economic impacts of the pandemic; and to increase the usage of OJT among smaller firms. Per the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 91.1 percent of The State entities were those which employed fewer than 20 workers in 2021. The initial waiver was approved on August 13, 2021. During the months of September and October 2021, the State board conferred with staff and thought leadership on the best approach to operationalizing this waiver among the local areas and raising employer awareness. In December guidance was issued by the State Board to all local areas and state staff was made available to answer any questions. The Greater Rhode Island local area issued enabling policy changes, with required procedural changes and guidance in early February 2022; the Providence/Cranston local area issued enabling policy with required procedural changes and guidance in late March.

**Waiver associated with the requirement that the State and local areas expend 75 percent of Governor’s reserve youth funds and local formula youth funds on Out of School Youth (OSY)**

The primary goal of the waiver was to better meet the needs of the youth population and help expand and scale school-to-career programming and drop-out prevention strategies, especially in-light-of and in response to the challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Waiver to adjust the six-month employment requirement for Incumbent Working Training (IWT)**

The primary goal of the waiver was to eliminate a barrier to providing IWT to employers and workers looking to restart operations and increase competitiveness as the State recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic. The State previously offered a state-funded IWT program that was popular statewide and made a WIOA-funded iteration of IWT redundant. The program was put on hiatus because of financial difficulties brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. After financial review, the State elected to bring the State funded IWT program back during PY21 and for the foreseeable future. Therefore, the State determined that the waiver was no longer necessary and elected not to enable a WIOA-funded IWT program. The State will continue to monitor the interest and need for IWT under WIOA. Such training may still be made available in local areas who authorize it, but with the six-month employment requirement, as described in 20 CFR 680.780.

**Waiver of the requirements, allowing the State board to function as a local board for the Greater Rhode Island area**

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

Under WIOA, the Governor continued to serve as the Chief Elected Official for the GRI LWDB. During a compliance monitoring review conducted in February 2018, DOL regional staff identified that the Governor acting in this capacity was inconsistent with WIOA requirements because the Governor was not a local elected official and, thus, cannot appoint the local board. Regional staff advised finding one or more local elected official(s) to assume the role of Chief Local Elected Official for the area or submit a waiver requesting that the SWDB act as, and carry out roles and responsibilities of, the GRI LWDB. After conferring with The State League of Cities and Towns (Which represents all 39 municipalities in The State, including the 37 that make up the Greater Rhode Island area), the State elected to submit a waiver to allow the State board to function as a local board for Greater Rhode Island. This waiver was initially approved in September 2019 with the condition that the Board ensure continued local input and feedback into decisions impacting the Greater Rhode Island area. In response, the Board worked with the League of Cities and Towns to establish a Local Area Advisory Committee for the State Board. This Subcommittee met throughout PY21 and helped ensure local area ‘voice’ and representation in key WIOA-related matters including policymaking, service data and demographic analysis, modification of the local WIOA plan, overseeing rehabilitation and upgrading of the local area American Job Centers, and other matters. The ultimate responsibility for these functions remains with the board.

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

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

### *Impact on Performance*

#### **Waiver of the requirements, allowing the State board to function as a local board for the Greater Rhode Island area**

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

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

In response to condition three, the State continues to conduct regular monitoring of local areas. Consistent with the terms of the waiver, The State revised its statewide monitoring policy to ensure that local monitoring decisions were free from any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest.

#### **Waiver to increase OJT employer reimbursement up to 90 percent for businesses with 50 or fewer employees**

During PY21, 81 percent of OJT establishments contracted in the Greater 18 State workforce area alone employed fewer than 50 individuals, and 59 percent fewer than 20 employees. It is anticipated that this ratio will be maintained or increased as both local areas continue to build employer awareness and outreach regarding the enhanced match.

#### **Waiver associated with the requirement that the State and local areas expend 75 percent of Governor’s reserve youth funds and local formula youth funds on OSY**

In PY21, 24.3 percent of all WIOA Youth served statewide were in-school youth (ISY); however not all local workforce development areas elected to use the flexibility to serve additional ISY provided through the waiver. The local area that opted for the increased service flexibility (Greater Rhode Island) served 27.8 percent ISY, despite lingering in-school logistical challenges related to the pandemic. The State plans to enhance its’ Incumbent Working Training partnerships with regional high schools and anticipate this ratio will continue to grow.

### *Success Stories*

No information provided for this section.

*For more information, visit:*

*Reports*

Department of Labor and Training. *State of Rhode Island WIOA PY2021: Narrative Performance Report.*

*Links*

Governor's Workforce Board

## South Carolina

### South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce

#### *Use of State Funds*

#### *Adult Priority Service*

No information provided for this section.

#### *COVID-19 Response*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Other State Funds Activities*

#### **Secret Shopper**

As part of the State's effort to assess and improve The State's Works customer experience, the SC Workforce Development Board (SWDB) invested \$100,000 in a comprehensive evaluation of The State Works system using a secret shopper approach. The project is expected to last 12 months, concluding in 2023.

The results of the evaluation will identify promising practices to be scaled across the State, inform resource investments, and highlight the need for staff training and professional development.

#### **SWDB Resiliency Grant**

Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs) were invited to submit requests for discretionary funding through the SWDB Resiliency Grant for activities and initiatives that align with one or more of the SWDB priorities including increasing labor participation, program outreach, rural development, innovation, and continuous improvement. All 12 local workforce development areas applied for were awarded a total of \$4,664,993 to support local activities for an 18-month grant period from December 1, 2021 through May 31, 2023.

#### *Evaluations*

#### *Activities and Methodology*

#### **State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) Survey**

The State Workforce Development Board partnered with the National Governors Association (NGA) to compile information and examples from other states regarding the structure and governance of state workforce development boards. To gather the information, the NGA Center for Best Practices developed a survey that was circulated to state workforce development board directors and staff across the country. Based on the survey responses and independent research, the NGA center prepared a memo summarizing the State examples and best practices in the following key areas:

- Membership

- Committees and task forces
- Staff support
- Onboarding new members
- Training and professional development
- Stakeholder engagement
- Communications
- Local board engagement

A comparison of the examples compiled by the NGA to current practices deployed by the SWDB shows that the SWDB is organized very similarly to other state workforce boards. Additionally, many of the practices highlighted in the memo are practices that the SWDB currently uses. Differences emerged in areas of membership, committees and task forces, and local engagement. As a result of the survey, the Board will support the use of *ad-hoc* task forces and work groups to engage stakeholders, including local workforce development boards, in the work of the SWDB.

### **Results of the Rural Analysis**

During PY21, the University of South Carolina, Darla Moore School of Business, conducted an analysis to determine if workers in rural areas faced greater barriers to reemployment. The research findings were published in September 2022 and concluded that rural workers laid-off during the COVID-19 recession were more likely to experience a longer period of unemployment than their urban counterparts, despite a broad-based labor market recovery over the past two years. Reemployment initiatives directed toward rural areas will be a crucial component of any economic development strategy to help improve long-term economic growth.

In PY22, the SWDB will communicate strategies for prioritizing rural areas. Strategies may include:

- Expanding the use of online services to connect rural jobseekers to employment and training opportunities;
- Increasing availability and breadth of supportive services to remove barriers;
- Conducting strategic outreach to communities and individuals who need assistance reentering the workforce;
- Utilizing non-traditional service strategies such as transitional jobs and work experience for adult participants to help overcome gaps in employment; and
- Engaging employers through industry and sector partnerships.

The full analysis is provided in the September 2022 Rural Workforce Study.



### **Virtual Reality Survey**

In cooperation with the SWDB, Department of Employment and Workforce (DEW) is evaluating the current and planned utilization of virtual reality (VR) in education and workforce development. VR is the computer-generated simulation of a 3D image or environment. A person interacts with VR by using electronic equipment such as a helmet with a screen inside or gloves fitted with sensors. VR offers a new, hands-on approach to career exploration and can be used to augment classroom and on-the-job training.

SWDB investments in statewide employment and training activities have allowed LWDA's to purchase and deploy virtual reality equipment. The Upstate LWDA is a front-runner in the utilization of VR in partnership with K–12 and employers. Through the State's research, we have also found examples of VR use in other states, including Alabama, Arkansas, and Oregon.

### *Continuous Improvement*

### **Virtual Reality Survey**

The survey, distributed to education and workforce partners, will help the State better understand the current and desired use of VR in workforce development and inform strategies to best support and expand the use of VR technology. Results of the survey will be available in the second quarter of PY22.

### *Reports*

- The Impact of Rural Residency on the Likelihood of Long-Term Unemployment in South Carolina.

### *Waivers*

### *Waiver Implemented*

The State did not have any active waivers in PY21.

### *Strategies*

Not applicable.

### *Impact on Performance*

Not applicable.

### *Success Stories*

### *SC Works Success*

The State Works Success webpage launched in February 2022, located on the SCWorks.org website to recognize the achievements and innovation of SC Works professionals and services across the State. Individuals can use the embedded forms on the webpage to submit success stories or promising practices for staff review. The success stories may be featured on the webpage, social media, or during SC WDB meetings for acknowledgment and awareness.

*For more information, visit:*

*Reports*

South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce. *WIOA Annual Report PY 2021*.

*Links*

South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce

## South Dakota

### South Dakota Department of Labor & Regulation

#### *Use of State Funds*

#### *Adult Priority Service*

No information provided for this section.

#### *COVID-19 Response*

#### **UpSkill**

This partnership between the State Department of Labor and Regulation (DLR) and the Board of Technical Education developed in response to COVID-19, utilized multiple funding streams to assist the first cohort of individuals pursuing a certificate in the fall of 2020. To reflect credentials earned for these co-enrolled individuals, DLR misinterpreted guidance and entered services for each program where funding was utilized. This created duplicate denominators, negatively impacting the credential attainment rate for the Dislocated Worker, National Dislocated Worker, and adult programs. Upon realizing this, DLR corrected the practice and anticipates that within two program years the credential attainment rate will correct as well.

#### *Other State Funds Activities*

#### **Bridge Programs**

Through a partnership with the Board of Technical Education (BoTE) and The State Department of Education (DOE), DLR awarded \$95,000 of Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) funding for the development of two bridge programs to assist individuals in preparing for and succeeding in entry-level healthcare and truck driving occupations. The goal of these programs is to offer a basic foundation of skills to engage individuals with a lower skill set and less likely to be part of the workforce. While still in their infancy, we look forward to making these programs available to businesses and workforce systems as avenues for skills development. In addition, the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) funding was paired with State Apprenticeship Expansion funding to engage industry associations in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) fields. With this funding, Kae Area Technical College (LATC) developed three healthcare Registered Apprenticeship programs offering a career pathway for students that include Certified Nursing Assistance (CNA), Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) and Registered Nurse (RN).

#### **Dakota Roots**

This initiative assists in recruiting out-of-state jobseekers by providing local job market insight and personalized job search assistance through DakotaRoots.com and SDWORKS. The State funds this worker recruitment initiative which continued its 15th year of connecting out-of-state jobseekers with in-state career opportunities. In addition to grassroots efforts encouraging current South Dakotans to refer family and friends, digital media outreach has assisted with traffic to the website.

During Calendar Year CY21, job search assistance was offered to 516 out-of-state jobseekers through direct contact from DLR Job Advisors. The State saw a seven percent increase in inbound workforce migration over the previous year's numbers. The most significant number of individuals came from bordering states, with Minnesota, Iowa and Nebraska being the top three. Large concentrations from Sioux City, Iowa; Rock Rapids, Iowa; Luverne, Minnesota; and the small bordering towns scattered across the river from Yankton and Vermillion may indicate daily commuters. Other large migration concentrations came from Minneapolis/Saint Paul, Denver, Omaha, Los Angeles, and Phoenix metro areas.

Comparing CY20 to CY21, The State saw the following changes:

- The manufacturing industry surpassed health care as the number one industry for hiring out-of-state individuals.
- The educational services industry saw a twenty-eight percent increase in hiring an inbound workforce.
- The professional, scientific and technical services industry overtook the retail trade industry as a top five industry in the top five relocation cities.

#### **Family First Initiative + Bring Your 'A' Game**

The State Legislature appropriated general funds for the Family-First Initiative to help individuals gain meaningful and sustainable employment, retain employment and further develop a work and life balance. DLR partnered with five providers to deliver virtual and in-person family-oriented courses to individuals from a wide range of economic and educational backgrounds to build positive relationships and receive guidance in a neutral learning environment. In PY21, providers facilitated 91 courses to 486 individuals who reside or are employed in the state.

#### **SDWORKS**

SDWORKS completed a fifth full program year as DLR's Management Information System. It continues to grow and expand in response to the needs of State jobseekers, employers, and DLR staff and programs. SDWORKS serves as the State's premier and most complete job listing board, employer posting site, and case management system. Enhancements are ongoing to improve data entry, reporting integrity and program data.

For compatibility with the South Dakota Citizen Portal, SDWORKS access processes were updated to transition to the mySD Single Sign-On protocol. mySD is the State of South Dakota's secure and centralized identity service used by citizens to access State of South Dakota services. mySD allows users to access state services using a single username and password. Since implementation, individual and employer users have been individually creating mySD profiles and linking those profiles to their existing SDWORKS account registrations.

#### *Evaluations*

#### *Activities and Methodology*

With the current job market and great resignation, the State Department of Labor and Regulation (DLR) saw an opportunity to review retention with the same employer performance indicator. DLR utilized the retention with the same employer indicator

during the pilot phase. DLR is evaluating the most current program's data because of the confidence level in the accuracy of the data.

DLR is particularly interested in retention with the same employer for individuals served with employment barriers such as long-term unemployed, ex-offender, single parent, low income, and basic skills deficient. DLR first compared the retention rate for individuals who had employment barriers and those who did not. The retention rate between the two groups is similar, with 67.7 percent of individuals who did not have any employment barrier and 61.2 percent of the individuals with at least one employment barrier retaining employment with the same employer.

DLR then further broke down retention with the same employer by each individual employment barrier. Here DLR was able to see that some employment barriers had lower retention rates than others. DLR reviewed several services to see if retention rates would improve if services were provided. One service that provided better retention rates was support services. Overall, when individuals with employment barriers received at least one supportive service during their program participation, they did better, GEER funding with a retention rate of 67.0 percent. DLR also saw groups of employment barriers doing better if they received a support service; low-income, older individuals, single parents and ex-offenders.

#### *Continuous Improvement*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Reports*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Waivers*

##### *Waiver Implemented*

The State's title I Youth program has benefited from two approved waivers:

- WIOA Section 129(A)(4)(A) AND 20 CFR 681.410 – Out-of-school youth (OSY) expenditure waiver.
- 20 CFR 681.550 – Individual Training Account (ITA) usage for in-school youth (ISY) waiver.

#### *Strategies*

##### **OSY expenditure waiver**

This waiver allows the State Department of Labor and Regulation (DLR) to expend up to 50 percent of youth funding on ISY. With this waiver in place, DLR has enhanced its partnership with the State Department of Education and individual school districts throughout the State. This waiver is crucial to the State's efforts to expose students to local employment and education opportunities in their communities.

The State's low employment numbers make businesses increasingly interested in building student relationships. This waiver allows DLR to offer services to all youth participants equally, resulting in a sizable increase in the number of Work-Based Learning services offered to youth in state communities.

#### **ITA usage for ISY waiver**

This waiver allows DLR to operate the in-school Youth program in alignment with the OSY program. This eases implementation in a small state where staff works on multiple programs. It reduces confusion for the State's partners and increases participation.

#### *Impact on Performance*

#### **OSY expenditure waiver**

Career exploration services include job shadows, provision of labor market information, and leadership development services. With the approval of this waiver in PY18, there have been significant gains in the number of Career Exploration Services provided to youth in the State except for PY20 (due to the reassignment of job service staff to assist with unemployment insurance from March through November of 2020, as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic). The number of career explorations offered in PY21 dwarfs all previous years and is a positive indicator of DLR's commitment to serving the youth of the State.

Title I Youth Work-Based Learning Services: DLR provided 218 opportunities in PY18, then saw a decrease in PY19 and PY20, a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, in PY21, DLR provided 237 work-based learning services to youth in the State.

Apprentices are generally between the ages of 16 and 34. With the launch of the Pathway Partnership initiative, there has been a steady increase in the number of youths entering apprenticeships. This past program year saw an increase of 95 percent in participation of the 16–24-year-old age group from the previous year.

#### **ITA usage for ISY waiver**

This waiver was first approved in PY18. DLR Job Service offices responded quickly to the opportunities provided by the waiver and raised enrollments by 43 percent in the first program year of waiver approval. From PY18 to PY19, the Youth program participation increased by another 44 percent. COVID-19 contributed to a slight decrease in PY20, but PY21 roared back, outpacing previous years of enrollment.

Since the implementation of this waiver, DLR has worked to increase postsecondary options for disadvantaged ISY. In PY21, DLR assisted 10 ISY with an occupational skills training service. While there have been marked increases in occupational skills training services since implementation of this waiver, there was a dip in PY20, most likely due to the pandemic. With the increase in participation, DLR anticipates continued growth in occupational skills training services in the coming years.

#### *Success Stories*

#### *WIOA Adult Program – Molly*

"I love to share my story. I was part of the very first cohort pursuing the Precision Machining certificate from Lake Area Technical College at the South Dakota Women's Prison. As much as I would like to erase that part of my story, it has

given me so much strength, courage, and a skill I never thought I would have. We learned from one of the best instructors and had so much support from many, including DLR. I was so worried when I left [prison in] Pierre I would have a hard time finding a career again and providing for my family. But I was hired before I was released as a service administrator for an electrical and power transmission manufacturer. I may not physically work on a mill or a lathe, but this certification gave me confidence, wisdom, and the industrial language and context to be successful in this role.

I will forever be grateful for the Precision Machining program and the support I received throughout. It came at a dark time in my life and opened more doors than I could have imagined!”

### *WIOA Adult Program – Lillie*

Lillie was referred to the Huron Job Service Office by the Adult Education and Literacy partner, Cornerstones Career Learning Center (CCLC). Lillie was 18, had dropped out of high school and worked part time while taking GED® classes at CCLC. Lillie met with DLR’s Employment Specialist, John Taylor, and enrolled in title III Wagner-Peyser and WIOA title I out-of-school Youth and Adult programs.

While Lillie was getting by, her financial resources were strained while juggling her GED® studies and a part-time job. Through Participants Reaching Employment Potential (PREP), Lillie received three months of rent and a \$200 monthly incentive for attending GED® classes, allowing Lillie to keep up with her bills while progressing toward her goal of obtaining a GED®. Lillie expressed interest in further developing her work history and skills. John helped Lillie prepare for work by completing a Master-application, résumé, mock interview, labor market research and Reality Check. Lillie was able to enhance her employability skills and earn youth incentives for completing milestones.

John reached out to the McDonald’s Manager about a 250-hour, part-time, paid title I Youth work experience for Lillie, allowing her to work 25 hours a week at \$15.00 per hour while she continued attending GED® classes. While working as a Crew Member, Lillie gained valuable transferable skills: effective communication with customers and co-workers, critical thinking, organizational skills, time management and the lost art of counting change. The additional money allowed Lillie to pay for rent without assistance and purchase a car! At the end of the contract, Lillie was offered a job on McDonald’s payroll, which she accepted.

While working at McDonald’s, Lillie began passing the GED® Ready tests. Lillie passed three tests and missed her final test by just a few points. She attempted this test two more times, missing it by a few points each time. During the summer, Lillie took a break from her GED® studies and focused on a new full-time, seasonal job at the Salvation Army Tiger’s Den Summer Youth Program as a Summer Camp Co-Leader. Although frustrated about not passing her final GED® test, she remained confident and never wavered from her goal. In August, Lillie earned her GED®. Lillie is distinguished as Huron’s first PREP enrollee and first PREP completer.

Lillie is currently working at Coborn’s Inc. in Huron and has worked with John on updating her résumé and cover letter to find full-time employment working with young children.

*For more information, visit:*

*Reports*

South Dakota Department of Labor & Regulation. *Program Year 2021 Annual Narrative Report.*

*Links*

South Dakota Department of Labor & Regulation



## Tennessee

### Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development

#### *Use of State Funds*

#### *Adult Priority Service*

No information provided for this section.

#### *COVID-19 Response*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Other State Funds Activities*

#### **Mobile American Job Centers**

The Mobile American Job Centers offer services similar to those found in a brick-and-mortar American Job Center (AJC). These Mobile AJCs provide internet connectivity, computer lab, copier and scanner and an adaptable venue for Job search assistance on Jobs4tn, various workshops, résumé assistance and interviewing skills. The State's Mobile AJCs can also serve as recruitment centers for new and expanding businesses.

#### **Virtual American Job Center**

The Virtual American Job Center (VAJC) provides a digital experience for Tennesseans to learn about services offered through the Department of Labor and partner agencies. The goal of the VAJC is to enable a self-service model that will improve the service exploration experience.

Through the new VAJC website, Tennesseans will be able to discover services and programs available through their local brick-and-mortar AJC, understand what they may be eligible for based on personal information provided, and get connected with their local AJC by scheduling an appointment online. A key feature included is the eligibility wizard which will help users understand what services they qualify for based on their demographic information. This feature is an example of the self-service model empowering users to explore services available independently and expediting the enrollment and intake process for case managers.

The vision of the VAJC is to develop a dynamic and adaptable system designed to foster cooperation between internal and external partner programs. In so doing, it will live up to the expectations of the clients by providing consistent high-quality customer service. By providing easily digestible and accessible information, the VAJC will positively impact the State as a whole, especially in distressed and rural communities, and to individuals who lack physical access to an AJC. The planned launch date for the VAJC website is December 2020.

As the primary customer of the workforce system, the Northwest TN Workforce Board (NWTNWB) prioritizes services to employers. During PY21, companies in the State's northwestern region have received wage reimbursements more than \$229,000

through on-the-job-training (OJT) grants to train their own workers. Business Services staff and the AJCs developed contracts with 33 companies, placed job orders, and referred eligible job applicants to fill 161 positions. Most OJT expenditures, 75 percent, were made in the Manufacturing sector, followed by Other at 14 percent, Contractor/Construction at 4.8 percent, Healthcare at 4.5 percent, and Business Services at 1 percent. Statewide funding was made available to employers to provide training for their current workforce to improve processes and upgrade skills. Over \$398,000 was awarded to 27 companies to train 664 workers, with 627 employees completing training and over \$364,000 paid to participating employers. The majority of expenditures, 58 percent, were made in the Manufacturing sector, followed by Business and Other Services at 23 percent, and Construction and Electrical Services at 12 percent, Healthcare at six percent, and Other at two percent.

### *Evaluations*

### *Activities and Methodology*

No information provided for this section.

### *Continuous Improvement*

#### **Tennessee Eligible Training Provider List (TN ETPL)**

TN ETPL is actively improving internal processes to provide the best outcomes for providers and program participants. In early 2022, new standard operating procedures set into place guided the processing of two separate state appeals. These new operating procedures ensured that all parties participated in a fair and timely appeals process.

As Apprenticeship TN continues its growth trajectory, TN ETPL recognizes their efforts bring great new opportunities for the ETP list. As a result, TN ETPL and Apprenticeship TN 19 collaborated this year to streamline the process that welcomes interested Registered Apprenticeships to the ETP list. An updated policy relating to Registered Apprenticeships has been drafted by TN ETPL and is in the final stages of review.

The number of providers has grown to 191. They are as follows:

- 108 – Private Schools
- 27 – TCATS
- 11 – Four Year Public Institutions
- 20 – Community Colleges
- 20 – Registered Apprenticeships
- 5 – Community-Based Organizations

All providers, except Registered Apprenticeships, are required to submit annual performance reports to The State Department of Labor and Workforce Development (TDLWD). This is the second year the report will contain individual-level data for all

participants in programs offered by eligible training providers. This report is then combined to submit the yearly ETPL Federal reporting. Beginning with PY20, reporting requirements expanded to include program completion rates for all students (both WIOA and non-WIOA). This data is being used to construct a baseline of program performance which WIOA participants may access. With program performance rates at their fingertips, program participants will enjoy a higher level of informed consumer choice.

### *Reports*

No information provided for this section.

### *Waivers*

#### *Waiver Implemented*

In PY21, the State had two WIOA waivers that were approved.

- Waiver associated with the requirement that local areas expend 75 percent of local formula youth funds on out-of-school youth (OSY).
- Waiver to allow WIOA Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for in-school youth (ISY)

### *Strategies*

#### **Waiver associated with the requirement that local areas expend 75 percent of local formula youth funds on OSY**

The Youth program received a 50/50 waiver from DOL to be able to serve OSY and ISY at the same percentage. Without this waiver the Youth program would have to serve 75 percent OSY and 25 percent ISY.

#### **Waiver to allow WIOA ITAs for ISY**

The approval of this waiver permits Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) the opportunity to determine how best to meet the educational and training needs of youth with other barriers regardless of school status, and specific to the population, geographical location, and economic and employment conditions within each Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA). Additionally, increasing outreach to ISY while maintaining a focus on serving OSY will help develop a larger pool of young people qualified and prepared to meet the current and future needs of employers in their workforce areas and throughout the State.

### *Impact on Performance*

#### **Waiver to allow WIOA ITAs for ISY**

This waiver allowed local areas to consider their demographic needs and provide direct resources to ISY populations determined to have the highest need; in turn creating a stronger workforce pipeline. For several of the areas, ISY enrollment has increased more than 100 percent.

## *Success Stories*

### *American Job Center, Humboldt – William*

William came into the American Job Center in Humboldt at the end of June 2021. An unemployed veteran, he was eager to go to school to earn his CDL. Shawn stated he had gone through many obstacles in life and was ready to make a change to make a better life for himself and his wife. Career Advisor, Olivia Capps determined Shawn eligible for services and enrolled him with WIOA to assist with the cost of attending school to earn his CDL. Shawn attended Roadrunner Driving School in Sharon, Tennessee starting in mid-July 2021 and completed training at the beginning of August. Soon after finishing training and earning his CDL, he secured a job with Doyle Sims & Sons Trucking, Inc. Shawn has been employed with Doyle Sims & Sons Trucking since September 2021 and enjoys traveling the country for work with his wife by his side.

### *American Job Center, Camden – Jarrod*

Jarrod had worked as a correctional officer but had always wanted to be a truck driver. Unemployed and in need of training to enter the workforce, he came into the AJC Camden requesting WIOA assistance. Roadrunner Driving School Office Manager Victoria states, “Truck drivers make sure that millions of people have food, gas, clothing, and other essential everyday supplies. In short, truck drivers keep American moving.” Jarrod was enthusiastic and eager to learn and caught on quickly, mastering the backing and driving techniques needed to pass his final skills/driving test. He is now employed in the field of his training as a Truck Driver with DOT Foods in Dyersburg, Tennessee, beginning in January 2022. Alicia, Human Resources with DOT Foods, stated that they are impressed with Jarrod and excited to have him on their team.

### *Submitted by Staff, Southwest Region – Jeremy*

“I have been working with a gentleman named Jeremy. He moved here without a job and came into the office looking for help with finding [a] job. He had been laid off before he moved here. He has a lot of experience in construction, warehouse, factory work, as a cook, and even in a grocery store. He was open to any job and already had a résumé. We were able to fill out a job application for UGN, a vehicle plant. I also told him about TBDN and some other jobs. I also made a referral to Mrs. Cheryl for Dislocated Worker. I called him for a follow up a couple of weeks later and he was still [sic] looking for a job. The same day we received an email about OJT, and I talked to Danté (title I) and he told me about a contract he has with Adient in Lexington. I called Jeremy and he said he had actually just filled out an application for them that day. Danté called the [human resources] lady and gave her Jeremy’s name and he started working there this week! He is working 2nd shift. He will be in today to do paperwork with Mrs. Cheryl. He was very thankful.”

### *Southwest Region – Amanda*

“Miss Amanda came in initially about 4–5 weeks ago to file her unemployment claim, as she had just lost her job. She was not good at all with computers. She needed help with everything from pulling up Google, to certifying every week, and putting in job applications. Every Monday for the past month and a half, I have helped her with her weekly certifications and passed along any job leads I knew of in her desired field. Miss Amanda caught on very fast when it

came to the computer part of things. By the second or third week she was doing the biggest part of her certifications on her own. Each week she'd need less and less help from me. By the fifth week or so [in December 2021] not only did Miss Amanda have a new job, but she was also familiar enough with a computer to do her weekly certifications completely on her own and pull up Google to browse the web as she pleases in the future!"

#### *Greater Memphis Area – Reuben*

Reuben, is a re-entry participant that was co-enrolled with title I and the SNAP E&T program. Reuben was released from an out-of-state prison at the beginning of the pandemic. Through the efforts of the AJC, Reuben is currently enrolled at Tennessee College of Applied Technology (TCAT) Elizabethton in the Automotive Technology program. He just graduated from his Phase 3 program at the Day Reporting Center. Reuben also received support services through the statewide OOR grant and was provided work boots for the construction job he is working while attending TCAT.

#### *East – Practical Nursing Program*

An individual came to us in 2015 requesting assistance with attending TCAT for the Practical Nursing Program. Due to medical reasons, after just a few months she had to drop. She came to us again requesting help in August of 2021. She was receiving SNAP benefits and was also a single mom. She faced difficulties again this past year with the loss of her mother. She was determined to finish no matter the cost. She only missed one day in the term of her program. Today she is an LPN and is working and is considering going forward to pursuing her RN degree.

*For more information, visit:*

#### *Reports*

Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development. *PY 21 WIOA Annual Narrative*.

#### *Links*

Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development

## Texas

### Texas Workforce Commission

#### *Use of State Funds*

#### *Adult Priority Service*

#### **College Credit for Heroes**

The College Credit for Heroes (CCH) program maximizes college credits awarded to veterans and service members for their military training and experience in order to expedite their transition into the Texas workforce. The program's goal is to eliminate obstacles to attain licensing, certification, accreditation, and degrees awarded at state and national levels so veterans may transition more quickly from college classrooms to the workforce.

The State's institutions value student veterans on their campuses and work on their behalf to award academic credit for their military experience, education, and training. In November 2019, Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) partnered with CCH institutions in The State to create a cohesive CCH network. In February 2020, TWC announced a new CCH Capacity Building Program grant designed to help State institutions develop or improve an integrated system for evaluating military transcripts.

CCH grants are divided into two types: Acceleration Curricula (from 2011 through 2018) and Capacity Building (from 2019 to present). Throughout the life of the program, 43 CCH grants have been awarded to 18 Texas colleges and universities, resulting in the creation of 91 acceleration curricula courses in fields such as emergency medical services, surgical technology, respiratory therapy, health information technology, nursing, cybersecurity, information technology, advanced manufacturing, and logistics.

- See CCH Phase 8 Capacity Building Program
- See also, Credit Evaluation

#### **Veterans Workforce Outreach Initiative**

The Veterans Workforce Outreach Initiative is designed to outreach hard-to-serve veterans who are not currently being served through Workforce Solutions Offices. The project seeks to address employment barriers faced by hard-to-serve veterans and reintegrate hard-to-serve veterans into meaningful employment.

TWC conducted a competitive procurement to solicit applications for the provision of services to hard-to-serve veterans who have one or more barriers to employment. American Government Issue (GI) Forum was awarded the contract and implemented the program in San Antonio, Houston, the Dallas/Fort Worth metro area, and El Paso.

Under the guidance of a case manager, the program helps veterans address employment barriers and access resources to overcome barriers. Veterans benefit from a range of services that may include assessments, job development and job placement, and case management, as well as support services such as transportation; rent and utility assistance; mental health assistance, including clinical counseling; wheelchairs, crutches, and medical beds; food assistance; and financial assistance.

In the most recent grant period, the Veterans Workforce Outreach Initiative provided 369 veterans with assessment services, and of the 338 veterans placed into employment, 205 earned an average wage of \$16.91 per hour.

### **Veterans Network**

The Veterans Network initiative provides funds to community-based organizations (CBOs) to develop networks of entities whose missions include providing services and support to veterans. Referral and service information shared among network partners—including Community Based Organization (CBOs), the Texas Veterans Commission, and other veteran-centric organizations—allows for the coordination of services over large areas of the State, regardless of the community in which veterans seek services. In FY20, TWC awarded two grants totaling \$4 million to Alamo Area Development Corporation (AADC) and Combined Arms, which demonstrated organizational experience in providing coordinated veterans' services. Grants issued in 2020 have a performance period ending in 2023.

### **Ending the Middle Skills Gap**

On June 30, 2021, TWC's three-member Commission earmarked funding for a comprehensive statewide strategy to end the middle skills gap in Texas. Due to technological advances in the workplace, employment demand has dramatically increased for individuals with middle skills, defined as workers with some education beyond high school but less than a four-year degree. Numerous initiatives have been proposed and approved for implementation focusing on career information, preparedness, connection, and progression activities to help put more State workers on a path to a career in a rewarding middle skills job.

### *COVID-19 Response*

#### **Career Transitioning Services**

On September 21, 2021, as part of a comprehensive statewide strategy to close the middle skills gap in Texas, TWC entered a contract with Korn Ferry, a global organizational consulting firm, to provide one-on-one Career Transitioning Services (CTS) to individuals whose careers have been affected by the pandemic. CTS helps individuals identify, prepare for, and obtain a job through assessments and coaching. Services include skills and traits assessments, job search guidance, résumé drafting support, interview preparation, skills development, reskilling, and upskilling.

### *Other State Funds Activities*

#### **Texas Science and Engineering Fair**

Sponsored by TWC, ExxonMobil, and other partners and hosted by Texas A&M University, the Texas Science and Engineering Fair (TXSEF) is an annual event in which participating middle and high school students display their projects and compete in 21 different project categories. Awards are given for first through third place in each category, with two grand prizes and one Best-of-Show winner in both the junior and senior divisions. Top finishers from the high school division also are awarded a scholarship to attend the prestigious Governor's Science and Technology Champions Academy. Top competitors in the junior division advance to the national Broadcom master's competition. Additionally, some of the winning senior division entries go on to compete in the Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF). The State has produced many ISEF winners and has a proud history of success for its participants.

### **Governor's Science and Technology Champions Academy**

The Governor's Science and Technology Champions Academy is a weeklong, hands-on residential summer camp that helps students explore the practical applications of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) endeavors and exposes students to exciting career options that involve high-tech skills. This camp supports the development of Texas' future workforce by focusing on the advanced skills required for high-demand careers within target industries and is designed to inspire students to pursue STEM-related college degrees and careers in Texas. Top finishers from the high school division of the TXSEF are awarded scholarships to cover the entire cost of the program.

### **Other State Funds Activities**

- Military Family Support Program (MFSP)
- High-Demand Job Training Program
- Building and Construction Trades
- Innovative Academies
- Cybersecurity Initiative

### *Evaluations*

#### *Activities and Methodology*

### **Adult Education and Literacy**

Two years ago, TWC participated in a new national reporting system for the adult education evaluation learning community. This 15-month project brought together research and evaluation experts from many states to develop and conduct high-value evaluation projects for adult education and literacy (AEL). TWC evaluated the impact that different intake and onboarding mechanisms that AEL grant recipients used had on variables such as length of participation. The final report was issued during PY20 and was used to develop curriculum for a session at TWC's AEL summer institute for AEL providers, which was held in August 2021.

### **Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)**

TWC is engaged in several ongoing evaluations of its VR program. One project nearing completion involves a quasi-experimental evaluation of TWC's Project SEARCH's impact on individuals with developmental disabilities. Project SEARCH provides participants with on-the-job experience via three 10 to 12 week paid internships in competitive integrated employment settings. The goal is to obtain and retain permanent employment. Common local employers involved in Project SEARCH include hospitals, law firms, and supply chain industries, which offer various internships in areas such as office administration, data entry, assembly/packaging, and housekeeping and food preparation. TWC reviewed a sample of 904 individuals divided evenly into Project SEARCH and a VR program comparison group and determined that Project SEARCH participants have an 87.39 percent successful employment rate compared to 60.40 percent for other participants of the same demographic in the VR program.



Based on a chi-square test, the result is significant, with greater than 95 percent confidence ( $p < 0.001$ ). TWC also found that Project SEARCH participants enjoyed a greater employment retention rate during Q2–Q4 post-exit than their comparison group peers, with 95 percent confidence (70.35% versus 63.27%,  $p = 0.0238$ ). TWC did not discover any significant impact on Q2 post-exit earnings. This study meets CLEAR’s standard for moderate evidence of causality.

### **Workforce Development**

TWC’s Workforce Development Division and Information Innovation & Insight (I|3) Division are collaborating on several evaluations for DOL-funded programs. The first study evaluates a new service that would be funded by WIOA dislocated worker (DW) statewide funding and that involves specialized job-coaching and related resources. The planned evaluation will involve the random selection of Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) claimants for access to such services and will serve as a WIOA DW evaluation. The divisions also are conducting a study that encompasses a quasi-experimental design to address the impact of the RESEA program on benefits usage and return to work. This study will meet CLEAR’s standard for moderate causality.

### *Continuous Improvement*

#### **Adult Education and Literacy**

In August 2022, TWC proposed developing a machine-learning model to predict the likelihood that an AEL student receives a measurable skill gain (MSG) within a particular program year. TWC anticipates that the model will provide deeper insight into the interaction between demographic characteristics and TWC services, thereby helping to identify factors that the agency can influence to increase the ratio of MSGs to total AEL participants as a measure of program effectiveness and engagement.

#### **Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)**

Another project still in development involves building a machine-learning model to identify VR participants who, six months into their cases, appear to be headed for an unsuccessful closure. The goal is to find commonalities that can be targeted with an intervention to change an unsuccessful case trajectory into a successful one. The VR program is developing the intervention, which will be tested using an RCT experimental design to identify cases at risk of unsuccessful outcomes and randomly assign them to receive the intervention. This approach will enable staff to determine whether the intervention has a causal impact on program outcomes. Although this work is being conducted within the VR program, the results likely will be applicable to WIOA core partner programs and other partner programs.

### **Workforce Development**

I|3 dedicates substantial analytical and evaluation resources to prevent waste, fraud, and abuse within Texas’ UI system by developing predictive models used by UI’s benefit payment control and investigative staff. TWC is active within the national UI integrity sphere and supports other states’ efforts by sharing best practices and contributing to the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA), NASWA’s Integrity Data Hub (IDH), and associated workgroups.

### *Reports*

No information provided for this section.

*Waivers**Waiver Implemented*

On June 30, 2020, DOL-ETA approved the following three WIOA waivers for Texas for PY20 and PY21 (July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2022).

- Use of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for in-school youth (ISY).
- Local Performance Accountability Flexibility.
- Reallocation of Local Funds.

*Strategies***Use of ITAs for ISY**

This waiver removes the requirement under the WIOA rule at 20 CFR Section 681.550 that limits the use of ITAs for youth participants to out-of-school youth (OSY) ages 16 to 24. This allows TWC to extend the use of ITAs to ISY, thus permitting Boards to serve ISY in the workforce area while maintaining priority of service for OSY.

**Local Performance Accountability Flexibility**

This limited waiver from WIOA Section 116(c) pertaining to local performance accountability measures for Subtitle B provides TWC with greater flexibility when contracting performance measures with Boards. Through the application of this waiver, TWC will increase the integration of services to customers, evaluate Boards more effectively—promoting accountability—and provide Boards with flexibility in implementing Workforce Solutions Offices services.

**Reallocation of Local Funds**

Addressing the provisions of WIOA Section 128(c)(3) and Section 133(c) and 20 CFR Section 683.140 regarding reallocation of WIOA funds among local areas.

*Impact on Performance***Use of ITAs for ISY**

Boards exercising this waiver have used ITAs to fund training for ISY enrolled in programs such as welding, nursing, HVAC, and business management. In PY20, 30 percent of ISY enrolled in postsecondary training programs used ITAs to fund training. Boards view this waiver as an excellent opportunity to promote apprenticeship programs and the application of pre-apprenticeship standards, with a focus on nontraditional industries and occupations. The State submitted a renewal request for this waiver with its WIOA Combined State Plan Two-Year Modification for PY20–PY23, and the waiver request was conditionally approved through June 30, 2022.

**Local Performance Accountability Flexibility**

This waiver provides TWC with continued administrative relief that will remove barriers to co-enrollment and promote a more

integrated case management system across multiple programs. The State submitted a renewal request for this waiver with its WIOA Combined State Plan for PY20–23, and the waiver request was approved through June 30, 2022.

### **Reallocation of Local Funds**

This waiver grants TWC flexibility in redistributing funds to workforce areas with the greatest need. The State submitted a renewal request for this waiver with its WIOA Combined State Plan for PY20–23, and the waiver request was approved through June 30, 2022.

### *Success Stories*

#### *Military Family Support Program – Texas Industry Partnership*

TWC supports collaborations between Boards and employers to provide high-demand occupational job training in workforce areas. This program supports Boards' partnerships with local employers to leverage local economic development sales taxes for high-demand job training. Boards collaborate with local employers and match their local economic development with sales tax funds to jointly support the provision of the training. In PY21, TWC awarded grants totaling \$568,537 to six Boards. Funds provided through these grants were used to enhance training, support services, and skills assessments and to expand capacity by purchasing necessary equipment and supplies. The grants have improved immediate training opportunities for 1,499 participants and will continue to serve Texans and help them fill future in-demand jobs.

### *Local Success Stories*

- A single mother who recently moved into a new home was looking for employment. After a television station ran a news story on the individual, Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast contacted her, helped her improve her WorkInTexas.com account and LinkedIn profile, and provided one on-one coaching on job interviewing and on leveraging her transferable skills. The Workforce Solutions office's assistance led to two successful interviews, and she is employed as an executive assistant in marketing.
- An individual who aged out of foster care was experiencing homelessness. The local Workforce Solutions office enrolled him in an apprenticeship program. He is now employed as an iron worker, with a starting pay of \$17.00 per hour.
- A 19-year-old applied for WIOA assistance in December 2021. A single man who lived with his parents, he previously worked at a lawn care business where he earned \$13.00 an hour. He completed emergency medical technician (EMT) training and was accepted into the firefighter academy, but he needed assistance paying for firefighter training. WIOA funding helped him with tuition, fees, books, supplies, and fuel cards. After graduating from the firefighter academy in May 2022 and successfully completing the firefighter and EMT state exams, he accepted a full-time job as a firefighter, earning \$40,000 per year.
- A justice-involved 19-year-old OSY went to his local Workforce Solutions office seeking training assistance to become an electrical line worker. Because of his age and lack of opportunity, his employment history consisted only of part-time work

as a ranch hand. Workforce Solutions Northeast Texas helped him enroll in a CDL program. He attained his CDL and is now employed full-time as a line worker, making \$21.00 per hour.

*For more information, visit:*

*Reports*

Texas Workforce Commission. *Program Year 2021 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Annual Report Titles I and III.*

*Links*

Texas Workforce Commission

## Utah

### Department of Workforce Services

#### *Use of State Funds*

#### *Adult Priority Service*

#### **Invest in You Too**

The program works with single mothers interested in obtaining training in the medical device manufacturing field. The short-term certificate program provides soft skills training combined with college classes at Salt Lake Community College. This partnership between Workforce Services and Salt Lake Community College provides customers with the combinations of skills needed to succeed in this in-demand industry.

In April 2022, the eighth cohort of Invest in You Too began with eight participants. During the program many participants experienced challenges such as eviction, domestic violence and significant family issues but were still able to attend required classes to successfully complete the program. In June, seven of the participants graduated and were awarded a certificate in medical device manufacturing.

Tours are provided by employers in the industry who recognize the medical device manufacturing certificate for the Invest in You Too cohort. All participants were offered an opportunity to interview for a position if they were interested in applying to these companies. These opportunities resulted in two participants receiving job offers from employers even before completing the program and started employment immediately after graduation.

#### **Re-Entry Partnerships**

Workforce Services has partnered with the Department of Corrections to participate in a resource fair for formerly incarcerated individuals as they are being released from Utah State Prison. Outreach specialists staff a table at the Release Day Fair every Tuesday to educate individuals and their families on programs and services including Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Medicaid, financial assistance, Vocational Rehabilitation and WIOA. American Job Center staff also participate in Salt Lake County's local Criminal Justice Advisory Council and attend several local county drug courts to offer support to ex-offenders. The Tooele County Health Department partnered with Utah Harm Reduction Coalition to host a re-entry fair targeting Tooele residents with background issues.

#### **Veteran Services**

Workforce Services delivers quality services to assist veterans, military service members and spouses in obtaining and retaining employment. The federally funded Wagner-Peyser Grant is used to provide employment services to jobseekers, including veterans. The federally funded Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) is specifically targeted to veterans with significant barriers to employment. The State-funded Accelerated Credentialing to Employment program provides funding for short-term training for veterans, actively serving National Guard and Reserve members and their spouses who do not qualify for other veteran services.

These staff work with external partners to ensure employment and support services are provided consistently throughout the State.

During PY21, Workforce Services focused on increasing veteran employment services to all veterans, military service members and spouses statewide by providing individual case management and postemployment services. Workforce Services offers priority of service and targeted services for veterans and their spouses, assisting them with ways to navigate the job market quickly and efficiently and find employment that aligns with their military experience. Workforce Services provides individualized career services, online tools and job development services tailored for veterans.

The State Patriot Partnership program recognizes employers that have pledged to hire or employ qualified veterans overqualified non-veterans. During PY21 workforce services worked to increase the level of employer participation beyond the hiring process to include veteran and active service member-friendly human resource policies, veteran employer resource groups and retention of veteran employees.

JVSG employment counselors coordinate with WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker employment counselors to ensure veterans' pre-employment training needs are met through co-enrollment.

#### *COVID-19 Response*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Other State Funds Activities*

#### **Work Experience**

The State continues to utilize work experience to assist youth and adult jobseekers in acquiring occupational skills needed to obtain suitable employment. Workforce development specialists create work experience opportunities in partnership with employers and other community stakeholders. Workforce development specialists connect job-ready customers with employment opportunities that align with their employment and career goals. The Youth and Career Pathways committees assist in coordinating efforts to promote and expand work experience opportunities for employers and jobseekers. Outreach to employers has expanded work experience opportunities for individuals with disabilities and increased engagement with technical colleges to educate students about work experience programs provided by partner agencies.

The on-the-job training (OJT) program is offered to youth and adult jobseekers. The program helps jobseekers who have the education needed to do the job, but lack the necessary work experience for the job, or who lack both the credentials and the experience. Jobseekers receive OJT and remain employed after completion. The program provides opportunities for jobseekers to get back into the workforce, increase their skillsets, and move into self-sufficiency. Workforce Services coordinates a productive employer-employee relationship. This helps each customer pursue a successful and meaningful career by using an individualized work experience placement strategy.

The State assisted 156 youth and adult jobseekers with at least one work experience opportunity during the past year. Coordinating with local partners led to many positive outcomes. The example below illustrates how collaborative efforts resulted in customer success.

#### **Additional State Funds Activities**

- Virtual Job Fairs Staff Development
- Workshops
- One-Stop Certifications
- Wagner-Peyser Strategies
- Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Strategies
- Youth Partnerships

#### *Evaluations*

#### *Activities and Methodology*

#### **Work Success Study**

Workforce Services participated in a national study, NextGen Evaluation, sponsored by the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation within the Administration of Children and Families of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to evaluate the State's Work Success program through March 2022.

Work Success is currently in the embargo period of the study, with a pathway to other Workforce Services career services, and is under consideration by Workforce Services leadership to become operational again.

In addition to the evaluation of the Work Success program and documenting the most effective components of the coaching, design and implementation, Mathematica Policy Research will include a cost analysis of the program. Outcomes from the study include measures of success in:

- Obtaining and retaining employment
- Career advancement
- Earnings
- Receipt of TANF and other measures of self-sufficiency
- Other indicators in personal and family well-being
- Improvement of self-regulation

Findings on Work Success will be provided in a series of reports from Mathematica beginning fall of 2022 and produced on a rolling basis through 2023.

### *Continuous Improvement*

#### **WIOA Services Evaluation**

Workforce Services continued to implement projects developed because of the WIOA Evaluation finalized in spring of 2020.

One project implemented this program year because of the WIOA evaluation was providing mental health services to WIOA eligibility participants. The evaluation identified that 17 percent of customers not currently receiving mental health treatment felt that they needed assistance. Youth were more likely to report that in the last 12 months their mental health was such a problem that they could not work or attend school. The evaluation also identified that 62.5 percent of youth customers have four or more adverse childhood experiences and most of the youth had never received mental health support.

Workforce Services has internal licensed clinical therapists that are funded to support Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) customers with mental health services. Utilizing this existing resource, Workforce Services has braided funding and started having licensed clinical therapists direct charge WIOA to provide the opportunity for WIOA enrolled customers to access this important service. Customers will benefit from having access to services for assessing mental health related barriers affecting their training and employment as well as having readily available options to treat mental health concerns to enhance success. Employment counselors began referring customers in January to start receiving mental health services. Workforce Services looks forward to evaluating the impact of mental health services on customers' success.

Workforce Services program staff, in collaboration with local area managers, developed an action plan to build on successful program implementation behaviors and recommended program improvements. The action plan was implemented during PY20 and included strategies, informed by the evaluation, to increase quality case management. Due to COVID-19 not all projects were fully implemented but are available for future utilization.

### *Reports*

#### **WIOA Services Evaluation**

The purpose of the evaluation was to answer the following key research questions posed by Department Workforce Services (DWS) leadership:

1. What is the overall composition and experience of the WIOA customer base relative to demographics, education and work history, barriers to program participation, and satisfaction with DWS programs and staff?
2. How do the Workforce Services WIOA front-line staff experience implementing the WIOA program? From their perspective, what program and policy components support and /or hinder success in program implementation?
3. What changes and/or supports would help them be more effective in administering the WIOA program?



4. What can workers' notes and data entered in UWORKS reveal regarding the appropriate implementation of WIOA services?

#### *Waivers*

##### *Waiver Implemented*

The State continues to use a waiver of the requirement to provide Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) to out-of-school youth (OSY) ages 18 to 24 enrolled in WIOA Youth.

##### *Strategies*

The waiver is used to assist in-school youth (ISY) in maintaining focus on education and exploring career options that require postsecondary education. Having more youth interested and engaged in education leading to credential attainment allows the State to increase its supply of workers to in-demand industries and occupations. Workforce Services has been monitoring its progress in implementing the waiver to ensure the State complies with waiver goals and meets measurable programmatic outcomes.

- Education and Training Voucher (ETV) program  
Workforce Services has maintained its partnership with John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program and administered the ETV program by serving in-school youth who are preparing for postsecondary education. This federally funded program is designed to assist foster care youth, or youth who have aged out of foster care, with support needed to complete postsecondary education and obtain employment. In the State, a WIOA co-enrollment is required to administer the Education and Training Voucher program to foster care youth.

##### *Impact on Performance*

The data in the State's report shows that Workforce Services is exceeding the requirements for OSY spending. By the end of PY21, 94.31 percent of WIOA Youth funds were spent on OSY and only 5.69 percent on ISY.

A quarterly breakdown of ISY versus OSY expenditures indicates that OSY expenditures significantly exceeded the expenditure goal of 75 percent in each quarter.

The State maintains its ISY enrollments at a level that has supported the above indicated increase in OSY expenditures. At the end of PY21, only 139 (15.38%) of youth served were ISY, and a quarterly breakdown of enrollments shows a shift towards enrolling more OSY, as agreed upon in the waiver.

Out of the 139 ISY served in PY21; 40 youth (29%) were working toward obtaining a postsecondary credential. The remaining ISY were working on completing secondary school requirements to enroll in postsecondary education. The impact of ISY's engagement in postsecondary education on their access to employment opportunities is evident in their employment rate. Out of eight ISY who obtained a postsecondary credential during PY21, six youth (75%) obtained employment. The youth who started

postsecondary training and did not complete it still benefited from their exposure to postsecondary education and gained additional marketable skills. Out of the 11 ISY who did not graduate, seven obtained employment (64%).

- Education and Training Voucher (ETV) program

Since most foster care youth are ISY, the waiver enables Workforce Services to serve this at-risk population and positively impact their ability to earn postsecondary credentials, enter the workforce and become contributing members of society. The State served 75 ETV youth during PY21. Out of 24 ETV youth who stopped attending their postsecondary training program in PY21, 15 youth (62.5%) successfully completed the program and earned a credential. Additionally, 71 percent of Education Training Voucher youth had their ETV enrollment closed due to income, 24 reported 'Obtained Employment' and 3 reported 'Customer Request—Income' closures out of 38 enrollment closures.

The waiver also positively impacted education providers on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), as they were not required to go through procurement in addition to completing the list requirements. This encourages providers to continue to be on the ETPL, benefiting both ISY and OSY. The State continues to certify the education providers and monitor their performance.

### *Success Stories*

#### *Work Experience – John*

John, a homeless military veteran, was hired as a side dump truck driver. The employer contacted the local workforce development specialist and said they were impressed with John's passion and work ethic but that he lacked the skills for promotions within the company. To help John increase his income to attain a home, the department assisted John with WIOA on-the-job training services. As a result of these efforts, John was able to obtain the skills needed in the new job, find housing and is on the road to self-reliance.

#### *Single Parent – Amber*

Amber is a single mother and a widow. Her father was a drug user and died by suicide, leaving Amber's mother to raise two children. After watching her mother struggle, Amber decided that she wanted something better for herself and her children. Amber said,

"I started out on the wrong track and had my first child at 15 years of age. I then married and divorced at the age of 18. Later I married my husband and was married for 15 years. Things started to look better, and I thought that maybe we might finally get out of the margins. Then my husband was diagnosed with stage 4 cancer. He died 18 months later. Now, here I was in the same exact spot I swore I never wanted to be in. At this point I had no choice but to return to school to provide a decent life for my children and me."

Workforce Services helped support Amber so she could complete her degree in social work at Utah Valley University. Amber and her employment counselor worked together to navigate barriers and gain a trusting professional relationship. Through Pell grants, scholarships and WIOA assistance, Amber completed her education. In spring 2022 Amber completed her degree, obtained her

license, and is now employed at a hospital earning \$26.50 an hour and will receive a pay increase soon. She is the first generation to obtain a degree in her family.

#### *Ex-Offender – Robin*

Robin is on probation, has a few felony charges on her background check and she is required to attend court regularly. After completing an assessment with an employment counselor, Robin decided to attend Tooele Technical College in the Heavy-Duty Diesel Technician program.

During her initial appointment Robin was very shy but as she began to succeed in her program, her confidence increased, and she was able to come out of her shell. Robin was awarded a scholarship from a community company and was recognized by the college as an exceptional student. Robin changed her life with the support of her counselor and teachers. She has received a job offer and will start working once she completes her program.

#### *Individual with a Disability – Aaron*

Aaron is a student at the Learning Center who had a strong interest in culinary arts and wanted to work in a kitchen. Through partnering with Vocational Rehabilitation and a job coach, he found an internship at a hotel. During his internship Aaron realized that the fast pace of the kitchen was not a good fit. Aaron's teacher, supervisor, Vocational Rehabilitation counselor and WIOA Youth employment counselor offered support to help him finish his internship successfully. At the end of his internship the hotel kept him on their team and offered him a permanent position as a laundry attendant. This was a better fit for Aaron. Aaron loved making his own money, building confidence, and learning soft skills along with other valuable skills to help him maintain employment.

#### *Homeless – Sally*

Sally dropped out of school when she became pregnant at 16 years old and moved to Utah fleeing a domestic violence situation. Sally was living in a truck with her son, with very few personal belongings. She wanted to work and earn money but did not have any work experience. The Connection team at the Clearfield American Job Center helped Sally with resources to get a state issued ID and apply for housing. She came every day to job search and within a couple of weeks had her first job. She also found a temporary place for her family to live while waiting for housing to become available. Clearfield staff used a combination of community resources, WIOA and personal donations to help Sally access warm clothing, job resources and get her son ready to attend school. Sally was able to qualify for housing after several months and her apartment felt safe and comfortable. She continuously checked off goals and worked towards building a better life. She purchased a car and now has her first bank account. Sally is so proud of each goal she accomplished and shares her success with the Clearfield office.

#### *Veteran –Matt*

Matt is a veteran who worked part time in a local cabinet shop and part time at a local restaurant. During COVID-19, he lost both jobs and came into the American Job Center to file for unemployment insurance benefits. He was referred to the local JVSG veteran employment counselor, and they began discussing resources available to him as a veteran. Matt expressed interest in

the CDL program and through the assistance of WIOA and the State's Accelerated Credential to Employment (ACE) he received financial support as well as supportive services while he was working towards his CDL. Matt worked with the veteran employment counselor to overcome barriers. He received assistance with support services, referrals to housing as well as assistance from Veteran Affairs for service-related disabilities. Matt began working in his new career within a few weeks of his course completion.

*For more information, visit:*

### *Reports*

Department of Workforce Services. *WIOA Annual Report Program Year 2021*.

Vogel-Ferguson, M.B. (Jan. 2020). *WIOA Evaluation Report*. Social Research Institute, College of Social Work - University of Utah.

### *Links*

Department of Workforce Services

## Vermont

### Vermont Department of Labor

#### *Use of State Funds*

##### *Adult Priority Service*

The State's reserve funds aided in the identification of system requirements and the articulation of an improved future state for VDOL information management systems. This system will disseminate information about eligible and non-eligible training providers, work-based learning, and training experiences. These include registered apprenticeship opportunities, best practices in employer recruitment, hiring, and retention. Additionally, it includes toolkits for employers and training providers to ensure accessibility, both physical and programmatic, for individuals with disabilities. The selection, contracting, and implementation of the new system is expected to occur during PY22 and PY23.

During PY21, VDOL used the State's reserve funds to support the required activities, including monitoring and oversight of title I activities, operation of a fiscal accountability system, and supporting industry and sector partnerships. VDOL also used reserve funds for allowable employment and training activities such as the administration of title I programs, development of strategies to meet employer needs and strategies to meet needs of individuals with barriers to employment, coordination of programs and services among One-Stop partners serving youth and mature workers and supporting the delivery of career services in the One-Stop delivery system—particularly for unemployed individuals.

##### *COVID-19 Response*

Coming out of the pandemic, the State prioritized providing employment services in places that jobseekers might be more likely to access them. The hashtag "LaborOnLocation" initiative provided satellite services in community spaces with moderate success, but also resulted in complicated staff coverage plans for local affiliate job centers. VDOL has invested in basic technology and outreach materials.

##### *Other State Funds Activities*

The State completed a request for information (RFI) and request for proposal (RFP) process during PY21 to solicit proposals from vendors who could improve VDOL's information management system, including its case and customer management system, job board, and financial tracking system, and information display platform. The state's reserve funds aided in the identification of system requirements and the articulation of an improved future state for VDOLs information management systems. This system will disseminate information about eligible and non-eligible training providers, work-based learning, and training experiences. These include registered apprenticeship opportunities, best practices in employer recruitment, hiring, and retention. Additionally, it includes toolkits for employers and training providers to ensure accessibility, both physical and programmatic, for individuals with disabilities. The selection, contracting, and implementation of the new system is expected to occur during PY22 and PY23.

### *Evaluations*

#### *Activities and Methodology*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Continuous Improvement*

No information provided for this section.

### *Reports*

No information provided for this section.

### *Waivers*

#### *Waiver Implemented*

The State had no waivers in place during PY21.

### *Strategies*

Not Applicable.

### *Impact on Performance*

Not Applicable.

### *Success Stories*

#### *Adult Work Experience – Joseph*

Joseph is an 18-year-old male who self-identified as having a disability and difficulty obtaining competitive employment. Through their work together, the case manager secured him short-term work experience in the reconditioning department at local car dealership. Joseph excelled in this position, which gave him the confidence to apply for, interview, and receive a job offer from Saint Johnsbury school as a custodian. He has been there for over two months and reports that he is doing well.

#### *Testimonial from WIOA Client – Coriene*

“When I decided to change my life and focus on my career, I told my case manager through Reach Up (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) what I wanted to do and she referred me to WIOA. At first, I wanted to go to school for business but then shortly after I decided that I wanted to become a Real Estate Agent. WIOA and my case manager worked together to find a Real Estate Agency for me to work at to start learning the ropes and what I needed to do to be on my way to becoming a realtor. My case manager through WIOA was very helpful the whole way even when I had issues with my checks, and it turned into a stressful time. He was always in contact with me and checking in on

me and my progress. I now have taken my 40-hour pre-licensing course and my first exam. I failed my first exam, but that's okay! It's super hard! I have now hired a tutor to help me pass and I do not plan on giving up! I currently manage two properties for my Real Estate Agency in between studying and doing other Admin work. I plan to have my license by January. I would absolutely recommend WIOA to others and my case manager specifically. The whole experience was super amazing and helpful and made me feel more confident in myself and my worth ethic.”

### *Labor Exchange – Hannah*

In early January, Hannah met with a case manager at the Barton Public Library during a #LaborOnLocation session and was referred to the local satellite Job Center for help with Vermont JobLink (VJL) and a résumé.

A case manager met with her and assisted her to create a VJL account. Hannah worked with her case manager to update her résumé and polish it for her job search. She was happy with the results. The case manager made several suggestions for pursuing job leads, based on her work history. Two job leads really caught her attention and the case manager explained how she should apply to both.

Hannah contacted her case manager about a week later and said that she had applied at a local craft brewery, and they had requested an interview via zoom. Her case manager set up a quick zoom call to make sure she was familiar with the platform and give her some tips and best practices for preparing for a virtual interview.

### *Basic Career Services and Virtual Job Fair – Daryl*

Daryl was referred to VDOL by a community partner (Northeast Kingdom Community Action) for help with job search.

When Daryl came into the St. Johnsbury resource center to meet with a case manager, he had mostly been unemployed for the last year. The last job he worked at was for about four weeks from March to April. He needed to gain employment as soon as possible and needed assistance with his truck payment and repairs.

During their first meeting, Daryl and the case manager worked on résumé creation and brainstormed job ideas that he may be interested in. They discussed his work experience and discovered that he may be interested in custodial openings. In the meantime, he was applying for jobs on Indeed and Vermont JobLink. The case manager also connected Daryl with the Individual Career Advancement Network (ICAN) for the additional support services for his truck.

At their next meeting they had a virtual job fair that hosted a Regional Hospital as the employer. The case manager was able to get Daryl to come and join the job fair to inquire about custodial positions through the hospital. Before the virtual job fair, they did look on the hospital's website and Vermont JobLink but did not see any openings. However, the case manager encouraged him to still join, and inquire directly through the Human Resources department.

At the job fair, the case manager was able to connect Daryl with the head of the hospital's Human Resources. They got to speak directly after the presentation where she informed him there was a position that had just opened in their environmental services. She was very eager for Daryl to apply and told him directly through that initial meeting she would be calling him in for an

interview. Daryl applied and within a week called to tell the case manager he had accepted the position at a starting rate of \$18/hour.

Daryl was very appreciative for the connection to the hospital and the assistance with the job search. The head of Human Resources was just as thankful as well. Daryl is still working at the hospital and is enjoying the new position.

#### *Employer Testimonial for Employer Services – Mercedes*

In January 2022, a VDOL case manager connected a local training provider to a jobseeker he had just met who had a welding background. The case manager knew that the employer was interested in expanding the welding courses offered at the local Career and Technical Education's Adult program, so he thought this might be an appropriate referral. Within five months, that jobseeker was employed and had completed facilitation of the Introduction to Welding class. He led a class of six students, five of whom completed and provided excellent reviews of the course and the instructor. The training provider is now planning a welding certification class for the fall. In today's tight job market, the employer might never have met this instructor without the help of the case manager and VDOL. Thanks to this connection, adult students in the area have a local option for welding training!

*For more information, visit:*

#### *Reports*

Vermont Department of Labor (Dec. 2022). *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Annual Statewide Performance Report Narrative - Program Year 2021*.

#### *Links*

Vermont Department of Labor

- Refugee, Parolee, and New American Services



## Virginia

### Virginia Career Works

#### *Use of State Funds*

#### *Adult Priority Service*

No information provided for this section.

#### *COVID-19 Response*

#### **Return to Earn (Expended \$322,049)**

This initiative provided \$500 hiring incentives to new employees of qualifying small businesses. The incentives were to support the transition of unemployed workers to get back into the workforce while helping employers fill vacant jobs after the COVID-19 pandemic. The Return to Earn Grant Program served business with less than 100 employees that did not have the resources to provide hiring incentives.

#### *Other State Funds Activities*

#### **Network2Work Pilot (Expended \$814,157)**

The Network2Work framework aligns the three networks that are essential for creating pathways to jobs and careers offering family-sustaining wages: the employer network, the jobseeker network, and the provider network. Four pilot communities include Charlottesville Region, Shenandoah Valley, Southeastern Virginia, and Richmond Region.

#### **CTE High School Innovation (Expended \$240,728)**

The Career Technical Education High School Innovation Grant is a two-year planning grant to develop and expand opportunities for secondary students to earn postsecondary credentials and a high school diploma simultaneously. The initiative will support partnerships between a local school division, postsecondary institutions, business and industry, and workforce and economic development entities. Students will be provided with a sequence of courses that start in grade nine and culminate in the attainment of a high school diploma and associate degree in up to five years. The initiative will include authentic work experiences, mentorships, and internships designed to prepare students for a career in an identified career pathway.

#### **American Job Center (AJC) Security (Expended \$151,552)**

Provides funding to support security personnel at comprehensive AJCs and AJCs that have a State Employment commission physical presence.

#### **Area 13 GOVA (Expended \$37,654)**

A study was completed on the workforce training needs in the Bay Consortium area to include a site selection study to implement the training needs in the Northern Neck Planning District Commission area. The assessment included a blueprint of what is needed by local companies and other workforce needs, prioritization for implementation, cost estimate, and the necessary steps

to improve the quality and quantity of workforce training in the region. The study addressed manufacturing, forestry/wood products/pater, and aquaculture.

#### **HR Strong (Expended \$36,798)**

WIOA state set-aside funds are being provided over an 18-month period for advanced training in shipbuilding, ship repair, offshore wind, and skilled trades workforce development in Hampton Roads in support of increased Navy ship construction, repair, modernization, and maintenance programs, the Coastal Virginia Offshore Wind project, and Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel expansion project. The project continues until June 30, 2023.

### *Evaluations*

#### *Activities and Methodology*

##### **Workforce Development System Evaluation**

In February 2021, the State began an evaluation of its workforce development system, and it was completed in December 2021. This evaluation was conducted by the State Commonwealth University (VCU) Performance Management Group (PMG) in collaboration with the Secretariat of Labor. The intention of this evaluation and its recommendations was to serve as a bridge to the Youngkin administration providing an overview of existing workforce development efforts in the State as well as opportunities to build and strengthen those programs and services. The evaluation used the goals included in the Virginia Combined State Plan (CSP) and in the Virginia of Workforce Development (VBWD) strategic plan as benchmarks.

Research was conducted primarily through interviews with workforce leaders in the State, regions, as well as peer states. In all, interviews were conducted with 49 workforce representatives including agency leaders, regional leaders (board chairs and directors) and Chief Local Elected Officials (CLEOs). Surveys were also used to collect information where appropriate. In-person assessments were conducted at all the comprehensive job centers throughout the State.

Logistics prevented conducting formal assessments at all the affiliate job centers. Direct interviews with workforce customers were not possible due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Data from the systems of record for WIOA title I, title III, and title IV, such as customer demographics and staff engagements, was analyzed along with information provided by the regions including board demographics and services available at the One-Stop centers.

Additional research included reviewing federal and state statutory code, related workforce policies and regulations, and journal articles pertaining to workforce trends along with demographic data. Currently, the State workforce development system spans ten agencies and six Secretariats.

Feedback from assessment participants, both internal and external, suggests the current structure creates challenges in developing and implementing policies, programs, and services. The State operates WIOA titles I and III in separate agencies while 80 percent of other states, including five of the six peer states analyzed, place them under a single agency. Operating titles I and III in separate agencies also means workforce customers may not be aware of eligible services available in the other programs.

Most of those interviewed as part of this assessment were found to be passionate, fully engaged and committed to the goal of providing effective workforce services to those in need. There were some differences of opinion on how to accomplish that goal when comparing the regional insights to that of those working at the State oversight level. Feedback from the regions suggests the workforce title I administration representatives are focused on compliance rather than the delivery of innovative services and do not take regional processes into consideration when developing policies and systems.

Title I administration representatives provided feedback that the regions are focused on retaining control rather than embracing system-wide solutions like the referral portal, which the majority regions reported does not meet their business needs. Communication challenges between the two groups have created tension and opportunities for misunderstandings that need to be addressed. Several of the assessment recommendations are a first step in resolving this conflict.

### *Continuous Improvement*

#### **Workforce Development System Evaluation**

- Recommendations for immediate implementation:
  - Reevaluate the management and implementation strategies of referral portal.
  - Regain trust amongst workforce partners.
  - Examine potential gains combining title I and title III together under one agency to help streamline job and training services.
  - Allocate state funds for regional outreach programs.
  - Focus on career readiness, soft skills, and support for both trade and degree programs.
  - Standardize One-Stop customer data collection methods.
  - Streamline One-Stop resource room technology management.
  - Expand regional partnerships.
- Recommendations for implementation 2022 to 2025:
  - Establish centralized decision-making authority over workforce system.
  - Address the need for critical wraparound services.
  - Provide dedicated funding for business services.
- Recommendations for implementation 2026 and beyond:
  - Expand opportunities for effective regional services delivery.

- Ensure Workforce Data Trust integration with all workforce partners.
- Create greater alignment of policies with local labor markets.

### *Reports*

#### **Workforce Development System Evaluation**

One-Stop customers generally experience high-touch engagements with workforce programs and services. Analysis of the data provided to PMG shows the pandemic had a significant impact on regional operations but in recent months the number of customer engagements has started to trend upward. The most often requested needs by workforce customers across almost all the regions are childcare and transportation with the lack of available childcare support outside of the “9 to 5” jobs being a significant obstacle. Resources available in the centers are generally consistent but methods for capturing visitor information (intake and customer satisfaction) vary by region, hindering the ability to analyze information across all the regions.

Partnerships with other entities such as economic development representatives are essential to ensuring the workforce can support existing and future needs of businesses through both four-year degree programs as well as vocational/trade programs.

A majority of regional directors reported awareness of workforce programs and services throughout their area is generally low with some reporting a five to ten percent awareness among residents. The level of engagement of some of the regions, sometimes limited because of funds, changing population demographics, and some regional boards focusing solely on oversight, may be a factor in the low level of awareness. Those regions actively partnering with local nonprofits, libraries, etc., reported higher levels of awareness of available workforce services.

### *Waivers*

#### *Waiver Implemented*

No information provided for this section.

### *Strategies*

Not applicable.

### *Impact on Performance*

Not applicable.

### *Success Stories*

#### *Success #1 – George*

In December 2021, George was experiencing homelessness after losing his father to cancer. George connected with the State Career Works Northern and with Shelters to Shutters. George was invited to a hiring event in January 2022 with multiple Shelters

to Shutters Industry Partners. George did not have experience in the multifamily industry, but his background in customer service, his positive attitude, and his motivation made him stand out at the event.

George was offered a full-time position as a Resident Coordinator with Bonaventure Property Management. He was provided with a discounted apartment large enough for his daughter to have her own play area. As part of the Shelters to Shutters program, George was paired with a mentor to walk alongside him and offer support as he navigated multiple life transitions.

Within three months, George was promoted to Leasing Consultant and now has his eyes set on continuing to advance and grow as a multifamily professional.

### *Success #2 – Mr. W*

Mr. W. completed his sentence within the criminal justice system and sought an opportunity to return to the labor market and find a fulfilling career. He faced several significant challenges to finding employment, including forbidden use of any form of technology due to the nature of his criminal charges.

In May 2022, Mr. W. visited the State Career Works Northern Fairfax Annandale Center, seeking employment assistance. Mr. W expressed an interest in obtaining a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) but needed assistance paying for training. He was connected to the WIOA and SNAP E&T programs. He worked with case managers to obtain CDL training as well as supportive services (CDL permit, DOT physical, driving record, along with new tires for his own vehicle to get to training/work) to assure his success in training and employment.

Mr. W. began training in June 2022 to obtain his CDLA license and earned his credential and Virginia CDL license by July 2022. Mr. W. worked with his WIOA and SNAP E&T case managers and several VCW Center Career Services Specialists who helped set up an email account, completed and submitted employment applications alongside Mr. W, and assisted with résumé writing and interviewing.

In August 2022, Mr. W. was offered full-time employment, earning \$23/hour (\$47,840 annually) with fringe benefits as a CDL driver. Mr. W.'s success was a result of his hard work and motivation along with the dedication of the numerous Employment Specialists who were determined to help him succeed. Mr. W expressed his gratitude and appreciation for all the career specialists who supported him stating, "your work has been instrumental in my success!"

### *Success #3 – Marvin*

Marvin, a window manufacturing company located in Roanoke, the State came to the Western State Workforce Development Board for assistance with providing training for their very first apprentice cohort comprised of 10 employees. The company had previously worked with the State Department of Labor and Industry to set up a Registered Apprenticeship program for their employees.

The board was able to provide Marvin with \$15,000 in Incumbent Worker Training funds that allowed them to purchase ToolingU licenses to provide technical education alongside of the on-the-job training provided by the employer. Employees completed this

training towards the end of 2021 and saw great success. Not only did the apprentice cohort see a 90 percent retention rate during one of the largest labor shortages due to the pandemic, but they also saw an average wage increase of 39 percent, or \$12,797.

Half of the employees also received a promotion because of this training. This provided a 62 percent return on investment over a two-year period. Marvin is also unique in the fact that they did not lay off, furlough, or reduce hours for their employees when businesses started to see the impact of the pandemic. Apprentices remained employed the entire time, completing their training as scheduled. Marvin shared that “funding was crucial to their ability to train these apprentices and seeing the confidence and skills they built was amazing!”

#### *Success #4 – Debra*

Debra worked as an airline sales agent for over 15 years until she was laid off due to the COVID-19 pandemic. She learned about multiple employment programs such as ReEmploying Virginia (REV) and WIOA that could help support her career goals of obtaining gainful employment within the IT industry.

In November 2021, Debra enrolled in WIOA as a Dislocated Worker with a goal of working in the field of Cybersecurity governance and compliance. With her Virginia Career Works Northern WIOA case manager, Debra explored different training providers and programs and she decided to begin cyber security training in February 2022.

In March, she earned her credential and began working with a job developer to get connected to employment opportunities and participate in mock interviews. That same month, Debra received a full-time job offer as an IT Communications Specialist earning \$82,000 annually with benefits.

*For more information, visit:*

#### *Reports*

Virginia Career Works.

- Burke, J., et al (Dec. 2021). *Evaluation of the Commonwealth of Virginia Federally-Funded Workforce System*. Report to the Virginia Board of Workforce Development. VCU Performance Management Group - L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs at Virginia Commonwealth University.
- *Virginia Annual Report Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Program Year 2021*.

#### *Links*

Virginia Career Works

Virginia Career Works Referral Portal

## Washington

Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board  
Washington State Employment Security Department  
Washington's Local Workforce Development Boards

### *Use of State Funds*

### *Adult Priority Service*

#### **Career Connect Washington**

A cross-agency workgroup is responsible for coordinating agency functions and external partnerships to scale up and expand high-quality career-connected learning opportunities in communities across the state. Program builders create, manage, and scale specific career-connected learning programs. Program builders expanding active programs are responsible for increasing both capacity and access; those developing new programs are responsible for designing new endorsement-ready programs based on the skills and competencies required by employers. To date, 82 unique program builder proposals have been funded via eight requests for proposals. During PY21, at the direction of Governor Inslee, 28 proposals were funded using \$4.1 million of WIOA title I Statewide Activities funds. These programs will provide access to training, credentials, and career opportunities for populations with barriers to employment in the advanced manufacturing, agriculture, automotive, construction, health care, hospitality, information technology, maritime, and life sciences sectors.

### *COVID-19 Response*

Due to COVID-19-related restrictions, the 11 participating LWDBs continued to develop programs that offered in-person and virtual opportunities to meet the needs of the vulnerable populations they serve. This included transitioning to virtual outreach, intake, and service delivery, and taking steps to address the underlying technology, digital literacy, and internet connectivity inequities that disproportionately impact low-income families. As sites began to partially re-open in 2021, the programs all increased enrollments as they were able to deliver services with a hybrid approach including in-person and virtual services. One of the many findings that surfaced during the pandemic was the discovery that virtual services are a critical resource for rural and vulnerable communities and necessary to improve equity in the system.

### *Other State Funds Activities*

LWDBs increased partnerships with local housing providers throughout the state to fill the gap that has existed in many areas for customers transitioning from homelessness to stabilization with housing and a career that supports sustainable full self-sufficiency.

- University of Washington Self-Sufficiency calculator – ESD changed the program outcomes to fully utilize the calculator to set an accurate customized self-sufficiency wage goal for each participant that takes into consideration where they live and their total cost of living.
- Breaking down silos – observing momentum with engagement between state and local partners: in part through the Human Centered Poverty Reduction design team including Washington College Grant pilot, Federal Waiver Request to the United States Department of Agriculture and a SNAP data-sharing agreement request with an LWDB.

### *Evaluations*

#### *Activities and Methodology*

##### **Net Impact and Cost-Benefit Evaluation Study**

The evaluation of the State's Workforce Development System is conducted every four years by the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (WTECB or WTB), as per its statute. The study uses a control group approach to evaluate workforce training participants' outcomes.

Prior studies were contracted out to third parties at considerable expense, but the most recent one was done in-house and completed in 2021. In mid-2019, the WTB research unit began working with partner agencies, including representatives from all four WIOA Titles, to provide administrative data for the study. Since that time, the State has been severely disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic—with various state agencies scrambling in the public health and economic recovery effort. Workforce development plays an important role in both overcoming this disaster and setting a future course for talent and prosperity for all.

##### **Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (WTB) performance measures/results**

The legislation that established the WTB called for the implementation of a comprehensive research program. This program continues under WIOA and is used to measure the results of federal and state workforce investment activities. The research effort assesses the effectiveness of workforce training programs.

##### **Workforce Training Results (WTR)**

WTR is an annual evaluation of the state's workforce development system, annually studying outcomes of participants from 12 workforce development programs, using a standard set of performance measures. The evaluation uses a data comparison approach to answer the question "Are training programs providing participants with opportunities and positive outcomes?"

##### **Other Evaluation Activities**

ESD's DATA Division program evaluation team (Evaluation Team) within the Program Evaluation, Research and Analysis (PERA) unit has completed, or is in the process of finishing, several program evaluations and research projects:

- Agricultural and seasonal workforce services (ASWS) customer experience study.
- Economic Security for All (EcSA) evaluation summary.
- Opioid Disaster Relief Dislocated Worker Grant Evaluation.



- Reemployment services and eligibility assessment (RESEA) program evaluation.

### *Continuous Improvement*

#### **Workforce System Matrix**

Some of the work of the Net Impact Study feeds into WTB's Workforce System Matrix. For example, the program return on investment (ROI) is updated and used in this product.

### *Reports*

#### **Net Impact Study**

The findings of this study inform—in direct quantitative terms—the attributable economic impact various workforce development programs have. More frequent and consistent net impact and cost-benefit evaluation of these programs will be helpful to on-going economic recovery, and future workforce development planning efforts.

All programs evaluated in this study have positive earnings and employment impact directly attributed to program participation for individuals on average within three years of program exit. Other influencing factors, such as race, education, employment history, and prior earnings, are held constant. The remaining net impact is due to program participation itself. Using the net impact findings, it is then possible to use average program costs per person and calculate a program's cost-benefit.

Most programs achieve a measurable positive taxpayer ROI, with programs breaking even within that same three-year observation period. However, there are several important considerations. For example, many of a program's benefits are unobserved or intangible. Increased personal satisfaction, social justice, civic engagement, crime reduction, public health, and economic multiplier effects are linked to public investments in education and training. Public costs, such as the consumption of welfare benefits, may also be reduced following program participation, which is not accounted for in this study, except for Unemployment Insurance and Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income for vocational rehabilitation program participants.

#### **Workforce Training Results (WTR)**

The report describes the demographics and employment outcomes of each population and participant. The evaluation includes representative programs from all four WIOA Titles. The WTR reports on measures such as hourly wage and hours worked, as well as older results for exiting cohorts.

#### **Opioid Disaster Relief Grant Net Impact Evaluation Report**

The initial evaluation report was published in January 2022. This report finds that the augmented services offered through the Opioid program improve career outcomes for recipients more than if they had received standard dislocated worker grant services: the marginal services provided through the augmented version of the dislocated workers program resulted in a \$3,050 increase in earnings over the study period.

### *Waivers*

#### *Waiver Implemented*

No information provided for this section.

### *Strategies*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Impact on Performance*

No information provided for this section.

### *Success Stories*

#### *Wagner-Peyser – Glenn*

Glenn came to WorkSource after separating from his employer. He was enrolled in WIOA as a dislocated worker and had his RESEA appointment two weeks later. As a creative, experienced project manager with proven problem-solving, leadership, communication, and decision-making skills, he shared his passion for leading cross-functional teams, helping organizations accomplish key goals on time and on budget. He looked at openings, considered labor market information and updated his résumé. He attended Strategies for Success (SFS) and Financial Capabilities classes with Marie and was remembered for contributing to the class.

His Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) records show that he received support from no fewer than 14 people around the State, from his separation in September to his return to work in December.

Glenn shared this about his time in SFS,

“Today I accepted a job that comes with a healthy increase over what I was making! Thanks to both of you amazing women, for the inspiration and dedication you give so many of us when we are out of work. I don’t know if anyone takes the time to tell you this, so I will: You both make a difference, and you are appreciated more than you can know.”

#### *Wagner-Peyser – Kirk*

Kirk began engaging with WorkSource in early August, and he started with a Strategies for Success (SFS) workshop right away. He participated in other workshops as well, and upon being enrolled in WorkFirst, he received a referral to WIOA services. He continued with SFS and strengthening his résumé with his WorkFirst counselor, Shannon, who writes,

“This gentleman had come to us not knowing what he wanted to do or what his next steps were. However, once we started talking about options, he was curious about the process of both completing assessments for insights and about informational interviewing. We wrapped other WorkSource services around his needs. He was determined to

get an employment success portfolio together, including a professional résumé, and then understood the need to tailor it to specific job opportunities and personalized cover letters. He put his efforts into mock interviewing, right down to heart felt thank you notes. All of this hard work led, of course, to him landing the job that he wanted—not just a job, but a better job—in just over three weeks. This was, in fact, the only company that he applied with.”

This is an example of the collaboration and effort of Shannon and Kirk.

#### *Wagner-Peyser – Forster*

Foster had his initial RESEA appointment on May 3, 2022, and his follow up on May 26, 2022. Foster’s goal is to work for the State as a Customer Service Representative. Foster shared that he appreciated the State’s commitment to be a safe and inclusive workplace. He was encouraged to attend the Work for Washington Workshop at WorkSource Thurston County.

Foster had this to say:

“Hi Duana, I am so happy to say that I accepted a job offer as a Public Benefits Specialist with Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) today! I wanted to reach out to you right away because you made my experience with WorkSource so, so positive. As a kid, I saw adults go through unemployment, and it always felt like a frightening experience, but you gave me such great resources and were a very positive force during my job search. I’ll be recommending visiting the resource room to anyone looking for job resources.”

#### *Wagner-Peyser – Serving Employers – Cindy*

Cindy, a business services staff person at WorkSource Yakima County, shared about working with a company that was hiring for 12 positions. Jeff called her needing to fill 10 sorter positions and two laborer positions. Cindy worked closely with Jeff to provide business services in the form of job posting and recruiting advice. After obtaining as much detail as possible for the “Hot Job” posting, Cindy sent it out to the WorkSource Yakima and Sunnyside staff and partners. Once the job was posted, there were constant referrals to this post from WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Case Managers, WorkFirst coaches, Labor Exchange and from the greeter. It was truly a team effort.

With the help of WorkSource staff, Jeff called back two weeks later to let them know they had an abundance of applicants and were ready to make job offers for all 12 positions. They let the staff know the hiring managers were very “pleased.” They even attended the Yakima Job Fair and plan to attend the Stand Down veteran job fair. Cindy will continue to work with this employer in the future to continue connecting jobseekers to new job opportunities.

#### *Wagner-Peyser – from RESEA to VETS – Paul*

Paul, a Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist, met a customer through a referral from Amy, who was doing a Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment for this customer in early April 2022. The customer had been laid off from his former employer and was completing the review process for continued unemployment benefits when Amy learned he recently retired from the Army National Guard and had some great education for the technology sector. Paul shared about the services

available through the Jobs for Veterans State Grant and the customer decided that case management would be a good way to build on his skills and network with the community.

The customer was determined to get a challenging, good-paying job, so he continued to return to the WorkSource center and to get résumé and cover letter advice from almost all staff at the center.

Paul's role was to remain engaged in the process with the customer, so he could put his best foot forward with top companies. He applied for around 25 jobs, getting multiple interviews, and he finally interviewed with the State's Washington Technology Solutions (WATech) agency for a Lead Virtualization Infrastructure Administrator position, paying \$108,000 per year with excellent benefits. They interviewed him on Tuesday and made the job offer on Friday. He was headed to Olympia for orientation and to pick up equipment for his new remote position within a few days. WorkSource staff proved invaluable structure to his future career path. The ability to create partnerships between agencies is critical for the State's customers.

*For more information, visit:*

### *Reports*

Dula, C. (April 2021). *The 2021 Net Impact and Cost-Benefit Evaluation of Washington State's Workforce Development Programs*. Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board.

Huang, X., & Klein, M. (Jan. 2022). *Pacific Mountain Workforce Development Council – Opioid Disaster Relief Grant Net Impact Evaluation Report*. Washington Employment Security Department.

Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, Washington State Employment Security Department, & Washington's Local Workforce Development Boards (Nov. 2022). *PY 2021 WIOA Annual Performance Narrative Report*.

### *Links*

Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board

- Workforce System Matrix
- Workforce Training Results

Washington State Employment Security Department

Washington's Local Workforce Development Boards

## West Virginia

### WorkForce West Virginia

#### *Use of State Funds*

#### *Adult Priority Service*

No information provided for this section.

#### *COVID-19 Response*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Other State Funds Activities*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Evaluations*

#### *Activities and Methodology*

During the summer of 2021, the State deployed a Workforce Development survey to State employers. The survey was designed to gather employer feedback on the preparedness and job-readiness of the State's workforce. Additionally, the State sought insight into the recruiting and retention obstacles facing employers.

The survey received 1,158 responses from a variety of industries.

Data analysts divided the survey findings into four parts:

- The first part of the survey provides information on labor force readiness, labor force description, difficulty hiring and employment gaps.
- The second part of the survey provides information on recruitment areas of inquiry, education and skills areas of inquiry and hiring considerations.
- The third part of the survey provides information on industry barriers for applicants, criminal background check and drug testing relationships in hiring, workforce development initiatives and training investments and barriers.
- In part four, the survey provides information on workforce development concentration, projections on industry openings and growth and survey respondent information.

### *Continuous Improvement*

The State's Workforce Development System (WDS) commits to creating a comprehensive approach to evaluation and research. WorkForce West Virginia, WV Division of Rehabilitation Services, and WV Adult Education have the capacity and expertise to convene the various partners to ensure coordination and effectiveness. The modification of WV's Combined State Plan during the last half of PY21 opened the WDS to a "new way of thinking" when it comes to conducting evaluations and research and will be evidenced in PY22.

### *Reports*

No information provided for this section.

### *Waivers*

#### *Waiver Implemented*

WorkForce West Virginia did not have a waiver in place for at least one program year.

### *Strategies*

Not applicable.

### *Impact on Performance*

Not applicable.

### *Success Stories*

No information provided for this section.

*For more information, visit:*

### *Report*

WorkForce West Virginia (Nov. 2022). *Annual Report Narrative on the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to the United States Department of Labor - Program Year 2021.*

### *Links*

WorkForce West Virginia

## Wisconsin

### Department of Workforce Development

#### *Use of State Funds*

#### *Adult Priority Service*

No information provided for this section.

#### *COVID-19 Response*

The State conducted annual monitoring of WIOA title I programs, managed by the 11 local boards, July 2021 through June 2022. Due to COVID-19, monitoring was conducted virtually for 10 of the 11 boards. All monitoring included a comprehensive review for program, fiscal, and civil rights/equal opportunity compliance. Monitoring of Wisconsin's 11 local boards ensures that the programs comply with appropriate policies and procedures and operate within the parameters established by law, regulations, the WIOA State Plan, the WIOA Local Plan, Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination policies, and program guidelines.

#### **Migrant Seasonal Farmworker Services**

The beginning of PY21 saw the continued impact of COVID-19 on the health and safety of Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers (MSFWs). The Department of Workforce Development (DWD) collaborated with health care partners and other agencies providing services to MSFWs, to support onsite vaccine clinics where MSFWs live and work.

DWD, in consultation with the Wisconsin Department of Health Services and interested stakeholders, promulgated emergency rules under the State's Administrative Code that provide extra protections from COVID-19 for migrant workers living in migrant labor camps. Housing provided under the H-2A worker visa program is also covered by these emergency rules.

#### *Other State Funds Activities*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Evaluations*

#### *Activities and Methodology*

#### **Assessing effectiveness of services**

The title I program assessed the effectiveness of services delivered by the Dislocated Worker and Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Act Program based on employment and earnings outcomes. The evaluation utilized the Division of Employment and Training's (DET's) Outcomes Universe with assistance from DWD's Bureau of Workforce Information and Technical Support (BWITS).

There were concerns regarding an appropriate comparison group to determine effectiveness. A literature review revealed that other research has been conducted with a more appropriate comparison group, showing TAA is related to improved employment

outcomes (e.g., *Can Displaced Labor Be Retrained? Evidence from Quasi-Random Assignment to Trade Adjustment Assistance* (Hyman, 2018)), finding both work-based learning and employment-related services influenced employment outcomes. Given more recent literature recommends a more appropriate comparison group, Wisconsin WIOA titles I, III, and IV staff partnered and conducted subsequent internal data analysis with a subset of individuals who could benefit from employment and training services. More specifically, analysis focused on teenagers with disabilities and their parents who received Wisconsin Promoting Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income (PROMISE).

### **Comprehensive Employment Planning Toolkit (CEPT) Evaluation**

The CEPT Employment Plan pilot is a joint effort by the Wisconsin DWD's Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG), Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), and WIOA title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs to use the same electronic employment plan tool developed in the Comprehensive Employment Planning Toolkit (CEPT) application available through the Division of Employment and Training's Application (DET APPs) portal. From July 1, 2022–December 31, 2022, staff working in workforce development areas (WDAs) 5, 6, 7, and 9 on the TAA, JVSG, and title I programs are piloting the use the CEPT.

Note: CEPT includes the following tools: Employment Plan, Action Steps List, Self-sufficiency, Budget, Community Resources Search, and links to career exploration and Labor Market Information (LMI) data through WisConomy. This evaluation includes collecting customer and staff feedback, as well as data on the use of CEPT. The aim of this evaluation is to answer the following research question: does CEPT improve employment planning, participation in action steps, and use of self-sufficiency, budget, community, career exploration, and labor market information (LMI) resources? Results will inform us of the use of CEPT in WIOA title I and partner program in the future.

### **Support to Communities Evaluation**

National evaluator (Abt Associates Inc., in partnership with MDRC) is evaluating Wisconsin's Support to Communities grant. Evaluation activities include knowledge development, implementation study, analysis, reporting, rapid review of grantee materials, clarification calls, structured video interview, site visits, in-depth interviews, surveys, administrative data collection, document implementation approaches, challenges, and successes. Evaluators share information/feedback during project implementation for reflective practice. The period of performance for this evaluation is five years and began September 2020, so it will be complete Aug. 31, 2025. This study is currently in the implementation study phase.

### **Other Evaluations Activities**

- Worker Connection Evaluation
- Career Pathways Advancement Evaluation
- Evidence-based policy and decision-making collaboration
- Labor market information research and reports
- Local Statistical Adjustment Model (LSAM) Evaluation Consultation



- Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) evaluation
- Title IV Evaluation
- WIOA title II action research

### *Continuous Improvement*

#### **Assessing effectiveness of services**

Data analyses revealed youth and parents who received Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) (WIOA title IV), or DET (WIOA title I and III) services had higher employment rates and wages than those who did not connect to these services. More specifically, DVR (WIOA title IV) services were associated with higher employment rates, and PROMISE services were related to improved wages. WIOA title I and III services were associated with even higher employment rates and wages. In looking at categories of WIOA title I and IV services, the analyses showed that Job Center of Wisconsin (JCW) self-services, title I Youth services, case management, and youth apprenticeship opportunities had the greatest increases in employment rates and wages. This study was presented to local field staff and workforce partners as part of Beyond Performance Fridays.

### *Reports*

#### **Assessing effectiveness of services**

DWD is working with University of Wisconsin - Madison researchers on an article for submission to a peer reviewed research journal, so the study results can be shared publicly to a broader audience. Overall, the study showed that WIOA titles I, III, and IV services together resulted in better employment outcomes than those that did not receive services, providing evidence for continued collaboration. Based on these research findings, WIOA title programs and partners can work together to set targets to increase observed co-enrollment using Wisconsin workforce co-enrollment reports. Wisconsin's Workforce Data Integration System (WDIS) Research and Evaluation workgroup is working on a follow-up research study to learn more about what demographics, employment influencers, and training services funded by different WIOA Title training programs predict employment outcomes.

#### **RESEA evaluation**

Researchers completed their first annual evaluation report, and have determined random assignment is indeed random, and enrollment numbers are projected to be sufficient to detect differences between groups.

### *Waivers*

#### *Waiver Implemented*

DWD has the following approved waivers, which were initially approved by the DOL on December 31, 2020, and extended on June 6, 2022, with the approval of Wisconsin's PY22–PY23 WIOA State Plan modification:

- In-school-youth (ISY) Waiver.

- Youth Expenditure Requirement Waiver.

### Strategies

#### ISY Waiver

Employment and Training Administration (ETA) approved the State's request to waive the requirement limiting individual training accounts (ITAs) to only out-of-school youth (OSY), ages 16–24 through the end of PY23. In addition to OSY, the State may use ITAs for ISY, ages 16–21. Please note, that ETA aligned the ISY age for ITAs with the minimum age for working.

#### Youth Expenditure Requirement Waiver

ETA approved through the end of PY23, the State's request to waive the requirement that the State expend 75 percent of Governor's reserve youth funds and local formula youth funds on OSY. Wisconsin may lower the expenditure requirement of Governor's reserve and local area youth fund expenditure requirement to 50 percent for OSY.

### Impact on Performance

No information provided for this section.

### Success Stories

No information provided for this section.

*For more information, visit:*

### Reports

Department of Workforce Development. *Wisconsin WIOA Annual Report – Program Year 2021*.

Hyman, B. (2018). *Can Displaced Labor Be Retrained? Evidence from Quasi-Random Assignment to Trade Adjustment Assistance*. University of Chicago.

### Links

Business Employment Dynamics Dashboard

Career Clusters dashboard

Data Labs: Roadmap to Recovery

Department of Workforce Development

Population and Co-enrollment Dashboard

WisConomy

## Wyoming

### Wyoming Department of Workforce Services

#### *Use of State Funds*

#### *Adult Priority Service*

#### **Department of Family Services Partnership**

The State Department of Workforce Services (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 State workforce centers provide universal access to all jobseekers 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), are given priority of service when it comes to receiving higher-intensity services like “individualized career services” or training from the WIOA Adult program.

Due to the WIOA title I Adults focus on low-income individuals, DWS and DFS have monthly meetings to discuss strategies and approaches to providing streamlined services and increase co-enrollments. During the program year, additional training was provided to both agencies, and this will continue on an annual basis.

The training topics included:

- WIOA title I eligibility requirements, and services provided
- Coaching for Success
- Case management with the team approach
- Funding streams and how to braid funds between TANF and WIOA programs
- Colors Personality Assessments and how personality impacts our relationships
- Bridges Out of Poverty
- Communication - Unconscious Basis and Managing Emotions

#### **Personal Opportunities with Employment Responsibilities (POWER) program**

DFS and DWS partner together to create self-sufficient, responsible, and successful individuals through the POWER program. Using DFS federal TANF funds, POWER allows State parents with barriers to employment to earn cash assistance through an employment-focused, pay-after-performance TANF work program administered by DWS. The individuals who enroll in POWER also meet the eligibility requirements of WIOA. As a result, program efforts were directed to cross-training workforce specialists and POWER case managers over the past year to increase co-enrollment efforts.

*COVID-19 Response*

No information provided for this section.

*Other State Funds Activities***Dads Making a Difference (DADs) program**

The DADs program is a DWS initiative in partnership with DFS that uses TANF, SNAP Employment and Training (SNAP 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 non-custodial 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 DADs program participants are co-enrolled in WIOA to leverage services and funding.

**Wyoming Child Support Program (CSP)**

CSP, in partnership with DWS, established the Work Initiative Network (WIN) program to improve earning outcomes for Non-Custodial Parents (NCPs). The program used coaching and a case management approach that increases the participants' capacity to move toward permanent unsubsidized employment so they can make reliable child support payments, which improves the financial well-being of both custodial and noncustodial parents and their children. Because WIN participants also meet the eligibility requirements of the WIOA Adult/Dislocated Worker program, DWS partners with the case managers to ensure that eligible participants are co-enrolled in WIOA and that funds can be leveraged to provide additional services.

**Adult Education (AE) Expansion**

Through a coordinated review and evaluation of programmatic data for Adult Education and the State Workforce Centers, it was determined that there existed a great opportunity to co-enroll increasing numbers of youth. Throughout the State large numbers of out-of-school youth (OSY), aged 16–24 were enrolling in Adult Education programs; yet these participants were not taking advantage of the services which could be provided by title I: Youth and/or title III: Wagner-Peyser. As a result, a new joint program was launched in FY21/22 between the State Department of Workforce Services and some of the Adult Education centers in the State. This program targeted out-of-school youth and required that the students be co-enrolled so that effective services could be delivered by both title I and title II. The program was expanded in FY22/23 to include all Adult Education centers in the State.

It is the intent of both the Adult Education program and the State Department of Workforce Services to replicate the Youth program to adults who are aged 25 or older.

*Evaluations**Activities and Methodology*

The State has conducted two strategic planning sessions to identify measurable areas for evaluations and is exploring an internal position to take on the evaluation process in 2023. The State had a significant staff transition in the program year but is looking to improve the evaluation process as it moves forward.

### *Continuous Improvement*

The One-Stop System continued to seek innovative and cost-effective procedures and delivery of services throughout PY21. The State utilized One-Stop Center certifications, National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) committee meetings, Workforce GPS webinars, and discussions with other states when evaluating best practices.

### *Reports*

The Research and Planning Division of DWS provides:

- Wyoming Labor Force Trends: A monthly publication of the Research & Planning section of the Wyoming Department of Workforce Services.
- 2022 Wyoming Workforce Annual Report
- A series of Labor Market Information webinar videos
- Commuting patterns (*An Introduction to Colorado-Wyoming Commuting Patterns* article)
- Current employment statistics

### *Waivers*

#### *Waiver Implemented*

No information provided for this section.

### *Strategies*

No information provided for this section.

### *Impact on Performance*

No information provided for this section.

### *Success Stories*

#### *Wagner-Peyser – Donna*

Donna was a walk-in client that came into the office to use the resource computers to look for employment. At first, Donna seemed reluctant to visit with the workforce center staff and indicated she could apply for positions independently. Donna returned to the workforce center a few more times and slowly began to open up about her employment needs and barriers.

Donna eventually agreed to work with a case manager and was provided a variety of basic career services that included referrals, one specifically to the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). The basic career services Donna received were:

- Registration in Wyoming at Work
- Résumé/Cover Letter Assistance
- Interview Tips and Tricks
- Mock Interview
- Weekly Job Application Assistance

Donna was very focused on obtaining clerical (administrative assistant) types of employment. However, she had limited typing/computer skills. The Workforce Center (WFC) referred Donna to a site with training. She found some Microsoft Office refresher classes that were free, self-paced, and offered online. Donna utilized the resource room and took classes. She also attended her meeting with DVR and started the application process.

The WFC staff continued meeting with Donna and helped her to apply for the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). After a long wait and two interviews, Donna was hired with the DMV and now helps individuals obtain their driver's licenses. Donna remains employed and is earning \$15.00/hour.

#### *WIOA Dislocated Worker Program and POWER (TANF) program co-enrollment – Bob*

Bob was working at Halliburton and was laid off. He came to the WFC to apply for his unemployment insurance (UI) benefits. Bob requested one-on-one assistance with his UI claims. Information was shared about the WIOA program, and he eventually enrolled. Bob became very interested in a new program at the Community College, Mine Maintenance/Control Room Operator.

Within a few months, Bob started college and just recently graduated. There were many struggles throughout the time Bob was attending school. He exhausted his Unemployment Insurance (UI) and he was not able to work and be successful in school. Therefore, the case manager made a referral to the Personal Opportunities with Employment Responsibilities (POWER) program [a cash assistance program designed to help families with children become self-sufficient through intensive case management services]. Both Bob and his wife became POWER participants and were able to utilize this program to meet their family's day-to-day financial needs.

After completion of the Mine Maintenance/Control Room Operator program, Bob was hired by Genesis. He is a full-time, permanent employee, and started at \$34.00/hour.

#### *WIOA Adult Program and DADS (TANF) program co-enrollment – Michael*

Michael applied for the program with hopes of finding a career to help support himself and his new family. Michael and his fiancée are the proud parents of a little baby boy, and both had been struggling to make ends meet since the addition to their family. The Dads Making a Difference (DAD) is a TANF program that gives job training and other services to fathers who need help supporting their children.

Michael was accepted into the DADs program and was co-enrolled in the WIOA program and the SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) program to leverage resources and expertise on his journey. All the programs collaborated with one another. The SNAP E&T program covered the tuition cost at Sage Technical Services where Michael completed the training necessary for him to obtain his CDL Class A. The WIOA program assisted Michael with many career services, some unforeseen support services and some basic life skills and opportunities such as parenting and financial literacy classes.

Michael successfully graduated from the DADs program, having already been hired by Mead Lumber as a Class A truck driver at a starting wage of \$18.00 an hour with full benefits. Michael's future aspirations include owning his own semi-truck and a home for his family.

#### *WIOA Youth Program – Erica*

Erica dropped out of high school due to social issues. Erica's home environment was not stable, negatively impacting her success in attending the HiSet and career exploration classes. Erica moved in with a long-term family friend. The family friend elected to seek guardianship of Erica, which was granted.

Erica began to thrive in the Leading Youth Forward Everyday (LYFE) Youth program with DWS. She attended her Highschool equivalency Test (HiSet) classes, completed career exploration activities, and learned more about herself. When she was in the program, her guardian unexpectedly passed away. This was difficult for Erica, but she was able to lean in and get the support she needed. Erica had to return home after the passing of her guardian. On a positive note, Erica's biological family agreed to seek assistance and began working on their self-sufficiency goals. Erica earned her Highschool Equivalency Certificate (HiSEC), obtained a survival job at Taco Bell, and enrolled in the Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program at Laramie County Community College. Erica is focused on pursuing a career goal in health care. Erica remains a WIOA participant.

#### *WIOA Youth Program and Wagner-Peyser program co-enrollment*

In Spring 2021, the program teamed up with an alternative high school in Sheridan to assist youth in the community. The initial focus included career exploration and development of work readiness skills. Approximately 30 youth were identified as needing career exploration and guidance to determine their long-term career paths. The Business Representatives identified businesses throughout the community that were willing to provide unpaid work experiences to community youth. The Business Representatives assisted the school with placing the 30 students in work experiences that fit their areas of interest. The program and the school identified six youth who had significant barriers and needed additional assistance. Those youth were enrolled in the WIOA Youth program for access to additional services.

DWS also began working with an alternative high school in Gillette, starting from the successful Sheridan program model. Approximately 25 youth enrolled in the school's career mentoring class; Specialists met and discussed different services over five weeks. Students were provided with the opportunity to create résumés for their job-shadowing assignments.

### *Wagner-Peyser Re-entry*

DWS has launched the Career Compass program pilot program dedicated to working with ex-offenders. The program's goal is to begin working with the ex-offender before their release. During the pilot and ongoing, DWS is collaborating with the Department of Corrections (DOC). The reentry team at the Department of Corrections identifies returning citizens. The focus has been on those within six months of release. In the program, the returning citizens receive education on all the different programs that DWS offers, which includes WIOA. They participate in workshops on basic career services. These workshops are geared toward their needs and address the challenges they may face as an ex-offender. The program is offered virtually, and approximately 50 ex-offenders have completed the pilot program.

Through this collaboration, DWS and DOC have applied for the Pathway Home grant. The relationship with the Department of Corrections has been fostered through this partnership and will further develop the available resources for returning citizens.

*For more information, visit:*

### *Reports*

Wyoming Department of Workforce Services, et al.

- *Wyoming Annual Narrative Report Program Year 2021.*
- 2022 Wyoming Workforce Annual Report
- Kofoed, A. (2020). *An Introduction to Colorado-Wyoming Commuting Patterns* in “2020 Wyoming Workforce Annual Report, Chapter 9: Commuting”.

### *Links*

Wyoming Department of Workforce Services

Wyoming Labor Force Trends

Wyoming Post-Secondary (Colleges & University) Employment Outcomes

Current Employment Statistics

Labor Market Information webinar videos



## American Samoa

### Department of Human Resources - Employment & Training Division

#### *Use of State Funds*

#### *Adult Priority Service*

No information provided for this section.

#### *COVID-19 Response*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Other State Funds Activities*

The Statewide fund activities include all program operations to enhance the quality of services to employers and jobseekers throughout the Territory. American Samoa's WIOA funding is directed to the various programs (Youth, Adult, Dislocated Adults) to ensure consistent operations. Activities/operations include:

1. Administering and monitoring the Territory's WIOA program operations,
2. Providing technical assistance in carrying out WIOA activities,
3. Operating a fiscal and management accountability information system, and
4. Maintaining Performance and Information on the cost of Attendance (including tuition and fees).

It is understood that activities under the WIOA program are appropriated to ultimately safeguard the operations listed above. However, in the efforts to expand the services here in the territory, there will be modifications applied. There is a high increased number of jobseekers, especially within the Youth and Dislocated Adults population due to the pandemic and graduates. The American Samoa Apprenticeship State Expansion (AS ASE) Program is a guaranteed opportunity avenue as well to enable additional Training and Education. Lastly, activities to support accessibility strategies (work experience, credentialing, and skill building) to bridge gaps between the Territory's workforce and the employers are all supported by program funds. Professional and well-equipped employees will produce more effective services that the government and its private sectors are in dire need of today.

#### *Evaluations*

#### *Activities and Methodology*

As of PY21, the Territory does not conduct evaluations nor coordinate and design the evaluations in conjunction with state and local workforce development boards.

*Continuous Improvement*

No information provided for this section.

*Reports*

No information provided for this section.

*Waivers*

*Waiver Implemented*

No new waivers proposed for the Territory.

*Strategies*

Not applicable.

*Impact on Performance*

Not applicable.

*Success Stories*

No information provided for this section.

*For more information, visit:*

*Reports*

Department of Human Resources - Employment & Training Division. *Workforce Innovations & Opportunity Act (WIOA) Annual Narrative Performance Report Performance Year 2021.*

*Links*

Department of Human Resources - Employment & Training Division

## Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

### CNMI Department of Labor – Workforce Investment Agency

#### *Use of State Funds*

#### *Adult Priority Service*

No information provided for this section.

#### *COVID-19 Response*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Other State Funds Activities*

Statewide funds were utilized to support the administration of workforce investment activities by the Commonwealth's State Workforce Development Board and the DOL Workforce Investment Agency. These include an array of activities:

- Marketing and Outreach
- Tinian Business Engagement with Tinian Department of Labor
- Rota Business Engagement with Rota Department of Labor
- National Disability Employment Awareness Month
- Reentry Resource Day
- Northern Marianas Technical Institute Orientation
- Saipan Chamber of Commerce General Membership Meeting
- Rota Department of Labor Career Fair
- Department of Correction Orientation of WIOA Programs
- Construction Apprenticeship Program

#### *Evaluations*

#### *Activities and Methodology*

#### **Request for Proposal RFP22-DOL-WIA-42200140**

Through the coordinated efforts of the Planning, Evaluation, and Assessment committee of the Commonwealth's State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) and the core programs, a Request for Proposal (RFP) or RFP22-DOL-WIA-42200140 was issued

on August 29, 2022, and closed September 12, 2022. The purpose of the project is to conduct an impact study of the effectiveness of Work Based Learning (WBL) strategies on WIOA in-school youth (ISY) and out-of-school youth (OSY) participants' educational and employment outcomes. One proposal was received and is currently under committee review.

### *Continuous Improvement*

#### **Peer Learning on Evaluation, Cohort 5 (EvalPLC5)**

In a concerted effort to build and strengthen the capacity within the Commonwealth's core partners, the territory administrators of the WIOA core programs applied and selected to participate in the technical assistance opportunity by DOL-ETA—EvalPLC5. Administrators and key program staff engaged with state and national subject matter experts (SMEs) to utilize the Evaluation Toolkits to self-assess evaluation readiness, design, and implementation strengths and challenges; participate in facilitated virtual workgroup meetings to build knowledge, peer learning, and support teams to develop future evaluation plans; work with a coach who provides resources, expert advice, and peer connections tailored to the territories needs and opportunities for improvement; and share promising practices across participating states. The Commonwealth team completed the EvalPLC in the spring of 2022.

The team represents the WIOA Core Programs: title I—DOL Workforce Investment Agency; title II—NMC Adult Basic Education; and title IV—Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. As part of the EvalPLC training, the team collaborated to design a capstone project that is focused on the development of a comprehensive online orientation of the Commonwealth's workforce system (WIOA core programs) that incorporates a survey to evaluate the effectiveness of this approach. The Commonwealth's core programs are working to finalize and launch the online orientation to all websites and provide results in the next report.

### *Reports*

No information provided for this section.

### *Waivers*

#### *Waiver Implemented*

The waiver on the statutory and regulatory provisions of the WIOA Section 101(b)(1)(c)(ii) and the corresponding regulation at 20 CFR 679.110(b)(3)(ii)(B) remained active in the first quarter of PY21 or through September 30, 2021 (waiver the statutory requirement on the membership to the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB)).

### *Strategies*

Since the approval of the above-mentioned waiver, the Commonwealth's Registered Apprenticeship Program established its first approved RAP with Pacific BioMedical Services, Inc. Its Vice-President, Stan Benavente, was appointed in January 2022 to serve on the Commonwealth's State Workforce Development Board as the representative of Joint Labor/ Management Registered Apprenticeship.

### *Impact on Performance*

No information provided for this section.

### *Success Stories*

#### *WIOA Adult Program – Davon*

Davon entered the WIOA program at the age of 19. He heard about the WIOA program through his parents who told him, “People tend to go to WIA and get hired really quick.” [The WIOA program is housed under the Workforce Investment Agency (WIA) Division]. He was deemed eligible under the adult program and during the assessment shared his interest in the Cooking and Restaurant Industry. He shared, “I have always wanted to try working in a restaurant as a cook and to own my restaurant one day, but I had no experience.” His Case Manager kept the note and a month away from graduation, he was referred to the Hyatt Regency Saipan for an interview and was selected to participate in their training program. He satisfied the pre-employment conditions within a day’s notice and trained as a Food and Beverage Attendant.

He admits,

“I did have challenges, such as communicating with guests because [...] I was a shy person and also had problems with recognizing the menus we were to serve [...] I had to memorize each and every one in case a guest asked what was on menu. How I overcame these challenges was by pushing myself to talk to the guests even if I was too shy. I got so used to it that I did not know how to be shy anymore and with the menus. I studied it every time I clocked into work or even out of work, otherwise I would show the guests I do not know anything about the menu which means I am not fit to be in a 5-star hotel like Hyatt. But I proved myself and others wrong by studying every single day and I got used to it as well. It takes time to memorize everything when you are new but being in Hyatt for 1 year and 6 months has got me somewhere.”

Although Davon had exited the Program, the Commonwealth continued to touch base with him and found him at the Hyatt with a shy smile working in one of the international cuisine restaurants.

#### *WIOA Dislocated Worker Program – Lisa*

When Lisa’s job as a Laundry Attendant was affected in March 2020 owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, she looked to the Commonwealth’s Department of Labor, Workforce Investment Agency (WIA) for help in retraining. She was able to make the move with the Work Based Training program. Thanks to program and transitioning to her new job, Lisa shares her great appreciation, “Glad I am working at Hyatt now.”

Lisa’s financial situation had improved to the point that she purchased a car and lives more comfortably. Lisa shared that having the ability to interact with people every day has been invaluable in terms of both her professional development and personal growth. Being new to the hospitality industry, she found the fast-paced environment at Hyatt to be challenging, but eventually adjusted and was able to perform daily tasks independently.

*WIOA Dislocated Worker Program – Louella*

Louella is a naturalized U.S. citizen who originally came from the Philippines. She studied health at the University but was not able to complete her degree plan. She eventually relocated to the island of Tinian where she took up a job as a Poker Attendant. When her husband fell sick and required medical treatment in Saipan, she made arrangements to live with her daughter, at the time, was attending college. Louella additionally had to quit her job working at the Tinian Municipal Treasury Office. After her husband passed, she then picked up a job working as an Accounting Assistant for Delta Management Corporation. She provided three years of service and could not be spared from termination as the pandemic affected operations. She then relocated back to Tinian where she heard from a family member that the WIA Division was taking applications. Staff from DOL-WIA were on Tinian and were able to receive, assess and determine Louella was eligible for services under the National Dislocated Worker Grant. She received temporary employment assisting the COVID-19 Taskforce.

She shared,

“I was scared to get the virus but was not worried because I always used my personal protective equipment, washed, and sanitized my hands very often. My daughter who was working in Saipan was on reduced hours during that time. She had a car loan, apartment, and utilities to take care of, but her salary was not enough to cover everything. I knew I had to help her and it motivated me to keep working till she got a stable job. I asked if the temporary work helped me in any way.... Yes! Definitely! I am very thankful for the opportunity to work under the WIA program. I am now working at the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation in Tinian as a Warehouse Technician and also currently taking online college courses at the Northern Marianas College.”

She added, “I would certainly recommend WIA services to others because WIA help people that are looking for jobs have access to employment, training and other services to enable them to get the skills to successfully get into the job market.”

The Commonwealth is humbled by Louella’s story and all the others that have come through the doors with their varying histories. Participants like Louella are the walking billboards of tenacity and opportunities taken that allow for successful outcomes of the WIOA program.

*WIOA Youth Program – Antonia*

Antonia, a student at Saipan Southern High School, wanted to gain work experience and thus needed job exploration. Every year, the Commonwealth WIOA program partners with the Public School System to provide supplemental subsidies to the Youth programs. She became eligible for WIOA services and gained more than she imagined. While in school, she took up Cooperative Training known locally as CoOp Class and was able to land placement with the Commonwealth Election Commission. She graduated from High School in June of 2021 and kept hopes of employment with the Commission. As luck may have it, a vacancy at the Election Commission opened and she applied. Antonia was hired full-time as an Election Commission Clerk earning more than the minimum wage. She shared, “This is my first job and now we are in the busy season [...] I love the interaction especially now. I have awesome coworkers and the best Boss!” The commonwealth got a chance to speak with her father and he shared so much pride for Antonia as such a young, disciplined adult.

### *WIOA Youth Program – Dmetri*

Dmetri learned about WIOA programs for youth during his Cooperative Training Class as a Junior. He shared with his Case Manager deep interest in the Army. Under CoOp Class, he did Work Based Learning with the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services (DFEMS) on Rota. As a Senior, he did job exploration and work experience at the local hardware store as a Store Clerk. This experience fueled his occupational dream. Before the training ended, he caught news of the Rota Fire Department opening up an Academy and jumped at the opportunity to submit his application for Fire Cadet. He endured the Fire Academy, but he could not shake off his dream of being in the Armed Forces. On October 19, 2021, he enlisted with the Guam Recruiting Company. Dmetri is the eldest of three siblings and is the first of his immediate family to join the Armed Forces and continues to be on active duty in the mainland today.

*For more information, visit:*

### *Reports*

CNMI Department of Labor. *WIOA Annual Statewide Narrative Performance Report Program Year 2021.*

### *Links*

CNMI Department of Labor – Workforce Investment Agency

## Guam

### Guam Department of Labor

#### *Use of State Funds*

#### *Adult Priority Service*

No information provided for this section.

#### *COVID-19 Response*

October 6, 2021, was the last day for filing claims under The Guam Department of Labor's (GDOL) Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program. And GDOL Director, David Dell'Isola, said October 27, 2021, was the last day to accept the weekly filing of claims online with the closing out of the PUA program.

The COVID-19 pandemic was a life-changer. The focus of the last two years has been how the pandemic affected the Territory's economy and various industries such as tourism, food services and the most vulnerable one, the healthcare industry. Both government and private sector leaders put together numerous programs and job packages to let individuals know that there are potential jobs available in the healthcare industry and other industries, to look at new opportunities offered to those willing to learn new skills and be placed at jobs where their skillsets were needed to fill vacancies. The pandemic impacted the economy especially where most employees from the private sector lost their jobs and needed financial assistance to continue supporting their families while looking for jobs. Some of the greatest impacts have been in the industries of tourism/visitor industry, one of the Territory's main revenue engines; the healthcare system, education, public safety, hospitality/hotels, restaurants, human resources, and other businesses and nonprofit organizations. Thus, the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) was made available to jobseekers who were dislocated workers, unemployed or underemployed since the private sector was hit the hardest during the pandemic period.

#### *Other State Funds Activities*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Evaluations*

#### *Activities and Methodology*

The Guam Department of Labor (GDOL) is working toward conducting an evaluation and assessment project on activities under the WIOA core programs. For PY21, the department was unable to conduct any research and evaluation study for the WIOA core programs as the Territory continued to recoup from the COVID-19 pandemic. The WIOA work plan includes collaborating with the University of Guam (UoG) in conjunction with the Guam Workforce Development Board (GWDB) standing committees on planning and monitoring to determine that the American Job Center (AJC) services for WIOA Core Programs are efficient. Funding available under the Governor's set aside funds will be utilized for this activity.



Key components of the evaluation for PY22 will be focused on the following areas:

- Investments in training.
- Case Management—Best practices and identify alternative types of approaches for case managers when delivering this service.
- Integrated Service Delivery—Is the Territory AJC closely integrated across programs that generate efficiency and reduce challenges for their customers?

While the Territory is a single state, it is believed that this would be advantageous for the Territory as coordination for this study will be mandated through the Governor's directive. The Program Action Team (PAT) will include members of the GWDB standing committees and representatives from the GDOL programs to conduct a workforce research and evaluation project on activities under WIOA core programs. As part of the Territory's continued efforts toward the research and evaluation of programs, the Territory will work continuously with the WIOA partners for title II and title IV, the Guam Community College (GCC) education and Vocational Rehabilitation partners, in addition to the State's core programs at the GDOL American Job Center (AJC).

### *Continuous Improvement*

The Territory strives to conduct evaluations and assessments for ongoing workforce training and boot camps with GCC for the WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs to provide services for workforce development to reintegrate into gainful employment.

The Territory plans to carry out the research and evaluation project during the PY22 period which began July 1, 2022. The findings of the evaluation will be based on results that will show that:

- The GCC training and boot camps held are working to have employers hire participants who completed the trainings with credentials and qualifications;
- That training is cost-effective and is available to everyone and not just a select few; and
- The evaluation will prove that these training programs are placing trainees into actual jobs that help them earn more than minimum income, above entry level jobs and help them earn higher wages.

The evaluation will also show that not everyone signs up for the training. Still, it gives the Territory information to help improve how all jobseekers are served, especially those with barriers to employment, such as the disabled population. The evaluation will be used as a guide to gather evidence-based information to make better workforce development policy decision-making.

Although the Negotiated Performance Measures have increased substantially, the Territory continues to align performance measures to document program elements showing both slippages and program areas for improvement to meet these new percentages. The AJC workforce system pursues continuous improvement through data-driven metrics and indicators by evaluating participants and its' data-driven policies. The data validation process through Virtual One-Stop (VOS) will show that

reports submitted to the DOL-ETA on program activities and performance outcomes are accurate, including individual data elements. GDOL utilizes the VOS with local AJC policies on data validation and timely data entry.

Providing effective career services for all individuals at the AJC requires forward-moving AJC partnerships with the Department of Integrated Services for Individuals with Disabilities (DISID). The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) continues to realign and support VOS working relationships and how to best serve and provide case management and recordkeeping services to individuals with disabilities. Other support measures include follow-up and referral assistance between DVR and AJC related to career services at the AJC.

Data was also collected from the July 1, 2022, island-wide job fair and will be summarized and provided for PY22. There have been numerous job fairs held with business entities in the private sector which is a sign of the economy becoming vibrant again. Electronic delivery made possible through HireGuam; the VOS case management system must not replace access to such services at the comprehensive AJC. The system is in compliance with the equal opportunity provisions of WIOA. Basic career services are universally available to everyone accessing the AJC.

### *Reports*

#### **Current Employment Statistic: Bureau of Labor Statistics**

As reported by the Territory's Bureau of Labor Statistics, the June 2022 preliminary statistics show the total number of jobs increased by 190 in the latest quarter and are up 2,130 over the prior June. Private sector employment was up by 850 in the latest quarter and increased 1,880 over the year.

#### **Unemployment Situation on Guam: Bureau of Labor Statistics**

The unemployment rate in the Territory for June 2022 was 4.8 percent, a decrease of 0.3 percentage points from March 2021 (5.1%), and a reduction of 6.6 percentage points from the June 2021 figure one year earlier (11.4%).

### *Waivers*

#### *Waiver Implemented*

The Territory originally submitted an out-of-school youth (OSY) WIOA Waiver request on December 29, 2020, during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. DOL-ETA gave approval on December 31, 2020, for PY20 and PY21 although this waiver request was not implemented. The Territory was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and requested this waiver to lower funds on OSY from 75 percent to 50 percent of the total funds received.

### *Strategies*

Career services are provided at the American Job Center (AJC) and the goal is to recruit both in-school youth (ISY) and OSY and help them find successful careers and employment, inclusive of Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs with education partners like Guam Community College (GCC) and the University of Guam (UoG). Post recovery from the pandemic, the OSY

waiver will be used to meet performance outcomes with the youth summer employment opportunities for paid and unpaid work experience with employers and eligible training providers as a year-round strategy for youth development.

### *Impact on Performance*

The waiver will allow GDOL to provide services and support to eligible youth to assist them with workforce training and work experience with youth programs.

### *Success Stories*

#### *National Dislocated Worker Grant – Laylani*

Laylani was laid off from her job due to the pandemic. She had applied for the National Dislocated Workers Grant (NDWG) Program and was placed under the Dededo Mayor's Office. Laylani had the opportunity to take the next step of her career. Through progress and monitoring, the outstanding work and commitment she had shown, made her stand out and resulted in a job offer. Laylani had entered unsubsidized employment as a Recreational Leader. In September 2022, she was transitioned into municipal clerk, a step up from Laylani's initial employment.

#### *National Dislocated Worker Grant – Jazmin*

"I started out as a Community Program Aide working at DPHSS under the National Displaced Workers [Program]. I was doing contact tracing and case investigation at DPHSS in the COVID-19 Containment Branch. I excelled in my position mainly because of my work ethics and how I interact with my coworkers and most importantly, with my patients. I speak fluent Pohnpeian, Chuukese, Kosraean and this really is a big asset in my field of work. I was able to communicate with people in the community who have language barriers. I was able to build bridges for them to get the resources and help they need. Through this, I was also hired as a temporary appointment staff and then recently hired as a limited term appointment. I found a passion for working with people through the program; I am now attending school at Guam Community College majoring in Human Services. I want to give back to the community and help educate people in the community."

#### *National Dislocated Worker Grant – Joseph*

Joseph first came to the AJC on May 22, 2017. He had recently been released from a 10-year prison sentence and was seeking assistance in obtaining his high school diploma and employment. He was sent to Asmuyao Community School on June 26, 2017, to earn the nine credits needed to obtain his diploma. Even with limited transportation he obtained his adult high school diploma on May 4, 2019. During the 23 months of attendance in school, Joseph would indicate that he wanted to drop out of school but was encouraged and praised for his accomplishments. On January 6, 2020, Joseph obtained employment at Ma Thai Restaurant as a kitchen helper. He was doing well at his job but was laid off on March 15, 2020, due to COVID-19. Joseph was deemed eligible for the NDWG Program and was placed at the Territory Veterans Affairs as a maintenance worker. On March 1, 2022, Joseph was hired as a Building Custodian at the Territory Veterans Affairs.

*National Dislocated Worker Grant – Rosita*

Rosita had been unemployed since May 2001 and actively seeking employment, with no success. She was deemed eligible under the NDWG Program as a customer service representative. After gaining knowledge of workforce development, she was re-assigned in September 2021 to the Department of Revenue and Taxation where she was exposed to a totally different work environment. She dealt with a large amount of money under a program called Salappe (money) due to COVID-19 and was then hired as a limited term employee on December 29, 2021.

*Senior Community Service Employment Program – Carmen*

Carmen first visited the AJC on March 1, 2016, needing assistance with finding a job. Her goal was to obtain full-time employment to become self-sufficient. Carmen's barriers included long-term unemployment and outdated job skills. Basic career services such as résumé revisions and job referrals were provided. After numerous attempts she was not able to obtain employment and was referred to the Senior Community Service Employment Program. She was deemed eligible for the program and enrolled on September 12, 2019.

Carmen was placed at the Department of Administration, Human Resource Department as an administrative assistant. During the time she was in training, she had access to the job opportunities for the Government of Guam and was encouraged to apply for jobs. In March 2022, Carmen accepted a position at the Department of Health and Social Services and became gainfully employed and self-sufficient.

*For more information, visit:*

*Reports*

Guam Department of Labor

- *PY2021 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act: Annual Report Narrative.*
- *The Unemployment Situation on Guam* (Sept. 2022).
- *Current Employment Report* (Sept. 2022).

*Links*

Guam Department of Labor

## Palau

State Workforce Development Board  
Palau WIOA Office/American Job Center

### *Use of State Funds*

#### *Adult Priority Service*

As a small and single service delivery area, services to adults and dislocated workers are offered through the Territory Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Office (Palau WIOA Office)/American Job Center (AJC). Programs and services for adults continue to focus on eligible adults and dislocated workers. Customers must receive at least one career service in the three categories: basic career services, individualized career services, and follow-up services. Eligibility of individuals for workforce services funded under the WIOA are stated in established state workforce policies. The State Board has incorporated the policies to include veterans and their spouses who meet the WIOA eligibility requirement, to fall under the category of priority customers of workforce services. Priority for services continues to be given to veterans and eligible veteran spouses, disabled individuals, dislocated workers, displaced homemakers, women, training opportunities for non-traditional employment, low-income individuals, and individuals with multiple barriers consistent with the WIOA laws and regulations.

#### *COVID-19 Response*

From June 1, 2021, to June 30, 2022, the Territory's WIOA was continually engulfed by the continuous disbursement of Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) and Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) grants as a response to the massive layoffs due to COVID-19. At the time PUA and FPUC was implemented, COVID-19 was non-existent in the Territory, as the government had closed its borders in March 2020 to prevent COVID-19 from entering the small island nation. By closing the borders to keep the Territory free of COVID-19 the tourism industry rapidly declined, which then affected other private and public sectors. PUA and FPUC were disbursed by WIOA to all who had lost their jobs or were facing a reduction of hours due to COVID-19. All WIOA title I programs were put on hold as this was the order of business from June 2020 until the end of Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act in September 2021. Due to mismanagement of the PUA and FPUC programs and guidelines not being followed, the work for CARES Act continued into 2022 affecting WIOA title I activities. Due to the unprecedented effects of the global pandemic that is now an economic, health, and social reality in the Territory, WIOA has been inundated with the overwhelming backlog of claims and retroactive payments to CARES Act participants. Currently, the WIOA is in the process of hiring five office clerks to assist with the Desk Monitoring Review Findings of the PUA and FPUC program. Until PUA and FPUC programs close on June 30, 2023, Palau WIOA will be able to conclude its regular employment and training services to the Territory.

#### *Other State Funds Activities*

No information provided for this section.

### *Evaluations*

#### *Activities and Methodology*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Continuous Improvement*

No information provided for this section.

### *Reports*

No information provided for this section.

### *Waivers*

#### *Waiver Implemented*

The Territory requested a Youth program waiver for PY20 which was conditionally approved pending actual program activities report. Although the implementation and continuous efforts to complete the CARES Act grants, PUA, and Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) has overwhelmed WIOA, the Territory was able to implement the Youth Program through the Ministry of Human Resource, Culture, Tourism, and Development (MHRCTD) in the Summer of 2021 and the Summer of 2022.

### *Strategies*

WIOA will continue to coordinate with MHRCTD in reorganizing how the Youth program will be implemented for PY22.

#### *Impact on Performance*

No information provided for this section.

### *Success Stories*

No information provided for this section.

*For more information, visit:*

### *Reports*

*Annual Statewide Performance Report Narrative for the Period July 01, 2021 to June 30, 2022.*

### *Links*

State Workforce Development Board

Palau WIOA Office/American Job Center

Palau WIOA State Plan Program Years 2020–2023

HirePalau

## Puerto Rico

Puerto Rico Workforce Development Program  
Department of Economic Development and Commerce

### *Use of State Funds*

#### *Adult Priority Service*

No information provided for this section.

#### *COVID-19 Response*

No information provided for this section.

### *Other State Funds Activities*

The following breakdown includes the activities carried out with the governor's reserve funds from July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022, for on-the-job training (OJT), customized training, and training activities under the Registered Apprenticeship Program. Programs funded through WIOA have become a critical partner in The Commonwealth's economic development efforts. These funds, especially those related to state reserve, will impact new businesses, and support existing ones by offering skilled workers and incentives. The development of this training resulted in the creation of 449 new jobs. Of these, 84 will receive national on-the-job credentials, and 181 incumbent workers will receive a credential under the RAP.

### **DE Holdings**

DE Holdings is a company engaged in the tourism industry. The company was delegated \$773,595.73 to provide OJT for 92 participants in different positions essential to operate the company. This project has benefited from the waiver approved by DOL, which allows for 90 percent reimbursement for OJT activities until June 30, 2024.

### **One Health Direct**

This is a company that specializes in direct sales services of medical devices and services through a Call Center. They currently have 54 employees and need to recruit and train 225 new employees to keep the company competitive. Due to the current waiver, the company was delegated \$1,740,367.20, corresponding to 75 percent of the OJT cost to train the new employees.

### **Guidant Puerto Rico**

This company specializes in the manufacture of pacemakers, defibrillators, and other medical instruments for heart failure. The company currently has approximately 800 employees. Guidant Puerto Rico must retrain and certify 95 incumbent workers under the Apprenticeship Program. The company was delegated \$4,032,359.96 to train and certify this number of apprentices.

### **T&O Project Management Group**

The group specializes in home repair and construction. T&O Project intends to retrain its workforce through a registered apprenticeship program to have a skilled workforce. T&O Project needs to retrain 16 carpenters through a Registered



Apprenticeship Program of 4,000 hours of on-the-job learning (OJL) and 288 hours of Related Instruction. The company was delegated \$836,800.00.

**Hogarea Inc.**

Hogarea intends to recruit 22 new employees. The company was delegated \$241,776.00.

**Forevenue, LLC**

The company was delegated \$700,000 to recruit and offer OJT to 100 Sales Development Representatives (SDRs).

**Puerto Rico Industries for the Blind, Corp**

This is a nonprofit organization founded in 2013, they provide employment and training opportunities to people with functional differences. The deal is to train 70 incumbent workers through the Registered Apprenticeship Program for the position of Sewing Machine Operator. The organization was delegated \$857,270.00 to complete the project.

*Evaluations*

*Activities and Methodology*

The Commonwealth's Department of Labor and Human Resources published a Request for the evaluation of the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program and expects to begin the evaluation of the program in January 2023.

*Continuous Improvement*

The program has been working closely with the Department of Economic Development and Commerce (DEDC) to report on the performance measures on services to employers. Data gathered by Wagner-Peyser over the years has been used to determine services to employers' performance measures. Once the program receives the ESE reports, the program will review and confirm certification on this performance measure, in collaboration with DEDC.

*Reports*

No information reported for this section.

*Waivers*

*Waiver Implemented*

DOL approved the waiver request of specific statutory and regulatory provisions of WIOA. This action was taken under the Secretary's authority to waive specific requirements of WIOA Title I, Subtitles A, B, and E, and Sections 8-10 of the Wagner-Peyser Act in WIOA Section I 89(i). As a result, Puerto Rico Workforce Development Program (PRWDP) has two approved waivers until June 30, 2022.

- 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 percent.

- 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).

### *Strategies*

#### **Waiver to increase OJT employer reimbursement up to 90 percent**

This waiver allowed The Commonwealth's businesses to rapidly adapt to technological and general marketplace changes by improving their capacity to expand and remain competitive with affordable OJT options uniquely designed to achieve their specific development goals. In addition, the reduced match requirement for employers, particularly new start-ups and small to medium-sized businesses, provides an attractive and cost-effective financial incentive, increasing the opportunity to utilize the OJT model for hiring and training new workers.

#### **Waiver that states and local areas must expend a minimum of 75 percent out-of-school formula funds on youth workforce activities for OSY**

This waiver was approved by DOL on April 20, 2021, and it was valid until June 30, 2022. The Commonwealth continues its efforts to provide employment and education services for OSY. The four local areas that used the waiver in the aggregate reported expenditures of \$2.55 million during PY21.

### *Impact on Performance*

#### **Waiver to increase OJT employer reimbursement up to 90 percent**

From an economic development standpoint, increasing the number and quality of the labor force stimulates the competence and competitiveness of The Commonwealth's economy. The waiver to increase OJT reimbursement has been a key tool to help the Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs) to attract new employers to the workforce system. For example, during PY21, this waiver was used by eleven LWDAs with a participation of 127 employers and 213 employees, 111 adults, and 102 dislocated workers, with a total expenditure of \$4,230,470.

Based on the labor and business sector background in The Commonwealth, the waiver is significantly adding to The Commonwealth's workforce and economy by increasing the opportunity to promote job skills improvement, job creation, and business sustainability in various economic regions of The Commonwealth.

### *Success Stories*

#### *Single Mother in Mayagüez, Las Marias*

A young woman had to drop out of high school after becoming pregnant. Her only income was from the Nutrition Assistance Program benefits and a part-time job at a local boutique. During the objective assessment, the Individual Service Strategy identified her goals of completing her high school education and continuing postsecondary education. First, she got her high school credentials through an alternative education service provider, and then the case manager helped her complete the process to continue her postsecondary education. She is currently studying at the Interamerican University, San Germán

Campus, to become a Pharmacy Technician and continues to work part time at the boutique. She is still receiving follow-up services to complete her educational and occupational goals.

#### *Bayamón/Comerio Dislocated Woman becomes Entrepreneur*

A 35-year-old female with two children was a displaced worker from domestic household with barriers to employment, no occupational skills or work experience, and living in public housing participated in the evaluation process of case management in February 2019. She decided to study Occupational Skills Training for nail technicians at D'Mart Institute, where she graduated with a 4.0 grade point average (GPA). Her success in this new career motivated her to continue with a new goal in the beauty industry, so she entered Cosmetology Studies and graduated with a 3.95 GPA. Facing the COVID-19 lockdown, she decided to upgrade her occupational skill, continuing advanced cosmetology training as super master. She completed her training excellently and developed a business plan to start her own company. Currently, she is obtaining state operational permits to open her beauty salon.

#### *OSY becomes paramedical in Bayamón/Comerio*

An OSY, with no high school degree, no skills or work experience returned to the family's hometown from the United States to live with grandparents. During the objective assessment, the Individual Service Strategy identified his goals of completing his high school education and continuing postsecondary education. In June 2020, he completed a High School Credential and continued his postsecondary education, an associate degree, as an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), First Responder. Carlos completed his studies in April 2022 with excellent performance and determination. After completing his internship, he was recruited as a full-time paramedical in Primary Care Ambulance. Currently, he is working full-time and upgrading his occupational credentials by studying for a bachelor's degree in medical emergency.

#### *Dislocated Workers Become Electrician Apprentice in Caguas-Guayama*

A dislocated worker arrived at the AJC in Caguas-Guayama during the summer of 2021 looking for a job. As part of his objective assessment, he identified his goal of achieving an occupational credential to increase his skills and opportunities for job placement. Through an Individual Training Account (ITA), he began postsecondary education in industrial electricity technology with PLC and Renewable Energy. He has been an exemplary student, improving his skills and obtaining excellent grades. He has also been part of MechTech's marketing campaign and has achieved his Apprentice certification, issued by the Puerto Rico Examiner Board of Electricians.

#### *San Juan NASA OSY Participant*

San Juan's success story is an OSY at the AJC entrance level who only had a high school diploma who is currently studying for a bachelor's degree in industrial engineering at the Polytechnical University of Puerto Rico. After the objective evaluation and the individual Strategy Service, he delivered work experience with an educational component resulting in a structured experience and the opportunity to explore careers and develop skills. He then set his occupational goal to become an engineer. During his participation, he collaborated on the design of the website for the Local Board. Additionally, he was enrolled in a NASA program

known as LSPACE, under the virtual modality in the design of proposals for aircraft to go to the planet Mars. For this activity, he obtained a certificate of participation and continued in the design of the prototype and its practice, for which he also got another certification. This youth is continuously active in the program and the case manager offers a follow-up to help him reach his professional goals.

#### *Southeast Dislocated Worker – Samuel*

Samuel came into the One-Stop Center looking for a job after losing his because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Samuel is the head of his family and needed to get a job right away. In the development of his Individual Employment Plan, he identified that he had always wanted to be a welder and set that as his goal. Through an Individual Training Account, Samuel completed his welding training and now has his own welding business.

#### *Guaynabo-Toa Baja Strategies to Serve Individuals with Disabilities*

Guaynabo-Toa Baja (GTB) developed some initiatives to improve service delivery to people with disabilities. The counselor was trained in sign language to better serve deaf participants and citizens in the One-Stop Center. Additionally, they built a partnership with “Fundación Puertorriqueña de Síndrome Down” to engage employers to serve individuals with disabilities through on-the-job trainings (OJTs) and work experience activities. American Job Centers (AJCs) involve persons with disabilities in their accessibility and program design efforts. Persons with disabilities have first-hand knowledge of barriers to employment and can be invaluable to making centers and affiliates accessible. These individuals can also provide insight into how to improve outreach and engagement of the disability community.

#### *Sign Language Training in Mayaguez las Marias*

To improve communication between the deaf community and the government, while following the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act, staff have been trained in sign language. Thirteen employees had the opportunity to take an introductory sign language course, consisting of 30 contact hours, from February 7 to March 31, 2022. After completing the course, employees received a certificate and had the opportunity to demonstrate the skills learned since most of the program was carried out in sign language. Puerto Rico is pleased that part of the staff could be trained in sign language, enabling the program to establish a communication channel with deaf people. Affirmative action was taken so that no person, due to their hearing impairment, is excluded from participating in the Commonwealth’s services, programs, and activities; making the agency an inclusive and integrated one.

*For more information, visit:*

#### *Reports*

Department of Economic Development and Commerce (Dec. 2022). *PR WIOA Annual Report PY 2021*. Department of Labor and Human Resource.

*Links*

Puerto Rico Workforce Development Program

Department of Economic Development and Commerce

## U.S. Virgin Islands

### U.S. Virgin Islands Workforce Development Board

#### *Use of State Funds*

#### *Adult Priority Service*

No information provided for this section.

#### *COVID-19 Response*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Other State Funds Activities*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Evaluations*

#### *Activities and Methodology*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Continuous Improvement*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Reports*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Waivers*

#### *Waiver Implemented*

Waiver of WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(H)(i) and 20 CFR 680.720(b) to increase OJT employer reimbursement up to 90 percent for businesses with 50 or fewer employees.

#### *Strategies*

No information provided for this section.

#### *Impact on Performance*

No information provided for this section.

### *Success Stories*

No information provided for this section.

*For more information, visit:*

### *Reports*

VI Workforce Development Board. *Annual Statewide Performance Report for the Period of July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022.*

### *Links*

U.S. Virgin Islands Workforce Development Board

Healthcare Career Advancement Program\



# **WIOA ANNUAL STATEWIDE PERFORMANCE REPORT NARRATIVE**

**QUICK VIEW: PROGRAM YEAR 2021**