

Annual Report Narrative on the Workforce Investment Act  
to  
The United States Department of Labor

Program Year 2014

July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015

Russell L. Fry, Acting Executive Director

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**[www.workforcewv.org](http://www.workforcewv.org)**

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## **A Word from the Acting Director:**

On behalf of WorkForce West Virginia (WFWV), I am pleased to provide you with our annual report narrative on the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) for Program Year 2014 (PY14). Through expanded partnerships with state employers and economic development, WorkForce West Virginia's many accomplishments in the past year include the following:

- WorkForce West Virginia secured 45,891 job openings with 19,839 job orders. The increase is a direct result of successful cross training models for WorkForce West Virginia field staff and partners.
- WorkForce West Virginia served 102,371 job seekers, with 72,453 (71%) receiving staff-assisted services and 30,502 (30%) referred to WIA programs. Additionally, 39,647 (39%) customers were referred to employment opportunities.
- WorkForce West Virginia continues to expand marketing and online services that saw an average of 198,000 page views per month or 2.4 million by the end of PY14.
- The West Virginia version of the Mid Atlantic Career Consortium (MACC) is the centerpiece for the State's comprehensive employment services case management information system. Job seekers that received staff service or referral in PY14 totaled 130,342 and 30,426 received self-services.
- More than 10,000 state employers have enrolled in the new online contribution reporting and payment service since it began in July 2012. This is a 40% increase from PY13.
- The total number of WIA participants served was 10,300 (including self-service participants).
- WorkForce West Virginia implemented a drug testing policy in July 2012. A total of 1,783 tests were collected in PY14. We are pleased to report that we experienced less than a 1.5% failure rate during PY14.

WorkForce West Virginia appreciates the guidance and support of the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) as we continue to build a highly skilled and employable workforce.

Sincerely,  
Russell L. Fry  
Acting Executive Director

## **INITIATIVES, MILESTONES, AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE PROGRAM YEAR**

### **Division of Corrections Initiative**

During the 2013 WV Legislative Session, a bill was passed that addresses prison overcrowdings in state correctional facilities. One part of this bill allows for nonviolent offenders to be released six months early into supervised release programs. With the expected influx of inmates being released, there has been additional outreach provided to parole offices and day report centers in various areas of the state to increase awareness of services and offer job placement assistance.

As part of the above mentioned legislation, WFWV has partnered with the Governor's Office and Department of Corrections (DOC) regarding employment issues for released inmates. As a result, a process was developed for released inmates to register with WFWV and receive job search assistance. This process was presented to all parole officers and has been implemented statewide.

WFWV received a list of 1,687 parolees released from the DOC during PY14 in order to verify their activity in the MACC. Of those released, 794 have enrolled/updated their status in the database, 607 of whom received direct services from a WFWV office. Evaluation comparing the number that received services with the number that enrolled/updated shows that 76.4% of those enrolled/updated received a service from WFWV. Wage records indicate 196 parolees earned wages in the last two quarters of 2014 which is the most recent data available. Analysis of the MACC showed that 107 parolees out of the parolees registered with WFWV have found employment.

WFWV and Parole Services have been working diligently in the past few months in order to increase the number of parolees accessing services to aid in their job search. This number will increase with continued oversight and training on the part of both agencies. The DOC continues to use WFWV to conduct correctional officer testing in all WFWV Career Centers. This initiative has allowed WFWV to recruit and test applicants interested in becoming a Correctional Officer in a state prison.

### **Drug Testing**

On July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2012, WFWV issued Guidance Notice 15-12, and subsequently issued Guidance Notice, Change 1 on July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012. The purpose of this policy was to provide guidance to local workforce investment boards (LWIBs) and their operators regarding mandatory drug screening for WIA training-level participants.

Section 181(f) of Title I of the WIA specifically provides states the authority to test and sanction WIA participants for the use of controlled substances. On April 24, 2012, the Governor of West Virginia signed Executive Order 8-12, charging WFWV to develop and implement a drug screening policy for WIA Title I training-level services.

Effective July 16, 2012, all participants that entered into training-level services funded by WIA Title I, Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) and On-the-Job Training (OJT), were required to be screened utilizing urinalysis for the use of the following controlled substances prior to the beginning of training:

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

A total of 1,783 drug screenings were completed during PY14. Only 1.5% of these screenings resulted in a sanction.

### **Free Fidelity Bonding Program**

WFWV, in conjunction with the USDOL, administers the Free Fidelity Bonding Program. Free Fidelity Bonding is a unique tool to help a job applicant with barriers obtain and keep a job. It is a business insurance policy that protects the employer from the risk of hiring the employee. It is a reassurance to the employer that the person hired will be an honest worker. The bond is given to the employer free of charge, serving as an incentive to hire a job applicant who is an ex-offender or has other risk factors in their personal background. Employers benefit from the work skills, abilities, and knowledge without the risk of potential employee dishonesty. Bond issuance instills confidence in job seekers who are experiencing difficulty in obtaining a job; proving they can be a productive worker. The Free Fidelity Bonding Program issued 27 bonds in PY14.

### **Marcellus Shale**

WFWV continues its partnership with education, labor, and industry leaders to increase the pool of prepared workers for Oil and Gas production employment opportunities. We continue to participate with committees such as 'Energy Speaks Education Committee' and the 'Just Beneath the Surface Alliance'. 51% of the ITAs issued in PY14 were in the Marcellus Shale Industry.

### **National Career Readiness Certificates**

Employers need documentation of worker skills, and WV is issuing the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) statewide to provide measurable skill levels of workers. In partnership with the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) and West Virginia Career and Technical Colleges (WVCTCs), WFWV has issued more than 52,000 WorkKeys® NCRCs. WorkKeys® measures skills in the areas of Locating Information, Reading for Information, and Applied Mathematics-basic skills that are required in the workplace.

More than 115 WV employers have used WorkKeys® as part of their hiring process. The WorkKeys® process helps employers save time by interviewing only applicants who have the skills required for positions. A WorkKeys® NCRC can be used as a 'plus' factor to help employers make selection and promotion decisions, and targets their training budget on employees with skill gaps.

WV is now identified on ACT's Work Ready Community site ([www.workreadycommunities.org](http://www.workreadycommunities.org)). The site gives current and prospective employers an on-line tool to identify communities and counties that have NCRC in their workforce.

### **On-line Marketing and Services**

WFWV continues to expand marketing and services online. During PY14, the agency website ([www.workforcewv.org](http://www.workforcewv.org)) had 2.4 million page views—an average of 198,000 page views per month. Website visitors spent the most time on our 'Unemployment Compensation' (UC) pages. The website's homepage is updated weekly to reflect available middle-skill jobs open in the MACC; as well as featured job openings in the Oil and Gas industry. Our Facebook ([www.facebook.com/wvjobinfo](http://www.facebook.com/wvjobinfo)) and Twitter ([www.twitter.com/wvjobinfo](http://www.twitter.com/wvjobinfo)) accounts are updated weekly with job openings.

During PY14, employers posted 19,839 job orders in the MACC, resulting in 45,891 job openings. More than 10,000 state employers have enrolled in the new online contribution report and payment service since it began in July 2012.

In March 2015, WFWV collaborated with the Department of Commerce and Stonewall Retail Marketing to begin developing a new modern website. The website design was based on a responsive web design (RWD) that allows the page layouts to adapt to the user agent, i.e. desktops, tablets, and mobile phones. The new website went live September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

### **Workforce Investment Council (WIC) Briefings**

The WIC has been very active in workforce development in the State. The WIC meets quarterly and had a quorum at every meeting in PY14.

During PY14, the WVIC heard from experts on several issues affecting WV's workforce. Those briefings were the impetus for new initiatives such as:

- **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA)**: The introduction of WIOA was presented to the Board. It was signed into law on July 22, 2014 by President Barak Obama and passed by Congress with wide bipartisan majority. It denotes a broad vision of workforce programs and promotes program alignment at the federal, state, local, and regional levels.
- **Marcellus Shale**: Jeff Green, WFWV, presented a report on Economic Changes Related to Marcellus Shale Activity. The examination of employment and wages regarding Marcellus Shale indicated the positive impact this industry is still having on WV's economy.
- **Exploring Substance Abuse in WV**: Jay Otto, Research Scientist for the Center for Health and Safety Culture, led an interactive session to explore our perceptions on substance abuse in WV. The session included how businesses can help address misperceptions and foster growth.
- **Why West Virginia**: Keith Burdette, Secretary, WV Department of Commerce, brought to the WVIC many interesting facts concerning WV. He spoke about growth industries, corporate tax rates, the low cost of living, and our trust fund solvency. He also commented on the new businesses being built by Proctor and Gamble and the ethane cracker plant, both of which will create many jobs for WV.

- **Simulated Workplace Update:** Dr. Donna Burge-Tetrick, Executive Director of the Office of Career and Technical Instruction, explained ‘What Makes Simulated Workplace Different’. It is an opportunity for students to master the skill sets and attributes necessary for gainful employment. This program allows students to enter an educational environment that emulates the workplace and answers the often heard question, “Why do I have to learn this?”. This is an opportunity for students to be accountable for his/her learning.

## **THE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT SYSTEM**

### **Local Workforce Investment Regions**

One of the goals of WFWV Career Centers is to offer job seekers and employers ready access to the many workforce development resources available in a local region. A brief description of the seven local Regions and the WFWV Career Centers are as follows:

- **Region One** consists of five comprehensive centers and one satellite center. The Region 1 Workforce Investment Board (WIB) oversees service delivery in 11 southeastern counties. The region is mountainous and rural. Industries expecting growth through 2022 include, but are not limited to: Administrative and Support Services, Ambulatory Services, Construction of Buildings, Health Care and Social Assistance, Wood Product Manufacturing, Waste Management, and Professional Services.
- **Region Two** consists of one comprehensive center located in Huntington, one satellite site in Logan, and five affiliate sites located in Madison, Hamlin, Williamson, Teays Valley, and Wayne. The Southwestern West Virginia Region 2 Board provides service to not only WIA clients but also Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) clients in Putnam and Cabell counties, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) clients in all 7 locations. The coal industry has laid off many individuals in the southern area of the region. Retraining programs are in place to assist these individuals with new career paths. Economic growth is expected in Health Care, Social Assistance, Warehouse and Storage, Information Technology, and Transportation.
- **Region Three** consists of one comprehensive center serving Kanawha County residents and those who have been displaced by Kanawha County employers. The region is mostly urban, but also has outlying rural populations. In years past, the region was economically driven by Chemical Plants, Manufacturing, and Coal. Although these industries are still a strong part of the Kanawha Valley, the number of these industry employers has dramatically decreased. As a result of this shift in the economic climate, currently the largest industry sectors in the area include the Medical field, Hospitality, Retail, and a vibrant Banking/Financial industry.
- **Region Four** consists of one comprehensive center and three satellite centers. Nine counties comprise a region of rural and urban population that includes the Ohio River as the western border. The region is supported by a variety of industries including Health Care, Plastics/Polymers, Professional Services, Warehousing, Oil and Gas, and Construction. Government employment, federal, state, and local levels, also employs a significant number of the region’s citizens.

- **Region Five** consists of two comprehensive centers and one satellite center. Six counties comprise the area overseen by the Northern Panhandle Workforce Investment Board, Inc. The region is bounded by the Ohio River on the north and west and the State of Pennsylvania on the east. Significant growth is expected in the following industries: Healthcare, Business, Oil and Gas, Construction, Specialty Trades, Chemical, Machinery, and Mineral Manufacturing.
- **Region Six** consists of two comprehensive centers and two satellite centers. The region is comprised of 13 counties in North Central WV. Region Six is considered a nonmetropolitan area. Health Care is a growth industry with demand occupations. Other expanding industries include Oil and Gas and Aerospace. Leisure/Hospitality and Retail continue to grow. The Hotel industry is one of the fastest growing industries with property developing all along the I-79 Corridor. In addition, the I-79 High Tech Corridor is home to the largest cluster of Biometric and Identity Security firms, and significantly contributes to the region's growth in technology.
- **Region Seven** consists of two comprehensive centers. Eight counties are served by the Region Seven Workforce Investment Board. Region Seven offers a contrast of the rural in western counties and fast-paced suburban sprawl of the eastern counties, part of the Washington D.C. Metropolitan Statistical Area. Region Seven expects population in the eastern most counties to continue to show rapid growth. The western counties are also anticipated to show growth, albeit at a slower pace. Health Care, Transportation, Agriculture, Warehousing, Advanced Manufacturing, Professional Services, as well as Leisure/Hospitality are all primary contributors to the expanding regional economy.

### **WorkForce West Virginia Career Centers**

Acquiring new and increasing the number of job openings is a vital component of WV's strategic plan goal attainment. This requires collaboration with mandated partners to educate employers on available services and promotion of the Career Centers. To that end, WFWV secured 45,891 job openings with 19,839 job orders in PY14. The increase is a direct result of successful cross training models for WFWV field staff and partners.

To further this initiative, each Career Center continues to enhance the job seeker experience to include resume development and employer testing services in the Public Computer Centers. In addition, staff provide soft skills (interviewing, test preparation, etc.), career counseling/guidance, networking opportunities, job and apprenticeship referrals, and follow-up services. A value added service, ACT's National Career Readiness Certificate, is utilized to boost the placement opportunity. WorkKeys® testing was provided to 2,527 customers in PY14.

Early intervention strategies are in place for UC claimants. In depth, in person interviews can begin at week four of the claim cycle applying the Reemployment Assistance and the Eligibility Review programs. Employability development plans that identify barriers and action/s to overcome are developed and referrals made to Career Center partners. Regional labor market information and local resource guides are distributed. Available job orders are reviewed and customers are referred to openings for which they qualify.

To achieve the Governor’s vision for a skilled workforce that meets emerging employer needs in the Oil and Gas industry, the Career Centers refer job seekers to related technical training to expand the pool of prepared workers. Career Center staff relay fundamental job seeker data and contribute to the goals by serving on councils or technical education committees. Further, the Career Centers are serving downstream employers who are experiencing substantial increases in their need for registered apprentices, construction workers, and service employees.

Based on the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) 9002A report ending June 30, 2015, WFWV served 102,371 job seekers, with 72,453 (71%) receiving staff-assisted services and 30,502 (30%) referrals to WIA programs. Additionally, 39,647 (39%) customers were referred to employment opportunities during this period. These outcomes are realized through a fully cross trained labor exchange/UC workforce who performs both functions.

Each Career Center offers a menu of both mandated and non-mandated partner services to every customer. WFWV met the negotiated labor exchange performance measures.

**WorkForce West Virginia Collaboration and Partnering**

The WV Legislature has continued to work closely with the WFWV system during PY14. Legislators continually receive updates and information from various partners within the WFWV system via an oversight commission comprised of members from both the Senate and House of Delegates. In 2007, legislation passed consolidating the ‘State of the One-Stop System’ report, and the ‘Funding Stream Report’. This consolidation allows WFWV to identify all Workforce Development Training funds within the state and how they may or may not be distributed throughout the One-Stop delivery system. WFWV continues to update the State of the State as appropriate.

**The West Virginia Management Information System**

The MACC is the centerpiece for the State’s comprehensive employment services case management information system. The MACC tracked the following levels of service in PY14:

<b>Employers</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Total Job Orders Posted	19,839
Cumulative Job Openings	45,891
Employers Receiving a Service/Posting an Order	5,882
<b>Job Seekers</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Receiving a Staff Service or Referral	130,342
Receiving a Self-Service	30,426
<b>Training Providers</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Providers Posting Courses	123
Courses Posted	953

In the past year, the MACC received several enhancements, most notably were changes to implement WIOA, as well as improvements to existing functionality.

These new features and upgrades to existing functionality were implemented to facilitate performance improvements, increase accuracy, and support more efficient use by state, LWIBs, training providers, educational institutions, partner agencies, and program clients.

## **INITIATIVES AND ACTIVITIES OUTLINED IN THE WIA AND WAGNER PEYSER ACT**

### **State Strategies to Improve Performance**

WFWV was granted a waiver several years ago that permitted the state to replace the performance measures at WIA Section 136(b) with the common measures. WV continues to rely on the MACC system to capture and track all information related to program performance. The collection of real-time data provides comprehensive, integrated labor market, workforce and economic development information. This allows decisions to be made based on real-time data and facts based on a regional perspective.

State performance staff require the LWIBs to submit quarterly fiscal and programmatic reports for comparison against the planned outcomes and goals identified in the WV State Strategic Plan. Any concerns of significance were forwarded to the LWIBs for discussion and/or corrective action.

### **Strategic Plan Goal Updates**

**Goal One**-Develop a workforce that is responsive to changing economic conditions through nimble and effective workforce training programs that will increase work readiness certifications statewide by 20%.

WFWV is on track to meet the 20% goal increase of WorkKeys® NCRCs based on the following numbers:

- Certificates Issued Through 6/30/12- **36,478**
- Certificates Issued Through 6/30/13- **43,244**
- Certificates Issued Through 6/30/14- **48,425**
- Certificates Issued Through 6/30/15- **52,035**

**Goal Two**-Develop a broader pool of appropriately prepared natural gas support and downstream industry workers in WV to take full advantage of economic opportunities in the emerging Marcellus Shale industry by working with primary education, Career and Technical Education Centers (CTEs), and Community and Technical Colleges (CTCs) to develop statewide curriculum to meet industry demands.

WFWV continues its partnerships with education, labor, and industry leaders to increase the pool of prepared workers for the Oil and Gas production jobs. We continue to participate with committees such as 'Energy Speaks Education Committee' and the 'Just Beneath the Surface Alliance'.

**Goal Three**-Promote technical training and education among students and job seekers to adequately prepare WV workers for a highly technical work environment. In collaboration with CTEs and CTCs, the state will increase the number of people receiving technical training by 10%. This will be tracked through cooperation with the CTEs and CTCs.

WFWV and the WVDE are collaborating on a Simulated Workplace/Work Experience project funded in part by a WIA Incentive grant. The project utilizes WV business and industry feedback, in addition to integrating effective strategies for facilitating the learning of CTE students via the

Simulated Workplace initiative. Simulated Workplace will assist high school students, ranging from 15 to 19 years old, with developing career and college readiness skills.

During PY14, there were approximately 483 individuals from the simulated workplace program enrolled in MACC. In regards to four year college degree program vs. one-two year technical certification programs, customers preferred short term training programs so they could enter the workforce more quickly.

**Goal Four**-To ensure job development and workforce readiness is a priority throughout WV, the state will increase the number of credentials awarded through ITAs for Adults and Dislocated Workers (DWs). MACC reflects credential outcomes for ITA’s as follows:

Type of Credential	Amount
Occupational Skills Certificate	664
Occupational Skills License	452
AA or AS Degree	5
BA or BS Degree	1
Other	21

The number of credentials for PY14 increased by 20.

**Strategies for Serving Youth**

WFWV and the WVDE have partnered to deliver the Simulated Workplace program. WV business and industry have been utilized to provide feedback, in addition to integrating effective strategies for facilitating the learning of CTE students via the Simulated Workplace initiative. Simulated Workplace assists high school students, ranging from 15 to 19 years old, with developing career and college readiness skills. While enrolled in the Simulated Workplace program, students are required to maintain a portfolio documenting academic growth, job performance, projects completed, industry credentials, safety certificates, resume, and computer literacy skills.

The objectives of the Simulated Workplace initiative integrates numerous components of the WIA, as well as supports CTE students by emphasizing strong business and industry partnerships which guide authentic workplace learning. The overall structure of the Simulated Workplace initiative is governed by a set of objectives and protocols to assure consistency and quality within the local implementation. The objectives and protocols are:

1. Academic Growth-With the annual completion of high school seniors, they will complete a pre/post WorkKeys® exam in the areas of mathematics, reading literacy, and locating information.
2. Business Processes-With the annual completion of the project, students will have a better understanding of business ethics, communication skills, professionalism, and customer service.
3. Career and College Readiness-With the annual completion of the project, students will have been exposed to a variety of employable skills, which include:
  - a. resume/application writing
  - b. computer literacy
  - c. technical writing
  - d. OSHA/Safety training
  - e. leadership and team work experience

- f. recognized industry certifications and credentials
4. Collaborative Partnerships-With the annual completion of the project and each year thereafter, collaborative partnerships will be established and updated as needed to expand and enhance the services to students.

Through collaboration between the Simulated Workplace initiative and WFWV, students across 26 counties have been served and better prepared to meet the demands of WV's business and industry employers. Expanding the relationship between the WVDE's Simulated Workplace initiative and the WFWV office, students experienced:

1. A transformed career and technical education learning environment with business/industry and higher education partnerships that will ensure they are prepared for career and college demands;
2. An understanding and knowledge of ethics, work place processes and behavior integral to successful employment (*business and industry partnerships will assist students in locating potential job placement*); and
3. Enhanced basic skills through the use of computer modules (WIN/Key Train) as well as hands-on job skill training which integrates reading, writing, mathematics, critical thinking, problem solving, responsibility and ethics into everyday workplace training.

An essential component of the Simulated Workplace initiative is the creation of technical business teams composed of industry experts from WV companies that represent a wide-variety of technical areas and experience. These teams conduct onsite evaluations focusing on workplace procedures, expectations and protocols in place that reflect the realities of an actual working environment. Each business team's role is to review and rate each Simulated Workplace site in a manner similar to how the Health Department rates restaurants. These business teams also critique the curriculum, interview instructors and students; rate the classroom work environment, safety procedures, and general business procedures and processes. During this process, WIA students are exposed to actual WV employers, as well as given the opportunity to demonstrate their skills first hand.

Simulated Workplace includes a strong dissemination component with documented implementation processes to serve as a consortium model for replication by other states. A dissemination of an operational manual and website covering the objectives and protocols of the project are being developed for sharing with other states interested in incorporating Simulated Workplace sites to assist students in developing true career and college ready skills.

WFWV allocated incentive grant funds to each of the seven LWIBs to create and expand summer employment and work experience opportunities for eligible WIA youth ages 16 to 21. The funds are allocated based on regular WIA funding formula allocations.

Work experience is an essential element in preparing WIA eligible youth for transition to adulthood and sustainable employment. It provides the WIA eligible youth with opportunities for career exploration and skill development. Potential benefits for youth participants and the communities they service include:

- Gaining career readiness skills including the 'soft skills' that employers look for in entry level workers;

- Acquiring real-world work experience;
- Increasing knowledge of specific occupational skills and workplace settings;
- Developing an understanding of different occupations in order to make informed career choices;
- Improving interpersonal communication skills;
- Achieving a greater understanding of financial management;
- Receiving career choice advice and educational guidance;
- Establishing a work history and connections with employers that can aid in future job searches; and
- Gaining an excellent addition to resume for future jobs or college applications.

In addition, research studies suggest that work-based learning may increase school attendance, decrease dropout rates, reduce school suspensions, and increase school engagement. One study found students who participated in work-based learning were more likely to attend college or go to work compared to their peers. Due to these afore mentioned benefits, WFWV believes this program will strengthen the state's ability to improve literacy levels, increase employment, and increase transitions to further education and training, and/or improve technical and academic skills.

**Simulated Workplace Accomplishments July 1, 2013-June 30, 2015:**

- Trained 150 Business and Industry Inspectors.
- Completed over 250 onsite inspections.
- Added 272 new sites for a total of 502 sites.
- 321 youth were placed in paid summer work experience.
- Semi-annual reports were developed for each company to assist with developing improvement plans.
- Conducted small group trainings for more one-on-one instruction with teachers.
- Students worked through their skill sets and curriculum to successfully achieve industry recognized credentials as well as drug free credential.

**PROGRAMS, INITIATIVES, AND STRATEGIES FOR SERVING VETERANS**

**Consolidated Resources for Veterans**

WFWV's partnership with the WV Military Connection program continues to provide employment and training support for WV military personnel and veterans. The WV Military Connection program partners consist of WFWV, the USDOL Veterans Employment and Training (VETS), the WV Department of Veterans Assistance, Veteran Affairs, WV National Guard Adjutant General's Office, Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, and the WV CTC system. The troops returning home from deployment or exiting the armed forces have a comprehensive list of resources on a website designed especially for them. The website ([www.wvmilitaryconnection.org](http://www.wvmilitaryconnection.org)), is administered by WFWV staff to offer guidance for service members about local, state, federal, and private sector assistance in the areas of employment, training and education, benefits, healthcare, and family resources. It also provides guidance in converting military experience towards civilian careers, and provides career development information for service members unsure about the next step in employment.

WFWV participated in Off Base Transition Training (OBTT) with the assistance of the WV Military Connection program to provide a USDOL pilot program consisting of a comprehensive workshop lasting three days. Professionally-trained facilitators cover topics including finding employment, translating military skills to work skills, answering tough interview questions, navigating the web, and effectively using social media in job searches. It was open to current and former armed forces members and their spouses to assist in their transition from military to civilian life. There have been over 150 military member and spouses participated in the OBTT during PY14.

### **West Virginia Veteran's Program Staffing**

WFWV leadership has worked diligently with USDOL VETS to strategically place veterans' representatives throughout WV. WV gained two additional Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists (DVOPS) bringing the total DVOPS count to 14 which provides coverage to every WFWV Career Center for provision of services to eligible veterans and eligible persons. WFWV DVOPS perform outreach to find and provide intensive services to eligible veterans with significant barriers to employment. Through the provision of intensive services, veterans gain long term sustainable employment. WV also has three Local Veteran Employment Representatives (LVERS) that provide outreach to business and industry to promote the hiring of veterans and they facilitate the veterans program within WFWV.

WFWV has successfully implemented the USDOL VETS "Refocus" of the Jobs for Veterans State grant and is ranked number one in the Philadelphia Region by the USDOL VETS. This initiative changed the flow of veterans in the WFWV Career Centers so that job ready veterans are served by an Employment Interviewer in their search for work. WFWV is proud to have all of its employees serve veterans and provide priority of service to the veteran.

### **Hilton HHonors Program/Operation Opportunity Initiative**

WFWV has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Hilton Worldwide Inc. in order to assist WV service members, prior service members, and their spouses gain employment faster and easier. The program consists of a donation of 100,000 reward points to eligible persons who are screened and submitted by WFWV staff. Qualifying activities include a verified job search, registration for an OBTT workshop, registration for job fair, housing searches for employment, job interviews, or training for a new job. Once approved, the points are entered into a HHonors account for purposes pertaining to seeking employment. The value of the points varies by location, but on average, it is equivalent to three nights at any Hilton Worldwide Inc. hotel.

Eligible applicants include veterans, active service members, National Guard and Reserve members, and military spouses. The initial term of the program is projected for five years. It was launched in December 2014, and veterans have utilized the program to gain employment as far west as California, as far north as New York. Several veterans have utilized the program to gain employment, interview, gain training/certification, and gain housing in a new area of employment within the state thus far.

## SPECIAL PROJECTS

### **National Emergency Grants**

WFWV has been awarded a variety of National Emergency Grants (NEGs) from the USDOL ranging from disaster grants for clean-up activities performed in various areas of the state following severe storms and flooding to a job-driven grant for employing long-term unemployed, and a mass layoff grant to provide services to a large number of DWs impacted by the major downsizing in the coal industry statewide. USDOL has recognized WV's Statewide Coal Mining NEG as a best practices NEG due to its success in the number of coal miners and displaced homemakers that have accessed training services and obtained employment. More detailed information regarding each NEG is outlined below:

- Statewide Coal Mining National Dislocated Worker Grant (\$7.4 million): In June 2012, the WV was awarded a \$1.8 million grant in NEG funds from the USDOL to be administered at the state level by WFWV for providing reemployment/retraining services to the large number of coal miners impacted by mass layoffs and mine closures. On April 28, 2014, WV was awarded supplemental funding in the amount of \$5.6 million. The additional funding and time extension allows continued reemployment/retraining services to the large number of coal miners impacted by mass layoffs and mine closures in WV. WFWV will continue contracting with the United Mine Workers of America Career Center (UMWACC), located in Beckley, WV, who serves as the project operator for the delivery of services.

The projected number of workers impacted and planned to be served through this grant is based upon Rapid Response (RR) Activities, Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act (WARN) notices, and UC records. The approximately 700 dislocated coal miners to be served through the NEG were identified from a pool of 5,633 workers reported on WARN notices and invited to attend RR informational meetings with employment separation dates from March 1, 2012 to the present. With the large number of mine closures and subsequent layoffs that have already occurred and the projection that there will be on-going permanent downsizing statewide in the mining industry, the intent of the coal mining NEG is to provide a variety of training programs that will refocus this target population on new career paths outside of the mining industry and long-term reemployment opportunities.

- Participant statistics as of 6/30/2015:
  - 881 dislocated coal miners/displaced homemakers have registered in the coal mining NEG since July 2012.
  - 791 dislocated coal miners/displaced homemakers have received funds for training.
  - 278 completed training and entered employment.
  - 155 entered employment without completing training.
  - Overall, 62% of participants have entered employment.
- Job Driven (JD) NEG (\$6.1 million): In May 2014, WV applied for JD NEG funding from DOL to be administered at the state level by WFWV that provides Job Coaching, reemployment/retraining services, and OJTs with focus on WV's Oil and Gas,

Ambulatory Health Care Services, Administrative and Support Services, Wood Product Manufacturing, and Construction Industries. On June 26, 2014, DOL announced the WV would receive funding in the amount of \$6.1 million for this grant. The period of performance is July 1, 2014-September 30, 2016.

- Participant statistics as of 6/30/2015:
  - 242 participants have been registered.
  - 208 participants have received ITA/OJT funding.
  - 19 employer partnerships have been established.
  - A total of 104 potential positions with employers have active OJT contracts with participants enrolled in an OJT.
  - Recruitment activities are currently taking place to fill an additional 98 potential OJT positions with 19 employers.
- 2015 Sector Partnership (SP) National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG) (\$5.2 million): A grant partnership between WFWV and the CTC system to build upon current sector-driven efforts in WV. This grant will focus on Energy, Manufacturing, Health Care and Information Technology industry sectors. The target population to be served are long-term unemployed individuals and individuals identified likely to exhaust UC benefits. This grant will also provide innovative services to the unemployed coal mining industry community and individuals dislocated from industries related to/affected by continued mining layoffs.
- 2015 Severe Storm and Flooding NDWG (\$2 million): Severe storms and flooding during 2015 caused severe damage in 29 counties, as indicated in Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Declaration 4210-DR, FEMA Declaration 4219-DR, and FEMA Declaration 4220-DR. Counties affected are as follows: Barbour, Boone, Braxton, Cabell, Doddridge, Gilmer, Harrison, Jackson, Kanawha, Lewis, Lincoln, Logan, Marshall, McDowell, Mingo, Monongalia, Putnam, Raleigh, Ritchie, Roane, Summers, Tyler, Upshur, Wayne, Webster, Wetzel, Wirt, Wood, and Wyoming counties. WFWV has contracted with Human Resources Development Foundation (HRDF), Inc. to provide temporary employment for clean-up in declared locations for individuals dislocated by the severe storm and flooding, general DWs, and long-term unemployed workers, with priority given to veterans. These workers may provide assistance delivering food, clothing, providing shelter, or other humanitarian assistance. They will also assist with clean-up, renovation, demolition, or reconstruction of public or non-profit buildings and also remove debris from public lands, parks, roadways, streams or rivers.

## **WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES AND ANALYSES**

### **Performance, Participant and Cost Analysis**

As evidenced by the annual report, WV exceeded all of the negotiated performance standards for PY14. WV is starting to see increased activities in employers' hiring in truck driving, security services, health services, production, and leisure/hospitality services. WFWV staff will continue to closely monitor issues of performance and service delivery throughout PY15.

During PY14, the total number of WIA participants served was 10,300\*. The total amount of WIA funds expended was \$11,577,252.14. This yields an average cost per participant of \$1,124.01. The following is pertinent data by funding stream:

WIA Adults Served*	7,277
WIA Dislocated Workers Served	2,223
WIA Total Youth Served	1,030
Total Number Served	10,300

*\*Includes self-service participants*

WFWV performance staff continually monitor for issues and opportunities related to improving performance within the workforce system. WFWV provides the local regions preliminary reports for each quarterly and annual report so that staff can review the data not only to ensure accuracy, but to address cases where data is missing. This is in addition to tools already provided to the LWIBs (i.e. error reports and existing MACC performance reports to which they have access).

For participants served under WIA Adult and DW programs, ongoing analyses determined the benefits associated with particular types of services. One analytical tool employed was a comparison of the benefits for those receiving training services versus those receiving only core and intensive services. Using the standard WIA performance measures for Adults and DWs as a means for analysis, a significant increase was noted in almost all of the outcomes for those receiving training services:

Measure	Received Training Services	Received Only Core and Intensive Services
Adult Entered Employment	88.9%	68.5%
Adult Employment Retention	89.1%	86.2%
Dislocated Entered Employment	91.0%	83.1%
Dislocated Employment Retention	93.1%	89.3%

When comparing this data with previous years, WFWV observed a trend that clearly indicated the increased benefits derived from training services. Many West Virginians who received workforce services were confronted with the obstacle of transitioning from more traditional employment in manufacturing and related industries to new economy opportunities in service, healthcare, and other market segments requiring different skill sets. These individuals certainly benefited from training opportunities. The need for training services was reflected in the high percentage of individuals who participated in WIA programs and received training.

Further examination of the training opportunities provided indicated the segments of the economy where Adult and DW program participants pursued employment. Among the highest ranking occupations in terms of Individual Employment Plan (IEP) goals were: truck drivers, licensed practical nurses (LPNs), medical assistants, registered nurses (RNs), operating engineers, electricians, medical records technicians, and Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers. This reflects a shift toward healthcare and other careers that are part of the new economy.

**Fiscal and Program Monitoring**

Financial management and program operations reviews of workforce investment activities related to the statewide system continued to be conducted annually on the seven LWIBs and NEG project

operators. The reviews are conducted to evaluate activities to determine their compliance with federal regulations. The reviews are also conducted to evaluate fiscal solvency and accuracy. Work papers developed by state staff enabled reviewers to document specific information obtained from office staff for evaluation. Other related materials are also examined and office staff activities observed for determining execution effectiveness. The results were then reported.

The financial management portion of the on-site visits was designed to determine if expenditures were made against the appropriate cost categories; if they were within the cost limitations specified; if there was compliance with other provisions, regulations, and applicable laws; and to provide technical assistance as needed and appropriate. Other activities included assisting with correction of financial transactions; assisting with design and compliance; and budgeting process design and control.

The program operations portion of the on-site visits included state staff verifying and validating performance data prior to federal reporting by checking the accuracy of a sample of computerized records and comparing keyed entries against the original source(s). On-site visits also included reviews of WIA participant files, LWIB and Youth Council memberships, and equipment/inventory systems procedures to determine their compliance with federal provisions, regulations, and other applicable laws and to provide technical assistance as needed. WFWV continued to be committed to continuous improvement of its information and data systems and ensuring the integrity of program operations. Program goals and progress toward meeting and/or exceeding performance standards were reviewed.

### **WAIVERS**

WV participated in a project to learn how states and local areas have implemented waivers of statutory and regulatory requirements established in the WIA to serve the workforce needs of their local populations. This study was conducted by Mathematica Policy Research on behalf of USDOL. In recent years, USDOL awarded more than 400 waivers to all 50 states and several territories. The ETA, which sponsored this study by using ARRA funds, was particularly interested in eight of the 56 waiver types, including those related to spending for OJT, incumbent worker training, youth training programs, and customized training. The project examined how waiver implementation—which often resulted in the shifting of resources from one funding category to another—affected the services that were delivered, workforce system outcomes, and participant outcomes, both at a general level and in-depth.

#### **Replace the Performance Measures at WIA Section 136(b) With the Common Measures**

The waiver-facilitated system integration and streamlined and simplified the performance accountability system. Placing a focus on integrated service and reporting only Common Measures reduced redundancies and lessened the burden of reporting 15 core measures and two satisfaction measures. A move to common measures allowed program staff to focus on providing quality services to employers and individual job seekers, rather than concentrating on an unwieldy methodology for tracking and reporting performance. Common measures provided for accountability, improved program management, and reduced associated costs.

WIA established 17 indicators of performance under Section 136(b). By minimizing the different reporting and performance requirements, common measures fostered integration of service delivery, reduced barriers to cooperation among programs and enhanced the effectiveness of the workforce system. The common measure waiver simplified and streamlined the performance accountability system.

The essential benefit to common measures was a simplified and efficient performance measures system. The waiver resulted in a cost-effective and understandable methodology for partners and service providers to understand. The waiver also reduced paperwork and staff time associated with data collection, analysis, and reporting. Having an integrated system provided a more useful tool for administrative purposes and led to better coordination among partner programs serving the public.

### **Utilize Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for Older Youth Program Participants**

WFWV requested a waiver to allow continued flexibility in utilizing youth funds to provide training services while retaining the limited Adult funds to be used for adult training services. It increased efficiency and customer choices for older youth. The workforce development system offers a full array of services to older youth that benefited them in the decision-making processes, such as choosing a rewarding career in health care, law enforcement, or the oil and gas industry. The use of the waiver focused on the following goals and outcomes:

- Created additional opportunities for older youth who were unemployed or underemployed and desired to improve their skills for full-time employment.
- Increased older youth usage of the workforce system to secure training with educational institutions.
- Maximized the flexibility of the state to respond to local needs and to ensure the training needs of business and older youth were met.

### **Increase Employer Reimbursement for OJT**

WFWV requested a waiver to allow a sliding scale for reimbursement to employers utilizing an approved OJT contract. The waiver supports an increased use of OJTs and helps program participants move into good jobs. A sliding scale of reimbursement to the employer of up to 90% of the wage rate and extraordinary cost as defined by the law increased employer participation and increased the training opportunities for WIA participants. WFWV issued policy guidance regarding implementation of the sliding scale which will adhere to the principles of training workers in high-demand, higher skill, and higher wage occupations.

### **Funds Transfer Authority**

This waiver permits local areas to transfer up to 50% of a program year allocation for Adult employment and training activities, and up to 50% of program year allocations for DW employment and training activities between the two programs. The waiver provides LWIBs the ability to better respond to changes in the economic environment and the local labor market. Resources are channeled to the population with the greatest need. This waiver allows LWIBs to be more responsive to the volatile economic climate.

Granting authority to transfer funds between Adult and DW programs provides the flexibility for improving the statewide workforce investment system. This allows the state to better manage

resources in response to the needs of the workforce. This flexibility provides the best use of resources as the state strives to meet the growing demands of the employer community.

### **Extend the Period of Initial Eligibility for Training Providers on WV's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL)**

This waiver allows training providers to offer continuous, uninterrupted service to WIA customers. WIA customers have the ability to choose their training providers and access training services in their local WIA area with the highest degree of informed customer choice possible. The primary goal of this waiver is to ensure that the increasing numbers of Adults and DWs have a system that offers training options, which ensures maximum customer choice. The number of providers on the ETPL (123) allows participants to choose the best possible program and provider to enhance skills and further their education and career goals.

### **Customized Training–Employer Contribution**

This waiver requires a 50% employer contribution for customized training permitting the use of a sliding scale for the employer contribution based on the size of the business. Under the waiver, the following sliding scale is permitted:

- No less than a 10% match for employers with 50 or fewer employees, and
- No less than a 25% match for employers with 51 to 250 employees. For employers with more than 250 employees, the current statutory requirements (50% contribution) continue to apply.

The state and local area may provide customized training to individuals over age 18 with WIA Adult funds and must provide priority to low-income individuals when funds are limited; the state and local area may provide customized training to dislocated workers with WIA DW funds. Customized training provided with statewide funds must serve WIA eligible individuals.

The sliding scale increases employer participation in customized training and increases the training opportunities for workers to upgrade their skills within the workplace. WFWV issued policy guidance regarding implementation of the sliding scale, which adheres to the principles of training workers in high-demand, higher skill, and higher wage occupations within the workplace.

WV has not requested any additional waivers since receiving guidance (TEGL 3-14) regarding the President's Job-Driven elements. However, we feel that all current waivers do advance these elements.

## **CUSTOMER SATISFACTION MEASURES**

Since the implementation of the WIA, WFWV has collected customer information through the Customer Satisfaction Surveys for both jobseekers and employers.

In PY14 WFWV used the telephonic methodology to select potential participants for the surveys. The sample selection consisted of querying individual participants with exit dates between July 1, 2014 and June 30, 2015. A survey is considered '*complete*' when valid answers are provided by participants for each of the core questions outlined by the Employment and Training Administration.

Examples of the questionnaire are listed below:

1. Utilizing a scale of 1 to 10, where a 1 means “Very Dissatisfied” and 10 means “Very Satisfied”, what is your overall satisfaction with the services provided from WFWV?
2. Considering all the expectations you may have had about the services, to what extent have the services met your expectations? A 1 now means “Falls Short of Your Expectations” and 10 means “Exceeds Your Expectations”.
3. Now think of the ideal program for people in your circumstances. How well do you think the services you received compare with the ideal set of services? A 1 now means “Not Very Close to the Ideal” and 10 means “Very Close to the Ideal”.

For PY14, there were a total of 2,042 jobseekers and employers that were provided customer satisfaction outreach. A response of 62% for jobseekers and 80% for employers has been recorded.

Research has shown that when a person is satisfied with a service they are likely to share their experiences with five or six other people; but on the other hand, dissatisfied customers are likely to tell ten people about their experiences.

### **STATUS OF STATE EVALUATION ACTIVITIES**

WFWV conducted a pilot evaluation for a LWIB that was awarded additional funds to provide training to participants on their ITA waiting list. WFWV, upon exit of the participants, evaluated the participants’ applicable performance as appropriate under common measures.

The evaluation addressed the following questions:

1. How many participants waiting for an ITA actually went to training?
2. Of those participants that did not go to training, how many entered employment and retained employment?
3. Of those participants that did go to training, how many completed with a credential, entered employment, and retained employment?

Based on the outcomes of these questions, WFWV will determine what further information and processes are needed in order to promote, establish, and implement methods for continuous improvement in the efficiency and effectiveness of the statewide workforce investment system.

At the close of PY14, our data reflected the following:

- 28 participants were included in the evaluation.
  - 24 participants entered training.
    - 19 participants have completed, received their credential, and have since exited. Five participants received training but no credential, and have since exited. Of the 24 participants who entered training, 24 were employed at first quarter and 23 remained employed at third quarter.
  - Four participants did not enter training. Of the four participants who did not enter training, two were employed at first quarter and two remained employed at third quarter.

## **SUCCESS STORIES AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVES**

**Veterans Program-**A service connected disabled Veteran was in transition from Marine Corps active duty when he first made contact with WFWV. He was referred to the DVOPS with the qualifying factor of a Service Member Career Readiness Standards/Individual Transition Plan (form DD2958). He is a Gold Star Veteran who began receiving services from WFWV for resume writing, labor market information (LMI), and UC in December 2014, before his actual discharge. He began school using his G.I. Bill benefits in January 2015, but continued his search for employment. During the course of his interaction with UC and receiving intensive services from the DVOPS, he was provided information for an employment opportunity as a Veterans Financial Coach and, after some research within the company, deemed eligible for the position, which required a Bachelor's Degree. Due to his diligence in attending school and other experiences, he was offered the position. He successfully completed their training in May, 2015, and has successfully retained employment making \$40,000/year. He continues to attend school full-time.

**Dislocated Worker Funding-**Shortly after graduating high school in 2011, our customer began working as a heavy equipment operator for Bluestone Coal Company. He began thinking about his future in the mining industry, and what other opportunities he may have in this industry. He approached his employer to inquire about their college tuition assistance program. They agreed to help him pursue a Degree in Civil Engineering at Bluefield State College (BSC). He began the enrollment process at BSC, expecting to begin in January 2013. Unfortunately, he was laid off October 2012. He was devastated. The layoff questioned his choice to pursue a Degree in Civil Engineering. Still thinking about his future, he recalled working for a short period as an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) for one of the local ambulance services. He liked this type of work, because it allowed him the opportunity to help others. He thought this may be a career that he would like to pursue further. As he began exploring his career options in the medical field, he had to keep in mind what barriers he would face during the time he was in training. He quickly realized he could not go to school full time without any form of income. At that time, he began exploring short term trainings. The LPN program was enticing because the program could be completed in one year.

In August 2013, he began LPN training at Summers County Technical School/New River CTC. He successfully completed training in August 2014 and is currently working as an LPN for Princeton Community Hospital. He indicated that he is now able to proudly say he can financially support himself. He is currently enrolled at the University of Charleston pursuing his Associate of Science Degree in Nursing. He hopes to one day be a Nurse Anesthetist.

**Adult Funding-**Our customer had been working for a tree trimming service and was injured on the job. He was receiving total disability for the injury but desperately wanted to go back to work, wanting to get his Class CDLs and become an over the road driver.

He came to WFWV in October 2014 to see if there were any training monies available. He was determined WIA Adult eligible but because funding was limited he was referred to Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) to see if they could get him into training sooner. Training monies became available at the same time from DRS and the LWIB.

He completed his CDL training with very high scores and was hired by an over the road trucking company before he even completed the course. He is now earning more per paycheck than he was on a monthly disability check. He is home every weekend and is financially stable.

**Dislocated Worker Funding-**Our customer had one job his entire adult life, working 40 years for a warehouse. The warehouse closed down and he was only in his early sixties and still needed to work. The LWIB assisted with basic computer skills, resumes, interview skills, etc. as the customer had little to no experience with seeking employment. While working through the years he also began taking care of a sick family member. Having had this experience he thought a career in the medical field might be an option. At his age, not wanting to be in training too long, he opted for Patient Care Technician at Mountwest CTC, one semester program, allowing him to become nationally certified and become employed at St. Mary's Medical Center.

**Dislocated Worker Funding-**Due to a slowed economy, our customer was laid off from a position he had held since 2008. With supportive services funding, he was able to purchase tools and uniforms needed to take his career in a new direction. He accepted an offer to work with PCM, a company specialized in industrial maintenance and repair, in March 2015. The company has currently placed him working as a crew leader in a power plant.

**OJT Program-**As recent graduate of Liberty University online, our customer received her certification as a Pharmacy Technician. However, WV requires 975 hours of OJT in order to qualify for the licensing exam. She was having a difficult time locating a company that would provide her with that experience.

The LWIB contacted Judy's Drug Store, explaining how our programs could benefit employers and introduced our customer to them. They agreed to meet her, and were impressed with her initiative and drive to succeed. She was offered a job on the spot. She has been working towards attaining her 975 hours since July 2014. She is doing very well and her new employer is still impressed with her drive. If all goes as planned, she will be eligible for her exam in May, and will become a fully licensed and certified Pharmacy Technician.

**Youth Program-**A 17-year-old high school senior enrolled into the youth program in September 2014. As a student in the Cooperative Education program at the local CTC, the youth employment program allowed the customer to fulfill her work hour commitment at the Hardy County Health and Wellness Center. The program's flexible hours were beneficial as she is actively involved in several high school sports programs such as volleyball and softball.

She enlisted in the National Guard in April 2015 and after graduating high school plans to enroll at West Virginia University (WVU) in January 2016.

"I am a student athlete so finding a job that would work with my availability is hard. I am very grateful that I have been given the opportunity to work through your program."

**JD NEG-**Like many families in the McDowell County area, our customer's family had a long history of employment in the coal mining industry. It would be only customary for him to seek work in the coal fields of McDowell County. He began working as a coal truck driver in April 2005. Soon

thereafter, he found more permanent work as a Heavy Equipment Operator for seven years with a local coal company. On January 31, 2014, he received the dreaded news that he was being laid off. He began looking for work and soon discovered that his options were limited in the truck driving business, because he did not have his CDLs. However, he continued to seek employment. On August 11, 2014, his efforts paid off. He began working with the WV Department of Highways as a Transportation Worker. Unfortunately, he received news on February 19, 2015 that he was being laid off again.

In March 2015, the customer visited our local office and saw information about the Coal Mining NEG. He thought he may be eligible since he was laid off from the mining industry in 2014. With careful consideration, he was determined eligible and registered for the JD NEG instead. He began CDL training at Alliance Tractor Trailer Center in Wytheville, Virginia on April 6, 2015. He completed training and obtained his CDL license on May 11, 2015.

He began working for Shelia's Trucking on May 25, 2015. The customer said he is thankful that he was able to receive funding to pay for CDL training, because he was not able to afford the training himself, and without training, he may have had to seek work outside of WV. He said this training has allowed him the opportunity to find employment in this area, and it allows him the resources to support his wife and son.

**Entrepreneurial Initiative**-Fruits of Labor, Inc.'s vision all started with an entrepreneur's dream at age five to have a show farm. She was formally educated in science and worked for over a decade in agricultural research with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), while growing Fruits of Labor, Inc. simultaneously. It is a corporation designed to marry her passion for agriculture and her love of the culinary industry, by growing much of the food for weddings and corporate events. She and the staff at Fruits of Labor, Inc. have truly experienced the fullness of that vision. The most profound way has been through her Seeds of Recovery Program, with the mission of Planting Seeds of Hope.

With this program, she and her staff mentor and train individuals from the drug courts within WV who are recovering from drug addiction. The participants graduate with nine different certificates of training, which include: American Culinary Federation (ACF) Quality Culinary and Agricultural Training Program, ServSafe, West Virginia Welcome, Bring Your A Game to Work, Resume Writing, Work Ethic Proficiency, WVU Extension Nutrition Program, Nutrition Curriculum and VisAbility. Fruits of Labor, Inc. has had six different groups complete the Seeds of Recovery training. This is the only ACF Quality Program in WV. The three month program is five days a week intensive training. The present group of individuals is the first group to be housed in a beautiful drug-free home called Oakhurst Heights located in White Sulphur Springs, WV. Fruits of Labor, Inc. provides nutritious meals seven days a week for the length of the program. The student must do a formal 4 course presentation dinner every three weeks before they move up to the next rotation. Front of house does table scape, floral design, and rolling of the napkins as well as all service. The back of house plates 3 courses (soup, salad, main course) and the bakery does all the bread. Each bakery student does a 2-tiered presentation cake and plates the 4<sup>th</sup> course of dessert. So far two students have presented their cake.

The LWIB is proud to be a partner with Fruits of Labor, Inc.'s Seeds of Recovery Program. Each Friday a different staff member from the LWIB volunteers a few hours of their time to present Bring Your A Game to Work, a job retention and work ethic training that focuses on developing seven key foundational values that will make employers want to hire you and keep you. Upon completion of the training, participants are eligible to earn their Certificate of Work Ethic Proficiency. The current class is the second group of individuals the LWIB has had the pleasure of teaching.

**West Virginia Pass Initiative-**The LWIB recently partnered with the WV State University Research and Development Corporation to participate in a workshop to help graduating seniors navigate their career paths. Staff with the WV Clearing House, provides information on how to apply for financial aid; how to prepare for ACT and SAT tests; what kinds of financial aid are available; and how to apply for scholarships. LWIB staff provide information about how WFWV could help those students who were planning to go to a technical school or straight into the workforce after graduation.

As a pilot project, one high school was chosen from each of the 11 counties encompassed by the LWIB. Approximately 250 students and parents have attended workshops to date. The LWIB is currently working with staff from the WV Clearing House to enhance these workshops and get information out to more students who plan on going to a CTC or straight into the workforce upon graduating.

**Simulated Workplace Program-**The LWIB received a grant through the WVDE for the Simulated Workplace program. WVDE worked with committee experts from numerous businesses and industries throughout WV to design the program. This new educational initiative has been created to assist schools in implementing workplace environmental protocols that align with WV workforce requirements, including random drug testing, professionalism, attendance, and safety. Simulated Workplace has not only enhanced instructional delivery of career education, but has created a more engaged career and technical student. The environment permits students the opportunity to take ownership of their individual performance as it impacts the overall success of their education, while thriving in an authentic workplace culture. It also encourages local business and industry experts to join onsite review teams to assist schools in meeting their workforce needs and expectations.

The partnership with the Simulated Workplace Program was a natural fit with the LWIB Business Services as the intent is to prepare students for the real world of work. As a grant recipient, the LWIB worked with businesses to recruit industry inspectors and assist with coordination and inspection at two sites in the region. This was the first year Fayette Institute of Technology participated with one program. One inspector was recruited for the March 30<sup>th</sup> event.

This was the second year the Wyoming County CTC participated with all 14 of their programs participating. A total of 14 inspectors were recruited to inspect and evaluate the programs. The inspections were held on April 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>.

The students and instructor(s) at both locations were well prepared and are awaiting the results of the inspections. This was the second pilot year for the programs and more schools throughout the state will be on board next year.

## **CONCLUSION**

In working toward accomplishment of the goals outlined in West Virginia's state workforce strategic plan, WFWV continues to coordinate, link and blend multiple funding streams into a statewide Workforce Development System that is able to respond quickly to changing economic conditions. Organizations within the WFWV Career Centers are coordinating with partners and stakeholders to create a workforce development system that strives to streamline and reduce duplication of services while also addressing end-goal issues, such as a drug-free workplace and expanded training opportunities for the oil and gas industries. Work will continue toward the continuous improvement of the delivery of workforce services in our state. While changes continue to be made and improvements undertaken, we remain cognizant of our commitment to serving the people of West Virginia.

For questions regarding this report and the information contained therein, please contact:

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