

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
Department of Labor and Training
Division of Workforce Development Services
Annual WIOA Narrative Report
November 2016



Report Summary

In 2015 Rhode Island continued to grow out of the Great Recession and has advanced the state's workforce to be a competitive player in regional and national economies. The unemployment rate continues to shrink, while work participation and wages grow. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act has allowed workforce development efforts in the state to continue to provide quality career interventions for individuals displaced by economic hardship. The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training in concert with our WIOA core partners and affiliate state agencies continued to make positive changes for the state's citizens which lead to self-sufficiency and stable careers.

This report will outline the progress that the state has made in PY2015. First, a market analysis of the current economic climate in the state will be presented. The forecast of market projections, growing industries, and the skills of the current workforce are the integral factors in formulating policy and programs that meet the needs of workers and businesses. Next, the state's WIOA outcome measures for all eligible populations will be discussed along with a summary of their effects on the state's economy. The report will also discuss how state funds are used to implement the strategies and goals that have been laid out by the current administration.

In order to fully gauge the efficacy of workforce activities on the broader economy, the RI legislature tasked the RIDLT with creating comprehensive reports and evaluations of workforce activities which have been guiding policy and program implementation. Findings of the reports including the recommended action steps to reach specific goals will be discussed. Finally, the customer satisfaction surveys conducted by RKM research will be presented and will show the feedback received regarding the quality of service provided by the RI One-Stop AJC network.

Workforce and Economic Market Analysis

According to the RIDLT Labor Market Information's 2022 industry Outlook Report Rhode Island employment is expected to increase by more than 51,000 jobs during the 2012-2022 projection period as the state's economy continues to recover from recessionary losses. Employment in 2022 is projected to reach 545,550 an increase of 51,420 (10.4%) jobs from the 2012 employment level. Much of this growth is attributed to the increased demand for the products and services provided by the Health Care & Social Assistance; Accommodation & Food Services; Professional, Scientific and Technical Services; Administrative & Waste Services; Construction and Manufacturing sectors. Nationally, employment is projected to increase by 10.8 percent. The largest numeric gains will continue to occur in the Health Care & Social Assistance sector. This sector is expected to account for 17 percent of the new job growth expected in the state during the 2012-2022 projection period.

At the beginning of PY15 the Rhode Island unemployment rate was still in decline from the Great Recession and stood at 6% and had been the lowest since December 2007. Projected job growth through 2022 indicates that Rhode Island will have an economy in which 64% of all jobs require a high school diploma or more and 35% require at least some level of college education. Even with high unemployment, employers were reporting a skills gap between what they need and what the Rhode Island workforce has. Data shows that 59.2% of Rhode Islanders 25 or above have at least some post-secondary education, while 26.6% of such adults only hold a high school diploma. 14.1% of such adults have less than a high school diploma or equivalent. African Americans and Hispanic citizens are disproportionately lower skilled and lower educated. Youth also have a disproportionately low job participation rate (21.1%).

For Rhode Island's students of color and those from low-income households, math proficiency challenges are especially acute. Among eighth graders, 41 percent of white students but just 13 percent of Hispanic students, 14 percent of black students, and 15 percent of low-income students scored at proficiency on the math portion of the NAEP in 2015. Among fourth graders, 48 percent of white children were proficient, compared to 18 percent of Hispanic students, 17 percent of black students, and 21 percent of low-income students. These are disturbing numbers for the state's economic future given that 30 percent of the state's PK-12 population is Hispanic or black and 46 percent are low-income.

Analysis of Rhode Island's workforce has found that growing minority populations will be integral to the expansion of the economy. According to the American immigration council, almost 1 in 8 Rhode Islanders are "new Americans" comprised of foreign born residents and their children. In 1990, Rhode Island's immigrants made up 9.5% of the population as a whole, by 2000 it had increased to 11.4% and in 2013 it further increased in 12.9%. By 2015, 15.2% of the workforce was comprised of foreign born workers; this population will play a crucial role in filling the positions left empty by an aging workforce. As Baby Boomers retire it is far from clear that the state's future workforce will be ready to fill their jobs in critical advanced industries, let alone support sector expansion.

According to Rhode Island's census data the Rhode Island workforce is aging at a rate faster than ever before. In 2010 Rhode Islanders aged 15-34 constituted 27.5% of RI's population, while people aged 35-64 made up 40.8% of the population. From 2000 to 2010 children age 10-14 declined 10.1%, children 5-9 declined 15.9% and children under 5 declined 10%. In comparison, between 2000 and 2010 the percentage of Rhode Islanders age 55-64 increased by 95%. Rhode Island continues to lack the ability to fully utilize the talents of underrepresented populations.

Rhode Island's disability population is also a crucial segment of our workforce that will be included in WIOA implementation and the execution of programs. According to the most recent available data from the Census Bureau, there are 63,400 working age Rhode Islanders with disabilities between the ages of 21 and 64. It is critical to distinguish between working age people and those that acquire disabilities due to the aging process. Of those working age citizens with disabilities, 33.9% of people with disabilities aged 18 to 64 are employed in juxtaposition with people who do not have disabilities who are employed at a rate of 77.7%. Rhode Island currently ranks 32nd in the nation in terms of jobs for people with disabilities.

PY15 Outcome Data

In PY2015 Rhode Island met the majority of its negotiated outcome levels, and proportionally increased its Adult and Dislocated Worker outcomes with the increase of funding the state received for its annual allocations. In total, Rhode Island served 23,262 unique WIOA eligible adults, 21,050 self-assisted Wagner-Peyser participants, 1,281 dislocated workers, and a total of 634 WIOA youth. The total number of Adults served from PY14 to PY15 rose by 28.9%, Dislocated Workers rose by 35.8%, but total Youth served declined by 10.1%.

	PY14 Served	PY15 Served	Total Exiters PY14	Total Exiters PY15
Total Adults	18,052	23,262 (+28.9%)	14,497	22,064 (+52.2%)
Total Adults (Self)	16,342	21,050 (+28.8%)	13,463	20,830 (+54.7%)
WIA Adults	17,146	21,988 (+28.2%)	13,952	21,374 (+53.2%)
Dislocated Workers	943	1,281 (+35.8%)	576	702 (+21.9%)
Total Youth	705	634 (-10.1%)	413	380 (-8%)
Younger Youth (14-15)	393	345 (-12.2%)	260	217 (-16.5%)
Older Youth (19-21)	312	289 (-7.4%)	153	163 (+6.5%)
Out of School Youth	492	490 (-0.4%)	252	264 (+4.8%)
In School Youth	213	144 (-32.4%)	161	116 (-28%)

Table 1 Participants Served by Population PY14/PY15 Comparison

This increase in overall performance aligns with the increase of funds allotted for Rhode Island for those years. Rhode Island saw a 31.63% increase or \$3,483,889 in funding, which allowed the state's local areas to provide services to more people.

Program Activity	Total Federal Spending
Local Adults	\$3,325,477
Local Dislocated Workers	\$3,971,328
Local Youth	\$4,232,740
Rapid Response	\$1,629,954
State Wide Activities	\$1,338,479

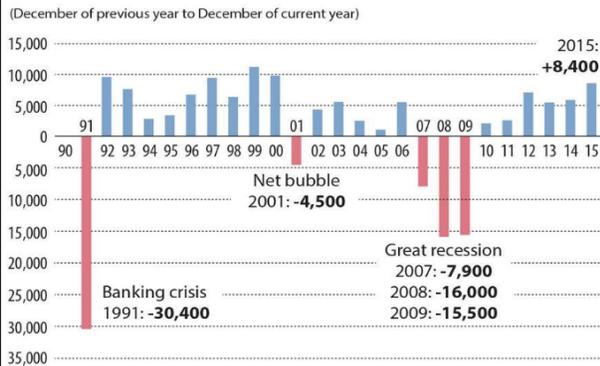
Table 2 Program Spending by Population

This increase in service delivery could be attributed to the overall growth of the Rhode Island economy; as

businesses recover from the Great Recession they are able to hire more individuals. In 2015, Rhode Island added 8,400 jobs. This may be roughly 8,000 jobs lower than the state's peak in 2006 of 495,700 jobs, but PY15 was the sixth consecutive year where jobs grew. Table 3 shows the longitudinal data on job numbers since 1990 and highlights the recent economic growth.

R.I. jobs recovering from Great Recession

Rhode Island gained 8,400 jobs in 2015, extending a now-six-year streak of jobs gains since the Great Recession, but still leaving the state 8,000 fewer than its peak in 2006 of 495,700.



SOURCES: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, R.I. Department of Labor and Training

Table 3 RI Job Recovery 1990-2015

However, Rhode Island youth programs saw a decrease in overall served participants. The state served 10.1% less youth participants overall, with the highest decrease being in the In-School-Youth category. While youth expenditures increased by 36.3% from PY14 to PY15, the new WIOA priority for youth spending required 20% of youth funds to be used specifically on programs related to work experience as dictated by WIOA sec.

129(2)(b). This priority shifted focus away

from sub-contracting funds to traditional youth providers who offer basic career and education services and switching to program providers who offer services such as pre-apprenticeship, internship and job shadowing. Since guidance from USDOL and WIOA regulations have clarified that this 20% must be calculated based on total youth funds allocated, and not total expenditures, Rhode Island LWDBs have been challenged with meeting this new priority. Rhode Island LWDBs carried over \$1.3 million from PY15 to PY16, which constitutes 23% of the total funds allocated for youth activities. Considering that youth programs are entirely subcontracted, it has been difficult for the state and LWDBs to make connections with providers that offer work experience services.

However, the state's local areas have met the majority of their negotiated outcome measures. In the Title 1B Adult population category, the state's entered employment rate was 82%, which surpassed the negotiated level of 81%. The employment retention rate was 91.2%, which exceeded the negotiated level of 89%. Rhode Island did not meet its adult employment and credential rate which was negotiated at 68%; the state achieved a rate of 57.2%. However, the state did exceed the six months average earnings measure which was \$13,773; surpassing the \$12,000 negotiated level.

Measure	Adult Negotiated	Adult Actual	DW Negotiated	DW Actual
Entered Employment Rate	81%	82%	82%	90%
Employment Retention Rate	89%	91.2%	92%	94.6%
Six Months Average Earnings	\$12,000	\$13,773	\$17,000	\$16,382
Employment and Credential Rate	68%	57.2%	72%	68.1%

Table 4 RI PY15 Program Performance Results

The state's dislocated worker measures were less robust than the adult category but still showed promising results. The entered employment rate exceeded the 82% negotiated level by 8 percentage points, standing at 90%. The employment retention rate was 94.6% which topped the negotiated level of 92%. The six months average earnings failed to meet negotiated level, which was \$17,000 but only met \$16,382. The state also failed to meet the employment and credential rate which was negotiated at 72%, obtaining a 68.1% rate.

Breaking down outcome measures by special populations shows the quality of services that are being provided to the state's underrepresented and at risk populations. Individuals utilizing public assistance saw an 80.3% entered employment rate. In PY15, 106 out of 132 public assistance recipients were able to find employment after service. Additionally, 88 out of 102 individuals retained employment for nine months after services which constitutes an 86.3% retention rate. The average six months earnings for this population was \$12,262, accumulating a total sum of \$1,017,751 in wages for 83 individuals. The employment and credential rate was 72.7% for this population; meaning 93 out of 128 individuals gained a credential and employment.

Veterans fared closely in entering employment and better in retaining employment and six months average earnings, but did not achieve the employment and credential rate of the public assistance population. This was mainly due to the number of individuals served as veterans under WIOA. 80% of individuals entered employment which means 16 out of 20 participants found a job. Additionally 89.5% of individuals retained employment, and achieved a 6 month average earnings of \$22,385. This amounted to a sum of wages of \$335,778 for 15 individuals. However, only 22.2% of veterans who received training services gained a credential and employment.

Much like the veteran population, individuals with disabilities did not have high outcome scores. Of the 11 individuals with disabilities who exited the program, 4 entered employment after program exit, making the entered employment rate 36.4%. Additionally, 4 individuals retained

employment for nine months following exit, which means a 100% employment retention rate. The six months average earnings was \$12,043, and 42.9% of individuals who received training services gained employment and a credential.

Dislocated workers saw better outcomes than adults across the board. In PY15 Rhode Island's entered employment rate for veteran dislocated workers was 94.1%, meaning 48 of the 51 program exiters entered employment. The employment retention rate was 100% and six months average earnings were \$16,899. This amounted to a total sum of \$692,840 in wages earned by 41 individuals. The employment and credential rate was 62.1% for veteran dislocated workers.

Rhode Island's exiters included 14 individuals with disabilities who were eligible as dislocated workers. 13 of them entered employment constituting a 92.9% entered employment rate. Disabled dislocated workers saw an employment retention rate of 100% and a six months average earnings of \$12,350. Due to the low number of individuals with a disability served, the state only achieved a 55.6% employment and credential rate for this population.

One of the largest populations of participant exiters as dislocated workers were older individuals. This cohort included 100 such individuals with a 91% entered employment rate. Additionally, these individuals saw a 90.8% employment retention rate and six months average earnings of \$16,936. This population also accounted for a 56.5% employment and credential rate.

When broken down by the type of service provided, dislocated workers who received training services typically saw higher outcomes. Individuals who only received core services saw a 84.1% entered employment rate while individuals who received training had a 92.7% entered employment rate. Participants who received training also had higher six months average earnings of \$16,703 whereas individuals who only received core services had a six months average earnings of \$15,225.

Except for the employment and credential rate outcome, for older youth Rhode Island exceeded negotiated levels. The state reached an 82% entered employment rate, exceeding the 72.1% negotiated level. Additionally, the employment retention rate was 85.3% exceeding the 79% negotiated level. The six months average earnings for this cohort exceeded the \$3,000 negotiated level and achieved a \$3,626. However, the employment and credential rate missed the negotiated level by .9%, standing at 50.6% as opposed to the 51.5% negotiated level.

Measures were not negotiated for younger youth. The state had a 55.3% placement in employment or education rate, a 37.3% attainment of degree or certificate rate, and a 35% literacy and numeracy gains for younger youth program participants.

Governor's Set Aside

In PY15, 10% of the formula funds allocated to the state and locals were used as the governor's set aside. This amounted to \$1,321,002 which was primarily used for staff and infrastructure costs such as rent for One-Stop buildings, utilities, and other like expenditures. These expenses added up by year end to \$803,002. The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training used \$80,206 to fund the customer satisfaction surveys that will be discussed in this report, which are conducted and analyzed by RKM Research. Finally, \$61,167 was used at the end of PY15 for the beginning of the state's new sector strategy grant program Real Jobs Rhode. The main expenditure was used for time charges for grant counselors working on the structure of the program, while \$20,000 went to Skills for Chicagoland's Future as consultants for the program. In PY16, the Governor's set aside will be a driving funding source for the Real Jobs program and will be utilizing the full 15% allocation.

Strategic Plans

In 2015 the RIDLT in concert with the RI Governor's Office began constructing the state's innovative sector strategy program known as Real Jobs Rhode Island (RJRI). The premise of the program is to convene businesses from the state's industry clusters as identified in the economic report by the Brookings Institute into partnerships that work together to identify the challenges and barriers to filling employment gaps throughout the state's industries. RIDLT began this process by requesting proposals for planning grants by industry intermediaries who act as the point of contact for each partnership. These proposals outlined the activities each partnership would take to meeting the aggregate needs of their industry partners. Skill gaps and employment barriers are determined by the partnerships, who then identify the types of training for new hires or for incumbent workers and create a training program to meet those needs. The autonomy of the partnerships allow the state to operate "at the speed of business" by streamlining processes and work with the intermediary rather than to engage individual employers to define the industry's needs. This also has incentivized employers and industries to participate in the program.

Round one planning grants went out to 26 partnerships in 12 industries. These partnerships include entities from the private and public sector, including institutions of higher education such as the state's community college network and state university; as well as economic development and policy institutions such as The Northern RI chamber of Commerce. As stated before, the autonomy of these partnerships allow for robust creativity in creating solutions to industry challenges. The fluidity of this program has allows the creation of programs such as non-trade registered apprenticeship programs. For example, Claflin Medical was the lead applicant in one of the state's biomedical industry partnerships, and had been having issues finding a steady pipeline of talent for its equipment and IT positions. The partnership created the state's first non-trade medical apprenticeship program for these workers which included the production of standards and the utilization of the competency based apprenticeship model. However, while RJRI's driving force is the demand for skilled labor to fill jobs, RIDLT and its partners are equally focused on accommodating participants in these programs as much as the industry partners.

Real Jobs Rhode Island breaks the mold when it comes to training programs. Instead of training individuals and then helping that individual find a job- RJRI partners seek to find individuals and train them for specific job openings. This has been a large culture shift in the idea of workforce development, and has brought on some administrative challenges. Since the idea of sector partnerships are innovative in and of themselves, the method of funding has to be innovative as well. RIDLT currently uses 4 potential funding streams that are attached to each individual participant, and faced the challenge of braiding funds to meet the needs of each partnership and individual trainee. Partnerships conduct their own outreach and find their own participants- which means that eligibility for funding varies and must be retroactively conducted. RJRI grant managers must match a funding stream to each individual. Some funding streams do not have rigid eligibility standards- like the state's Job Development Fund or the WIOA Governor's set aside. Others, such as the Sector Partnership National Emergency Grant, have a specific focus on dislocated workers. The variation in the populations being trained under RJRI has required RIDLT to become flexible in finding funding for each participant. This process has also required the state to determine the best method and metrics possible to effectively evaluate the outcome of this program.

RIDLT has partnered with the Harvard University Kennedy School of Government performance lab to create metrics in which the Real Jobs model can be analyzed and measured. RIDLT currently houses two part time graduate students in order to work closely with the Real Job Rhode Island staff in formulating performance outcome metrics that go beyond federally and state mandated reporting requirements. The team will be conducting data collection and analysis, preparation of reports, and assisting in communications with responsible officials of the state and external stakeholders. This team work will continue until December 31 2018.

Aside from the statewide activities of Real Jobs Rhode Island, in the State's 2014-2015 Biennial Plan the Governor's Workforce Board laid out four areas of focus for the workforce development network, which include all federal workforce programs. The focal points for the state greatly affect the direction in which actions are taken. The 2014-2015 focal points as outlined by the RI Biennial Plan include:

1. Employer Partnerships: Engaging employers as full partners to ensure that training and education are responsive to, and align with employer needs.
2. Work Readiness: Ensuring that all youth and adults have the opportunity to acquire the core literacy, numeracy and work readiness skills necessary to succeed in the workplace.
3. Career Pathways: Providing youth and adults with a continuum of training, education and work experience and supportive services that lead to good jobs and careers in high-growth, high demand, strategically important sectors of the Rhode Island economy.
4. Public workforce system: Integrating interagency work to coordinate planning, funding and services, and to evaluate and report the effectiveness and efficiency of services; and align with the state's economic development strategies.

Employer Partnerships

In order to facilitate employer partnerships the state began the Real Jobs Rhode Island partnership program as described above. However, the Governor's Workforce Board set out a series of other action steps that can achieve this goal. Individual companies that are actively involved with the workforce system can galvanize the business community by helping to promote workforce development initiatives. Businesses have credibility among other businesses

and can speak directly to workforce challenges. To be effective, the system needs their involvement and endorsement. GWB Industry Partnerships provide a model for partnership and should be encouraged to serve as Champions.

The following activities throughout PY14-PY15 were implemented in order to achieve these goals:

a. Action Step: Market EmployRI Website

- i. EmployRI was marketed through billboards, bus panels, and other outreach efforts (including RI Resource Hub and Adult Lifelong Learning (ALL) Access Learning Lounge through Providence Public Library).
- ii. Improvements were made to EmployRI, making it easier to register, post a resume or job, and match jobseekers to available jobs.
- iii. Employer focus groups were conducted regarding usability and satisfaction. These groups included several employers from the GWB's Employer Advisory Committee.
- iv. Jobseekers and One-Stop staff were surveyed regarding usability and satisfaction with EmployRI.
- v. The DLT used focus group, survey results, and the 2013 Job Match Bill recommendation to undertake improvements to the system that improve functionality for matching skills required by employers, to compare training programs, and to find training based on skills checklist, as well as updating the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL).

b. Action Step: Analyze the requirements of current job openings

- i. EmployRI analyzed the skills of individual jobseekers for job matching and provided an aggregate skills gap report in the winter of 2015.
- ii. The Division of Labor Market Information analyzes requirements of job vacancies and skills of jobseekers on the aggregate level (labor supply and demand report).
- iii. Industry Partnerships wrote or updated Skills Gap studies to identify sector specific gaps and training needs.

- iv. Unemployment Insurance claimants are now required to post their resumes on EmployRI.
- c. Action Step: Exempt the Job Development Fund from the States cost recovery**
 - i. The FY2015 budget, passed by the General Assembly and signed into law by the Governor, exempts the JDF from the 10% indirect cost recovery.
- d. Action Step: Leverage employer support for experiential learning opportunities:**
 - i. A new RI Work Immersion Program was created to provide partial wage reimbursements to RI employers providing internships to unemployed adults, college student, and recent college graduates in RI.
 - ii. Innovative partnership grants and industry partner grants were established, requiring employer partner-driven training.
- e. Action Step: Enlist a team of private sector champions to engage business leaders**
 - i. GWB formed Employer Advisory Committee which has met several times per year to discuss critical workforce issues.
 - ii. GWB Industry Partners are more closely aligned with the DLT Business Workforce Center.

Work Readiness

Work readiness has become a major focal point in advancing the state’s workforce, and aims to meet this goal to ensure that all youth and adults have the opportunity to acquire core literacy, numeracy and work readiness skills. The youth unemployment rate is nearly 13% higher than for those over 20 years of age. This indicates that programming and funding are critical to enable youth to obtain valuable work readiness training, employer-recognized credentials, and paid work experience. Nationally, the workforce development community is moving toward a “cradle to career” approach that places emphasis on early intervention, while here in Rhode Island, economic development organizations has identified K-12 education as a key area for workforce improvements in its recently released RhodeMap RI. Significant support for paid work experience for youth has come from JDF and TANF funds; however, funding levels may not be

sustainable, and new sources of funding will be needed to maintain and expand this important effort.

Over 83,000 working age Rhode Islanders do not have a high school diploma and 35,000 Rhode Islanders lack some level of English proficiency. The target populations noted above are overrepresented in these numbers and are far more likely to be low-skilled and/or unemployed, thus requiring additional services and support to succeed in the workforce. Focus Groups conducted as part of the Biennial planning process expressed concerns regarding the level of support and integration available to programs serving populations with greater barriers to employment

The following activities were undertaken to operationalize these action steps:

f. Action Step: Expand Resources for target populations with low skills and barriers to employment

- i. RI received a National Emergency Grant for dislocated workers; LWDBs worked toward a contextualized model for work based learning (including digital literacy).
- ii. Broadband RI has implemented new digital literacy efforts to expand work readiness skills.
- iii. The Employment First Initiative was launched to provide increased job placements for adults with developmental disabilities.
- iv. RI Family Literacy Initiative (RIFLI) provides services 3 days per week at One-Stops.
- v. Child care support for individuals in training programs was enacted into law, which allows eligible individuals to access child care assistance while training.
- vi. Numerous grants and programs across RI's workforce system were expanded to include and/or require work readiness programs.

g. Action Step: Expand access to career pathways through contextualized adult education, and work experience

- i. GWB established Innovative Partnership grants to support business-education partnerships that increase the employability of unemployed and

under-employed workers through work readiness, occupational skills training, and experiential learning aligned with career pathways.

- ii. The RI Work Immersion program was established to expand opportunities for college students and unemployed adults to obtain paid internships leading to jobs and careers.
- iii. CCRI PACE provided training to trade-eligible dislocated workers, returning military veterans, and Rhode Island's unemployed with a USDOL TAACCCT grant.

h. Action Step: Establish a statewide, employer recognized work readiness credential

- i. North star Digital Literacy Assessment program was piloted at public libraries.

i. Action Step: Expand subsidized summer youth employment opportunities

- i. Summer youth programs were expanded through increased investment of JDF funds by the GWB in the summer of 2014 and 2015.

Career Pathways

The GWB in its 2014-2015 Biennial Plan identified the need to provide youth and adults with a continuum of training, education, work experience, and supportive services that lead to good jobs and careers in high growth and high demand sectors of the state. These services could include academic and career advising, contextualized adult education, and occupational skills trainings. Rhode Island has limited opportunities for dual enrollment that enable high school students to gain technical skills and post-secondary credits upon graduation. Dual enrollment programs in nursing, culinary arts, and hospitality are already creating seamless entrance into career pathways.

The State of RI has endorsed Career Pathways as an effective strategy for workforce development; furthermore, Career Pathways are widely accepted as a best practice to address sector specific workforce demands. There is no other strategy that fully encompasses all parts of the workforce system in terms of talent development. Clear career pathways (developed closely with industry and education) that have smooth transitions and accelerated skill attainment

opportunities for individuals represent a more efficient and responsive method to meet the fast changing occupation and job demands of the modern economy.

These action steps were met with the following action steps throughout PY14 and PY15

j. Action Step: Promote Dual enrollment academic programs

- i. Dual Enrollment programs were expanded at CCRI to include several high school technical programs.

k. Action Step: Expand the use of CTE high school facilities to train adults and youth

- i. A team was formed to address this step; they are still in the planning stage at the conclusion of PY15.
- ii. CTE facilities were leveraged for adult programming in culinary arts and boat building (including programs at Providence CTE, Woonsocket CTE, Davies CTE, and the MET school).

l. Action Step: Promote a statewide internship campaign to identify and develop talent for employers

- i. Bridge.jobs, a statewide web portal to facilitate internships between students and Rhode Island businesses, conducted a statewide campaign to increase awareness and participation of businesses in internship programs with funding from the RI Foundation.
- ii. The Work Immersion program was implemented to target college students, recent college grads, and unemployed adults.
- iii. Work Immersion and Back to Work RI were established to increase opportunities for college students and unemployed adults to obtain work experience.

m. Action Step: Expand the use of on-the-job training, occupational skills training to prepare the workforce for career pathways

- i. Non-trade apprenticeship programs were approved for CNC Machinists, construction managers, cost estimators, and marine trades.

- ii. Workforce Solutions of Providence-Cranston administered an On-the-Job Training program for TANF recipients with funding from the Department of Human Services.
- iii. DLT and the LWDBs initiated an effort to improve the alignment of the Eligible Training Provider List with in-demand jobs and career pathways, as well as to increase accountability for outcomes.
- iv. GWB Jobs Initiatives, Work Immersion, and Innovative Partnerships have increased support for pre-employment training, experiential learning, and hiring subsidies.

n. Action Step: Establish links from K-12 to higher education, and higher education to employers

- i. CCRI established a manufacturing boot camp for youth, veterans, and the unemployed.
- ii. Industry Partnerships in eight key sectors have conducted skills gap studies, created online, career pathways tools for in-demand occupations, and provided career coaching to jobseekers.
- iii. Several USDOL grants (TAACCCT, NEG, and H-1B) were obtained to expand career pathways capacity in manufacturing, shipbuilding, and information technology.
- iv. Articulation agreements were developed and expanded between institutions of higher education.
- v. The Hospitality sector has developed articulation agreements with culinary arts and lodging programs (to offer college credit and scholarships).
- vi. The Shipbuilding, Marine Trades/Advanced Manufacturing Institute (SAMI) was established at NEIT with funding from a USDOL TAACCCT grant.
- vii. The IYRS marine tech program established an articulation agreement with Roger Williams.
- viii. Legislation was passed allowing 16 and 17-year-olds to participate in pre-apprenticeships in manufacturing settings.

Workforce System Integration

Finally, a critical and imperative goal which was echoed by the passing of WIOA in 2014 is to integrate the workforce agencies into a seamless service delivery machine. This goal must come to fruition in order to effectively coordinate interagency planning, funding and services. The biggest importance is to develop and expand compatible data systems to improve evaluation and reporting, and to be able to share participant data to create seamless referrals between programs. Integrating data systems will also allow the workforce system to establish clear performance expectations and accountability. It will be crucial to integrate agency work in order to identify the resources that will support the most effective and efficient delivery system.

Cabinet-level directors, under the leadership of the Governor, are uniquely positioned to drive the heightened collaboration among state agencies that is needed to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of workforce development funding and services. Biennial Plan Focus Group participants indicated a need for workforce leadership to be more active and responsive to workforce needs.

The state worked towards these goals through the following action steps:

- o. Action Step: Improve the effectiveness and efficacy of the public workforce system**
 - i. RI Office of Management and Budget performance management office was created to refine and capture data across state agencies.
 - ii. New legislation was passed that requires the GWB to develop a comprehensive system improvement plan in 2015.
 - iii. Data collection processes were improved across agencies.
 - iv. Improved methodology for performance measures have been established.
 - v. netWORKri One-Stop centers have expanded their integration efforts and services.
 - vi. Legislation passed to allow data sharing across Longitudinal Data System that measures K-12 to Higher Education.
- p. Action Step: Appoint a representative of the GWB to the board of Economic Development Corporation and vice versa**

- i. A GWB Board Chair or member was added by statute to CommerceRI Board, Board of Education, and Career & Tech Board of Trustees. The Secretary of Commerce is to become Vice Chair of GWB.
 - ii. As of February, 2015, LWDB Chairs will serve on the GWB.
 - iii. As of February, 2015, the Secretary of Commerce will serve on the GWB.
 - iv. In 2015, a GWB employer representative will serve on the new Career and Technical Education Board of Trustees.
 - v. RhodeMap RI and the state economic development plan included workforce development data, strategy, and leadership.
- q. Expand interagency participation and resource support for netWORKri One-Stop Centers**
- i. Industry partners have increased their presence in One-Stops to provide industry specific coaching.
- r. Increase the frequency of cabinet level meetings on workforce matters**
- i. No progress to date.

This work will continue, and has been expanded upon within the 2016-2017 Biennial Plan which provides updates and progress on these goals. The plans can be found on the GWB website at <http://www.gwb.ri.gov/pubs.htm>.

The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training continued its work with Operation Stand down by including veteran's counselors in the One-Stop network. The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training is committed to providing support to all local veterans organizations, including the state's two Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP) grantees; Operation Stand Down Rhode Island (OSDRI) and Veteran Inc. OSDRI and Veterans Inc. work closely with the state's Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist (DVOP) to provide specialized employment and training opportunities to homeless and economical disadvantaged Veterans. Every HVRP eligible veteran is registered in EmployRI and assigned to a DVOP to provide intensive employment services. Furthermore, OSDRI and Veterans Inc. attend a bi-weekly case conference to review case management strategies and create an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) for each enrolled Veteran. During this case conference, the Local Veteran Employment Representative (LVER) plays an important role in assisting with the development of the service delivery strategies, as well as educating all HVRP staff with current

employment initiatives and programs for veterans. Rhode Island will continue to value veterans as an important population within the Rhode Island workforce.

State Evaluations

Comprehensive System Improvement Plan (CSIP)

In June, 2014, the Governor’s Workforce Board (GWB) was directed by the RI General Assembly to conduct a Comprehensive System Improvement Plan (CSIP) to “facilitate the seamless and coordinated delivery of workforce services in this state, consistent with the goals and objectives of the board's statewide employment and training plan.” The statute further calls for the CSIP, among other things, to identify specific barriers to creating a seamless and coordinated system and provide recommendations to overcome or eliminate these barriers, along with a time frame and responsible agencies for doing so.

In the fall of 2014, the GWB partnered with the Rhode Island Foundation to expand the scope of the CSIP by producing a comprehensive review and ‘map’ of RI’s workforce development system, including a detailed inventory and analysis of all workforce development programs in the state and their functions, responsibilities, areas of overlap, common populations served, performance indicators, outcomes, and goals.

In the spring of 2015, the GWB enlisted Public Works, Inc. – a nationally-recognized firm with extensive experience advising state governments on matters related to workforce development, economic development, and education – to assist the GWB in the development of the CSIP. Throughout the summer and fall of 2015, Public Works conducted an extensive review of RI’s workforce development programs, expenditures, opportunities, and challenges, and their findings and recommendations are incorporated throughout the CSIP.

The CSIP was published on January 8th, 2016 and has reframed the purpose of the Rhode Island workforce system so that employers are able to find the workers they need when they need them, that workers are able to acquire the skills, training, and support they need to obtain good jobs and careers, and that governance is coordinated, adequately and flexibly funded, and accountable. The plan also outlined workforce system barriers, systemic patterns of under-performance, and the recommendations and action steps that each workforce entity should take in order to unify and align all activities to meet the overarching goals of the state. This evaluation of the state’s

workforce system was foundational for the creation of the strategies outlined within the Rhode Island WIOA State Plan.

RI: Competitive Strategy for the Ocean State Brookings Report

In Spring 2015 a number of Rhode Island foundations, state connected individuals, and state agencies supported the work by the Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings along with its analytic partner the Battelle Technology Partnership Practice (now TEconomy Partners, LLC) and in collaboration with Monitor Deloitte, Deloitte Consulting LLP to provide a detailed economic assessment and actionable recommendations for the state's economic development planning, with an emphasis on growing the states critical advanced industries.

Designed to provide a fact-driven basis for action, the evaluation provides a detailed assessment of the state's present situation and best opportunities for economic and workforce development growth, with the goal of promoting an advanced economy that works for all.

The report reflects the results of a six month inquiry that sought to distill the economic challenges facing the state, identify the state's best opportunities for industry expansion and high value growth, assess the strengths and weaknesses of the state's growth platform, and provide an action plan for realizing the state's economic opportunities.

The Brookings report sets the factual background for RIDLT, and our WIOA core partners to develop strategies for service delivery improvement. Understanding the current economic situation is imperative to providing effective career intervention to individuals.

This report was published in January 2016, and was incorporated into the WIOA state plan, the Governor's Workforce Board's Annual Report, and is a driving factor behind the Governor's Real Jobs Rhode Island Sector Strategy grant program.

URI/DLT Real Jobs Rhode Island Evaluation 2016

The University of Rhode Island is currently working with Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training to analyze and evaluate the programs that have been operating under the Real jobs Rhode Island grant program. Although evaluations won't begin until PY16- it was planned and contracted in PY15. Real Jobs Rhode Island began awarding grant funds to industry partnerships in early 2016. The University of Rhode Island will be conducting interviews with RJRI grantees

for the first time in 2016. Researches will then begin to evaluate the functionality of the program, and determining the strengths and challenges of each partnership. URI will be providing an institutional history of Real Jobs Rhode Island, to be included as part of the introduction to the overall evaluation that describes the goal of the program, including how it built upon similar sector strategy programs in other states. It will also include the process of implementing the program from the program's inception to the conclusion of all implementation grants.

URI will be conducting and writing case studies on all grantees that address the following factors:

- What each partnership set out to do (brief summary of their grant proposals)
- Why they set out to do it (summary of the justification for the proposal i.e challenges of finding workers in this field and existing training programs in the past)
- How training programs prior to this one were different
- The challenges each partnership faced, such as working as a “sector” finding participants, working with DLT, training, etc.
- The strengths/benefits of each partnership
- The outcomes of each program

URI will then give an overall program evaluation that addresses the following areas:

- Themes of challenges and strengths grouped by sector
- Recommendations for reforms
- Strengths to build upon

RIDLT will be providing access to all grantees, DLT staff and program files pertaining to Real Jobs Rhode Island. The timeline for this project is January 1 2016 to January 1 2019.

Rhode Island Yearly Expenditure and Program Report

First published in 2010 at the request of the Rhode Island Legislature, the annual Unified Workforce Development Expenditure and Program Report (UEP) provides a compendium of all workforce development funding and activities in the state. The report shall include, at a minimum, expenditures by agencies for programs included in RIGL § 42-102-6(b)(1), including

information regarding the number of individuals served by each program, demographic information by gender, race and ethnicity; outcome and program-specific performance information as determined by the board, and such other information as may be determined by the board, including, but not limited to, the attainment of credentials. Program expenditures included in the unified workforce development system report shall be categorized as administrative, program delivery, or other costs; the report shall further include information on the cost-per-individual served within each program, through a manner determined by the board.

The UEP allows elected officials, policy-makers, and other stakeholders to gain a better understanding of the breadth and impact of workforce development funds in the state, so that policy and program decisions can be made based upon the results of those activities. Subsequent legislation encouraged the use of the UEP to make long-range planning decisions. In 2011, legislation was passed that instructed the Human Resource Investment Council (HRIC), now known as the Governor's Workforce Board RI (GWB), to also publish a Biennial Employment and Training Plan that combined the information from the UEP with labor market information in order to assess the gaps between workforce development services and employer demand for workers and identify strategies to address those gaps.

The GWB is charged with policy development and coordination of workforce activities of state agencies. Each of the agencies has representation on the UEP planning committee and contributed its respective expenditure and program data to this report.

The UEP contains all funding information, participant numbers and appropriate outcome information for the following RI state agencies:

- Department of Corrections (DOC)
- Department of Education (RIDE)
- Department of Labor and Training (DLT)
- Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS)
- Governor's Workforce Board (GWB)
- Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner (OPC)

This report aims to report all expenditures and outcomes for each workforce program operated by the state's workforce, education, and social service agencies. Due to the differences in each

agencies goals for participants, the report describes the intent of each program, the outcomes specific to each program, and the demographics that are the most prevalent.

Biennial Employment and Training Plan

In 2011, the Rhode Island General Assembly directed the Governor’s Workforce Board to develop a biennial employment and training plan that would provide an analysis of Rhode Island’s workforce funding and gaps in meeting the needs of workers and employers and would develop a plan for workforce spending for the state. The first Biennial Employment and Training Plan, written in 2012 and covering fiscal years 2014-2015, identified many important action steps to move Rhode Island closer to its overall workforce and economic goals. Through the identification of four major priorities (Employer Partnerships, Work Readiness, Career Pathways, and the Public Workforce System), the FY2014-15 Biennial Plan focuses on strategies and action steps to maximize limited state and federal funding. Key strengths of the FY2014-2015 Biennial Plan include its focus on Career Pathways, opportunities for experiential learning, the work readiness credential and other workforce readiness initiatives. Even in entry level occupations, job seekers need access to education and training in order to be competitive

The Governor’s Workforce Board publishes the Biennial Employment and Training Plan which seeks to maintain and build upon the momentum created by that first plan. By statute, the Biennial Employment and Training Plan is required to identify “major priorities” for the next two fiscal years. In drafting this plan, the GWB, with the help of a range of strategic partners, conducted an extensive research and analysis process, developing recommendations for the workforce system that take into account not only the current economic climate and industry needs, but also anticipate changes in industry, demographics, and legislation.

In the two years covered by this plan Rhode Island, like all other states, will be subject to the regulations of the recently signed federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). In addition, the GWB will respond to the General Assembly’s charge to conduct a “Comprehensive System Improvement Plan” to facilitate the seamless and coordinated delivery of workforce services in this state. These important developments in state and federal regulations will affect the ways workforce development initiatives are funded and implemented, demanding an increased focus on efficiency and alignment.

Rhode Island's efforts to increase literacy, numeracy, and soft skills are essential for young and transitional workers. Further, through employer partnerships, workforce development agencies and related service providers have been able to identify and better address industry needs. Beyond these few highlights, the last two years have shown significant progress in each of the four priority areas and the workforce system is poised to build upon this progress in FY2016-2017.

Customer Satisfaction Surveys

Rhode Island currently uses RKM Research to conduct the state's customer satisfaction surveys. The results of the report are based on a series of follow up telephone surveys. The surveys are administered using a computer assisted telephone interview system. The interview system allows interview data to be entered directly into a computer database as the interviews are conducted, creating highly reliable data collection. All interviews are conducted by paid, trained, and professional interviewers.

The research has been conducted quarterly since PY 2000. Only participants who received core and intensive training under WIA, and enhanced career services and training under WIOA through the Rhode Island One-Stop network are interviewed. For PY15, a total of 270 netWORKri participants were interviewed. The results for participant interviews carry a maximum margin of error of +/- 5.3 %. A total of 736 employers were interviewed and had a maximum margin of error of +/- 3.3%.

Participants and employers are identified for these interviews by utilizing RIDLT's management information system known as EmployRI. Participants are contacted as soon as possible on or after their last expected service date and no later than 60 days after their service closure date. Employers are contacted as soon as possible after the completion of the service they receive and no later than 60 days after services have been completed. For employers who listed a job order where no referrals were made, contact occurs 30 to 60 days after the original listing. An employer may receive multiple services and have multiple job listings. In this case the employers are only contacted once during the course of a program year.

The study analyzed the feedback of the One-Stop network services, the satisfaction of the staff, and other subjects such as the probability that the participant would return for further service,

and their employment retention after receiving services. Respondents were also asked about the goals that they had hoped to achieve through their participation in One-Stop programs.

RKM uses three questions regarding overall satisfaction. They then use a weighting formula to create an “American Customer Satisfaction Index,” which is used to track satisfaction trends over time. The questions asked during the interview are:

1. Utilizing a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means very dissatisfied and 10 means very satisfied, what is your overall satisfaction with the services you received?
2. Considering all of the expectations you may have had about the services, to what extent have the services met your expectation? Utilizing a scale of 1 to 10, 1 meaning falls short of your expectations and 10 meaning exceeding 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? Utilizing a 1 to 10 scale, where 1 means not very close to ideal and 10 meaning very close to ideal.

RKM then uses the following formula to calculate the American Customer Satisfaction Index (or ACSI) score. Respondents who fail to answer all 3 questions are eliminated from the calculation.

$$\text{ACSI Score} = \text{score1} + \text{score2} + \text{score3}$$

$$\text{Where Score1} = ((\text{mean score for Q1} / 9 \times 100)) \times \text{weight1}$$

$$\text{Where Score2} = ((\text{mean score for Q2} / 9 \times 100)) \times \text{weight2}$$

$$\text{Where Score3} = ((\text{mean score for Q3} / 9 \times 100)) \times \text{weight3}$$

Participant Data

In 2015, younger youth and adults registered the highest ACSI score. The overall score among participants in 2015 was 81.15, slightly lower than 2014 (81.56). Younger youth recorded the highest score with 83.73, followed by adults at 83.13, older youth 81.89, and dislocated workers 79.10.

Participants also rated the staff at the netWORKri centers highly. In PY15, a service quality audit was conducted among all participants in order to identify the areas of possible improvement. Participants were asked a total of 10 questions relating to the netWORKri services they received.

For each services attribute, participants were instructed to describe the netWORKri offices as excellent, very good, good fair, or poor.

Upon completion of the survey, participants answers were recoded numerically and averaged so that a score of “5” means that the participants consider netWORKri to be excellent, while a score of 1 would mean services were poor.

The data indicates that in general participants rated the network highly in terms of not having to wait (4.14), having all needed services in one location (4.16) and things being easy to find (4.05). Respondents rated the staff highly for carefully explaining services (4.37), being responsive (4.28), being knowledgeable (4.24) helping participants accomplish what they wanted to achieve (4.13), showing genuine interest (4.29), helping identify job opportunities (3.99) and helping find the services they wanted (4.02).

Many adults and dislocated workers reported using One-Stop services to find a job or find a better job. 54% of adults and 55% of dislocated expressed these goals. Youth respondents reported using the center to advance their education- 36% of older youth and 32% of younger youth reported these goals.

Participants were asked whether or not they are currently employed at the time of the interview. Although it is unclear whether employment was a direct outcome of the services individuals received, in 2015 85% of adult participants, 82% of dislocated workers, 72% of older youth, and 54% of younger youth indicated that they were employed. The proportion of adult participants who indicated that they were employed at the time of the interview remained steady over time from 2006 (76%) to 2009 (75%), but has risen by multiple percentage points since to an overall total of 82%.

A majority of participants would use the services again in the future. Additionally, 92% of adult participants said they would probably (32%) or definitely (60%) use the series they received again in the future if their circumstances were the same. 8% of adults said they would not use the service again. 91% of dislocated workers indicated that they would probably (29%) or definitely (62%) use the services they received again if their circumstances were the same. 95% of older youth indicated that they would probably (39%) or definitely (56%) use the services again. 5% said they would not use the service again. 97% of younger youth indicated that they would

probably (43%) or definitely (54%) use the services. 3% indicated they would not use the services again.

Employer Data

Similar to participants, employers were also asked a series of three questions that were used to construct an ACSI. The ACSI score among employers in 2015 was 67.55, which is slightly higher than 66.22 for PY14.

Overall, employers rated the staff at netWORKri highly. In order to understand employer satisfaction, employers were asked to rate the service they received through netWORKri in 4 areas.

1. Responsiveness of staff
2. Knowledge of staff
3. Interest shown by staff
4. Staffs ability to help them accomplish what they wanted to achieve.

For each service attribute, employers were instructed to describe the netWORKri as “excellent,” “very good,” “good,” “fair,” or “poor”.

The data indicates that, similar to participants, employers were most likely to give excellent ratings to the netWORKri staff for interest (58%), followed by knowledge (53%), responsiveness (52%), and for helping them accomplish what they wanted to receive (46%). Employers were also asked how likely it was that they would use the services they received again in the future. For PY15, 86% of employers reported that they “probably” (35%) or “definitely” (51%) would use the services again, while 12 percent would not use the services again.

However, employers were most likely to give less favorable ratings to the quality of EmployRI. Employers were asked to rate the quality of the website used to create job postings. Employers were most likely to give an excellent or very good rating for the websites ability to help them accomplish what they wanted, but typically gave poor ratings for factors such as the ease of finding information.

The vast majority of employers reported that they were able to understand the information about workforce development incentives. Employers were asked if they recalled receiving information about the incentives offered by the state workforce agency which includes development incentives, tax breaks, and all of the services offered by the RIDLT Business Workforce Center. Slightly more than half (52%) of employers reported receiving such information. Of the respondents who did receive such information, 94% responded “excellent” or “very good.”