

ARKANSAS WORKFORCE
INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY
ACT (WIOA) TITLE I AND TITLE III
ANNUAL STATEWIDE
PERFORMANCE REPORT
PROGRAM YEAR 2018

ARKANSAS DIVISION OF WORKFORCE SERVICES

From the Director

As the newly-appointed Director of the Arkansas Division of Workforce Services (ADWS), I have the honor of presenting our Program Year 2018 annual report. It is designed to give readers a closer look at our programs, highlight the year's accomplishments, and demonstrate two of the agency's core values: transparency and results.

Although I did not assume leadership of ADWS until July 1, 2019, I am very familiar with the WIOA Programs as the former Director of the Arkansas Department of Career Education. Additionally, I have served on the Arkansas Workforce Development Board since 2016. I am extremely proud of the successes we have seen, the progress we have made, and the challenges we have overcome. Under the guidance of Governor Asa Hutchinson, ADWS has become the state's lead workforce development agency. I would like to thank and commend my staff, the lifeblood of ADWS, for their hard work, dedication, and service to our state. Without them, ADWS would not be the agency it is today.

These are exciting times for Arkansas: total employment is up, the unemployment rate consistently outpaces that of the nation, and thousands of jobs were added in the past year. The economy in our state is growing, and as it continues to expand, ADWS will be there to carry the momentum forward.

Education and workforce development opportunities are critical to a strong economy. To aid in meeting these demands, ADWS will continue to collaborate with its partners and work closely with employers and job seekers to develop initiatives and offer effective programs and services to enrich the economic growth of Arkansas.

Together we are preparing today's workforce for tomorrow's careers.

Sincerely,

Charisse Childers Ph.D
Director

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I. Introduction

Last year, 107,706 Arkansas residents accessed the state's workforce system for assistance in acquiring or retaining employment. They came from a wide array of demographics, characteristics, backgrounds and experiences: low-income, single parents, migrant and seasonal workers, single parents struggling to support themselves, workers displaced by a changing economy and veterans returning from active duty. Many needed help connecting to unemployment benefits and assistance in determining next career steps. Others needed more basic, individualized or training services to overcome barriers to meaningful employment. Two of the primary funding sources for these basic, individualized services is the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I and Wagner-Peyser Title III programs. This report provides an in-depth look at the impact those funds have had in Arkansas in Program Year 2018, July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019.

II. Overview of Arkansas' Workforce Development System

Arkansas' workforce development system is a coordinated and collaborative network of services, programs and investments with a shared goal of improving the skills of the state's workforce. In order to meet the challenge of the 21st century global economy, the public workforce system works in partnership with businesses, educators, organized labor and community leaders to foster economic development and high-growth opportunities in regional economies. This network further helps potential job candidates, particularly low-income youth, adults and displaced workers, overcome obstacles to successful employment. These services are coordinated through Arkansas Workforce Centers, the state's one-stop delivery system. Primary funding for Arkansas Workforce Center operations and many of the basic and individualized services is provided by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I and the Wagner-Peyser Act of 1933. Other formula-based and competitive federal, state and local resources and services that support our workforce system include Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), veteran services, USDOL National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG), Trade Adjustment Assistance, Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Assistance and other partner program funds.

At the heart of the public workforce system, these Arkansas Workforce Centers are made up of one-stop career centers, affiliate, and connection sites. Arkansas Workforce Centers are the primary access point to qualified workers, as well as to a multitude of resources for businesses and job seekers. These Centers serve thousands of individuals who are seeking employment, changing jobs, reentering the workforce or learning new skills. This makes them the ideal venue for workforce solutions for job seekers and businesses alike.

At our Workforce Centers throughout the state, individuals can open a claim for unemployment insurance, find job openings, receive other job search assistance and attend workshops that can improve employability. Qualified individuals can find assistance with specific training in high demand occupations. Businesses can get help with workforce needs including recruitment, screening, employee training, layoff aversion, and employee retention.

III. The Arkansas Division of Workforce Services

The Arkansas Division of Workforce Services began its legacy around 1940 as the Arkansas Employment Security Division of the state Department of Labor. In 1941, Act 391 created a

network of public employment offices. With that, a fund for the disbursement of benefits to be paid out during periods of unemployment was put in place, as well as a board of review to hear claims and appeals for unemployment benefits. The division underwent no great changes until Act 100 of 1991. This raised it to a department-level agency and made it the Arkansas Employment Security Department.

In 2007, Act 551 created the Department of Workforce Services Training Trust Fund for the operating expenses of the Unemployment Insurance program. Thus, the name of the agency was changed to the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services. Throughout its history, the agency's mission remained essentially the same: to provide employment related services that enhance the economic stability of Arkansas.

In 2019, Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson signed the Transformation and Efficiencies Act of 2019 into law, cutting the number of cabinet-level agencies from 42 to 15. This piece of state legislation went into effect on July 1, 2019 and reflects a reorganization of the workforce partner agencies in Arkansas. Specifically, the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services became the Division of Workforce Services and incorporated the former Arkansas Rehabilitation Services, Division of Services for the Blind, and Adult Education Services. This report incorporates these changes and includes the following new acronyms:

- ADWS – Arkansas Division of Workforce Services
- DSB – Division of Services for the Blind
- ARS – Arkansas Division of Workforce Services – Arkansas Rehabilitation Services
- AES – Arkansas Division of Workforce Services – Adult Education Services

Since ADWS is a state agency, it does not earn a profit and does not measure success by business growth and expansion. The size of the agency's budget and the staffing levels are adapted to best meet the needs of the state and its customers while balancing the requirements of stakeholders. The agency is unique from other state agencies in that it is 99 percent federally funded with taxpayer dollars. Even though the agency is almost entirely funded with federal money, the Arkansas Legislature appropriates the agency's funds and has the authority to pass legislation affecting agency programs and services on a state level. As a result, ADWS must adhere to both state and federal laws and regulations.

Our success is measured by our ability to cushion the impact of economic downturns and bring economic stability to the state by meeting the needs of employers and job seekers. As a proud partner of the American Job Centers, ADWS and the Arkansas Workforce Centers offer a variety of services to assist both groups.

WIOA Roundtable

In PY2018, ADWS focused on revamping the WIOA Roundtable and its subcommittees. The WIOA Roundtable consists of senior-level representatives from partner agencies including the Arkansas Department of Career Education, Arkansas Rehabilitation Services, and the Arkansas Department of Human Services-Division of Services for the Blind. The goal of the WIOA Roundtable is for partners to coordinate their efforts to improve the state's workforce development delivery system. Moving forward, the Governor's Transformation and Efficiencies Act of 2019 will only strengthen this group's cohesion and effectiveness.

IV. State and Local Roles

The Arkansas Workforce Development Board (State Board) assists the Governor in overseeing the state's workforce development system. The core business of the State Board is to coordinate state policy and state strategic planning for the workforce development system, evaluate results and facilitate demonstration projects that test innovations and ideas. ADWS serves as the state's WIOA Title I grant recipient. These WIOA responsibilities include stewardship of the funds, oversight and monitoring activities, issuing statewide policy, management of grants and contracts and allocation of the WIOA Title I funds to the local area Workforce Development Boards (Local Boards) for the delivery of services within an integrated service delivery system. ADWS also fulfills an operational role within the workforce system through providing services funded under the Wagner-Peyser, Trade Adjustment Assistance, Jobs for Veterans Services Grants, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Family (TANF) programs.

The Local Boards are the local conveners and managers of the workforce system through which WIOA programs are accessed. They are the strategic visionaries for local implementation of WIOA funds. There are ten (10) Local Boards in Arkansas and each is private industry led and locally focused. Local Board members are appointed by Chief Elected Officials (CEOs), and certified by the Governor. CEOs are the local area WIOA Title I grant recipients. CEOs direct their Local Boards' staff to administer the funds and oversee the area's Workforce Centers to most effectively respond to the local economy and needs of local citizens. Local Boards convene with regional partners and stakeholders to assess skill gaps, identify emerging and future employment possibilities and collaborate with economic developers and other partners to develop the region's workforce development plan.

V. WIOA Title I and Title III Programs

WIOA Title I Youth Program

Who is served: Youth must be between 14 and 24 years old, low income (WIOA allows for a 5% exclusion) and meet other criteria described in the WIOA, such as a need for additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment.

Participation: Approximately 1,000 young people were served by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Youth Program between July 1, 2018 and June 30, 2019.

Program description: The program prepares low-income youth ages 14 through 24 for success in school and the world of work. Eligible youth may receive counseling, tutoring, job training, mentoring or work experience. Other service options include summer employment, study skills training and instruction in obtaining a GED or equivalent.

WIOA Title I Adult Program

Who is served: Specific eligibility guidelines are described in the WIOA. Basic services are available to all adults with minimal eligibility requirements. Basic, individualized or training services are authorized for unemployed individuals unable to find jobs. In some cases, these services are available to employed workers who need more help to reach self-sufficiency.

Participation: Approximately 1,400 participants received career services and 1,200 participants received training services by the WIOA Adult Training Services Program between July 1, 2018 and June 30, 2019.

Program description: The program prepares individuals 18 years and older for participation in the labor force by providing basic services and access to job training and other services. Services are coordinated through the state's workforce center system. Basic services include skill assessment, labor market information; consumer reports on training programs and job search and placement assistance. Individualized and training include more intensive assessments, work experiences and occupational skills training. Priority is given to veterans and eligible spouses as well as those individuals with barriers to employment.

WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker Program

Who is served: Specific eligibility guidelines are described in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Dislocated workers are people who lost jobs due to plant closures, company downsizing or some other significant change in market conditions. In most cases, eligible workers are unlikely to return to their occupations because those jobs are no longer economically viable, and they must be eligible for (or have exhausted) unemployment compensation. Other conditions can lead to eligibility for services, such as separating military service members and eligible spouses of military service members, being self-employed but not working as a result of general economic conditions or being a displaced home maker.

Participation: Approximately 330 participants received career services and 250 received training services through the WIOA Dislocated Worker Career Program between July 1, 2018 and June 30, 2019.

Program description: The program tailors employment and training services to meet dislocated workers' needs, establishes early intervention for workers and firms facing substantial layoffs and fosters labor, management and community partnerships with government to address worker dislocation. Dislocated workers are also eligible for basic services including skill assessment, labor market information, training program consumer reports and job search and placement assistance. Individualized and training include more intensive assessments, work experiences and occupational skills training.

Note- Arkansas has taken the approach of housing Dislocated Worker/Rapid Response, Trade Adjustment Assistance, and Reemployment Assistance within one unit to ensure proper coordination across those programs. Additionally, a referral process is in place to provide these referrals to Title I service providers and Employment Services and partners are invited to meetings with businesses impacted by layoffs procedurally.

WIOA Title III Wagner-Peyser Program

Who is served: Specific eligibility guidelines are described in the WIOA. Career services are available to anyone who is legally entitled to work in the United States no matter one's age or employment status. Through Title III, basic and individualized career services are offered. A veteran or his or her eligible spouse has a priority to receive such services.

Participation: 85,500 participants were served under Wagner-Peyser between July 1, 2018 and June 30, 2019.

Program description: The Wagner-Peyser Act of 1933 established a nationwide system of public employment offices, known as the Employment Service. The Employment Service seeks to improve the functioning of the nation's labor markets by bringing together individuals seeking employment with employers seeking workers. The Wagner-Peyser Act was amended in 1998 to make the Employment Service part of the one-stop delivery system under the Workforce Investment Act. In 2014, the Wagner-Peyser Act was amended again under Title III of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

The Employment Service under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act builds upon the previous workforce reforms, requires colocation of the Employment Service offices into the nearly 2,500 American Job Centers nationwide, and aligns performance accountability indicators with other federal workforce programs. Basic services include skill assessment, labor market information; consumer reports on training programs and job search and placement assistance. Individualized services include career and vocational counseling.

VI. Arkansas Workforce Centers

The Arkansas Workforce Centers are the gateways to job services and workforce development programs in our state. With 33 Arkansas Workforce Centers located strategically throughout the state, representatives are available to help employers and job seekers find the best resources and services to meet their needs.

The Arkansas Workforce Centers represent Arkansas' version of the American Job Centers. They are designed to provide universal access to an integrated array of services so that workers, job seekers, and businesses can find the services they need in one stop, and frequently under one roof.

All Arkansas Workforce Centers offer a consistent line of resources for employers and job seekers. However, the full menu of services may vary from center to center, as each site can tailor the additional services it offers to meet the specific needs of employers and job seekers in their community.

At the Arkansas Workforce Centers, customers receive services on three levels:

1. Self-service in the resource rooms
2. Intensive services and career counseling
3. Training and skill-building for those who qualify

Customers can search and apply for jobs online in the AWC resource rooms. These rooms are equipped with computer stations, Internet, printers, copiers, fax machines, phones, and staff to assist as needed. With an Arkansas JobLink account, job seekers can search for employment opportunities, apply for jobs, and post their resume, skills, and other credentials to a profile viewable by employers.

In PY2018, there were 108,114 staff-assisted participant registrations in the Arkansas JobLink system.

Workforce specialists assist individuals who require or request personal assistance and intensive services. In one-on-one meetings, staff interview and assess clients to determine specific needs and eligibility for programs. Workforce specialists also provide career counseling and work with job seekers to develop customized employment plans

based on their current skill sets, professional experience, employment history, cost of living, and personal goals.

In PY2018, there were 50,918 referrals made by Workforce Center staff in the Arkansas JobLink System.

VII. WIOA Discretionary Grants

Discretionary Grants

Since 2010, ADWS has been awarded a total of over \$40 million in discretionary grants funding.

Discretionary grants provide economic support for workforce development initiatives and relief funds for temporary employment, clean-up efforts, and infrastructure repairs when natural disasters strike.

During the Program Year, efforts have been focused on building partnerships with stakeholders and employers across the state to expand and diversify registered apprenticeship programs (and the number of apprentices) in Arkansas. As an example, ADWS has initiated the launching of a series of *Employers Growing Talent Through Apprenticeship – Employer Forums* to increase awareness and interest of the proven registered apprenticeship model as a workforce development solution. These collective efforts have contributed to unprecedented growth in both the number of apprentices and registered apprenticeship programs over the last year. This expansion has been facilitated through the following grants: ApprenticeshipUSA State Accelerator, Arkansas Apprenticeship Pathway Initiative (AAPI), and Arkansas Expands Apprenticeship (AREA).

ApprenticeshipUSA State Accelerator Grant

The ApprenticeshipUSA State Accelerator grant has a period of performance that started on June 1st, 2016 and concluded on November 30, 2018. The Accelerator grant is a planning grant intended to provide support for governors and their states as they build upon existing strategies to expand and diversify registered apprenticeship. These strategies include convening key industry representatives, state agency leaders, community college representatives and other stakeholders to form strategic partnerships, and elevate apprenticeship as a workforce solution in both traditional apprenticeship industries (i.e., construction trades) and non-traditional apprenticeship industries (i.e., information technology, healthcare, advanced manufacturing, business services, transportation, etc.).

The final deliverable of the Accelerator grant resulted in the development of the *State Plan for Registered Apprenticeship Expansion and Diversification* (<https://www.dws.arkansas.gov/news-info/apprenticeship-news/>). The State Plan includes a series of recommendations that together offer a strategic alignment of resources and communications efforts to maximize registered apprenticeship expansion efforts within the state.

Arkansas Apprenticeship Pathway Initiative

Registered apprenticeship offers a career pathway for job seekers to learn a skill and earn good wages while earning a marketable credential from the U.S. Department of Labor. Apprentices are considered employees from day one of the program; they receive paid training and progressive increases in wage as they demonstrate skills gain.

The AAPI grant is expanding registered apprenticeship opportunities in the traditional registered apprenticeship construction trades, as well as in the non-traditional registered apprenticeship industry sectors, such as information technology and advanced manufacturing.

Collaborative work efforts under the AAPI grant has pioneered non-traditional (i.e., outside the construction trades) registered apprenticeship programs in Arkansas, introducing software developer and cybersecurity apprenticeships working with the Arkansas Center for Data Sciences and partnering employers as well as industrial maintenance, culinary, and nursing related apprenticeships. The AAPI grant is scheduled to end September 30, 2020.

Arkansas Expands Apprenticeship

The AREA grant was the last of the three USDOL ApprenticeshipUSA Initiative Grants awarded to ADWS, This grant award is offering the opportunity to leverage funding to expand Arkansas' capacity to collaborate with employers and start new apprenticeship programs across diverse industries and communities. AREA registered apprenticeship training programs are available across all industry sectors where employer demand drives the expansion of existing programs or the development of new programs. The AREA grant is scheduled to end on October 31, 2020.

Re-Employment Systems Integration

Arkansas strives to promote and support a talent development system that offers employers, individuals, and communities the opportunity to achieve and sustain economic prosperity. This project's purpose is to build on the relationship between the ADWS and its WIOA Partners in the design & development of a secure, integrated common intake & case management system that is a citizen-focused service delivery model that enhances the access to programs & services for all of our customers.

ADWS and our WIOA partners have implemented a Business Service Teams Solution in Arkansas's workforce centers, that will enable us to coordinate, manage, and record the services being provided to business' to meet the spirit of the WIOA law, to avoid multiple contacts to business by leveraging the communication tools available in Salesforce, and to establish additional data for reporting the new business metrics.

Disaster National Dislocated Worker Grant– AR-29 (Storms occurring between July 1, 2018 and June 30, 2019)

In June of 2017, the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency declared storm impacted counties within the northwest and north central regions as federal disaster areas. ADWS received a total award of \$2,060,000 to fund temporary employment and recovery assistance for storm debris removal and repairs. Disaster NDWG AR-29 has an end date of June 30, 2019.

Arkansas PROMISE

Arkansas PROMISE is part of a program sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education and the Social Security Administration to help youth receiving disability benefits, and their families, improve their educational and employment outcomes. This project is being implemented in 11 states. In Arkansas, the program is administered by the Department of Education and the University of Arkansas, in partnership with several other state agencies and private organizations. PROMISE provides services to youth and their families, including intensive case management, two paid competitive work experiences, education and employment training, and support for youth and families, benefits counseling, and health and wellness training. Arkansas PROMISE has an end date of September 30, 2018.

VIII. Arkansas Labor Market

The 2019 Arkansas Labor Market and Economic Report, released in Summer 2019, projected information for industry and occupational trends covering the years 2018 to 2020.

Arkansas increased in population in 2018 by 10,828 from 2017; and added a total of 46,099 new residents from 2014 to 2018. Of Arkansas's 10 Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs), Northwest Arkansas continues to see the largest increase in population, adding 36,160 in 2018. The Eastern, North Central, Southeast, and Southwest Arkansas LWDAs continued to see decreasing populations in 2018.

Between 2017 and 2018 the state's labor force decreased by 2,769 and employment decreased by 2,975. Labor force and employment were mixed across LWDAs. The State's unemployment rate remained at 3.7% in 2018, but that is a drop of two and three-tenths percentage points since 2014. The unemployment rate dropped in 2018, ending the month of July at 3.4%. The unemployment rate decreased across all LWDAs in 2018 and through July 2019. The Northwest Arkansas LWDA unemployment rate fell below state levels through July 2019.

Short-term employment projections for 2018-2020 continue to see an increase in the Arkansas job market with 38,742 jobs, equivalent to a 2.75% rise in employment. Good-producing Industries are estimated to see a net gain of 9,066 jobs; while the Services-Producing Industries are forecast to increase employment by 26,480. Arkansas's self-employed ranks are estimated to experience a net gain of 2,823, an increase of 2.25%.

Jobs requiring a high school diploma or equivalent are estimated to add more jobs than any other education level with 15,511 jobs between 2018 and 2020. Occupations requiring a Bachelor's degree are expected to grow by 7,851.

IX. State's Strategic Vision and Goals Progress

In Arkansas, the Arkansas Workforce Development Board is responsible for ensuring that the vision and goals for the state's workforce development system are being met. Consequently, the Board has assigned this duty to its Strategic Planning Committee. Upon its inception, the Strategic Planning Committee developed a Strategic Action Plan grid that contained the ongoing strategic goals for the State, complete with milestones and completion dates.

At each of its quarterly meetings, the Strategic Planning Committee reviews an updated Action Plan that provides a "report card" towards achieving these goals. Some of this Committee's strategic goals and progress made towards achieving them are listed below:

Strategic Planning Committee Action Plan Results

- The development, implementation, and modification of the state workforce development plan. PY2016-2019 Completed. PY2020-2023 Ongoing.
- The review of statewide policies, of statewide programs, and of recommendations on actions that should be taken by the state to align workforce development programs in the state in a manner that supports a comprehensive and streamlined workforce development system in the state, including the review and provision of comments on the state plan, if applicable, for programs and activities of one-stop partners that are not core programs. Continuous.

- The development and continuous improvement of the workforce development system in the state, including the identification of barriers and means for removing barriers to better coordinate, align, and avoid duplication among the programs and activities carried out through the system. Continuous and Update provided at each Committee Meeting.
- The development of strategies to support the use of career pathways for the purpose of providing individuals, including low-skilled adults, youth, and individuals with barriers to employment (including individuals with disabilities), with workforce investment activities, education, and supportive services to enter or retain employment. Continuous and Update provided at each Committee Meeting.
- The development of strategies for providing effective outreach to and improved access for individuals and employers who could benefit from services provided through the workforce development system. Continuous and Update provided at each Committee Meeting.
- The development and expansion of strategies for meeting the needs of employers, workers, and jobseekers, particularly through industry or sector partnerships related to in-demand industry sectors and occupations. Continuous and updates provided at each Committee Meeting.
- The identification of regions, including planning regions, after consultation with local boards and chief elected officials. Completed.
- The development of strategies to support staff training and awareness across programs supported under the workforce development system. Continuous via bi-annual Statewide WIOA Partner Meeting;
- The development and review of statewide policies affecting the coordinated provision of services through the state's one-stop delivery system. Initial policy manual developed, but ongoing review and identification of new policy needs ongoing.
- The development of strategies for technological improvements to facilitate access to, and improve the quality of, services and activities provided through the one-stop delivery system. Initial project approved and ongoing, with quarterly progress reports.
- Strengthen the professional development of providers and workforce professionals; and Ensure such technology is accessible to individuals with disabilities and individuals residing in remote areas. Ongoing.
- The development of allocation formulas for the distribution of funds for employment and training activities for adults, and youth workforce investment activities, to local areas. Approved, but reviewed annually.

X. Sector Strategies and Career Pathways

Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), economic development entities are partners in the workforce system. While economic development efforts are centered on recruiting new businesses and helping existing ones expand in a region, workforce development partners assist with the expansion and retention activities of existing businesses.

This entails sector strategies for training, skill upgrading, work-based learning (including apprenticeship), on-the-job training, work experience, incumbent worker training, and customized training.

In PY 2018, Arkansas took several steps to improve sector strategies and career pathways. 1) A second round of Sector and Regional Planning funds were made available to Local Workforce Development Areas, funded by the Governor's 15% reserve. Technical Assistance from the Business Services lead were provided to ensure the strategies are effective. 2) Throughout the

year, training was offered to expand applicants of the state's WBL program. During PY18, two projects were funded, which focused on homeless and TANF recipients respectively 3) ADWS continued working towards implementing Salesforce, a business-focused Customer Relation Management tool for local Business Services Teams, which went live on September 16, 2019. 4) Finally, the common registration system moved forward with Services for Blind, Employment Services, and Title I Adult, Youth, and Dislocated Worker case management systems developing a common file for communicating between systems. Employment Services and Title I (Adult, Youth, and Dislocated Workers) MIS is currently developing processes to accept and produce the file for partners. Funding for further development in the case management systems in Titles II and IV are a current constraint, but the state is actively looking at alternative solutions that remove that barrier.

Sector Strategies and Industry Initiatives

Industry focus groups and sector initiatives (also called sector partnerships or sector strategies) are regional, employer-driven partnerships of industry leaders, education and training consortia, and other stakeholders that focus on the workforce needs of key industries in a regional labor market.

ADWS has previously released guidance and funding availability opportunities to Local Workforce Development Boards to encourage the development and implementation of sector strategies planning efforts on a regional basis. To date, these previous efforts have achieved limited successes. Therefore, ADWS is currently evaluating “best practice” models (e.g., Colorado), technical assistance resources, and various other strategies to incentivize broad-based adoption of sector strategies planning efforts on an ongoing basis across all Local Workforce Development Boards.

Career Pathway Strategies

ADWS, in collaboration with Arkansas Research Center, has developed a Career Pathways report to demonstrate demand within occupations based on Job Posting data (source- EMSI) to wages based on LMI. The reports are grouped by the Career Cluster and Career Pathway associated with each occupation, and presented per Local Area. This information will be provided to Local Areas and updated at least annually.

XI. Business Engagement

During the Program Year, Arkansas continued its efforts in expanding the services available to the State’s businesses through the Workforce Center System. These efforts included further solidifying the roles and responsibilities of Local Workforce Development Area Business Services Teams as well as engagement with WIOA core partners. Several of the LWDA’s are in the early stages of their business services development, implementation and outreach efforts. ADWS has taken the lead in establishing and convening the WIOA Roundtable – Business Engagement Committee that includes representation across partner programs. This Committee has conducted a statewide business services workshop to communicate the menu of services that are offered through the various partner programs. This workshop provided attendees with an overall awareness of available programs in order to better serve clients.

Additionally, the committee members (including a broader group of WIOA core partner representatives) have been active in the development and implementation of Salesforce. Salesforce is a customer relations management tool that will assist business services teams to track and report business engagement activities across partner programs. The Salesforce system will allow business services staff to begin recording actual business engagement activity leading to improved tracking and reporting. A long-term goal for Salesforce is to integrate the sharing and usage of data within the system with economic development and other state agency partners.

XII. Waivers

The State of Arkansas has not requested any waivers. Arkansas will be request the following waivers in the upcoming 2020 plan for the following: remove the ETP reporting requirement for non-WIOA participants, reduce the Out-of-School Youth requirement from 75% to 50%, to increase the reimbursement for large employers in OJT to 90%, and a waiver to allow the Governor's Statewide Funds to fund temporary cleanup efforts following a FEMA declaration.

XIII. Evaluations

While Arkansas has not yet completed an evaluation, efforts in PY2018 to enter into a contract with the University of Arkansas – Fayetteville to complete a workforce system evaluation. This evaluation will employ the most rigorous analytical and statistical methods that are reasonably feasible, such as the use of control groups (20 CFR § 682.220) as appropriate, and includes:

- A. Local Integration Study- Sample Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I or Title III participants for 3 Local Workforce Development Areas. This part of the evaluation will focus on two primary areas: 1. Co-enrollment and Co-funding of REQUIRED WIOA Partners and 2. Leveraging of Local Resources available in the Local Workforce Development Area.
 1. Sample Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I and Title III participants for 3 Local Workforce Development Areas-to determine if, based on the participants information in the Case File, the participant might have been eligible to receive services under the required partners listed in 20 CFR § 678.400.
 2. For each local area selected, interview leadership to identify partner programs and non-profits that collaborate with the Workforce Centers beyond the list of required partners above. For all partners, required in number 1 and other partners identified in 2, report whether there exists:
 - Memorandums of Understanding between the programs/entities
 - Referral Procedures
 - Training for partners regarding the services provided or alternative print materials to assist in collaboration OR
 - An alternative method to refer clients between the partners effectively
 3. Identify and report entities in the selected local areas that provide services to the following targeted populations:
 - Displaced Homemaker
 - Low Income

- Limited English Proficiency
- Migrant Worker
- Disabled
- Veteran
- Older Worker
- Out of School Youth
- Foster Youth
- Basic Skill Deficient
- Ex-Offender
- Single Parent
- TANF Recipient
- SNAP Recipient
- SSDI Recipient
- UI Claimant
- Long-Term Unemployed

4. For all programs and services identified in steps 1, 2, and 3, report whether sampled participants were: referred to or co-enrolled in other programs or services.

B. In the Comprehensive Centers for the 3 Local Areas selected for sampling, report case studies on effectiveness of identifying and closing Skill-Gaps

Interview staff for examples of:

- i. Skills-gap identification on either the occupation level, based on demand, or the skill-level based on interaction with an employer.
- ii. Determine the services that were provided to address the skills-gap
- iii. Provide an assessment of the effectiveness of the services provided in closing the skills-gap, if possible.

C. Review a sample of Arkansas Workforce Centers against the State's certification policy and applicable laws/regulations for four comprehensive centers and two affiliate centers. Each of the six centers selected should be located in different Local Workforce Development Areas and may be selected from Local Workforce Development Areas that overlap the 3 selected above

D. Conduct a statewide customer service survey for business customers of WIOA Title I and Title III receiving services over the most recent 12 months available.

E. Provide evaluation status reports on a monthly basis on overall project goals. These reports will be issued at the end of February, March, April, May, June, and July of 2020.

F. Provide a preliminary evaluation report by August 15, 2020.

G. Provide a final evaluation, with results, best practices, and recommendations by September 30, 2020.

XIV. Customer Satisfaction

While Arkansas has not implemented a customer satisfaction survey process for WIOA participants, we intend to collect and utilize customer feedback to assist in improving services to better meet the needs of job seeker. The feedback received from customers will be summarized in annual performance report narratives and utilized in the One-Stop certification process.

In addition to the customer service surveys included in our Evaluation Contract that is described above, we will also initiate the following for upcoming years.

DATA COLLECTION

To collect feedback, Arkansas will develop a customer satisfaction survey for job seekers through SurveyMonkey or QUIA. A link to each survey will be emailed to Arkansas Job Link customer accounts accordingly. Initially, this job seeker survey will be sent to WIOA Title I and Title III (Wagner-Peyser) exits each quarter of the Program Year during the months of July, October, January, and April.

The job seeker survey will be sent from the WIOA@arkansas.gov account and will include the corresponding SurveyMonkey or QUIA survey link.

RESULTS

In addition to annual performance reports and One-Stop certification, results data will be used throughout the program year to improve services to better meet the needs of businesses and job seekers. Responses and data will be exported from SurveyMonkey or QUIA by the ADWS on a quarterly basis.

The summary data for the survey will be filtered by date to show the proper reporting periods, exported as a customized read-only link, and sent to the ADWS Senior Leadership.

Overall results filtered by date and Arkansas Workforce Center location will be exported as read-only links and sent all applicable Arkansas Workforce Center Managers.

Managers will share the information with their entire staff and use it to improve service delivery performance.

Both summary data and individual Workforce Center data will be presented to the Arkansas Workforce Development Board.

XV. Common Exit Policy

Please see below, Arkansas's Common Exit Policy:

Definitions Policy 1.2- Common Exit date – Arkansas has chosen to use a common exit date, as allowed in 20 CFR 677.150(c)(3) and encouraged in TEGL 10-16. Included in the common exit are: -Title I-B Adult, Youth, and Dislocated Worker formula programs, -Title III Wagner-Peyser Employment Service program (Participants in Jobs for Veterans State Grants must be co-enrolled in and have a common exit with Wagner-Peyser Employment Services [TEGL 16-16]), - Trade Adjustment Assistance program (TAA), authorized under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq., and -Title I-D National Dislocated Worker Grants The WIOA common exit date is the last date of service or activities (other than follow-up services,

self-service, and information-only services and activities) in any of these programs in which a participant is enrolled, and no future services (other than follow-up services, self-service, and information-only services and activities) are planned. Information concerning follow-up services may be found in policies concerning each particular program. The criteria must be met for all programs in which a participant is enrolled before a participant is considered to be exited. The last date of service cannot be officially determined until at least 90 days have elapsed since the participant last received services or activities from any of these programs, (other than follow-up services, self-service, and information-only services and activities) [20 CFR 677.150(c); Comments in WIOA Final Rule concerning §677.150(c); TEGs 10-16, 19-16, and 21-16].

XVI. WIOA Title II – Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program

The Arkansas Division of Workforce Services - Adult Education Section provides Adult Basic Education (ABE), Adult Secondary Education (ASE), and English Second Language (ESL) services to all eligible adult education and literacy programs in Arkansas. Using the thirteen considerations, eligible programs will be funded as stated in “Distribution of Funds for Core Programs” using the previously stated competitive processes. Eligible provider’s activities include reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, and English language acquisition instruction delivered by the eligible provider, will be based on the best practices derived from the most rigorous research available and appropriate, including scientifically valid research and effective educational practice. In addition, adult education and literacy providers work collaboratively with other agencies to enhance services.

For example, Arkansas Rehabilitation Services use federal funding to provide services to individuals with disabilities. The Arkansas Division of Workforce Services provide funds to those individuals seeking to enter or retain employment or receive specialized training after completing basic skills acquisition through Arkansas Adult Education.

All providers receiving state and/or federal funding from the Arkansas Division of Workforce Services, Adult Education Section will be required to provide the following services in year one: adult education and literacy activities which include, English language acquisition, integrated English literacy and civics education, workplace education, workforce preparation activities or integrated education and training. Details of these activities will be provided in each program’s proposal.

XVII. WIOA Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation Program

The Designated State Agency for General Vocational Rehabilitation in Arkansas is the Arkansas Division of Workforce Services - Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS). Title IV of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Similarly, the Division of Services for the Blind is the designated State Agency to provide services for rehabilitation and social services to blind and severely visually impaired persons age 14 and above in Arkansas.

ARS

The Arkansas Division of Workforce Services - Arkansas Rehabilitation Services provides vocational rehabilitation services to people with disabilities. Currently, there are significant barriers for people with disabilities in relation to attaining employment. A 2008 study (StatsRRTC[1]) indicated the employment rate for people with disabilities was 33.9 percent when compared to 79.1 percent for people without disabilities.

The Arkansas State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) is a key partner with Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) in the administration of the State's Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program. The Arkansas SRC is a citizen advisory council, appointed by the Governor, to provide guidance to ARS to help individuals with disabilities, including individuals with the most significant disabilities, to obtain, maintain and regain competitive integrated employment, promote full inclusion and integration into society, and to maximize independence and economic self-sufficiency. Its membership helps ARS to develop and operationalize the VR State Plan, develop and operationalize ARS' state goals and priorities, shape and review policy, engage in strategic planning, evaluate the effectiveness of the VR Program, analyze consumer satisfaction and provide guidance, including development and review of cooperative agreements.

DSB

Historically, there are significant barriers to the inclusion of people with disabilities into the overall strategy for economic development in Arkansas. ARS in partnership with the Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) are leading the charge for providing targeted training and education for people with disabilities in order for them to develop the skills and abilities needed to attain competitive integrated employment in Arkansas.

The DSB Director and the senior leadership of DSB provide oversight and coordination within the constraints of state and federal laws to fulfill its mission through the following goals:

Please note that under the Governor's Transition Plan, the yet to be appointed Secretary of Commerce will have transitional authority regarding the state director of the Arkansas vocational rehabilitation program as well as the Commissioner of Arkansas Rehabilitation

- Employment - To assist Arkansans who are blind or visually impaired to secure or maintain employment and consistent with their skills, abilities, and interests.
- Rehabilitation - To assist Arkansans who are blind or visually impaired to live as independently as possible through the development of skills, accommodations, or adaptations that are necessary to perform all activities of daily living.
- Prevention of Blindness - To assist in preventing blindness stabilizing vision, and, where possible, restoring vision.
- Field Services personnel provide the local level coordination and facilitation of all general vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with blind or visual impairment issues. This includes, but is not limited to, vocational rehabilitation counseling, vocational case management, eligibility determination, individual employment plan development, transition services, and job placement.

- Business and Technology personnel provide assistance to educate consumers to develop management and business ownership within the Vending Facility Program (VFP). The Vending Facility Program Services are available to eligible blind persons who are interested in and have the necessary skills to manage snack bars.

Through the Governor's Executive Order 10-17, DSB coordinates with other state agencies to increase employment of Arkansans with disabilities. The order also aims to focus consumer services first toward the goal of self-sufficiency through employment.

XVIII. Success Stories

During the Program Year, ADWS encouraged Local Workforce Areas to begin regularly collecting and publishing participant success stories on their websites. However, we have including a sample of these stories.

SHANISA THOMAS' SUCCESS STORY

Shanisa Thomas, a single mother of three, wanted to provide a better life for her family and she was interested in pursuing a career as a Nurse. However, she did not have the financial means to pay for the training.

In May 2017, after she met with a Career Consultant at the Arkansas Workforce Center in North Little Rock to discuss her options, she enrolled in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Adult Program and began working on her educational training at the University of Little Rock (UALR).to become a Registered Nurse.

Working vigorously and determined to succeed, not only was she accepted into the National Nursing Honor's Society, she also graduated from UALR with an Associate of Science Degree in Nursing two years later. Shortly after, she obtained her Registered Nursing License and began working full time employment at the Veteran's Administration Hospital in Little Rock making a self-sufficient wage.

In the end, Shanisa was proud of the available resources through WIOA that allowed her to reach her goal in finding a career that she would love and that would allow her to provide for her family.

BRYAN HJELDEN'S SUCCESS STORY

In January 2019, after being laid off from his job, Bryan Hjelden visited the Arkansas Workforce Center in Conway to apply for unemployment benefits. Afterwards, he spoke with Ashlee Ennis, Career Consultant, to discuss possible services through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Dislocated Worker Program.

He decided that a new career in the transportation industry would provide a steady income and being a Truck Driver would allow him to provide for his family.

Shortly after, Bryan enrolled in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Dislocated Worker Program. Being self-motivated and driven to succeed, he began his Occupational Skills Training at Level One Driving Academy in February 2019.

After the completion of his training, Bryan received his certification on April 11, 2019. Shortly after, he obtained full time employment at the City of Conway Sanitation Department as a CDL Driver making \$17.00 an hour.

In the end, Bryan was able to take advantage of the amazing opportunities through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and has acquired long-term, sustainable employment in the Transportation industry, which is and in-demand industry in Central Arkansas.

NIKEIA TALLEY'S SUCCESS STORY

Hoping to obtain her degree in Nursing and unable to pay for the course herself, single mom Nikeia Talley visited the Arkansas Workforce Center at Benton to discuss potential opportunities available through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) program.

In January of 2019, she enrolled in the WIOA Adult program and received Educational Training Services to assist her with completing her final semester in the University of Arkansas at Little Rock's Nursing Program.

Despite managing her special needs child's busy schedule and all the demands that come with being a single parent, on May 11, 2019 she successfully walked across the stage at UALR's Commencement Ceremony and received her degree in Nursing.

Upon the successful completion of the State Board Examination, she accepted a job offer and began working at the Saline Memorial Hospital on July 8, 2019 earning a substantial wage which allows her to support her family.

When it came to defining her educational and career goals, she took advantage of the support and services that were provided through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) grant.

XIX. Statewide Performance Report Results

Table Narrative

The following data tables make up the final portion of Arkansas's *WIOA Title I and Title III Annual Report*. A few notes may help with interpretation. Federal deadlines and the need for prompt reporting mean that the year-long periods used for some measures are not the same year-long periods used for others. Finally, since these are outcome measures, they concentrate on participants who have left WIOA programs and do not include those who are still participating.

Federal employment rates second quarter after exit and median earnings measures are calculated for participants who exited between July 2017 and June 2018. Federal employment rates four quarters after exit are calculated for participants who exited between July 2017 and December 2017. Median earnings second quarter after exit are calculated for participants who exited between July 2017 and June 2018.

As the charts below indicate, Arkansas met or exceeded the 90% threshold in all performance measures.

Moreover, Arkansas experienced increases in services provided to the WIOA-defined *Populations with Barriers to Employment*. Between Program Year 2017 and Program Year 2018, Arkansas the following increases:

- Exhausting TANF within 2 years - increased from 123 to 1,338
- Ex-Offenders – increased from 1,202 to 1,573
- Homeless – increased from 537 to 693
- Low-Income – increased from 11,816 to 18,971
- Individuals with Disabilities (incl. Youth) – increased from 1,657 to 2,846
- Youth in foster care or aged out of system – increased from 25 to 73

The Employment Rate Q4 experienced increases as well, including:

- Individuals with Disabilities – increased from 50.74% to 56.97%
- Youth in foster care or aged out of system – increased from 75.00% to 81.82%
- Ex-Offenders – increased from 60.78% to 63.86%

Finally, Median Earnings increased for the following populations:

- Displaced Homemakers - \$3,338.29 to \$4,187.37
- English Language Learners - \$4,173.42 to \$4,491.00
- Migrant/Seasonal Farmworkers - \$4,026.97 to \$5,323.37
- Individuals with Disabilities - \$3,646.19 to \$4,942.62
- Youth in foster care or aged out of system - \$2,997.15 to \$3,592.26

The actual performance tables for WIOA Titles I & III are listed on the next page.

ADULTS												
	Total Participants Served (Cohort Period: 07/01/2018 - 06/30/2019)	Total Participants Exited (Cohort Period: 04/01/2018 - 03/31/2019)		Employment Rate (Q2) (Cohort Period: 07/01/2017 - 06/30/2018)		Employment Rate (Q4) (Cohort Period: 01/01/2017 - 12/31/2017)		Median Earnings (Cohort Period: 07/01/2017 - 06/30/2018)	Credential Rate (Cohort Period: 01/01/2017 - 12/31/2017)		Measurable Skill Gains (Cohort Period: 07/01/2018 - 06/30/2019)	
					Rate		Rate	Earnings		Rate		Rate
Total Statewide	1365	834	Target			91.10%		85.80%	\$6,281.00		74.20%	NA
			Actual	Num.	724		775		661		801	
				Denom.	854	84.78%	922	84.06%	\$6,161.65	818	80.81%	1020

DISLOCATED WORKERS												
	Total Participants Served (Cohort Period: 07/01/2018 - 06/30/2019)	Total Participants Exited (Cohort Period: 04/01/2018 - 03/31/2019)		Employment Rate (Q2) (Cohort Period: 07/01/2017 - 06/30/2018)		Employment Rate (Q4) (Cohort Period: 01/01/2017 - 12/31/2017)		Median Earnings (Cohort Period: 07/01/2017 - 06/30/2018)	Credential Rate (Cohort Period: 01/01/2017 - 12/31/2017)		Measurable Skill Gains (Cohort Period: 07/01/2018 - 06/30/2019)	
					Rate		Rate	Earnings		Rate		Rate
Total Statewide	327	226	Target			91.00%		85.50%	\$7,000.00		76.10%	NA
			Actual	Numerator	237		214		149		173	
				Denominator	268	88.43%	239	89.54%	\$6,396.00	189	78.84%	212

YOUTH													
	Total Participants Served (Cohort Period: 07/01/2018 - 06/30/2019)	Total Participants Exited (Cohort Period: 04/01/2018 - 03/31/2019)	Placement Rate (Q2) (Cohort Period: 07/01/2017 - 06/30/2018)		Placement Rate (Q4) (Cohort Period: 01/01/2017 - 12/31/2017)		Median Earnings (Cohort Period: 07/01/2017 - 06/30/2018)	Credential Rate (Cohort Period: 01/01/2017 - 12/31/2017)		Measurable Skill Gains (Cohort Period: 07/01/2018 - 06/30/2019)			
				Rate		Rate	Earnings		Rate		Rate		
Total Statewide	<u>998</u>	<u>593</u>	Target			75.00%		78.10%	NA		75.00%		NA
			Actual	Numerator	<u>438</u>		<u>476</u>		<u>256</u>		<u>318</u>		
				Denominator	<u>548</u>	79.93%	<u>592</u>	80.41%	<u>\$3,127.68</u>	<u>375</u>	68.27%	<u>466</u>	68.24%

WAGNER-PEYSER													
	Total Participants Served (Cohort Period: 07/01/2018 - 06/30/2019)	Total Participants Exited (Cohort Period: 04/01/2018 - 03/31/2019)	Employment Rate (Q2) (Cohort Period: 07/01/2017 - 06/30/2018)		Employment Rate (Q4) (Cohort Period: 01/01/2017 - 12/31/2017)		Median Earnings (Cohort Period: 07/01/2017 - 06/30/2018)	Credential Rate (Cohort Period: 01/01/2017 - 12/31/2017)		Measurable Skill Gains (Cohort Period: 07/01/2018 - 06/30/2019)			
				Rate		Rate	Earnings		Rate		Rate		
Total Statewide	<u>105,016</u>	<u>102,234</u>	Target			73.40%		74.50%	\$4,750.00		NA		NA
			Actual	Numerator	<u>75,723</u>		<u>73,505</u>		NA		NA		NA
				Denominator	<u>104,727</u>	72.31%	<u>102,206</u>	71.92%	<u>\$5,136.93</u>	NA	NA	NA	NA

XX. Statewide Performance Report - Effectiveness in Serving Employers

WIOA implemented a pilot performance measure to determine the effectiveness in serving employers. States were requested to select two of the three DOL pilot measures and could include additional state-defined employer measures. The state of Arkansas has chosen for the pilot period to report on the following for the *Effectiveness in Serving Employer* performance indicator:

- Retention with the Same Employer
- Employer Penetration.

The first chart details the specific services provider to Employers, by service type, during the program year.

Effectiveness in Serving Employers	
Employer Services	Establishment Count Cohort Period: 7/1/2018-6/30/2019
Employer Information and Support Services	2,809
Workforce Recruitment Assistance	5,521
Engaged in Strategic Planning/Economic Development	69
Accessing Untapped Labor Pools	119
Training Services	22
Incumbent Work Training Services	6
Rapid Response/Business Downsizing Assistance	65
Planning Layoff Response	27

The chart below details the actual achieved performance for the two pilot measures, Retention with the Same Employer and Employer Penetration, during the program year.

Pilot Measures	Numerator/Denominator*	Rate Cohort Period: 7/1/2018-6/30/2019
Retention with Same Employer in the 2nd and 4th Quarters After Exit Rate	44.014/66,539	66.1%
Employer Penetration Rate	6,932/104,832	6.6%
Repeat Business Customers Rate	N/A	N/A
State Established Measure	N/A	N/A

XXI. Organization Chart

ARKANSAS DIVISION OF WORKFORCE SERVICES

October 2019

