

# WIOA PY2018

## Narrative Performance Report



The evolution of Rhode Island’s workforce development network into a demand-driven, client-centered, and high performing service network continued throughout PY2018. PY2018 saw a specific focus on bringing the disparate elements of the workforce network together. Powered by our industry sector partnerships, Rhode Island ‘works backwards’ from industry need and demand to build innovative career pathways for job seekers, particularly those with barriers to employment. In doing so, the workforce network placed thousands of Rhode Islanders into jobs, prepared hundreds of youth for the demands of the labor market, and assisted hundreds of employers to meet their talent needs.

We look forward to building on that success and keeping the momentum going.

- **Progress made in achieving the state’s strategic vision and goals, as described in the state’s Unified or Combined State Plan, for developing its workforce and meeting employer needs in order to support economic growth and economic self-sufficiency.**

The guiding strategies of the states WIOA Plan issued in 2016 and modified in March 2018 include:

1. Implementing a demand-driven sector-based strategy to aggregate economic opportunities by employers and their intermediaries
2. A career pathway strategy to provide employment, education, training and support services for individuals, particularly those with barriers to employment, so they can improve own individual capacity to effectively compete in the labor market to achieve economic security for themselves and their families.
3. Develop an effective performance measurement strategy to track labor market interactions beyond federal reporting requirements

Rhode Island has made moderate, and in some cases advanced, progress on each of these strategic goals. By braiding state and federal investments, the state has been able to ‘stand up’ over thirty sector partnerships in over 15 leading industries. Investments in these partnership’s knowledge base and capacity helped them adeptly identify their industry workforce needs then partner with various elements of the workforce network (Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker programming most prominently) to meet that demand. Overall the state board is pleased with the progress the workforce system has made in advancing these goals. Specific activities and initiatives will be explored in greater detail in the coming sections.

- **Progress made in implementing sector strategies and career pathways. The discussion may include: business engagement strategies, work-based learning (including apprenticeship), work experiences for youth and adults, transitional jobs, and incumbent worker training strategies and policies in the state**

### *Sector Strategies*

Rhode Island's sector partnership initiative, Real Jobs RI, aggressively meets employer demand to not only increase Rhode Island's competitiveness in a global economy, but increase the earning potential of incumbent workers trained, open the door to more job opportunities for unemployed Rhode Islanders, and help bring employer knowledge and expertise to the table in a way that can inform and improve the workforce system in the future. Real Jobs RI is the state's industry-sector workforce training program that ensures that workforce solutions are driven by and developed by actual employer needs. Real Jobs RI connects employers with industry intermediaries such as a trade association, nonprofit, or university, who acts as a facilitator bringing together smaller companies that have similar workforce challenges to create innovative and quick solutions. Solutions include, but are not limited to: recruitment and training of new hires, re-skilling of incumbent workers, and activities focused on the future workforce such as youth career readiness programming. These partnerships also function as sophisticated, real-time, workforce intelligence aggregators that work directly with the state workforce system to disseminate actionable intelligence, detail emerging workforce trends, articulate skill requirements, and design solutions to meet them.

### *Career Pathways*

Rhode Island's middle class job market has experienced a shift away from low-skilled jobs toward more middle and high-skilled occupations. Because today's workplace needs are more defined, today's job seeker cannot rely on a generalist approach to his or her future career. Individuals seeking gainful employment, specifically those from traditionally underserved populations, need a high level of career knowledge, skill training, and experience so they can make informed decisions and compete in an increasingly competitive labor market. For this reason, the Governor's Workforce Board invests in a number of programs designed to provide career pathways for youth and adults.

Real Pathways RI promotes and supports partnerships between and among nonprofits, education and training providers, community partners, and others, within a specific geographic region or who focus on a similar population (ex. veterans, non-English speakers). These partners collaborate and strategize how to best serve clients through comprehensive and cooperative workforce development programming that is demand-driven, linked to the larger workforce development network, and designed to maximize the opportunities for middle class employment. These programs are predominately state-funded and the state is working on the most effective and efficient way to integrate them into the One Stop Career Center Network.

PrepareRI is the state's Three Year Action Plan to Ensure All High School-age Students are College and Career Ready. It provides a statewide strategy to prepare all Rhode Island youth for success in college and career and represents a strategic partnership between government, private industry leaders, K-12 education, higher education, and non-profits across Rhode Island.

The Non-Trade Apprenticeship Development Program provides ‘start up’ funding to help develop new and innovative apprenticeship training models in high-growth, high-demand fields that extend beyond the traditional trades. Apprenticeship is a tried-and-true training model that is increasingly getting a ‘second look’ in today’s economy. The ‘learn and earn’ structure is mutually beneficial to employer and employee, particularly low-income workers who are able to support themselves and their families as they learn the skills their employer needs. Employers can develop a tiered pay structure that grows as the individual’s value to the company grows. Once a model is successfully developed, the employer is connected with the state Workforce Development Services office to explore placing the apprenticeship model on the state ETPL.

- **If the state has received a small state minimum allotment exception to decrease the minimum out-of-school youth expenditure requirement, describe how the exception has impacted services provided to both in-school youth and out-of-school youth, including specific strategies for serving each population, as well as how the state and/or local area is ensuring serving out-of-school youth remains a priority.**

N/A.

- **The state’s performance accountability system, including:**
  - **Any specific state performance measures or goals and progress towards meeting them.**
  - **Any performance deficiencies on the primary indicators of performance, which may include descriptions of any factors impacting performance.**
  - **The state’s common exit policy, including which ETA-funded partner programs are included in the state’s common exit policy.**
  - **Negotiated performance levels for local areas for titles I and III core programs for program years 2016-2017.**
  - **The state’s approach to data validation and ensuring data integrity, including a description of the methodology of any validation activities that occurred.**

#### *State Specific Measures*

Rhode Island has not identified any state-specific performance measures; however the development of such measures is an item that is under consideration as part of our PY2020-2023 State Planning effort.

#### *Performance Deficiencies*

Rhode Island is generally pleased with local area and statewide performance for PY2018. The Greater Rhode Island area was .4% short of its 2Q Employment target for Dislocated Workers, and each area was challenged to reach Credential Attainment rate for Dislocated Workers (Greater Rhode Island area) and Youth (both areas). This mirrors a statewide performance challenge in credentialing across all three Title I categories. This challenge relates to a ministerial error, not performance. Several statewide training and employment programs resulted in a credential yet were not reported as such. An internal project team within the state Department of Labor and Training has been assigned to research this matter and craft a correction action plan to resolve the reporting issue.

### *Common Exit Policy*

For the purposes of performance calculations in all WIOA core programs, except Vocational Rehabilitation, exit is the point after which an individual who has received services through any program meets specific criteria (§677.150(c)). This criterion is:

- i. 90 days of no services has elapsed, and
- ii. No future services are planned

For the purposes of this definition, a participant's use of self-service or the provision of information-only activities or follow-up services will not prevent a participant's exit. For the Vocational Rehabilitation program, an individual would be determined to have exited the program on the date the individual's case is closed in accordance with the Vocational Rehabilitation program requirements. Under Vocational Rehabilitation, those individuals who have achieved a supported employment outcome at a subminimum wage are excluded from the definition of "exit".

*PY2018-2019 Negotiated Performance Levels*

<b>Performance Measures</b>		<b>PY 2018</b>	<b>PY 2019</b>
<b>WIOA Title I Adults</b>			
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)		77.0%	78.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)		72.8%	73.6%
Median Earnings		\$ 5,800.00	\$6,000.00
Credential Attainment Rate		68.0%	69.0%
Measurable Skill Gains		Baseline	Baseline
Effectiveness in Serving Employers		Baseline	Baseline
<b>WIOA Title I Dislocated Workers</b>			
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)		79.0%	80.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)		80.0%	81.0%
Median Earnings		\$7,000.00	\$7,100.00
Credential Attainment Rate		77.4%	77.8%
Measurable Skill Gains		Baseline	Baseline
Effectiveness in Serving Employers		Baseline	Baseline
<b>WIOA Title I Youth</b>			
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)		61.0%	62.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)		59.2%	59.4%
Median Earnings		Baseline	Baseline
Credential Attainment Rate		53.7%	60.6%
Measurable Skill Gains		Baseline	Baseline
Effectiveness in Serving Employers		Baseline	Baseline
<b>WIOA Title III Labor Exchange (LEX)*</b>			
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)		72.0%	73.0%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)		63.0%	64.0%
Median Earnings		\$5,800.00	\$5,900.00
Effectiveness in Serving Employers (Statewide Measure)		Baseline	Baseline

### *Data Validation*

Data element validation is conducted to ensure that the data elements in participant records that are used to calculate aggregate reports are accurate. Data element validation involves reviews of a sample of participant records against source documentation to ensure compliance with federal definitions. The sample files are selected by the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) software from reported exiters and participants.

Validators review Adult, Dislocated Worker, Older & Younger Youth files. Some reviews are conducted at the Department of Labor and Training but most are conducted at vendor sites. Two business days before the scheduled review, the Department of Labor and Training staff sends a list of files selected for review to the appropriate contact person(s). Complete files must be available for review. If certain information is kept separately or in multiple files, effort must be made that all documents are available.

Once the data element validation is completed, a monitoring report will be issued to each LWDB explaining the overall and specific findings. Written responses within thirty (30) days are required as part of corrective action for any summary findings and recommendations.

- **Activities provided with the funds reserved by the governor, which can be up to 15% of the state's allotment. In this section of the narrative, states may describe activities undertaken in whole or in part with their Governor's Reserve and how those activities have directly or indirectly impacted performance.**

In addition to required activities – Governor's Reserve Funds helped fund personnel for the state's industry sector partnership initiative. Each industry sector partnership is assigned an Advisor who works closely to advise, assist, and observe grant-related activities and performance. Throughout PY2016 and PY2018 the advisors met and worked with each partnership to review deliverables, expectations, and timelines as well as offer technical assistance in implementing program elements and accessing system resources that may help increase capacity. Opportune connections with the One Stop Career Centers, the Community College network, or other elements of the workforce network and prompted and facilitated by these Advisors.

- **Rapid response activities and layoff aversion, which may include:**
  - **Data on number of companies served and number of individuals served.**
  - **Discussion of strategies for linking Rapid Response recipients to American Job Centers and processes for intake or co-enrollment in the Trade Adjustment Assistance and the Dislocated Worker programs.**
  - **Discussion of layoff aversion strategies, including any metrics/outcomes developed and/or tracked by the state with respect to layoff aversion, such as return on investment or measures showing the economic benefits of Rapid Response and layoff aversion.**
  - **Discussion of how Rapid Response and layoff aversion activities are aligned with business engagement, sector strategy, and career pathway efforts, which may include a discussion of any systems, tools, networks or approaches designed to identify companies in distress and strategies to deliver necessary solutions as early as possible, as well as outcomes of the use of such systems or tools.**
  - **Discussion of specific types of services or workshops provided to both companies and affected workers.**

PY2018 Rapid response and layoff aversion approaches in Rhode Island combine both *proactive* and *reactive* activities for contacting employer and/or affected workers to assess layoff needs. Layoff aversion strategies include offering short-term compensation (aka Workshare) or provide alternative strategies to employer with the assistance of other business partners entities (Commerce, SBA, Union etc); Rapid Response Set-Aside Grants (if available), state and federally funded incumbent worker training opportunities, industry and community-based workforce development partnerships, and other available services.

Importantly, Rhode Island seeks to get ahead of any potential mass layoff events by analyzing, and being proactive in acting upon, data and information on dislocations and other economic activity in the State. Such data includes incidences of employers applying for Workshare and information provided by the state Labor Market Information unit regarding employers who have had ten or more Unemployment Insurance claims filed against them per week.

Also as part of a proactive layoff aversion strategy, Rhode Island maintains collaborative partnerships with a range of organizations that can help identify and avert potential layoffs. These partnerships include but are not limited to: Rhode Island Commerce Corporation, the U.S. Department of Commerce Trade Adjustment Assistance for Firms, the Governor's Workforce Board, and the Department of Labor and Training's Work Share Program. Information is gathered at downsizing companies regarding reasons for layoff as well as what, if anything, the state can do, or could have done, to avert the layoff.

Rapid response offers resources to employer and impacted workers including help filing for unemployment insurance, reemployment services, Trade Adjustment programs and supporting filing TAA petition, WIOA training and Real Jobs Rhode Island training, Affordable Care Act information (HealthSource RI), Hardest Hit Fund Rhode Island (Hardest Hit Fund is US Treasury gave funding to RI Housing to help prevent foreclosures.), United Way, and Retirement and Health Care Coverage by US DOL Employee Benefits Security Administration.

When appropriate, additional services may be provided to employees, which may include:

- Group or Individual Registration
- Job Search Workshops
- Individual Assessment/Counseling
- Job Search Strategies and Techniques
- Resume Writing
- Interviewing
- TAA Orientations
- Job fairs/Company matching
- Other services as necessary

Rhode Island strives to provide Rapid Response services as early as possible. In PY2018, Rapid Response assisted 9 employers and 665 workers.

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

N/A

- **Any National Dislocated Worker Grants (DWGs) awarded to or within the state and how those funds are coordinated with state rapid response activities and dislocated worker programs, as well as how the DWGs fit in with state co-enrollment policies and disaster/emergency management activities, as applicable.**

N/A

- **Any technical assistance needs of the state workforce system. 2 See WIOA section 128(a)(1).**

N/A.

- **Promising practices, lessons learned, and success stories that focus on serving employers, communities, and individuals with barriers to employment, including information based on the state's evaluation and related research projects. This discussion should cover a broad range of at-risk and priority populations served, including out-of-school youth, low-income adults, dislocated workers, individuals who are basic skills deficient, individuals with limited language proficiency, individuals with disabilities, veterans, the long-term unemployed, and any other individuals with barriers to employment, or other populations the state may wish to discuss.**

The state's broader investments in industry partnerships has been essential to the success of the workforce development network. Since 2005, the state of Rhode Island has funded the Industry Partnership Program, which asks industry intermediaries to convene employers in their industries and serve as their industry's voice to ensure informed strategic investment in workforce development. Those investments were the springboard for our "2.0" employer-led sector-driven workforce development grant program, Real Jobs RI. Real Jobs RI no longer asks industries to simply identify their workforce challenges, but now full engages them in developing the solutions to those challenges by strategically deploying state and federal resources. With over 30 partnerships (as of the development of this report) across 16 industry sectors, Real Jobs Rhode Island is the backbone of the state's demand-driven workforce strategy and acknowledges that the extent to which we better meet employer need is the extent to which we better serve our job seeker clients.

- **Any challenges the state workforce system faces, which may include policy, implementation, or other relevant challenge.**

N/A.

- **Any strategies/policies relating to Pay-for-Performance contracting, which may include examples from local areas**

N/A.

- **Identify each waiver that the state has had in place for at least one program year and provide information regarding the state’s progress toward achieving the goals and performance outcomes in ETA’s letter of approval for the waiver (sec 189(i)(3)(C)(ii)) and outlined in the state’s waiver request (when applicable). Discuss how activities carried out under each approved waiver have directly or indirectly affected state and local area performance outcomes. To the extent possible, provide quantitative information.**

While Rhode Island did not have any waivers in place for at least one program year in PY2018 (a standing waiver the state was granted under WIA related to the size of the state board was no longer necessary due to the flexibility granted under WIOA), in November 2018 the state submitted a number of waiver requests to the USDOL for their consideration. One of the requests, described below, was approved by the Secretary in February 2019.

WAIVER REQUESTED – Eligible Training Provider List Participant Outcome Requirements

CITATION: WIOA Sections 116 and 122 | 20 CFR 677.230 and 20 CFR 680.400 thru 680.530

ISSUE(S): WIOA requires that eligible training providers must collect and report performance related data on all students participating in training program if that program is listed on the state’s Eligible Training Provider List; whether or not they are receiving WIOA training funds. This presents a number of problems:

PROPOSAL: A waiver from the requirement that ETPL providers must provide wage and employment outcome information for all students participating in a training program; and instead limit said requirement to only those students who are participating through WIOA

ETA RESPONSE: The waiver request was approved. Rhode Island was asked provide information regarding how the state will continue to take into account the outcomes of all students in an ETP program of study, with respect to their employment and earnings, as required for the demonstration of continued eligibility in 20 CFR 680.460(f)(1)(iii) and WIOA Section 122. Rhode Island’s planned approach to ensuring this information is still taken into account was provided to the USDOL earlier this year.

A subsequent waiver request, relating to governance of one of our local workforce development areas was also submitted in 2019, for which a response was received in September 2019.

- **Identify the two approaches the state has chosen for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers performance indicator pilot. If the state is piloting a state-established measure of Effectiveness in Serving Employers, or has any other metrics to assess employer engagement, describe the measure or metric as well.**

WIOA sec. 116(b)(2)(A)(i)(VI) requires the US Departments of Labor and Education to establish a primary indicator of performance for effectiveness in serving employers. In December 2016, the Departments announced they will be piloting three approaches designed to gauge three critical workforce needs of the business community.

Approach 1 – Retention with the same employer

Approach 2 – Repeat Business Customers

Approach 3 – Employer Penetration Rate

Since this indicator is a new approach for measuring performance under WIOA's six core programs, the Departments have implemented a pilot program during which States must select two of the three approaches. The Departments will evaluate state experiences with the various approaches and plan to identify a standardized indicator that the Departments anticipate will be implemented no later than the beginning of Program Year 2019.

Rhode Island elected to adopt Approach 1 (Retention with the same employer) and Approach 3 (Employer Penetration Rate) at this time. The Board may revisit these measures in future and may adopt additional measures. These two approaches are measured as follows:

Approach 1 – Retention with the same employer: The number of participants with wage records who exit during the reporting period and were employed by the same employer during the second quarter after exit and the fourth quarter after exit DIVIDED by the number of participants with wage records who exit and were employed during the second quarter after exit.

Approach 3 – Employer Penetration Rate: The total number of establishments, as defined by the BLS QCEW program, that received a service or, if it is an ongoing activity, are continuing to receive a service or other assistance during the reporting period DIVIDED by the total number of establishments, as defined by BLS QCEW, located within the State during the final month or quarter of the reporting period.

- **Include brief descriptions of: (a) current or planned evaluation and related research projects, including methodologies used; (b) efforts to coordinate the development of such projects with WIOA core programs, other state agencies and local boards; (c) a list of completed evaluation and related reports and links to where they were made accessible to the public electronically; (d) State efforts to provide data, survey responses, and timely site visits for Federal evaluations; and (e) any continuous improvement strategies utilizing results from studies and evidence-based practices evaluated.**

By state statute, the State Workforce Development Board must publish what we call the “UEP” - the Unified Expenditure and Program report – a compendium of all workforce development (tightly defined and including state and federal programs) spending and performance throughout the state. This started as a paper document however – over time the document evolved, to become much more robust, consistent, and accurate. Two years ago we migrated from a pdf to web-based Tableau data story comprised of several dashboards that visualize workforce investments by target populations and primary program goal to help users understand where these funds are targeted. This year, we are including two fiscal years of data, which will provide a more-real-time snapshot of workforce investments, outcomes, and participant demographics.

The UEP was the springboard for a lot of our Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) work, in which the end-game is the more comprehensive P20W (pre-K through Grade 20 through Workforce) system that will visualize the linkages between education and workforce data, promote further system integration for better policy analysis and public transparency, and track real-time metrics that reflect progress in the state’s priority areas. The dashboards will also allow users to explore the data and analyze the trajectory of Rhode Islanders as they move along the education to workforce continuum.

Along with the focus on collecting, analyzing, and publishing data, the state of Rhode Island has undertaken (or is soon to undertake) a number of performance management and evaluation projects. “DLTStat” is a performance management tool that allows the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training to strategically coordinate and plan for the continued and growing success of programs within the agency, including WIOA-funded activities. DLTStat serves to increase communication between the program staff and executive layer of the department on the performance and day-to-day execution of key programs. The genesis of DLTStat was CompStat, a NYPD program implemented in the early 1990s to reduce crime in New York City. The idea that animated CompStat is that data ought to drive performance management. The CompStat model was later adapted by the city of Baltimore (CityStat) and by the state of Maryland (StateStat).

DLTStat sessions are lengthy and intense ‘deep dives’ into performance to determine what is working, what is not, and, if applicable, what needs to change. WIOA-related items including the afore-mentioned credentialing matter and grant performance management were included in DLTStat sessions and will continue to be a part of the agenda as and when appropriate.

- Describe the state’s approach to customer satisfaction, which may include such information used for one-stop center certification, in accordance with 20 CFR 678.800. This description should include: 1) the state’s methodologies; 2) the number of individuals/employers who were provided customer satisfaction outreach, the response rate, and efforts made to improve the response rate; 3) the results and whether the results are generalizable to the entire population of customers; and 4) a description of any continuous improvement processes for incorporating the customer satisfaction feedback.

Each program under the WIOA network utilizes its own approach to querying and documenting customer satisfaction.

For job seeker services; customer satisfaction surveys are provided and collected at American Job Centers across the state. In program Year 2018 – 1384 surveys were conducted. The state was pleased to see that the results of these surveys were generally quite positive. When asked to rate the services they received by One Stop center staff; results were as follows:

	No Response	Needs Improvement	Just Okay	Helpful	Very Helpful	Total
Professionalism/ helpfulness of staff	9	1	8	118	1248	1384
Job search resources	19	1	24	187	1153	1384
Appearance of center	30	7	51	191	1105	1384



# Governor's Workforce Board

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