STATE OF ARKANSAS

WORKFORCE INNOVATION & OPPORTUNITY ACT ANNUAL REPORT

PROGRAM YEAR 2017

PARTNERS FOR A BETTER WORKFORCE

adws
Arkansas Department of Workforce Services

ARKANSAS WORKFORCE CENTERS
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A WORD FROM THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF WORKFORCE SERVICES DIRECTOR

As Director for the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services, I am pleased to present the enclosed State of Arkansas's Program Year (PY) 2017 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Annual Report. This Report contains the Arkansas PY 2017 program data required under USDOL Training and Employment Guidance Letter 5-18 dated November 7, 2018.

Program Year 2017 represented an exciting year in Arkansas. I am proud of the many accomplishments achieved by our State's WIOA Partners. Following the leadership of Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson, we are beginning to mold our workforce development system into the model that he envisions.

I would especially like to thank the Arkansas Workforce Development Board for its leadership and engagement in setting the strategic course for our system's ongoing transformation to becoming a valuable resource for both job seekers and our state's employers.

The information contained in this report is the culmination of the efforts between Arkansas's Workforce partners, including Local Workforce Development Areas, which provide direct services to Arkansas WIOA Program participants.

I believe that Arkansas's future is very bright thanks to the collective efforts of all WIOA partners and stakeholders.

Sincerely,

Daryl E. Bassett

VISION FOR THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

The publicly funded workforce system envisioned by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is quality focused, employer-driven, customer-centered, and tailored to meet the needs of regional economies. It is designed to increase access to, and opportunities for, the employment, education, training, and support services that individuals need to succeed in the labor market, particularly those with barriers to employment. It aligns workforce development, education, and economic development programs with regional economic development strategies to meet the needs of local and regional employers, and provide a comprehensive, accessible and high-quality workforce development system. This is accomplished by providing all customers access to high-quality workforce development centers that connect them with the full range of services available in their communities, whether they are looking to find jobs, build basic educational or occupational skills, earn a postsecondary certificate or degree, or obtain guidance on how to make career choices, or are businesses and employers seeking skilled workers.

Under WIOA, partner programs and entities that are jointly responsible for workforce and economic development, educational, and other human resource programs collaborate to create a seamless customer-focused workforce delivery system that integrates service delivery across all programs and enhances access to the programs' services.

The workforce delivery system includes six core programs (Title I adult, dislocated worker, and youth programs; Title II adult education and literacy programs; Title III Wagner-Peyser program; and Title IV vocational rehabilitation program), as well as other required and optional partners identified in WIOA. In Arkansas, these programs are administered by the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services (Titles I & III), the Arkansas Department of Career Education (Title II), the Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (Title IV) and Division of Services for the Blind of the Arkansas Department of Human Services (Title IV). Through the Arkansas Workforce Center network, these partner programs and their service providers ensure that businesses and job seekers—a shared client base across the multiple programs identified above—have access to information and services that lead to positive employment outcomes. Under WIOA, workforce centers and their partners:

1. Provide job seekers with the skills and credentials necessary to secure and advance in employment with family-sustaining wages.
2. Provide access and opportunities to all job seekers, including individuals with barriers to employment, such as individuals with disabilities, to prepare for, obtain, retain, and advance in high-quality jobs and high-demand careers.
3. Enable businesses and employers to easily identify and hire skilled workers and access other supports, including education and training for their current workforce.
4. Participate in rigorous evaluations that support continuous improvement of workforce centers by identifying which strategies work better for different populations.
5. Ensure that high-quality integrated data inform decisions made by policy makers, employers, and job seekers.

The management of the Arkansas workforce delivery system is the shared responsibility of States, local boards, elected officials, the core WIOA partners, other required partners, and workforce center operators. The Departments encourage all of these entities to integrate the characteristics below into their work, including developing state, regional, and local strategic plans; establishing workforce center certification criteria; examining the state, regional, and local footprint of workforce centers; conducting competitions for selecting workforce center operators; developing local Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs); updating other workforce center policies and procedures; and operating and delivering services through the Arkansas Workforce Centers.

GOVERNOR'S INITIATIVES

REORGANIZATION

On Friday, March 16, 2018, our office shared the Governor's plans to consolidate his cabinet from 44, to fewer than 20 through agency realignment. Governor Hutchinson held a press conference announcing his plan which is summarized in the attached "Transformation Org Chart". The Transformation Advisory Board will develop the legislative packet that will be presented in the upcoming 2019 General Session, with the transformation taking place in 2021 after all necessary legislative changes are in place.

Under the Final Proposed Transformation plan, the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services (ADWS) will be responsible for the following programs and functions under a larger Department of Commerce:

- DWS Advisory Council
- Workforce Investment [Development] Board
- Board of Review
- Governor's Commission on People with Disabilities
- Office of Skills Development
- Adult Education
- Rehabilitation Services
    - Rehab Council
- Blind Services
    - Division of Services for the Blind Board
- Telecommunications Services Corporation Board of Directors

Underlined functions will be new to ADWS, under this version of the plan.

Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2015, greater emphasis was placed on the alignment of the programs that were funded under the WIOA law. Four core programs exist in Arkansas that are funded under the WIOA: local workforce development allocations, Adult Education, Employment Services, and Rehabilitation Services. WIOA also emphasizes the important of coordination with economic development, which will also be housed in the larger Department of Commerce umbrella.

We consider this proposal to be consistent with the requirement to align these services and fully support the Governor's initiative to streamline state government.

STATEWIDE DATA WAREHOUSE

The Governor has established, within the Arkansas Department of Information Systems, a team dedicated to establishing a State Wide Longitudinal Database System. All agencies have signed an MOU to collaborate to meet this goal and agencies are working with DIS to identify datasets that need to be included. Once established, the database will include state data from education, workforce, health, and human services.

ARKANSAS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD (AWDB)

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, or WIOA, was signed into law in July 2014, after being passed in Congress by a wide bipartisan majority. A reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, WIOA was the first legislative reform of the public workforce system in 15 years.

WIOA calls for the delivery of a broad array of integrated services to individuals seeking jobs or skills training and employers seeking qualified workers. Job seekers and business owners can access a seamless system of high-quality services through coordination of programs, services, and governance structures. WIOA aligns regional economies with Local Workforce Development Boards and encourages relationships among key workforce partners—business leaders, workforce boards, labor unions, community colleges, non-profit organizations, youth-serving organizations and State and local officials—in striving for a more job-driven approach to training and skills development.

The purpose of the Arkansas Workforce Development Board is to convene state, regional, and local workforce system stakeholders and partners. ADWS provides the board staff that facilitates and coordinates the board meetings. Arkansas Workforce Development Board members and meeting details are listed on the ADWS website.

WIOA ROUNDTABLE

In PY2017, the WIOA Roundtable re-established the Business Engagement Committee, which has developed a menu of business services and cross-training for partner programs. Additionally, the group, representing all core partners and others make up the User Acceptance Testing Group for Salesforce Implementation.

SALESFORCE

ADWS has been approved for a customer relations management (CRM) system that promises to streamline business engagement across WIOA-partner programs.

A nine-month contract with Carahsoft Technology Corporation licenses the agency to use Salesforce, a "Workforce Development Solution" that can be shared with business services staff, program managers and others in the core workforce-development programs.

A joint committee of the General Assembly on Sept. 19 approved the contract, which allows for 35 seats spread across each of the 10 Local Workforce Development Areas and interested WIOA core partners. Carahsoft will provide extensive training over a two-month rollout period.

Under the company's proposal, Salesforce will:

1. Track the business lead, account, contact and activity information
2. Generate Arkansas business-driven, training-program application
3. Promote, educate, and onboard the state workforce services team

"PARTNERS IN ACTION"

In PY2017, the Executive Committee worked together to establish a WIOA Partners' Newsletter. The purpose of the newsletter is to distribute through partner organizations success stories, with an emphasis partnership between agencies, as a method of cross-training on the services provided.

Each core partner, and other partners, submit one story per quarter, including this example from Adult Education:

"A pre-apprenticeship pilot program in the Western Arkansas Local Workforce Development Area is helping open career doors for Adult Education clients and providing a roadmap for collaboration among WIOA partners.

Three Adult Education programs—Crawford County, Arkansas Tech University-Ozark and Fort Smith Adult Education—joined forces in the spring for a course focused on Industrial Manufacturing
Technology and partnered with the Arkansas Apprenticeship Coalition (affiliate of the National Apprenticeship Training Foundation) for curriculum development. NATF certified teachers to instruct the 40-hour class that included certifications in OSHA 10 and CPR as well as comprehensive "soft-skills" training in Employer Expectations, Employee Responsibilities, Team Building and other, more general life skills.

"The companies we work with really stress the importance of soft skills, and often lament the lack of them in prospective employees," Dr. Gary Udouj, Jr., director of Fort Smith Adult Education, wrote in an email. "I think the pre-apprenticeship program is the perfect mix of soft skills, safety training and career-readiness training."

Seven west Arkansas manufacturing and construction companies lent support to the program and interviewed students as one of the last phases of the class. Udouj said a few of the 26 students who completed the course in the three locations were hired.

Udouj listed nine partner agencies and community organizations as lending support, including the ADWS Workforce Center, Arkansas Rehabilitation Services, Goodwill and Next Step Homeless Services, as well as three institutions of higher education.

The Fort Smith Adult Education Center houses two apprenticeship programs—a four-year electrical apprenticeship in conjunction with the Arkansas Board of Electrical Examiners, and a residential construction apprenticeship in partnership with the Greater Fort Smith Association of Homebuilders. Udouj said those programs will be tied more directly to the pre-apprenticeship in future classes.

"The spring was a first-run for sure. We saw a few tweaks that need to occur in this next round of classes, including reaching out to more employers. The class we are holding in August will have about five-to-seven students going right into our Residential Construction Apprenticeship."

But Udouj said the spring pilot produced positive results for growing the program. All three locations are planning pre-apprenticeship courses early in the fall semester.

"I was excited by the diversity of our classes in Fort Smith—we had a good mix of men and women, and included several of our English Language students," he wrote.

STATE EFFORTS

STATEWIDE FUNDS

In PY2017, the AWDB adopted a policy for a state-funded Work Based Learning fund that allows local workforce development boards to access state funds if they are exceeding a 70% funds utilization rate. Due to the diversity among the areas, the AWDB determined that to provide a consistent menu of services to business statewide, local areas with smaller budgets or more activity may need additional funding to provide these services consistently.

The pilot project for the Arkansas Work-Based Learning program funds paid work experience in Our House Resale stores in Little Rock and North Little Rock through June 2019. The participants—"job trainees" in Our House parlance—are also required to take classroom, computer-based training at the Our House Career Center to, according to the agreement, "teach work skills, adult education and literacy, and life skills." Homelessness and unemployment are the only criteria for the trainees to qualify for the program; they are not required to be residents of the Our House Shelter on Roosevelt Road in Little Rock. Staff from the WIOA program in the Little Rock Workforce Center assess them and enroll them in the Title I Adult program at the start of their employment in the stores.

Transportation to and from the job sites is included, and workers are given bus passes by their WIOA case manager as a supportive service. "It's not just Our House residents, it's for any homeless person," said Justin Robinson, manager of Our House Resale Stores. "If I didn't have anybody to hire from Our House, I could go to another shelter and hire their people."

Additionally, LWDBs were provided funding opportunities from the Governor's reserve for Regional Planning, Sector Strategy Planning, and allotments were provided to areas with High Concentrations of Eligible Youth. Finally, the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services uses the 7(b) Governor's Reserve to fund Career Readiness Certifications and assessments throughout the state. The state considers this a proven exemplary model for delivering services to both employers and job-seekers. This activity is also funded by the WIOA Title I Statewide funds for amounts in excess of the 10 percent 7(b) funding. The state reserve funds were used to fund 4,096 Career Readiness Certifications during the year, as well as general operations and administrative costs.

SUPPORT FOR CAREER PATHWAYS, SECTOR AND REGIONAL PLANNING

In PY2017, Arkansas took several steps to improve sector strategies and career pathways.

1) Sector and Regional Planning funds were made available to Local Workforce Development Areas, funded by the Governor's 15 percent reserve. Technical Assistance from the Business Services lead will be provided to ensure the strategies are effective, and LWDBs are required to convene with business to receive the award for sector planning.
2) In early 2017, the AWDB approved a policy allowing the Governor's reserve to also be accessed by local workforce development boards for Work-Based Learning models, including Work Experience, OJT, Internships, and Incumbent-Worker Training programs referenced above.
3) 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) that also includes wage estimates 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 annually.
4) In 2017, the WIOA Roundtable Executive Committee, with representation from all core partners, reengaged the Business Engagement Committee, which has created a cross-program business service menu. The Business Engagement Committee will be responsible for taking the lead in cross-training business services and heading up the User Acceptance Testing for the implementation of the CRM Salesforce. The State considers the Salesforce project a priority for business engagement and partner coordination. Production is set for September 2019.

DISCRETIONARY GRANTS & STATE-LED PROGRAMS

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.

In PY2017, the ADWS Discretionary Grants staff focused efforts on the expansion and diversification of apprenticeship programs under the Department of Labor ApprenticeshipUSA Initiative grants. ADWS administers three apprenticeship grants: ApprenticeshipUSA State Accelerator, Arkansas Apprenticeship Pathway Initiative (AAPI), and Arkansas Expands Apprenticeship (AREA) in addition to other National Dislocated Grants listed below.

APPRENTICESHIPUSA STATE ACCELERATOR GRANT

The ApprenticeshipUSA State 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 elevating apprenticeship as a workforce solution in both traditional apprenticeship and non-traditional apprenticeship industries.

ADWS has initiated efforts to organize and implement planning activities across partners and stakeholders to gather input and facilitate discussions resulting in a State Plan for Registered Apprenticeship Expansion and Diversification due to the Department of Labor by November 30, 2018.

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.

The ADWS Discretionary Grants unit and its partners under the AAPI grant have pioneered registered apprenticeship programs in Arkansas, introducing a Police Officer registered apprenticeship program for the Little Rock Police Department and a software developer registered apprenticeship program in partnership with the University of Central Arkansas. The AAPI grant is scheduled to end September 30, 2020.

ARKANSAS EXPANDS APPRENTICESHIP

The AREA Grant was awarded as a complement to the ApprenticeshipUSA Initiative Grants. ADWS is leveraging these funds to expand Arkansas's capacity to collaborate with employers and start new apprenticeship programs across diverse industries and communities. AREA registered apprenticeship training programs are available in the industry sectors of transportation and advanced manufacturing with JB Hunt and Canfor Southern Pine as partnering employers.

The original AREA grant base award is scheduled to end on April 30, 2019. ADWS received second-round continuation funding for the AREA grant from the U.S. Department of Labor that extends the grant's period of performance through October 31, 2020.

DISASTER NATIONAL DISLOCATED WORKER GRANT- AR-29 (STORMS OCCURRING BETWEEN APRIL 26, 2017 AND MAY 19, 2017)

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. This grant has an original period of performance that ends June 30, 2018. A requested extension to March 31, 2019 has been submitted to the U.S. Department of Labor.

REEMPLOYMENT AND SYSTEMS INTEGRATION NATIONAL DISLOCATED WORKER GRANT

The purpose of the RSI grant is to provide funding to improve the capacity of the workforce system to efficiently link dislocated workers, including those who might first approach the workforce system as unemployment insurance claimants, and the long-term unemployed to the broad spectrum of employment and training assistance available to them and to support their productive reemployment. This funding stream will support a common registration system, VOCAL, as well as the business customer-relations management tool intended to improve communication and reporting across partner programs.

GOVERNOR'S DISLOCATED WORKER TASK FORCE

The Governor's Dislocated Worker Task Force addresses the needs and concerns of individuals and communities affected by worker dislocation. It pools the resources of ADWS, the U.S. Department of Labor, the Arkansas Economic Development Commission, WIOA, area health services, and other state agencies to meet the needs of dislocated workers and businesses.

The Governor's Dislocated Worker Task Force identifies permanent closings and substantial workforce reductions in advance. Upon receiving notice of a closure or workforce reduction, the Task Force immediately contacts the company to schedule a community meeting with local elected officials and business leaders. During the meeting, an action plan is developed to assist all individuals who will be affected.

Worker Assistance Workshops are conducted by representatives of local and state agencies to inform affected workers of available resources. Services discussed at the workshops include education and training opportunities, unemployment insurance, social service programs, credit counseling, insurance options, and reemployment resources.

ADWS leverages several programs to react to closings and reductions identified by the Governor's Dislocated Worker Task Force. 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.

Additionally, in PY2017, ADWS began looking for new ways to identify and reach potential Dislocated Workers. For those UI Claimants requesting the UI Newsletter from ADWS and who provided their emails, the agency determined which of those UI Claimants were previously occupied in declining industries based on their last employers NAICS codes. Those individuals are informed about the Dislocated Workers program through the UI Newsletter process and referred to their Local Workforce Development Board on a monthly basis. A similar process has been used to identify companies with multiple claims filed. This information may provide indicators of smaller layoffs or other areas in distress. The team will reach out to the businesses and offer a form of preemptive support and information about the partner programs.

ADWS ON WHEELS

In CY2017, the mobile units supported 129 events to assist job seekers and employers across the state.

ADWS owns a fleet of mobile workforce units—RVs equipped with work stations, full internet connectivity, computers, printers, copiers, and JAWS (Jobs Application with Speech) software.

Operated by the Governor's Dislocated Worker Task Force, the mobile units are transported frequently to communities all across the state. By traveling to meet job seekers and employers where they are, ADWS is able to increase access to services and supplement local resources. The mobile units are an

integral resource addressing worker dislocation and natural disaster-affected areas by providing on-site assistance. Staff transports mobile units upon request to support community events, job fairs, business expos, hiring events, career days, training sessions, and more.

REEMPLOYMENT SERVICES UNIT

The Reemployment Services program uses demographic data to mathematically identify unemployment insurance claimants who are most at risk of exhausting benefits before finding employment. Through the Arkansas Workforce Centers, ADWS provides additional assistance to these participants and requires completion of a job search workshop to maintain their UI benefits. The goal of the program is to keep these claimants from exhausting their benefits before acquiring gainful employment.

In CY2017, RES staff hosted 347 job search workshops. A total of 13,880 unemployment insurance claimants were selected to participate.

Selected job search workshop participants are UI recipients identified as requiring intensive services to promote successful returns to the workforce. Intensive services may include comprehensive skills assessments, in-depth evaluations to identify employment barriers, individual counseling, and career planning.

5,433 participants received intensive services to promote successful returns to the workforce in CY2017.

REENTRY INITIATIVES

In CY2017, 91 job search workshops were conducted by RES and Task Force staff, assisting 2,812 returning citizens, parolees, and probationers.

The Governor's Dislocated Worker Taskforce and the ADWS Reemployment Services unit have worked in partnership with various correctional facilities throughout the state since 2012. ADWS staff provides employment and reentry guidance to the inmate population. Reentry initiatives target those who are transitioning into the workforce, in addition to serving individuals who are currently incarcerated.

During National Reentry Week April 24-30 2017, ADWS RES staff and the Governor's Dislocated Worker Task Force supported 20 events designed to help prepare inmates for release.

TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE

Trade Adjustment Assistance is a federal program that aids workers who have lost their jobs as a result of foreign trade. The TAA program provides opportunities for trade-affected workers to obtain the skills, resources, and support they need to prepare for and obtain suitable employment. The mobile Arkansas Workforce Centers are frequently used to support these activities.

In CY2017,

- TAA field personnel provided case management services for 742 clients across the state.
- 302 Trade clients successfully completed TAA approved and subsidized training programs.
- $2,990,365.04 in training-related payments was remitted on behalf of trade program participants.
- $4,412.76 in job search and/or relocation payments was remitted on behalf of trade program participants.

The TAA program provides income support in the form of weekly cash payments known as Trade Readjustment Allowances. Trade Readjustment Allowances are income-support payments to individuals who have exhausted unemployment compensation and whose jobs were affected by foreign imports as determined by a certification of group coverage issued by the Department of Labor. Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance provides wage subsidies to individuals 50 years of age or older who return to work earning less than their trade-impacted employment.

In CY2017,

- $4,334,954 in TRA payments was remitted to TAA clients.
- $232,467 in Reemployment Trade Adjustment Assistance payments was remitted on behalf of Trade program participants.

LABOR MARKET INFORMATION

DISCOVER ARKANSAS LMI PORTAL

Arkansas LMI can be accessed online through the Discover Arkansas LMI Portal at www.discover.arkansas.gov. This web portal helps job seekers make informed, data-driven career decisions and allows employers, economic developers, and researchers to promote stable employment and economic growth across Arkansas.

On Discover Arkansas, users can search by industry, wage, occupation, employment, and education, as well as browse helpful career resources and publications. The portal can be used to view current employment statistics, in-demand industries and occupations, two- and ten-year job projections, and wage information from the only wage survey done in Arkansas. Discover Arkansas is also the first place monthly unemployment rates are posted for public viewing.

The LMI department distributed more than 135,000 print and electronic publications in PY2017.

The LMI department went beyond simply making Arkansas LMI available in 2017, by increasing outreach to let the public know exactly what data is available to them and conducting training sessions on how to use it effectively.

In PY2017, LMI staff conducted 29 training sessions with approximately 1,500 participants and attended 15 career fairs and conferences reaching another 5,000 LMI customers.

Customers accessed information through the Discover Arkansas LMI Portal approximately 640,000 times in PY2017.

CAREER WATCH ARKANSAS

The LMI department produces Career Watch Arkansas magazine, an annual publication containing profiles of Arkansas occupations. These profiles include job descriptions, average pay, job-growth rates, and information on related education and scholarship opportunities. Career Watch Arkansas is distributed to more than 60,000 high school juniors each year. Additionally, a classroom set is provided to every Arkansas public high school career development teacher.

Career Watch Arkansas was viewed online at www.careerwatch.org more than 21,000 times in PY2017.

REAL-LIFE ARKANSAS

www.real-life.arkansas.gov

Real-Life Arkansas is an online lifestyle calculator designed to help students learn how much money they will need to earn to support the kind of lifestyle they may want in the near future. The lifestyle calculator gives three options to help users select the right career for their spending needs:

1. Reality check: Users see what they need to make in a year based on how they buy “stuff” for a sample month.
2. Future Salary: Users enter the amount of money they want to earn and receive information on which occupations pay that amount.
3. Occupation Direct: Users enter an occupation to see how much “stuff” they can buy with the job they have chosen.

In PY2017, Real-Life Arkansas was utilized more than 49,000 times.

FOREIGN LABOR CERTIFICATION

The FLC program is designed to ensure that the admission of foreign workers to work in the United States, on a permanent or temporary basis, will not adversely affect the job opportunities, wages, and working conditions of American workers.

ADWS assists the U.S. Department of Labor in certifying two things:

1. There are not sufficient, qualified U.S. workers who will be available to perform the temporary services or labor for which an employer desires to hire foreign workers.
2. The employment of the H-2B worker(s) will not adversely affect the wages and working conditions of U.S. workers similarly employed.

In PY2017, ADWS certified 345 H2A job orders and 110 H2B job orders.

	July – Sept. 2017	Oct. – Dec. 2017	Jan. – March 2018	April – June 2018	Totals
H2A JOB ORDERS	16	174	98	57	345
H2B JOB ORDERS	34	30	31	15	110

ARKANSAS WORKFORCE CENTERS

With 28 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's 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.

MENA WORKFORCE CENTER

In October of 2017, the Workforce Center in Mena moved to its new location in the Abernathy Building on the University of Arkansas- Rich Mountain campus. This state of the art facility was celebrated with an event rededicating the Abernathy Building. Governor Asa Hutchinson spoke at the event, stating, "You're connecting those that are in need of services with the opportunity to enhance education and training…and there's no better place to do it than right here at this center."

"You're connecting those that are in need of services with the opportunity to enhance education and training…and there's no better place to do it than right here at this center."
- Governor Asa Hutchinson

EMPLOYER SERVICES

Local Business Service Teams (BSTs) offer a range of services and programs to assist employers with their business needs with the assistance of partners and the Business Engagement Committee of the WIOA Roundtable. The network of Arkansas Workforce Centers is equipped to assist businesses with finding and hiring qualified workers, paying unemployment tax, applying for a tax credit, training new and existing staff, and more. Employers can also access Workforce Center facilities at no cost. Most Arkansas Workforce Centers have the space to accommodate events of all sizes. Rooms are often used to hold training sessions, hiring events, meetings, and even interviews.

Another important item on our employer services menu is Arkansas JobLink. Arkansas JobLink, or AJL, is part of a nationally recognized job-matching and labor market information system. With an AJL account, employers can create a company profile, post job orders, search for candidates with specific skills, save searches and resumes, and sign up for email updates.

In addition to the services that are available at Arkansas Workforce Centers, the Local Workforce Development Areas have established business service teams. The business service representatives develop custom workforce solutions by meeting with employers to assess their pain points. This allows them to assemble the best combination of services to effectively address the employer's specific needs.

WORK OPPORTUNITY TAX CREDIT

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit is a federal tax credit that encourages employers to hire workers from targeted groups. The tax credit is designed to help job seekers gain on-the-job experience, move towards economic self-sufficiency, and help reduce employer's federal tax liability. In PY2017, ADWS certified 34,038 applications out of the 50,916 applications received, resulting in potential tax credits for Arkansas employers in the amount of $80,921,255.00.

	Applications Received	Applications Certified	Employer Tax Savings
Jul-17	3,647	2,969	$7,522,200.00
Aug- 17	4,759	3,443	$8,950,400.00
Sep-17	4,280	2,432	$6,048,400.00
Oct-17	4,746	4,445	$11,572,200.00
Nov-17	3,840	3,491	$10,883,800.00
Dec-17	3,809	3,370	$2,801,200.00
Jan-18	3,206	4,954	$12,355,200.00
Feb-18	3,347	5,439	$12,369,855.00
Mar-18	3,849	2,883	$7,641,000.00
Apr-18	4,267	2,395	$6,126,600.00
May-18	4,817	1,931	$5,110,400.00
Jun-18	3,981	1,921	$5,492,800.00
TOTAL	**48,602**	**39,673**	**$96,874,055.00**

CAREER READINESS CERTIFICATE

ADWS and partner state agencies implemented the Arkansas Career Readiness Certificate program as part of the Governor's Workforce Cabinet in January of 2008.

The CRC is a nationally accredited, portable credential that gives employers and career seekers a uniform, standard, objective measure of key workplace skills. All issued CRCs are assigned state and national identification numbers, making the recipient's CRC recognizable nationwide. Taking the CRC is free of charge to Arkansas residents and all issued CRCs are signed by the Governor of Arkansas and the ADWS Director.

The first step to obtaining a CRC is to successfully complete the WorkKeys Curriculum, a pre-WorkKeys instructional test that helps prepare individuals for the three ACT WorkKeys 2.0 assessments. After completing the WorkKeys Curriculum, individuals must pass the rest of the assessments with a minimum score of three. The CRC is issued at four levels: Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum.

Career Readiness Certificate Assessments

1. ***Applied Math***
The Applied Math assessment measures critical thinking, mathematical reasoning, and problem-solving techniques for situations that actually occur in today's workplace. While individuals may use calculators and conversion tables to help with the problems on the assessment, math skills are still needed to think them through.

2. ***Graphic Literacy***
Workplace graphics come in a variety of formats, but all communicate a level of information. From charts to graphs, diagrams to floor plans, identifying what information is being presented and understanding how to use it are critical to success. The Graphic Literacy assessment measures the skills needed to locate, synthesize, and use information from workplace graphics.

3. ***Workplace Documents***
Employees need to be able to understand written text to do a job. The Workplace Documents assessment measures the skills people use when they read and use written text such as memos, letters, directions, signs, notices, bulletins, policies, and regulations on the job.

Total Career Readiness Certificates Issued in CY2017: 4,096	
Platinum	12
Gold	830
Silver	2597
Bronze	657

Accumulated Data WorkKeys Work Ready Communities	
Types of Certificates	***Jan 2006—Aug 31, 2018***
Bronze	12,922
Silver	43,874
Gold	16,998
Platinum	764
Platinum Plus	0
Grand Total Certificates	***74,558***

CRCs Submitted Calendar Year 2018

Type of CRC	Platinum+	Platinum	Gold	Silver	Bronze	***Totals/ Month***
January	0	5	86	148	35	***247***
February	0	16	94	188	79	***377***
March	0	53	105	201	103	***462***
April	0	76	145	242	178	***641***
May	0	89	111	186	141	***527***
June*	0	37	56	74	48	***215***
July*	0	56	43	90	49	***238***
August**	0	64	102	133	65	***364***
Totals/ CRC Type	***0***	***395***	***742***	***1,262***	***698***	***3,098***

FEDERAL BONDING PROGRAM

The Federal Bonding Program is a unique hiring incentive created by the Department of Labor in 1966. Employers who hire eligible applicants are rewarded bonds of $5,000 or more. The program targets individuals with backgrounds that pose significant barriers to securing or retaining employment. Some examples include previously incarcerated individuals, recovering addicts, welfare recipients, individuals with poor credit records, individuals dishonorably discharged from the military, economically disadvantaged youth and adults who lack work histories.

OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS ASSESSMENTS

Occupational skills assessments lay the foundation for productive job searches and help workforce specialists find qualified candidates for local employers.

At the Arkansas Workforce Centers, job seekers and workforce specialists use an online occupational skills-assessment tool called TORQ, which stands for Transferable Occupation Relationship Quotient. TORQ matches qualified job seekers with local employers using an algorithm that analyzes job seekers' knowledge, skills and abilities compared to a list of job openings from local employers and provides staff with a numerically ranked list of candidates. Based on the knowledge, skills, and abilities from previous jobs and education, TORQ recommends occupations, training programs, and jobs matched to each individual.

The TORQ program is used by workforce professionals at American Job Centers across the country. This tool was introduced to Arkansas Workforce Centers when ADWS licensed the program in March of 2012 to assist long-term unemployed individuals. ADWS soon expanded this initiative by providing TORQ skills assessments to participants in every program. Since the TORQ program launched, more than 200,000 individuals have received personal occupational skills assessment profiles that identify areas of interest and ability, match those to occupations, and aid in the discovery of new opportunities, better jobs, and higher education and training options.

NEW HIRE REGISTRY

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act was enacted by the United States Congress in 1996 as part of Welfare Reform and created the requirement for employers in all 50 states to report their new hires and re-hires to a state directory. Partners use the reports to discover and stop fraud in unemployment insurance, worker's compensation and other types of public assistance. New hire reporting also speeds up the child-support income-withholding order process, expedites collection of child support from parents who change jobs frequently and quickly locates noncustodial parents to help in establishing paternity and child-support orders. By reporting new hires, employers play a key role in ensuring financial stability for many children and families.

862,675 New Hires were reported during PY2017.

JOB-SEEKER SERVICES

Unemployed and underemployed individuals transform into job seekers the moment they walk through the doors of an Arkansas Workforce Center. Job seeker services exist to ensure that every Arkansan has an equal opportunity to find and maintain gainful employment, no matter the circumstances. Ultimately, these services decrease an individual's need for unemployment insurance and reduce their dependency on other government benefits. With access to a variety of supportive services at the Arkansas Workforce Centers, job seekers can make informed decisions and take appropriate actions to achieve their career goals.

Job-seeker services are not limited to the unemployed; these services are available to anyone who is looking for a job or wants to find a better one. To best serve Arkansas's diverse population of workers, the BSTs collaborate with a variety of state, local, and community-based partners. Together, these organizations provide comprehensive assistance to job seekers of all backgrounds, in all corners of the state.

VETERANS SERVICES

Veterans seeking employment are ideal candidates for employers. They often already have the skills and characteristics employers are looking for: discipline, teamwork, problem-solving, working under pressure, and loyalty. However, the complexities accompanying transition from military to civilian life can make securing employment a challenge for veterans. ADWS strives to eliminate those barriers while effectively matching veterans with the right employers, and employers with qualified veterans.

In PY2017, Veteran staff continued to meet the employment needs of our state's veteran population with actual veteran staff members. Veteran representatives exclusively serve veterans, eligible persons, and transitioning service members and are familiar with the full range of job-placement and training services available.

The U.S. Department of Labor's Jobs for Veterans Grant provides the funding for these veteran staff positions, making it possible for ADWS to offer such targeted services. There are two types of positions funded through the grant: Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER) and Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) representatives. The LVERs efforts are concentrated on conducting outreach, communicating with local employers, and advocating for veterans. They work closely with new and existing members of the business community in the areas they serve. DVOP specialists provide intensive services to meet the employment needs of disabled veterans and other eligible veterans, with maximum focus on serving those who are economically or educationally disadvantaged. A directory of veterans' representatives throughout Arkansas is available on the ADWS website.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

ADWS administers Arkansas's Unemployment Insurance program and facilitates employer compliance with the Department of Workforce Services Law, collects unemployment insurance contributions from employers, provides unemployment insurance benefits to those who qualify, and maintains management information systems for filing unemployment insurance claims and fraud detection.

ADWS CLAIMS PROCESSING HOTLINE

For years, UI customers were provided service exclusively through in-person contact with representatives at their local employment office or Workforce Center. To leverage local office staff and evenly disperse the claims-taking workload, UI administration developed the ADWS Claims Processing Hotline in December 2014. By March 2015, the Hotline was officially implemented, permitting Hotline staff to serve claimants filing an initial or additional claim. The UI Hotline has been operative in every local office since February 2016. Later that year, general UI questions were integrated into the Hotline repertoire. The Hotline continues to operate in a "closed" environment, meaning customers can only contact a Hotline representative using a telephone in a customer call station within an ADWS local office or through staff -assisted transfers.

In June 2017, ADWS integrated staff-assisted transferred telephone calls into the Hotline environment, enabling ADWS to evenly distribute the claims assistance and maintenance workload on a statewide basis.

UI EMPLOYER SERVICES PORTAL

The online Unemployment Insurance Employer Services Portal brings information and resources together in a uniform way to make submission of UI reports, responses and requests simple and convenient for employers.

REPORT UI FRAUD

UI fraud can be committed by individuals claiming UI benefits and by employers failing to pay UI taxes on

wages paid to workers. Help prevent UI fraud by reporting activity online at www.dws.arkansas.gov or by telephone at 501-682-1058. Your identity will remain confidential.

ArkNet- www.ArkNet.Arkansas.gov and EZARC- www.ezarc.adws.arkansas.gov

ArkNet is Arkansas's web-based continued claim application for Unemployment Insurance weekly benefits via the Internet. EZARC (Easy Arkansas Claims) is a web-based application that allows anyone to file an initial or additional claim for Arkansas Unemployment Insurance via the Internet.

EMPLOYER UI CONTRIBUTIONS

PY2017

- Total number of employers filing quarterly wage reports: 68,187
- From that total, the total number of employers filing online quarterly wage reports: 49,511
- Total amount of contributions paid by employers: $220,243,000.85
- Total amount of contributions paid through the online portal: $77,458,334.61
- Arkansas's Seasonally Adjusted Unemployment Rate in June 2018: 3.8%
- Amount of TRA payments were remitted to TAA Clients: $2,803,136.00

DISASTER UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) is a federally-funded program that provides financial assistance and employment services to jobless workers and the self-employed when they are unemployed as a direct result of a major natural disaster.

TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES

The Arkansas Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program was created to help families stay together by empowering family leaders with job skills, resources and assistance. With that in mind, TANF serves four primary functions:

1. Provides assistance to needy families so that children can be cared for in their own homes;
2. Reduces the dependency of needy parents by promoting job preparation, work and marriage;
3. Prevents and reduces the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies;
4. Encourages the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

TRANSITIONAL EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE

The Transitional Employment Assistance, or TEA, program emphasizes work as the first step toward building a brighter future. Through training, education and work activities, individuals are guided to become self-sufficient. This federally funded program provides time-limited cash assistance to needy families with (or expecting) children. In addition, TEA furnishes parents with work training and other supportive services they need in order to attain permanent self-sufficiency. The TEA program also provides assistance to children being cared for by non-parental guardians.

WORK PAYS

Arkansas Work Pays is a post-employment program that provides assistance to prior participants of the TEA program. Participating families are eligible for the same supportive services and assistance as families enrolled in the TEA program and will receive a monthly cash assistance payment. The extra income provided is designed to help families transition to self-sufficiency.

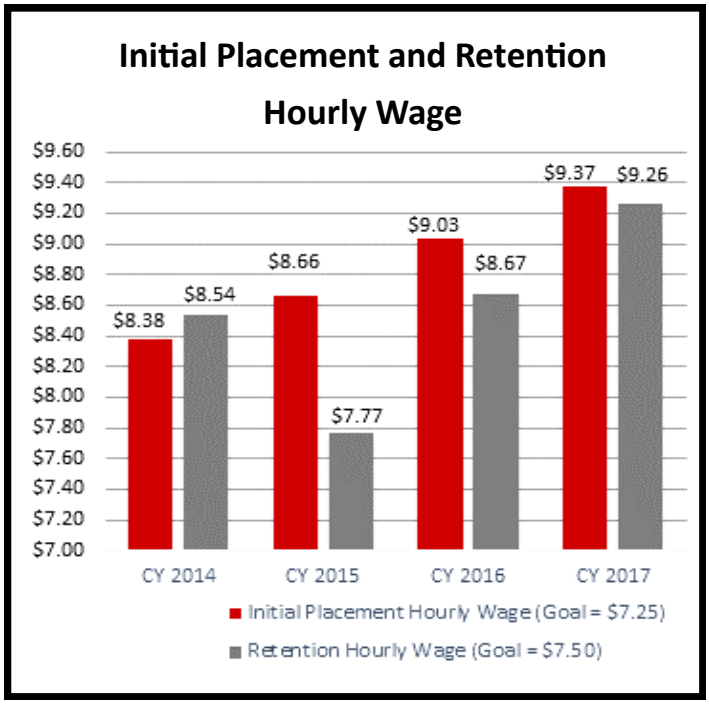
COMMUNITY INVESTMENT INITIATIVE

The Arkansas Department of Workforce Services contracts with organizations to offer services and support to parents, children and youth in their communities. The Community Investment Initiative focuses on improving outcomes for youth; parenting and family functioning; marriage and relationship skills; employment skills; family connections of parents who leave state jails and prisons; and supportive services to child-only cases in the TEA program.

CAREER PATHWAYS

Under the Career Pathways Initiative, Arkansas invests public funds to support the development and implementation of career pathway programs in the state's two-year colleges and technical institutions for low-income families. Career Pathway programs provide training in local, high-demand occupations and career fields, in addition to intensive counseling and supplemental services such as child care and transportation assistance.

Career Pathways Initiative				
Calendar Year	*CY2014*	*CY2015*	*CY2016*	*CY2017*
Enrollments	4,706	4,345	4,577	4,500
Employability Certificates	948	1,105	1,667	1,314
Technical Certificates	549	444	529	547
Associate Degrees	658	578	542	544
Certificate of Proficiency	353	438	656	566
GEDS	6	10	36	27
Other Certificates	219	488	514	539
Total Attainments	2,733	3,063	3,944	3,537



CONNECTIONS WITH OTHER PROGRAMS

Under WIOA, the following are required programs that must be accessible from the Workforce Centers, some of which are described in this report.

Required Department of Labor programs: Adult (WIOA title I formula), Senior Community Service Employment Program (title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965), Dislocated Worker (WIOA title I formula), Trade Adjustment Assistance activities (Trade Act of 1974, as amended), Youth (WIOA title I formula), Jobs for Veterans State Grants (Chapter 41 of title 38), YouthBuild (WIOA title I), Unemployment Compensation programs, Indian and Native American Programs (WIOA title I), Wagner-Peyser Act ES, as authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by WIOA title III, National Farmworker Jobs Programs (NFJP)/Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Programs (WIOA title I), Reentry Employment Opportunities (REO) program (formerly referred to as the Reintegration of Ex-Offenders [ReXO] program) (Section 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007 and WIOA sec. 169), Job Corps (WIOA title I).

Required Department of Education programs: AEFLA program (WIOA title II), Career and technical education programs at the postsecondary level, authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, and State VR program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA title IV.

Required Department of Health and Human Services programs: Programs authorized under the Social Security Act title IV, part A (TANF), Community Services Block Grant Employment and Training activities (Community Services Block Grant Act), and Required Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) program Employment and training programs.

COMMON EXIT DATE POLICY

Arkansas has chosen to use a common exit date, as allowed in 20 CFR 677.150(c) (3) and encouraged in TEGL 10-16. Definitions Policy 1.2- Common Exit date – 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); TEGLs 10-16, 19-16, and 21-16].

SUCCESS STORIES

STORIES FROM TITLE I SERVICES:

MARTY: WIOA DISLOCATED WORKER

Blytheville WIOA Staff – Teresa McDonald

After nearly six years of employment with Tenaris in Hickman, Arkansas, Marty Tubbs was laid off. Marty was worried about the job market and didn't know what to do. He attended a meeting held by the Governor's Dislocated Worker Taskforce where he learned of the TAA and WIOA services available to him. After an interview and evaluation, Marty was determined eligible for both programs and co-enrolled. Both programs coordinated services to ensure Marty had the resources to train in Air Conditioning and Refrigeration at Arkansas Northeastern College. Marty maintained outstanding grades throughout his studies and completed his training on December 15, 2017. He obtained a full-time job making $25 an hour, which was higher than his wage at Tenaris.

SIERRA: WIOA YOUTH – OUT OF SCHOOL

Paragould WIOA Staff – Heather Toombs

Sierra was an 18-year-old youth with multiple barriers: low income, unemployed, homeless, and on public assistance. Sierra was referred by the Mission Outreach of Northeast Arkansas, Inc. to the Paragould Workforce Center for assistance in finding employment. Sierra was determined eligible for WIOA Youth services. Sierra expressed an interest in a career in child care and was interested in work experience at Butterfly Babies Daycare. During the work experience, the participant started out with below average attendance and punctuality. With continuous guidance and encouragement from the WIOA staff and the worksite, Sierra improved her attendance, punctuality, and job skills. With this improvement, Butterfly Babies Daycare offered Sierra a full time, job which allowed her to earn a steady income. The new income stream allowed Sierra to move from a homeless shelter to an apartment with her boyfriend. Sierra appreciates the opportunity to work with children and become part of the workforce.

GABRIEL: WIOA YOUTH – OUT OF SCHOOL

Jonesboro WIOA Staff – Charlotte Rose

Gabriel was a pregnant, single parent receiving SNAP and TEA. Gabriel wanted to make a change in her life, and her TEA caseworker advised her to speak with WIOA. She was determined eligible for WIOA Youth and enrolled in work experience. Since she did not have a driver's license, she rode the public bus system. Gabriel was spurred to overcome her shyness through interaction with WIOA staff and worksite staff. This newfound confidence motivated her to obtain a driver's license and apply for jobs that she would have never before considered. Gabriel saved her money and purchased a vehicle. Recently, Gabriel was hired as a production worker by Nice Pak (a local industry) at $12 an hour.

DESTINY: WIOA YOUTH – OUT OF SCHOOL

Blytheville WIOA Staff – Christy Dillon

Destiny was a struggling 24-year-old who was unemployed and a single parent of two small children. She had to rely on SNAP, WIC, and her mother's help to provide for her family because she was an offender, and most employers did not want to give her a chance. Destiny heard about WIOA and came to the Blytheville AWC. After WIOA staff performed an evaluation and assessment of her situation, Destiny was determined eligible for work experience. Destiny always wanted to help others and was placed at The Haven of Northeast Arkansas, Inc., a non-profit organization providing emergency shelter, supportive care and education to victims of domestic abuse and their children so that they can live abuse-free lives. After just a few months, the worksite hired Destiny. Destiny is thankful for the second chance from WIOA because she was on the verge of giving up. Destiny would recommend WIOA services to others and is thankful to work at the Haven with wonderful coworkers and be able to help people in need.

STORMY: WIOA ADULT

Jonesboro WIOA Staff – Charlotte Rose

Stormy was unemployed, low income, and SNAP recipient. Stormy wanted to improve her situation and was referred by Crowley's Ridge Development Council to the Arkansas Workforce Center in Jonesboro. She was determined eligible for WIOA Adult services and enrolled in work experience. As a result of the work experience, Stormy developed the crucial job skills for full time employment at Cyient. The full-time employment has allowed her to purchase her own vehicle and become less dependent on family and others.

A VETERAN'S SUCCESS STORY

Jim, a homeless, unemployed veteran, was living at Mission Outreach in Paragould when he was referred to the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program for intensive services. He was paired with a DVOP specialist who immediately took action, determined to find affordable housing and employment for Jim. With the help of the DVOP, Jim updated his resume, set up a TORQ occupational skills assessment account, and completed the Career Readiness Certification. Jim scored Silver on the CRC; he had highly marketable skills, and completing the CRC created more opportunities for work. The DVOP specialist was excited to learn about Jim's work history, which featured experience operating an extruder machine. From there, they focused on companies with an open machine operator position. The Anchor Packaging plant was Jim's first choice, so the DVOP made a referral and helped Jim apply for the job. Jim was hired as an extruder operator at Anchor Packaging in October of 2017 and was able to transfer a 401K from a past employer. He is no longer unemployed, and is no longer homeless.

WAIVERS

Arkansas Requested no Waivers in PY2017.

EFFECTIVENESS IN SERVING EMPLOYERS

Arkansas is currently piloting the following effectiveness in serving employers measures:

1. Retention with the Same Employer – Methodology – Data on employee retention for all participants who received ETA-funded WIOA program services will be collected by the Arkansas Workforce Centers and reported at the State-Level by the State Workforce Agency (Department of Workforce Services). Outcomes for WIOA Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) participants will be collected at the State-Level, through the State VR agency, and submitted to the State Workforce Agency (DWS), who will aggregate both sets of information and report one shared outcome for the State.
2. Employer Penetration – Methodology – Total number of business establishments, as defined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program that received a service or are continuing to receive a service (Core Program Services). The state is implementing a business -service Customer Relations Management (CRM), Salesforce, with the coordination of all core partners. It is anticipated that the product will assist the state in data collection for this measure in the future.

EVALUATIONS AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEYS

Arkansas did not complete any evaluations during PY17. In May of 2018, Governor Asa Hutchinson officially announced his intentions to reorganize State Government by reducing the number of cabinet-level agencies by 50 percent. Each of the WIOA Core Partners are cabinet-level agencies and would be impacted by this change. Additionally, the Governor instituted a hiring freeze on these agencies, due to the impending reorganization. Consequently, ADWS did not believe that it prudent was to begin evaluations until after details related to the government-wide reorganization were released. ADWS did not have sufficient staffing resources to lead this effort. On October 3, 2018, Governor Hutchinson released details of the state government reorganization, and the WIOA Core Programs are being moved under the auspices of ADWS. Consequently, our evaluation effort can begin, once a Project Lead is acquired.

a) Current or Planned Evaluation and Research Projects: Arkansas has not officially begun its evaluation of our state's workforce development system. However, we intend to identify a contractor with the requisite experience to conduct a full-fledged evaluation in Calendar Year 2019. This evaluation will be designed to improve the ongoing implementation of the WIOA as well as identify the factors that are contributing to our system's success or failures and seek to measure how effective our system is in achieving its objectives.
b) Efforts to coordinate the development of such projects with WIOA Core Programs: We anticipate that the evaluation project will include input from the WIOA Roundtable Committee. This Committee includes representatives from all WIOA Core and Non-Core Programs. The data collection activities will involve the collection of data from all Core Programs, through various modes, including: site visits, focus groups with stakeholders or program participants, surveys of participants, interviews with key stakeholders and partners, as well as participant observation. Once collected, the results will be analyzed, along with program administrative data for the development of a comprehensive report. The resulting report will include meaningful and practical recommendations to improve and/or change our program model and/or operations and information to help correct program-model shortfalls.
c) List of Completed Evaluation and Related Reports: There has been no WIOA evaluations completed to-date.
d) State efforts to provide data, survey responses, and timely site visits for Federal evaluations: To-date, Arkansas has not received any requests for information related to Federal evaluations.

e) Continuous Improvement Strategies Utilizing Results from Studies and Evidenced-Based Practices: In PY2017, Arkansas participated in a Customer-Centered Design Project that was based upon evidenced-based practice. USDOL contractor, Maher & Maher, led this project that was first introduced in the North Central Arkansas Workforce Development Area. Since this time, ADWS staff has presented the information from this project to other WIOA Local Areas and stakeholders across the State.

For both the Customer Satisfaction and Evaluation processes, Arkansas will seek a contractor to assist the Executive Committee of the WIOA Roundtable in defining two processes for each. The team would develop standards for ongoing evaluation and customer satisfaction processes that would meet the requirements of WIOA. This first group of standards and procedures would be focused on long-term evaluation and customer satisfaction surveys that are repeatable and target issues that need to be reviewed on an ongoing basis. These processes would become standard procedure annually.

Additionally, the contractor would help design processes that meet federal requirements for evaluations and are customizable. This will allow the core partners to continue isolating specific issues as needed.

The state would seeks to establish ongoing evaluation and customer-satisfaction processes to meet this requirement while ensuring a high return on the investment. Ideally, a more long-term, sustainable and repeatable process would keep us informed on critical issues that need ongoing evaluation, allowing the state to focus on more important one-time studies as the need arises while meeting requirements in a meaningful and efficient way. A technical assistance proposal has been submitted requesting assistance with facilitating the conversation across the core partners for several key projects including the evaluation process, asset mapping, and skills-gap analysis. All of these projects, require data-analytics and evaluation backgrounds, which will require third parties and may benefit from DOL Technical Assistance.

LOCAL AND STATE PERFORMANCE

PY 2017 Performance		Target	Outcome
Adult	Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	82.50%	85.47%
	Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	78%	85.92%
	Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	$5,842	$6,289.32
	Credential Attainment Rate	75.30%	80.32%
Dislocated Workers	Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit	77%	91.93%
	Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit	74.50%	84.68%
	Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit	$6,400.00	$6,794.10
	Credential Attainment Rate	75.00%	75.26%
Youth	Education or Training Activities or Employment in the 2nd Quarter After Exit	75.00%	78.40%
	Education or Training Activities or Employment in the 4th Quarter After Exit	71.20%	80.43%
	Credential Attainment Rate	70.00%	68.12%
Wagner-Peyser	Entered Employment Rate	65%	70%
	Employment Retention Rate Six Months After Exit	84%	86%
	Six Months Average Earnings	$15,000	$15,123.71