

WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT (WIOA)

Annual Statewide Performance Report Narrative

Program Year 2021

WE ARE YOUR DOL



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I. COMBINED PLAN STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS

A. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM PROGRESS

The New York State (NYS) Combined State Plan for Program Years (PY) 2020-2023 envisions a unified workforce development system (“System”) that aims to ensure every business has access to a skilled labor force and that every New Yorker has access to job training opportunities that lead to high quality employment or career advancement. This vision is supported by goals and strategies that address business engagement, prioritize opportunities for individuals with barriers to employment, improve data integration and performance outcome metrics, support non-traditional education models and career pathways through apprenticeship and on-the-job training (OJT), and align workforce development strategies with regional stakeholders.

A discussion of PY 2021 cannot take place without discussing the major effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the transition to a hybrid model of virtual and in-person services. Many Career Centers throughout NYS were closed as part of the effort to decrease the spread of COVID-19. In June 2022, most NYS Career Centers re-opened to serve customers through virtual and in-person services. NYS explored virtual platforms to be used to serve customers and have been successful in efforts to maintain connection with customers through a virtual environment. In response to these changes, NYS is currently rolling out a pilot program utilizing a Virtual Career Center (VCC) to select local areas. The goal is to utilize a Case Manager function and incorporate this virtual tool into each appointment with a customer. Customers are automatically enrolled in the VCC and will work closely with a Case Manager to ensure a customer profile is crafted based on skills and previous work experience. The goal is to train other Case Managers in each region. The VCC integrates with NYS’ case management system to track services provided to business and job seeking customers as well as related outcomes, and is inclusive of the following:

- **Virtual Meetings and Events Tool** – Virtual one-on-one appointments, small-group appointments, and large-scale workshops and presentations are conducted via video and audio chat providing customers throughout NYS with quality services without the need to come into a Career Center;
- **Virtual Career Fairs** – Large-scale career fairs are held entirely online providing business and job seeking customers with the ability to connect via text and video chat, further improving employment outcomes for customers and hiring and retention rates for businesses;
- **Comprehensive Online Training Solution** – This provides unemployed New Yorkers with the training and tools to upskill and reskill in order to find the right job and career pathway in a post-COVID-19 workforce environment; and
- **Enhanced Job Search** – Increases and leverages machine learning and artificial intelligence to provide customers targeted job matches that align with their skills and experience.

To achieve dual job seeker and business customer service goals and the goals identified in the NYS Combined State Plan, NYS’s strategy is to build public-private sector partnerships and strategic alliances, creating a unified System that integrates and coordinates the work of local experts and stakeholders from government, education, and business, with priority given to individuals in special populations.

Various solicitations have been released or re-released across core programs that provide priority in scoring to applicants planning to serve individuals with barriers to employment. This includes the Consolidated Funding Application Workforce Development Initiative (CFA WDI), launched in

PY 2018 and providing up to a total of \$175M statewide in additional funding for workforce investments, with NYSDOL’s contribution being \$25M. The CFA WDI is one of the most important pieces of the System and is discussed in more detail in later sections of this report.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Interagency Team, consisting of staff from NYSDOL, the NYS Education Department (NYSED), the NYS Office of Children and Family Services/ NYS Commission for the Blind (OCFS/NYSCB), the NYS Office for the Aging (NYSOFA), the NYS

Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA), and the NYS Department of State (DOS), continued to meet throughout PY 2021 to further the progress made in PY 2020 related to the development of NYS's workforce. Additional State agencies with workforce development initiatives were added to the Interagency Team in late PY 2021, including the State University of New York (SUNY), Empire State Development (ESD), and the Office of Mental Health (OMH).

The WIOA Interagency Team also has several workgroups, including:

- **Training & Accessibility Assistance Workgroup (TAG)** – Collaborates with NYS Career Centers to make the Centers and workforce development services accessible to all New Yorkers through the distribution and training of assistive technology, and identifies opportunities for skills building across partners;
- **Business Engagement Workgroup** – Focuses on the development of a common system for agencies to track their engagement of businesses and new statewide policy across agencies;
- **Combined Plan Workgroup** – Develops the four-year NYS Combined State Plan and required two-year modification;
- **Data Integration Workgroup** – Tasked with determining how NYS can best comply with WIOA's requirement for integrated data reporting. System partners continued to meet throughout PY 2021 to develop a statewide unique identifier and determine a method to best share and combine agency data;
- **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Workgroup** – Develops the guidance and template for the WIOA-required MOU; and
- **Youth Collaborative** – Works collectively to support the development of youth/young adults.

B. MEETING BUSINESS NEEDS TO SUPPORT ECONOMIC GROWTH AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Functioning as the Career Center System's conduit to the business community and supporting WIOA's principles for a demand driven system, NYSDOL's Business Engagement team (the NYSDOL Business Services and NYSDOL Rapid Response Units) directly engages new and repeat business customers to offer targeted programs, services, and job development. Integral to these efforts is strategic business outreach, which is built around an understanding of the unique needs of individual businesses, and a tailored service strategy to meet those needs.

II. SECTOR STRATEGIES AND CAREER PATHWAYS

A. BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

NYSDOL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

NYSDOL's Community Engagement initiative, considered the gold standard of service delivery, provides intensive placement services in specific areas of NYS suffering high unemployment or high poverty. Community Engagement employs a sector-based model that relies on a network of partnerships among business intermediaries, government, educational institutions, training providers, economic developers, and labor and community organizations. This type of model requires active staff engagement in job development (business demand) and customer case management (worker supply) with intensive referral and job brokering. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the in-person outreach tied to this initiative was paused during 2020 and 2021. However, staff is beginning to move forward with it again in 2022.

Community Engagement was first piloted in the Bronx in 2014 and subsequently rolled out to the following 14 areas across NYS: Bronx, Queens, Lewis, Kings (Brooklyn), Jefferson, Franklin, Montgomery, Orleans, Oswego, St. Lawrence, Steuben, Niagara, Buffalo, and Lackawanna. In June 2019, plans were implemented to further expand Community Engagement into Syracuse, Binghamton and Elmira.

Key aspects of the initiative include stationing Career Center staff in convenient community locations to:

- Provide case management of customers, which includes ensuring each customer has a quality resume prepared, providing appropriate job leads and referrals, assisting with interview preparation, and following-up with continued assistance; and
- Engage and provide services to local businesses in convenient locations, including the development of job openings, matching job posting orders to Community Engagement customers, referring qualified candidates and advocating to businesses on their behalf, developing customized recruitments and career fair events to facilitate hiring, and following-up to ensure business customer satisfaction.

REGIONAL BUSINESS SERVICES TEAMS (RBSTs) AND ALIGNMENT WITH REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

NYSDOL's Regional Business Services staff collaborate with Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs), WIOA partners, and Career Center staff to develop sector strategies and to align service to businesses in concert with regional industry cluster/sector strategies and the goals of the Regional Economic Development Councils. RBSTs are established throughout NYS to support alignment of Career Center services with sector initiatives/strategies in the region. This structure brings Career Center staff and NYSDOL Business Services and local Business Services staff together to discuss common challenges and share promising practices. It also allows staff to share workforce intelligence and strategies for marketing services, as well as hiring and training incentives for businesses. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, some of the job duties assigned to the RBSTs were temporarily suspended, but are increasing again in 2022.

STRATEGIC BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT

NYSDOL Business Engagement works closely with many high-profile businesses on projects with significant job creation and sector impacts. These efforts include coordinating with businesses to create a customized recruitment plan and application process, followed by matching, referring, and assessing qualified candidates in NYSDOL's talent bank along with the job seeking public.

CUSTOMIZED RECRUITMENTS AND CAREER FAIRS

Customized recruitments are no-cost, targeted hiring events built around the specific needs of each business. NYSDOL Business Services staff work directly with business customers to develop job specifics, search the talent bank for qualified candidates, and set up a hiring event where the business can interview these candidates.

Career Fairs provide businesses with the opportunity to interact one-on-one with job seekers. NYSDOL Business Services staff organize and participate in numerous career fairs around NYS each year at no cost to participating businesses. During the COVID-19 pandemic, in-person career fairs and recruitment events were not an option. To support the ongoing critical needs of our business and job seeking customers, NYSDOL secured a virtual career fair platform to allow for the continuation of these connections, which continues into PY 2022.

Virtual Career Fairs offer a sophisticated job fair simulation where businesses and jobseekers can connect in a virtual setting in real-time, while keeping the familiar feel and positive outcomes of a physical recruitment event. In PY 2021, NYSDOL hosted 93 Virtual Career Fairs which brought 4,794* businesses offering 206,442 job openings together with 46,247* job seekers in a safe space to network and share opportunities. *These are not unique as many of the same businesses and job seekers come to multiple events each month.

As a workforce partner, NYSDOL provides extensive recruitment assistance and supportive services to hiring businesses in sectors with large impacts (e.g., emerging industry sectors or sectors that remain constant and critical (in-demand) in a region or the state as a whole), connecting individuals to employment. Examples of services and initiatives provided include:

- **Jobs Express** – An online database for businesses to post available jobs sorted by region and occupational category. Local areas use Jobs Express as a lead-generation source to grow NYS’s database of business customers. Jobs Express saw a record number of over 245,000 NYS-based job openings in PY 2021.
- **Microsites** – A subset of the NYS Job Bank (newyork.usnlx.com). These sites help job seekers research specific employment needs they may have more efficiently.
 - **Immediate Hiring Opportunities Microsite (Statewide)** – The microsite NYHireNow (nyhirenow.usnlx.com) was launched in Spring 2020 to highlight immediate job openings available in industries that expanded during the COVID-19 pandemic. The site lists immediate hiring opportunities with essential industries during the COVID-19 pandemic and currently has over 84,000 immediate jobs available. Since launching the Immediate Hiring Opportunities Microsite, two (2) additional sites have been created.
 - **Seasonal Microsite** – The microsite SeasonalWorks (seasonalworks.labor.ny.gov) highlights NYS’s seasonal employment opportunities such as construction, retail, landscaping, and snow plowing and currently has over 16,000 jobs available.
 - **Tourism Microsite** – NYSDOL partnered with ESD and their I Love NY team to develop the Tourism Microsite NYTourism (nytourism.usnlx.com) to address the critical needs in the tourism and hospitality industry. The site currently has over 26,000 jobs available.
- **OJT** – In PY 2021, NYS worked closely with the NYS Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) to operate the Energy Efficiency and Clean Technology OJT to provide businesses with incentives to hire target populations, such as the long-term unemployed. During PY 2021, NYSDOL provided due diligence on 111 businesses applying to the NYSERDA OJT program and assisted 108 businesses to hire and train 432 individuals through the program.
- **Human Resources (HR) Consultation Services** – NYSDOL Business Engagement provides technical assistance at no cost to businesses with a variety of HR issues. These services include job analysis and descriptions, application processes, skills gap analysis, turnover analysis, employee handbooks, and help navigating rules and regulations.

- **Hiring and Training Incentives** – NYSDOL Business Engagement provides businesses with technical assistance to help them understand available employment-based tax credits and training incentives. By taking advantage of these incentives, businesses can save money by reducing tax liability or by using grant funds to offset the costs of training.

ADDITIONAL BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES AND COMMUNICATION

NYSDOL's Business Engagement staff returned to their core functions after heavily assisting with UI during the COVID-19 pandemic. During PY 2021, Business Engagement staff engaged an average of 1,400 businesses each week and provided services to 27,050 unique businesses.

B. WORK-BASED LEARNING (INCLUDING APPRENTICESHIP)

I-81 VIADUCT WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

NYS used statewide activities funds to support Onondaga County's large-scale infrastructure project to redesign sections of the I-81 Viaduct in and around the city of Syracuse, and to refurbish others. The funds provide intensive career services, hands-on training, and supportive services to expand the availability of qualified job seekers in construction and transportation-related occupations; and assist job seekers with employment barriers from historically marginalized communities in Syracuse for placement in local infrastructure employment. 77 participants have been placed into work-based learning opportunities including CDL (Heavy Truck) and Welding.

NYSERDA ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND CLEAN TECHNOLOGY TRAINING FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

NYSERDA released \$2.8M in OJT funding for new hires at energy efficiency/clean technology businesses in PY 2021. NYSDOL Business Services promotes these opportunities to businesses in the energy sector and works closely with NYSERDA to provide technical assistance to businesses with the application process, hiring eligible candidates, skills gap analyses, and development of training plans. In PY 2021, NYSDOL helped 108 businesses hire and train 432 individuals.

CONSOLIDATED FUNDING APPLICATION WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

As noted in Section I.A., PY 2018 saw the release of the CFA WDI on May 8, 2019, with the initiative continuing throughout the entirety of PYs 2019, 2020, and 2021. The application deadline for Round 1 was May 29, 2020 and for Round 2 was April 15, 2022.

Round 2, like Round 1, was funded using state-level WIOA funds. Round 2 supported two (2) training programs:

1. Existing Employee Training (EET) – Trains incumbent workers in specific occupational skills that lead to job retention and/or advancement in middle-skills occupations; and
2. Unemployed/Underemployed Worker Training (UWT) – Trains un- and/or underemployed individuals in occupational skills to prepare them for full or part-time positions needed by businesses in the region, and to offer career development and supportive services to individuals with additional barriers to employment.

Businesses were eligible to apply for one or both of these programs, depending on their needs. At the completion of Round 2 in April 2022, NYSDOL made 83 awards totaling more than \$15M.

Round 3 of the CFA WDI was launched on May 4, 2022 and will continue into PY 2022. This round will continue to utilize state-level WIOA funds to support the EET and UWT programs.

REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP

NYS's economic well-being is developed and sustained by a highly skilled workforce and Registered Apprenticeship plays a leading role in ensuring a reliable and constant source of skilled workers for in-demand industries. NYSDOL has received the following five apprenticeship-related grant awards since 2016:

Grant Award	Value
1. Accelerator Grant	\$ 200,000
2. ApprenticeshipUSA State Expansion Grant	\$ 1,500,000
3. Expansion Grant Continuation Funding Staffing Grant	\$ 1,816,650
4. State Apprenticeship Expansion Grant	\$ 4,445,188
5. State Capacity to Expand Apprenticeship	\$ 450,000

The first of these was a \$200,000 Accelerator Grant in June 2016 that served as a steppingstone toward the goal of apprenticeship expansion. Additionally, in 2016, NYSDOL received a \$1.5M ApprenticeshipUSA State Expansion Grant (AEG) from the United States Department of Labor (USDOL). NYSDOL received \$1.8M in additional funds in March 2018 through the Expansion Grant Continuation Funding Staffing Grant. These grant funds continued until October 2021.

NYSDOL has seen success with these grants, funding an initial Request for Applications (RFA), in part with AEG funds. NYSDOL made an additional \$3.7M in WIOA Discretionary funding available for a second round of funding under the AEG-RFA, referred to as AEG-2, and NYSDOL then made an additional \$2.0M in WIOA Discretionary funding available during PY 2021 for continued Apprenticeship expansion. Under AEG-2, sponsors and signatories of NYS Registered Apprenticeship programs could apply for up to \$300,000 in funds (up to \$10,000 per apprentice) to cover costs associated with training such as OJT, related instruction, books, and tools. Both rounds of AEG funding targeted industries such as Information Technology, Health Care, Advanced Manufacturing, and other in-demand occupations. The application deadline for AEG-2 funding was on June 30, 2022. A total of 32 programs received funding under NYSDOL's AEG RFAs, including some large group programs such as the Manufacturers Association of Central New York (MACNY) and 1199SEIU League Training and Upgrading Fund.

In 2019, NYSDOL received approximately \$4.4M under the State Apprenticeship Expansion Grant program (continuing through June 30, 2023). Through these funds, NYSDOL released the Apprenticeship State Expansion Request for Applications (ASE-RFA), which utilized \$2.75M to support industry intermediaries in sponsoring Registered Apprenticeship programs in high growth industries such as Advanced Manufacturing, Healthcare, Information Technology, Hospitality, Film, Transportation & Logistics, Sewing/Textiles and other high-demand industries. Sponsors and signatories of Group NYS Registered Apprenticeship programs were able to apply for up to \$200,000 in funds (up to \$5,000 per apprentice) to support staff in the role(s) of Related Instruction Coordinator and OJT Job Developer. One program was funded under the ASE-RFA. Due to the lack of interest in the ASE-RFA and the prior success of AEG funding, a new RFA was issued, AEG-3, which utilized \$2.55M in State Apprenticeship Expansion Grant funding. Under AEG-3, applicants may apply for up to \$300,000 in funds (up to \$15,000 per apprentice) to cover costs associated with training such as OJT, related instruction, books, and tools. Similar to prior rounds of AEG funding, AEG-3 targets industries such as Information Technology, Health Care, Advanced Manufacturing, and other in-demand occupations. Applications for AEG-3 are being accepted through December 30, 2022.

Most recently, NYSDOL was awarded a \$450,000 State Capacity to Expand Apprenticeship base grant (continuing through June 30, 2023) to support new staff and marketing efforts. Both the State Apprenticeship Expansion grant and the State Capacity to Expand Apprenticeship grant will allow NYSDOL to sustain the goal of apprenticeship expansion within NYS.

In addition to these grants, NYSDOL continues to develop new trades and move more trades into alternative training approaches, allowing for further diversity and expansion into new and emerging industries. This includes a recent increase in the number of new programs in non-traditional trades. During the reporting period, NYSDOL approved 78 new programs and of those programs, 52 were in trades outside of building and construction. These numbers continue to rise and NYSDOL anticipates continuing this trend by further expanding apprenticeship beyond the traditional construction trades.

NYS's Empire State Apprenticeship Tax Credit (ESATC) Program has an annual state budget allocation of \$10M to provide tax credits beginning at \$2,000 for each qualified apprentice. Initial ESATC credits are available for apprentices who are hired and remain in a Registered Apprenticeship program for six (6) months. Additional or enhanced ESATC credits are available for each year the apprentice remains in the program, as well as for businesses that hire disadvantaged youth as apprentices, and for those who provide the apprentices with the support of a mentor. The ESATC focuses on encouraging new apprenticeship opportunities in in-demand occupations throughout NYS, and as such, most construction trade Registered Apprenticeship programs are excluded from the ESATC.

During the reporting period, NYSDOL worked closely with our business and educational partners, including NYSED and SUNY, to connect with prospective businesses and apprentices, and market to new and emerging industries. Our partnerships have helped increase awareness of Registered Apprenticeship and support expansion efforts. Statewide apprenticeship industry roundtable marketing events were held throughout the year for prospective sponsors and workforce development stakeholders. Despite the on-going COVID-19 pandemic, Registered Apprenticeship staff continued to connect and market Registered Apprenticeship to potential program sponsors using virtual methods.

C. WORK EXPERIENCES FOR YOUTH AND ADULTS

As described in Section VIII.E., NYSDOL operated a Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) systems change grant funded by USDOL, which ended on September 30, 2021 after a 12-month, no-cost extension. A key component of this opportunity was the provision of work experience to youth, ages 14-24. DEI project staff worked with businesses and community partners to develop these work experiences that included, but were not limited to, paid or unpaid internships, job shadowing, pre-apprenticeship, OJT, career-focused mentoring, and transitional jobs. These types of work experiences were incorporated into the program to meet the diverse learning needs of youth and included tools such as Virtual Job Shadow and Metrix Learning.

NYS is on track for spending 20% of local Title I Youth program funds on work experience. Most LWDBs have developed local work experience policies to assist providers in the implementation of work experience, including the educational components. NYS continues to provide reporting, programmatic, and fiscal guidance regarding work experiences.

NYS used statewide activities funds to support work experiences for youth with Requests for Proposals (RFPs), with 22 contracts for the Opportunity Youth Career Exploration and Access (OYCEA) program. These programs served 1,542 youth as of October 2022, with career exploration and work readiness training, work experience, and job placement in Long Island, Syracuse, and Albany.

NYSDOL also began a Gun Violence Prevention (GVP) effort as one part of NYS's first-in-the-nation gun violence disaster emergency and comprehensive strategy to build a safer NYS. This initiative treats gun violence as a public health crisis and includes short-term solutions as well as long-term strategies such as work experiences, career exploration, and occupational skills training to break the cycle of violence. Each program under the GVP effort is summarized below:

- Consortium for Worker Education (CWE) – \$12M in state funding was awarded to CWE to fund workforce training and job placement for youth residing in zip codes most impacted by gun violence in New York City (NYC). As of November 2022, 1,760 participants were enrolled in training; 1,362 participants completed training; 761 obtained credentials; 1,984 enrolled in workforce preparation services; and 769 participants were placed in employment.
- GVP Local Initiative – \$16M in state funding was awarded to 17 LWDBs to fund workforce training and job placement for 3,200 youth and young adults in 20 NYS locations outside of NYC most impacted by gun violence. As of September 30, 2022, 1,684 young adults were enrolled in the program and 892 participants were placed in subsidized and/or unsubsidized employment.
- Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) – \$4M in WIOA Discretionary funding was awarded to DCJS to fund the salaries of Interrupters/Credible Messengers, including 70 Outreach Workers and 7 Supervisors, in NYC, Albany, Bronx, Buffalo, Hempstead, Mt. Vernon, Yonkers, Poughkeepsie, Rochester, Syracuse, Troy, Wyandanch, and Newburgh, under the SNUG Program. Interrupters, typically former justice-involved individuals themselves, will gain employment while engaging high-risk individuals in communities with high rates of violence to reduce and prevent shootings. As of September 2022, 31 participants were hired as Outreach Workers.
- Summer Youth Employment – For summer 2021, \$10.25M in WIOA Discretionary funding was utilized to augment OTDA’s Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP). This funding supported the expansion of SYEP 2021 to an additional 2,877 participants as of September 2022. NYC received an extension to serve youth until December 2022.

D. TRANSITIONAL JOBS

As described in Section VIII.C., NYSDOL operated an Opioid NDWG funded by USDOL, which ended on June 30, 2022 after a six-month, no-cost extension. A key component of this workforce opportunity was the provision of disaster-relief employment aimed at alleviating the issues caused by the opioid crisis in affected communities.

These temporary positions served as an on-ramp to positions in Healthcare, including positions related to the treatment and prevention of opioid abuse and addiction. By the end of the Opioid NDWG’s period of performance, 585 participants were served.

E. INCUMBENT WORKER TRAINING

As further discussed in Section II.B., the CFA WDI includes an EET program. In Round 2, a total of \$25M in federal WIOA funding was made available for both EET and Unemployed Worker Training, on a first-come, first-serve basis, to provide occupational skills training commensurate with REDC priorities. EET funds were targeted to businesses seeking to train their incumbent workers for more skilled positions leading to promotions, increased pay, or increased earnings through more work hours. Applications were accepted on a rolling basis through April 15, 2022. Under Round 2, 23 EET awards were made totaling \$1.9M. The EET program is continuing under Round 3 of the CFA WDI in PY 2022.

III. PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM

A. STATE PERFORMANCE MEASURES OR GOALS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS MEETING THEM

After the close of PY 2017, NYS developed and released a WIOA Primary Indicators of Performance Report to the LWDBs, and continued to do so through PY 2020. This report details the negotiated PY local area goals, local area performance on each of the WIOA Primary Indicators of Performance, and how that local performance relates to the NYS-level performance. Due to a technical issue, NYSDOL was unable to release these reports on a quarterly basis during PY 2021. However, NYSDOL staff offered and provided technical assistance to LWDBs throughout PY 2021 in the form of webinars, one-on-one support and One-Stop Operating System (OSOS) guides. The issue with the Primary Indicators of Performance Report Card has been corrected and NYS has released the PY 2021 Quarter 4 Performance Report. These quarterly reports are used to assess local area progress toward meeting the Primary Indicators of Performance and will continue to be released quarterly moving forward. NYSDOL uses these reports to assist the local areas with improving performance and to determine workforce training needs throughout the System.

In conjunction with the release of the Primary Indicators of Performance Report, NYSDOL also provides individual lists of customers in the Credential Attainment and Measurable Skill Gains (MSG) measures to allow local areas the ability to outreach to customers and collect outcomes. In PY 2021, NYSDOL staff were fully transitioned back to providing re-employment services after providing assistance to the UI Division during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, NYSDOL has resumed providing technical assistance to ensure data is entered accurately and offers individualized training to local areas in need of further guidance and assistance.

B. ANY PERFORMANCE DEFICIENCIES ON THE PRIMARY INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE

The Employment Rate in the 2nd and 4th Quarter after Exit measures were negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Credential Attainment and MSG measures emerged as potentially difficult measures in NYS. To address this difficulty, NYSDOL developed and implemented a plan to work with local areas to improve performance on the Credential Attainment measure, which included analyzing and evaluating local area Credential Attainment measure performance. Conversations were held with high performing local areas to determine best practices to share with underperforming areas and individual meetings were held with struggling local areas to address any issues and share best practices. NYSDOL has also continued sharing information on the participants in the Credential Attainment measure, as well as the customers identified in the MSG measure, with local areas on a quarterly basis so appropriate follow-ups can be conducted with customers who have not shown a positive outcome. NYSDOL continues to develop and deliver trainings to local areas to improve performance on both the Credential Attainment and MSG measures. As NYS continues to emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, additional discussions and system-wide and individualized trainings will be offered to further improve performance on all measures.

C. DESCRIPTIONS OF ANY FACTORS IMPACTING PERFORMANCE

The calculation of the Credential Attainment and MSG measures is completely reliant on staff performing proper data entry because an administrative crossmatch method to gather this information does not currently exist. NYSDOL is actively working to improve data entry to ensure accurate performance is reported and to mitigate any potential negative impacts.

NYSDOL staff developed and delivered extensive trainings in the form of customized live virtual training, webinars, and OSOS guides for local staff on proper data entry and its importance in calculating these measures. NYSDOL is also working with local staff to ensure they understand the reports of individuals included in these measures and are performing the appropriate outreach to collect and data enter this information.

D. COMMON EXIT POLICY

NYSDOL implemented a functional alignment policy for the WIOA Title I and Title III programs. Individuals 18 years of age or older who receive a service from a Career Center must be enrolled as a WIOA Adult, DW or Youth and are considered participants in both the WIOA Title I and Title III Wagner-Peyser (WP) programs. Any participant who receives services funded in whole or in part from the WIOA Title I, Title III WP, Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS), or Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) programs, sequentially or simultaneously, will be counted as a participant in each program, and will share a common “date of participation” and a common “date of exit” for federal reporting. Both Title I and Title III WP follow this common exit policy. If a participant receives services from multiple programs, the common date of exit for reporting on each program is the end date of the most recent service across all programs. Participation in any one program extends across all programs that share a common enrollment. Customers who do not receive a service within 90 days will exit enrollment effective the date of last service.

E. NEGOTIATED PERFORMANCE LEVELS FOR LOCAL AREAS FOR PROGRAM YEARS 2020-2021

For PYs 2020 and 2021, negotiated performance goals were established for local areas using the Statistical Adjustment Model. State negotiations with USDOL were also completed for PYs 2022 and 2023 by the end of PY 2021. Proposed and negotiated performance goals for the local areas are found on the WIOA Primary Indicators of Performance webpage (dol.ny.gov/performance-indicators-goals) on the NYSDOL website.

F. DATA VALIDATIONS AND DATA INTEGRITY

Now that the annual USDOL Data Element Validation (DEV) review is discontinued, to ensure data validations and data integrity, NYSDOL continues its annual Adult, DW, Youth, and TAA program monitoring reviews of NYS’s 33 LWDBs. These annual program monitoring reviews include DEV reviews of sampled OSOS case management participant records and files, with findings and required actions made, and technical assistance provided as necessary to improve compliance. Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, NYSDOL staff were engaged in assisting the UI Division process claims, resulting in a reduction of staff assisted services. However, Program monitoring staff returned to regular duties effective September 1, 2021, and DEV reviews have recommenced. Program monitoring and DEV reviews of the LWDBs for the PY 2020 timeframe were completed during PY 2021, and program monitoring and DEV reviews of the LWDBs for the PY 2021 timeframe began in July 2022 and will be completed during PY 2022.

IV. WAIVERS

A. WAIVERS IN PLACE FOR AT LEAST ONE PROGRAM YEAR

Extension of PY 2019 WIOA Adult, DW, and Youth Funding Availability Waiver

In PY 2021, NYS received approval for one USDOL waiver to support workforce development: Waiver associated with the requirement at 20 CFR 683.110(c)(1) and (2), which limits the period of local WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth funds availability to the PY of allotment and the succeeding year. This waiver extended through the duration of PY 2021 and assisted NYS and the LWDBs in recovering from the unprecedented effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, including significant reductions in customer traffic and decreased spending on WIOA programs. As NYS reopens, this waiver helps ensure the influx of customers who require WIOA services and programs receive the services they need.

B. PROGRESS TOWARD ACHIEVING THE GOALS AND PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES IN ETA APPROVAL LETTER AND/OR STATE'S APPROVAL REQUEST

While all LWDBs appreciated the ability to extend the use of PY 2019 Adult, DW, and Youth funding by one year, only the Fulton/Montgomery/Schoharie (FMS) LWDB took advantage of this extension.

C. IMPACTS ON STATE AND LOCAL AREA PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES, IF ANY

This waiver had no direct impact on NYS and local area performance outcomes.

D. ANY AVAILABLE QUANTITATIVE INFORMATION

FMS had \$21,102.02 remaining in PY 2019 Youth funding and \$18,517.16 remaining in PY 2019 DW funding as of June 30, 2021, and was the only LWDB of 33 that required the use of the one-year extension.

E. WAIVERS IN DEVELOPMENT/AWAITING REVIEW

NYS does not currently have any waivers in development or awaiting review.

V. EFFECTIVENESS IN SERVING BUSINESSES

The WIOA Interagency Team's Business Engagement workgroup focuses on the development of a common system for agencies to track their engagement of businesses. Since its inception, the workgroup has strived to collaborate more closely at both the local and State levels to ensure all partners are included in the RBSTs and coordination of activities related to engaging businesses. The group focused on aligning cross-agency services for the purposes of federal reporting, utilizing OSOS for tracking all cross-agency services to business, and identifying key performance measures for engaging businesses.

NYS is utilizing the following methods to report on the Effectiveness in Serving Businesses measure:

A. REPEAT BUSINESS CUSTOMERS

This measure looks at the percentage of repeat business customers and is based on the total number of business establishments that received and utilized a service anytime within the prior three years. During PY 2021, NYSDOL reported a repeat business customer rate of 76.9%.

B. BUSINESS PENETRATION RATE

This measure looks at the percentage of businesses using services out of all the businesses in NYS. During PY 2021, NYSDOL reported a business penetration rate of 4.6%.

C. OTHER MEASURES/METRICS USED TO ASSESS EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

Additional business engagement activities are recorded by NYSDOL staff in OSOS, which provides a location to store key information that will improve the effectiveness of contact with a certain business. Services have been added in OSOS for core partners to record business engagement activities throughout NYS, ensuring streamlined outreach with minimal duplication of efforts. NYSDOL, NYSED's Adult Career and Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR), OCFS/NYSCB, and local Business Engagement staff are encouraged to meet locally to discuss outreach efforts and determine the most effective manner of engaging businesses.

Successful engagement is evidenced by the multitude of businesses posting their jobs on the NYS Job Bank, which maintains a daily average of more than 346,000 job openings.

VI. CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

A. INFORMATION USED FOR ONE-STOP CERTIFICATION

NYSDOL's approach to customer satisfaction is to allow LWDBs to implement their own processes catered toward their local area and the populations being served. In the PY 2017 certification process, all 33 LWDBs indicated that a customer feedback process was in place and utilized. This was verified by NYSDOL through the Career Center Certification process, where one of the several required continuous improvement components is having a customer feedback process in place. Although recertification is required every three PYs, the COVID-19 pandemic pushed back this process. NYSDOL will continue to verify that customer feedback processes remain in place when Career Center Certification is reimplemented.

B. METHODOLOGIES

NYSDOL has placed a priority on embedding a customer service focus into the service delivery model for both job seekers and businesses. The programs offered to job seekers in the Career Centers all follow a continuous engagement model. Traditionally, customers were continuously invited into the Career Center for a variety of services, including one-on-one appointments, workshops, on-site recruitments, and mini job fairs. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the workforce system began providing services virtually to customers, conducting one-on-one appointments with customers via a Virtual Contact Center solution to ensure customers in need of assistance received these services. As we transition out of the COVID-19 pandemic, the workforce system is again providing services in-person in conjunction with virtual services. Continuous engagement and individualized case management allow staff to provide the necessary services to customers while giving customers multiple opportunities to provide feedback, which leads to customer satisfaction. Staff are evaluated on the services provided to their customers and Career Center managers use individual level performance data to provide consistent feedback. This ensures customers receive the necessary services to help them reach their employment and training goals.

VII. EVALUATION AND RELATED RESEARCH PROJECTS

A. WEEKLY/MONTHLY REPORTS

NYSDOL produces several weekly, quarterly, and monthly reports designed to evaluate the programs, initiatives, and solicitations implemented under WIOA Titles I and III in NYS.

NYSDOL responds to a substantial volume of LWDB reporting requests on a quarterly, monthly, and ad-hoc basis. Reports provided include aggregate and individual reporting on performance, cohort demographics and characteristics, services, and outcomes to assist local areas with developing more effective service strategies.

NYSDOL focuses efforts on serving customers with barriers to employment. One of the special populations NYSDOL prioritizes are justice-involved individuals. A report developed for the program assisting these individuals shows the number of formerly incarcerated participants in NYS that were served or hired during specific timeframes. The report also shows NYS job development with businesses interested in hiring participants in the program. Lastly, the report shows services and employment outcomes for justice-involved individuals referred to NYSDOL by the NYS Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) in several pilot locations including Albany, Buffalo, Syracuse, Bronx, Brooklyn, and both Nassau County (Hicksville, Hempstead, and Massapequa) and Orange County (Middletown and Newburgh).

NYSDOL actively operates several USDOL-funded grants. Programmatic narrative reports are submitted to USDOL on a quarterly basis describing project activities related to grant goals and objectives. NYSDOL leadership also receives narrative reports on state-level projects. The grants and state-level projects, as well as the information submitted in the reports, include, but are not limited to:

- New York Systems Change and Inclusive Opportunities Network (NY SCION) – The report includes a summary of grant progress including participants served, total grant allocations, and accrued expenditures;
- The COVID-19 Disaster Recovery (DR) and Employment Recovery (ER) NDWGs – Quarterly reports include a summary of grant progress including total expenditures; challenges and concerns; key issues and technical assistance needs; and significant activities, accomplishments, and success stories. Internal bi-weekly reports are compiled by NYSDOL staff and reviewed to track grant progress;
- Syracuse I-81 Project – The bi-weekly report includes a summary of grant progress including participants served, total grant allocations, and accrued expenditures;
- The Fidelity Bonding Demonstration Grant – The report includes cumulative bonds purchased within a quarter; the number of bonds issued within a quarter; any issues or concerns related to grant implementation; and outreach, education, and marketing activities directed to stakeholders within NYS regarding the Federal Bonding Program;
- The Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) – The report includes information about outlays, expenditures, and obligations related to the budget; staffing expenses; performance goals and outcomes; the individualized career services rate for JVSG staff; services to non-veterans rate; staffing changes and vacancy information; and best practices for the Hire a Veteran Medallion Program; and
- Fostering Access, Rights, and Equity (FARE) – This quarterly report includes a summary of outreach activities to women by NYSDOL and four (4) partnering organizations. Additionally, the report includes information on leveraged resources, expenditures, status of deliverables, challenges and assistance needed, best practices, and outcomes. The report also captures the number of women reached, number of women who benefited from service or were connected to a benefits calculator, the type of audience, and demographic information (i.e., women of color, those with disabilities, justice-involved, low wage earners, LGBTQA+, immigrants/refugees, and women with dependent children or older disabled children).

VIII. ACTIVITIES PROVIDED BY STATEWIDE FUNDS

A. RAPID RESPONSE ACTIVITIES AND LAYOFF AVERSION

The NYSDOL Rapid Response Program functions as part of the Career Center System, working cooperatively with LWDB Directors and Career Center managers to serve affected workers before layoffs occur. NYSDOL Rapid Response is alerted when businesses submit a WARN Act notice to NYSDOL 90 days in advance of layoffs. The program also receives alerts regarding upcoming or sudden layoffs via Career Center leads, Contact Center customer inquiries, media reports, and other business intelligence. At that time, follow-up is made with the business for planning intensive job placement assistance. These alerts are initially categorized as expeditious response and are sometimes recategorized as Rapid Response if the layoffs trigger the WARN threshold.

NYS's Rapid Response Program continued to see a marked decrease in the number of WARNs received and number of attached affected workers, reflective of historically low unemployment rates. In PY 2021, 39 WARNs impacting 665 affected workers were received.

Rapid Response sought out opportunities to serve businesses and workers impacted by smaller layoff and closure events (non-WARN) referred to as expeditious responses. In PY 2021, 106 expeditious response events, impacting 6,039 affected workers, were identified.

Rapid Response is initially focused on layoff aversion by advising the downsizing/closing business of the Shared Work Program, which is discussed in more detail later in this Section. When layoffs cannot be averted, onsite service orientations are scheduled for customer registration in OSOS and messaging. This includes:

- Providing intensive 1:1 job placement assistance;
- Issuing customized job lead templates for customers' initial consideration based on WARN job titles attachment (continuous customer engagement job leads follow);
- Providing ongoing job lead templates as the customer relationship evolves;
- Developing a skill-based resume;
- Advocating to a hiring business on the behalf of a customer who submitted an employment application to that business;
- Coaching employment interview techniques based on an upcoming job interview;
- Providing alerts for upcoming recruitments and job fairs (also, introduce customers to specific businesses strongly interested in the labor pool);
- Sharing business and customer testimonials;
- Discussing local Career Center services available;
- Sharing basic information on filing a UI claim and, if an anticipated need, use of a remote UI content expert available to answer technical questions; and
- Arranging for a NYS Marketplace Navigator to present affordable health care options.

As identified in Section I.B., the Rapid Response unit is part of NYSDOL's Business Engagement team. Plans for service are initially drafted for downsizing/closing businesses and are subject to modification based on continuing discussion with HR management. Alignment with sector strategies is a point of emphasis toward brokering the labor pool with businesses in expansion mode. The NYSDOL Rapid Response unit and NYSDOL Business Services unit regularly communicate about the Rapid Response customer skill sets and work experience to identify appropriate job leads in addition to conducting dedicated job fairs.

Business prospecting research tools and methods used by Rapid Response include, but are not limited to:

- Prospecting hiring businesses:
 - Quarterly Expanding Businesses Report;
 - NYS Employment Graph indicating hiring trends;
 - Internet mining;
 - Ongoing interaction with Business Services and Career Center staff; and
 - Leads as provided by served customers.
- Prospecting downsizing or closing businesses:
 - Quarterly Contracting Business Report;
 - Quarterly Dun and Bradstreet Distressed Business Report;
 - Internet mining;
 - Leads as provided by customers calling the NYSDOL Contact Center; and
 - Early Warning Report.
 - New regular UI Benefit Claims, by region and single-site establishment firms, with five (5) or more current week claims in NYS, referencing current week and seven (7) previous weeks trend.

Daily goals are established for Rapid Response staff to outreach businesses and customers. Rapid Response staff resumed daily outreach at the start of PY 2021. Emphasis was placed on customer outreach to aide those impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in returning to work. Virtual orientations were the primary delivery model for job search, healthcare marketplace, and applying for unemployment insurance information throughout the PY. At the close of the PY, Rapid Response returned to offering onsite services. Business customers now have the option to receive virtual or onsite services based on the needs of their workforce.

Results are shared weekly with Rapid Response's ten (10) regional units (22 field staff). During PY 2021, service activities produced:

- 1,178 unique businesses engaged;
- 8,461 unique number of total customers engaged;
- 7,423 unique total customers engaged (number attached to Rapid Response/Expeditious Response accounts); and
- 2,408 placements.

TAA is also highly considered when there is a possibility of layoffs due to foreign competition (directly or indirectly). Benefits to a customer when a petition is certified by USDOL include:

- Job training (classroom, online, OJT, and apprenticeship);
- Income support payments;
- Job search and moving allowances;
- A tax credit to help pay for health insurance; and
- A wage supplement for customers age 50 or older, who return to work at a lower pay rate.

Rapid Response asks the business key fact finding questions to determine if a TAA petition should be filed with USDOL, including:

- Is the company doing business in other countries? If yes, where?
- Has the company recently been sold or purchased by another company that does the same or similar type of work? If yes, who?
- Do they compete with products/services from other countries? If yes, who and/or what?
- Does the worker know the name(s) of their competitors? If yes, who?

- Has the worker trained replacement workers based in other countries prior to the layoff? If yes, what countries?
- Has the worker or co-workers traveled to other countries to train workers? If yes, what countries?

During PY 2021, TAA petition activity included 40 petitions filed, of which 14 were certified, 20 were denied, and 6 were under consideration or terminated (e.g., affected workers covered by a previously certified petition or a petition withdrawn from consideration).

THE SHARED WORK PROGRAM

The Shared Work Program helps businesses retain valued employees during temporary downturns, which is more important than ever in today's economy. It can also be used as part of a seasonal re-opening strategy. With Shared Work businesses keep their trained, valued employees and avoid layoffs by reducing work schedules. While on a reduced schedule, employees receive reduced pay from the business and a percentage of their unemployment benefit rate.

Retaining employees means the business can gear up quickly when conditions improve. They can also save the expense of recruiting, hiring, and training new employees. Plus, employees are spared the hardships of full unemployment and are shown they are valued as team members.

On September 6, 2021, new legislation was passed to make the Shared Work program even more valuable, removing the 26-week allowance of Shared Work benefits to now allow eligible participants to collect 26 times their benefit rate. In most cases, this will allow participants to remain on Shared Work longer.

NYSDOL received a USDOL grant on June 11, 2021, for improvements and promotion of the Shared Work Program. Below are some key successes of the grant:

- Programming and updates were made to reflect the legislative change to the cap on Shared Work benefits by eliminating the 26-week limitation of benefits to a maximum of 26 times an individual's weekly benefit rate;
- Maintained enhancements to the processes, online services, and front-end customer service experience, especially regarding responsiveness and convenience;
- Submission and approval of employer plans and the filing and approval of initial and continued short-term compensation (STC)/Shared Work Program (SWP) claims have been automated;
- Enhancements have been made to the online plan application to allow an employer to manage their plan more easily;
- Plans are approved within 1-2 business days;
- Email campaigns are strategically timed and targeted using business intelligence collected by the Shared Work Promotional team. Targeted businesses include those experiencing supply chain issues, seasonal businesses, financial institutions and mortgage lenders impacted by rising interest rates, manufacturing businesses, and small businesses; and
- NYSDOL's working relationship with the NYS Chamber of Commerce and business associations has grown tenfold.

Rapid Response staff assists with actively promoting the use of the Shared Work Program to distressed businesses. A business may submit a Shared Work plan even if it has already submitted a WARN Act notice.

During PY 2021, 405 Shared Work plans were approved to begin, and 11,075 participants were registered.

B. ACTIVITIES PROVIDED UNDER THE WAGNER-PEYSER ACT EMPLOYMENT SERVICE SECTION (7B)

NYSDOL is responsible for the delivery of federally funded WP services (otherwise referred to as Employment Service programs), in coordination with other workforce partners and their programs through the Career Center System. These responsibilities include:

- Maintaining and strengthening the public labor exchange through the operation of a central, statewide job bank and talent bank matching system;
- Providing Reemployment Services for UI customers; and
- Providing service to special target populations.

All Adult customers served by Career Centers must be co-enrolled in WP and WIOA. Each of the 33 LWDBs developed a local plan outlining how Career Center service delivery is integrated across all programs. In PY 2021, 84,103 individuals attended virtual appointments; 40,369 individuals attended in-person appointments; and 1,256,314 individuals had a self-service activity.

Statewide policy establishes standards for the effective use of customer assessment in the Career Center System. In the policy, Career Center customers across NYS are required to receive an initial assessment to determine the best way to service their individual reemployment needs. This policy emphasizes the value of providing quality job leads and referrals to customers to speed their entry into employment. It also emphasizes the value of identifying customers in need of a more comprehensive assessment to make informed decisions about additional reemployment services they would benefit from.

To help supplement the WP program, NYS administers the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program to serve all UI claimants, with priority shown to customers profiled as most likely to exhaust benefits. RESEA is framed around four (4) major customer service principles to provide intensive case management and a heightened level of services to UI claimants: (1) expeditious entry into the System, (2) assessment/identification of needs, (3) individual reemployment plans, and (4) continuous engagement.

NYS is currently conducting an impact study on the implementation and design of the state's RESEA program. The study will provide an analysis of the program services delivered and determine which components and methods are most effective in yielding better customer outcomes.

The RESEA program, which follows a calendar year reporting period, operates in 65 select Career Center locations in all 33 Local Areas and all ten (10) economic development regions of NYS. The program design has been shown to increase RESEA participants' competitive advantage by returning claimants to work earlier than non-RESEA claimants. NYS received just over \$24M in 2022 RESEA funding, and \$21M in 2021.

C. NATIONAL DISLOCATED WORKER GRANTS (DWGS)

TRADE AND ECONOMIC TRANSITION (TET) – NDWG

On September 16, 2018, NYSDOL was awarded an \$8M TET-NDWG by USDOL to address the economic and workforce challenges NYS faces due to globalization and advances in technology. NYSDOL partnered with 31 LWDBs to develop the NYS application for funds (The Saratoga/Warren/Washington and Yonkers LWDBs did not participate).

Upon receipt of the award, NYSDOL distributed the funds to the LWDBs to coordinate the provision of career, training, and supportive services to approximately 6,575 eligible DWs. The funds were administered by the LWDBs with monitoring and reporting oversight provided by NYSDOL throughout the period of performance (October 1, 2018 – September 30, 2021).

This project targeted individuals who were unable to obtain employment through conventional job search techniques and were in the most need of enhanced services. This project served DWs with multiple barriers to employment, including a lack of basic skills, older workers, education that does not match current job market for similar jobs, existing mental health or substance abuse conditions that impede finding work, or a long separation from the workforce. As of the close of the TET-NDWG's period of performance, the grant served 6,336 total participants.

NATIONAL HEALTH EMERGENCY PHASE TWO – OPIOID NDWG

On January 16, 2019, NYSDOL was awarded up to \$5,591,446 in Opioid NDWG funds, with an initial increment of \$1,863,815 available for immediate use. USDOL made these funds available to address the economic and workforce challenges faced by NYS residents and communities impacted by the opioid crisis. NYSDOL partnered with 12 LWDBs (Columbia/Greene, Dutchess, Finger Lakes, Hempstead/Long Beach, Herkimer/Madison/Oneida (HMO), Monroe, North Country, Onondaga, Orange, Suffolk, Sullivan, and Westchester/Putnam) to document the impact and need for NDWG funding.

Upon receipt of the award, NYSDOL distributed the funds to the LWDBs to coordinate the provision of services to approximately 701 eligible participants. Allowable services included career, training, and supportive services. Additionally, funds could be used to coordinate disaster relief employment in positions including, but not limited to, addiction treatment service providers, peer recovery navigators, or other peer-focused positions that support individuals struggling with or recovering from opioid addiction. Although Opioid-NDWG services were available to all DWs within each local area, additional training opportunities were made available to those that voluntarily disclosed qualifying opioid impacts.

NYSDOL sent a request for a grant modification to the USDOL Employment and Training Administration (ETA) on September 14, 2020, and was approved for an increment request of \$1,863,815.00 on October 30, 2020, bringing the total remaining amount available to \$3,727,630.00. NYSDOL also received an extension to the grant period of performance through December 31, 2021. In September of 2021, NYSDOL requested the final increment of Opioid NDWG funding of \$1,863,815.00, as well as a six (6) month no-cost extension to June 2022. On December 16, 2021, NYSDOL's request was approved, and the period of performance was extended to June 30, 2022. On January 31, 2022, NYSDOL's final increment request of \$1,863,815 was approved, bringing the total award to \$5,591,446. As of the close of the Opioid NDWG's period of performance, the grant served 585 total participants.

COVID-19 DR NDWG

On April 15, 2020, NYSDOL was awarded a \$12M COVID-19 DR NDWG by USDOL. The full modified application was submitted on July 12, 2021. These funds were made available to assist the hardest hit sections of the US to recover from the swath of worker dislocations in the wake of the global COVID-19 pandemic. NYSDOL's COVID-19 DR-NDWG grant has two components of funding for staffing and program activities throughout the April 10, 2020 – March 31, 2023, period of performance:

1. UI Temporary Staffing – In PY 2021, NYSDOL's Division of Employment and Workforce Solutions (DEWS) worked with the UI Division to fund the temporary employment of NYSDOL UI staff. Up to \$6.1M was allocated for UI Temporary Staffing. During the pandemic, NYSDOL processed over 7.5M UI customers (including pandemic-specific programs) and made over \$65B in payments.
2. Local Disaster Relief Employment Projects – NYSDOL allocated up to \$5.9M for awards to LWDBs. These sub-awards were made to approved LWDB plans, via Notice of Obligational Authority (NOA), that identify local needs and design projects for local disaster relief employment projects. Currently, eight (8) LWDB plans have been received and approved. LWDBs will coordinate with worksite businesses to fund eligible participants as temporary workers in roles including, but not limited to, contact tracing, vaccination work and other humanitarian efforts addressing the COVID-19 pandemic disaster at the local level.

COVID-19 ER NDWG

On September 1, 2020, NYSDOL was awarded a \$12M COVID-19 ER NDWG by USDOL. The full modified application was submitted on April 22, 2021. These funds were made available to assist the hardest hit sections of the US to recover from the swath of worker dislocations in the wake of the global COVID-19 pandemic. NYSDOL's COVID-19 ER-NDWG grant has two components to fund program activities throughout the August 27, 2020 – September 30, 2023, period of performance:

1. Virtual Training Services Statewide – NYSDOL has partnered with Coursera, an industry leader in virtual learning, to provide a virtual training platform with 4,300 courses from 215 universities and private companies. These courses, and corresponding certificates, allow eligible participants to rapidly prepare for re-employment while maintaining reduced density in physical workforce training facilities. NYSDOL has made two (2) annual installments of \$2M, fulfilling the \$4M partnership commitment. Over 1M learning hours have been logged by over 87,000 New Yorkers through this partnership.
2. Services for Eligible Career Center Customers – NYSDOL has obligated a total of \$8M to New York's 33 LWDBs to provide career, training, and supportive services to eligible Career Center customers impacted by the disaster. \$4M was distributed to all 33 LWDBs in December 2020 with an additional \$4M allocated in April 2021 to offset the additional expenses incurred through the sudden and sustained increase in demand for services due to the pandemic. These additional funds were limited to the local areas most severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic or with greatest expressed need. Through June 30, 2022, 431 eligible participants were enrolled and served, generating expenditures of \$2,530,980.07.

CAREER NDWG

On September 17, 2021, NYSDOL was awarded \$3M in funding for the Comprehensive and Accessible Reemployment Through Equitable Employment Recovery (CAREER) NDWG by USDOL to upgrade technology systems necessary to connect unemployed individuals to reemployment. NYSDOL's CAREER grant has several components to fund program activities throughout the September 13, 2021 – September 12, 2023, period of performance:

1. Annual maintenance and upgrade costs for the Virtual Career Center (VCC) – NYSDOL partnered with Eightfold to create the first VCC in our state. The VCC offers advanced technology, backed by robust artificial intelligence that provides job leads that target and accurately match a job seeker's skills and experience.
2. Licenses for the Virtual Call Center – The Verizon Virtual Call Center is a tool used by NYSDOL staff to conduct Career Center appointments over the phone. The system allows calls to be monitored and tracked to ensure appropriate services are provided.
3. Subscription to Northstar Digital Literacy – Career Centers and partner District offices will be provided a license for Northstar's assessment and curriculum tool, which is designed for mid-level learners requiring career development and digital literacy services.
4. Upgrades to accessibility equipment – Career Centers will receive updated Job Access With Speech (JAWS) and ZoomText to assist visually impaired individuals.

D. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDS OF THE NYS WORKFORCE SYSTEM

NYSDOL continues to provide training and capacity-building activities and technical assistance to NYS's workforce development and Career Center System. Training opportunities are provided to all levels of workforce professionals, from NYS and LWDB members to front-line direct service delivery staff in the Career Centers, program providers, and stakeholders. Capacity-building activities will continue to be delivered to workforce professionals statewide through a variety of methods, including videoconferencing, conference calls, webinars, classroom training, and WIOA Interagency Partner meetings.

Training needs throughout NYS are regularly assessed through continuous communication and analysis of performance data. Trainings are developed based on the identified need. NYSDOL also maintains a Programs and Tools for Workforce Professionals page (dol.ny.gov/workforce-professionals-tools) on the NYSDOL website, which includes guides for a multitude of programs, appropriate data entry practices, and fact sheets.

E. AT-RISK AND PRIORITY POPULATIONS SERVED

Out of School Youth (OSY);

- NYS continues to build the capacity of local areas to help retain OSY. This year, the NYSDOL Youth & Young Adults team is hosting a monthly Bring Your Own Questions Hour with providers to address their immediate data entry, policy, program, and practice questions. During this Hour, providers also get to network and learn from each other's best practices for recruitment of OSY. In addition, All About WIOA youth trainings and resources are offered with peer support structures to onboard new WIOA youth staff at the local level. Along with one-on-one and group online technical assistance, NYSDOL's Youth & Young Adults team staff has started visiting youth programs to collaboratively support local staff efforts with OSY. With the GVP Initiative, typically underserved youth will be offered career development and work experiences, including recruitment into the WIOA Youth program. Moreover, local partnerships will be forged for continued collaboration with the LWDBs and entities that serve youth living in areas affected by gun violence.

Low-income adults;

- As required in WIOA, low-income adults are given priority for career and training services in Career Centers.

Dislocated workers;

- As described in Section VIII.C., NYSDOL is currently operating two NDWGs: the COVID-19 DR NDWG and the COVID -19 ER NDWG.

Individuals who are basic skills deficient;

- Local areas have started utilizing a variety of valid and reliable assessments to determine basic skills deficiency of individuals instead of using rigorous National Reporting System approved tests, so providers can offer tests that are relevant to the customers need and capacity. Partnerships with education-focused entities for English Language Learners and high school equivalency programs are maintained to support with assessments and education of the individuals.

Individuals with limited language proficiency;

- Individuals with limited English language proficiency receive language assistance to access Career Center services. Language interpretation services are provided in more than 200 languages, including American Sign Language, and vital documents are translated into the twelve (12) most commonly spoken languages in NYS. Information on these services is provided in Technical Advisory (TA) #17-02.2: Language Interpretation Services Available at Career Centers (January 31, 2022).

Individuals with disabilities;

- Since 2010, NYS was awarded four (4) rounds of DEI competitive grants to place specialized staff in Career Centers. These specialized staff members, called Disability Resource Coordinators (DRCs), are responsible for increasing the capacity of Career Center Career Pathways Programs to better serve people with disabilities. Additionally, DRCs are responsible for promoting the US Social Security Administration's Ticket to Work Program and connecting customers to the New York Employment Services System (NYESS) Administrative Employment Network via their Career Center. On October 1, 2017, NYSDOL was awarded a Round 8 DEI grant for \$2.25M. This most recent round of funding placed a strong emphasis on improving employment and training outcomes for youth (ages 14-24) with disabilities. This three-year capacity building project conducted activities through September 30, 2021. During the grant's period of performance from

October 1, 2017 – September 30, 2021, a total of 605 youth with disabilities were served with 314 receiving core services and 249 entering unsubsidized employment.

- On October 21, 2021, NYS Governor Kathy Hochul announced a commitment of \$11.1M in federal workforce development funding through December 31, 2024, to expand the already successful network of DRCs to all 33 Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs) to increase the capacity of their service delivery and better serve individuals with disabilities. This initiative, referred to as NY SCION, aims to improve education, training, and employment opportunities and outcomes for youth and adults with disabilities, including those receiving Social Security disability benefits. As of June 30, 2022, 24 DRCs have been hired, covering 38 counties in NYS.
- By 2020 all NYS Career Centers were equipped with a range of assistive technology that includes text scanning and reading software for individuals who are blind or visually impaired, adaptive computer systems, and accessible workstations.

Veterans;

- Veterans' services in NYS are delivered through the Career Centers either under priority of service or through the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG). A maximum total of 78 Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program Specialists (DVOPs) and Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs), funded through the \$8.8M JVSG, are in NYS Career Centers. DVOPs only serve those veterans and eligible persons with significant barriers to employment (SBE), ages 18-24; Vietnam Era veterans; or other populations as defined by the Secretary of Labor. Veterans and eligible persons ineligible to meet with a DVOP are served on a priority basis by other Career Center staff. The DVOP specialist service delivery model provides early intervention, services tailored to individual customer needs, and expedited referral of those who need additional assistance to services available within the workforce system. Through a continuous engagement of one-on-one appointments and between appointment contacts, customers receive a comprehensive assessment, an individual employment plan (IEP), and customized job search support by a DVOP specialist. DVOP customers are provided with resume assistance, career guidance, coaching, job leads, and referrals to ensure suitable job placement. During PY 2021, 12,918 veterans were served, with 3,026 of them (23%) served by DVOPs. The DVOP specialists and LVER staff coordinate their services for a thorough and wholistic approach. LVER staff's primary functions are to advocate for the hiring of veterans and eligible persons with businesses, as well as conduct job matching, job referral, job placement and business outreach on behalf of all covered persons served by their Career Center.

Long-term unemployed (LTU);

- NYS developed the Community Engagement initiative, first identified in Section II.A. of this report, to help job seekers in areas suffering from high unemployment or high poverty. Community Engagement aligns NYS Career Center and NYSDOL Business Services staff to provide services and job referrals to LTU and low-income customers. Customers are provided with intensive services including a skills assessment, resume development, job leads, and labor market and training program information.
- NYSDOL Business Services staff outreach to businesses with job opportunities that align with the targeted LTU customers. The purpose of this outreach is to build relationships with area businesses and increase the number of employment leads for customers, as well as customize recruitments and targeted career fairs, and create multiple opportunities to connect qualified candidates with businesses.

OTHER INDIVIDUALS WITH BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT, INCLUDING:

Justice-involved individuals:

- NYSDOL administers USDOL's Federal Bonding Program (FBP) in NYS to provide fidelity bonds to businesses, which protect them from losses caused by the fraudulent or dishonest acts of "high risk" employees. Businesses receive the fidelity bonds free-of-charge, as an incentive to hire these applicants. Each bond provides \$5,000 worth of coverage and has a \$0 deductible. The maximum amount of coverage that can be provided to a business is \$25,000 (five bonds). Fidelity coverage is free and lasts for six (6) months. In most situations, the coverage can be renewed with the business for an additional six (6) months at no charge. During the period of July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022, NYSDOL issued bonds to 11 businesses at a total of \$115,000 coverage. NYSDOL was able to issue additional bonds during this reporting period due to a general increase in hiring over the past year.
- The GVP Initiative will also support many individuals involved in the justice system with the help of local partners.
- The list of Local Bonding Coordinators (LBCs) was updated during the summer of 2021 to determine current training needs and to update the list of LBCs on the NYSDOL website. The NYS Bonding Coordinator continues to update the listing LBCs statewide, provide training to them as needed, and update personnel changes on the NYSDOL website.
- On June 14, 2019, NYSDOL was awarded a four-year Fidelity Bonding Demonstration Grant (FBDG) from USDOL in the amount of \$100,000. Through this funding, NYSDOL purchased an initial \$4,000 of fidelity bonds. These bonds are used to assist individuals with criminal records, including individuals recovering from opioid and other drug addictions, in obtaining employment. This grant also provides funding to market the FBP to a variety of stakeholder groups in NYS, allowing for greater use of the program to promote employment. The FBDG concludes on June 30, 2023. Activities planned for the next 12 months include creating customized fact sheets on the FBP for different stakeholder groups; updating the FBP Brochure for a business audience; creating and disseminating social media and email blasts to different stakeholder groups; partnering with other NYS agencies to further market content; disseminating printed information to all NYSDOL stakeholders who provide or support reentry services; working with Business Engagement staff to promote the FBP directly to businesses; presenting the program to additional stakeholder groups; and working with Communications to create a FBP video highlighting testimonials from businesses that have used the program.
- Under the program for justice-involved individuals, first identified in Section VII. A. of this report, NYSDOL developed a pilot program for implementation, working in conjunction with local Career Centers in pilot locations and DOCCS to promote and increase the employment of formerly incarcerated individuals. Career Centers provide liaisons from the program, known as Reentry Employment Specialists, who assist jobseekers in overcoming barriers to employment due to incarceration, as well as matching formerly incarcerated individuals to job openings. RBSTs are working to educate businesses about available hiring incentives and providing job development services. As a result of staff outreach, nearly 30,860 businesses have hired eligible candidates since the program started in March 2013, and more than 116,000 jobs have been obtained by program participants.

Displaced Homemakers:

- NYSDOL administers the NYS Displaced Homemaker program, which is funded with \$1.62M in non-federal, state funds. In 2021, NYSDOL issued funding to ten (10) organizations in Albany, Bronx, Brooklyn, Nassau, Oneida, Schenectady, Schoharie, Suffolk, Tompkins, and Westchester counties. Additionally, under WIOA, displaced homemakers are considered DWs. This makes them eligible for all DW services available under WIOA, including, but not limited to, career pathway development and counseling; help applying for jobs with interview preparation, resume, and cover letter writing; job search strategies, readiness, and referrals; career and computer workshops; information about training and educational services; and referrals to supportive services to address needs such as childcare, medical, housing, transportation, and financial literacy. In total, 1,033 displaced homemakers were served during PY 2021, a near 24% increase over PY 2020.

At Risk and Priority:

In-School Youth residing in gang prevalent areas

- Three (3) OYCEA RFPs were released in 2018 for service providers in the City of Albany, the City of Syracuse, and specific communities in Nassau and Suffolk counties. The funds provide career exploration and supportive services to youth. Twenty-two (22) organizations were awarded grants of up to \$300,000 of WIOA funding, totaling \$6.3M.

Youth and Young Adults living in areas affected by gun violence

- A multifaceted approach is used to address the gun violence crisis, which is described in detail in Section II.C. of this document.

Youth and Young Adults in Foster Care (FC) or have runaway or experienced homelessness (RHY)

- NYSDOL and NYS OCFS have partnered to expand career preparation and exploration services for FC and RHY youth in the three (3) pilot LWDA's of the Capital Region (Albany/ Rensselaer/ Schenectady), Monroe, and Tompkins through systems-change and collaboration efforts.

F. CHALLENGES THE NYS WORKFORCE SYSTEM FACES

1. The VCC has limited connections to OSOS – The largest challenge the System will continue to face in PY 2022 is recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic and providing innovative services to New Yorkers most severely impacted by the corresponding economic downturn. As discussed in Section I.A., to do this NYSDOL developed the VCC and continues to hold virtual career fairs. The VCC, which is now live and available to NYS job seekers, allows NYSDOL to provide high quality services to both businesses and job seekers in an entirely virtual manner. The VCC includes a suite of tools, resources, and applications that enhance customer service and increase the effectiveness of services provided. Since launching with limited use in May 2021, over 1.3M jobseekers have been invited to use the tool and thousands have applied to at least one job using the VCC platform. Once fully implemented, the VCC will fully integrate with OSOS enabling NYSDOL to continuously track and assess services provided and outcomes for customers.
2. Local areas do not align with federal statistical areas – NYS has three sub-county level local areas: Yonkers, Hempstead/Long Beach, and Oyster Bay. Additionally, the Yonkers local area sits fully inside the Westchester-Putnam local area. These sub-county areas make it difficult to apply the Statistical Adjustment Model to these four local areas when establishing negotiated local area goals and when determining adjusted local area goals after the program year has concluded.
3. The NYS System partners lack a unified case management system – An additional challenge the NYS System faces is the need to have one unified case management system for all partners to use. The reporting requirements under WIOA are difficult because each core partner uses a different system to collect and report data. These systems do not currently communicate with one another making collecting and aggregating data from multiple partners challenging. The WIOA Data Integration workgroup was established to address data and reporting challenges and determine a strategy moving forward. This group met regularly in PY 2019 prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and has data sharing agreements in place to share wage data among partners. The group has also been examining how other states share and report participant information and will continue to work toward determining a solution. Workgroup meetings resumed in PY 2020 and continued through PY 2021. A subcommittee was established to further research and investigate what other states have done to effectively share data, discuss a unique identifier that could be used to identify customers across Titles, and develop a plan that will help NYS accomplish the goal of joint reporting. The WIOA Business Engagement workgroup has also addressed this, using OSOS for tracking business engagement activities across multiple core partners.

4. As stated throughout this document, NYS DRCs have made great strides in improving services to individuals with disabilities through the NYS DEI projects and more recently under NY SCION. Funding under NY SCION will end on December 31, 2023, and without continued support from state and local leadership to obtain funding to sustain these positions, NYS's capacity to serve these individuals will be diminished. NYSDOL Special Populations Team staff will continue to encourage continued funding for these positions.

G. STRATEGIES/POLICES RELATING TO PAY-FOR-PERFORMANCE CONTRACTING

NYSDOL was a recipient of the \$12M Workforce Investment Act Pay-for-Success Pilot Project Grant to serve formerly incarcerated individuals, which ran from October 1, 2013 – September 30, 2017. This Pilot Project also included a second, non-federally funded phase for services which ran through September 30, 2018. This experience informed NYSDOL's strategies and policies relating to Pay-for-Performance contracting initiatives, including those funded with state-level and local-level WIOA funds and non-federal funds. To date, NYSDOL awaits additional guidance from USDOL on how to implement WIOA Pay-for Performance contracting.

In early 2020, NYSDOL made two (2) awards totaling \$1,140,000 under a non-federally funded Pay for Success Pay-for-Performance initiative in collaboration with the Governor's Office of Workforce Development. Contract development was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic; however, as of early October 2022, both contracts are executed and services subject to performance-based outcome payments are underway.

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