



STATE OF MAINE STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2016

Submitted by
the Maine Department of Labor
and
the State Workforce Board

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Introduction

Per Section 5 of The State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) By-Laws, the Board shall make an annual report to the Governor and Legislature at the beginning of each calendar year describing the state of Maine's workforce, and making recommendations for public and private action related to workforce development. This report shall also address annual report requirements in state law for disabilities, apprenticeship, the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act, and youth. It covers the 2016 calendar year and also includes data during Program Year 2015 (July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016). The following report includes the Commission on Disability and Employment Report.

Workforce System Performance Data

Performance Results

Maine PY 2015 Performance Outcomes

Measures	Negotiated Performance Level	Actual
WIA Adults		
Entered Employment	84.0%	71.6%
Retention	88.0%	87.4%
Avg Earnings	\$11,700	\$12,411
WIA Dislocated Workers		
Entered Employment	89.5%	86.7%
Retention	92.8%	91.4%
Avg Earnings	\$15,027	\$16,665
WIA Youth		
Placement in Emp or Educ	66.3%	63.4%
Attainment of Degree or Cert	73.3%	55.4%
Literacy Numeracy Gain	30.0%	20.4%
W-P Labor Exchange (LEX)		
Entered Employment	57.0%	69.0%
Retention	82.0%	87.0%
Avg. Earnings	\$12,500	\$16,037

PY15 Performance Overview

Performance for the Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs is reviewed on a quarterly basis; at the time of the review, the planned numbers to be served and types of services to be provided are also reviewed. Program year 2015 has been one of significant transition for the entire system in Maine, with two local areas (Aroostook Washington and Tri-County) taking steps to consolidate into a single local area (Northeastern WDB), resulting in a total of three Local Areas in the State. In gearing up for the transition to Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the core partners and State and Local Board staff met continuously to complete the Unified Plan and to identify planning regions. Staff have been challenged with learning the new components of WIOA and a new labor exchange and case management system known as Maine JobLink (MJL).

Each year, Local Areas propose specific service implementation plans. These plans get modified as a result of unforeseen events such as significant downsizings or additional resources in the form of National Emergency Grant (NEG) or other discretionary grants. The economy also has an effect. The recent upswing has resulted in record low unemployment and a large number of unfilled jobs.

In addition to formula funding, Maine received two NEGs. The Job Driven NEG and the Sector Partnership NEG both focused solely on the dislocated worker populations. As such, Local Areas took advantage of the WIOA option to transfer funds from dislocated worker to adult services in order to apply more funds to the adult population. Local Areas are finding that adults that have not yet secured employment in this market are those with the greatest barriers. Dislocated workers who live in remote geographic areas for which a single paper mill supported all or most of the jobs have also had difficulty securing employment, not only because those remote areas are less likely to attract new businesses but also because they are mostly made up of an aging workforce that is less likely to relocate and reestablish themselves in a new location.

Overall, each of the three populations saw gains in average earnings, including labor exchange-only participants. This appears to be the result of a tight labor force, the current job market and the high level of competition between employers to fill vacancies. Veterans served under the adult program fared even better with approximately 15% higher earnings than non-veterans. The average earnings difference between adults who received core services only as compared to those who received intensive and/or training services was around 17% and of dislocated workers the earnings difference between those who received core only services versus those who received intensive services was even greater at 27% higher wages, even higher than dislocated workers who received training services.

Youth participants continue to be the hardest to serve. Maine has always placed significant focus on serving out-of-school youth, for which the negotiated measures are the most difficult to achieve. Out-of-school youth made up approximately 78% of all youth served during PY15. Local Areas had the greatest success assisting youth to transition to post-secondary education and/or employment with Aroostook/Washington placing youth at 139% of goal and Coastal Counties, which served the greatest number of youth participants achieving 92% of this goal.

Maine did not meet the negotiated measure for Literacy Numeracy gains – despite implementation of ambitious corrective action plans that focused on presenting math and language skills to youth in a way that can be

applied during work experience activity to offering incentives to youth to promote completion of required post-testing. The greatest challenge to Local Areas experiencing difficulty with this measure was due to staff-turnover. In two Central Western Area CareerCenters, youth staff turned over not once but twice in a one year period. Centers that held long-term, experienced youth counselors in place had the greatest success with this measure. To address this issue, part of the local area corrective action plan has been to develop a staff transition plan that identifies alternate staff to take on youth caseloads during the transition period and who have been trained and kept informed about youth caseloads, challenges and plans. This is not an easy fix, as resources are always very tight and capacity constantly stretched; however, it is especially necessary for this population. Even though corrective action plans were initiated half-way through the program period, the loss of youth during staff transition periods was significant and has had an obvious negative effect. Professional training for new youth staff is a priority for PY16 and will be formalized through a new Professional Development Team who is researching staff training resources, methods, formats and subject matter experts to bring new staff up to speed and to refresh and reenergize seasoned staff with the greatest experience.

Maine has experienced several issues with the conversion of youth data from our old One Stop Operating System (OSOS) to our new Management Information System, Maine JobLink. There appear to be a number of issues that are actively being reviewed and addressed both internal to Maine and in concert with AJLA. Of note, one identified problem involved converting skill gains activity to educational activity that was showing a negative effect on youth credential outcomes. However, because the new system is undergoing WIA to WIOA conversion issues at that same time as we are preparing this report, it is unlikely we will have fully resolved the inconsistencies before this report is due. As such, we have agreed to submit it as it stands and will continue to have staff investigate each individual participant file going forward. We are aware this will not change the data in time for this report, but going forward we do not anticipate any challenges with meeting the credential gains measure for youth.

Program Year (PY) 2015

Table B – Adult Program Results

	Negotiated Performance Level	Actual Performance Level		
			Numerator	Denominator
Entered Employment Rate	84.0%	71.6%	Numerator	212
			Denominator	296
Employment Retention Rate	88.0%	87.4%	Numerator	340
			Denominator	389
Average Earnings	\$11,700	\$12,411.35	Numerator	\$4,207,446
			Denominator	339
Employment and Credential Rate*	NA	47.0%	Numerator	167
			Denominator	355

*Not on ETA 9091 Data from MJL Reporting Informational Only

Table C – Outcomes for Adult Special Populations

Reported Information	Public Assistance Recipients Receiving Intensive or Training Services		Veterans		Individuals With Disabilities		Older Individuals	
Entered Employment Rate	68.7%	127	58.8%	10	66.7%	12	69.7%	23
		185		17		18		33
Employment Retention Rate	85.1%	211	83.3%	15	76.5%	13	80.8%	21
		248		18		17		26
Average Earnings	\$12,072.76	2,535,280	\$14,149	\$212,229	\$11,738	\$152,597	\$9,304	\$195,386
		210		15		13		21
Employment and Credential Rate	46.5%	106	41.2%	7	31.3%	5.00	26.9%	7
		228		17		16.00		26

Table D – Outcome Information by Service Level for the Adult Program

Reported Information	Individuals Who Only Received Core Services		Individuals Who Received Only Core and Intensive Services		Individuals Who Received Training Services	
	Entered Employment Rate	71.4%	5 7	75.4%	52 69	72.0%
Employment Retention Rate	84.6%	11 13	92.2%	47 51	86.8%	276 318
Average Earnings	\$10,522	\$115,738 11	\$12,381	\$569,539 46	\$12,626	\$3,484,840 276

Table E – Dislocated Worker Program Results

	Negotiated Performance Level	Actual Performance Level		
		Entered Employment Rate	89.5%	86.7%
Employment Retention Rate	92.8%	91.4%	Numerator 328 Denominator 359	
Average Earnings	\$15,027	\$16,665	Numerator \$5,466,221 Denominator 328	
Employment and Credential Rate	NA	47.1%	Numerator 144 Denominator 306	

Table F – Outcomes for Dislocated Worker Special Populations

Reported Information	Veterans		Individuals With Disabilities		Older Individuals		Displaced Homemakers	
Entered Employment Rate	87.1%	27	60.0%	3	80.0%	44	66.7%	2
		31		5		55		3
Employment Retention Rate	100.0%	30	100.0%	2	93.6%	58	100.0%	3
		30		2		62		3
Average Earnings	\$18,115	\$543,449	\$12,938	\$25,876	\$16,790	\$973,799	\$11,489	\$34,468
		30		2		58		3
Employment and Credential Rate	55.2%	16	50.0%	2	46.5%	20	66.7%	2
		29		4		43		3

Table G – Outcome Information by Service Level for the Dislocated Worker Program

Reported Information	Individuals Who Only Received Core Services		Individuals Who Only Received Core and Intensive Services		Individuals Who Received Training Services	
Entered Employment Rate	100.0%	19	82.9%	34	86.4%	229
		19		41		265
Employment Retention Rate	92.0%	23	91.5%	43	91.0%	254
		25		47		279
Average Earnings	\$13,968	\$321,270	\$18,972	\$815,791	\$16,393	\$4,163,862
		23		43		254

Table H.1 – Youth (14-21) Program Results

Reported Information	Negotiated Performance Level	Actual Performance Level		
		Actual Performance Level	Numerator	Denominator
Placement in Employment or Education	66.3%	63.4%	Numerator	210
			Denominator	331
Attainment of Degree or Certificate	73.3%	55.4%	Numerator	175
			Denominator	316
Literacy and Numeracy Gains	30.0%	20.4%	Numerator	32
			Denominator	157

Table H.1.A – Outcomes for Youth Special Populations

Reported Information	Public Assistance Recipients		Veterans		Individuals With Disabilities		Out-of-School Youth	
	Placement in Employment or Education Rate	61.1%	99 162	0.0%	0 0	68.8%	22 32	66.1%
Attainment of Degree or Certificate Rate	52.6%	80 152	100.0%	1 1	70.7%	29 41	49.7%	74 149
Literacy and Numeracy Gains	20.3%	13 64	0.0%	0 1	16.7%	3 18	20.4%	32 157

Table H.2 – Older Youth (19-21) Results

	Negotiated Performance Level	Actual Performance Level	
		Entered Employ. Rate	N/A
Employment Retention Rate	N/A	86.5%	Numerator 141 Denominator 163
Earnings Chg in six months	N/A	\$6,270	Numerator \$1,015,730 Denominator 162
Employment & Credential Rate	N/A	28.6%	Numerator 58 Denominator 203

Table I – Outcomes for Older Youth Special Populations

Reported Information	Public Assistance Recipients		Veterans		Individuals With Disabilities		Out-of-School Youth	
	Entered Employment Rate	68.1%	49 72	0.0%	0 0	61.5%	8 13	67.2%
Employment Retention Rate	83.3%	65 78	0.0%	0 0	90.0%	9 10	85.6%	113 132
Earnings Change In Six Months	\$4,770	\$372,088 78	0	0 0	\$2,320	\$23,202 10	\$4,929	\$650,663 132
Employment and Credential Rate	25.6%	23 90	100.00%	1 1	20.0%	4 20	26.1%	47 180

Table J – Younger Youth (14-18) Results

Reported Information	Negotiated Performance Level	Actual Performance Level		
			Numerator	Denominator
Skill Attainment Rate	NA	49.5%	Numerator	137
			Denominator	277
Youth Diploma or Equivalent Rate	NA	49.4%	Numerator	78
			Denominator	158
Retention Rate	NA	65.6%	Numerator	200
			Denominator	305

Table K – Outcomes for Younger Youth Special Populations

Reported Information	Public Assistance Recipients		Individuals With Disabilities		Out-of-School Youth	
Skill Attainment Rate	64.4%	65	72.3%	34	40.6%	58
		101		47		143
Youth Diploma or Equivalent Rate	57.1%	40	64.0%	16	10.4%	5
		70		25		48
Retention Rate	68.7%	101	51.9%	27	65.2%	75
		147		52		115

Table L– Other Reported Information

	12 Mo. Employment Retention Rate		12 Mo. Earnings Change (Adults and Older Workers) or Replacement Rate (Dislocated Workers)		Placements for Participants in Nontraditional Employment		Wages At Entry Into Employment For Those Individuals Who Entered Unsubsidized Employment		Entry Into Unsubsidized Employment Related to the Training Received of Those Who Completed Training Services	
Adults	89.7%	347	\$4,771	\$1,827,396	0.5%	1	\$5,120	\$1,085,375	54.9%	84
		387		383		212		212		154
Dislocated Workers	92.4%	354	\$106	\$5,778,852	2.8%	8	\$7,765	\$2,213,072	55.5%	127
		383		5,445,178		286		285		229
Older Youth	79.7%	110	\$5,444	\$745,887	0.0%	0	\$3,628	\$366,379		
		138		137		101		101		

Table M – Participation Levels

	Total Participants Served	Total Exiters
Total Adult Customers	49,307	47,485
Total Adult (self-service only)	47,786	46,568
WIA Adults	48,773	47,133
WIA Dislocated Workers	546	365
Total Youth (14-21)	599	415
Younger Youth (14-18)	291	223
Older Youth (19-21)	308	192
Out-of-School Youth	466	285
In-School Youth	133	130

Table N- Cost of Program Activities

Program Activities		Total Federal Spending
Local Adults		\$2,666,222
Local Dislocated Workers		\$1,830,091
Local Youth		\$2,496,036
Rapid Response (up to 25%) §134 (a) (2) (b)		\$848,041
Statewide Required Activities (up to 15%) §134 (a) (2) (b)		\$463,254
Statewide Allowable Activities §134 (a) (3)	Program Activity Description	3.75% of Adult, Youth, and DW funds for State Activities
		\$384,545
		TAT (Tech. Assist. Trng.)
		\$1,534
Total of All Federal Spending Listed Above		\$8,689,722

Table O (formulas to fill statewide data)

		Statewide <small>Note: Tables B, E, H.1 & M used to populate table</small>		
	Total Participants Served	Adults	987	
		Dislocated Workers	546	
		Older Youth (19-21)	308	
		Younger Youth (14-18)	291	
	Total Exiters	Adults	565	
		Dislocated Workers	365	
		Older Youth (19-21)	192	
		Younger Youth (14-18)	223	
		Negotiated Performance Level	Actual Performance Level	
Entered Employment Rate	Adults	84.0%	71.6%	
	Dislocated Workers	89.5%	86.7%	
Retention Rate	Adults	88.0%	87.4%	
	Dislocated Workers	92.8%	91.4%	
Average Earnings	Adults	11,700.00	12,411	
	Dislocated Workers	15,026.60	16,665	
Placement in Employment or Education	Youth (14-21)	66.3%	63.4%	
Attainment of Degree or Certificate	Youth (14-21)	73.3%	55.4%	
Literacy/Numeracy Gains	Youth (14-21)	30.0%	20.4%	
Description of Other State Indicators of Performance (WIA §136 (d)(1)) (Insert additional rows if there are more than two “Other State Indicators of Performance”)				
Overall Status of Local Performance		Not Met	Met	Exceeded
		2	5	2

Table O - Aroostook/Washington LA (ETA Code: 23030)

	Total Participants Served	Adults	5,785	
		Dislocated Workers	49	
		Older Youth (19-21)	50	
		Younger Youth (14-18)	44	
	Total Exiters	Adults	5565	
		Dislocated Workers	34	
		Older Youth (19-21)	23	
		Younger Youth (14-18)	14	
		Negotiated Performance Level	Actual Performance Level	
Entered Employment Rate	Adults	84.0%	67.0%	
	Dislocated Workers	89.5%	79.0%	
Retention Rate	Adults	88.0%	90.0%	
	Dislocated Workers	92.8%	100.0%	
Average Earnings	Adults	\$11,700.00	11,818.00	
	Dislocated Workers	\$15,027.00	12,488.00	
Placement in Employment or Education	Youth (14-21)	66.3%	92.0%	
Attainment of Degree or Certificate	Youth (14-21)	73.3%	57.0%	
Literacy/Numeracy Gains	Youth (14-21)	30.0%	27.0%	
Description of Other State Indicators of Performance (WIA §136 (d)(1)) (Insert additional rows if there are more than two "Other State Indicators of Performance")			n/a	
Overall Status of Local Performance		Not Met	Met	Exceeded
		1	4	4

Table O - Tri-County LA (ETA Code: 23020)

	Total Participants Served	Adults	8,649
		Dislocated Workers	84
		Older Youth (19-21)	55
		Younger Youth (14-18)	54
	Total Exiters	Adults	8476
		Dislocated Workers	64
		Older Youth (19-21)	26
		Younger Youth (14-18)	50
		Negotiated Performance Level	Actual Performance Level
Entered Employment Rate	Adults	84.0%	77.0%
	Dislocated Workers	89.5%	87.0%
Retention Rate	Adults	88.0%	84.0%
	Dislocated Workers	92.8%	85.0%
Average Earnings	Adults	\$11,700.00	\$12,684
	Dislocated Workers	\$15,026.60	\$18,861
Placement in Employment or Education	Youth (14-21)	66.3%	67.0%
Attainment of Degree or Certificate	Youth (14-21)	73.3%	82.0%
Literacy/Numeracy Gains	Youth (14-21)	30.0%	30.0%
Description of Other State Indicators of Performance (WIA §136 (d)(1)) (Insert additional rows if there are more than two "Other State Indicators of Performance")			n/a
Overall Status of Local Performance	Not Met	Met	Exceeded
		5	4

Table O - Central/Western LA (ETA Code: 23035)

	Total Participants Served	Adults	17,827
		Dislocated Workers	190
		Older Youth (19-21)	96
		Younger Youth (14-18)	98
	Total Exiters	Adults	17,337
		Dislocated Workers	105
		Older Youth (19-21)	69
		Younger Youth (14-18)	81
		Negotiated Performance Level	Actual Performance Level
Entered Employment Rate	Adults	84.0%	71.0%
	Dislocated Workers	89.5%	88.0%
Retention Rate	Adults	88.0%	81.0%
	Dislocated Workers	92.8%	93.0%
Average Earnings	Adults	\$11,700.00	\$12,099
	Dislocated Workers	\$15,026.60	\$16,323
Placement in Employment or Education	Youth (14-21)	66.3%	62.0%
Attainment of Degree or Certificate	Youth (14-21)	73.3%	56.0%
Literacy/Numeracy Gains	Youth (14-21)	30.0%	13.0%
Description of Other State Indicators of Performance (WIA §136 (d)(1)) (Insert additional rows if there are more than two “Other State Indicators of Performance”)			n/a
Overall Status of Local Performance	Not Met	Met	Exceeded
	2	4	3

Table O Coastal Counties LA (ETA Code: 23040)

	Total Participants Served	Adults	16,512	
		Dislocated Workers	223	
		Older Youth (19-21)	107	
		Younger Youth (14-18)	95	
	Total Exiters	Adults	15,753	
		Dislocated Workers	157	
		Older Youth (19-21)	74	
		Younger Youth (14-18)	78	
		Negotiated Performance Level	Actual Performance Level	
Entered Employment Rate	Adults	84.0%	72.0%	
	Dislocated Workers	89.5%	88.0%	
Retention Rate	Adults	88.0%	93.0%	
	Dislocated Workers	92.8%	92.0%	
Average Earnings	Adults	\$11,700.00	\$12,747	
	Dislocated Workers	\$15,026.60	\$16,709	
Placement in Employment or Education	Youth (14-21)	66.3%	61.0%	
Attainment of Degree or Certificate	Youth (14-21)	73.3%	36.0%	
Literacy/Numeracy Gains	Youth (14-21)	33.0%	20.0%	
Description of Other State Indicators of Performance (WIA §136 (d)(1)) (Insert additional rows if there are more than two “Other State Indicators of Performance”)			n/a	
Overall Status of Local Performance		Not Met	Met	Exceeded
		2	4	3

Table P – Veteran Priority of Service

	Total	(%) Served
Covered Entrants who reached the end of the entry period	3,602	N/A
Covered Entrants who received a service during the entry period	3,602	100%
Covered Entrants who received a staff-assisted service during the entry period	87	2.4%

Table Q – Veterans' Outcomes by Special Populations

Reported Information	Post 9/11 Era Veterans		Post 9/11 Era Veterans who received at least Intensive Services		TAP Workshop Veterans	
Entered Employment Rate	70.6%	12	68.8%	11	0.0%	0
		17		16		0
Employment Retention Rate	85.7%	6	85.7%	6	0.0%	0
		7		7		0
Average Earnings	\$11,141	\$66,846	\$11,141	\$66,846	\$0.00	\$0.00
		6		6		0

Workforce Investment Cost Efficiency Data

While the cost efficiency chart shows the amount of formula funds that were allocated to each of the programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) divided by the total number of participants served in PY15, the chart does not take into consideration the funds-transfer option. In PY15, \$273,489 of DW money was utilized to serve Adult participants. This would change the actual ratio of spending to the following for these two categories:

Program	Cost-Efficiency Ratio	Total on Program Participants	Total Served
Adult	\$2,978	\$2,939,711	987
DW	\$2,851	\$1,556,602	546

These charts do not provide a complete picture of the amount of funds invested on participants who may have been co-enrolled into other programs, such as the two National Emergency Grants (JD NEG and SP NEG), Local Area Discretionary Grants, Trade Act Assistance, or State-funded training programs like the Competitive Skills Scholarship Program (CSSP).

Maine's new MIS system will provide us with a more comprehensive understanding of actual participant investment across all programs in which participants are co-enrolled. It includes a mechanism that allows staff to connect spending from multiple programs an individual participant is enrolled in.

Activities Supported by the 5% Discretionary Funds

In PY15, Governor's set-aside funds were used primarily to support the cost of staff to the State Workforce Development Board and the cost of facilitating events and activities pertaining to development and preparation of the Unified Plan. The State Board hosted a three day event that involved all of the required and multiple system partners in identifying and prioritizing workforce issues the plan could address and articulating a vision for the Maine Workforce Development System.

Cost of Workforce Investment Activities

Efficiency numbers come from Table N and Statewide Table O.

PY 2015

UNIT COST DATA	Cost-Efficiency RATIO	TOTAL OBLIGATIONS*	TOTAL INDIVIDUALS SERVED
Overall, All Program Strategies	\$3,280	\$6,992,349	2,132
Adult Program	\$2,701	\$2,666,222	987
Dislocated Worker Programs	\$3,352	\$1,830,091	546
Youth Programs	\$4,167	\$2,496,036	599

=

data entry fields

WIA Reporting Assurance

The Maine Department of Labor submits all required WIA financial, participant, and performance data reports in accordance with instructions issued by USDOL, as laid out in 20 CFR 667.300, and within required reporting deadlines. In addition, Maine performs all federally mandated report and data element validation annually. Maine will continue to meet all deadlines for reporting as required.

Customer Satisfaction Measures

PY15 has been a year of significant change for both the staff and users of the workforce development system, not only because of the launch of new requirements under WIOA, but because Maine has been involved in significant preparation for, transition to, and implementation of, a new management information system that affects both system users (participants and employers) as well as staff.

Although the transition has gone better than anticipated, there have been bumps along the way that have required significant communications with job seekers, UI claimants, and employers, both pre-transition and continuing regularly as we move into the fourth month of the new system implementation.

Customer satisfaction surveying usually occurs at the end of each program year. However, the Bureau has made a strategic decision to postpone the PY15 customer satisfaction analysis until all users have had the opportunity to become better acquainted with the new system. This decision was based due to the system transition falling directly into the customer survey timeframe, the significant number of communiques that have been sent to seekers, UI claimants and employers, along with continuous questions and answers occurring between staff and customers. The new system known as Maine JobLink (MJL), which is part of the Americas Job Link Alliance-AJLA, includes methods to survey all customers regarding specific aspects of service delivery.

We anticipate launching the State level surveys at the end of December. This will give the majority of staff and users (seekers, participants, and employers) time to become much more expert at navigating the system and to be better prepared to comment on the quality and efficacy of specific services being offered through staff and system interactions that Title I, III, and employer customers participate in.

In preparation for full WIOA implementation, Local Area service providers have been conducting on-going customer satisfaction analyses on a daily basis with all job seekers who access the CareerCenters and affiliated sites. While not compiled into an annual statistical report, the survey results are shared monthly with center managers and also with the Commissioner's Office as part of a monthly bureau activity report.

The tool used to capture this data is referred to as the **CareerCenter Visit Record**. The record asks to provide the following data:

- Name
- Date
- Town of Residence
- First or subsequent visit at which the form is being filled out
- U.S. Military Service Status
- Employment Status
- Reason(s) for visit:
 - Job Search Assistance
 - Filing a Unemployment Insurance Claim
 - Use of Computers/ Internet
 - Career Guidance
 - Resume Assistance

- Services for Individuals with Disabilities
- Training or Education
- Employer Recruitment Event or Job or Resource Fair
- Individual appointment
- Other _____

Center staff also uses the above information to identify whether the participant is active in the MJL or not and whether the service activity has been recorded in the MJL system.

A separate instrument in which they can remain anonymous asks them to provide the following regarding service satisfaction:

- Overall Rating Excellent: ___ Good: ___ Fair: ___ Poor: ___
- Services Easy to Use Excellent: ___ Good: ___ Fair: ___ Poor: ___
- Service Met Needs Excellent: ___ Good: ___ Fair: ___ Poor: ___
- Staff Responsiveness Excellent: ___ Good: ___ Fair: ___ Poor: ___
- Facility Quality Excellent: ___ Good: ___ Fair: ___ Poor: ___

Comments:

The attached data sheet shows how the information is captured and shared statewide as part of a regular system metrics review.

**Customer Satisfaction Survey Data Snapshot
One Quarter**

Career Center	# of Surveys	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Overall 1 = Poor 5 = Excellent
Augusta	110	80.0%	19.1%	0.9%		3.8
Bangor	76	80.0%	17.1%	2.6%		3.8
Brunswick	269	94.1%	5.2%	0.7%		3.9
Calais	106	95.3%	4.7%			4.0
Lewiston	432	78.9%	19.2%	1.9%		3.8
Machias	395	93.4%	6.3%	0.3%		3.9
Presque Isle	354	87.0%	12.4%	0.6%		3.9
Rockland	91	86.6%	13.2%			3.9
Skowhegan	776	62.6%	31.7%		5.7%	3.5
Wilton	864	78.6%	20.5%	0.9%		3.8
Percent of Surveys with additional comments: 46.8%						
Percent of Surveys from people who have visited multiple times: 34.2%						
Percent of Surveys from veterans: 11.71						

Waivers

We had no active waivers in place in PY15.

Program Monitoring & Assessment

The Maine Department of Labor's Bureau of Employment Services is the State Workforce Agency responsible for conducting program monitoring and oversight of WIA and WIOA's Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Programs, as well as Wagner Peysner employment services. Because PY15 has been a year of transition from WIA to WIOA, the monitoring process has been revised to include WIOA readiness reviews of the local boards and Local Area one-stop service providers.

Additionally, the program period being monitored has been expanded to cover not only the past program year processes and files but current program year as well. This new method stems from the need to identify and address issues during the current year so they can be fully resolved before related performance reporting and data validation activities take place for greater accuracy and efficiency in continuous improvements.

The monitoring plan this past year included a thorough review of:

- **Local Area Governance** – including:
 - WIOA compliant Local Board membership and nomination processes / CEO By Laws
 - Local Board adherence to the WIA / WIOA Sunshine Provision
 - Local Board policies and governance documents, including: policies, By-Laws, service provider contracts, RFP processes, outreach, and more.
 - Local Area Regional Coordination Activities, including: identification of innovations and best practices; level and type of employer and stakeholder engagement; current and planned industry and sector partnerships; industry and education stakeholder-driven career pathway development; and benchmarks toward Local Area plan goals.
- **Local area sub-recipient monitoring** focused on reviewing Board monitoring processes and tools and the level of monitoring taking place; the goal to identify whether the same or similar service provider level concerns and findings are being identified and correctly cited; the tools and methods being used and the level and oversight of implementation of any corrective action plans instated to address findings.
- **Local Area Performance** is reviewed on a quarterly basis to ensure issues are identified, corrective action plans articulated and implemented, and to ensure planned participant numbers are being served in each of the programs and if not to ascertain why.
- **Local board effectiveness** in reviewing policies and affecting integration of services is also examined.
- **Program delivery and participant file reviews** are also conducted with the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Service Providers to ensure they are adequately staffed, and that staff are aware of and abiding by Federal, State and local laws, regulations, policies and guidance. Topic areas reviewed at the service provider level include:
 - Organization and staffing patterns (one-stops and affiliated sites);
 - Customer service delivery design and flow;
 - Service integration efforts between in-house partners and other required partners;
 - Customer eligibility determination process/tools/documentation;
 - Participant assessment processes/tools/documentation;
 - Use of customer-level labor market information for the purposes of participant assessment, plan development and service packaging;
 - Delivery of required core/ basic career services;
 - Delivery of intensive/individualized career services;

- Evaluation and appropriateness for training services;
- Use and explanation of the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) for Individual Training Accounts;
- Appropriate and compliant use of all of the varied training service options (OJT, CT, ITA, etc.);
- File management and data validation documentation;
- Review of complaint processes and staff knowledge of these;
- Staff development and training needs; and,
- For Youth, the availability and packaging of required youth service elements and best practices for keeping youth engaged in program activities.

Monitoring Tools:

Each year the monitoring tools are reviewed and revised to accommodate any changes in Federal, State or local area law or policy. The following tools are included as part of the full monitoring toolbox:

- WIOA Local Board Membership Checklist
- Local Board Governance Document Checklist
- Local Area Policy Checklist
- MOU Checklist
- Local Board Questionnaire
- Service Provider Questionnaires:
 - Adult
 - Dislocated Worker
 - Youth
 - Labor Exchange & Employment Services
- Participant Interviews (A, DW, Y)
- One-Stop Center Checklist
- Accessibility Checklist
- Participant File Review Forms (A, DW, Y)

PY15 Local Areas Monitored:

Each year, all Local Areas are monitored with a goal of conducting monitoring at each A/DW/Youth service provider level. During PY15, Maine had four Local Areas and monitoring occurred as follows:

- March 22-25, 2016: Local Area 3 the Central Western WDB and Augusta CareerCenter
- April 26-29, 2016: Local Area 4 the Coastal Counties WDB and Brunswick CareerCenter
- May 9-13, 2016: Local Area 2 the Tri-County WDB and Bangor Career Center
- June 1-3, 2016: Local Area 1 the Aroostook Washington WDB and Presque Isle CareerCenter

PY16 Monitoring Schedule

CENTRAL WESTERN AREA

Program	Date	Time	Location	Activity
Adult/DW Programs	April 3, 2017	8:30-11:00	Lewiston CC	Frontline staff interviews
A/DW Participant Interviews		11:15-12:00	Lewiston CC	Two Adult and two DW participants as a panel
Youth Programs		12:30-3:00	Lewiston CC	Frontline staff interviews
Youth Participant Interviews		3:15-4:00	Lewiston CC	Three OSY Youth participants as a panel
Info Center & WP Review		4:00-5:00	Lewiston CC	Checklist review
Adult/DW Programs	April 4, 2017	8:30-11:00	Skowhegan CC	Frontline staff interviews
A/DW Participant Interviews		11:15-12:00	Skowhegan CC	Two Adult and two DW participants as a panel
Youth Programs		12:30-3:00	Skowhegan CC	Frontline staff interviews
Youth Participant Interviews		3:15-4:00	Skowhegan CC	Three OSY Youth participants as a panel
Info Center & WP Review		4:00-5:00	Skowhegan CC	Checklist review
Local Board Governance	April 5, 2017	9:00-Noon	Lewiston CC	Review of Board Governance, Activities, Plan, Policies
Exit Interview		2:30-4:00	Lewiston CC	Zoom in Skowhegan staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board Governance documents must be submitted to Bureau of Employment Services (BES) on or before March 10, 2017. • Files will be selected and reviewed behind the scenes in the Local Office – file reviews will consist of PY16 & PY17 files. • Participants to be interviewed will be identified by BES – Local Office staff will be required to ensure selected participants are able to attend the scheduled participant interviews, which will be done at the same time as a participant panel. 				

COASTAL COUNTIES AREA

Program	Date	Time	Location	Activity
Adult/DW Programs	May 8, 2017	8:30-11:00	Lancaster St.	Frontline staff interviews
A/DW Participant Interviews		11:15-12:00	Lancaster St.	Two Adult and two DW participants as a panel
Youth Programs		12:30-3:00	Lancaster St.	Frontline staff interviews
Youth Participant Interviews		3:15-4:00	Lancaster St.	Three OSY Youth participants as a panel
Info Center & WP Review		4:00-5:00	Jetport	Checklist review
Adult/DW Programs	May 9, 2017	8:30-11:00	Rockland	Frontline staff interviews
A/DW Participant Interviews		11:15-12:00	Rockland	Two Adult and two DW participants as a panel
Youth Programs		12:30-3:00	Rockland	Frontline staff interviews
Youth Participant Interviews		3:15-4:00	Rockland	Three OSY Youth participants as a panel
Info Center & WP Review		4:00-5:00	Rockland	Checklist review
Local Board Governance	May 10, 2017	9:00-Noon	Brunswick	Review of Board Governance, Activities, Plan, Policies
Exit Interview		2:30-3:30	Brunswick	Zoom in Rockland & Lancaster St.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board Governance documents must be submitted to BES on or before April 13, 2017. • Files will be selected and reviewed behind the scenes in the Local Office – file reviews will consist of PY16 & PY17 files. 				

Program	Date	Time	Location	Activity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants to be interviewed will be identified by BES – Local Office staff will be required to ensure selected participants are able to attend the scheduled participant interviews, which will be done at the same time as a participant panel. 				

NORTHEASTERN AREA

Program	Date	Time	Location	Activity
Adult/DW Programs	June 5, 2017	8:30-11:00	Machias CC	Frontline staff interviews
A/DW Participant Interviews		11:15-12:00	Machias CC	Two Adult and two DW participants as a panel
Youth Programs		12:30-3:00	Machias CC	Frontline staff interviews
Youth Participant Interviews		3:15-4:00	Machias CC	Three OSY Youth participants as a panel
Info Center & WP Review		4:00-5:00	Machias CC	Checklist review
Local Board Governance	June 6, 2017	9:00-Noon	Bangor	Review of Board Governance, Activities, Plan, Policies
Exit Interview		2:30-3:30	Bangor	Zoom in Machias staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board Governance documents must be submitted to BES on or before May 12, 2017. Files will be selected and reviewed behind the scenes in the Local Office – file reviews will consist of PY16 & PY17 files. Participants to be interviewed will be identified by BES – Local Office staff will be required to ensure selected participants are able to attend the scheduled participant interviews, which will be done at the same time as a participant panel. 				

Program Evaluation Project

The State plans to compare the long-term effectiveness of work-based learning versus traditional classroom-based learning programs using the Center for Workforce Research and Information’s Longitudinal Data System (LDS) tool.

Maine’s LDS tool is being used to measure long-term participant outcomes to provide information that inform program design and policy decisions around training investments. The LDS is designed to measure program participants’ wage and employment outcomes by credential and program. Currently, a range of programs are part of this data sharing and tracking initiative including Maine’s Community Colleges, the University of Maine System, Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation programs and MDOL.

Defining Industry Recognized Credentials and measuring the attainment of these credentials has been an important aspect for assessing the value of those credentials in regards to long-term employment and earnings outcomes.

Maine will utilize the LDS to study a control group to assess the long-term outcomes of participants who participate in specific types of training activities.

Maine’s economic analysis states the majority of jobs that are projected to grow in Maine will require postsecondary education and training. Maine has utilized Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) to support WIA participant attainment of traditional two and four year college degrees as a the primary method for occupational training for many years. However, WIOA strongly emphasizes employer-based workforce preparation and promotes new education alliances intended to limit duplication of services and to increase the

engagement of employers in developing standards and articulating pathways workers can take to attain entry to upper level skills.

By selecting a pool of individuals who successfully completed training during PY15, the state will analyze and compare the long-term employment and earnings outcomes of participants enrolled in employer-based training, (*On-the-Job Training, Registered Apprenticeship, Customized Training, and employer-funded certificate training*) with the outcomes of participants enrolled in traditional two or four year college degree or certificate programs.

This is a long term evaluation that has only just begun as of July 1, 2016 and will continue for several years.

Information that will be used to evaluate the outcomes of each of the participant groups will include the costs borne by the WIOA programs for specific types of instruction as follows:

- Full-cost of the formal component of participant training
 - For college bound trainees: tuition, fees, books, remedial or prerequisite courses and other charges of the educational institution;
 - For employer-based trainees: OJT wages, cost of any related classroom training or instruction, cost of customized training funded by WIOA;
 - Full cost of supportive services funded for the full term of the training program;
 - Percentage of staff time directly supporting the participant from the point of program entry to successful completion of training and including any follow-up services; and,
 - Full amount and type of non-WIOA funds leveraged, such as: PELL, scholarships, individual contributions and employer wage and classroom cost match, including costs of employee benefits paid to participants while in training, if any.

Additional aspects that will be evaluated for each participant will include:

- Industry for which trainee was prepared;
- Length of time in formal training (program/OJT start to program/OJT end date);
- Length of time from completion of training to attainment of employment;
- Whether or not the training included both an experiential and academic component;
- Whether or not trainee attained a portable credential, degree, diploma, license or will attain a portable credential, such as a certificate of apprenticeship;
- Wages at second quarter after exit;
- Wages at sixth quarter after exit; and,
- Wages at tenth quarter after exit.

In addition to participant analysis, employers offering the work-based training will be surveyed regarding their perspectives on the value and effectiveness of this approach. Employers will be asked to provide their input regarding the overall success of employees they hire just out of college with those they have hired and trained through WIOA supported work-based training. This input will be used to inform service providers who are developing work-based training programs for employers and participants.

Participants with similar socio-economic backgrounds and academic levels at entry will be randomly selected from across the state, using data captured through formal intake and assessment.

Because it is assumed the number of employer-based training approaches will increase under WIOA, additional comparison cohort groups will be selected each year through PY17.

Data accumulated will be analyzed at the end of each program year and in total at the end of PY20. A report comparing the long-term employment and earnings outcomes of each of the two participant cohorts of the study will be produced. Results will be used to inform workforce development service providers and employers about the benefits and/or pitfalls of each approach and to improve the practices involved, including the following:

- Initial and ongoing involvement of the employer or industry for which employees from both cohorts are being educated and trained;
- Processes used to prepare and support participants throughout their preparation for training, training, and subsequent employment;
- Formulas for greatest return on investment and cost efficiencies identified;
- Level of relevance to the employer for each training approach;
- Level of skill quality produced as identified in earnings and employment;
- Amount of non-WIOA funds leveraged; and,
- Overall lessons learned based on the findings including strengths and weaknesses for both the employer and the worker.

WIOA Transition Activities During PY15

Maine's workforce development system has undergone significant transition over the past program year. Service provider staff has been challenged not only with learning the new law and regulations but also learning to use a new job match and case management system.

CareerCenter staff meetings have been used as training platforms to explain what is new under WIOA and a series of WIOA Transitions Newsletters have also been published on an as needed basis as a way to keep frontline staff informed.

A Statewide Steering Committee, made up of the four core partners, met regularly to identify action steps that would have to be addressed to transition to WIOA; three subcommittees were generated to take on the work.

1. **Unified Plan Committee** – tasked with convening partners, analyzing plan requirements, and researching and writing the plan;
2. **Performance and Accountability Committee** – tasked with understanding the new WIOA performance measures and new reporting requirements and also to discuss data integrated and data sharing efforts that would be required to meet the requirements of the law; and,
3. **One-Stop Committee** - tasked with taking on the following topics:
 - a. Provision of meaningful assistance to Unemployment Insurance claimants
 - b. Development and implementation of Priority of Service policy and guidance
 - c. Exploring methods for integrated intake
 - d. Eligible Training Provider List new requirements and policy
 - e. One-Stop Certification methodology
 - f. Employer Outreach and Services
 - g. Youth Service Delivery
 - h. Accessibility
 - i. System staff development and cross informing

In addition, the State Workforce Development Board appointed a WIOA Implementation and Policy Committee tasked with the review of newly required WIOA policies and the revision of WIA policies to meet WIOA requirements.

Two separate committees have also worked on the MOU requirements and integrated service requirements, often referred to as co-enrollment requirement under WIOA. The State Board has a Program Partner Committee made up of all required and additional partners identified by the State as integral to the One-Stop delivery system. A MOU policy was drafted and the program partners were apprised of the requirements and the soon to be published guidance on infrastructure cost sharing agreements that must be in place by PY17.

Of the initial work groups above, the following groups will continue as ongoing implementation teams into the distant future. They are the Staff Development Committee, the Youth Services Committee and the WIOA Implementation and Policy Committee.

Veterans Services

The past year has been busy with veteran related activities from job fairs, conferences, campaigns and workshops. With the support of Maine's Governor Paul LePage and First Lady Ann LePage, we kicked off the first annual Maine Hire-A-Vet Campaign on September 5, 2015. This initiative was met with more success than we could have imagined. We exceeded all our goals! Our hope was to place 100 veterans with 100 employers in 100 days – 100/100/100. By the end of 100 days, 269 veterans had been placed with 139 employers in all Maine's 16 counties. During the Hire-A-Vet Campaign, Facebook users from eight countries, 24 states and 176 cities LIKED our page. At least two veterans moved to Maine to accept positions with campaign participant employers. At the heart of the campaign were its partners, which included MDOL, Maine's CareerCenters, Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), Hero2Hired (H2H), Veterans Inc., Maine Bureau of Veterans Services (MBVS), VA Togus VR&E, the VA Homeless Program and the State of Maine Bureau of Human Resources (MBHR) – most of whom are members of the State Workforce Board's Veterans Employment Committee. Plans are underway to continue the campaign in 2016. Also in September, Maine's Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) hosted a Veterans Conference, *Maine Values Veterans*, in Northport, Maine. JVSG incentive monies supported the conference, which brought together MDOL leaders, CareerCenter and JVSG staff, as well as community business, nonprofit and military partners. First Lady Ann LePage and MDOL Commissioner Jeanne Paquette kicked off the day by welcoming participants and thanking them for their partnerships and service. Keynote speaker and Chairman of the Easter Seals Dixon Center in Washington, D.C., COL David Sutherland, pulled on the attendees' heartstrings with his stories of veterans with multiple deployments and disabilities who have overcome significant barriers to get back in the workforce.

Maine Hire-A-Vet collaborated with the Live + Work in Maine (L+WM) Initiative in January 2016 to attract more veterans to come to live and work in Maine in response to current and predicted workforce shortages. The L+WM staff were open and excited to take next steps with us. In July of 2016, a new webpage was added to their website that markets directly to veterans, answering questions such as why they should consider moving to Maine. Videos highlighting veterans who have successfully found employment in Maine and made the move are inspiring. In addition, employers who have hired veterans share their successes also on video.

The JVSG, a USDOL funded program, provided \$1,022,017 in PY16 and supported 13.5 full-time equivalent veterans staff positions, three which were limited-term positions to build veterans staffing capacity in different regions of the state. Maine's staffing was comprised of six full-time and five half-time Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOPs) Specialists and five full-time Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVERs) working within 12 CareerCenter offices and numerous itinerant sites. One LVER serves as the state Veterans Program Manager based at Augusta's central office. This staffing plan includes a heavier emphasis on DVOP positions to ensure intensive services are adequately provided to veterans with barriers to employment.

The 2016 JVSG staff development plan included training for both JVSG grant funded staff as well as training for CareerCenter partners: Wagner-Peyser, Workforce Investment Act and vocational rehabilitation. Training focused on customer flow for veterans at the CareerCenters, Priority of Service and Maine JobLink case management training. In addition, veteran representatives participated in Motivational Interviewing and Suicide Prevention training.

Maine's DVOPs and LVERs continue to collaborate with local agencies and programs such as Easter Seals of Maine, Volunteers of America, Goodwill's Veterans Program, Disability Employment Initiative, Maine's Business

Leadership Network (promotes the hiring and advancement of people with disabilities), the Apprenticeship Program, Ticket to Work, Bureau of Veterans Services, Maine Military Community Network, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment, Chambers of Commerce, LWIBs, homeless shelters, American Legion, Maine National Guard, and Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve. In addition, the Veterans Program Manager provides staff leadership on the SWB's Veterans' Employment Committee, which focuses on veteran Priority of Service programs and other issues impacting veterans.

Performance Targets and Outcomes for Jobs for Veterans State Grants, Quarter Ending June 30, 2016

<i>DVOP Specialists: (Source: VETS-200A):</i>	Negotiated Standard	Actual Outcome
Intensive Services Provided to Individuals by DVOP Specialists/Total Veterans and Eligible Persons Served by DVOP Specialists in the State <i>(New)</i>	90	95
Veterans' Entered Employment Rate (VEER) <i>Weighted</i>	60	74
Veterans' Employment Retention Rate (VERR)	78	81
Veterans' Average Earnings (VAE) (Six Months)	\$12,750	\$13,647
Disabled Veterans' EER (DVEER)	50	64
Disabled Veterans' ERR (DVERR)	72	75
Disabled Veterans' AE (DVAE) (Six Months)	\$13,750	\$13,951

Performance Targets and Outcomes for One-Stop Services for Veterans, Quarter Ending June 30, 2016

	Negotiated Standard	Actual Outcome
Veterans Entered Employment Rate (EER)	52	61
Veterans Employment Retention Rate (ERR)	80	82
Veterans Average Earnings (AE)	\$13,750	\$15,175
Disabled Veterans EER	47	56
Disabled Veterans ERR	79	80
Disabled Veterans AE	\$14,500	\$15,226

The actual performance as compared to the negotiated standards trended upward in the third quarter. We exceeded all 13 negotiated standards – according to OSOS. Every CareerCenter exceeded the 90% goal. We are especially happy to see the average earnings up in every category. Overall, the trend continues in a positive direction. At least in part, we can attribute this to DVOP training on intensive services and proper documentation. In addition, the economic recovery is providing better opportunities for our veteran jobseekers.

Priority of Service

Maine continues to implement the Veterans' Priority of Service as defined and required by 38 U.S.C 4215(b) and 20 CFR Parts 1001 and 1010. The Maine One-Stop delivery system (Maine CareerCenters) is the core mechanism that is used to support, expand and maintain services to our veteran population throughout the State. Priority of Service is made available and provided to all eligible veterans and eligible spouses, transitioning service members, Chapter 31 veterans, Native American veterans, and other groups targeted for special consideration, including difficult to serve veterans and veterans with barriers to employment.

Priority of Service applies to the WIA Adult, Dislocated and Youth Grants, National Emergency Grants, Demonstration Grants, Trade Adjustment Assistance, Wagner-Peyser, American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and other core programs funded by the USDOL and administered in Maine by the Maine Department of Labor. Accordingly, MDOL has issued guidance to the State's Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIBs) requiring local policy issuance to providers of the above applications to include priority of service for veterans' requirements in agreements (plans, contracts and subcontracts).

In conjunction with our DVET, MDOL monitors LWIB issuance, implementation and compliance of the Priority of Service statute and policy. LWIBs are subsequently required to conduct the same monitoring with any and all contractors receiving Department of Labor funds. DVOP Specialists and LVERs are responsible for advocating for veterans and monitoring the Priority of Service principle within Maine's CareerCenter network. Any case where a veteran or eligible spouse is denied services over a non-veteran will be documented and brought to the attention of the Bureau of Employment Services for review and further action as appropriate.

Priority of Service for veterans and eligible spouses supports the tenets of "precedence" and "awareness", as defined in 20 CFR 1010. With regard to precedence for all U.S. DOL core-funded programs, Maine veterans and eligible spouses receive access to services earlier than non-covered persons. If limited resources restrict a particular service, then a Maine veteran or eligible spouse will receive access instead of or before non-veterans. Again, precedence will apply to every qualified job training program funded, in whole or in part, by the USDOL.

Under the tenet of "awareness," Maine focuses on points of entry for services, both physical and virtual modes. All Maine CareerCenters and itinerant sites have signage in their entryways that defines Priority of Service for veterans. At the initial point of contact with CareerCenter staff, veteran's status is determined and Priority for Services is discussed. For all hard-copy products (pamphlets/brochures) describing USDOL core-funded programs, Priority of Service for veterans is inscribed. On all MDOL websites, Priority of Service for veterans is highlighted. This applies as well to the websites of LWIBs, program operators and others receiving USDOL core program funds. In the new Maine JobLink, a screen reflects what Priority of Service for veterans means, particularly as it relates to precedence.

Special Initiatives – In the past year, several special projects for veterans were initiated. Some highlights include:

Maine Department of Labor Awarded the Rural Veterans Coordination Pilot - June 2016

The Maine Department of Labor's Rural Veterans Coordination Pilot (RVCP) assists veterans who are transitioning to civilian life in rural areas of the state, gain access to employment, healthcare, support services and resources. Partner agencies in the grant include the Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management (DVEM)/Maine Bureau of Veterans Services (MBVS), Easter Seals Maine and the Northeastern Workforce Board. The grant has been extended through May of 2017. Grant funding comes from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' Office of Rural Health.

HiltonHHonors Military Program Launches in Maine

If veterans have to travel for a job interview, for housing search (if they have already been offered a job), and/or for job search in cooperation with a Hiring Fair, they can access points by working with their CareerCenter.

Those points can be used to pay for their stay in a Hilton Hotel. This program is a part of Hilton's *Operation: Opportunity* initiative to provide support to United States military veterans and their families. In partnership with the National Association of State Workforce Agencies and individual State Workforce Agencies, the Hilton HHonors Military Program donates points to eligible transitioning service members, veterans and military spouses. There are currently 20 Hilton brand hotels in the State of Maine. As of March 31, 2016, 15 veterans have used the program. Two have used their HHonors accommodations for job search, two for job fairs, eight for job interviews, and six for housing (some a combination of the above). Five of the 15 have been hired to date.

National Veterans Training Initiative (NVTI) Trainings in Denver

Four of Maine's DVOPs and LVERs attended trainings at NVTI in Denver in the past year. Trainings included: Facilitating Veterans Employment (FVE), Intensive Services (IS), and Employer Outreach (EO). In addition, three of our CareerCenter managers and two of our Rural Veterans Coordination Pilot staff attended the Leadership for the Implementation of Veterans Services (LIVS) training. NVTI is encouraging non-veteran CareerCenter staff and partners to participate in the training as a way to raise awareness of the integration of veterans' services at our centers. We will see more of this in the year ahead.

Local Workforce Investment Board Highlights

Northeastern workforce development board (NWDB) Program Year 2015 report

Successful Consolidation equates to new local area

The Chief Elected Officials (CEOs) for the five counties of Aroostook, Washington, Penobscot, Piscataquis, and Hancock met on October 13, 2015 and decided to consolidate two Local Workforce Development Areas (LA 1 & LA 2) into one. Their decision was grounded in maximizing resources and services to both job seekers and businesses throughout all five counties. The Northeastern Workforce Area model allows more to be done in all areas of the region and ensures sufficient administrative funds to conduct all activities required for the proper administration of WIOA.

PY15 Local Area Admin Funds

LA1 AWWIB	LA2 TCWIB	LA3 CWMWIB	LA4 CCWIB
Aroostook Washington	Hancock Penobscot Piscataquis	Androscoggin Kennebec Franklin Oxford Somerset	Cumberland Knox Lincoln Sagadahoc Waldo York
\$86,878	\$181,095	\$226,197	\$292,142

Using the charts above, it is easy to see the NWDB receives adequate resources to conduct all of the required administrative activities of the new local area for WIOA formula funds.

Combining efforts have decreased costs for both local areas overall by reducing staff including fiscal management, indirect costs and eliminating redundancies in auditing, board development and strategic planning. The consolidation has increased resources available to develop activities geared to educating the public about the workforce system and building stronger relationships with job seekers, partners and businesses throughout the region. Increasing education and training opportunities to urban, suburban and rural populations and providing businesses with qualified workers is the mandate of the workforce development system and the consolidation is proving to be successful in exactly what is expected. More details will be available after program year 2016. The NWDB received its first contract July 1, 2016.

Moving into PY16, the NWDB will focus its efforts on board development, strategic planning and outreach to job seekers, one stop partners, and industry partners.

The NWDB will meet for a two-day retreat on November 1st and 2nd, 2016 at the New England Outdoors Center. Partners and stakeholders will be invited to join the board on November 1st for listening sessions.

The NWDB collaborates and partners with three service providers: Eastern Maine Development Corporation (EMDC), Bureau of Employment Services (BES) and the Aroostook County Action Program (ACAP).

NWDB Service Provider in Aroostook County; Aroostook County Action Program

ACAP Workforce Development works to help underemployed and unemployed Aroostook County workers improve their skills, earn credentials, and secure jobs in high-wage, high-demand fields. They also serve Aroostook County youth (14-24) with a specially targeted youth program. They help regional employers fill high-skill vacancies with local talent, as well as give new entrants to the workforce a chance to earn valuable experience. To do this, ACAP collaborates with many local partners, including the Bureau of Employment

Services/Career Centers, local Adult Education partners, Vocational Rehabilitation, postsecondary institutions, and New Ventures Maine. As the Community Action Agency (CAP) in this sparsely populated region, ACAP is well-positioned to address the needs of low-income working families in a comprehensive way, including high-quality Head Start services, LiHEAP and housing services, insurance coverage through the Affordable Care Act Marketplace, and targeted case management funded through the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funds.

One customer was laid off in 2013 when Creative Apparel closed its doors. She had been out of school for over 30 years but made up her mind to take advantage of the opportunity to get her degree. She worked with the CareerCenter, Madawaska Adult Education, and ACAP Workforce Development to help her enroll in the Accounting program at the University of Maine at Fort Kent (UMFK). She received assistance paying for classes, transportation and books not only through ACAP programs, but also from the Maine Competitive Skills Scholarship Program (CSSP). In addition, Madawaska Adult Education assisted her with some of her college coursework. She just graduated with a Grade Point Average of 3.9 and also received the Associate of Arts Academic Achievement Award. She is now employed as an assistant manager at Dollar Tree in Madawaska.

NWDB Service Provider in Washington County: Bureau of Employment Services (BES)

St. Croix Tissue (SCT) Workforce Partnership

St. Croix Tissue is a new, state-of-the art tissue paper manufacturing company in Baileyville, Maine. SCT is located next to their parent company, Woodland Pulp LLC, Washington County's largest employer. SCT produces a full range of products for the growing national and international tissue markets, including paper napkins, paper towels, bathroom tissue and facial tissue. Two automated tissue paper manufacturing machines are expected to produce over 120,000 tons of tissue a year with pulp supplied by Woodland Pulp.

Training this workforce resulted in a successful collaboration of various partners including SCT, Washington County Community College (WCCC), AXIOM Education & Training, CEI, Sunrise County Economic Council, and the Maine Department of Labor for an initial nine month Paper Making Technology course in which 40 students were enrolled. MDOL supported 18 of the 40 with travel assistance and laptop purchases through the Competitive Skills Scholarship Business Program, the Job Driven National Emergency Grant and WIOA. Thirty-eight students completed the class and were all offered interviews with St. Croix Tissue. MDOL provided interview and resume preparation to the students. Five students were also certified as WorkReady through AXIOM Education & Training.

Phase two of the training was a 16 week customized training program developed by SCT and WCCC. Topics included crane operation, substantial workplace safety, high performance work teams, and vendor specific modules. MDOL assisted with the cost of the customized training and provided support services for travel assistance and child care for individuals eligible for the aforementioned programs.

Phase three of the training consisted of on-the-job training that lasted three to six months. WCCC awarded college credit to anyone who completed the Paper Making Technology course, as well as the customized training. This can be applied to new degree tracks that WCCC has developed in response to manufacturing sector needs in Washington County. The degree programs are: Production Technician Certificate, Production Technician Associates in Applied Science (A.A.S.), and Pulp and Paper Technician Associates in Applied Science (A.A.S.). These programs will align perfectly to develop Registered Apprenticeships at St. Croix Tissue in partnership with DOL and WCCC as they move forward with their post-production training.

NWDB Service Provider in Penobscot, Piscataquis and Hancock counties: Eastern Maine Development Corporation (EMDC)

During PY15, EMDC expanded work based learning significantly over PY14, particularly in the use of On-the-Job Training with 16 OJTs. EMDC is serving WIOA customers directly in this manner and have also worked in partnership with BES and the Trade Adjustment Act (TAA) program to partner in developing four more TAA funded OJT's. The TAA funding has been a significant source of training funds for laid off mill workers as EMDC has supported these efforts with NEG funds targeted to each of the four mills closing over the past two years.

EMDC has expanded programming with the adult education groups in the tri-county area. Exemplified by completing a fourth Medical Administrative Assistant (MAA) cohort training with Bangor Adult Education as a partner and content provider, EMDC partnered with RSU #24 in Sullivan in creating a similar program to the one in Bangor for MAA and also added a cohort of trainees in residential construction. All three programs offered certificates; testing for MAA certification was also offered and accomplished.

Out of school youth have been another focus for PY15. EMDC created and ran two separate cohorts of Career Compass, the local programming for youth to learn employability skills and "test" some of those concepts with a capstone paid work experience in the Bangor area with local employers. This year's programming was augmented with a 16 hour component of financial literacy that provided insights into finance and importantly enabled many students to open their first savings accounts and begin to manage their money.

Overall, it has been a very busy year for the Northeastern Workforce Development Board. They are looking forward to the next year, working on a new strategic plan and bringing all partners and stakeholders to the table.

Central/Western Maine Workforce Development Board (CWMWDB) Program Year 2015 Report

During PY15, a significant amount of effort went into the development of the WIOA four-year Local Plan, which focuses on employer-demand/targeted industry workforce needs of the region. The planning process was community driven: a webinar informational session was held and 39 stakeholders participated in the event; three focus group sessions were conducted (employers; educators/service providers; economic development/business associations); a follow-up survey was sent to all stakeholders for additional input and to enable stakeholders that were not able to participate in the focus groups an opportunity to provide input.

The main emphasis of the Local Plan revolves around activities and partnerships that support and facilitate industry sector development through: increased employer engagement in the workforce development system; improving educators' understanding of employers' workforce needs/skills requirements; reducing the mismatch between job seeker skills and employer needs, balancing supply and demand of labor, and improved foundational learning and adaptability skills. This will be accomplished by:

- Creating demand-driven training opportunities
- Establishing stackable, industry recognized training programs
- Developing a pipeline of workers through outreach and education

As noted in the WIOA four-year Local Plan and through the support of two NEG grants, three industries are specifically targeted to address the employer demand for employees (manufacturing, IT professionals, healthcare). The following "employer-engagement model" is implemented to support and facilitate sector strategies that utilize career pathways as a tool to develop and retain employees:

Identify Industries/Employers that are Growing/Emerging

- Employers engaged at beginning of talent pipeline
 - Determine workforce needs/issues (new jobs/incumbent workers)
 - Identify specific skills for occupations
- Career pathways for incumbent and entry level workers
 - Assist in curriculum development and implementation
 - Involvement in initial review of potential training participants
 - Participate as guest speakers/instructors, train at facility, onsite tours
 - Active in pre-employment preparation (resume, mock interviews, etc.)
 - Job placement and employer's competitive position strengthened

Industry panels have been used to identify employers to implement the employer-engagement model above. As a result, there have been "Ready2Work" (R2W) industry-specific occupational training for various positions in healthcare and manufacturing sectors. CWMWDB has collaborated with the CareerCenters, Adult Education and numerous employers within the targeted industries to partner in R2W training and coupling it with On-the-Job training opportunities. Meetings and planning are currently in progress to replicate similar training for the IT sector. Career pathway development discussions and planning have begun within the three industries. The existing R2W's are beginning to advance into the career pathways direction as a natural extension of the current training. CWMWDB has been collaborating with the Adult Educators within the region to begin career pathway planning and development.

A very important initiative that took place and will continue into the near future is the transition from WIA to WIOA. Implementation of WIOA occurred at various levels/functions: local organization, governance and structure (e.g. Board membership, local policy revisions, local plan development); design and implementation of sector strategies, industry partnerships, increasing opportunities for work experience, OJT, apprenticeships that lead to/facilitate career pathways; change in CareerCenter service delivery, performance indicators, implementing a new management information system (AJLA/MJL); aligning programs/services with the four core partners for authentic “integrated service delivery”; expanding/clarifying roles and partnerships with Adult Education; and, improving customer flow and referral to partners.

Employer-driven relationships have become the norm through two grants [Job-Driven (JD) NEG, Sector-Partnership (SP) NEG] and the new norm has become institutionalized as the new standard operating procedure. Conversations begin with “what do you need” and then the workforce development system (CareerCenters, CWMWDB and partners) pull together the resources needed (e.g. recruitment, training, business support, etc.).

The majority of JD and SP NEG funds have been/continue to be used to help address employer staffing needs where the employer has encountered chronic inability to fill positions due to a skills gap of job seekers in the community. Most prominent in the healthcare and manufacturing arenas, these funds have been used to assist in developing the Ready2Work models that include industry tailored soft skills training followed by occupational skills training and then On-the-Job Training contracts with area employers. Existing partnerships include Maine General Medical Center, Maine Veteran’s Home, Mount St. Joseph’s Residence and Rehabilitation, Lakewood Continuing Care, Alternative Manufacturing, Central Maine Meats, Senior Flexonics Pathway, St. Mary’s Health Systems, Clover Manor, Schooner Estates, Strainrite, and Carbonite. All positions supported provide opportunity for career pathways to high-pay, high demand occupations. Two of the projects, St. Mary’s and Clover Manor, have begun apprenticeship programs at their sites.

The Ready2Work model is a close collaboration between the CareerCenters, employers, and training providers (i.e., adult education, post-secondary education). The partners collaborate to develop the marketing/recruitment materials, screening, assessment, selection, training, and placement processes. Participants are connected to these projects through our marketing/recruitment strategies, which include community posters, email blasts, Facebook, Twitter, direct referrals from all the partners, reverse referrals from the employers, and self-referrals. The JD and SP grants are also being used to support individual occupational skills training and support services.

Twelve R2W academies have been conducted, and OJT contracts increased from 11 in PY 14-15 to 34 in PY 15-16. Two of the R2W employers have begun apprenticeship programs at their sites (St. Mary’s Health System and Clover Manor). New programming, based on community partnerships, has incorporated the following:

- Working with local schools and the Lewiston-Auburn Metro Chamber; the CareerCenter coordinated an “Economic Bus Tour” for teachers (K-12) and guidance counselors. This included two tours with four businesses on each tour. Businesses include: Proctor and Gamble, International Paper, Central Maine Community College, TD Contact Center, Elmet, Globe Manufacturing, Central Maine Orthopedics, and Geiger. The tour ended at Lewiston-Auburn Museum for a bit of manufacturing and history.

- CWMWDB and the Lewiston CareerCenter have been working with the John T. Gorman Foundation, the City of Lewiston, the Green and Healthy Homes Initiative, and businesses to develop funding for training opportunities for New Mainers and other downtown residents with barriers to employment. The partnership with the Gorman Foundation and the Green and Healthy Homes Initiative will focus on environmental remediation and construction trades.
- CWMWDB's youth programs are now comprised of 75% out-of-school youth (OSY). Beginning last year, enrollments are almost entirely OSY. The strategy is to work with programs that target OSY. Examples are the Work with ME Program (an affiliate of the Auburn Police Department), the Auburn School Department's credit recovery program, and Take2 (YouthBuild). These are very at risk youth. Academic components are offered directly through these partners and all partners provide workshops. The youth programs work with agencies such as Work with ME and New Ventures to arrange financial literacy workshops to be delivered as a group activity on-site for youth. Effort is made to keep youth services "portable" so they can be delivered where the youth are versus expecting them to visit the CareerCenter. Work experience is another major service provided for enrolled youth using both private and public sector sites. Academic components are built into the Work Experience and offered on site through the partners. Work Experience is also being used as a way for employers to "evaluate" youth for potential hire. Youth are also referred to the employer-driven projects where they receive work-readiness, occupational skills training and on-the-job-training.
- Manufacturing Day 10/2/15: This event had a total of 13 employers from five counties and 537 students from 16 different schools. Students ranged from the sixth grade to graduate college students from CMCC. The Manufacturing Association of Maine's (MAME) "Flagship Event" had 46 kids from East Auburn and Washburn Schools in Auburn attending. It also included Colt Seigars from Hall-Dale High School conducting a robotics demonstration and three segments on WCSH-TV, which were live from Strainrite. These segments included Plant Operations Manager Peter Brown, Auburn Ad Ed Director Bill Grant, and Marion Sprague from MAME explaining why the event was important. The goal is to work with schools on an ongoing basis and send groups of students to tour these businesses; expand the students' knowledge; and improve the public perception of manufacturing careers and manufacturing's value to the Maine economy. This strategy enables educators to learn about how to engage their students through manufacturing; and, students will learn about high tech-high paying jobs with benefits in Maine's growing manufacturing sector.
- To address recruitment strategies with the labor shortage in the Lewiston/Auburn area, the Lewiston CareerCenter partnered with LA Metro Chamber, and the Central Maine Human Resources Association to create an eight part series titled *HR Thursdays*. The sessions are 'lunch and learns' and the following workshops titles/themes have been/will be offered:
 - a) *"Hiring for Your Best Fit: Screening to On-Boarding and Everything In-between"*- Jay Casavant, Vantage Point Recruiting;
 - b) *"Reducing stress in the workplace to help with productivity, health, and retention"*- Dr. Cory St. Denis, D.C.;
 - c) *"Five Strategies for a Stronger Workforce"*- Paul Beaudette, Leading Edge Business Strategies; and,
 - d) *"Making the ADA Work for You and Adding Value to your workplace"*, *Criminal Backgrounds and Drug Screens*, and *Creative Strategies for Attracting People* from a variety of talent pools.

Due to Verso Papers plant closure in PY15, a contract was awarded to CMMWIB to provide a Peer Support Worker (PSW) to the affected employees as the facility began to shut down. The PSW's purpose is to act as a liaison between the company, the employees and the rapid response services available to the employees.

A continuing challenge that is becoming more evident is the decreasing supply and availability of qualified job seekers. The CMMWDB has focused on employer needs for many years and have developed a successful Business Services model, but it needs to put more emphasis, time and effort on the supply side to help job seekers improve and obtain marketable skills for the high-demand occupations. With the increase of aging-out workers and the lack of youth coming into the labor market, it is imperative to have a high degree of involvement with the under-represented population segments.

Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. (CCWI) Program Year 2015 Annual Report

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

Once the federal legislation for workforce development was finally reauthorized in the passage of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), CCWI and its partners knew it meant challenges for them, but they also knew it created opportunities as well.

They immediately went to work by conducting a comprehensive review of both the WIOA law and the initial USDOL regulations. This prepared them to provide comments to USDOL on their guidance, but also to begin their local and regional WIOA implementation. However, they knew that before launching implementation tasks, they had to address any impacts to the agency. This resulted in modifying their financial manual to fully align with the new Office of Management and Budget (OMB) compliance and adjusting by-laws and board membership composition while creating local policy guidance that dealt with WIOA policy changes. As this foundation was laid, their board approved the revised by-laws and designated the new One-Stop Operator. Finally, the new Coastal Counties Regional Plan has now been approved by the Workforce Board and submitted to the State. During PY15, the region's CareerCenters and Workforce Solutions Centers saw more than 46,728 customer visits. Individuals receiving WIOA-funded employment and training services over that period of time totaled 901. The average entered employment rate across the three WIOA formula programs was 78%.

WIOA Adult & Dislocated Worker Program

The Adult Program provides employment and training services to eligible individuals ages 18 and older who require assistance and skills upgrading in order to secure meaningful employment, with priority given to those who are low income. The Dislocated Worker Program provides services to eligible individuals who have been terminated or laid off or who have received a notice of termination or layoff from employment, who are eligible for or have exhausted unemployment insurance, or who are displaced homemakers. In PY2015–2016, the two programs served 706 workers throughout the region.

During PY15, outreach strategies were amended to acknowledge the low unemployment rate in the region. Local businesses increasingly noted difficulty in finding skilled applicants and continued to seek services covered under WIOA. In the Greater Portland area, efforts have been made to engage the New Mainer, youth, and other populations with significant barriers to employment to encourage these individuals to enter the workforce. Utilizing various training techniques, these underserved populations are now engaging in employment activities that would not have been possible without the aid of the WIOA funding source.

WIOA Youth Program

The Workforce Solutions Youth Program provides employment and training opportunities to young adults between the ages of 14 and 24 who have barriers to employment, with a focus on youth who are out of school and disengaged. In PY15, the program served 202 youth throughout the region; 107 older youth, and 95 younger youth. Despite life and work challenges that some of the youth face, they also experience great successes through their program enrollment.

Job Driven (JD-NEG)

The intention of a National Emergency Grant is to expand capacity on the service provider level in order to address immediate and tragic economic events or massive job losses. During Program Year 2014, CCWI was awarded \$943,435 in funding through Maine's Bureau of Employment Services via the U.S. Department of Labor for dislocated workers, with a focus on those who are long-term unemployed. This project runs between October 2014 and June 2017 and will support training and reemployment efforts for 108 participants.

Sector Partnership (SP-NEG)

This project is operational between July 2015 and June 2017 with \$857,825 of the award earmarked for the Coastal Counties Region, which is bolstering capacity for dislocated worker services and providing funding for regional sector planning and strategies. This grant supports CCWI's demand-side, or industry focused, regional planning – increasing workforce and economic development opportunities and improving partnerships between industries, workforce investment boards, government entities, economic districts, and community colleges.

Technology Occupations through Pathways Strategies (TOPS)

In October 2011, CCWI was awarded a five-year, \$5 million H-1B Technical Skills Training grant by the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (DOLETA). This grant, funded by employer-paid H-1B visa fees, was designed to encourage Maine's mid-coast employers to hire Maine residents with science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM)-related skills and experience.

Known as TOPS, the public-private partnership is ending on November 30, 2016 and has been a great success. It has provided a combination of on-the-job (OJT) and classroom training to 449 participants. The project assisted employers with hiring and training workers along a career pathway for a broad range of mid- and higher-level, STEM-related occupations.

To date, TOPS has provided 449 participants with OJT in nearly 75 different companies including Bath Iron Works, Mölnlycke Healthcare, Apex Engineering, and Ocean Renewables. Almost \$2.4 million dollars, including employer-paid OJT wages, were leveraged through the program.

Pre-Release Employment Project (PREP)

During PY15, CCWI was selected by the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) as one of 20 communities in 14 states to receive funding for the Pre-Release Employment Project (PREP) grant. More than 9 million people are released from the nation's more than 3,000 county and local jails every year, the U.S. Department of Justice reports. Many of these individuals have few job skills and face difficult barriers to stable employment. Without a strong support system or a steady job, many once-incarcerated people are likely to commit new crimes and return to jail; a cycle of recidivism that recurs across the country.

CCWI received \$499,941 for the purpose of creating an American Job Center in the Cumberland County Jail. PREP staff are housed in the jail and in the Community Corrections Center, for the purpose of providing workforce development and re-entry services to prisoners within 180 days of their scheduled release dates. Comprehensive services are provided to inmates before release and ongoing support is provided when their incarceration ends. PREP will serve 100 transitioning offenders over a 24-month period, during which time staff will work directly with participants to develop work-readiness skills and competencies in order to prepare them

to obtain employment prior to or immediately upon release. PREP staff will continue to work with participants after they are released and will coordinate post-release services with WIOA service providers throughout the state. The City of Portland's Human Services Division will provide assistance with helping released offenders find suitable housing upon their release. PREP will measure performance outcomes and outputs based on specific performance targets set by the USDOL. As of June 30, 2016 PREP staff have enrolled 39 participants.

Make It in America (MIIA)

The Make It in America Grant (MIIA), a U. S. Department of Labor funded program of the Employment and Training Administration (DOLETA), is a tri-agency grant which was developed collaboratively with Maine Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP), Midcoast Regional Redevelopment Authority (MRRRA), and Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc. CCWI was awarded \$1,300,000 in September of 2013 to oversee this three-year grant and to meet the grant objectives.

Since the inception of MIIA, grant activities focused on two primary interventions – paid internships and incumbent worker training.

Paid Internships: Individuals have been continually enrolled in a cohort-based academy where they have received pre- and post-internship employment and education support based on the needs of the individual. Twenty-nine companies have served as an internship sponsor, offering valuable training opportunities for qualified unemployed and underemployed participants. These participants have successfully upgraded their experience and skill development. Combined, 44 individuals have received a total of 57 industry-recognized credentials and are on their way to continue their education and/or become full-time employees in non-entry level positions.

Incumbent Workers: Through the Targeted Incumbent Worker Training (TIWT) aspect of MIIA, funding is provided for valuable training experiences for workers currently employed in companies in these industry sectors. The grant goal of providing this training to 150 incumbent workers has already been exceeded and continues to provide upskilled workers in numerous regional companies, thereby adding to the quality and skill development of Maine's workforce.

CCWI, in conjunction with Maine Manufacturing Extension Partnership, service provider Workforce Solutions and partner Midcoast Regional Redevelopment Authority, proudly continue to meet and surpass all of the grant's goals. Of the 88 unemployed/underemployed participants enrolled, 44 have successfully completed their internships, with 30 of those entering full-time employment. MIIA has provided valuable training program offerings to 176 incumbent employees who have received a combined total of 199 industry recognized credentials.

Career Pathways and Sector Partnership Strategy

Building on the work CCWI started last year with the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL), CCWI continues to take an employer-focused approach to address the skilled worker shortage in the region. An in-depth labor market analysis was conducted to identify key industry sectors, which are growing and which provide employees a competitive wage and opportunity for advancement. With additional help from the Maine Center for Business & Economic Research (University of Southern Maine), a regional economic assessment was undertaken, which confirmed the initial CAEL recommendations.

CCWI has identified five key industry sectors which are critical to the growth of the CCWI's regional economy. These sectors are: Advanced Manufacturing, Health Care, Information Technology, Banking & Financial Services, and Transportation & Logistics. The goal of engaging employer partners through a sector-wide approach is two-fold. First, it enables CCWI to understand immediate hiring needs so it can create a pipeline of qualified candidates. Secondly, it allows them to identify career pathways within each industry sector. By mapping the career pathways, CCWI is better positioned to address common workforce needs. It also allows them to strengthen the capacity of its training and education partners in designing customized training programs and industry recognized credentials.

CCWI hosted industry specific listening sessions to gather information from employers about the challenges and opportunities they are experiencing. Employers representing the Transportation/Logistics sector and the Banking/Financial Services sector, as well as CCWI's community partners, came together for these initial listening sessions. Over the upcoming year, CCWI will continue to host listening sessions for employers in Information Technology, Health Care, and Advanced Manufacturing.

CCWI will continue to engage employers in these five key sectors by creating an advisory group for each industry. Members of the group will include industry specific employer partners, education and training partners, representation from CareerCenter staff and CCWI. The sector advisory groups will meet regularly to address key needs in hiring and training and set goals to address those needs. Agendas and goals for the year will be employer driven, with the mission of creating a pipeline of qualified candidates who meet industry needs for in-demand occupations.

TechHire

In late June, 2016, CCWI learned that its *TechHire* application had been approved at \$4 million from USDOL. *TechHire Maine* will recruit, assess, train, and place 500 individuals in well-paying, middle- and high-skilled occupations in Maine's Information Technology (IT) industry throughout Maine. This grant is collaborative with the two other Local Workforce Boards, Educate Maine, Adult Education, and other education and employer partners. Demand for well-qualified computing and IT professionals is prevalent in a range of IT-supported sectors across Maine. *TechHire* provides an opportunity to replicate and expand competency-based curriculum, accelerated education, and training delivery models statewide.

Education and training activities will be customized based on an in-depth assessment of participants' employment goals, skills, work experience, and IT competency, and may include: intensive IT career coaching; paid internships; on-the-job training; targeted occupational training; short-term, intensive IT bootcamp; work experience; or contextualized classroom training. Employment and training activities are based on and align with the USDOL's Information Technology Competency Model to ensure they match the skills needed by employers. All *TechHire* participants will obtain an industry-recognized credential as a result of training activities. Credentials may include certificates of completion, industry-recognized certifications, or micro-credentials or badges.

The Commission on Disability and Employment

The Commission on Disability and Employment (CDE), established by the Maine Legislature in 1997, promotes collaboration with the public and private sectors to increase awareness and influence policy related to employment for people with disabilities (PWD). The CDE is a statutory committee of the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) and meets six times a year.

The Chair of the Committee is Jennifer Kimble, Interim Director of the Department of Vocational Services at Maine Medical Center. The members of the Committee this year were: Mel Clarrage, Jeanie Coltart, Gayla Dwyer, Rachel Dyer, Karen Fraser, Jane Moore, Peaches Bass and Donald Rice.

Challenges

Issues identified last year continue to present challenges for PWD and employment in Maine.

Poverty: Research correlates poverty with high unemployment, low educational attainment, low-wage jobs, and lack of access to services. Mainers with disabilities are disproportionately impacted by poverty, experiencing it at twice the rate of Mainers without disabilities. According to Maine's Center for Workforce and Research Information (CWRI), from 2010 through 2014, nearly 60 percent of working-age Mainers with a disability lived at or near poverty, compared to Mainers with no disability at 27 percent. Even when employed, the percentage of Mainers with disabilities in or near poverty is 71% higher than the rate of employed people without disabilities (36% vs. 21%).

Close to 10 percent (9.88%) of Maine's working-age population receives a disability benefit from the Social Security Administration, ranking Maine 6th in the country, preceded only by southern states with high poverty, high unemployment, and a rural landscape (West Virginia, Kentucky, Alabama, Arkansas, and Mississippi). Many recipients of Social Security disability or SSI benefits are at or near poverty, but fear that earning income will cause immediate loss of the financial and medical safety net on which they rely. Although this is largely untrue due to special rules that support workers with disabilities, myths and misinformation on this topic persist among PWD and the social service providers that support them. The state should continue to support efforts to provide accurate information about working and how it affects benefits and identify additional means of educating individuals, their families and service providers to dispel the myths and increase the economic self-sufficiency of PWD and their families.

Cultural Perceptions: An area of ongoing concern to the Commission is the impact of societal and cultural messages regarding people with disabilities. These cultural beliefs are longstanding, with even the dictionary defining "disability" as something that "substantially limits activity especially in relation to employment or education." People with disabilities are often seen as individuals who receive services rather than as potential contributors to the economy as employees or business owners. This belief is alive and well among employers, individuals who provide services to PWD, PWD themselves, and even their family members. The reality is that every person with a disability is unique and has individual skills, interests, talents, and abilities that should be considered through the lens of employment. It is critical for Maine to continue existing efforts and develop additional strategies to combat these assumptions and stereotypes about PWD and employment for all of these groups, particularly with Maine's workforce shortage.

Access to Effective Services: To effectively serve people with disabilities, all parts of the Workforce Development System (WDS) must improve its accessibility to and engagement of this population. This is specified by rules in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) regarding access to services for people with disabilities. Often, if a CareerCenter customer mentions disability, they are directed to Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) only, limiting that customer's opportunity to access the wide range of valuable programming available to all Mainers seeking employment. Not all people with disabilities require or meet eligibility requirements for VR. The Disability Employment Initiative (DEI), which ends in March 2017, has focused on this issue and has developed recommendations for sustainable change in the CareerCenter system. Their recommendations are outlined later in this report.

Transportation: As a very rural state, availability of and accessibility to reliable transportation is a major concern for any Maine citizen living in poverty. People with disabilities are faced with additional challenges in transportation. The Committee has been following initiatives to address transportation issues, particularly the proposed legislation based on recommendations from the Commission on Independent Living and Disability. The State should seek out successful models in other rural states and work to identify a solution to this pressing need.

Opportunities

Impacting Cultural Perceptions:

1. 2016 Empowerment Forum

The Commission Chair met with Chairs of the State Rehabilitation Council for the Division of the Blind and Visually Impaired (SRC-DBVI), the State Rehabilitation Council for the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (SRC-DVR), the State Independent Living Council (SILC), and the Commission for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing & Late Deafened (CDHHLD) regularly throughout the year to share information about common disability-related issues, identify points of advocacy, and to plan and implement the 2016 Empowerment Forum for People with Disabilities. This year's forum included Travis Mills as a keynote speaker, education for the attendees on keeping informed of legislation and advocacy opportunities, and a panel of four Mainers with disabilities that have experienced transitions in their lives and spoke about how they successfully managed those transitions. The forum was well-attended and received high satisfaction ratings from attendees.

2. Employment First Maine

The Employment First Maine Act of 2013 created a Coalition that met regularly through October 2016, the sunset date of the group identified in the Act. The culmination of this group includes a report that outlines recommendations to improve Maine's employment outcomes for PWD, and specifically notes enhancing the employment competencies of educators and providers of services to children and adults with disabilities.

Improving Access to WDS Services:

1. Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

The State's four-year WIOA Unified Strategic plan will be the system's operating manual and will specify how individuals with disabilities are served by system partners. The plan received final approval with provisions in

October 2016. The Steering Committee has been meeting to gather all the elements to accomplish what needs to be done with the implementation strategy of the plan.

2. Implement DEI Recommendations

Maine has enjoyed many years of these federal grants aimed at improving access to CareerCenter services for and improving financial literacy of PWD. With this experience and the end of these grants, it will be critical for the WDS system to embrace and implement these changes, demonstrating its commitment to improving access and effectiveness in serving PWD. The Commission on Disability and Employment strongly urges implementation of these changes:

- Local boards should consider having a Disability Committee or a Universal Access Committee to address ongoing accessibility issues related to language/culture, disability, and geography (rural, remote, poor access to transportation).
- An interagency release form should be developed and used across system partners to facilitate referrals and communication and minimize the burden on customers to complete multiple forms.
- When a customer comes into a CareerCenter, new or on-going, they should be asked if they are receiving SSI or SSDI so they will not miss the opportunity of being eligible to utilize their “ticket” in the Ticket to Work program.
- CareerCenter Managers should be held accountable for ensuring staff effectively assist customers receiving SSI or SSDI to:
 - connect with resources to obtain accurate information regarding how work impacts benefits, and
 - assign their “Ticket to Work” to the CareerCenter, developing a guiding plan for employment service delivery and allowing for the CareerCenter to receive payments from Social Security when employment outcomes are achieved.
- CareerCenters should offer regular workshops for job-seeking PWD that can include, but should not be designed only for, VR clients.
- In line with WIOA expectations about financial literacy development for WDS customers, a financial assessment should be part of services delivered to anyone receiving employment and training services, including PWD.

Dispelling myths to reduce poverty:

1. Mental Health Data Forum on Employment

At the June meeting, the Commission Chair presented data collected from the Department of Health and Human Services’ (DHHS) mental health Community Employment Services program that had also been shared with mental health providers in an online data forum. Highlights included:

- Thousands of individuals have been in contact with this program since 2008; 68% of individuals expressed, in writing, a desire to work.
- Research shows that many service providers do not believe people with psychiatric disabilities can work, which reduces likelihood of referral to employment services.

- Length of time unemployed decreases desire to work, but 30% of people who had been out of work for 16 years or more still expressed a strong or urgent desire to work.
- Most of the 734 people who found jobs with help from these services worked over 20 hours/week with an average wage of \$9.54/hour in diverse types of jobs and settings.
- One significant factor negatively correlated with successful job placement and stable employment outcome was receipt of Social Security disability benefits.

2. *Work and Benefits Navigator Training (WBNT)*

As introduced in last year's report, through specialized funding from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), the Department of Health and Human Services with consultation from the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services contracted with vendors to provide training and services to increase the capacity of the DHHS service system to support integrated, community-based employment for PWD across DHHS. This included the development and delivery of a "Work and Benefits Navigator" training to 100 current providers of DHHS-funded services to PWD, to better equip providers to engage in conversations about employment, benefits, and economic opportunity.

One hundred forty-seven providers have attended nine sessions across the state from January – December 2016. This resulted in many more individuals being equipped with information and knowledge to spread the word about employment opportunities and resources and to dispel myths about work and benefits during their work in disability service provider agencies across the State of Maine.

What does the CD&E want to see in Maine regarding employment of people with disabilities in 2017?

- Increased opportunity for people with disabilities to be engaged in the employment and training process, and encouraged to have a voice regarding the access to and effectiveness of services that are designed to facilitate their access to employment and economic advancement.
- Promotion of ability and reduced cultural stigma regarding the role of people with disabilities in our communities and economy.
- Development of creative and aggressive strategies to get people with disabilities hired in jobs that meet their financial needs. This should include development of employer awareness and recognition of people with disabilities as a potential untapped labor pool.
- Universal design and access to services – where everyone in the State of Maine who needs employment-related services is able to access them easily and efficiently, including people with disabilities of all kinds.

In the current and future Maine economy and in the interest of having Maine residents available and appropriately skilled to fill existing and new jobs as employers need them, the Workforce Development System (WDS) must improve its accessibility to and engagement of people with disabilities.

Maine Department of Labor Highlights related to Employment of People with Disabilities

The Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) Grant

Through June 2016, DEI provided nearly \$45,000 to 49 individuals with disabilities with Flexible Employment Funds to supplement the support they were receiving through WIOA, vocational rehabilitation, and other sources to maximize their employment and training success. Most of the individuals had successful outcomes in training and employment.

The Disability Employment Initiative, in partnership with the Central-Western Maine Workforce Development Board, 18 representatives from community partners, and two banks, sponsored the Financial Freedom Forum in Augusta. The Forum addressed resources and community response to improve the financial security of people with disabilities and other low-income individuals and families. Over 70 service providers and other professionals from Central and Western Maine attended.

CareerCenter staff, including partner providers, received in-depth training on the ADA and job accommodations through a partnership between DEI and Disability Rights Maine. The same staff received a half-day of training on how to encourage disability self-disclosure by CareerCenter customers provided by the DEI Program Manager.

Using DEI grant funds to hire a summer intern, we updated the disability landing page for the Maine Department of Labor website. In particular, we updated resources and provided current program information for the BES Employment Network.

DEI developed a Disability Resource Guide listing disability related programs and services in the grant's five county region of Central and Western Maine. The guide was distributed to all CareerCenter and Vocational Rehabilitation staff, posted on the BES and BRS common drives for easy access, and distributed to all the participants attending the Financial Freedom Forum.

DEI deployed MyFreeTaxes on all CareerCenter public computers in the grant region to assist people with disabilities and other low-income individuals with filing their income tax returns.

As of June 30, 2016, DEI sites had an increase in the number of people with disabilities served by WIOA with an 80% entered employment rate, and 83.3% employment retention rate, and an almost \$2,000 increase in annual earnings.

The Bureau of Rehabilitation Services

With the passage of WIOA, there is increased focus on preparing youth with disabilities for post-secondary education and employment. Over the past summer, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and the Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DBVI) offered a number of innovative opportunities for transition-age youth to build skills:

LIFE 101 (L: Learning, I: Independence, F: Fun, E: Employment)

- DBVI's new two-week residential program on the Southern Maine Community College campus helped youth participants build independent and vocational skills through instruction and real life situations.

Lewiston DVR Office - Summer Work Experience Programs

- Poland Regional High School and Leavitt Area High School operated a four-week paid work experience program, Spruce Mountain High School operated a six-week paid work experience in the community, and Oxford Hills and Fryeburg Academy offered variable length paid work experience opportunities.

WE-DO Summer Work Experience Program

- Seven students from Lake Region Vocational Center in Naples were matched with community employers for a five-week paid work experience, working four days and spending the fifth day engaged in activities to increase their independent living and social skills through a partnership with AlphaOne.

Vision Quest, DBVI's College Preparation Program

- Seven students participated in a program held at the University of Maine that included a 3-credit English course and volunteer opportunities in which students participated.

Summer Work Experience at Eastern Maine Community College (EMCC)

- A collaborative project between VR, KFI, EMCC and the University of Maine's Center for Community Inclusion and Disability Studies, held from July through mid-August, for students in the Bangor area.