
EASTERN AREA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

A Proud Partner of the American Job Center Network

PROGRAM YEAR 2016 ANNUAL REPORT

General

The implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA) has been a busy and exciting year for the Eastern Area. Some of the key enhancements of WIOA included an increased focus on partnership development and collaboration; being creative in how partners collaborate and work together to build a system that is much more cohesive and comprehensive in its design; identifying new and innovative ways to increase/improve services to rural communities; stronger emphasis on the role and oversight of the one stop operator; and it even shifted the targets and priorities for the populations of job seekers served with WIOA funding. New regulations challenge states and local boards to be innovative in their approaches to serving job seekers and employers in new ways that place the customer experience at the forefront.

These were key items to consider in the development and implementation of priorities and strategies within the local plan. Keeping in mind that the overall Board focus is to create a more highly skilled workforce for employers to enhance efforts to create stronger and more diverse local economies uniting partners to work collaboratively and cohesively on system development and service delivery. While it is easier to “work together” from a single location, it is not feasible or practical to attempt to establish comprehensive centers in each community. Therefore, the board through its operator hopes to build a system with a “No Wrong Door” concept across partners that includes the development of clear, meaningful and measurable goals for the system. This vision means customers would have access to intake and services for all the partners in the local community from any partner location.

In an effort to enhance services and avoid duplication of services within each community, WIOA required the local boards to re-evaluate the role of the one stop operator. The EAWDB, for the first time since its inception, opted to issue separate contracts for the one stop operator and the provider for adult and dislocated worker services. While previous one stop operator function had been a secondary role within the Adult/DW sub-recipient contract, issuing separate contracts now allows the one stop operator to assume a front and center role in the development of the workforce system and the collaboration of its partners. Available entities with the capabilities and historical knowledge to develop a robust, focused operator role proved limited and resulted in no responses to two request for proposal releases by the Board. The EAWDB ultimately was approved to act as the One Stop Operator for the eastern area by the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (NMDWS), as the Governor’s designee, and the Chief Elected Officials (CEO) of the eastern area. The Board has hired staff to fulfill this critical role. This shift in workforce system development is an exciting and dynamic change that will result in streamlining services and collaborative efforts from the many resources of the eastern area including federal, state, local agencies along with community based organizations and private sector initiatives.

Part of measuring how partners are working and collaborating includes the federal requirement to establish a mechanism for tracking the issuing of referrals and the results of those referrals. To fulfill this requirement the board began working with partners on a secure online communication platform to serve as the mechanism to accomplish this. This platform includes access to staff across all partners in the community that will result in an email notification anytime a referral is issued or there are changes to the status or updates to the notes for the referral. This platform also creates a place for partner staff to securely transmit information such as employment plans and assessments to prevent customers from having to duplicate these efforts with every partner they receive services from.

In laying the foundational work for this communication platform, partners worked together to begin aligning documents in a manner that would allow the partners to communicate and share information through this platform. It is hoped the work accomplished during this year will be a significant tool in minimizing duplication and improving the customer service and experience throughout the workforce system.

In keeping with this concept local offices and service providers have begun meeting with partners to build a collaborative cohesive system to serve both the employers and job seekers throughout the area. The adult and dislocated worker service provider has been working to establish and strengthen an impactful and practical social media presence to help increase outreach and information available to rural areas. To further this effort, partnerships with local libraries have been developed to provide venues for individuals to access services there as well.

The board also issued requests for proposal for both the adult/dislocated worker and youth services. The new contracts include much more detailed scopes of work and service delivery models including internal real time performance metrics that are intended to give solid indicators for the federally reported performance measures included in WIOA. As part of the proposal process the youth provider and adult/dw provider collaborated to establish a braided funding approach to hire and share a quality assurance staff that works with the career development specialists on record maintenance, internal quality control of participant records.

Business Services

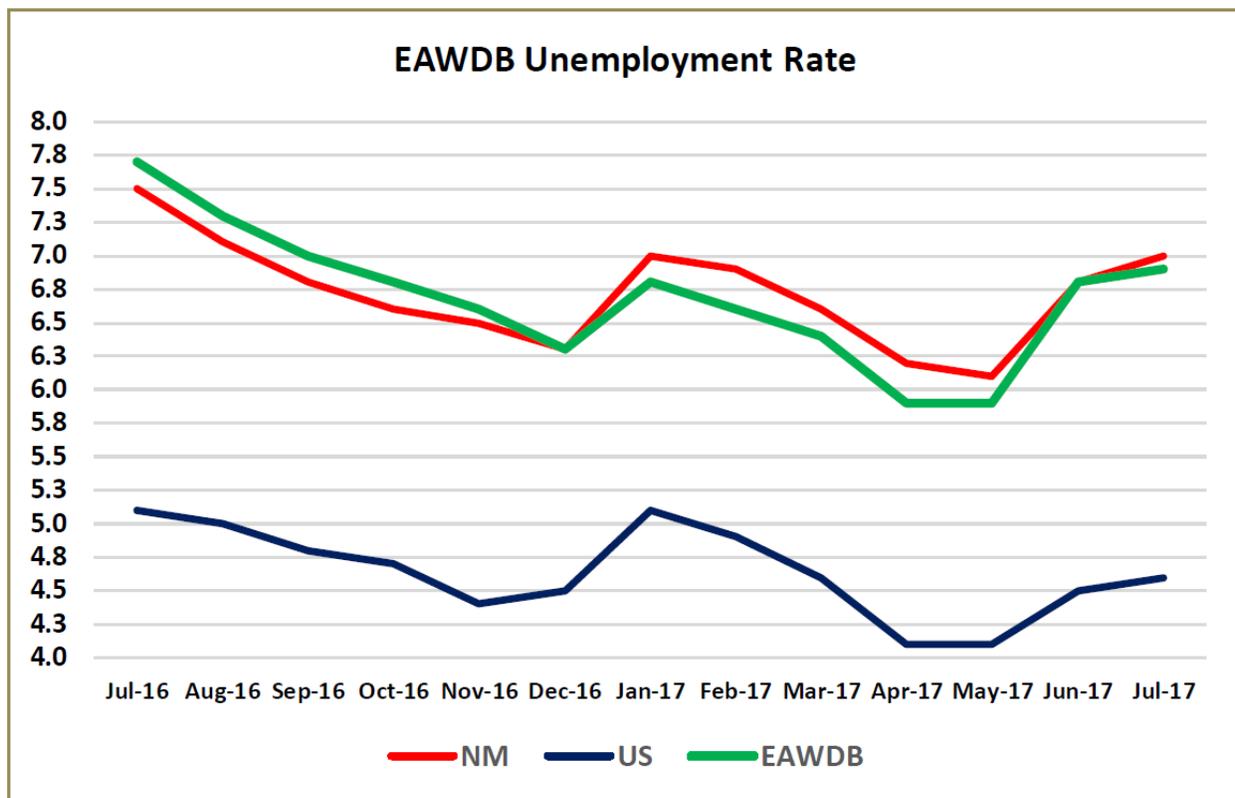
The board's overarching mission is to work with WIOA partners to develop a more highly skilled workforce to enhance economic development opportunities and create more diverse and stable local economies. Therefore, local office staff have been working to provide increased services to employers for filling open positions. Local offices have increased the use of Social Media. Each office has a Twitter, Linked In, Facebook and Instagram page. Local jobs have been posted to these pages on behalf of employers to increase the recruiting efforts to fill those positions. This has resulted in increased applicant pools for the employers in several cases and has increased the services available to employers.

The offices have long made interviewing space available for employers. The marketing of this service has increased over the last year. This has resulted in much higher numbers of employers utilizing the offices for interviewing sessions. One office was conducting the interviews on behalf of an employer for a supervisory position and then referring the

selection of the most qualified applicant(s) for the final interview with the employer. This represented a cost effective and time saving hiring process for that employer.

Labor Market

In the midst of the changes to the requirements the Eastern area continues to experience high unemployment in some of its communities as a result of the decline in the oil and gas industries. Additionally, Holloman Airforce Base in Alamogordo lost the German contingent on the base but were awarded a F-16 training squadron to be relocated from Utah. Therefore, the county experienced some civilian loss of jobs in PY 16, but many of those jobs will be replaced by support contracts for the training squadron. Hiring for contracts associated with this will begin early in PY 17.



While according to NMDWS seasonally unadjusted unemployment figures, unemployment numbers have slowly but steadily declined, the area continues to feel the impact of low oil prices. Most new business and employment opportunities throughout the area over the last year has been retail, hospitality and service industry related. The wages for these types of jobs are significantly lower than the oil related and support industries. Healthcare positions continue to grow but not at high enough numbers to offset the loss of the oil related occupations. There has been progress on other economic development projects such as wind farms, a beef slaughter/processing plant, and an aircraft parts supplier but those projects will not begin employing people until PY 17 and some not until PY 18. According to NMDWS employment figures health care and retail continue to be the highest growth industries for the area. As of June 2017 there were 1.16(LAUS) unemployed individuals for each job opening

Below are additional labor, employment and earnings information and statistics for the area.

Eastern Area Largest Occupations and the Median Wages		
Occupation	Employment	Median Wage
Office & administrative support	19,310	\$28,920
Sales and Related	13,090	\$22,620
Construction & Extraction	14,410	\$38,380
Education	9,040	\$40,460
Food Preparation and Service	13,480	\$18,780
Transportation and Material Moving	9,760	\$33,110
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	6,960	\$40,320

Source: NMDWS LASER

EASTERN AREA AVG WEEKLY WAGES BY COUNTY	
Eddy	\$1037
Lea	\$697
Curry	\$679
Otero	\$625
Chaves	\$603
Union	\$627
De Baca	\$569
Roosevelt	\$567
Harding	\$563
Quay	\$554
Lincoln	\$545
Guadalupe	\$537

Source: NMDWS LASER

Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth Services and Expenditures

The Eastern area had a significant amount of carry-in money from prior year funding largely due to unexpended contract dollars. Some of the low contract expenditures were the result of staff turnover and lag time in filling vacancies and resulted in the board under spending its funding. A major focus for the board's sub-recipients in PY 16 was to improve staff training, increase staff retention, decrease the length of time for staff vacancies, and to focus on implementation priorities under WIOA. Board sub-recipients worked diligently to decrease turnover rates, increase the speed in filling positions and increasing outreach and recruitment of participants to expend these funds.

All adult and dislocated worker Career Development Specialists (CDSs) attended training either through the Texas Workforce Commission or the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals. Youth CDSs as well as several adult CDSs attended targeted case management training geared toward suicide awareness and prevention provided by the board in partnership with the School Based Health initiative. The youth contract manager also held training sessions for CDSs via video conferencing and by leveraging board administrative staff working with Clovis staff.

Under WIOA the youth program focus on out of school youth required local programs to work toward a seventy five percent (75%) out of school and a twenty percent (20%) work activity expenditure requirement. The youth service provider for the Eastern board completed the year with an eighty three percent (83%) out of school expenditure rate and met the twenty percent (20%) work activity expenditure requirement.

In working to meet the twenty percent (20%) work activity requirement, CDS staff worked hard to develop local worksites that would provide meaningful and comprehensive work activities within the local communities. As a result of this work the partnership with Emerging Technology Ventures (ETV) was established. This employer develops agricultural drones. They partnered with the youth program and worked with a high school youth with barriers to teach various aspects of the industry. The overall success of that partnership resulted in a press release that begins with the heading below. The entire release can be found through the URL provided below.

<http://etvamerica.com/portal/images/PDF/AUSC-company-ETV-welcomes-newest-addition-to-the-team-6-3-17.pdf>

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ETV Welcomes their First Full Time Employee from the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

WIOA is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. The Workforce Connection Youth Office in Otero County helps facilitate this important program for teen and youth participants, building the future workforce of our region.

In the area of adult/dislocated worker services, as previously mentioned training and outreach were heavily prioritized. CDSs attended a large variety of staff development sessions and through this the East saw an almost twenty two percent (22%) increase in the number of adult and dislocated worker customers served. The increase in participants resulted in a seventeen percent (17%) increase in adult and dislocated worker expenditures. Of this, sixty-two percent (62%) of the total funds expended were spent directly on participant training. Increased employer outreach created more opportunities to utilize On the Job Training (OJT) to assist employers in filling positions and deferring some of the exorbitant costs associated with training. There was a thirty-seven and one half percent (37.5%) increase in the number of OJT contracts written.

Listed below are the total expenditures and percentage rates for the programs.

Expenditures by Funding Stream					
Admin	Youth	Adult	Dislocated Worker	Total	Percent of Allotment
\$198,829	\$460,022	\$1,041,382	\$198,978	\$1,899,212	70.87%
Program Administration					
	\$40,777	\$98,243	\$20,182	\$159,203	
Percentage	8.86%	9.43%	10.14%	8.38%	

The PY 17 enrollment numbers are indicating an increase over the same timeframe (1st Quarter) of last year.

Stories of renewed hope and success provided through the WIOA program

Maritza's story

Maritza came into the job center in December of 2015. High School had been difficult for her so she transferred to New Hope Alternative High School where she graduated. She was a single parent with two young children. They were living well below the poverty level. Her family was receiving public assistance. To support her family, she worked part-time as a server/bartender for a local restaurant at only \$5.00 per hour. She had been attending New Mexico Junior College and had been accepted into the nursing program. Even with public assistance and part time job it was difficult to support her children. She was receiving financial aid, however, it was not enough to cover the full cost of the program. So, she was seeking financial assistance and support to obtain her Nursing degree. When she came into the job center she was ready to begin her second semester of the program. She was determined to complete the program so she could make a better life for herself and her children but she was struggling.

She was enrolled in WIOA and received assistance with tuition, books, fees and temporary housing while in clinicals. Ms. Gallegos worked hard and graduated from the Nursing program in May of 2017, passed her NCLEX and is now employed as a Nurse at University Medical Center in Lubbock, TX. She is currently earning \$26.58 an hour. She is extremely happy with her job and is excited about the opportunities she will be able to offer her children.

The career development specialist received the following email from Ms. Gallegos expressing her gratitude and appreciation of WIOA:

“Thank you everyone from WIOA, the funding was truly a blessing and I honestly don't think I could of made it through school without it! I appreciate all the work you guys do to help others get into a career, which ultimately changes our lives so much for the better! God bless you and all of those who are a part of your program, and again thank you so much!”

Ms. Hernandez' story

Ms. Hernandez came into the job center crying and desperately seeking assistance after recently being divorced with two children. One of her children is a child with special needs. She was receiving public assistance and had little to no work history and no professionally marketable skills as she had spent most of her married life as a homemaker. She wanted to attend college to become a nurse but financial aid would not be enough to cover the attendance needs. She wanted to work and wanted to be able to support herself and her children. She did not want to continue to be dependent on public assistance programs. She needed help.

She was enrolled in WIOA as a displaced homemaker. The career development specialist provided a comprehensive assessment to identify her needs and worked with her to create a training plan. WIOA was able to assist her with the costs of training, supportive services and provide assistance with uniforms. When she completed training she was provided also assistance with testing. She is now a licensed RN working at Lovelace Regional Hospital earning over \$26 per hour. She is now able to support herself and her children without the need for public assistance.

ND's Story

ND has been a success story and inspiration for the WIOA Youth of Lincoln County. ND was a youth that had been home schooled and disengaged and just stopped participating. He felt he would do better enrolling to get his equivalency diploma. He enrolled in the Adult Education (AE) program to do that. Although his pre-test scores were low he continued to attend classes regularly. He was referred to the WIOA youth program by them for additional assistance and was co-enrolled. He was a very shy young man and his progress was slow but he continued to attend classes regularly. His parents even thought he might have a learning disability. He was referred to Vocational Rehabilitation for testing. The testing did not identify a specific learning disability but he was allowed testing accommodations. He continued to attend multiple tutoring sessions, with the support of AE and WIOA staff. This continued for nearly two years. He could not raise his math scores to a level that would allow him to test and pass.

A math tutoring pilot program was being developed by ENMU with a group of students to support post-secondary transitions. ND was invited to participate in the program. He was very hesitant. He was frustrated and embarrassed and avoided situations where he might be compared or evaluated against his peers. He was encouraged to try at least one session and he reluctantly agreed. It was helpful so he continued attending. The pilot became a huge success and after more than two years he was finally able to obtain his GED.

Shortly after this he began feeling depressed, anxious and overwhelmed. He was very stressed and fearful of his next steps. He had lost all motivation and hope for the future.

WIOA staff continued to work with him to show him the ways the youth program could continue to help and support him through these decisions. He was at risk of falling into a dangerous level of depression. The youth Career Development Specialist (CDS) became very concerned and spoke to his mother. She too was concerned. With mom's approval, the CDS began working within the community to establish counseling options to present to him. It was presented to him as an opportunity to speak to a professionally trained neutral party to help give him tools and techniques to cope with all the emotions he was dealing with. At first, he was hesitant but did agree to go. With consistent encouragement, he now attends weekly counseling sessions and is doing much better.

He is now enrolled in college. His skills, aptitudes and interests has led him to the computer technology field. He is working toward a degree in computer technology. He walks the campus halls tall and proud as a college student. He has grown from the shy, quiet, withdrawn youth that first came into the program. He has become proud, outgoing and successful. He is a great example of various programs working together collaboratively to help a youth move forward and overcome obstacles. They worked together to help identify his strengths and interests, support him until he succeeded and begin building his confidence.