

PY 22 ANNUAL REPORT



Alex Naranjo, Lead CEO
Joseph Weathers, Chairman
Lisa Ortiz, Executive Director
Ericka Van Eckhoutte, One Stop Operator

525 Camino de Los Marquez
Santa Fe, NM 87505

From the Board Chairman

In my capacity as the Chairman of the New Mexico Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB), I'm pleased to present our Annual Report for Program Year 2022. This report serves as a comprehensive overview of our programs, highlighting our achievements over the past year, and showcasing the activities and performance metrics of our board.

The primary mission of NALWDB remains unwavering: to empower individuals with the essential tools they require to bolster and maintain their skills, enabling them to access the workforce successfully. We are committed to advancing both workforce and economic development by bridging the gap between residents seeking employment opportunities and employers in need of skilled and proficient workers to fuel their growth and prosperity.

Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, our dedicated team of professionals continued to serve our customers and support their local communities, extending our services throughout the northern region.

NALWDB, in collaboration with the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (NMDWS), the State Workforce Board, and under the leadership of the Governor, remains resolute in forging partnerships within the state's workforce ecosystem. Our vision revolves around fostering meaningful connections between educational institutions and employers, ensuring performance accountability, and providing individuals from diverse backgrounds with clear career pathways to secure employment and reintegrate into the workforce.

We recognize the role that education and workforce development play in underpinning a resilient and thriving economy. In line with this, NALWDB will persist in working together with our educational partners to develop and implement effective training programs that align with the specific needs of our sectors.

The collective effort of all stakeholders involved ensures that we are better positioned to cater to the workforce requirements of the northern region. Together, we can further enhance our ability to meet these needs and contribute to the prosperity of our community.

Sincerely,

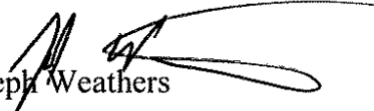

Joseph Weathers

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	2.
Profile of the Northern Area.....	4.
Sector Strategies.....	5.
Major Accomplishments	8.
Northern Area Adult and Dislocated Worker Program	8.
WIOA Business Partnerships	12.
Dislocated Worker Success Story.....	13.
Adult Success Story.....	13.
Northern Area Youth Program	14.
Apprenticeship	18.
Success Stories Youth.....	14.
PY 21 Performance	14.
Workforce Connection Center Partnerships (One Stops).....	17.
Northern Regions Hiring Events	17.
CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT	18.
CHANGES TO SYSTEM AND PROGRAM DELIVERY.....	18.
Service Delivery Challenges.....	16.

The Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) is a nonprofit organization designated by local elected officials to administer workforce development services in accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014. NALWDB serves ten counties in Northern New Mexico: Cibola, Colfax, Los Alamos, McKinley, Mora, Rio Arriba, San Juan, San Miguel, Santa Fe, and Taos, which collectively make up approximately 27.6 percent of New Mexico's total population.

NALWDB was incorporated in 2001 as a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, and it functions as the Administrative Entity (AE) responsible for managing workforce funds in the specified region. The organization was well-prepared for the implementation of WIOA, which allowed it to serve both transitioned Workforce Investment Act (WIA) carryover participants and new WIOA participants. Additionally, NALWDB collaborated with employers and core partners to enhance the workforce system in the Northern Area.

The presented report details the utilization of WIOA funds in the Northern Area during Program Year 2022, encompassing the period from July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023. It outlines the advancements made in realizing the board's strategic vision and goals as outlined in the unified plan.

In Program Year 2022 (PY 22), the Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) showcased a steadfast commitment to enhancing its service delivery to address the changing workforce needs in the Northern region. With a strategic objective to elevate performance accountability, balance funding expenditures, and foster robust regional partnerships, the NALWDB responded to challenges faced in Program Year 2020 when only one out of 15 measures were met.

Building on lessons learned, there was a focused effort in PY 21 to shift towards performance, resulting in remarkable progress as the NALWDB not only met but exceeded 14 out of 15 performance measures. In Program Years 22 and 23, the NALWDB's dedication to performance resulted in remarkable success, achieving all 15 performance measures. This accomplishment marks a significant milestone in the NALWDB's continuous efforts to effectively serve the workforce and promote economic vitality in the northern region.

Over the past three years, the Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) has undergone a significant internal transformation, marked by increased board, staff, and service provider training. These changes have positioned the board to harness numerous opportunities that were previously beyond reach. The continued momentum from this transformation paved the way for the New Program Year of 2022 to be aptly designated as the "Year of Partnerships with Impact." This theme underscores the NALWDB's commitment to fostering collaborations and initiatives that make a substantial and lasting difference in the communities it serves. It signifies an exciting chapter of growth and development for the NALWDB, marked by its dedication to building impactful partnerships that drive positive change.

Sector Strategies

The Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) underscores its commitment to sector strategies, evident in its annual two-day conference. The most recent conference, held on February 8-9, 2023, aimed to address substantial workforce gaps in northern New Mexico. This pivotal event provided a platform for diverse stakeholders, including community leaders, legislative experts, and local employers, to unite in addressing the prevalent workforce challenges in the region.

The primary objective of the conference was to foster collaboration and knowledge-sharing among these stakeholders, with a particular focus on workforce programs, data analysis, and partnerships in key sectors: Healthcare, Hospitality, Trades, and IT. These sectors were identified as crucial for the economic development of northern New Mexico, and the conference provided a venue for showcasing innovative solutions and strategies within them. Moreover, the NALWDB recognized the importance of personal and professional growth and was open to suggestions from attendees to help them achieve their workforce development objectives.

The Inaugural Northern Region Workforce Professional Development Conference began with opening remarks delivered by Santa Fe County Clerk Katharine Clark, who emphasized the conference's significance as a gathering for strategic solutions. Deputy Secretary Marcos Martinez then presented on the post-COVID workforce and highlighted New Mexico's successes in adapting to changing circumstances. Attendees also had the opportunity to gain insights from One-Stop Operator Ericka Van Eckhoutte and Operations Manager Barney Trujillo, who provided valuable insights into the role of a Workforce Board in driving workforce development.

The conference comprised several breakout sessions. In Breakout Session I, attendees engaged in local data presentations and panel-led discussions that delved into the successes and opportunities in different regions, including Northwest (San Juan, McKinley, Cibola), Northcentral (Taos, Los Alamos, Rio Arriba, Santa Fe), and Northeast (Colfax, Mora, San Miguel). These discussions allowed for in-depth exploration of localized workforce challenges and potential solutions.

The conference also featured keynote speeches from influential figures such as Lieutenant Governor Howie Morales and Dr. Thomas Mason, representing Los Alamos National Laboratory, which is the largest employer in northern New Mexico. Their insights offered attendees a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by the region and the progressive policies that could address them. During lunch, Board Chair Joseph Weathers recognized local State Representatives Ambrose Castellano and Joseph Sanchez, as well as Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board members for their contributions to the region's workforce development.

Breakout Session II was devoted to industry experts discussing current and future projections, industry-specific needs, and strategies for creating a robust workforce pipeline and retention strategies within the four key sectors of Healthcare, Hospitality, Trades, and IT.

On the second day of the conference, Representative Tara Lujan introduced Commissioner Camilla Bustamante, who presented the goal of the Workforce Integrated Network (WIN) to establish a support service network. The NALWDB collaborated with WIN and the Good Jobs Challenge Grant to better serve the under-employed population in northern New Mexico. Santa Fe County Commissioner Camilla Bustamante led discussions, and the Northern Central New Mexico Economic Development District (NCNMEDD) and WIN played a leadership role in this effort.

For PY 22 The NALWDB committed to maintaining its efforts in convening sectors across all ten counties in the region, working closely with employers and stakeholders to drive effective workforce development. Looking ahead, they expressed excitement about hosting another conference the following year and continuing their mission of promoting collaboration and resource alignment to address the workforce development challenges in northern New Mexico.

As we transition into Program Year 2023 (PY 23), our focus continues to revolve around reinforcing sector strategies in the Northern Area. Our primary objectives encompass community engagement, forging strong connections with employers, and streamlining job placements. Notably, we are placing a spotlight on the healthcare and skilled trades sectors, recognizing their pivotal role in our initiatives.

The NALWDB is thrilled to share its involvement in the Northern New Mexico WIN initiative, The partnership will integrate within workforce connection centers, by deploying four navigators across seven counties, excluding Cibola, McKinley, and San Juan counties. These navigators will play a crucial role in providing intake assessments and referrals to participants within the workforce system. The project will also implement the Unite Us platform at Workforce Centers to enhance efficiency, reduce costs, and streamline processes. Utilizing Unite Us, the collaboration aims to coordinate closed-loop referrals, securely share trusted resources, leverage comprehensive social care data for decision-making, manage social care funding seamlessly at scale through Payments, and ensure effective Care Coordination with dedicated professional support and expertise.

This initiative carries a particular emphasis on creating opportunities for individuals with limited employment experience, especially within the construction and healthcare fields. Our dedicated efforts are concentrated within the seven counties of northern New Mexico. Our strategy comprises a multi-faceted approach, which encompasses skill development, job placement, and sustained support for employees. Through continual monitoring and fine-tuning of our programs, we are committed to making a positive impact and enhancing opportunities within our local community. Our mission remains steadfast, and we are resolute in our commitment to workforce development in the Northern Area.

The chart information below provides an overview of labor market details, including top occupations and employers in the northern region.

Current Labor Market Information as of September 2022 – October 2023

September 2022	Civilian Labor Force	Number Employed	Number Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
North	214,673	204,577	10,096	4.7%

October 2023	Civilian Labor Force	Number Employed	Number Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
North	217,508	207,967	9,541	4.4%

Supply and Demand

0.40

Candidates available per job opening.
4,639 Candidates | 11,539 Job Openings

Job Source: Online advertised jobs data
 Candidate Source: Individuals with active résumés in the workforce system.

Top Occupations

SELECT a Geography

- Albuquerque MSA
- Central Region
- Eastern Region
- Farmington MSA
- Las Cruces MSA
- New Mexico
- Northern Region
- Santa Fe MSA
- Southwestern Region

SELECT an occupation below to see details.

Most New Jobs Northern Region

Occupation	Estimated New Jobs
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	1,000
Cooks, Restaurant	800
Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	700
Fast Food and Counter Workers	600
Walters and Waitresses	500
Hotel, Motel, and Resort Desk Clerks	450
General and Operations Managers	400
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	350
Registered Nurses	300
Stockers and Order Fillers	250
Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	200
Security Guards	150
Project Management Specialists and Business Operations Specialists, All Other	100
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	100
Construction Laborers	100
Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers	100
Medical Assistants	100
Amusement and Recreation Attendants	100
Dining Room and Cafeteria Attendants and Bartender Helpers	100
Food Preparation Workers	100

Unemployment Rate
4.4% Current Unemployment Rate

Job Demand
11,539 Openings Available

Employment
185,118 Average Employment Q1 2023

Income
\$50,956 Per capita income in 2021

118

Rank	Employer Name	Job Openings
1	CHRISTUS Health	1,088
2	Los Alamos Laboratory	609
3	Espanola Public School District	222
4	Aya Health	194
5	Spectra Tech, Inc.	182
6	Presbyterian Healthcare Services	163
7	San Juan Region Medical Center	180
8	Santa Fe Public Schools	173
9	Presbyterian Medical Services	128
		118

In Program Year 22, the Northern Area Local Workforce Board, operating under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), has realized significant achievements driven by a steadfast commitment to collaboration. The milestones outlined below not only mark improvements in the workforce landscape but also signify a positive impact on the lives of numerous individuals. These accomplishments include the establishment of on-the-job training and customized training programs, as well as the formation of innovative partnerships with local educational institutions and employers. These partnerships aim to create effective pipelines, enabling job seekers to acquire in-demand skills and secure meaningful employment opportunities.

On-the-Job Training and Customized Training

In PY22, the Northern Area achieved success in the development and/or provision of ongoing training services through On-the-Job-Training and Customized Training.

OJT

- 81 Adults and 22 Dislocated Workers received OJT services.
- 42 active OJT contracts from the previous program year were carried into PY21.
- 103 individuals, to include those carried over from PY20, were placed in hands-on, occupational-specific training that resulted in the development of new skills.

Customized Training

- 20 individuals received these services as Incumbent Workers (incumbent-worker training)
- individuals received Customized Training services as new employees to the occupations.
- In total, 91 Adults and 1 Dislocated Worker received Customized Training services.

Basic Skills Training

- 4 DW (Greater Gallup Economic Development Corporation “GGEDC” partnership 2) (Higher School Equivalency “HSE”1) (1 UNM Taos Coding Bootcamp)
- 38 Adults (GGEDC partnership 22, 4 HSE, 5 commercial residential building seminars, 5 Commercial Drivers License, 1 coding boot camp, 1 Navajo Technical University).

Santa Fe Community College (SFCC)

The NALWDB's collaboration with SFCC remains steadfast in providing services to participants. Specifically, five SFCC nursing students have been enrolled in the program, with WIOA offering supportive services to address any unmet needs. This comprehensive support includes textbooks, laptops, scrubs, nursing shoes, stethoscopes, blood pressure sets, and penlights.

The focus of this collaboration extends particularly to nursing and I-Best students. Ongoing efforts aim to broaden outreach and create additional opportunities for students in various fields to obtain credentials. Schedules have been established to meet with students across

different areas of the school, providing information on the advantages of WIOA (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act). Additionally, meetings with department heads have been conducted to elucidate the WIOA process and its potential contributions to the success of students in their respective programs. This proactive approach is tailored to support students in achieving their educational and career objectives.

Taos UNM Nursing Program:

The NALWDB highlights the success of the nursing program at UNM Taos, which has held full approval from the New Mexico Board of Nursing since its establishment in 2009. Graduates from the program are eligible to apply for the NCLEX-RN® examination upon completion. The UNM-Taos Nursing Program follows a concept-based statewide curriculum through the New Mexico Nursing Education Consortium (NMNEC). Notably, UNM Taos nursing boasts a remarkable 100% first-time NCLEX pass record over the last three years. In the current program year, all 23 WIOA participants who participated in the program have successfully graduated, showcasing the program's effectiveness and the students' achievements.

Construction Seminars

Five WIOA participants participated in Construction Seminars, located in Albuquerque. The Construction Seminars specialize in providing test preparation for license exams, continuing education, and business services for contractors. Their range of classes includes Continuing Education, business courses, Licensing, Business Formation, Bonding, and Registered Agent services. Moreover, they offer preparatory classes for licensure in various categories such as general contractor, mechanical contractor, electrical contractor, business and law, mechanical journeyman, electrical journeyman, asphalt, and specialties.

All students who attended these classes successfully obtained their contractor's license. The interest among our participants in attending this training is steadily growing, showcasing the valuable impact of this partnership and the relevance of the training provided by Construction Seminars.

New Mexico Corrections Department

The NALWDB collaborated with the New Mexico Corrections Department to implement a training program for incarcerated individuals. The NALWDB received the names of 10 women inmates from Springer Correctional Center for intake, aiming to prepare them for future employment upon release. The training focused on Heavy Equipment Operations-Excavator, conducted in collaboration with Safety Zone Credentialing. This program provided the inmates with the necessary skills and training to obtain a credential for operating an excavator, offering them a trade they can utilize post-release. Despite facing challenges, such as COVID lockdowns, the inmates completed written and hands-on training. Nine out of ten inmates completed the program successfully, and one individual has already been paroled and is employed. Equipped with certifications that enhance their employment opportunities, this initiative highlights a dedicated commitment to providing valuable skills and opportunities for incarcerated individuals, ensuring their successful reintegration into the workforce.

City of Bloomfield Police Department

The City of Bloomfield Police Department has collaborated with the NALWDB to offer on-the-job training for their three newly hired employees. This partnership has demonstrated significant benefits for our participants, the police department, and our WIOA grant. Multiple participants successfully completed this program, and it is noteworthy that all of them are still employed with the Bloomfield Police Department. This fruitful collaboration highlights the positive impact of the partnership, effectively addressing workforce development needs and fulfilling the requirements of the police department.

Lancer Health Group

The NALWDB partnered with Lancer Health Group to hire four employees in Colfax County, focusing on psychiatric evaluations and treatment, including family and group therapy. Lancer Health's unique approach involves assigning an employee as a "supporter" to work one-on-one with youth facing behavioral challenges, attending school with them to assist in overcoming these challenges. Multiple participants successfully completed their On-the-Job Training (OJT) program with Lancer Health, and they continue to be employed by the company.

Air Interfacility Transport LLC

The NALWDB has collaborated with Air Interfacility Transport LLC (AIT) in Farmington to hire four employees for the company, which offers ambulance services in the San Juan area. AIT sought assistance through our On-the-Job Training (OJT) program, and participants were trained for roles as dispatchers and drivers. All participants successfully completed their training and were subsequently offered full-time positions. AIT continues to engage with our service provider for ongoing support, reaching out for assistance with additional OJTs as new positions become available.

City of Española, Las Vegas, and Rio Arriba County

The NALWDB has established partnerships with the municipal governments of Española and Las Vegas, responding to their need for assistance in training and hiring for unfilled positions. Additionally, the NALWDB addressed Rio Arriba County government's request for CDL training with Comanche CDL in Española. This collaboration benefited five employees who were referred to acquire the necessary skills for their positions. The municipalities took advantage of services such as on-the-job training, adult transitional jobs training, and youth work experience. Furthermore, training funds were made available to support current employees in skill upgrades and obtaining commercial driver's licenses. These collaborative efforts underscore a commitment to addressing workforce needs and enhancing the skills of both current and potential employees within the region.

Southwest Indian Foundation's Industrial Worker Program

The Industrial Worker Program is a comprehensive 400-hour training initiative spanning ten weeks. This program is rooted in industrial curriculum sourced from the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER). The GGEDC Industrial Workforce Program

encompasses four key components: Core, Core Plus, Transitional Jobs Training (Adult Work Experience), and On-the-Job Training. Over the course of three cohorts, the service provider effectively served 32 adult and youth participants.

Furthermore, the program facilitated a new cohort involving 11 participants (comprising 8 Adult Dislocated Workers and 3 Youth) focused on welding and heavy equipment operation through Southwest Indian Foundation (SWIF). This training initiative commenced on August 29th and concluded on November 17th, contributing to the ongoing success and expansion of the Industrial Worker Program.

CORE Curriculum

The workforce development program consists of three components. The CORE Curriculum, spanning 80 hours over two weeks, provides introductory exposure to industrial employment with topics such as workplace safety and construction math. Graduates receive certifications in NCCER Blue Card and OSHA 10-hour General Industry Completion Card. CORE Plus, designed for 160 hours over eight weeks, builds on CORE by addressing modules identified by local employers, leading to certifications in Heavy Equipment and IWP Completion, along with employment recommendations. Simultaneously, Work Experience offers 160 hours of practical experience, with participants earning minimum wage. In an 8-hour workday, 4 hours are dedicated to instruction (CORE or CORE Plus), and the remaining 4 hours are reserved for hands-on work experience.

On-the-Job Training

Upon completing the Industrial Workforce Program, graduates stand a chance to be considered for employment placement. Employers with fewer than 50 employees may benefit from the Adult On-the-Job Training (OJT) program, offering up to 75% reimbursement of wages for up to 1040 hours. Larger employers, with over 50 employees, could receive up to 50% reimbursement of wages for the same duration through OJT. This program serves as a seamless transition for graduates entering full-time employment.

Youth participants have also been able to participate in the Southwest Indian Foundation's Industrial Worker Program. Youth receive supportive services like transportation and work uniforms as needed.

UNM Taos' Power Up Program

Students participating in UNM Taos' Power Up Program are actively engaged in the HiSet program at the college, where they receive incentives upon reaching various milestones. With a total of 34 participants, these students are working towards obtaining their HiSet with the ultimate goal of entering post-secondary education upon graduation. The incentives include level gains on math or reading TABE tests, successful course completion (including synchronous Zoom sessions during a 4-week session), the creation of a digital career portfolio, and the achievement of a high school equivalency credential. Furthermore, all participants were provided with the opportunity for work experience during the 2023 Summer Youth Academy.

The 2023 Summer Youth Career Academy,

The 2023 Summer Youth Academy highlighted various project achievements. Participants engaged in an online Career Exploration curriculum, covering a Career Inventory, Soft Skills Training, and a Leadership Activity. The Paid Work Experience/Job Shadowing phase, occurring from May 31 to July 28, 2023, allowed participants up to 40 hours per week at their placement site.

Incentives and Final Projects, guided by a comprehensive curriculum, included career development through virtual platforms such as DWS Why I Work, My Next Move O-Net, NM Career Solutions, and Soft Skills Training for job readiness and online resume building. Financial Literacy instruction covered topics like borrowing wisely, creating spending plans, and effectively using banking products. Community Service Learning provided an opportunity for youth to showcase the impact of volunteering in their communities, enhancing self-image, self-esteem, and valuable skills. The final project reflected their engagement in community service.

Furthermore, the Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board successfully utilized federal grant and community resources to implement targeted workforce development programs, catering to eligible in-school and out-of-school youth. The program has successfully enrolled 80 participants, comprising 34 in-school youth and 46 out-of-school youth. This initiative underscores a commitment to empowering youth with educational and career development opportunities, contributing to the region's economic vitality, and fostering inclusivity in the labor market.

Business Partnerships for PY 22

The Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) plays a crucial role in engaging businesses to connect job seekers with high-quality employment opportunities in Program Year 22. In the Northern Area, impressive collaboration with over 150 businesses across the ten counties has been achieved. This collaborative effort focuses on innovative strategies for recruitment and retention.

Facing a demand for CDL drivers and skilled construction workers, a proactive approach was taken. Initiatives included the development of two new CDL programs, RV Transportation and Comanche CDL, addressing the shortage of qualified CDL drivers. In the construction sector, collaboration with the SWIF Industrial Worker Program ensures a steady pipeline of skilled labor.

The integration of business consultants within Workforce Connection Centers has proven instrumental, facilitating information exchange between businesses and job seekers. In this landscape, adaptability and resilience have been demonstrated, with strategies formulated and partnerships nurtured. This win-win approach benefits both businesses and the local workforce ecosystem, contributing to a thriving employment environment.

Success Stories

Adult

Christopher Griego sought a new employment opportunity after transitioning out of the military, driven by his desire to transition from his previous roles into an office setting. Christopher had experience as a warehouse supervisor and was determined to achieve his goal. Recognizing the potential for support and career development, he was approved for the WIOA Veteran program.



Christopher was placed in a Transitional Job Training role at the Department of Workforce Solutions (DWS) as an office assistant. This experience allowed him to acquire valuable skills and insights while actively pursuing new career opportunities. He actively participated in various Rapid Hire events, further enhancing his prospects.

An exciting career opportunity arose with the New Mexico Human Services Department, and Christopher received invaluable assistance in preparing for the interview process. The combined support from the DWS staff and his Community Support Advocate (CSA) proved to be instrumental in his journey.

Ultimately, Christopher secured a full-time position as an FAA 1 with the New Mexico Income Support Division (ISD) office, where he currently earns \$23 per hour. He enjoys full health benefits and an attractive leave package. Christopher expressed his gratitude by emphasizing that he couldn't have made this career transition without the full support of HELPNM and NMDWS, and he extended his thanks for the opportunity provided to him.

Dislocated Worker



Brandon McAfee embarked on a journey of transformation when he submitted an application for services in August. Seeking a fresh start and a less stressful environment, Brandon relocated to Raton, New Mexico, in September 2022. He had enrolled online at Eastern New Mexico University and wanted to be part of a small, supportive community. This move represented a significant turning point in his life, as he was determined to overcome challenges and pursue his dreams.

Initially, Brandon entered into a Transitional Job Training (TJT) contract at The Peach Protein and Beverage Shop. The Community Support Advocate (CSA) working with Brandon identified an On-the-Job Training (OJT) opportunity that would align with his academic pursuits and career aspirations.

As a result of the OJT contract, Brandon secured a job at Lancer Health Group in the mental health field. This was a crucial step in his journey, allowing him to gain practical experience in his area of studies while also improving and acquiring the necessary skills for his career. Reflecting on his experience, Brandon expressed gratitude for the support provided by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). He highlighted that, without WIOA services, he had previously believed he would need to work in basic labor jobs until completing college. However, thanks to WIOA, he now had the opportunity to build a career in the mental health field even before finishing his education. Brandon's story exemplifies the transformative impact of WIOA in helping individuals achieve their career goals and realize their potential.

Youth

Judith L. initially sought an internship opportunity through the UNM-Center for Career & Technical Education program during her high school years. Although the program offered valuable real-life work experience, it was unpaid. However, her circumstances required financial support while living in a dormitory setting at a local Boarding School. When presented with the opportunity to participate in the Youth Program, allowing her to earn a wage while continuing her education, Judith enthusiastically embraced it. She met the eligibility criteria for participation and embarked on a journey of growth and learning.



During the program, Judith worked as an Administrative Office Assistant for three months. This experience allowed her to develop essential skills in customer service, public communication, organizational abilities in her daily tasks, and professional etiquette. Simultaneously, she persevered in her high school studies and successfully earned her diploma.

As she progressed through the program, Judith decided to pursue further education and explore local college options. After applying to several institutions, she received acceptance to attend New Mexico State University-Grants, NM campus, starting in the fall of 2023. Inspired by her work experience and motivated by the positive influence of her working peers and family, Judith made the choice to build her future in the field of Business Administration. She is now on the path to becoming a college student, equipped with essential skills and a fresh perspective, thanks to her participation in the WIOA Program. Judith is grateful for the support and guidance she received, and she eagerly anticipates the opportunities that lie ahead as she builds her future.

Performance

In PY22, the Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) continued to place a strong emphasis on performance accountability. Despite facing various challenges that

impacted WIOA service delivery and performance in the region, the NALWDB and its service provider, HELP-NM, effectively addressed these obstacles. This dedicated effort resulted in the successful achievement of all 15 out of 15 performance measures, a significant improvement compared to PY20. The NALWDB, in collaboration with HELP-NM, demonstrated a commitment to delivering a continuum of high-level services, ensuring that they met or exceeded the expected performance standards. The table below provides both the negotiated and actual performance levels for program year PY22, reflecting their dedication to maintaining accountability and excellence.

Adult

	Actual	Negotiated	% Met	Met/Exceed/Fail
Employed in Q2 Rate:	68.29	75	91.1	Met
Median Wages in Q2:	774.90	7100	109.52	Exceed
Employed in Q4 Rate:	67.95	75	90.60	Met
Credential Attainment Rate:	67.35	67	100.52	Exceed
MSG Rate:	66.88	65	102.88	Exceed

Dislocated Worker

	Actual	Negotiated	% Met	Met/Exceed/Fail
Employed in Q2 Rate:	70.83	70	101.19	Exceed
Median Wages in Q2:	7,355	7650	96.15	Met
Employed in Q4 Rate:	71.17	73	97.49	Met
Credential Attainment Rate:	70.42	62	117.37	Exceed
MSG Rate:	76.07	62	122.69	Exceed

Youth

	Actual	Negotiated	% Met	Met/Exceed/Fail
Employed in Q2 Rate:	72.50	66	109.85	Exceed
Median Wages in Q2:	3,465.08	3400	101.91	Exceed
Employed in Q4 Rate:	72.51	65	111.56	Exceed
Credential Attainment Rate:	66.45	51.5	129.03	Exceed
MSG Rate:	56.21	48.1	116.86	Exceed

Service Delivery Challenges

In the Northern Area, the implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) has not been without its challenges. Several key issues have emerged, including the need for improved alignment between various workforce partners and agencies, ensuring equitable access to services for all community members, addressing funding constraints, and enhancing the tracking and reporting of program outcomes.

Coordination between education, training providers, and employers remains a work in progress, requiring more seamless collaboration to align programs with local labor market needs. Additionally, efforts are being made to address disparities in service delivery to marginalized populations, with a focus on expanding access and opportunities for those facing barriers to employment.

Financial limitations and resource allocation have posed challenges in fully realizing the program's potential, and improved data collection and reporting mechanisms are being pursued

to better measure program effectiveness and outcomes. These challenges underscore the ongoing commitment to refining and strengthening the Northern Area's workforce development initiatives under WIOA.

Contending with the Opportunity Scholarship for ITA's. When there is not an unmet need, we provide supportive services to pay for costs not paid for.

In the small communities, we struggle with finding placements for participants who want to complete work experience or on-the-job training, there are not enough businesses to go around. We are working together to try and produce a way of helping in this area. Service Provider also have been struggling with the higher institutions and private training businesses not keeping up on their Eligible Training Providers List status, we have participants coming in wanting to complete a program, and the training providers have fallen off the ETPL, participants are having to wait until it is put back on the ETPL before then can begin their trainings and sometimes it is too late in the semester for them to be able to take the training, and they have to wait until the next semester or cohort begins.

Business Challenges

Service provider have been working with the businesses, and when they speak with them, the main challenge they face is finding employees and retaining them.

Some businesses are struggling with being able to pay an hourly wage that the perspective employees are looking for, even though minimum wage has gone up, the employers are struggling just to pay minimum wage.

New Mexico has a remarkably high unemployment rate however employers are struggling to fill openings. There are fewer job seekers coming through our doors and fewer dislocated workers. Employers are reaching out to the Title I team for help. We are able to offer hiring events, share openings with job seekers and with our partner organizations, and we also provide a one-on-one consultation with the businesses.

Youth Challenges

Service provider has been in competition with other youth programs for summer youth employment opportunities, the following programs are available for youth. Strategy for Title I youth services is our service provider offers incentives and supportive services where these other youth employment providers do not.

- Gallup McKinley County School's work program is currently paid \$13.00 an hour.
- Gallup Youth Conservation Corp. paid \$13.00 an hour.
- Metro Farmington Youth Conservation Corp paid \$15.00 an hour.
- San Juan County summer Internship \$15.00 an hour.
- DWS Level Up offering \$15.00 an hour in Taos to gain experience in hospitality.
- HELPNM PED Internship paid \$12.00 an hour

Key factor is going to be pay; it is the only way to stay competitive with programs that are mimicking WIOA summer youth employment. Service provider is fortunate in the sense that we do all the work on the ground, make, and grow connections with our communities so that we can continue offer education and training to those that are not aware that WIOA exists.

Regardless of the challenges, our service provider continues to reach as many people as they can and building a positive rapport is going to keep them moving in the right direction as a program.

State will be hosting a pre-apprenticeship program in Northern counties. They have several positions available statewide over the next year, pay is \$15.00/hr. They will be hosting 16–24-year-old in High School leading to graduation, college, focus will be on trades. They will be reaching the same demographic WIOA youth but do not need to be low income nor have a barrier to participate. An opportunity to pick them up as an OJT may be a discussion item with placement sites.

Most 14 and 15-year-olds are looking to enroll in the youth program and majority are looking for a work experience. Most of those who do come in for services do not have a barrier or are not coming from a low-income household. Our service provider is still able to service this population through their New Mexico Public Education Department summer internship grant. The provider does their best to provide as many opportunities as possible to youth through various funding streams.

Customer Service

Improving Customer Service and Quality in New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers in the Northern Region

In Program Year 22 (PY22), New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers within the Northern Region made customer service and quality improvement a top priority. This initiative aimed to enhance the opportunity-seeker experience by increasing survey response rates and expediting the resolution of concerns and recognition of successes. The following key changes were implemented:

Monthly Surveys: Customer surveys transitioned from quarterly to monthly collections to capture more timely feedback.

Expanded Survey Recipients: Surveys were sent to all individuals receiving services, not just those coming in for Title I or Title III services.

Review and Data Sharing: The collected information was reviewed and shared with partner leadership, informing adjustments to the system and program delivery.

Key Survey Results for PY22:

A total of 13,227 surveys were conducted across all 10 counties, including various programs and services.

- 423 surveys were received (3.2%), representing a 1.06% improvement over PY21.
- Satisfaction with New Mexico Workforce Connection services varied by quarter:
- Q1: 41.2% of opportunity-seekers were extremely or very satisfied.
- Q2: 43% of opportunity-seekers were extremely or very satisfied.
- Q3: 50.7% of opportunity-seekers were extremely or very satisfied.
- Q4: 49% of opportunity-seekers were extremely or very satisfied.
- Overall, for the entire program year, 62% of opportunity-seekers answered "Yes" to the question, "Will you recommend NM Workforce Services to others with similar needs?"

Feedback from Opportunity-Seekers in PY22 Surveys:

- Q1 Survey: "Thank you for what you do in the community, but services are difficult to access and not friendly to people who don't have computer access or time to navigate the confusing system."
- Q2 Survey: "I love this office and always feel taken care of as a customer and business owner. Thank you, TED and MARIA!"
- Q3 Survey: "Chee-key and Joshua provided a lot of comfort. As long as these gentlemen work here, I will continue to send people their way."
- Q4 Survey: "Really friendly, very professional service!"

In addition to customer surveys, the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers also initiated Business/Resource Feedback Surveys during the last quarter of PY22. This process aims to address the needs of businesses and gather valuable insights for event strategies. Key highlights from the business surveys include:

Over the last four months of PY22, 302 surveys were sent to businesses that attended New Mexico Workforce Connection hosted events, with 18.8% returned.

Notable outcomes of these surveys included:

1. Total formal/contingent job offers made on-site: 66.
2. Average wage for job offers: \$17.48/hr., with additional benefits.
3. Total number of referrals made to resource partners: 134.

Feedback from Businesses in PY22 Surveys:

- March post-event survey: "Everything was great."
- April post-event survey: "As these events are held, we are all getting more creative on more productive processes."
- May post-event survey: "The services you provided for us were wonderful. You always had someone checking on us. You all did great."
- June post-event survey: "The planning and organization led to a positive candidate and hiring organization experience."

These efforts reflect a commitment to continuous improvement and a focus on enhancing the overall experience for opportunity-seekers and businesses within the Northern Region.

Events

In Program Year 22 (PY 22), the Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) actively organized and participated in numerous hiring and resource events to promote and support workforce initiatives. These events were aimed at connecting job seekers with employment opportunities, resources, and support. The NALWDB's engagement in these activities highlights its commitment to fostering economic growth and improving employment prospects in the region.

Community Career and Resource Events					
Amazon On-Site Hiring Events (Santa Fe and Rio Arriba Counties) Weekly	Northern New Mexico College FAFSA Night (Rio Arriba County) January 11th, 2023	City of Santa Fe-Public Utilities Rapid Hire (Santa Fe County) February 11th, 2023	JobCorp Resource Event (Santa Fe County) March 15th, 2023	San Juan and McKinley County Energy Transition Act May 2023	Santa Fe Department of Transportation Rapid Hire (Santa Fe County) June 2023
Food Depot Community Food Drive (Santa Fe County) November/December 2022	Santa Fe County Hiring Event January 18th, 2023	Northern Region Workforce Professional Development Conference February 8th-9th, 2023	Santa Fe County Hiring Event March 16th, 2023	GGEDC Economic Development Week (McKinley and Cibola Counties) May 2023	Raton Hiring Event (Colfax County) June 21st, 2023
Longfellow Elementary Holiday Event (Colfax County) December 2022	Goodwill Job Fair (McKinley and Cibola Counties) January 23rd, 2023	Department of Workforce Solutions Rapid Hire (All Counties) February 16th, 2023	TSA Hiring Event (Santa Fe County) March 20th, 2023	City of Santa Fe-Wastewater Management Rapid Hire (Santa Fe County) May 2023	Mora County Employment and Resource Event June 29th, 2023
Las Vegas Holiday Meal and Gift Event (San Miguel and Mora Counties) December 2022	AmberCare Hiring Event (McKinley and Cibola Counties) January 23rd, 2023	San Juan College Career and Internship Fair (San Juan County) February 16th, 2023	AmberCare Hiring Event (McKinley and Cibola Counties) March 20th, 2023	NMSU-Grants Career Event (McKinley and Cibola Counties) May 1st, 2023	NMWFC Services Workshops
Angel Tree Toy Drive (McKinley County) December 2022	San Juan College Community Resource Fair (San Juan County) January 24, 2023	Rio Arriba County Job Fair February 21st, 2023	City of Las Vegas Hiring Event (San Miguel and Mora Counties) April 13th, 2023	San Juan County 2nd Annual Community Employment Event May 4th, 2023	Resume Writing Workshop (Santa Fe County) Weekly
Salvation Army Gift Event (San Juan County) December 2022	Goodwill Career Fair (San Juan County) January 25th, 2023	Goodwill Career Fair (San Juan County) February 22nd, 2023	Northern New Mexico Hiring Event (Rio Arriba County) April 5th, 2023	Santa Fe County Resource and Hiring Event May 26th, 2023	Mock Interview Session (Santa Fe County) Weekly
Farolitos Lighting on the Plaza (Taos County) December 8th, 2022	2023 Navajo Tech University Career Expo (McKinley and Cibola Counties) February 2023	Rio Arriba Business Connectivity Event February 23rd, 2023	2023 Santa Fe County Chamber of Commerce Business & Career Resource Fair April 20th, 2023	NAPI Hiring Event (San Juan County) June 2023	Basic Computer Skills Class (Santa Fe County) Weekly
Human Service Department Rapid Hire (Santa Fe County) January 10th, 2023	Community Food Drive (San Juan County) February 2023	Senior Resource Fair (Santa Fe County) March 3rd, 2023	Freezer and Food Distribution (Mora County) April 26th, 2023	CoreCivic Hiring Event (McKinley and Cibola Counties) June 2023	Esperanza Shelter Virtual Orientation and Resume Writing Workshop (Santa Fe County) February 22nd, 2023

NMWFC Service Presentations			Youth Events	
New Mexico Workforce Connection Services Orientation (Santa Fe and San Juan Counties) Weekly	SFCC Apprenticeship Presentation (Santa Fe County) September 20th, 2022	Pinon Mesa Hyperbarics Ribbon Cutting (San Juan County) June 2023	West Las Vegas High School Reality Fair (San Miguel and Colfax Counties) March 21st, 2023	SWTT Services Meeting (Multi-County) Monthly
Title II Services Presentation (Multi-County) As needed	Santa Fe Recovery Services Presentation (Santa Fe County) September 23rd, 2022	Youth Events	Zuni Financial Literacy Event (McKinley County) May 2023	Veteran Events
Informational Public Radio Spot (Santa Fe County) Bi-weekly	Santa Fe Recovery Services Presentation (Santa Fe County) October 7th, 2022	Taos County Schools Presentation Bi-weekly	DOT Pre-Apprenticeship Orientation (San Miguel and Mora Counties) May 25th, 2023	Veteran Stand Down (San Juan County) September 12th, 2022
Informational Public Radio Spot (Colfax County) Bi-weekly	Food Depot Services Presentation (Santa Fe County) October 18th, 2022	Boys & Girls Club Presentation (Santa Fe County) July 27th, 2022	Navajo Preparatory School New Student Home Groundbreaking (San Juan County) June 2023	Veteran Stand Down (Santa Fe County) September 15th, 2022
Informational Public Radio Spot (San Miguel and Mora Counties) Bi-weekly	Pojoaque Pueblo Tribal Police Presentation (Santa Fe County) January 13th, 2023	Winter Youth Academy (Multi-County) Winter Break	San Miguel County Youth Presentation June 12th, 2023	Santa Fe Legion Office Presentation (Santa Fe County) October 14th, 2022
TEEP Services Meeting (Taos County) Monthly	Chamber of Commerce Presentation (San Miguel and Mora Counties) March 27th, 2023	Laguna High School College and Career Fair (Cibola County) February 28th, 2023	New Mexico Pre-Apprenticeship Program (All Counties) Summer Break	SFCC Veteran and Family Appreciation Day (Santa Fe County) November 10th, 2022
New Mexico Restaurant Association Presentation (All Counties) August 21st, 2022	Raton Police Department Services Presentation (Colfax County) February 27th, 2023	Nambe Pueblo Presentation (Santa Fe County) February 28th, 2023	Summer Youth Academy (Multi-County) Summer Break	Veteran Resource Fair (McKinley and Cibola Counties) February 28th, 2023
Roadrunner Medical Services Presentation (Multi-County) September 7th, 2022	86th Annual NM Counties Human Resources Conference (All Counties) June 2023	2023 Parent and Youth Caregiver Conference (San Juan County) March 2023	Level-Up Program Bootcamp and Skills Training (Taos County) Summer Break	Veteran's Conference (All Counties) March 27th-31st, 2023