

## **REPORTS**

### **NM Department of Workforce Solutions**

In the provided report by V. Alonzo, several key announcements and updates were shared. Firstly, it was mentioned that C. Gallegos, the current board liaison, will be leaving the department for a new opportunity at DWS. This will leave a vacant CEO and board liaison position to be filled in the coming year.

The second announcement pertains to the state plan, which will be open for public comment for a 30-day period. Individuals who couldn't participate in earlier meetings now have an opportunity to review sections of the state plan and provide public comments, with the deadline around January 22. The next State Board Meeting on February 1 in Santa Fe is crucial, as it will involve the approval of the state plan.

Additionally, there will be a policy committee meeting in late January to review State Administrative Entity Title I policies. Among the policies to be reviewed is the Eligible Training Provider (ETPL) policy, which is expected to undergo significant changes. These changes include modifications to the initial eligibility criteria for providers and the introduction of performance requirements for providers seeking continued eligibility on the ETPL for an additional two years. The specifics of these performance standards will be discussed in the upcoming policy committee meeting.

### **Service Provider Report**

L. De La Cruz provided updates on open positions and program status. The Adult team is full, with one open staff position in Alamogordo. Participant numbers and obligations were reported, with 371 Adult participants and \$828,966 in obligations. Dislocated Worker participants decreased to 87 due to lower unemployment.

Program activities included team training in Ruidoso and plans for CDL training for incarcerated individuals. All programs have entered priority of service for enrollment. Adult/DW projects involved partnerships for CDL training in Ruidoso and Incumbent Worker Training with Inn of the Mountain Gods.

UFO projects included collaboration with the New Mexico Youth Challenge, a successful fall cohort for the entrepreneurial program, and community events like the Day of Hope. County leadership teams are working on various projects and plans for the youth conference in Clovis on April 2 and 3, these are progressing well.

L. De La Cruz concluded with sharing flyers designed for the conference and talk of the arrangements of transportation for participants from outside of Clovis. L. De La Cruz welcomed questions or further discussion.

B. Elias asked L. De La Cruz to speak on the partnership with the Title III for the Incumbent training at Inn of the Mountain Gods. L. De La Cruz reported how A. Jenks and B. Elias,

helped bring together teams from Title III, Title I Adult/Dislocated, and the youth team to assist in enrolling participants. It was a significant task, and they were able to successfully enroll approximately 400 people. V. Davis expressed excitement about the full enrollment and profile creation process, highlighting the presence of the board's program staff during the event. The collaboration between Title I and Title III demonstrated a strong team mentality, and V. Davis was pleased to see both sides of the house actively participating in the significant initiative. A big thank you was expressed from the board staff.

B. Elias asked L. De La Cruz how many were enrolled from Youth Challenge with 11 successfully gaining their GED. L. De La Cruz stated 30 were enrolled and that the success rate was lower this year, but that some had not yet completed their tests which would improve the success rate.

### **Administrative Entity**

V. Davis provided a brief overview of the current performance status. Although a direct comparison with the previous quarter wasn't available due to missing state data, the scorecards indicated that the program is either meeting or surpassing most measures. V. Davis highlighted concerns about the measurable skills gain requirement in all three programs are expected to change as the program year progresses.

V. Davis and L. De La Cruz are actively addressing ways to enhance the youth credential measure, recognizing it is a common statewide challenge.

V. Davis acknowledged an oversight in not including the small table for median earnings in the submitted materials but assured the board that, based on the current report, all Title I programs and the Wagner-Peyser program are currently exceeding the measure. This information was not included in the packet but was shared with the board for their awareness.

B. Elias added in regards to the Youth Program, stating that, based on observations during her time with the board, she strongly believe the root of the credential problem lies in the insufficient number of credential offerings and methods of capturing them. B. Elias mentioned exploring short-term training options adopted by other states, focusing on areas that might be more engaging for the age group. Approximately 95% of the credentials in the youth program are either HSEs and GEDs or post-secondary degrees, a trend B. Elias believes should be diversified. She welcomed input from L. De La Cruz. L. De La Cruz agreed and stated the accuracy. Explaining they are actively exploring alternative pathways for short-term credentials while emphasizing the importance of employment. If individuals are not employed it doesn't count. V. Davis explained how after they receive their credential, they either have to be in post-secondary training or have gainful employment within the year after they exit for the measure to be met.

T. Roth provided a brief update to the board, highlighting the audit status. Delays in work at REDW prompted an email outlining urgent concerns, leading to a quick response and the upload of a new binder. T. Roth emphasized a belief that unbilled expenses stemmed from a posting error, not billing discrepancies. Despite challenges with the accounts receivable module due to MIP training, T. Roth expressed cautious optimism about the audit's progress. A meeting with S. Eliason from Jaramillo Accounting Group was scheduled for further insights.

In the financial report, T. Roth noted \$36,000 in expenditures for REDW's audit preparation services. Originally intending to use REDW for various tasks, including quarterly closes, T. Roth explained constraints and the need to split tasks to comply with procurement regulations. The board is actively seeking controller accounting services and welcomes proposals from potential firms. T. Roth also mentioned ongoing work on sub-recipient monitoring, with a final report pending.

B. Elias reported that the NAWB conference, scheduled for March 23 through the 26th, is approaching. While agenda topics are not yet available, the pre-conference session on March 23rd, a Saturday, is typically valuable. Board members interested in attending were urged to notify B. Elias promptly for timely registration and arrangements.

Additionally, B. Elias highlighted the impending release of the state plan for public comment, featuring new sector strategies aligned with governors' priorities. These strategies will be shared between state and local boards. B. Elias acknowledged the inclusion of existing strategies in the local plan but emphasized that the complete set is not finalized. Meetings with partners, employers, and stakeholders are set for late January and early February to gather input for the local plan. B. Elias noted a submission timeframe around September.

B. Elias reported that there was a Broadband Summit in Albuquerque at Sandia Resort last week. Both federal and state broadband initiatives were discussed. The state has been actively involved in a broadband initiative for several years, and it appears that the initiative is set to move aggressively throughout the state, with the goal of providing fiber broadband access to every New Mexican. However, it was noted that rural areas might not be prioritized initially. Training requirements are anticipated to address skills necessary for network maintenance, customer support, and digital literacy, especially among individuals over 45 and those in agricultural or industrial fields.

B. Elias also discussed efforts to establish a drone license certification program. Conversations have been initiated by the One Stop Operator and JobCorps with ENMU-Roswell, and discussions with community colleges are underway to collaborate on the program. Surprisingly, there is a significant number of drone pilots in the state, over 700, with expectations for exponential growth. The program aims to be a ten-week training with four cohorts per year, and mentorship from previous cohorts is being considered to increase the number of participants. A convening is scheduled for January with area employers, including representatives from BLM, DOT, and the oil fields. S. Pawlyshyn expressed interest in the program and asked if there is an expected start date. B. Elias is

anticipating starting the first cohort in June. It is currently in curriculum development and planning processes. Input sessions are projected to take place in January.

B. Elias reported on the collection of data on different drone disciplines. Highlighting the Part 107 licensure and specialized skills required by employers, such as bridge inspection, fire surveillance, firefighting support, surveying, and more, B. Elias emphasized the need to tailor training to these diverse employment opportunities. Coordination across community colleges was proposed to avoid duplication and provide unique training opportunities.

B. Elias provided insights into the proposed WIOA reauthorization. Key points included a requirement for 50% of Title I funds to be allocated directly to training (excluding participants), potential changes in the program's name to ASWA (A Stronger Workforce for America), alterations in performance components, and modifications to the eligible training provider. B. Elias also noted the proposed requirement for governors to designate local boards every eight years, with options for local boards to align with economic planning districts or form consortia. The unique aspect of offering funding for a five-year period was highlighted, with B. Elias expressing concerns about the potential for almost flat funding over the next five years. B. Elias offered to share a detailed summary of the proposed changes for those interested in delving into the specifics of the reauthorization.

### **One-Stop Operator and Site Manager Reports**

B. Silvers provided an update, noting R. Van Leuven, the site manager was unavailable, but local area managers were present. From the One-Stop side, B. Silvers reported a decrease in customer flow in November and December, though it remained higher than the same period last year. Anticipating a rebound in January, B. Silvers attributed the temporary dip to holiday spending patterns.

Excitement was expressed about the upcoming visit of the Be Pro, Be Proud truck to Roswell and Clovis in January. It is a semi-truck from DWS and it features virtual reality programs aimed at exposing students to various professional trades, including simulators for CDL license training, construction equipment, plumbing, electrical work, welding, and more. The truck is scheduled to be in Roswell on January 11th and 12th and in Clovis on the 16th and 17th.

### **DWS Area Supervisor Reports**

DWS Area Supervisors gave brief updates on their areas. M. Cordova reported on the team's excitement about the upcoming visit of the Be Pro, Be Proud truck. They have been actively participating in hiring events and engaging with the community. M. Cordova mentioned a recent legislative breakfast in Clovis, where they had the opportunity to meet with senators, local representatives, and members of the local government. The session

provided insights into various topics that will be discussed in the upcoming legislative session. M. Cordova expressed anticipation about the potential outcomes and concluded the update with these points.

M. Anaya reported on recent activities in Alamogordo, mentioning the team's discussions about plans for introducing new staff to the community. Ongoing training efforts were noted, and the team is preparing for a community job fair in April, collaborating with the college for venue support and planning additional events for increased appeal. Despite initial expectations of a holiday slowdown, the office has experienced increased activity, assisting individuals in their job searches. M. Anaya highlighted the team's efforts in helping people secure employment quickly, noting the positive impact on the community. As the holidays approach, the team is actively working to keep operations smooth, even with some staff members temporarily out due to illness.

A. Jenks reported on the strong partnership and impressive employment percentages in the field offices, noting that the figures surpass the state average. He expressed gratitude to the partners in each office for their teamwork approach, emphasizing the collaborative effort that contributes to success. A. Jenks highlighted upcoming visits to Eunice, Clayton, and Tatum in March, reinforcing the commitment to community engagement. He concluded by expressing anticipation for further improvement and the continued positive impact of the workforce connection center offices.