

EAWDB REPORTS March 18, 2025

NM Department of Workforce Solutions

V. Alonzo thanked the staff for their work in developing the four-year local plan, noting that the Department took time to review and provide feedback, resulting in the approval letter being sent out about a month ago. She expressed excitement about executing the goals and strategies within the local plan.

She also highlighted the recent summit for field staff from each region. V. Alonzo thanked the board and administrative staff for sending representatives to the summit and emphasized the benefits of networking and building partnerships across regions and with the state administrative entity (SAE) team. Due to the success of the event and positive feedback, the Department plans to host a similar summit annually, rotating locations. V. Alonzo mentioned that various training requests emerged from the summit, and the Department will work with regional teams to address those needs.

Regarding grant agreements for PY25-26, V. Alonzo shared that the Department is beginning the review and update process. Edits will be sent to the regions for feedback, with a goal to finalize and obtain signatures by early June to ensure agreements are in place by July 1st. While no major changes are anticipated, some adjustments will be made based on feedback and internal review.

Finally, V. Alonzo announced the Department's involvement in sector strategies, starting with a clean energy sector convening in partnership with the northern board in May. A second convening will follow with the central board, aligned with the workforce conference. Plans are also in motion to collaborate with the EAWDB on a sector strategy event in the coming year.

The annual workforce conference is in the planning stages, with participation from EAWDB administrative staff on the planning committee. The conference is scheduled for late October.

Service Provider Report

L. De La Cruz reported that the past three months have been busy, especially on the adult and dislocated worker (DW) side. He noted that the youth coordinator position will be posted soon, and two positions remain open, one in Roswell and another in Clovis. Interviews have begun for the Roswell position, with a hiring decision expected soon. The Adult/DW team is fully staffed, with hopes of maintaining stability.

Currently, the adult program has 375 participants, compared to 474 at the end of last year. The dislocated worker program is exceeding last year's numbers, with 180 participants and three months remaining in the program year. The youth program has 245 participants, slightly below last year's total due to a team restructuring initiative. L. De La Cruz highlighted the team's dedication to service delivery and community support. He

also discussed the National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG) and the partnership with the Department of Corrections. Projects are underway at correctional facilities in Roswell and Santa Rosa, with upcoming initiatives in Clayton and Otero. There are currently 44 participants in the grant program, with \$115,000 obligated and an expected total of over \$200,000 by the end of the program year.

In respect to the adult and dislocated worker programs, Roswell is running its second CDL cohort with eight participants, and Santa Rosa has launched a construction technician cohort with 13 participants. Clayton and Otero facilities are preparing for similar projects, potentially in heavy equipment or CDL training. He expressed pride in the team's efforts, noting that one program graduate has already secured a job in Alamogordo. Additional partnerships include a CNA training program for adult education students in collaboration with Mesa Lands, with plans for six to eight participants. A CDL training in Santa Rosa will support ten participants from surrounding counties, contributing to the region's workforce development.

He also emphasized the broad regional impact, with projects implemented in 10 of the 12 counties in the past year.

On the youth program front, the team visited the Youth Challenge program in January, engaging with over 100 cadets about services available through the American Job Center. With 20 cadets from the eastern region enrolled, follow-up services will be provided upon their program completion. The partnership with Job Corps has resumed, with five participants enrolled last week. The team plans to continue biweekly visits to support participants with work-based learning opportunities, work experience, and additional services.

Administrative Entity

B. Elias reported that the National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG) has enabled the enrollment of 44 individuals, including three on disaster relief employment. She emphasized how the funding has expanded service opportunities to communities previously difficult to reach due to limited budgets. B. Elias praised the team for effectively implementing projects and facilitating training opportunities. She highlighted the challenges in serving the northern counties of Union, Harding, Quay, and Guadalupe, which lack physical offices. Staff have been traveling extensively to deliver services, with particular credit given to L. De La Cruz, M. Hopkin, and their teams for their dedication.

She also announced that two staff members and four board members will attend the National Association of Workforce Boards conference next week. This event will focus on board-level discussions and system-level conversations. Additionally, in May, two administrative entity staff members will attend the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals conference for in-depth program training.

B. Elias introduced C. Clough, who provided details about an initiative with Corona Schools to create a comprehensive workforce development collaborative for the public school system. He explained that the initiative will build pathways from K-12 to adult

education, focusing on targeted industries and regional adaptations. A collaborative meeting with educational institutions, workforce representatives, and government agencies will be held on March 25th in Albuquerque. The project aims to establish a statewide framework addressing regional workforce needs, with input from multiple stakeholders.

B. Elias presented an update on the performance data, which reflected the status of key performance measures. For Q2, the adult program showed slight underperformance in employment, missing the target by just 0.04%. However, this is considered unusual, and it's expected that the measurable skills gain will improve by year-end, as these numbers typically increase over time.

The youth program continues to face challenges in most performance measures, although there has been improvement in recent years. A rolling four-quarter analysis was provided to offer a better overview of the youth program's performance. This analysis showed significant improvements in many areas, and the youth program is now meeting many of its targets. A particular area of concern remains the youth credential measure, which continues to struggle. This is a nationwide challenge, with many programs experiencing similar difficulties. The data for youth credentials lags, taking up to two years to reflect changes. Currently, the youth credential measure is at 88.12%, slightly below the 90% target. Despite this, the adult and dislocated worker credential measures are on track to exceed targets, with both programs meeting or exceeding goals for employment rates after exit.

Regarding median earnings, the rolling four-quarter data shows that the adult and dislocated worker programs have exceeded expectations, with median earnings for the adult program at \$5,143, significantly higher than the single-quarter figure of \$3,395. Additionally, the Title III program shows median earnings just over \$8,000.

B. Elias emphasized that while the youth credential measure is a concern, the overall performance across other areas is strong and indicates positive trends for the remainder of the year.

V. Davis provided an update on the median earnings goals, noting a potential issue with the current year's goals. She indicated that the goals might be slightly off due to an error in how the averages were calculated for PY23 to PY24. V. Davis will verify and send an updated version of the data, but emphasized that even with the potential adjustment, the program is still meeting all its performance measures.

V. Davis also informed the board that M. Sosa, the program monitor, is engaged in full monitoring activities. She is working with ENMU-Ruidoso's team to complete internal program monitoring for the current year. Afterward, M. Sosa will begin monitoring the One-Stop Operator contract. V. Davis expressed appreciation for M. Sosa's hard work in ensuring these tasks are on track.

One-Stop Operator and Site Manager Reports

B. Silvers announced the rebranding of America's Job Centers, beginning with a ribbon-cutting ceremony in Hobbs. Plans for similar events in Carlsbad and Roswell were impacted by weather, but the rebranding process is progressing, with necessary paperwork being updated.

In late February, an all-system training session brought together America's Job Centers staff and external partners, focusing on WIOA best practices. The session on using labor market information was especially well-received, though attendees requested more networking time. Overall, it was productive, and the team looks forward to similar events.

B. Silvers also provided an update on the UPin pilot program, introducing a closed-loop referral system being tested in Clovis to connect WIOA partners and community-based organizations. The goal is to allow job seekers to access multiple services through a single referral system. The pilot is still in its early stages, but the team is optimistic about its potential.

Another project highlighted was the transition from landline phones to Zoom phone systems in state buildings. The change aims to provide a more stable communication platform, especially during inclement weather. Zoom phones are already in use in Roswell and Clovis offices, and B. Silvers expressed enthusiasm for expanding this technology.

R. Van Leuven reported on One Stop centers activity, noting a drop in visitors in February to 1,234 after a high of 1,747 in January. Despite the decline, R. Van Leuven emphasized the improved quality of services, citing the strong variety of activities offered to visitors.

Chaves County remains one of the busiest, with a year-over-year increase in visits. Lea County also showed strong activity, while the Carlsbad office remains busy with 215 visits in January and 195 in February. Other areas, such as Artesia and Alamogordo, also showed significant improvements.

In a year-over-year comparison for February, visits increased from 676 in February 2022 to 1,234. Roswell led with 406 visits, and Carlsbad had 215, more than double the numbers from two years ago. Despite additional responsibilities like assisting with unemployment benefits and ID processing, the staff continues to provide a positive customer experience.