



PY2020-PY2023 LOCAL WORKFORCE PLAN MODIFICATIONS

SOUTHWESTERN AREA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

New Mexico 
Workforce Connection

A Proud Partner of the American Job Center Network

Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board

Local Four-Year Plan Modifications

July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2023
PY2020 – PY2023

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INTRODUCTION

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires each Workforce Development Board (WDB) to develop and submit, in partnership with the local chief elected official, a comprehensive four-year plan. The WIOA Program Year (PY) 2020 Plan is to provide current information and be effective July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2023 and will include all current local policies. The local plan will support the alignment strategy described in the New Mexico WIOA Combined State Plan PY 2020- 2023, in accordance with WIOA Section 102(b)(1)(E), and otherwise, be consistent with the New Mexico Combined State Plan.

The state strategies include aligning common messages and metrics, creating opportunities for integrated learning across core programs, and leveraging state resources to maximize efficiency and effectiveness statewide.

The Southwestern Workforce Development Boards shall comply with WIOA Sections 106 through 108 in the preparation and submission of the plan.

This plan considers the economic impact of COVID-19 and how the Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board and its workforce partners will develop actionable strategies based on the needs of employers, job seekers, and youth, as well as other targeted populations, such as disabled individuals, veterans, older adults, low literacy, and low-income individuals.

It is the mission of New Mexico Governor and Cabinet Secretary for Department of Workforce Solutions to keep New Mexicans working by utilizing an “All Hands” approach to connect New Mexican workers with local New Mexico businesses. The goal of this approach is to keep our economy competitive while providing good-paying jobs to people so they can support themselves and their families.

The Southwestern Area Workforce Board developed this plan through its planning committee who gathered information from the region’s-communities, partners, and staff. Surveys requesting input for the plan from the community and partners were solicited. The surveys were distributed to residents in the Southwestern area in March 2020 Pre-COVID. With the onset of COVID-19 and life-altering changes across the region, new surveys were created in July 2020, one for Community Input and one for WIOA Partner Input. These surveys contained the following questions:

- What skills or training do you think an individual needs to obtain employment within your community?
- What can the local workforce system do to better serve the community?

- What policies can the local workforce board develop to make businesses in your area more competitive?
- Why does top talent leave your communities?
- Seeing the impact of COVID-19 in your community, what changes do you anticipate for employment and skills in your community?
- In terms of future planning, how can workforce partners prepare to meet the needs of other businesses that may locate to the region?
- What new programs or services can workforce partners introduce to help train the workforce for the industries that are growing in the region?
- What types of employment opportunities do you anticipate being available in the next four years in the Southwestern New Mexico region?
- How engaged are businesses with education in trying to solve workforce challenges?
- Are there any suggestions that you have to create a skilled and ready workforce in your community?

Zoom meetings were held with WIOA core program partners, such as Adult Education Services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Tresco, Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth program. Each shared successes, weaknesses, and ideas for improvement which include collaborating with all partners.

The plan establishes an innovative, relevant, effective, and efficient workforce development system that creates adaptable, work-ready, skilled talent to meet the current and future needs of workers and businesses in our region.

The goal is to achieve and sustain economic prosperity and to ensure Southwestern New Mexicans are ready for the jobs of today and tomorrow. This work will be done by increasing collaboration with local industry sectors and working with the workforce and industry partners to provide the skilled workers needed by our local industries.

Stakeholders and workforce partners are terms used throughout the plan. Stakeholders are defined as individuals or organizations who have an interest or may be affected by a policy or regulation, initiative, or project. Workforce partners are comprised of the WIOA mandatory core partners under title I, as well as the other required partners in the Act. CFR 678.400 lists the following partners:

(1) Programs authorized under title I of WIOA, including:

- (i) Adults;
- (ii) Dislocated workers;
- (iii) Youth;

- (iv) Job Corps;
 - (v) YouthBuild;
 - (vi) Native American programs; and
 - (vii) Migrant and seasonal farmworker programs;
- (2) The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.), as amended by WIOA title III;
 - (3) The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) program authorized under title II of WIOA;
 - (4) The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 720 et seq.), as amended by WIOA title IV;
 - (5) The Senior Community Service Employment Program authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.);
 - (6) Career and technical education programs at the postsecondary level authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.);
 - (7) Trade Adjustment Assistance activities authorized under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.);
 - (8) Jobs for Veterans State Grants programs authorized under chapter 41 of title 38, U.S.C.;
 - (9) Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.);
 - (10) Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development;
 - (11) Programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws (in accordance with applicable Federal law);
 - (12) Programs authorized under sec. 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007 (42 U.S.C. 17532); and
 - (13) Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) authorized under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.), unless exempted by the Governor under § 678.405(b).

The process of creating this plan has provided an opportunity to reach out and communicate with community members, workforce partners, and local legislators of all seven counties. The committee used multiple surveys and meetings over the past

several months to collect information that would identify opportunities to improve regional partnerships.

The following are some survey questions and responses provided to the community. When asked “Why does top talent leave your community?”, nearly 90% of the survey submissions said Low Wages are the reason. Written-in comments include *lack of good schools and shopping to keep families here, low quality of life, to live in a bigger city with more amenities*. When asked “Are there any suggestions that you have to create a skilled and ready workforce in your community?” written-in responses include *workshops incorporating communication technology, have all related agencies work together on a plan/too many working alone, more specific skill training, collaboration between education and businesses, pick a specific industry and double down on skill training*. Such comments inform the board of what areas need to be addressed. This will build a foundation for opening new and furthering existing communications.

As regional collaborations continue to increase, the Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board is committed to working together with all workforce partners to build a strong regional workforce system that meets the need of job seekers, employers, and communities.

The emphasis of this plan for the next four years will be to strengthen and expand the industry sector partnerships that will increase collaboration with business leaders from industries in the Southwestern region.

Priority Industries

The local board has identified aerospace, agriculture, education, health care, logistic and warehousing, manufacturing, mining, hospitality, tourism, and information technology as its priority industries.

Career Pathways

The local board has developed a Career Pathways Plan that follows the Department of Labor’s Career Pathways Tool Kit and includes the following phases: Build Cross-Agency Partnership, Identify Industry Sectors and Engage Employers, Design Education and Training Programs, Identify Funding Needs and Resources, Align Policies and Programs, and Measure System Change and Reporting. The Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board identified healthcare and education as the first industries to engage using the sector partnership strategy model that convenes employers, training providers, and workforce partners. In November 2020, the board’s administrative entity began working with the Centers for Health Innovation to begin sector partnerships with rural health care employers. In January 2022, the administrative entity will continue the work in the healthcare system by convening

stakeholders, analyzing what pathways currently exist, and structuring a plan on how to strengthen what already exists and expand in the necessary areas. The administrative entity will also collaborate with public schools and entities representing education to follow the same process of evaluating what exists and working to improve and expand those pathways in accordance with the Career Pathways Plan. The Career Pathways Plan is available on the employnm.com website.

While the Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board provides a targeted approach between specific industries and employers for the Career Pathways Plan, the board also supports career pathway opportunities at New Mexico Workforce Connection offices by assessing the needs of individuals and developing an individual employment plan. Each plan consists of steps leading to credential attainment and career opportunities. Individuals may also use the online career exploration tools available at www.nmcareersolutions.com. The tools assist individuals in making informed decisions based on their work interests and work values. It also has a budget tool, “Why I Work”, that shows the earnings that are needed to afford the lifestyle that an individual desires. From there, individuals are directed to an occupational finder that helps them filter different interests, such as a career path, job outlook, demand, education, wage requirements, experience, training, and if they have military experience. The results can be explored with the individual’s case manager at New Mexico Workforce Connection to finalize the individual employment plan.

MODIFICATION UPDATE

Budget

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act provides state Governors with funding that supports the needs of employers, job seekers, and youth through various funding streams. As per 20 CFR § 683.710, the local Chief Elected Officials in the Southwestern area of New Mexico are the grant recipients of the funds and work with the Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board to allocate funds for use within the region.

The Funding by Program Year chart and graph show that the Southwestern area has maintained a level amount of funding during PY19/FY20 and PY20/FY21. The chart below reflects a decrease in funding from PY21 to PY22.

The board's four-year plan describes the goals and service delivery strategies for adults, dislocated workers, and youth who are supported by the funding. The Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board invests the funds in career services, tuition assistance, on-the-job training, transitional jobs training, customized training, youth services, and supportive services.

Funding is provided by the U.S. Department of Labor to the State of New Mexico which allocates the funds to the four local regions by a formula. The increases and decreases from one program year to another are solely based on the formula methodology.

Funding by Program Year

| Program Allocation | PY18/FY19 | PY19/FY20 | PY20/FY21 | PY21/FY22 | PY22/FY23 |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Administration (10% of Total) | \$ 551,256 | \$ 545,585 | \$ 551,401 | \$ 534,092.00 | \$ 439,601.00 |
| Adult | \$ 1,339,570 | \$ 1,186,024 | \$ 1,232,683 | \$ 1,216,353.00 | \$ 952,829.00 |
| Dislocated Worker | \$ 1,747,781 | \$ 2,003,131 | \$ 1,890,806 | \$ 1,691,740.00 | \$ 1,543,938.00 |
| Youth | \$ 1,873,957 | \$ 1,721,110 | \$ 1,839,130 | \$ 1,898,741.00 | \$ 1,459,648.00 |
| Total Allocation | \$ 5,512,564 | \$ 5,455,850 | \$ 5,514,020 | \$ 5,340,926.00 | \$ 4,396,016.00 |

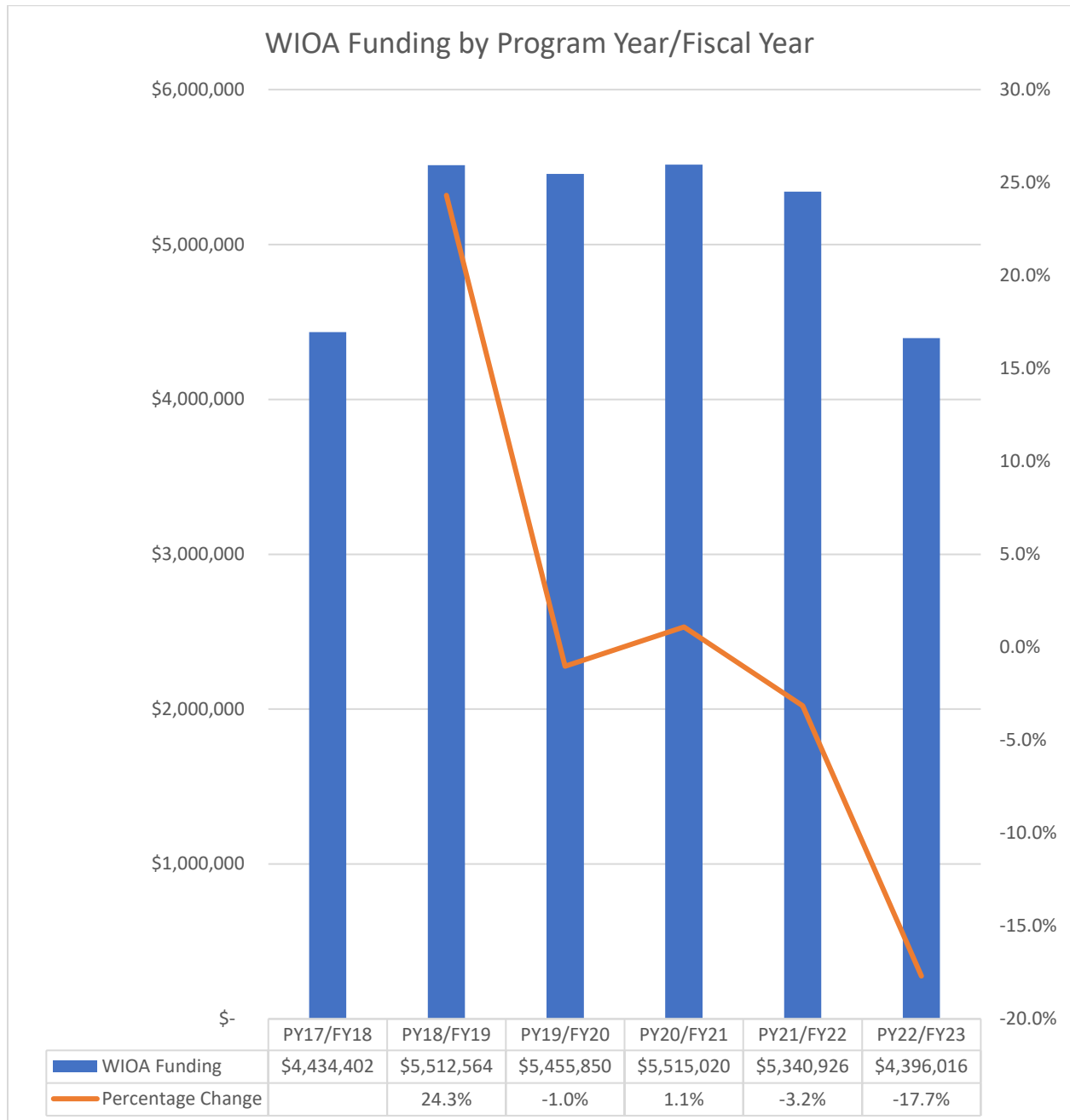
Funds are allocated to each of the four local workforce boards by a formula based on factors described in the U.S. Department of Labor's Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 16-19 for the WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth PY20 Program Allocations. In New Mexico, the requirements in TEGL 16-19 use prior-year data obtained from the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions' Economic Research & Analysis Bureau.

The data for the WIOA Adult and Youth programs consists of the number of: 1) economically disadvantaged; 2) excess employed, and 3) the number of substantially

unemployed. The data for the WIOA Dislocated Worker program consists of the; 1) the number of insured unemployed; 2) the number of unemployed; 3) mass layoff statistics; 4) the number of major industry job decline 5) the number of agricultural employment; and 6) the number of long-term unemployed.

In the following graph, the Percentage Change Y-axis shows changes in funding from one year to the next. In PY21, there is a ~3.2% change from PY20 illustrating a decrease in funding and in PY22, there is a 17.7% decrease in funding.

WIOA Funding by Program/Fiscal Year



STRATEGIC PLANNING ELEMENTS

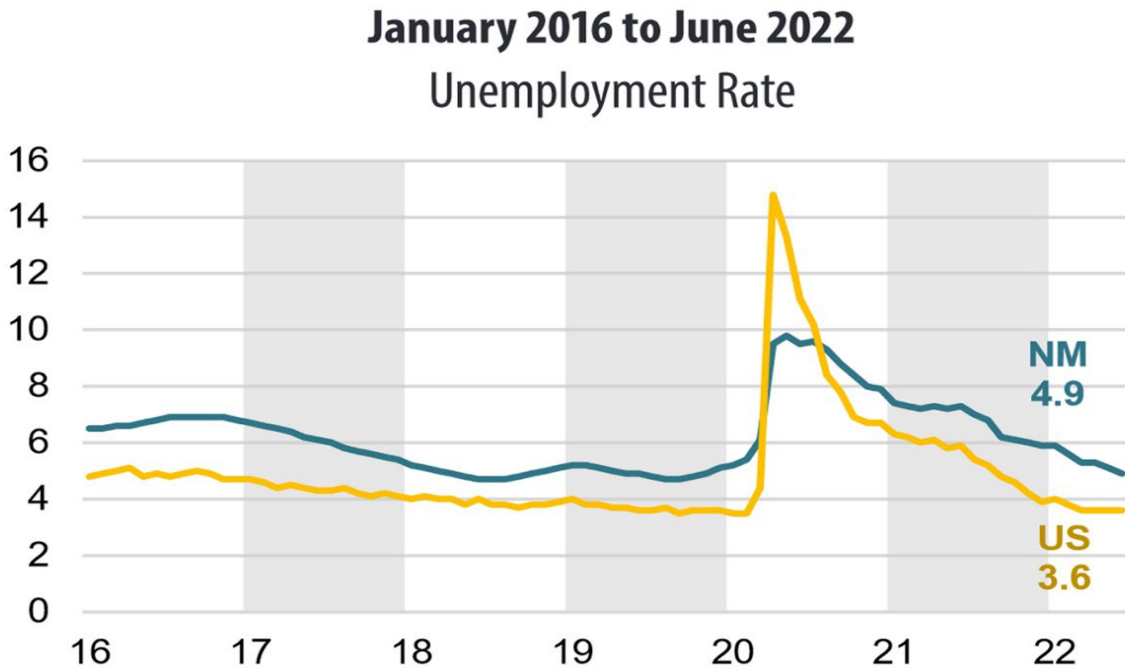
A. Economic and Workforce Analysis

§679.560(a)(1)(i) Economic conditions including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

The major employers in the Southwestern region of New Mexico are identified as the State of New Mexico, White Sands Missile Range, the City of Las Cruces, New Mexico State University, federal and municipal government, regional hospitals, and the international US/Mexico border complex (BorderPlex).

COVID Impact

The pandemic has drastically altered the economic landscape around the world, affecting small businesses especially hard. The graph below shows New Mexico’s unemployment rate surged right along with the rest of the country in the fall of 2020.



Statewide Unemployment—Job Losses Due to COVID-19 Shutdown

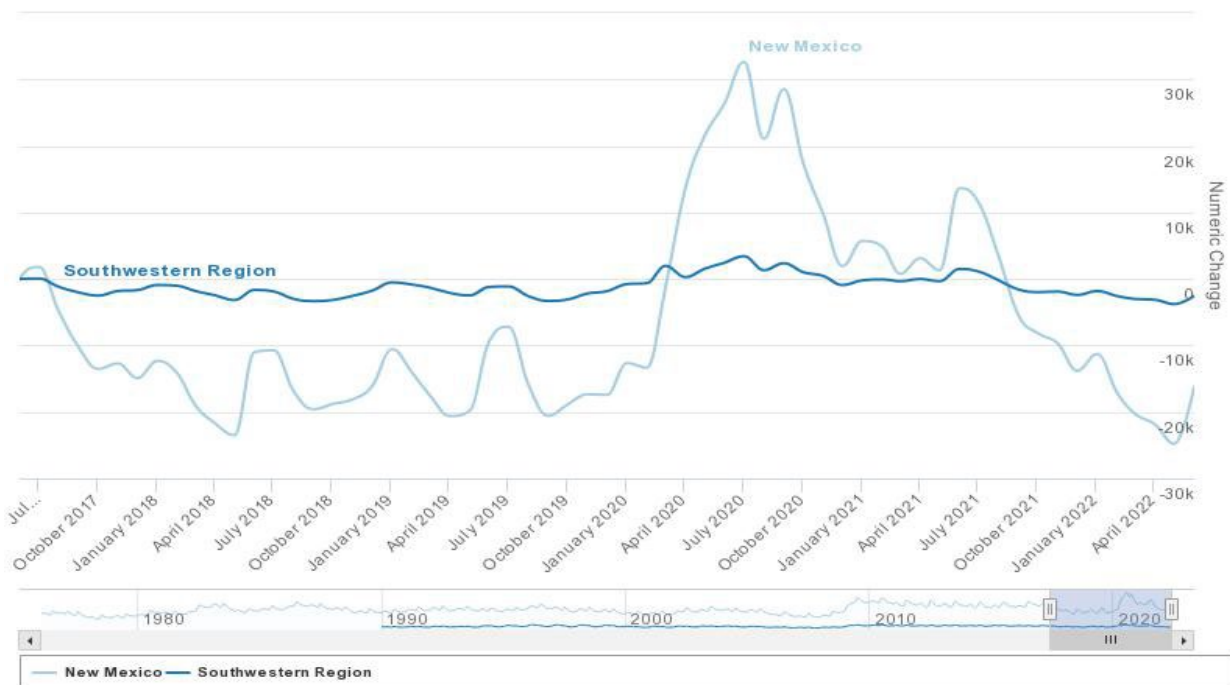
According to Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, when the Pandemic hit New Mexico, unemployment went from 8,000 to 13,000 in just four weeks. When comparing the unemployment numbers for the state of New Mexico with the Southwestern region, the data in the graph below shows the Southwestern region has seen slightly waivered figures for several consecutive years.

In January 2018, unemployment in the Southwestern region was at 9,392, or 7.2%. In January 2019, unemployment was 9,785 or 7.3%; January 2020 shows 9,530 or 7.1%; January 2021 closed at 10,096 or 7.7% unemployed; January 2022 reported 8,485 unemployed or 6.4%.

For the state of New Mexico, the unemployment numbers reported were 51,104 or 5.4% in January 2018. January 2019, there were 52,872 or 5.5% unemployed; in January 20, we saw 50,787 or 5.2% unemployment; in January 2021, unemployment was reported at 69,143 or 7.4%; in January 2022, unemployment was 52,152 or 5.5%.

This trend shows the Southwestern region’s unemployment rate is noticeably higher than the state average. However, when coming out of the pandemic and businesses were opening up, New Mexico’s unemployment rate was rather high in January 2021 at 7.4% while the Southwestern region’s rate was a very comparable 7.7%

**Not seasonally adjusted Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment data in Multiple Areas
Unemployment**



Source: NMDWS, Local Area Unemployment Statistics program in conjunction with U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
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While we did not want to welcome COVID-19, it forced us to quickly research and embrace available technology to adapt to the pandemic-tainted workforce. New Mexico Workforce Connection centers closed across the state. Staff packed up their office necessities and worked from home. Through discussions with the Department of Workforce Solutions, workforce partners, service providers, and many ears open to

ideas, management put processes in place to keep workforce services flowing with as little disruption as possible. Schools closed and students were forced to remote learning, as were participants in the Youth Services program. Recognizing these participants were ill-equipped to receive remote services, the Southwestern region quickly acted on the requests of the Youth Services providers. Laptops and mobile hotspots were purchased and mailed to individuals who did not have a computer and internet service available in their homes. Online training was made available to provide youth participants with the equivalent of work experience. A subscription to RightSignature was obtained to allow staff to send and receive signed documents without leaving their home office.

Subscriptions for Zoom allowed us to begin providing virtual services open to the public as a whole. We hosted some virtual events such as Employer Recruitment and Town Hall events. Staff used Zoom to conduct training and service providers were able to meet with participants. As we learned to adjust to a virtual setting, meetings with workforce partners increased as well as attendance. Virtual meetings allowed participation from those not only in other cities but also in other states.

At the tail end of PY19 and into the first quarter of PY20, minimal staff continued to work at New Mexico Workforce Connection offices in larger cities of the Southwestern region. With staff safety a priority, we followed CDC guidelines and COVID-19 protocols were put in place. We purchased acrylic shields for all staff to have at their desk and for reception counters. Temperature checks were performed, and mask mandate posters were created and hung. Although doors were locked to the public, staff saw an increasing number of customers knocking on office windows and doors requesting assistance with filing for unemployment. Staff safely provided services to our residents such as scanning, copying, and faxing while customers waited outside. Without knowing when our doors would need to open to the public, social distancing floor decals were purchased and installed on the floors at all locations. Seeing customers waiting outside for one-on-one assistance, social distancing decals were placed on sidewalks and parking lots for their safety.

While we planned the slow opening of New Mexico Workforce Connection centers in the region, staff safety remained a priority and a checklist of items was completed. The Governor deemed it necessary to have a security guard in place at each New Mexico Workforce Connection center before it could open. At the request of the Department of Workforce Solutions, the Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board helped fund a security guard for three offices. Security guards are no longer in the centers. Temperature checks and questionnaires are no longer required. Face masks are optional, but hand sanitizer is available for staff and the public.

Virtual recruiting events were held virtually weekly during the pandemic, but are now being held in person. Although in-person meetings with participants are encouraged, virtual and telephonic options are still provided. Most staff and partner meetings offer a hybrid option.

The OSO is currently holding customer flow plan work sessions to continue improving service delivery while streamlining the eligibility and enrollment process. Co-located partner meetings are held monthly to also assist with the alignment.

MODIFICATION UPDATE

Industries by Projected Growth

Going forward, the local workforce board is developing new strategies to address current needs as well as expected needs as they occur. With the setback of the pandemic shutdowns, many industries are recovering and predictions for some industries have been made. The top three industries in Southwestern Region, NM with the highest total annual percent change were Nonstore Retailers (2.52%), Ambulatory Health Care Services (2.27%), and Social Assistance (1.98%). See the table below.

Industries by Projected Growth

| Area Profile for Southwestern Region, NM | | | | | |
|---|--|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| Industries by Projected Growth Table | | | | | |
| The table below shows the industries with the highest total annual percent change in Southwestern Region, NM for the 2018-2028 time period. | | | | | |
| Rank | Industry | 2018 Estimated Employment | 2028 Projected Employment | Total Annual Percent Change | Total 2018-2028 Employment Change |
| 1 | Nonstore Retailers | 124 | 159 | 2.52% | 35 |
| 2 | Ambulatory Health Care Services | 8,456 | 10,581 | 2.27% | 2,125 |
| 3 | Social Assistance | 4,952 | 6,026 | 1.98% | 1,074 |
| 4 | Warehousing and Storage | 306 | 351 | 1.38% | 45 |
| 5 | Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction | 794 | 906 | 1.33% | 112 |
| 6 | Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services | 4,126 | 4,607 | 1.11% | 481 |
| 7 | Food Services and Drinking Places | 8,974 | 10,020 | 1.11% | 1,046 |
| 8 | Support Activities for Agriculture and Forestry | 1,917 | 2,121 | 1.02% | 204 |
| 9 | Construction of Buildings | 1,036 | 1,146 | 1.01% | 110 |
| 10 | Specialty Trade Contractors | 2,710 | 2,996 | 1.01% | 286 |

Source: NMDWS, Employment Projections program
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Existing In-Demand Industries and Occupations

The local board's Individual Training Account policy and guidance letter describe the criteria for an occupation in-demand within the seven-county area and participant eligibility. An "occupation in demand" is defined by the board as those that have annual openings of 4 or more, or a total annual percent change of 8% or more. Projections can be found in the labor market information on the New Mexico Workforce Connection Online System and uploaded into the participant's online file. The board may also approve training services for occupations determined in sectors of the economy that have a high potential for sustained demand or growth in the local area and/or those designated as priority industries within the region.

Occupations that require a high school diploma or more experienced high demand through the calendar year 2023, and are expected to grow, in the short term, over the next two years. Additionally, these occupations offer a median annual wage above the statewide annual median average of \$35,420.

The NMDWS, Occupational Employment Statistics program estimates that the median annual wage in the Southwestern region in 2019 was \$30,678. The estimated entry-level annual wage was \$19,962 and the experienced annual wage was \$53,331. The Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board supports career pathway opportunities for occupations requiring higher levels of education, such as those found in in-demand occupations.

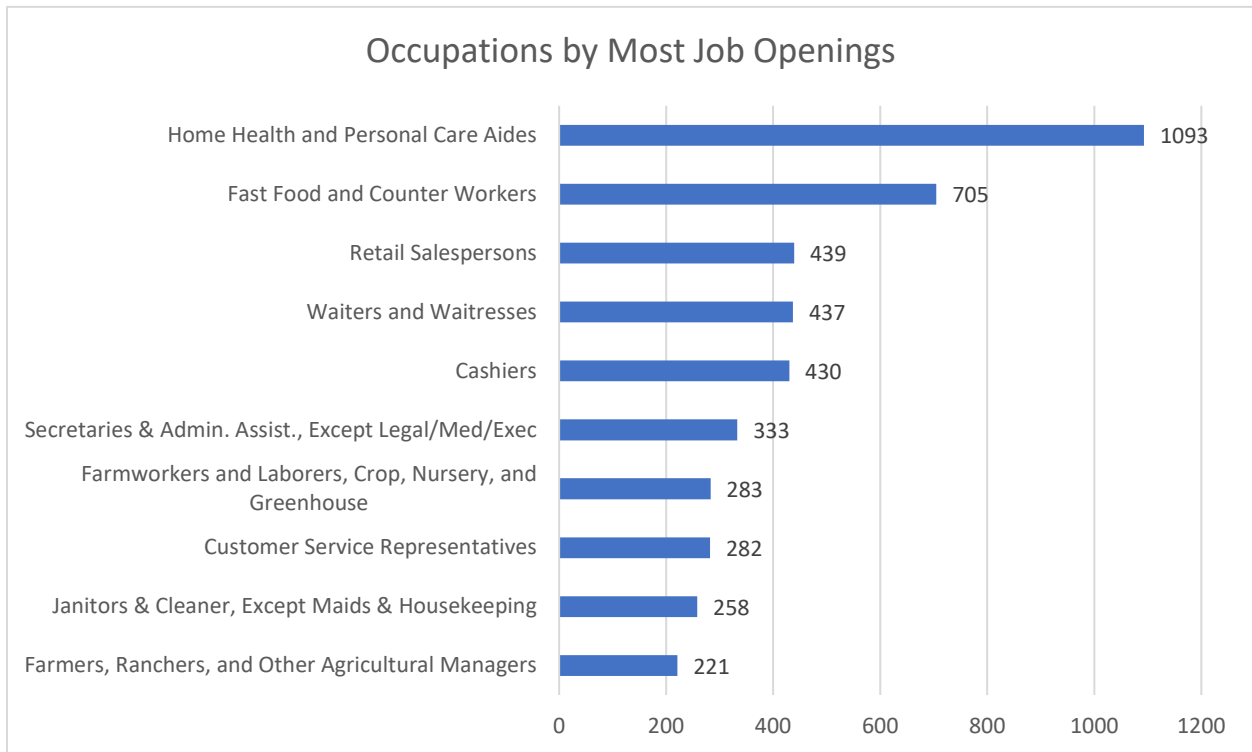


Emerging In-Demand Industries and Occupations

Occupations listed in the following graphs are projected to record solid job expansion over the long term (through 2029), along with high annual job openings and median wages above the state median wages.

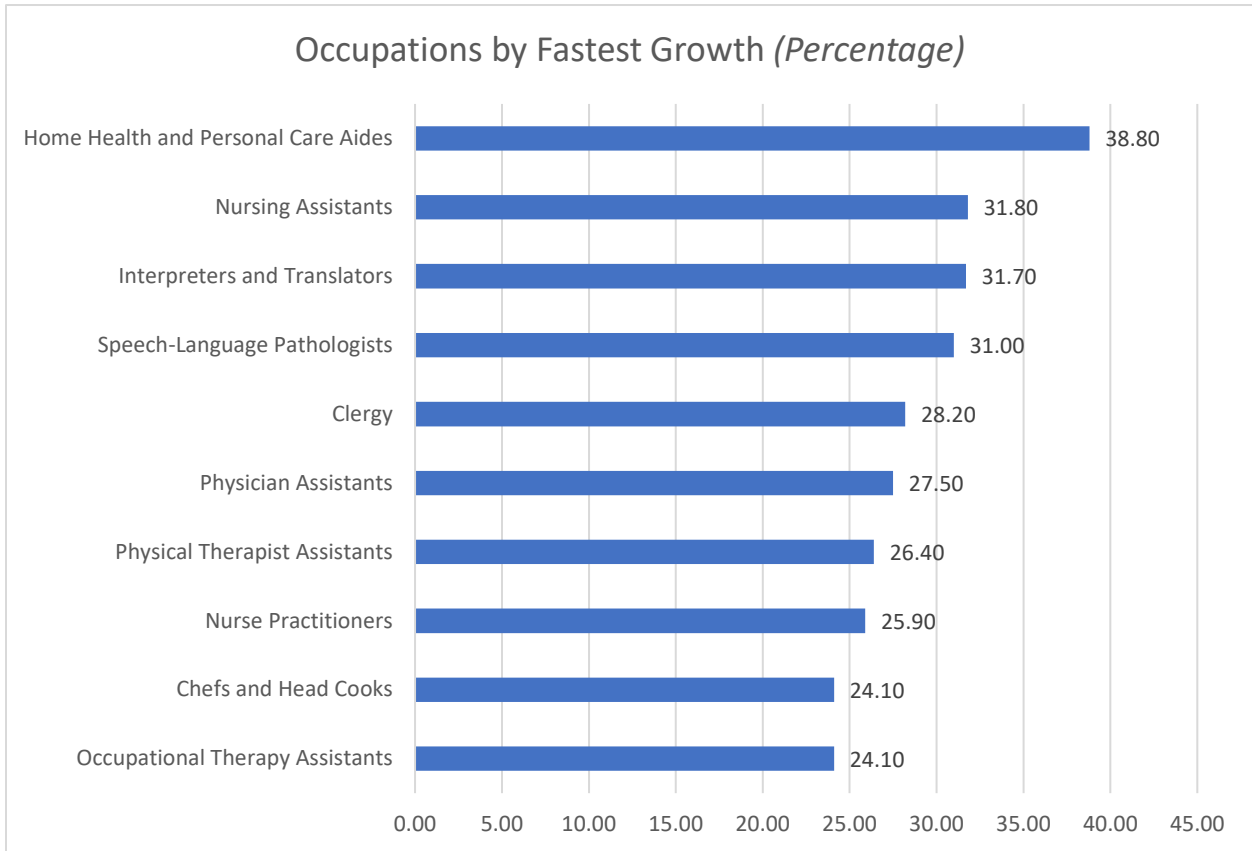
1. Occupations by Most Job Openings:

The occupations in the Southwestern Region, NM with the highest number of job openings on July 31, 2022, were Home Health and Personal Care Aides with 1,093 job openings, Fast Food and Counter Workers with 705 job openings, and Retail Salespersons with 439 job openings.



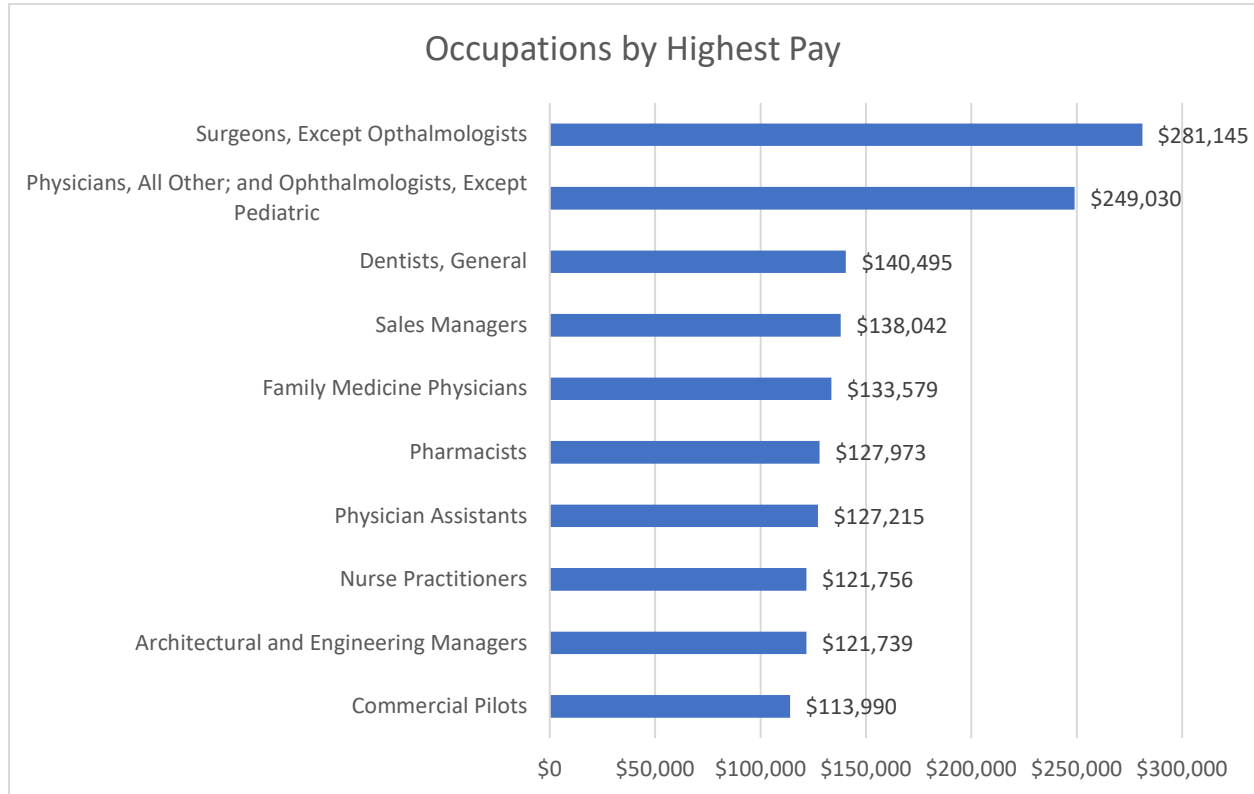
2. Occupations by Fastest Growth:

Occupations in Home Health and Personal Care Aides are expected to have a projected growth of 38.8% by adding 1,093 jobs annually. Nursing Assistants are expected to grow 31.8% by adding 7 jobs annually, and Interpreters and Translators are expected to add 46 jobs annually giving them a projected growth of 31.7%



3. Occupations by Highest Pay:

The growth for Surgeons, Except ophthalmologists, is expected to decrease by 4.3% with only 2 job openings expected annually. Physicians, All Other, and Ophthalmologists, Except Pediatric are expecting a 5% projected growth adding 5 jobs annually. Dentists, General is expecting a 3.4% growth by adding 4 jobs annually.

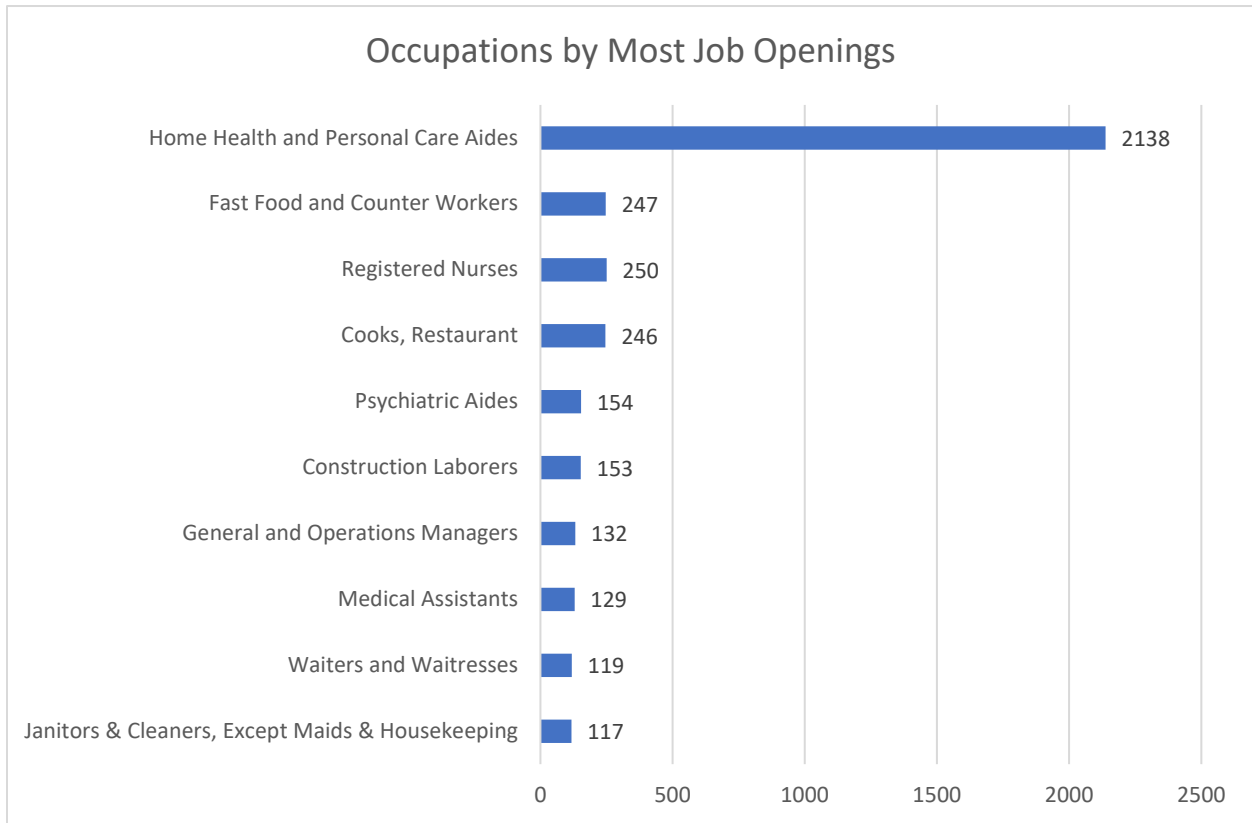


A closer look at the emerging high-demand occupations in high-wage occupations in the Southwestern workforce region reveals that the positions with the highest pay are concentrated in a handful of categories, including Surgeons, Physicians, Dentists, Sales Managers, Pharmacists, Physician Assistants, Nurse Practitioners, Architectural and Engineering Managers, and Commercial Pilots.



4. Occupations by Most Job Openings

The occupations with the newest jobs are mostly jobs with lower pay such as Home Health and Personal Care Aides, Fast Food and Counter Workers, Registered Nurses, Cooks, Restaurant, and Psychiatric Aides. The lack of good jobs with good pay in the Southwestern region continues to be a problem.



**Economic Conditions—
Unemployment Rates**

The following table shows a comparison of the New Mexico average unemployment rate with the Southwestern region average unemployment rate for the last five years, highlighting the recent increase in unemployment starting in March of 2020 due to the COVID pandemic.



1. Average Unemployment Rate by Year

SW Region / New Mexico

| Average Unemployment Rate by year | Time | SW | NM |
|--|-------------|-----------|-----------|
| | 2017 | 7.2% | 6.1% |
| | 2018 | 6.0% | 4.9% |
| | 2019 | 6.2% | 4.9% |
| | 2020 | 8.6% | 8.1% |
| | 2021 | 7.3% | 6.8% |

Source: NMDWS, Local Area Unemployment Statistics program in conjunction with U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

The next table shows the average unemployment rate for the past six months. The unemployment rate increased slightly over the first three months, but then increased dramatically beginning in April, with a small dip in May, but another increase in June. The four highlighted months, March through June, show the effects COVID-19 had in our region.

2. Average Unemployment Rate Over Six Months

SW Region / New Mexico - 2022

| Average Unemployment Rate over 6 months | Time | SW | NM |
|--|-------------|-----------|-----------|
| | Jan | 6.4% | 5.5% |
| | Feb | 5.8% | 4.9% |
| | Mar | 5.5% | 4.6% |
| | Apr | 5.4% | 4.4% |
| | May | 4.9% | 4.1% |
| | Jun | 5.7% | 5.0% |

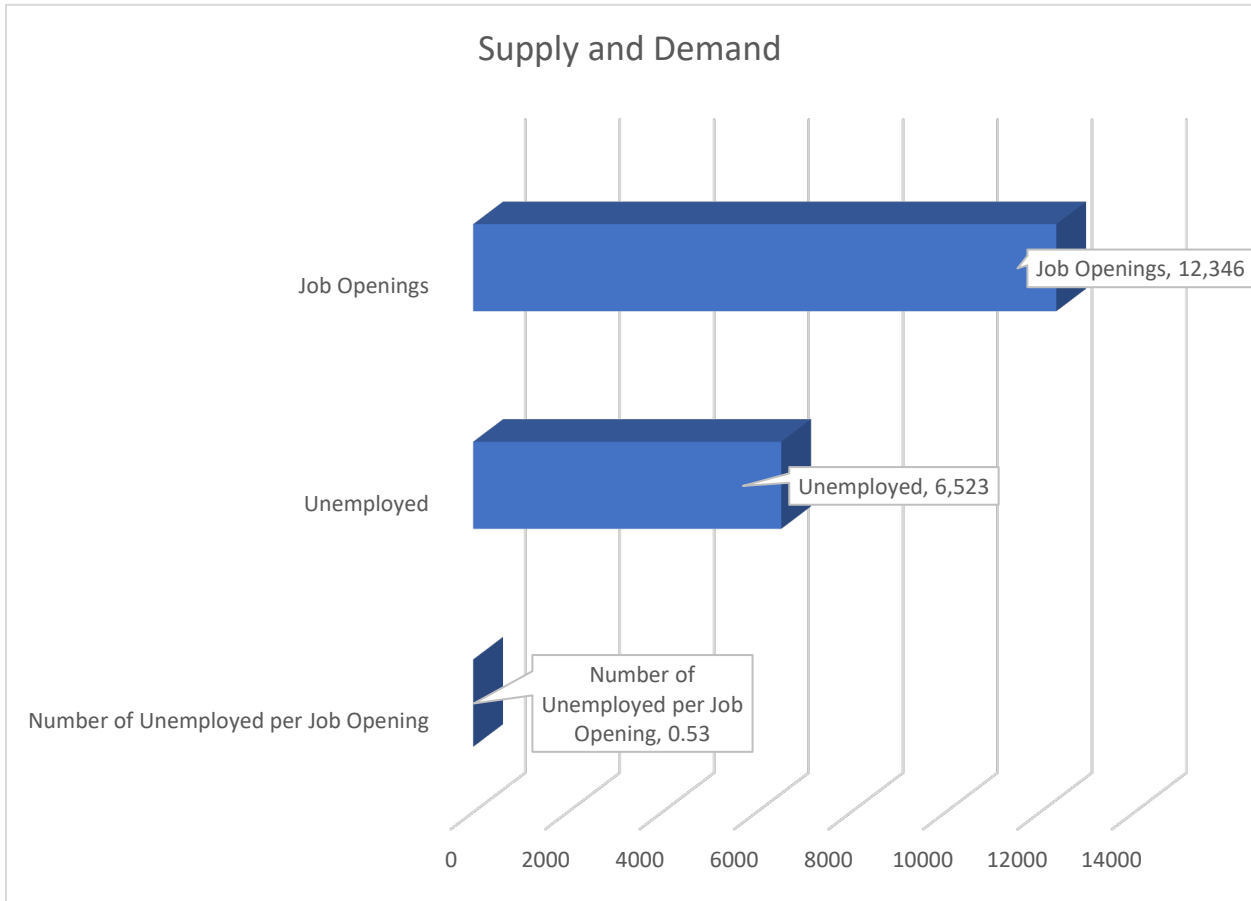
Source: NMDWS, Local Area Unemployment Statistics program in conjunction with U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Supply and Demand for Southwestern Region in June 2020

This section shows the non-seasonally adjusted number of unemployed, number of job openings advertised online, and the ratio of the number of unemployed to number of job openings advertised online in Southwestern Region, NM in May 2022 (Jobs De-duplication Level 2).

The estimated total number of unemployed (not seasonally adjusted) in May 2022 for the Southwestern region, NM was 6,523. The total number of job openings advertised online was 12,346. There were 0.53 unemployed per job opening advertised online in May 2022 for Southwestern Region, NM (Jobs De-duplication Level 2).

Supply and Demand



Job Openings

The first table on the following page shows the five-year average for total employment and average wages for workers in the Southwestern region. The State of New Mexico suffered high unemployment during the recession that started in 2010 but started to make gains in both measures in 2016. By 2019 workers in the region started to see increases in wages that were slightly above the average inflation rate. As a result of the COVID-19 shutdown in 2020, the total employment is in the negative range.

Even though New Mexico is behind the rest of the country in average wages per worker, gains were happening because of the tight labor market and the recent increases in minimum wage rates enacted in the state and local communities. The SAWDB will be closely monitoring wages in its region as the current impact of COVID-19 may harm wage growth.

The second table below shows the changes in online job openings over the past six months. Advertised job gains were modest in the region in January but started to grow at a rapid pace in February and March. When the state mandated restrictions due to COVID, the region, as well as the nation, saw substantial job losses compared to the same month a year earlier. The Southwestern board will monitor the data as some of the job losses may return when restrictions are removed, but the board remains cautious, as a sizable number of small businesses may not recover fully.

1. Total Employment

| SW Region | | | | | |
|------------------|-------|----------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Total Employment | Time | Employed | 1 Year % Change in Employment | Avg Ann Wages per Worker | 1 Year % Change in Wages |
| | 2016 | 122,823 | 1.11% | \$35,376 | 1.0% |
| | 2017 | 122,922 | 0.08% | \$36,336 | 1.4% |
| | 2018 | 124,401 | 1.20% | \$37,344 | 4.6% |
| | 2019 | 125,444 | 0.83% | \$38,348 | 3.1% |
| | 2020* | 117,431 | -6.59% | N/A | N/A |

Source: New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions / JobsEQ®

* Preliminary data from NMDWS April 2020

2. Online Job Openings

| Online Job Openings Trend - SW Region - 2022 | | | |
|--|----------|-------------------|--------------|
| Online Job Openings Over Time | Time | Job Openings 2022 | Average Wage |
| | May | 97,976 | \$54,691 |
| | April | 95,319 | \$54,626 |
| | March | 94,808 | \$51,036 |
| | February | 90,947 | \$50,833 |
| | January | 91,456 | \$51,778 |

Source: NMDWS, Online advertised jobs data

§679.560(a)(1)(ii) Include a regional analysis of employment needs of employers in existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

Top Ten Industries

The table below lists the top ten industries that are posting jobs in the region. These industries are experiencing a shortage of skilled applicants for two major reasons. First, is the skills gap that exists especially in rural areas for health care and education. Second, is the decline in the labor participation rate that is currently at 56% in the region compared to 61.5% in the US.

Top Industries Posting Jobs

| Industries by Advertised Jobs - SW Region - 2022 | | | |
|--|--------------|--|-------|
| Top Industries by Advertised Jobs | Rank | Industry | Job |
| | 1 | Health Care and Social Assistance | 1,668 |
| | 2 | Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services | 553 |
| | 3 | Educational Services | 424 |
| | 4 | Retail Trade | 307 |
| | 5 | Public Administration | 255 |
| | 6 | Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services | 225 |
| | 7 | Accommodation and Food Services | 190 |
| | 8 | Manufacturing | 120 |
| | 9 | Wholesale Trade | 105 |
| 10 | Unclassified | 2,469 | |

Source: NMDWS, Online advertised jobs data



Top Ten Occupations

The table below illustrates the top ten occupations within the industries mentioned on the previous page. In Southwestern New Mexico, as with the rest of the state, jobs in the health care industry are prevalent. These jobs will mostly be filled by applicants from other states. Recruiting young professionals to move to rural locations has been a problem many organizations have been working on for decades. The lack of available transportation in most rural communities only exasperates the barrier to employing local talent and attracting a younger workforce from larger cities.

Occupations by Advertised Jobs

| Occupations by Advertised Jobs - SW Region - 2022 | | | |
|---|------|--|-----|
| Top Occupations by Advertised Jobs | Rank | Occupation | Job |
| | 1 | Registered Nurses | 670 |
| | 2 | Physicians, All Other | 137 |
| | 3 | Personal Care Aides | 137 |
| | 4 | Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses | 129 |
| | 5 | Nursing Assistants | 105 |
| | 6 | Customer Service Representatives | 104 |
| | 7 | Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers | 66 |
| | 8 | Surgical Technologists | 62 |
| | 9 | Physical Therapists | 61 |
| | 10 | Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand | 59 |

Source: NMDWS, Online advertised jobs data

To worsen the situation, today's health care workers are starting to age out of the workforce system and retiring and there are fewer young people seeking education to fill these positions. Also, more Americans are entering retirement. This elder population will only increase the need for workers with the skills to care for them.

Top Growing Occupations


The following table shows the annual employment projections by potential job openings in the region. The projections demonstrate the demand for entry-level positions will be substantial in some areas; unfortunately, these jobs do not pay a sustaining wage if the employee is the head of a household. On the other hand, these positions are vital and can be a gateway to starting a career pathway for younger people. The workforce system will need to consider this issue and increase the amount of entry-level skills training programs to keep these workers on a career pathway that will lead to jobs that pay a living wage.

Top Growing Occupations

Top Growing Occupations

| | | |
|--|----------|--|
| Personal Care Aides | N/A |  |
| Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food | N/A |  |
| Retail Salespersons | \$25,980 |  |
| Waiters and Waitresses | \$21,840 |  |
| Cashiers | \$22,750 |  |

Source: NMDWS, Employment Projections program and Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS) Program

 = 100 Annual Openings

According to a study of local industries and businesses conducted by the Workforce Collaborative of New Mexico, the region does have many high-paying jobs that go unfilled due to a lack of qualified applicants. The central task of the workforce development system is to identify the skill gaps and to assist in developing training programs to address the needs of the employers.

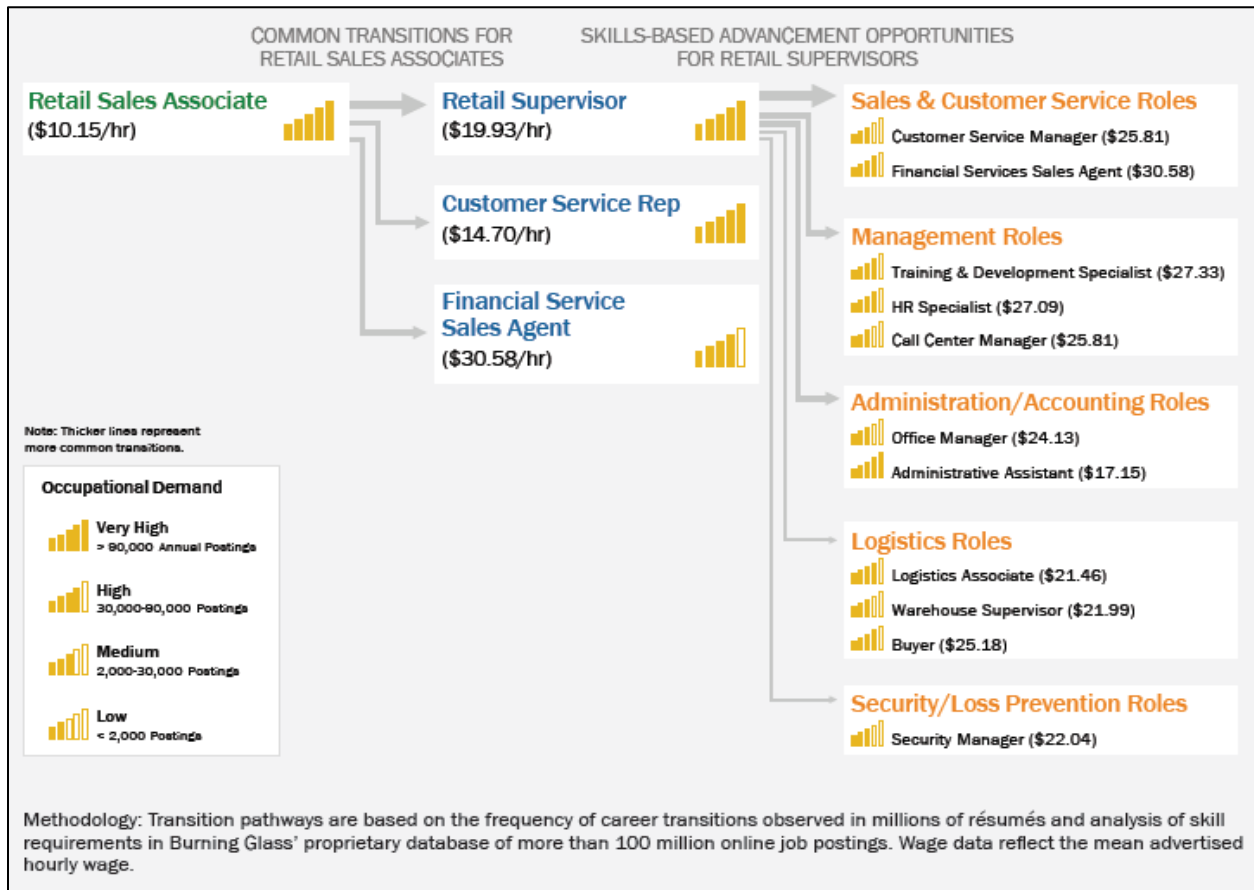
The task here is to find a way to communicate with workers in these entry-level jobs and offer them the training programs needed to turn an entry-level job into a career pathway. Often, as workers increase wages, they also tend to lose social benefit programs like rental assistance and childcare subsidies, thus causing some of them to slide back into poverty. The state legislators are working on his problem, but the childcare subsidy is a federal program that cannot be changed locally. Other options are needed at both the state and local levels.



Sample Career Pathway

The next page shows an example of a career pathway for an entry-level sales associate position. An entry-level employee only needs specific short-term training programs to move to the next level of employment as most of the skills needed will come with experience as the employee moves across the chart.

Sample Career Pathway



When the Southwestern region has completed the industry meetings across the region, the needs of employers will be clearer and the SAWDB and its partners will be able to develop more customized and short-term training that will result in the skilled workforce needed for employers.

[§679.560\(a\)\(2\) Knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of employers in the region, including employment needs in In-Demand industry sectors and occupations.](#)

Technology

Over the last 20 years, the Southwestern region has seen several changes to the workforce. The use of technology is now a factor in most jobs, including entry-level positions. Also, we are seeing people switching jobs every year or two, rather than committing to a career with one company. In the workplace, we are seeing shifts in traditional jobs as companies are hiring fewer managers and giving employees more responsibilities to complete tasks. Because of the COVID pandemic, many jobs will simply disappear because many workplaces are going to disappear.

The addition of technology, such as computer-based intelligence, will replace the need for human capital. Manual jobs will be most at risk, while jobs that require empathy, like caretakers and social workers, will still be in demand for at least a while. These changes do not necessarily mean a loss of jobs, as new jobs will be created to deal with these changes. The need to develop new training programs to meet the needs of employers today and tomorrow will determine the success of this and any workforce program.

Work Experience of Jobs and Candidates

The following table shows the minimum required work experience for job openings advertised online in the Southwestern region, as well as the percentage of potential candidates in the workforce system that are looking for work.

On August 18, 2020, the New Mexico Workforce Connection Online System indicated that 4,731 job postings were seeking “1 Year to 2 Years” of experience, but only 7.4% of potential candidates are registered in the online system. In contrast, 44.6% of potential candidates are registered in the online system with only six (6) job openings in the category.

Work Experience of Jobs & Candidates

| Minimum Required Work Experience | | | | |
|---|-------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| Work Experience of Jobs & Candidates | Rank | Experience | Job Openings | % Potential Candidates |
| | 1 | Entry Level | 451 | N/A |
| | 2 | Less than 1 year | 122 | 9.28% |
| | 3 | 1 Year to 2 Years | 6,104 | 8.25% |
| | 4 | 2 Years to 5 Years | 160 | 15.99% |
| | 5 | 5 Years to 10 Years | 49 | 18.00% |
| | 6 | More than 10 Years | 13 | 48.47% |

Source: NMDWS, Online advertised jobs data

Top Ten Tools or Tech Skills

The table below shows the top ten tools or tech skills needed by employers in the Southwestern region in 2020. This list is taken from job advertisements employers post on the state online database and gives us a very focused list of degrees, certifications, and training programs that need to be available in all seven counties of the workforce region. While cash register and forklift skills may be obtained on the job, employers still want new employees to have these skills before applying, thus delaying some participants from starting employment and possibly prolonging their career development.

Advertised Tools & Technologies for Job Openings

| Tool and Technologies in Job Openings Advertised Online - SW Region - 2022 | | | |
|--|---------------|---------------------------------|-----|
| Advertised Tools and Technology | Rank | Tool or Technology | Job |
| | 1 | Microsoft (MS) Office | 559 |
| | 2 | Personal protective equipment | 343 |
| | 3 | Microsoft PowerPoint | 291 |
| | 4 | Masks | 277 |
| | 5 | Ladders | 144 |
| | 6 | Personal Computer (PC) | 141 |
| | 7 | Structured query language (SQL) | 125 |
| | 8 | C++ | 108 |
| | 9 | Forklift | 98 |
| 10 | Cash Register | 90 | |

Source: NMDWS, Online advertised jobs data



Education Level of Jobs and Candidates

The table below shows the minimum level of education requested by employers on job openings advertised online, as well as the educational attainment of potential candidates in the workforce system that are looking for jobs in the Southwestern Region, NM on July 28, 2022. There were 5422 job openings advertised online that did not specify a minimum education requirement (Jobs De-duplication Level 2) Education Level of Jobs & Candidates

| Minimum Level of Education Requested by Employers | | | | |
|--|-------------|--|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| Education Level of Jobs & Candidates | Rank | Education Level | Job Openings | % Potential Candidates |
| | 1 | No Minimum Education | 326 | N/A |
| | 2 | Less than High School | 0 | 13.26% |
| | 3 | High School Diploma or Equivalent | 797 | 34.63% |
| | 4 | 1 Year of College or a Technical or Vocational School | 1 | N/A |
| | 5 | 3 Years of College or a Technical or Vocational School | 1 | N/A |
| | 6 | Some College | 0 | 0.08%% |
| | 7 | Vocational School Certificate | 25 | 7.85% |
| | 8 | Associate's Degree | 56 | 9.96% |
| | 9 | Bachelor's Degree | 230 | 11.64% |
| | 10 | Master's Degree | 36 | 4.20% |
| | 11 | Doctorate Degree | 4 | 0.67% |
| | 12 | Specialized Degree (e.g. MD, DDS) | 1 | 0.52% |
| | 13 | Not Specified | 5,422 | N/A |

Source: NMDWS, Online advertised jobs data

Workforce Talent Collaborative, Doña Ana County

The local Workforce Talent Collaborative, facilitated by the Bridge of Southern New Mexico is a collaboration between public schools, non-profit organizations, private sector industries, economic development, local government entities, adult and children services, and higher education. The Collaborative is currently holding roundtables with Doña Ana County industries to build the county’s talent pipeline. While their priorities are somewhat different from those of the Southwestern region, there are many overlaps. Both have Aerospace, Manufacturing, Agriculture, and Health Care on their priority lists. The Collaborative also includes Digital Media and Energy, while the SAWDB’s list includes Mining, Hospitality and Tourism, Education, and Information Technology. A Joint Regional Workforce Talent Development Strategic Plan has been developed and is located at <https://thebridgeofsnm.org/how-we-do-it/workforce-development/>.

1. Aerospace, Space, and Defense Industry Sector

Participants included Jacobs Technology, White Sands Missile Range, Spaceport American, Virgin Galactic, Boeing, and the Physical Sciences Lab at New Mexico State University.

2. Key Findings are the Following:

- Federal mandates for candidate requirements may stifle innovation or alternate routes to qualification.
- The number of jobs requiring significant years of experience (ranging from 5Q20 years) creates a chasm between what local colleges and universities can produce and the prospective talent that is already available in the region. This pipeline of talent requires strategic partnerships to reach outside of the county and into other regions and target audiences.
- A high percentage of jobs require security clearances and, currently, there is not an intentional effort to proactively identify and educate prospective candidates on what those requirements are.
- Work-based learning opportunities must be expanded to support greater access to students and contribute to work experience requirements for employers.

3. International Industries

The work with International Industries located along the border in Santa Teresa is showing different results. Those jobs require much less experience. However, the turnover rate is about 50%. Those companies tend to hire from temp agencies in El Paso so that they can “try out” the worker. A much better approach would be to determine (from the industries) what kind of training programs they require and for the Southwestern region to develop those specific training programs.

International Industries hires from temp agencies to “try out” the worker, resulting in 50% turnover rate

4. Transportation

These industries also complained about a lack of transportation for employees, especially potential employees from New Mexico. The South-Central Regional Transit District is currently developing a new route from Sunland Park to the Santa Teresa Industrial Park and has started discussions on two daily round trips between Las Cruces and the industrial park in Santa Teresa.

5. Collaboration with the Workforce Talent Collaborative

The Southwestern region will be working with the Workforce Talent Collaborative in all their industry roundtables to gain information about the local needs of businesses and industries in Doña Ana County. Using the Career Pathways Plan developed by SAWDB in the fall of 2019, the Southwestern region will study the industries in Doña Ana County not covered by the Workforce Collaborative—Mining, Hospitality and Tourism, and Education. Work outside of Doña Ana County, in the more rural counties, may require a different set of priorities.

[§679.560\(a\)\(3\)](#) An analysis of the regional workforce, including current labor force employment and unemployment data, information on labor market trends, and educational and skill levels of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment.

Six-Month Unemployment Comparison, 2019 to 2020

The total civilian labor force (not seasonally adjusted) for Southwestern New Mexico for June 2020 was 129,257 of which 117,431 were employed and 11,826 were unemployed. The unemployment rate for June 2020 was 8.3% compared to 4.9% in June 2019. This increase was related to the economic shutdown caused by the COVID pandemic that started in March 2020. Before the economic disruption, the Southwestern region averaged an unemployment rate of 4.8% for the last quarter of the fiscal year. The table below shows the first 6 months of 2019 and 2020 and compares the unemployment rates and the effects of the COVID pandemic on our employment figures.



Six-Month Employment Comparison, 2021 to 2022

| Unemployment Rate SW Region - 6-Month Comparison by County (January through March) | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| COUNTY | JAN 2021 | JAN 2022 | FEB 2021 | FEB 2022 | MAR 2021 | MAR 2022 |
| <i>Catron</i> | 6.9 | 5.6 | 7.4 | 5.0 | 6.7 | 5.1 |
| <i>Doña Ana</i> | 7.1 | 5.7 | 7.0 | 5.1 | 6.8 | 4.8 |
| <i>Grant</i> | 7.7 | 5.9 | 7.6 | 5.3 | 7.2 | 4.9 |
| <i>Hidalgo</i> | 5.2 | 4.6 | 5.9 | 3.9 | 5.7 | 3.7 |
| <i>Luna</i> | 15.1 | 15.5 | 16.5 | 14.5 | 16.7 | 13.8 |
| <i>Sierra</i> | 8.6 | 7.8 | 8.9 | 7.3 | 8.5 | 7.3 |
| <i>Socorro</i> | 6.5 | 5.4 | 6.2 | 4.7 | 5.9 | 4.5 |

Source: NM Labor Market Review (2022)

| Unemployment Rate SW Region - 6-Month Comparison by County (April through June) | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| COUNTY | APR 2021 | APR 2022 | MAY 2021 | MAY 2022 | JUN 2021 | JUN 2022 |
| <i>Catron</i> | 6.2 | 4.7 | 5.8 | 4.6 | 6.6 | 5.5 |
| <i>Doña Ana</i> | 7.0 | 4.8 | 6.7 | 4.4 | 8.0 | 5.3 |
| <i>Grant</i> | 7.2 | 4.7 | 7.3 | 4.3 | 8.7 | 5.0 |
| <i>Hidalgo</i> | 5.5 | 3.7 | 6.4 | 3.4 | 6.3 | 3.9 |
| <i>Luna</i> | 17.2 | 13.3 | 16.0 | 11.5 | 16.7 | 11.5 |
| <i>Sierra</i> | 8.8 | 7.0 | 8.8 | 6.5 | 9.0 | 6.2 |
| <i>Socorro</i> | 6.1 | 4.3 | 6.3 | 3.9 | 7.8 | 5.1 |

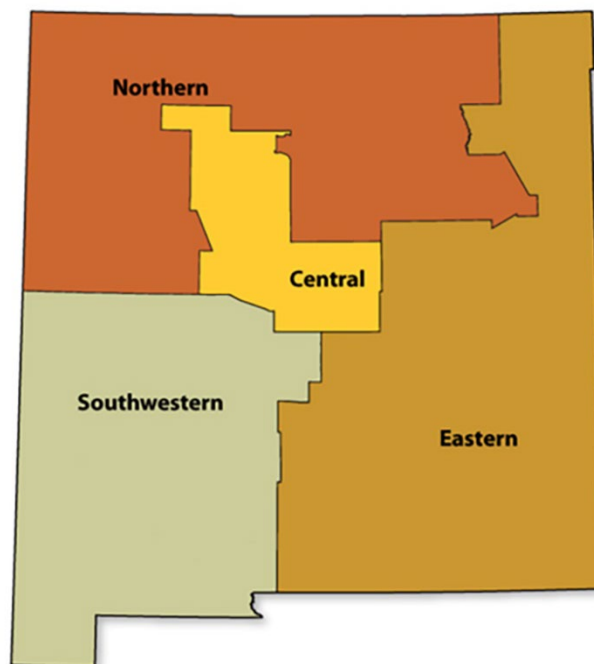
Source: NM Labor Market Review (2022)

Projected Growth by Region

Employment in New Mexico is expected to grow from 878,470 to 930,208 between the years 2018 to 2028. The Southwestern region is expected to grow employment from 106,790 to 113,870 in the same period. This 7% employment growth will primarily happen in the MSA (Metropolitan Statistical Area) of Las Cruces and will be the highest projected growth by percentage across the state.



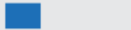



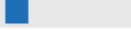







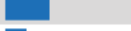















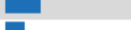



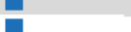





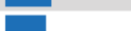
















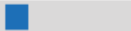





Projected Employment Growth by Region & MSA

| Projected Employment Growth by Substate Area | | | | | |
|---|--------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|-------------|
| 2018–2028 | | | | | |
| | | 2018 | 2028 | # | % |
| New Mexico | | 875,470 | 930,280 | 54,810 | 6.3% |
| REGIONS | Central | 401,030 | 425,640 | 24,610 | 6.1% |
| | Eastern | 145,260 | 154,130 | 8,870 | 6.1% |
| | Northern | 197,840 | 210,350 | 12,510 | 6.3% |
| | Southwestern | 106,790 | 113,870 | 7,080 | 6.6% |
| MSAs | Albuquerque | 401,030 | 425,640 | 24,610 | 6.1% |
| | Farmington | 49,950 | 53,060 | 3,110 | 6.2% |
| | Las Cruces | 77,410 | 82,840 | 5,430 | 7.0% |
| | Santa Fe | 65,230 | 68,830 | 3,600 | 5.5% |



In the Southwestern region, health care, and social services will have both the most and fastest growth followed by education and mining. The industries with the most projected decline in jobs will be manufacturing, utilities, information, and retail.

Industry Sectors with the Largest Projected Employment Growth

| Industry Sectors With the Largest Projected Employment Growth 2018–2028 | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------------|---|--|-----------------------------|--|
| MOST GROWTH | | | FASTEST GROWTH | | |
| Central/AB Q MSA | Health Care & Social Assist |  10,990 |  16.5% | Health Care & Social Assist | |
| | Accomm. & Food Svcs |  3,980 |  11.7% | Professional & Tech Svcs | |
| | Professional & Tech Svcs |  3,630 |  11.1% | Construction | |
| | Construction |  2,600 |  9.5% | Accomm. & Food Svcs | |
| | Self Employed |  1,440 |  6.7% | Arts & Entertainment | |
| Eastern | Health Care & Social Assist |  2,830 |  17.1% | Health Care & Social Assist | |
| | Mining |  1,840 | *** | Mining | |
| | Accomm. & Food Svcs |  1,410 | *** | Construction | |
| | Construction |  1,080 |  11.7% | Professional & Tech Svcs | |
| | Educational Services |  470 |  8.8% | Accomm. & Food Svcs | |
| Northern | Health Care & Social Assist |  5,260 |  16.9% | Health Care & Social Assist | |
| | Accomm. & Food Svcs |  2,080 |  11.7% | Professional & Tech Svcs | |
| | Professional & Tech Svcs |  1,820 |  11.4% | Construction | |
| | Construction |  950 |  8.8% | Accomm. & Food Svcs | |
| | Educational Services |  690 |  7.1% | Mining | |
| S. Western | Health Care & Social Assist |  3,590 |  18.8% | Health Care & Social Assist | |
| | Accomm. & Food Svcs |  1,050 |  11.7% | Professional & Tech Svcs | |
| | Educational Services |  540 |  11.2% | Construction | |
| | Construction |  510 |  10.2% | Accomm. & Food Svcs | |
| | Professional & Tech Svcs |  480 |  6.5% | Arts & Entertainment | |
| Farmington MSA | Health Care & Social Assist |  1,220 |  16.1% | Health Care & Social Assist | |
| | Accomm. & Food Svcs |  480 |  12.1% | Construction | |
| | Construction |  420 |  11.7% | Professional & Tech Svcs | |
| | Mining | *** |  10.4% | Accomm. & Food Svcs | |
| | Educational Services |  190 | *** | Mining | |
| Las Cruces MSA | Health Care & Social Assist |  2,760 |  19.1% | Health Care & Social Assist | |
| | Accomm. & Food Svcs |  780 | *** | Professional & Tech Svcs | |
| | Professional & Tech Svcs | *** |  11.0% | Construction | |
| | Construction |  390 |  10.7% | Accomm. & Food Svcs | |
| | Educational Services |  390 | *** | Mining | |
| Santa Fe MSA | Health Care & Social Assist |  1,650 |  18.0% | Health Care & Social Assist | |
| | Accomm. & Food Svcs |  840 |  11.7% | Professional & Tech Svcs | |
| | Professional & Tech Svcs |  310 |  10.9% | Construction | |
| | Construction |  300 |  8.5% | Accomm. & Food Svcs | |
| | Self Employed |  210 |  6.9% | Arts & Entertainment | |

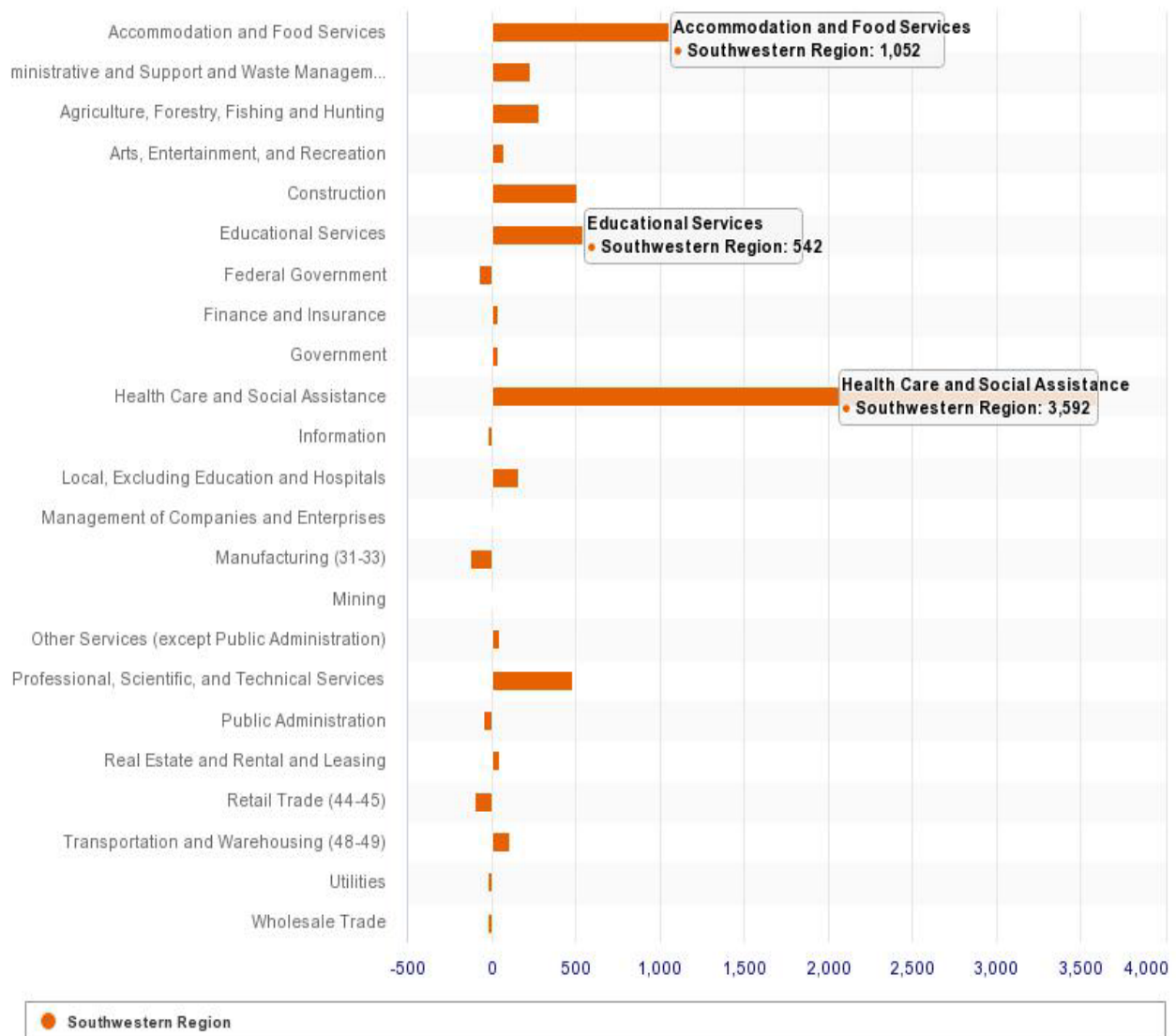
Source: NMDWS Economic Research and Analysis Bureau, Employment Projections and Occupational Employment Statistics Programs, projected numeric growth for industries is rounded.

Projected Growth by Industry

In the Southwestern region, the health care and social assistance sectors are projected to have the highest employment growth in the state. Employment in accommodation and food service is projected to be strong in all regions as are educational services.

Projected Employment Growth by Major Industry

The graph below shows the long term industry projections for Multiple Industries in Southwestern Region for the 2018-2028 projection period.
Total 2018-2028 Employment Change



Source: NMDWS, Employment Projections program
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Projected Growth by Occupation

Growth in the occupational groups of home health aides, personal care aides, speech-language pathologists, physician assistants, food preparation and serving, construction, extraction, healthcare practitioners, and technical areas represents 62.2 percent of total projected employment growth between 2018 and 2028. New demand for workers in these occupational groups is projected to grow quickly. Jobs for personal care and service workers are projected to grow by 25.0 percent, while jobs for food preparation and servers are projected to increase by 11.0 percent. Jobs for construction and extraction workers are expected to increase by 10.8 percent, while healthcare practitioners and techs are projected to increase by 10.9 percent.

Community and social service occupations are projected to increase by 9.9 percent; whereas, the occupations of office and administrative support, sales and related, and production are expected to have job losses over the projection period.

Projected Growth by Occupation

The SAWDB strongly supports the development of a skilled workforce for both the jobs that exist today and those that are emerging in the region. Going forward, the Board aims to learn more about and engage further with the local business and industries in our region to develop training programs that will result in a well-developed career pipeline that is tailored to meet the needs of local businesses and industries within the Southwestern region.



Level of Education

The table below shows the minimum level of education requested by employers on job openings advertised online, as well as the educational attainment of potential candidates in the workforce system that are looking for jobs in Southwestern, NM on August 1, 2022. There were 5,422 job openings advertised online that did not specify a minimum education requirement. There are no jobs listed for a less than high school education level, but the number of potential candidates is 515. In all but four categories, the number of potential candidates is larger (or much larger) than the number of job openings.

Education Level of Advertised Jobs

| Rank | Education Level | Job Openings | Percentage of Job Openings | Potential Candidates | Percentage of Potential Candidates |
|------|---|--------------|----------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 | No Minimum Education Requirement | 326 | 4.73% | 0 | N/A |
| 2 | Less than High School | 0 | N/A | 515 | 13.26% |
| 3 | High School Diploma or Equivalent | 797 | 11.55% | 1,345 | 34.63% |
| 4 | 1 Year of College or a Tech or Vocational School | 1 | 0.01% | 0 | N/A |
| 5 | 3 Years of College or a Tech or Vocational School | 1 | 0.01% | 0 | N/A |
| 6 | Some College | 0 | N/A% | 3 | 0.08% |
| 7 | Vocational School Certificate | 25 | 0.36% | 305 | 7.85% |
| 8 | Associate's Degree | 56 | 0.81% | 387 | 9.96% |
| 9 | Bachelor's Degree | 230 | 3.33% | 452 | 11.64% |
| 10 | Master's Degree | 36 | 0.52% | 163 | 4.20% |
| 11 | Doctorate Degree | 4 | 0.06% | 26 | 0.67% |
| 12 | Specialized Degree (e.g. MD, DDS) | 1 | 0.01% | 20 | 0.52% |
| 13 | Not Specified | 5,422 | 78.59% | 0 | N/A |

Source: Job Source: Online advertised jobs data

WIOA Title II: The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, or AEFLA

The New Mexico Higher Education Department (NMHED) is the State’s eligible agency for administering Adult Education and Literacy programs under WIOA, and the Adult Education Division (NMHED-AE) oversees this effort. NMHED is required to award multi-year grants or contracts on a competitive basis to eligible providers within the State or outlying area to develop, implement, and improve adult education and literacy activities within the State. Eligible providers must use AEFLA funds to establish or operate programs that provide adult education and literacy activities, including programs that provide these concurrently. As outlined in Section 203 of WIOA, sanctioned activities include:

- Adult education;
 - Literacy;
 - Workplace adult education and literacy activities;
 - Family literacy activities;
 - English language acquisition activities;
 - Integrated English literacy and civics education;
 - Workforce preparation activities; or
 - Integrated education and training that—
1. Provides adult education and literacy activities, concurrently and contextually with both, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster, and
 2. Is for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

NMHED-AE held its last competitive grant process in the spring of 2021. The new 4-year grant cycle began on July 1, 2021, with 26 awards issued to local providers in all four workforce regions, including four program providers who serve the Southwest region.

“MANY PATHWAYS, ONE BRIGHT FUTURE”

In a nutshell, Adult Education programs help New Mexicans to:

- Strengthen core literacy, numeracy, digital literacy, and workplace readiness skills
- Earn a High School Equivalency (HSE) credential or New Mexico Adult Diploma
- Become college ready and enter or progress along an in-demand career pathway, which may include “fast tracking” and enrolling in an Integrated Education and Career Training Program
- Enhance parent and caregiver ability to support children’s learning needs
- Learn English as a second language (ESL) and civics + prepare for citizenship if applicable

WIOA Title II includes a requirement that states provide corrections education (Section 225). Corrections education is for criminal offenders who reside in correctional institutions. In the Southwestern region, corrections education is provided at the Southern New Mexico Correctional Facility located in Las Cruces in Doña Ana County.

The following table lists the WIOA Title II Adult Education providers in the Southwestern region and information on the services they provided for PY21.

Southwestern Program Providers and PY21 Service Numbers

| Summary | Doña Ana Community College | University of New Mexico – Valencia | Western New Mexico University | Southern New Mexico Corrections Facility |
|--|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| Total number of qualified students served in Title II programs | 622 | 252 | 64 | 118 |
| Total number of qualified students participating in Adult Basic Education and Adult Secondary Education Programs | 171 | 227 | 63 | 118 |
| Total number of qualified students participating in the English as a Second Language Program | 451 | 25 | 1 | 0 |
| Percent of qualified students who made educational gains | 39.68% | 24.8% | 28.13% | 32.2% |

Source: LACES student management system; NMHED

For more information about Adult Education (Title II of WIOA, administered by USDE), see the Adult Education program-specific section of New Mexico’s Combined State Plan, as well as Title II contributions woven throughout the main Plan body. In addition, we invite you to visit the Higher Education Department website:

https://www.dws.state.nm.us/Portals/0/DM/Partners/NM_WIOA_State_Plan_Modification_2022-2023_.pdf?ver=2022-06-27-170901-447

https://hed.state.nm.us/students-parents/adult_education

Work Experience

The table below shows the minimum required work experience on job openings advertised online in the region, as well as the experience level of potential candidates in the workforce system that are looking for jobs in Southwestern, NM on August 1, 2022.

These figures show that there is a high demand (88.48%) for candidates with 1 to 2 years of experience. Apprenticeship programs and on-the-job training programs could give applicants some of the experience needed to qualify for these positions.

Work Experience of Advertised Jobs

| Rank | Experience | Job Openings | Percentage of Job Openings | Potential Candidates | Percentage of Potential Candidates |
|------|---------------------|--------------|----------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 | Entry Level | 451 | 6.54% | 0 | N/A |
| 2 | Less than 1 Year | 122 | 1.77% | 361 | 9.285% |
| 3 | 1 Year to 2 Years | 6,104 | 88.48% | 321 | 8.25% |
| 4 | 2 Years to 5 Years | 160 | 2.32% | 622 | 15.99% |
| 5 | 5 Years to 10 Years | 49 | 0.71% | 700 | 18.00% |
| 6 | More than 10 Years | 13 | 0.19% | 1,885 | 48.47% |

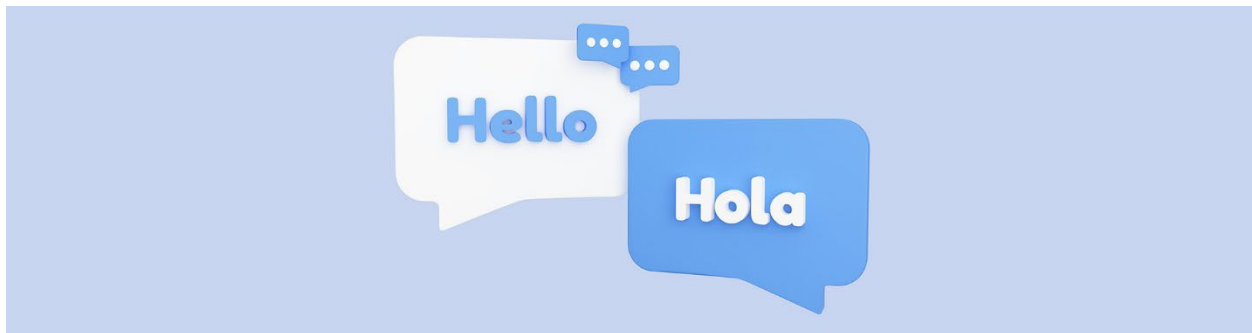
Source: Job Source: Online advertised jobs data

Candidate Source: Individuals with active résumés in the workforce system.

TOP SKILLS

The following table shows the top skills employers require in online job postings against potential candidates in the workforce system who possess those skills.

The need for bilingual, Spanish speaking skill is currently the greatest. Technology continues to be a challenge and the need for personal computers and skills is primarily due to remote work and school.



Skill Gaps: SAWDB

| Skill | Candidates # | Openings # | Gap # |
|---|--------------|------------|-------|
| Spanish | 329 | 562 | -233 |
| Personal Computers (PC) | 164 | 341 | -177 |
| Home Health Care | 160 | 285 | -125 |
| Cash Registers | 186 | 286 | -99 |
| Microsoft Office | 531 | 610 | -79 |
| Medical Terminology | 52 | 121 | -70 |
| Word Processing | 122 | 184 | -62 |
| Retail Sales | 176 | 229 | -53 |
| Hospitality | 128 | 178 | -49 |
| Mathematics | 201 | 249 | -48 |
| Teaching/Training, School | 403 | 377 | 26 |
| Pallet Jacks | 62 | 34 | 27 |
| Adding Machine | 37 | 7 | 30 |
| Typing 41-50 wpm | 34 | 1 | 33 |
| Manufacturing | 139 | 101 | 38 |
| Microsoft Word | 265 | 223 | 42 |
| Cash Handling (Cashier) | 481 | 428 | 54 |
| Working With Children | 87 | 34 | 54 |
| People Skills | 124 | 67 | 57 |
| Medication Administration | 110 | 8 | 102 |
| <p>Source: JobsEQ® Data as of 2021 Q4; openings and candidate sample compiled in August 2021. Note: Figures may not sum due to rounding. Supply and demand data may be based upon source data from broader geographies. For further details, see the export by skill at the 6-digit SOC level.</p> | | | |

B. Analysis of Workforce Development Activities

§679.560(a)(4) An analysis of workforce development activities, including education and training, in the region. This analysis must include the strengths and weaknesses of workforce development activities and capacity to provide the workforce development activities to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment, and the employment needs of employers.

The following table contains a summary report that provides a look at the number of services provided at the NM Workforce Connection Centers in the region to individuals and employers who have registered in the New Mexico Workforce Connection Online System.

The report contains data on the number of individuals who registered in the system, distinct (unduplicated) individuals receiving services, the total number of services provided to individuals, the total number of internal job orders created, and the total number of job referrals, as well as services provided to employers. The report represents twelve months from July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022, for the entire seven-county area of southwestern New Mexico.

Master Summary Report by LWIA

Region/LWIA: Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board - Date range: 07/01/2021 -

| Summary | Total |
|---|--------------|
| Total number of Individuals that Registered | 2,740 |
| Total number of Distinct Individuals Receiving Services | 9,269 |
| Total number of Services Provided to Individuals | 60,976 |
| Total number of Résumés Added | 2,172 |
| Total number of Internal Job Orders Created | 3,761 |
| Total number of Internal Job Referrals | 3,724 |
| Total number of Services Provided Employers | 17,991 |

Source: New Mexico Workforce Connection Online System

As part of the local planning process, participating WIOA partner programs in the Southwestern region identified the strengths and weaknesses of the regional workforce system. This process involved the Administrative Entity reaching out to core agencies, such as the three adult education services from Doña Ana Community College, the

University of New Mexico – Valencia, and Western New Mexico University. Other partners included the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Tresco, Inc., NM Department of Workforce Solutions, Equus, the adult and dislocated worker service provider, and Youth Development, Inc., the youth service provider. Each also provided input to specific program elements that would identify areas that need improvement as well as recognize efforts that are showing positive results.

Strengths

1. Workforce Connection: According to survey respondents, existing agencies have worked well together out of necessity due to the COVID virus, sharing resources, and lessening the duplication of services. Our system is a partnership of organizations, working as a team, to promote a universal approach to providing effective workforce assistance to job seekers and businesses. This collaboration of state, regional, and local organizations is designed to provide a seamless delivery system of programs and services.

The survey results indicate that Core Partners needed for a Comprehensive Workforce Center include Adult Education, Wagner-Peyser, New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and Commission for the Blind, and the title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs serving employers, job seekers, youth, students, unemployed, veterans, and more.

2. Employer Services: Service providers appreciate the New Mexico Workforce Connection Online System (NMWCOS) that allows employers to post job openings, view registered job seekers for potential candidates, and search labor market information. Job seekers can input their work history, create multiple résumés, search for, and apply for jobs.

Federal funds available under the Training Reimbursement programs, Tuition Assistance program, and In-School and Out-of-School Youth programs seem adequate. Applicants must meet qualification criteria.

Respondents believe that On-the-Job Training (OJT) helps reduce employer-training costs while providing new employees with the necessary skill sets that are required for the job. If a business is planning to hire, the employer could get reimbursed for up to half of the employee's wages for up to six months. The program is available for training new employees or existing employees who are moving to a different position within the business but will need additional in-house training programs to do the job. The Southwestern region has had a significant increase in OJT contracts during the past six months, especially during the economic downturn during the COVID pandemic.

3. Job Seeker Services: One of the benefits of the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers is that they allow an employer to hold hiring events, interview candidates, set up skills assessment tests with potential candidates, and more. According to surveys and conversations with local participants, job seekers also utilize services to create résumés and work closely with case managers to search the job database for careers that are suited for that person, while addressing their barriers to employment, including disabilities.

The Tuition Assistance program has been successful in helping low-income participants gain skills that lead to better-paying jobs. In the last five years, the Southwestern region has assisted participants with over one million dollars in tuition assistance and support.

Weaknesses

The Southwestern region consists of seven counties. Six are small rural communities where the population is dispersed and farthest from employment, education, and training opportunities. The Southwestern workforce region has limited resources for addressing the barriers that limit people from gaining access to the workforce.

Throughout the second half of the program year, the administrative entity utilized several survey tools to address the specific needs of the workforce region. Participants included regional employers, community members, city and county governments, education providers, and workforce partners including board members. The survey responses reported the weaknesses associated with workforce systems failing to reach all facets of the region where the above-mentioned barriers are prevalent. The following is a list of concerns the workforce board is working to overcome in its strategic vision.

1. Lack of an integrated software system for referrals and case management among WIOA partners
2. Limited facility space at workforce centers for additional core programs
3. Limited resources to provide additional outreach and community awareness
4. Funding resources
5. Lack of job and education services in rural communities
6. Limited or nonexistent broadband access for training programs and workforce services

As the Southwestern region moves into its sector strategy efforts, the capacity to provide workforce development activities to address the education and skill needs of the local workforce will be improved and the education and skill needs of the workforce will be better adapted to the employment needs of local employers. A more concise understanding of what employers need will also be used to develop better programs for individuals with barriers to employment.

C. Strategic Vision and Goals

§679.560(a)(5) A description of the local board's strategic vision to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. This must include goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including youth and individuals with barriers to employment), and goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on performance indicators described in §677.155(a)(1) of the WIOA Joint Rule.

Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board Vision

A skilled and ready workforce in current and emerging occupations for regional businesses and industries.

Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board Mission

To empower individuals in the region by providing them with the tools and training they need to acquire higher-paying jobs based on the needs of local businesses. With an emphasis on economic and employer-driven goals, SAWDB's cooperative programs will cater to the region's unique employment needs, allowing for more effective distribution of federal funds and serving local employers by cultivating a highly skilled workforce.

Southwestern Area Workforce Development Goals

The Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board, pursuant to its vision, established the following local goals for the program years 2020 - 2023:

Goal 1: Establish sector partnerships and career pathways within target industry sectors that support the economic and workforce development of the region by providing individuals with lifelong training opportunities leading to good jobs by

- 1) increasing the availability of short-term training directly related to the target industry sectors and leading to industry-recognized credentials.
- 2) working with industry to identify skills and credentials (including stackable credentials) and with community colleges and training institutions to identify existing or develop new training programs.
- 3) Prioritizing sector strategies and career pathways in this current plan and expanding on the goals and objectives in the next 4-year plan to strengthen the economic and workforce development efforts in the region.

Goal 2: Enhance training programs for stakeholders to understand the Board's vision, regulations, contractual obligations, as well as the region's strengths and weaknesses in the workforce system by

- 1) building an online training platform for training providers, service providers, staff, and board members that includes board duties and responsibilities, policy review, training provider duties and responsibilities, and labor market information.

Goal 3: Use systems that will incrementally improve the Board's negotiated performance measures identified in Attachment E by

- 1) capitalizing on the functions of the database quality management system (Future Works) and focusing on monitoring and measuring performance data to provide compliance of negotiated performance measures and conduct periodic reporting to the Board.

Goal 4: Build a more sustainable value-added agriculture industry in the region by

- 1) working with training providers, economic developers, and local farmers and ranchers to enhance the production and manufacturing processes.
- 2) assisting regional agencies to determine what workforce services are needed to expand markets for local agricultural products.

Goal 5: Build a trained and ready workforce to replace workers who are retiring and leaving the industry by

- 1) working with employers to develop targeted and customized programs, especially for the large entities such as White Sands Missile Range, that are rapidly losing employees.
- 2) recruiting new participants, such as WIOA youth participants and individuals with barriers to employment, to the workforce within these career areas.

Goal 6: Provide community stakeholders, workforce partners, and the public with an understanding of the workforce needs of each respective county and how to address them by

- 1) developing a Customized Workforce Development Action Plan in a minimum of three counties of the region.

Goal 7: Strengthen the regional workforce by increasing credential completion rates from post-secondary institutions by

- 1) identifying individuals who are nearing credential completion and training in occupations-in-demand but lack funding for tuition, supplies, or other items and enroll them into WIOA Title IB Individual Training Accounts and Supportive Services.

Goal 8: Increase the number of co-enrollments among the required partner programs to improve braided funding and efficiencies of the workforce system by

- 1) identifying policies that will encourage co-enrollments of participants.

The Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board understands that people and businesses create healthy economies; its mission is to build a workforce system in our

region that encourages people, businesses, and other trade and labor groups to work together to sustain economic growth and success through economic self-sufficiency. The Board’s vision and mission align with the mission of New Mexico Governor and Cabinet Secretary for Department of Workforce Solutions to keep New Mexicans working by utilizing an “All Hands” approach to connect New Mexican workers with New Mexico businesses. The goal of this approach is to keep our economy competitive while providing good-paying jobs for people so they can support themselves and their families.

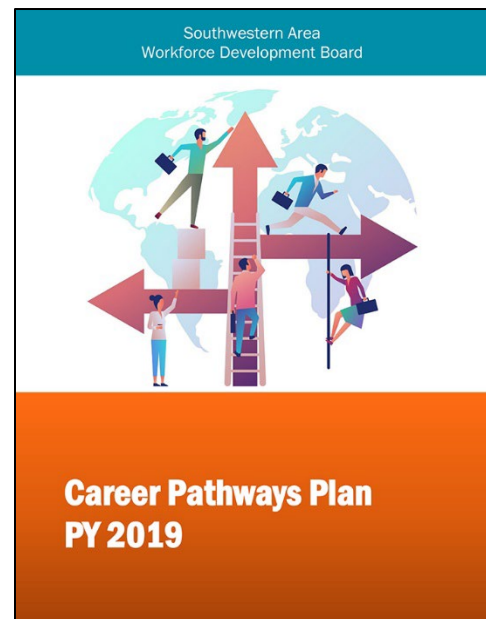
[§679.560\(a\)\(6\)](#) Taking into account analyses described in Sections A and B above, describe the local board’s overall strategy for working with the entities that carry out the core programs and required partners to align resources available to the local area, to achieve the strategic vision and goals.

The SAWDB’s overall strategy for working with the entities that carry out the Core programs and to align the available resources in the local area to achieve the strategic vision and goals is a two-prong strategy. The Core partners are the WIOA Title IB Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs; Title II Adult Education and Literacy programs; Title III Wagner Peyser programs; and Title IV Rehabilitation Act programs.

Career Pathways Plan

As described in the SAWDB’s Career Pathways Plan, the first step will be to use a traditional approach to quickly provide support to the various industries in the region. That begins with convening a leadership team to work on developing career pathways information sheets for the eight Priority Industries.

“A Leadership Team (WIOA Project Manager [Lead], SAWDB Chair [or his appointed representative], WIOA Administrator, and One-Stop Operator) will identify entry points, recruitment strategies, career ladders, and lattices. Industry leaders will be involved in the design process of the career pathways system.”



Underscoring this work is the understanding that central to the development of career pathways information sheets is the simultaneous development of training programs that provide community members with the training necessary to participate in the eight priority industries. The Leadership Team will develop and disseminate career information sheets for each industry throughout the region. The information sheets will

provide information on the education needed for the careers in that industry, the hands-on experience that is available, and the particular careers in that field along with possible salaries.

*The leadership team
will provide a
quarterly webcast*

Partners and educational providers will be encouraged to post a link to the career pathways webpage and provide hardcopy career information sheets to the public and their staff.

After developing the Initial Career Strategies information sheets for all industries and producing and disseminating information, work can then begin on the new Sector Strategies approach that will result in Career Pathways for the first two priority industries, Education and Healthcare.

The core team for each industry will be drawn from cross-agency partners and employers in the region with the following members.

1. WIOA Project Manager (Lead)
2. SAWDB Chair or designated participant
3. WIOA Administrator
4. One-Stop Operator Manager
5. Employers from the Designated Industries
6. Core program partners
 - a. WIOA Adult program
 - b. WIOA Dislocated Worker program
 - c. WIOA Youth program
 - d. WIOA Wagner-Peyser program
 - e. WIOA Adult Education Services program
 - f. WIOA Vocational Rehabilitation programs
7. Education (K-12 and higher education)
8. Economic Development
9. Community-based organizations

Career pathways are developed through the collaboration of core partners and industry, who gather and analyze information to help customers develop an awareness of employment needs of the local industries that will help customers make informed career choices. A key goal is to engage workforce partners, businesses, and education to form a team that works together to meet the workforce needs of the industry through workforce development.

The six elements of the Career Pathways Plan are the following:

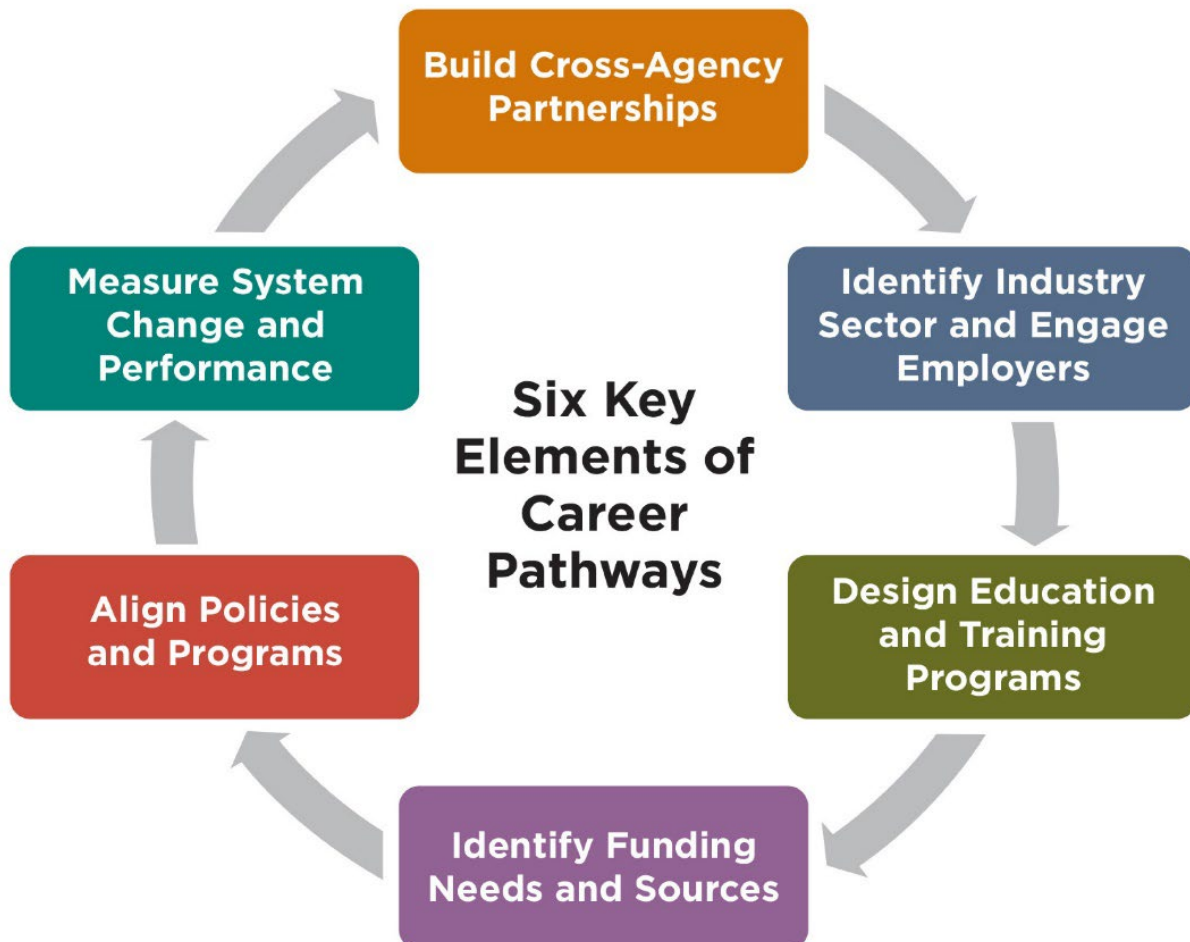
1. Building cross-agency partnerships and clarifying roles within the workforce system
2. Identifying industry sectors and engaging employers
3. Designing education and training programs to meeting the needs of employers
4. Identifying funding needs and sources
5. Aligning policies and programs
6. Measuring system change and performance

Six Elements of Career Pathways

View the SAWDB Career Pathways Plan for additional information at <https://www.employnm.com/policies-regulations>.

OPERATIONAL ELEMENTS

A. Local Workforce System Structure



§679.550(c) Local Board Area Profile. Describe the geographical workforce development area, including the LWDA's major communities, major employers, training, and educational institutions (technical and community colleges, universities, etc.), population, diversity of the population, and relevant growth trends.

Geographical Workforce Development Area

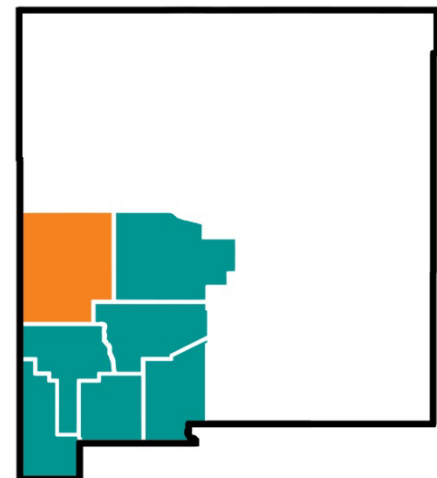
The Southwestern Workforce Investment Region comprises seven counties: Catron, Doña Ana, Grant, Hidalgo, Luna, Sierra, and Socorro. The region shares a border with Arizona, Texas, and Mexico.

Agriculture, including chile production, and copper mining provide many jobs in this area. Military installments such as White Sands Missile Range and NASA also provide many jobs as well as the more than 100 industries located in the Border Industrial Area (BIA) along the border with Mexico where over 500 jobs (and growing) are located. New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, New Mexico State University, and Western New Mexico University are also important sources of employment in the region. Tourist attractions include Gila, Cibola, and Apache National Forests; several state parks; Elephant Butte Lake; the Town of Mesilla; and Truth or Consequences and their hot mineral springs.

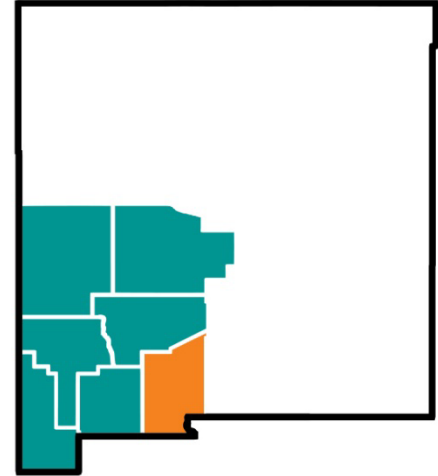


Major Communities

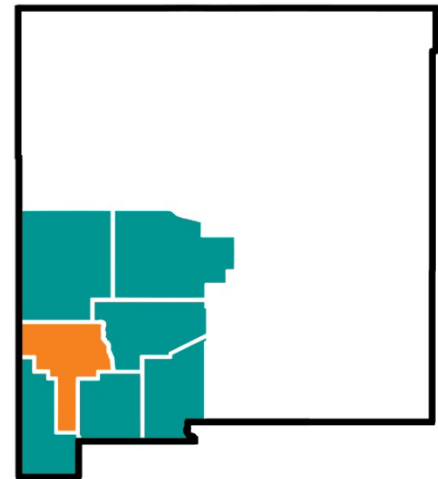
1. Catron County is a very rural county located in western New Mexico. Catron County is the largest county by area with 6,928 square miles according to the Census Bureau. The ethnicity distribution was 76.0% White (not Hispanic), 19.0% Hispanic, 2.7% American Indian and 0.4% Black in 2010. More than half of Catron County's land comprises parts of three national forests (Gila, Cibola, and Apache). Government is the largest employing sector, with local schools and the U.S. Forest Service providing many opportunities. Agriculture is also important to the local economy, particularly cattle ranching and the timber industry. The Village of Reserve in western Catron County is situated in the Gila National Forest about 15 miles east of the Arizona border. Covering just over half a square mile, Reserve is the largest community in Catron County with two grocery stores, a hardware store, a few restaurants, bar, fairgrounds, and a health clinic.



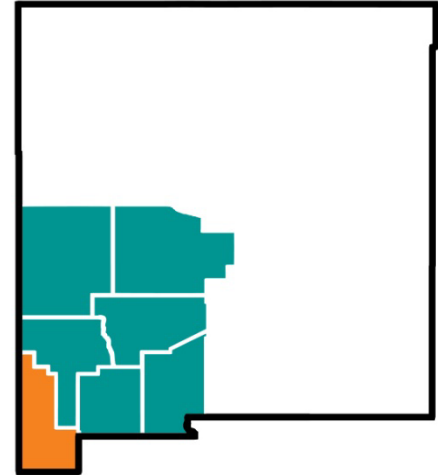
2. Doña Ana County in southern New Mexico shares a border with Mexico and covers 3,807 square miles and the Census 2010 population density was 55 persons per square mile. In 2010, the ethnicity distribution was 65.7% Hispanic, 30.1% White (not Hispanic), 1.7% Black, and 1.5% American Indian. Doña Ana County's economy is supported by its agricultural base, New Mexico State University, and a developing urban area. Las Cruces is the largest city in the county and second largest in New Mexico spanning approximately 77 square miles. Located approximately 20 miles north of the Texas state border, Las Cruces sits where I-25 stems from I-10 and is the center of the Mesilla Valley. Bisected by the Rio Grande, the Mesilla Valley boasts fertile-rich land, which contributes to the growth of pecans, cotton, chile, onions, corn, and wine-producing grapes. Major employers for Las Cruces residents include Las Cruces Public Schools, City of Las Cruces, Doña County Government, New Mexico State University, two hospitals, and U.S Government jobs at White Sands Missile Range and NASA.



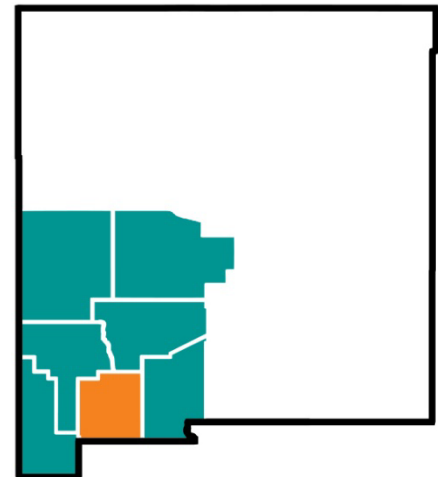
3. Grant County covers 3,966 square miles and had a Census 2010 population density of 7.4 persons per square mile. Ethnicity distribution shows 48.6% White (not Hispanic), 48.3% Hispanic, 1.4% American Indian, and 0.9% Black. Mining, health care, education, and tourism are important components of the county's economy. Home to Western New Mexico University, the Town of Silver City is located near the center of Grant County and spans approximately 10 square miles. Located 3 miles east of the Continental Divide, Silver City was founded as a mining town rich in silver, gold, copper, lead, and zinc. Mining opportunities dwindled over the years and Freeport-McMoRan is now the primary employer for mining operations. Two major health care employers are Gila Regional Medical Center and Hidalgo Medical Services, with Western New Mexico University (WNMU) the major education employer. Local tourist attractions include Silver City, Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument and City of Rocks State Park.



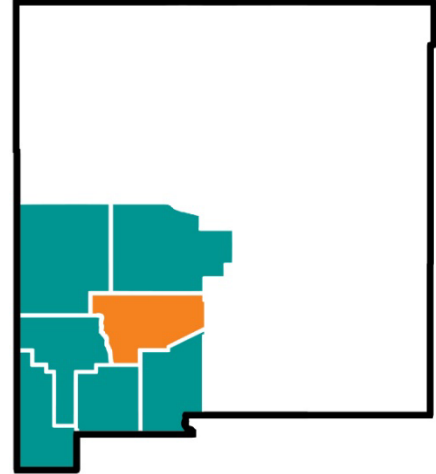
4. Hidalgo County covers 3,446 square miles and had a Census 2000 population density of 1.4 persons per square mile. The 2010 Census shows Hidalgo County's ethnicity distribution at 56.6% Hispanic, 41.4% White (not Hispanic), 0.8% American Indian, and 0.6% Black. The largest employing industries are public administration, retail, accommodation and food services, and agriculture. The county has a very small population, and many of its residents are employed by city and county government entities. According to the USDA's 2009 Agricultural Statistics Bulletin, Hidalgo County ranked third among all New Mexico counties for chile production, behind Doña Ana and Luna Counties. At approximately 8.4 square miles, the City of Lordsburg is known as a rest stop for travelers. To New Mexicans, Lordsburg is the birthplace of the New Mexico state song. Located in northern Hidalgo County, Lordsburg is situated on I-10 where it intersects with Hwy 70 and is about 20 minutes from the Arizona state border.



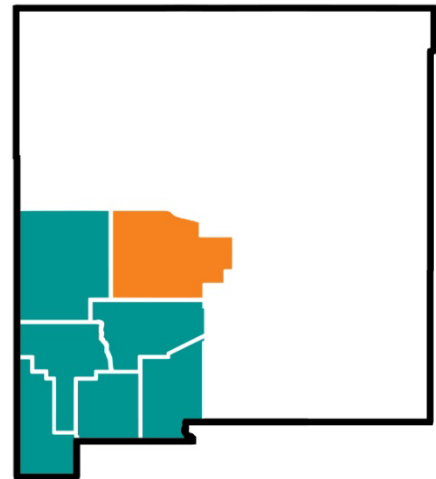
5. Luna County covers 2,966 square miles and had a Census 2010 population density of 8.5 persons per square mile. The 2010 Census shows Luna County's ethnicity distribution at 61.5% Hispanic, 35.9% White (not Hispanic), 1.1% Black, and 1.3% American Indian. Economic drivers include agriculture, manufacturing, and tourism with alfalfa, chile, cotton, corn, and pecans representing the bulk of its agricultural production. Food manufacturing employs many workers to process agricultural output. Luna County is home to an international port of entry located three miles south of the village of Columbus. Tourist attractions include Pancho Villa State Park, Rockhound State Park, the Deming Luna Mimbres Museum, and several ghost towns. At just under 17 square miles, the City of Deming sits on I-10 at quite the intersection. Deming is one hour east of Lordsburg, one hour west of Las Cruces, 1 hour south of Silver City, and approximately 35 minutes north of Mexico. Among a variety of businesses, Deming has a municipal airport, hospital, and golf course. The City of Deming, Deming Public Schools, and the U.S. Border Patrol are among the largest employers.



6. Sierra County covers 4,180 square miles and had a Census 2010 population density of 2.9 persons per square mile. The 2010 Census shows Sierra County's ethnicity distribution at 68.4% White (not Hispanic), 28.0% Hispanic, 1.7% American Indian, 0.4% Asian, and 0.4% Black. Sierra County's main economic drivers are agriculture, health care, tourism, and aerospace. Spaceport America is located a few miles to the east of Truth or Consequences where the number of jobs is beginning to increase. The agriculture industry consists primarily of cattle ranching. Health care industry employers include Sierra Vista Hospital, New Mexico State Veteran's Home, Ben Archer Health Center, and Sierra Health Care Center. Spaceport America continues to grow near Upham. Local tourist attractions include Elephant Butte Lake and State Park, the Gila National Wilderness, Caballo Lake State Park, Percha Dam State Park, several museums and ghost towns, and the mineral baths located in Truth or Consequences. Major communities include the cities of Elephant Butte and Truth or Consequences and the Village of Williamsburg. Major employers include the City of Truth or Consequence, Sierra County, the hospital, and the New Mexico Veterans Center.



7. Socorro County covers 6,646 square miles and had a Census 2010 population density of 2.7 persons per square mile. The 2010 Census shows Socorro County's ethnicity distribution at 48.5% Hispanic, 37.6% White (not Hispanic), 11.7% American Indian, 1.1% Black, and 1.2 Asian. Primary economic drivers include education, health care, and agriculture. The New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology is the major employer in the area, and it supports other entities in the professional and technical services sector, including the National Radio Astronomy Observatory. The health care industry includes employees at Socorro General Hospital, Socorro Good Samaritan Village, Socorro Community Health Center-Presbyterian Medical Services, and Magdalena Area Health Center. Agriculture in this area consists of small farming communities along the Rio Grande. A major tourist attraction is the Bosque Del Apache National Wildlife Refuge. There are also a variety of museums and outdoor hiking, biking, and wildlife viewing opportunities. The City of Socorro sits right off I-25 and spans more than 14 square miles.



Workforce

The region has a civilian labor force of 128,996 with a labor participation rate of 54.3%. Of individuals 25 to 64 years of age, 15.3% have a bachelor's degree or higher compared to the national rate of 20.8% and 18.2% do not have a high school diploma or equivalent.

Major Employers

Like most rural areas, healthcare, schools, universities, and government top the list of the region's largest employers. Much of southern New Mexico's growth has been seen at the border where some of the largest employers can take advantage of the fifth largest port on the US/Mexico border with more than 30.0 billion in trade in 2019. The southern area of Doña Ana County has over 100 companies consisting of manufacturing, transportation and logistics, and other supporting industries that are attracting new business and employees to the area.

The Southwestern region is also home to many businesses in the aerospace and defense industries. Spaceport America, Virgin Galactic, and several smaller commercial space companies are starting to operate in the region, bringing good-paying wages to the area.

The following is an alphabetical list of some of the largest employers in the Southwestern region.

Large Employers in the Southwestern Region

| | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| City of Las Cruces | Doña Ana Community College |
| Doña Ana County | Federal Government |
| Freeport McMoRan | Gila Regional Medical Center |
| Grant County | Jacobs Engineering |
| Las Cruces Public Schools | Luna County |
| Memorial Medical Center | Mimbres Memorial Hospital |
| Mizkan | Mountain View Regional Medical Center |
| New Mexico Institute of Mining & Technology | New Mexico State University |
| State of New Mexico | Tresco |
| Walmart | Western New Mexico University |

Source: <https://nmpartnership.com/incentives-data/new-mexico-largest-employers/>

The top three employers in Southwestern Region with the highest number of job openings advertised online were Community Health Systems, Inc. (338), LifePoint Health, Inc. (278), and Addus HomeCare, Inc. (242).

Employers By Job Openings

Southwestern Region, NM

| | RANK | EMPLOYER | JOB OPENINGS |
|---|-------------|---|---------------------|
| Employers with Highest # of Job Openings Advertised Online | 1 | Community Health Systems, Inc. | 338 |
| | 2 | LifePoint Health, Inc. | 278 |
| | 3 | Addus HomeCare, Inc. | 242 |
| | 4 | MCI | 207 |
| | 5 | Suppressed | 115 |
| | 6 | Gadsden Independent School District | 101 |
| | 7 | Ernest Health, Inc. | 93 |
| | 8 | Gila Regional Medical Center | 90 |
| | 9 | Presbyterian Healthcare Services | 89 |
| | 10 | New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology | 87 |

Source: Online advertised jobs data. Downloaded: 08/3/2022 7:44 AM

Training and Educational Institutions

The Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board plans to continue to use the State's web-based eligible training provider lists. Prospective and current providers will access the applications to become eligible providers via the State website (<https://www.jobs.state.nm.us/>). Applications for training provider programs are also accessed using the same procedure. Eligible training providers will enter course information and performance information onto the state's website. All programs will be reviewed to make sure they have been identified as an occupation in demand for the Southwestern area.

The following is a current list of Eligible Training Providers

1. Eligible Training Providers

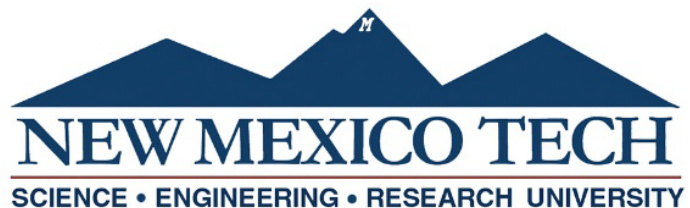
| Provider Name |
|--|
| Advantage Home Care INC. DBA Corus Academy |
| Cooperative Educational Services LEAP |
| Doña Ana Community College of NMSU |
| Mountain View Vocational Institute |
| NM State University Las Cruces |
| NM Tech |
| Pinnacle Institute |
| Western New Mexico University |

Source: NMWCOS

Major Educational Institutions

The largest educational institutions in the Southwestern region include the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, New Mexico State University, Western New Mexico University, and Doña Ana Community College.

New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology (NM Tech) in Socorro was established in 1889 with the main campus spanning 320 acres. NM Tech is a research university focusing on STEM (science,



technology, engineering, and mathematics), and offers 30 majors. With small class sizes at a 12-to-1 student-to-faculty ratio, nearly 57% of classes have less than 20 students, which results in increased attention from instructors. In 2020, CollegeChoice.net ranked NM Tech the Best College in New Mexico. On USNews.com, NM Tech tied with others at #18 for Best Colleges in Regional Universities West.

www.nmt.edu/aboutnmt/

www.collegechoice.net/rankings/best-colleges-in-new-mexico/

www.usnews.com/best-colleges/nmt-2654

New Mexico State University (NMSU) has a 900-acre campus and enrolls more than 14,000 students from 49 states and 89 foreign countries. NMSU is a NASA Space-Grant College and home to the very first Honors College in New Mexico. NMSU serves a multi-cultural population of students and community members across the state at five campuses, a satellite learning center in Albuquerque, cooperative extension offices located in each of New Mexico's 33 counties, and 12 agriculture research and science centers. NMSU offers 90 majors for over 12,500 undergraduate students. With their 16-to-1 student-to-faculty ratio, nearly 47% of classes have less than 20 students. The most popular majors include Business, Management, Marketing, and Engineering. NMSU ranked #3 on CollegeChoice.net's Best Colleges in New Mexico for 2020.



https://nmsu.edu/about_nmsu/index.html

<https://www.collegechoice.net/rankings/best-colleges-in-new-mexico/>

Western New Mexico University (WNMU) in Silver City was established in 1893 and spans 83 acres. They offer more than 70 fields of study, from accounting to zoology. WNMU has fully online master's and bachelor's degree programs. More than 3,500 students attend their campuses and are enrolled online. WNMU awards 500 degrees each year.



WESTERN
NEW MEXICO UNIVERSITY

www.wnmu.edu/about/

Doña Ana Community College (DACC) has a total of 6 campuses in Anthony, Chaparral, Las Cruces, and Sunland Park in southern Doña Ana County. Originating as a trade school in 1973, DACC is now a higher education institution graduating highly skilled professionals ready for today's workforce. They have 44 associate degrees and 55 certificate programs and produced 1,055 graduates in the 2020 school year.



Doña Ana Community College

<https://dacc.nmsu.edu/>

<https://dacc.nmsu.edu/programs-alpha/>

Population

The workforce region had an estimated population of 304,055 in 2019 per the US Census Bureau. Below is a table of the population by county with Doña Ana County having the highest population of over 218,195.

Population

| County | 2016 Estimated Population | Largest Community | 2018 Estimated Population |
|----------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Catron County | 3,508 | Village of Reserve | 280 |
| Doña Ana | 214,207 | City of Las Cruces | 102,926 |
| Grant County | 28,280 | Town of Silver City | 9,529 |
| Hidalgo County | 4,302 | City of Lordsburg | 2,427 |
| Luna County | 24,450 | City of Deming | 14,099 |
| Sierra County | 11,191 | Truth or Consequences | 5,865 |
| Socorro County | 17,027 | City of Socorro | 8,407 |

Source: US Census Bureau and www.WorldPopulationReview.com



Diversity of Population

The following tables show population and demographic information for the Southwestern area. The entire Southwestern region has an estimated population of 303,708 of which 150,057 are male and 153,651 are female. The estimated population growth is estimated to be 0.2% per year.

| Percent Value | SAWDB | USA | SAWDB | USA |
|--|-------|-------|---------|-------------|
| Demographics | | | | |
| Population (ACS) | — | — | 303,708 | 322,903,030 |
| Male | 49.4% | 49.2% | 150,057 | 158,984,190 |
| Female | 50.6% | 50.8% | 153,651 | 163,918,840 |
| Median Age ² | — | — | 36.1 | 37.9 |
| Under 18 Years | 24.2% | 22.8% | 73,403 | 73,553,240 |
| 18 to 24 Years | 13.0% | 9.6% | 39,511 | 30,903,719 |
| 25 to 34 Years | 12.0% | 13.8% | 36,295 | 44,567,976 |
| 35 to 44 Years | 10.5% | 12.6% | 31,933 | 40,763,210 |
| 45 to 54 Years | 10.8% | 13.2% | 32,666 | 42,589,573 |
| 55 to 64 Years | 12.0% | 12.8% | 36,320 | 41,286,731 |
| 65 to 74 Years | 10.2% | 8.8% | 30,862 | 28,535,419 |
| 75 Years, and Over | 7.5% | 6.4% | 22,718 | 20,703,162 |
| Race: White | 88.5% | 72.7% | 268,871 | 234,904,818 |
| Race: Black or African American | 1.6% | 12.7% | 4,775 | 40,916,113 |
| Race: American Indian and Alaska Native | 1.9% | 0.8% | 5,622 | 2,699,073 |
| Race: Asian | 1.0% | 5.4% | 3,106 | 17,574,550 |
| Race: Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander | 0.0% | 0.2% | 76 | 582,718 |
| Race: Some Other Race | 5.1% | 4.9% | 15,377 | 15,789,961 |
| Race: Two or More Races | 1.9% | 3.2% | 5,881 | 10,435,797 |
| Hispanic or Latino (of any race) | 63.1% | 17.8% | 191,760 | 57,517,935 |
| Population Growth | | | | |
| Population (Pop Estimates) ⁴ | — | — | 304,055 | 328,239,523 |
| Population Annual Average Growth ⁴ | 0.2% | 0.7% | 510 | 2,146,799 |
| People per Square Mile | — | — | 9.5 | 92.9 |

Economically, 0.3% of the region's population is a member of the armed forces and 5.7% of the residents are veterans.

| Percent Value | SAWDB | USA | SAWDB | USA |
|--|-------|-------|----------|-------------|
| Economic | | | | |
| over) ⁵ | 54.3% | 63.2% | 128,996 | 162,248,196 |
| 54) ⁵ | 73.9% | 81.8% | 74,251 | 104,136,254 |
| Armed Forces Labor Force ⁵ | 0.3% | 0.4% | 792 | 1,028,133 |
| Veterans, Age 18-64 ⁵ | 5.7% | 4.7% | 10,077 | 9,398,789 |
| Veterans Labor Force Participation Rate and Size, Age 18-64 ⁵ | 70.0% | 76.3% | 7,049 | 7,168,168 |
| Median Household Income ^{2,5} | — | — | \$37,526 | \$60,293 |
| Per Capita Income ⁵ | — | — | \$21,164 | \$32,621 |
| Mean Commute Time (minutes) ⁵ | — | — | 20.2 | 26.6 |
| Commute via Public Transportation ⁵ | 0.5% | 5.0% | 631 | 7,602,145 |

Looking at educational attainment in the Southwestern area, the high school graduate population exceeds all others at 25.9%, which is close to that national average of 25.8%. The next largest group is the population with some college/no degree at 22.8%, while the national average of this group is lower at 21%.

| Percent Value | SAWDB | USA | SAWDB | USA |
|-----------------------------------|-------|-------|--------|------------|
| Educational Attainment, Age 25-64 | | | | |
| No High School Diploma | 18.2% | 11.2% | 24,952 | 18,885,967 |
| High School Graduate | 25.9% | 25.8% | 35,559 | 43,699,272 |
| Some College, No Degree | 22.8% | 21.0% | 31,294 | 35,525,113 |
| Associate's Degree | 8.6% | 9.1% | 11,869 | 15,389,737 |
| Bachelor's Degree | 15.3% | 20.8% | 21,007 | 35,261,652 |
| Postgraduate Degree | 9.1% | 12.1% | 12,533 | 20,445,749 |

Source: JobsEQ®

1. American Community Survey 2014-2018, unless noted otherwise

2. Median values for certain aggregate regions (such as MSAs) may be estimated as the weighted averages of the median values from the composing counties.

3. Disconnected Youth are 16-19-year old who are (1) not in school, (2) not high school graduates, and (3) either unemployed or not in the labor force.

4. Census 2019, annual average growth rate since 2009

5. See Rio Arriba errata note in the Data Dictionary.

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The table below shows the social demographics of the Southwestern workforce region compared to the US average. Data shows the Southwestern region has nearly twice the national average in terms of poverty due to the number of residents receiving SNAP benefits, those with limited English speaking, and the number of disconnected youth (16-19 years-old not in school, not a high school graduate, and unemployed or not in the workforce).

| Social Demographics | Southwest Region | USA |
|--|------------------|-------|
| Poverty Level (of all people) | 27.2% | 14.1% |
| Households Receiving Food Stamps/SNAP | 23.2% | 12.2% |
| Enrolled in Grade 12 (% of total population) | 1.6% | 1.4% |
| Disconnected Youth (3) | 4.5% | 2.6% |
| Children in Single Parent Families (% of all children) | 41.2% | 34.3% |
| Uninsured | 10.2% | 9.4% |
| With a Disability, Age 18-64 | 13.4% | 10.3% |
| With a Disability, Age 18-64, Labor Force Participation Rate | 34.8% | 41.6% |
| Foreign Born | 14.9% | 13.5% |
| Speak English Less Than Very Well (5 yrs. and over) | 14.0% | 8.5% |

Source: JobsEQ®

1. American Community Survey 2014-2018, unless noted otherwise

3. Disconnected Youth are 16-19 years old who are not in school, not high school graduates, and either unemployed or not in the labor force.

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Relevant Growth Trends

The Southwestern region of the state consists of seven counties that have seen significant increases and decreases in population from the time of the 2010 Census until estimates were taken by the US Census Bureau in 2015. During these 5 years, the county of Doña Ana saw the highest rate of growth at +4.81%. The other six counties saw a decrease with Hidalgo having the largest at -15.5% and Sierra showing -10.9%, Grant at -9.3%, Socorro at -7.6%, Luna at -5.9%, and Catron at -4.0%.

With a median age of 45.7, the region's population is much older in comparison to the U.S. population at 37.9. The area's oldest population (65 years old and older) has grown more rapidly since 2015 than the general population within the state. Between 2015 and 2018, the region's younger population (24 years old and younger) shrank more quickly than the general population within the U.S.

Of the state’s four workforce regions, the Southwestern region is projected to experience the highest percentage of growth (6.6 percent). Expansion in the city of Las Cruces (7.0 percent) is anticipated to be the primary driver of that region’s growth. The metropolitan area also has the highest projected percentage growth across the state’s four workforce regions.

The top industries projected to grow the most and the top projected to grow the fastest are the health care and social assistance sectors. These industries are projected to lead the growth of all sectors in the region.

Employment in accommodation and food service is projected to be particularly strong in all regions as well. The professional and technical services industry and the construction industry make the list for increased numbers and/or percentages of growth in Las Cruces.

Health care and social assistance sectors are projected to see the largest and fastest growth

Additional highlights of regional industry growth include projected growth in construction in the Las Cruces area. Industries expected to shrink in the region include manufacturing, utilities, and information. The industries of wholesale and retail trade are expected to shrink, and the industry of educational services is projected to show high growth in nearly all counties.

The chart below reflects the industries with the highest projected annual change for the next 8 years for the workforce region.

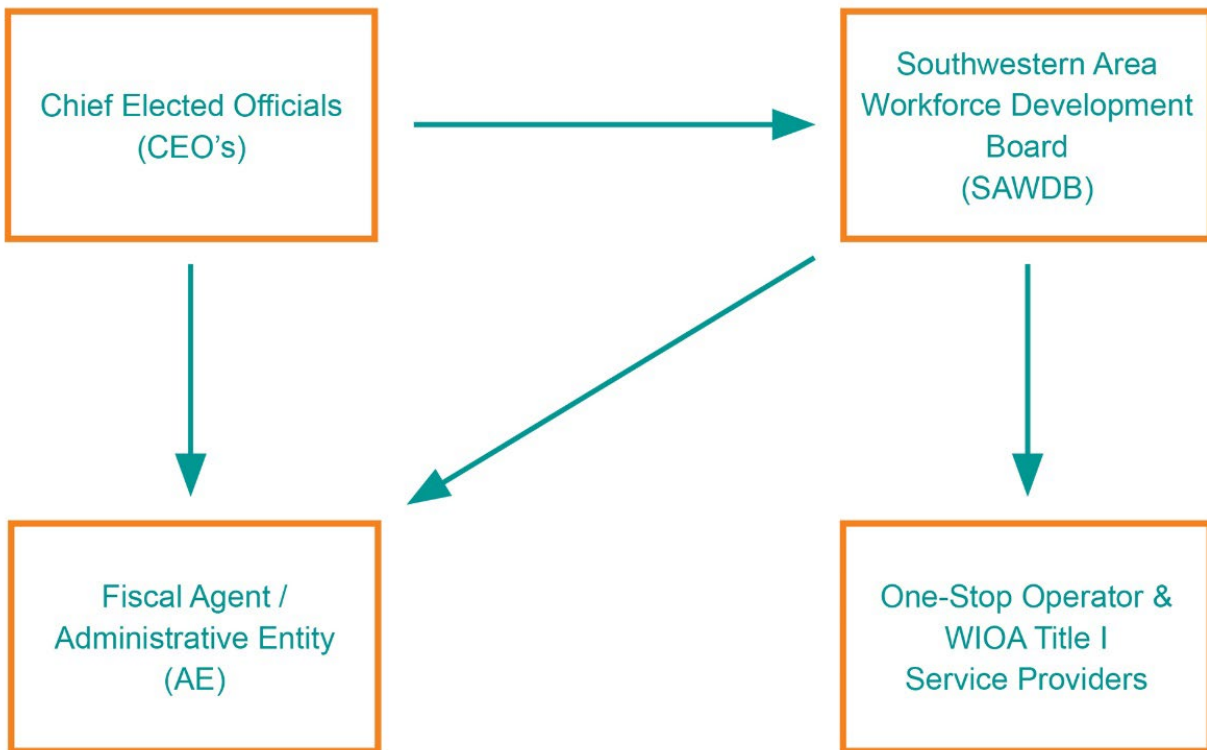
Industries with Highest Projected Annual Change

| Industry | Industry Code | 2018 Estimated Employment | 2028 Projected Employment | Total 2018-2028 Employment Change | Annual Percent Change |
|--|--------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Total, All Industries | 00 | 106,793 | 113,870 | 7,077 | 0.64% |
| Health Care and Social Assistance | 62 | 19,131 | 22,723 | 3,592 | 1.74% |
| Accommodation and Food Services | 72 | 10,291 | 11,343 | 1,052 | 0.98% |
| Educational Services | 61 | 13,728 | 14,270 | 542 | 0.39% |
| Construction | 23 | 4,540 | 5,048 | 508 | 1.07% |
| Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services | 54 | 4,126 | 4,607 | 481 | 1.11% |
| Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting | 11 | 4,690 | 4,974 | 284 | 0.59% |

§679.550(c) Local Board Structure. Provide a full roster of local board membership, including the group each member represents, in Attachment B. Include a list of all standing committees, along with a description of the purpose of each committee.

The following chart shows the relationship between the Chief Elected Officials of Region IV, the Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board (SAWDB), and its relationship with its contractors. The Chief Elected Officials are the grant recipients of the funds and appoint members to the SAWDB. The Chief Elected Officials contract with SAWDB and the fiscal agent and the administrative entity. The SAWDB also approves policies for the workforce region and contracts with WIOA Title IB service providers: One-Stop Operator, Adult and Dislocated Worker program, Youth program.

Local Board Structure



View Attachment B for a full roster of local board membership and the group each member represents. Attachment B also contains a list of all standing committees, along with a description of the purpose of each committee.

§679.560(b)(1)(i) Provide a description of the workforce development system in the local area that identifies the programs that are included in the system; demonstrating alignment with regional economic, workforce and workforce development analysis. (In addition, please provide a list in Attachment C of the one-stop centers in your local area, including address and phone numbers. Indicate the one-stop operator for each site and whether it is a comprehensive or satellite center. Include a list of the one-stop partners physically located at each of the one-stop centers in the local board area, and the services provided by these partners.)

Workforce System Programs

The Combined State Plan calls for a customer-driven, one-stop system with multiple partners to match skilled individuals to employers. The workforce system is aligned with a common federal brand and service requirements across federal, state, and local levels.

The Southwestern Workforce Development Board administers the 8 Workforce Connection offices for the seven-county region. These sites offer the WIOA adult, dislocated worker, and youth services and offer referrals to services that may not be staffed at each site. These sites provide staff-assisted and self-directed services to meet the needs of the participants for job training, unemployment application, and access to computers for job searches as well as other services listed in Attachment C of this plan.



Access to services in the SAWDB partner network is provided through New Mexico Workforce Connection or referrals to various programs and organizations. Co-located partners in New Mexico Workforce Connection centers across the seven counties include the following:

- WIOA Title I.B Adult & Dislocated Worker (Equus Workforce Services)
- WIOA Title I.B Youth (Youth Development Inc.)
- WIOA Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy program through December 2020
- WIOA Title III Wagner-Peyser Program (NM Department of Workforce Solutions)
- WIOA Title IV (NM Division of Vocational Rehabilitation)
- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) (NM Department of Workforce Solutions)
- Veterans' Services Program (NM Department of Workforce Solutions)

Alignment of Regional Economic & Workforce Development

Program development is informed by data analysis of programs, service design strategies, and opportunities that will align with the best interest of job seekers and employers. The local workforce system is designed to increase access to, and opportunities for, the employment, education, training, and support services that individuals need to succeed in the labor market, including target populations, particularly those with barriers to employment.



The collection of data allows the administrative entity of the local board to prioritize and target underserved populations. This data is shared with workforce partners to provide levels of service within specific target populations for continual service improvement by increasing outreach. Data is also collected by our service providers to inform the Board and staff on how they are meeting the most recent service demands. Certain corrections are made to allow funding between workforce programs to be transferred, making training dollars available to the programs most in need.

The Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board plans to strengthen its relationships with economic development offices, school districts, chambers of commerce, and other trade and labor organizations within the seven-county area. This goal will be accomplished by increasing communication through active participation in regional meetings of each group and by developing a monthly regional economic analysis publication of each county that will include all relevant workforce-related data such as employment/unemployment, labor participation rates, workforce demographics, and other relevant information.

Strengthen relationships with active participation in regional meetings and plans to develop monthly regional economic analysis publication of each county

A complete list of the Southwestern Area workforce centers and the partners located in each center can be found in Attachment C.

§679.560(b)(1)(ii) Describe how the LWDB will support the strategies identified in the State Plan and work with the entities carrying out core programs and other workforce development programs, including programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.) to support service alignment.

The Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board recognizes and supports the State's strategic goals and objectives in the Combined State Plan through the alignment of its board policies, career pathways, sector strategies, and career and training services.

The Combined State Plan states the following:

New Mexicans envision a human-centered, inclusive, and innovative workforce development system that grows the talent, knowledge, and skills of people in our diverse communities, including Veterans, unemployed workers, youth, and state tribal and pueblo communities. Culturally and linguistically responsive strategies that are developmentally appropriate and geared toward equitable opportunities will advance meaningful independence, self-sufficiency, and economic well-being across the lifespan. We are committed to working through partnerships at all levels to balance the needs and the assets of employees and employers in the public and private sectors to build a sustainable and thriving talent pipeline. Data-informed, coordinated, and integrated strategies are higher quality and strengthen life-long education, training, and work-based learning experiences. These strategies build competency in work and life skills that are foundational to the ongoing economic vitality of individuals, families, communities, and the state as a whole. New Mexico is especially committed to serving individuals who face barriers to employment such as low-income, disabilities, ex-offenders, youth aging out of foster care, English language learners, individuals with low literacy, seasonal farmworkers, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers. This vision demonstrates a shared commitment to more resilient, responsive, and results-oriented workforce development system that moves all New Mexicans toward greater economic prosperity.

“Strategy #1 – Develop and implement common messages and metrics across core programs and combined state plan partner agencies:

Strategy #2 – Create opportunities for shared and integrated learning and technical assistance across core programs and combined state plan partner agencies to promote alignment across systems

Strategy #3 – Identify opportunities to leverage state resources to maximize efficiency and effectiveness of workforce programming statewide.”

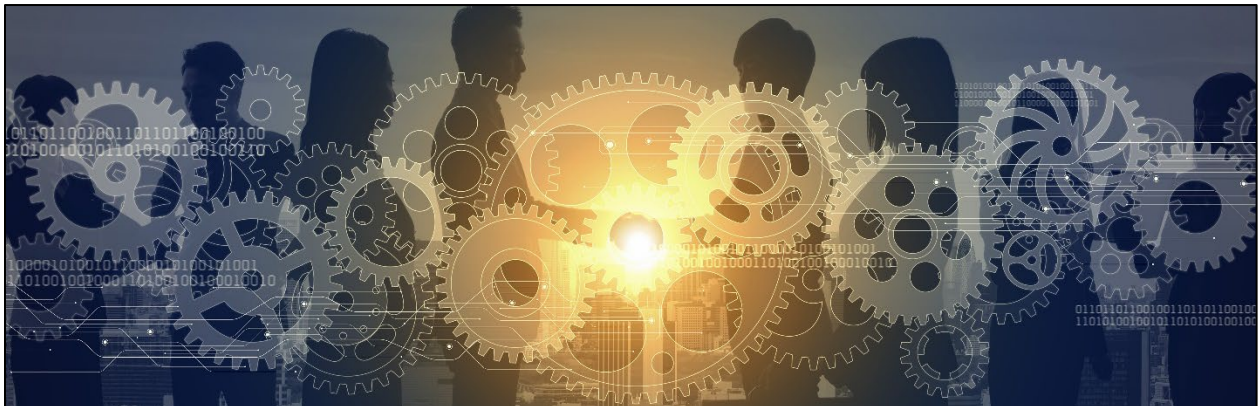
The core and workforce programs within the region, including the Carl D. Perkins Act recipients, facilitate this process as a collective workforce system with a variety of workforce development services. By executing the Board’s Career Pathways Plan that includes employers in the sector partnership strategy process, Perkins Act and other partners will deliver career and training services to grow the talent pipeline of New Mexicans.

Another asset to the workforce board and the system is having a Carl D. Perkins program representative serve as a board member. The board member will have the opportunity to inform the Board and Board committees on how services can be aligned to meet the needs of both programs, ultimately providing individuals with effective and efficient levels of service.

*An asset is having a
Carl D. Perkins program
representative serves
as a board member*

The WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs (Title IB) will continue to enhance their strong working relationship with partners to align and deliver the necessary services to individuals who benefit from the programs.

Collectively, the programs’ coordination also strengthens the connections between secondary and postsecondary education. In addition to the partners being involved in the coordination of services, they will reexamine the current system service strategies to improve alignment with the State’s plan. Their involvement in the redesign, delivery and evaluation of career pathways educational programs, integrated education and training programs, and workforce preparation activities that are responsive to regional and local labor market demands is beneficial to all Core and workforce services, especially during the implementation phase.



The NM PED-College and Career Readiness Bureau (CCRB) has already gathered information and collectively worked on key objectives in several stakeholder meetings in Winter 2019 to transition to Perkins V. The workforce board will continue to collaborate with the CCRB on these collective target industries and strengthening career and technical education in the region.

The Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board will support the strategies of the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions and work with the following list of core programs:

- Adult Program (WIOA, Title I)
- Dislocated Worker Program (WIOA, Title I)
- Youth Program (WIOA, Title I)
- Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program (WIOA, Title II)
- Wagner-Peyser Act Program (Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by Title III)
- Vocational Rehabilitation State Grant Program (Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV)

The Board will promote these programs and ensure that they are carried out by the service providers by working with core partners and service providers collectively to strategize and execute methods that are conducive to the needs of the communities.

Regular meetings with service providers and Core partners offer a platform for open communication where improvements on current methods can be

discussed and innovative ideas can be expressed. The One-Team approach brings all partners together as one entity, New Mexico Workforce Connection, eliminating the outdated method of having each partner in their own silo. Partners can periodically examine and re-design workshops for partnering staff on cross-training and services, as well as for customers on services, résumé building, job search, and interviewing. By working together with multiple workforce partners, including Adult Education Services and Carl D. Perkins, service alignment with local and state strategies will benefit the public workforce system in the region and New Mexico. Each partner's individualized services can be better understood and promoted by other partners throughout the workforce system.

*The One-Team
approach brings all
partners together
as one entity*

B. Local Workforce Development System Alignment

§679.560(b)(2)(i) Describe how the local board will work with entities carrying out core programs to expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment.

Board Objective

The Board's objective for the core program partners is to expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services to individuals with barriers to employment through planning, partner and training provider collaboration, cross-training, implementation, and reporting through the One-Stop Operator and administrative entity.

MONTHLY PLANNING

Monthly workforce core partner meetings, facilitated by the One-Stop Operator, will periodically measure:

- leveraging of partner resources
- coordination of outreach and recruitment
- re-alignment of service delivery strategies
- review of performance measure indicators
- funding opportunities with the administrative entity

Specific examples include the planning and leveraging of staff for job fairs. In PY19, the partners conducted coordinated job fairs with the City of Las Cruces. The city's economic development department provided the Las Cruces Convention Center and the partners recruited the employers, informed the job seekers, and staffed the job fair. The Board is committed to partnering with other entities in applications for additional funding, such as the Rural Healthcare Initiative to develop healthcare apprenticeship programs to meet the needs of the healthcare industry through a discretionary U.S. Department of Labor funding opportunity.

Partners recruited the employers, informed job seekers, and staffed the job fair

This will be accomplished by maintaining a healthy system for referring individuals to workforce partners that specialize in helping those with barriers overcome or navigate their challenges. As individuals are assisted by different partners in the workforce system, cohesiveness, and collaboration among the partners play a critical role in their success. WIOA establishes regulations and guidance that provide local workforce

boards the authority to create partnerships among the required workforce partners in the system.

ONE-TEAM APPROACH

The Board will nurture its existing organizational structure that promotes the Board's "One Team" approach with its partners who provide core program services. This organizational structure will ensure that open lines of communication, collaboration, and strategic development focus on leveraging resources and developing methods to expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services to individuals and those with barriers to employment.

The Board will focus on providing access and flexibility for work-based training options like OJT's, Customized Training, and Incumbent Worker Training programs that will be used to develop a career pathway along with co-enrollments for job seekers and a job-driven strategy for employers and industries. Improved access to training programs and partnerships with businesses and educational organizations will benefit job seekers with barriers to career pathways and employers.

Additional measures will also be deployed by the Board to enhance access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment by:

Enhancing Coordination with Core and other Workforce Partners

The Board, through its administrative entity and One-Stop Operator, will facilitate this process with its partners to determine how the co-location and leveraging of partners, program goal mapping, cross-training, and new outreach strategies and materials will play a role to expand access to the services. Beyond the planning phase, the partners will also work on their plan and timeline for implementation. A memorandum of understanding to support their plan is the blueprint for how the workforce system functions and establishes the working relationship that supports the cooperative outreach and leveraging efforts for capacity building to expand services. Under WIOA, the Board's focus and priority of service are serving those with barriers to employment.

Board Representation

The Board has representation from various partners who engage in strategic planning, policy development, monitoring, and oversight of the WIOA program. This model helps the Board understand the strengths and weaknesses of a partnering program. It helps shape how resources can be managed and how services can be delivered.

Funding

The Board will seek to maintain at least 50% of its service providers' funding allocation for employment, training, education, and supportive services. This will help broaden the pathway for individuals and employers to access providers and services throughout the network.

Incremental Capacity Building

As the Board and workforce partners implement the strategies outlined in this plan during the first year, improvements will be made to the system that will incrementally build capacity in the system.

The workforce centers have established a strong and effective system of coordinated services with their partners and will continue to do so in the future. Numerous educational institutions, known as eligible training providers, service providers, partners, and employers have been the foundation of the workforce system. Now under WIOA, the system adds improvements and alignment to better serve those with barriers to employment.

Supportive services may only be provided to individuals who are: (a) participating in career or training services, including training in any WIOA program (Title I, II, III, and IV), and other trainings that are not within the WIOA programs (b) unable to obtain supportive services through other programs providing such services. Additionally, supportive services may only be provided when they are necessary to enable individuals to participate in Title I activities.

The Board has a supportive services policy that supports the needs of participants at www.employnm.com. It provides details on eligibility and the types of services available, such as transportation consisting of mileage reimbursement, bus passes, and vehicle repair are provided to eligible individuals. Paying for background checks, clothing and footwear, tools, rental and utility assistance, vehicle insurance and registration fees, laptops, software, and internet access.



§679.560(b)(2)(ii) Describe how the local board will work with entities carrying out core programs to facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs.

The Board is actively engaged in collaborative planning with core program partners to enhance the community's access to workforce services. Community workforce, education, and training partners, and employers will have the opportunity to leverage their respective resources, braid funding, and provide better outcomes for the region's participants.

Career Pathways

Career pathways are developed through the collaboration of partners and industry that gather and analyze information to help customers make informed career choices. A key goal is to engage workforce partners, businesses, and education to form a team that works together to meet the workforce needs of the industry through workforce development.

The Career Pathways Plan contains six Phases and Key Element Components that provide a guide for the development of career pathways.

Phase I: Building Cross-Agency Partnerships and Clarifying Roles

Key Element Components:

- Engage cross-agency partners and employers
- Establish a shared vision, mission, and set of goals
- Define the roles and responsibilities of all partners
- Develop a work plan and/or Memorandum of Understanding for the partnership

Phase II: Identifying Industry Sectors & Engaging Employers

Key Element Components:

- Conduct labor market analysis to target high-demand and growing industries
- Survey and engage key industry leaders from targeted industries and sector partnerships
- Clarify the role of employers in the development and operation of programs
- Identify existing training systems within the industry as well as the natural progression and/or mobility (career ladders/lattices)

Phase III: Designing Education & Training Programs

Key Element Components:

- Identify and engage education and training partners
- Identify target populations, entry points, and recruitment strategies. Review, develop, or modify competency models with employers and develop and validate career ladders/lattices.
- Analyze the State's and region's education and training resources and response capability
- Research and promote work-based learning opportunities within business and industry
- Develop integrated, accelerated, contextualized learning strategies
- Provide flexible delivery methods
- Provide career services, case management, and comprehensive support services. Provide employment assistance and retention services.

Phase IV: Identifying Funding Needs and Sources

Key Element Components:

- Identify the costs associated with the system and program development and operations
- Identify sources of funding available from partner agencies and related public and private resources and secure funding
- Develop a long-term sustainability plan with state or local partners

Phase V: Aligning Policies and Programs

Key Element Components:

- Identify state and local policies necessary to implement career pathways systems
- Identify and pursue needed reforms in state and local policy
- Implement statutory and administrative procedures to facilitate cross-agency collaboration

Phase VI: Measuring System Change and Performance

Key Element Components:

- Define desired system program and participant outcomes
- Identify the data needed to measure system, program, and participant outcomes
- Implement a process to collect, store, track, share and analyze data
- Design and implement a plan for reporting system and program outcomes

Organizing the Partners and Clarifying their Roles

In this phase of the process, the focus is to set up the Leadership Team, which will include the WIOA Project Manager [Lead], the SAWDB Chair [or his/her appointed representative], WIOA Administrator, and the One-Stop Operator.

As part of developing a career pathways process, the partners will provide input based on their individual experiences. This type of input is essential to understanding each other's roles and how they can better serve customers with the Board's priority industries. The Act requires that each local workforce board, like the SAWDB, has a set of core programs and other required partners who bring their special skills and resources to the table to better serve the needs of each individual or employer. The role of the partners is to develop a pipeline for skilled workers through training opportunities that meet the workforce needs of businesses.

The Administrative Entity and One-Stop Operator of the Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board will lead in the initial phase of forming the leadership team.

WIOA Core Program Partners

The core program partners work in collaboration in various areas of the public workforce system. Working together as part of the career pathways process provides the system with a variety of perspectives that enhance the quality of services to employers, job seekers, and youth.

The core programs consist of:

- WIOA Title I – Adult Program
- WIOA Title I – Dislocated Worker Program
- WIOA Title I – Youth Program
- WIOA Title II – Adult Education Services
- WIOA Title III – Wagner-Peyser Employment Program
- WIOA Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation Program



WIOA
*Core Program Partners
Collaboration*

WIOA Additional Partners

The Code of Federal Register, 20 CFR § 678.400, as listed below, identifies the additional partners who have a role in the public workforce system. Like the core programs under the Act, these partners specialize in providing employment or education to specific populations within our communities. Their roles are essential to addressing the unique and diverse needs of those within our workforce system.

- The Senior Community Service Employment Program authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056et seq.);
- Career and technical education programs at the postsecondary level authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301et seq.);
- Trade Adjustment Assistance activities authorized under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271et seq.);
- Jobs for Veterans State Grants programs authorized under chapter 41 of title 38, U.S.C.;
- Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (42 U.S.C. 9901et seq.);
- Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development;
- Programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws (in accordance with applicable Federal law);
- Programs authorized under sec. 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007 (42 U.S.C. 17532); and
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) authorized under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601et seq.), unless exempted by the Governor under § 678.405(b).

Education Providers

In addition to the core and additional partners under WIOA, K-12 education providers are additional partners that have an important role in the process. The region has over 20 public school districts and numerous private schools that will be invited to convene and participate in both the sector partnership strategy process and industry roundtable discussions. Having K-12 education providers provides a sound balance and adds value to the workforce system.

Community-based organizations and government agencies that are not WIOA or K-12 partners should also be invited to partner depending on the value that they can bring to the workforce system. Such partners are valuable as they can potentially fill gaps in the delivery of wrap-around services for individuals or their families.

§679.560(b)(2)(iii) Describe how the local board will work with entities carrying out core programs to improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential (including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable).

The Board is continuously strengthening relationships with its Eligible Training Providers who are postsecondary institutions. New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, New Mexico State University, Western New Mexico University, Doña Ana Community College, as well as other educational institutions on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), enter into contractual agreements through Individual Training Accounts for classroom training. Individuals can earn industry-recognized credentials that are portable and stackable.

The One-Stop Operator will facilitate workforce partner meetings that will lead to greater accessibility to assessment tools, partner co-enrollments, enrollments in education, supportive service, and credential attainment rates. The One-Stop Operator will also coordinate cross-training among the partner programs. Sharing this knowledge with workforce partners will open the door to improved communications, additional referrals, and enhance relationships within the public workforce system.

Assessment Tools

The local workforce service providers use multiple assessment tools to guide participants into long-term career pathways. These tools use a system of assessments and curriculum that build and measure essential workplace skills that can affect a participant's job performance and increase opportunities for lifelong learning, career changes, and job advancement. After an assessment, the participants can access available training opportunities online, in a classroom, or at a job site.

Assessment tools build and measure essential workplace skills that can increase opportunities for lifelong learning

Workforce Partner Meetings

The local workforce region holds weekly workforce partners meetings that are attended by representatives of higher education, economic development, postsecondary training providers, and other workforce partner agencies. This workgroup addresses the current training needs of the participants by leveraging resources to meet the current employment needs of the region's employers as identified in our industry sector partnership programs.

Co-Enrollment

The state's public school system allows students to enroll in a dual college credit program that will allow students to graduate high school with enough college credits to obtain a community college associate degree. In this program, high school students can take courses in areas that are not available at their high school. If they plan to continue their education at the local university, these students will have already completed most of their general education requirements. Finally, most of these credits are transferrable to other universities.

Students can graduate high school with enough college credits to obtain an associate degree

Connecting Education and Training

The local board is at work with workforce partners to provide a system of education and training. This requires close collaboration among districts, schools, postsecondary institutions, and employers. Together these stakeholders are currently designing memorandums of understanding to decide what students need to learn in the classroom and in the workplace to earn a certificate or be prepared for advanced learning. This plan, coupled with the Board's commitment to developing industry sector partnerships, will bring the needs of the employers to the forefront so that participants have the information they need to find their pathway to a long-term career.

Supportive Services

The Board also works with workforce partners to develop policies to align supportive services with job training and basic education in the framework of occupational training. This is to move educationally underprepared students more successfully to certificate or degree completion. These policies can provide tuition assistance to working students enrolled part-time or in non-credit occupationally-focused programs.



C. Local Strategy Implementation

§679.560(b)(3)(i) Describe the strategies and services that will be used in the local area to facilitate engagement of employers in workforce development programs, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

The Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board's goal is to meet the workforce needs of regional employers through the delivery of services offered at workforce centers and through its partners. Since the inception of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), the Board's strategy has been to work toward developing a business-driven model. This model will encourage job seekers to earn credentials that not only lead to self-sufficiency but also meet the workforce needs of regional businesses so that individuals may not need to leave their communities to find jobs that can support a family.

Goal is to meet the workforce needs of regional employers through services offered at workforce centers and through partners

A comprehensive and collaborative approach with the workforce partners is necessary to create new strategies to enhance the methods of engaging employers and addressing their workforce needs. A strong focal point of collaboration will be with economic development organizations, business organizations, and industry groups that are in line with the Board's priority industries in the region.

Currently, the Southwestern region has chosen the following priority industries.

Priority Industries

- Aerospace
- Agricultural
- Education
- Health care
- Hospitality and tourism
- Information Technology
- Logistic and warehousing
- Manufacturing
- Mining

Career Pathways

According to the Southwestern region's Career Pathways Plan, the first step for the industry's Core Team will be to do Phase I of the Career Pathways Plan: Build Cross-Agency Partnerships and Clarify Roles.

When Phase I is completed, Phase II, Identifying Industry Sectors & Engaging Employers call for the following:

- Conducting labor market analysis to target high-demand and growing industries
- Surveying and engaging key industry leaders from targeted industries and sector partnerships.
- Clarifying the role of employers in the development and operation of programs.
- Identifying existing training systems within the industry as well as the natural progression and/or mobility (career ladders/lattices)
- Identifying the skill competencies and associated training needs
- Sustaining and expanding business partnerships.

By completing the first two phases of the Career Pathways Plan, the career pathways leadership will be able to move on to Phase III, Designing Education & Training Programs that meet the needs of local employers.

Small Employers

Many of the employers in the rural parts of the region have fewer than 25 employees. The business services team from each workforce office will work with the career pathways leadership team to develop methods for engaging and servicing small employers, as they do for larger employers. The teams may choose to incorporate the New Mexico Workforce Connection Online System that delivers information to



employers via email. Social media, through the Board's social and web-based media, is another effective method for customizing messages to employers at a minimal cost. Additionally, the workforce partners may engage with economic development offices and chambers of commerce as a pathway for establishing and cultivating relationships with smaller employers. Other methods under consideration for reaching employers are the traditional use of radio, newspaper, and billboards.

In-Demand Industries

Labor market information, and the dominant industries in a community, easily lend themselves to identifying in-demand industry sectors and occupations. Per the Board's policies, this community-centered work will establish criteria for in-demand industries and occupations that are in-demand through its labor market analysis. Labor market information is obtained from the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions' Economic and Research Analysis Bureau. It identifies occupation information, wage information, unemployment rates, advertised job posting statistics, demographic information, and more, for a specific region, county, or metropolitan area.

[§679.560\(b\)\(3\)\(ii\) Describe the strategies and services that will be used in the local area to support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area.](#)

Career Pathways Leadership Team

The Southwestern Region Leadership Team (Team) will conduct a self-assessment using a career pathways tool (View Attachment A in the Career Pathways Plan at www.employnm.com) with workforce partners, which include Title I, II, III, IV, education, and other stakeholders to determine whether or not the Southwestern workforce system is high-performing, sector-focused, and effective.

The leadership team will establish the frequency of meetings and other activities related to partner cross-training on the Career Pathways Plan. Meeting agendas and summaries will be available for stakeholders. Periodic progress updates will be made at monthly workforce partners meetings, board meetings, and Chief Elected Officials meetings.

The following are some of the areas for assessment from the Employment Training Administration (ETA) Sector Technical Assistance Initiative Sector Strategies Organizational Self-Assessment tool (Attachment A):

Data-Informed Decision Making

Is your organization/partnership using rigorous data to make decisions about target industries and education and training program investments?

- 1) Understanding of the region's most important industry sector(s) through the use of rigorous economic, industry, and labor market data collection and analysis.
- 2) Process in place to identify specific skill needs, level of demand, and area education and training program gaps within the target industry sector(s)
- 3) Provision of data that is understandable and shared across partners to enable joint, collaborative decision-making

Industry Engagement

How broad and deep is the involvement of the targeted industry sector(s) employers in designing and delivering programs and services?

- Regional influence to bring key industry leaders to the table and understand the needs of their businesses
- Industry as a strategic partner in designing and executing services and programs
- Capability to take on the sector partnership intermediary role if required



Sector-Based Service Delivery

How effectively are you and your partners facilitating the development and delivery of workforce opportunities that are responsive to the needs of an entire targeted industry?

- Capability to fill the industry's near-term workforce needs
- Capability to meet the industry's longer-term pipeline needs across a range of skill levels
- Ability to overcome barriers for lower-wage workers to facilitate employment and career advancement within the targeted sector(s)
- Experience with and capability to develop effective, employer-validated career pathways in support of the target sector(s)
- Experience with and capability to design and implement, with employers, work-based learning models in the targeted sector(s)
- Partnerships with the right regional organizations to deliver comprehensive solutions in response to target industry sector(s) needs – while minimizing the duplication of services
- Willingness and ability to respond to non-workforce needs directly related to the industry's economic development or growth opportunities

After finishing Phase I and Phase II of the Career Pathways Plan, the Core Teams will move on to Phase III: Designing Educational & Training Programs.

One-Stop Operator

The Board's One-Stop Operator, who is a key member of the Career Pathways Leadership Team, will share information with the core workforce partners so that they may develop employer services and innovative approaches that will better meet the needs of the local businesses. The Leadership Team further consists of the WIOA Project Manager, recently hired; SAWDB Chair [or appointed representative], WIOA

Administrator, and support staff. The team will identify stakeholders, convene with such identified stakeholders, gather information, review pathways already in existence, and formulate plans of growth and improvement in areas while continuing to engage with career and industry leaders.

Industry Needs and Partnerships

Through the sector strategy meetings, the Core Team for that industry will identify that industry's skill needs. As part of the Career Pathways Plan, meeting with businesses within each industry sector will lead to partnerships with representatives of those industries.

The Board and its workforce partners will offer the following business services:

- Educate job seekers about in-demand jobs and the needed education and training needed
- Search for a job candidate
- Post a job opening
- Job placement
- Database job matching
- Credentialed job seeker
- On-the-job training
- Customized training
- Outreach & Recruitment - finding candidates for jobs
- Organizing hire events
- Job candidate skill-set assessments
- Pre-employment screenings
- Job market trends
- Job description development
- Labor market trends
- Unemployment Tax Assistance (Las Cruces only)
- Obtain required employment posters
- Rapid Response
- Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)
- Synchronize marketing activities with the above-listed groups to standardize outreach

The One-Stop Operator will ensure that business outreach teams utilize the Customer Relationships Module of the New Mexico Workforce Connection Online System. The module provides an online and integrated method of managing employers, displaying their business services representative, and providing a history of activities with the employers.



By using this module, staff can create marketing leads, contact lists, view all the marketing leads, create work items and appointments, and create online employer surveys.

Other methods for the delivery of services include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Using sector strategies with employers to determine local regional hiring needs and design training programs that are responsive to those needs.
- Engaging employers, employer associations, and labor organizations in the design and delivery of programs and services to meet current and future hiring needs that will likely result in employment for participating job seekers.
- Developing and implementing proven or promising strategies that expand employment and career advancement opportunities for system participants in in-demand industry sectors or occupations and meet the needs of employers by providing a skilled workforce.
- Developing effective linkages with employers in the region to support employer utilization of the local workforce development system and to support local workforce investment activities.
- Ensuring that workforce investment activities meet the needs of employers and support economic growth in the region by enhancing communication, coordination, and collaboration among employers, economic development entities, and service providers.
- Prioritizing work-based learning opportunities including on-the-job training, internships, pre-apprenticeships, registered apprenticeship, and customized training as training pathways to employment.

§679.560(b)(3)(iii) Describe the strategies and services that will be used in the local area to better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development.

Workforce Presentations to Economic Development Entities

To develop a better understanding of the WIOA system, the local board's One-Stop Operator and/or Administrative Entity, will share information about career services and training services through the in-service training programs offered to economic development entities throughout the region.

Presentations to various economic development entities will include the types of services that are available to businesses. Included in this training is an orientation on career services, on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, customized worker training, employee training programs, and tuition assistance services. Some of these services complement the Job Training Incentive Program offered by the economic development department which reimburses companies for training expenses when they create new jobs.



In addition to sharing this information, the Board will offer labor market information to economic development offices in the areas of economic activity, researching employers by industry, industry profiles, regional reviews, industry spotlights, occupations bulletins, and other reports that assist with their economic strategies and services.

The board will offer labor market information to assist with economic strategies and services

One-Stop Operator

Through the One-Stop Operator and workforce partners, the Board will market the workforce services to businesses as an economic development approach. This approach will attract additional businesses to use and take advantage of the services offered. The expectation is to help businesses become more competitive in the market by narrowing the skills gap in the region.

Economic Development Teams

The Board will recommend workforce staff be a part of economic development recruitment teams to bring jobs into the region as well as support the expansion of local companies. Labor market information, workforce services, and technical information will be provided to assist in recruitment efforts. The Board will also look at economic development organizations' marketing materials to align its workforce materials that support economic development in the region.

The Board also contracts with the South Central Council of Governments for its administrative entity services. It assists local governments and political subdivisions with local planning and economic development. It is also the organization that develops the Comprehensive Economic Development Plan that describes the regional



economy, establishes regional goals and objectives, develops a regional plan of action, and identifies investment priorities for Socorro, Sierra, and Doña Ana Counties. The local board has also partnered with the SCCOG's CARES Act recovery operations to assist small businesses in applying for COVID-related economic assistance. This partnership will enhance our outreach services by offering technical assistance for both economic recovery and employee training services as it relates to the current economic recession caused by this pandemic.

Other economic development plans are listed under §679.560(b)(1)(i).

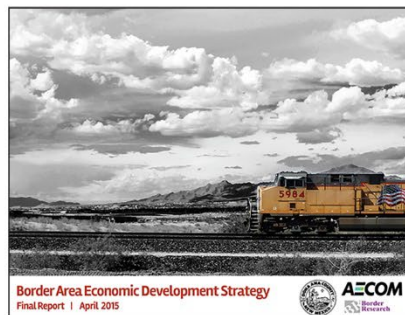
Economic and Workforce Organizations in the Southwestern Region

The Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board plans to strengthen its relationships with economic development offices, school districts, chambers of commerce, and other trade and labor organizations within the seven-county area. Enhanced communications and more collaboration with these partners will bring to light an array of regional analyses leading the way to new workforce goals for the entire Southwestern area.

The Board will work with a newly formed workforce development and economic development organization, the Grant County Workforce and Economic Development Alliance (GCWEDA) to align strategies between GCWEDA's plan and this four-year

plan. The Board will invite the GCWEDA to be part of the sector partnership strategies process to identify the workforce needs of industries. Other numerous regional economic, workforce, and workforce development programs exist across the region that are important partners in supporting the region’s economy through workforce development. The largest programs are listed below.

| |
|---|
| Economic and Workforce Organizations in the SW Region |
| Doña Ana County Border Area Economic Development Strategy (BAEDS) For more information - CLICK HERE |
| The Santa Teresa Area Border Transportation Needs Assessment & Strategic Plan (STBAT) For more information - CLICK HERE |
| Mesilla Valley Economic Development Alliance (MVEDA) For more information - CLICK HERE |
| Grant County Workforce and Economic Development Alliance (GCWEDA) For more information - CLICK HERE |
| The South Central Council of Governments (SCCOG) Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy For more information - CLICK HERE |
| Middle Rio Grande Economic Development Department For more information - CLICK HERE |
| County and City organized economic development organizations in Las Cruces, Sunland Park, Truth or Consequences, and Luna, Grant, Catron, and Hidalgo counties. |



§679.560(b)(3)(iv) Describe the strategies and services that will be used in the local area to strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs.

Individuals who become unemployed may submit a claim for unemployment benefits through the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions at a New Mexico Workforce Connection Center, online, or by phone. The partners within the public workforce system also assist those who are unemployed through various workforce services to assist individuals with re-employment.

The key strategies for strengthening linkages

- Coordinating services and processes with workforce partners and the unemployment insurance partner at workforce partner meetings
- Providing key re-employment services for those entering or contacting the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers
- Providing key re-employment services for Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) workshops
- Conducting periodic re-assessment of strategies and services with partners

Key Re-Employment Services

- Conducting initial triage of the individual's employment status
- Assisting with the initial unemployment claims
- Registering individuals in the New Mexico Workforce Connections Online System (NMWOS)
- Helping individuals develop resumes
- Providing help to navigate the resources room and (NMWOS)
- Determining the need and desire for training
- Assessing barriers to education or employment/need for supportive services
- Providing job search assistance

The Board's primary objective is to ensure that the unemployment insurance (UI) program, provided through the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions, is offered office space at each of the comprehensive and affiliate workforce centers for individuals to certify and recertify for benefits via telephone or computer. The unemployment insurance program is a lifeline for individuals who are dislocated from their employment (through no fault of their own) and are eligible to receive monetary benefits while they search for and acquire their next job.

As unemployed individuals enter the workforce center to certify for UI benefits, they will be registered in the New Mexico Workforce Connections Online System, offered employment services to develop or update their résumés, taught how to do online job searches, and determine their need for job training or education on the available jobs in the region, along with education/training/experience required



and other services as deemed necessary. During the assessment phase, individuals will also be referred to other workforce partners to address any barriers to training, education, and employment. This guarantees that the one-stop system is available and ready to meet the needs of the unemployment insurance system's objectives.

There is a need to support dislocated workers with employment services under Wagner Peyser, training services under Title IB, and other services offered by the core and additional partners.

The following is a list of additional services that are offered through workforce partners to those receiving unemployment benefits.

- Job search assistance
- Information on emerging occupations and subsequent training and education
- Information on available jobs in various sectors in the region along with the education, experience, and experience required for those positions.
- Creation of a résumé
- Job search matches
- Veterans' services
- Migrant Seasonal Workers services
- Job candidate skill assessments
- Job description development
- Virtual Recruiter services
- Training to upgrade skillsets for employability
- Tuition Assistance, On-the-Job Training, Customized Training
- Job market trends
- Labor market trends
- Career Exploration

§679.560(b)(4) Describe how the local board will coordinate local workforce investment activities with regional economic development activities that are carried out in the local area and how the local board will promote entrepreneurial skills training and small business services.

The Local Area is fortunate to be surrounded by organizations promoting entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services and the Board promotes these entities and needs to find more ways to be involved.

The training providers in the region offer entrepreneurial training classes and have entrepreneurial training components built into the curriculum of existing training. The Las Cruces, Socorro, and Sierra County school districts utilize guest speakers and mentoring programs and offer career readiness programs to students, but this is limited to a few students and not in every school in the region. The local board is working with the Small Business Administration to offer services on how to plan a business, obtain market research and competitive analysis, write a business plan, calculate startup costs, and identify funding sources.

The Board will continue to strengthen its relationship and market its business services to economic development offices to promote entrepreneurial and small business development. Additionally, the Board's Administrative Entity is working with the South Central Council of Governments, a regional planning and economic development government agency, to coordinate regional economic activities, promote entrepreneurial skills, and offer small business services in the region.

§679.550(c) Describe how the local board will develop and implement training across systems for all core partners to ensure a unified approach to service delivery, including vocational rehabilitation.

Enhancing Coordination

The Board is enhancing coordination with core partners to improve the delivery of services under a unified approach. Under this unified approach, the One-Stop Operator will facilitate meetings with the core partners to implement the planning process for each of the following areas: co-locating and resource-sharing agreements, mapping program deliverables and methods of measurement, cross-training among partners, and the development of outreach materials. As the plans are developed for each area, the partners will consider establishing teams with a team leader who can facilitate the design and planning process.

Key Components

Key Element Components for designing education & training programs can be found under Phase 3 in the Southwestern region's Career Pathway programs.

- Identify and engage with education and training partners.
- Identify target populations, entry points, and recruitment strategies.
- Review, develop, or modify competency models with employers and develop and validate career ladders/lattices.
- Analyze the State's and region's education and training resources and response capability.
- Research and promote work-based learning opportunities within business and industry.
- Develop integrated, accelerated, contextualized learning strategies.
- Provide flexible delivery methods.
- Provide career services, case management, and comprehensive support services.
- Provide employment assistance and retention services.

Cross-Training

An important area for the partners to explore is a cross-training method to be used to train scores of workforce professionals on each other's programs. Short audio-based PowerPoint modules uploaded on a restricted website will be considered, in addition to personalized training programs and other ideas proposed by the partners. The cross-training program will be essential to the workforce professionals to understand the eligibility requirements and services available to those they will serve.

Commission and Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and Commission for the Blind

As stated in New Mexico's WIOA Combined State Plan, the Commission and Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and Commission for the Blind provide services to mutual participants. The Board recognizes that its role is to build a strong system of services within that network. The Board has a representative from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) who serves on the workforce board and can provide first-hand information to develop policy and guide the Board on decisions. The board member can also provide the Board with technical information specific to the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and Commission for the Blind services, such as vocational guidance and counseling, school-to-work transition services, vocational and other training, job search and placement assistance, diagnostic/treatment of impairments, accommodations, and assistive technology.

D. One-Stop Delivery System

§679.560(b)(5)(i) Describe how the local board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers through the system and how such providers will meet the employment needs of local employers, workers, and job seekers.

The Board engages with at least 26 partner groups across the Southwestern New Mexico region, including economic development entities, adult education services, higher education, and community-based organizations. The Board actively supports and coordinates with these partner agencies to carry out workforce development programs, including core programs and secondary/post-secondary institutions with career and education programs, to strengthen alignment with education and industry.

Collaborative Planning

The One-Stop system is engaged in collaborative planning to enhance the region's access to workforce services. The regional workforce program, as well as education and training partners and employers, have a history of operating on a collective impact model that leverages partner resources and braids funding to provide better outcomes for the communities we serve. A key strategy is for workforce partners and stakeholders to address Title II Adult Education and Literacy, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, and other targeted populations for the alignment of services and favorable outcomes. The Administrative Entity with the One-Stop Operator will hold partner meetings tied to collaborative planning, such as building trust, identifying opportunities, delivering services, and identifying partner strengths.

Career Pathways

A key strategy will be the implementation of the career pathways system and the opportunity for employers to be directly involved in developing solutions to their workforce needs within their industry. The local workforce board and committee meetings are used as public forums to listen to businesses, education, and service providers to stimulate all key stakeholders to suggest systems changes.

The SAWDB's Career Pathways Plan was developed in consideration of the U.S. Department of Labor *Career Pathways Toolkit: An Enhanced Guide and Workbook for System Development* and the sector partnership strategies model that is being implemented throughout New Mexico. The toolkit provides the teams with a variety of tools to use to strengthen processes and develop career pathways. It calls for the alignment of cross-agency planning, performance measures, and new strategies that will result in a skilled and ready workforce.

The building of cross-agency partnerships will help partners become an integral part of the process that leads to the engagement of businesses within their respective industries. This group is referred to as the Core Team. The Core Team consists of businesses, workforce development, and education all working together to develop training programs that meet the needs of the employers. The Core Team also works to develop the career pathway information that will be used within the workforce centers and system. The braiding of programs and services also leads to the search for additional funding and other resources to support the training needs of the industry.

The Core Team consists of business, workforce development, and education all working together to develop training programs

The Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board will work with the Core Team to align policies and programs that will improve services. This leadership team will measure change and report its conclusions to businesses, its partners, the Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board, and the Chief Elected Officials every quarter.

Continuous Improvement

As described in the Board's eligible training policy, the workforce development system established under WIOA emphasizes informed consumer choice, job-driven training programs, provider performance, and continuous improvement. The One-Stop system partners have created a



dialog and input mechanism to monitor continuous improvement and the Planning and Monitoring Committees participate in a regular review of performance measures, indicators of performance, and regional plans and policies.

Eligible Training Providers and Programs

The selection of quality providers and programs of training services is vital to achieving the core principles. As required by WIOA Sec. 122, states, the Local boards, must identify eligible training providers (ETPs) and programs that are qualified to receive WIOA Title I-B funds to train adults, dislocated workers, and out-of-school youth ages 16 through 24, including those with disabilities.

The approved state list of eligible training providers and programs serves as an important tool for participants seeking training to identify appropriate providers and programs, and relevant information, such as cost and program outcomes. WIOA Sec. 122 (c) specifies that states must establish an application procedure for training providers and programs to maintain their eligibility and the eligibility of their programs. The State has centralized the administrative responsibility for certifying ETP applications.

The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (NMDWS) as the State Administrative Entity (SAE) in partnership with the Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) provides oversight and administration for the Eligible Training Provider (ETP) certification system. LWDBs work with NMDWS to identify eligible training providers and programs qualified to receive WIOA title I-B funds to train adults and dislocated workers, and out-of-school youth ages 16 through 24, including those with disabilities.

NMDWS and the Local Workforce Development Boards provide oversight and administration for the Eligible Training Provider certification system

[§679.560\(b\)\(5\)\(ii\)](#) Describe how the local board will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system, including in remote areas, through the use of technology and other means.

COVID-19 Pandemic

During the COVID pandemic, the Southwestern region implemented several operational changes to both protect the WIOA participants and the employees of the workforce system. The application of remote workstations and virtual tools were utilized so service interruptions were kept to a minimum. Each employee was given the tools necessary to allow participants to be served virtually or with limited contact at physical locations. The use of mobile internet access modems and online signature software was implemented to allow participants to share relevant forms and documentation needed to continue services. Virtual job fairs were also used to connect dislocated workers with businesses that were hiring during the economic slowdown.



Software and Data Tools

The local board will increase the utilization of all software services and data collection processes available to the network to increase data-based decisions to improve communications with partner agencies and to continually improve services to all participants. Below are some of the tools used in the One-Stop system.

| Software and Data Tools | | |
|---|---|---|
| WCOSS - Workforce Connection Online System | Virtual Orientation – Job Readiness Workshops | Career Pathways Explorer – <i>Career Matching Software</i> |
| FutureWorks - Labor Market data and Access | Money Essentials – <i>Financial Literacy</i> | TABE Academy – <i>Testing Prep.</i> |
| Jobs EQ – Labor Market Data Tool | LASER – State and local Labor Market Information | The Academy – Online Training Platform |

Online Learning

The COVID pandemic has sped up the use of online learning (e-learning) whereby teaching is undertaken remotely on digital platforms. E-learning has been successful in the past so this system of learning may be here to stay. As students in K-12 schools adapt to this style of learning, colleges, and education providers are pushing for an increase in available courses to meet the needs of rural residents and students with barriers to employment like childcare and transportation.



Virtual Meetings

The Board has likewise started using virtual meetings for board functions such as board and committee meetings as well as instruction for the provider network in administering WIOA program policy and procedures. The Board complies with the New Mexico Open Meeting Act and during the New Mexico Governor’s Public Health Emergency Declaration because of COVID-19. The Board will continue to provide public access to virtual board and committee meetings in accordance with the New Mexico Attorney General’s directives.

Access to high-speed internet remains a barrier to education for many rural parts of New Mexico; however, in many other areas of the Southwestern region, high-speed internet access is available and more affordable. The need to bolster broadband access to remote areas of the region has been accelerated due to the pandemic as the need for access has increased as well as the need for more bandwidth to accommodate all the new jobs that will allow employees to work from home. The Board will work with economic development entities and other agencies to connect and coordinate with broadband initiatives that are emerging and to provide testimony on the internet access gaps that exist for participants within the region.

[§679.560\(b\)\(5\)\(iii\)](#) Describe how entities within the one-stop delivery system, including one-stop operators and the one-stop partners, will comply with WIOA sec. 188 (Nondiscrimination), if applicable, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities.

Periodic Reviews

The local board performs periodic reviews of workforce centers to determine compliance with provisions of WIOA section 188 for both physical access and programmatic functions. The One-Stop operator partner meeting reviews compliance with accessibility to buildings and services.

Training

The Board, through its One-Stop Operator and workforce partners, will conduct training for their respective staff within the region. The training may be facilitated by the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions' training team, who encourages local workforce areas to request training that is beneficial to the staff within the workforce system. The training programs will cover Non-Discrimination (Sec. 188), as well as ADA requirements.



Non-Discrimination, Sec. 188

This segment of section 188 prohibits discrimination against individuals in any program or activity that receives financial assistance under Title I of WIOA, as well as by the one-stop partners listed in WIOA Section 121(b) that offer programs or activities through the one-stop/American Job Center system. Section 188 prohibits discrimination because of

race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation or belief, or, for beneficiaries, applicants, and participants only, citizenship status, or because of an individual's participation in a program or activity that receives financial assistance under Title I of WIOA. As it pertains to new employees, the partners should receive training on WIOA Sec. 188 as part of their employee orientation or onboarding.

Facility and Equipment Compliance

Regarding facility and equipment compliance, the Board's partners provide services out of three workforce centers that are owned by the State of New Mexico. These centers are in Deming, Las Cruces, and Silver City. There is one workforce center in Socorro that is not government-owned and one local office in Truth or Consequences that is owned by the City of Truth or Consequences. All five facilities are required under state and federal regulations to be compliant with the Disabilities Act of 1990 and have programs and services, technology, materials, and staff training to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities and barriers to language.

Three workforce centers in the Southwestern region are owned by the State of New Mexico: Deming, Las Cruces, Silver City

As tenants of the buildings, it is the Board's responsibility, along with the owners, to ensure that the buildings meet the requirements of state and federal laws. In addition to building compliance, the workforce partners must also be involved in ensuring that they understand the requirements for equipment and materials that are necessary for individuals with disabilities and ensure they are provided.

One-Stop Operator

The Board's One-Stop Operator will present the ADA requirements to the workforce partners that are co-located at the workforce centers. The Board will also coordinate with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Commission for the Blind to develop the process for inspections and staff training. The One-Stop Operator will coordinate annual inspections of the centers and promptly correct any deficiencies identified with the building owners and workforce partners. Additionally, the Board will explore the requirements of having staff who can communicate using American Sign Language and provide written materials in English and Spanish.

The One-Stop Operator will coordinate annual inspections of the workforce centers

§679.560(b)(5)(iv) Describe the specific roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners, to date. Please include your process for updating any cooperative agreements, resource sharing agreements, and memoranda of understanding relevant to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. (If any of these documents have already been updated or are even still in draft form, please provide copies as a part of Attachment D.)

Each partner organization is integrated into the workforce system. The Workforce Connection centers allow specialized reviews of the system to identify and improve services to participants including the disabled and those with significant barriers to employment.

Memorandum of Understanding

The Board, its administrative entity, One-Stop Operator, and one-stop partners began the process of developing its Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with workforce partners. The Administrative Entity met with other regions to research their method of creating their MOU. The draft MOU was introduced to the SAWDB One-Stop Committee, and then to our regional workforce partners for their input. During that period, comments were received and incorporated into the MOU. All the required partners have signed the MOU and Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA).

Infrastructure Finance Agreement

The workforce partners' Infrastructure Finance Agreement (IFA) involved considerable thoughtfulness and consideration. Ideas on how to allocate costs for each co-located partner varied. We needed to collect input from the partners on the IFAs they may be familiar with and how this one should be created. The AE assembled an IFA work session for the Las Cruces Workforce Connection Center where the expected outcome was to walk away from the meeting with a spreadsheet everyone agreed to. Some partners came to the table stating they had no funding to contribute to the Las Cruces Workforce Connection center.

Ideas on how to allocate costs for each co-located partner varied

Updating Documents

The Board will update the documents every three years or when needed. It will entail working in collaboration with the workforce partners to identify any changes that are reflective of current or future priorities and initiatives, presenting the proposed changes to the One-Stop Committee with their recommendations, then presenting to the Board and CEOs for their approval.

§679.560(c) Describe how entities within the one-stop delivery system, including one-stop operators and the one-stop partners, will provide for the Accessibility for English Language Learners (ELL).

Language Barriers

An extensive network of partner organizations operating across the region in offices and through various other access points, makes it easier for the One-Stop Operator to efficiently engage individuals in every county of Southwestern New Mexico. Integration with a range of partners enhances service offerings to meet a variety of needs and address all kinds of barriers. The Board works with our partners to analyze who is currently using services in each location, their demographics, as well as their English language challenges, and other information about the current job seeker base will help develop plans to adequately address any gaps that exist due to language barriers.

Service information will be analyzed to develop plans addressing language barrier gaps

One-Stop Shop

The One-Stop offices provide accessibility for English language learners through its partners. Each office has a staff member who can read, write, and speak the Spanish language. The New Mexico Workforce Connection online system offers an English and Spanish language function. The New Mexico Unemployment Insurance services system provides access in Spanish. Promotional materials are also made available in Spanish.

Individuals expressing interest in English as a Second Language (ESL) will be referred to the Title II Adult Education provider in their area. The New Mexico Workforce Connection Online System will be used to document the referral and monitor the status of the referral.

In the future, the One-Stop Operator will work with the one-stop partners to evaluate their processes and examine best practices. Best practices are provided in the Training and Employment Notice (TEN) 28-16. As stated in the notice, it provides

workforce system examples, best practices, partnership models, and information on how to align resources available under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to increase services to English Language Learners (ELL) with substantial cultural and language barriers to employment. It further provides information to the workforce system, including partner programs and entities that are jointly responsible for workforce and economic development, educational, and other human resource programs, about how to align their efforts to provide basic career services, individualized career services, and training services.

E. Service Implementation for Indicated Populations

Youth

§679.560(b)(8) Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce investment activities in the local area including activities for youth with disabilities, and other barriers, such as homeless youth, foster and former foster youth, and/or expecting and parenting youth.

1. Youth Services

The Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board, through local policy and federal regulations, addresses the 14 youth service elements and their requirements through its youth service providers.

The local workforce board's Youth and Young Adult Committee meets to discuss recommendations on how the 14 service elements are to be delivered in specific geographic areas of the regions. The youth service provider is monitored under their contracted scope of work related to the delivery of the 14 required service elements and results are provided to the Board's Monitoring and Performance Committee. The service providers ensure that periodic partner meetings are held to manage and enhance the program's deliverables through the term of its contract agreement with the local board.

The Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board recognizes that Supportive Services are key to minimizing or eliminating barriers that impede the success of youth participants in a workforce activity. The Board recognizes that with more out-of-school youth being served, there is a higher propensity for transportation, childcare, dependent care, housing, and needs-related payments. The Board will allocate funds within its service providers' contracts to make supportive services available, per the local board policy, to those who qualify and are in need.

2. Tutoring/Study Skills Training

Tutoring and study skills training includes instruction and evidence-based dropout prevention as well as recovery strategies that lead to the completion of a high school diploma or equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for youth with disabilities) or preparation for postsecondary credentials. Tutoring is provided online through ACT Curriculum or other educational remediation programs or through referrals to school or community-based tutoring programs to assist in increasing grade levels for school retention.

3. Alternative Secondary School Services

Alternative secondary school services include referral to formal alternative education programs or formal dropout recovery services, as appropriate. Strong partnerships are developed with Adult Education Services providers to co-enroll participants in need of completing their secondary education.

4. Occupational Skills

The SAWDB evaluates trends in the region to determine the needs of the employers and works with our partner educational institutions to develop relevant training courses. Through careful evaluation of each participant, our workforce partner will determine a strategy to assist the clients in obtaining access to such training with supportive services including tuition assistance.

5. Work Experience

Participants are placed in paid work experience opportunities aligned with their career interests for up to 300 hours. Placements are made to learn a trade and gain the valuable experience required for long-term employment. Participants that have barriers such as a disability or access to childcare are supported through the program's supportive services or by partner organizations through a referral process to receive additional assistance. Participants complete employability skills training before placement to increase their knowledge of work. Training programs will be guided by utilizing the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions Career Solutions and "Why I Work" online tool providing the ability to search occupations, schools, scholarships, and jobs, in addition to completing a career exploration worksheet and work interest assessment. This comprehensive tool will help participants determine their career interests and work with youth program staff to develop a career pathway for training and employment placement. Work experience is monitored by the youth program case managers to ensure a meaningful experience that will lead to employment opportunities. Collaborations are made with additional community programs that provide an opportunity for further work experience for youth such as summer employment, pre-apprenticeships, internships, and on-the-job training.

Education offered concurrently with and in the same context refers to the integrated education and training model in which required education and training occur concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training. Such a program element must describe how workforce preparation activities, basic academic skills, and hands-on occupational skills are to be taught within the same time frame and connected to training in a specific occupation, occupational cluster, or career pathway. Partnerships with programs such as YouthBuild, Job Corps Centers, or Apprenticeship programs can provide this opportunity for concurrent education and workforce preparation.

6. Leadership Development Opportunities

Leadership development programs are opportunities that encourage responsibility, confidence, employability, self-determination, and other positive social behaviors such as:

- Exposure to postsecondary educational possibilities and distance learning to include supporting Tribally Controlled Colleges such as Navajo Technical University
- Community and service-learning projects including with the Alamo Navajo Chapter Government
- Peer-centered activities, including peer mentoring or peer tutoring
- Organizational and teamwork training, including team leadership training programs
- Training programs in decision-making, including prioritization and problem-solving skills
- Citizenship training programs, including life skills such as parenting and work behavior training
- Civic engagement activities that promote the quality of life in a community,
- Activities that place the youth in a leadership role such as serving on a youth leadership committee or a standing youth committee

Collaborations are developed with community partners who have opportunities to provide the leadership development opportunities listed above.

7. Supportive Services

Supportive services are designed to enable youth to participate in WIOA activities and may include linkage to community services, referrals to health care, and cost assistance with transportation, childcare, housing, uniforms, work attire, work-related tools, protective gear, educational testing, and reasonable accommodations for youth with disabilities. Supportive services are provided throughout the program as needed by the participant to be successful in the completion of any of the 14 youth elements.



8. Adult Mentoring

Adult mentoring is a formal, in-person, relationship between a youth participant and an adult mentor for at least 12 months that includes structured activities where the mentor offers guidance, support, and encouragement to assist in the development of the competence and character of the mentee. Adult mentoring also includes workplace

mentoring matching a youth participant with an employer or employee of a company who acts as a mentor. Mentoring is integrated into the work experience activity utilizing work placement as an opportunity for employers to step into a different role and provide career awareness and exploration to the youth participant. Referrals are also made to community organizations such as Big Brothers Big Sisters and school-based mentoring programs that provide Adult Mentoring activities.

9. Follow-Up Services

Follow-up services are designed to help ensure the youth participant is successful in employment or postsecondary education/training post-program. Follow-up is provided for at least 12 months following the youth's exit from the program. Participants are contacted once per quarter to offer support services and obtain performance outcome information. A guidance counselor works directly with the youth case manager to track postsecondary participants and helps monitor performance.

10. Comprehensive Guidance & Counseling

Guidance and counseling services may include career and academic counseling, drug and alcohol abuse counseling, and mental health counseling, and are often individualized for the youth participant. Collaborations are developed with partner agencies to initiate referrals for these services.

11. Financial Literacy

Financial literacy is education or activities that assist youth to initiate checking and savings accounts at banks and making informed financial decisions; support youth learning how to manage spending, credit, and debt, including student loans, consumer credit, and credit cards. It also supports a participant's ability to understand, evaluate, and compare financial products and services; informs participants about identity theft, their rights regarding it, and ways they can protect themselves from it; and supports the financial literacy needs of non-English speakers using multilingual financial literacy and educational materials. Financial Literacy is provided through online training programs, partnerships with local bank institutions, or referrals to other community organizations.

12. Entrepreneurial Skills Training

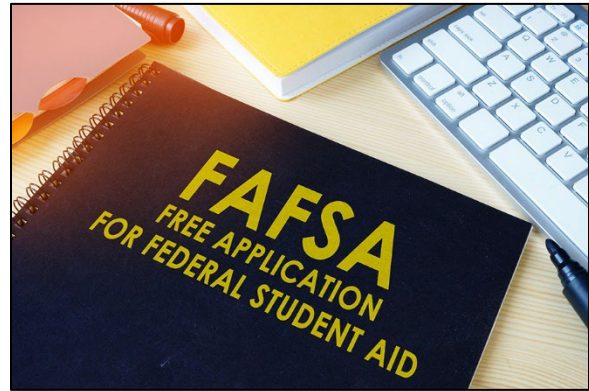
Entrepreneurial Skills Training provides the basics of starting and operating a small business, taking initiative, creatively seeking out and identifying business opportunities, developing budgets, and forecasting resource needs; understanding various options for acquiring capital and the trade-offs associated with each option; and how to communicate effectively to market oneself and one's ideas. Entrepreneurial skills are provided through online training programs or referrals to other community organizations.

13. Labor Market & Career Awareness Information

Labor market information is used to tailor program services and guide youth participants into in-demand and emerging industry sectors with greater employment opportunities. Youth participants are provided with services such as career awareness, exploration activities, and career counseling to make an informed decision towards further training and development of a career pathway.

14. Transition to Postsecondary Education

Services to transition to postsecondary education include information about, and preparation for, college entrance. Youth participants are assisted or educated on applying to colleges, financial aid, entrance testing, student life, pre-requisite courses, and more. Collaborations with post-secondary institutions and training programs will assist in a coordinated transition to post-secondary education, eliminating any



barriers to enrollment. Most of the Native American youth are first generational college students. They are encouraged to attend a two-year college before transitioning to a larger University. The transition from high school to postsecondary education can be difficult for some families to accept due to cultural values and traditions about family members staying home. Depending on the financial need, leveraging funds from other grants could financially assist the youth to stay in college and become successful.

The SAWDB Youth providers build strong partnerships with regional programs that serve persons with barriers that would prevent or limit their access to the workforce. Special attention is provided to youth who are most in need, i.e. youth with disabilities, homeless youth, and foster or former foster care youth. A focus on these populations is handled with our partnerships with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, juvenile justice, and foster care system, schools, and other community organizations.

Additional activities that support the 14 WIOA youth elements include but are not limited to the following:

- Comprehensive work readiness training improving employability skills
- Development of quality work experience sites to provide meaningful work experiences and skill development
- Co-enrollment with adult WIOA program for OJT and further training opportunities
- Online training to enhance occupational and employability skills

§679.560(c) Describe how the local board is planning or working to fulfill specific Youth requirements, as laid out in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, including:

- a) how the board is providing for the 14 required Youth service elements;
- b) approach towards meeting the 20% work experience, including the use of Registered Apprenticeship as a service strategy;
- c) approaches toward meeting the 75% OSY minimum expenditure;
- d) a description of changes in the youth provider's service delivery models;
- e) a description of any changes in outreach activities around Youth; and
- f) any changes in Youth case management approach, including the use of supportive services.

a) The SAWDB requires all youth providers to implement the necessary elements in accordance with WIOA. The 14 elements are available to youth through direct service by the youth provider or through referrals to partners and other community resources. Collaborations and coordinated referral processes are put in place to ensure effective delivery and tracking of services.

b) All youth providers are monitored closely, and often, to confirm that the required 20% of formulated funds are spent on work experience activities. These activities are necessary to achieve long-term goals established with the participants to gain skills and experience that would bolster their career prospects. The SAWDB will strengthen its relationship with the State Apprenticeship Program and work closely with regional employers to develop ongoing apprentice programs.

20% of formulated funds are spent on work experience activities

c) The key approach to meeting the 75% OSY requirement will be for workforce partners to develop a concentration of outreach and recruitment efforts of OSY and network with partners that historically serve this target population including city and county community centers, Title II Adult Education providers, juvenile justice facilities, and community-based organizations for recruitment. Additionally, individuals will be recruited by searching the employment services online database, as well



as screening those who walk into the workforce center for services. The SAWDB is developing a new marketing campaign to target communities and inform them of the advantages of our services to garner peer referrals and linkages with employers that need more skilled employees. The youth case managers will continue to enter activities for supportive service when it is provided. There is a broad range of activities to assist in academic and occupational learning (through the 14 elements), developing leadership skills, and preparing for further education and training that leads to employment.



- d) A new youth service provider has brought a different method of serving youth in the area that employs a comprehensive, cost-effective, and flexible strategy. This strategy utilizes a human-centered design to best identify participant needs and employs a positive youth development framework to effectively develop a service plan to meet participant needs. A comprehensive Objective Assessment is conducted at intake to develop an Individualized Education Plan that will work through barriers and establish education and employment goals. Customized recruitment efforts with partners that also serve in-school youth and out-of-school youth are the key to the effective delivery of services. Enhancing and developing a streamlined process between the new service provider and Title II Adult Education service providers will lead to co-enrollments that will help individuals complete the objective in their individual employment plans.
- e) The SAWDB has a Communications Manager who will work with the One-Stop Operator when coordinating outreach activities in the seven-county region. Outreach materials are disseminated in our schools and throughout the communities. The Board continues to increase our social media presence to reach our priority participants in outlying rural communities. Social media posts may consist of enrollment opportunities, promotional videos, success stories, and other recruitment efforts. The Board has several members that participate in community groups (boards, councils, and committees) that work with youth issues and they often share our programs with an audience that may not be familiar with all the services offered in our region.

Outreach materials are disseminated in our schools and throughout the communities

The Board has contracted with the youth service provider to perform the following outreach and recruitment activities:

- i. meet with school principal/counselor/school staff
 - ii. presentations at school staff meetings
 - iii. presentations in school classes/clubs/events
 - iv. presentations at youth community centers
 - v. staff meetings with entities that work with out-of-school youth
 - vi. connect with alternative sentencing programs (JCC, JJD, Drug Court)
 - vii. connect with other youth-serving organizations
 - viii. collaborate with Title II Adult Education programs
- f) All outreach activities are applied in conjunction with the adult programs to strengthen a co-enrollment activity. The youth provider integrates effective case management methods utilizing the Data Assessment and Plan (DAP) method to all youth participants by providing access to support services identified through the Individual Education Plan. DAP is a clinical model that includes both subjective and objective data as well as observations and all contact and progress notes. The youth case managers will continue to enter activities for supportive service when it is provided. There is a broad range of activities to assist in academic and occupational learning (through the 14 elements), developing leadership skills, and preparing for further education and training that leads to employment.



Adults & Dislocated Workers

§679.560(b)(6) and §679.560(c) Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area, including any services targeted toward adult populations with barriers, such as displaced homemakers, homeless adults, ex-offenders, single parents and pregnant women, and/or long-term unemployed.

Career Services

There are three types of “career services”: Basic career services, Individualized career services, and Follow-up services. These services can be provided in any order; there is no sequence requirement for these services. Career services, under this approach, provide local areas and service providers with the flexibility to target services to the needs of the customer.

The three categories of career services are defined as follows:

1. Basic Career Services

Basic career services must be made available to all individuals seeking services in the One-Stop delivery system, and include the following:

- Determinations of whether the individual is eligible to receive assistance from the Adult, Dislocated Worker, or Youth programs
- Outreach, intake (including identification through the State’s Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services) system of unemployment insurance (UI) claimants likely to exhaust benefits, and orientation to information and other services available through the One-Stop delivery system
- Initial assessment of skill levels including literacy, numeracy, and English language proficiency, as well as aptitudes, abilities (including skills gaps), and supportive service needs
- Labor exchange services, including Job search and placement assistance and, (when needed by an individual) career counseling, including the provision of information on in-demand industry sectors and occupations (as defined in sec. 3(23) of WIOA)
- Provision of information on non-traditional employment (as defined in sec.3(37) of WIOA)
- Provision of referrals to, and coordination of, activities with other programs and services, including those within the One-Stop delivery system and, when appropriate, other workforce development programs

- Provision of workforce and labor market employment statistics information, including the provision of accurate information relating to local, regional, and national labor market areas, including job vacancy listings in labor market areas
- Information on job skills necessary to obtain the vacant jobs listed
- Information relating to local occupations-in-demand and the earnings, skill requirements, and opportunities for advancement for those jobs
- Provision of performance information and program cost information on eligible providers of training services by program and type of providers
- Provision of information about how the local area is performing on local performance accountability measures, as well as any additional performance information relating to the area's One-Stop delivery system
- Provision of information relating to the availability of supportive services or assistance, and appropriate referrals to those services and assistance, including: childcare, child support; medical or child health assistance available through the State's Medicaid program and Children's Health Insurance Program; benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Assistance through the earned income tax credit, housing counseling and assistance services sponsored through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)¹, and assistance under a State program for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and other supportive services and transportation provided through that program
- Assistance in establishing eligibility for programs of financial aid assistance for training and education programs not provided under WIOA
- Provision of information and assistance regarding filing claims under Unemployment Insurance (UI) programs, including meaningful assistance to individuals seeking assistance in filing a claim, using staff (on-site) who are properly trained in UI claims, filing, and/or the acceptance of information necessary to file a claim, or by phone or via other technology, as long as the assistance is provided by trained and available staff and within a reasonable time
- The costs associated with providing meaningful assistance may be paid for by the State's UI program, the WIOA Adult or Dislocated Worker programs, the Wagner- Peyser Employment Service, or some combination of these funding sources

2. Individualized Career Services

If One-Stop center staff determines that individualized career services are appropriate for an individual to obtain or retain employment, these services must be made available to the individual. These services must be available in all One-Stop centers. One-Stop center staff may use recent or previous assessments by partner programs to determine if individualized career services would be appropriate. These services include

comprehensive and specialized assessments of the skill levels and service needs of adults and dislocated workers, which may include the following.

- Diagnostic testing and use of other assessment tools
- In-depth interviewing and evaluation to identify employment barriers and
- Appropriate employment goals
- Development of an individual employment plan to identify the employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate combination of services for the participant to achieve his or her employment goals, including the list of, and information about, eligible training providers
- Group and/or individual counseling and mentoring
- Career planning (e.g. case management)
- Short-term pre-vocational services, including the development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training. In some instances, pre-apprenticeship programs may be considered short-term pre-vocational services
- Internships and work experiences that are linked to careers
- Workforce preparation activities that help an individual acquire a combination of basic academic skills, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and self-management skills, including competencies in utilizing resources, using information, working with others, understanding systems, and obtaining skills necessary for a successful transition into and completion of postsecondary education, or training, or employment
- Financial literacy services
- Out-of-area job search assistance and relocation assistance
- English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs

3. Follow-Up Services

Follow-up services must be provided as appropriate for participants who are placed in unsubsidized employment, for up to 12 months after the first day of employment.

Counseling in the workplace is an appropriate type of follow-up service. Follow-up services do not extend beyond the date of exit in performance reporting.

The Adult and Dislocated Worker Program, under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, is designed to provide quality employment and training services to assist eligible individuals in finding and qualifying for meaningful employment and to help employers find the skilled workers they need to compete and succeed in business.

WIOA increases individuals with disabilities access to high-quality workforce services, preparing them for competitive integrated employment, and preparing vulnerable youth, and other job seekers, for successful employment through increasing the use of proven service model services.

Employment and Training Services

1. IEP - Individual Employment Plan

An IEP provides a tangible strategy that incorporates specific steps designed to accomplish the individual participant's employment goals through a comprehensive assessment.

2. ITA - Individual Training Account

The intent of an ITA is to augment the quality of skills training to meet the needs of both employers and job seekers alike. This is done by identifying training providers whose performance qualifies them to receive WIOA funds to be used to train adults and dislocated workers.

3. On-the-Job Training (OJT)

OJTs provide financial assistance to employers who agree to train WIOA-eligible and suitable individuals. The purpose of an OJT is the placement of individuals into appropriately skilled employment.

4. Customized Training

This training is designed to meet the needs of a specific employer or group of employers. The employer pays for not less than 50% of the cost of training and must commit to employ, or continue to employ, the worker(s) upon successful completion of any form of customized training.

Services that target individuals with barriers, such as displaced homemakers, homeless adults, ex-offenders, single parents, and pregnant women will be addressed by contacting State Agencies, Criminal Justice, etc. Partners will be cross-trained and case management that meets their needs will be identified.



5. Leadership Development Opportunities

Leadership development includes opportunities that encourage responsibility, confidence, employability, self-determination, and other positive social behaviors such as the following:

- Exposure to postsecondary educational possibilities
- Community and service-learning projects
- Peer-centered activities, including peer mentoring or peer tutoring
- Organizational and teamwork training, including team leadership training
- Training in decision-making, including prioritization and problem solving
- Citizenship training, including life skills such as parenting and work behavior training
- Civic engagement activities that promote the quality of life in a community
- Activities that place the youth in a leadership role such as serving on a youth leadership committee or a standing youth committee

6. Supportive Services

Supportive services are designed to ensure adults and dislocated workers' successful participation in appropriate WIOA Title I employment or training activities. WIOA activities may include linkage to community services, referrals to health care, and cost assistance with transportation, childcare, housing, work or education-related uniforms or attire, work or education-related tools, protective gear, and educational testing.

7. Follow-Up Services

Follow-up services are available for a period of up to 12 months following exit from the program. The goal of follow-up services is to ensure job retention, wage gains, and career progress for participants who have entered employment.

8. Comprehensive Guidance & Counseling

Comprehensive guidance and counseling are tailored for each participant. This may include career and academic counseling, drug and alcohol abuse counseling, mental health counseling, and referral to partner programs for which the counselor has coordinated the referral with the partner agency on behalf of the individual.

9. Financial Literacy

Financial literacy is provided through education or activities that assist participants to initiate checking and savings accounts at banks and making informed financial decisions; to support a participant with learning how to manage spending, credit, and debt, including student loans, consumer credit, and credit cards. This training also supports a participant's ability to understand, evaluate, and compare financial products and services; informs participants about identity theft, their rights regarding it, and ways

they can protect themselves from it; and supports the financial literacy needs of non-English speakers using multilingual financial literacy and educational materials.

10. Entrepreneurial Skills Training

This training provides the basics of starting and operating a small business, taking initiative, creatively seeking out and identifying business opportunities, developing budgets, forecasting resource needs, understanding various options for acquiring capital and the trade-offs associated with each option, and how communicating effectively to market oneself and one's ideas.



11. Labor Market & Career Awareness Information

Services that impart information to the participants about jobs that are in demand in the local labor market may include career awareness, exploration activities, and career counseling.

12. Transition to Postsecondary Education

Includes information about, and preparation for, college entrance. Also includes information about applying to colleges, financial aid, entrance testing, student life, pre-requisite courses, and more.

13. Transitional Jobs

Transitional jobs provide time-limited, paid work experience to individuals in southern New Mexico who have been chronically unemployed or have an inconsistent work history. Those jobs focus on training and employment for justice-involved individuals and emphasize more on transitioning youth co-enrollments to the Adult and Dislocated Worker program. Transitional jobs also serve to establish an effective system of communication with Youth and Adult service providers to inform youth participants of the occupations in demand, along with the opportunities available to enroll in adult training programs. This goal is to align the youth and adult service programs, build relationships that promote long-term success, and connect youth to the workforce system.

Time-limited paid work experience to individuals who have been chronically unemployed or have an inconsistent work history

Individuals with Disabilities

§679.560(b)(13) and §679.560(c) Describe how individuals with disabilities will be served through the one-stop center system in the local area, including copies of executed cooperative agreements which define how all local service providers, including additional providers, will carry out the requirements for integration of and access to the entire set of services available in the local one-stop delivery system. This includes cooperative agreements (as defined in WIOA sec. 107(d)(11)) between the LWDB or other local entities described in WIOA sec. 101(a)(11)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 721(a)(11)(B)) and the local office of a designated State agency or designated State unit administering programs carried out under title I of the Rehabilitation Act(29 U.S.C. 720 et seq.) (The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation within the NM Public Education Department and the Commission for the Blind) (other than sec. 112 or part C of that title (29 U.S.C. 732, 741) and subject to sec. 121(f)) in accordance with sec. 101(a)(11) of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. 721(a)(11)) with respect to efforts that will enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities and to other individuals, such as cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information and resources, cooperative efforts with employers, and other efforts at cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, such as improving or creating referral processes, joint enrollment and case management.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, as well as other federal programs, require that persons with disabilities have accessibility to services. Within the public workforce system, the workforce partners will meet monthly with the One-Stop Operator to discuss strategies to enhance the delivery of services to individuals with disabilities, as well as establish a cross-training program. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2010 nearly 1 in 5 persons (19%, 56.7 million) in the country have a disability and more than half disclosed that their disability is severe. The bureau states that

Forty-one percent of those age 21 to 64 with any disability were employed, compared with 79 percent of those with no disability. Along with the lower likelihood of having a job came the higher likelihood of experiencing persistent poverty; that is, continuous poverty over a 24-month period. Among people age 15 to 64 with severe disabilities, 10.8 percent experienced persistent poverty; the same was true for 4.9 percent of those with a non-severe disability and 3.8 percent of those with no disability

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

The Board recognizes that this statistic has a direct bearing on how the services at the New Mexico Workforce Connection Center should be structured and delivered to ensure that the workforce partners address the needs of those with disabilities, as well the barriers to training, education, and employment.

The Combined State Plan states, “In 2018, persons living in New Mexico who reported having a disability participated in the labor force at a much lower rate (37.6 percent) than persons without a disability (77.1 percent)” (Exhibit 23). This trend held true at the national level as well, with 41.6 percent of the population with a disability participating in the labor force versus 81.1 percent of the population without a disability.

In New Mexico, the unemployment rate for persons with a disability was 14.9 percent, 8.3 percentage points higher than the rate for persons without a disability. At the national level, the rate for those with a disability was 13.0 percent, 7.6 percentage points higher than the rate for those without a disability

Source: The New Mexico Combined State Plan, p.50

The One-Stop Operator will work with workforce partners to explore and implement strategies that will increase the number of individuals with disabilities in the labor force.

A key strategy is to ensure that those with disabilities receive integrated and coordinated services from the partners in the workforce system. The Board will work through its One-Stop Operator to align vocational rehabilitation services and core program services. This effort will provide better access to a variety of services and a streamlined process for those with disabilities. The Board will work with the New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, New Mexico Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and Commission for the Blind, who will be the lead partner, to facilitate how vocational rehabilitation services may be triaged not only at the workforce centers, but at other partner offices as well. The workforce partners will work to develop strategies to address the challenges that exist, such as;

- 1) Barriers to employment
- 2) Lack of opportunity to employment
- 3) For the public workforce system to work closely together with vocational rehabilitation

The Board’s objective is to strengthen the coordination among its workforce partners to guarantee that they are a part of an integrated system that delivers services that will enable those with disabilities to be skilled and competitive in the workplace. When provided with training, many individuals with disabilities are capable of competing with other skilled job seekers for high-demand occupations. An emerging initiative by DVR, One-Stop Operator, and the Board’s administrative entity is to implement an Integrated

Resource Team (IRT) by July 1, 2021. The IRT will bring partners together with individuals to address and identify solutions to their barriers in education or employment.

Another important element in the workforce system is cross-training with the workforce partners' staff. The Board's One-Stop Operator will organize and facilitate the cross-training activities, one of which will be on the topic of vocational rehabilitation eligibility, services, referrals, coordination, and how to triage and manage customers.

The New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, New Mexico Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and Commission for the Blind have been, and continue to be, an important partner within the workforce system. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act requires a closer and stronger relationship among the New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, the New Mexico Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and Commission for the Blind, and the WIOA Title IB programs and Wagner-Peyser.

The Program Manager for SW NM DVR, Mr. Erik Padilla, provided the following observations, challenges, and efforts within the system.

The barriers and challenges to employment that people with disabilities face are similar to those faced by people that do not have disabilities such as lack of employment opportunities relative to their skills and interests, transportation, lack of access to a computer and internet, lack of proficiency to utilize web-based services, and lack of access to resources available to them. Access to resources and programs is the barrier that effects people with disabilities the most and has been the focus of the SW workforce system over the last 6 months. Accessibility is not just a regional concern but is also something that needs to be addressed at the state-wide level.

The Program Manager for SW NM DVR, the One-Stop Manager for SW New Mexico, the Governor's Commission on Disability, the SW ADA Network, and the Project E3 team has worked together in coordinating training to workforce partner managers and staff to increase awareness and education about the responsibilities of workforce partner organizations in improving accessibility to workforce partner programs for which they are eligible by law under the ADA, ADA AAA, and WIOA, Section 188.

The reason for this initiative was based on direct feedback from participants and people with disabilities as well as receiving guidance and additional education on how other states, regions, and areas were working together as a workforce system to increase opportunities for the citizens in their

respective areas. The SW area team also received guidance and direction from the Governor's Commission on Disability, the Project E3 team, and the SW ADA Network.

This initiative has been in place for close to 4 years now, but has gained momentum due to being able to directly identify the responsibilities of the all workforce partners in serving people with disabilities as well as identifying the direct concerns that need to be addressed. Overall, training has been identified as the most essential to moving the SW workforce system forward to ensure compliance in providing access to people with disabilities, which in the past, workforce partner staff saw NM DVR and other partners that served people with disabilities as a place where people with disabilities seeking employment services should be referred to and exclusively served by. This is not the case and against the true spirit of WIOA, the ADA, and the ADA AAA.

Regarding workforce partners serving individuals with disabilities, Mr. Padilla went on to state:

NM DVR and other workforce partners that serve people with disabilities are considered specialized programs under the ADA and the ADA AAA, which means that a person with a disability does not have to be served by workforce programs specifically for people with disabilities if they choose not to, by law. It also means that people with disabilities have the right to access any program that they wish as long as they meet the eligibility requirements for that program with the understanding that policies, procedures, and eligibility requirements cannot directly or indirectly discriminate or weed out people with disabilities from being able to participate in federally funded programs.

This concept also identifies the spirit of WIOA in leading to the conclusion that instead of each workforce partner operating independently in serving their participants and referring participants based on their specific classification, that workforce partner staff and organizations should and must work together, regardless if they are co-located, to maximize efficiency and service to the people they serve and to include people with disabilities in that endeavor. In other words, a person with a disability essentially can be eligible for and a participant of multiple workforce programs simultaneously, and the workforce representatives serving that participant should work together in coordinating services necessary to assist that individual or employer with reaching their goals, which is to also ensure that there is not

any duplication of services and that all needs are being met in a timely manner to increase the chances of success of people with disabilities.

This concept is directly related to one of the goals of the four-year plan which is to increase the number of participants co-enrolled in multiple workforce programs for which they are eligible and to include people with disabilities. This strategy is also in line with exceeding the goals of the workforce partner organizations' performance measures which the federal government holds us accountable.

Mr. Padilla shared information about the Manual of Operating Procedures and training workforce partners.

NM DVR has continued to provide services to people with disabilities according to the federal regulations of RSA and the Manual of Operating Procedures (<http://www.dvr.state.nm.us/uploads/FileLinks/58e0c205b57c4c2a8301c25365b4b2cc/2013ManualOfOperatingProcedures.pdf>). NM DVRs focus is in providing unique services to individuals with disabilities in assisting them with reaching their career goals. There are a variety of services that NM DVR can provide to include self-employment, assistance with academic and other training costs, and variety of other services aimed at reducing and/or eliminating barriers to employment. Per federal regulations, NM DVR is obligated to have participants seek out comparable benefits first and then assist with any additional costs if appropriate. This includes title IV federal student aid, workforce partner program resources, state and federal Veteran Affairs VR programs, Supported Employment waiver programs, medical insurance, etc.

Based on the statements above, the key focus has been training due to workforce partner organizations mentioning that they are not trained to serve people with disabilities as to the reason why they refer people with disabilities to specialized employment assistance programs, instead of attempting to work together in having an individual participate and apply for all workforce programs for which they are eligible and can receive services. I would like to note here that there is nowhere in WIOA, Section 188, the ADA, or the ADAAA that states that a participant may not have access to programs for which they are eligible due to a lack of trained staff. These acts state the contrary in that no one can be discriminated against due to their status in a protected class.

In order to increase awareness and education in understanding the SW workforce system's responsibilities in working with people with disabilities, there have been multiple trainings provided:

- NM DVR General Program Training (completed: 10/7/2020)
- ADA Title I Training (completed: 10/13/2020)
- ADA Title II Training (completed: 10/27/2020)
- Why We Think What We Think Training (completed: 11/10/2020)
- IRT (Integrated Resource Team) Training (completed: 12/15/2020)
- Trails Model Development (In Process)
- Community Academy (completed: 11/20/2020)

These trainings have also been recorded, so that they may be accessed anytime to use for on-boarding new staff of the SW Workforce system. The ADA Title I, ADA title II, and Why We Think What We Think trainings were provided by Julie Ballinger of the SW ADA Network. The NM DVR Training was provided by the Program Manager for SW NM DVR. The Integrated Resource Team training was provided by the Project E3 team, Russ Thelin and Brian Ingram with John Walsh providing additional support over the last two years.

One of the models Mr. Padilla presented was the Trails Model.

The Trails Model concept consists of various committees utilized a hierarchal structure to be able to identify and address any concerns that are reducing efficiency, productivity, and service of the SW workforce system. This model can be utilized at a regional, local, or statewide level. We are hoping to have this established soon. We also hope to build on these trainings in order to ensure that the SW workforce system is in compliance and is moving towards becoming unified in serving the citizens of SW New Mexico as well as increasing the number of those citizens that are enrolled in multiple workforce programs simultaneously due to the nature and specializations of the various programs, which ultimately assists the citizens of SW New Mexico in maximizing their chances of success.

Mr. Padilla shared information about the Project E3.

The Project E3 team has been very helpful in providing support and guidance in many of the above stated initiatives. The Project E3 team consists of John Walsh, Russ Thelin, and Brian Ingram and is a national grant funded program and technical assistance provider that assists workforce programs with a focus on VR and improving services and employment outcomes for people with disabilities. The targeted areas

around the country are mainly centered around locations that have a high rate of unemployment.

The targeted sites for New Mexico are Albuquerque and Deming, New Mexico. For SW New Mexico, the Project E3 site in Deming was the sole site in SW New Mexico and all focus was with workforce partner staff in that region. Later, this was expanded throughout the SW region due to similar concerns being identified throughout the region and the state regarding the need for increasing awareness and education, accessibility for people with disabilities, and developing resource partnerships throughout the region. John Walsh is an ex-Director for New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired and now serves as a lead with George Washington University, Russ Thelin is the ex-Director of the VR system for the state of Utah and is also a professor of VR at UMASS, and Brian Ingram has many years of experience from the ground level to upper management in working for the workforce and VR systems in the state of Oregon.

A supplement to the projects and initiatives that were completed during this timeframe includes the Community Academy. The Community Academy concept is a way to bring representatives of the various programs and resources within the area that can assist with barriers to employment and the economy in general. The Community Academy is also an event to work towards increasing collaboration in serving the citizens within the area in moving towards the Integrated Resource Team model and increasing co-enrollments of participants in the workforce programs.

The SW Workforce system held the first Community Academy that was primarily focused on the Deming area on November 20, 2020. We hope to build on this by having a Community Academy event at a minimum of every 6 months, preferably every quarter and to also develop those for each specific location within SW New Mexico. For instance, a Community Academy for the Silver City area, one for Las Cruces, one for the Anthony area, etc.

Adult Education

In terms of Adult Education, Mr. Padilla shared the following:

In SW New Mexico, NM DVR and the workforce partners have a great relationship and it has been a pleasure working with ABE staff in serving participants. In serving our participants, there is not always a need of the participant to participate in Adult Education programs, but there are some

occasions where individuals will need to complete the NM GED, ESL courses, or additional trainings and education to make them more marketable or to prepare them for higher education in obtaining the degrees and/or credentials necessary to reach their employment goals. Whether or not a participant is going to need to access the Adult Education programs in on a case by case basis and dependent on the individual's employment goals, interests, informed choice, and the level of education at that point in time.

Other factors to consider when referring to Adult Education is whether appropriate accommodations can be provided to support Adult Education, this would not be true of all situations and is also dependent on the individual's cognitive abilities relative to any support/accommodations that can be provided. For instance, a participant that is Intellectually Disabled may not be able to successfully complete an Adult Education program with accommodations available and may not need to do so in order to reach their employment goal. Overall, there is not any concerns that I am aware of in referring or coordinating with Adult Education in serving people with disabilities in SW New Mexico.

There has been a mention related to accessibility in the Deming area for Adult Education, since support with Adult Education has to come down from Silver City and Adult Education staff will only assist people of the Deming area if there are enough people signed up for assistance at that time, which has discouraged people from signing up for the Adult Education program, since there is not always enough people signed up to receive assistance and service.

Next Steps

Mr. Padilla stated

The key next steps and future endeavors to build on the progress that has already been made are as follows:

- Identifying existing ADA Coordinators for each workforce partner (By law an organization with 50 or more employees must have at least one ADA Coordinator and follow the roles of the ADA Coordinator's rules and regulations)

- If necessary, select a staff member to complete the ADA Coordinator training program (ACTCP) through the Governor's Commission on Disability
- Once, ADA Coordinators are identified or established, a transition plan, ADA grievance procedure, and self-evaluation will need to be developed for each agency. Part of this process will include the initial review and evaluation of all workforce programs to ensure ADA compliance.
- Note: Non-compliance with the ADA can have significant implications on the SW Workforce system and the state in general.
- To continue to provide regular trainings and support to workforce partner staff on working with people with disabilities.
- To continue to increase the number of participants co-enrolled in workforce programs by utilizing the IRT model and developing strong relationships among the staff of the SW workforce system and its partners.
- To conduct more outreach and support to employers in providing awareness and education in employing people with disabilities. Overall, there are many employers that are disability friendly, however; the rural areas need some work in understanding the benefits of considering this population for their employment pool.
- Increasing the number of referrals from the Public-School systems of SW New Mexico who is one of the most critical workforce partners in relation to the WIOA requirements on pre-employment transition services to include students and youth with disabilities. There has been much collaboration conducted with the schools, however; there are many students and youth within our area that the public schools are not connecting to workforce programs. In particular, all students and youth with disabilities that plan on working after graduation should be referred to NM DVR and YDI (WIOA youth provider) to support the public schools and the students.

The pandemic has exposed several weaknesses regarding accessibility not just for people with disabilities, but others that are needing to access government programs for their livelihood such as unemployment and the IRS (stimulus checks). All programs have done their best to assist those in need during this time, but the workforce system and some other federal programs have room for improvement by becoming accessible and improving their level of service. The key is to work together and to stay connected with each other in serving the citizens of the area and the state. If we can just accomplish that, then we can make a greater impact in the lives

of the people that we serve and in exceeding any goals or performance measures that our organizations are accountable for.

We still have work to do as at this time, many people are not able to access or receive sufficient service over the phone for many programs that they are entitled to participate in. There needs to be an understanding that just because many organizations provide access on their web pages or on the internet that this means that everyone can understand, use, and/or access online services. Many people still need one on one assistance to access programs, resources, and services that they have the right to receive, which does not have to be provided in person or online, and can be provided over the phone with some direct assistance, patience, and understanding. Unfortunately, those right now that have had the experience of being referred to the website but needed more one on one assistance over the phone, are now not receiving resources and services that are entitled to them leading to these people struggling to live. This is contrary to the intention of these programs and services. Sometimes, all people need is for someone to take the time to make sure that they are receiving thorough considerate service, even if it takes the person helping them a little longer. This alone is considered accessibility and can be the difference between someone having to do without the things they need to live or not.

By increasing accessibility and removing policies, procedures, organizational cultures, and mentalities that are barriers to employment, programs, and resources, we can truly improve the quality of the lives of the citizens we serve, our communities, and our economy.

Source: Mr. Erik Padilla, Program Manager for SW NM DVR, Shared Information via E-mail: "Four Year Plan Feedback." Message to Steve Duran. 30 December 2020.

Veterans

§679.560(c) and §680, Subpart E Describe the board's strategic approach to serving Veterans to improve employment outcomes for this population, including priority of service efforts.

The Board places veterans and eligible spouses in a priority of service for job training programs, in accordance with Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 10-09.

WIOA services are available to veterans at the One-Stop centers. At the Las Cruces and Silver City, New Mexico centers, full-time veteran representatives assist veterans with a variety of services leading to either an educational track, employment track, or both. Veteran representatives are available at the Deming and Socorro centers by appointment.



The Combined State Plan states that it will also include a partnership with the Jobs for Veterans State Grants program (JVSG). To support and align this effort, the Board will work through its One-Stop Operator to coordinate with JVSG to assist veterans through this program.

Community awareness

Community awareness is an important component for reaching veterans and their eligible spouses who are not aware of the employment services available to them. As part of the Board's outreach and promotional campaign, veteran re-entry to employment will be promoted in each county of the region.

Partnership and coordination with veteran programs

As part of the ongoing process to enhance the services to veterans in the workforce system, workforce partners, the New Mexico Department of Veteran Affairs, and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs will be invited to periodic workforce partner meetings.

Cross-training of workforce staff

To ensure that veterans and their eligible spouses are properly served, cross-training among workforce staff is a priority. Workforce staff will be trained on the priority of services and how under the Title I Adult program, veterans and eligible spouses will receive the highest priority of service, followed by persons receiving public assistance, low-income individuals, or those who are basic skills deficient. The Code of Federal

Regulation, Section 680.650 states that veterans receive priority of service under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. As defined under WIOA sec. 3(63)(A) and 38 U.S.C. 101, receive. S.C. 4215 and described in 20 CFR part 1010. A veteran still must meet each program's eligibility criteria to receive services under the respective employment and training program. For income-based eligibility determinations, amounts paid while on active duty or paid by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for vocational rehabilitation, disability payments, or related VA-funded programs are not to be considered as income, in accordance with 38 U.S.C. 4213 and § 683.230 of this chapter.

To ensure veterans and their eligible spouses are properly served, cross-training among workforce staff is a priority

Pursuant to § 680.660, when a separating service member is separating from the Armed Forces with a discharge that is anything other than dishonorable, the separating service member qualifies for dislocated worker activities based on the following criteria:

- The separating service member has received a notice of separation, a DD-214 from the Department of Defense, or other documentation showing a separation or imminent separation from the Armed Forces to satisfy the termination or layoff part of the dislocated worker eligibility criteria in WIOA sec. 3(15)(A)(i);
- The separating service member qualifies for the dislocated worker eligibility criteria on eligibility for or exhaustion of unemployment compensation in WIOA sec. 3(15)(A)(ii)(I) or (II); and,
- As a separating service member, the individual meets the dislocated worker eligibility criteria that the individual is unlikely to return to a previous industry or occupation in WIOA sec. 3(15)(A)(iii).

Use of workforce center services

A job seeker's attainment of employment depends on using the available online resources at the center. Building a good résumé, posting it on the online system, learning and practicing good interview skills, and following the advice of the workforce staff are all important in obtaining employment.



Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers

§679.560(c), Parts 653 and 685 Describe, as appropriate, the board's approach to serving migrant seasonal farmworkers within its respective area to increase education and employment outcomes for this population.

The Board's approach to serving migrant seasonal farmworkers (MSFW) is to maximize the coordination of services among various workforce partners and training providers to increase education and employment outcomes. As part of these services offered, MSFW has access to career services, the high school equivalency program (HEP), training, housing assistance, supporting services, and services for youth. Referrals are made for qualified individuals. The OSO is leading the initiative to formulate a system for tracking the referrals as the NFJP currently does not have access to the WCOS system. There are approximately 5 NFJP staff in our region as co-located partners.

Outreach services will also be coordinated through the One-Stop Operator and in coordination with the State Monitor Advocate to enroll and provide individuals with the services and training. As stated in the Combined State Plan, "The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions will continue to conduct outreach services to MSFWs. Contacts will be conducted in person, through farm labor contractors, farmers, community agencies, and other community events. The outreach worker will also provide services to workers at their worksites."

In PY19, New Mexico reported that there were 686 MSFWs in the state. The outreach worker plans to conduct outreach services to approximately 1000 MSFWs throughout the state. During the peak season (May-October), the outreach worker will perform outreach services four days per week."

The Board has established a priority to meet the needs of farmworkers and seeks to provide the services offered by the workforce system. Seasonal farmworkers do not need to enter a workforce center when their seasonal employment ends to file for unemployment because they can use a toll-free number or computer to do so. This reduces the opportunity to make contact and offer workforce services for re-employment. Therefore, outreach to farmworkers is a necessary approach to offering them the services at the workforce center, including the message of the benefit of having a trained and skilled workforce, and how WIOA can help with training reimbursements. It is also a priority to develop strategies with the National Farmworker Jobs Program, as well as other workforce partners working with migrant and seasonal farmworkers.

In addition to the customary outreach services available, service providers should supply information on the benefits of training, which ultimately translates to higher earning potential and increased quality of life.

The Board examines the barriers to training for farmworkers with its workforce partners and determines how the barriers, including transportation needs, may be overcome.

Native Americans

§679.560(c) and Part 684 Describe, as appropriate, the board's approach to serving Native Americans within its respective area to increase education and employment outcomes for this population.

The Alamo Navajo Chapter of the Navajo Nation is in Socorro County. The Board currently contracts with the Alamo Navajo School Board to deliver WIOA Youth services on the Alamo Navajo Reservation. An objective for the next four years is to continue providing community awareness of services to adults and dislocated workers and to expand the work experience opportunities for youth in Magdalena and the City of Socorro. Work opportunities are extremely limited on the Alamo Navajo reservation. Community members need transportation to travel 60 miles one way each day. Partnerships with the public and private sectors will be explored within the communities to expand the academic and employment opportunities for Native Americans.

An objective for the next four years is to expand work experience opportunities for youth in Magdalena and the City of Socorro

Along with service providers, workforce partners, local governments, and other community-based organizations, the Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board will examine the barriers to training, including transportation needs. Based on the examination, the workforce partners and service providers will create a feasible plan and implement it.

The Alamo Navajo School Board (ANSB) is a non-profit 501(c) 3 organization. ANSB operates under resolutions from the Alamo Navajo Chapter and the Navajo Tribe. ANSB was organized within the Alamo Navajo Chapter to establish and operate Federal and State programs that serve the people of Alamo under Contracts, Grants, or Cooperative or Joint Powers Agreements.

Poverty and unemployment have been insurmountable obstacles to Alamo Community members who have not been in the mainstream and have little to no experience interacting with mainstream society. Historically, clients who went off-reservation for employment and/or post-secondary education had difficulty completing these programs due to barriers created by lack of transportation, affordable housing, childcare, basic-skill deficiencies, and other barriers. Many clients requesting assistance with postsecondary education or training are single parents with young children or older clients with families. They do not have supportive services to live off-reservation, maintain their program of education, and maintain their family responsibilities. In addition, mainstream institutions usually do not have personal counseling services to assist clients in maintaining their educational program as well as accessing the supportive services necessary for their retention and success.

Many clients are single parents or older individuals with families

The isolation, setting, and environment of the Alamo Navajo Reservation all have a major impact on the educational goals and aspirations of the Alamo Community. The Reservation consists of 63,109 acres of arid rocky land in west-central New Mexico. Alamo is one of the most isolated reservation communities in the entire state. A paved road, Highway 169, connects the Reservation with the nearest town, Magdalena. Magdalena (pop. 800) is located 32 miles south of the Alamo Navajo Chapter. Socorro is the county seat, 70 miles away, and the only nearby town of appreciable size. To seek services, clients must travel to Albuquerque or Socorro. Travel time to Albuquerque alone is 5 hours round trip.

Alamo is one of the most isolated reservation communities in the entire state

The lack of vehicles or vehicles in good repair and the rising cost of fuel also contribute to this problem. Geographic separation from the mainstream life of the state has caused a communications and services gap for the Alamo Navajo people. The distance to services for postsecondary education, staff development, and curriculum diversity can be financially and physically prohibitive for community members who are already educationally and financially disadvantaged.

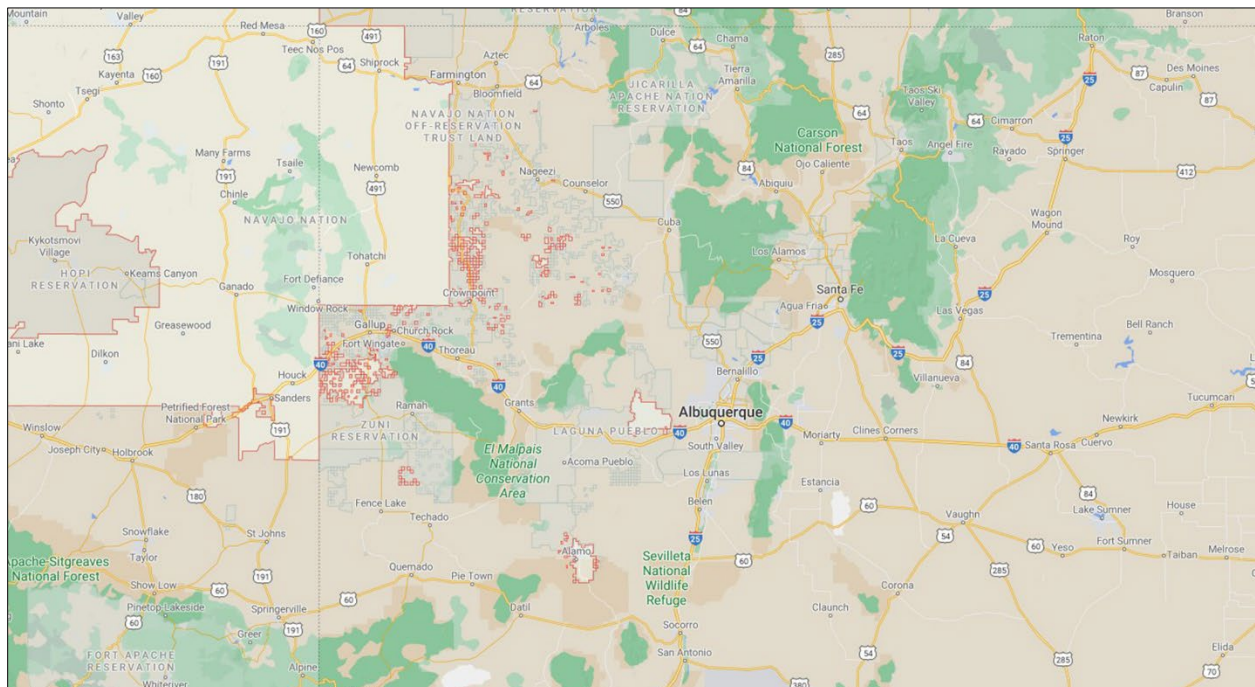
As seen in the following table, the population of Alamo represents over 11% of the total Socorro county population and the Native American population in the county primarily resides on the Alamo Navajo Reservation. The data documents the isolation and poverty of the Alamo Community in relation to the rest of the county, the rest of the state, and the rest of the Navajo Nation. Alamo is one of the poorest Reservation communities in the

State of New Mexico with an unemployment rate of 14.5%, an additional 63.5% of the population not in the labor force, and 43% of the population is living under the poverty level.

| | Alamo | Socorro | New Mexico | Navajo Nation | USA |
|----------------|--------------------|----------|------------|---------------|-------------|
| Population | 2,035 ¹ | 17866 | 2,059,179 | 178,100 | 308,745,528 |
| Per Capita | \$8,481 | \$18,206 | \$23,537 | \$10,248 | \$27,915 |
| % | 14.5% | 6.2% | 8.2% | 24% | 8.7% |
| % Not in Labor | 63.5% | 53.2% | 38.4% | 54.2% | 35.2% |
| % Native | 96.7% | 10.2% | 9.1% | 94% | .9% |
| % Living in | 43% | 27.4% | 19% | 37.2% | 10.5% |
| % < HS | 40.4% | 22.2% | 17% | 27.9% | 14.6% |
| Some College | 10.1% | 19.2% | 23.6% | 20.9% | 21% |
| Associate | 2.3% | 4.7% | 7.3% | 9.6% | 7.6% |
| Bachelor's | 3% | 11.3% | 14.7% | 5.1% | 17.7% |
| Master's | 0.26% | 9.8% | 10.8% | 4.2% | 10.5% |
| % Limited | 43.7% | 14.2% | 9.7% | | 8.7% |
| Public | 9% | 4.1% | 2.6% | 9.4% | 2.6% |
| Food Stamps | 41.4% | 17.8% | 11.2% | 28.5% | 10.2% |
| Median Age | 30.4 | 36.3 | 36.7 | | 37.2 |

Source: US Census 2010

The following map shows the size and location of the Alamo Navajo community in comparison to the Greater Navajo Nation. Socorro is the nearest city and Albuquerque is the nearest major city.



Individuals with Low Income

§679.560(c) and §680, Subpart E Describe how the board will identify and work with low-income individuals, including any plans to coordinate locally with the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program to serve this population, as well as to serve TANF exhaustees.

The Board identifies target populations by analyzing labor market data and the local economy weighed against local demographic data to assess program priorities and service limitations. This population includes public assistance recipients and those who are basic skills deficient. The analysis informs the development of programs, service design strategies, and opportunities that will align with the best interest of job seekers and employers. The local board works with service providers to design programs to increase access to, and opportunities for, the employment, education, training, and support services that individuals need to succeed in the labor market, particularly those with barriers to employment.

This work is accomplished by increasing the service providers' and workforce partners' capabilities to serve youth and adults with limited skills, limited or no work experience, and barriers to employment and/or training. The Board seeks to expand access to education and training opportunities for those not only in the TANF program, but other low-income individuals as well. This goal will be accomplished through the Board's One-Stop Operator who will coordinate services and develop methods with the TANF service provider to better serve low-income individuals at the workforce centers. Cross-training for staff among various workforce partners will be conducted to better understand and employ effective employment-based activities for serving low-income individuals.

Working with the TANF program, the Board will seek to improve its strategy and process to improve its service alignment across the workforce system.

The Board's key functions are to ensure that the workforce system aligns its planning and policies that can support low-income individuals to have better access to its Core programs through a unified process of serving low-income populations.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act requires a priority of service to low-income individuals. The policy has been established and partnerships with human services are in place to provide accessibility to the workforce system for those who are low-income. During the next several months, through the Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board's service provider, methods for better access to low-income individuals will be explored.

Older Individuals

§679.560(c) Provide a description of how the local board will coordinate WIOA title I workforce investment activities with the Senior Community Service Employment Program (Title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965) to serve the employment needs of older individuals.

Numerous factors may influence why older individuals are continuing to work into later years. These factors may include changes in personal, social, and economic circumstances, or merely a desire to remain socially engaged in their community. Medical advances have also resulted in a rise in life expectancy, potentially resulting in the need for individuals to return to the workforce if retirement funds run out and no longer cover living expenses.

Older individuals with low skills encounter barriers to education and employment and require work experience training that will lead to higher-skilled and higher-paying employment opportunities. The Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board will coordinate with the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) to develop strategies to provide effective employment-based activities for older individuals within the workforce system.



The Board will also align its actions with the Combined State Plan and those of the Aging and Long-Term Services Department and its goals: (1) to assist income-eligible persons, age 55 or older, to obtain employment (2) to provide community service through paid, part-time, training positions. Currently, SCSEP participants are located at the workforce centers and assist in the welcome function to help job seekers enroll and access job opportunities through the New Mexico Workforce Connection Online System.

Workforce partners will be trained to understand the barriers that older individuals encounter and how to address them. Title II Adult Education, Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation, and other partners are essential to the delivery of services for older individuals as they work together to assist individuals to address barriers to education

and employment. The partners will also research and analyze the literacy and numeracy data by county to develop actional steps. SCSEP, along with the Board's One-Stop Operator, will provide cross-training to the workforce partners. Through this joint planning and system design with SCSEP, older individuals will have better access to training and be more competitive in the workplace.

Workforce partners will be trained to understand the barriers older individuals encounter

Doña Ana Community College (DACC) is the local provider of Title II services for Doña Ana County. The program offers Integrated Education and Training programs, ESL, and ABE/ASE services at several DACC campuses across the county. DACC provides Title II services in Sunland Park, Anthony, Chaparral, and Las Cruces, with roughly half the student population living in rural communities in Southern Doña Ana County. During the pandemic, all programming moved online, including instructional and assessment programs. DACC typically services approximately 1,000 participants a year.

The New Mexico Department of Aging and Long-Term Care is an important partner within the workforce system. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act seeks partnerships that can address the workforce needs of all adults.

As part of the ongoing process to enhance the workforce system through the collaboration of partners, systems will be studied, and protocols will be written to address the needs of older adults.

The Board has supported the SCSEP program by establishing work sites for participants and serving as a program work site. SCSEP participants have received On-the-Job Training (OJT) in the areas of technical support and administrative support. Partner representatives attend partner meetings and are invited to collaborate on job fairs to align participants with potential employers.

The board has supported the SCSEP program and served as a program work site

Individuals with Low Literacy Levels

§679.560(b)(12) Provide a description of how the local board will coordinate WIOA title I workforce investment activities with adult education and literacy activities under WIOA title II. Describe the joint planning processes planned or underway that will enhance the provision of services to individuals with receiving adult education services, such as cross training of staff, technical assistance, sharing resources, sharing of information, cooperative efforts to improve or create referral processes, joint enrollment and case management. This description must also include how the LWDB will carry out the review of local applications submitted under title II consistent with WIOA Secs. 107(d)(11)(A) and (B)(i) and WIOA sec. 232.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act requires a priority of service to basic-skills deficient individuals. In collaboration with K-12 programs, Adult Education Service (AES) partners, and the private sector, strategies will be developed to address the low literacy levels in the Southwestern area. Research on best practices in and outside of New Mexico will be explored and examined for implementation in the workforce system.



The Board is actively engaged in collaborative planning with partners to expand the region's access to workforce services. The Board acts as the convener for the region to ensure consistency with the local plan and to advise on the alignment of resources with additional adult education and literacy providers.

The Board has developed agreements with partner agencies and providers to carry out this requirement within the one-stop delivery system. The agreements are made to offer system-wide development and training as well as the development of applicable policies and procedures.

*Agreements offer
system-wide
development and training*

Activities with Adult Education and Literacy under WIOA Title II are available in the metropolitan areas of the state but are limited in most rural counties. The SAWDB and Core partners have created leveraged resources amongst its programs to offer adult education services for the participants.

In addition to programs offered by the Adult Literacy partners, a range of career and training services will be available to individuals with low literacy levels who have been established as a priority for receiving services because they are basic-skills deficient. The delivery of AES services is determined by current occupations in demand as well as economic conditions in our region.



By utilizing systems such as WorkKeys, Key Train, and online training resources, the SAWDB can access data on the current needs of the clients related to education. This information is shared with the board of directors and our AES partners to determine if the availability and types of training offered are appropriate and meet the demands of the employers.



F. Coordination of Services Across Programs

Coordination with Wagner Peyser Services

§679.560(b)(11) Provide a description of plans, assurances, and strategies for maximizing coordination, improving service delivery, and avoiding duplication of Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.) services and other services provided through the one-stop delivery system;

The Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board plans to improve the alignment of services with the Core and additional workforce partners by working with Wagner-Peyser and other partners to enhance methods for the delivery of services.

Traditionally, the services offered to individuals have been delivered under the Wagner-Peyser program and Workforce Investment Act program, which include unemployment insurance services via telephone and the internet.

The Board, through the One-Stop Operator, will organize the partners and discuss the customer flow process to minimize the duplication of services and enhance the quality of services. The Workforce Center Service Guide identifies the processes for workforce staff to follow. The Service Guide contains three functional service teams. The teams include the Welcome Function Team, Skills Development Team, and the Business Services Team. Each team has its functions and mission statement, as shown below.

Welcome Team Mission

To greet customers with a smile, in a welcoming, inviting, and friendly manner; begin the assessment of customer skill levels consistent with employer needs; and direct customers by marketing the services and opportunities

Skills Team Mission

In a customer-friendly and professional environment, the Skills Team will facilitate skill/career development to assist motivated customers in becoming self-sufficient. Customers will explore new and enhanced existing career skills that are in demand by area employers. Customers will be able to sustain employment through the successful marketing of their skills.

Business Services Team Mission

The Business Services Team provides job-getting and skill-development services that develop qualified job seekers to meet area employer needs.

With the collaboration of workforce partners, a new customer flow diagram is now in place: a switchboard process, a customer greeting process, an intake questionnaire, a

process for helping those needing unemployment assistance, and a customer complaint process. These are some items in the new Workforce Center Service Guide.

All Workforce Connection Centers have a plan that involves the Three Functional Teams; all partners will share in these functions. The functions are in place to eliminate duplication of services and to improve the services to be delivered.

Coordination with Rapid Response Activities

§679.560(b)(7) A description of how the local board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response activities;

The local board will work closely with the Statewide Rapid Response team when there is a mass layoff in the Southwestern Area to help affected employees get training whether it be in the form of tuition assistance or job training.

In coordination with the State (DWS) Rapid Response team, and as stated in Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 19-16, “the Board will assist to promote economic recovery and vitality by developing ongoing, comprehensive approaches to identifying, planning for, or responding to layoffs and dislocations, and preventing or minimizing their impacts on workers, businesses, and communities.” A successful Rapid Response system must include:

- Informational and direct reemployment services for workers, including but not limited to: information and support for filing unemployment insurance claims; information about the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program; information on the impacts of layoff on health coverage or other benefits; information on and referral to career services; reemployment-focused workshops and services; and training.
- Delivery of solutions to address the needs of businesses in transition, provided across the business lifecycle (expansion and contraction), including comprehensive business engagement and layoff aversion strategies and activities designed to prevent or minimize the duration of unemployment.
- Convening, brokering, and facilitating the connections, networks, and partners to ensure the ability to provide assistance to dislocated workers and their families such as home heating assistance, legal aid, and financial advice.
- Strategic planning, data gathering, and analysis designed to anticipate, prepare for, and manage economic change.

Coordination with Secondary and Postsecondary Education System

§679.560(b)(9) Provide a description of how the local board will coordinate relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities with education and workforce investment activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services;

The Board will provide activities leading to the attainment of a secondary diploma or its recognized equivalent; a recognized postsecondary credential along with preparation for postsecondary education and training opportunities such as tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention; and recovery strategies that lead to the completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or a recognized postsecondary credential.

Education will be offered concurrently with, and in the same context as, workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

We can reduce the duplication of services through the assessment of skill levels and strengthening of our partnerships to help our system move toward shared resources, assessments, and support more co-enrollment. In doing so, we can reduce the intakes and assessments for the customer and workforce system.

Coordination with Core Programs

§679.560(b)(2)(iii) Describe how the local board will work with entities carrying out core programs to improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential (including a credential that is an industry-recognized certificate or certification, portable, and stackable).

The Board will work with educational institutions and employers to carry out activities leading to postsecondary credentials. To improve the industry-recognized credentials, the local board will do employer outreach in the area to determine what occupations are in demand and what the industries need for employees to obtain a credential.

In partnership with core partners, the Board has developed strategies and action plans for cross-walking and integrating career pathway services into the service delivery system at workforce centers and educational institutions. This integrated approach will result in concurrent learning and skills attainment models for individuals that will align skill attainment to target high-demand occupations. Emphasis will be on the support and

creation of training programs that result in a certificate or credential that is industry-recognized, portable, and stackable. The Board is developing a process connecting education and training strategies to supportive services that enable individuals to secure industry-recognized credentials to obtain employment within targeted occupations.

The Board will also do outreach for the portable credentials that participants have to see if there are occupations in demand where the applicant might be able to use his/her skills either in other geographic areas, at other educational institutions, or by other industries or employing companies. The Board will do outreach to help participants with stackable credentials that can be utilized in various occupations in demand.

Coordination of Supportive Services

§679.560(b)(10) Provide a description of how the local board will coordinate WIOA title I workforce investment activities with the provision of transportation and other appropriate supportive services in the local area.

Supportive services, including transportation, will only be provided to individuals who are (a) participating in career or training services (b) unable to obtain supportive services through other programs providing such services. Additionally, supportive services may only be provided when they are necessary to enable individuals to participate in Title I activities. The Board's supportive services policy is available at www.employnm.com and provides detailed explanations regarding eligibility and supportive services.

The Board will periodically examine its supportive services policies to be reflective of the needs of its participants. It will study how and what limits it should place in the following areas of supportive services:

- Books and supplies for training
- Computers and internet access
- Dependent care
- Educational testing
- Fees for applications, test, certifications
- Housing
- Medical and counseling services
- Transportation
- Auto insurance
- Auto repair
- Utilities

- Youth services
- Work attire or related costs
- Workplace accommodations

Coordination of Follow-up Services

§679.560(c) Provide a description of the board's follow-up policy and procedures for each of the targeted groups in Section G.

The Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board's follow-up services policy aligns with WIOA's regulations to ensure that workforce center staff remain in contact with existing customers after their last activity. Service providers will receive the guidance needed to do follow-up services for WIOA Adult, Dislocated Workers, and Youth providers. The policy became effective on July 1, 2017.

1. Youth

Follow-up services are critical services that are provided following a youth's exit from the program to help ensure the youth is successful in employment and/or post-secondary education and training. Follow-up services may include regular contact with a youth participant's employer, including assistance in addressing work-related problems that arise.

Follow-up services for youth may also include the following program elements:

- Supportive Services
- Adult mentoring
- Financial literacy education
- Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services
- Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training

Follow-up services must be provided to all participants for a minimum of 12 months unless the participant declines to receive the services. Information from the Youth follow-ups must be entered into the State database called New Mexico Workforce Connection Online System (NMWCOS), every quarter, following exit. All contacts and attempts to contact an individual for a follow-up must be entered into NMWCOS. Evidence of a minimum of 2 attempts to contact an individual not available must be documented in NMWCOS to constitute a follow-up.

Follow-up services must be provided, as appropriate, including counseling regarding the workplace, for participants in adult or dislocated worker workforce investment activities who are placed in unsubsidized employment, for up to 12 months after the first day of employment. As a requirement for applying for supportive services under WIOA, other related resources in the area (including One-Stop partners) must first be explored. Applicants and participants shall secure documentation of denial from all other available community resources that the applicant was referred by the case manager. Such efforts shall be documented in the participant's file. To prevent the duplication of costs and efforts, participants first must exhaust related available services before WIOA services will be authorized.

Coordination of Service Priorities

§679.560(b)(21) Describe the direction given by the Governor (NMDWS) and the LWDB to the one-stop on how the board will coordinate outreach efforts across partner programs for shared customers and target populations.

The Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board, in accordance with WIOA sec. 134(c)(3)E and 680.600 of the WIOA DOL Rule, establishes the Priority of Service that is given to the One-Stop Operator for participants that are low-income, on public assistance, or who are basic-skills deficient. The Board establishes a Priority of Service for veterans or eligible spouses of veterans, who are followed by other individuals who are NOT low-income, on public assistance, basic-skills deficient, veterans or spouses of veterans, but meet WIOA's eligibility requirements. The priority of services always exists, regardless of funding.

The Board will ensure that the service provider incorporates the Priority of Service into their application process for every individual receiving career or training services and that the service provider's management self-monitors their program for compliance. The One-Stop Operator will ensure that the Priority of Service requirements are being met by conducting a review and monitoring of the process not less than six times per year. The Board will conduct desk reviews at least four times per year by sampling participants to ensure compliance.

*The One-Stop Operator
will ensure that
Priority of Service
requirements are met*

1. Order of Priority

In accordance with TEGL 03-15, priority will be provided in the following order:

- First, to veterans and eligible spouses who are also included in the groups given statutory priority for WIOA adult formula funds. This means that veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic-skills deficient will receive first priority for services provided with WIOA adult formula funds
- Second, to non-covered persons (that is, individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses) who are included in the groups given priority for WIOA adult formula funds
- Third, to veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in WIOA's priority groups
- Last, to non-covered persons outside the groups given priority under WIOA

The local board has given the Service Providers direction to give priority to participants that are low-income, on public assistance, or are basic-skills deficient. This process follows the WIOA sec. 134(c)(3)E and 680.600 of the WIOA DOL Rule, stating that WIOA establishes a priority requirement with respect to funds allocated to a local area for adult employment and training activities.

Coordination of Outreach Efforts

[§679.560\(c\)](#) Describe how the board will coordinate outreach efforts across partner programs for shared customers and target populations.

The Board's vision for outreach is for workforce partners to have a targeted and coordinated Outreach Plan to address the needs of employers, job seekers, and youth. The One-Stop Operator, along with the workforce partners, will establish an Outreach Plan that outlines their objectives and the coordination across the partners' programs and targeted populations. Through the Board's Outreach Committee, the One-Stop Operator and partners will periodically measure the performance of the Outreach Plan.

*The One-Stop Operator
and partners will measure
the performance of the
Outreach Plan*

For the Outreach Plan, youth partners will incorporate their strategies for youth, both in-school and out-of-school. The youth service provider, Job Corps, school districts, and

other agencies who focus on providing direct services to youth, are essential to the development of this section of the Plan, as they know what is effective and efficient.

Similarly, Wagner-Peyser, WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker, Adult Education and Family Literacy, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and other workforce partners who focus on providing services to job seekers will help incorporate strategies into their respective sections in the Plan. The partners should consider their common goals, objectives, targeted locations, populations to engage, outside agencies who can serve as advocates, media and materials, staff roles, and frequency of team meetings.

Employers are the end recipients of skilled youth, and they will support the workforce needs and help make the employers more competitive within their industries. The One-Stop Operator will organize partners whose participants require placement into employment. The partners will help develop the Outreach Plan specific to employers, including agricultural employers.

The Combined State Plan includes an assessment of farmworkers' needs and addresses employment, training, and housing. This local plan aligns itself with the State's plan to address not only the workforce needs of farmworkers but the agricultural industry at large. Workforce partners will address their method for engaging farmworkers and employers offering WIOA services to agricultural employers and job seekers; enhance and cultivate a network of organizations whose mission and target population is similar with WIOA and Wagner-Peyser; coordinate employment and training services that are offered at the workforce centers and with other training programs, such as the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program and WIOA Sec. 167 grantees from New Mexico and El Paso, Texas; participate in agricultural outreach planning and services with other programs and organizations; participate in establishing annual measurable goals with the workforce partners for the delivery of services; participate in reporting performance measures and outcomes; monitor the effectiveness of the Welcome Function with agricultural employers and job seekers through the local



Workforce partners will address their method for engaging farmworkers and employers

workforce board's One-Stop Operator; and work with the State Monitor Advocate to identify the strengths and weaknesses of systems and services at the local level. The One-Stop Operator will also use WorkforceGPS to access the agricultural modules of the online training program to explore other outreach options for engaging farmworkers.

Outreach to targeted populations will be provided by using printed materials, social media, websites, banners, flyers, and public service announcements.

Coordination of Professional Development Activities

§679.560(c) Describe how professional development activities will be coordinated across all partner programs staff.

The One-Stop Operator will gather and facilitate the cross-training process among the workforce partners. Ultimately, the One-Stop Operator will publish a cross-training and workforce development plan that incorporates the frequency and methodology that will be used to train partners on each other's programs and services. The primary media for the cross-training could be 7 to 10-minute audio-based PowerPoint training presentations that can be viewed online during an employee's onboarding or as a refresher or a reference tool.

In addition to the cross-training among programs and services, the One-Stop Operator will facilitate and offer other types of training to workforce partner staff through the following online sites:

Geographic Solutions Online Training

"WorkforceGPS" Online Training (PowerPoint and video-based).

"WorkforceGPS" provides a large library of self-paced trainings that brings together many aspects of WIOA for a workforce professional, such as:

- Financial management
- Labor market workforce information
- Performance management
- Service to Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act 101
- Veterans Priority of Service
- The Agricultural Connection

In addition, and as a standard practice, the Board's Administrative Entity will provide ongoing training and technical assistance throughout the program year to service providers, training providers, and the One-Stop Operator. The training will range from local board policies to state and federal regulations, as well as the local plan's goals and objectives.

The workforce system partners serve a broad spectrum of the state's population, providing training and services to adults and youth, including dislocated workers, low-income individuals, migrant and seasonal farm workers, individuals training for nontraditional employment, veterans, public assistance recipients, and individuals with multiple barriers to employment, including older individuals, individuals with limited English-speaking proficiency, and individuals with disabilities. Workforce system partners are responsible for the delivery of a broad range of services focused on education, workforce education, and training for this diverse pool of participants. These partners will also participate in cross-training and establish with the local board areas shared success indicators, operating strategies and procedures, and customer flow, where appropriate, for effective seamless service delivery

Coordination of Referrals

[§679.560\(c\) Describe how the board will coordinate customer referrals across partner programs.](#)

The Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board, through its One-Stop Operator, will work with its workforce partners to enhance the existing customer referral process across partner programs. The referral process is one of the cornerstones for determining how services are delivered to a customer through the workforce system. Internal referrals within the



workforce center are a simpler process in comparison to referrals to workforce partner programs outside of the workforce center. Since the inception of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, the workforce center programs have referred customers to programs both within and outside of the center. The referral process currently in place within various programs at the workforce centers is made through the New Mexico Workforce Connection Online System's software system. This process works well; however, a different method is used with workforce partners who are not co-located at the workforce centers. This process involves hand-carried referrals by the customers

from one program to another, telephone referrals, or faxed referrals. Federal regulations require confidential information, including identifiable information, to be transmitted through a secure site and/or process. Various Core partners and additional partners do not use the same secure online software system to manage customers. Therefore, they do not interface, and workforce staff does not have access to partners' systems. As such, the customer referral process is not entirely efficient and can result in a customer being dropped from the system and not receiving the needed services.

An online referral system is available in the NMWCOS. Software training is required for all partners. Partners not currently using the NMWCOS will need access granted by NMDWS and will be required to take the Security Awareness Training (SAT) annually. Service providers will develop a referral process to ensure customers are referred to the appropriate services promptly and will align services across multiple service delivery systems/partners through a unified plan, and performance outcomes in all core programs.

Coordination with Other Partner Programs

§679.560(c) Describe any other services provided in the one-stops to support the local workforce development system and customers. Include any coordination plans or activities the board has with any other partner programs such as, AmeriCorps, Job Corps, Youth Build, Mission: Graduation, Innovate Educate, etc.

The Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board, its One-Stop Operator, and service providers service hundreds of customers every week. With so much contact with customers comes the need to coordinate services with partners, such as Job Corps, Youth Build programs, and other community-based programs. The Board currently has memoranda of understanding with the National Farmworker Jobs Program, and with the low-income housing program in Doña Ana County to coordinate services and activities. In addition to connecting with these programs, the Board's Administrative Entity will continue to engage with economic development offices and other agencies to develop strategies for services, leverage resources, and minimize the duplication of services.



Job Corps is co-located at one of the Board's workforce centers in Las Cruces, New Mexico. Cubical space is and will continue to be afforded to Job Corps and other partners in Silver City, Deming, and Socorro, New Mexico. This type of partnership

provides a strong support mechanism for Job Corps youth, as they can access the NMWCOS database. In addition, Job Corps participants can take advantage of résumé writing services, job search, and the On-the-Job Training programs that are offered at the workforce centers.

The Board will continue to explore and be receptive to developing relationships with other organizations that support the mission of workforce development within the region.

The Board's One-Stop Committee will recommend policy to the Board and offer guidance to the Administrative Entity and One-Stop Operator on the coordination with other partner programs. The focal point of the policy is to ensure that the workforce partners are coordinating their efforts to provide a streamlined service to customers.

The One-Stop Operator's responsibility is to have the workforce partners meet regularly to ensure that their methods and procedures are effective and efficient. Goal setting and measuring the workforce partners' progress is an important and key function to ensure efficiency within the program.

The Board's administrative entity and several of the New Mexico Workforce Connection Center partners have participated in providing technical information to The Bridge of Southern New Mexico, a community-based organization, in their development of a workforce talent strategic plan, titled the Doña Ana County/Borderplex Joint Regional Workforce Talent Development Strategic Plan.

Through a community collaboration of organizations, the group worked together to identify and understand the barriers to success, plus to identify eight industries and their occupational pathways. This organization has held business roundtables with three sectors in Doña Ana County: Aerospace, Commercial

Space, and Defense Industries; International Trade Industries; and Energy Industries; Their reports for each of these sectors include "an analysis of the skills, knowledge, and abilities needed for a comprehensive and well-qualified talent pipeline: for these industries. This information is available to the SAWDB. Future collaboration with The Bridge of Southern New Mexico and the communities of Doña Ana and El Paso brings awareness of the workforce needs in our communities and helps drive the economy in a positive direction.

The group worked together to identify and understand the barriers to success

The New Mexico National Guard Youth Challenge Academy, a state-supported program, is a 17 ½ month program that starts with a demanding 22-week quasi-military residential phase for cadets in Roswell, NM. It is followed by a year of mentoring support to help the cadets maintain positive lifestyles. The program is for young men and women, ages 16 to 18, who are not currently attending school or do not have enough credits to graduate from high school. The Board will work with the program to develop a pathway to transition youth who reside in the Board’s seven-county area under the WIOA out-of-school youth program. This partnership will leverage federal and state resources and seek to develop greater positive outcomes that lead to career training and job placements for the youth in the region.



One-Team Approach

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act calls for a fully integrated model with Adult Education and Family Literacy, and Vocational Rehabilitation to better serve individuals and employers.

The One-Team Approach is a “We” concept of how staff think about their workforce partners as one team.



Management from the different partners will develop training programs and practices to incorporate this approach into the workforce system’s daily practices.

ADMINISTRATIVE ELEMENTS

G. Fiscal and Performance Management

§679.560(b)(14) Identify the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds described in WIOA sec. 107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III).

Disbursement of Funds

The South Central Council of Governments is responsible for the disbursement of grant funds described in WIOA sec. 107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III). The South Central Council of Governments shall disburse the grant funds for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act activities at the direction of the local board.

§679.560(b)(15) Provide a detailed description of the competitive process that will be used to award the subgrants and contracts for WIOA title I activities. (Please provide a copy of the board's procurement policy or policies, including conflict of interest provisions as a part of Attachment A.)

Competitive Process

The Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board follows the New Mexico State Procurement Code 13-1-1 through 13-1-199 NMSA 1978, and in conjunction with the requirements under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, such as, but not limited to, the procurement of one-stop operators and service providers.

- The Code of Federal Regulations, Section 662.410 states the following on how the One-Stop Operator is selected.
- “The Local Board, with the agreement of the chief elected official, must designate and certify One-Stop Operators in each local area.
- The One-Stop Operator is designated or certified:
 - Through a competitive process
 - Under an agreement between the Local Board and a consortium of entities that includes at least three or more of the required One-Stop partners identified at §662.200, or
 - Under the conditions described in §§662.420 or 662.430. (WIA sec.121(d), 121(e) and 117(f)(2))
- The designation or certification of the One-Stop Operator must be carried out in accordance with the “sunshine provision” at 20 CFR 661.307.”

§679.560(b)(16) Provide the local levels of performance negotiated with the Governor (NMDWS) and chief elected official consistent with WIOA sec. 116(c), to be used to measure the performance of the local area and to be used by the local board for measuring the performance of the local fiscal agent (where appropriate), eligible providers under WIOA title I subtitle B, and the one-stop delivery system in the local area, in Attachment E.

Local Performance Levels

The negotiated performance levels for Program Year 2018 and 2019 are shown in the following table.

| Performance Measures – PY 2018 & 2019 | Adult | Dislocated Worker | Youth |
|--|---------|-------------------|----------|
| Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit | 77.0% | 72.0% | 65.0% |
| Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit | 78.0% | 59.0% | 81.0% |
| Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit | \$7,500 | \$7,100 | Baseline |
| Credential Attainment 4th Quarter After Exit | 60.0% | 67.0% | 58.3% |

§679.560(b)(17) Describe the actions the LWDB will take toward becoming or remaining a high-performing workforce development board.

To work toward fulfilling the needs of employers in the area, the Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board will need to coordinate with its key workforce partners and employers to identify the needs and expected outcomes within the region. The Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board may establish a makeshift committee to implement the region's Career Pathways Plan.

The Southwestern Workforce Development Board, throughout its years of performance under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, met and/or exceeded its performance measures in the areas of entered employment, average six-months earnings, retention, entered employment or education for youth, literacy and numeracy gains, and credentials earned. It has been a very successful board in many facets and will continue to pursue improvements in its performance and the performance of its service and training providers under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. As an example of innovation that pursues high performance, the Board established a Summer Youth program that provides career exploration, classroom training, paid work experience, and

the connection with the WIOA Adult program that will lead to Individual Training Accounts and On-the-Job Training opportunities for youth.

The Board will also periodically examine its vision, structure, future initiatives, and partnerships as it develops strategies for its programs and how it can best support economic development and the employers in the region. It will convene stakeholders, align its partner program, and seek to increase capacity among partners.

At the board level, the Board has incorporated professional development items on its board meeting agenda to educate its board members on the workforce system. Testimonials are also incorporated into the meetings. Both participants and employers will continue to provide board members with first-hand accounts of their experience in the WIOA program.

The Board will also benefit through its National Association of Workforce Board membership where it will obtain the latest information on workforce matters and practices. In addition, the Board will utilize WorkforceGPS as a training platform to build the board members' knowledge of WIOA and its systems.

[§679.560\(b\)\(18\) Describe how training services outlined in WIOA sec. 134 will be provided through the use of individual training accounts, including, if contracts for training services will be used, how the use of such contracts will be coordinated with the use of individual training accounts, and how the local board will ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs regardless of how the training services are to be provided.](#)

In accordance with WIOA Section 134(b), Local Employment Training Activities, funds allocated under the Act for adults and dislocated workers will provide for Career Services, Individual Training Accounts, On-the-Job Training, and Customized Training. Individuals will be screened for eligibility, as provided in the Act. Individuals will receive an orientation of services, assessment of skill levels, supportive service needs, labor exchange services, referrals to partner programs, labor market information, as well as a list of eligible training providers with customer choice instructions for those entering training programs.

The Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board will require that service providers maintain a customer choice document signed by the participant outlining the customer choice requirements, as required by the Act. This requirement will be monitored through the Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board's monitoring process on an annual basis.

§679.560(c) Boards may implement a pay-for-performance contract strategy for certain elements, for which the board may reserve and use not more than 10 percent of the total funds allocated to the board under WIOA Section 128(b). Describe any plans the board may have to use pay-for-performance contracts to communicate performance expectations to service providers.

As a preliminary phase to issuing a request for proposals involving pay-for-performance contracts, the Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board may explore the benefits and methods of issuing such contracts with its administrative entity and legal counsel. The Board may request technical assistance from the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions to ensure that it follows federal and state regulations, as it relates to pay-for-performance contracts.

§679.560(c) The local board grant agreements require boards to achieve or exceed a Minimum Training Expenditure Requirement of 60%. Local boards should obligate a minimum of 80% and expend a minimum of 40% of current year funding by the end of the third quarter of the program year. Please report on the local board's expected obligation and expenditure rates for PY 2019.

The Board prepares a 15-month budget beginning in July and ending in September of the following year. Local boards are allowed two years to use their funds. The Board intends to achieve or exceed the minimum training expenditure requirement of 40%, as well as achieve or exceed the minimum annual obligation and expenditure requirements of 80% and 40%, respectively.

The Board has traditionally used at least 50% of its Adult and Dislocated Worker funds for training. It is anticipated that the Board will incrementally increase its participant expenditure amount to 60% by the end of PY21. The Board plans to achieve this requirement by establishing minimum expenditure levels in its service provider's contract. The Board will also use a monthly desk review process to ensure that expenditures are consistent with the contractual level. Information will be reviewed by the Board's Monitoring/Performance Committee which will report the information to the Board. If the service provider is not meeting the minimum requirements, the Board's administrative entity will request an action plan outlining the service provider's steps to remedy the deficiency.

The board will use a monthly desk review process to ensure expenditures are consistent with contractual level

§679.560(b)(20) Describe how one-stop centers are planning to implement or transition to an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system for programs carried out under WIOA and by one-stop partners.

The Board currently has the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act's Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth (Title IB) programs integrated with the Wagner-Peyser program in the One-Stops located in Deming, Las Cruces, Silver City, Socorro, and Sunland Park, New Mexico.

The Board has determined that there are significant barriers in the way customers are serviced among the different partners and programs. The WIOA Wagner-Peyser and Title IB programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) have and will continue to use the New Mexico Workforce Center Online System, which is capable of registering individuals into one system. The issue lies with the New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and Commission for the Blind and Adult Education Services partners because they use different online client management software that does not interface with NMWCOS.

The Board, through its One-Stop Operator, will promote the use of the NMWCOS with workforce partners for referrals, intakes, and case management. They will also evaluate systems and propose an interface system that will work for all partnering programs.



H. Definitions

§679.560(c) Because the State has chosen not to define “additional assistance,” as it relates to WIOA Youth program eligibility, each local board has the responsibility for determining its own definition of this eligibility category. If the local board wishes to use this eligibility category, a local policy must be developed that specifies what conditions must be met for a youth to require “additional assistance” and what documentation is needed to demonstrate this eligibility category. In each area, not more than five percent of the in-school-youth under WIOA Section 129(3)(B) may be eligible under “individual who requires additional assistance” to complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment. If applicable, provide the definitions the board uses for “requires additional assistance” and a copy of the related local policy as a part of **Attachment A**.

The Board created Policy 18-03.1 Youth Requires Additional Assistance for the WIOA Youth program. This board defines a person who requires “additional assistance” as “an individual (including a youth with a disability) who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or secure and hold employment.” A copy of this policy is listed under Attachment A and contains what conditions must be met for youth to require “additional assistance” and what documentation is needed to demonstrate this eligibility category.

§679.560(c)The state defines “basic skills deficient” for Adults and Youth as follows.

- For Adult – An individual who is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual’s family, or in society.
 - For Youth – An individual who computes or solves problems, reads, writes, or speaks English at or below the eighth-grade level on a generally accepted standardized test or comparable score on a criterion-referenced test. Please describe the process the board uses to test individuals for basic skills deficiency.
-

The Board authorizes its service providers to use WorkKeys Conversion Table for determining basic-skills deficiency (BSD) for Adult and Dislocated Workers individuals. A score of 4 or below is considered basic-skills deficient. For youth, the Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE) is used and anything below 8.9 is considered basic- skills deficient. The TABE is administered at intake to all youth participants and is used to determine the need for educational assistance and/or eligibility reasons. The assessment is administered through the Online TABE system through DRC INSIGHT. Youth participants are initially assessed with the locator test that determines the

appropriate level of the TABE 11/12 the participant will continue with. TABE results administered by partner agencies for referred participants are used if assessed is within the last six months. Tutoring is provided to participants testing basic skills deficient to increase skills and a post-TABE is administered within 6 months to determine a measurable skill gain of at least one educational functioning level. Post-TABE can continue up until one year of program participation. With the need for remote services, the youth provider is in the process of certifying youth staff to conduct remote proctoring of the TABE assessment.

As stated in WIOA Section 3 Basic Skills Deficient is defined as follows:

BASIC SKILLS DEFICIENT.—The term “basic skills deficient” means, with respect to an individual— (A) who is a youth, that the individual has English reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 8th grade level on a generally accepted standardized test; or (B) who is a youth or adult, that the individual is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual’s family, or in society.

I. Note on Regional Planning

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act identifies specific requirements for any planning that will occur across local areas, i.e. “regional areas.” This requirement does not apply in New Mexico as the New Mexico WIOA State Combined State Plan designates our existing four local areas as the regional planning areas; however, LWDBs are encouraged to describe regional economies in their local area and provide strategies of how unique regional economies will be addressed.

J. Assurances

| # | Assurance | Indicate Yes / No |
|-----|--|-------------------|
| 1. | The LWDB obtained input into the development of the Local Plan and provided an opportunity for comment on the plan by representatives of local boards and chief elected officials, businesses, labor organizations, institutions of higher education, the entities responsible for planning or administrating the core programs and other programs included in the Plan, other primary stakeholders, and the general public, and the Local Plan is available and accessible to the general public. | Yes |
| 2. | The LWDB has established a policy identifying circumstances that may present a conflict of interest for a local board member, or the entity or class of officials that the member represents, and procedures to resolve such conflicts. | Yes |
| 3. | The LWDB has established a policy to provide to the public (including individuals with disabilities) access to meetings of local boards and local boards, and information regarding activities of local boards, such as data on board membership and minutes. | Yes |
| 4. | The LWDB has established fiscal control and fund accounting procedures necessary to ensure the proper accounting for funds paid to the local boards for adult, dislocated worker, and youth programs to carry out workforce investment activities under chapters 2 and 3 of subtitle B. | Yes |
| 5. | The Federal funds received to carry out a core program will not be expended for any purpose other than for activities authorized with respect to such funds under that core program. | Yes |
| 6. | Service providers have a referral process in place for directing Veterans with Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) to DVOP services, when appropriate. | Yes |
| 7. | The LWDB has implemented a policy to ensure a process is in place for referring veterans with significant barriers to employment to career services provided by the JVSG program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist. | Yes |
| 8. | The LWDB established procedures that set forth criteria to be used by chief elected officials for the appointment of local workforce investment board members. | Yes |
| 9. | Priority of Service for covered persons is provided for each of the Title I programs: and | Yes |
| 10. | The LWDB has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 2900 and WIOA 184(a)(3). | Yes |

ORIGINAL RECORD OF ASSURANCES AND SIGNATURES ON FILE AT
600 HWY 195, ELEPHANT BUTTE, NM 87935

Signatures:



12/20/2022

Chief Elected Official Chair

Date



12/20/2022

Local Board Chair

Date

K. Attachments

MODIFICATION UPDATE

Attachment A Provide on a flash drive, copies of all LWDB policies relevant to the implementation of WIOA. (Refer to Section III of these guidelines, Process for Plan Modifications, for information on required updates to this section.)

The following policies are current in the Southwestern region and can be found on the New Mexico Workforce Connection Southwestern Area regional website:

<https://www.employnm.com/policies-regulations>

To view the policies, use the hyperlinks below.

- 13-1 [Contract Signature Authority Policy](#)
- 14-1 [Electronic Signature Policy](#)
- 15-1 [Contract Procedure Policy](#)
- 17-01 [Oversight Monitoring Policy](#)
- 17-03.4 [On-the-Job Training Policy](#)
 - [On-the-Job Training Policy Addendum #1](#)
 - [On-the-Job Training guidance Letter DWS 18-006](#)
 - [SWAGL 22-02 OJT Reimbursement Waiver](#)
- 17-08.5 [Individual Training Account Policy](#)
 - [ITA Addendum No. 1 – Film Industry and Digital Media](#)
 - [SWAGL 15-1.2 ITA Waiver Request Letter](#)
 - [SWAGL 17-02 Occupation in Demand/Labor Market Analysis](#)
 - [LLSIL PY2020 Income Table](#)
- 17-09.5 [Supportive Services Policy](#)
 - [SWAGL 19-02 Laptop Purchases](#)
- 17-11 [Eligible Training Provider List Policy](#)
- 17-12 [Technical Assistance and Training Policy](#)
- 17-16 [Self-Sufficiency Policy](#)
- 17-17 [One-Stop Delivery System Policy](#)
- 17-18.2 [Follow-Up Services Policy](#)
- 17-19.1 [Electronic Files Content & Records Management Policy](#)
- 17-20 [Incumbent Worker Training Activities](#)
- 17-21 [Performance Policy](#)
- 17-22 [Conflict of Interest Policy](#)
- 18.01 [Contract Approval Authority](#)
- 18-02 [Co-Enrollment Policy](#)
- 18-03.1 [Youth Additional Assistance Policy](#)

- 18-04.1 [Youth Activities Policy](#)
 - [Youth Activities Policy Addendum #1](#)
- 18-05.1 [Referral Process Policy](#)

- 18-06 [Veteran's Referral Process Policy](#)
- 18-07.1 [Use of Assessments Policy](#)
- 18-08 [Board Meeting Accessibility Policy](#)
- 18-09 [Governance Policy](#)
- 18-10.1 [Grievance and Complaint Policy](#)
- 18-11 [Internet Usage and Equipment Policy](#)
- 18-12 [Workforce Center Purchases Policy](#)
- 18-13.1 [Incentive Policy](#)
- 18-14 [Eligibility Policy](#)
 - [STAG – Attachment to Eligibility](#)
 - [Basic Skills Deficiency Definition for Adult/DW and Youth](#)

- 19-01.1 [Customized Training Policy](#)
- 19-02.1 [Communications Policy](#)
- 19-03 [Supplemental Wage Data Policy](#)
- 19-04 [Transitional Jobs Policy](#)
- [21-01 Individual Career Services Policy](#)

[DWS 16-005 One-Stop Common Identifier](#)

[SWAGL 20-01 Workforce Center Requisition and Purchase Order Process](#)

[SWAGL 20-02 Information Technology for Computers](#)

[SAWDB Financial Policies Manual](#)

[WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Services STAG July 2015](#)

MODIFICATION UPDATE

Attachment B Provide a full roster of local board membership, including the group each member represents. Include a list of all standing committees, along with a description of the purpose of each committee. (Refer to Section III of these guidelines, Process for Plan Modifications, for information on required updates to this section.)

The local board consists of 20 board members. The following is a full roster of the local board members including the group each member represents. You will also find a list of all standing committees, and a description of the purpose of each committee.

Click here to view online: <https://www.employnm.com/sawdb-membership-admin>

| NAME | SECTOR |
|------------------------|---|
| Cassie Arias-Ward | Agency Partner: Economic Development |
| Chris Boston | Private Sector: Health Care and Social Assistance & Workforce |
| Mary Ann Chavez-Lopez | Agency Partner: HUD |
| Alisa Estrada | Private Sector: Health Care and Social Assistance |
| Jacqueline S. Fryar | Private Sector: Retail Trade |
| Robert C. Hawkins | Private Sector: Mining |
| Rebecca Lescombes | Private Sector: Manufacturing |
| Magdaleno Manzanarez | Agency Partner: Education and Training |
| Marcos Martinez | Private Sector: WIOA Title III, Veterans |
| Michael Olguin, Jr. | Private Sector: Finance and Insurance |
| Joshua Orozco | Private Sector: Manufacturing |
| Erik Padilla | Agency Partner: Vocational Rehabilitation |
| Anton Salome | Private Sector: Other Services |
| Debbie Schoonover | Agency Partner: Workforce & Private Sector: At-Large |
| Steve Siañez | Agency Partner: Labor, Union |
| Kim Skinner | Private Sector: Other Services |
| Marlene Thomas-Herrera | Agency Partner: Education and Training & Labor |
| JC Trujillo | Private Sector: Health Care and Social Assistance |
| Mary Ulrich | Agency Partner: Education and Training |
| Gary Whitehead | Private Sector: Other Services |

Standing Committees and Descriptions

The Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board currently has seven standing committees:

- Disabilities Committee
- Executive Committee
- Monitoring/Performance Committee
- One-Stop Partner Committee
- Planning Committee
- Policy Committee
- Youth and Youth Adult Committee

Disabilities Committee: This committee will provide information and assist with operational and other issues relating to the provision of services to individuals with disabilities, including issues relating to compliance with section 188, if applicable, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) regarding providing programmatic and physical access to the services, programs, and activities of the one-stop delivery system, as well as appropriate training for staff on providing supports for or accommodations to, and finding employment opportunities for, individuals with disabilities.

Executive Committee: This committee has the responsibility for reviewing and coordinating the work of the other committees prior to the Chair of those committees reporting to the SAWDB. This committee is accountable to and reports all actions taken to the Board. Any action taken by the Executive Committee must be in accordance with the Board's mission statement and is subject to ratification by the Board.

Monitoring/Performance Committee: The responsibility of this committee is to oversee and evaluate workforce development areas and local programs for compliance with rules and regulations to determine program success or failure. Additionally, it will review and approve state and local performance goals, review monitoring and performance reports, make recommendations for recognition, award incentive grants for program success, take corrective action, and/or impose sanctions for non-compliance or program failure. The goal of this committee is to assure the continuous improvement of State training programs.

One-Stop Partner Committee: This committee will facilitate the integration of all the One-Stop Workforce Connection centers in the Southwestern area. They will make efforts to minimize program duplication, facilitate coordination and communication between agencies, employers, and training providers. The committee will research and identify employment and training activities, services available, and facilitate the

interaction between the government and private sector to assure they do not overlap and are effective and efficient to promote a clear strategy leading to program success.

Planning Committee: This committee has responsibility for reviewing and making recommendations pertaining to workforce development planning and operation. This includes reviewing state and local plans, resources for those workforce areas, and identification of education needs for services and training. The Planning Committee shall develop a four-year plan with Board approval and CEO concurrence and annually review and update said plan as necessary, as outlined in the local plan.

Policy Committee: This committee is responsible for reviewing and recommending local board policy to the SAWDB that supports the objectives of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. The local policies provide direction to service providers, other partners within the public workforce system, and the public. The committee reviews requests for new policies, modifications, or rescissions. The committee will meet semi-annually or more frequently.

Youth and Young Adult Committee: This committee will provide recommendations to the SAWDB on matters related the WIOA Youth program, its related policies, measures, and practices. The committee shall also review the youth services provider's performance reports, to include quarterly performance measures.

MODIFICATION UPDATE

Attachment C Provide a list of the one-stop centers in the local area, including addresses and phone numbers. Indicate the one-stop operator for each site and whether it is a comprehensive or satellite center. Include a list of the one-stop partners physically located at each of the one-stop centers in the local board area, and the services provided by these partners.

Click here to view online: <https://www.employnm.com/offices>

| OFFICE LOCATION | PARTNER AGENCIES |
|---|---|
| <p>Alamo Navajo Reservation Alamo Navajo School Board Highway 169, Mile Marker 26 Alamo, NM 87825 575-854-2543 ext. 1403 Managed by: ANSBI DESIGNATION TYPE: Satellite</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alamo Navajo School Board, Inc. |
| <p>Deming Workforce Connection Center 322 E. Oak St. Deming, NM 88030 575-546-0192 One-Stop Operator: Equus DESIGNATION TYPE: Comprehensive</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NMDWS • Equus • MET |
| <p>Las Cruces Workforce Connection Center 226 S. Alameda Blvd. Las Cruces, NM 88005 575-524-6250 One-Stop Operator: Equus DESIGNATION TYPE: Comprehensive</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NMDWS • Equus • MET |
| <p>Silver City Workforce Connection Center 420 W. Broadway St. Silver City, NM 88061 575-538-3737 One-Stop Operator: Equus DESIGNATION TYPE: Comprehensive</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NMDWS • Equus |
| <p>Socorro Workforce Connection Center 109 Faulkner Socorro, NM 87801 575-835-0067 One-Stop Operator: Equus DESIGNATION TYPE: Comprehensive</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NMDWS • Equus |

| OFFICE LOCATION | PARTNER AGENCIES |
|--|--|
| <p>Sunland Park Workforce Connection Center 1500 Appaloosa Dr. Ste. A-160 Sunland Park, NM 88063 575-618-1249 One-Stop Operator: Equus DESIGNATION TYPE: Comprehensive</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NMDWS • Equus • MET |
| <p>Truth or Consequences Workforce Connection Center 601 Sunset St. Truth or Consequences, NM 87901 575-894-0077 One-Stop Operator: Equus DESIGNATION TYPE: Satellite</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equus • WNMU • *NMDWS visits once a week |

| KEY SERVICES PROVIDED BY AGENCY PARTNERS | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job candidate search • Learn strategies for finding a job • Prepare for job interviews • Effective résumé • Learn how to start your own business • Explore your career interests • Learn about jobs and careers suitable for you • Learn about jobs in demand and rates of pay • Get information about employer in local area • Learn what employers expect from their employees • Get an assessment of your skills • Job referral and placement • Veteran employment services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACT WorkKeys • ACT Career Ready 101 • Individual Training Accounts • On-the-Job Training • Occupational training • Labor market information • Out-of-area job search assistance • Pre-screened job applicants • Search for veteran candidates • Training cost reimbursements for your business • Recruiting strategies • Job Corps services • WIOA youth services • Adult Education and Literacy services • Vocational Rehabilitation services |

Attachment D Provide copies of any draft or completed cooperative agreements, resource sharing agreements, and memoranda of understanding relevant to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

Click here to view online: <https://www.employnm.com/policies-regulations>

- [MOU: New Mexico Workforce Connection Partners](#)
- [IFA: New Mexico Workforce Connection, Las Cruces](#)
- [MOU: Motivation, Education, and Training \(MET\)](#)
- [MOU: Tierra del Sol Housing Authority](#)

Attachment E Provide the local levels of performance negotiated with the Governor (NMDWS) and chief elected official consistent with WIOA sec. 116(c), to be used to measure the performance of the local area and to be used by the local board for measuring the performance of the local fiscal agent (where appropriate), eligible providers under WIOA title I subtitle B, and the one-stop delivery system in the local area, for PY18 and PY19. (Refer to Section III of these guidelines, Process for Plan Modifications, for information on required updates to this section.)

[Click here to view Section G. of this plan for the negotiated performance measures.](#)

Public Comment

The 30-day public comment period began on September 22, 2020 and ended on October 22, 2020. The legal notice for public comment was published in the following newspapers of general circulation and sent to WIOA service providers within the Southwestern region of New Mexico, as well as on the www.employnm.com website.

- Albuquerque Journal
- Deming Headlight
- El Defensor Chieftain
- Hidalgo County Herald
- Las Cruces Sun-News
- Sierra County Sentinel
- Silver City Daily Press

There were comments from five individuals who commented on the plan during the 30-day public comment period. The Planning Committee of the Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board met on October 23, 2020, to review the comments and provide direction for revisions to the plan.

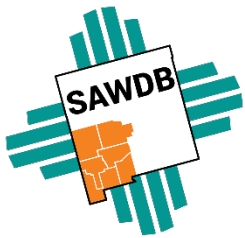
MODIFICATION UPDATE

Public Comment

The 30-day public comment period for the modifications began on August 22, 2022 and ended on September 20, 2022. The legal notice for public comment was published in the following newspapers of general circulation and sent to WIOA service providers within the Southwestern region of New Mexico, as well as on the www.employnm.com website.

- Albuquerque Journal
- Las Cruces Sun-News

No public comment was received on the modifications to the plan during the 30-day public comment period.



Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board
600 Hwy 169, Ste. C
Elephant Butte, NM 87935
575-744-4857

www.EmployNM.com
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New Mexico 
Workforce Connection

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