SOUTH DAKOTA
DEPT. OF LABOR & REGULATION

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
A N N U A L   N A R R A T I V E
Program Year 2019

C O N T E N T S

Appendix A: *Oversight and Monitoring Policy*

WIOA Program Year 2019 Annual Narrative

Federal Guidance: TEGL 5-18

Year in Review

In Program Year 2019 (PY19), the South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation (DLR) workforce programs faced many highs and lows. The Department secured another round of funding for Registered Apprenticeships and awarded incentives for 19 new Registered Apprenticeship programs. In September, DLR accepted the **National Association of State Workforce Agencies State Excellence Award** for the Start Today SD Incentive program to expand Registered Apprenticeship opportunities across the state.

A **Registered Apprenticeship Future Focused** event to recognize the development of 19 new programs and announce incentive winners of a Pathway Partnership Registered Apprenticeship award was cancelled due to social distancing recommendations of COVID-19. DLR also had several in-state partnership efforts and events postponed, including:

- The **South Dakota Week of Work**, originally scheduled for April 2020, in partnership with the South Dakota Governor's Office and South Dakota Department of Education (DOE) to offer a job shadow event for high school sophomores.
- Short-term credentials coupled with hands-on work experience provided to inmates by sharing office hours with the South Dakota **Department of Corrections** (DOC).
- Expansion of career exploration activities to young adults with the **Boys and Girls Club**.
- Helping to address housing needs on Indian Reservations in South Dakota by offering work experiences to post-secondary building trade students through **Native American programs**.
- An effort to **decrease the skills gap** in our state in collaboration with the South Dakota Board of Regents, South Dakota Board of Technical Education, and DOE.

As COVID-19 affected the workload of our Reemployment Assistance (RA) Division, all staff in our One-Stop Career Centers, or DLR job service offices, were reassigned to assist with the increased demand for unemployment benefits. As expected, a decrease of participation and an increase of exits from workforce programs occurred. Despite many challenges, a few highlights include:

- Receiving a *National Dislocated Worker Grant* to increase reach to Dislocated Workers and implement a program in partnership with South Dakota technical colleges.
- Implementing and expanding *virtual services delivery*, specifically to our rural areas.
- Establishing *RA Claims Technicians* on-site in job service offices to assist with questions related to unemployment benefits.

DLR is poised to be more responsive and more flexible than ever.

The Department renewed a memorandum of understanding with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) partners of the One-Stop System and collaborated with the six WIOA Core Programs to complete a new WIOA State Plan. Efforts continue to be made to improve data sharing between the four WIOA core programs with a goal to decrease burden, improve outcomes, and enhance case management for shared customers.

Economic and Workforce Information Analysis

Please note: *The following section is based on calendar year 2019 data.*

Population and Population Projections

South Dakota's total population began an upward trend in 1990 which continued through 2019. According to estimates published by the U.S. Census Bureau, our population increased by 77,600 or 9.6% between 2009 and 2019 which exceeded the U.S. population increase of 7.0% over the same time period. Some of the largest growth has taken place in our two Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs), Rapid City and Sioux Falls. Population in those two metro areas increased by 13.4% and 18.7%, respectively, over the last 10 years. Nearly half of South Dakota's population 419,300 (47.4%) resides in either the Sioux Falls or Rapid City MSAs. Between 2018 and 2019 growth remained consistent in comparison to previous years with the MSAs growing at a slightly faster pace than the rest of the state.

Population projections for the 2010-2035 time period released by the South Dakota State Data Center show South Dakota's total population will reach 889,447 by the year 2020. This reflects an increase in the core potential workforce (age 16-64) of approximately 14,000 (2.7%).

Although most of the counties in South Dakota are expected to show population declines, the Rapid City (Custer, Meade and Pennington counties) and Sioux Falls (Lincoln, McCook, Minnehaha and Turner counties) Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) will be the fastest growing areas in the state.

Labor Force Participation

Current Population Survey (CPS) figures from the Bureau of Labor Statistics show South Dakota's labor force participation rate was 69.5% in 2019. In other words, nearly 70% of all (non-institutionalized) residents age 16 years and older were in the labor force, either working or looking for work. This compares to a 2019 national average of 63.1%. Historically, South Dakota consistently has higher rates of labor force participation than the nation as a whole.

South Dakota's participation rate of 69.5% was the fifth-highest rate of all states and the District of Columbia. The District of Columbia had the highest rate at 71.1%, followed by Iowa at 71.0%, Nebraska at 70.5% and Minnesota at 70.1%.

Youth in South Dakota were also very active labor force participants. In 2019, 63.8% of the state's young population (age 16-24 years) were in the labor force, compared to the national rate of 55.9%. At the other end of the age spectrum, South Dakota's labor force participation rate of 65 and over is 25.5% compared to the national average of 20.2%.

Labor Force and Unemployed

South Dakota's labor force continues to grow, indicating a healthy labor market. The number of unemployed began to increase in March 2016 and continued this movement until October 2017, when it began to decrease for the next 11 months. Another upward trend began in November 2018, which continued through 2019. The unemployed series consists of more than those people who have lost a job. It includes those who have quit their jobs to look for other employment, workers whose temporary jobs have ended, individuals looking for their first job, and experienced workers looking for jobs after an absence from the labor force (for example, stay-at-home parents who return to the labor force after their children have entered school). The level of employed also began an upward trend about a year after the recession ended in May 2009 and has continued to increase gradually over the years.

The 2019 annual unemployment rate was 3.3% in South Dakota, compared to the national rate of 3.7%. South Dakota's annual unemployment rate has gradually decreased since the end of the recession, peaking at an annual average of 5.0% in 2010, and remained low through 2019.

Unemployment rates by educational attainment level indicate the highest unemployment rates in South Dakota correlate with residents who have an educational attainment level of 'high school graduates, no college' (3.6 percent)

and 'less than a high school diploma' (8.8 percent). In contrast, the lowest unemployment rates are for those residents which have an educational attainment level of 'Bachelor's degree and higher' (0.9 percent). Higher levels of educational attainment also correlate with higher earnings levels.

Not in the Labor Force

Another helpful metric to consider in workforce development is data on those people who do are not working but are also not looking for work—so not in the labor force. There can be several reasons why South Dakota civilians are not in the labor force, a few of which include specific barriers to employment, such as discouragement and poor job prospects. Doing special tabulations of unpublished Current Population Survey (CPS) data from BLS, we can get statistics on the reasons why 206,400 South Dakota civilians were not in the labor force in 2019. The largest group was those who did not want a job, at 195,000. Of the 11,400 individuals who indicated they wanted a job, 7,300 indicated they had not searched for work within the last year.

Workforce Demand

The most complete and detailed indicator of workforce demand is occupational demand projections. This data provides an estimate of the number of workers who will be needed to fill job openings created by employment growth within industries where the occupation is found, as well as those needed to fill openings created by workers who will leave the labor force (for reasons including retirement) and by those who will transfer to other occupations. Including all three of these demand indicators, South Dakota is projected to need an average of 58,885 workers a year across all occupations to 2026.

Hot Careers

DLR encourages the use of occupational demand data and wage estimates to help education and training program planners make better-informed decisions about the feasibility of programs offered. This helps ensure an adequate return on investment – not only with the greater likelihood of a trainee or graduate finding employment in an occupation related to the program, but also of being able to increase his or her earning potential.

To this end, the Labor Market Information Center (LMIC) identifies high demand-high wage occupations as "Hot Careers." To be a hot career, an occupation must meet three criteria: be projected to show employment growth; have projected annual openings (a measure of demand for workers) greater than the average across all occupations (85) for 2018-2028; and have an average/mean wage greater than the median wage across all occupations in 2019 ($34,754). The list of Hot Careers and a number of resources on each one, including a link to current job openings, is available on the LMIC website (dlr.sd.gov/lmic/menu_hot_careers.aspx).

For more economic and workforce information on South Dakota, view the 2019 South Dakota Workforce Report at dlr.sd.gov/lmic/publications/labor_market_reports/workforce_report_2019.pdf.

The remaining sections review program activity by program year, July 1, 2019, through June 30, 2020.

Workforce Development Council

The South Dakota Workforce Development Council (WDC) convenes quarterly with focused meeting agendas, including participant testimonials, industry tours, and required items for board approval. Program Year 2019 (PY19) included one industry tour, review of the Perkins State Plan, Career Exploration activities, Adult Education and Literacy funding priorities, and Labor Market Information. The Council approved two One-Stop Career Centers for re-certification, applications for the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), and the 2020 WIOA Unified State Plan. At the advice of the Council, DLR staff also identified objectives and timelines for the goals and priorities outlined in the State Plan.

Half of the WDC meetings for PY19 were hosted virtually, so agendas were shorter than previous in-person meetings. The new Program Year will provide opportunities for more dynamic virtual agendas.

Title I Youth

IN-SCHOOL-YOUTH

In-School-Youth (ISY) are individuals ages 14 through 21 attending high school, a post-secondary school, or attending a high school equivalency program funding through the public K-12 school system. They must meet low income guidelines and one of the following barriers:
- Basic skills deficient
- English language learners
- Ex-offenders
- Homeless, including Runaway and Out-of-home placement
- Currently in or aged out of foster care
- Pregnant or parenting
- Individuals with disabilities
- Or meet our **additional assistance criteria:**
    - No employment within the last 6 months
    - Has a record of not being able to hold employment due to being fired, or quitting two or more jobs in the last six months
    - Has a history of substance abuse
    - Having one or more parents currently incarcerated
    - Is a veteran

OUT-OF-SCHOOL-YOUTH

Out-Of-School-Youth (OSY) are individuals ages 16 through 24, with a school status of any of the following:
- Not attending any school
- Homeschool status
- Attending Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) classes
- Attending a high school equivalency program not funded through the public K-12 school system
- Attending Job Corps
- Under the age of 18, does not have a high school diploma or equivalency, and has not attended school for the most recent school year quarter as determined by the school
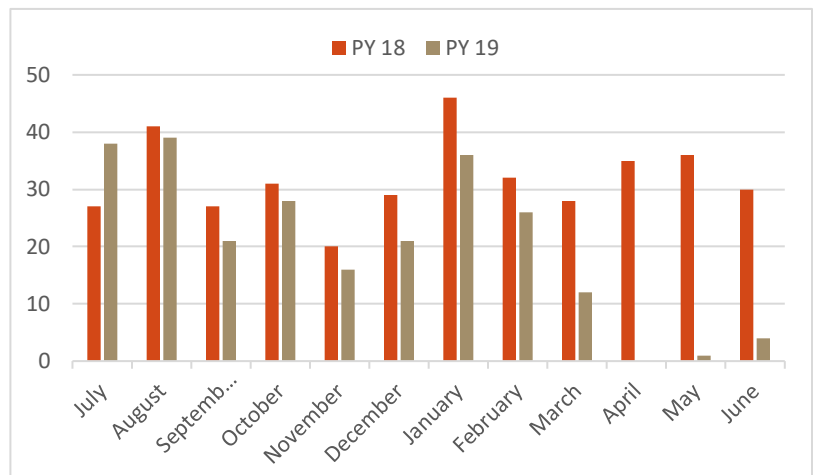
And must meet one or more of the following:
- School dropout
- Under the age of 18, does not have a high school diploma or equivalency, has not attended school for the most recent school year quarter as determined by the school
- Ex-offender
- Homeless, including Runaway and Out-of-home placement

- o Currently in or aged out of foster care
- o Pregnant or parenting
- o Individual with a disability
- o Meets low-income guidelines and additional assistance
- o Meet low-income guidelines, has a Secondary School Diploma or equivalency and is Basic Skills Deficient
- o Meets low income guidelines, has a secondary School Diploma or equivalency and is an English Language Learner

Overall, participation in the Title I Youth program has decreased. South Dakota had 588 unique individuals as participants during PY18 compared to 463 in PY19, a reduction of 21%. The reductions were experienced solely in the OSY demographic and can largely be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic. As DLR job service offices were closed and DLR staff were called to assist the RA Division with unemployment insurance claims, resources for WIOA Title I decreased. Prior to March, South Dakota was on track to maintain PY18 participant numbers or even experience slight growth.

Despite reductions in the overall Title I Youth numbers, ISY participation experienced modest growth. Continued success can be attributed to:
- Increased integration and referral efficiency between One-Stop Career Centers and Career Launch Career Advisors
- Improved relationships between secondary and post-secondary providers and DLR
- Enhanced trainings for One-Stop staff
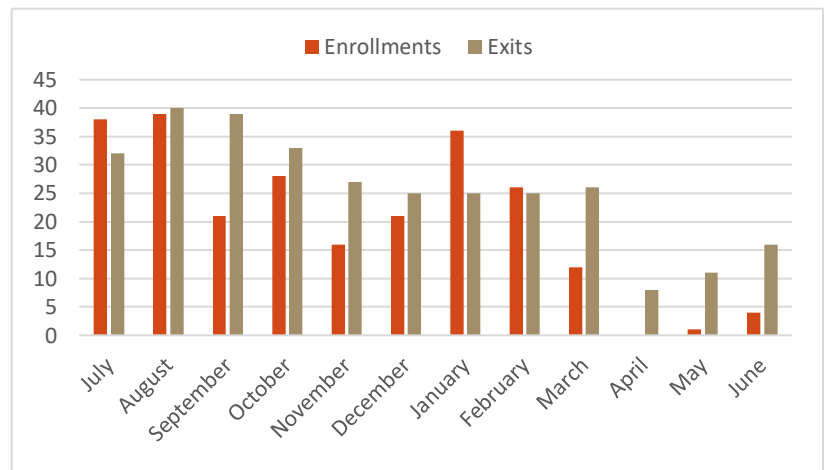- The Career Launch outreach campaign

ISY efforts attempt to target students experiencing the greatest need, those in rural areas, and serving Indian Reservations. Of the 122 participants served:
- 28% identify as Native American
- 64% report as having a disability
- 98% report as being low income
- 58% report as receiving public assistance

To increase participation on South Dakota's Indian Reservations, DLR formed a partnership with the South Dakota Native American Homeowners Coalition and Lakota Funds to increase work experience opportunities on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. Through this partnership, post-secondary building trades students would take part in a summer internship partially paid for through the Title I program, gaining experience in the construction field while building housing units on the reservation. Unfortunately, the project had to be postponed due to COVID-19, but the partnership successfully developed:

*Figure 1: **New Title I Youth Participants***

*Figure 2: **Title I Youth PY19 Enrollments and Exits***

- Concepts of virtual case management and virtual enrollment
- Co-hort model for enrollments and service delivery
- Awareness of non-profit organizations to provide meaningful services on behalf of DLR
- Stronger relationships between DLR and programs serving Native Americans in our state, including WIOA Native American programs

Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker

DLR enrolls anyone over the age of 18 and interested in receiving individualized services into the WIOA Title I Adult program. All Title I participants are also enrolled in Wagner-Peyser. Title I Adult funding for services is reserved for those individuals with a barrier to employment. The Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker programs ensure each person has a road map with the steps, resources, and training necessary to reach their goal. Despite limited funding, DLR provides supportive and training services to help individuals overcome obstacles to employment. Those eligible for funding include:

- Displaced homemakers
- Low-income individuals
- Native American, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians
- Individuals with disabilities
- Older individuals (55 or over)
- Ex-offenders
- Homeless individuals
- Youth who have aged out of the foster care system
- English language learners who have low levels of literacy
- Individuals facing substantial cultural barriers
- Migrant and seasonal farmworkers
- Individuals within two years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under TANF
- Single parents, including single pregnant women
- Long-term unemployed individuals (unemployed for 27 consecutive weeks or more)
- Individuals who are basic skills deficient
- High School dropouts
- Underemployed individuals
- Individuals who have a history of substance abuse
- Veterans (Self-identified Veterans receive Veteran's Priority of Service)

All dislocated workers are also co-enrolled into Wagner-Peyser Title III and the WIOA Title I Adult program. The number of Dislocated Workers in PY19 increased by 24% due to continued coordination with the Re-employment Services (RES) program and the RA Division. To provide additional resources for dislocated workers, South Dakota applied for and received a National Dislocated Worker Grant (NWDG), developed to combat job loss resulting from COVID-19. Part of this funding was allocated for participants to attend shortened and more focused programs of study at the four South Dakota technical colleges in partnership with the South Dakota Board of Technical Education.

Success Story

Jeramie and his wife moved their family to the Huron area in the fall of 2018 because his wife began a new job. Once there, Jeramie was able to find work at a local trucking company but was laid off the following May. A few months later, Jeramie applied for RA benefits and started working with a DLR Employment Specialist at the Huron Job Service. Jeramie was enrolled as a non-SBE Veteran into Wagner-Peyser and the Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. Jeramie did not want to be collecting RA benefits any longer than necessary, so he went above and beyond by applying for more jobs each week than required.

Jeramie had been taking online classes through Dakota State University (DSU) toward a bachelor's degree in Information Technology for the past six years. He was scheduled to graduate in May 2020. During one of Jeramie's weekly appointments, he found an Information Technology Technician position at Huron Regional Medical Center (HRMC). The Employment Specialist completed a referral and Jeramie applied for the position.

After the interview, Jeramie was not confident about receiving a job offer because he lacked work experience in information technology. The Employment Specialist contacted HRMC and offered an On-the-Job Training (OJT) contract to give him a better chance. A few weeks later, Jeramie received a formal job offer and an OJT training contract with HRMC began. During one of his monitors, Jeramie said he looked forward to going to work every day for the first time in years. In June of 2020, Jeramie received the HRMC Exceptional Employee Award, which is given to an employee who demonstrates the hospitals values of being accessible, helpful and knowledgeable.

Title II Adult Education and Literacy

South Dakota's WIOA Title II program is under the Workforce Training Division. DLR, as the responsible state agency, has long been committed to serving adults who are most in need of literacy services. These demographics include:

- Adults who are low-income or have minimal literacy skills
- Learners with disabilities
- Single parents
- Displaced or dislocated workers
- Those with limited English proficiency

Other populations served include:

- Unemployed and underemployed persons
- Young adults
- Offenders in correctional institutions
- Ex-offenders

These individuals may perform at lower educational levels (below the 9.0 grade level equivalency) and generally demonstrate a need for reading, writing, and math skills in order to obtain or retain employment.

Improving the literacy, numeracy, and oracy skills of our workforce leads directly to a stronger economy. The instruction, activities, and services provided by the Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) programs promote family literacy, obtainment of a high school diploma equivalency, employment, and self-sufficiency. Language instruction methodologies, such as workplace literacy, and action-research projects were again priorities for the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program. These efforts support our non-native speakers, immigrants, and former refugees in achieving linguistic, economic, and civic integration. Furthermore, the Distance Education project became increasingly important this past year due to the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In PY19, WIOA Title I supported three *AEL Special Projects* as allowable Employment and Training Activities [under WIOA Section 134(a)(3)(A)(viii)(II)(dd)]: *Career Navigation, Distance Education*, and *Weekend ESL*.

Career Navigation

The Adult Education program at Lutheran Social Services of South Dakota's Center for New Americans delivered, for a third year, an innovative and successful Career Navigation project. The adult learners served by this project tended to have lower literacy-levels; therefore, they required more intensive case-management to better navigate the local workforce system, obtain employment, and explore their ongoing career pathways. The project continued to make a significant difference for English learners in the Sioux Falls community, particularly in connecting these adults to the workforce.

During PY19, 69 adults enrolled in Career Navigation services as a crucial support to the clients of the Center for New Americans. Of the 69 enrolled:

- 22 obtained employment
- Half achieved self-sufficiency through obtaining a job or job-advancement

- 34 were co-enrolled in WIOA Title II as participants in the Integrated Education and Training Program
- 51% were community members in need of more intensive employment case management as non-native English speakers with low print and digital literacy skills
- 32% achieved self-sufficiency through obtaining a job or advancing in their job
- 19 participated in a new *Advanced Manufacturing Skills and Safety Class* developed in partnership with a local employer (The four top students were hired by this employer after the pandemic; the Center for New Americans assisted a fifth student in finding a job with another local manufacturer)

During the 4th Quarter, due to COVID-19, hiring was on hold for the vast majority of the employer-partners which diminished employment outcomes during Quarter IV of PY19.

The need for these services continually exceeded the capacity of this promising project. Nonetheless, this project allowed the Center for New Americans to provide career and employment assistance to non-native English speakers who did not qualify for such assistance through Office of Refugee Resettlement, only available to residents during their first five years after arriving to the U.S. with refugee status. In summary, the PY19 Career Navigation project served 69 job seekers, helped meet the workforce-needs of 7+ different local employers, and yielded 22 job-placements.

Distance Education

Under a special project, Cornerstones Career Learning Center provided Adult Basic/Secondary and English as a second or foreign language (ESL) Distance Education via a Virtual Learning Environment. This initiative yet affords approximately 30 hours per week of staff-time for this project. Staff work in Google Classroom, facilitate student communication, monitor student-work, share feedback with supplementary materials, conduct administrative tasks, align curricula, and provide technical support.

There exists a need for virtual learning in South Dakota as part of the AEL Program; additionally, there are primary and itinerant/satellite Job Service offices without access to local WIOA Title II instruction, activities, and services. Some WIOA Title II subrecipients are responsible for providing services to large geographical areas. Although these service-areas have several communities with populations over 1,000 residents, it is often not viable (or fiscally responsible) to maintain brick and mortar adult education programs in these communities.

The 4th Quarter of PY19 was a very busy time for South Dakota's Distance Education due to COVID-19. Study time was recorded primarily through GED® Academy and Burlington English curricula. Students also logged hours in Northstar Digital Literacy, Khan Academy, and ReadWorks. The Distance Education project offered services to students from Huron, Aberdeen, Mitchell, Yankton, Vermillion, Rapid City, Pierre, Sioux Falls, Madison, Brookings, and Watertown.

During the COVID-19 closures, Cornerstones Career Learning Center purchased extra seats in GED Academy to accommodate increased demand. The program also offered Burlington English seats to distance students from other adult education locations around the state to remotely support their English language acquisition [programming]. Adult learners who previously studied at libraries and adult education sites struggled to access technology at home. Student intakes and pre-testing have been challenging due to office closures and social-distancing mandates.

During Quarter IV of PY19, Distance Education students averaged 233 study-hours per month, in comparison to 101 hours per month during Quarter III. The Distance Education program set a new three-year benchmark when the program surged to an average of 258 study-hours in April 2020. With GED® Testing once again operational, a handful of statewide Distance Education students have recently earned their GED® credential.

Weekend ESL

Under another special project, Cornerstones Career Learning Center also delivered instruction, activities, and services to support incumbent workers in the Huron area with Limited English Proficiency or Basic Skills Deficiency by providing specific Adult Education opportunities via an alternative classroom schedule. This Weekend ESL project supported

classes on both Saturday and Sunday to meet the needs of workers, many employed in meatpacking, manufacturing, hospitality, and food-processing.

During PY19, the Weekend ESL program had a total of 44 enrollments. Of those 44 adult learners, 25 of them became federal WIOA Title II Participants. COVID-19 had a significant impact on this particular project. Admittedly, attendance during the first three quarters of PY19 was sporadic. However, after the various local COVID-19 related closures, there was really no opportunity to recoup participation and performance levels. Still, Cornerstones worked to transition the existing Weekend ESL students to online offerings.

Title III Wagner-Peyser

The primary function of the Wagner-Peyser Act is to provide universal access of labor exchange services from South Dakota's businesses to job seekers. Labor exchange services are considered a type of career service under WIOA and are available to all individuals legally authorized to work in the U.S. with no further eligibility criteria. In PY19, the focus was to engage One-Stop Career Center walk-in traffic and to enroll Wagner-Peyser Title III participants in other workforce programs to the greatest extent possible. This focus shifted in March 2020, and the duration of the program year was spent developing virtual service delivery. In May 2020, the Virtual Job Search Assistance Program (JSAP) was piloted with four JSAP instructors who were all located in different offices across the state. The service delivery was successful and has helped pioneer new service delivery model for PY20. JSAP sessions in PY20 will also be available to Title II, Title IV, and other partner programs for their participants to attend. A youth specific virtual JSAP is under development.

In PY19, 7,321 participants were served with Wagner-Peyser career services. This is a significant reduction in participation from last year's report of 11,017 participants. All three negotiated goals for PY18 were met: employment rate for 2nd Quarter after Exit was 70.4% (goal of 70%), employment rate for 4th quarter after program exit was 68% (goal-61.4%), and median earnings was $4,962 (goal of $4,800). U.S. DOL has implemented a pilot program through WIOA to measure effectiveness in serving employers. Through these measures, DLR is focusing efforts specifically on employee retention and repeat services to businesses. Wagner-Peyser performance measures were negotiated in PY19 for the next four years, in accordance with unified state plan procedures.

Business Services

In preparation for the new Wagner-Peyser effectiveness in serving employer measures, DLR used a lean event, involving job service staff, managers, and Vocational Rehabilitation staff to identify current practices with business engagement and service data entry within SDWORKS. The process outlined the following needs:
- Training for staff on business service data entry and how to properly case manage businesses
- Additional resources and training to help aid business engagement efforts and build staff confidence
- Further local discussions to prioritize business relationships within the office environment and strategies to approach businesses

Five administrative staff members underwent Certified Business Engagement Professional (CBEP) training to learn about business engagement strategies and implement course curriculum into future staff trainings. DLR worked closely with Title IV administrators to develop a business engagement training for staff from all four core WIOA programs in South Dakota. While this training was meant to be in-person, COVID-19 caused the medium to change to virtual. Post-training steps are in development as the final virtual session did not take place until PY20. In 2021, DLR will develop virtual, service entry training to DLR job service office staff across the state.

Rapid Response

South Dakota uses a variety of strategies to link Rapid Response to businesses, Title I Dislocated Workers, and Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) individuals. As a result of job service office closures due to COVID-19, a video recorded presentation was developed for Rapid Response events. This general informational recording can be utilized by a business and employees in the event of a layoff. DLR also began working with a technical college to provide training

information during Rapid Response events. This initial partnership will provide a framework to engage other technical colleges.

In PY19, DLR assisted 45 employers through Rapid Response activities. While not all resulted in a Rapid Response event, employees of the companies were given the opportunity to visit their local DLR job service office and received the same information. Businesses with a limited number of employees impacted or employers not interested in hosting a Rapid Response event are still able to connect their employees with One-Stop services.

The Rapid Response team consists of DLR Labor Program Specialists, Job Service Office Managers, RA Claims Technicians, Employment Specialists, and a technical college representative.

DLR typically becomes aware of a layoff or closure from the affected business by way of a Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN), the RA Division, social media, or by an individual who has been laid off and is now seeking services. Regardless how DLR receives the information, it is the goal of the Rapid Response team to provide as much information to the employer and affected employee for a smooth transition period. The job service office managers play an important role in creating and sustaining robust relationships with businesses to ensure timely coordination if a layoff occurs.

National Dislocated Worker Grants

COVID-19 impacted the unemployment rate in South Dakota in the second half of PY19. In April, DLR was awarded $281,968 in Employment Recovery National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG) funds through a Disaster Recovery NDWG application process. From April to July, DLR worked to implement policies and procedures related to the grant. DLR continues to work with U.S. DOL to confirm if this is a Disaster Recovery or Employment Recovery grant. A portion of this funding will be utilized to assist those who lost their jobs from COVID-19 obtain short-term credentials. NDWG participants will be co-enrolled with Wagner-Peyser Title III and WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs as eligibility allows. A common Exit will also be implemented among these programs.

Trade Adjustment Assistance

TAA provides federal assistance to workers who are adversely affected by foreign trade. TAA includes resources and opportunities to obtain skills, credentials, and support necessary for successful reemployment. Due to a renewed understanding of the program and technical assistance from the regional and national offices, TAA petitions filed and petitions certified have increased in South Dakota.

DLR actively pursues businesses to gain information to file a petition on behalf of the employees. According to the International Trade Administration, South Dakota saw a decrease in trade activity of $1.43 Billion to $1.36 Billion from 2018 to 2019. Top exports consisted of processed foods, machinery, transportation equipment, beverage and tobacco products, computers, and electronic products. Exports to Canada, Mexico, Japan, China, and Germany have slowed, affecting South Dakota's workforce.

In response to the increase of layoffs and closures, DLR looks to become common knowledge to businesses and community agencies to give businesses the confidence to come to DLR for services and TAA petition assistance. Some of those agencies include: Governor's Office of Economic Development, Small Business Administration, South Dakota International Trade Center, South Dakota Chamber of Commerce and Industry, U.S. Department of Commerce, South Dakota Department of Agriculture, Foreign Trade Zone, and local city officials and businesses.

TAA Success Story

Peggy, an older worker not ready to retire, was devasted to lose her position of 39 years. She attended the Rapid Response meeting and then visited a job service office for

help. Peggy was enrolled in WIOA Title I and TAA. DLR assisted Peggy with resumes, job applications, mock interviews, and a wide range of other services on a weekly basis. Peggy's skill set was limited, and her computer knowledge was minimal, so she also worked on Teknimedia training.

After recieving denial letters for several similar jobs openings, her self-confidence was low. DLR set up a short-term Work Experience for Peggy to gain general retail skills to increase her employability. The retail business owner ejoyed Peggy as an employee for her attitude and work ethic. DLR also assisted with some transportation through the Dislocated Worker program and continued to help her apply for job openings. Once Peggy had a current job on her resume, she was quickly offered employment at an assisted living facility doing housekeeping.

Peggy works Monday through Friday, and is happy to have weekends off to spend more time with her grandkids. She enjoys visiting with the residents while helping them maintain and clean their apartments. Peggy will receive the RTAA wage differential until 2022.

Registered Apprenticeship Program

DLR began the program year with the launch of the Start Today SD incentive funding and received the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) State Excellence Award during the NASWA 2019 Workforce Summit in Boston, Massachusetts. The State Excellence Award recognizes a state for a workforce-related program, project, or initiative, which innovatively addresses an issue or challenge, and results in significant improvement of service or performance. The 2019 Start Today SD Incentive funding provided a maximum of $20,000 per business to help offset the initial startup costs when developing Registered Apprenticeship programs. Each of the 32 applications were scored based on priority factors, such as: key industries, career pathway model, partner collaboration, and under-represented population recruitment.

DLR celebrates National Apprenticeship Week (NAW) every November. Leading up to NAW 2019, DLR team members, the U.S. DOL Office of Apprenticeship, and state leaders traveled South Dakota to learn more about the impacts of Registered Apprenticeship programs through interviews with mentors, business leaders, training providers, and apprentices. The roadshow offered an opportunity to share impacts statewide through social media outlets. At the end of NAW 2019, DLR announced the 20 organizations selected to receive the Start Today SD incentives, totaling $370,000. These organizations represented hospitality, advanced manufacturing, information technology, agriculture, building trades, automotive, construction, and healthcare industries. Over the next four months, DLR and U.S. DOL offered intensive guidance and technical assistance as the organizations developed programs to meet and enhance their workforce needs.

In March of 2020, DLR and U.S. DOL scheduled a Future Focused event to celebrate the efforts of DLR and South Dakota businesses to implement these new programs. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the event was cancelled. In exchange of the in-person event, small-group virtual workshops where scheduled with the incentive awardees, job service office staff, and the U.S. DOL Office of Apprenticeship State Director. The virtual workshops included review of the RAPIDS data entry process, apprentice registration into SDWORKS, and using WIOA services to meet the training needs of both businesses and individuals. Support of these new programs and apprentices is ongoing.

Similar to the Start Today SD incentive funding, organizations could apply for a $50,000 Pathway Partnership incentive, also announced during NAW 2019. This funding offsets the cost of implementing a Registered Apprenticeship program to allow students to earn high school credit, post-secondary credit, and Registered Apprenticeship credit simultaneously. Upon graduation, a Pathway Partnership student can decide to complete their Registered Apprenticeship and/or continue their post-secondary education. Eight organizations applied, including workforce development boards, businesses, associations, and post-secondary institutes. Applicants were invited to present their program intentions and were scored based on partner commitment, use of funding, plan to increase under-represented populations, and

sustainability. Four organizations, including two of South Dakota's technical colleges, were awarded. DLR staff continue to offer technical assistance for the development and implementation of these programs. As we move into PY20, DLR is improving the process to gather and report data to help make informed decisions surrounding Registered Apprenticeships. DLR is also building mentor training, offering incentives for new apprentices to increase engagement with businesses, and strategically engaging with industry associations for program development in STEM fields.

PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES

Forty-four new programs have been added since 2018, adding 25 new occupations. The new occupations and year added are listed in Figure 3.

South Dakota apprentices have trained in over 53 different occupations since 2015, although not all are active in any given year. Most apprenticeship training is in the trades. Electrician programs make up 25% of apprenticeships programs, and 20% are programs for plumbing. The remaining 55% of the apprenticeships are split between other occupations. Figure 4 (Page 13) lists the number of new apprenticeships per year by occupation, sorted by the total trained since 2015. The "Total" column represents the total number of apprentices that registered in that occupation since 2015. For example, there have been 549 electrician apprentices since 2015.

*Figure 3: **New Registered Apprenticeship Occupations Since 2018***

Year	Occupation Title	Year	Occupation Title
2018	Production Technologist	2020	Veterinary/Lab Animal Tech
2018	Dental Assistant	2020	Operations Management
2018	Residential Carpenter	2020	Workforce Development Specialist
2019	Fire Medic	2020	General Insurance Associate
2019	Machinist	2020	Automobile Body Repairer
2019	Farm Worker, General I	2020	Mechatronics Technician
2019	Home Health Aide	2020	Nurse, Licensed Practical
2019	Welder, Combination	2020	Electric Sign Assembler
2019	Butcher, All Round	2020	Glass Blower
2019	Web-Press Operator	2020	Computer Support Specialist-Desktop Support Tech
2019	Industrial Manufacturing Technician	2020	Restaurant Manager
2019	Automotive Technician Specialist	2020	Electromechanical Technician
2019	Professional Brewer	2020	Form Builder Carpenter

Source: U.S. DOL Office of Apprenticeship Registered Apprenticeship Sponsor Information Database (RAPIDS)

TESTIMONIALS

Independent Health Solutions LLC, Huron

"The best outcome has been watching my apprentice, Melissa, blossom into a leader by mentoring other home health aides, expanding her business acumen, and formalizing her medical knowledge through competency driven goals. I am amazed at her professional development; she is now proficient in direct client care for aging adults, memory care, chronically ill, and the disabled populations. In fact, Melissa was able to recognize a growing need in our community for the Karen population and has begun mentoring Karen workforce to serve as Home Health Aides. Our labor force has increased by 20% for Home Health Aides due to participation in the Start Today SD Apprenticeship program. Our turnover rate is at an all-time low with less than 1% since participation. Team morale has increased, with corresponding surveys indicating Home Health Aides feel more confident in their profession and better understand their roles and tasks. The Home Health Aide Mentor Apprenticeship has promoted individualized professional development with milestones, key performance indicators, and defined metrics for success."

Scott Peterson Motors, Belle Fourche and Sturgis

"DLR has been immensely helpful in the entire process of setting up our Registered Apprenticeship program. Navigating the paperwork and details needed was guided by the opportunities to meet with DLR program specialist, as a group and for individual time. DLR was responsive to requests for guidance and willing to commit large chunks of time to answer questions and walk us through the process. The time commitment on the front end of building a registered apprenticeship program pales in comparison to the positive long-term benefits of having the program. Registered Apprenticeships allow our skilled laborers to build their knowledge into the up-and-coming generations, build positive relationships in our organization, increase retention, and it invest in the future of the economy of your business, your industry, and your community."

Figure 4: **New Registered Apprenticeship by Occupation Since 2015**

O*NET	Occupation	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
47-2111.00	Electrician	86	76	82	123	118	64	549
47-2152.02	Plumber	75	91	54	80	82	56	438
47-2152.01	Sprinkler Fitter	38	47	29	23	25	27	189
47-2031.00	Carpenter	39	23	27	18	33	17	157
49-9051.00	Line Erector	17	1	1	11	60	32	122
49-9052.00	Line Installer-Repairer	25	24	17	16	21	15	118
47-2211.00	Sheet Metal Worker	12	39	14	3	18	19	105
37-2012.00	Housekeeper, Com, Res, Ind	10	26	5	4	30	8	83
49-9021.01	Heating & Air-Conditioner Install/Ser	6	13	18	11	11	1	60
37-3011.00	Landscape Management Technician	2	12	12	9	8	6	49
47-2021.00	Bricklayer (Construction)	7	1	6	5	6	3	28
49-2095.00	Electrician, Powerhouse	1	2	12	2	5	6	28
21-1093.00	Direct Support Specialist	9	6	4	8	0	0	27
49-3011.00	Powerplant Mechanic	0	1	9	10	0	1	21
49-9071.00	Maintenance Repairer, Build	0	7	4	8	0	2	21
39-2011.00	Animal Trainer	0	0	0	13	4	2	19
51-2092.00	Production Technologist	0	0	0	0	12	6	18
31-9091.00	Dental Assistant	0	0	1	2	12	1	16
51-8013.00	Power-Plant Operator	0	1	14	1	0	0	16
35-2012.00	Cook (Any Ind)	1	3	2	0	5	4	15
47-2131.00	Composite Plastic Fabricator	1	1	3	2	1	2	10
49-2097.00	Tape-Recorder Repairer	1	4	2	1	0	0	8
33-2011.01	Fire Medic	0	0	0	0	5	2	7
51-3011.00	Baker (Bake Produce)	0	0	3	0	3	1	7
51-5112.00	Web-Press Operator	0	0	0	0	1	5	6
17-3024.00	Electromechanical Technician	0	0	0	0	0	5	5
47-2141.00	Painter (Const)	0	1	1	0	2	1	5
51-8021.00	Boiler Operator	1	2	1	0	1	0	5
51-9199.01	Recycling & Reclamation Worker (Prisons Only)	0	0	0	0	2	3	5
49-3023.02	Automotive Technician Specialist	0	0	0	0	4	0	4
25-9041.00	Teacher Aide I	0	0	0	0	1	2	3
49-2011.00	Electronics Mechanic	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
49-9021.02	Refrigeration Mechanic (Any Ind)	0	0	0	1	1	1	3
49-9041.00	Powerhouse Mechanic	0	0	0	3	0	0	3
19-1013.00	Horticulturist	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
29-2061.00	Nurse, Licensed Practical	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
31-9092.00	Medical Assistant	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
39-9032.00	Recreation Assistant	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
45-2091.00	Farm Worker, General I	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
47-2073.00	Operating Engineer	0	0	1	0	0	1	2
51-4041.00	Machinist	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
51-4081.00	Machine Operator I	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
51-9012.00	Professional Brewer	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
11-1021.00	Operations Management	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
13-1151.00	Workforce Development Specialist	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
17-3029.09	Industrial Manufacturing Technician	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
31-1011.00	Home Health Aide	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
31-9096.00	Veterinary/Lab Animal Tech	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
39-5011.00	Barber	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
51-2022.00	Electric Sign Assembler	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
51-3023.00	Butcher, All round	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
51-4121.06	Welder, Combination	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
51-9061.00	Electronics Tester	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
		331	381	326	355	478	310	2181

Source: U.S. DOL Office of Apprenticeship Registered Apprenticeship Sponsor Information Database (RAPIDS)

General Educational Development

During PY19, 394 South Dakotans earned a General Educational Development (GED®) credential. The majority of individuals interested in earning a credential were white males ages 20-24 who finished their junior year of high school. While the national pass rate during the program year was 76%, South Dakotans had a pass rate of 83%.

In June 2020, GED® Testing Service introduced an online-proctored (OP) version of the GED® test. Four testers in South Dakota took advantage of this opportunity in June, with three of them earning a credential. The OP GED® offers flexibility and greater opportunity for testing for those who qualify to take that version.

For a South Dakotan who does not have a high school diploma, possessing a GED credential remains a viable path to advancing education, expanding job opportunities, and increasing earning potential.

Figure 5: **GED Pass Rate**

South Dakota		Ages 16 – 17	DOC
Passed GED	394	58	103
Pass rate	83%	91%	83%

Figure 6: **GED Pass Rate**

	United States	South Dakota
Social Studies	83.00%	90.00%
Science	93.00%	93.00%
Reasoning Through Language Arts	90.00%	90.00%
Math	86.00%	83.00%

Re-employment Services

The Re-employment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) is the Re-employment Services (RES) program in South Dakota, with 12 One-Stop Career Center, or job services offices, with itinerate and affiliate sites available for claimants to attend required meetings. DLR co-enrolls all RES participants into WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs as appropriate.

A surge in unemployment insurance claims due to COVID-19 changed the RES program dramatically near the end of PY19. RES notification letters were suspended along with required job contacts and activities, resulting in a decrease of RES participation.

DLR continues to prepare to serve individuals in-person and virtually when the participation in RES is required again. South Dakota has a large rural area to serve, and not all claimants are able to attend meetings in person. The effects of COVID-19 only increased the necessity for a virtual service deliver method.

Success Story

Kami visted a DLR Job Service after being let go from her position. She did not know if she would qualify for RES as she received severance and did not know the reason for job separation. She was also very overwhelmed having not been unemployed before. The DLR Employment Specialist reviewed community partners, Dress for Success, Vocational Rehabilitation, Independent Living Choices, Community Outreach and County Services. Kami signed up for JSAP, scheduled data entry, 10-key, and typing assessments. Kami received assistance in filing her weekly request for payment, job referrals, searching for jobs, resume preparation, and a mock interview.

Kami began employment in August. Kami stated that without the services that DLR provided to her, she may still be unemployed.

Research and Evaluation

In PY19, an analysis of the participant performance outcomes of On-the-Job Training (OJT) and Occupational Skills Training (OST) was completed. While an OJT is not considered a training service by the federal law for the Title I Youth program, South Dakota's process for OJTs is similar in all Title I programs, offering a clean comparison for OST and OJT. Program performance includes:

- 2nd Quarter after Exit employment rate
- 4th Quarter after Exit employment rate
- 2nd Quarter median earnings

Analysis

Looking at all program outcomes, participants receiving an OJT appear to have a better 2nd Quarter after Exit employment rate (+2%) while having a lower 2nd Quarter after Exit median earnings (-$966.75). Participants receiving an OST have better 2nd Quarter after Exit median earnings and 4th Quarter after Exit employment rates (+9%) than those receiving an OJT.

When reviewing individual program outcomes, the results vary. The Title I Adult program produces similar results to all programmatic outcomes, where those receiving an OJT appear to have better immediate employment rates (+9%) and lower median earnings (-$2606.61) than those receiving an OST. Title I Adult participants receiving an OST also have better 4th Quarter after Exit employment rates (+3%).

Figure 7

	2nd Quarter after Exit Employment Rates		2nd Quarter after Exit Median Earnings		4th Quarter after Exit Employment Rates	
	OJT	OST	OJT	OST	OJT	OST
All Programs	57/67	88/106	$5720	$6686.75	51/67	90/106
	85%	83%			76%	85%
Adult	22/23	55/63	$4950.77	$7557.38	20/23	57/63
	96%	87%			87%	90%
Dislocated Worker	6/7	17/22	$7188.16	$6857.19	6/7	15/22
	86%	77%			86%	68%
Youth	8/10	17/22	$4020.65	$2240.17	7/10	19/22
	80%	77%			70%	86%

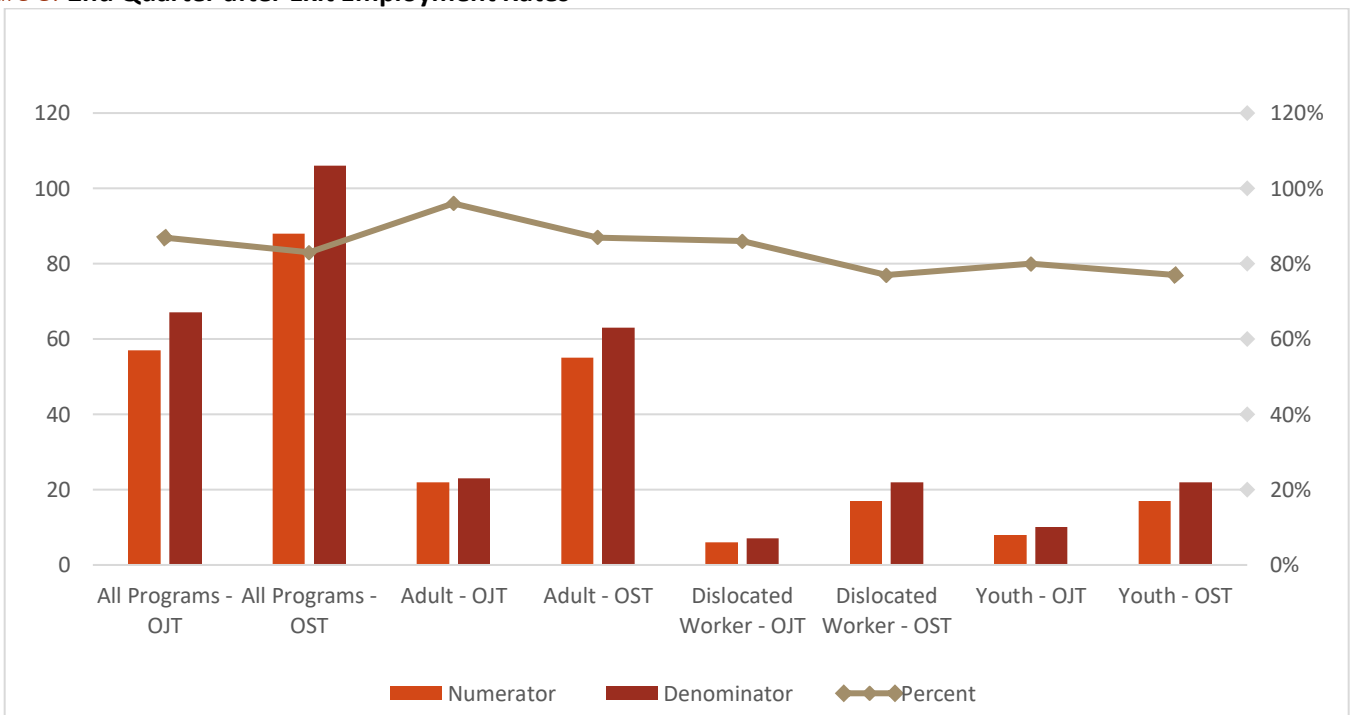*Figure 8:* **2nd Quarter after Exit Employment Rates**

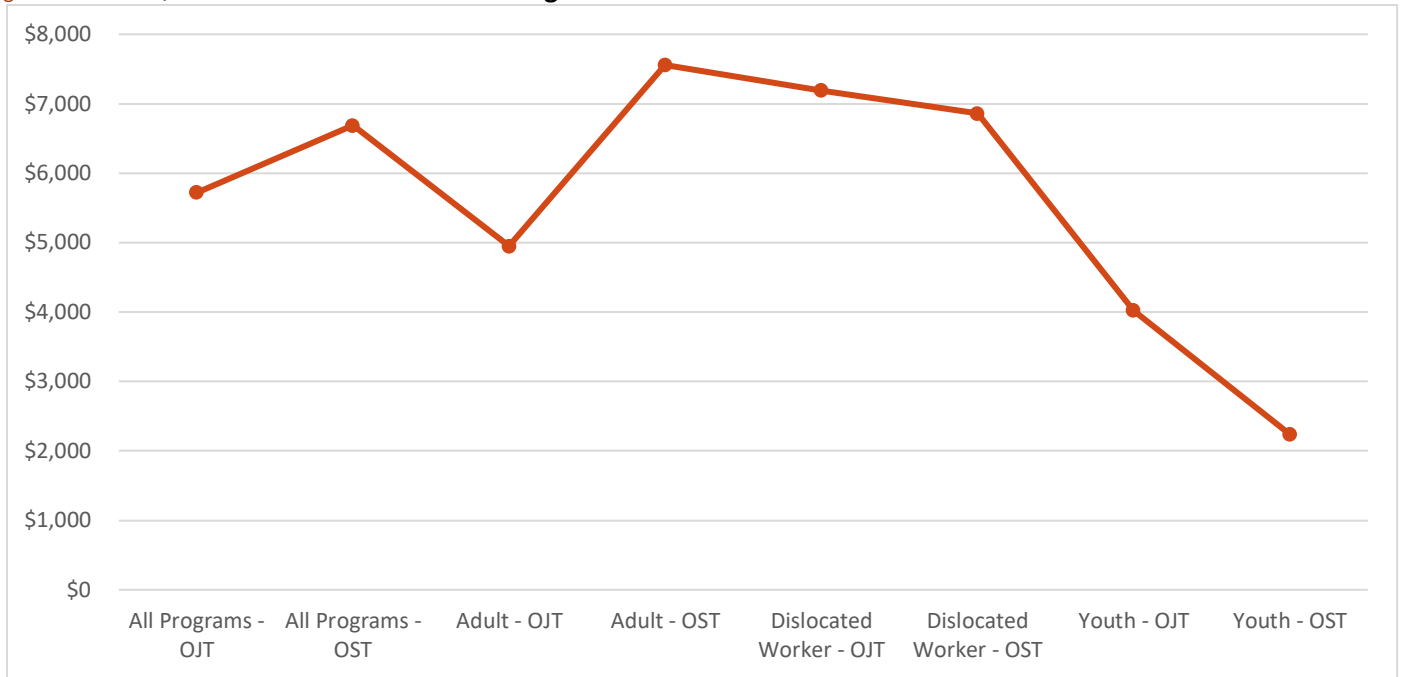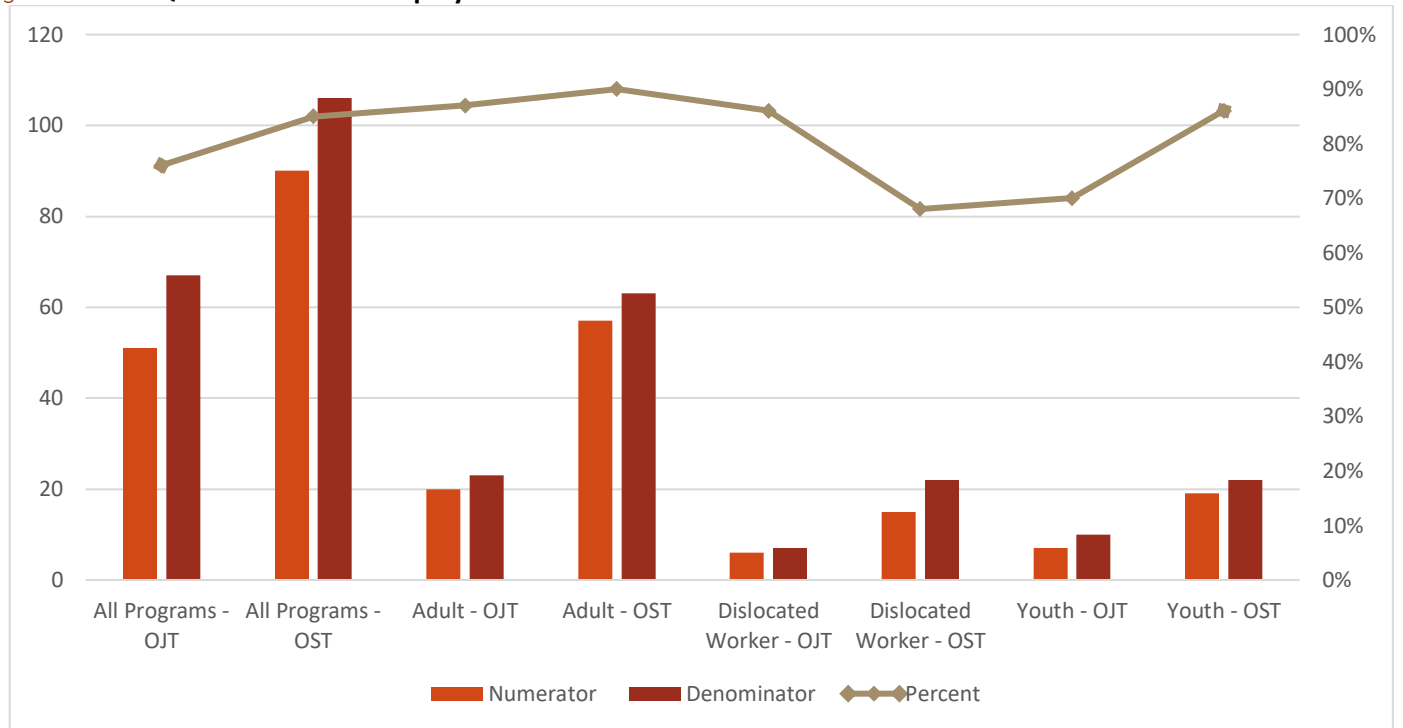*Figure 9:* **2nd Quarter after Exit Median Earnings**

Figure 10: **4th Quarter after Exit Employment Rates**

Title I Dislocated Workers tend to have better results in an OJT, while employment rates for those in an OST drop off in the 4th Quarter after Exit.

The Title I Youth program produces similar results to the Title I Adult. Title I Youth who received an OJT have stronger 2nd Quarter after Exit results (+3% in Employment Rate, and +$1780.48 in Median Earning). However, a major difference appears in Title I Youth receiving an OST, with an improved outcome of nearly 16% in 4th Quarter after Exit employment rates than those receiving an OJT.

Conclusion

The results are inconclusive of either an OJT or OST providing better outcomes for all programs. However, policy makers may make some conclusions that dislocated workers tend find more success after OJTs. This is likely because they were previously in the workforce and are taking a foundational skill set with them to their new position. The data also reinforces the need for case managers to appropriately align participants with an OJT that fits their needs and ensure they are prepared for success when taking part in an OST. Continued case management throughout the training experience is essential to help a participant have a successful outcome regardless of the training type.

Customer Satisfaction

In PY19, DLR continued the use of Survey Monkey to conduct two surveys, one for job seekers and another for businesses. The job seeker survey was emailed quarterly to participants who exited the Wagner-Peyser Title III program in the previous quarter. DLR requires all programs using SDWORKS to co-enroll participants in Wagner-Peyser along with Title I programs. Employers are surveyed annually, based on those who received services in the previous year.

Responses were collected and calculated for both employers and participants. While the opportunity to take the survey was optional for both, response rates continue to increase from previous years. The response rate is 5.98% (298 responses to 4,987 surveys emailed) for participants and 6.76% (164 responses to 2,425 surveys emailed) for employers. Participants reported an overall satisfaction rate of 81.6%, with 95.3% crediting their Employment Specialist with a high level of professionalism and knowledge. A high number of respondents, 90.9%, stated all or most of their needs were met. Employers reported an overall satisfaction rate of 92.2%, with 96.8% stating their Employment Specialist displayed a high level of professionalism and knowledge. Additionally, 88.3% of employers reported all or most of their needs were met.

Based on employer feedback, DLR provided business engagement training in PY20 and will continue to focus on business engagement in PY21. The survey will be adjusted to include service-related questions and a place for customers to provide their contact information for follow up if desired. Additionally, employers will be surveyed quarterly, rather than annually. These adjustments are based on feedback from respondents and job service office staff. A direct link to the survey will also be made available on the DLR webpage, for job seekers and employers to provide feedback at their convenience.

Additional Statewide Activities

SDWORKS

SDWORKS completed a third full program year as DLR's Management Information System (MIS). It is still growing in response to the needs of South Dakota job seekers, employer, and DLR staff. SDWORKS serves as the state's premier and most complete job listing board, employer posting site, and case management system. Enhancements continue to improve data entry and program data.

Eligible Training Provider List Module

DLR implemented an Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) module in SDWORKS. This module will allow for the application process and performance reporting to take place within SDWORKS.

Registered Apprenticeship Module

In response to U.S. DOL Registered Apprenticeship reporting guidance, DLR began efforts to implement a module in the SDWORKS management information system with a goal to launch this in PY20. This module will connect job seekers looking to learn new skills with employers looking for qualified workers. This module will also assist staff in preparing and engaging individuals with case management oversite.

National Career Readiness Certificate

Through statewide funding, DLR offers both employers and job seekers the ACT National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC®). As of June 2020, over 36,000 South Dakotans have earned an NCRC, and over 1,200 businesses in South Dakota recognize the NCRC. Available to all current and potential job seekers in the state, the NCRC can be a key employment tool for all Title I program participants, high school students, and incarcerated individuals. Whether in the application, the interview, or the probationary training phase, the NCRC provides concrete information for all parties (participants, case managers, employers) in making appropriate workforce decisions.

DLR continues to financially support the NCRC program. This allows any job seeker registered in SDWORKS to prepare and complete the three WorkKeys Assessments required for certification: Applied Math, Graphic Literacy, and Workplace Documents. South Dakota's NCRC scores consistently rank above the national average. DLR also offers ACT WorkKeys® Curriculum, a skill development curriculum, at no cost to all program participants and job seekers interested in earning an NCRC. The use of this curriculum provides a framework to capitalize on skill strengths and to define potential skill training needs during the employment process.

The NCRC program has grown significantly since its 2009 inception. In addition to serving job seekers across the state through the DLR job service offices, developing partnerships has been a key component in expanding the program. Partnerships with other South Dakota state agencies have also gleaned the following results in PY19:
- 341 incarcerated individuals earned an NCRC
- Over 5,300 students earned an NCRC
- One of the state's technical institutions has utilized the NCRC program
- Most job listings in SDWORKS through the South Dakota Bureau of Human Resources (BHR) include a reference to the NCRC, providing a model for other hiring personnel to follow

To foster a skilled workforce, emphasis has been placed on business education and outreach. Currently, over 1,200 employers in South Dakota recognize the NCRC in their hiring practices. The focus on business outreach continues as an ongoing effort to meet the state's workforce needs.

DLR is committed to providing the resources in maintaining the NCRC program, while fulfilling its mission. This obligation provides an effective tool for job seekers, high school students, employers, education, and government leaders to identify and improve the foundational workplace skills found across all employment sectors.

Dakota Roots

Dakota Roots assists in recruiting out-of-state job seekers by providing local job market insight and personalized job search assistance through DakotaRoots.com and SDWORKS. This worker recruitment initiative continued its 13th year of connecting out-of-state job seekers with in-state career opportunities. In addition to grassroots efforts encouraging current South Dakotans to refer family and friends, a digital media outreach campaign drove traffic to the websites. Job advisors assist individuals one-on-one with job referrals, resume development, interview preparation, labor market information, community resources, and housing information. From July 1, 2019, to June 30, 2020, 716 out-of-state job seekers were contacted and offered job search assistance.

Bring Your 'A' Game

DLR facilitates hands-on soft skills training, *Bring Your 'A' Game to Work*, as a result of expressed need from employers for soft skills in their workforce. *Bring Your 'A' Game* is a training designed to teach foundational behaviors and values for employment. The seven soft skill behaviors determined to be the most important are addressed in the workshops. These behaviors are attendance, appearance, attitude, ambition, accountability, acceptance, and appreciation. The curriculum is designed for participants to discover these skills through activities and group participation. After completing the program, individuals will understand the long-term benefits of work ethic, setting a foundation for personal and professional success, and earn a certificate of completion.

DLR partners with seven providers across the state to deliver the curriculum to program participants and employer referrals. These partners include the Career Learning Center of the Black Hills, Cornerstones Career Learning Center, Lake Area Technical College, Lutheran Social Services, Outsource Projects, Inc., and The Right Turn, Inc. From July 1, 2019, to June 30, 2020, 457 job seekers and employees attended the workshops and earned certificates of completion.

DLR job service office staff are certified to offer *Bring Your 'A' Game* to school districts across South Dakota. Soft skills training in the state school system provides the future workforce with invaluable skills. During the 2019-2020 school year, 47 school districts hosted a workshop, and 1,217 students earned a certificate of completion.

DLR is developing a partnership with the Center for Work Ethic Development to implement *Bring Your 'A' Game Anywhere* e-learning courses. This will be offered to job seekers, employers, employees, and schools across South Dakota.

Career Launch SD

In January 2018, DLR formed a partnership with DOE with the intent to increase career exploration and work-based learning opportunities for students in the K-12 school system. This Career Launch program, funded in part with WIOA Title I Youth funding, allowed twelve staff to assist four schools. The following school year, services were expanded to a regional model in the western side of the state. Realizing this was a more effective method to serve more students and fulfill increased requests from schools, DLR prepared for a statewide regional service delivery model for the 2020-2021 school year. Through a survey of the schools, over 65 districts have requested Career Launch services.

Figure 11

School districts served in through each year of the program			
School Year	**January 2018**	**2018-2019**	**2019-2020**
School Districts Served	**4**	**9**	**21**

Despite the shortened school year due to COVID-19, Career Advisors were able to offer 15 career fairs, connect over 500 students with post-secondary institutions or work-based learning experiences, and link 63 students to the WIOA Title I Youth program.

Veterans

Jobs for Veterans' State Grant

DLR receives a Jobs for Veterans' State Grant (JVSG) staffing grant and employs three full-time and five part-time, specially trained Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists who assist eligible veterans, eligible persons, eligible transitioning service members, eligible wounded warriors and their family caregivers. DVOP staff provide case management services to veterans and eligible persons and are part of the WIOA Integrated Resource Team to access a wide variety of specialty services that can be used to further assist their case managed veterans in an integrated team system. DVOP's assist veterans and other eligible persons in becoming job ready and conduct outreach within the communities served to seek out eligible veterans with significant barriers to employment. DVOP staff provide career readiness services to veterans and other authorized populations wo have significant barriers to employment. The JVSG staffing grant also employees one full-time Local Veterans' Employment Representative (LVER) and one full-time JVSG Program Coordinator. The LVER conducts outreach to employers promoting the hiring of all veterans, is part of the business outreach teams, and assists DVOP staff with promoting and placement of job ready veterans in DVOP case management. The JVSG Program Coordinator is an overseer of the JVSG program to ensure the best possible services to assist veterans and employers are being delivered by JVSG staff.

Priority of Service

Veterans who served at least one day in the active military, naval, or air service with a discharge other than dishonorable are considered a covered person for Priority of Services. If the veteran's spouse is found to meet the eligibility

requirements, they would also be a covered person for Priority of Service. Veterans and eligible spouses (covered persons) are given priority over non-covered persons for the receipt of employment, training, and placement services in all programs funded by U.S. DOL and are entitled to precedence over non-covered persons for services. Implementation of identifying priority of service eligibility includes signs and brochures in the job service offices, priority of service floor mats or floor decals, early identification and notification of priority, screening assessments by non-JVSG staff, website information defining priority of service eligibility and entitlement of services. Priority of service includes placing covered persons first in line to obtain services and priority in WIOA funding for training programs.

- Veterans also receive preference on DLR internal job orders. The order for priority of job orders is:
- Qualified Special Disabled Veterans
- Qualified Disabled Veterans
- All other qualified veterans and eligible spouses
- Qualified non-veterans

Compliance Metrics

DVOP Individualized Career Services to JVSG eligible veterans was 100% for PY19. The compliance metric for this performance measure is 90%. JVSG performance metrics for Employment Rate After Exit for 2nd Quarter and 4th Quarter were above negotiated rates. Median Earnings for 2nd Quarter After Exit exceeded the negotiated rate.

Figure 12

Measure for JVSG Staff		Negotiated Baseline
Employment Rate	2nd Quarter After Exit	55.2%
	4th Quarter After Exit	53.4%
Median Earnings	2nd Quarter After Exit	$4,365
Measure for Wagner-Peyser Staff		Negotiated Baseline
Employment Rate	2nd Quarter After Exit	63.1%
	4th Quarter After Exit	64.8%
Median Earnings	2nd Quarter After Exit	$5,700

Work Opportunity Tax Credit

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) program is a federal income tax credit savings program that encourages employers to hire job seekers in demographics with high unemployment rates due to some type of employment barrier. The WOTC program in South Dakota started a new State Coordinator during the program year but continued a 42.2% certification rate while the remainder of the United States is 27.5%. The WOTC program saved South Dakota employers an estimated $8,261,000 in federal income tax savings.

Due to the challenges presented with COVID-19, South Dakota processed fewer applications in the 2020 federal fiscal year. To meet these challenges and become more efficient for the future, DLR is developing an electronic process for submissions of applications, upgrades to the WOTC system, and more automation for the certification process.

Foreign Labor Certification

The Foreign Labor Certification (FLC) program processes H2A visas designed for temporary, agricultural work, and H2B visas for temporary, seasonal, and nonagricultural jobs. DLR processes applications for both visas, posts SDWORKS job orders, inspects housing for H2A employers, and communicates changes and information between the National Office in Chicago and applicant's agent. DLR also refers potential U.S. applicants to employers who are resolving their labor shortage with temporary, foreign workers.

Figure 13: **H-2A Job Orders**

FLC Performance Timeframes	PY18 Results	FLC Performance Timeframes	PY19 Results
FFY18 Q4	43 job orders	FFY19 Q4	37 job orders
FFY19 Q1	83 job orders	FFY20 Q1	108 job orders
FFY19 Q2	99 job orders	FFY20 Q2	101 job orders
FFY19 Q3	32 job orders	FFY20 Q3	25 job orders
Total	257 job orders	Total	271 job orders

Figure 14: **H-2B Job Orders**

FLC Performance Timeframes	PY18 Results	FLC Performance Timeframes	PY19 Results
FFY18 Q4	1 job order	FFY19 Q4	3 job orders
FFY19 Q1	27 job orders	FFY20 Q1	41 job orders
FFY19 Q2	119 job orders	FFY20 Q2	96 job orders
FFY19 Q3	0 job orders	FFY20 Q3	1 job order
Total	147 job orders	Total	141 job order

In PY19, the FLC results must be broken down into FFY19 and FFY20 equivalents: FFY 19 Quarter 4 and FFY 19 Quarter 1. A small decrease in the H-2B job applications was experienced between program years, but H-2A job orders have grown, even during a small period of COVID-19. DLR referred 35 U.S. citizens for H2A and H2B job orders during PY19. DLR began using the new Foreign Labor Application Gateway (FLAG) portal for new applications and held a refresher FLC training for existing staff over Skype in October 2019.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

DLR is a long-term partner of the South Dakota Department of Social Services (DSS) in co-administering welfare-to-work programs for the purpose of promoting personal responsibility and self-sufficiency. DLR delivers the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) work activities in 54 counties that contain 52% of the eligible mandatory parent-case population.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services requires every state to achieve a 50% TANF rate (unless a waiver has been approved) to receive full TANF block grant funding. This federal fiscal year, which ended Sept. 30, 2020, DLR achieved 35.1% of the required 50% participation rate for the TANF clients living in DLR counties (non-reservation counties) in South Dakota.

COVID19 had a profound effect on the overall TANF program and the required participation rate. DLR offices closed on March 16, 2020, but TANF participation was still expected. DLR and DSS worked diligently to create "at home job readiness activities" for clients to complete.

Figure 15

Program Year		PY18	PY19
TANF Applicants (mandatory, from DLR Counties)		2,887	2623
Caseload	Monthly Average	241	219
	DLR Statewide Share	51%	52%
Employment	Job Entries	566	448
	Share of Statewide Job Entries	69%	85%
	Job Entries with Medical Benefits	17%	21%
	Share of statewide job entries with medical benefits	99.4%	99.4%
Average Starting Wage (per hour)		$10.93	$11.25

TANF activities for Fiscal Years 201 and 2020 (July 1 through June 30)

These activities continue to evolve to engage TANF clients in preparation for a return to normal, including the goal of obtaining employment. Each household has unique barriers to participation, including home-schooled children, lack of technology resources (computer/internet), and trying to maintain a safe and clean household while quarantined. Expectations for activities are case-by-case.

DLR TANF staff divided their time between completing TANF duties and prioritizing the overall DLR efforts to serve the increase in RA benefits claimants due to COVID-19. This readjustment to service priorities affected the TANF participation rate for the PY19, and ongoing into the remainder of the federal fiscal year which ended September 30, 2020. Some of DLR's current innovative TANF projects include:

- A comprehensively managed work site/skill development center in Rapid City.
- Enrollment of TANF clients into WIOA Title I and Title III programs.

Diversion Program

DLR makes every attempt to assist potential TANF participants with financial diversion opportunities prior to obtaining full TANF benefits. The diversion program is designed to assist potential TANF participants with a one-time cash payment. For example, to purchase work and interview-appropriate clothing, to assist the individual in starting employment without needing to apply for regular TANF benefits.

Partners

DLR continues to provide individualized, intensive case management to all TANF households, placing a high priority on strengthening partnerships with our local community organizations. This includes area United Way Service programs, local school districts, county welfare agencies, and sheltered workshops in various areas across the state. In addition, DLR makes efforts to fully utilize other South Dakota state agencies and their programs for the benefit of our TANF

clients, including the DSS Office of Child Support, Department of Human Services Vocational Rehabilitation, and the DOC Probation and Parole Divisions. In cooperation with WIOA programs, TANF has taken full advantage of opportunities to leverage program dollars so we can help as many eligible South Dakota families as possible.

Senior Community Service Employment

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is a federal program authorized by the Older Americans Act and administered through DLR. The program offers services to older adults, a vital untapped labor pool. SCSEP provides community service and work-based training opportunities to low-income, unemployed adults over the age 55 years old and helps place them into meaningful, unsubsidized employment. While undergoing work experience training at a non-profit or government organization, SCSEP participants are building relevant skills pertaining to their career goals while mastering soft skills. Since January 2018, all applicants who are deemed eligible for SCSEP are enrolled into WIOA Title I and Wagner-Peyser Title III to offer a wider variety of basic career services, such as job search assistance and resume help, and open opportunities for support services and more robust case management.

SCSEP operates in three different regions of South Dakota (West River, Central, and East River) and four employment specialists help oversee these regions. In PY19, a total of 51 older workers participated in SCSEP (27 transferred over from PY18 and 24 participants were enrolled in PY19). Overall, participants contributed 29,190 cumulative hours in a host agency performing community service. This program is committed to helping minority groups and people with significant barriers to employment. Out of the 51 total participants, 39% were Native American, 25% reported a disability, 33% were veterans, and 26% were either homeless or at risk of homelessness.

DLR is continuing to see success in enrolling SCSEP participants into WIOA programs, but COVID-19 has been a unique challenge. Working with older workers more susceptible to serious health complications has led to the adaption of a paid sick leave policy. In June, this paid sick leave policy changed and some individuals were allowed to return back to open training sites. Enrolling participants is a struggle, as many nonprofits and government agencies in rural areas continue to keep doors closed or are not accepting volunteers at this time.
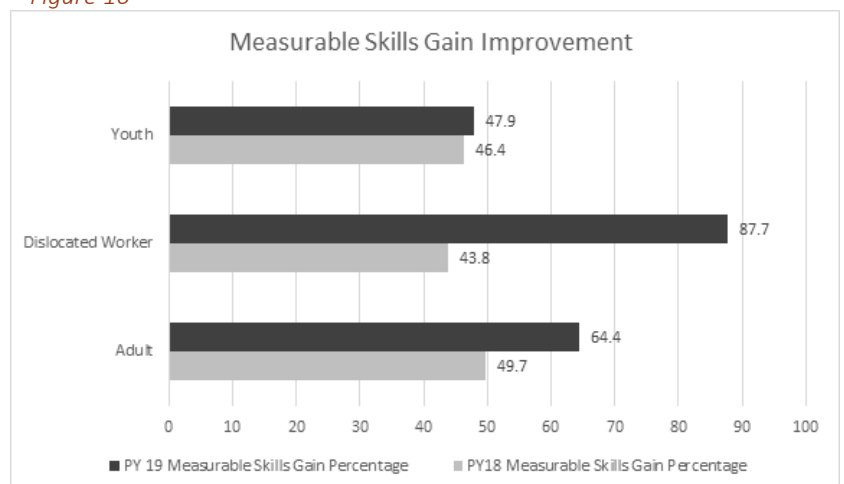
Performance and Reporting

The primary focus for PY19 was to ensure the annual program data properly reflected the participant outcomes for credentials and measurable skills gains. In particular, improving measurable skills gains reporting.

Credentials and Measurable Skills Gains

Program staff traveled across the state to DLR job service offices for in-person training and a better understanding of the criteria for credentials and measurable skills gains. Staff also emphasized the importance of accurate data entry and source documentation for data validation purposes. In addition to continuing with training opportunities, a written resource guide is underdeveloped.

With PY19 being the last program year for measurable skills gain baseline establishment, it was important for the reported data to accurately indicate the level of performance so that program staff can assess expected performance for PY20 relative to the negotiated targets. Compared to PY18 measurable skills gains rates, job service office staff have made significant improvements in recording skills gains for PY19.

Figure 16

Measurable Skills Gain Improvement

	PY 19 Measurable Skills Gain Percentage	PY18 Measurable Skills Gain Percentage
Youth	47.9	46.4
Dislocated Worker	87.7	43.8
Adult	64.4	49.7

Eligible Training Providers

Data reporting and performance for programs of study on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) continue to be a challenge for DLR. An ETPL-specific module was recently added to the database management system for data collection and reporting. Participant numbers in any given program are so small, assessing effectiveness and quality of the training programs based on completion, employment, and credential attainment outcomes is not practical. It is the strong collaborative nature of the relationship between the providers and DLR staff that has been the true measure that appropriate and quality training opportunities are available for program participants. DLR is considering a contract process in accordance with WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(G)(ii)(III). DLR would appreciate assistance from the regional office in developing a training provider method that works for our state.

Effectiveness in Serving Employers

Retention with the Same Employer in the 2nd and 4th Quarters After Exit Rate and Repeat Business Customers Rate are the two measures that South Dakota selected to report for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers annual report. The Retention Rate remained strong, with nearly two-thirds of participants remaining with the same employer, an indication of success in assisting employers in finding the right employees.

The Repeat Business Customer Rate decreased from 26.3% in PY18 to 20.7% in PY19. This trend is also mirrored in the Employment Penetration Rate from PY18 to PY19. Although not reported as a performance measure, there was a decrease of 4%. These decreases could convey employers are not only utilizing online recruitment sites such as LinkedIn, Monster, and Indeed, but also turning to social media outlets, such as Facebook, as legitimate staffing resources. The ease by which employers can directly connect with potential employees through these platforms may decrease the number of employers seeking services from DLR.

Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in record layoffs during the last half of PY19. A larger pool of dislocated workers could mean fewer employers need workforce recruitment assistance.

Common Exit Policy

The Wagner-Peyser Title III, and WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs have a common Exit. In accordance with TEGL 10-16, Change 1, Exit occurs when 90 days have elapsed since the participant received a staff-assisted service. Self-service, information-only, or follow-up services do not apply to common Exit. SDWORKS automatically records the Exit retroactively to the date of the last staff-assisted service, once the 90 days has passed.

Federal Waivers

ETPL WAIVER

PY19 is the final program year for the waiver for reporting outcome information for the total student populations for each program of study on the annual ETPL report. DLR has entered into data share agreements with each of the four public technical colleges to collect student information required for reporting, however these institutions have expressed concerns regarding privacy of the non-WIOA participant student data.

The number of WIOA participants in any single program of study is extremely small, so the reporting outcomes may not represent a true measure of the quality of the program. The smaller private training providers are struggling with the reporting requirements as they often do not have sufficient staff to handle the administrative requirements associated with the ETPL in relation to the one or two WIOA participants for which they provide training.

YOUTH WAIVER

The WIOA Title I Youth expenditure waiver utilized in PY19 allows DLR to spend equal amounts of grant funding on the In-School-Youth (ISY) and Out-Of-School-Youth (OSY) customer groups combined with a waiver allowing Individual Training Plans to be created for In-School-Youth has been utilized to great success. The Title I ISY program has seen

growth in South Dakota, even during a pandemic. DLR continues to build a reputation for providing meaningful services to student's in need. During PY19, DLR provided over 800 services to the In-School-Youth customer group including:

- 55 work experience/internship opportunities
- 15 Occupational Skills Training opportunities
- 27 support services

In PY20, DLR will be engaged in a greater number of secondary schools through the Career Launch program. DLR's Career Launch Career advisors have been training during PY19 in preparation to enroll eligible individuals in high schools around the state into WIOA Title I programs and offer Title I services to eligible participants. The need for the OSY funding waiver and individualized training account opportunities for ISY will continue to be essential for DLR to effectively engage and serve youth in our state.

One-Stop Career Center Certification

DLR Review Crew

In Program Year 2019, a process was implemented to complete the One-Stop Certification and Oversight and Monitoring of DLR job service offices, or One-Stop Career Centers, across the state. A team of Workforce Training staff and Field Operations staff took part in the first "Review Crew" to complete program file and data validation reviews. This format offered a training and team building opportunity, simultaneously. Additional staff to review files allows for more timely feedback to each office, rather than the four offices in need of One-Stop Certification. The One-Stop Certification, Americans with Disabilities Act, and Equal Opportunity reviews were completed outside of the Review Crew.

Data Validation

Using a collaborative Review Crew effort, data validation provided job service office staff a deeper understanding of the importance of data collection and source documentation during enrollment and the provision of participant services. The team approach to the review and validation process also helped clarify participant forms and other procedures. The Data Validation policy is currently being updated to reflect the requirements set forth in TEGL 23-19. See Appendix A.

Equal Opportunity Officer

The Equal Opportunity (EO) Officer provides One-Stop Operators with guidance, technical assistance, and oversight to ensure equal services is provided to all participants. An Equal Opportunity Resource site was developed to provide One-Stop Operators with training material and technical assistance with Limited English Proficiency and providing accommodations for individuals with disabilities. The resource page also has request forms for One-Stop Operators to request training for staff, request translations of important documents, and to provide feedback and recommendations.

As part of the One-Stop Certification process, the EO Officer conducts monitoring reviews of One-Stop Operators to ensure compliance with DLR's Non-Discrimination Plan and 29 CFR 38 and that the One-Stop Operator is conducting its WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity in a nondiscriminatory way. The review consists of a monitoring tool covering each section of the Non-Discrimination Plan, on-site interview of staff and manager, a file review, and data analysis of participants served to demographic data of the serving community. The monitoring process is provided in more detail in the Non-Discrimination Plan, Element 7.

DLR's Equal Opportunity Officer joined the Policy and Best Practices subcommittee of the NASWA Equal Opportunity Committee and developed a nationwide monitoring guide and template, which is primarily a replication of DLR's monitoring process. The guide and template have been approved and adopted by the NASWA committee and is available for all States to use on the NASWA website.

Together all of these reviews make up the One-Stop Certification process. In Program Year 2019, five offices were reviewed as part of the One-Stop Certification process and another office's review from Program Year 2018 was finalized.

OVERSIGHT AND MONITORING

The DLR One-Stop Operator and One-Stop Career Center, or job service office, managers are responsible for ensuring compliance with federal laws, regulation, and guidance as well as state policies and procedures. The Workforce Training, Employment Services, and Administrative Services Divisions are responsible for oversight and monitoring of the One-Stop Career Centers to ensure compliance with federal laws, regulation, and guidance, and state policies and procedures. Monitors ensure:

- DLR programs achieve intended results.
- Resources are utilized efficiently and effectively for authorized purposes and are protected from waste, fraud, and abuse.
- Accurate and timely information is reported to serve as the basis for improved decision-making and required reporting.

Selected employment specialists from the One-Stop Career Centers will assist labor program specialists with reviewing active files and data validation. This process will allow employment specialists to better understand the process and requirements to improve accuracy. Labor program specialists will provide training for employment specialists prior to conducting the review. An employment specialist will not validate files from their own One-Stop Center. Labor program specialists will work alongside the employment specialists at all times during the review.

ACTIVE FILE REVIEW

Timeline
File review of active files will be completed every program year by June 30. Files subject to review include participants active in the program during the year of review. Files will be randomly selected to ensure a variety of case managers and offices are represented.

Process
Labor program specialists will develop a review sheet for each program. This review sheet will analyze eligibility, provision of services, quality of case management, documentation, fiscal accountability, and inclusion of data validation elements. An Active File Review Report containing the results of the file review will be provided to the One-Stop Career Centers. These results shall identify the names of the files reviewed, errors, and promising practices identified.

DATA VALIDATION

This preliminary policy establishes data validation guidance for Wagner-Peyser, Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, and Trade Adjustment Assistance programs. Once additional guidance from U.S. DOL is received regarding data validation, revisions may be necessary.

Data validation is a series of internal controls and quality assurance techniques established to verify the accuracy, validity, and reliability of data. The purpose of validation procedures for required performance data are to:

1. Verify the performance data reported is valid, accurate, reliable, and comparable across programs;
2. Identify irregularities in the data and resolve issues that may cause inaccurate reporting;
3. Outline source documentation required for common data elements; and
4. Improve program performance accountability through the results of data validation efforts.

Labor program specialists will review the data validation process, requirements, and plan for completion with the Employment Services and Workforce Training Division Directors annually to ensure staff are prepared for performing data validation of selected files.

Timeline
Data validation will be completed for every program year by September 30th for the previous program year's files. Files that are subject to data validation include participants who exited during the given program year. At least two percent of Wagner-Peyser files and five percent of each of the Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, TAA, and Youth files will be randomly selected for data validation.

Process
The review team will validate the data elements outlined in TEGL 7-18, Attachment I, program eligibility and triggering service data elements outlined in the Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL) and participant intake/orientation forms. For each validated individual data element, a pass or fail grade will be assessed.

A Data Validation Report containing the results of the data validation shall be provided to the One-Stop Career Centers. These results shall identify the names of the files reviewed, missing and/or erroneous data.

Source Documentation for Common Data Elements
For most data elements, the validation guidelines provide multiple forms of acceptable source documentation. If the State collects multiple sources for the same data element and the sources conflict, the most objective source should be used to determine if the data element is valid and accurate. These source documentation types include:

- *Cross-Match:* a cross-match required validators to find detailed supporting evidence for the data element in a database. An indicator or presence of a Social Security Number (SSN) in an administrative non-WIOA database, i.e., a database not maintained by a WIOA core program such as data from the State's Department of Motor Vehicles, is not sufficient evidence for a cross-match. State validators must also confirm supporting information such as dates of participation and services rendered. DLR will have data sharing agreements in place as appropriate.

- *Self-Attestation:* Self-attestation (also referred to as a participant statement) occurs when a participant states his or her status for a particular data element, such as pregnant or parenting youth, and then signs and dates a form acknowledging this status. The key elements for self-attestation are: (a) the participant identifying his or her status for permitted elements, and (b) signing and dating a form attesting to this self-identification. The form and signature can be on paper and uploaded electronically into SDWORKS or in SDWORKS with an electronic signature.

- *Case notes:* Case notes refer to electronic statements by the case manager that identify, at a minimum, the following: (a) a participant's status for a specific data element, (b) the date on which the information was obtained, and (c) the case manager who obtained the information.

- *Electronic Records:* Electronic records are participant records created, stored or transferred in a form that only a computer can process and maintained in the DLR's management information system. Records can be numeric, graphic, or text. They can also include magnetic storage media such as tapes or disks.

Source documentation for data validation items must be uploaded into SDWORKS. Hard copies are not acceptable as outlined in policy and will not be considered for data validation purposes.

CORRECTIVE ACTION

Results of the annual active file review and data validation review will be incorporated into the One-Stop Career Center Certification process as identified in Policy 3.3. Findings, areas of concern, and promising practices that remain consistent through the annual reviews will be included in the One-Stop Career Center Certification monitoring report.

WIOA §107, §116, §129, §134
20 CFR §677.150, §679.370, §683.400-440
WIOA Participant Individual Record Layout