



Quarterly Meeting Briefing Book

February 10, 2021
10:00 AM to 2:00 PM

Tom Wolf
Governor

Jeff Brown
Chair



Quarterly Meeting Briefing Book
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Quarterly Meeting
Wednesday, February 10, 2021
10:00 AM to 2:00 PM

Skype

Please note this meeting is being recorded

Agenda

- 10:00 AM Welcome, Introductions, and Roll Call, Chair Jeff Brown
- 10:05 AM Chair's Updates, Jeff Brown
- Approve August 12, 2020 Quarterly Meeting Minutes – **VOTE**
 - New Member Introduction – Acting Labor & Industry Secretary Jennifer Berrier
- 10:15 AM Board Member Updates
- Bobby “Mac” McAuliffe, United Steel Workers
 - Wendie DiMatteo Holsinger, A.S.K. Foods, Inc.
 - Senator Lindsey M. Williams, Pennsylvania Senate
 - Dionne Wallace Oakely, Erie Insurance
 - John “Ski” Sygielski, Harrisburg Area Community College
 - Matt Yarnell, SEIU Healthcare Pennsylvania
 - Chekemma J. Fulmore-Townsend, Philadelphia Youth Network
- 11:15 AM PA WDB Agency Updates
- Governor's Office
 - Labor & Industry
 - Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
 - Aging
 - Agriculture
 - Community and Economic Development
 - Corrections
 - Education
 - Human Services
- 12:15 PM PA WDB Committee Updates
- Industry Partnership and Employer Engagement, Chair John “Ski” Sygielski
 - Reentry Ad Hoc, Chair Jeff Brown
 - Career Pathways and Apprenticeship, Chair Richard Bloomingdale
 - One-Stop Service Delivery System, Chair Sarah Hollister
 - Youth, Chair Chekemma J. Fulmore-Townsend
 - TANF Youth Development Program Data Recommendation – **VOTE**
 - Continuous Improvement, Chair Brian Funkhouser
 - Pilot Grant Program Recommendation – **VOTE**
 - Healthcare Workforce Ad Hoc, Chair Matt Yarnell
 - Professional Care Worker Crisis Recommendations – **VOTE**



1:15 PM Public Comment Period

1:30 PM Adjourn – **VOTE**

Next Meeting: May 4, 2021

PA WDB Quarterly Board Meeting

Tuesday, November 10, 2020

10:00AM to 11:25AM

Skype

Meeting Minutes

Attendance

Members:

- Chair Jeff Brown
- Idayat Adewunmi
- Denise Andahazy
- Shannon Austin
- Senator Camera Bartolotta
- Tim Bean
- Richard Bloomingdale
- Julene Champion
- Representative Morgan Cephas
- Wendie DiMatteo-Holsinger
- Chekemma Fulmore-Townsend
- Nick Gilson
- James Harper, Jr.
- Brad Hollabaugh
- Sarah Hollister
- Timothy James
- Marguerite Kline
- Bob McAuliffe
- Secretary Teresa Miller
- Henry Nicholas
- Secretary Jerry Oleksiak
- Acting Secretary Noe Ortega
- Jodi Pace
- Tom Redden
- Secretary Russell Redding
- Gregg Riefenstahl
- JoAnne Ryan
- Frank Sirianni
- John "Ski" Sygielski
- Jessica Trybus
- Dionne Wallace-Oakley
- Laura Wand
- Yvette Watts
- Senator Lindsey Williams
- Matt Yarnell
- Deputy Secretary Allison Jones for Governor Tom Wolf
- Deputy Secretary Carol Kilko for Secretary Dennis Davin
- Billie Barnes for Commissioner Robert J. Harvie, Jr.
- Jonas Ricci for Representative Ryan Mackenzie
- David Miles for Secretary Robert Torres
- Amy Schwenk for Secretary John Wetzel

Presenters:

- Acting Secretary Noe Ortega, PA Department of Education
- Chair Chekemma Fulmore-Townsend, Youth Committee
- Chair Jeffrey Brown, Reentry Ad Hoc Committee
- Chair Rick Bloomingdale, Career Pathways and Apprenticeships Committee
- Chair John "Ski" Sygielski, Industry Partnerships and Employer Engagement Committee
- Chair Matt Yarnell, Healthcare Workforce Ad Hoc Committee

- Executive Director James Martini, Continuous Improvement Committee
- Chair Sarah Hollister, One-Stop Service Delivery System Committee
- Passle Helminski, Chair of the Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council
- Secretary Jerry Oleksiak, PA Department of Labor and Industry
- Deputy Secretary Shelia Ireland, PA Department of Labor and Industry
- Executive Director Shannon Austin, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Dave Miles, PA Department of Aging
- Secretary Russell Redding, PA Department of Agriculture
- Deputy Secretary Carol Kilko, PA Department of Community and Economic Development
- Amy Schwenk, PA Department of Corrections
- Julie Kane, PA Department of Education
- Secretary Teresa Miller, PA Department of Human Services

Staff: Executive Director James Martini, Deputy Director Tracey Turner, Shuana Davis, Mary Hoskins, Michelle Lengel

Welcome and Introductions

Chair Brown called the meeting to order and asked Executive Director Martini to run through roll call. Executive Director Martini noted that he could see people that logged in online and proceeded to run through the phone numbers for those who called in.

Chair Brown then asked Acting Secretary Noe Ortega to introduce himself and what was going on in his area.

Acting Secretary Ortega said that he was glad to participate. He noted that around the career and tech ed space, Dr. Lee Burkett held an integrated conference which had a great number of participants. He said she was also monitoring the work around the federal Perkins V loan and a number of post-secondary partners had begun to submit their applications for 2021 grants. In addition, Perkins V does require post-secondary to lend support to the workforce development board as well. Around the Career Ready PA Coalition, Laura Fridirici has launched a number of virtual convenings as well as statewide sessions. In the adult education space, like many of the education providers it has really been a narrative of people pulling through the challenges of the pandemic and continuing to provide services to their adult students. In addition, it is helping them in the areas that require additional support as they manage both their continuing development academically, professionally, and personally with that of their young children as well. Lastly, in the space of elementary and secondary education, recommendations around changing the science standards had been taken to the PA WDB a couple of months ago and the process continued.

Chair Brown thanked him for his report and said he looked forward to him being on the Board.

Chair's Updates

Chair Brown said he was looking for a motion to approve the August 12, 2020 minutes.

MOTION: Secretary Jerry Oleksiak made the motion. Chekemma Fulmore-Townsend seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Brown then moved to committee updates but Dr. John Sygielski of the Industry Partnership and Employer Engagement Committee was having some technical difficulties.

Committee Update- Youth

Chair Chekemma Fulmore-Townsend remarked that upon the Board's approval of the joint recommendation on evaluation, the committee supported the development and distribution of an evaluation evidence survey to better understand how local programs have the capacity to measure results so that they could begin to prepare for capacity building and training for those programs. Those results were expected at the end of the month. Chair Fulmore-Townsend commented that she was hoping that at the next meeting they would have an update for the Board about how their programs were doing and what they would recommend for support for those programs.

Chair Fulmore-Townsend said they doubled down on understanding the impact of COVID-19 on opportunity youth, specifically by inviting the Aspen Institute to join the committee for a meeting to share impact and policy considerations for the population. She said the impact of the global pandemic and the economic downturn were predicted to be dire for young people between the ages of 16 and 24. She then highlighted a new report called A Decade Undone which estimates that this disruption will undo much of the progress made in that area over the last decade, increasing the needs for youth employment and training by the thousands. She highlighted that some of the policy considerations that the Aspen Institute suggested the committee explore and said they would continue to do so related to direct relief payments, affordable college tuition, and work to prepare a comprehensive policy agenda for young people. She said that motivated them to be really clear on the data that they have and the data that they need so they invited the Center for Workforce Information and Analysis to come to their last meeting and share what information they have relating to the goals and that leads them to their next focus of work. Their next focus is to determine and make any recommendations related to their evaluation capacity survey, to evaluate their current baseline related to the youth goals that are set, and to make any recommendations for data collection and integration of multiple sources of information for young people. She said they have been focusing on having strong data so that they can see where they started as a baseline but what the impact of COVID has been on the youth population and how they should target their limited resources moving forward.

Committee Update- Reentry Ad Hoc

Chair Brown noted that the Reentry Ad Hoc Committee update was in the briefing book and that the committee was continuing to work on the same things that they reported last time. He remarked that they hoped to have another recommendation by the next meeting.

Committee Update- Career Pathways and Apprenticeship

Chair Rick Bloomingdale highlighted that they continue to look for pilot programs to deal with barriers and individuals who may be facing so barriers to get onto a career pathway. That has been made particularly difficult during the pandemic and he knows the building trades unions have a number of openings as construction takes off and are setting up their apprenticeship schools for social distancing and providing all of the safety gear. Some employers have proximity sensors that employees wear so the technology that is going into safety on the job and the adaptation has been nothing short of remarkable. Another topic that they are looking at is how sometimes K-12 kids aren't aware of all wonderful

opportunities that are available to them outside of going to college. He noted that there are a lot of opportunities in manufacturing and in the building trades. He noted that Governor Wolf's Teacher in the Workplace program had been particularly successful. It had really taken off with teachers, particularly guidance counselors becoming aware of what was available for the kids and was an eye-opener.

Committee Update- Industry Partnerships and Employer Engagement

Chair "Ski" Sygielski commended Chair Brown on how he has come back from some tough times. Chair Brown thanked him. Chair Sygielski noted that for the committee summary could be found in the book and there was three general areas that they were focusing their efforts on all in support of WIOA Goal 2.4. They were focusing their efforts around the Next Generation Industry Partnerships and they are very critical in order to stay in touch with what employers are doing. They can develop partnerships and bring people together so that the engagement of the employers can provide necessary input that they need for the operations of the One-Stop systems.

He noted that that is another area where they put their focus on in is encouraging the use of and increasing awareness, as the PA CareerLink® is not fully known yet. He said that once employers are engaged, overall they are satisfied as they have learned through surveys and it continues to be an area that they work on. Finally, aligning all of the policies, resources, and strategies together are very important as they work to strengthen employer engagement within the system. They are focused on developing and maintaining partnerships so it can benefit policies and procedures within the state and bringing employers together to share promising practices and be able to provide assistance to get to employees that need to be trained.

Committee Update: Healthcare Workforce Ad Hoc

Chair Matt Yarnell said that he didn't have much of a report beyond the fact that they passed two recommendations at the last Board meeting and they have a few areas where they want to dig in and keep working on them. He also reminded everyone that they had a crisis statement that they passed a few meetings ago. He noted that around 7 in 10 deaths related to COVID in Pennsylvania were in nursing homes. He said that they would likely see the workforce crisis there deepen as cases continued to rise so the work of the committee would be very important as they move through the winter.

Committee Update: Continuous Improvement

Executive Director Martini gave the update as Chair Funkhouser was unable to join the meeting. He noted that there were three big things that they were focusing on in the last quarter. A lot of it was working collaboratively with the state teams that are in charge of a lot of the system. The first was the CWDS project and were engaged with the state folks quite a bit on that where they can make improvements around intake for the customers. He said it is beneficial for the system to have a better understanding of what the customers that come in look like and what barriers they face. They also feel like it will give them a better opportunity to reflect performance of the system more accurately when they have a better idea of who the customers are that they are serving. Additionally, they were working with the Bureau of Workforce Development Administration and Dan Kuba and his team around the system of record policy as they worked to finalize that. They want to make sure that they are accurately capturing what happens in the system as best as they can while also respecting the privacy and data integrity of all of the participants they serve in the system. Finally, along with the Youth Committee they worked on the survey of all of the programs around their ability to effectively evaluate their programs with respect to the data

and evidence they collect. He mentioned that they already have over 100 responses to the survey and that was going on and would continue to be live until November 20th. He said they would be sure to provide a robust report-out of what they find from the survey. Chair Brown remarked that he thought that was the committee that was taking a look at technological improvements in the internet or systems approach. He said the purpose was to make it more friendly and modern and asked if they would be a report back. Executive Director Martini said they could make sure they had an update on it at the next quarterly meeting if it wasn't part of the report from the Department of Labor and Industry further along in the meeting.

Committee Update: One-Stop Service Delivery System

Chair Sarah Hollister commented that they were able to meet for the first time and had a great representation. She said the committee did feel that they needed to have more diverse opinions on the committee and were seeking employer and customer representatives. She said they were also going to do a deeper dive into the system data available. She commented they would also continue to explore what their priority will be to enhance the work being done by the other committees. She said she was interested in taking recommendations from board members about employers and customers to be represented on the committee. Chair Brown asked if Executive Director Martini could help with that and Chair Hollister said that he had been helping.

Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council Presentation

Passle Helminski began her recruitment presentation. She noted that the Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council's (PARC) mission was to inform and advise the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, the State Board of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Legislature, and the Governor on issues affecting people with disabilities. She noted that she was giving the presentation because they are mandated to have one member from the PA Workforce Development Board be part of PARC. They are supposed to have 15 members and only had 13. She said to get and maintain federal funding they must have 15 members and that they would be appointed by the Governor. She commented 51% of the membership had to be someone with a disability and they can only serve two, three year consecutive terms. She said she was hoping that at least one PA WDB member applied. She said they had six standing committees and each member had to be in at least one. They form ad hoc committees as needed. Chair Brown asked if there were any questions and if anyone was interested. Chair Brown said that if anyone was interested to talk to James about it. Senator Williams asked what the other spot that they were looking to fill besides the Board spot. Ms. Helminski listed some spots that could be covered including education and special education. She noted that OVR had to review the applications. Senator Williams said she had some thoughts as to who could fill a spot. Chair Brown thanked Ms. Helminski for her presentation. Secretary Oleksiak noted that OVR is a part of the Department of Labor and Industry and he noted if there were questions, that they could help as well.

Agency Report- Department of Labor and Industry

Secretary Oleksiak noted that the Department was busy in dealing with the mitigation efforts and Unemployment Compensation. He said they were seeing a record number of claims, both through regular unemployment and through the programs available under the CARES Act. He said every time they seemed to be getting a handle on the numbers, they ran into various issues on the way including fraud. He said they were tapping into the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program and it was happening all over the country. Secretary Oleksiak remarked they were working closely internally as well as with the

vendors, other state, federal, and local authorities and they really got a handle on it. Secretary Oleksiak then gave a shoutout to the many employees working diligently on Unemployment Compensation. He said one of the things is that they know they are going to get through COVID and they were looking at the what the immediate future of work was going to look like and what the impact would be long term. He said that is a focus of the Department of Labor and Industry and the administration. He then invited Deputy Secretary Shelia Ireland to give her report.

Deputy Secretary Ireland noted that she wanted to cover three things. The first was the challenge of providing Rapid Response and in-person services at the PA CareerLink® during the pandemic; the second was the revitalization of the Apprenticeship and Training Office; and finally the efforts to raise diversity, equity, and inclusion as a key driver in their work. She said the pandemic dramatically shifted the landscape on how their direct services operate. It accelerated both volume and the vehicles they employ to provide services to a rapidly expanding customer base. The Rapid Response team was continuing to expand virtual services to address temporary and permanent layoffs throughout the Commonwealth and as of the Board meeting, 377 WARN notices were filed impacting over 70,000 workers. They were using all of the virtual meeting platforms to conduct information sessions with the effected workers but they do realize that not all customers had access to virtual services. They were therefore holding sessions at brick and mortar sites, broadcasting the virtual information meetings. Rapid Response was also engaging the PA CareerLink® Business Service Teams to continue to expand virtual job fairs as people were still be hired throughout the state. She then applauded the Rapid Response team as they had responded to more WARN notices in the last four months than they had received in the last four years. She said they were not the only frontline heroes at L&I as the PA CareerLink® continued to diversify their strategies to provide reemployment services in Pennsylvania. She said that as of the Board meeting, 43 PA CareerLink® offices had reopened their doors at limited capacity, mostly by appointment only. All of the offices had developed pandemic plans to maintain safety for their customers and safe. She said they were being tested though as they wrestled with increasing COVID exposures in the face of the recent surge. In the past two weeks before the Board meeting, they had to close or disinfect 6 different locations. Yet, even in the face of the pandemic, they were continuing to push on creative ways to expand their services. Some examples where that in the recent months, some local boards partnered with L&I to develop curbside assistance for workforce services and they were working to ensure that ever PA CareerLink® across the state had the capacity to provide that type of assistance. They would like to see that within a block of the PA CareerLink®, they would have broadband and Wi-Fi access. They were testing drive-thru job fairs in two workforce areas to assist employers with their recruitment efforts and were moving from a reactive to proactive stance by piloting, in five workforce areas across the state, their process around reaching out to customers who had recently filed UC claims. They would like to use claims data to tailor a more personalized outreach approach to connect them to services. Essentially, instead of waiting for people to contact PA CareerLink®, they were reaching out to them. Included in the pilot was training module geared towards using conversational skills in an empathetic manor to engage the customers.

One of the more exciting things going on at the Department of Labor and Industry was Tara Loew joining the deputate as the new Director of the Apprenticeship and Training Office. She said Ms. Loew was bringing a wealth of workforce development and program management experience to the ATO and they were lucky to have her. Deputy Secretary Ireland said that apprenticeships sit at the center of the longer term strategy for getting Pennsylvanians back to work. Recently in support of that, they released \$6 million of PAsmart grant funding to organizations across Pennsylvania. The ATO continues to perform

despite its staffing challenges, having added another 221 apprentices and had reached 156% of their goal for their 4 year grant. The ATO continued to service 861 active programs and over 18,000 registered apprenticeships.

The last thing that that Deputy Secretary Ireland highlighted was that they were leaning in on their efforts to raise diversity, equity, and inclusion as a key driver in their work. The bureaus of Workforce Development Administration, Workforce Partnership Operations, the Board, and OVR had assembled a diverse workgroup partnering to connect additionally underserved Pennsylvanians with employment and training opportunities. She said that shortly they would see a survey coming out and they were trying to uncover promising practices that serve communities of color with greater cultural fluency and effectiveness so that the state and the One-Stops can reach more people and better serve Pennsylvanians from underserved communities and communities of color. Deputy Secretary Ireland asked the board to review the updates on the opioid grant and the ECHO grant.

Chair Brown asked if there were questions. Chair Brown said that he had a lot of businesses that were saying they couldn't get workers and if the state was trying to connect workers that lost their job in light of a WARN notice to the jobs that were open in the state. Deputy Secretary Ireland said absolutely and that is what part of what the Rapid Response team does. She said they respond to a specific organization that is closing or laid off employees and make the employees aware of opportunities in the area. She said a lot of organizations have a lot to do from an HR perspective and that the ground shifted under a lot of industries and there are cutting edge, proactive approaches that HR needs to make to effectively connect. She said that PA is also long overdue to start addressing the digital divide and with employers working primarily through digital platforms to engage prospective employees. She said they can't ignore that in Philadelphia, 25% of households don't digital access, not even a smartphone. She said they wouldn't get around digital literacy where 67% of people are characterized as not being digital literate. She said it is less that employers can't find who they need but more they can't find who they need in the traditional way. She said part of the work that needs to be done is to lean into the moment and find new ways or develop new practices that become the norm for practice in terms of connecting people to jobs and opportunities. Chair Brown asked if there were any other questions and there were none. He thanked Secretary Oleksiak and Deputy Secretary Ireland for the presentation and for trying to help citizens during these difficult times.

Agency Report- Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

Executive Director Shannon Austin then provided an update on the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. She remarked that they currently have 3,986 individuals that are currently on the closed order of selection and they are working with the Governor to try to get approval to remove individuals off that waiting list so they can begin to serve them. To date, they had removed close to 10,000 individuals off of the waiting list so they were anticipating removing more and getting the approval. She said that just in September, they did have the ability to go after additional reallocation funds from the state perspective and they were able to pull down and additional \$27 million for the VR program which they were very excited to do. She said it would allow them to serve more customers and their hope was that in the spring if they were on a continuing resolution that they could open the order at some point. She remarked that they had done a lot of internal work getting people placed into employment and cleaning up internally within the agency so that they can serve and have put internal controls in place. She said they were anticipating an RSA monitoring report that was from August 2019, so they were waiting on that to go public. She said they

were working with them and other areas to work on deficiencies within the agency. She commented that during the summer to the current time, they had the opportunity to work with the Bureau of Special Education of PDE in developing an MOU. She said she was happy to say that they had a signed MOU and they were hoping to have supplement documentation roll out in the spring where there is crossover for students that are 14 to 21 years of age and what covers with PDE under IDEA and what covers OVR under WIOA working with those students under pre-employment transition services. They were also working on a toolkit that will go alongside the MOU to do outreach to parents and key stakeholders to do cross-training among OVR and PDE staff to make sure they understand what the MOU is, who's responsible for what and how they are going to serve the kids. It will also be focused on what it looks like when OVR is invited to IEPs in particular and what can students and parents anticipate, so they have parents' part of the stakeholder group working through the marketing material but also they have tech support to also work through that.

Executive Director Austin said they continue to have HGAC (Hiram G. Andrews Center) open as they are still continuing to work with students and they were at about half capacity because of the mitigating measures they were taking. She remarked they didn't have any breakouts or students getting COVID and the team did an amazing job following protocols. She said the Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing continued to work vigorously with the Department of Health and the Governor's Office to do the updates and make sure that the necessary interpreters are there so that consumers can get the information. She noted they had an internal diversity, equity, and inclusion initiative that they rolled out at the beginning of the year. They were finalizing their five year plan with it and had an internal benchmark done. Chair Brown said it seemed like they made great progress in getting people off of the waiting list. Chair Brown asked how the Board can help get the last people off of the waiting list. Executive Director Austin said that they go through the funding and she just needs to submit the plans. She said they need to make sure they have the capacity and they hope to go month to month.

Agency Report- Department of Aging

David Miles said he didn't have anything to report in addition to the report in the packet.

Agency Report- Department of Agriculture

Secretary Russell Redding provided the report for the PA Department of Agriculture. He remarked that the week of the Board meeting was National Apprenticeship week and he had joined Deputy Secretary Ireland in a panel discussion about apprenticeship's value to agriculture and the food system in the state. He said they were able to highlight the three apprenticeships they had as well as some apprentices. He noted that he was pleased to report that they had received word that one of their businesses in Western PA that was using the National Landscape Management Apprenticeship program had the first female graduate and there was only four in the US total. He added that since the last meeting, the US Department of Agriculture announced they are discontinuing the Agricultural Labor Survey and its quarterly farm labor report. The survey and report had been used to set the adverse effect wage rates for the H2A program. He said the Department of Labor on November 1st issued a notice for the new rule for updating the methodology in determining the annual wage rate. He said that for the vast majority of agriculture jobs, the rule stabilizes the rate through the calendar year of 2022 by using the average hourly wages for field and livestock workers as reported by the US Department of Agriculture on the survey that was published in 2019. In 2023 it will pick up again. He said that their current adverse effect wage rate is about \$13.34. Secretary Redding remarked they were looking at that change because it is aimed at stabilizing wages and

there had been concerns from employers about the inconsistency of those rates. He said they had reported before on the Commission on Ag Education Excellence and welcomed Secretary Ortega who serves as the co-chair with him. They were focused on the agricultural education programs in Pennsylvania with a workforce development view of how it is their pipeline and pathway. He said they also were continuing their work on equity, inclusion, and diversity. They were looking at how they can diversify the agricultural workforce and educational system. He commented there was also work being done by the Commission on Ag Education Excellence. Finally, they were working at the PA Farm Bill implementation with the programs like economic and workforce development.

Agency Report- Department of Community and Economic Development

Deputy Secretary Carol Kilko noted that they had continued collaboration with a number of agencies including the Department of Labor and Industry. She noted that Secretary Davin had been working with DCED staff and they were doing industry outreach calls and they had included representatives from the Department of Labor and Industry, the Department of Health, and PEMA. One of their larger programs in volume of applications through the CARES Act was the hazards pay program where they provided three dollars per hour for those that were frontline workers under certain industries. She said they had over 10,000 applications for the program in nearly \$900 million in requests for a total of \$50 million that was available to them. She said they continued to work through that program. A lot of the healthcare programs were able to apply and were awarded. She remarked a lot of them had never done business with state government before. She said they must have all of the money out by the November 30th deadline. She said the Brookings Institute did say that the hazards pay program should be modeled by other states and that the administration was proud of that. Finally, Deputy Secretary Kilko remarked that their Workforce and Economic Development Network (WEDNET) program that provides training dollars for incumbent workers was alive and well. The businesses across the commonwealth are training their employees.

Agency Report- Department of Corrections

Amy Schwenk noted that their report was in the briefing book but that she wanted to mention a few more things. She said COVID was impacting their reentrants heavily. Their overall employment numbers for reentrants were down and they were working with them and connecting with industry partners to connect those individuals. Their workforce development specialist, Dorenda Hamarlund was continuing to reach out and conduct virtual presentations on the benefits of hiring reentrants and continues to coordinate with the community on those initiatives. She noted that in October they met with the Kutztown Business and Manufacturing Roundtable via Zoom and provided an update on the benefits of hiring reentrants and they were going to circle back with them in 2021. She said they updated a page on their website to have all of their resources and contacts highlighted. Also, their reentry fairs inside of the institutions had been halted and they have participated in them virtually. The week of December 7th through the 11th they were holding a weeklong reentry fair with all of their SCIs. She said they had a lot of community partners and inmate participating. They started a reentry services office pilot in January 2020 at SCI Houtzdale and was basically a one-stop shop for inmates at the institution to begin their reentry efforts. She said it was really valuable for them to begin connecting to community partners that are staffed with a parole agent, a reentry specialist, or a social worker that helps them with connections in the community. Ms. Schwenk commented that it was a successful pilot and within the first two months 250 inmates participated in the program and was well received. She said it was rolled out to all of the SCIs two weeks before the November Board meeting. Finally, she remarked they had on the ground for some time at SCI Phoenix, a female

transition unit and had been vacant until September 2020 when they did start receiving females. She said it was exciting as their female institutions were at SCI Muncy up north and SCI Cambridge Springs near Erie so this unit allows inmates that are close to getting out into the community back into the community in which they came from. She said she expected to expand and get them involved in the community. Chair Brown asked if at SCI Phoenix the males and females were separated. Ms. Schwenk responded that it is a completely separate unit and is outside of the perimeter of the male unit at SCI Phoenix. Chair Brown thanked her for her update.

Agency Report- Department of Education

Chair Brown asked Julie Kane if she had any additional information to add onto what Secretary Ortega had reported earlier in the meeting. Ms. Kane said that she did not and that Secretary Ortega did a great job at explaining everything.

Agency Report- Department of Human Services

Secretary Teresa Miller said that as their report notes, they once again were trying to get word out about their programs during the pandemic. She said they were seeing a growth in enrollment for their Medicaid and SNAP programs since February and they were using every opportunity afforded to them to provide additional assistance wherever possible. She remarked they had a good partnership with the Department of Education over the spring to fill the gap as students who participated in the National School Lunch program. With kids at home they weren't able to get breakfast and lunch at school so they were able to get funding to those families to cover that. She said with the recent action by Congress, they were able to continue the program for 2021 to assist with the ongoing need. They were able to get additional SNAP payments out to SNAP households that did not receive the maximum household amount. They had been pushing to provide additional benefits to those who don't receive the maximum household amount which was about 40% of the lowest income SNAP recipients. She said they were in a legal battle over it as the USDA was fighting them over it. They were insisting that any amounts they were paying out would have to be reimbursed if they lost in court. She said those were not amounts that they would not be able to reimburse as it was \$82 million a month.

During the pandemic they were able to start a SNAP online purchasing pilot and were in the fifth month of the pilot. In October their transactions increased to 2.95% of all SNAP transactions which was up from about a point and a half in the first month so it was about \$10 million and close to 142,000 transactions. They also implemented a LIHEAP crisis recovery program during the summer to help with utility bills and that was funded through federal CARES Act dollars. She said they were working closely with the Department of Labor and Industry to develop strategies and ways to outreach to people who might be losing their unemployment benefits to make sure they are aware of DHS programs. She said that now they are somewhat getting back to business as usual, they are reestablishing their Medicaid Work Supports program. It is a program that systematically connects Medicaid enrollees who are interested in employment and training opportunities with the PA CareerLink®, County Assistance Office, or their managed care organization for further engagement. They launched the program back in February. They did have some elements of the program stop for awhile because of the pandemic but some of them did continue. All of the components of the program are to be up and running by the end of November. They have seen an average of 860 people per week seeking those resources. She said as more people in the coming months were going to be looking for employment supports; the new program is in place.

Secretary Miller also mentioned the work expense deduction that they recently implemented to better support TANF recipients as they enter the workforce. It will allow the TANF recipients to have a longer transition into the workforce. She said they hope between that action and the employment training redesign that they had talked about before that they would be able to do a better job at supporting the population and reducing the churn they see in the program. She said the data shows that half of the people that leave TANF for a job are back in the program within a year. The hope is with some of the changes they are making that it will change that. She commented they are also focusing on their racial equity work. She said she was excited to hear so many other agencies talk about it. Secretary Miller then remarked that since the last meeting, DHS had implemented a racial equity steering committee that is going help them identify ways in which they can make DHS a more inclusive, diverse, and equitable workplace. They had several meetings where they looked at data and all steering committee members were going through a training so they would have the tools to address issues and hopefully put in place solutions to address the disparities. She said they were starting to look internally and all of the program offices are also focusing on addressing disparities that they know exist in program office areas. Chair Brown asked what the timeline was on the lawsuit. Secretary Miller said that they have a verdict and the federal government has taken the position of if they will in court then the commonwealth needs to reimburse the funds. Secretary Miller said they don't have the funds to reimburse that and that she doesn't have a timeline for where it will end up going. She remarked that they were supporting CLS in the lawsuit. Secretary Miller said they want to get the money out but can't risk the \$82 million a month at that point. Chair Brown asked if the current position was that they weren't sending any money out until the issue is adjudicated. Secretary Miller said or if they could get comfortable that they wouldn't have to reimburse the federal government. She said they were having conversations with CLS about how real that threat is. She said they are trying to work it out as quickly as possible. Chair Brown asked if it was also political. Secretary Miller said it was possibly and they have a couple of months until they could talk to someone who could give them assurances.

Public Comments

Passle Helminski thanked the Board for letting her present and noted that their next meeting was Wednesday, November 18th. She said their PA CareerLink® committee needed someone from the Board to participate. Chair Brown reiterated that Senator Williams had some thoughts as to who could serve. Ms. Helminski reiterated that they needed to have someone from the PA Workforce Development Board.

Chair Brown sought a motion to adjourn.

MOTION: Senator Camera Bartolotta made the motion to adjourn. Wendie DiMatteo-Holsinger seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Quarterly Meeting Agency Update

February 10, 2021

Agency: PA Department of Labor & Industry, Workforce Deputate

1. Business Education Partnership Grant - The BWDA awarded Lehigh Valley Workforce Development Board, Montgomery County Workforce Development Board, and Westmoreland/Fayette Workforce development Board each a \$100,000 Business Education Partnership (BEP) Grant to support the Commonwealth's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Combined State Plan. The purpose of this grant is to allow school districts to collaborate with local business and local workforce development boards to educate students, parents, and guardians regarding high-priority occupations and career pathways. With the addition of the three below awards, the project has now been expanded statewide.
2. Veterans Employment Program - The BWDA awarded \$200,000 to Educational Data Systems Inc. for a Veterans Employment Program (VEP) utilizing the Pennsylvania Industry Partnership (IP) Heroes Path funding. This VEP grant provides communities in Delaware County, PA with flexible resources to support innovative solutions to address veterans' barriers to employment. IP Heroes Path funds may be used to fund programs and services to assist veterans to become employed or improve their employment, including, without limitation, job search and placement services, educational enhancement, job training, job readiness, and workplace skills training.
3. Direct Care Worker Grants - The BWDA awarded the Center for Independent Living of Central PA, Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit, District 1199C Training & Upgrade Fund, and Penn Asian Senior Services Direct Care Worker Training grants totaling \$4.8M. The grants will provide awardees opportunities to develop and implement systems that focus on delivering effective training programs that will improve the skills, knowledge, and quality of care produced by existing direct care workers (Personal Care Assistants, Home Health Aides, and Certified Nursing Assistants) and will create, organize, and/or build career pathways that pay family-sustaining wages for future workers in these fields. These grants are 100% state funded with reemployment funds.
4. Digital Literacy Grants - The PA Department of Labor & Industry (L&I) announced the availability of \$4.5 million in funding for the Digital Literacy and Workforce Development Grant (DLWDG) to include awards of up to \$45,000. This grant opportunity will be focused on supporting effective programs that enhance foundational digital literacy skills for job seekers in their local community. Foundational digital skills are necessary in carrying out job tasks and are becoming a main function of many jobs. Digital literacy skills promote problem-solving and critical thinking skills necessary to effectively navigate most platforms used in the job search process and in the workplace. Acquiring these skills will prepare today's job seekers and employees for success in the 21st century labor market.
5. Wi-Fi Expansion Project – BWDA staff in collaboration with the Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations and local board staff facilitated a process to contract with multiple small business vendors to quickly expand the Wi-Fi capabilities at each of the commonwealth's PA CareerLink® centers. This project aligns with the Governor' initiative to expand digital literacy in Pennsylvania. By expanding this capacity at the one-stop centers, customers will be able to access workforce opportunities through the PA CareerLink® online platform while waiting to meet with staff.

6. PA CareerLink® Postage Meter Update - Procurement staff within BWDA coordinated a new contract for mail postage meter machines for each of Pennsylvania's 62 PA CareerLink® centers. This new contract will save thousands of dollars by obtaining new machines and closing out an older contract.

Bureau of Workforce Partnership & Operations (BWPO)

Director: Ruben Pachay

1. Pandemic Update - In April 2020, the Bureau of Workforce Partnership & Operations (BWPO) and the Bureau of Workforce Development Administration (BWDA) worked together to develop guidance with the local Workforce Development Boards that enabled the PA CareerLink® system to continue to provide employment services to job seekers and employers. This guidance has set a permanent foundation for PA CareerLink® to operate virtually in all local workforce areas, as well as, allow for limited in-person services where available. The flexibility of this guidance provides the PA CareerLink® with the opportunity to make quick decisions on delivery of services. Some examples include:
 - a. Access to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
 - b. The ability to adapt business days/hours of operation
 - c. The ability to provide 100% virtual services
 - d. The ability to provide curb-side services/drive-thru job fair options
 - e. The ability to allow for limited staff/customers inside building (mostly to help customers who cannot access virtual services)
 - f. Rapid Response deployment do assist companies with temporary/permanent layoffs
 - g. Access to additional Workforce funds (as applicable)
2. Unemployment Compensation Recipient Pilot - Observing the evolution of PA CareerLink® during the pandemic has allowed BWPO and its workforce partners to pilot new techniques for outreach. In September 2020, BWPO and five local Workforce Development Areas (WDA) launched an outreach pilot for Unemployment Compensation (UC) customers who filed an initial claim. The goal of this pilot was to bring employment services to the customer(s) and demonstrate the quality of the services provided. There was training provided to PA CareerLink® staff that homed in on conversational skills and messaging to address individualized customer needs. A pool of 900 customers were used and after three months the data gathered shows that 135 customers engaged with PA CareerLink® in some aspect. These preliminary results show that proactive outreach by PA CareerLink® helps customers engage employment services in a timely manner.

Based on the initial findings, BWPO and the 22 Workforce Boards launched a statewide outreach campaign on January 25th, 2021 for customers who will exhaust Unemployment Compensation Benefits, including all extensions. The goal is to assist customers by connecting them with employment opportunities in their local labor market prior to the exhaustion of benefits and in some cases, training dollars will be available as well. This initiative intends to assist employers to connect with much needed workers in various industries across the state.

3. Reemployment Services and Eligibility (RESEA) - Relaunched on January 19th, 2021, this program targets employment services to UC claimants identified as likely to exhaust benefits. All PA CareerLink® sites are providing RESEA services with the primary service provision modality being virtual.

4. PA CareerLink® Website Redesign - Launched October 2020, the website continues to receive steady traffic, with around 800,000 Pennsylvanians actively engaging virtual services monthly.

Apprenticeship and Training Office (ATO)

Director: Tara Loew

Update:

The department has begun enhancing the standard acceptance process for Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship programs by creating a guide to registration and making the registration documents themselves more user-friendly and inclusive of all program types. The department has also started the process of building out a participant tracking system in CWDS and will be reconfiguring the apprenticeship related web pages on both the PA Department of Labor and PA CareerLink website.

During the quarter lasting from October 1, 2020 to December 31, 2021, the ATO has served over 848 unduplicated program sponsors, added an additional 8 programs/trade additions, as well as, supported sponsors who have added over 880 new apprentices and certified completion of over 330 apprentices.

Grants:

PASmart2019 awardees have been notified of receiving their awards and will be submitting a kick-off report due January 29, 2021.

Program activities have begun for the Apprenticeship State Expansion funding consisting of \$2.1 million to support registration of 800 new apprentices. The grant concentrates on serving underrepresented populations through non-traditional industries. The ATO has already identified over 100 apprentices that can be served with these funds.

ATO anticipates beginning SAE2020 activities as of January 2021 after the department receives notification of modification acceptance. SAE2020 activities are designed to further support the department's efforts to expand apprenticeship without being directly tied to participant outcomes. Activities include, but are not limited to, the improvement of online knowledge dissemination and development of knowledge products related to apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship.

Center for Workforce Information Analysis (CWIA)

Director: Ed Legge

1. CWIA released occupational and industry employment projection for the 2018-2028 period by workforce development areas and metropolitan statistical areas. The new projections can be found at <https://www.workstats.dli.pa.gov/Products/employment-projections/Pages/default.aspx>.
2. CWIA provided DCED with unemployment compensation claims data and labor market data to assist them in the development of information to assist the Governor's Office in analyzing the impact of the COVID-19 on Pennsylvania's businesses and citizens.

Please remember to utilize the CWIA [online job postings dashboard](#). The dashboard summarizes job posting data by workforce development area and includes breakouts by categories, including industry, occupation, and employer.

Quarterly Meeting Agency Update

February 10, 2021

Agency: Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Labor & Industry,

AGENCY UPDATE & STATISTICS

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

In order to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in Pennsylvania, Governor Wolf announced temporary closures of most Commonwealth offices as of March 17, 2020. OVR staff continues to telework, with designated staff going into the district offices and Central Office on a rotating basis in order to handle mail and other essential tasks. Much of OVR's telework is projected to continue into at least mid-2021; however, BBVS staff are actively preparing for providing services in the field in the near future.

As the mitigation efforts continue, we will continue to seek guidance and work internally to develop processes and procedures to ensure the health and safety of staff and customers as we plan for an eventual return to normal operations.

EMPLOYMENT OUTCOME STATISTICS

Successful Closures Across OVR

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the delivery and direct management of services. The OVR Executive Team, Regional Management, local District Administrators, and direct staff continued to thrive in the face of adversity. In consideration of the closed Order of Selection and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, BVRS and BBVS achieved the following:

Program	Goal for the Program Year (PY)	# of Successful Closures in Q1 of SFY20	% of Goal Achieved for the PY
BVRS	5,414	1,610	30%
BBVS VR Program	266	23	9%

ORDER OF SELECTION

In 2019, RSA approved OVR's request to temporarily close the Order of Selection (OOS). A wait list was implemented on July 1, 2019. The following chart reflects the number of OVR customers on the wait list as of January 18, 2021.

All Customers on Waiting List as of 1/18/2021	3,878
Net Decrease Since 1/4/2021	(218)
Net Increase Since 7/1/2019	2,417

MSD & SD Customers on Waiting List as of 1/18/2021	3,829
Net MSD & SD Decrease Since 1/4/2021	(216)
Net MSD & SD Increase Since 7/1/2019	2,368

In accordance with RSA federal regulations, all OVR district offices received procedures to establish contact with customers by utilizing the *OVR Now Able to Serve OOS Letter*. Each customer is given the opportunity to respond and be placed into a plan status within 90 calendar days of their release off the wait list.

The Executive Team will continue to monitor the progress of the customers released from the list and will work with the Secretary's and Governor's Offices to determine when additional releases can occur.

BUREAU OF CENTRAL OPERATIONS (BCO)

GENERAL UPDATE

The Bureau of Central Operations (BCO) is focused on the monitoring and refinement of the implementation of WIOA. OVR was one of the state VR agencies to be monitored by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) in FFY 2019. We are currently reviewing and responding to RSA's monitoring report.

BCO continues to work with staff throughout the agency to implement guidance and changes as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. BCO has updated vendor guidance, staff guidance, and implemented a variety of protocols to aid with work-from-home guidance. We will continue to roll with the changes that have been necessitated by the pandemic and will continue to work with our staff, stakeholders and partners to implement services to ensure we are able to safely provide as many services as possible while under the mitigation restrictions.

COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE NEEDS ASSESSMENT (CSNA)

The purpose of the CSNA is to inform OVR and the Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council (PaRC) regarding issues and needs of the disability community for the Commonwealth. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Title IV, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, require that the State Plan must include the results of the CSNA that is to be jointly conducted by the designated state agency (OVR) and the PaRC. OVR has contracted with Temple University Institute on Disabilities for this project to cover 2019-2022.

BUSINESS SERVICES & OUTREACH DIVISION (BSOD)

The Business Services & Outreach Division (BSOD), along with all OVR, continues telework activities. In this new normal, guidance and support to OVR staff and business customers continues. During these months, BSOD has increased its partnership with Unique Source and its member companies, including InspiriTec, which have contracted with the PA Department of Labor for Unemployment Compensation (UC) and Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) call center positions starting at \$14.00 per hour. These positions offer qualified OVR customers opportunities to build their work history and market

themselves for full-time, benefitted careers in the IT help desk field. OVR's on-going relationship with retailers in the grocery and pharmacy sectors continues to provide opportunities for qualified OVR customers. As an example, each week, BSOD staff share approximately 200-300 job openings with CVS Health for positions in PA retail pharmacies, distribution centers, and pharmacy direct operations. BSOD specialists and district office business services staff work with VRCs to encourage all employment-ready customers to register with their local CareerLink, the national Talent Acquisition Portal, USA Jobs for federal career positions, PA Civil Service Commission for state and municipal civil services positions, and with many private sector job boards.

CareerLink Accessibility Reviews

Discussions with the Bureau of Workforce Development Programs (BWDP) regarding ADA accessibility reviews at all PA CareerLink offices continue, and these reviews will resume when it is safe to do so. Approximately 12 CareerLink sites were reviewed prior to the COVID-19 closure. OVR has provided an outline of a potential re-opening plan which had been discussed and relayed to all CareerLink site administrators. OVR has been approached to review one of the NE PA CareerLink offices. Until OVR staff are available to work in the community these CL sites and others will not be visited. An update regarding this status and plan was shared with the statewide BWDP staff and Workforce Board partners in their monthly call in early November.

Job Retention

Job Retention services allow for an exemption to the current wait list for all eligible customers so they can receive immediate assistance to help them retain a job that is in jeopardy due to their disability, upon verification with their employer of imminent loss of employment.

Focus on the Expansion and Development of Apprenticeship Pathways and Internships

The following is an update on activities related to apprenticeship and internship collaboration:

- Networking and expressed interest by the PA AFL-CIO in assisting with expanding apprenticeship pathways to any qualified OVR trainee.
- Networking and expressed interest by regional labor councils and their trade locals to expand apprenticeship pathways to any qualified OVR trainee.
- Networking with PA Department of Labor & Industry and Keystone Development Partnership (KDP) to explore collaboration in the Philadelphia and western PA regions to introduce qualified OVR customers in both pre- and registered apprenticeships.
- Work toward development of statewide legislative office aide internship and/or job positions for qualified OVR customers with both caucuses of the PA house and senate.
- Plans to resume a 2021 State Summer Internship program in collaboration with the Office of Administration.
- Initiated discussion with PSSU SEIU Local 668 leadership in exploring development of Public Sector apprenticeships within 668.

TRANSITION & PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES (PRE-ETS)

Pre-ETS and Transition

The Transition Unit and OVR Executive Team have been meeting with PDE leadership since last December and are happy to report that the OVR-PDE MOU has been signed by all parties and a training and implementation plan is being developed between OVR and PDE. In addition to the MOU, OVR is participating in an interagency workgroup to develop a corresponding toolkit. The toolkit will include tools

and resources for professionals and families on collaboration, IEP meetings, and how to utilize the MOU in the field.

Due to COVID-19, OVR has had to shift to virtual service provision for the delivery of Pre-ETS. OVR staff are able to provide any of the five required services by phone or virtual means, as well as attend IEP meetings virtually. Community-based provider Pre-ETS have restarted where possible.

POLICY, STAFF DEVELOPMENT & TRAINING DIVISION

POLICY

The following OVR policies are currently under revision:

- Pre-ETS/Transition
- Vehicle Modification
- Supported Employment

RECRUITMENT

Due to directives given by Governor Wolf as related to COVID-19, all Commonwealth agencies are under a hiring freeze; therefore, OVR is currently unable to hire interns and entry-level VR professionals. OVR is working diligently with the Office of Administration (OA) to develop a strategic plan for future recruitment.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION (DEI) INITIATIVE

Due to COVID-19, planned DEI trainings were put on hold until mid-spring 2021; however, we have decided to transition into deeper cultural topics regarding racial and social injustice.

BUREAU OF BLINDNESS & VISUAL SERVICES (BBVS)

OVR's Bureau of Blindness & Visual Services (BBVS) provides specialized services to individuals who are blind and visually impaired. These services are designed to increase an individual's independence and employability. BBVS currently serves 1,830 customers across Pennsylvania in their Vocational Rehabilitation program.

BUREAU OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES (BVRS)

OVR's Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (BVRS) provides vocational rehabilitation services to adults, students and youth with disabilities. BVRS currently serves 33,121 customers across Pennsylvania.

HIRAM G. ANDREWS CENTER (HGAC)

There are currently 126 students enrolled in training programs at HGAC.

The *CareerPrepped* curriculum and learning platform is being added to all programs at HGAC. *CareerPrepped* is instructor-led and independent education focused on skill development of workforce competencies across six areas including self-management, communication, people, analytical, planning, and career management skills. *CareerPrepped* addresses areas of improvement emphasis through training and resources to help students secure employment upon graduation, and better prepares students through the explicit instruction of soft or employability skills. Three courses are being developed

using *CareerPrepped* as a foundation, and the platform will be added to additional training programs as they are revised.

The use of stackable credentials (i.e., programs with multiple exit points to allow students to attain the level or credential that matches their ability and/or career goals) is being explored. An example of a revision currently underway is the Culinary program. After the required approved revisions, all Culinary students will enter and follow the same path and same course progression for two terms, earning a Culinary Assistant Diploma, an exit point. Those able and interested can then continue for an additional two terms and earn the AST, the next exit point.

Quarterly Meeting Agency Update

February 10, 2021

Agency: Pennsylvania Department of Aging

The Department of Aging and the Senior Community Service Program (SCSEP) has just finished the second quarter of its program year. We have tried to open our program as much as possible, but we are still limited because of COVID. We utilize many training sites that are currently closed to the public or have limited services. Furthermore, since we provide training to participants that are 55 years and older, we have only been able to open at 90% capacity. We have provided training services to 448 participants this program year which is 101% of SCSEP maximum enrollment. We are still limited by COVID to enroll new participants and sending participants to train in host agencies. 102 participants have exited the SCSEP with 28 participants exiting due to employment. The 2nd quarter employment rate is 33%. Furthermore, 22% of the participants that found employment have retained employment through the fourth quarter after exiting the program. Most in need, community service, and median earnings goals and targets are either exceeding or on pace to exceed when all required updates are performed in the SPARQ system.

Quarterly Meeting Agency Update

February 10, 2021

Agency: PA Department of Agriculture

COVID Updates

- PDA has continued to monitor COVID and its effects on the Agricultural Workforce and Employers. The Department has maintained contact with employers across the State to ensure any COVID related issues are addressed.
- Workers in the Food and Agricultural sectors have been deemed critical workers and are covered under Phase 1B of the COVID vaccination plan. The Department has been working with employers and stakeholders in the industry to share this important information and help ensure workers are able to access the vaccine when we enter phase 1B.

H2A Temporary Agricultural Worker Program

- Over the past few months, several rule changes to the H2A program have been proposed.
- Proposed changes have included suspension of USDA's Farm Labor Survey and changes to the methodology for determining the Adverse Effect Wage Rate (AEWR). Many of these proposed rules have been reversed or withdrawn in order for the new administration to review them. The department is monitoring these changes and will continue to provide updates.
- On January 15th the trump administration announced a final rule to the H2A program. The proposed rule focused on simplifying the application process and strengthening protections for foreign workers while also easing the burden on H2A employers. This rule has since been withdrawn by the new administration in order to review. We are monitoring the situation and waiting to hear more from the US Department of Labor.

2021 Farm Show and Career Exploration Events

- The Department of Agriculture recently hosted the 2021 Farm Show which included various events focused on careers in Agriculture.

Agriculture Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeships

- A new agricultural pre-apprenticeship program has been created by PASA and will be a Diversified Vegetable Pre-Apprenticeship. The program will begin this spring and is currently under review by the Apprenticeship and Training Office.

PA Commission for Agricultural Education Excellence

The Commission for Agricultural Education Excellence has been working on the following projects:

- Collaboration with the PA Department of Education (PDE) around updating the PA Science and Technology Standards to assure that agriculture and food content is included in STEM-related standards.
- Recently updated the in-demand jobs in the Agriculture and Food industry as well as the career pathways of which they are a part.
- Created an Ad Hoc Committee to focus on equity and diversity within the Agricultural education system to address the new goals on equity and diversity within the Commission's 2020-2022 work plan.

Other Workforce Initiatives

- PDA continues to work with PA Farm Bill grantees to ensure that economic and workforce efforts continue, despite the pandemic.
- A number of PA Farm Bill programs have opened. The Agriculture and Youth Development grant program opened on January 25th and applications will be accepted until March 5th. The grant program invests in workforce development initiatives for agriculture and youth organizations such as FFA and 4-H. More information on the grant can be found at <https://www.agriculture.pa.gov/Pages/Ag-and-Youth-Grant-Program.aspx>.

Quarterly Meeting Agency Update

February 10, 2021

Agency: Department of Community and Economic Development

COVID-19 Action

- **Contact Tracing Training:** DCED and DOH continue to work together with the community colleges across the commonwealth to offer a contact tracing training program. The 45-hour training program will train over 400 individuals in contact tracing and, offer them a career pathway.
- **Outreach Calls with Industry:** Secretary Davin continues hosting listening session calls with industry and partner organizations to hear firsthand what is happening at the local level and to hear how the state can help with recovery efforts. To date, over 45 calls have been hosted. Sister agencies, PEMA, L&I, DOH continue to participate regularly on the calls. PennDOT, Banking & Securities, Agriculture and the PUC also participate on related industry calls.
 - **Industry topics include:** Hospitality/Travel/Tourism; Construction; Small Business/Direct to Consumer Business; PREP (LDDs, SBDCs and IRCs); Medical/Technology & Innovation; Food Chain; Team PA Foundation; Warehousing/Distribution/Logistics; Minority/Diverse Business; PEDDA Executive Committee; The Trades; Workforce Development; Finance; Utilities & Energy; and Manufacturing.
 - Potential topics to consider: Architecture/Engineering/Accounts/Law Firms; Logging/Time/Hardwood; Site Selectors/Developers; and Healthcare.

WIOA State Plan-Goal 2 Sector Strategies and Employer Engagement: DCED continues to serve as the lead agency for Goal 2 of the WIOA State Plan and hosts interagency committee meetings to review the sub-goals. The committee is trying to incorporate other agencies that engage employers and develop some metrics around those agencies.

Workforce & Economic Development Network of Pennsylvania (WEDnet):

FY 20-21 - 4th Quarter Activity:

- 5,124 employees trained
- 185 unique FEINs trained
- \$1,166,851.32 invoices paid

Manufacturing Training to Career: The Manufacturing PA Training-to-Career Grant program has awarded four grants totaling \$653,262. Three of the grants are going to develop short-term training programs and one is going to focus on bringing awareness of the manufacturing industry to students.

Next Generation Industry Partnerships: DCED continues to partner with L&I on NGIPs. DCED participates on a bi-weekly interagency Next Gen calls with L&I, Team PA, PDE, and DHS, as well as participates on the monthly Community of Practice calls with the NGIPs across the commonwealth. DCED will participate with L&I on check in calls with the current 28 partnerships that are in operation. These calls will begin in February.

Manufacturing Council:

As a result of Pennsylvania participating in the SSTI Manufacturing Policy Academy, DCED developed and implemented the Pa Manufacturing Advisory Council. The Council, currently made up of service providers working to support Pa manufacturers, has had three meetings and our now poised to start work on the following focus areas:

- Engage industry and recruit industry members;
- Produce comprehensive view of state of industry;
- Create a statewide manufacturing strategy (including elements such as access to capital, customized training, reshoring, support of specific sectors, database of suppliers, fund to help companies acquire companies from other states);
- Promote manufacturing at higher level in state and improve public opinion.

Quarterly Meeting Agency Update

February 10, 2021

Agency: Pennsylvania Department of Corrections

Partnerships with Other Agencies

On January 21, 2021, the department's Workforce Development Specialist provided a presentation on the Benefits of Hiring Reentrants during an Engage! Business & Manufacturing Roundtable hosted by Kutztown University of Pennsylvania. The presentation was done with Flagger Force, a second chance employer, sharing the success of hiring reentrants.

In January 2021, the Workforce Development Specialist began talks with the PA Turnpike Commission on how they can hire reentrants to fill their workforce needs.

Also in January 2021, additional conversation we held with the Apprenticeship and Training Office to discuss potential registered apprenticeship programs inside SCIs.

Corrections/Parole continues to participate in various Labor & Industry committees on Employment and Reentry.

Corrections/Parole continues to assist with the WIOA State Plan by sitting on the committee headed up by Labor & Industry and Workforce Development Board.

Corrections and Office of Vocational Rehabilitation staff facilitated a Reentry Employment Specialist training on January 21st and 22nd. There were participants from the Chester, Harrisburg, and Philadelphia areas. This was the first time that this training was held virtually, and there will be more trainings scheduled soon. Please visit: [Reentry Employment Specialist Training \(pa.gov\)](https://www.cor.pa.gov/Community-Reentry/Pages/Workforce-Development.aspx) for future training events.

Reentry Services

Corrections, in partnership with the Department of Health is actively working on a vaccine administration plan for all inmate, reentrants, and parolees. This plan will be all-encompassing while offering both shots within the DOC system.

As a reminder, in October 2020, to better connect employers and reentrants the department created a Workforce Development page on our website with resources and contacts all centered on second-chance hiring. <https://www.cor.pa.gov/Community-Reentry/Pages/Workforce-Development.aspx>. Our goal in the future is to add a list of second chance employers.

Annually, each SCI coordinates and hosts a reentry job fair for inmates to participate. This event is generally hosted in the gym, classrooms or other large area within the institution and invites various community partners (employers, community service providers, BCC contractors and other agency representatives) to provide in-person information and presentations to the inmates. This information is vital for successful reentry planning. However, due to the COVID outbreak of 2020, these in-person events were cancelled. In September a Virtual Reentry/Career Fair was successfully piloted at SCI Huntington



and we had planned to hold a virtual statewide event in December; unfortunately, due to the increase in COVID cases throughout our institutions, those events were also canceled. We look forward to holding them in 2021.

Reentry Services have begun working on a new workshop for inmates for what to expect when being released during the pandemic. This workshop will assist inmates with information and skills on how to succeed in a very different world than when they entered prison. This workshop covers various topics like- telemedicine, virtual learning platforms, getting ready for a virtual job interview, and how to diversify.

Quarterly Meeting Agency Update

February 10, 2021

Agency: Department of Education

Title II Adult Education

On January 13, 2021, the U. S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education [announced 95 finalists for the Rethink Adult Education Challenge](#), a \$750,000 competition to advance pre-apprenticeships. Seven of the finalists are adult education programs funded by PDE's Division of Adult Education. Only California has more, with eight. North Carolina also has seven. The Pennsylvania finalists include programs based in community-based organizations, intermediate units, a community college, and a four-year university.

The finalists will have access to digital resources—such as case studies, activities, and webinars with subject matter experts—to help them develop detailed pre-apprenticeship program proposals. The challenge will award \$250,000 to the grand-prize winner, and up to five runners-up will each receive at least \$100,000.

During the second stage, the challenge will share selected materials and resources for other challenge entrants interested in further developing their programs. At the end of the challenge, the Department will adapt and publish materials from the virtual accelerator for the wider adult education community.

As the Covid-19 pandemic continues, adult education and family literacy programs funded by PDE's Division of Adult Education continue to innovate to ensure continued services to their communities.

Career and Technical Education

Due to the unanticipated circumstances brought about by the pandemic, the Department will undertake revision of the Perkins V State Determined Performance Levels, following provisions in Section 113(b)(3)(A)(iii) of the Perkins V Act. State Determined Performance Levels (SDPL) must be subject to the public comment process described in section 113(b)(3)(B), which requires development of the SDPL in consultation with the stakeholder group (representation set forth in section 122(c)(1)(A)). The requirement is to collect written comments from the stakeholder group through a public comment period that commences 60 days prior to submission of the plan and address any comments with written responses thereto.

Consistent with the process followed in the past, the Department will hold a public comment period for the stakeholder group for a minimum of 10 days, anticipated to take place in spring of 2021. The Department will schedule a virtual meeting to explain the unanticipated circumstances, propose revision to five of the Perkins indicators, and ask for written comment regarding how the established levels of performance 1) meet the requirements of the law, 2) support the performance of all concentrators, and 3) support the needs of the local education and business community.

Career Ready PA Coalition

In late 2020, the Career Ready PA Coalition convened five statewide stakeholder champion sessions focusing on strategies and best practices to increase awareness for career and workforce readiness to ensure that all learners have equitable access to workforce training and career pathways, aligned to workforce needs and departmental career readiness initiatives. Participants included regional



stakeholders from education, advocacy and non-profit organizations, business and industry, STEM Ecosystems, workforce, military, libraries, and state and local government agencies. The conversations prioritized employability skills, pathway pilot opportunities, STEM, and industry credentials, which will help to inform the direction for the Career Ready PA Coalition as next steps are developed to advance regional priorities.

Teacher in the Workplace Targeted Grants

Local education agencies continue to implement the 92 Teacher in the Workplace Targeted grants (\$25,000 each) that connect the classroom to the workplace for K-12 educators across Pennsylvania. The grants are federally funded and end September 31, 2021. Educators focus on professional development aligned to workforce needs to help all students to have the information and tools needed to gain awareness of college and career pathways for postsecondary success.

Quarterly Meeting Agency Update

February 10, 2021

Agency: PA Department of Human Services

Addressing barriers: RISE PA – the statewide resource and referral tool

DHS selected a vendor to develop and implement the statewide resource and referral tool, newly named the Resource Information and Services Enterprise – or RISE PA. This tool will help connect people to resources across nine domains that reflect the social determinants of health. The nine domains include: healthcare, food, housing, transportation, employment, child care, clothing, financial strain, and utilities. The vendor, Aunt Bertha, will develop an interactive platform that not only connects people to a database of resources based on location and needs, but also allows for a closed-loop referral system that tracks referrals and follow up services. The tool will supplement interactions between organizations and clients to help facilitate access to services and supports. It will also help minimize duplication of services and reduce the time it takes for individuals to get the help they need. Once the tool is in place, workforce providers can use this to help address barriers to employment, and other service providers can connect people to workforce services as part of a whole-person approach to a healthy life. DHS will host webinars and meetings with local providers for engagement with the tool in a phased rollout.

DHS Racial Equity Report issued including focus on economic justice and child care

Following the events of last year bringing racial disparities to the forefront, DHS has further committed to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in all of its work in order to be a partner in correcting systemic racism and inequities. The Department released its first [Racial Equity Report](#) in January which covers work in health equity, economic justice, early childhood education, child welfare, and juvenile justice. Regarding economic justice, statistics show that black individuals and families are disproportionately impacted by poverty, which is also reflected in the demographics of public assistance program enrollment. Remedies for poverty, such as quality workforce programs, must include conversations about addressing racism. The racial equity report supports the efforts to redesign TANF and SNAP Employment and Training programs and their focus on holistic, trauma-informed employment services. Regarding child care, the report highlights the need for targeted child care efforts in underserved communities including raising the quality of child care, exploring non-traditional child care hours, and increasing child care base rates. These activities will be included in the Child Care Development Fund state plan for submission in June 2021.

TANF Employment & Training redesign updates

After six months of implementing new flexibilities and expanded services in two of DHS's major workforce programs, EARN and Work Ready, DHS is reviewing initial data reports to identify notable outcomes that will inform future service delivery requirements. Initial analysis indicates an improvement in the rate of enrollments following referrals, completion rates of over 90% for assessments conducted with new participants within 14 days of enrollment, and a notable use of new counseling services. Going forward, the Department hopes to see additional enrollment in training and education programs, given the expanded access to education as a means to economic mobility. For participants who enroll in education and training programs and who may be experiencing the impacts of the digital divide, we now permit the issuance of special allowances for devices for qualifying individuals. The Department is continuing to work with County Assistance Offices and program providers, as well, to connect with participants who have not been participating due to the pandemic in order to reengage with these new services and begin thinking about economic recovery and next steps.

Job Connections: Contractor Partnership Program (CPP) efforts relaunched

The Contractor Partnership Program, or CPP, is a collaborative effort between DHS and its contractors to create quality job opportunities for TANF recipients. The initiative requires major contractors with DHS to set a hiring goal and develop a hiring plan to bring TANF recipients onto their workforce. The requirement is included as part of the contractor's agreement with the Department. Over the past year, DHS worked to relaunch the initiative, given its role in also supporting diverse and inclusive workforces. Secretary Miller is issuing letters this quarter to the top 40 contract partners reminding them of this effort and the resources and support available to meet hiring goals and fulfill the contract requirements, including benefits of participation such as help for training, hiring, and retention at no cost to the employer, as well as eligibility for the Work Opportunity Tax Credit. The CPP initiative seeks to increase TANF employment rates, advance diversity in the workforce, support program providers and employers in job placement goals, develop connections between employers and local programs, and ultimately connect people to jobs that will truly impact their family's economic trajectory.

Continued resources for people experiencing loss of income

DHS continues to work to increase awareness of resources for essential needs, such as food and utilities, as the economic impact of COVID-19 continues. County assistance offices (CAOs) remain closed to the public. However, people can apply for assistance like TANF, SNAP, MA, and LIHEAP online at www.compass.state.pa.us. Those who prefer to submit paper documents can pick up an application at their local CAO, where social distancing protocols are in place, or they can print from the website or request an application by phone at 1-800-692-7462. Secure drop boxes are available at office locations, and people can also use their mobile phones to upload documents in some cases. Updates include:

- **SNAP and student eligibility:** The Consolidated Appropriations Act temporarily expands SNAP eligibility for students in higher education if they are enrolled at least half time and are eligible for work study or have an estimated family contribution of \$0 on their FAFSA. DHS issued guidance to CAOs informing them of this change during the public health emergency.
- **SNAP outreach to UC recipients:** The Department of Labor & Industry and the Department of Human Services are partnering with one of DHS's SNAP outreach partners, the Benefits Data Trust, to provide targeted outreach to recipients of unemployment to inform them of the potential eligibility for SNAP and the process for applying. Outreach efforts are expected to begin by the end of February and will focus first on people who received UC denials.
- **TANF outreach:** The Office of Income Maintenance will be issuing a letter to households who received short-term assistance through TANF Diversion or the Emergency Assistance Program in 2020, informing them of TANF assistance that is available if they are still in need of support. The letter will include a focus on the new E&T programming which provides comprehensive support including barrier remediation, counseling services, and education access in addition to traditional services such as job search and placement support. Eligible participants pursuing credentials may also receive support to purchase devices to participate in remote activities.

Childcare – base rates increase to support providers and increase quality

On February 1, Governor Wolf announced an increase to child care base rates effective March 1 for child care providers who participate in the Child Care Works program. This increase in the amount of reimbursements from the 15th to the 40th percentile of regional market rates will help providers to invest in child care services and staff compensation and development. The increase accompanies the nearly \$220 million in CARES Act funding for child care providers during the pandemic and the recent announcement of issuances of \$600 of COVID-19 Pandemic Relief Awards to eligible child care workers. Open child care locations can be found using this site: <http://www.findchildcare.pa.gov>.

Industry Partnerships and Employer Engagement Committee
Quarterly Update
February 10, 2021

The committee membership continues to align its priorities with **WIOA Combined Goal Plan 2.4** and the **Priority of Focus**. In addition to **WIOA Combined Goal Plan 2.4**, the committee plans to align its membership to strategically collaborating with the work of **Next Gen Industry Partnerships** statewide, regionally, and locally.

The committee membership has been committed to the process of increased alignment and has used the last three meetings to become familiar with its purpose and function and created an agreed upon purpose statement, objectives, and strategies. The updated purpose statements, objective, and strategies allow for a greater sense of direction, measurable goals and gives the committee an opportunity to evaluate its progress.

Next Gen Industry Partnerships are partnerships of businesses, from the same industry and in a shared labor market region, who work with education, workforce development and economic development to address the workforce and other competitiveness needs of the targeted industry.

The mission of Next Gen Industry Partnerships is to promote state and regional economic vitality and global competitiveness by providing skilled workers for employers and advancing education, employment, entrepreneurship, and economic development opportunities.

The vision of Next Generation Industry Partnerships is to empower the most dynamic workforce to achieve greater economic vitality and global competitiveness throughout the state.

Encourage use of and Increase Awareness of the one-stop System (WIOA Combined Plan Goal 2.4)

The committee membership has discussed the need to increase awareness of the one-stop system. Committee members identified several priorities and ranked them in order of importance. The priorities for marketing the PA CareerLink system has been created based on feedback and recommendation of the committee. Based on those recommendations a marketing tool was created for employers to increase the use and awareness of the one-stop system.

The Commonwealth will align resources, policies and strategies between state, local and regional systems to increase employer awareness of the one-stop system. The commonwealth will increase engagement and develop awareness with business and industry on diversifying their workforce by hiring Pennsylvanians with barriers to employment and provide additional information on the benefits of using the one-stop system. (Priority of Focus)

The committee membership continues to identify strengths and weaknesses of employer engagement within the workforce system and explore ways to increase business and industry engagement. Committee members also identified a need to identify and support policies that highlight or focus on re-entry citizens and track employments gains of re-entry citizens.

John J. "Ski" Sygielski, Ed.D., Chair
Industry Partnership and Employer Engagement Committee

Reentry Ad Hoc Committee

Quarterly Update

February 10, 2021

2021 Reentry Community Priority List

The Pennsylvania Workforce Development Board's Reentry Committee has committed its efforts in identifying its most pressing priorities for 2021 and a broader vision for the committee's work going forward. The committee is working to develop new recommendations (e.g. regional reentry roundtables, toolkit development, policy changes, etc.). The Reentry Committee continues to focus on identifying strategies and priorities to support Returning Citizens entering the workforce, addressing barriers to employment, and engaging employers around hiring reentrants.

Allegheny County Virtual Roundtable Listening Sessions

The committee, in collaboration with Allegheny County Anchored Reentry (ACAR) Consortium, and the Pennsylvania Attorney General's Office and Pennsylvania Reentry Council (PARC), is hosting a virtual employer roundtable event on April 8th, 2021 from 10:00am until 12:00pm. The purpose of this roundtable is to hear directly from employers and HR Professionals around issues related to reentry. This information will be used as an opportunity to address barriers for employers and reentrants entering the Workforce, as well as identify employers who are actively hiring returning citizens.

The goal is to invite employers who are actively supporting this initiative to share the value in hiring reentrants, and the impact on their businesses and communities. The committee will use the information collected as a resource to build a toolkit that identifies resources and strategies to support employers looking to hire returning citizens.

PA Employer Toolkit

The Reentry Committee recognizes the obstacles that reentrants face when returning to their communities and have identified a list of priorities related to removing stigmas and barriers to employment. The purpose of the employer toolkit is to provide employers, human resource professionals, and the general public, with practical resources and strategies to encourage the hiring of reentrants.

Next Steps:

- Employer Tip Sheet
- 2021 Identified Priorities List
- Allegheny County's Employer Virtual Roundtable Event – April 8th, 2021
- Employer Toolkit

Jeff Brown, Chair

Reentry Committee



Career Pathways & Apprenticeship Committee
Quarterly Update
February 10, 2021

The committee membership continues to align its priorities with **WIOA Combined State Plan Goal 1** and the **Career Pathways Grant Program**. In addition, to **WIOA Combined State Plan Goal 1**, the committee has started defining its **Strategic Process** and direction for decisions making on allocating its resources to pursue set priorities and guiding mechanisms to control implementation of the committee's strategies.

The committee membership continues to be committed to the **Strategic Process** to ground the committee in actionable steps to achieve strategies the membership agrees that aligns with the purpose of the committee. The committee has dedicated its last two meetings to this ongoing work which includes the committee membership defining their purpose, strategies, and objectives. The updated purpose statements, objective, and strategies allow for a greater sense of direction, measurable goals and gives the committee an opportunity to evaluate its progress.

The Career Pathway and Apprenticeship Committee continues to support Goal 1 of the WIOA Combined State Plan. Establish career pathways as the primary model for skill, credential, and degree attainment, and provide all Pennsylvanians, with an emphasis on Pennsylvanians with barriers to employment, an opportunity to obtain a job that pays.

The committee membership has discussed the need to increase exposure to career awareness, exploration opportunities for K-12 and postsecondary and engaging students and parents.

Rick Bloomingdale, Chair
Career Pathways and Apprenticeship Committee

One-Stop Service Delivery System Committee

Quarterly Update

February 10, 2021

The One-Stop Service Delivery System Committee continues to support the goals of the WIOA Combined State Plan, specifically those goals related to the strengthening the system and the PA CareerLink®.

Meetings of the Committee

The Committee met two times after the November 10th meeting.

- Ruben Pachay, Director of the Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations, presented at both meetings on a new pilot focusing on personalizing the outreach approach to participants. He remarked that 2021 is all about outreach and they were working on an outreach plan for employers. Mr. Pachay had noted that staff were receiving the program well and were excited to try something new.
- Eliza Arentz of the Center for Workforce Information gave a presentation on how the system collects data. There was discussion on how the state was looking at integrating program data pre-COVID.
- Nancy Dischinat, Executive Director of Workforce Board Lehigh Valley, presented on how they collect customer satisfaction data. She provided an overview of different surveys that they use to collect information from customers, whether it be individuals or businesses.

One-Stop Service Delivery System Committee Next Steps

- Three common themes for action: statewide actionable data, customer service, and staff support and training.
- The Committee plans to meet monthly with a goal of bringing forth a recommendation in the spring.

Sarah Hollister, Chair

One-Stop Service Delivery System Committee

Youth Committee

Quarterly Update

February 10, 2021

The Youth Committee continues to support all youth-related sub-goals of the current WIOA Combined State Plan.

Over the last quarter, the committee has begun to evaluate the current accessibility of youth-related workforce program data in Pennsylvania, particularly the type of programmatic data that is already being gathered by the state, as well as the type of reports that are able to be generated with this information, in alignment with state plan priorities.

Included in the briefing book is the committee's recommendation related to TANF Youth Development Program (YDP) data collection submitted to the PA WDB membership for consideration during the February 10th quarterly meeting.

Youth Committee Next Steps

- Use the recent Evaluation Capacity Survey results as a foundation for next youth priorities.
- Plan collaborative discussion on evaluation with Continuous Improvement Committee.
- Continue to prioritize elements of the four sub-goals related specifically to opportunity youth.
- Continue to ascertain youth-related impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and promising practices for mitigation.

Chekemma Fulmore-Townsend, Chair
Youth Committee

Draft TANF Youth Development Program Data Recommendation

Whereas TANF Youth Development Program (YDP) data is not currently officially documented in the same manner as other workforce development-related data within Pennsylvania's Commonwealth Workforce Development System (CWDS)*, the Pennsylvania Workforce Development Board recommends that TANF YDP workforce data be entered by workforce program staff into CWDS, on an on-going basis. To facilitate this process, CWDS will need to be appropriately modified to allow for the entry and extraction of this program-related data.

This change would allow for the integration of additional youth-related data into the overall workforce system to further facilitate the ability to assess, evaluate, and inform the increased effectiveness of services to youth, ages 12 - 24 years, including improved transitions from youth to adult workforce programs.

Since the Commonwealth now requires TANF YDP plans to be incorporated into each local workforce development board's 4-year WIOA Combined Local Plan, rather than separately submitted annually to the Commonwealth, this change would also allow TANF YDP data to be accessed on demand, instead of only once a year; and allow for real-time data and reports to be pulled and compiled from CWDS, as with other workforce development program data. Additionally, this will facilitate the effective documentation of co-enrollments and referrals of youth and young adults between Pennsylvania's existing workforce programs; and provide efficient means for tracking additional increases in workforce services to all youth, including opportunity youth, in alignment with priorities outlined within the current WIOA Combined State Plan.

**CWDS is Pennsylvania's system of record for the documentation of workforce-related activities, services, and performance outcomes.*

Continuous Improvement Committee

Quarterly Update

February 10, 2021

Committee Activity

The committee spent the majority of the quarter reviewing and analyzing the results of the evidence and evaluation capacity survey conducted during the latter half of 2020. Key findings of this survey indicated several key findings, including:

- Apprehension among programs related to change
- Concern about resources to conduct additional evidence and conduct evaluation
- The value in better evidence to support program activities leading to positive outcomes for participants

A PowerPoint presentation was developed detailing the survey findings that can be found in this briefing book.

The committee drafted a recommendation on developing a pilot workforce development grant program prioritizing strong evidence collection and more robust evaluation for the full Workforce Development Board to consider.

Continuous Improvement Next Steps

- The committee will host a presentation on March 15th from the team working on a common intake process for users of the PA CareerLink® system, in order to provide feedback on development.
- The committee plans on reviewing workforce development system performance data in the coming quarter.
- The committee will also explore the workforce system branding initiative that was paused due to competing pandemic related priorities.

Brian Funkhouser, Chair
Continuous Improvement Committee

Draft Recommendation on Incorporating Evidence and Evaluation into Pilot Grant Program

Recommendation:

The Pennsylvania Workforce Development Board recommends identifying one discretionary workforce development grant program to serve as a pilot program for increased focus on evidence collection and increased rigor of evaluation.

Rationale:

Increasing the utilization of evidence for rigorous evaluation is a culture shift in the operation of discretionary workforce development grant programs. In order to facilitate this transition, it is imperative to identify best practices in grant operations, from the development of the grant solicitation through grant close out. This will help to ensure that when these priorities are deployed to all discretionary workforce development grants that potential negative impacts are minimized, and effective incorporation of stronger evidence and evaluation practices are maximized.

Recommended Essential Elements of Pilot Program:

- Incorporation of evidence definitions adopted by the Pennsylvania Workforce Development Board in May 2020.
- Effective communication strategy to applicants and awardees on the benefits of increased focus on evidence collection and program evaluation.
- Increased state support for programs in the form of technical assistance, financial support, or both.
- Strong state leadership and guidance to programs on evidence collection strategy and evaluation design.
- Evaluation and update, if necessary, of the Next Gen Industry Partnership Metrics adopted by the PA Workforce Development Board in October 2018.
- Updates should be provided on pilot program implementation and progress on a quarterly basis to the relevant committees and the Pennsylvania Workforce Development Board



Healthcare Workforce Ad Hoc Committee

Quarterly Update

February 10, 2021

Following the approval of the Healthcare Workforce Ad Hoc Committee's first two recommendations to address the crisis shortage of professional care workers in Pennsylvania, approved by the PA WDB membership on August 12, 2020, the committee has continued to make progress in the development of additional recommendations to address this crisis.

The committee's next four recommendations to address the crisis shortage of professional care workers, which has been further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, are included in the briefing book for consideration by the PA WDB membership during the February 10th quarterly meeting.

Matthew Yarnell, Chair
Healthcare Workforce Ad Hoc Committee

Draft Recommendations to Address Crisis Shortage of Professional Care Workers

Recommendation 1:

With the goal of expanding the pool of Certified Nurse Aides (CNAs) by making CNA training more accessible and flexible for students and for registered nurse (RN) educators, the PA Department of Education (PDE) should allow for blended education: online classroom education (for standard 40+ hour programs only) and in-person clinicals, with final skill demonstrations conducted in person.

Recommendation 2:

The PA Departments of Health (DOH), Education (PDE) and Human Services (DHS) should review the requirements for nurse educators, who provide CNA instruction, to identify ways to improve recruitment of educators, to expand the pool of educators- including allow LPNs to be educators, and to increase the capacity and availability of train-the-trainer programs, including virtual programs, across the commonwealth.

Recommendation 3:

Whereas Medication Technicians (Med Techs) play a role in some long-term care settings, Med Techs could also play an important role in supplementing, but not replacing, existing RN and Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN) roles in nursing homes, for stable patients with unchanged conditions. The PA Department of Human Services (DHS) and/or Department of Health (DOH) should expand Med Tech training regulations to allow for these additional roles in nursing homes under the State Board of Nursing; and the licensure and training should be streamlined and formalized including making online or blended format of training available and formalizing requirements, competencies, and testing.

Recommendation 4:

Competency-based Alzheimer's and dementia training and cultural competencies training (including those applicable to the LGBTQIA population), focused on person-centered care, should be an industry standard for all direct care professionals across all long-term service and support (LTSS) settings (e.g., nursing homes, personal care homes, assisted living facilities) and home and community-based service (HCBS) providers.

2019 Population		
Total Population	12,791,530	100.0%
Female	6,526,417	51.0%
Male	6,265,113	49.0%

Population by Race		
White	10,300,602	80.5%
Black	1,430,664	11.2%
Hispanic Ethn	935,216	7.3%
Other	1,060,264	8.3%

Population by Age		
Ages 0 to 17	2,662,391	20.8%
Ages 18 to 24	1,174,907	9.2%
Ages 25 to 34	1,680,907	13.1%
Ages 35 to 44	1,493,904	11.7%
Ages 45 to 54	1,692,870	13.2%
Ages 55 to 64	1,804,831	14.1%
Ages 65 to 74	1,276,690	10.0%
Ages 75 and Older	1,005,030	7.9%
Median Age	40.8	

Educational Attainment, Ages 18 and Older		
High School Diploma or Less	4,495,797	44.4%
Some College or Associate Degree	2,668,721	26.3%
Bachelor's Degree	1,841,510	18.2%
Graduate or Professional Degree	1,123,111	11.1%

Source: U.S. Census ACS 2015-2019 - DP05, B01001, and B15001

Help Wanted OnLine Job Postings			
Dec 2020	Dec 2019	Volume Change	Percent Change
94,014	109,916	-15,902	-14.5%

Source: Burning Glass Technologies Help Wanted OnLine™

U.S. Veterans		Median Income	
Total	Unemployment Rate	Veteran	Non-Veteran
759,474	4.6%	\$38,725	\$31,116

Source: U.S. Census ACS 2015-2019 (Table: S2101)

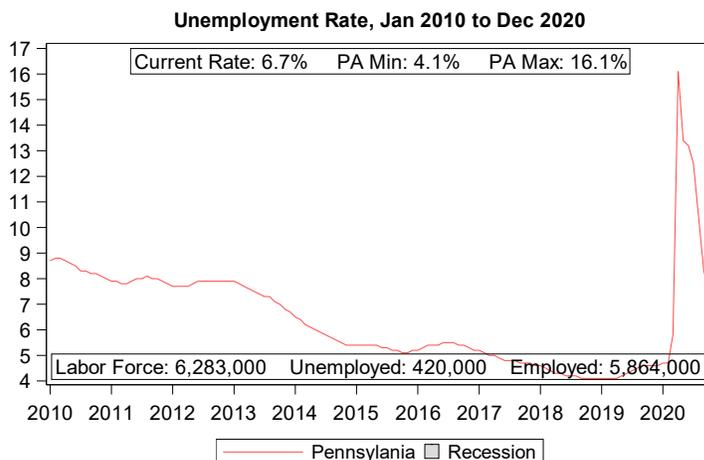
Income Measures			
Per Capita	Total Personal	Median Household	Median Family
\$742,924,29	\$58,032	\$61,744	\$78,521

Note: Total Personal Income is displayed in thousands.

Note: Median Incomes are in 2019 adjusted dollars.

Source: Personal Incomes - Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) - 2019

Source: Median Incomes - U.S. Census ACS 2015-2019 (Tables: B19013 & B19113)



Top 25 Employers by Employment in Q2 of 2020

- Federal Government
- State Government
- Wal-Mart Associates Inc
- Trustees of the University of PA
- City of Philadelphia
- Giant Food Stores LLC
- Pennsylvania State University
- United Parcel Service Inc
- School District of Philadelphia
- UPMC Presbyterian Shadyside
- PNC Bank NA
- Lowe's Home Centers LLC
- University of Pittsburgh
- Amazon.com Services Inc
- The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
- Home Depot USA Inc
- Weis Markets Inc
- Comcast Cablevision Corp (PA)
- Target Corporation
- Giant Eagle Inc
- Vanguard Group Inc
- Merck Sharp & Dohme Corporation
- Saint Luke's Hospital
- PA State System of Higher Education
- Western Penn Allegheny Health

Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

Unemployment Compensation (UC) by Pre-UC Industry	Jan 2020 to Dec 2020		Dec 2020 Initial (IC) and Continued (CC) UC Claims			
	Exhaustees	Percent	IC Total	IC Percent	CC Total	CC Percent
Natural Resources & Mining	3,950	1.0%	2,686	1.3%	16,421	1.1%
Construction	30,370	8.0%	30,217	15.1%	130,136	9.1%
Manufacturing	33,980	9.0%	21,720	10.9%	129,856	9.1%
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	73,010	19.3%	29,996	15.0%	261,848	18.3%
Information	4,810	1.3%	1,055	0.5%	12,170	0.8%
Financial Activities	11,490	3.0%	2,921	1.5%	36,250	2.5%
Professional & Business Services	53,360	14.1%	22,324	11.2%	180,774	12.6%
Education & Health Services	55,030	14.5%	22,700	11.4%	252,907	17.6%
Leisure & Hospitality	89,390	23.6%	44,864	22.5%	300,046	20.9%
Other Services	17,330	4.6%	6,098	3.1%	52,487	3.7%
Government	3,020	0.8%	1,961	1.0%	16,573	1.2%
Info Not Available	3,260	0.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	379,000	100%	199,749	100%	1,434,514	100%

Notes: Percentages less than 0.5% will be displayed as 0.0%. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding. Claims data are not comparable to claims data released in any other report.

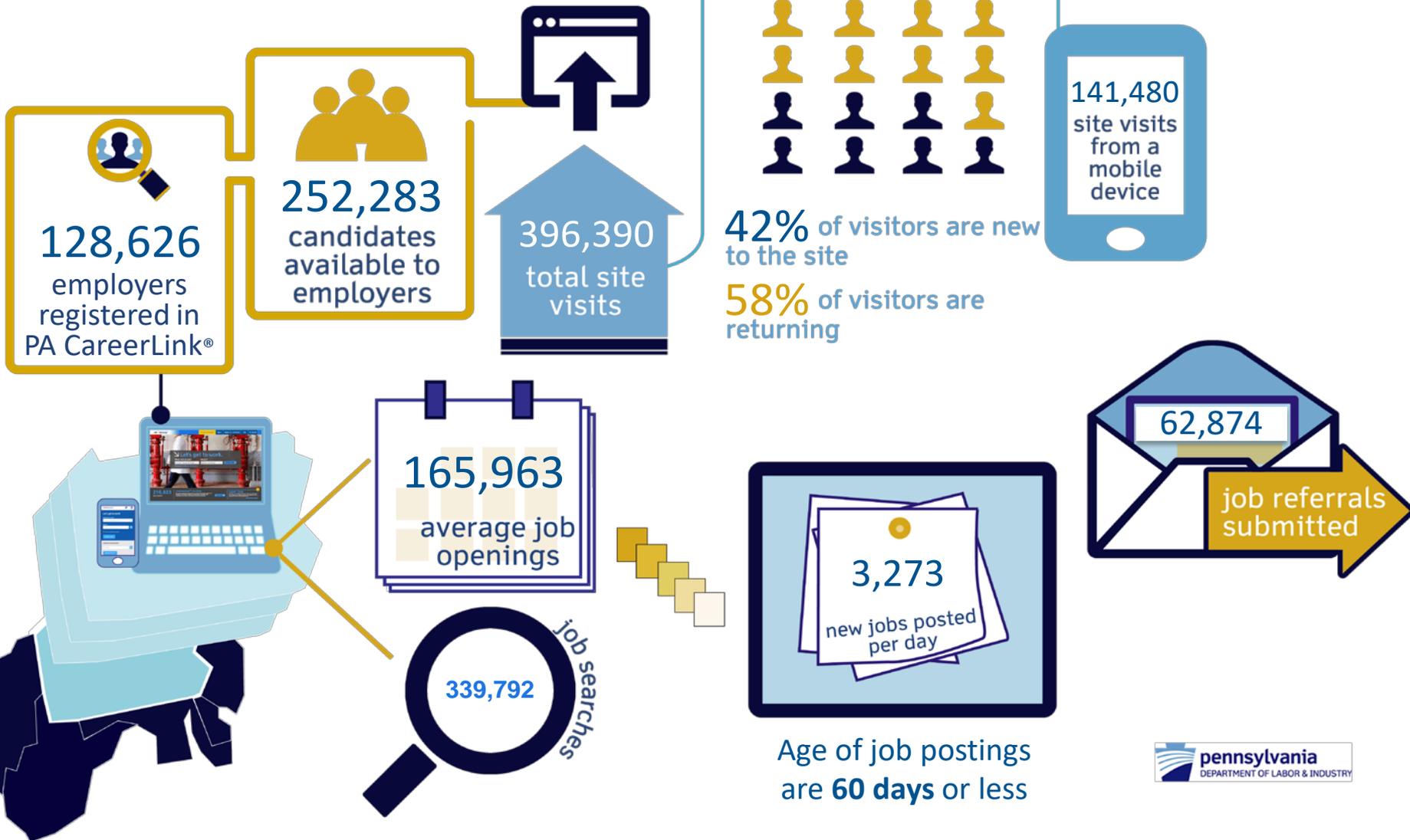
Source: Pennsylvania Unemployment Compensation System

Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2019 Annual Averages						
NAICS	NAICS Description	Establishments	Employment	Employment %	Average Wage	
	Total, All Industries	359,119	5,925,582	100.0%	\$57,497	
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	2,351	25,013	0.4%	\$36,714	
21	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil & Gas	1,275	28,043	0.5%	\$90,133	
22	Utilities	1,367	34,608	0.6%	\$99,248	
23	Construction	29,303	269,127	4.5%	\$68,113	
31-33	Manufacturing	14,435	575,459	9.7%	\$64,251	
42	Wholesale Trade	23,412	217,417	3.7%	\$82,077	
44-45	Retail Trade	40,909	614,434	10.4%	\$30,251	
48-49	Transportation and Warehousing	11,645	315,199	5.3%	\$50,189	
51	Information	5,439	90,505	1.5%	\$93,124	
52	Finance and Insurance	18,326	267,300	4.5%	\$97,378	
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	10,984	65,421	1.1%	\$62,576	
54	Professional and Technical Services	41,741	367,729	6.2%	\$98,975	
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	4,829	136,094	2.3%	\$135,620	
56	Administrative and Waste Services	18,200	322,045	5.4%	\$38,452	
61	Educational Services	9,064	484,699	8.2%	\$58,763	
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	53,666	1,090,104	18.4%	\$52,330	
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	5,435	103,178	1.7%	\$34,327	
72	Accommodation and Food Services	28,475	478,166	8.1%	\$19,451	
81	Other Services (Except Public Administration)	33,122	203,687	3.4%	\$35,241	
92	Public Administration	5,143	237,356	4.0%	\$62,908	

Company Ownership						
Total, All Ownership		359,119	5,925,582	100.0%	\$57,497	
Private Ownership		345,782	5,249,726	88.6%	\$57,226	
Federal Ownership		2,758	98,105	1.7%	\$77,436	
State Ownership		1,448	130,313	2.2%	\$64,185	
Local Ownership		9,131	447,439	7.6%	\$54,362	

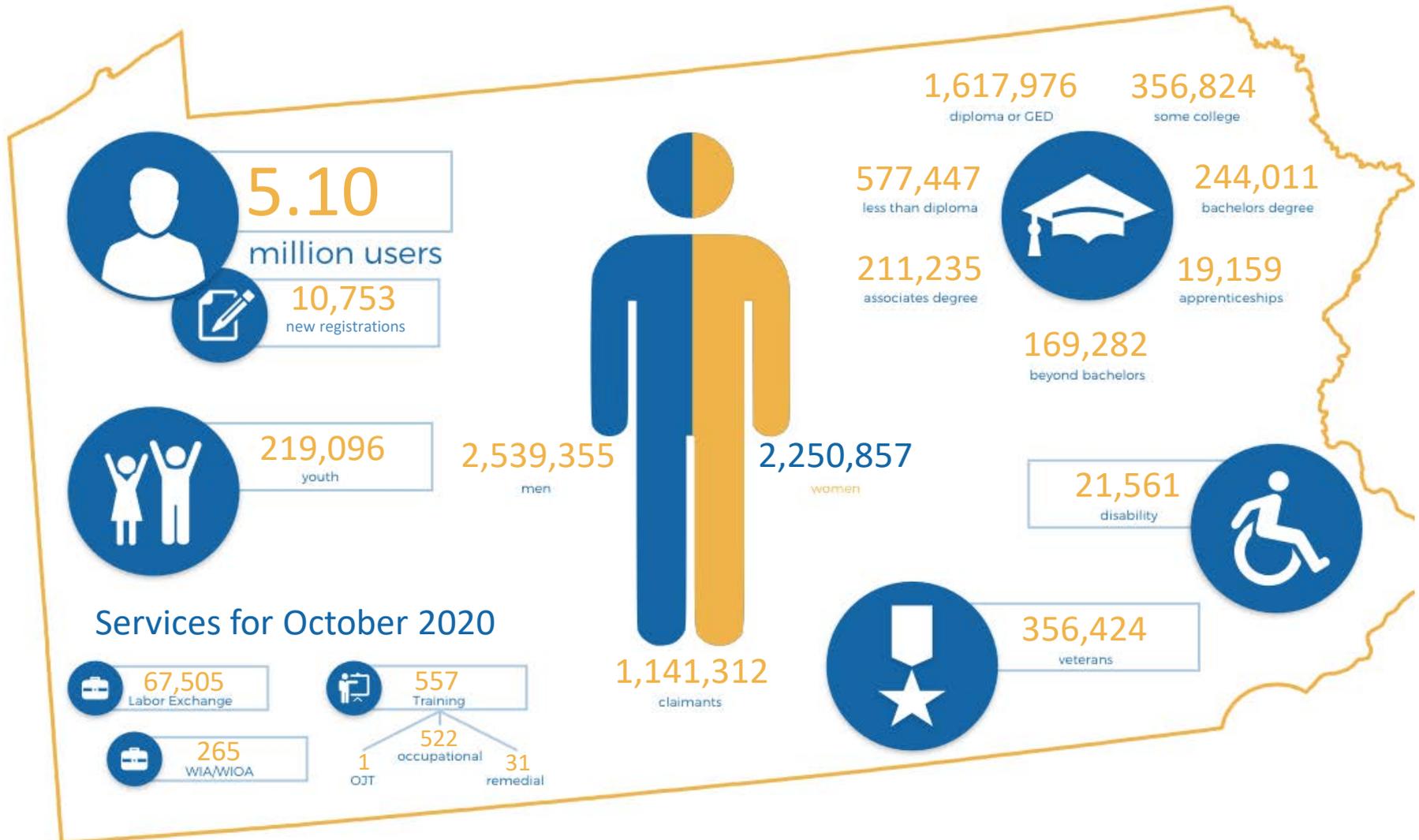
Occupational Employment (2018) and Wages (2019)						
SOC Code	Major Occupational Group	Employment	Entry Wage	Average Wage	Experienced Wage	
	Total, All Occupations	6,329,070	\$23,070	\$51,340	\$65,480	
11-0000	Management	322,280	\$62,900	\$125,270	\$156,460	
13-0000	Business & Financial Operations	302,930	\$45,450	\$76,330	\$91,780	
15-0000	Computer & Mathematical	164,370	\$51,220	\$86,730	\$104,480	
17-0000	Architecture & Engineering	110,120	\$48,690	\$80,650	\$96,630	
19-0000	Life, Physical & Social Science	54,250	\$40,950	\$76,750	\$94,650	
21-0000	Community & Social Services	139,080	\$30,240	\$46,880	\$55,200	
23-0000	Legal	50,520	\$44,090	\$106,560	\$137,790	
25-0000	Education, Training & Library	341,820	\$28,380	\$61,790	\$78,500	
27-0000	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports & Media	83,130	\$25,090	\$52,720	\$66,540	
29-0000	Healthcare Practitioners & Technical	421,720	\$40,130	\$77,730	\$96,530	
31-0000	Healthcare Support	200,560	\$22,230	\$29,760	\$33,520	
33-0000	Protective Service	128,960	\$23,540	\$47,580	\$59,610	
35-0000	Food Preparation & Serving Related	505,660	\$17,700	\$25,190	\$28,930	
37-0000	Building & Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	208,360	\$20,730	\$30,500	\$35,380	
39-0000	Personal Care & Service	321,070	\$17,920	\$28,440	\$33,710	
41-0000	Sales & Related	591,150	\$19,550	\$42,680	\$54,240	
43-0000	Office & Administrative Support	957,620	\$25,470	\$40,460	\$47,960	
45-0000	Farming, Fishing & Forestry	39,530	\$20,240	\$34,810	\$42,090	
47-0000	Construction & Extraction	260,640	\$32,560	\$54,530	\$65,510	
49-0000	Installation, Maintenance & Repair	251,580	\$30,140	\$50,010	\$59,950	
51-0000	Production	391,230	\$25,610	\$40,640	\$48,160	
53-0000	Transportation & Material Moving	482,490	\$22,440	\$36,350	\$43,300	

Note: 'ND' represents Non-Disclosable information.





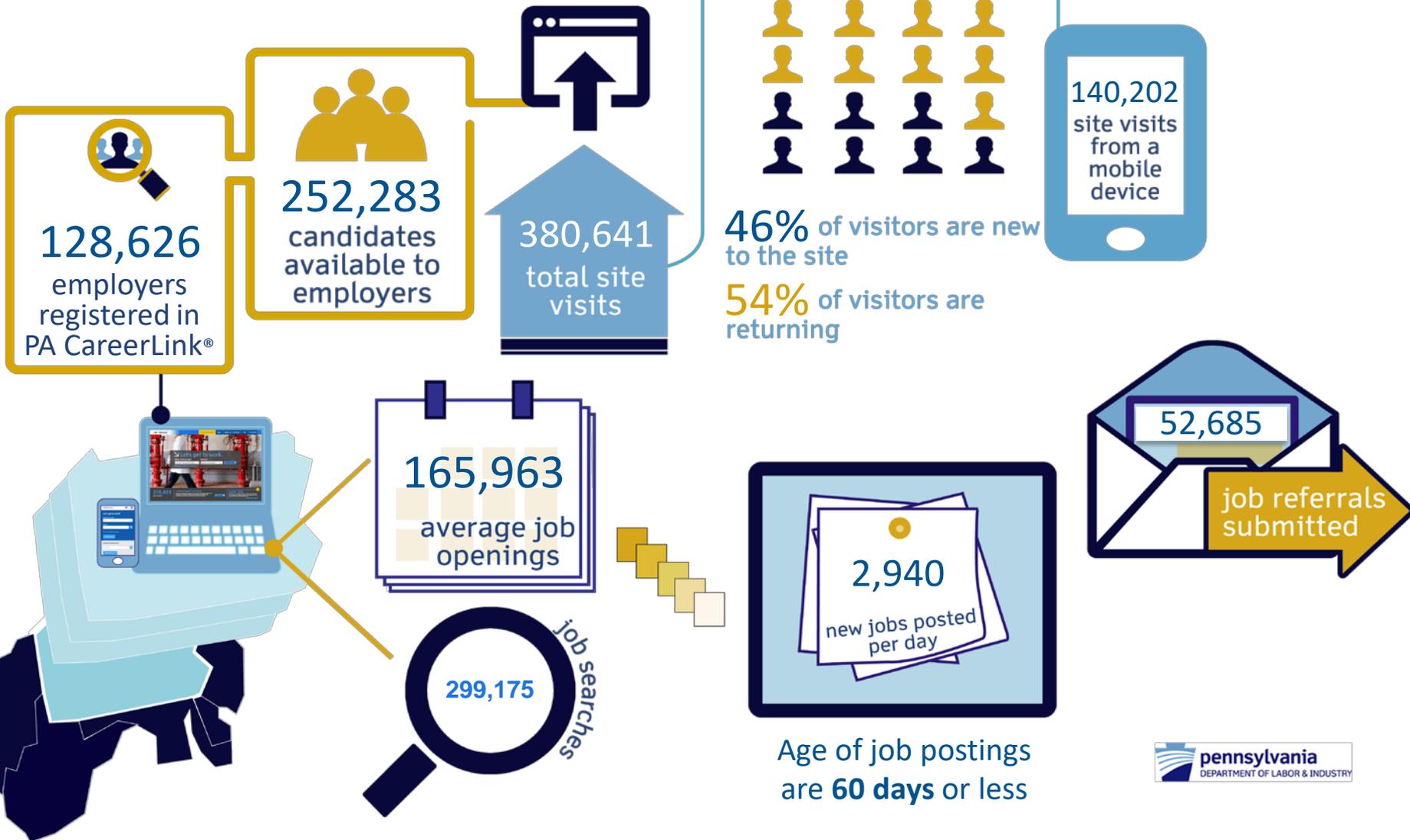
CWDS/PA CareerLink® User Demographics & Services



Infographic Description

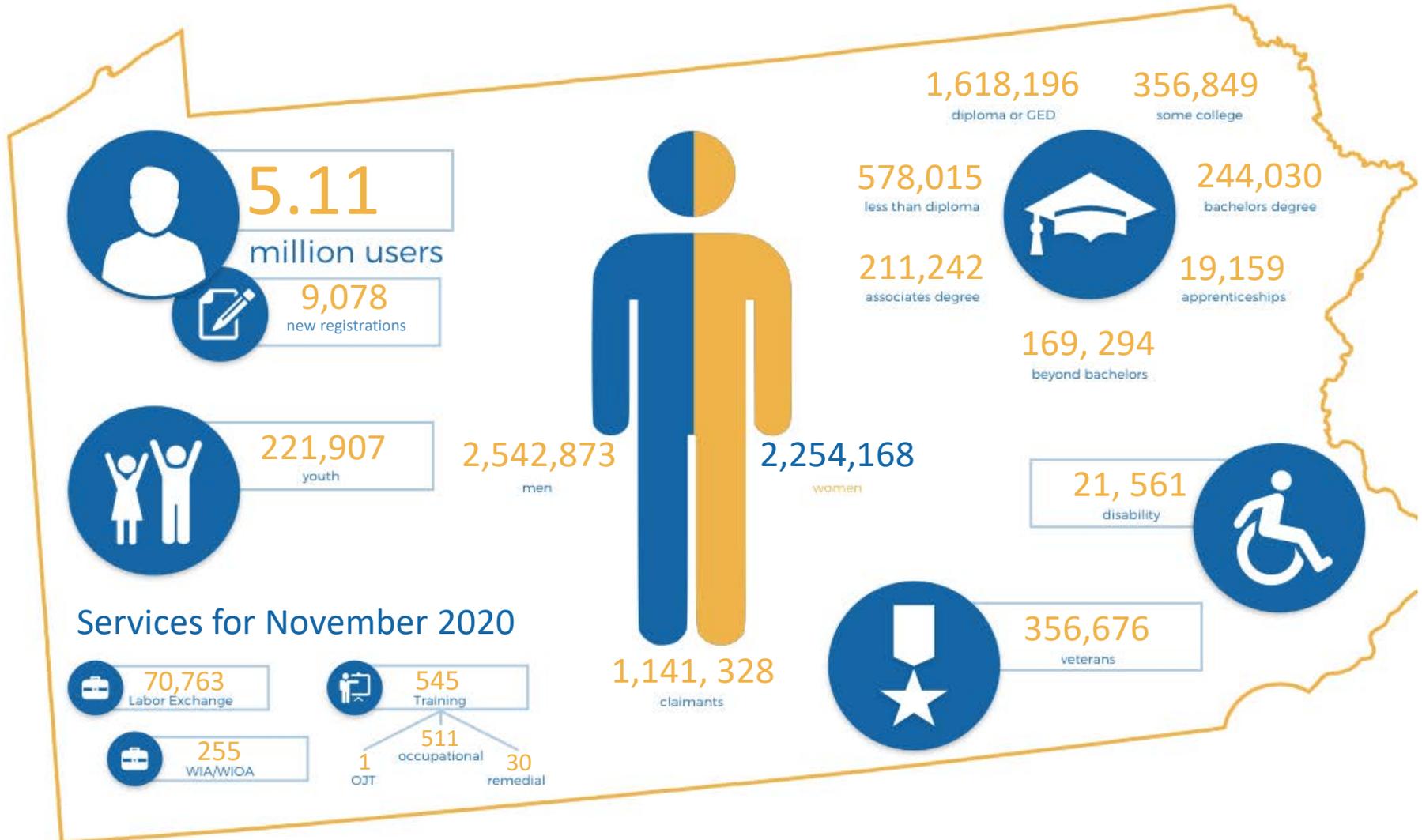
#	Metric	Description	Notes	Source	Source Detail
1	Employers registered in PA CareerLink®	Total Employer Profiles based on FEIN	Cumulative (Based on FEINs and SSNs)	CWDS Business Report	Employer #7: Employers -Total - TOTAL COUNT
2	Candidates available to PA employers	Job Seekers with "Want Employers to Find You" marked as "Yes"	Job seekers with job preferences enabled (cumulative)	CWDS Business Report	Participant #13: Participants with Job Preferences Enabled - TOTAL COUNT
3	Total site visits	Number of times PA CareerLink® was visited (includes new and return visits)	Per month	Google Analytics	PA CareerLink®: Customization: Dashboards: PA CareerLink InfoGraphic: Visits
4	Visitors new to the site	New visitors to PA CareerLink®	Per month	Google Analytics	PA CareerLink®: Customization: Dashboards: PA CareerLink InfoGraphic: New Visitor
5	Visitors are returning at least each month	Returning visitors to PA CareerLink®	Per month	Google Analytics	PA CareerLink®: Customization: Dashboards: PA CareerLink InfoGraphic: Returning Visitor
6	Total mobile site visits	Number of times PA CareerLink® mobile was visited (includes new and return visits)	Per month	Google Analytics	PA CareerLink®: Customization: Dashboards: PA CareerLink InfoGraphic: Private: PA CareerLink® Mobile Analytics: Visits
7	Average job openings	Current number of job openings based on the "Open Positions" value of job postings which are in open status	Current number of openings (Note: The average can be calculated by recording this number at the start, middle, and end of the month)	CWDS Business Report	Job Postings: Open Positions (Total openings for jobs in open status)
8	New jobs posted per day	New job postings based on posting date	Sum of Registered Employer and Job Feed Job postings posted (i.e. in "open" status) within the month	CWDS Business Report	Job Postings #6: All Jobs - Posted - AVG ON RPT DATES
9	Age of job posting	Length of time jobs are in open status (Note: There are variations based on type of job)	Job Feed Jobs and Registered Employer Unassisted are 60 days; Registered Employer Staff Assisted are 180 days	NA	NA
10	Number of job searches	Total number of times the Search Jobs screen is visited	Total number of times the job search screen is visited	Google Analytics	PA CareerLink®: Dashboards: Private: PA CareerLink® InfoGraphic Data: Pageviews by Page Title: PA CareerLink® - Search Jobs
11	Job referrals submitted	Number of job referrals created by either applying to a registered employer job or visiting the web site of a job feed job	Per month	CWDS Business Report	Referrals #1 - COUNT ON RPT DATES

CWDS Business Report: http://lihbg000dvbs/Reports/Pages/Report.aspx?ItemPath=/CWDS_DASHBOARD_RPRT/CWDS+Business+Report





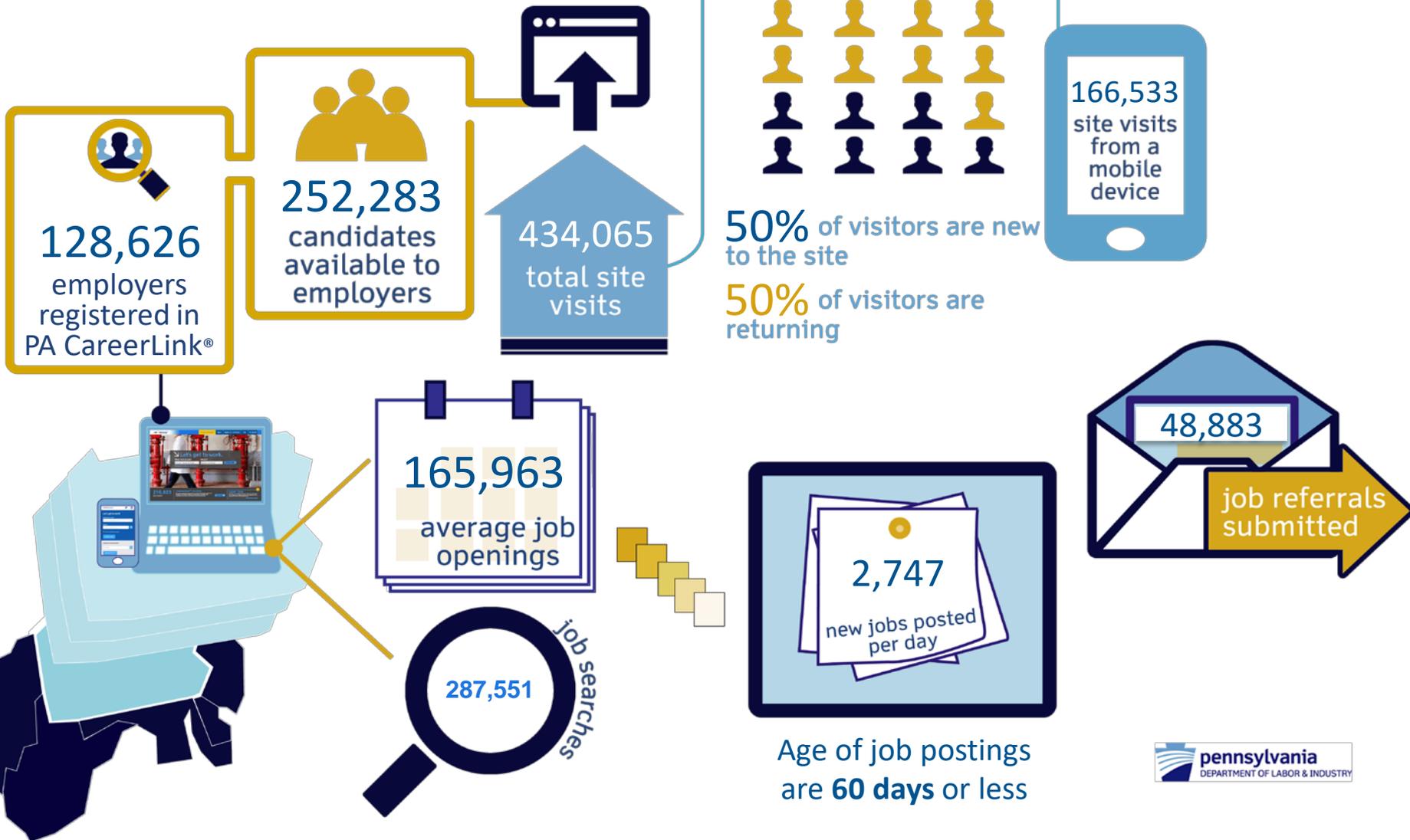
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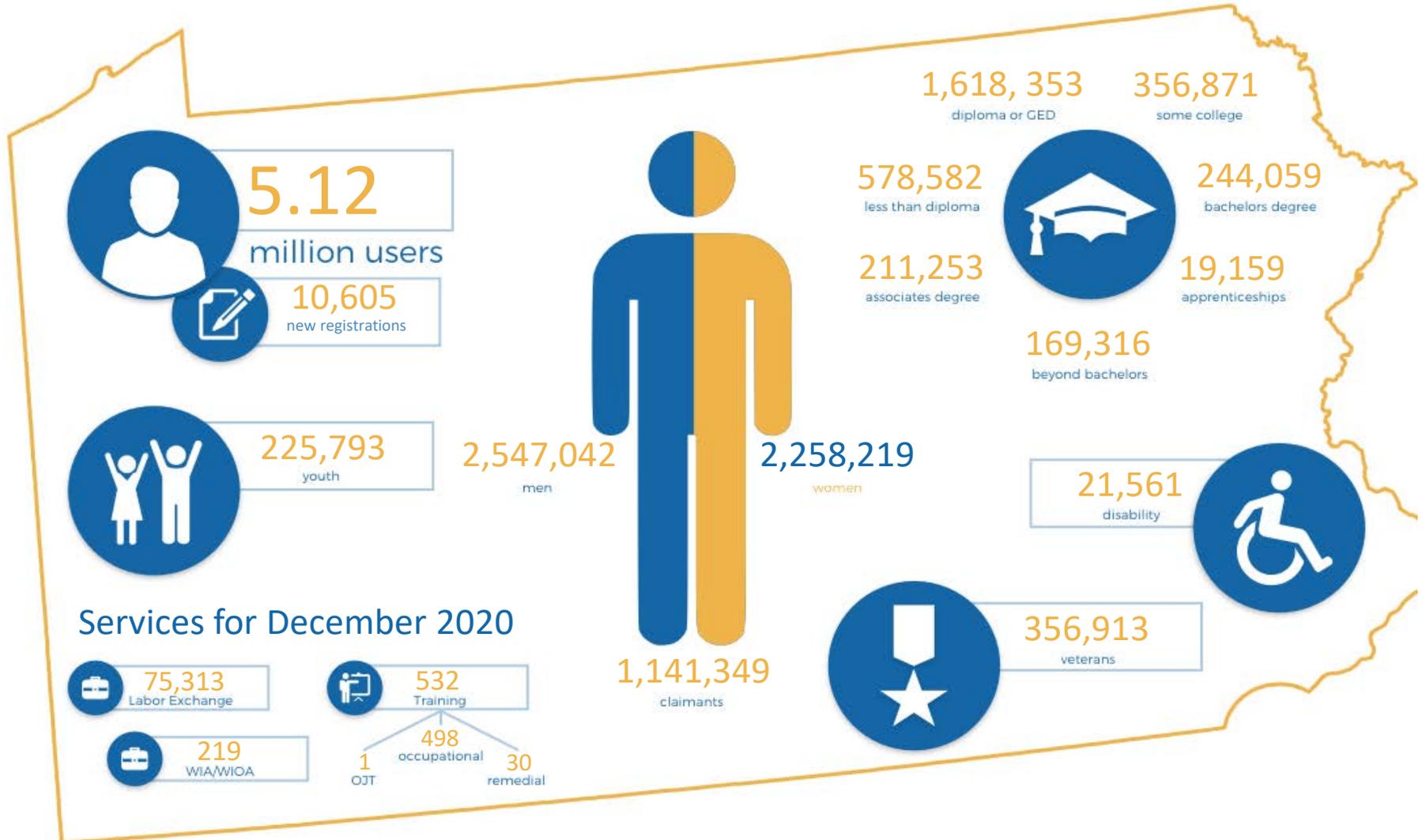
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Pennsylvania Workforce Development Board

Evaluation Capacity Survey Results



Summary Findings

- 256 total responses; Over 100 unique respondents
- 12 different programs
 - WIOA Youth
 - WIOA Adult/Dislocated Worker
 - Title II – Adult Basic Ed.
 - Title IV – Office of Voc. Rehab
 - State Local Internship Program
 - Youth Reentry
 - Teacher in the Workplace
 - Business Education Partnership
 - Industry Partnerships
 - Career & Tech Education
 - K-12 Education
 - TANF Youth
- ~80% self rate as pre-preliminary or preliminary evidence
- Most have less than 1 FTE evaluating program
- ~57% have never had an external evaluation
- Highest Priority of Need for programs:
 - Dedicated resources in grant award for evaluation (84%)
 - Enhanced state technical assistance (60%)
- Common Barriers: Staff Expertise, Data Access, Staff Capacity, Non-staff related costs

Barrier Summary Responses

- Staff Expertise
 - Training on Data Collection
 - Data analysis training
 - System Data Extraction Training
 - Consistency
 - Clear definition of what success is
 - Clear roadmap of expectations and methodology
 - Guidance on choosing an external evaluator
- Data Access/Availability
 - State does not have TANF youth measures (like WIOA programs)
 - CWDS enhancements
 - Not all programs are the same within a particular funding stream
- Staff Capacity
 - Need more funding so that evaluation does not take away from services
- Non Staff Related Costs
 - Employer time commitment for data collection

Specific Barrier Related Responses

- On SLIP
 - “I don’t know what/how you would evaluate this program”
- On data in general
 - “We cannot analyze data over time...” – NEED for SLDS
- On data in general
 - “Additional training for staff involves setting clear, attainable expectations with an increased understanding of the metrics used to determine performance.”
- On training:
 - “None of the staff are trained in data analysis and reporting”
- On staff:
 - “Staff often don’t know what evidence to collect or don’t keep accurate records”
- On customer choice (paraphrased quote)
 - Having a control group meant no customer choice

Impact of Additional Evaluation Summary Responses

- Spending money on evaluation limits the money that is spent on program services
- Concern about whether or not small entities would apply for funding if they could serve even fewer people
- Need better tools to measure ROI
- Within specific programs, funding is used in a variety of ways, so there are concerns about how to measure each program
- Many respondents indicated that better evaluation would lead to improved programs and improved service delivery
- Data will help to eliminate gaps in services
- Additional evidence would help showcase best practices
- It may be difficult to quantify positive outcomes when they may not have an immediate impact
- Would assist in continuous improvement of programs
- Better evidence can help to increase funding that is desperately needed

Impact of Additional Evaluation Summary Responses (continued)

- Many folks indicated that they do not know if better evaluation and collection of evidence will be helpful to their program until they see what the evidence shows
- Seems to be a perception that the only way to evaluate a program is by surveying participants.
- Challenges were identified in following participants through referrals to determine outcomes
- It would give grantees the ability to accurately assess the effectiveness of their programs.

Impact of Additional Evaluation Specific Responses

- “Being completely honest, most proposals are submitted because they theoretically will improve the workforce, make things easier on businesses, students, and jobseekers. Having time via staff capacity, access to data, and additional resources from the state to commit to evaluation would allow local partners to test if the services really add value and solve problems, or if it’s just one more thing we are doing that “sounds good”. Focusing on evaluation to see what really works and what doesn’t can only improve the whole system and result in a more powerful and meaningful workforce system that will help to resolve the ever-growing skills gap problem to keep Pennsylvania competitive and thriving in a global economy. “
- “SLIP is designed at the local level, I think it has the same flexibility as TANF, allowing a larger population to be served and/or targeting a certain population and designing the program. No performance/follow-up is conducted, except for outreach the additional year if funds are awarded.”

How Pennsylvania can support ability to build and use evidence summary

- State agencies need to work together to determine how to implement these changes
- State should consider hiring folks to do this uniformly across areas and programs
- Enhancements to CWDS for better access to data and usability
- Reliable funding for analysis provided by the state
- Increased staff training on CWDS, Service Entry, Ad Hoc Reporting, with ongoing training.
- Develop a SLDS to track outcomes over time
- Share best practice models of high functioning programs

How Pennsylvania can support ability to build and use evidence specifics

- “The state could provide technical assistance on best practices in collecting and evaluating evidence. For example, what type of data should/could we collect that would demonstrate evidence of success? We currently track inputs and outputs for grants like TIW, SLIP, Business and Education Partnerships. How would you measure if these programs are meeting the intended goal assuming the goal isn’t just to have X number of people go through a program? To that end, it would be helpful if the state provides clear problem statements that we are trying to solve with each grant, so a plan can be developed to determine if the grant funded activities are achieving the expected outcomes to reach the goal and solve the problem. The state could also make wage records and UC data available to local areas so we can determine the success of placements in the short-term and long-term retention periods to track short-term and long-term success of interventions. Extending the life of grant programs to a minimum of 2 years to allow providers time to start gathering and evaluating evidence would also be helpful. Historically, new notice of grant announcements are released for the same type of programs before local areas have enough information to identify what does and doesn’t work in existing programs. Longer grant periods would allow for evaluation to take place before submitting proposals for something that ultimately might not get the results that were expected.

How Pennsylvania can support ability to build and use evidence specifics – continued

- “I think the biggest help would be some sort of evaluation process framework where we can see how they have helped other programs and then modify to our needs instead of starting with a blank slate. And maybe grants or specific funding that would also lay out a framework for use of funds.”
- “We are being evaluated on teaching adults based on assessment tests that take 3 + hours to take each time. That's like take the SAT or worse. Adults are busy, and not always self motivated to do their best. The gains needed to move into another EFL gain is a large task for a number of our students who were not functioning well in school when they were younger. It is an antiquated measure and should be modified. “
- “The state can support our ability to build and use evidence by: 1) disseminating best practices; holding trainings on evaluating effectiveness; and 3) providing a clearer outline of expectations of program data collection, analysis, and reporting for programs.”
- “I think there would need to be a strong emphasis on explaining why this type of research is important before implementing any plans. “

Overall Summary Points

- Many participants consider their programs successful despite not currently collecting evidence on outcomes.
- Many programs seem to believe that the only way to evaluate a program is by surveying participants, rather than by measuring impacts through available data that is already collected and available.
- There is a large fear that money spent on evaluation will not be spent on participants.
- Many respondents indicated a lack of capacity (both time and knowledge) in doing this work. They suggest either additional training for program operators and that the state take on the role of evaluation of the programs.
- Funding is an issue across the board.
- There is a large desire for a SLDS. As the impacts of many programs will not be seen immediately (or even for several years) it is imperative that a way to track programs participants over time be developed.
- **There needs to be a strong statement indicating why we are focusing on increased evidence collecting an program evaluation. Providing a clear and focused explanation as to the impetus behind better program appears to be imperative.**