



Southwestern Area  
Workforce Development Board

# ANNUAL REPORT PY23

New Mexico  
Workforce Connection

A Proud Partner of the American Job Center Network

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board (SAWDB) is providing an overview of the workforce employment services for the seven-county workforce region of Southwestern New Mexico. This report highlights numerous accomplishments and challenges for Program Year 2023 (PY23). The SAWDB strives to provide essential services to our Region to assist in our workforce and economic growth. The Board, Administrative Staff, One-Stop Operator, and service providers cultivate strong collaboration with workforce partners to align efforts and work together to provide consistent, professional services to all participants.

In PY23, SAWDB positively contributed to stabilizing our local economies and supporting economic growth by providing stability and continuity with vital employment services. This Board uses reliable labor market information from the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions to cost-effectively administer efficient and successful services to participants by reacting to changes in the regional job market and economy. The following is an outline of the information contained in this report.

- Summaries of accomplishments and challenges of service delivery and business services as well as opportunities for improvements for the upcoming year.
- Performance metrics to highlight overall performance.
- Success stories, per funding stream, detailing services and outcomes for participants.
- Labor market information illustrating economic conditions of the Southwestern region.
- Quality improvement activities implemented throughout the program year with a description of customer and business surveys and how these surveys changed program delivery.
- Examples of partnership engagement and their outcomes with required and nonrequired partners highlighting opportunities for improvement as well as improvement for participants and businesses.

The SAWDB looks forward to building upon our accomplishments and learning from our challenges over the last year. We appreciate the support and work of all those who contribute to delivering our vision to build, support, and maintain a ready workforce for New Mexico.

Respectfully,



Sylvia Washington  
*SAWDB Board Chair*



Glory Juarez  
*WIOA Administrator*

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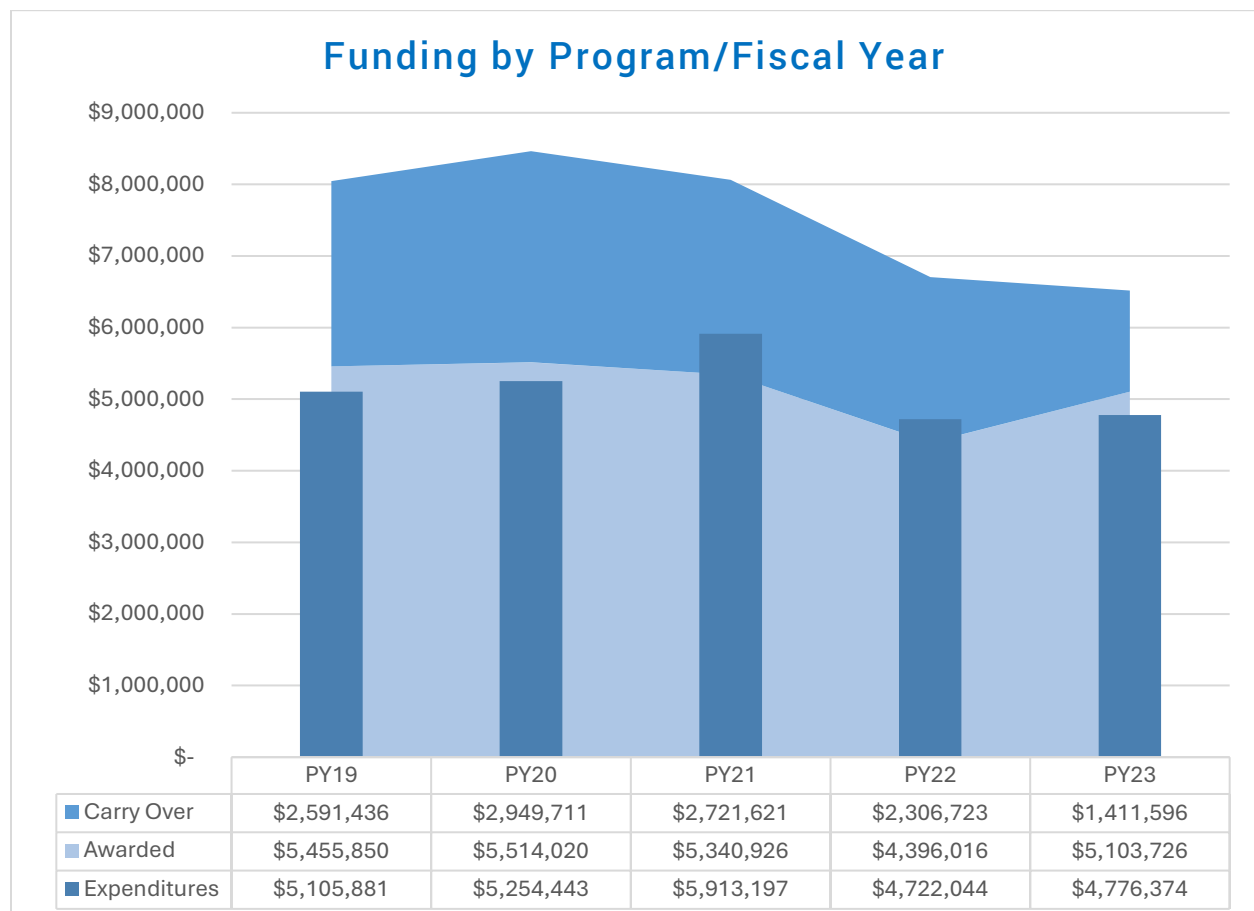
## BUDGET SUMMARY

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act provides state Governors with funding that supports the needs of employers, job seekers, and youth through various funding streams. According to 20 CFR § 683.710, the local Chief Elected Officials in the Southwestern area of New Mexico are the grant recipients of the funds and work with the Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board (SAWDB) to develop a budget to allocate funds for use in the counties of Catron, Doña Ana, Grant, Hidalgo, Luna, Sierra, and Socorro.

WIOA grants are awarded annually on two-year terms. Unexpended funds from the first year are carried over and must be spent in year two of the contract. The WIOA Funding by Program/Fiscal Year graph shows the annual formula fund allocations provided by the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions to the Chief Elected Officials. Program Year (PY) 23/Fiscal Year (FY) 24 allocated \$5,103,726, an increase of \$707,710 from PY22/FY23. Looking at a five-year trend, PY23 set several great achievements in the budget realm. PY23 is the first year the funding allocation increased from the previous year since PY20/FY21. PY23 saw the lowest carry-over dollars in over five years, below \$1,500,000.

### Budget vs. Actuals

The Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board had an overall budget of \$6,515,322. As of the end of PY23, the Board expended \$4,776,374. The unexpended amount of \$1,738,948 has been allocated for PY24 and will be invested in various programs to benefit employers, job seekers, and youth. Types of costs include, but are not limited to, Youth Work Experience, On-the-Job Training, Supportive Services, Customized Training, and Career Services.



The graph below summarizes expenditures by program, services, and training for PY23.

For the Adult program, the total expenditures were \$1,376,211.73. Of the \$1,376,211.73, the total amount expended on Training services (OJT, ITA, TJ, etc.) was \$907,707.41.

For the Dislocated Workers program, the total expenditure amount was \$1,621,956.15. Of the \$1,621,956.15, the total amount expended on Training services was \$1,127,312.05.

<b>PY 2023 BUDGET SUMMARY</b>				
Expenditures	Total by Program			Total
	Adult	Dislocated Worker	Youth	
Total Expenditures	\$ 1,376,211.73	\$ 1,621,956.15	\$ 1,385,975.87	\$ 4,384,143.75
Total Admin Expenditures	\$ 452,091.64	\$ 468,705.69	\$ 949,812.70	\$ 1,870,610.03
<b>SUPPORTIVE SERVICE EXPENDITURES</b>				
Total SS Expenditures	\$ 16,322.68	\$ 25,938.37	\$ 29,516.45	\$ 71,777.50
<b>PARTICIPANT TRAINING SERVICE EXPENDITURES</b>				
Individual Training Accounts	\$ 84,354.99	\$ 344,887.33	\$ 17,100.00	\$ 446,342.32
Customized Training	\$ - 0 -	\$ - 0 -	\$ - 0 -	\$ -
Incumbent Worker Training	\$ 1,100.00	\$ - 0 -	\$ - 0 -	\$ 1,100.00
On-the-Job Training	\$ 532,757.71	\$ 422,456.31	\$ - 0 -	\$ 955,214.02
Work Experience	\$ - 0 -	\$ - 0 -	\$ 404,963.17	\$ 404,963.17
Transitional Jobs	\$ 64,705.75	\$ 56,790.00	\$ - 0 -	\$ 121,495.75
Career Services	\$ 224,788.96	\$ 303,178.41	\$ - 0 -	\$ 527,967.37
Other	\$ - 0 -	\$ - 0 -	\$ 14,100.00	\$ 14,100.00
<b>Total Training Expenditures</b>	<b>\$ 907,707.41</b>	<b>\$ 1,127,312.05</b>	<b>\$ 436,163.17</b>	<b>\$ 2,471,182.63</b>

## SUMMARY OF SERVICE DELIVERY

Summary of service delivery to adult, dislocated worker, and youth; major accomplishments, major challenges, and opportunities for improvement for the upcoming year.

### Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs – Equus Workforce Solutions

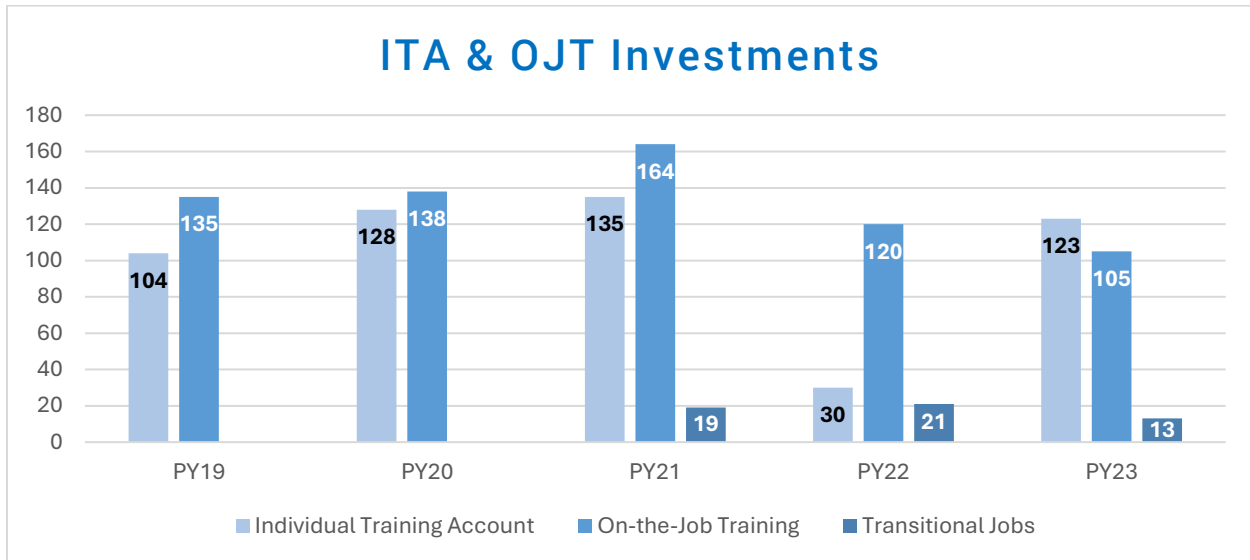
The SAWDB has contracted with Equus Workforce Solutions to provide services throughout its Region for the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. In PY23, Equus served 331 Adult and Dislocated Workers, including 80 rollovers. They fulfilled 123 Individual Training Account (ITA) contracts, 105 On-the-Job Training (OJT) contracts, and 13 Transitional Job contracts.

The following table shows that the Adult and Dislocated Worker service provider increased ITA enrollments by 400% from PY22. To help increase enrollments, they expanded the list of Eligible Trainer Providers by contacting established and non-established institutions, educating them about the program, and adding more course options for participants.

Not only does the Adult and Dislocated Worker program want to help individuals achieve their career dreams by providing tuition assistance, but we also want to see new graduates go straight into their dreams after graduation. The high number of ITAs is due to excellent relationships and communication with training institutions and local employers. Not realizing it was already in play, these relationships sparked the idea of creating cohorts. Several different paths are available for a successful cohort.

Example #1: Trucking companies share their career opportunities with New Mexico Workforce

Connection. When the Adult and Dislocated Worker program learns an individual wants to obtain a CDL, staff informs the individual of the local trucking companies currently hiring. Staff provides a list of training institutions and their class schedules. Local employers are notified of new graduates before they complete the program, and interviews are scheduled. Example #2 is when individuals enter a training institution to learn about the first steps towards their dream career, they are referred to New Mexico Workforce Connection for tuition assistance.



The Adult and Dislocated Worker program proudly reports that cohorts are ongoing with employers and training institutions in Doña Ana, Luna, Grant, and Socorro counties. Individuals from Grant and Luna counties have traveled to Las Cruces for CDL training, receiving mileage reimbursement as part of supportive services. However, that journey was not convenient for some individuals. In PY24, the service provider plans to establish new cohorts, including connecting a CDL training institution with Luna County to provide CDL classes in Deming. We hope to see increased participation from Grant, Luna, and possibly Hidalgo County residents.

**Youth Services Program – Equus Workforce Solutions**

The SAWDB contracted with Equus Workforce Solutions to provide Youth Services throughout the seven counties in the Region. In PY23, Equus served 252 In-School and Out-of-School Youth, including 65 rollover participants from PY22. The 187 participants enrolled in PY23 break down to 58 In-School Youth (31%) and 129 Out-of-School Youth (69%).

Relationships with local schools are thriving. With the Youth program at the forefront, New Mexico Workforce Connection co-hosted events targeting students in Deming, Silver City, and Sunland Park on top of the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Mock-It Till You Rock It! event in Las Cruces. Equus enhanced the Design Your Future workshop they created for their participants to accommodate the youth's needs. Workshop modifications include adding weekend schedules and bi-lingual translation. Equus developed an internal tracking system to help case managers stay organized and improve efficiency.

All successes are not without challenges. Staff retention within different counties added to the caseload of other staff. Equus recognizes they did not meet enrollment goals in Py23. They plan to increase enrollments in PY24 by strengthening current partnerships like those with TANF and Title III RESEA programs, and creating new ones like those made in PY23 with Children, Youth & Families Department

and Mamacitas Digital Navigation Program. Staff informed these agencies of the services available through the Youth program to receive referrals.

### Youth Services Program – Alamo Navajo School Board, Inc.

Alamo Navajo School Board, Inc. (ANSBI) is another youth service provider serving the Alamo Chapter of the Navajo Nation in Socorro County.

ANSBI served 25 youth participants in PY23. They reached their enrollment goal of 10 in-school youth but fell short by five on their out-of-school enrollment goal of 20. All ten in-school youth enjoyed gaining work experience at community worksites. Work experience is a key aspect of the Youth Services program because it helps shape youth into professional young adults. Alamo participants gain self-confidence and soft skills through work experience. The number of participants completing a high school diploma and seeking post-secondary education is increasing. Some former participants who moved on to post-secondary education are still in college and on the verge of graduation. Youth from the community have observed how the Youth program impacts its participants. The success of the program has attracted younger students who want to apply.

Enrolling out-of-school youth has always been a challenge. Adult Education funds are not available to hire a part-time in-person instructor. Alamo does not have the means to transport students to in-person Adult Education classes more than 100 miles away one way. ANSBI partners with Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute (SIPI) in Albuquerque to provide virtual GED courses. However, many out-of-school youth have family responsibilities and cannot commit the time needed to attend classes and complete assignments.

ANSBI only has one case manager position for the WIOA Youth Services program. Finding a qualified candidate to fill the vacancy left by their previous case manager wasn't easy. After several months, ANSBI filled the position with someone with WIOA experience.

The New Mexico Health Registry recently approved Alamo as a training site for Certified Nursing Assistants. Classes will begin in PY24, and Alamo's own CNA will instruct the classes. Not only does this provide easily accessible education for a promising and necessary career for Alamo residents, but the construction of a new outpatient clinic currently provides jobs. It will become a new worksite for Youth participants.

## **SUMMARY OF BUSINESS SERVICES**

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Summary of Business Services, major accomplishments, major challenges, and opportunities for improvement for the upcoming year.

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Strengthening existing partnerships and creating new ones was the driving force behind more than 20 employer-related events in the Southwestern Region, including job fairs, hiring events, and employer roundtables.

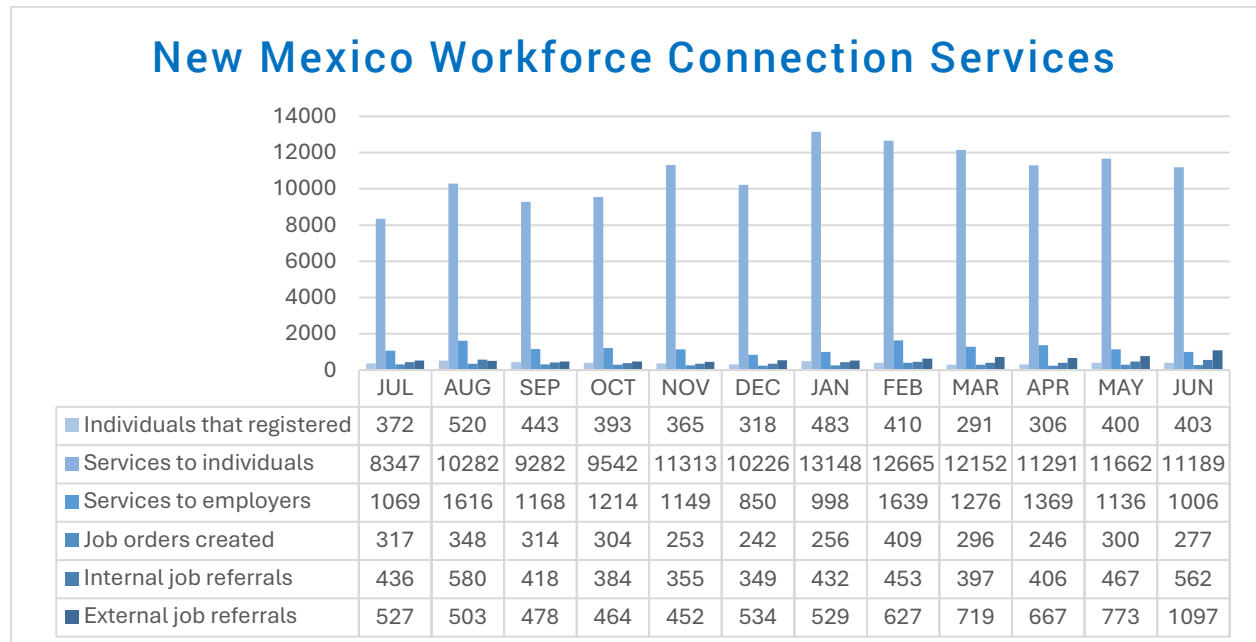
New Mexico Workforce Connection in Silver City has excellent relationships with Grant County employers. They work together to host job fairs and organize recruitment events upon request. However, job seeker turnout is not where we want it to be. Staff will strategize to increase attendee numbers at events to help employers improve their candidate pool.

The Pre-Apprenticeship Program provides youth with unique opportunities to sample their dream job. There is no lack of employers when it's time to place youth in these positions. Nine individuals in the Grant County area worked with the 6<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Courthouse, U.S. Forest Service, Watershed, and

more. In Deming, 50 young adults participated in Pre-Apprenticeships and enjoyed working in positions such as Dental Assistant, HVAC Apprentice, and Mechanic Assistant.

New Mexico Workforce Connection in Deming has flourishing relationships with employers and local agencies, including Luna County Economic Development, Juvenile Justice Court System, Luna County Health Council, El Corazon de Columbus, HELP NM, USDA Rural Partners Network, Deming Public Schools, Deming Luna County Detention Center, and more.

The graph on the following page shows the number of New Mexico Workforce Connection services provided in PY23. Services to Individuals fluctuated throughout the year, with the most served in January at 13,148. The number of Individuals that Registered peaked in August at 540. Increases to Services to Employers and Job Orders Created appear to sync. They had their highest counts in February, with 1,639 and 409, respectively. Internal Job Referrals peaked in June, the end of the school year, and again in August, the beginning of the school year. External Job Referrals were in the triple digits until June, when they reached 1,097.



#### Digital Accessibility on the EmployNM Website

The Board wants to ensure the regional New Mexico Workforce Connection website, EmployNM, is as accessible as possible to all customers. Hearing the request to have the website available in other languages and recognizing barriers to viewing sites, including font and color restrictions, the Board added ReciteMe, a digital accessibility software, to EmployNM. After accessing the toolbar, visitors can translate the site into one of over a hundred languages. Many of those languages offer audio translation for those with visual impairments.

#### Rapid Response

The Department of Workforce Solutions provided Rapid Response services to six companies in the Southwestern Region whose closures or reductions affected 294 workers. Only two of the six companies provided a WARN (Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification) notice.

Commscope closed its facility in Santa Teresa. Liberty Engineered Wire Products, Sodexo, and CEC Facilities Group downsized. Virgin Galactic permanently laid off employees in Las Cruces. RI International closed its location in Las Cruces.

## RAPID RESPONSE ACTIVITY

Date	Name of Business	City	County	Purpose of Event	# of Individuals
8/22/2023	Commscope	Santa Teresa	Doña Ana	Rapid Response	165
10/4/2023	Liberty Engineered Wire Products	Las Cruces	Doña Ana	Rapid Response	20
10/13/2023	Sodexo	Las Cruces	Doña Ana	Rapid Response	10
11/8/2023	Galactic Co., LLC and Galactic Enterprises, LLC	Las Cruces/TorC	Doña Ana	Rapid Response	73
11/9/2023	CEC Facilities Group	Socorro	Socorro	Rapid Response	4
1/16/2024	RI International	Las Cruces	Doña Ana	Rapid Response	22

### Extended Hours

New Mexico Workforce Connection in Las Cruces was selected to test the idea of extended hours to accommodate individuals unable to visit the workforce center before 5:00 p.m. Effective April 1, 2024, business hours changed to 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. There has not been a significant increase in services with the additional hour.

## PERFORMANCE METRICS

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Inclusion of performance metrics to highlight overall performance accountability, major accomplishments, major challenges, and opportunities for improvement in the upcoming year.






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

The goals of the Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board are to increase employment, retention, and earnings to improve the skills of the Region's workforce, reduce dependency on social services, enhance the productivity of our workforce, and help businesses compete. These goals and their associated performance outcomes aid the Board in shaping their programs to place more job participants and prepare them for their future careers.






The following informational blocks show how the Region performed against expected performance metrics negotiated with the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions.




### Adult Program

The Adult program displayed exceptional performance by exceeding all four performance goals for PY24: Employment Q2 was 105.17%, Employment Q4 was 112.32%, Credential was 101.29%, and Skills Gain was 111.76%. The Southwestern Region surpassed the other regions' measures for Employment Q4.

PY23 - Adult		Employment Q2	
All Workforce Boards	108.68%		Exceeded
Central WDB	111.32%		Exceeded
Southwestern WDB	105.17%		Exceeded
Northern WDB	99.26%		Met
Eastern WDB	108.62%		Exceeded






PY23 - Adult		Employment Q4	
All Workforce Boards	106.81%		Exceeded
Central WDB	105.62%		Exceeded
Southwestern WDB	112.32%		Exceeded
Northern WDB	100.99%		Exceeded
Eastern WDB	112.12%		Exceeded



PY23 - Adult		Credential	
All Workforce Boards	109.64%		Exceeded
Central WDB	117.45%		Exceeded
Southwestern WDB	101.29%		Exceeded
Northern WDB	85.72%		Not Met
Eastern WDB	109.97%		Exceeded






PY23 - Adult		Skills Gain	
All Workforce Boards	119.21%		Exceeded
Central WDB	130.85%		Exceeded
Southwestern WDB	111.76%		Exceeded
Northern WDB	117.92%		Exceeded
Eastern WDB	98.37%		Met

### Dislocated Worker Program

The Dislocated Worker Program exceeded goals in three performance areas: Employment Q2 with 110.09%, Employment Q4 with 117.67%, and Skills Gain at 100.67%. The Credential goal was 86.06% and not a number the service provider is pleased with. After some research and discussion, the service provider realized that participants were not reporting back to staff whether or not they had completed the program they had enrolled in. Follow-up attempts to participants from staff were unsuccessful. To remedy this, the service provider contacted the training institutions and created agreements with them. When classes end, the training institutions send certificates of completion for their WIOA participants to the service provider. The service provider is confident their Credential number will increase for PY24.

PY23 - DW		Employment Q2	
All Workforce Boards	109.52%		Exceeded
Central WDB	119.33%		Exceeded
Southwestern WDB	110.09%		Exceeded
Northern WDB	114.85%		Exceeded
Eastern WDB	103.59%		Exceeded

PY23 - DW		Employment Q4	
All Workforce Boards	105.69%		Exceeded
Central WDB	109.33%		Exceeded
Southwestern WDB	117.67%		Exceeded
Northern WDB	109.06%		Exceeded
Eastern WDB	116.53%		Exceeded

PY23 - DW		Credential	
All Workforce Boards	110.57%		Exceeded
Central WDB	104.18%		Exceeded
Southwestern WDB	86.06%		Not Met
Northern WDB	101.99%		Exceeded
Eastern WDB	142.51%		Exceeded

PY23 - DW		Skills Gain	
All Workforce Boards	114.18%		Exceeded
Central WDB	127.74%		Exceeded
Southwestern WDB	100.67%		Exceeded
Northern WDB	123.59%		Exceeded
Eastern WDB	128.21%		Exceeded

### Youth Program

The Youth Services program metrics combine results from both service providers, the Alamo Navajo School Board, Inc. and Equus Workforce Solutions.

The Youth program exceeded goals for Employment Q2 with 101.51%, Employment Q4 with 101.87%, and Skills Gain with a whopping 115.55%, a 235% increase from 34.48% in PY22. The Youth program will focus on improving Credential goals, having not met expectations with 52.79%.

PY23 - Youth		Employment Q2	
All Workforce Boards	110.09%	<span style="color: green;">■</span>	Exceeded
Central WDB	115.09%	<span style="color: green;">■</span>	Exceeded
Southwestern WDB	101.51%	<span style="color: green;">■</span>	Exceeded
Northern WDB	114.89%	<span style="color: green;">■</span>	Exceeded
Eastern WDB	101.00%	<span style="color: green;">■</span>	Exceeded

PY23- Youth		Employment Q4	
All Workforce Boards	107.30%	<span style="color: green;">■</span>	Exceeded
Central WDB	108.86%	<span style="color: green;">■</span>	Exceeded
Southwestern WDB	101.87%	<span style="color: green;">■</span>	Exceeded
Northern WDB	113.91%	<span style="color: green;">■</span>	Exceeded
Eastern WDB	107.26%	<span style="color: green;">■</span>	Exceeded

PY23 - Youth		Credential	
All Workforce Boards	81.71%	<span style="color: red;">■</span>	Not Met
Central WDB	84.64%	<span style="color: red;">■</span>	Not Met
Southwestern WDB	52.79%	<span style="color: red;">■</span>	Not Met
Northern WDB	114.11%	<span style="color: green;">■</span>	Exceeded
Eastern WDB	84.40%	<span style="color: red;">■</span>	Not Met

PY23 - Youth		Skills Gain	
All Workforce Boards	107.60%	<span style="color: green;">■</span>	Exceeded
Central WDB	111.22%	<span style="color: green;">■</span>	Exceeded
Southwestern WDB	115.55%	<span style="color: green;">■</span>	Exceeded
Northern WDB	166.67%	<span style="color: green;">■</span>	Exceeded
Eastern WDB	77.38%	<span style="color: red;">■</span>	Not Met

### Performance Indicators

Performance indicators are a key performance measure within the public workforce system for local boards and their service providers. They show the employment rate after exiting for the 2nd and 4th quarters, median earnings, credential attainment rates, and measurable skills gain.

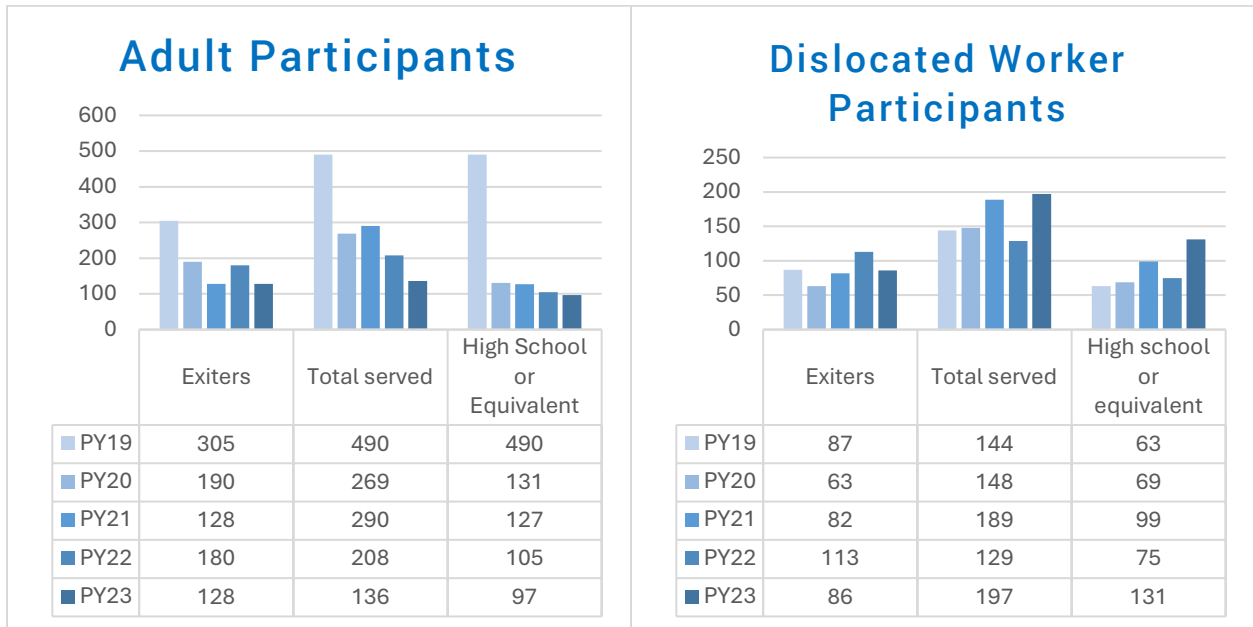
The following table shows the results of those who exited the Adult, Dislocated Workers, and Youth Programs. Section 116 of WIOA establishes performance accountability indicators and performance reporting requirements to assess the effectiveness of States and local areas in achieving positive outcomes for individuals served by the workforce development system.

PY23 Performance Indicators	Adult	DW	Youth
Employment, Education or Training Placement Rate (2nd Qtr.)	76.2%	72.4%	62.8%
Employment, Education or Training Placement Rate (4th Qtr.)	83.2%	82.2%	63.3%
Median Earnings	\$9,606.24	\$9,826.58	\$4,467.12
Credential Rate	57.5%	50.0%	26.9%
Measurable Skill Gains	75.0%	62.3%	62.3%

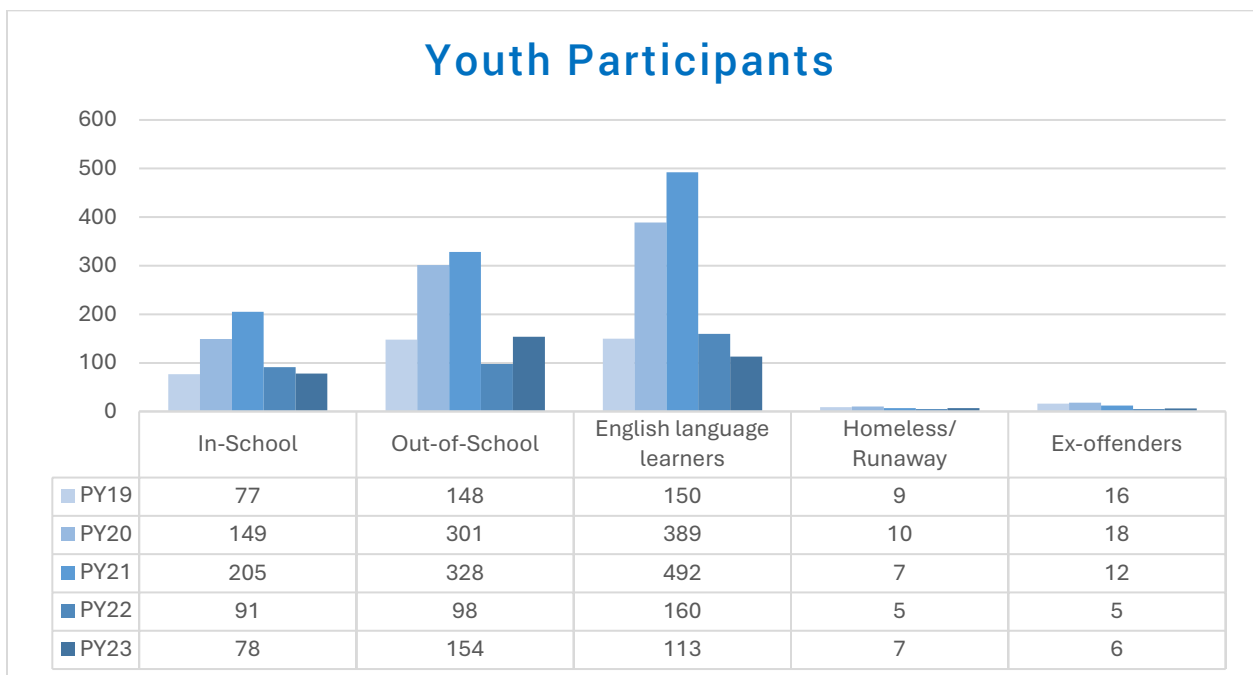
*Median Earnings* for participants in all three programs increased from the previous year. The Adult program reports median earnings of \$9,606.24, up from \$8,399.31 in PY22. The Dislocated Worker program saw the most significant increase in median earnings, with \$9,826.58 compared to last year's \$7,888.70. The Youth program reported an increase from \$3,715.07 in PY22 to \$4,467.12 in PY23. Despite the rise in *Median Earnings*, the Youth program's *Credential Rate* indicator reached 26.9%.

The Dislocated Worker program served 197 individuals in PY23, the highest number over the last five years. This same five-year trend also shows that the program served the highest number of individuals with a high school diploma or equivalent in PY23. Increased outreach efforts encouraged that population to further their education at a post-secondary level.

PY23 shows the Adult program had a significant decrease in *Exiters*, down from 180 in PY22 to 128, and a decline in participants served, 136 in PY23 compared to 208 in PY22. Although these numbers appear negative, the facts behind the scenes are that the Adult program provides more information to participants about additional services available. For example, instead of participants exiting the program after completing an ITA, they may be hired immediately after graduation and may move into an On-the-Job Training contract. Another contributing factor to the lower number of *Exiters* is that the Adult program enrolled several individuals into educational institutions in the latter half of the year, and they had not graduated by the end of PY23.



The Youth program has made strides in increasing Out-of-School Youth enrollments. PY23 Out-of-School Youth enrollments totaled 154, an increase of 57% from the 98 Out-of-School Youth enrolled in PY22.



## SUCCESS STORIES

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Inclusion of at least one (1) success story per funding stream, detailing services and outcomes for the participant and/or employer relevance to LWDB goals and objectives, as stated in local plan.

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### Adult Success Story

Brenda Andrade is a 31-year-old mother of three who lives in La Mesa, NM. She worked as a caregiver with Crossroads, earning \$12.50 an hour. When her client moved to a senior living home, Crossroads did not assign Ms. Andrade to another client. Having wanted to become a medical assistant and secure a higher-paying job, Ms. Andrade visited New Mexico Workforce Connection in Las Cruces and learned about the Tuition Assistance program. She enrolled in the program in February 2024 and started her training at Pinnacle Institute.

Ms. Andrade secured a position as a Billing Clerk with Anthony Water and Sanitation, making \$16.00 an hour as she continues her education for a career in the medical field. New Mexico Workforce Connection invested \$4,000 in Ms. Andrade's education at Pinnacle Institute.

*"I am currently working as a billing clerk and learning techniques that can be applied to my objective dream job. Thank you to the WIOA program for giving me the opportunity to pursue the right avenues to keep adding valuable experiences. My gratitude to Maria Carrasco for being patient with my journey to succeed." – Brenda Andrade*

### Dislocated Worker Success Story

Christopher Corrales is a 21-year-old single parent of three in Hatch, NM. He worked 40 hours a week at Hatch Area Medical Center from June 2021 until November 2023. Due to a company layoff, Mr. Corrales was unemployed. He qualified for unemployment benefits and was referred to New Mexico Workforce Connection for additional assistance. Mr. Corrales decided to pursue a Commercial Driver's License to secure a stable future for his family.

Mr. Corrales received tuition assistance and began CDL training at Glitz Inc. Capstone Construction School on April 30, 2024. On May 31, 2024, he received his Diploma of completion and his Commercial Driver's license from the State of New Mexico. Shamrock Foods soon hired him as a shuttle driver, working 40 hours a week. He is thrilled about his new career and its opportunities for him and his children.

While enrolled in the WIOA program as a Dislocated Worker, Mr. Corrales received tuition assistance and mileage reimbursement for his travel from Hatch to Las Cruces, totaling \$4,496.20.

*"I am so thankful for the assistance that New Mexico Workforce Connection provided to me and my family. I would like to thank Marita, she was very helpful and made the process easy to understand. I will be referring other friends and family members to the New Mexico Workforce Connection." – Christopher Corrales*

### In-School Youth Success Story

Gianna Apachito is 19 and enrolled as an in-school youth while a senior at Magdalena High School in Magdalena, New Mexico. She heard about the Youth Services program from friends and the local radio station. She applied to the program for help focusing on completing high school graduation requirements.

Ms. Apachito gained work experience working part-time at the Alamo Navajo Senior Center, where she helped provide meals to the seniors. She also worked as a teaching assistant at the Alamo Navajo

School. She values the employment skills she acquired from working and the financial education provided by the program.

The Youth Services program invested \$7,679.00 in Ms. Apachito with work experience, incentives, and supportive services. She was very grateful for the income she used to buy school clothes and supplies, food for lunch, and graduation clothes.

*"I highly recommend the WIOA program to kids that want to learn to be responsible and financially responsible. I really enjoyed being enrolled in the WIOA program and would recommend this for students who have a hardship in meeting financial responsibilities while in school.*

*– Gianna Apachito*

### **Out-of-School Youth Success Story**

Yaksi Acevedo Trejo is a 20-year-old who graduated from Las Cruces High School in May 2022. Living with her grandmother and younger brother, Ms. Trejo tried attending college but had to drop out because she needed to work and help care for her family. She went to New Mexico Workforce Connection to inquire about unemployment assistance when she lost her part-time sales associate position at HomeGoods. She was referred to the Pre-Apprenticeship and Youth Services programs. Under the Pre-Apprenticeship program, Ms. Trejo worked part-time, earning \$15 an hour.

Ms. Trejo expressed a desire to become a Dental Hygienist and wanted to attend Pinnacle Institute. She received \$5,000 for tuition assistance, books, and fees. An additional \$1,200 in supportive services, including a laptop, uniforms, and a post-secondary certificate fee, were provided. She was placed at Las Cruces Dental Solutions as a Sterilization Technician, earning a total of \$3,360 for the Work Experience component of the Youth program. After receiving a Dental Assistant certificate from Pinnacle, Ms. Trejo plans to continue on a career path to becoming a Dental Hygienist.

*"I fell in love with the program. I am very grateful to be part of and have the support of the WIOA Youth Program. They have helped me go back to school, pay my tuition, and provided me with supportive services, incentives, and work experience."*

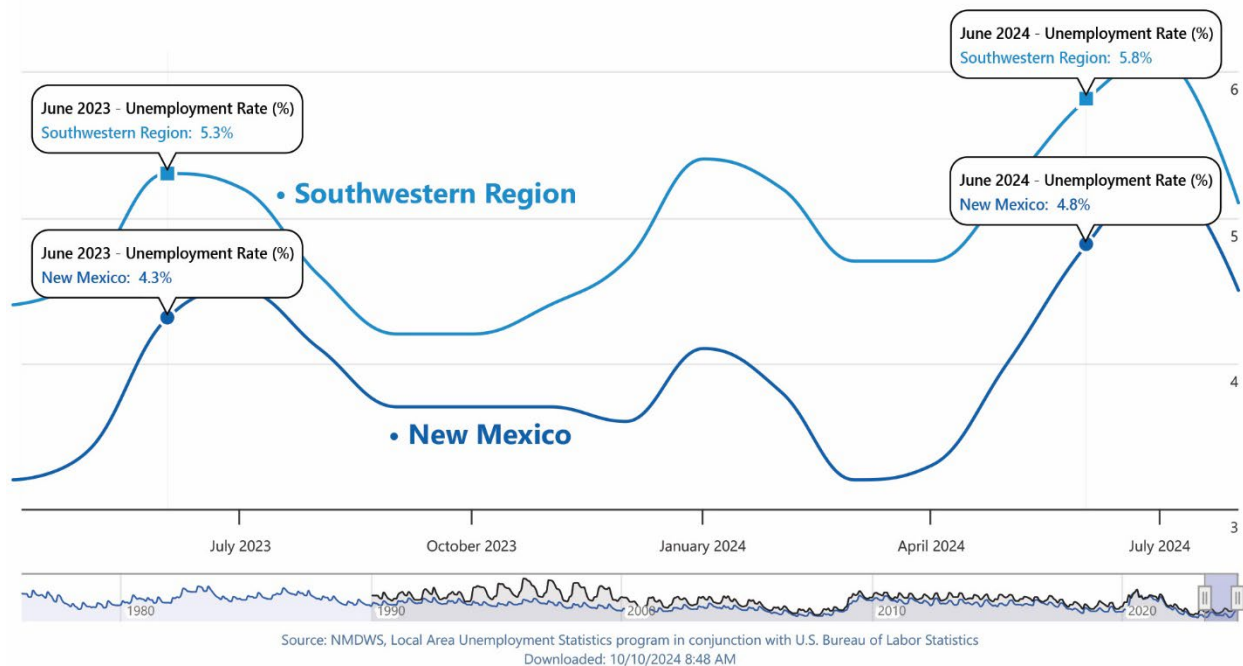
*– Yaksi Acevedo Trejo*

## LABOR MARKET SUMMARY

Labor market summary highlighting how the LWDB reported activities impacted the local regional economy, business sectors, and/or career pathway outcomes; opportunities for improvement and focus for the upcoming year.

### Employment and Unemployment

#### Not seasonally adjusted Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment data in Multiple Areas Unemployment Rate (%) June 2023 - June 2024



Unemployment rate data are from the Local Area Unemployment Statistics, WCOS.

In June 2023, New Mexico's labor force comprised 967,114 individuals: 923,711 employed and 43,403 unemployed, constituting a 4.5% unemployment rate. At a 5.5% unemployment rate, the SAWDB had 129,918 employed and 7,562 unemployed, adding to a total labor force of 137,480 individuals. It is important to note that both started and ended the program year at a similar unemployment rate despite the fluctuations throughout the year. The graph above also suggests that unemployment rates in the Region tend to mirror that of the State throughout the year by a percentage difference. This highlights the importance of tracking State activity to predict unemployment in the Region, the factors contributing to it, and improving workforce outcomes.

## Industry Snapshot

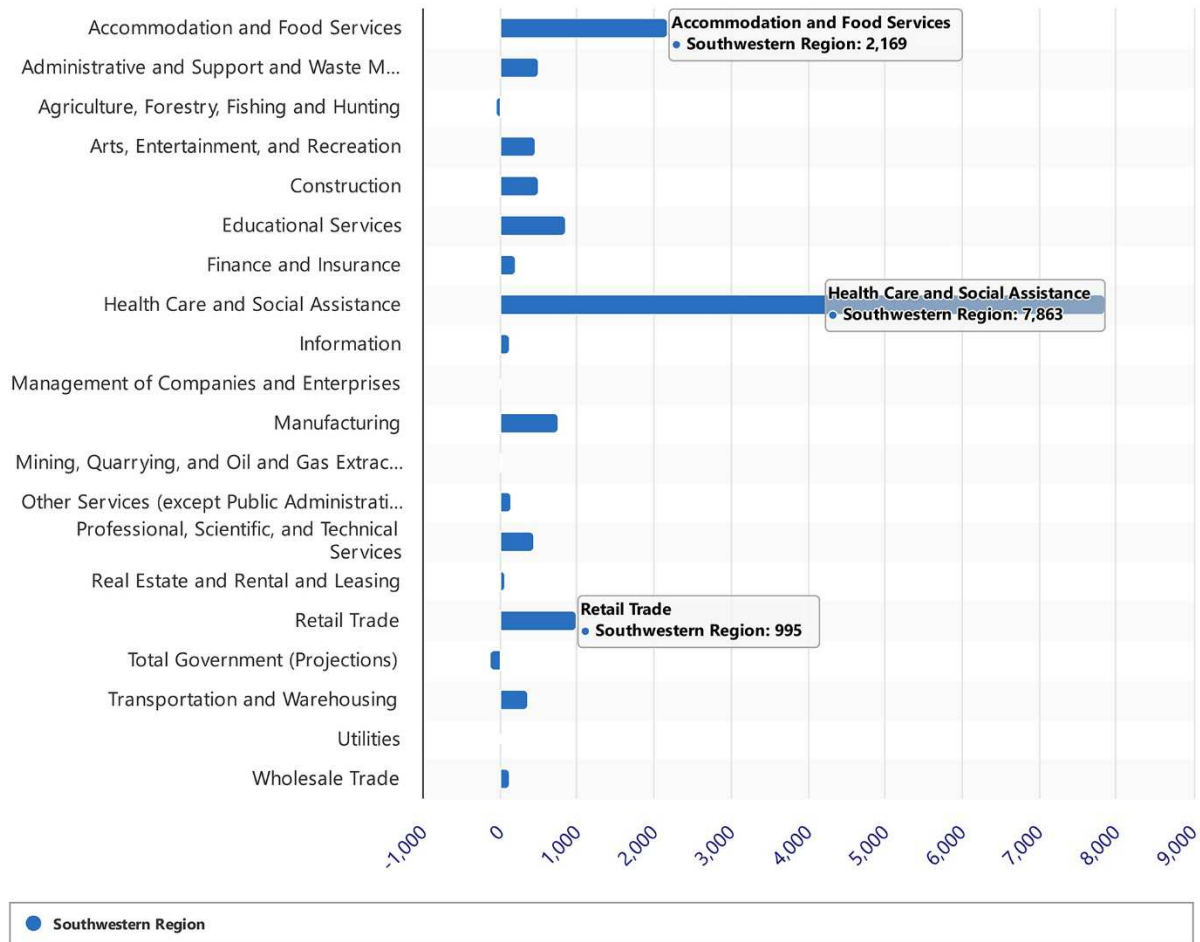
### INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT DISTRIBUTION TABLE

Rank	Industry Sector	Number of Establishments	Number of Employees
1	Health Care and Social Assistance	1,596	21,925
2	Educational Services	205	15,653
3	Retail Trade	799	11,355
4	Accommodation and Food Services	540	11,046
5	Public Administration	336	9,128
6	Construction	733	5,826
7	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	470	5,291
8	Manufacturing	181	4,217
9	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	791	3,871
10	Transportation and Warehousing	282	3,105

*NMDWS, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages program*

Health Care and Social Assistance, Educational Services, and Retail Trade provide the Southwestern Region's most significant employment opportunities. The Retail Trade had 11,253 employees, Educational Services had 15,093, and, rounding off the top, Health Care and Social Assistance had 21,757. As the population in New Mexico ages and retirees look to relocate to our state, the demand for Healthcare and Social Assistance jobs will continue to grow. That demand currently impacts the Region's work; almost half of all ITAs are for positions in the medical field. It is important to note that the other half of ITAs is for CDLs. The Region's proximity to the border and New Mexico's growing trade industry may have a significant impact.

**The graph below shows the long term industry projections for Multiple Industries in Southwestern Region for the 2022-2032 projection period. Total 2022-2032 Employment Change**



Source: NMDWS, Employment Projections program  
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Labor market information indicates that Healthcare and Social Assistance, Accommodation and Food Services, and Retail Trade will have the most significant projected employment for the Southwestern Region in 2032. The SAWDB prioritized healthcare and education in its efforts. Current regional initiatives and work fulfill the needs of the Regional and Combined State Plan.

## CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENTS

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Continuous quality improvement activities implemented throughout the year focused on workforce system improvements; include summary description of customer/business surveys activities and how data from surveys is reflected in direct changes to system and/or program delivery.

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### Customer & Employer Satisfaction Surveys

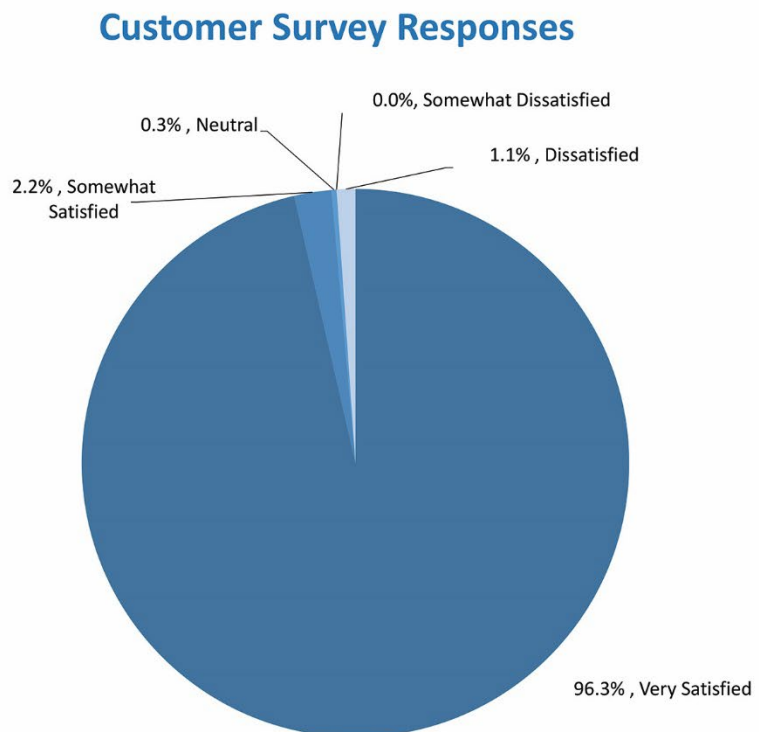
New Mexico Workforce Connection renamed the Job Seeker Survey to Customer Survey and updated the questions in both the Customer and Employer surveys. New questions ask for the date and time of day the customer visited. Other updates include revising the list of services received and shortening it to encourage more submissions. Surveys are standard for all job fairs in the Region.

The following graphs and tables show the overall satisfaction of both customers and employers. In PY23, New Mexico Workforce Connection in the Southwestern Region received 2,063 Customer Survey responses and 148 Employer Survey responses.

Graph 1. Customer Survey Responses

*Overall, how satisfied were you with your service?*

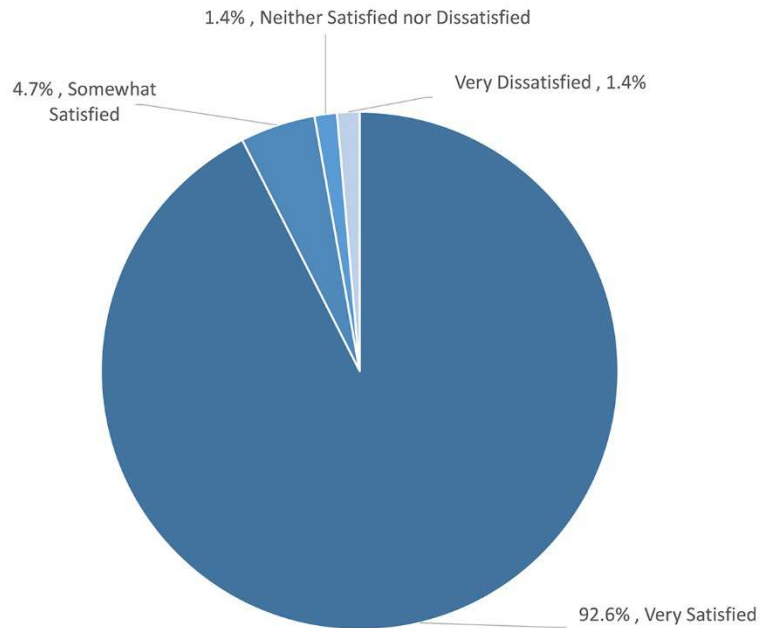
VALUE	PERCENT	RESPONSES
Very Satisfied	96.3%	1,986
Somewhat Satisfied	2.2%	46
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	0.3%	7
Somewhat Dissatisfied	0.0%	1
Very Dissatisfied	1.1%	23
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>2,063</b>



Graph 2. Employer Survey Responses  
*Overall, how satisfied were you with your service?*

VALUE	PERCENT	RESPONSES
Very Satisfied	92.6%	137
Somewhat Satisfied	4.7%	7
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	1.4%	2
Somewhat Dissatisfied	0.0%	0
Very Dissatisfied	1.4%	2
<b>Totals</b>		<b>148</b>

### Employer Survey Responses



To promote survey-taking, business card-size survey cards containing a QR code and URL to surveys are available at the front desk/reception desk of each New Mexico Workforce Connection office. These cards allow customers to take the survey at their convenience, either on a computer elsewhere or on their phone by scanning the QR code. The desktop background of each Resource Computer has a design that resembles our regional website, [www.EmployNM.com](http://www.EmployNM.com), and contains QR codes for customers to take a survey while at the computer. Survey QR codes are printed and posted at each staff cubicle so customers visiting with a workforce expert can scan it with their phone and take the survey on the spot. One survey asks for the name of the individual who assisted them, and there is also an option for customers to provide additional feedback. Using these elements, the One-Stop Operator created healthy competition among the team, encouraging customers to take surveys and mention the staff member by name. The staff member with the most mentions each month wins a prize.

## **PARTNERSHIP ENGAGEMENT**

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Examples of partnership engagement strategies and outcomes; specifically, with required partners such as vocational rehabilitation, adult education, Wagner-Peyser programs. Highlight examples of partnership engagement that improved or enhanced the experience for customers and businesses and opportunities for improvement or focus for the upcoming year.

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New Mexico Workforce Connection continues to host monthly Workforce Partner meetings. Partner meetings allow workforce partners to educate one another on programmatic information, discuss respective workforce initiatives, and identify opportunities for collaboration and outreach. Co-located Partner meetings occur quarterly to enhance service coordination and delivery.

New Mexico Workforce Connection has developed many partnerships throughout the Region. The most common answer from service providers regarding improvements for PY24 is strengthening existing partnerships.

The following are some examples of partnership engagement activities in PY23.

### **Adult Education Provider**

The Adult Education service providers in the Region, Doña Ana Community College, University of New Mexico-Valencia, and Western New Mexico University, have an open two-way communication. They are invited to and have participated in New Mexico Workforce Connection events, including job fairs and an industry-specific career fair hosted by DACC.

### **Agricultural Workers and Employers**

The State Monitor Advocate calls New Mexico Workforce Connection in Deming home. In partnership with New Mexico Workforce Connection, the State Monitor Advocate collaborates with local agencies each year to host events targeting the agricultural population, such as Farmworker Workshops in Anthony, Deming, and Hatch, where agencies educate farmworkers about services and opportunities available to them. PY23 events include a backpack giveaway with Play Sharity, \$600 vouchers for work boots with HELP NM Chicano Por La Causa, and several food dispensing events.

### **City of Deming and Deming Luna County Economic Development**

New Mexico Workforce Connection's relationship with Luna County Economic Development grew stronger in PY23. They partnered together on all events in Luna County, including job fairs, an Employer Roundtable, and an Own Your Future event with a local high school.

### **Division of Vocational Rehabilitation**

NM DVR participated in most New Mexico Workforce Connection-involved events in PY23. They were among the first to sign up for all the job fairs and the annual Mock It Till You Rock It in Las Cruces. NMDVR feels that New Mexico Workforce Connection could benefit from a stronger relationship with them. In PY24, discussions will address this with plans to increase referrals.

### **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)**

TANF hosts monthly Career Ready Connection Classes at New Mexico Workforce Connection in Deming, Las Cruces, and Silver City, where participants learn about work ethics and soft skills, proper attire, best tactics for job searching, navigating WCOS, building a résumé, and enhancing their interview skills with mock interviews. One & Done Engagement Events at TANF offices were renamed Career Essentials events. To help reach the TANF population, staff and other workforce partners take the information to

them for these events. Participation has dwindled for both events. Staff will evaluate and revamp them in PY24.

### **Services in Rural Communities**

In PY22, New Mexico Workforce Connection staff established a weekly visit to Hatch, providing employment services and assisting individuals with unemployment insurance issues. They also provide information on New Mexico Workforce Connection's menu of services and what is available from other workforce partners. In PY23, New Mexico Workforce Connection duplicated this initiative, and staff from Deming traveled to Columbus weekly.

The One-Stop Operator created a second access point at Hope Haven Recovery Center in Lordsburg. Residents can access the New Mexico Workforce Connection Online System through a computer provided by the SAWDB.

### **Community of Hope Job Readiness Fairs**

New Mexico Workforce Connection is still working with Mesilla Valley Community of Hope to help the unhoused population get job-ready. At these monthly events, workforce partners are set up at the Community of Hope to share the available services and provide assistance on the spot. When space allows, employers with opportunities attend.

## **ACHIEVING THE STATE'S STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS**

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Progress made in achieving the state's strategic vision and goals, as described in the state's unified or Combined State Plan, for developing its workforce and meeting employer needs in order to support economic growth and economic self-sufficiency.

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The SAWDB provides ongoing support to New Mexico's strategic vision and goals. With education of the two top industry sectors in the Region, the Youth and Young Adult Committee is working on an initiative with a local high school. Board members attended workforce conferences and brought back ideas they had learned about and wanted to implement in the Southwestern Region. One idea members learned about was the SEEDS Program, which a WIOA Youth Services provider in Texas implemented. This career exploration event brings an industry-specific panel of professionals to a high school. Students interested in this industry listen to the panel and ask questions. This event was live-streamed on Facebook from the host high school. Students from other area schools viewed the event from their school and were able to submit questions via Facebook. Committee members, staff, and service providers discussed how to have a similar event, named an Industry Forum, in our region. Plans are underway to work with one high school and hold the first event in November 2024.

For decades, virtual Reality training has existed for specific sectors, such as the military and law enforcement. Its success as a training tool has opened doors to career exploration opportunities, and the SAWDB wants to offer this to the Southwestern Region. Transfr VR offers VR headsets and software for career exploration and VR training. In PY24, the SAWDB will bring this VR technology to New Mexico Workforce Connection.

## IMPLEMENTING SECTOR STRATEGIES AND CAREER PATHWAYS

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Progress made in implementing sector strategies and career pathways. The discussion may include business engagement strategies, work-based learning (including apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship), work experience for youth and adults, transitional jobs, and incumbent worker training strategies and policies in the state.

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Healthcare is one of the two industry sectors the Board has prioritized for the Southwestern Region. The Adult and Dislocated Worker service providers contacted private educational institutions to increase the number of certificate programs available to participants. These efforts help workers, particularly those from underserved communities, gain access to high-demand industries and earn higher wages over time while also addressing skills gaps in the economy.

Youth interested in a healthcare career can take their first step on a career pathway with the Pre-Apprenticeship Program. If young adults are still interested in the healthcare field after completing the Pre-Apprenticeship Program, they can continue their education by enrolling in the Youth Services program. The work experience component of the program can get participants a step further on their career path. After the Youth Services program, participants can enroll in the Adult program.

Through virtual reality software from Transfr VR, individuals can explore careers and build skills from practically anywhere in the Southwestern Region. Virtual training from a virtual coach simulates training in a physical environment and helps people develop skills for in-demand occupations such as:

- Registered Nurse
- Surgical Technologist
- EMT
- Electrician
- Distribution Line Worker
- Welder
- Semiconductor Manufacturing Technician
- Solar Technician
- Network Technician
- and more

With this VR technology, the SAWDB plans to help create career pathways for many career seekers.

To address the brain drain and create opportunities for youth and young adults, the SAWDB will create a youth group subcommittee. This subcommittee will include youth and young adults in the WIOA Youth Services program. The purpose of this subcommittee is to gain program feedback, including new ideas, such as how to make the program more attractive to youth and increase enrollments.

## FINANCIALS

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The Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board had total expenditures of \$4,776,3774. For the Adult program, the total expenditures were \$1,030,733. Of the \$1,030,733, the total amount expended on Training services (OJT, ITA, TJ, etc.) was \$800,836.56.

For the Dislocated Workers program, the total expenditure amount was \$1,573,158.45. Of the \$1,573,158.45, the total amount expended on Training services was \$994,192.15.

### Balance Sheet

On June 30, 2023, the Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board held assets of \$260,942.

### **WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT SOUTHWESTERN AREA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD BALANCE SHEET 06.30.2023 Non Close-Out**

	<u>WIOA</u>
<b>ASSETS:</b>	
Cash and cash equivalents	\$
Accounts Receivable-Grants	260,942
Total assets	\$ <u>260,942</u>
<b>LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE:</b>	
Accounts payable	\$ 260,942
Deferred Revenue	-
Total liabilities	<u>260,942</u>
<b>Fund Balance</b>	
Unreserved and designated for future expenditures	<u>-</u>
Total fund balance	<u>-</u>
Total liabilities and fund balance	\$ <u>260,942</u>

### Budget vs. Actuals

The Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board had an overall budget of \$6,515,322. As of the end of PY23, the Board expended \$4,776,374. The unexpended amount of \$1,738,948 has been allocated for PY24 and will be invested in various programs to benefit employers, job seekers, and youth. Costs include but are not limited to, Youth Work Experience, On-the-Job Training, Supportive Services, Customized Training, and Career Services.

**SOUTHWESTERN AREA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD  
WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT  
STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, AND  
CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES - BUDGET (GAAP BASIS) AND ACTUAL  
FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 23-24  
6/30/2024 non close out**

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Variance</u>
<b>Revenues:</b>			
Federal grants	\$ 6,515,322	4,776,374	1,738,948
<b>Expenditures:</b>			
Employment services:			
Program Year 23/Fiscal Year 24			
Adult	1,143,028	1,030,733	112,295
Dislocated Worker	1,855,275	1,052,686	802,589
Youth	1,595,050	973,076	621,974
Administration	510,373	308,283	202,090
Program Year 22/Fiscal Year 23			
Adult	347,469	347,469	0
Dislocated Worker	437,368	437,368	0
Youth	413,759	413,759	(0)
Administration	213,000	213,000	(0)
Total general governmental	<u>6,515,322</u>	<u>4,776,374</u>	<u>1,738,948</u>
Excess (deficiency) of revenues over expenditures	-	-	-
Fund balance, beginning of year	-	-	-
Fund balance, end of year	\$ <u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>

# Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board

PY23 Annual Report

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## Contact Information

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