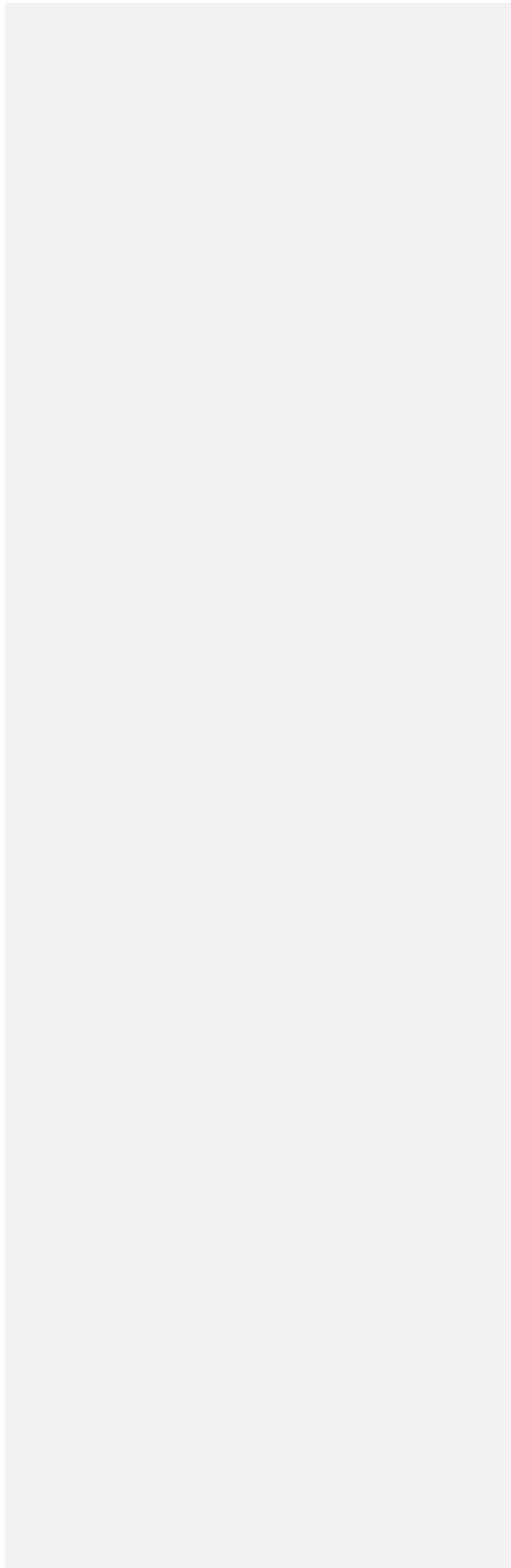




NORTHERN AREA
**LOCAL WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT BOARD**
ANNUAL REPORT
YEAR OF TRANSITION AND GROWTH



Program Year 24



Dear Partners, Colleagues, and Community Members,

We are honored to present the **Program Year 2024 (PY24) Annual Report** for the **Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB)**. This report highlights the collective achievements, partnerships, and innovations that continue to strengthen workforce development across Northern New Mexico.

Over the past year, we have remained steadfast in our mission to connect individuals with meaningful employment opportunities, strengthen local industries, and empower our communities through education, collaboration, and economic advancement. By working together with our partners, service providers, and stakeholders, we continue to build pathways that help job seekers develop the skills needed to succeed in today's rapidly evolving economy.

Highlights from PY24 include:

- **Strategic Workforce Initiatives:** Continued investment in priority sectors such as healthcare, trades, IT, broadband expansion, and advanced manufacturing—driving sustainable economic growth and expanding career opportunities.
- **Collaborations and Partnerships:** Strengthened partnerships with education institutions, employers, and community organizations to enhance program delivery and expand access to workforce services.
- **Success Stories:** Inspiring outcomes from participants whose lives have been transformed through training, employment, and support made possible by our collective efforts.
- **Looking Forward:** A renewed commitment to data-driven decision-making, performance excellence, and innovation through initiatives such as the Workforce Integration Network (WIN) and ongoing collaboration with the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (NMDWS).

Together, we are shaping a stronger, more inclusive workforce for the future—one that reflects the resilience and potential of Northern New Mexico.

With appreciation for your continued partnership and support,

Sincerely,
Alex Naranjo
Lead CEO

Joseph Weathers
Board Chairman

Lisa Ortiz
Executive Director

NALWDB Membership Overview

Program Year 2024

During Program Year 2024, the **Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB)** continued to maintain a strong and diverse membership that reflects the economic and cultural fabric of Northern New Mexico. The Board's composition represents a broad cross-section of key sectors—business, labor, education, and community-based organizations—ensuring that workforce development strategies remain both inclusive and responsive to regional needs.

This diversity enables the NALWDB to address workforce challenges comprehensively, foster collaboration across industries, and align resources to strengthen the regional economy.

Business Representatives

- **Joseph Weathers** – Tapetes de Lana
- **Sean Medrano** – Northeastern Construction
- **Rebecca Estrada** – Los Alamos National Laboratories
- **David Romero** – Romero's Automotive
- **Krutik Bhakta** – Best Western Montezuma Inn
- **Vince Howell** – Phillips 66
- **Pablo Lujan** – Ken's Cuisine
- **Kate Harvie** – San Juan Regional Medical Center
- **Floyd Archuleta** – Yearout Energy
- **Rudy Garcia** – Zia Factory Outlet
- **Jon Paul Romero** – Cordova Contracting & Development

Partner Representatives

- **Sarah Boisvert** – Fab Lab Hub
- **Maria Herrera** – New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (NMDWS)
- **Jennifer Martinez** – San Juan College Adult Education
- **Mario Lucero** – Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)
- **Jolene Nelson** – Regional Development Corporation (RDC)
- **Dr. Lorenzo Reyes** – San Juan College Higher Education
- **Kevin Romero** – New Mexico Commission for the Blind
- **Arthur Sparks** – Union Local 412

These members bring critical perspectives from business, education, labor, and community sectors, ensuring that NALWDB initiatives are equitable, data-informed, and aligned with the economic goals of Northern New Mexico. Their collaboration continues to enhance access to training, education, and employment opportunities that empower both individuals and employers across the region.

Executive Summary

Program Year 2024: A Year of Transition and Transformation

Program Year 2024 (PY24) marked a defining chapter for the Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB). It was a year of transition, renewal, and transformation for the region's workforce system. The year began under one service provider that was released due to performance and compliance concerns. To maintain uninterrupted services for job seekers and employers, the NALWDB temporarily managed direct program delivery across all ten counties.

In November 2024, the system entered a new phase with the onboarding of two dedicated service providers: **Career TEAM**, serving Adult and Dislocated Worker programs, and **Youth Development Inc. (YDI)**, delivering Youth Services. This transition restored regional stability and created the foundation for long-term growth, innovation, and accountability.

Despite the challenges of rebuilding, the Northern Region demonstrated measurable progress and renewed energy. More than 357 participants were served through training, education, and employment programs. Career TEAM expanded access to workforce services, introduced data-driven performance tools, and strengthened employer partnerships across key sectors including healthcare, information technology, and trades. YDI successfully re-established youth programs and provided more than 60 youth with paid work experiences, leadership training, and hands-on exposure to high-demand careers.

NALWDB also broadened rural access by expanding mobile workforce units and satellite locations in Mora, Colfax, and Cibola Counties, ensuring equitable access to career services throughout the region. Collaborations with Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Wagner-Peyser partners improved co-enrollment, service coordination, and business engagement.

As the Board looks ahead to Program Year 2025, it enters a phase of sustained growth and modernization. Priorities include expanding apprenticeships and work-based learning, deepening employer collaboration, enhancing data integration, and advancing equitable access for all residents.

Program Year 2024 reflected a time of transition, resilience, and transformation that redefined how the Northern Workforce System serves its people, its businesses, and the future of Northern New Mexico.

Summary of Service Delivery to Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs

Program Year 2024

Adult Services

Overview

In Program Year 2024 (PY24), the Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB)—through its service provider, Career TEAM—successfully delivered comprehensive Adult Services focused on helping job seekers acquire the skills, credentials, and support needed to secure employment in high-demand industries.

Although Career TEAM began operations in November 2024, the organization quickly reestablished services across all ten counties, achieving measurable outcomes within just eight months. A total of 212 Adults enrolled in the program, with 202 participants entering occupational training.

Training activities were concentrated in key regional growth sectors such as healthcare, transportation (CDL and heavy equipment operation), information technology, and trades, all aligned with current New Mexico labor market trends identified through NMJOBS and WorkforceGPS data. These programs were developed in collaboration with local employers, education providers, and community organizations to ensure participants gained relevant, work-ready skills that reflect the economic priorities of Northern New Mexico.

Major Accomplishments

- **Robust Enrollment and Training Participation:** 212 Adults enrolled in WIOA services, including 202 who entered occupational skills training. Adult program funds were fully expended and supplemented with Dislocated Worker transfers to sustain service levels across the region.
- **Reestablished Regional Partnerships:** NALWDB and Career TEAM rebuilt strong relationships with American Job Centers and community organizations following the service transition, improving outreach coordination, referral efficiency, and trust among local partners.
- **Career EDGE Integration:** Over 125 participants actively used the Career EDGE platform for résumé development, interview preparation, goal setting, and digital skill-building, allowing Career Advisors to track progress and personalize engagement at scale.
- **Performance Results:** PY24 outcomes met or exceeded several state performance targets, with Employment Q2 at 70.7%, Employment Q4 at 72.16%, a Credential Attainment Rate of 68.82%, and median quarterly earnings of \$7,503. These outcomes align with statewide benchmarks reported by the **New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (NMDWS)**, reflecting the region's improving employment momentum and labor market resilience.

County Participant Distribution (Adults)

Cibola – 16 | Colfax – 35 | Los Alamos – 0 | McKinley – 60 | Mora – 2 | Rio Arriba – 1 | San Juan – 76 | San Miguel – 38 | Santa Fe – 43 | Taos – 29

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Program Highlights

- **New Mexico Corrections Department (NMCD) Partnership:** Delivered Culinary Arts, HVAC, CDL, and Heavy Equipment Training in Santa Fe, Grants, and Springer correctional facilities, providing justice-involved individuals with valuable trade skills that enhance employability upon release.
- **Southwest Indian Foundation Collaboration:** Supported Automotive, Construction, and CDL training programs across rural Northern New Mexico, directly addressing local skilled labor shortages.
- **Rapid Response Engagement:** Conducted coordinated Rapid Response sessions for employees affected by closures at Party City, JoAnn Fabrics, Big Lots, and Pete’s Place, ensuring immediate access to training and reemployment support.

Challenges

The transition from the previous provider presented significant administrative and operational hurdles, including incomplete participant files, missing documentation, and inherited caseloads that required extensive data reconstruction. Simultaneously, multiple state and federal audits placed additional strain on limited staff resources, further compounded by budget cuts that reduced in-person coverage in several counties.

Despite these challenges, Career TEAM maintained program stability through a hybrid service model, combining virtual appointments, rotating office schedules, and structured case management systems. This adaptive approach allowed the NALWDB to maintain service continuity while strengthening compliance, documentation, and performance tracking practices.

Looking Ahead – PY25 Opportunities

Building on the progress of PY24, the Adult Program will focus on:

- Expanding On-the-Job Training (OJT) and Rapid Response reemployment pathways.
- Deepening Career EDGE integration to enhance measurable skill gains (MSG) and participant engagement.
- Standardizing provider documentation and invoicing timelines to improve data accuracy and reporting efficiency.
- Leveraging labor market data from NMJOBS, LASER, and WorkforceGPS to inform training investments in the most promising local industries.

With a renewed emphasis on data-driven decision-making and strategic partner engagement, NALWDB aims to further strengthen program performance while preserving participant-centered service delivery under ongoing budget constraints.

Dislocated Worker Services

Overview

The Dislocated Worker (DW) Program provides critical support to individuals separated from employment due to layoffs, closures, or economic transitions. In PY24, 32 Dislocated Workers enrolled in services, with 17 entering occupational training. Participants were concentrated primarily in San Juan, McKinley, and Santa Fe counties, where energy sector restructuring and retail closures have had significant workforce impacts.

Training and reemployment services targeted in-demand fields such as 3D printing, welding, CDL, and information technology, offering participants expedited career transitions and access to higher-wage employment opportunities aligned with regional workforce projections.

Major Accomplishments

- **Reemployment Success:** The Dislocated Worker Program achieved an Employment Q2 rate of 67.5% and Employment Q4 rate of 67.37%, exceeding 103% of target performance goals.
- **Strong Earnings and Credential Attainment:** Median earnings reached \$8,903, and Credential Attainment climbed to 81.59%, surpassing state benchmarks for the program year.
- **Rapid Response and Retraining:** Provided timely outreach and reemployment services for impacted workers, including short-term retraining in advanced manufacturing through the New Collar Network 3D Printing Bootcamp and IT certification programs at Central New Mexico Community College.

Challenges and Opportunities

Many dislocated workers faced financial pressure to reenter the workforce quickly, limiting their ability to pursue long-term or degree-based training. In response, Career TEAM expanded short-term, stackable credential programs and strengthened partnerships with employers to provide OJT and Transitional Job placements.

For PY25, NALWDB will continue to enhance employer engagement through structured outreach calendars and sector-based strategies, aligning business needs with workforce services. This approach will improve placement quality, participant retention, and regional economic impact.

Conclusion

PY24 marked a year of stabilization, rebuilding, and measurable progress for the Northern Area's Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs. Through collaboration, innovation, and a renewed commitment to performance excellence, NALWDB and Career TEAM successfully reestablished operations across the region—laying a solid foundation for continued growth, data-driven improvement, and meaningful outcomes for Northern New Mexico's workforce.

Youth Services

Program Year 2024

Overview

The **Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB)** Youth Program, administered by **Youth Development, Inc. (YDI)**, provides comprehensive services to both **In-School Youth (ISY)** and **Out-of-School Youth (OSY)** through education, training, and work-based learning opportunities. The program is designed to help youth overcome barriers to employment and education while promoting long-term career and life success.

Program Year 2024 marked a period of transition and rapid development following the change in service provider. Early efforts centered on ensuring continuity of services for **214 youth participants** (16 active and 198 in follow-up), hiring qualified staff, conducting in-depth training, and initiating robust community outreach. Within three months, the program achieved full staffing and began delivering consistent, high-quality services throughout the ten-county region.

YDI's outreach and partnership development efforts were extensive, resulting in connections with **over 70 education and community partners** and interest from **122 regional employers** offering potential worksites for youth work experience placements. These partnerships enhanced the program's visibility, accessibility, and capacity to provide meaningful training and employment opportunities across Northern New Mexico.

Major Accomplishments Strong Program Rebuild and Staffing: The program transitioned successfully to YDI leadership, onboarding staff, delivering professional development, and ensuring compliance with WIOA guidelines within the first quarter of operations.

- **Youth Engagement and Enrollment:** Over **123 youth** were served during the year, with a strong emphasis on **Out-of-School Youth (OSY)**. Engagement improved significantly through coordinated outreach, new partnerships, and alignment with local education and training institutions.
- **Summer Youth Academy (SYA):**
The **PY24 Summer Youth Academy** was a signature success, enrolling **66 youth** across the region and focusing on three high-demand sectors: **Healthcare, Information Technology, and Infrastructure Trades**.
 - **Program Components:** Orientation, career exploration, skills training, 300 hours of paid work experience, and a leadership development project.
 - **Employer Participation:** Over **30 businesses** provided worksites for paid placements, offering hands-on experience aligned with participants' career goals.
 - **Outcomes:** The majority of participants completed the program, with many continuing into occupational skills training or unsubsidized employment
- **Career Readiness and Support Services:** Participants received access to financial literacy, leadership development, and work-readiness training, ensuring exposure to the 14 WIOA youth elements.

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- **Youth Success Stories:** Individual outcomes like that of Brandon Bocanegra, who earned his HSE, completed a pre-apprenticeship with Kit Carson Cooperative, and secured full-time employment as a lineman illustrate the life-changing impact of the WIOA Youth Program in the Northern Area

Performance and County Participation

Regional Snapshot (PY24):

- **Employment Q2:** 50.67% (76/150 participants)
- **Employment Q4:** 57.43% (85/148 participants)
- **Credential Attainment:** 46%
- **Median Earnings:** \$5,010.88 per quarter

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County Distribution (Youth – ISY/OSY, Active and Follow-up Participants):

Cibola-1, Colfax-7, McKinley-8, Mora-17, Rio Arriba-4, San Juan-3, San Miguel-13, Santa Fe-2, and Taos Counties-11 were all represented, though engagement varied due to rural service coverage and differing levels of youth participation.

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Challenges

- **Rural Accessibility:** Youth in remote areas faced persistent transportation barriers, limited broadband access, and fewer local job opportunities, impacting retention and completion rates.
- **Out-of-School Youth Recruitment:** Recruitment of OSY participants required sustained effort and creative outreach to reach youth disconnected from education and the workforce.
- **Employer Engagement:** While outreach generated strong employer interest, the program continues to develop deeper partnerships to sustain year-round work experience opportunities.

Opportunities for Improvement – PY25 Focus

- **Expand Work Experience and Internship Opportunities:** Increase the number and diversity of paid worksites to strengthen youth-employer connections across key industries.
- **Strengthen Supportive Services:** Leverage partnerships with financial institutions and community agencies to enhance wraparound services addressing transportation, childcare, and housing barriers.
- **Enhance Skill Pathways:** Collaborate with training providers and high schools to build **occupational skills pathways** aligned with regional labor demand in healthcare, IT, and trades.
- **Launch Special Projects:** Implement new initiatives under the 14 WIOA youth elements, including:

- **Financial Literacy Workshops** with evidence-based curricula and banking partners.
- **“Project Shadow”** a career exploration initiative connecting youth directly with employers for hands-on learning and mentorship.
- **High School Internship Programs** to support graduating seniors in transitioning to post-secondary education or employment.
- **Continuous Staff Development:** Ongoing training for YDI staff will ensure high-quality, holistic case management and consistent service delivery across the Northern Area.

Conclusion

PY24 was a foundational year for the NALWDB Youth Program under YDI’s leadership. Despite transitional challenges and the complexities of serving a geographically diverse region, the program demonstrated strong recovery, innovative outreach, and meaningful participant outcomes. With expanded partnerships, targeted training initiatives, and renewed employer engagement, the Youth Program is well-positioned to build on its momentum in PY25—creating new opportunities for young people across Northern New Mexico to thrive in education, work, and life.

Summary of Business Services

Program Year 2024 / Fiscal Year 2025

Overview

The Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) serves ten counties Cibola, Colfax, Los Alamos, McKinley, Mora, Rio Arriba, San Juan, San Miguel, Santa Fe, and Taos representing more than a quarter of New Mexico’s population. In this region, workforce needs are shaped by both rural and urban dynamics: strong energy and healthcare sectors in the west, expanding technology and education sectors in Santa Fe and Los Alamos, and emerging opportunities in trades, broadband, and advanced manufacturing throughout the north.

The Business Services team works closely with employers, education providers, and community partners to align workforce supply with regional demand. Through On-the-Job Training (OJT), Customized Training, Transitional Jobs, and sector partnerships, the team supports businesses in attracting, developing, and retaining skilled workers—contributing to the overall economic health of Northern New Mexico.

In Program Year 2024 (PY24), these collective efforts resulted in expanded employer engagement, strategic training collaborations, and measurable regional impact despite persistent challenges from staffing transitions and fiscal constraints.

Major Accomplishments

1. Expansion of Employer Partnerships

- Established or renewed 48 employer partnerships across all ten counties, with the strongest engagement in San Juan, McKinley, Santa Fe, and Taos.
- Connected over 450 job seekers with employers through targeted recruitment, Rapid Response coordination, and regional job fairs.
- Hosted and participated in eight hiring events and three regional business outreach sessions, including events in Farmington, Española, Las Vegas, and Gallup, which drew participation from small businesses, healthcare organizations, and tribal employers.
- Engaged with economic development partners such as the Greater Gallup Economic Development Corporation (GGEDC), Cibola Communities Economic Development Foundation, Regional Development Corporation (RDC), and New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (NMDWS) to align workforce initiatives with regional economic growth strategies.

These activities fostered collaboration across multiple counties, improving employer access to talent pipelines and increasing awareness of NALWDB services among small and mid-sized businesses.

2. Customized and Sector-Based Training Programs

- **Healthcare Sector:** Develop more partnerships with San Juan College and Santa Fe Community College to develop credentialed healthcare pathways, including the Registered Medical Assistant (RMA) program that helped fill local healthcare vacancies.
- **Trades and Construction:** Through collaboration with the Southwest Indian Foundation and NM Corrections Department, NALWDB supported Automotive, Construction, HVAC, and Heavy Equipment training in Grants, Santa Fe, and Springer, directly addressing labor shortages in high-demand skilled trades.
- **Energy and Manufacturing:** Supported the New Collar Network 3D Printing Bootcamp and participated in the NM Energy Policy Symposium (May 2025), contributing to state-level discussions on energy workforce transitions and green infrastructure employment.
- **Technology and Broadband Expansion:** Partnered with regional employers and training providers to introduce new IT skills development workshops and promote workforce readiness for broadband infrastructure projects in Rio Arriba, San Miguel, and Taos Counties.

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These customized programs reflected the NALWDB's ability to adapt training models to meet sector-specific needs, supporting regional economic diversification and long-term sustainability.

3. Support for Small and Rural Businesses

- Delivered technical assistance to small employers across rural areas, helping them post jobs, recruit locally, and access workforce incentives such as OJT and WIOA-funded customized training.
- Supported hiring and training needs in Mora, Colfax, and Cibola Counties, where smaller businesses often face geographic and resource barriers to talent acquisition.
- Collaborated with the American Job Centers (AJCs) in Gallup, Las Vegas, Española, and Taos to improve visibility of employer services, standardize outreach materials, and share labor market information with local chambers of commerce.

- Leveraged digital marketing campaigns via Facebook, Instagram, X, and TikTok, which collectively reached over 20,000 impressions region-wide, boosting both employer awareness and job seeker engagement

PY24 Northern Area Employer Engagement Snapshot

Category	Result
Employers Engaged	48 New / Active
Job Seekers Connected	450+
Hiring Events	8
Business Outreach Activities	3
Rapid Response Activations	1 (Farmington Retail Closures)
Customized Trainings	4 (Healthcare, Trades, CDL, Energy)
OJT/Work-Based Learning Participants	22
Counties Served	10 (Full Coverage)

Challenges

- **Employer Awareness:** Many small and medium-sized employers remain unfamiliar with the benefits of WIOA-funded services. Targeted outreach and success story marketing are needed to build broader awareness.
- **Data Integration:** Continued improvements to NMJOBS data entry and coordination among AJCs are needed to ensure consistent tracking of employer interactions and service delivery.
- **Geographic Access:** Serving ten diverse counties—many rural or frontier—requires ongoing coordination to ensure equitable employer access to workforce services.

Opportunities for Improvement

1. Targeted Outreach and Marketing

Implement a data-informed marketing strategy to highlight employer success stories, promote incentives for small businesses, and increase utilization of OJT and work-based learning programs.

2. Strengthen Sector Partnerships

Expand multi-employer partnerships in healthcare, broadband, energy, and IT, and develop regional training consortia with local colleges and unions.

3. Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning Expansion

Collaborate with employers, the NM Apprenticeship Office, and community colleges to increase the number of registered apprenticeships and transitional jobs aligned with priority industries.

4. Data-Driven Strategic Planning

Use Labor Market Information (LMI) and WorkforceGPS analytics to refine training investments, identify emerging occupations, and guide future funding priorities.

5. Employer Retention and Recognition

Launch a “Northern Workforce Partner Recognition Program” to celebrate employers that consistently participate in workforce initiatives and support OJT or customized training.

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Conclusion

Program Year 2024 marked a period of growth and stabilization for the Northern Area’s business engagement strategy. Despite challenges related to staffing transitions and geographic scale, the NALWDB successfully rebuilt partnerships, expanded training opportunities, and provided hundreds of local job connections across its ten-county region.

Looking ahead, the Business Services team will focus on strengthening employer collaboration, expanding sector partnerships, and using data to drive targeted workforce investments. By aligning local initiatives with state and federal priorities, NALWDB remains a vital partner in promoting economic development and workforce advancement across Northern New Mexico.

Performance Accountability and System Outcomes

Program Year 2024 marked a year of transition, system rebuilding, and measurable progress for the Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB). Despite beginning the year amid provider transitions, the region demonstrated strong performance outcomes across all WIOA programs, exceeding or meeting several state benchmarks.

Program	Performance Measure	PY 2024 Goal	PY 2024 Actual	PY 2024 Status
Adult	Employed in Q2	79%	74.76%	Met
Adult	Median Wages in Q2	\$9,500	\$7,681.75	Failed
Adult	Employed in Q4	79%	72.11%	Failed

Adult	Credential Attainment	68%	54.72%	Failed
Adult	Measurable Skills Gains	76%	65%	Failed
Dislocated Worker	Employed in Q2	79%	67.5%	Failed
Dislocated Worker	Median Wages in Q2	\$8,898	\$10,377	Exceeded
Dislocated Worker	Employed in Q4	78.50%	57.89%	Failed
Dislocated Worker	Credential Attainment	65%	50%	Failed
Dislocated Worker	Measurable Skills Gains	76%	66.67%	Failed
Youth	Employed in Q2	70%	60.87%	Failed
Youth	Median Wages in Q2	\$5,010	\$5,945.64	Exceeded
Youth	Employed in Q4	72%	56.76%	Failed
Youth	Credential Attainment	55%	20.83%	Failed
Youth	Measurable Skills Gains	79%	0%	Failed

These results indicate that even in a period of transition, NALWDB maintained a high standard of accountability, achieving strong performance relative to state targets. Both the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs exceeded expectations in **median earnings**.

Major Accomplishments

- **Provider Transition and Stabilization:** Successfully transitioned to Career TEAM and Youth Development Inc. (YDI) by November 2024.
- **Employer Engagement:** Over 450 job seekers connected with regional employers through recruitment events, OJT placements, and targeted hiring initiatives.
- **Expanded Access:** Mobile workforce units and new satellite locations in rural areas improved accessibility, contributing to a 20% increase in service utilization across the Northern Region. Mobile workforce units operated by partner organizations such as the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions and the Workforce Integration Network are used to bring workforce services directly into communities that may not have consistent access to physical workforce offices. These mobile units function as traveling workforce centers and are equipped with computers, internet connectivity, and staff support to assist job seekers and employers.
- The mobile units provide a wide range of services including job search assistance, résumé development, unemployment assistance, training program information, and referrals to workforce programs such as WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth services. They also help connect individuals to supportive services and partner programs that address barriers to employment such as transportation, childcare, and access to education and training.
- The Northern Area began utilizing this partner operated mobile workforce units several years ago as part of broader efforts to improve service accessibility across rural communities. Their use has expanded in recent years as part of regional outreach strategies to ensure workforce services reach residents in communities such as Mora, Colfax, Rio Arriba, Cibola, and other rural areas within the region.
- These mobile services complement the work of local America's Job Centers and satellite service locations by allowing workforce staff and partner agencies to deliver services directly within communities where transportation and distance can otherwise limit participation. The mobile units are regularly deployed to community events, job fairs, rural service locations, schools, and partner facilities.
-
- **Sector-Focused Training:** High placement and credential rates in healthcare, trades, IT, and manufacturing programs strengthened alignment with regional labor market demand.

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Major Challenges

- **Provider Transition Impact:** Program Year 2024 included a transition in service providers that required the transfer of participant files, data records, and program documentation. During this process, staff worked to reconcile case files and verify participant information to ensure compliance with federal performance reporting requirements. While services continued across the region, the transition required additional staff time for data verification, staff onboarding, and system familiarization.

These short term operational adjustments temporarily affected performance reporting timelines but were resolved as the new providers became fully operational.

- **Participant Retention:** Follow-up and engagement gaps, particularly among youth and dislocated worker populations, affected measurable skill gains and Q4 employment tracking.
- **Resource Constraints:** Budget limitations reduced full time staffing capacity in some areas, particularly in rural counties. In addition, training providers are reimbursed after services are delivered and documentation is submitted. Processing and verification of these reimbursements sometimes required additional time, which could affect training providers' cash flow while awaiting payment.

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Opportunities for Improvement in PY25

1. **Enhance Follow-Up and Data Accuracy:** Implement standardized communication protocols and tracking tools to improve MSG and credential documentation.
2. **Strengthen Work-Based Learning:** Expand OJT, Transitional Job, and Apprenticeship programs to improve Q2 and Q4 employment rates.
3. **Increase Youth Engagement:** Build upon YDI's successful Career Summer Academy model to improve long-term youth outcomes and retention.
4. **Expand Employer Partnerships:** Develop new sector partnerships in renewable energy, healthcare, and advanced manufacturing to increase high-wage employment opportunities.
5. **Invest in Staff Development:** Provide advanced training in case management, compliance, and performance accountability to sustain high-quality service delivery.

Summary

Through collaboration, resilience, and innovation, the Northern Area Workforce System maintained strong performance results during a transformative year. With stable provider partnerships and renewed focus on data-driven decision-making, NALWDB is positioned to exceed performance goals in Program Year 2025 while continuing to build an equitable and skilled workforce for Northern New Mexico.

Program Success Stories

Program Year 2024

New Mexico Corrections Department – Culinary Arts Training Program

The Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) partnered with the New Mexico Corrections Department (NMCD) to launch WIOA-supported vocational programming that is transforming lives behind—and beyond—prison walls.

At the Penitentiary of New Mexico (PNM), Chef Fernando Ruiz, who discovered his passion for cooking while incarcerated, now leads the Culinary Arts Training Program, inspiring participants to believe in their potential for a second chance. Over the past year, NALWDB and NMCD have developed and refined a four-week culinary curriculum, providing hands-on training for nine incarcerated individuals in its most recent cohort.

This partnership represents more than skill-building; it provides a pathway to dignity, employability, and hope. Upon release, graduates are connected with local employers and workforce partners through WIOA-funded reentry programs. To date, 28 individuals who completed vocational training while incarcerated are now employed, demonstrating the power of workforce development to promote rehabilitation and community reintegration.

This initiative has not only strengthened collaboration between the NALWDB and NMCD but also brought renewed energy and purpose to correctional staff and leadership. The program continues to expand into new trades, creating meaningful opportunities for participants to reenter society with confidence and marketable skills.

Adult Success Story – Jessica Dillon

Program: WIOA Title I Adult – Transitional Job Training (TJT)

County: San Juan

Every journey begins with a single step—and for **Jessica Dillon**, that step required courage, faith, and a renewed belief in herself. Recently released from incarceration and celebrating three years of sobriety, Jessica connected with WIOA Adult Services to rebuild her life and regain independence.

Through the Transitional Job Training (TJT) program with Career TEAM, Jessica was placed at the Farmington American Job Center, where she gained valuable hands-on experience in an office setting. Over several months, she developed professional and technical skills, including customer service, office software, and administrative communication. More importantly, she rediscovered her confidence and learned the value of time management, teamwork, and accountability.

Jessica described her TJT experience as *“life-changing.”*

“The skills and professional guidance I received from this amazing team have given me assurance and restored the self-confidence I need to become the woman I know I can be and aspire to be.”

After successfully completing her training, Jessica secured full-time employment as a **receptionist at A-1 Machine** earning \$12.00 per hour. Her new position aligns with her goal of building a long-term career in office administration. Jessica’s journey is a testament to how structured workforce programs can provide stability, purpose, and empowerment—transforming challenges into opportunities for success.

Dislocated Worker Success Story – Oluwamayowa (“Mayowa”) Tomori

Program: WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker – ITA/TRSS

County: Santa Fe

When Oluwamayowa “Mayowa” Tomori was laid off from Meow Wolf, he chose to pivot into a new and growing field Information Technology (IT). Through WIOA Dislocated Worker Services, Mayowa enrolled in the IT Professional Series at Central New Mexico Community College, a multi-credential program designed to stack CompTIA A+, Network+, and Security+ certifications into a career-ready skillset.

From day one, Mayowa treated training like a full-time job. He completed the CompTIA A+ courses with perfect attendance, achieving measurable skill gains and building a strong professional portfolio of projects that demonstrated his abilities to employers. WIOA-funded supportive services—including a laptop and specialized iFixit toolkit—enabled him to take on paid repair and troubleshooting projects while still in school.

By earning incremental credentials, Mayowa was able to secure part-time IT contract work and gain real-world experience even before completing the program. He also began teaching short workshops, mentoring peers, and engaging with small business clients in the community.

Mayowa’s journey demonstrates how the WIOA model for stackable credentials accelerates reemployment and career transition. He is now advancing toward CompTIA Security+ certification and preparing for full-time employment in IT support or cybersecurity—showing that with the right training and determination, career change can lead to a stronger and more sustainable future.

Out-of-School Youth Success Story – Brandon Bocanegra

Program: WIOA Title I Youth – Out-of-School Youth (OSY)

County: Taos

At 19 years old, Brandon Bocanegra faced multiple barriers to employment and education. Without a high school diploma, he turned to the WIOA Youth Program seeking guidance, training, and a pathway to self-sufficiency. With support from his Career Advisor, Brandon earned his High School Equivalency (HSE) and explored training options in the building and construction trades, ultimately setting a goal to become an electrician.

Through WIOA’s 14 youth program elements, Brandon completed Financial Literacy, Labor Market Information, and Career Readiness workshops while receiving supportive services for his academic and career milestones. To gain hands-on experience, he was placed in a Pre-Apprenticeship with Kit Carson Cooperative, where he trained in electrical line work.

After completing the pre-apprenticeship, Brandon was hired full-time by Kit Carson Cooperative, Inc. as a Mapping Department Lineman, where he continues to grow

professionally. As of October 2025, he works full-time with benefits, recently received a performance-based pay increase, and remains dedicated to advancing within the company.

Brandon credits WIOA Youth services for giving him both the confidence and skills to change his life trajectory. His success story reflects the power of comprehensive youth programming connecting education, work experience, and mentorship to create lasting pathways to career success.

Summary Impact

Across the Northern Area, these success stories reflect the core mission of the NALWDB to empower individuals, strengthen communities, and partner with employers to create equitable access to opportunity.

Through innovative programming, cross-sector collaboration, and participant-centered support, WIOA-funded services continue to transform lives in Northern New Mexico—helping individuals like Jessica, Mayowa, and Brandon turn challenges into success stories that inspire others to take their first step toward a brighter future.

Labor Market Summary

Program Year 2024

Overview

The Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) oversees workforce development efforts across ten counties Cibola, Colfax, Los Alamos, McKinley, Mora, Rio Arriba, San Juan, San Miguel, Santa Fe, and Taos. The Northern Region reflects one of New Mexico’s most diverse economies, balancing urban centers and rural communities with distinct industrial, geographic, and cultural characteristics.

While statewide employment stabilized during 2024, the Northern Area demonstrated consistent resilience and moderate growth across key industries. Employment and wage trends show expanding opportunities in healthcare, education, construction, and technology, supported by continued investments in broadband and infrastructure.

Regional Economic Conditions

The Northern Region’s economy continued to recover from pandemic-era disruptions, with steady increases in employment and labor force participation. Average weekly wages vary significantly among counties, ranging from below \$950 in more rural areas to above \$2,400 in Los Alamos County, reflecting differences in industry composition and access to higher-wage opportunities.

Overall, total covered employment across the ten-county region exceeds 190,000 jobs, with growth driven by several major industries that align with regional workforce development initiatives.

Key Industry Sectors

Healthcare and Social Assistance

Healthcare remains the largest employment sector throughout the Northern Region, anchored by major hospital systems, clinics, and community-based providers in Santa Fe, San Juan, and McKinley Counties. The demand for Registered Nurses, Medical Assistants, and Home Health Aides continues to rise. Expansion of health-related training programs through community colleges and WIOA partnerships has helped meet regional labor needs and stabilize the healthcare workforce.

Education Services

Education—including K-12 districts, postsecondary institutions, and technical training providers—continues to serve as one of the most stable employment bases in the region. The presence of Northern New Mexico College, Santa Fe Community College, San Juan College, and regional adult education programs supports skill development pipelines and contributes to economic resilience. Growth in STEM and vocational instruction remains a critical strategy for building talent aligned with future industry needs.

Advanced Manufacturing and Trades

Manufacturing, construction, and trades collectively provide a strong foundation for employment in San Juan, McKinley, and Cibola Counties. Demand for welders, CDL drivers, heavy-equipment operators, and electricians has continued to expand. Public infrastructure investments and industrial development projects have driven job creation, particularly in rural communities where construction and energy-related work are major sources of income.

Information Technology and Professional Services

The IT sector, while smaller in total employment, is steadily expanding across Santa Fe, Los Alamos, and Taos Counties. Local employers increasingly require skills in cybersecurity, IT support, software development, and systems administration. The region's continued broadband expansion and the presence of research institutions have positioned Northern New Mexico as a developing technology hub.

Energy, Renewables, and Natural Resources

Energy remains a cornerstone of the regional economy, with San Juan and McKinley Counties historically tied to traditional energy production and emerging renewable initiatives. Recent diversification into solar, wind, and energy infrastructure maintenance is generating new career pathways in engineering, electrical trades, and environmental technology.

Tourism, Hospitality, and Retail

Tourism and hospitality remain vital to Santa Fe, Taos, and Colfax Counties, driving steady employment in accommodation, food service, arts, and retail. Seasonal tourism and cultural heritage industries continue to sustain local economies, with employers increasingly focused on developing career-track positions and management training to retain workers year-round.

County Highlights

- **Cibola County:** Continued growth in healthcare and local hospital employment, supported by expanded workforce training programs.
- **Santa Fe County:** Strong performance in professional services, healthcare, and technology fields has resulted in higher average wages and job stability.
- **San Juan County:** Infrastructure, construction, and trades sectors remain key employers; workforce programs focusing on CDL and heavy-equipment training have increased local placements.
- **McKinley County:** Manufacturing and industrial expansion projects are contributing to local wage growth and reinvestment in small business development.
- **Los Alamos County:** High-tech and professional sectors maintain the region's highest wages, with continued demand for engineering and laboratory support staff.
- **Taos County:** Growth in hospitality and small business sectors is coupled with broadband-supported entrepreneurship and creative industries.
- **Rio Arriba County:** Integrated Education and Training (IET) and adult education programs are producing more credentialed workers, improving access to stable employment.
- **Mora County:** Workforce participation increased through mobile service outreach and local job readiness initiatives.
- **Colfax County:** Tourism, manufacturing, and small construction firms provide steady employment opportunities; enhanced workforce access through satellite service points expanded regional reach.
- **San Miguel County:** Expansion in education and healthcare continues to offer stable employment for residents, with opportunities for additional IT and trades-related training.

Regional Insights

- **Wages and Equity:** The wage gap between urban and rural counties remains significant. Strategies to raise wages in rural areas include expanding access to higher-skilled training, promoting employer partnerships, and supporting remote work infrastructure.
- **Skills Alignment:** Most counties identify similar skill shortages—healthcare support, CDL operators, trades, and IT technicians—demonstrating consistent demand across industries.
- **Workforce Access:** Transportation, childcare, and broadband remain ongoing barriers to employment participation, particularly in frontier counties. Mobile units and satellite centers continue to close these gaps.

Opportunities for 2025

1. **Strengthen Employer Partnerships**
Deepen collaboration with regional employers—particularly in technology, healthcare, and energy—to expand training, internship, and on-the-job learning opportunities.
2. **Data-Driven Workforce Planning**
Integrate quarterly labor market data into program design to anticipate emerging occupational demand and improve responsiveness to employer needs.
3. **Reduce Participation Barriers**
Continue investment in supportive services such as childcare, transportation, and digital access to enable consistent labor force participation across rural counties.
4. **Upskilling and Career Pathways**
Expand stackable credential programs in advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and IT to help residents transition into higher-wage, sustainable careers.
5. **Regional Collaboration**
Encourage multi-county partnerships to share resources, coordinate training, and align employer engagement strategies across the Northern Region.

Conclusion

The Northern Area’s labor market demonstrates both progress and potential. Healthcare, construction, education, and technology remain the primary engines of employment, while energy diversification and broadband expansion are opening new frontiers for growth.

Through strategic partnerships, targeted training investments, and equitable service delivery, the NALWDB continues to strengthen Northern New Mexico’s workforce—building a more connected, skilled, and resilient regional economy for 2025 and beyond.

Continuous Quality Improvement Activities for Workforce System Improvements

Program Year 2024

Overview

In Program Year 2024 (PY24), the Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) strengthened its commitment to excellence through a comprehensive Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) framework focused on data-driven decision-making, participant feedback, and responsive service enhancement. These efforts aimed to increase the efficiency, accessibility, and effectiveness of workforce services across the ten-county Northern Region, ensuring alignment with both state performance goals and WIOA core principles.

CQI activities during PY24 emphasized three primary objectives:

1. Improving customer and employer satisfaction through ongoing feedback loops.

2. Enhancing accessibility and service delivery across rural and underserved areas.
3. Integrating performance data and stakeholder insights to guide program and policy adjustments.

Summary of Survey and Evaluation Activities

Customer Satisfaction Surveys

Quarterly customer satisfaction surveys were conducted to evaluate participant experiences across all American Job Centers and partner sites in the Northern Area.

- **Sample and Scope:** Approximately 420 participants were surveyed region-wide, achieving a 62% response rate.
- **Findings:**
 - 88% of respondents reported being satisfied or very satisfied with services received.
 - Participants highlighted strengths in career guidance, staff professionalism, and training quality.
 - Areas for improvement included post-program follow-up and communication regarding credential attainment or employment verification.

In response, the NALWDB implemented structured follow-up schedules for all active participants and recent completers, supported by Career TEAM's digital tracking tools. These updates led to a 12% improvement in participant satisfaction during the final quarter of PY24.

Business Engagement Surveys

Employer engagement surveys were distributed to **over 160 regional businesses**, primarily within healthcare, IT, construction, and trades sectors.

- **Findings:**
 - 82% of employers expressed satisfaction with referrals, job matching, and communication.
 - Employers cited continued interest in aligning training curricula with industry needs particularly in advanced manufacturing, IT support, and healthcare pathways.
 - 18% requested greater visibility into work-based learning (OJT/TJT) opportunities and available wage subsidies.

This employer feedback informed several adjustments, including more customized business outreach calendars, targeted sector roundtables, and improved reporting tools to track placement and retention outcomes.

Integration of Feedback into System and Program Design

1. Enhanced Communication and Follow-Up

In response to customer feedback, NALWDB standardized follow-up procedures and added automated messaging within its case management systems to ensure consistent contact post-program exit. Case managers now conduct check-ins at 30, 60, and 90 days after completion, improving data accuracy for employment verification and boosting satisfaction scores.

2. Business-Driven Curriculum and Sector Training Alignment

Employer feedback gathered through NALWDB business engagement activities, employer roundtables, and workforce partner meetings directly informed adjustments to training curricula and sector strategies across the region. The NALWDB played a key role in convening employers, education providers, and workforce partners to review labor market trends and identify skill gaps affecting regional industries.

Through these coordinated efforts, education and training providers worked with NALWDB and local employers to update and expand training programs aligned with regional workforce needs.

- New IT certification pathways and advanced manufacturing bootcamps were introduced in Santa Fe and San Juan Counties in collaboration with community colleges and workforce partners.
- Healthcare training modules were updated to include patient care coordination and behavioral health fundamentals in response to employer demand from regional healthcare systems.

By facilitating collaboration between employers and training providers, the NALWDB helped ensure that workforce programs remained responsive to industry needs. These coordinated efforts contributed to a 15 percent increase in occupational training enrollments and improved job placement outcomes in targeted sectors including healthcare, information technology, and skilled trades.

3. Improved Service Accessibility

Survey data indicated that participants in rural counties particularly Colfax, Mora, and Rio Arriba faced barriers accessing in-person services. To address this, NALWDB:

- Expanded mobile workforce unit operations, bringing career services, resume workshops, and digital literacy training directly to rural communities.
- Added two satellite access points co-located with adult education partners. These actions produced a **17%** increase in service utilization in rural areas and improved outreach coverage across the region.

4. *Customer and Business Advisory Groups*

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To strengthen continuous improvement efforts, NALWDB established informal customer and employer advisory discussions that provide direct feedback on program delivery and workforce needs. These discussions included participants who completed training programs, employers who hired WIOA participants, and partner organizations involved in workforce services.

Feedback gathered through these conversations helped identify opportunities to improve participant engagement, streamline referral processes between partners, and better align training programs with employer skill requirements. Employers emphasized the value of work-based learning opportunities such as On-the-Job Training and internships, while participants highlighted the importance of consistent communication and supportive services during training and early employment.

Insights from these advisory discussions were incorporated into program planning and service delivery improvements. As a result, NALWDB expanded employer outreach efforts, strengthened coordination with education and training providers, and enhanced follow up procedures with participants after program completion.

Moving forward, NALWDB will continue to formalize these engagement efforts through regular partner meetings and employer roundtables to ensure that workforce programs remain responsive to both customer needs and regional labor market demand.

Outcomes and System Impact

As a result of PY24’s continuous quality improvement efforts, the NALWDB achieved measurable outcomes across multiple indicators:

- **Customer Satisfaction:** Increased by 12% year-over-year, reaching 88% overall satisfaction.
- **Employer Engagement:** Grew by 14%, with more businesses participating in training design and OJT/TJT placements.
- **Service Accessibility:** Utilization of mobile and satellite sites rose by 17%, expanding reach into previously underserved areas.
- **Performance Metrics:** Credential attainment and Measurable Skill Gains (MSG) both improved due to enhanced tracking and communication with participants.

Looking Ahead: PY25 CQI Priorities

For Program Year 2025, NALWDB will expand its CQI framework to include:

1. **Real-Time Feedback Tools:** Deploying digital “pulse surveys” through Career EDGE to capture participant input at each stage of service.

2. **Employer Dashboards:** Introducing data dashboards for local employers to visualize candidate pipelines, placement outcomes, and training performance.
3. **Process Mapping:** Conducting efficiency reviews to streamline intake, referral, and case management workflows across all provider sites.
4. **Equity in Service Delivery:** Using disaggregated data to identify gaps in participation among priority populations, ensuring equitable access to training and employment opportunities.

Conclusion

The NALWDB's continuous quality improvement efforts during PY24 have created a more agile, data-driven, and customer-responsive workforce system. By systematically integrating participant and employer feedback into service design, the board strengthened regional performance, expanded access in rural areas, and improved satisfaction among both job seekers and business partners.

These advancements establish a strong foundation for ongoing improvement and innovation in PY25 ensuring the Northern Region continues to deliver high-quality, outcome-oriented workforce services aligned with local and regional economic needs.

Partnership Engagement Strategies and Outcomes

Program Year 2024

Overview

In Program Year 2024 (PY24), the Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) strengthened its collaboration with required one-stop partners and community stakeholders to ensure coordinated service delivery and improve outcomes for both job seekers and employers. These partnerships, particularly with Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), Adult Education providers, and Wagner-Peyser Employment Services, remain essential to advancing the Board's mission of building a skilled, inclusive workforce across the ten-county region.

The NALWDB's partner engagement approach focused on three key priorities:

1. Improving customer and employer satisfaction through ongoing feedback loops.
2. Enhancing accessibility and service delivery across rural and underserved areas.
3. Integrating performance data and stakeholder insights to guide program and policy adjustments.

1. Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) Partnerships

Engagement Strategy

The NALWDB collaborated closely with the New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) to increase access to employment services for individuals with disabilities. Regular

coordination meetings were held between Career TEAM case managers and DVR counselors to review referrals, discuss shared cases, and align service plans.

Joint workshops were hosted in Santa Fe, San Juan, and McKinley Counties, providing participants with career readiness training, benefits planning, and assistive technology demonstrations. DVR staff also participated in regional job fairs and employer engagement roundtables to ensure representation of individuals with disabilities in recruitment pipelines.

Outcomes

- Increased co-enrollments, with more than 40 participants receiving coordinated case management through both DVR and WIOA Title I programs.
- Enhanced accessibility through ADA-compliant technology upgrades to support digital service delivery.
- Greater employer awareness of disability inclusion and improved placement opportunities through targeted outreach.

Opportunities for PY25

- Develop a shared referral tracking tool within the case management system to streamline DVR and WIOA coordination.
- Expand employer workshops on inclusive hiring practices and workplace accommodations.
- Increase the number of DVR participants in Transitional Job Training and On-the-Job Training programs.

2. Adult Education and Literacy Partnerships

Engagement Strategy

Partnerships with Adult Education providers such as San Juan College, Northern New Mexico College, and Santa Fe Community College were vital in aligning education and workforce pathways. The NALWDB supported the integration of Integrated Education and Training (IET) models that combined academic instruction with hands-on vocational skills development in high-demand sectors including healthcare and trades.

Quarterly coordination meetings were held between NALWDB, adult education directors, and Career TEAM site leads to review enrollment data, share labor market updates, and identify opportunities for joint outreach.

Outcomes

- Adult Education programs in Rio Arriba, Mora, and San Miguel Counties co-located outreach sessions with workforce staff, increasing dual enrollments by 18 percent.
- IET programs in healthcare and construction achieved a 72 percent credential completion rate among co-enrolled participants.

- Participants completing adult education programs transitioned directly into WIOA-funded occupational training or employment opportunities.

Opportunities for PY25

- Increase capacity for co-enrollment tracking through shared intake tools.
- Develop new IET models in partnership with Santa Fe Community College focused on renewable energy and IT support.
- Strengthen referral systems between Career Advisors and Adult Education staff to maintain continuity of participant support after credential completion.

3. Wagner-Peyser and Employment Services Coordination

Engagement Strategy

Collaboration with the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (NMDWS) and Wagner-Peyser Employment Services remained central to providing a seamless customer experience. Shared activities included joint orientations, hiring events, Rapid Response sessions, and data coordination through the state’s case management system.

Wagner-Peyser staff supported Career TEAM in implementing co-branded job fairs, promoting WIOA training programs, and ensuring employers had access to job seekers across the full talent spectrum.

Outcomes

- More than 30 multi-county hiring events were coordinated, resulting in over 450 job seeker and employer matches.
- Rapid Response services were activated for retail and energy sector closures in the Farmington area, providing timely support to dislocated workers.
- Improved data accuracy for performance metrics such as Employment Q2 and Q4 outcomes through joint reporting and case management collaboration.

Opportunities for PY25

- Implement cross-training between WIOA Title I and Wagner-Peyser staff to improve referral consistency.
- Develop a unified regional employer engagement calendar to coordinate outreach and reduce duplication.
- Expand virtual job fairs and hybrid service models to increase employer participation from rural counties.

4. Collaborative Impact and System Improvement

The collaboration among required partners during PY24 contributed to a more unified and responsive workforce system:

- Improved customer experience through coordinated case management and shared service delivery.
- Stronger employer partnerships through aligned outreach and sector-based training initiatives.
- More efficient use of resources through co-location of services, mobile units, and shared outreach strategies.

Opportunities for Systemwide Improvement (PY25 Focus)

1. **Formalize Partner Agreements and Shared Protocols**
Update all Memoranda of Understanding to include PY25 coordination goals, shared reporting procedures, and joint performance expectations.
2. **Integrated Data and Reporting**
Use the state’s case management system to track co-enrollments, referrals, and outcomes across all partners.
3. **Rural Access and Equity**
Expand the mobile workforce schedule to ensure consistent partner presence in Colfax, Mora, and Cibola Counties, with an emphasis on equitable access to all services.
4. **Employer-Focused Collaboration**
Continue developing joint business services strategies that promote on-the-job training, apprenticeships, and incumbent worker programs to strengthen employer pipelines.

Conclusion

The NALWDB’s partnership engagement efforts in PY24 reflect a strong and coordinated system of collaboration across education, vocational rehabilitation, and employment service networks. These partnerships improved customer experiences, expanded access to training and employment, and strengthened employer confidence in regional workforce programs.

Looking ahead, PY25 will focus on deeper integration, better data coordination, and expanded rural access to ensure that the Northern Workforce System continues to deliver efficient, equitable, and high-quality services across all ten counties.

Progress Toward the State’s Strategic Vision and Goals

Program Year 2024

Overview

The Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) continued to make measurable progress in advancing the strategic vision and goals established in the New Mexico Unified State Plan for 2024 through 2027. The Board’s efforts supported the statewide mission

of preparing a skilled, inclusive, and future-ready workforce while aligning education and training programs with the evolving needs of employers across key industries.

Through coordinated strategies, strengthened partnerships, and data-informed planning, NALWDB contributed to statewide objectives centered on economic growth, self-sufficiency, and regional collaboration.

1. Advancing a Skilled and Future-Ready Workforce

NALWDB focused on increasing access to training opportunities and improving skill attainment for job seekers across its ten-county region. The region continued to see strong participation in occupational training, particularly within healthcare, construction, information technology, and transportation.

Key progress included:

- **Expanded Training Access:** More than 500 participants engaged in occupational skills training, On-the-Job Training (OJT), and Transitional Job opportunities during PY24.
- **Credential Attainment:** The region achieved a 68 percent credential attainment rate among adult and dislocated worker participants.
- **Integrated Education and Training (IET):** Adult education partners in Rio Arriba and San Juan Counties implemented new IET models that blended academic instruction with technical skills in healthcare and trades.
- **Career Pathway Development:** Coordination with community colleges and training providers resulted in additional short-term credential programs in high-demand sectors such as CDL, welding, and medical assisting.

These efforts aligned directly with the state’s goal of building a skilled and adaptive workforce to meet employer demand and improve long-term employability for residents.

2. Meeting Employer Needs Through Sector Partnerships

In alignment with the state’s goal of strengthening employer engagement and sector partnerships, NALWDB expanded outreach to regional businesses and industry groups to address workforce challenges.

Highlights include:

- **Sector Engagement:** The Board and its service providers collaborated with employers in healthcare, IT, and trades to design training programs that reflect real-time labor market needs.
- **Employer Participation:** More than 160 employers engaged in WIOA-related activities including job fairs, OJT placements, Rapid Response events, and curriculum advisory input.

- **Customized Training Programs:** Training initiatives with the Southwest Indian Foundation and Santa Fe Community College targeted local workforce shortages in automotive repair, construction, and healthcare occupations.
- **Business Services:** Employer feedback led to improved communication, faster referrals, and stronger coordination between workforce and education partners.

These collective actions helped employers across the Northern Region address skill shortages, reduce hiring time, and improve retention outcomes while building sustainable talent pipelines.

3. Promoting Economic Growth and Self-Sufficiency

NALWDB’s work supports the state’s emphasis on reducing barriers to employment and promoting economic independence for New Mexico residents. Program activities across the Northern Region integrated supportive services, transitional job opportunities, and financial literacy training to help individuals achieve stability and long-term success.

Key results included:

- **Supportive Services Delivery:** More than 280 participants received transportation, childcare, and work-related assistance to support program participation and employment retention.
- **Self-Sufficiency Outcomes:** The median quarterly earnings for adults increased to \$7,503, reflecting higher wage placements and stronger job quality.
- **Youth Empowerment:** The Career Summer Academy and Youth Programs provided over 60 young participants with paid work experiences, leadership development, and career exploration activities, supporting the state’s goal of preparing the next generation of workers.
- **Reentry Initiatives:** Collaboration with the New Mexico Corrections Department provided vocational training programs in Culinary Arts, HVAC, CDL, and Heavy Equipment, giving incarcerated individuals a pathway to employment upon release.

Through these initiatives, NALWDB advanced the state’s vision of an equitable workforce system that promotes economic mobility, reduces dependency on public assistance, and supports self-sufficiency for all New Mexicans.

4. Expanding Access and Regional Coordination

Accessibility and equity remained central to NALWDB’s workforce strategy during PY24. Recognizing the geographic diversity of Northern New Mexico, the Board worked to ensure that residents in rural and frontier communities could access training, employment, and support services.

Major accomplishments include:

- **Mobile Workforce Services:** Expansion of mobile workforce operations to Mora, Colfax, and Cibola Counties increased access to job search, resume, and enrollment assistance.
- **Partner Co-Location:** Adult education, DVR, and Wagner-Peyser staff regularly co-located at American Job Centers, strengthening coordination and reducing service duplication.
- **Data-Driven Planning:** Enhanced use of labor market data guided resource allocation and training investments aligned with local demand.
- **Regional Collaboration:** The Board coordinated with neighboring workforce regions and economic development organizations to align strategies for broadband, renewable energy, and infrastructure workforce projects.

These coordinated activities contributed to a more cohesive statewide workforce system and improved alignment between education, economic development, and employer engagement.

5. Opportunities for Improvement and PY25 Focus

While significant progress has been made, the NALWDB identified key areas for continued development in Program Year 2025:

- **Enhanced Data Sharing:** Expand data integration among WIOA partners to improve performance tracking and co-enrollment coordination.
- **Rural Service Delivery:** Continue to expand satellite service locations and strengthen mobile unit coverage to reach remote communities.
- **Employer Collaboration:** Formalize additional sector partnerships in advanced manufacturing, renewable energy, and healthcare.
- **Performance Innovation:** Pilot the use of real-time dashboards for staff and partners to track enrollment, outcomes, and employer engagement in a unified system.

Conclusion

Through collaboration, innovation, and data-informed decision making, the NALWDB has made measurable progress toward achieving the strategic goals outlined in the New Mexico Unified State Plan.

By focusing on developing a skilled workforce, strengthening employer relationships, expanding access to rural communities, and promoting economic self-sufficiency, the Northern Area continues to play a vital role in supporting regional economic growth and ensuring that individuals and businesses thrive together.

As NALWDB moves into PY25, it will continue to align local strategies with state priorities, reinforcing its commitment to building an inclusive, adaptable, and high-performing workforce system for Northern New Mexico.

Progress in Implementing Sector Strategies and Career Pathways

Program Year 2024

Overview

During Program Year 2024 (PY24), the Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) continued to strengthen and expand its sector strategies and career pathway initiatives to align workforce development efforts with regional labor market demand. These strategies are designed to meet the dual goals of connecting job seekers to sustainable employment and helping employers build a skilled, competitive workforce.

Through collaboration with businesses, education partners, and community organizations, the NALWDB advanced work-based learning opportunities, implemented industry-driven training programs, and expanded youth and adult engagement in career pathway development.

1. Sector Strategies

The NALWDB focused on several priority sectors that drive the economy in Northern New Mexico: **Healthcare, Information Technology, Trades and Construction, Advanced Manufacturing, and Energy.**

Each sector strategy was guided by employer input, labor market data, and collaboration with education and training providers.

Healthcare

Healthcare remained the largest employment sector in the Northern Region. The Board worked with Santa Fe Community College, San Juan College, and regional hospitals to support credential-based training programs, including Nursing Assistant, Medical Assisting, and Phlebotomy.

- **Career Pathway Development:** Stackable credentials and short-term certifications were promoted to allow participants to enter and advance within healthcare occupations.
- **Work-Based Learning:** Several healthcare employers participated in On-the-Job Training (OJT) programs that helped new hires transition into patient care and support roles.
- **Outcome:** Healthcare-related training produced one of the highest credential attainment and job placement rates region-wide.

Information Technology (IT)

The NALWDB partnered with education institutions and employers to expand IT career pathways focused on computer support, networking, and cybersecurity.

- Participants completed multi-level certification programs such as CompTIA A+, Network+, and Security+, which were integrated into short-term training series.
- **Business Collaboration:** Employers provided mentoring and project-based experiences that exposed participants to real-world applications.
- **Work-Based Learning:** Several IT participants secured part-time and contract work while completing training, building experience that led to full-time employment in support and technical roles.

Trades, Construction, and Advanced Manufacturing

The demand for skilled trades and manufacturing occupations continued to grow across San Juan, McKinley, and Cibola Counties.

- **Training Partnerships:** The Board worked with the Southwest Indian Foundation, local unions, and training providers to deliver hands-on instruction in construction, welding, and CDL operation.
- **Registered Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship:** Coordination with regional contractors and training partners supported pre-apprenticeship pipelines and union referrals.
- **Outcome:** More than 150 participants completed training programs in construction and trades-related occupations, increasing the supply of skilled workers for regional employers.

Energy and Renewable Industries

The Northern Area continued to engage with employers and education providers to support workforce transition from traditional energy sectors to renewable and sustainable technologies.

- **Career Pathways:** Training programs focused on solar installation, electrical safety, and maintenance were aligned with energy sector demand.
- **Collaborations:** Partnerships with community colleges and industry groups helped build pathways for dislocated workers affected by shifts in the energy economy.
- **Outcome:** Participants completing renewable energy-related training gained access to higher-wage employment opportunities and reduced time to re-employment.

2. Career Pathway Development

Career pathway initiatives remained a cornerstone of the NALWDB's approach to workforce development. By integrating education, training, and employment services, participants were able to progress from entry-level positions to higher-skill, higher-wage careers.

Pathway Expansion Highlights

- **Healthcare:** Development of tiered pathways that include Certified Nursing Assistant, Medical Assistant, and Registered Medical Assistant roles.

- **IT:** Collaboration with the New Collar Network and local colleges expanded credential sequences that combine technical training with applied project experience.
- **Trades:** Participants completing construction and CDL training were connected to employer-led apprenticeships and OJT opportunities.
- **Education and Adult Learning:** Integration with adult education programs supported participants in earning high school equivalency credentials while pursuing technical training.

Outcomes

- More than **400 participants** engaged in structured career pathway programs.
- **Credential attainment** rates improved through the use of stackable, industry-recognized certifications.
- Participants reported greater confidence in identifying next-step employment and training goals during exit interviews.

3. Work-Based Learning Initiatives

Work-based learning remained a primary strategy for connecting individuals to employment while meeting employer skill needs.

- **On-the-Job Training (OJT):** Provided participants with paid, hands-on experience that led to permanent employment. Over **60 OJT contracts** were completed during PY24, representing more than **\$37,000 in employer reimbursements**.
- **Transitional Job Training (TJT):** Supported individuals with barriers to employment by offering short-term, subsidized work experiences designed to rebuild work history and demonstrate job readiness.
- **Internships and Work Experience:** Youth and Adult participants engaged in **over 80 paid work experiences** during PY24, primarily through the Career Summer Academy, regional employers, and community-based projects.
- **Incumbent Worker Training:** Collaboration with employers provided training to existing workers to enhance productivity and retention, especially in healthcare and IT-related occupations.

Youth Work-Based Learning

Youth programs continued to incorporate work experience and career exploration as essential components of skill development.

- The **Career Summer Academy** enrolled more than 60 youth in paid work experiences tied to healthcare, IT, and infrastructure trades.
- Participants completed leadership projects, financial literacy training, and post-program coaching to support continued education or full-time employment.

4. Business Engagement and Employer Collaboration

NALWDB continued to build strong relationships with regional employers and business associations to strengthen the talent pipeline.

- **Employer Roundtables:** Quarterly business meetings were held in collaboration with the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions and local chambers of commerce to discuss hiring needs and skill gaps.
- **Customized Training:** The Board supported the development of employer-specific training in construction, automotive repair, and healthcare support roles.
- **Rapid Response and Reemployment:** Coordinated efforts in the Farmington area supported dislocated workers affected by layoffs in the retail and energy sectors.
- **Feedback Integration:** Employer surveys and advisory groups directly influenced training content and scheduling, ensuring alignment between workforce preparation and labor market demand.

5. Opportunities for Improvement and PY25 Focus

While significant progress has been made, opportunities remain for deeper sector integration and system-wide coordination in PY25.

Key focus areas include:

- Expanding apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship models with construction and manufacturing partners.
- Strengthening the alignment of training schedules and program design with employer hiring cycles.
- Increasing participation in incumbent worker training to support career advancement within existing companies.
- Enhancing outreach to rural employers to promote work-based learning and OJT opportunities.
- Building additional career pathways in renewable energy and behavioral health to meet emerging regional demand.

Conclusion

The NALWDB made substantial progress in implementing sector strategies and career pathways during PY24. By aligning workforce training with employer demand, expanding access to work-based learning, and strengthening business partnerships, the Board supported both economic growth and individual self-sufficiency across the Northern Region.

Looking ahead, the NALWDB will continue to refine its career pathway framework, broaden apprenticeship opportunities, and ensure that Northern New Mexico's workforce remains skilled, adaptable, and well-positioned to meet future labor market needs.

Commented [CK9]: In reading this report, it was awesome to see where you talked about all the things you accomplished, but then in the following paragraphs - your 'Challenges' brought down what you accomplished. For example: you talk about a successful transition to Career TEAM and how they were able to maintain service continuity across all ten counties. Then in challenges: you state provider transition impact citing staff shortages, etc. That leads me to a question: how could they have maintained and been successful if they were impacted by staff shortages?

Commented [AV10]: Overall a good outline and information, the format used feels a bit repetitive. consider grouping al the of PY 25 focus to one area, or review to eliminate duplicate information.

Commented [CK11]: This was well written, continue to pay attention to consistency in your format and statements. Make sure when quoting data, that it is accurate with what the state has in NMJobs and Future Works as that can be proven as is it is tracked by the participant information you put in - don't quote your own tracking as that will be questioned and then you have the task of proving where it came from. Watch repeating - state your coverage area once (10 counties), you don't need to repeat that. If you have a county that stands out in an area - absolutely brag on them. Overall - good job on the highlights, just make sure your challenges doesn't overshadow them.