

**HAWAII COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD UPDATE REPORT
TO THE STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL BOARD MEETING**

Thursday, November 18, 2021

Please share strategies and plans to increase traffic flow into the American Job Center and online delivery of services.

- *We are currently holding meetings via Zoom and attending community events to get the word out.*
- *We are engaging employers to provide workshops and special hiring events via Zoom so we can advertise them and have attendees come to the American Job Center to attend if they do not have broadband or equipment.*
- *We are working on getting a website specific for the American Job Center and using the existing Facebook page for announcements and upcoming events, hours, programs, partners, etc. We continue to work with partners to get the AJC content and links onto their websites.*
- *We generate press releases for events the AJC and its Partners are hosting and services available for job seekers and employers alike.*
- *The WIOA service provider has created fillable enrollment documents so that they can be sent out to the clients, and they are setting up appointments to meet with potential or enroll clientele, assist with career services and enroll them into training.*
- *We are working with Kaala Souza on digital literacy to bring in a teacher to American Job Center to provide classes after regular Resource Room hours and/or on Saturdays.*
- *We have purchased two Zoom licenses: one for the Workforce Development Board and one for Rapid Response/Business Engagement to work with employers and job seekers. We assist with HireNet Hawaii remote technical support for UI claimants.*
- *The Partner programs also have Zoom licenses to serve their clients remotely and direct them to the AJC for additional services.*
- *We are collaborating with the new Financial Empowerment Centers (FEC) that are on the island to provide referrals from the FEC to the AJC and vice versa.*
- *We put business cards with location and contact information plus the HireNet Hawai'i URL at the UI and TANF offices. We are also giving them to partners for them to hand out to their clientele.*
- *We are working with the local employment agencies to assist in getting their employees upskilled, provide career services and soft skills.*

- *We continue to collaborate with the County of Hawai'i's Research and Development department on businesses coming to the island to conduct work.*
- *We promote and offer Flexjob licenses as an employment solution to those inquiring about remote work. We used to do the same for Remote Ready, but they have fulfilled their quota of available jobs.*
- *We promote On the Job Training opportunities through the programs available at the AJC.*
- *Our signs at the AJC are more inviting – they read Open by appointment and for remote assistance please call.... and we look open – even though it is by appointment only. We are anticipating opening to the public on a regular basis rather than by appointment only.*
- *We encourage our eligible training providers to send their students to the AJC if they have tuition issues or need support services.*
- *We assist everyone who comes to the AJC – if they are unable to meet the COVID-19 protocols we will work with them outside of the office. NO one coming to the AJC is turned away.*
- *We continue to promote opportunities for incumbent workers to gain skills for promotions within the company or to seek employment outside the company.*
- *We are working with Unite Hawai'i to create a referral system for the AJC network that provides the opportunity for reporting what happens to the referrals.*
- *We continue to attend webinars and symposiums on best practices in a virtual world.*
- *We are working on a survey to find out where the labor force lives on the Big Island so that we can get to them and offer services.*
- *We continue to look for mobile outreach opportunities and additional funding sources*

The Hawaii County WDB received federal funds through the State Workforce for the COVID-19 disaster recovery and COVID-19 employment recovery grants. Please explain plans to increase performance and meet participant enrollment targets for each grant.

- *The service provider has hired a case manager that is dedicated to the specific grants so they are working on outreach and enrollment to help meet the enrollment targets for each grant.*
- *We are attending Emergency Broadband Benefit events for outreach in remote areas as the clientele that is eligible to receive the benefits also would be eligible for the COVID-19 employment and disaster recovery grants.*

- *We are trying to get additional information from the State of Hawaii regarding UI recipients that were receiving benefits for the lay-off/termination or reduction in hours due to COVID-19 to let them know they are eligible for programs and services offered at the American Job Center.*
- *We are looking for additional outreach opportunities to support those that have lost their employment due to COVID-19.*
- *We are also working with the County of Hawaii Kilauea Disaster Recovery grant folks to let them know that we have funding and opportunities for those that would qualify. We've provided them with the details for their assistance and what the eligibility requirements are for the grant. This includes but is not limited to outreach opportunities, social media campaigns, training the grant staff to help make referrals to the COVID-19 disaster recovery and employment grants.*
- *We are also looking for clarification from the state as to the roles and responsibilities of the Program Coordinator – as the referrals we are receiving have not been viable based on the requirements of the COVID-19 disaster recovery grant. We continue to work with HI Employment's Program Coordinator for access to additional worksites for placement.*
- *We continually look for ways to get this information out to the public, via websites, social media and press releases that there is funding and work available for those that were affected by COVID-19 furloughs/terminations/reduction of hours.*

What is the status of the Request for Proposals (RFP) to contract the One-Stop Operator? Please include timeline.

The proposal is in the final stages of being crafted. The Request for the One-Stop Operator Proposal is scheduled to be released after the first of the year mid-January. That is dependent upon when WIOA can physically move out of the Office of Housing and Community Development Department and over to Research and Development to avoid any actual or perceived conflicts in the RFP process.

Has the Hawaii County WDB conducted monitoring of its Eligible Training Providers (ETP) and Service Providers? Please include monitoring schedule.

Monitoring of the ETP was conducted by EDSI. Hawai'i County has not been privy to the initial review and reporting nor have we been provided a final report.

We have not scheduled any additional monitoring of the ETP as we have not received the final reports from EDSI to know where the ETPs are lacking or what we should be requesting to review.

We are also requesting Technical Assistance in the monitoring of ETPs as this is a function that we have not performed in the past. And this year is the first year its been required as the State of Hawai'i had a waiver to postpone the monitoring of the ETPs. Once we receive the final report from the contractor the State hired, technical training that prepares us on how and what to review with the ETP will create a schedule for monitoring.

The WDB conducted and review participant files for eligibility and monitoring of the Service Providers for PY 20 in April 2021. The next monitoring for the first 2 quarters of PY21 is slated for mid-December.

We are using the Data Validation report as a guideline to continue the quarterly reviews of DV elements as required by the U.S. DOL Training and Education Guidance Letter 23-19 State Bulletin 29-19 Change 1.

We are also requesting Data Validation Training (Technical Assistance) as our Service Provider is new and this was their first-time experiencing data validation. Previously, Data Validation elements were still being based on the Workforce Investment Act requirements. We have a request to include definitions of certain documents and expectations set for data validation review and monitoring.

NOTE: Data Validation was performed previously with Workforce Investment Act elements. The last two years were WIOA elements but completed at the state level.

Please explain what efforts are underway and/or planned to increase dual enrollment of WIOA Title 1 programs with other eligible programs.

Hawai'i County discusses the program referrals at each of the AJC Partner meetings. WIOA provides referrals to other AJC network partners for co-enrollments.

We depend on our partners to work with us if they have enrolled someone into their program and then offer up the referral to the Title I program. RESEA is working on getting WIOA information into their classes and Wagner Peyser usually refers folks that come into the AJC for assistance to the program.

We screen everyone coming into the AJC to see which programs referred them to the AJC and we also require everyone to create a HireNet account for ease of use when enrolling program participants.

DVR, SNAP/TANF and UI send their participants to the program. Participant in their programs is usually a barrier or a qualifier for the Title I program participants.

We are working with the AJC Partners to enroll in Unite Hawai'i's referral system to assist with referrals, tracking and status.

Employers are seeking qualified workers to sustain their businesses. What strategies, plans and activities has/will the WDB and AJC undertake to increase employer outreach and engagement?

We held a virtual fair and will continue to hold additional virtual fairs as we assist employers with their workforce needs. We continue to rely on the businesses to be the experts and we are here to assist and facilitate as needed. As soon as we get the okay we will be back to "in person" job fairs and in the meantime we continue to look at hybrid opportunities.

We are engaging businesses to provide AJC Workshop Wednesdays where they can talk about what they look for while reviewing resumes, what happens in the interviewing

The Governor’s vision for the State includes supporting a diversified economy with a focus on digital access and equity. The pandemic highlighted the digital divide in Hawaii. Please explain efforts, activities and plans to increase digital literacy and career services.

We were working with Kaala Souza to bring in a digital literacy instructor in house –prior to the increase in delta variant COVID-19 cases, but was put on hold due to the limitation of number of people that could be served and restrictions of entry. We are trying to resume the process, but need to understand the state

We are attending Emergency Broadband Benefit events for outreach in remote areas as the clientele that is eligible to receive the benefits and enroll them into programs that can provide support for digital literacy courses and career services as needed.

Please share accomplishments and success stories of the WDB and American Job Center.

The American Job Center is following the Governor’s 21st Emergency Proclamation, Hawai’i County Mayor’s Emergency Proclamation 18, and the CDC guidelines to allow for appointments, time limits and verifying vaccination or negative COVID tests. For those folks that cannot provide verification we still continue to provide services so that anyone showing up at the American Job Center will receive services even if it means meeting with them outside thanks to Wagner Peyser and AJC staff.



The American Job Center is working with the Bi-literacy program through UH Manoa. The Big Island participants tests will be proctored at the American Job Center. We will have the opportunity to meet them first had and grab their contact info, should the need arise for a translator. We also let the County Immigration Specialist know for her clients as well.

The AJC Partners meeting is December 2, 2021, and the HCWDB meeting is scheduled for December 7, 2021.

We continue to look for ways to collaborate, streamline and help those that need us create ways to find us.

WIOA SUCCESS STORIES

- **OUT-OF-SCHOOL:**

A young man entered the Ola I Ka Hana Out-of-School Program at age 17. The last school he attended was Hilo High School, where he completed the 9th grade. He has not been in a classroom setting for more than 2 years. Prior to attending Ola, the youth entered the Youth Challenge Academy. The youth made a decision to drop-out of YCA as he was unable to handle the rigors of the academy. Prior to being found eligible for WIOA services, the youth was deemed to be basic skills deficient in both math and reading. In the first several months of beginning at Ola, the youth developed a bad habit of having inconsistent attendance patterns. Because of his poor attendance record, the youth and his parent were asked to meet with program staff. Luckily for the youth, the meeting was beneficial on his part as the parent did not realize how much of a risk the youth suffered by not attending his regularly scheduled classes. After completing his 60 hours of instructional time, the youth became eligible to take the CASAS Math and Reading assessments. The youth exhibited a 17+ point increase for his scores and was then found eligible to participate in a diploma track class offered by WCSA. Since taking the CASAS and increasing his EFL by 2 levels, the youth's attendance and participation have increased and he is on his way to earning his high school equivalency.

- **IN-SCHOOL:**

In April of 2021 a young man who is Native Hawaiian came to the program seeking assistance with obtaining work experience. His barriers included being basic skills deficient and low income. The youth had an established relationship with the Assistant Director, as he was referred to the program by a contact of the Assistant Director. The assigned youth specialist set goals to participate in a CWEP assignment, graduate from high school, and enroll in post-secondary education. After the youth specialist found a CWEP placement for the participant, the participant started responding very sporadically, and decided to put the placement on hold while he finished high school. The participant earned his high school diploma and submitted it to the Youth Specialist, but it was difficult to keep consistent communication with the participant for a few months as he went off-island without informing the Ola program. Once he returned, he decided that he would pursue school full-time and try to find outside work, so the CWEP assignment was discontinued. The youth would occasionally text the Assistant Director asking for advice on how to enroll in school, and the assistant director coached him what he should do and referred him to his youth specialist if he needed additional help. The youth kept in moderately consistent contact with the new youth specialist via text and would request advice on what classes he should take, what to do if classes were full, and other enrollment questions. The youth specialist encouraged and coached him through those various issues. The participant completed his enrollment and has been attending UH Hilo since August 2021 and decided he wanted to be placed on follow-up. The

youth specialist obtained a class registration, and the participant was approved and placed on 12-month follow-up.

- **DISLOCATED WORKER:**

Glenn came through the doors of the American Job Center due to COVID-19, in 2020, and was able to experience a plethora of support throughout the entire 2020, leading into present day 2021.

2020—Glenn was devastated when he lost his management job at a local hotel in Hilo. Like many others in our community, suffering the effects of COVID, he was in search of stability and security. He did not want to rely on the uncertain unemployment insurance benefits and wanted to be proactive in his quest for not just earning income but making an impact. He enrolled into the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) Program in April 2020 with the goal of changing his career path and following his passion of service. He stated: “I’m choosing to focus on the silver lining of this grim situation and pursue the opportunity of helping improve the quality of life, for others.” He worked closely with his employment counselor on assessing his skills, strengths, and needs. After several appointments that centered on his enrollment, mentorship, and coaching, he decided that he wanted to pursue a career as a Certified Nurse Aide (CNA).

He worked closely with his employment counselor to select a course and training provider that would meet his needs of attaining quality training at a time that would suit his schedule. Within a short timeframe, his employment counselor was able to coordinate discussions with a training provider and assess his comfort-levels. He was very grateful and appreciated the fact that he did not have to navigate this career switch alone. Within a few short weeks, right at the height of COVID, he was able to secure a spot in his preferred training course and have all course expenses covered by the WIOA Program! He was so grateful and shared: “I am going to pass this course with flying colors and make the program and myself proud!” Indeed, despite the setbacks of COVID—course modifications such as reducing class size, schedule, etc. he remained focused on sticking out the course, and kept close contact with his instructors and employment counselor, and just as he said, with flying colors, he passed his course, clinicals, and graduated with his CNA Certificate in June 2020.

After analyzing his job and self-sufficiency needs, he worked closely with his employment counselor to identify his next steps, which was to pursue his CNA licensure. Through analyzing labor market needs and demand with his employment counselor, he was able to clearly see that with a CNA license in Hawaii, he would have access to higher paying positions, with a greater opportunity for stability—both in schedule and income. His employment counselor walked him through the CNA licensure application process and informed him that the WIOA Program would cover his licensure expenses as well! He was so stoked and said: “I cannot believe a program like this exists—I’m ready to get this license!”

After launching his prometric exam application, Glenn began studying and working even closer with both his employment counselor and CNA instructors to help boost his confidence for test-day. In addition to preparing for his test, he also began searching for employment. He and his employment counselor met numerous times to strategize employment seeking, and to their excitement, he was offered a position as a CNA with Yukio Okutsu veteran's home. However, at

this time, the veterans home began battling COVID head-on, and seen an immediate increase and outburst of uncontrollable COVID cases hitting the facility and residents. To err on the side of safety, Human Resources informed him that they were going on a temporary hiring freeze and would inform him of when he could start working, citing: “hopefully in the near future.”

Though being downhearted, Glenn continued to work closely with his employment counselor on strategizing his next steps. Together, they began to resume focus on studying for his CNA licensure exam. However, another hurdle stood in his way, due to COVID, prometric exams were pushed back until August, pending the COVID crisis. Though this could've easily been another challenge for Glenn, he continued without letup and worked with his employment counselor on strategizing yet again his next steps. His employment counselor encouraged him and kept closely connected in helping him to identify other avenues or potential employment routes. He decided that he would use the time allotted to focus on his personal growth in a local nonprofit and building his skills. His employment counselor continued to host both virtual and in-person meetings with Glenn to ensure he was moving forward—developing soft and transferrable skills while waiting out the COVID hiring freeze and Prometric freeze.

In no time, Glenn got the call that he could successfully test, and without a doubt, he successfully passed his prometric exam in August 2020, and became a licensed CNA in the State of Hawaii. He was so excited and expressed appreciation for his employment counselor and her endless support, and shared: “I don't know what to do without your help. I am very much grateful for such a great program you have. I really appreciate you checking in with me to make sure everything remains okay and most especially for taking off the financial burden off my shoulders.”

Despite all of these challenges, he persisted with his employment counselor on obtaining gainful employment. They met several times to assess the job market, review his resume and prepare to submit his employment applications. Despite the challenge of COVID and mass job-loss in our county, he was pleasantly surprised and excited to get a call back from Yukio Okutsu Veterans State home offering him full-time employment, earning \$16.41, effective October 2020. He took to this new line of work quickly and successfully passed his three months' probation! Glenn continued to work diligently and thoroughly enjoyed his new line of work stating that he felt he was making the best impact he could with his patients, and with others. During all of this, Glenn remained steadfast with his meetings and check-ins with his employment counselor. Together, they were able to develop a savings goal and spending plan that would help Glenn continue to achieve his overall goals, in addition to employment. Overall, Glenn's infectious smile paved the way for him to light up the lives of many during the darkest of times. He attributed his success in this new industry to the fact that he did not have to navigate alone. He felt that the WIOA Program provided him the guidance, support, and encouragement he needed to succeed, and therefore, provides that to those he serves.

2021—Fast forward to present day, Glenn continues to make an impact in the lives of the many he serves. Through this new line of work as a licensed CNA, he was able to develop new skills, while honing in on his existing skills of leadership, compassion, and passion for making a difference through quality care. Though he was extremely happy as a CNA, our island tourism and hospitality industry opened up again, and he was called back to work in his management position. He discussed this opportunity with his employment counselor and decided that he would return to

his position as he felt he could go back as a greater leader who could help affect more positive change within our local community. He accepted his position and is now earning \$20 per hour, with full benefits. Glenn never regretted his decisions to change course in doing what was best for him, as that in turn, allowed him to play a part in the lives of many.

The WIOA Program worked and will continue to work with Glenn through each phase of his life, while continuing to provide him with a wide array of options that would lead him to an enhanced skillset level, and the ability to give back, and to make an impact—across any field he may choose. With a heart full of appreciation, Glenn shared: “I am forever grateful. Thanks to the WIOA Program, I never worried about my next step, or about how I would pay for my bills. This program is a blessing!”