*Welcome to LLA Reports, a podcast produced by the Louisiana Legislative Auditor’s office. This podcast is intended to be an oral representation of the written report it highlights and is primarily for the use of the Louisiana Legislature.*

This is Chris Magee. I’m the data analytics manager for LLA’s Performance Audit Services. This episode of LLA Reports focuses on our new report titled “Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.”

This report provides the results of our audit of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act – or WIOA – programs. The purpose of this audit was to answer questions about service delivery and administration, WIOA spending and the number of participants enrolled compared to the eligible population, program success, and potential improvements.

WIOA, which is overseen by the Louisiana Workforce Commission – or LWC – has six core programs that provide career services. This audit focuses on Title I programs, which include the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs, and the Title III Wagner-Peyser program.

We found the administration of the Title I and Title III programs involves many layers, with funds flowing through several entities, but services are provided primarily through 60 One-Stop Centers throughout the state.

One-Stop Centers offer a standard range of career services, and the training services funded by different local workforce development boards – or LWDBs – vary depending on locally in-demand professions, provider availability, and customer choice.

We found that, as of June 2023, LWC had not ensured all LWDBs had memorandums of understanding to provide access to all required partner programs.

During fiscal years 2018 through 2022, Louisiana spent $274.6 million dollars on the Title I and Title III programs, or an average of $54.9 million dollars per year.

In fiscal year 2022, 81.8 percent of Title I expenditures were spent at the local level by LWDBs, and the local cost per participant ranged from approximately $3,100 to $12,000 dollars. LWC spent 61.4 percent of Title III expenditures at the local level, and the cost per participant varied from approximately $80 to about $1,100 dollars.

We found also that in fiscal years 2019 and 2022, Title I and III programs enrolled only a small percentage of the individuals potentially eligible. Consistent branding and a more centralized online presence could help LWDBs ensure potential participants are aware of available locations and services.

Additionally, we found that Louisiana met its performance indicator targets in fiscal years 2019 through 2022. Based on performance indicators for fiscal year 2022, we found that Louisiana participants gained credentials and skills at a higher rate than participants in other states, but obtained jobs at a lower rate.

Also, while the majority of participants who exited Title I and III programs in fiscal years 2019 and 2021 found employment afterward, their earnings were often lower than two to three quarters before program participation. Most WIOA participants did not have earnings after they completed the programs that were high enough to be self-sufficient.

We found that the majority of Title I participants did not obtain jobs related to the training they received in WIOA. However, those who received training had better outcomes than those who did not, especially if they finished the training and/or obtained jobs related to their training.

In addition, the majority of participants did not receive supportive services in fiscal year 2022; however, Title I participants who did receive supportive services had better employment and earning outcomes and were more likely to finish the training.

We also found that LWC could better evaluate the effectiveness and compliance of each program and the factors contributing to participant success by performing more in-depth data analyses of participant services and outcomes.

As a result of our report, we developed nine recommendations.

We recommended LWC ensure the local workforce development boards have updated memorandums of understanding – MOUs – with all required partner programs, and work with the boards and other stakeholders to ensure the MOUs are consistent and contain all required information.

In addition, we recommended LWC develop a policy for the equitable dispersal of Title III resources across local areas, including a periodic re-evaluation of local needs.

We also recommended LWC work with stakeholders to identify ways to serve more potentially eligible individuals and ensure its website has the correct information about One-Stop Centers.

We recommended as well that LWC ensure the local workforce development boards have the required American Job Center branding on their websites and work with the boards to determine whether adopting a statewide naming convention and/or brand could help improve outreach efforts.

Finally, we recommended LWC work with the boards to identify ways to increase the number of participants who receive training and supportive services and analyze outcome information in more detail to ensure the programs result in positive outcomes and the service design is data-informed.

As part of its response, which is included in the report as Appendix A, LWC agreed with six of our recommendations and partially agreed with three.

*We hope you found this podcast informative, and that you’ll follow future episodes of LLA Reports.*

*This podcast was created as part of the audit report just discussed and is intended primarily for the use of the Louisiana Legislature. Both the full report and the podcast can be found on the LLA’s website at* [*www.lla.la.gov*](http://www.lla.la.gov)*.*

*Thank you for listening.*