

# COORDINATION OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

PERFORMANCE AUDIT SERVICES

**Informational Report**  
**February 28, 2024**

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February 28, 2024

The Honorable J. Cameron Henry, Jr.  
President of the Senate  
The Honorable Phillip DeVillier,  
Speaker of the House of Representatives

Dear Senator Henry and Representative DeVillier:

The purpose of this review was to evaluate the participation, costs, and outcomes for certain public assistance and workforce development programs and to identify areas for improved coordination among these programs.

In 2023, Louisiana spent approximately \$3.27 billion, primarily in federal dollars, on the following programs:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- SNAP Employment & Training Initiative (SNAP E&T)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) cash assistance
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)
- State Unemployment Insurance (UI) Program
- Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Program
- Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)

These programs served approximately 1.07 million individuals.

We found that while Louisiana has a unified WIOA state plan, it needs more collaboration among agencies and stakeholders to put together a unified vision and plan detailing how best to coordinate and administer public assistance and workforce development programs. The governor and cabinet-level leadership would need to take the lead in spurring improved coordination among these programs.

In addition, we found that other states have varying levels of coordination among their agencies and programs. In Louisiana, potential strategies for improved coordination could include increased public information and data and/or document sharing. For example, several other states have websites that include a clear picture of available services and how to apply.

We also found that measuring outcomes could help Louisiana determine which programs and which contractors and providers are the most effective in meeting their goals. Such information could help state leaders make more informed decisions about resources and funding.

Michael J. "Mike" Waguespack

February 28, 2024

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We would like to express our appreciation to the Department of Children and Family Services, the Louisiana Workforce Commission, the Louisiana Community and Technical College System, the Louisiana Department of Education, and the Office of Technology Services for their assistance during this audit.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike Waguespack", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael J. "Mike" Waguespack, CPA  
Legislative Auditor

MJW/aa

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# Louisiana Legislative Auditor

Michael J. "Mike" Waguespack, CPA



## Coordination of Public Assistance and Workforce Development Programs

February 2024

Audit Control #40230019

## Introduction

We evaluated the public assistance programs related to workforce development to identify areas of potential coordination. We conducted this evaluation in response to House Resolution 100 of the 2023 Regular Legislative Session,<sup>1</sup> which requested the legislative auditor to (1) evaluate participation, costs, and outcomes for public assistance programs in the state and (2) identify areas for improved coordination. In Louisiana, various state agencies administer public assistance programs that are directly and indirectly related to workforce development. This report focuses on the following public assistance programs because of their role in assisting individuals in attaining self-sufficiency through workforce development:

As of 2021, Louisiana had:

- the **second-highest** percent of individuals aged 25 to 64 with educational attainment of high school or less,
- the **fifth-highest** percent of residents living in poverty, and
- the **third-highest** percent of households with cash public assistance or SNAP of any state.

**Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).** The purpose of SNAP (previously known as the "Food Stamps" program) is to alleviate hunger and malnutrition by allowing low-income households to obtain a more nutritious diet by increasing food purchasing power for eligible households. Work requirements exist for certain SNAP participants. *[see pages 6–7]*

SNAP includes the **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training Initiative (SNAP E&T)**. The purpose of SNAP E&T is to help SNAP participants gain skills, training, work, or experience to increase their ability to obtain regular employment, with the ultimate goal of becoming financially self-sufficient. *[see pages 8–10]*

**Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).** The overall purpose of TANF is to help states fund a wide range of benefits, services, and activities to address the effects and root causes of child poverty and economic disadvantage, including a work activities program. States have broad flexibility regarding how to spend TANF dollars. In Louisiana, TANF funds are used for a variety of programs, including pre-Kindergarten and child welfare activities. There are three TANF cash assistance programs: *[see pages 11–12]*

<sup>1</sup> <https://legis.la.gov/legis/ViewDocument.aspx?d=1325117>

1. *Family Independence Temporary Assistance Program (FITAP)*, which provides cash assistance to eligible needy families with children,
2. *Strategies to Empower People Program (STEP)*, which is a work activities program that requires active participation for work-eligible FITAP recipients so they may achieve self-reliance through increased employment and workplace literacy, job retention, and earnings, and
3. *Kinship Care Subsidy Program (KCSP)*, which provides cash assistance to caregivers who possess or obtain legal custody or guardianship of minor relatives within one year of enrolling in the program. This program does not have a workforce development component.

**Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).** The purpose of WIOA programs is to increase participants’ employment, job retention, and earnings in order to increase the prosperity of workers and employers, the economic growth of communities and regions, and the nation’s productivity and global competitiveness. WIOA is comprised of six programs, as shown in Exhibit 1. *[see pages 13–18]*

Exhibit 1 WIOA Core Programs			
Title Number	State Agency	Program	Description
I	LWC	Adult	Provides career and training services for adults to prepare them for good jobs, with priority for recipients of public assistance, other low-in income individuals, and those who are basic skills deficient.
		Dislocated Worker	Provides career and training services to support reemployment of adult workers unemployed through no fault of their own, such as mass layoffs.
		Youth	Provides career and training services for out-of-school youth and low-income in-school youth to support educational attainment and career readiness.
II	LCTCS	Adult Education	Provides services to individuals with limited basic skills to help them obtain skills and knowledge necessary for employment and postsecondary education.
III	LWC	Wagner-Peyser	Provides career services to all jobseekers and employers, including labor exchange services, to connect jobseekers and employers seeking workers.
IV	LWC	Vocational Rehabilitation	Provides career, training, and medical services to empower individuals with disabilities to maximize employment, independence, and social inclusion.

**Source:** Prepared by legislative auditor’s staff based on LWC policy and federal law, regulation, and guidance.

**Unemployment Insurance (UI) Program.** State UI provides workers whose jobs have been terminated, through no fault of their own, monetary payments for a set period of time or until they find new employment. UI benefits are paid as a matter of past employment and legal entitlement, and not on the basis of need. In Louisiana, employers pay all costs of unemployment insurance through a payroll tax or reimbursable program. Employees do not pay any part of their wages to finance the UI program. *[see pages 19–20]*

**Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Program.** RESEA is a grant program for states to assist individuals receiving UI benefits. The funds are used to connect participants with in-person assessments and reemployment services through American Job Centers. *[see pages 21–22]*

**Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP).** CCAP pays up to 100% of child care tuition to providers who care for children under the age of 13. CCAP pays providers up to the current state daily rate which varies by age of child and child care type. *[see pages 23–24]*

**Potential for Improved Coordination.** Louisiana residents needing public assistance and workforce development services may have to navigate multiple state agencies, applications, and eligibility criteria, depending on the type of public assistance services they need. Louisiana has a fragmented system to navigate, and other states have varying degrees of integration among their public assistance and workforce development programs. *[see pages 25–37]*

To conduct this evaluation, we requested the costs, number of participants, and performance metrics from each state agency for each program for fiscal years 2022 and 2023.<sup>2</sup> We interviewed management from the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC), Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS), and the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE), as well as the Office of Technology Services (OTS). We also conducted interviews with stakeholders, case workers, and staff for these programs; reviewed the application processes for each program; and visited an American Job Center.

The objectives of this review were:

- (1) To evaluate participation, costs, and outcomes for certain public assistance and workforce development programs in the state.**
- (2) To identify areas for improved coordination among certain public assistance and workforce development programs.**

Our results are summarized on the next page and discussed in detail throughout the remainder of the report. Appendix A includes our scope and methodology. Appendix B contains a summary of eligibility requirements for each program. Appendix C lists the parishes where the SNAP E&T able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWD) work requirement is voluntary and those where it is mandatory. Appendix D shows characteristics of Workforce Investment Council (WIC) membership.

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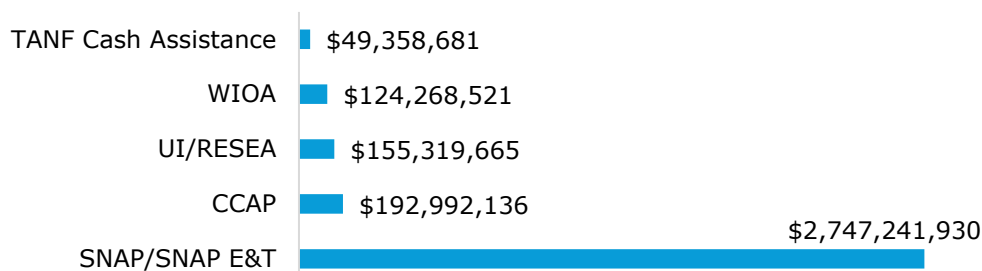
<sup>2</sup> The information presented in this report is primarily from state fiscal years 2022 and 2023; however, because some programs operate in federal fiscal years, some information was only available by federal fiscal year.



## Objective 1: To evaluate participation, costs, and outcomes for certain public assistance and workforce development programs in the state.

Overall, we found that, in 2023, Louisiana spent approximately \$3.27 billion, primarily in federal dollars, on SNAP, SNAP E&T, TANF cash assistance, WIOA, UI, RESEA, and CCAP. These programs served approximately 1.07 million individuals.<sup>3</sup> Agencies also publish performance metrics on these programs, such as the number of participants, the percentage who obtained jobs, and median wages earned. See Exhibits 2 and 3 for comparisons of costs and participants by program for 2023.

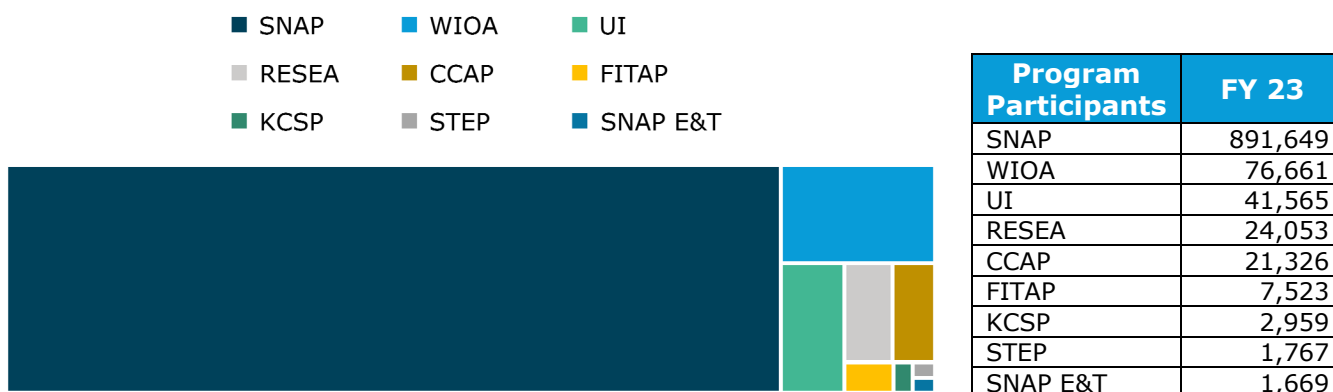
### Exhibit 2 Total Costs (Benefits, Program, and Administrative\*) 2023



\* See next page for definitions of cost types.

**Source:** Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using self-reported information provided by DCFS, LWC, LCTCS, and LDOE.

### Exhibit 3 Public Assistance Program Participants 2023



**Source:** Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using self-reported information provided by DCFS, LWC, LCTCS, and LDOE.

<sup>3</sup> This does not represent a unique count of program recipients across all programs. Some recipients may have been served by multiple programs.



This report provides information on costs, participants, and performance metrics for each public assistance program. We relied on self-reported statistics provided by each agency. The information presented in this report is primarily from state fiscal years (FY) 2022 and 2023; however, because some programs operate in federal fiscal years (FFY), some information was only available by federal fiscal year.

Costs shown on the following pages include the following:

- **Benefit Amounts** – Dollars that are provided directly to recipients, such as dollars on Electronic Benefit Transfer cards for SNAP, unemployment insurance benefits, or TANF cash assistance.
- **Program Costs** – Dollars spent to provide services to program recipients, which may include contracts for services or salaries for employees who provide direct services.
- **Administrative Costs** – Dollars spent to administer the program. Agencies and programs vary on what is considered an administrative cost; therefore, we used each agency's determination of administrative costs.

# SNAP

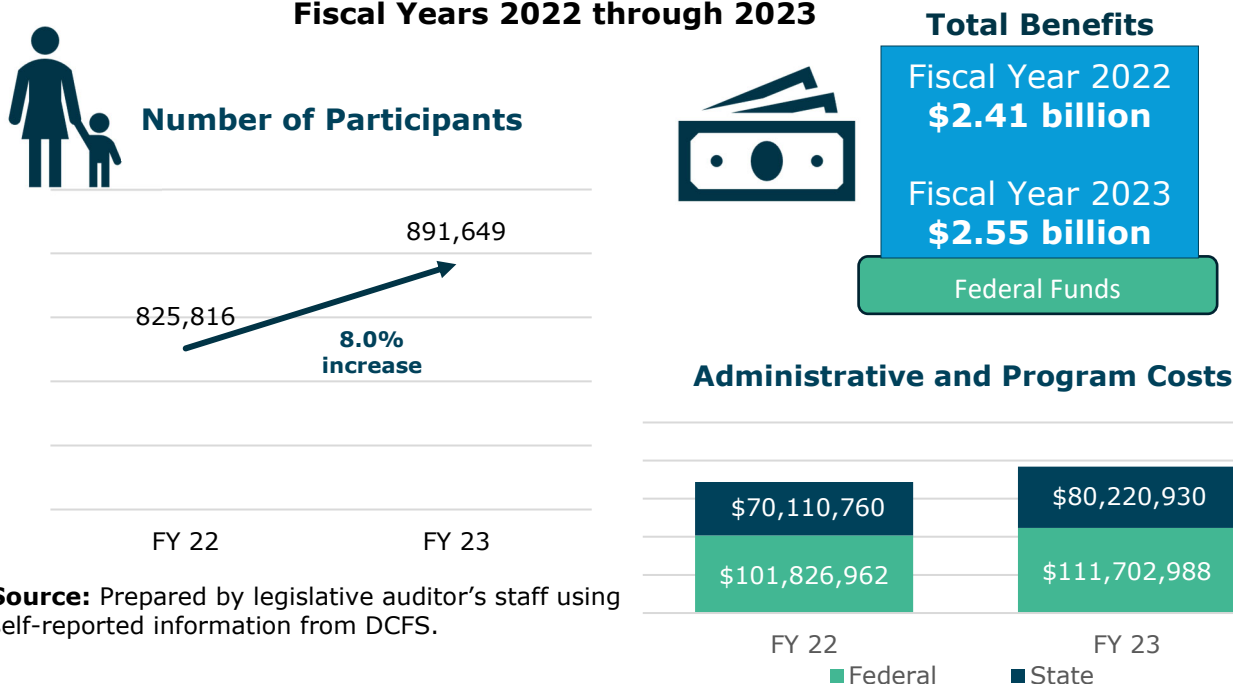
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program



SNAP (previously known as the "Food Stamps" program) was authorized by the United States Congress in 1964 to alleviate hunger and malnutrition by allowing low-income households to obtain a more nutritious diet by increasing food purchasing power for eligible households. SNAP is managed at the federal level by the United States Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) administers the program in Louisiana.

SNAP recipients must meet income limits of less than 130% of the federal poverty level<sup>4</sup> and have less than \$2,750 in resources. Individuals receiving other types of public assistance, such as Social Security Income (SSI) or TANF cash assistance, are exempt from the resource limit. Generally, SNAP certification is renewed on an annual basis. Able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) can receive SNAP benefits for three months in a 36-month period if they do not meet the ABAWD work requirements or meet an exception.<sup>5</sup> However, historically, Louisiana has had a waiver from the time-limit rule for ABAWDs. See Appendix B for a summary of eligibility requirements and Exhibit 4 for SNAP statistics for fiscal years 2022 and 2023.

### Exhibit 4 SNAP Statistics Fiscal Years 2022 through 2023



**Source:** Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using self-reported information from DCFS.

<sup>4</sup> For elderly and disabled persons, the gross income standard is 165% of the federal poverty level.

<sup>5</sup> To meet work requirements, ABAWD SNAP participants must (a) work in a job for at least 80 hours per month, (b) participate in a SNAP Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) program for at least 80 hours per month, or (c) work and/or participate in any combination of working in a job or SNAP E&T for a combined 80 hours per month.

DCFS reports performance metrics for the SNAP program quarterly to the Division of Administration (DOA) and monthly to FNS. In fiscal year 2022, DCFS did not meet targets for two of the four performance metrics, and in fiscal year 2023 it did not meet one target.<sup>6</sup> See Exhibit 5 for SNAP performance metrics for fiscal years 2022 through 2023.

<b>Exhibit 5</b> <b>SNAP Performance Metrics</b> <b>Fiscal Years 2022 through 2023</b>			
Performance Metric	State Goal	FY 22	FY 23
SNAP Reciprocity Rate*	75.0%	73.8%	79.7%
SNAP Accuracy Rate*	95.0%	94.4%	92.8%
Percentage of SNAP applications processed within time frames	95.0%	99.4%	99.3%
Percentage of SNAP redeterminations processed within time frames	95.0%	99.6%	99.9%
*The SNAP Reciprocity Rate is the percentage of people below the poverty level that receive SNAP, and the Accuracy Rate is the percentage of how accurate the state is when it comes to SNAP eligibility and benefit determinations. <b>Source:</b> Prepared by legislative auditor’s staff using information provided by DCFS.			

<sup>6</sup> According to DCFS, a 5% variance from the target is allowed; therefore, it considers these measures met.

## **SNAP E&T**

### *SNAP Employment and Training Initiative*



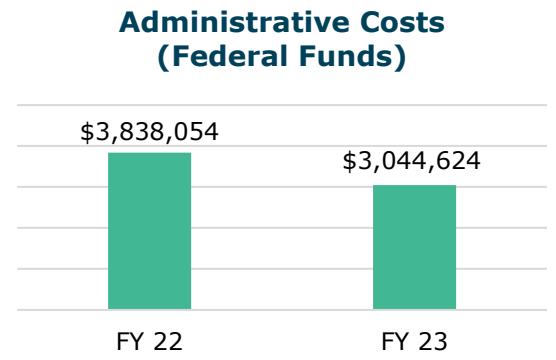
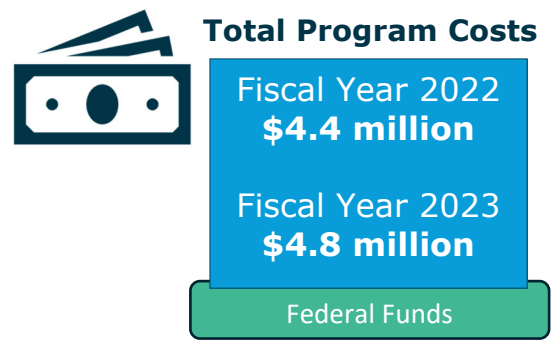
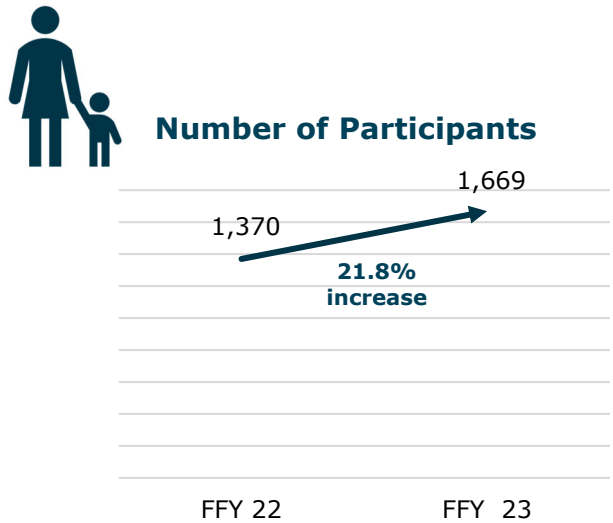
The Food and Nutrition Act that established SNAP also requires states to provide employment and training services to eligible SNAP recipients through the SNAP E&T initiative. The purpose of SNAP E&T is to help SNAP recipients gain skills, training, work, or experience to increase their ability to obtain regular employment, with the ultimate goal of becoming financially self-sufficient. Louisiana's SNAP E&T program is voluntary and does not require mandatory participation for all SNAP participants with work requirements (ABAWDs). ABAWDs are those individuals physically and mentally fit for employment, are aged 18-49, are not pregnant, and are not living in a SNAP household with a child under age 18. However, participation in the SNAP E&T program is one way that ABAWDs can satisfy their work requirement.

According to DCFS, the ABAWD work requirement became effective for 33 parishes on October 1, 2023. See Appendix C for a listing of parishes where the ABAWD work requirements are voluntary or mandatory. DCFS staff stated that SNAP E&T has not seen an increase in participation since ABAWDs were mandated to meet their ABAWD work requirements; however, SNAP E&T has seen an increase in SNAP recipients who meet the state-specific criteria to participate in the SNAP E&T program through the screening and referral process per federal regulations.<sup>7</sup> See Appendix B for a summary of eligibility requirements and Exhibit 6 for SNAP E&T statistics for 2022 and 2023.

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<sup>7</sup> 7 Code of Federal Regulations 273.7(c)(2)

**Exhibit 6  
SNAP E&T Statistics  
State/Federal Fiscal Years 2022 through 2023**



**Source:** Prepared by legislative auditor’s staff using self-reported information from DCFS.

DCFS reports federal performance metrics for SNAP E&T annually to FNS and state-level performance metrics; however, it does not have targets for the metrics it tracks. According to DCFS, it is working to implement quarterly performance metrics for contracted SNAP E&T providers. See Exhibit 7 for SNAP E&T performance metrics for federal fiscal years 2021 through 2022, which was the latest available data at the time of our request.

<b>Exhibit 7 SNAP E&amp;T Performance Metrics Federal Fiscal Years 2021 through 2022</b>			
Performance Metric	Target	FFY 21	FFY 22
<b>Federal-Level Reporting Measures</b>			
Percentage of participants achieving unsubsidized employment in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter following participation in E&T	DCFS currently does not maintain standard targets for the SNAP E&T program.	59.0%	52.5%
Percentage of participants achieving unsubsidized employment in the 4 <sup>th</sup> quarter following participation in E&T		2.7%*	58.0%*
Percentage of participants completing at least one educational, training, work experience, or an on-the-job training component		40.8%	38.5%
Median Quarterly Wages in 2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter following participation in E&T		\$3,614	\$3,470
<b>State-Level Reporting Measures**</b>			
Percentage of participants who received E&T services and obtained unsubsidized employment during the 2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter following completion of job training services	DCFS does not currently maintain performance targets for the SNAP E&T program.	11.2%	12.5%
Percentage of participants who remain employed in the second quarter after completion of job retention services		24.0%	14.5%
Percentage of participants who received E&T services and are in unsubsidized employment in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter after completion of work experience		16.5%	5.7%
Percentage of participants in SNAP E&T that completed a training, work experience, apprenticeship, or an on-the-job training component and received a certificate or recognized credential		44.1%	17.2%
Percentage of participants who earned a certificate or recognized credential		30.3%	22.8%
Percentage of participants who gained employment in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter after completion of vocational training		17.7%	16.7%
Percentage of participants who earned a high school equivalency certificate (HiSET/GED)		4.4%	4.9%
Percentage of participants who gained employment in 2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter following completion of basic/foundational skills training		1.1%	6.2%
Percentage of participants who gained employment in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter following completion of English Language Acquisition (EPEL), Integrated Education and Training/Bridge Programs (EPIE), or Work Readiness Training (EPWRT)		Not Reported	6.1%
<p>* The significant difference between FFY 21 and FFY 22 for employment outcomes in the fourth quarter following SNAP E&amp;T participation that does not occur in other outcomes is due to the large decrease in participation following the end of COVID-19 pandemic program expansions.</p> <p>** DCFS stated that FNS requested it change the state-level reporting measures for FFY 22; therefore, the data is not comparable to FFY 21 state-level reporting measures.</p> <p><b>Source:</b> Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using information provided by DCFS.</p>			

## TANF

*Temporary Assistance for Needy Families*



DCFS administers the TANF program in Louisiana. The TANF block grant was established pursuant to the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996.<sup>8</sup> The overall purpose of the TANF program is to help states fund a wide range of benefits, services, and activities to address the effects and root causes of child poverty and economic disadvantage. States have broad flexibility regarding how to spend TANF dollars. In Louisiana, TANF funds are used for a variety of programs, including pre-Kindergarten and child welfare activities. There are three TANF cash assistance programs:

1. *Family Independence Temporary Assistance Program (FITAP)* provides cash assistance to eligible needy families with children. To be eligible for cash assistance, FITAP recipients' income must not exceed the monthly flat grant amount, which as of January 2022 was \$484 for a family of three. Recipients can receive benefits for 24 months every 60-month period of time. Work-eligible recipients must participate in the STEP program.
2. *Strategies to Empower People Program (STEP)* is a work activities program that requires active participation for work-eligible FITAP recipients so they may achieve self-reliance through increased employment and workplace literacy, job retention, and earnings. Work-eligible adults are non-disabled individuals under 60 or teen heads of household.
3. *Kinship Care Subsidy Program (KCSP)* provides cash assistance to caregivers who possess or obtain legal custody or guardianship of minor relatives within one year of enrolling in the program. KCSP *does not* have a work component. Families must meet income limits of less than 150% of the federal poverty line. See Appendix B for a summary of eligibility requirements.

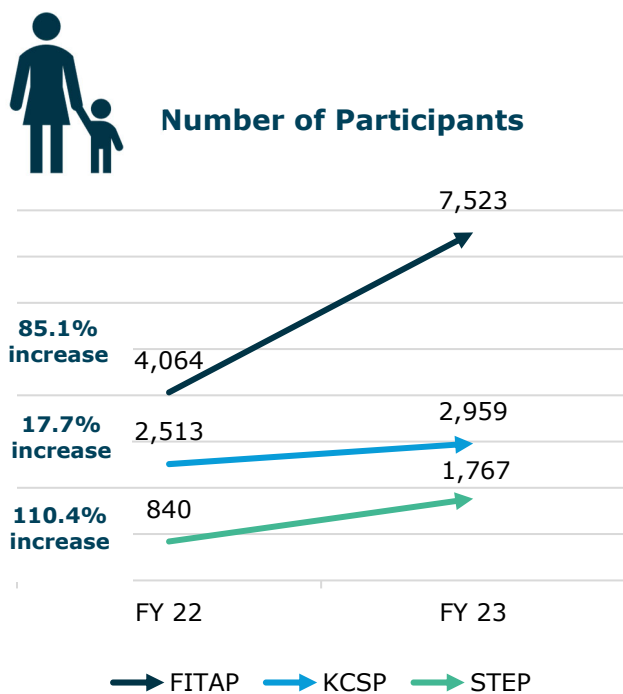
According to DCFS, expenditures increased in core TANF program costs due to the increase in FITAP and KCSP benefit amounts effective January 2022, which resulted in larger benefit payments and a higher number of eligible recipients. In addition, expenditures increased due to STEP case management costs for new staff, new contracted STEP services, an increase in STEP supportive service payments, and a higher number of STEP participants. Exhibit 8 shows TANF cash assistance statistics for fiscal years 2022 through 2023.

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<sup>8</sup> Public Law 104-193

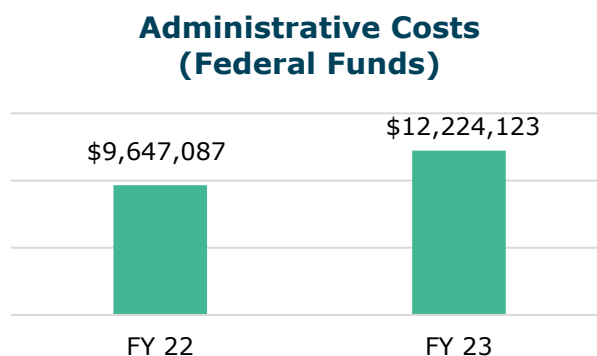


### Exhibit 8 TANF Cash Assistance Statistics Fiscal Years 2022 through 2023



Total Cash Benefit Amounts		
Program	FY 22	FY 23
FITAP	\$6,282,530	\$15,035,350
KCSP	10,341,328	15,155,657
STEP*	4,506,727	6,943,551
<b>TANF Total</b>	<b>\$21,130,585</b>	<b>\$37,134,558</b>

\* STEP costs are costs for direct services, as recipients also receive FITAP benefits.  
**Source:** Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using information from DCFS.



**Source:** Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using self-reported information from DCFS.

DCFS reports performance metrics for the TANF cash assistance programs monthly to DOA as part of its Strategic and Operational plans. In both fiscal years 2022 and 2023, DCFS did not meet targets for four performance metrics, all of which were for the STEP program. See Exhibit 9 for TANF performance metrics for fiscal years 2022 through 2023.

Exhibit 9 TANF Performance Metrics Fiscal Years 2022 through 2023			
Performance Metric	State Goal	FY 22	FY 23
Percentage of cases leaving <b>cash assistance</b> that returned to the program within 12 months	20.0%	8.5%	14.7%
Percentage of <b>TANF</b> applications processed within time frames*	95.0%	98.3%	98.4%
Percentage of <b>TANF</b> redeterminations processed within time frames*	95.0%	98.7%	98.6%
Percentage of <b>STEP</b> families engaged in work activities*	70.0%	45.8%	46.5%
Percentage of <b>STEP</b> caseload that gain unsubsidized employment	20.0%	2.4%	3.2%
Percentage of <b>STEP</b> case closures with earned income	30.0%	16.7%	18.1%
<b>STEP</b> Overall Participation Rate	50.0%	3.8%	4.1%

\* These metrics are internal and not reported to the DOA.  
**Source:** Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using information provided by DCFS.

## WIOA

### *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act*

WIOA is the primary federal law that supports workforce development, including employment and training programs available through a nationwide system of American Job Centers designed to serve as central points of service. The purpose of WIOA programs is to increase participants' employment, job retention, and earnings in order to increase the prosperity of workers and employers, the economic growth of communities and regions, and the nation's productivity and global competitiveness. The Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS) oversees the WIOA Adult Education program, and the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) oversees the remaining programs. There are six WIOA programs, as shown below:

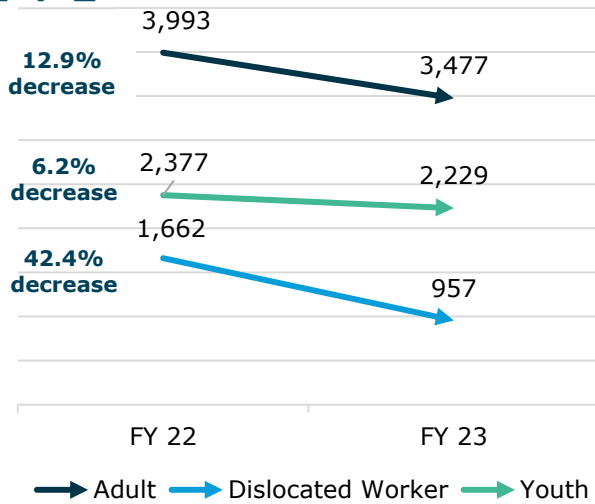


1. **Adult (Title I)** - Provides career and training services for adults to prepare them for good jobs, with priority for recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and those who are basic skills deficient. A minimum of 51% of individuals served must meet the priority target groups: (1) individuals receiving public cash assistance from another program, (2) low-income individuals who do not exceed the higher of the poverty line or 70% of the lower living standard income level, and (3) individuals who are basic skills deficient, meaning that they are unable to compute or solve problems or read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job.
2. **Dislocated Worker (Title I)** - Provides career and training services to support reemployment of adult workers unemployed through no fault of their own, such as mass layoffs. The Dislocated Worker program does not have income limits. Eligible individuals must be 18 years or older, be a citizen, and meet military selective service requirements (if applicable).
3. **Youth (Title I)** - Provides career and training services for out-of-school youth and low-income in-school youth to support educational attainment and career readiness. Eligible youth either attending (ages 14-21) or not attending school (ages 16-24) must meet criteria such as: has dropped out of school or is not regularly attending school; has a secondary school diploma and is low income, basic skills deficit, or an English language learner; is in the juvenile justice system; is a homeless youth; is a youth with a disability; or is a low-income youth who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or hold employment. See Appendix B for a summary of eligibility requirements for these programs and Exhibit 10 for WIOA Title I statistics for fiscal years 2022 through 2023.

**Exhibit 10  
WIOA Title I Statistics  
Fiscal Years 2022 through 2023**



**Number of Participants**

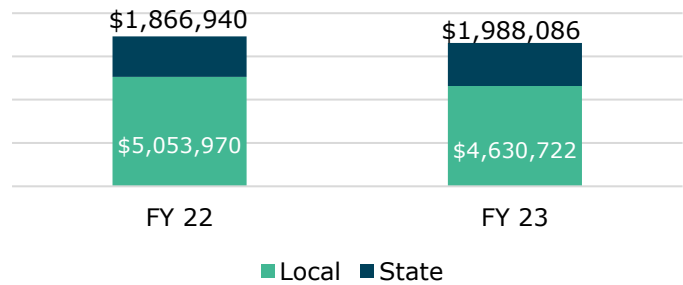


**Source:** Prepared by legislative auditor’s staff using self-reported information from LWC.

<b>Total Program Costs (Federal Funds)</b>		
<b>Program</b>	<b>FY 22</b>	<b>FY 23</b>
Adult	\$16,254,509	\$13,726,458
Youth	16,034,851	16,341,899
Dislocated Worker	17,494,833	17,238,732
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$49,784,193</b>	<b>\$47,307,089</b>

**Source:** Prepared by legislative auditor’s staff using information provided by LWC.

**Administrative Costs (Federal Funds)**



LWC reports performance metrics for WIOA Title I programs quarterly to the United States Department of Labor (USDOL). In fiscal year 2022, LWC did not meet targets for three of the five performance metrics, and in fiscal year 2023, it did not meet one metric.<sup>9</sup> See Exhibit 11 for WIOA Title I performance metrics for fiscal years 2022 through 2023.

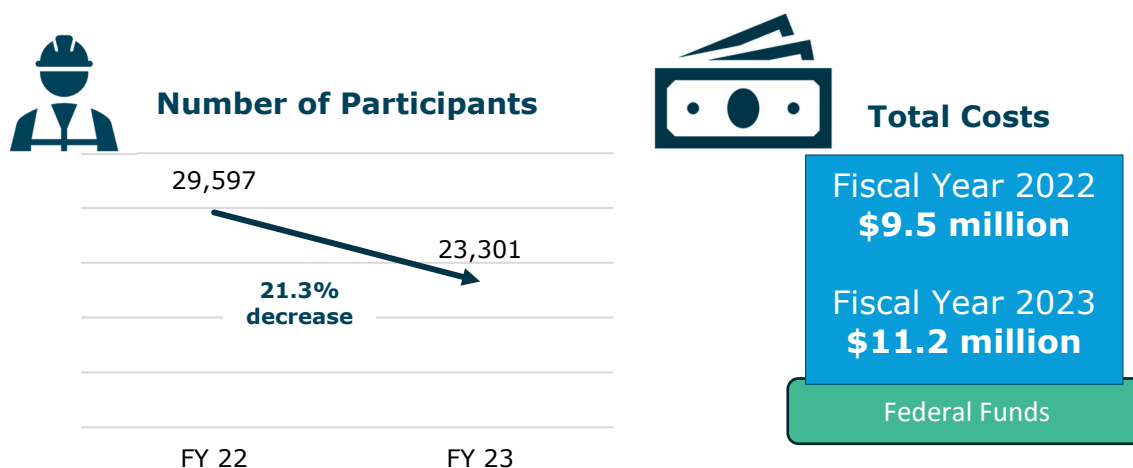
<sup>9</sup> According to LWC, USDOL considers each metric met if it is within 90% of the negotiated target; therefore, it considers all of the metrics as met.

Exhibit 11 WIOA Title I Performance Metrics Fiscal Years 2022 through 2023							
Performance Metric	Fiscal Year	Adult		Dislocated Worker		Youth	
		Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual
Employment rate second quarter after exit	2022	67.0%	73.2%	67.0%	72.5%	73.5%	71.0%
	2023	65.9%	75.8%	64.0%	74.4%	70.7%	74.9%
Median earnings second quarter after exit	2022	\$6,000	\$6,697	\$7,800	\$8,459	\$2,900	\$3,673
	2023	\$6,400	\$7,384	\$7,500	\$8,489	\$3,100	\$4,782
Employment rate fourth quarter after exit	2022	67.0%	62.3%	68.0%	61.5%	72.0%	72.4%
	2023	66.1%	72.8%	67.0%	73.4%	72.0%	73.5%
Credential rate	2022	64.3%	72.2%	70.5%	84.0%	58.0%	62.9%
	2023	73.5%	78.8%	79.8%	84.7%	52.0%	55.0%
Measurable skills gain	2022	54.0%	75.2%	59.0%	77.0%	45.0%	48.0%
	2023	65.5%	77.1%	74.5%	72.8%	50.0%	56.1%

**Source:** Prepared by legislative auditor’s staff using information provided by LWC.

4. **Wagner-Peyser (Title III)** - Provides career services to all jobseekers and employers, including labor exchange services, to connect jobseekers and employers seeking workers. The Wagner-Peyser program serves all job seekers in need of assistance, and there are no eligibility requirements. See Appendix B for a summary of eligibility requirements and Exhibit 12 for WIOA Wagner-Peyser statistics for fiscal years 2022 through 2023.

**Exhibit 12  
WIOA Wagner-Peyser Statistics  
Fiscal Years 2022 through 2023**



**Source:** Prepared by legislative auditor’s staff using self-reported information from LWC.

LWC reports performance metrics for the Wagner-Peyser program quarterly to USDOL. In fiscal year 2022, LWC did not meet targets for two of

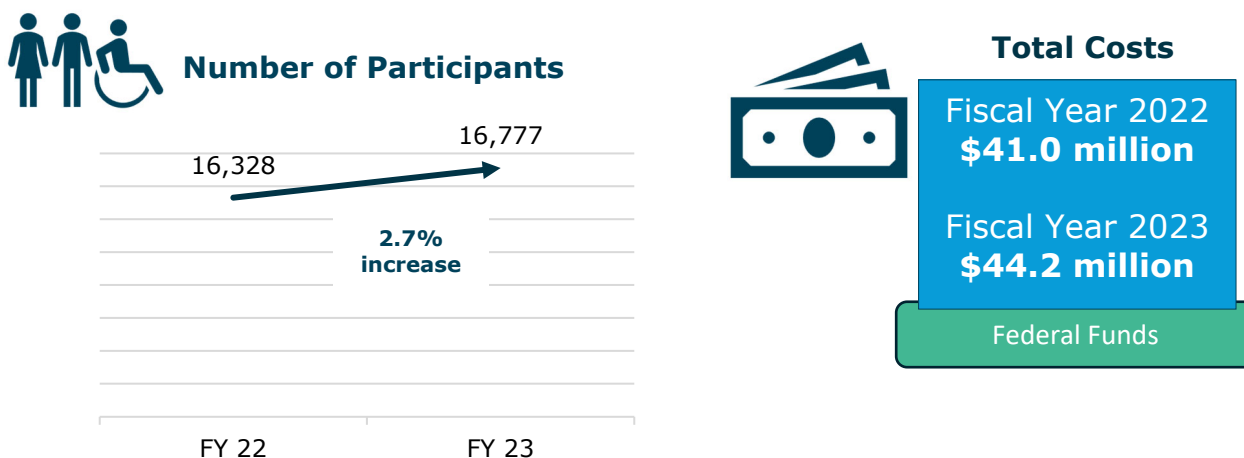
the three performance metrics.<sup>10</sup> See Exhibit 13 for WIOA Wagner-Peyser performance metrics for fiscal years 2022 through 2023.

<b>Exhibit 13</b>			
<b>WIOA Wagner-Peyser Performance Metrics</b>			
<b>Fiscal Years 2022 through 2023</b>			
Performance Metric	Fiscal Year	Wagner-Peyser	
		Target	Actual
Employment rate second quarter after exit	2022	60.0%	58.7%
	2023	56.0%	66.0%
Median earnings second quarter after exit	2022	\$5,000	\$5,862
	2023	\$5,000	\$7,075
Employment rate fourth quarter after exit	2022	62.0%	56.0%
	2023	57.0%	62.8%

**Source:** Prepared by legislative auditor’s staff using information provided by LWC.

5. **Vocational Rehabilitation (Title IV)** - Provides career, training, and medical services to empower individuals with disabilities to maximize employment, independence, and social inclusion. Recipients must have a physical or mental disability which results in a substantial impediment to employment, be able to benefit from vocational rehabilitation services in terms of employment, and require vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for, enter, engage in, or retain gainful employment. See Appendix B for a summary of eligibility requirements and Exhibit 14 for WIOA Vocational Rehabilitation statistics for fiscal years 2022 through 2023.

**Exhibit 14**  
**WIOA Vocational Rehabilitation Statistics**  
**Fiscal Years 2022 through 2023**



**Source:** Prepared by legislative auditor’s staff using self-reported information from LWC.

<sup>10</sup> According to LWC, USDOL considers each metric met if it is within 90% of the negotiated target; therefore, it considers all of the metrics as met.

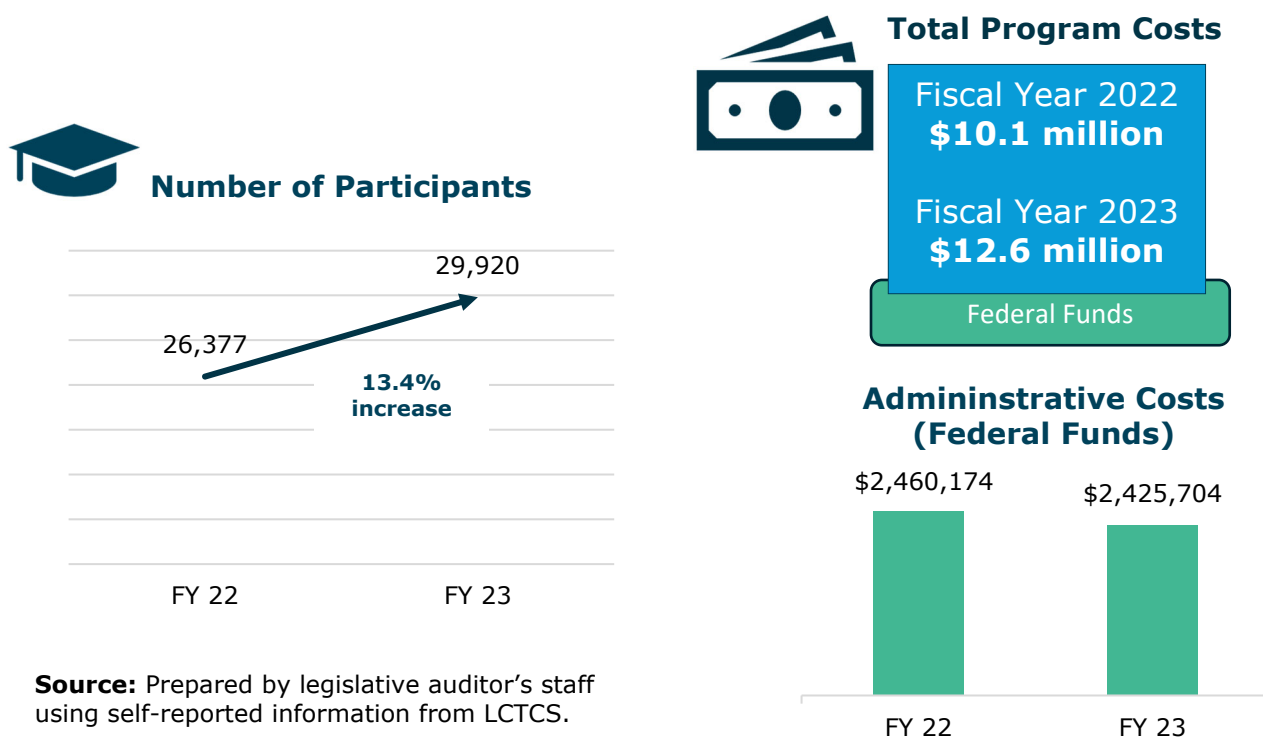
LWC reports performance metrics for the Vocational Rehabilitation program quarterly to the United States Department of Education (USDOE). In both fiscal years 2022 and 2023, LWC met all targets for the Vocational Rehabilitation program. See Exhibit 15 for WIOA Vocational Rehabilitation performance metrics for fiscal years 2022 through 2023.

<b>Exhibit 15 WIOA Vocational Rehabilitation Performance Metrics Fiscal Years 2022 through 2023</b>			
<b>Performance Metric</b>	<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Vocational Rehabilitation</b>	
		<b>Target*</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Employment rate second quarter after exit	2022	N/A	53.1%
	2023	53.3%	54.9%
Median earnings second quarter after exit	2022	N/A	\$4,634
	2023	\$4,169	\$5,085
Employment rate fourth quarter after exit	2022	N/A	46.3%
	2023	48.6%	55.9%
Credential rate	2022	N/A	41.0%
	2023	38.0%	46.2%
Measurable skills gain	2022	22.5%	47.2%
	2023	46.0%	53.0%

\* Targets listed as N/A were baseline years where performance levels were not negotiated and evaluation of those metrics were not in effect until the following year.  
**Source:** Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using information provided by LWC.

6. **Adult Education (Title II), also called WorkReady U** - Provides services to individuals with limited basic skills to help them obtain skills and knowledge necessary for employment and postsecondary education. An individual is eligible for Adult Education services if the individual is at least 16 years old, is not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school, is basic skills deficient, does not have a secondary school diploma, or is an English language learner. See Appendix B for a summary of eligibility requirements and Exhibit 16 for WIOA Adult Education statistics for fiscal years 2022 through 2023.

### Exhibit 16 WIOA Adult Education Statistics Fiscal Years 2022 through 2023



LCTCS reports performance metrics for the Adult Education program annually to the USDOE. In fiscal year 2022, LCTCS did not meet two targets, and in fiscal year 2023, it did not meet four targets.<sup>11</sup> See Exhibit 17 for WIOA Adult Education performance metrics for fiscal years 2022 through 2023.

<b>Exhibit 17 Adult Education Performance Metrics Fiscal Years 2022 through 2023</b>				
Performance Metric	FY 22		FY 23	
	Target	Actual	Target	Actual
Measurable Skills Gains	42.5%	43.1%	43.0%	41.6%
Employment Second Quarter after exit	31.0%	33.8%	31.2%	30.1%
Employment Fourth Quarter after exit	31.0%	25.3%	31.2%	29.1%
Median Earnings Second Quarter after exit	\$3,100	\$3,540	\$3,150	\$3,282
Attained any credential (unduplicated)	21.5%	12.5%	22.0%	17.3%

**Source:** Prepared by legislative auditor’s staff using information provided by LCTCS.

<sup>11</sup> According to LCTCS, USDOE considers each metric met if it is within 90% of the negotiated target; therefore, it considers all of the metrics as met.



# Unemployment Insurance

## Unemployment Insurance Program

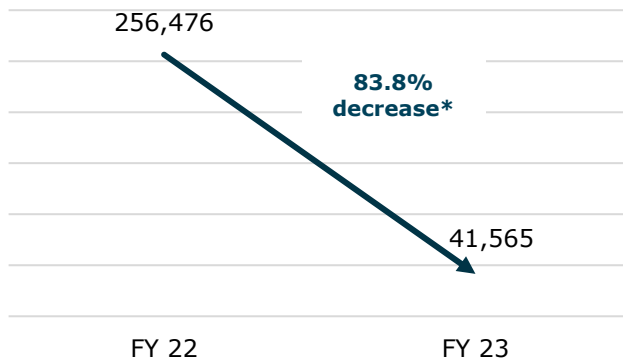


Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits provide workers whose jobs have been terminated, through no fault of their own, monetary payments for a set period of time or until they find new employment. UI benefits are paid as a matter of past employment and legal entitlement, and not on the basis of need. In Louisiana, employers pay all costs of unemployment insurance through a payroll tax or reimbursable program. Employees do not pay any part of their wages to finance the UI program. LWC administers Louisiana’s UI program. Individuals can receive benefits for up to 26 weeks and must be actively looking for work by contacting at least three different employers about job openings each week that they receive benefits. See Appendix B for a summary of eligibility requirements and Exhibit 18 for Unemployment Insurance program statistics for 2022 and 2023.

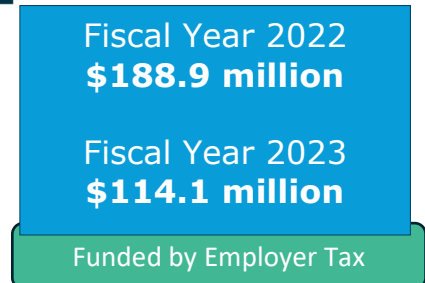
### Exhibit 18 Unemployment Insurance Program Statistics Fiscal Years 2022 through 2023



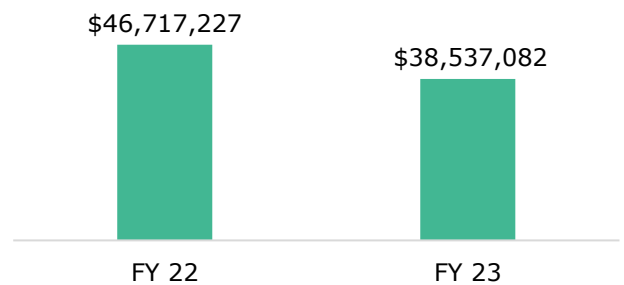
#### Individuals Receiving UI Benefits



#### Total Claims Paid (September 1, 2021 – August 31, 2023)



#### Administrative Costs (Federal Funds)



\* The significant decrease is due to the COVID-19-related UI programs ending July 31, 2021.  
**Source:** Prepared by legislative auditor’s staff using self-reported information from LWC.

LWC reports performance metrics on the UI program at various points throughout the year to USDOL. In fiscal year 2022, LWC did not meet four of the nine performance metrics, and in fiscal year 2023, it did not meet five acceptable levels of performance. See Exhibit 19 for Unemployment Insurance performance metrics for fiscal years 2022 through 2023.

<b>Exhibit 19</b> <b>Unemployment Insurance Performance Metrics</b> <b>Fiscal Years 2022 through 2023</b>			
Performance Metric	Acceptable Levels of Performance	FY 22	FY 23
Percent of first payments for the benefit year made within 14/21 days	≥87%	58.80%	65.50%
Percentage of Nonmonetary Determinations made within 21 days of the date of detection of any nonmonetary issue that had the potential to affect the claimant’s benefit rights	≥80%	66.50%	73.90%
Percentage of Nonseparation Determinations with Quality Scores equal to or greater than 95 points	≥75%	83.2%*	91.20%
Percentage of Separation Determinations with Quality Scores equal to or greater than 95 points	≥75%	70.6%*	70.00%
Average Age of Pending Lower Authority Appeals	≤30 Days	290.6 Days	289.9 Days
Average Age of Pending Higher Authority Appeals	≤40 Days	17.9 Days	7.4 Days
Percentage of Lower Authority Appeals with Quality Scores equal to or greater than 85 potential points	≥80%	89.50%	74.20%
Percentage of New Employer Status Determinations made within 90 days of the last day in the quarter in which the business became liable	≥70%	92.70%	92.50%
Assessment of the accuracy and completeness of the tax program. Pass if there are no more than 3 tax functions failing TPS in a year, and the same tax function cannot fail for three consecutive years.	Pass	Pass	Pass
* USDOL reported that Louisiana did not submit the entirety of required documentations for this measure for the respective period, and the calculations were therefore based on partial information. <b>Source:</b> Prepared by legislative auditor’s staff using information provided by USDOL.			

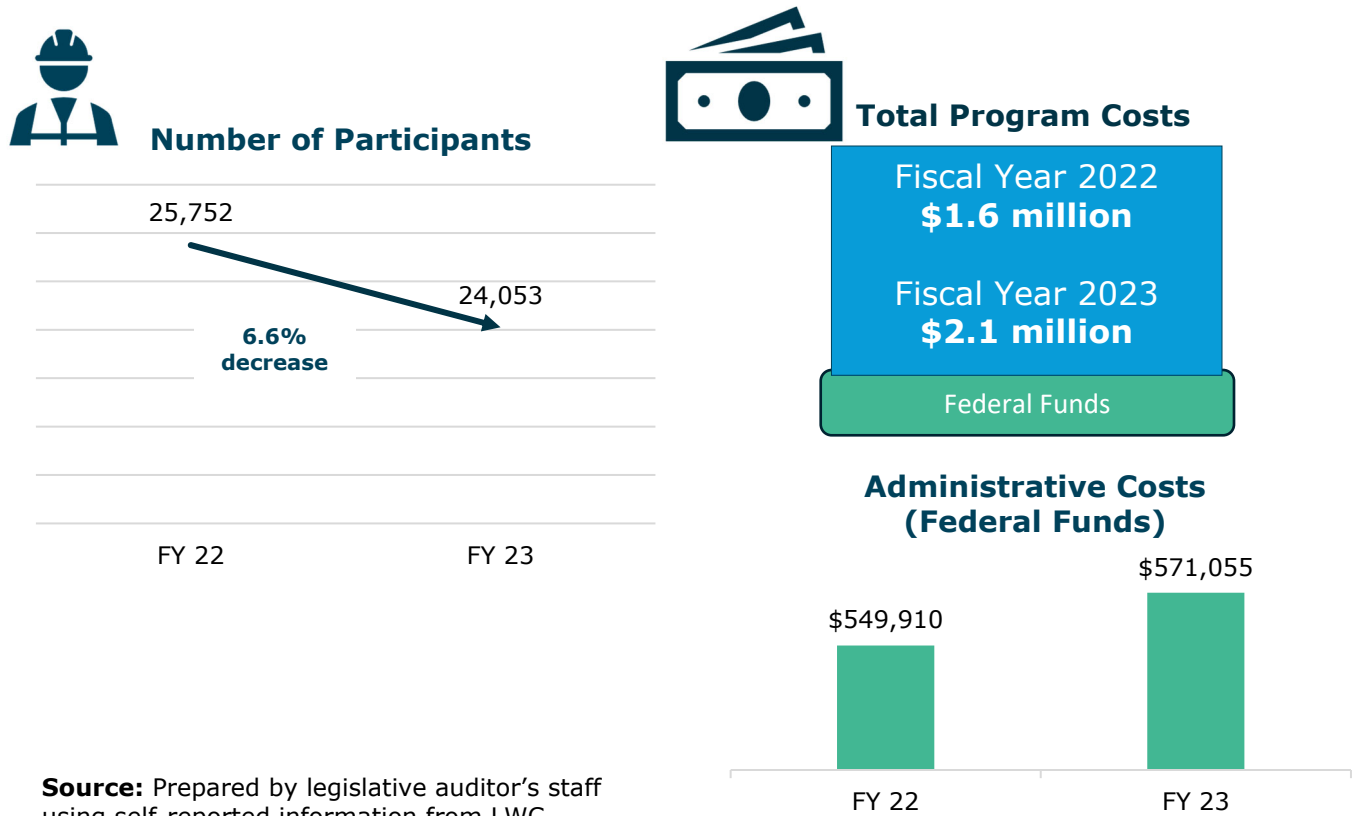
## RESEA Program

Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment Program



The RESEA program is a grant program for states to assist individuals receiving UI benefits. The funds are used to connect participants with in-person assessments and reemployment services through American Job Centers. RESEA’s target population is UI recipients likely to exhaust UI benefits. In Louisiana, some UI recipients are required to participate in RESEA in order to continue receiving UI benefits. See Appendix B for a summary of eligibility requirements and Exhibit 20 for RESEA program statistics for fiscal years 2022 through 2023.

### Exhibit 20 RESEA Program Statistics Fiscal Years 2022 through 2023



LWC reports performance metrics on the RESEA program to the USDOL. RESEA performance metrics do not have targets. See Exhibit 21 for RESEA performance metrics for fiscal years 2022 through 2023.

<b>Exhibit 21</b>								
<b>RESEA Outcome Performance Metrics</b>								
<b>Fiscal Years 2022 through 2023</b>								
<b>Metric</b>	<b>FY 22</b>				<b>FY 23</b>			
	<b>QTR 1</b>	<b>QTR 2</b>	<b>QTR 3</b>	<b>QTR 4</b>	<b>QTR 1</b>	<b>QTR 2</b>	<b>QTR 3</b>	<b>QTR 4</b>
Employment Rate of Participants 2 Quarters Prior	Program Shut down due to the COVID-19 Pandemic		57.1%	60.4%	60.1%	74.8%	66.4%	67.6%
Employment Rate of Participants 4 Quarters Prior			59.5%	63.3%	58.2%	61.3%	60.9%	74.6%
Median Earnings			\$6,384	\$7,409	\$7,669	\$8,783	\$9,369	\$8,955
<b>Source:</b> Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using information provided by LWC.								

## CCAP

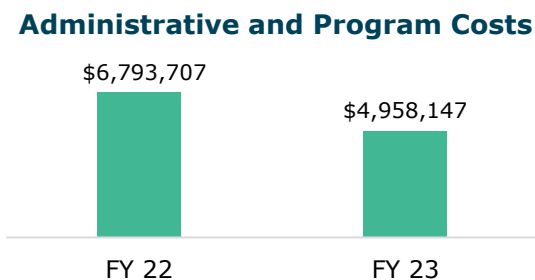
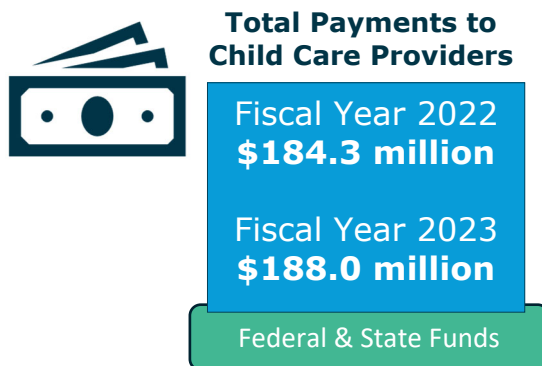
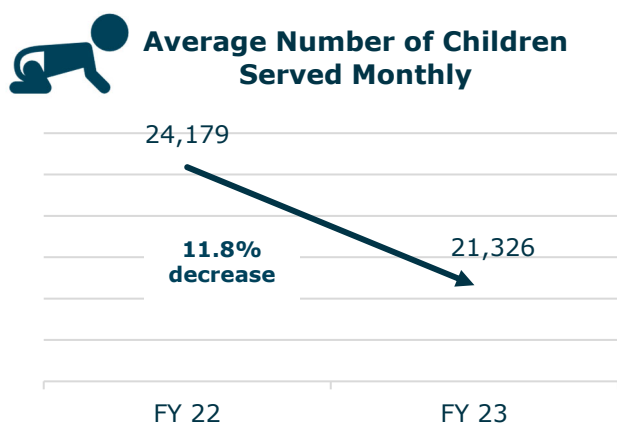
### Child Care Assistance Program



CCAP is funded through a combination of federal and state sources. The majority of CCAP funding, approximately 56.6%, comes from the federal Child Care and Development Fund. CCAP pays up to 100% of child care tuition to providers who care for children under the age of 13 or age 13-17 with a diagnosed disability or under court supervision, up to the current state daily rate which varies by age of child and child care type. In July 2015, the Louisiana Early Childhood Act transferred CCAP from DCFS to the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE).

STEP participants, children in foster care, and children in an Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership<sup>12</sup> are categorically eligible for CCAP benefits. Otherwise, eligible households must include a child under the age of 13, have a household income that does not exceed 85% of the state median income, and must be employed or attending a job training or educational program for a minimum average of 20 hours per week. Households must apply to redetermine their eligibility every 12-24 months depending on their eligibility criteria. See Appendix B for a summary of eligibility requirements and Exhibit 22 for CCAP statistics for fiscal years 2022 through 2023.

### Exhibit 22 CCAP Statistics Fiscal Years 2022 through 2023



**Source:** Prepared by legislative auditor’s staff using self-reported information from LDOE.

<sup>12</sup> This initiative enhances developmental services and supports for low-income infants and toddlers, and their families, by providing strong relationship-based experiences and preparing them for the transition into Head Start and preschool.

LDOE does not have federal performance metrics; however, the Administration for Children and Families, a division of the United States Department of Health & Human Services, monitors the program every three years, including collecting data. LDOE reports quarterly state performance metrics on the CCAP program, which are (1) the total annual child care payments and (2) the number of children receiving Child Care Assistance monthly.

## Objective 2: To identify areas for improved coordination among certain public assistance and workforce development programs.

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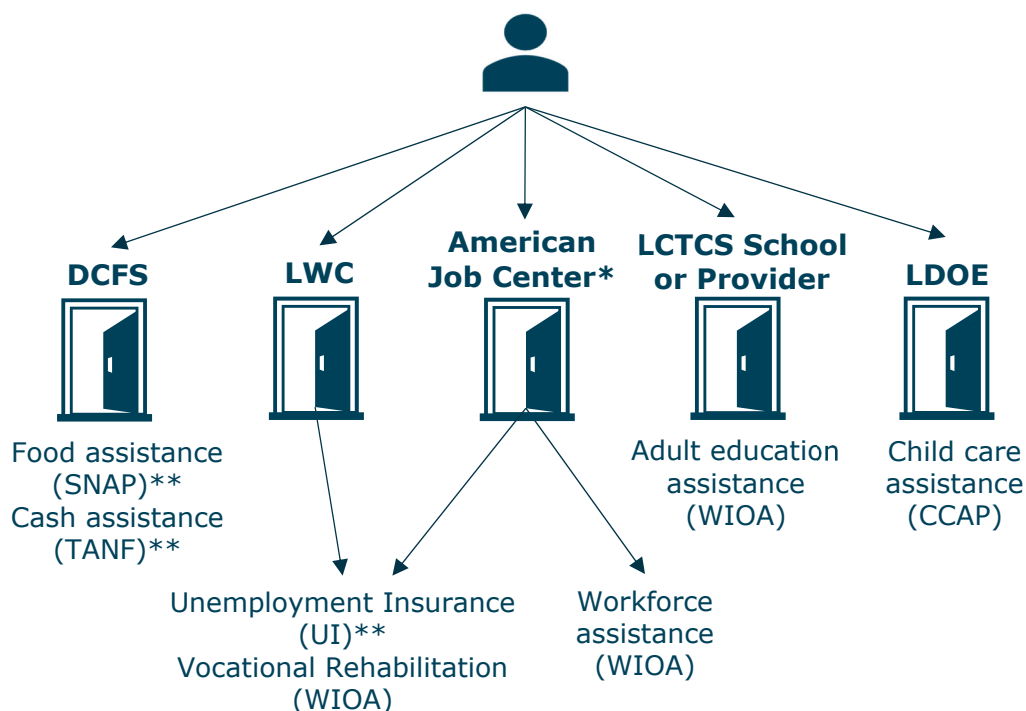
Overall, we found the following:

- **While Louisiana has a unified WIOA state plan, the state needs increased collaboration among agencies and stakeholders in order to implement a unified vision and plan for how to best coordinate and administer public assistance and workforce development programs. Improved coordination of these programs must flow from the governor and cabinet-level leadership.** Stakeholders with the various agencies and entities we interviewed as part of this review stated that any change to the current workforce development delivery system in Louisiana must be a priority of the governor.
- **Other states vary in the level of coordination that exists among agencies and programs. In Louisiana, potential strategies for improved coordination include increased public information and data and/or document sharing.** Several other states, including Colorado, Michigan, Texas, Utah, and Washington have websites that include a clear picture of available services and how to apply.
- **Measuring program outcomes could help the state determine which programs, and which contractors and providers, are most effective in meeting their goals.** Outcome information can assist state leaders in making more informed decisions regarding resources and funding.

As shown in Objective 1, public assistance programs in Louisiana are overseen and administered by various state agencies. In Louisiana, an individual may have to go through multiple doors to access services. When an individual needs public assistance, they must identify and contact the appropriate agency, complete an application process, and meet eligibility criteria, if applicable, to begin receiving benefits or services. In addition to the public assistance programs with a workforce development component discussed in this report, there are also other public assistance programs in additional state agencies, such as healthcare coverage programs through the Louisiana Department of Health, as well as housing assistance through the Louisiana Housing Corporation. The workforce development system in Louisiana is also vast, including industry, businesses, and community-based organizations, all of which have a role in the system. Exhibit 23 shows how an individual would access public assistance programs with a workforce development component in Louisiana.



### Exhibit 23 Access to Workforce-Related Public Assistance Programs



\* American Job Centers are overseen by Local Workforce Development Boards, who receive WIOA funding through LWC.

\*\* SNAP E&T is a subprogram of SNAP, STEP is a subprogram of TANF cash assistance, and RESEA is a subprogram of UI.

**Source:** Prepared by legislative auditor’s staff using information from DCFS, LWC, LCTCS, and LDOE.

Our findings and our recommendations are discussed in more detail in the sections that follow.

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**While Louisiana has a unified WIOA state plan, the state needs increased collaboration among agencies and stakeholders in order to implement a unified vision and plan for how to best coordinate and administer public assistance and workforce development programs. Improved coordination of these programs must flow from the governor and cabinet-level leadership.**

Federal law requires LWC to develop a state plan, which is intended to outline a strategic vision and goals for how its workforce development systems will achieve the purposes of WIOA. It is a four-year action plan to develop, align, and integrate the state’s systems, including the workforce development programs discussed

throughout this report, and provide a platform to achieve the state's vision and strategic and operational goals. Louisiana uses a combined state plan, which incorporates other workforce development programs into it with the idea of having a collaborative, unified vision to achieve the purposes of WIOA.

**While Louisiana has a combined WIOA state plan, agencies and stakeholders are not always working collaboratively.** Multiple stakeholders noted that state agencies develop their sections of the state plan with no coordination with the other agencies and stakeholders, and as a result, various sections of the plan are, in essence, copied and pasted into the document. In addition, we found that the intention of the WIOA state plan, especially in terms of co-location of various services, is not always what occurs at the American Job Centers. The WIOA state plan states that:

*Designing and implementing the technological infrastructure to execute a common intake/registration application with real-time triage processes that feature strong skills and transferability assessments, job matching and job referral, common case management and reporting systems across all partners is imperative to our ability to strengthen the consistency and quality of services provided by the system to job seekers and businesses.*

*The plan is also to create regional "career pathways" or customer flows for each customer base across systems (adults, dislocated workers, UI Claimants, long-term unemployed, adult education student, TANF/SNAP, vocational rehabilitation clients, veterans, older workers and individuals with additional barriers to employment including, the homeless etc.) to align programs and resources that lead to employment outcomes, particularly for those with barriers to employment.*

However, according to stakeholders and Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs), this level of coordination is not always happening at the American Job Centers. In a survey of LWDBs,<sup>13</sup> when asked about the effectiveness of the integration of WIOA with partner programs (i.e., SNAP E&T, TANF, STEP, etc.), eight (53.3%) of 15 responded "somewhat effective," six (40.0%) responded "somewhat ineffective," and one (6.7%) responded "very ineffective." No respondents selected "very effective." The survey of LWDBs showed that partner programs, such as SNAP E&T and TANF, are not consistently co-located in American Job Centers and not all LWDBs use common intake forms for applicants.

In addition, interviews with caseworkers in the various programs indicated that not all workers understood what programs and services were potentially available for individuals they serve. Caseworkers described varying levels of assistance they provide to help applicants navigate Louisiana's workforce development and public assistance systems. For example, caseworkers for some

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<sup>13</sup> According to a survey of all 15 LWDBs conducted during the [2023 LLA audit on the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#). Survey responses were received during December 2022 and January 2023.

programs indicated that they help individuals navigate these systems, such as assisting with applications, while others indicated they do not.

**In some instances, Louisiana has become more fragmented in terms of workforce development programs.** Fragmentation may make sense as some programs focus on certain types of populations that may have differing levels of need; however, even with fragmentation, agencies could benefit from more collaboration. The Governor’s Workforce Development and Higher Education Policy Council found that “Silos in government have led to inefficient workforce development... [as] the number of government entities and lack of clear direction in workforce development have led to a disjointed effort of multiple government silos rowing in different directions.”<sup>14</sup> For example, there are multiple workforce development programs within multiple agencies that may serve similar populations. Agencies often work in silos, due, in part, to the various federal funding mechanisms and related requirements, differing focus or philosophies about serving participants, or administrative changes. For example, the CCAP program was administered by DCFS until fiscal year 2016 when the legislature transferred it to LDOE. This shift in administration prioritized increasing access and affordability of child care statewide in order to better prepare all children for kindergarten.

In addition, between fiscal years 2016 and 2020, DCFS contracted with LWC to perform case management services for the STEP program; however, in 2021, DCFS began performing case management services instead because it wanted to make significant investments in employment and training opportunities by changing to a career pathway model. DCFS also contracted with LWC to provide services to ABAWDs (including through SNAP E&T) between 2016 and 2020.<sup>15</sup> In fiscal year 2023, DCFS branded its Workforce Development section<sup>16</sup> as its SET for Success workforce development initiative that aligned its workforce development programs and provides individuals and families in SNAP E&T, STEP, and Child Support E&T<sup>17</sup> the opportunity to participate in and gain the skills, education, or work experience needed to become employable and earn a living wage.

**The governor is uniquely positioned to direct increased collaboration and coordination of various agencies and entities administering workforce development programs throughout Louisiana.** The Workforce Investment Council (WIC) is created within LWC and serves as the state’s required workforce

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<sup>14</sup> <https://oneteam.la/2024/01/26/the-workforce-development-higher-education-policy-council/>

<sup>15</sup> In 2016, the former Governor issued JBE 2016-12, an executive order that required DCFS to contract with LWC to provide services to ABAWDs. However, in February 2020, the former Governor issued another executive order, JBE 2020-5, that rescinded the previous order. In October 2020, LWC’s contract with DCFS and requirements for mandatory SNAP E&T participation ended.

<sup>16</sup> DCFS began building a Workforce Development section with its Division of Family Support in fiscal year 2021.

<sup>17</sup> Child Support E&T is a no-cost program that provides employment and training services to the unemployed or underemployed noncustodial parents and custodial parents to help non-custodial parents who are not able to meet monthly court ordered child support obligation payments. Its purpose is to help parents with job training, job readiness, and education in an effort for them to sufficiently support their families. DCFS contracts with community-based organizations for the CS E&T program.

development board. Its membership is comprised of representatives of workforce partners and stakeholders.<sup>18</sup> Two of the WIC's purposes include (1) advising the governor on the needs of the state's employers and the state's workforce and strategies for continued improvement and (2) creating a common vision, a strategic combined state plan, and outcomes that will coordinate and integrate a workforce development delivery system to assure the greatest cooperation possible between public and private entities.

Stakeholders with the various agencies and entities we interviewed as part of this review stated that any change to the current workforce development delivery system in Louisiana must be a priority of the governor. The governor appoints 46 (86.8%) of 53 members of the WIC, which includes the governor or his designee, as well as Secretaries of LWC, DCFS, the Department of Economic Development, and the Department of Public Safety and Corrections. These agencies each have a role in administering workforce development programs or cultivating jobs and economic opportunity for Louisiana residents. LWDBs do not have a representative on the WIC. In addition, Louisiana has a large number of WIC members, higher than several states. For example, Florida has 35 members, Alabama has 34, and Texas has 19. While federal law<sup>19</sup> outlines requirements for WIC composition, it does not designate a specific number of members. Streamlining WIC membership may help the WIC function more effectively and efficiently. See Appendix D for a listing of WIC members by whom the member represents and who appoints them. Requiring increased collaboration amongst these agencies through the WIC could improve coordination and administration of these programs through various options discussed below.

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**Other states vary in the level of coordination that exists among agencies and programs. In Louisiana, potential strategies for improved coordination include increased public information and data and/or document sharing.**

As mentioned previously, Louisiana has various agencies administering workforce development programs. All 15 LWDBs responded that program integration could function more effectively through greater collaboration between LWC and partners at the state level, such as clarifying expectations through interagency policies. Stakeholders stated that Louisiana's workforce development system does not have centralization of oversight and administration of the system, resulting in duplication of effort across the various programs and not leveraging funding as much as possible.

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<sup>18</sup> WIC members must include the heads of state workforce and education agencies; high-ranking officials such as chief executive officers from business and industry, local government, and community organizations; and representatives of organized labor.

<sup>19</sup> 29 United States (U.S.) Code § 3111

**States have varying degrees of integration among their public assistance and workforce development programs.** In some states, public assistance programs related to food, healthcare, child care, and cash assistance are administered by multiple state agencies and have an integrated application portal, while workforce development programs, such as WIOA and unemployment insurance are administered by a separate agency. Other states, often ones with a Department of Health and Human Services, have that one agency oversee most public assistance programs (food assistance, cash assistance, healthcare, and child care assistance programs), while workforce development programs are administered by other agencies. One state, Utah, has a Department of Workforce Services that administers most public assistance programs and workforce development programs. States that have centralized portals include the following:

- **Colorado** – uses a centralized portal, Colorado PEAK, that outlines existing public assistance programs, guides individuals to programs they may be eligible for, and allows them to apply for multiple programs at once. The portal includes food assistance, cash assistance, healthcare coverage, child care assistance, energy assistance, and transit assistance. These programs are administered by multiple state agencies. The portal does not include workforce development programs through WIOA or unemployment insurance.
- **Michigan** – uses a centralized portal, Michigan Bridges, similar to Colorado, that shows multiple public assistance programs and allows individuals to apply for multiple programs at once. The portal includes food assistance, cash assistance, healthcare coverage, child care assistance, and state emergency relief. All of these programs are administered by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. The portal does not include workforce development programs through WIOA or unemployment insurance.
- **Texas** – uses a centralized portal, Your Texas Benefits, that shows individuals what programs they qualify for and allows individuals to apply for benefits. The portal includes food assistance, cash assistance, and healthcare coverage. All of these programs are administered by the Texas Department of Health and Human Services. The portal does not include workforce development programs through WIOA or unemployment insurance, which are administered by the Texas Workforce Commission.
- **Utah** – uses a centralized portal, myCase, through the Department of Workforce Services, which administers most public assistance programs, workforce development programs, child care assistance, and unemployment insurance in the state. Individuals can apply for benefits through the portal, including Medicaid, which is administered by the Department of Health and Human Services.

- **Washington** – uses a centralized portal, Washington Connection, that shows multiple public assistance programs and allows individuals to see what programs they qualify for and apply for benefits. The portal includes food assistance, cash assistance, healthcare coverage, child care assistance, and state emergency relief. These programs are administered by multiple state agencies. The portal also includes links to a wide array of other services, provided by both state programs and community providers.

**In Louisiana, there is not a centralized location, such as a webpage, that includes a clearinghouse of the various public assistance programs available in the state, how to access them, and general eligibility requirements.** As a result, individuals needing assistance may not have a clear understanding of how to access services. Caseworkers in the various programs may also not know what other services may be available to recipients or how to assist them in accessing needed services. The Louisiana Association of United Ways (LAUW) administers Louisiana 211, which provides individuals with available nearby services; however, not all caseworkers we interviewed knew about Louisiana 211. Several other states, as mentioned previously, have websites that include a clear picture of available services and how to apply. Some even help individuals determine what programs they may be eligible for. Exhibit 24 shows a snapshot of the Colorado PEAK website.

### Exhibit 24 Colorado PEAK Website



Source: [Colorado PEAK website](#)

Washington’s website, which is similar to Colorado’s, also includes a section that includes a wide variety of services, including those that are not included in the centralized application portal. Each service area link directs users to a resource page that lists both state-administered and external resources. Even if Louisiana did not further integrate public assistance programs, a website that citizens could use



to identify available services could improve overall access to these services. Exhibit 25 shows a snapshot of the Washington Connection website.

### Exhibit 25 Washington Connection 'Find Services' Webpage



Source: [Washington Connection](https://www.washingtonconnection.com/) website

Although many program requirements are federally driven, Louisiana could identify areas to help improve the user experience, such as data and information sharing. The Governor’s Healthcare and Hospitals Policy Council found that the state needs to “Explore ways to modernize and align the application and renewal process for Louisianans utilizing Medicaid, SNAP, and other public benefits. The multitude of regulations surrounding these programs create greater costs to the state and can be burdensome to those most in need.”<sup>20</sup> For example, each public assistance program has differing eligibility criteria and application processes, as well as the level of case management agencies provide to recipients. If an individual is receiving services from multiple programs simultaneously, they may have multiple caseworkers and varying eligibility requirements to navigate.

<sup>20</sup> <https://oneteam.la/2024/01/26/the-healthcare-and-hospitals-policy-council/>

However, individuals often have to provide these programs with the same or similar information based on our review of program applications,<sup>21</sup> which can be burdensome. For example, identifying information such as social security number, date of birth, name, address, sex, gender, and ethnicity were common across applications. While income information is also common, the extent of information requested and the income limits for eligibility vary across programs and can be challenging to navigate. For example, the income eligibility limit for TANF is below the monthly flat benefit amount,<sup>22</sup> and SNAP is 130% of the Federal Poverty Line (FPL) or 200% of the FPL for those broad-based categorically eligible,<sup>23</sup> while CCAP's limit is 85% of the state median wage. See Appendix B for a comparison of eligibility requirements for various programs analyzed as part of our review.

Regardless of the overall administrative structure of Louisiana's public assistance programs, there are some strategies that could improve coordination:

- **Implement, expand, and improve referral processes across public assistance and workforce development programs.** DCFS has a cooperative endeavor agreement (CEA) with LAUW to actualize a DCFS No Wrong Door Support Continuum, which is designed for its clients to access service providers through a robust referral functionality and provide data-driven insights about clients' needs and existing service gaps. The contract term is January 1, 2022, through December 31, 2024, for a total cost of \$8,210,000.<sup>24</sup>

The No Wrong Door CEA encompasses Louisiana 211,<sup>25</sup> which is a network offering access to health and human services available in an individual's area, and Unite Us, which is an infrastructure for referrals among agencies and providers. LAUW subcontracts with Unite Us.

To access 211, a person can call or text 211 and include their zip code. This will populate a list of vendors available in the area for the individual seeking services, which is built off of LAUW's archive of human services available throughout the state. In addition, LAUW has various dashboards on its website for information.

Some WIOA American Job Centers also use Unite Us; however, its use is not consistent across all centers. In addition, caseworkers with other agencies stated they do not have a referral process. Louisiana could expand the use of Louisiana 211 and Unite Us or a similar platform across other agencies in order to have a consistent referral process.

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<sup>21</sup> We reviewed applications for SNAP, FITAP, KCSP, WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker, Vocational Rehabilitation, and CCAP.

<sup>22</sup> As of January 2022, the monthly flat benefit amount was \$484 for a family of three.

<sup>23</sup> The FPL was \$30,000 for a family of four in 2023.

<sup>24</sup> DCFS funded this agreement with funds from TANF, SNAP, child support enforcement, Social Services Block Grant, State General Fund, and American Rescue Plan act of 2021.

<sup>25</sup> Louisiana 211 has been in existence for over 20 years and has a variety of initiatives and funding outside of the DCFS CEA.



- **Develop a digital citizen portal or platform to hold electronic documents and/or integrate applications.** Some states have developed digital citizen portals that allow a citizen to access and manage multiple state services, as well as upload necessary documents. For example, Utah uses UtahID, which is a type of identification, like a passport or driver license, that allows citizens of Utah to access multiple State government applications from one place. Utah’s integrated application portal uses the UtahID during the application process. South Dakota also has a MySD citizen portal that allows citizens to access a variety of state services, such as child care assistance, hunting licenses, and victims’ services, as well as maintain records for services received.

Currently, Louisiana has an integrated eligibility system that includes Medicaid, SNAP, and TANF, but it does not have a citizen portal where citizens can access multiple state services or upload documents that could be used for multiple programs. Management from multiple agencies stated that data sharing among agencies and the lack of access to data is a significant challenge. More effective data sharing, as well as integrating agencies’ technology and data systems to more easily share information, could make the application and renewal processes easier for citizens and increase the effectiveness of agencies’ processes.

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**Measuring program outcomes could help the state determine which programs, and which contractors and providers, are most effective in meeting their goals. Outcome information can assist state leaders in making more informed decisions regarding resources and funding.**

Defining and measuring success is an important component in determining whether programs are meeting desired goals and outcomes. Research is mixed on whether public assistance and workforce development programs are successful and often indicate that participants are not always moving towards self-sufficiency. For example, a 2023 Harvard study on public job training<sup>26</sup> showed that strong training programs are not differentiated from weak ones due to limited performance information on the provider level, and that public workforce development programs do not promote job quality as most programs train for low-wage occupations. In addition, a 2023 report from Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission in Virginia<sup>27</sup> found that few Virginians in poverty qualify for self-sufficiency programs, and that those who do rarely exit poverty or achieve self-sufficiency.

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<sup>26</sup> [“Navigating Public Job Training,” Harvard Project on Workforce, March 2023](#)

<sup>27</sup> [“Virginia’s Self-Sufficiency Programs and the Availability and Affordability of Child Care,” Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, October 16, 2023](#)

**Agencies administering public assistance programs do not always have performance measures or benchmarks that capture program outcomes. As a result, it can be difficult to determine whether programs are meeting their stated goals.** Many agencies have output measures, which track metrics that describe participants served or the program processes; however, programs do not always have meaningful outcome measures that help gauge program success. For example, if the goal of a program is self-sufficiency, metrics should address progress towards self-sufficiency. In previous LLA audits, we have found an absence of outcome measures or that existing outcome measures are not always sufficient to measure overall program success. For example, we found:

- **2021** - The current performance measures that DCFS uses to monitor and evaluate **TANF** programs are mostly output and process measures which are not useful in determining whether programs are effective at meeting TANF goals. For example, DCFS collects output measures, such as the number of individuals served and the number of sessions conducted, rather than measures to determine overall effectiveness of the programs. As a result, DCFS does not have a data-driven process to determine what TANF programs and initiatives to fund or what expenditures should count towards its maintenance of effort requirement.<sup>28</sup> According to DCFS, effective October 1, 2024, TANF will be reporting new federally-mandated outcomes that include employment during the second and fourth quarters after exit, as well as median wages.
- **2023** - Federal **SNAP E&T** performance outcome measures reported by DCFS show mixed results during FFYs 2018 through 2021. For example, median quarterly wages after program completion increased from \$3,225 in FFY 2018 to \$3,614 in FFY 2021, but the percentage of participants completing components<sup>29</sup> decreased from 70.0% to 40.8% over this same time. DCFS could better evaluate the effectiveness of components and providers by requiring performance outcome measures and targets in contracts and evaluating whether providers achieve those targets. While the purpose of SNAP E&T is to increase SNAP recipient's ability to obtain regular employment with the goal of becoming financially self-sufficient, neither FNS nor DCFS have developed specific targets for what defines "success" in the program.<sup>30</sup> According to DCFS, SNAP E&T is working with FNS to develop quarterly targets.

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<sup>28</sup> [Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Department of Children and Family Services, December 22, 2021](#)

<sup>29</sup> A SNAP E&T component is a broad category of employment and training activities defined in federal law and is comprised of specific types of employment and training offerings.

<sup>30</sup> [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Employment and Training, Department of Children and Family Services, April 5, 2023](#)

- **2023** - While the majority of participants who exited **WIOA** Title I and III programs in fiscal years 2019 and 2021 obtained employment after exit, their earnings were often lower than two to three quarters before program participation. However, being employed does not necessarily mean that participants' economic positions improved. Most WIOA participants did not have earnings after exit that were high enough to be self-sufficient. 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.<sup>31</sup>

**WIOA Standard Performance Indicators:**

- Employment second quarter after program exit
- Employment fourth quarter after program exit
- Median quarterly earnings second quarter after program exit
- Credential attainment
- Measurable skills gains

Aligning performance metrics across similar programs could help Louisiana determine which programs are most successful. A 2019 United States Department of Health and Human Services study<sup>32</sup> examining performance measures in self-sufficiency programs recommended developing common indicators within and across programs with consistent definitions and developing methods for setting performance targets that account for differences in program services. WIOA has standard performance indicators across its programs that Louisiana could build upon to incorporate indicators to measure self-sufficiency. For example, indicators measuring employment one year after program exits, job retention for 30 days, job entry, and wage growth could help determine overall self-sufficiency.

**Matter for Legislative Consideration 1:** The legislature may wish to evaluate the composition of the WIC and determine whether it should adjust state law to streamline membership.

**Matter for Legislative Consideration 2:** The legislature may wish to encourage the WIC to assess the various paths to services and evaluate where opportunities for collaboration exist.

**Matter for Legislative Consideration 3:** The legislature may wish to encourage an agency(ies) to develop a website that includes all public assistance programs and how to access them.

**Matter for Legislative Consideration 4:** The legislature may wish to address existing barriers to data sharing among state agencies and encourage technological integration where feasible.

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<sup>31</sup> [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Louisiana Workforce Commission, September 13, 2023](#)

<sup>32</sup> "Aligning Federal Performance Indicators Across Programs Promoting Self-Sufficiency: Key Considerations for Policymakers," (The EMPOWERED study), Mathematica, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, June 2019

**Matter for Legislative Consideration 5:** The legislature may wish to encourage agencies to develop targets and performance metrics that measure program outcomes.



## APPENDIX A: SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

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This report provides the results of our review of public assistance programs with a workforce development component. We conducted this review under the provisions of Title 24 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950, as amended. This review covered July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2023. Our analyses sometimes used information through September 30, 2023, for programs that reported on a federal fiscal year basis. Our objectives were:

- (1) To evaluate participation, costs, and outcomes for certain public assistance and workforce development programs in the state.**
- (2) To identify areas for improved coordination among certain public assistance and workforce development programs.**

To answer our objectives, we performed the following steps:

- Researched relevant federal and state laws, regulations, and policies regarding the administration of various workforce development programs, including Louisiana’s Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA) combined state plan.
- Met with program leadership and agency staff from the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC), Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE), and Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS) regarding the programs analyzed as part of this review.
- Obtained and analyzed documentation and statistics from LWC, DCFS, LDOE, and LCTCS regarding participation, expenditures, and performance indicators for 2021 through 2023, depending on the most current available data provided by the agency at the time of our analysis.
- Met with stakeholders who participate in the delivery of services through these programs, such as Adult Education providers, Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs), and the United Way.
- Researched and analyzed other states’ systems of delivering and administering public assistance and workforce development programs.
- Researched and analyzed past audits on public assistance programs with a workforce development component as part of this review, including past Louisiana Legislative Auditor audits.

- Analyzed Workforce Investment Council (WIC) membership requirements, including who appoints each member and what industry or function each member represents.
- Obtained and analyzed data from the United States (U.S.) Census Bureau (educational attainment, poverty, and public assistance) for Louisiana, other states, and the U.S. overall to determine the potential need for workforce development programs in Louisiana and how it compares nationally.
- Provided our results and conclusions to LWC, DCFS, LDOE, and LCTCS staff to discuss our conclusions and incorporated their feedback throughout the report.

## APPENDIX B: ELIGIBILITY COMPARISON

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The columns below are generally defined as follows:

- *Program* – the name of the program analyzed.
- *Income limits* – lists the income limits to be eligible for the program, if applicable.
- *Participant in other public assistance programs* – lists participation in public assistance programs that make an individual automatically eligible for the program or gives them priority.
- *Basic skills deficient* – applies to WIOA programs and means the individual computes or solves problems, reads, writes, or speaks English at or below the eighth-grade level or is unable to compute or solve problems, read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society.
- *Work eligible* – denotes whether a person being work eligible is required, if applicable.
- *Work status* – denotes whether a person needs to be working or looking for work, or how the individual became unemployed, if applicable.
- *Age* – lists the age(s) required to be eligible, if applicable.
- *Have Dependent* – denotes where having a dependent is a requirement, if applicable.
- *Benefit Time Limit* – lists the maximum amount of time an individual can be on the program, if applicable.



Program	Income Limits	Participant in Other Public Assistance Programs	Basic Skills Deficient	Work Eligible	Work Status	Age	Have Dependent	Benefit Time Limit
<b>SNAP</b>	Gross income standard 130% of federal poverty level  Gross income standard 165% of federal poverty level for elderly and disabled persons  Gross income standard 200% of federal poverty level for those Broad-Based Categorically eligible  Maximum resources of \$2,750 or \$4,250 for elderly and disabled persons	Exempt from resource limit if receiving SSI, FITAP, KCSP, STEP or Broad-Based Categorically Eligible.		No, except for work-eligible recipients	Working/ Student or looking for work, if work eligible			Active period before renewal (12-month certification; 36 months for elderly or disabled households with no income)  Three countable months in a 36-month period for able-bodied adults without dependents. There historically has been a waiver for this.
<b>SNAP E&amp;T</b>	(Same as SNAP eligibility)  Gross income standard 130% of federal poverty level	Exempt from resource limit if receiving SSI, FITAP, KCSP, STEP.		Yes	Working/ Student or looking for work	16 years of age or older		Active period before renewal.  Three countable months in a 36-month period for able-bodied adults without dependents. There historically has been a waiver for this.

Program	Income Limits	Participant in Other Public Assistance Programs	Basic Skills Deficient	Work Eligible	Work Status	Age	Have Dependent	Benefit Time Limit
<b>WIOA - Adult</b>	Priority given to family that does not exceed the higher of: the poverty line or 70% of the lower living standard income level	Given priority	Given priority	Yes	Nature of services assist with work search/ training	18+		
<b>WIOA - Dislocated Worker</b>				Yes	Unemployed through no fault of their own or who have received official layoff notice	18+		
<b>WIOA -Youth</b>	No, but can be a factor		No, but must need services	Yes, or student		14-24		
<b>WIOA - Wagner-Peyser</b>				Yes	Must be a job seeker			
<b>WIOA - Adult Education</b>			Yes	Yes		16+		
<b>WIOA - Vocational Rehab</b>			Must have a physical or mental disability which results in impediment to employment	Yes	Need assistance to obtain work			

Program	Income Limits	Participant in Other Public Assistance Programs	Basic Skills Deficient	Work Eligible	Work Status	Age	Have Dependent	Benefit Time Limit
<b>TANF - FITAP</b>	Below monthly flat grant amount  As of January 2022, grant amount was \$484 for family of three			No, except for work-eligible adults		Dependent must be under 18 or age 18 if enrolled full time in secondary education	Yes	24 months every 60 months, or 60 months in a lifetime
<b>TANF - KCSP</b>	150% federal poverty line for family. Each eligible child must pass a monthly income test of \$450					Dependent must be under 18	Yes	
<b>TANF - STEP</b>	Below flat grant amount	FITAP		Yes - required for work-eligible FITAP recipients		Under 60 or teen head of household	Yes	24 months every 60 months, or 60 months in a lifetime (FITAP)
<b>CCAP</b>	85% State Median Wage	FITAP, STEP, children in foster care, Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership		Yes		Dependent must be under 13 or 13-17 and disabled	Yes	May be certified up to 24 months
<b>Unemployment Insurance Program (UI)</b>				Yes	Actively seeking work			26 weeks

Program	Income Limits	Participant in Other Public Assistance Programs	Basic Skills Deficient	Work Eligible	Work Status	Age	Have Dependent	Benefit Time Limit
RESEA				Yes	Actively seeking work			26 weeks



## APPENDIX C: PARISHES WHERE SNAP E&T ABAWD WORK REQUIREMENT IS VOLUNTARY OR MANDATORY

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Voluntary	Mandatory
Assumption	Acadia
Avoyelles	Allen
Bienville	Ascension
Catahoula	Beauregard
Claiborne	Bossier
Concordia	Caddo
East Carroll	Calcasieu
Evangeline	Caldwell
Franklin	Cameron
Iberia	DeSoto
Iberville	East Baton Rouge
Jefferson	East Feliciana
Madison	Grant
Morehouse	Jackson
Orleans	Jefferson Davis
Ouachita	LaSalle
Plaquemines	Lafayette
Pointe Coupee	Lafourche
Richland	Lincoln
St. Bernard	Livingston
St. Helena	Natchitoches
St. James	Rapides
St. John The Baptist	Red River
St. Landry	Sabine
St. Martin	St. Charles
St. Mary	St. Tammany
Tangipahoa	Vermilion
Tensas	Vernon
Terrebonne	Webster
Union	West Baton Rouge
Washington	West Feliciana
West Carroll	
Winn	
<b>Source:</b> Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using information from DCFS' website.	



## APPENDIX D: WORKFORCE INVESTMENT COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

Representative	Appointed By	Number
Business and Industry	Governor	27
Organized Labor	Governor	11
Member of House	Speaker of the House	2
Member of Senate	President of the Senate	2
Parish and City Government	Governor	2
Chief Executive Officer of a Community Based Organization	Governor	1
Governor	Governor	1
Higher Education or Designee	Board of Regents	1
President of Louisiana Community and Technical College System	LCTCS Board	1
Secretary of Department of Children and Family Services	Governor	1
Secretary of Department of Economic Development	Governor	1
Secretary of Department of Public Safety and Corrections	Governor	1
Secretary of Louisiana Workforce Commission	Governor	1
Superintendent of Education	BESE	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>53</b>
<b>Source:</b> Prepared by legislative auditor's staff using information from state law.		