

WIOA Title 1 Service Delivery in Kansas: Independent Study

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) provides federal funding to states for workforce development. In Kansas, the Department of Commerce administers Title I programs for Adults, Dislocated Workers and Youth, providing education and training, supportive services, career assistance and connections to employers. Services are delivered through Local Workforce Development Boards within designated Local Areas.

KANSASWORKS State Board policy requires local boards to spend 40% of their WIOA allocation on training and supportive services. However, during the past two years, two Local Areas spent less than 1% to just over 17% of their WIOA allocations on these services. The current format of federal expenditure reporting makes it difficult to determine how remaining funds are being used. Local Board leadership has indicated that funds may support staffing, operations, rent and leverage for other funding opportunities.

Local Area Consolidation and Independent Study: On October 1, 2025, Kansas completed the merger of three Local Workforce Development Areas, reducing the number from five to three. Following the mergers, local economic development organizations, local chief elected officials and local workforce development board members requested an independent review to determine whether additional changes to local area boundaries could improve workforce service delivery. Commerce engaged an independent third party to evaluate WIOA Title I service delivery. The study compared Kansas with states having populations below 5 million and incorporated input from Local Workforce Development Board members and staff, local elected officials, economic development leaders and other workforce partners.

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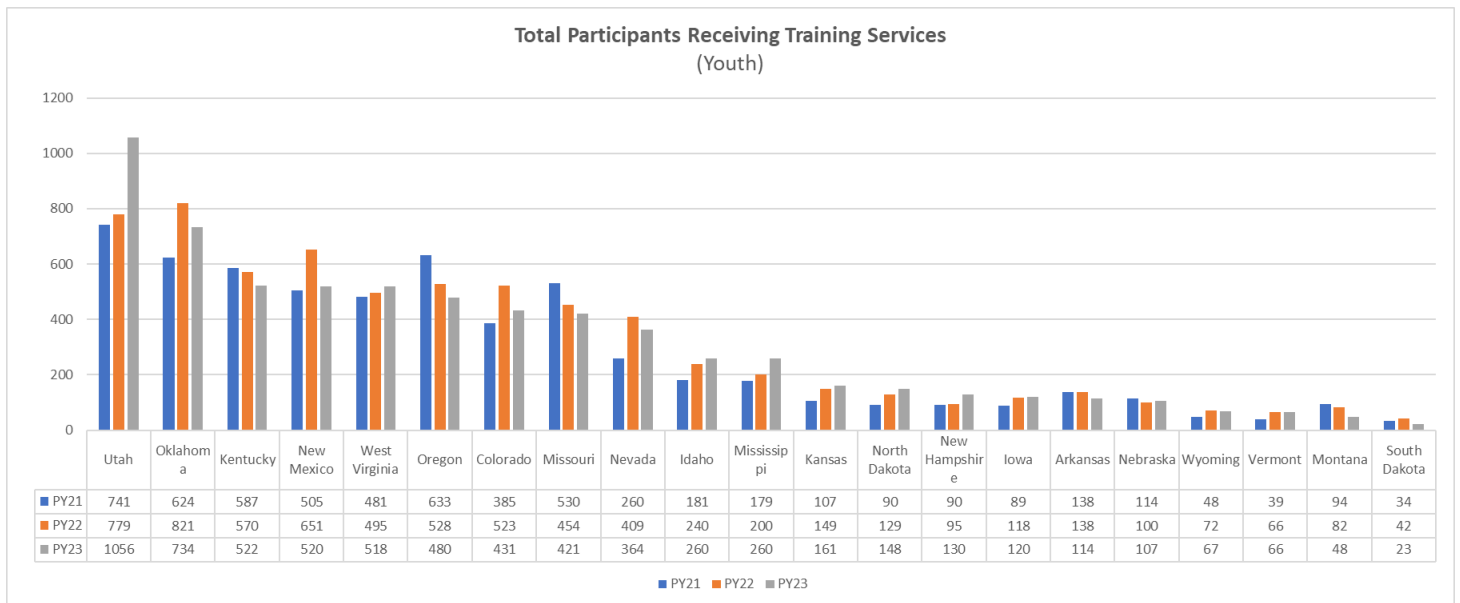
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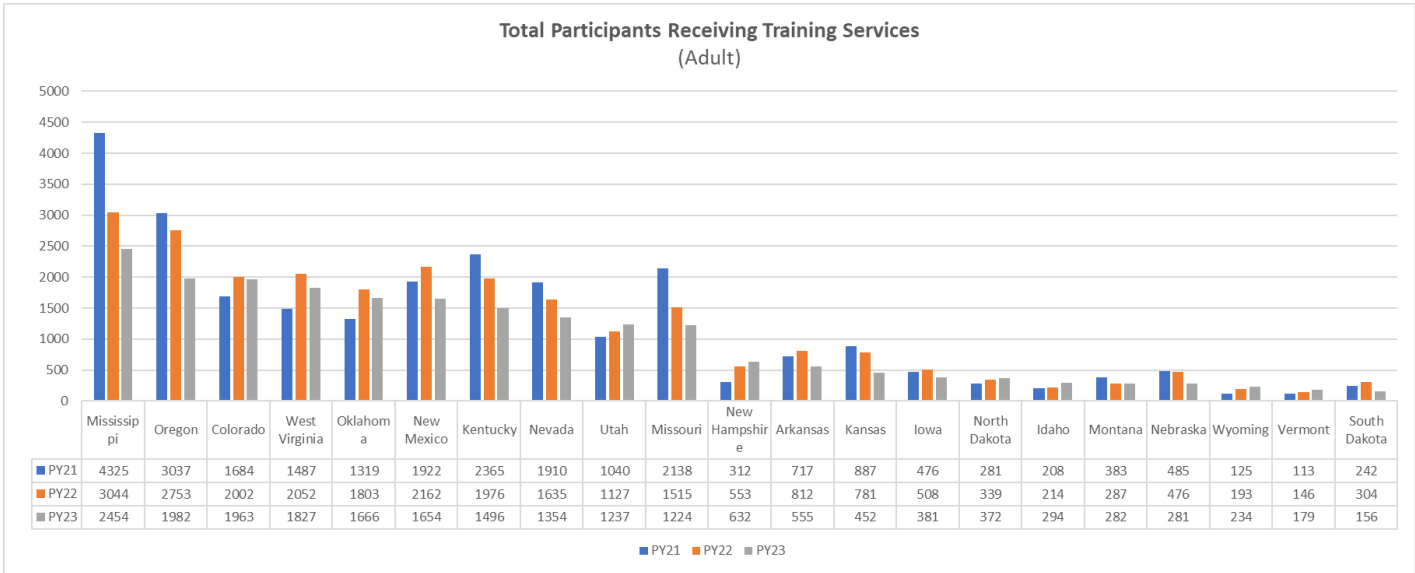


Key Findings of Study

Youth Programs: The study found that Kansas operates WIOA programs at a higher cost per participant than many peer states, with the greatest disparity in the youth program. Kansas' youth training costs were identified as a significant outlier, ranging from \$9,164 to \$10,237 per participant during 2021 - 2023 compared with approximately \$5,000 - \$7,500 in most peer states. Kansas served an average of 139 youth annually through training and supportive services, compared with 151 annually among comparable and neighboring states. Despite receiving a slightly smaller WIOA allocation, Utah served 2,576 youth with training and supportive services during the same period.

Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs: Kansas' adult training cost increased from \$6,390 per participant in 2021 to \$8,878 in 2023, compared with approximately \$1,000 - \$3,500 in most comparable states. Kansas had the highest training cost among the states examined in 2023. From 2021 - 2023, Kansas provided training and supportive services to an average of 706 Adults and dislocated workers annually, compared with 1,701 annually in comparable and neighboring states with similar WIOA allocations.





Study Recommendations

Based on these findings, the independent study recommended that Kansas transition to a single statewide Local Workforce Development Area, with the State Workforce Development Board serving as the Local Workforce Development Board. The recommended structure is intended to reduce administrative costs, strengthen accountability for federal workforce funds, and increase the number of Kansans receiving direct training and supportive services. The recommendations also included that the State Board develop a structure to solicit and consider input from local business and industry, training providers, and other partners.