



**CAPITAL AREA**  
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

# Operations Report

**September 2021**

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## Strategic Initiatives

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### Youth Advisory Councils

Youth Advisory Committees in Wake and Johnston Counties are continuing to develop strategies to address the barriers that youth face in completing their education and earning relevant degrees and credentials. Johnston County is continuing to develop a mentoring program for youth at risk of dropping out. The first cohort will be 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students at Smithfield Selma High School and working with career development counselors to reach potential students. In August, the Johnston County group applied for a grant from the N.C. Community Foundation, Louise Oriole Burevitch Fund to help start the program. The fund will make announcements of who they have funded in October. Wake Advisory Council has selected subcommittee members to develop a strategy to present to the larger group. They are focusing on how to recruit employers to provide work-based learning opportunities in less resourced schools. They are also organizing a series of focus groups with youth who are at risk of dropping out to better understand their current needs due to COVID.

### Reentry Programs

*Reentry Employment Opportunities Grant, Department of Labor*

Roads to Reentry, a U.S. Department of Labor grant, has continued to grow and serve clients, despite many challenges. In May, Capital Area requested a six month, no-cost extension to make up for the loss of recruitment in the early months of the pandemic when all the correctional and detention centers were locked down. The Federal Program Officer has informed us that the extension has been approved and we expect the formal notification shortly. This will extend enrollment until March 30, 2022, and the full program until March 30, 2023. **145 clients** have been enrolled and 73 placed into employment since the beginning of the program. The goal for the program is 188 participants enrolled and 132 placed into employment. With the extension, this goal should be easily met.

**Success Story:** Mr. Barnett served a 3-year sentence for possession of a controlled substance, which was his first offense. After enrolling in Roads to Reentry, he accepted responsibility for the choices that sent him to prison and had a desire to rebuild his life. He was on time for each session and came ready to work with a smile and, a positive attitude. COVID made it difficult to secure employment and his bills began to pile up. Mr. Barnett noticed job opportunities for forklift operators and requested our assistance with training. In September of 2020, after successfully completing forklift certification, he was hired by Blue Pack Marketing in Clayton. Not only has he maintained employment, but he has received three promotions.

### *Wake Local Reentry Council*

The Wake Local Reentry Council, funded by N.C. Department of Public Safety, is the first step for returning citizens in Wake County from jail or prison. The CAWD led Wake LRC has served **109 clients** in the past year. Wake LRC also received five donated chrome books to provide to clients from the non-profit HUBZone.



Beyond serving individual clients, the Wake LRC also coordinates the county-wide effort to support returning citizens. The membership in the council has grown by 23 new members and the most recent Wake LRC virtual meeting had over 70 attendees. The Wake LRC works with partners to expand services to clients. Legal Aid NC continues to provide expungement clinics monthly at Tillery to a full house. Wake County has begun offering Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) program office hours weekly at Tillery. This allows clients to apply for help with food expenses. This service was arranged by the Wake LRC and is open to any customer at the NCWorks Career Center.

### *Emerging Opportunities in Reentry*

CAWD has presented twice to the Wake County Public Safety Committee on our current work in reentry and ways to improve reentry in Wake County. The second presentation included a proposal on how to expand Reentry Services in Wake County to support more individuals and provide a wider range of services. All the County Commissioners attended the second presentation, asked excellent questions, and unanimously expressed support for the proposal. The proposal would include the addition of four more staff members, more housing and basic needs support, and a mentoring component. We have submitted a budget of an average of \$800,000 annually to expand the program.

### **CAREERS Grant**

On July 14, 2021 Capital Area submitted a grant proposal to the U.S. Department of Labor to expand services to dislocated workers in Johnston and Wake Counties. The grant was approved on August 20, 2021. The grant is for \$1,927,28.00 and started on August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021 and will run for 24 months. The goal is to serve 250 dislocated workers with a focus on long-term unemployed and individuals from historically marginalized communities. This work will be carried out by expanding virtual tools such as Access NCWorks, Virtual Reality career exploration, and technology to offer virtual workshops. The proposal also addresses the mental health challenges faced by long-term unemployed. The NCWorks Career Center will be able to hire a Clinical Social Worker to meet with job seekers and assist them with mental health challenges related to seeking and securing employment. Finally, the grant funds will provide for additional staff at the Center to focus on serving dislocated workers in person and virtually through extended hours with Access NCWorks. Services of the program will be offered at the NCWorks Career Centers in Wake and Johnston and managed by the One-Stop team.

## **Business Engagement**

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### **WRAL Capital Area Career Expo**

CAWD's annual WRAL Capital Area Virtual Career Expo will be held November 4<sup>th</sup> from 10am – 2pm. CAWD will hold this event on the virtual recruitment platform (Premier Virtual). A new strategy for this year's event includes a collaboration with Wake Technical Community College to promote this event to their students and alumni.



### **CARES BioWork Student Hiring Event**

The CARES funded BioWork training is offered in collaboration with the NCBiotech Center, CAWD, and Wake Technical Community College. CAWD is hosting a virtual event on November 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> to connect participating students to full-time jobs and employers who will support their career goals within the life sciences industry.

### **Incumbent Worker Training**

Three applications totaling \$25,537 were approved in September:

- Silver Linings for Seniors
- Consolidated Asset Recovery Systems
- Braven Environmental

### **Fujifilm Talent Recruitment & Strategy (ongoing)**

Since the kickoff Strategy Workshop in June, CAWD has participated in two subcommittees: Recruitment & Staffing and Training. The subcommittee work is currently focused on identifying and connecting the appropriate support for their talent needs with the economic development partners. This work directly supports Fujifilm Diosynth Biotechnologies' expansion announcement of 725 new jobs for their future facility in Holly Springs.

### **Economic Development Letters of Support**

CAWD has provided 6 letters of support and 1 RFI from June 2021 to September 2021 projecting 3,308 new jobs. These organizations represent life sciences, manufacturing, financial services, and information technology. Additionally, CAWD was introduced to the team at HedgeServ as they work to begin operations in Wake County. We were also introduced to Biocair who has an existing operation in Cary and is looking to possibly expand.

Staff and leadership are in the process of developing action plans based on the items identified. Action plans will be completed by the end of September. At that time work will begin on putting the action plans into place.

## **WIOA Youth & Young Adult Services**

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Data: April 1, 2021 – June 30, 2021

Narrative: July 2021 to current

### **NCWorks/NextGen Strategic Planning**

Capital Area staff and NCWorks/NextGen Center leadership started the process for strategic planning this year. The process began with a SWOT analysis to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and, threats in each Center. Each manager included center staff to get their input and ideas. Once the SWOT analysis was completed, everyone identified three low



hanging fruit (items that could be accomplished quickly with little resources but makes a big impact) and three high hanging fruit (items that may take more time and resources to accomplish).

Once these items were identified, everything was combined into one document and categorized. This helped to identify items that were similar and provided a basis for priority. The final seven categories (in no particular order) are: Text Messaging, Social Media/Marketing, Equipment/Technology, Employer/Business Relations, Professional Development, Resources/Services and Staffing.

## **YouthBuild**

### **Who Build? We Build! Who (are) We? YouthBuild!**

The current YouthBuild grant will end on September 30, 2021. The participants that are in their one year follow up phase will receive a notification reminder of the end date. In the notification, they will receive information on available resources to continue any education goals as well as job search. Capital Area YouthBuild met its enrollment goal. The program did well in certifications, the number that entered employment and the number that received leadership training. There is still optimism for the GED goals! The youth continue to work on their GED goals at the NextGen Center.

The chart below lists the goals and outcomes of the program. The GED attainment and construction hours completed fell a little short of the expectation. In North Carolina, individuals are required to pass 4 tests to complete their GED. Although we had only 33% to complete their GED, many participants were only one or two tests away from completion. Most of them were lacking math which has been a challenge. All participants that had not yet met their goal were referred to NCWorks NextGen to continue their GED studies at the end of their time in the YouthBuild program.

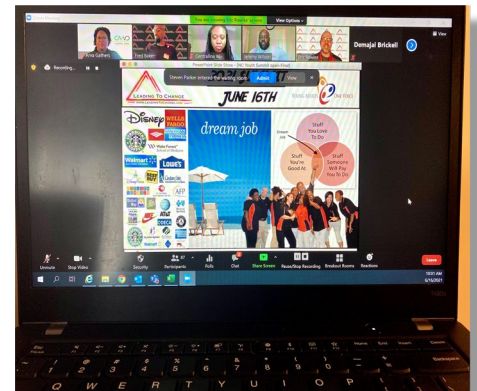
Participants had the opportunity to earn 320 work experience hours through Habitat for Humanity of Wake County. After the first cohort, the program received feedback from Habitat that it would be helpful if participants were better prepared for the work experience prior to participating in it. As a result, additional requirements were established before a participant could move on to the work site. Some participants were delayed in starting their work experience and therefore, had a reduction in the number of hours they could complete. Another contributing factor to the reduction in work experience hours available was allowing the participants the ability to work on their GEDs one or two days a week, instead of a full work week. This also reduced the number of hours available for participants to complete work experience hours. Some participants decided that working in construction was not a fit for them and made the decision to not complete the work experience.

## YouthBuild Goals

Measure	Goal	Actual	% of Goal
Enrolled	60	60	100%
HSD or GED Received	33	11	33%
PACT Certification	33	46	139%
320 hrs Construction Completed	50	34	68%
Leadership Development Rec'd	50	51	102%
Entered Employment/Education	40	40	100%

## NCWorks NextGen

- The NC Youth Summit Committee hosted its First Virtual NC Youth Summit event on June 16th. The virtual event welcomed over 200 registered participants from 16 workforce development boards throughout the State. The workshop facilitator, Leading to Change, offered the following workshops: Navigating work/life balance during the COVID-19 pandemic, I am Zoomed Out...Now What?! and The (My) top five takeaways from the COVID-19 pandemic. Wake and Johnston county youth got the opportunity to attend and enjoyed this year's virtual summit.



**2021 Virtual Youth Summit**



**NextGen Table at the Community Resources & Awareness Fair**

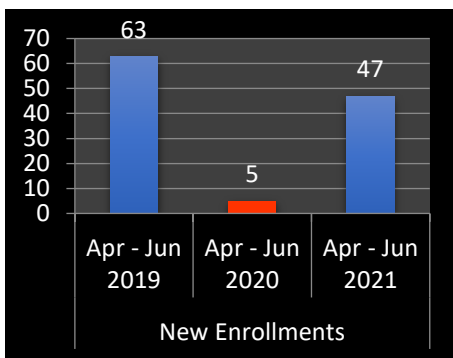
- Our NextGen program strives to get out into the community and spread the word about the program. NextGen Johnston hosted a table at the Community Resources & Awareness Fair on August 20<sup>th</sup>. This event was hosted by Alliance Health and the Johnston Community Collaborative for Youth & Families.

### NextGen Wake County New Location

The NextGen Center in Wake County moved into their new, larger location at 1800-H Tillery Place in Raleigh on July 6, 2021. The new location will allow them to serve more youth and provide more enhanced services to these youth. NextGen staff plan to host activities such as workshops, employer interviews, job fairs, pre-apprenticeship programs, high school equivalency, and computer courses. Many activities, such as the workshops, will take place in a hybrid environment such as training rooms that can be used as a computer lab or a regular classroom. Laptops will be used throughout the Center, so the youth can be mobile to meet with their Youth Advocate, study for tests, etc.

### WIOA Youth Program Data Summary: April – June 2021

(Data reflects the impact of COVID-19 during this period. Since reopening, numbers continue to rise but are still low. Centers continue to serve youth both virtually and in-person with safety precautions.)



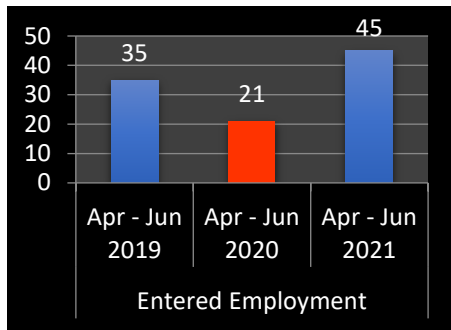
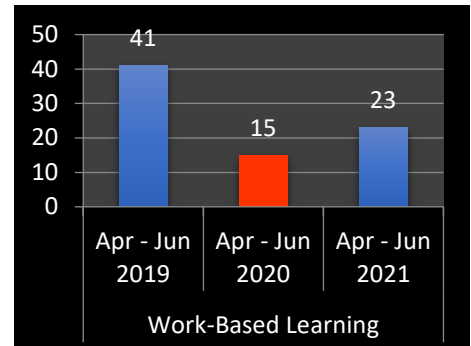
### Total New Enrollments: 47

Enrollments for the third quarter of the program year are up 840% from last year during the same time period. Enrollments have continued to increase as the NextGen Program staff continue to adjust their outreach efforts for new enrollments amid the COVID environment. Last year this time the enrollments numbers were impacted by the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and the closure of the Centers.



**Work-based Learning Opportunities: 23**

Work-based learning opportunities includes on-the-job training, internships, and work experience. We are starting to see more OJT and WEX opportunities become available for youth. The numbers from this period increased by 53.3% over the same period last year. We expect this number to continue to grow as more businesses return to normal business operations.



**Entered Employment: 45**

Employment opportunities can be either part-time or full-time. There was a significant increase of 114.3% from last year this time mainly due to so many employers needing workers so bad. It is providing the youth with various opportunities, so they have options available to them. Most of the jobs obtained are essential worker positions.

**NCWorks Career Centers (NCWCC)**

Data: April 1, 2021 – June 30, 2021

Narrative: June 2021 to current

- The Capital Area NCWorks Career Center (NCWCC) system is continuing to operate in Phase II of its Temporary Operational Plan to ensure the safety of visitors, partners, staff, and customers. The Temporary Operational Plan has reimplemented the mask mandate based on CDC guidelines. Customers, center staff, visitors and partners are required to wear masks while in the centers. In addition, they must follow the 3 W’s, and other CDC recommended protocols and guidelines. In addition, the NCWCCs located on Tillery Place and in Johnston County continue to operate with modified hours of operation Monday – Friday, 8:30 am – 5:00 pm. The NCWCCs located in Zebulon, Fuquay, and Wake Forest are operating by appointment and virtually to serve their customers. The Swinburne location has not reopened to the public yet; however, customers are provided services virtually.
- On July 16, 2021, Capital Area Workforce Development hosted its Annual Kick-Off for the NCWCC system. This event was hosted virtually and included a day of training for staff.

The training included topics such as Performance, Capital Area updates, Serving Employability Assessment Interview (EAI) program and Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program customers, Policy and Procedures, etc. The Kick-Off also included individualized breakout sessions for NextGen and the NCWCC Functional Areas (Talent Engagement (TE), Talent Development (TD) and Talent Employment Solutions (TES)).

- Under the direction of the board’s Customer Success Committee, Capital Area staff contacted AARP to express an interest in partnering with them on their BACK TO WORK 50+ program. AARP Foundation launched BACK TO WORK 50+ to increase the services and resources available to 50+ job candidates to facilitate their access to in-demand jobs. AARP works with key partners to integrate local workforce services, and employer engagement to connect 50+ job candidates to jobs in their communities. Staff completed the AARP Foundation BACK TO WORK 50+ Program Network Partner Application and was approved in August 2021. CAWD plans to launch the program in the Fall 2021.
- Throughout the year, the One-Stop System team conducts Quality Assurance Reviews for all of the Career Centers in the Capital Area. There are three components evaluated for the full Quality Assurance Review noted as follows: programmatic, fiscal and center operations. Partial reviews evaluate Center operations only. Results from this quarter’s reviews are as follows:
- NCWorks Career Center – Fuquay Varina – August 26, 2021- Partial Results: Above Meeting Expectations

### **SkillsBuild**

Since going live in March 2021, 1,044 customers have registered for IBM SkillsBuild, 2,308 learning hours have been completed, 2,936 learning activities have been completed, and 26 learning badges (achieved after completing a prescribed menu of courses) have been obtained by customers. IBM SkillsBuild continues to be a valuable resource for individuals seeking to upskill, job seekers, and entrepreneurs.

Individuals 18 years of age or older can submit a SkillsBuild Access Request form on the Capital Area Workforce Development (CAWD) website at <https://capitalareancworks.com/skillsbuild/>. The SkillsBuild main platform has approximately 100 badges that an individual can earn, claim through the Acclaim open badge software, and post to their professional social media profiles, such as LinkedIn. SkillsBuild is a free learning resource for users to access and an excellent way to build knowledge and upskill.

### **Finish Line Grant**

The collaboration between Capital Area Workforce Development, Wake Technical Community College (WTCC) and Johnston Community College (JCC) continues to be successful. The

community colleges continue to identify eligible students. They run reports to gather a list of all students that are at least 50% complete with their program of study and emails are sent out to these targeted students informing them of the Finish Line Grant and the eligibility criteria.

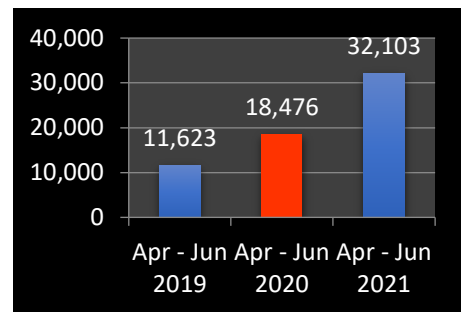
By the end of Year 3 (June 30, 2021) of the Finish Line Grant, Capital Area has approved 149 grants and paid out over \$79,000 to vendors to help students in need. We have provided funds for assistance with vehicle repairs, rent, utility bills, etc. We continue to utilize our virtual processes for providing Finish Line Grant services to students. This enables us to continue to provide services, while keeping students and staff safe.

**WIOA NCWorks Career Center Program Data Summary: April – June 2021**

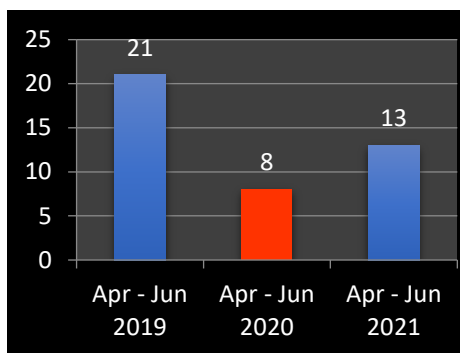
(Data reflects the impact of COVID-19 during this period.)

**Total Participants Served: 34,577**

Participants served represent traffic across all of the Capital Area NCWorks Career Centers. There was an increase of 73.8% in customer numbers this quarter over the same time period last year representing 13,627 individuals. Individuals seeking services continue to increase. We continue to serve customers virtually through the Access NCWorks Contact Center using phone, chat, and email. This method of engagement has been more convenient for many of our customers.



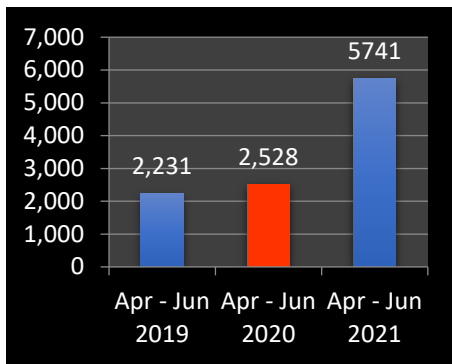
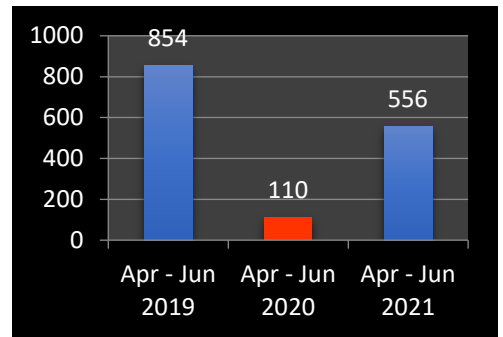
**Total Work-Based Learning Opportunities: 13**



These work-based learning opportunities include on-the-job training, internships, and work experience. Work-based learning is a more effective way to get job seekers back to work quickly. It is a 62.5% increase over the same period last year (which was impacted by COVID-19). Work-based learning activities are continuing to increase as more businesses are starting to resume normal operations.

**Total Employment Results: 556**

Employment results are real-time and are self-reported by customers and employers. There was an increase of 405.5% over the same timeframe last year. These numbers also increased from 519 last quarter (January – March 2021) to 556 this reporting period. It is anticipated that this number will continue to rise as more people return to the workforce.

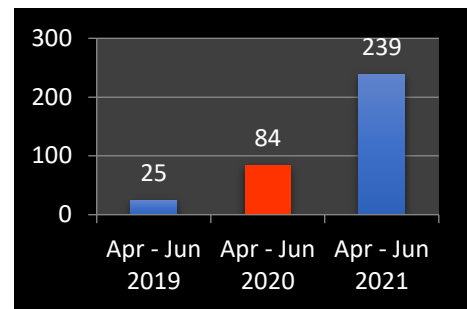


**Access NCWorks Contact Center - Calls: 5,741**

Access NCWorks contact center continues to be a valuable resource for customers during the COVID-19 pandemic. There was an increase of 127.1% in calls over the same timeframe from last year. Most of the calls from customers during the start of the pandemic were related to Unemployment Benefit questions, but there continues to be a spike in customers calling about the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program, Career Services, and Scholarship related services.

**Access NCWorks Contact Center - Chats: 239**

As a part of the NCWorks contact center, chats are received by staff. There was an increase of 184.5% over the same timeframe from last year. Staff can quickly answer questions and direct customers to online resources through chat. It is a real time resource that is convenient for the customers.



## COVID-19 Special Projects

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### National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG)

Capital Area received \$693,160 in National Dislocated Worker Grant funding beginning in July 2020 to assist with serving individuals impacted by COVID-19. This funding provides flexibility in responding to and recovering from unexpected events that cause large-scale job loss that exceed the capacity of the local area to address with formula resources. Capital Area is using the funds to serve 288 dislocated workers by providing them with occupational skills training, supportive services (transportation, work-related work equipment/supplies), and work-based learning (primarily On-the-Job Training (OJT)). The funding is for two-years ending June 30, 2022. At the end of the first year of managing the grant, we are already at 91% of the goal for the number of participants in career and training services.

Capital Area NDWG COVID -19 July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021	
Number of Participants in Career and Training Services	263
Number of Participants who Received Training	86
Number of OJTs	19
Number of Participants Receiving Supportive Services	19

### Finance

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Below is a financial status summary report for the period July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021 for CAWD funding. As Program Year 2020 (PY20) has been closed, the WIOA funding streams for Adult (92%) Dislocated Worker (84%) and Youth (92%) are expended. COVID-19 pandemic has impacted our operations by slightly dropping the overall WIOA activities during this program year. This along with the influx of Dislocated Worker Contingency funds and NDWG COVID-19 grant (59%) helped us avoid cost overruns that were previously projected. Infrastructure Cost grant funding (nearly \$302,000) was fully utilized to pay for occupancy costs, computer equipment and software in the Adult centers that were traditionally paid with Adult and Dislocated Worker funding.

Roads to Reentry grant (48%) commenced its second year of operations and is right on track and YouthBuild program (95%) is set to close by September 30, 2021. CARES Act funding (\$1,983,868) expired in March 2021 has overall expenditure rate of 75% within 7 months of operation that helped us expand COVID-19 related workforce services among community-based organizations in Wake County. These services included Emergency Youth Employment (60%), Wake Partners (83%) and Wake Cares (68%). Other grant activities include \$377,740 Training & Technical Assistance grant from NC DWS, \$150,000 local Reentry grant (2021) from NC DPS, \$245,731 Finish Line grant from DWS, and \$53,700 from NC Biotechnology Center which was utilized to conduct biotechnology career exploration program for NC workers who lost their job due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

CAPITAL AREA CONSORTIUM - FINANCIAL STATUS REPORT - YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2021				
				100.0%
ACTIVITY	AVAILABLE	SPENT	BALANCE	% EXPENDED
TITLE I ADULT	\$1,547,756.00	1,419,581.06	128,174.94	92%
TITLE I DISLOCATED WKR	1,392,374.51	1,163,964.84	228,409.67	84%
TITLE I YOUTH	1,583,092.51	1,464,116.30	118,976.21	92%
WIOA ADMINISTRATION	606,318.84	480,436.34	125,882.50	79%
YouthBuild USA 2017 (DOL)	1,080,000.00	1,025,844.37	54,155.63	95%
Roads To Re-Entry Project Grant USA 2019 (DOL)	1,500,000.00	717,170.46	782,829.54	48%
Second Chance at Success Initiative Pilot (Local)	50,000.00	48,992.00	1,008.00	98%
NextGen Sector Patnership Grant	50,315.00	50,315.00	-	100%
Finish Line Grant - FLG CAWDB	245,731.54	150,439.66	95,291.88	61%
State Leadership Training Grant	97,912.50	84,252.35	13,660.15	86%
Business/Employment Services Grant	50,000.00	3,417.50	46,582.50	7%
Infrastructure Cost Grant 2020	302,594.65	302,594.65	-	100%
Infrastructure Cost Partner Fees	34,653.81	34,653.81	-	100%
DPS Local Re-Entry Grant 2020	117,473.02	117,473.02	-	100%
DPS Local Re-Entry Grant 2021	150,000.00	76,502.04	73,497.96	51%
House Wake COVID-19 Grant	100,090.00	87,419.00	12,671.00	87%
NDWG COVID-19 Grant from NC DWS	693,160.00	411,563.23	281,596.77	59%
CARES Act - Youth Employment Grant - Wake County	688,362.54	410,706.85	277,655.69	60%
CARES Act - Wake Partners Grant - Wake County	1,244,484.46	1,038,087.43	206,397.03	83%
CARES Act - Wake Cares Grant - Wake County	51,021.00	34,710.59	16,310.41	68%
NC Biotechnology Center Grant 2020	53,700.00	53,700.00	-	100%
Training & Technical Assistance Grant - DWS	377,740.00	8,583.88	369,156.12	2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$12,016,780.38</b>	<b>\$9,184,524.38</b>	<b>\$2,832,256.00</b>	<b>76%</b>

NEW FUNDING AFTER JUNE 2021	AVAILABLE	SPENT	BALANCE	% EXPENDED
CAREER-Dislocated Worker Grant - USDOL	1,927,284.00	0	1,927,284.00	0.00%
Statewide Youth Initiative Grant - DWS	100,000.00	-	100,000.00	0.00%
NC Biotechnology Center Grant - Additional	4,600.00	-	4,600.00	0.00%