

Regional Council of Public Officials

"Community Development Through Regional Cooperation"



PY 2019

**Impact
Report**

**Workforce
Development**

DEPARTMENT REPORT

About Two Rivers Regional Council

Two Rivers Regional Council of Public Officials (TRRC) began receiving federal funds in 1976 when the Weatherization Program was implemented. The second federal grant TRRC received was in 1989 from the US Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration. The Two Rivers Council Foundation was incorporated in November 1989 as a 501(c)(3) to support programs that benefit the poor by identifying the needs, providing goods and services, and financial aid.

The mission of TRRC is to “Provide leadership and planning for units of local government to promote economic development.” The mission of Two Rivers Community Action Agency is to “Strengthen Communities by reducing poverty through financial assistance, education, and training.”

Two Rivers Regional Council provides services to Adams, Brown, Pike, and Schuyler counties. Since 1974, TRRC has been offering community and planning services to West Central Illinois. As a member of Illinois Association of Community Action Agencies, TRRC provides many services to the low income members of our community. As a member of Illinois Association of Regional Councils, TRRC provides community development and planning assistance to units of local government.



TRRC is an agency established by intergovernmental agreements between Adams, Brown, Pike, and Schuyler counties in Illinois. Its activities are funded by membership dues, state and federal grants, and administrative fees received for providing services. The Governing Board includes county and municipal representatives and members representing various citizens' interests.

The Community Development Department provides assistance to county, city, village, and special districts for planning including land use, housing, recreation, economic development, environment, solid waste management, and other areas. TRRC offers programs including: Workforce Development, Grant Management, and Planning. TRRC provides staff to develop and administer programs and policies which further the efforts of local governments and aid the economically disadvantaged throughout the region. Community Action includes programs like: The Home Buyer Program, Food Pantry, Reach Out Centers, Energy Assistance, and Workforce Investment.

Two Rivers Economic Development District (TREDD) is an inter-governmental entity that provides planning and technical assistance to counties and communities within the counties of Adams, Brown, Cass, Morgan, Pike, Schuyler, and Scott in Western Illinois.

The primary purpose of the TREDD is to develop a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the region and oversee its implementation. The TREDD also provides low-cost planning services to current member counties and communities and services to non-member counties and communities on a contractual basis.

Workforce Development Department

TRRC Workforce Development seeks to prepare individuals to embark on successful career paths to help them become self-sufficient by providing personal and employment skill development to meet the employment need for our area. This mission is accomplished through our various workforce programs. The programs we offer allow us the ability to assist individuals with a vast array of employment services. We offer services and workshops to assist with job search, résumé writing, interviewing, soft skills, and anything else that someone might need for employment. We also offer assistance with apprenticeships, work based learning, internships, and vocational training.

Workforce Development has been a component of TRRC for over thirty years. Over the years, TRRC Workforce has demonstrated the ability to secure community partners for workforce programs. TRRC has developed relationships with many employers, state agencies, and community based organizations in the four county service areas.

Workforce Development Director Report

This past program year has been a success for our department in multiple ways. We saw 156 individuals gain employment or find more impactful employment. Our median income at program entry was \$0.00 and at program exit it was \$9.75. At exit, our average participant wage was \$10.96. This leads to additional income for the individuals and their families and increased tax revenue for our communities of service. Because of this, our communities have seen a decrease in individuals receiving social service benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. The employment impact also helps these individuals become more self-sufficient for their long-term needs and goals.



Our department staff were able to assist our customers in receiving 37 credentials in various employment sectors. This will assist with their immediate and long-term employability in the area. This also increases our skilled workforce in the community which is greatly needed.

Showcasing our impact on the communities we serve is of great importance to our department, but so is seeing the individual success of our participants. Below you will hear a story from Caitlin and how our programs were able to help her increase her education and get a job as a registered nurse. This will have a direct influence on her current and future success as she looks to continue her education.

We were also able to be a worksite for two different programs that assist with employability of the individuals that work within these programs. Through the AmeriCorps VISTA and National ABLE programs, we were able to assist individuals in obtaining the skills needed to be successful in the modern workplace. You can see two of those success stories later in the report.

Workforce Development Programs

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

WIOA is designed to increase work readiness and skills by providing money to cover training costs for individuals that meet income requirements. This program assists those intending to start new or change careers to one in a targeted, high-growth sector. Applicants who meet the general eligibility requirements of being authorized to work in the United States must then meet eligibility in one of the following four categories:

- *Adult*
- *Dislocated Worker*
- *In-School Youth*
- *Out-of-School Youth*

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Job Placement (TANF)

This program is meant to help people with children receiving TANF Benefits pursue employment and education opportunities as well as develop work skills. Through pre-employment skills workshops, job coaching and counseling, résumé preparation, and assistance acquiring job necessities (including uniforms, shoes, and gas vouchers), the TANF program is able to help clients find employment and become self-sufficient.

Eligibility: Individual is receiving TANF Benefits and has been referred to the program by the Department of Human Services (DHS).

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Job Placement (SNAP)

The SNAP program aims to help individuals to find and keep the right career. This is accomplished by helping improve a participant's work skills and assisting in finding employment through short-term training, work assignments, résumé writing, interview classes, and GED assistance.

Eligibility: Able-bodied individual, between the ages of 18 and 49 with no dependents, that has been referred to the program by DHS.

SNAP to Success (S2S)

The SNAP to Success program is intended to assist SNAP recipients cover the costs of classroom training, transportation, uniforms, and anything else required entering into employment in targeted sectors.

Eligibility: Individual is receiving SNAP Benefits and has been referred to the program by DHS.

Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)

CSBG provides funding for local programming intended to create measurable impacts on the alleviation of poverty. Our agency utilizes part of our CSBG funding for training in high-growth employment sectors.

Program Performance and Impact

TRRC Workforce Development Employment Sectors

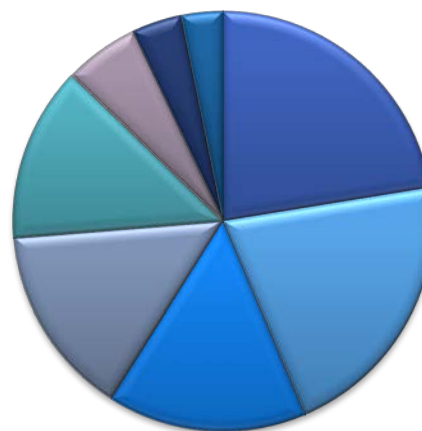
TRRC Workforce Development strives to help individuals gain employment that is full-time, head of household wages, and that have good long-term employability. To that end, we target our placement and training programs for manufacturing, logistics, and healthcare based on local labor market information. In Program Year 2019, 156 participants gained employment or obtained new employment.

For PY19, there was a total of 370 program participants with 14 co-enrollments across all programs.

Credentials Earned

Certified Nursing Assistant (C. N. A.)	18
Licensed Practical Nurse (L. P. N.)	4
Certified Production Technician	3
Truck Driver	3
Associate Degree- Nursing (R. N.)	2
Certified Medical Assistant	2
Accounting	1
Bachelor of Science- Nursing (R. N.)	1
Electrical Technician	1
Healthcare Assistant	1
Medical Office Technology	1

Placements by Industry



Healthcare: 35 Food Service: 33 Other: 24
 Retail: 23 Manufacturing: 21 Warehousing: 9
 Hospitality: 6 Transportation: 5



Income Earned

Median Income at Program Entry	\$0.00
Median Income at Program Exit	\$9.75
Average Participant Wage at Exit	\$10.96

Success Stories

Written by: Caitlin Hoeltje



In March of 2016 I quit both of my CNA jobs and with minimal savings I moved to Quincy, IL. I moved from Crystal Lake, IL (300 miles away) with my two month old son, Ashton, in order to escape the misery of my circumstance of being in an abusive relationship with my son's father. After staying with my mother, and slowly regaining my sense of self-worth through church and support groups, and being with my family, I chose to go back to school to complete my nursing degree I had started in the years prior to the abusive relationship. I was accepted to Blessing-Rieman College of Nursing and Health Sciences and began classes at both Blessing-Rieman and Quincy University in the fall of 2016 as a sophomore.

I first heard about TRRC from one of the nursing students I had classes with. She told me that this program would help me with my tuition, books, gas mileage reimbursement and child care reimbursement, and since I was a single mother and full time student, that I should apply. I applied at the end of my sophomore semester and I was accepted into the program. My "why" has always been my son, Ashton. From the moment he came into my life, I knew he deserved more than the life I was allowing myself to remain stuck in. I couldn't stand the fact that if we stayed in the misery of my circumstance filled with domestic violence and emotional abuse, that Ashton would have a dysfunctional and frightening life where he would learn only to abuse women in the process. I could not allow this life for my son. God gave me Ashton, and he saved my life. I knew that a career in Nursing would give us the life I knew we both deserved, which is why I followed through with this commitment.

Through TRRC, I received additional assistance and stability from the case workers who have been there for me through it all. They have helped guide my decisions and provide encouragement in the duration of my college experience. I have been on state aid such as Medicaid, TANF, and LINK throughout nursing school and am thankful for the assistance and guidance they have provided. They have helped me and my son more than I had ever dreamed of and the relationships I have formed with these people have been so positive, comforting, and encouraging.

Goals I have set for myself is to continue to be the greatest influence on my son and on his future education. Since graduation with my BSN and acceptance of a RN position at Blessing Hospital in the Cardiac ICU, I will be financially stable, have flexible work hours to spend time with my son more often, and provide a future and education for him as well. Professionally, I would like to obtain my CCRN after working for two years on the unit, and possibly go back to school for either a MSN, or AC-NP. The assistance and guidance from the case workers at TRRC have been amazing. Ashton and I have had so many individuals on "our team" from the moment I left his abusive father. Our lives have been forever changed, and I thank God each and every day that we came to Quincy and started a whole new life full of opportunities and continuing support within this community.

Volunteers in Service to America (AmeriCorps VISTA)

The AmeriCorps VISTA Program is an anti-poverty program that was originally an idea of John F. Kennedy and officially created by Lyndon Johnson under the Economic Opportunity Act in 1964 as a domestic version of the Peace Corps. The program is meant to alleviate poverty in low-income areas.

In November of 2017, Two Rivers Regional Council

- Workforce Development was given the opportunity to partner with the AmeriCorps VISTA program to host two VISTA volunteers at a time for a period of three years. The Two Rivers Regional Council AmeriCorps VISTA position and related administrative



VISTA
Volunteers in Service to America



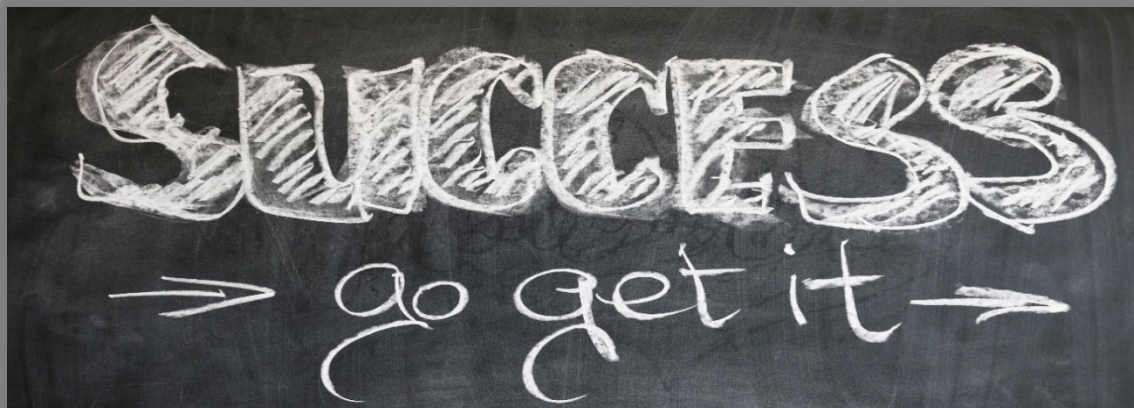
support is provided by the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs at Western Illinois University through a grant

from AmeriCorps VISTA. By assisting within the agency, AmeriCorps VISTA members strengthen Two Rivers' ability to service members of low-income communities.

Karrie Cramsey-Groll was one of our initial VISTAs. She has since found full time and gainful employment in the community, and she was more than happy to share her experience. We appreciated her service. We were also happy to be a part of helping her continue on in her career.

"For the past 3 1/2 months I have had the pleasure of being an AmeriCorps VISTA working at TRRC/Quincy Workforce. During my service I have gained experience working in an office setting. I have also been allowed to help aid in the elimination of poverty in this area. Even though my time with this organization was short, I will value being able to work with an amazing staff. The staff has encouraged me to be a better person, trained me using technology that I was not all proficient in, and supported me through the most horrific event of my life. I will forever remember all that each and every one of them has done for me. Thank you for letting me serve!!!"

-Karrie Cramsey-Groll



National Able Network

The National Able Network is a volunteer group that temporarily employs people in non-profit organizations while they search for permanent employment. This allows the volunteers to continue searching for a long-term position while receiving both an income and work experience in an office setting. Through the Senior Community Service Employment Program, National Able workers are traditionally given up to four years of volunteer employment and are classified into either federal or state level employees. Two Rivers hosts individuals at both levels with their duties ranging from secretarial tasks to grant writing.



"Working for National Able has been a very good experience for me. I like the fact that they allowed me to work in a company that let me flourish. From day one, Two Rivers made me feel like I was part of the group and not just a part-time person who really didn't have anything to contribute. My supervisors included me in every aspect of departmental functions. My co-workers were extremely helpful and wonderful to me. I loved working at Two Rivers, and I am very sad that it is time for me to leave. However, I am grateful that the National Able training program has given me the confidence to seek other employment. I have recently accepted a position at Blessing Health System, and I am looking forward to a new opportunity and challenge." - **Sheila Shaw**



Partner Agency Impact

"As the Adams County Probation Department, we have numerous clients with various needs. The Workforce Development Center helps provide assistance in essential resources including, but not limited to: employment and job readiness, educational funding, transportation assistance, and child care. The Workforce Development Center is an ideal location where we can send our clients for a multitude of resources. Some of our clients' court orders can also be satisfied at the Workforce Development Center. The Workforce Development Center is also located downtown which makes it within walking distance from the Adams County Courthouse."

-Kyle Koenig (Adams County Probation)

"The Two Rivers Workforce program has been an important partner to the John Wood Community College Adult Education program. Representatives have presented information on program services to GED classes in all of our centers, increasing student awareness and accessibility to job training and employment opportunities. During the past year, the program has provided funding for GED completers who have transitioned to CNA classes and in their work with the ACER program, Workforce has helped students obtain industry recognized credentials which led a recent GED completer to full time employment with a local manufacturing company. The Workforce partnership is able to provide Adult Education students with both financial and support services to make full time, head of household employment a reality." -**Monica Foster (JWCC Adult Education)**

Special Projects

Adams County Employment Re-Entry Program (ACER)

The Adams County Employment Re-entry (ACER) program started in the fall of 2017. The program began as a partnership among Adams County State's Attorney's Office, Adams County Probation Department, John Wood Community College, Illinois Department of Employment Security, Two Rivers Regional Council of Public Officials, and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. The partnership was created to assist individuals currently on probation in Adams County in their endeavor to earn a vocational skill and secure gainful employment. The targeted employment sector for this program was manufacturing due to the high demand of labor needed by local manufacturing companies.



Adams County Probation officers are tasked to refer candidates that they believe are ready to enter training. Those candidates are then invited to attend an orientation session to learn about the opportunity and to determine if they are interested. Once a candidate expresses interest, staff from TRRC put them through a series of assessments to determine their eligibility. This is done in order to submit an application for funding to pay for the pre-approved training which was chosen by members of the ACER partnership. In addition, ACER participants are required to attend a series of pre-employment skills workshops with TRRC and IDES staff. These workshops are designed to better prepare the individuals for long-term employment.

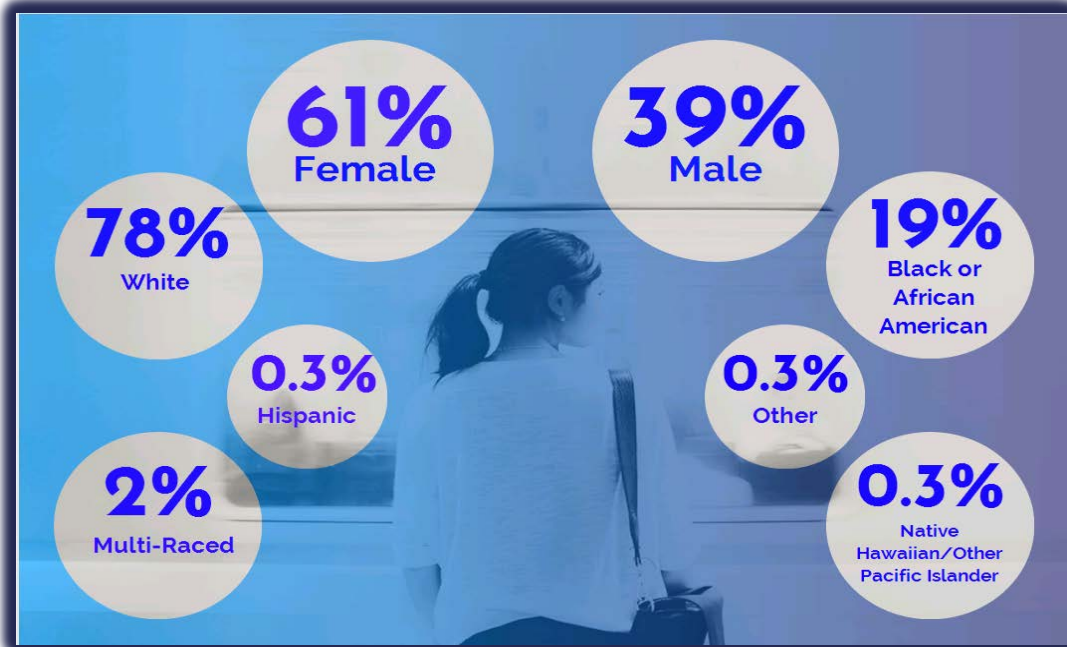


Once a candidate meets their workshop attendance requirements, a WIOA application is completed with TRRC staff. WIOA funds are then used to pay for the vocational training held at JWCC's Workforce Development Center. Throughout the training, ACER participants are required to check-in regularly with staff from JWCC, TRRC, and IDES to ensure there are no issues that may interfere with their completion of the training. Once the participants complete training, they are encouraged to attend additional workshops with TRRC and IDES staff regarding résumé writing, job

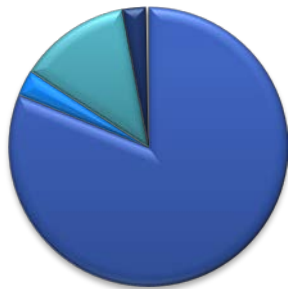
search, and interview skills. JWCC also works with the participants in an effort to match them with a manufacturer where they can seek employment.

Customer Demographics

Program Year 2019: 370 Participants

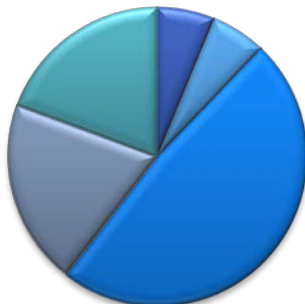


Participants By County



■ Adams: 300 ■ Brown: 11 ■ Pike: 48 ■ Schuylers: 10 ■ Ralls: 1

Participants by Program



■ CSBG: 24 ■ S2S: 23 ■ SNAP: 187 ■ TANF: 78 ■ WIOA: 75

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

25 PARTICIPANTS
REPORTED BEING
HOMELESS



72 CLAIMED
CRIMINAL
CONVICTIONS

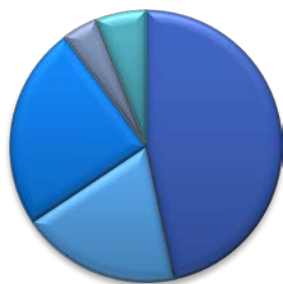
10 REPORTED
VETERAN STATUS



Funding Sources

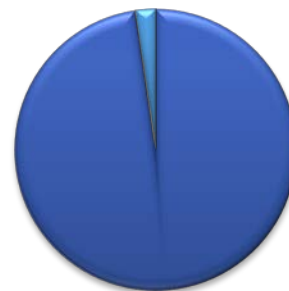
TRRC Workforce Development Fund Sources

Funding by Program



■ WIOA ■ SNAP JP ■ TANF JP ■ S2S ■ CSBG

Funding by Source



■ State/Federal ■ Private

Assessment Tools

Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT)

The WRAT is used to assess a client's aptitude with mathematics and reading by determining their grade level competency based on an overall score.

Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE)

The TABE test is used to assess a client's aptitude in mathematics and reading and determines their grade level competency based on their score.

National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI)

The NOCTI Employability assessment draws from several areas (including math, reading, writing, speaking and listening, etc.) to determine employability skills for an overall measure of workplace success.

Illinois WorkNet

TRRC utilizes the Illinois WorkNet across all programs by using the Career Cluster Inventory to assess a client's interests in potential job fields. We can also make use of other assessment quizzes offered by the site to determine overall potential success in a given job. WorkNet also provides clients quick access to workforce development resources, both local and statewide, and quick links to other important resources and websites for career development.

Illinois JobLink

TRRC also utilizes Illinois JobLink across all programs by having clients set up a résumé on the site. This allows the clients to have a simple and efficient résumé on hand so employers on the website can view and contact clients they are interested in interviewing. JobLink also offers information on industries and workforces, as well as job searches based on key words.

