

Regional Council of Public Officials

"Community Development Through Regional Cooperation"



PY 2020

Impact
Report

**Workforce
Development**

DEPARTMENT REPORT

About Two Rivers Regional Council

Vision: A thriving community of inter-connected individuals, families, businesses, and government.

Mission: To grow stronger and more positive communities through relationships. As a connected community of individuals, families, businesses and government; we focus on supporting the basic needs of our community, fostering resiliency and developing economic opportunity for all.

Values:

- **Service**
TRRC provides a safe environment for individuals and communities to build relationships and identify needs
- **Integrity**
TRRC maintains trustworthy relationships, internally and externally, so that our standards are beyond reproach
- **Dignity**
TRRC mindfully meets people where they are with respect and confidentiality
- **Empowerment**
TRRC creates connections that make individuals stronger and more resilient. These connections help TRRC build a thriving community where everyone's voice is heard
- **Sustainability**
TRRC is committed to stewarding resources for long term growth and self sufficiency
- **Community**
TRRC strengthens relationships to promote interconnectedness and sense of belonging for all

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.

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.

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 is accomplished through our multiple 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 quite different, as I know it has been with a lot of people, organizations, and businesses. Due to COVID-19 our world shifted quickly and drastically. Sending people to school and helping people find jobs looked extremely different in a very short amount of time. We have spent half of the year responding to the pandemic. We know the fallout will see negative numbers in employment and we are gearing up to assist with those employment needs when the time comes. We are looking forward to helping our community and business partners with their employment needs. There will be increased funding for some workforce programs, so we are preparing to serve more individuals soon as well.



Our department staff were able to assist our customers in receiving 31 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 Todd and Alexis on how our programs were able to help them increase their education and jobs. This will have a direct influence on their current and future success.

We were also able to be a worksite for the AmeriCorps VISTA program. We assisted two individuals in obtaining the skills needed to be successful in the modern workplace. One of those individuals is now working in our agency. You can hear from one of them 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 can 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: Individual is receiving SNAP Benefits and 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 for entering 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

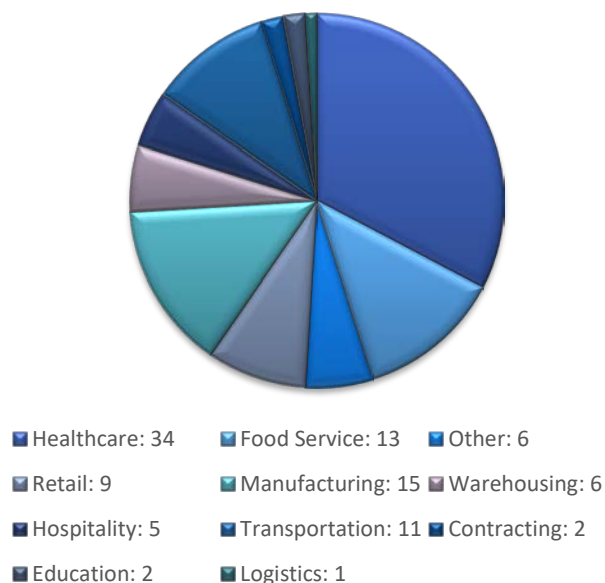
TRRC Workforce Development strives to help individuals gain employment that is full-time, head of household wages, and that have good long-term employability. To that end, we target our placement and training programs for manufacturing, logistics, and healthcare based on local labor market information. In Program Year 2020, 104 participants gained employment or obtained new employment.

For PY20, there was a total of 264 program participants with 23 co-enrollments across all programs.

Credentials Earned

Truck Driver (CDL License)	12
Certified Nursing Assistant (C.N.A)	11
Licensed Practical Nurse (L.P.N.)	3
Medical Office Certificate	2
Logistics	1
Associate Degree Nursing (R.N.)	1
Welding Certificate	1

Placements by Industry



Income Earned

Median Income at Program Entry	\$0.00
Median Income at Program Exit	\$11.00
Average Participant Wage at Exit	\$12.49

Our department sent out surveys asking our participants some questions about us and their experience with our programs. We were humbled by the responses that we received. The first word cloud shows what they thought about our department and the second really shows the reasons why the individuals decided to tackle finding a new job or going back to school to start a new career.



Success Stories

Written by Todd Platt

You never know what is going to happen in life and when my job was discontinued it was a surprise just like what a lot of people are going through now with the coronavirus pandemic situation. You wake up one day and things are not normal anymore and you have to make tough decisions on what your future plans will be to get back to whatever will be your new normal day to day life. You worry about your income and your family and you don't know what will happen next.

I was very fortunate to have gone to a seminar on how to write a resume that was offered by the unemployment office in Quincy back in December of 2019. The person giving the seminar asked me to stay afterwards and introduced me to the Two Rivers Regional Office and they explained the WIOA Program which enabled me to pursue a new career path in an industry that will give me the opportunity to make more money and work in a high demand job with great benefits and insurance so I can provide for my family.

I enrolled in the John Wood Truck Driver Training Program and dedicated all my time and efforts to succeed in the program.

I was able to apply at AMCON Distributing Company and was hired on with them as a truck driver.

I could not be any more appreciative of all of the people who have helped me and my family through this difficult journey.

I would like to give a special thanks to the ladies at the Two Rivers office and the trainers at the John Wood campus. They were all great to work with and help me with any questions or concerns that have come up along the way.

I encourage anyone who is going through some tough times like my family has been going through to not give up and know that God has a plan for you and to have the faith that everything will be ok, you just have to be open minded and willing to do the hard work to get back on your feet and everything happens for a reason.



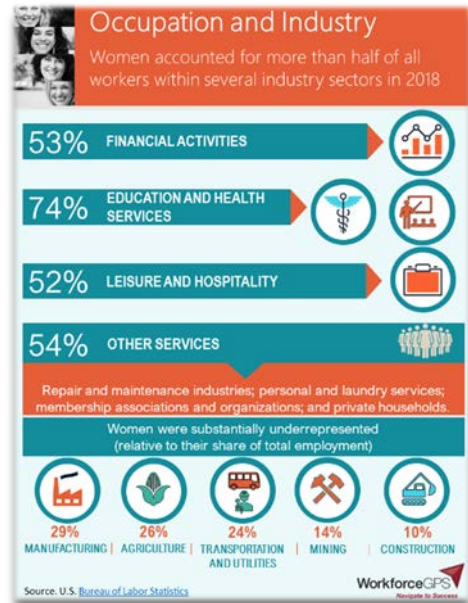
Written by Alexis Gay



My name is Alexis Gay and I am a single mother of two children, an 11 yr old daughter and a 5 year old son. I came into the Two Rivers program needing help after obtaining my Bachelor's Degree in Science as well as accepting a new position through Blessing Hospital. When I accepted the position I was very excited about what the future held for me and my children but I was also nervous about how I was going to provide for myself with the proper work attire after being off work for quite some time.

Once I contacted Carolyn White she informed me that she had a program

that would be perfect for me and she was willing to help me with my career path. I came to my appointment and received assistance with getting scrubs for work as well as shoes that were needed as well to complete my uniform. Every month I was provided with 2 gas cards to help with gas back and forth to work. The only thing that they asked of me was to stay in contact with my case worker and give copies of check stubs every pay check. Carolyn even took the initiative to come to my place of employment to give me gas cards because I had gotten so busy with working long shifts I couldn't find time to meet with her. Two Rivers has been a tremendous help for me and my family and I truly appreciate everything that they have done to make my new career path successful. I had goals going into the program of using my degree and moving forward in life and moving up that ladder of success and never looking back. If you ever feel like giving up on your dreams don't ever do that because there is always a program out there that is willing to assist you and Two Rivers was one that really helped me.



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. The TRRC AmeriCorps VISTA position and related administrative support is provided by the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs at Western Illinois University through a grant from AmeriCorps VISTA.

"Working for Two Rivers through the AmeriCorps VISTA Program was one of the best opportunities I've had. I was fortunate enough to work with wonderful people, all of whom are dedicated to bettering the Quincy community, while also being able to build up my work skills. I learned a lot working there and would do so again, given the opportunity. It's a fantastic organization, and I will always think back on my time working there fondly."

-Allysa Maue

Partner Agency Impact

"The Quincy Local Office of IDES partners with the Two Rivers Regional Council of Public Officials/WIOA program to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market. By coordinating services our local public workforce system is strengthened and businesses are able to hire and retain the skilled workers they need to succeed in the local and global economy. Two Rivers Regional Council of Public Officials/WIOA and Quincy IDES align and coordinate services with the goal of providing job seekers with a variety of employment related services in one location, with Two Rivers focusing on training services and IDES on employment services. The partner agencies work together to improve the skills of the local labor market and provide qualified job seekers to employers."

–Illinois Department of Employment Security – Quincy Local Office

"Working with Two Rivers has provided our clients with added supports when they are trying to further their education and finding employment. The supportive services they offer makes the client feel less afraid for them to take that big leap into school and the workforce if they know they have an organization that will support them financially. Like DHS, Two Rivers is also a sounding board for customers that are overwhelmed and stressed about life circumstances. They provide support and feedback to keep a client moving towards their goals even when they want to quit."

–Adams County Family Community Resource Center

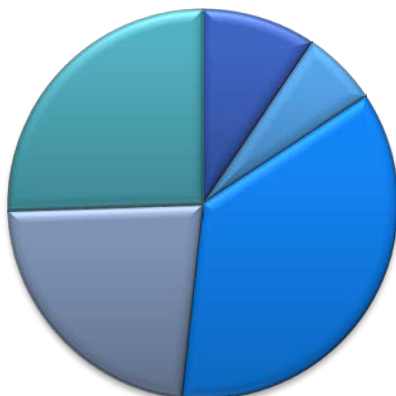


Customer Demographics

Program Year 2020: 264 Participants

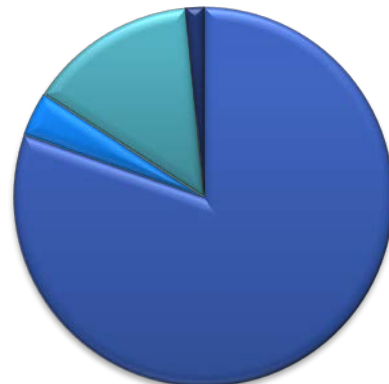


Participants by Program



■ CSBG: 27 ■ S2S: 18 ■ SNAP: 103 ■ TANF: 65 ■ WIOA: 73

Participants By County

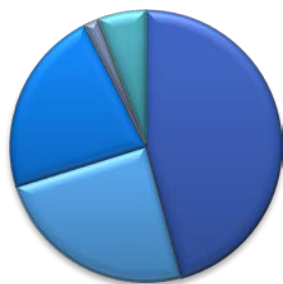


■ Adams: 212 ■ Brown: 10 ■ Pike: 38 ■ Schuyler: 4

Funding Sources

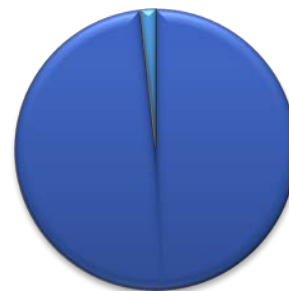
TRRC Workforce Development Fund Sources

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 assessments 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.

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.

Our agency and department would like to thank all the organizations that partner with us by providing grant monies for our workforce development programs.

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Illinois Department of Human Services

Community Foundation Serving West Central Illinois & Northeast Missouri

Walmart Foundation



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