Arkansas Department of Workforce Services

2011 Annual Report

Jobs for People. People for Jobs.

DWS

Department of WORKFORCEServices

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"Equal Opportunity Employer/Program"
"Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities."
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From the Director

The Department of Workforce Services took great strides in 2011 to assist both employers and job seekers with their employment needs. In addition to our everyday activities, we implemented several new programs and practices that will help with our "Good to Great" initiative.

Artee Williams, Director

We implemented several information technology projects, including the Tax 21 project that updated our Employer Registration System and Wage Reporting System to ensure accurate tax rates are calculated and the system is more user-friendly for employers.

In our continuing efforts to make the agency more "green," we installed lighting motion sensors, implemented a recycling program, reduced paper usage by 42 percent, and purchased software that allows employers and other clients to complete forms electronically, thus reducing paper.

We also hosted U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, who visited with staff and clients involved in the Career Pathways Initiative, a collaborative workforce development initiative of the Department of Workforce Services and the Department of Higher Education.

Finally, we were honored with the Delta Association for Rural Initiatives Joseph Wheatley DARI Award from the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration in Dallas for our efforts and support of the National Farmworker Jobs Program in the DARI region.

These are just a few of our many accomplishments in 2011, and 2012 is looking even better! If we can assist with your employment needs, don't hesitate to let us know.

Vision: To be Arkansas' preferred provider of workforce services and solutions.

Mission: To enable the Arkansas workforce to compete in the global economy by linking a comprehensive array of services for employers and job seekers.

Grand Openings

Two Arkansas Workforce Centers held grand openings in 2011 to celebrate their new locations.

Benton

The Arkansas Workforce Center at Benton moved to 400 Edison Ave., which provides more space and better parking.

Services include résumé assistance, interviewing tips, services to veterans and training assessments, as well as various programs such as Unemployment Insurance, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Trade Adjustment Assistance and the Arkansas Career Readiness Certificate program.

Besides DWS, other partners include the Central Arkansas Planning and Development District (which provides Workforce Investment Act services) and Arkansas Rehabilitation Services.

Camden

The Arkansas Workforce Center at Camden relocated to the Southern Arkansas University Tech Uptown Center at 237 Jackson St.

The new location allows staff to refer clients to the college for additional services to help them become work ready.

Besides DWS and SAU Tech, other partners include the Southwest Arkansas Planning and Development District (which provides Workforce Investment Act services), Arkansas Rehabilitation Services and Division of Services for the Blind.

Career Readiness Certificate

Since the Governor's Workforce Cabinet launched the Arkansas Career Readiness Certificate in January 2008, more than 34,000 CRCs have been awarded around the state.

The certificate measures a job seeker's workplace skills in Reading for Information, Applied Mathematics and Locating Information, skills that all jobs require.

Not only does the certificate build morale by giving job seekers another credential they can use to market themselves, it benefits employers as well.

Employers who use the certificate as part of their hiring process find that it dramatically reduces their turnover, overtime and training costs because they know they are hiring qualified individuals.

The certificate is signed by the governor and director of the Department of Workforce Services and is good for a lifetime.

Arkansas Career Readiness Certificates Awarded

January 2011 to December 2011

Gold:	1,896
Silver:	5,038
Bronze:	1,448
2011 Total:	**8,382**

January 2008 to December 2011

Gold:	6,164
Silver:	19,360
Bronze:	9,007
Total:	**34,531**

Partner Agencies

- Arkansas Department of Workforce Services
- Arkansas Workforce Investment Board
- Arkansas Economic Development Commission
- Arkansas Department of Career Education
- Arkansas Department of Education
- Arkansas Department of Higher Education
- Arkansas Science & Technology Authority
- Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges

Arkansas Career Readiness Certificate

Arkansas Works!

Career Expo

The Arkansas Workforce Centers' Career Expo was held in November 2011 at Verizon Arena in North Little Rock. This was the third year for the event.

More than 3,100 job seekers attended the event that featured 140 exhibitors, including employers, education and training providers, and veterans organizations. More than 8,500 job openings were available, with many people leaving the event with jobs or interviews.

New this year, the expo featured a Veterans Center to assist veterans with their employment needs.

In addition to the Veterans Center, a mini-Arkansas Workforce Center was available with computers for employment searches, staff reviewed résumés, workshops were held throughout the day and a mobile unit was available.

Task Force and Mobile Units

The Governor's Dislocated Worker Task Force is led by the Department of Workforce Services and is responsible for responding to layoffs and closures around the state, providing services to employers and job seekers, and providing outreach efforts that promote agency services that will avert a layoff or closure.

These services include holding planning meetings with company officials, workshops for affected workers, and coordinating job and career fairs.

In 2011 the task force provided services to 90 companies that reported layoffs or closures affecting 6,455 workers.

Mobile Units

In addition to conducting meetings with workers and company officials, the task force oversees the Mobile Resource Units, a fleet of four RVs and two trailer units. The units, which are equipped with computers, Internet capability and information technology equipment, are used to assist job seekers at job fairs, employers' hiring events, natural disasters, company layoffs and closures, and other outreach events.

In 2011 the units were used at 92 events around the state, including areas such as Fort Smith, Crossett, Searcy and Arkadelphia. A unit also was deployed to Joplin, Missouri, to assist with tornado response initiatives.

Information Technology Projects

The Department of Workforce Services implemented several new information technology projects in 2011 that benefit employers and job seekers.

EZARC

Unemployment Insurance claimants are now able to file a claim for benefits from the comfort of their own homes thanks to EZARC, the Department of Workforce Services' Internet application for taking initial, additional and re-opened UI claims.

Before the launch of EZARC in August 2011, claimants had to report to a local office to file a claim on the agency's intranet called LOARC. With EZARC, claimants can file a UI claim from any computer that has Internet access.

Arkansas is now one of 35 states that has an online claim filing system.

UI-AJL Interface

Not only can UI claimants now file for benefits from home, they can register for work in the same online system.

Previously, claimants who filed UI claims also had to register for employment in the Arkansas JobLink system, a web-based system for employment services. In 2011, however, an interface between the UI and employment services systems was deployed, making it easier for claimants to register for work.

By answering just a few simple questions, AJL is automatically populated with claimants' information. This process eliminates duplication, reduces staff time and gives clients immediate access to thousands of job opportunities around the state.

Information Technology Projects

PROMIS

The DWS Bureau of Labor Statistics unit reached a milestone in 2011 with the implementation of PROMIS, the Program to Measure Insured Unemployment Statistics.

PROMIS captures the characteristics of the insured unemployed in Arkansas by allowing DWS to use UI claims to determine claimants' ages, education levels, their most recent jobs and other demographic information.

The program not only gives DWS a better picture of the types of Arkansans filing UI claims, it allows staff to assist employers looking to move to Arkansas. DWS will now be able to provide information regarding the workforce in specific areas of the state.

The PROMIS Team

New WOTC System

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit program completed the successful conversion to a new secure, automated, web-based system.

WOTC provides tax credits to employers who hire employees from 11 hard-to-serve target groups: recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, military veterans, disabled veterans, vocational rehabilitation clients, ex-felons, designated communities, summer youth, food stamp recipients, Supplemental Security Income recipients, long-term family assistance clients and Ticket-to-Work recipients.

The new system allows employers to print their certifications instead of waiting for them to be mailed. Employers also can input their information instead of mailing it to DWS.

By conserving resources and reducing waste, the new system also contributes to DWS' efforts to "go green," saving the agency approximately 25,000 sheets of paper a month.

Training Trust Fund

The Department of Workforce Services Training Trust Fund Program provides training funds to Arkansas companies looking to upgrade employees' skills in order to increase productivity, meet industry demands and avoid layoffs.

Any for-profit or nonprofit business that has operated in Arkansas for at least 12 months may apply.

In 2011 $1,295,291 was obligated to 10 companies to train 28,616 workers.

Green Bay Packaging, Inc.

Green Bay Packaging, Inc. was one company DWS assisted in 2011. In 2008 the DWS Training Trust Fund awarded Green Bay Packaging funding to establish a regional training facility and train 200 new and incumbent workers.

The company partnered with Arkansas Tech University at Ozark to train workers to become junior mechanics and eventually top journeymen. The first eight top journeymen (four mechanical maintenance students and four electrical/instrumentation students) graduated from the program in October 2011. The students completed 1,200 hours of hands-on and classroom training and earned an increase in pay.

Mature Worker Awards

The Arkansas Workforce Investment Board and Department of Workforce Services recognized four Arkansas employers in 2011 for their efforts to recruit and retain mature workers (those age 50+).

This was the fourth year the AWIB and DWS have partnered with the Governor's Work-Life Balance Initiative to present the Mature Worker Friendly Awards.

"Each year we recognize some outstanding companies from around the state. These employers incorporate innovative practices and policies to ensure the mature workforce stays employed, engaged and remains a vital part of society."

— Artee Williams, DWS Director

The awards are a result of the Arkansas Mature Worker Initiative, an AWIB-led program developed in 2006 to increase awareness among employers of the need to hire and retain mature workers.

The initiative has evolved to also include the importance of keeping mature adults actively engaged in work and volunteer activities.

Bank of the Ozarks, a previous three-time winner, was inducted as an ambassador in 2011.

Other winners include the Arkansas Educational Television Network (a three-time winner that was inducted as an ambassador in 2012), White County Medical Center in Searcy and St. Vincent Health System.

Ambassador: Bank of the Ozarks

White County Medical Center

St. Vincent

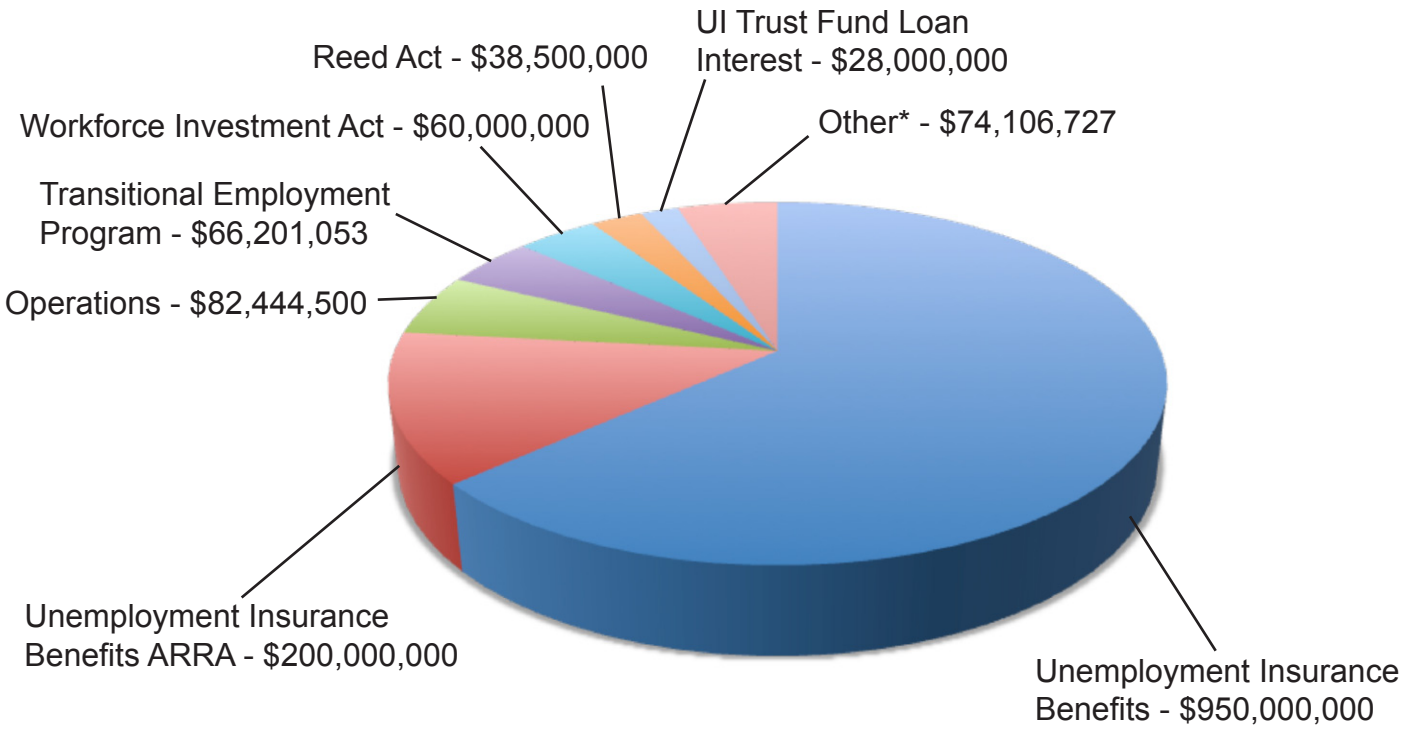
AETN

Financial Statement

Funds Received

Grants	FY 2011-2012
Unemployment Insurance Benefits	$950,000,000
Unemployment Insurance Benefits ARRA	$200,000,000
Operations	$82,444,500
Transitional Employment Program	$66,201,053
Workforce Investment Act	$60,000,000
Reed Act	$38,500,000
UI Trust Fund Loan Interest	$28,000,000
Training Allowances & Payments*	$26,250,000
Special Fund*	$11,330,389
Reed Act ARRA*	$9,595,093
Disaster Relief Payments*	$5,000,000
Training Trust Fund*	$5,000,000
UI Administration Fund*	$5,000,000
Community Investment Initiative*	$3,500,000
Workforce Investment Act ARRA*	$3,500,000
Operations ARRA*	$3,431,245
Loans to Workforce Investment Boards*	$1,500,000
Total:	**$1,499,252,280**

** Noted in the "Other" category in the chart below.*



UI Trust Fund Status

Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund
December 31, 2011

Beginning Balance, January 1, 2011:	$38,585,414
Receipts:	
UI Contributions	$400,328,391
Reimbursement From Other States	$20,244,693
Reed Act Distribution	$0
Interest Income	$0
Title XII Advances*	$29,136,218
Total Receipts:	$449,709,302
Total Balance Available to Pay UI Benefits:	$488,294,716
Disbursements:	
Unemployment Benefit Payments	$384,007,325
Repayment of Title XII Advances	$29,136,218
Reed Act Withdrawals	$0
Total Expenditures:	$413,143,543
Excess (Deficiency) of Receipts Over Disbursements:	$75,151,173
Ending Balance, December 31, 2011:	$75,151,173

*Advances from the U.S. Treasury under Title XII of the Social Security Act for the payment of UI benefits.

Agency Statistics

2011 Highlights:

• A total of 256,850 individuals received employment assistance.
• A total of $682,812,126 was paid in regular unemployment insurance, military and federal benefits, Emergency Unemployment Compensation, Extended Benefits and Federal Additional Compensation benefits.
• Employers filed 69,784 quarterly wage reports totaling $81,338,144.22 through the online UI tax filing, wage reporting and payment site.
• The Arkansas New Hire Registry reported 597,110 new hires.
• A total of 13,665 people were certified for the Work Opportunity Tax Credit, resulting in potential tax credits of $34,102,800 for Arkansas employers.
• A total of 660 Career Pathways Initiative participants received certificates of proficiency, 815 received technical certificates, 1,982 received employment certificates and 904 received associate degrees.
• DWS maintains several websites to assist job seekers, employers and the general public.

• www.dws.arkansas.gov • www.ARJobLink.com • www.arjoblink.arkansas.gov
• www.ArkansasAtWork.org • www.discover.arkansas.gov
• www.real-life.arkansas.gov • www.careerwatch.org