

Are We Making a



# Difference?

*Kristen Cox, Executive Director,  
Department of Workforce Services*

**D**EAR READERS:

The Department of Workforce Services (DWS) has increased its exploration of the difficult question, “Do our programs make a measurable difference?” It is sometimes too easy to equate ‘busyness’ with productivity—but one doesn’t always lead to the other. To better understand our effectiveness and how to improve the way we do our work, we are continually evaluating our processes and outcomes, tracking both operational and outcome measures.

We’ve put increasing focus on our workforce programs to more fully understand the impact on job seekers and employers. Are we helping people find work? Do we help employers find qualified candidates? Do our investments pay off? What could we do better?

DWS currently serves one of every seven hiring employers and one of every 3.3 new hires in the Utah labor market during each quarter. But knowing how many people we impact is just a start. The big question is whether or not we make a positive difference.

The answer is yes. For example, DWS has studied the difference in employment outcomes for unemployed individuals receiving DWS job services as compared to unemployed individuals who did not. The study determined that “labor exchange customers who are unemployed at the time of referral are 50% to 66% more likely to find employment than if they had not used the system.” We also know that people who complete training opportunities funded by DWS are more likely to become employed and will earn more.

In addition to these measures, we have the ability to break down our outcomes by funding streams. For example, DWS:

- Served more than 31,000 veterans last year and ranked 15th in the nation in helping veterans find and retain employment
- Has the 5th best duration rate for unemployment insurance customers nationally
- Ranks among the top ten states in helping job seekers to find and retain employment through our Wagner Peyser program—serving approximately 125,000 new hires
- Estimates that approximately 45 percent of TANF customers participating in our Work Success program find work in 2-4 weeks

While there are still improvements to be made, I believe we are making a big difference. Our “key levers” (or strategies that will have the biggest impact) should continue to help us provide better and better services to our customers while giving tax payers a better return on their investment.

SINCERELY,

## Trendlines

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