

# **Partners For Success**

## 2014 Narrative Report

September 28, 2015

## Program Integration

The Laguna Department of Education continues to implement a program of integrated services through PL102-477 for the period of January 2014 through June 2015. The integration of program services in areas of education, employment and training services, through the Division of Partners for Success (PFS) has streamlined and optimized services for program participants. Services provided efficiently in a manner that eliminates duplication of effort on the part of the applicant and program. Individual submits a single application, rather than an application for each type of services requested.

The 2014 project year was very eventful with some changes. Partners For Success requested contract amendment to a change in project year-end to align with the Pueblo of Laguna Department of Education fiscal year. The year-end date change from December 31, 2014 to June 30, 2015. This following annual report will include 6 more months.

The focused remained on the core program activities such as job training, job experience, adult education, school supplies, college E&T and higher education. PFS continued to collaborate and partner with several other tribal and non-tribal programs and local colleges and universities.

PFS project conducted several adult activities for this year, which included GED, Employment & Training College, Certified Drivers License (CDL) Class B, Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) & First Aid training & certification, Job Search/Preparation services and Work Experience. The GED classes were held for two sessions (spring/fall/spring 2015). E&T College program supported students for three semesters (spring/summer/fall/spring 2015) as well. PFS hosted one session of CDL Class B training and partnered with LDoE's Division of Early Childhood program for use of their facilities for classroom training. PFS also partnered with LDoE's Elementary and Middle School's transportation program for use of their school buses. PFS also hosted a two CPR and First Trainings in addition to the CDL Class B training and invited community members to attend. The Higher

Education project supported 76 students for the 2014 spring semester. For the fall semester, the Pueblo of Laguna initiated a new scholarship program. The Job Search/Preparation services were provided throughout the year were provided but were met with challenges. PFS placed Work Experience workers in Laguna Department of Education and Pueblo of Laguna Utility Authority's Community Connect Grant.

Youth project activities for this year included, Summer Youth Employment Project (SYEP), CPR and First Aid training, and School Supplies project and Santa Fe Indian School's Leadership Institute. The SYEP project employed 30 youth and young adult. SYEP partnered with the New Mexico HELP program to hire additional workers. SYEP who were selected were eligible for additional resources to assist them throughout the school year. PFS distributed school supplies to elementary, middle and high school students. . PFS placed three SFIS Leadership Institute interns at job sites on the Pueblo of Laguna reservation.

PFS collaborated a couple of colleges and universities to access more resources and services for our participants. PFS worked with New Mexico State University Grant Branch's Title III Native American Serving Non-Tribal Institutions (NASNTI) Grant dual enrollment projects and GED classes. PFS developed a working relationship with University of New Mexico's Gallup Branch. UNM Gallup has included PFS in its plans to reach out to rural New Mexico communities by provide distance education and vocational training and certification.

## **Adult Education – GED<sup>®</sup>**

### **GED Program**

In 2014, GED<sup>®</sup> testing curriculum, testing preparation and costs changed. The testing is more rigorist and requires more preparation. The curriculum changed to match the Common Core Standards. In class instructions have been revised to match the new standard. The test is computer based so basic keyboarding and computer literacy is required to take the test. The PFS has accommodated the increase costs of the tests. PFS has also initiated basic keyboarding PFS is absorbing all the practice tests costs as well.

PFS hosted a 2014 spring and fall and 2015 spring GED® sessions. There were an average total of 9 students who enrolled in the class throughout the year. One of the twelve students obtained their GED®. Mr. Kyle Keryte was invited to a formal graduation ceremony that is hosted by New Mexico State University's Grants Branch (NMSU-G) in Grants, New Mexico. The graduate was first one in Grants Cibola County to pass the new test. Below is Mr. Keryte's story

### **Kyle's Story**



Kyle was very frustrated and ready to give up on school. He didn't get along with his teachers and school staff. He was going through a lot at home and has had to overcome a lot of things in his young life. He felt like school was a waste of his time. When the stress became too much and he didn't feel challenged, he started to look at other schools but they did not interest him.

Kyle honestly thought he would eventually be expelled from school. He would then become another high school dropout statistic. He would have eventually been caught up in a vicious cycle of unemployment with no to low skills and more frustration.

Kyle was encouraged by his mother and stepfather to seek services at Partners For Success (PFS). He dropped by the office, filled out an application for services and made an appointment with Ms. Johanna Wade, PFS Case Manager/Program Coordinator. Ms. Wade developed an Individual Plan for Success (IPS) with Kyle that was implemented immediately. He showed up to GED class and was introduced to Mr. Kenneth O'Conner, GED Instructor. Kyle attended class everyday and completed all the assigned work. He was put in simulated testing environment at the PFS computer lab. What he remembers the most about the experience was the, "respect and encouragement" he received from the PFS staff especially from Ms. Wade and Mr. O'Conner.

After implementing the plan, Kyle was the first student for the PFS, NMSU-Grants Branch testing center, as well as Cibola County, to pass the new 2014 Common Core Curriculum standards-based GED test. PFS put a lot of effort and planning into implementing the new GED test preparation; including basic keyboarding and computer skills as the official GED test is now computer based.

The PFS staff is very proud of Kyle and his accomplishment. He will be part of the graduating class of 2014 this coming June at the New Mexico State University Grants Branch. Kyle plans to further his education and training at a post secondary institution.

Kyle recommends the program to anyone who feels like completely giving up. Kyle's mother stated, "our children are smart and very intelligent but we need to learn to respect each other and understand that some children have issues beyond their control". They both thanked PFS and highly recommend their services. Under the assistance of Ms. Johanna Wade PFS Employment and Training Coordinator/Case Manager and instructor Mr. Kenneth O'Connor the PFS GED program has graduated seventy-three (73) students since the fall of 2006.

## **Employment and Training College Associate and Certificate Program**

This year there were an average of 22 participants enrolled in the E&T College program for 2014 spring/summer/fall and 2015 spring. 4 students obtained their degree or certificate. Students attended several colleges near the Pueblo of Laguna. The New Mexico State University Grants Branch in Grants, NM, Southwest Indian Polytechnic Institute (SIPI) and CNM located in Albuquerque NM.



Two of graduates are culinary art students. They initiated job search activities so after graduation. PFS assisted the participants with job placement and supportive services. One of the students was part of the Laguna Acoma Connections Vocational Rehabilitation Project. Ms. Laverne Arkie graduated with her associates in culinary arts at



Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute in Albuquerque NM. Ms. Arkie invited PFS staff to her seniors' project, which included a seven-course meal.

SIPI has been a place where a lot of students get their start. It is low cost and affordable. Credit hours earned at SIPI are transferrable to most in state public institutions such as Central New Mexico Community College and University Of New Mexico.

## **Class B Commercial Driver's License Project**

PFS conducted one session this year for 11 participants. PFS collaborated with several partners to assist with onsite training. The LDoE's Division of Early Childhood (DEC), and the Los Lunas Transportation Department all played a major

part. The classes were held at DEC's Parent Resource Center for six Saturdays. CPR and First Aid training was provided to all students. The driving course was conducted at the Los Lunas Transportation Department. The class instructor was contracted from Los Lunas's Transportation Department. Buses were made available from the Los Lunas's bus fleet at no cost. 11 students took the class. Two students obtained their Class B CDL licenses.

### **Pueblo of Laguna Emergency Response certification**

PFS partnered with Pueblo of Laguna Emergency Response Program certification program. The Director of PoL ERP made a request to PFS to assist by providing computer lab for 24 Pueblo of Laguna tribal employees. All tribal employees used the PFS computer lab to take an online course and pass a test. All employees passed the test and received their certification. Certification was required for their employment with the tribal administration.

### **Comprehensive Services/Job Search**

PFS provided one to one services with participants seeking employment and/or certification and licensure. 4 students were provide guidance and counseling on Free Application For Student Aid (FAFSA). Students used the program computer lab, printer and fax machine. PFS Case Manager coordinated meeting with student and college financial aid officers at SIPI, CNM and UNM. All Students received adequate funding to continue school. Some students were on academic warning so PFS Case Manager put them on mandatory tutoring sessions. 3 participants requested job search and job preparation services. Participants utilized the computer lab for job search, resume building and application. Participants were provided clothing allowances for interview sessions.

### **Santa Fe Indian School Leadership Institute**

At the start of the summer of 2014 and 2015 Santa Fe Indian School's Leadership Institute request assistance with placement of 3 students (2014) and 2 students (2015) in worksite location in and around the Pueblo of Laguna. PFS coordinated the effort with the Pueblo of Laguna Sport and Wellness Program, Pueblo of Laguna Utility Authority's and village Mayordomo's (village officers) and

village computer labs. Each intern worked a 8 weeks and provided presentation at the Santa Fe Indian School. Student interns earned stipend, which was covered by SFIS. PFS assisted student interns with timesheet submission and teleconferences with SFIS's Program Manager. The program was open to high school students ages 14-18yrs.

## Work Experience

PFS placed two Work Experience (WEX) participants in Pueblo of Laguna Department of Education in June of 2015. One WEX was placed in Partner's For Success main office to assist with Pueblo of Laguna Direct Education Scholarship program and Youth Employment Program. The WEX coordinated training days for YEP. The second WEX was placed in the Business Offices as an accountant helper. She reconciled \$1.2M payments and was off by \$.02 cents. She made a huge impact to the department. She is now being highly considered for full time employment by August of 2015.

## Youth Activities

### Summer Youth Employment Project

2014 Youth Employment Program (YEP) hired 35 summer youth and 2015 YEP hired 42. Due to the extension of year-end 2015 June, this report includes the first month of YEP of 2015.

The Laguna Development Corp provided and excellent new employee orientation at Route 66 Casino Hotel and Conference Center. LDC Human Resource Director conducted the orientation and provided a high level performance. YEP employees learned a lot and enjoyed themselves



Youth employees were placed at Laguna Department of Education, Laguna Police Department, Laguna Fire Department, Laguna Behavior Health Department, Laguna Sports & Wellness program, and Laguna Development Corporation, Inc, Earth & Sky Floral Co., Laguna

Village and Laguna Rainbow Corporation (Elderly Center). All SYEP received very good work experience. All SYEP received positive feedback from their employers. Some SYEP received a little going away reception.

### School Supply Distribution Program

PFS provided back packs filled with schools supplies to 113 participants who attended local schools within the service area. Students from Laguna Department of Education Elementary and Middle school and Grants Cibola County School District (Laguna Acoma High School, Cubero Elementary, Seboyeta Elementary, Grants High School), Santa Fe Indian School, St. Joseph Mission School and some Albuquerque Public Schools were provide school supplies. PFS staff worked with local school officials on identifying the list of supplies most needed. Elementary age student were provided backpacks with paper, pencils, glue, folders, notebooks, and other items. High School student received similar supplies plus USB memory sticks and calculators were provided. Scientific calculators were provided to students upon request. Parents from the community were very appreciative.

### Higher Education

PFS Higher Education provided scholarship support to 76 students for the 2014 spring semester. 14 students received their degrees from University of

Ne Mexico, New Mexico State University, Central New



Mexico Community College,

Western New Mexico University,

Haskell Indian Nations University, Utah Valley University, Fort

Lewis College and Central Texas College. Students attended 36

higher educational institutions (12 in-state and 24 out of state).



At the end of the 2014 spring semester, the Pueblo of Laguna passed a resolution (14-35) to enact the Pueblo of Laguna Direct Education Scholarship. The Pueblo of Laguna Governor's office and Tribal Council appointed Partners For Success to administer and managed the new scholarship program for the first year or until they identified an program to manage it. The new scholarship

simplified the scholarship application process, which allow more students to receive funding and broaden the scope. The new application did not require student to submit financial needs analysis nor the Free Application for Federal Student Aid information. It change the higher education program from a need base to a merit based. The funding distribution also changed. PFS no longer communicates with the college or university's financial aid offices. The funds are now going directly to the students. Students are not responsible for the paying their school tuition, fees, books and other ancillary costs. The students seeking certificated, associates & bachelors degrees and graduated and professional doctoral degrees were now eligible to apply. The funds were distributed in accordance with two funding models. One provided funds up to a bachelors degree and the other graduate degree to professional level degrees. Over 167 students were funded for the fall 2014 semester and 148 students were funded for the spring 2015 semesters. The numbers are not included in the statistical report.

## **Memorandums of Agreements**

PFS continues to collaborate with various higher educational institutions in the state of New Mexico. PFS and other pueblo tribes have established Memorandums of Understanding with three in-state universities. These MoUs provide tuition waivers for selected student, campus support and community outreach. The institutions are listed below;

- New Mexico Highland University in Las Vegas, NM
- University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, NM
- New Mexico State University in Las Cruces, NM

There is a selection process each institution exercises to determine which students qualify for the tuition waiver. A list of names of students who qualify for tuition waivers is provided to the Director of PFS. Priority is given to students at senior level and who demonstrate the most need. The director provides a list and short bio of each student to Governor and Tribal Council. The Governor and Tribal

Council then choose the student. A letter is written by Governor and sent to the institution notify the institution for the award. These MoUs has assisted many students complete their degrees.

## **In-kind Support from Tribal and Non-Tribal Entities**

The PFS received an in-kind scholarship funds from Pueblo of Laguna Tribal Council and a couple of private entities. The Pueblo of Laguna Tribal Council contributed \$1,072,000 in support of its PoL Direct Education Scholarship program for the 2014/2015 academic years. 165 students were provided funding in 2014 fall semester and 148 students were provided funding for the 2015 spring semester. The El Paso Natural Gas Company contributed \$10,000. Continental Divide Electric Company contributed \$10,000. The in-kind gifts will go toward the Laguna Scholarship program.



El Paso Natural Gas  
Company, L.L.C.  
a Kinder Morgan company



## **Challenges**

For 2014, there were several changes that impacted the PFS program. First of all, the new Pueblo of Laguna Direct Education Scholarship was a huge undertaking plus the fact that it was not executed within the timeframe students are accustomed to. There was an increase of student application from less the 100 to over 200 students applied. The amount of funds distributed was over a half a million dollars for the fall semester. The scholarship application was not released until end of June as opposed to it being available to student in early April. The availability of funds was transferred in early August as opposed to funding availability in July. Although the application and funding delayed, PFS staff and Laguna Department of Education Business Office manage to disburse 90% of the 167 scholarship awardees within two weeks.

The funds for the spring 2015 semester were delayed as well. A new Tribal Administration was in place at the beginning of 2015. The Pueblo of Laguna tribal official changed its Governor, Staff Officers and Executive staff. Therefore PoL Direct Education Scholarship project was delayed and scholarship awards were distributed in late February to early March. Of the 148 returning and new students for the spring semester only one student was drop from class. The student was later reinstated when funds were received.

The next challenge for PFS is with GED testing changes. The GED<sup>®</sup> curriculum made a huge change in its testing requirement. Pearson released the new GED test in January 2014. However, many educators considered the following changes as a new and different set of problems with the GED:

- With Pearson onboard, the GED test shifted from a non-profit program to a for-profit enterprise. The fees for taking the tests jumped from around \$60 to \$120
- The 2014 test is considered much more difficult than previous versions and creates barriers for people who left school and need a diploma in order to find a job
- The test is now taken only on computer creating problems for older people unfamiliar with new testing technology
- The number of people earning GEDs has dropped from roughly 560,000 earning the credential in 2013 to approximately 86,000 successfully completing the tests on 2014

In response to these new problems, more than a dozen states have either dropped the GED and switched to the HiSET or TASC equivalency tests, or added those tests as additional options for those seeking a high school credential. More states are now reviewing programs and policies for high school equivalency in the hope of solving problems with the GED.

PFS has teamed up the University of New Mexico Gallup Branch's Adult Basic Education program to address the GED testing issue. They have been administering the HiSET testing in lieu of the GED for a couple years. They were experiencing low

graduation rates much like PFS. Meeting has been planned to learn more about the testing process.