



STATE OF WYOMING
DEPARTMENT OF WORKFORCE SERVICES



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT TRAINING FUND
2007 ANNUAL REPORT

OCTOBER 22, 2007

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Executive Summary

The Workforce Development Training Fund (WDTF) is a 100% state-funded business training and outreach program consisting of three types of grant programs and a separate program designed to secure long-range funding for certain types of large grant applications. The largest program, Business Training Grants, provides grant funding for new or incumbent worker training which directly contributes to workforce development at the business and individual levels. The other grant program, Pre-Hire Economic Development Grants, focuses on supplying trained workers to resolve industry shortages.

The WDTF is funded through an appropriation by the Legislature and interest earned from the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund. Its total operating budget for the 2007 – 2008 biennium was \$8,075,592.

During fiscal year 2007, the WDTF concentrated its efforts on outreach to a broader range of Wyoming businesses, program and accountability improvements, and making the application and contract processes easier for Wyoming citizens to utilize. By any comparable standard, the WDTF Business Training Grant programs wildly exceeded their expectations for performance during this fiscal year, as evidenced by:

- A 42% increase in approved applications from fiscal year 2006;
- A 27% increase in approved funding for applications;
- A 5% increase in number of trainees on approved applications;
- A 20% increase in number of individual businesses served;
- A 30% decrease in the amount of time required of businesses to apply; and
- No increase in staff.

These statistics came about through a number of staff-led initiatives and the ability to utilize existing resources at little to no extra cost to the state. Notable among the many program improvements are:

- Migration of the WDTF database from an outdated data platform to a state of the art operating and web-based application system;
- Intensive, targeted marketing of the program to the top five projected growth industries;
- Partnering with other state agencies to develop automated processes, particularly the State Auditor's Office and the Department of Employment, to streamline internal payment and reporting processes; and
- Soliciting comments and suggestions from Wyoming businesses, and using those ideas to develop policy to make the program as user-friendly and accountable as possible.

Overview of the Program- Past and Present

The WDTF is composed of three distinct grant programs and a mechanism to pre-obligate funding in advance of a large project. Following is a brief summary of each.

- Business Training Grants for Existing Positions. This type of grant can provide up to \$2,000 per trainee per fiscal year for established Wyoming businesses with existing employees who need a skill upgrade or retraining in their current occupations.
- Business Training Grants for New Positions. This type of grant can provide between \$1,000 and a maximum of \$4,000 per trainee per fiscal year, depending on the employee's full-time status and hourly wage. Grants for New Positions were developed to assist Wyoming businesses with the costs of a business expansion, or relocation to Wyoming.
- Pre-Hire Economic Development Grants. This type of grant is designed to train skilled workers in a particular business or industry. Applications are completed through a partnering of four entities who contribute separate needs or services to the program:
 - A business, group of businesses, or an industry with a need for workers;
 - A training provider who can deliver the training, certificate or skills the business requires;
 - The local or regional Economic Development entity, who will work within the local or regional economic network to provide assistance; and
 - The local DWS Workforce Center, which will assist in the recruitment of potential workers, along with placement of trained participants.
- Pre-Obligation of WDTF Funding. Pre-Obligation of WDTF funding allows economic developers the flexibility to request advance allocation of WDTF funding in support of a new or expanding business in Wyoming. Any funding allocated through Pre-Obligation must be disbursed through an approved Pre-Hire Economic Development Grant and/or a Business Training Grant for New Positions.

The DWS Three Year Business Plan, titled “Vision 2005”, was released in late 2004 and contained a number of directives that specifically impacted the WDTF. During the past two years, the program met all the requirements from the 2005 Business Plan. A sampling of these mandates from DWS included:

- Develop a service delivery model that integrates all divisions, facilities, outreach offices, communications, training and cross-education.
- Adopt an agency-wide customer service philosophy, culture and training program.
- Reinvent our programs and program policies to serve the mission and vision of DWS and Wyoming (increased emphasis on business services and economic development).

- Develop strategies to target resources toward Wyoming's current and projected needs.
- Create program management systems that support a high level of business and program intelligence.

In addition to the directives from DWS, the WDTF also implemented a number of initiatives, including:

- Migration of the WDTF database from an outdated software platform to a state of the art operating system. This transition occurred over a two-month period with no discernable disruption in service to customers and applicants;
- Moving from a mailed, hard-copy paper application to a web-based online application format;
- Intensive, targeted marketing of the program to the top five projected growth industries in an effort to reach more Wyoming businesses;
- Numerous efficiency improvements throughout the various parts of the program. Typical of these improvements are cross-training of staff using policy and procedure manuals for all duty positions, which allow practically anyone to perform a staff member's duties in their absence as required;
- Partnering with other state agencies for automated processes, particularly the State Auditor's Office and the Department of Employment, to modernize WDTF payment processes and validation of business standing, respectively.

Status of Business Training Grants

By any comparable measure, Business Training Grants had a remarkable year of growth and program efficiency improvements. A summary of activity shows:

- A 42% increase in approved applications from fiscal year 2006;
- A 27% increase in approved funding for applications;
- A 5% increase in number of trainees on approved applications;
- A 20% increase in number of individual businesses served; and
- A 30% decrease in the amount of time required of businesses to apply.

The WDTF accomplished these improvements with no increase in staff, instead using available resources to streamline processes and maximize efficiency. Below are the highlights of statistical information derived from the full fiscal year 2007 Business Training Grants status report, which is included as Attachment B to this report.

- Businesses that used Business Training Grants: 299.
- Top three sizes of businesses utilizing Business Training Grant funding: 1 to 5 employees – 30.4%; 11 to 25 employees – 16.7%; Over 100 – 16.4%.

- Total employees contracted: 2,499.
- Top three occupations of trainees trained with Business Training Grant funding: Healthcare Practitioners and Technical – 19.1%; Management – 17.4%; Business and Financial Operations – 7.6%;
- Total Business Training Grants approved: 1061 grants totaling \$2,143,437.09.
- Top three industries utilizing Business Training Grant Funding: Healthcare and Social Assistance – 19.7%; Professional and Technical Services – 14.4%; Other Services (Except Public Administration) – 9.4%.
- Average grant amount approved (by contract): \$2,212.01.
- Average grant amount approved (by trainee): \$731.73.

The chart below shows the usage of Business Training Grants between fiscal years 1998 and 2007.

Business Training Grants				
	Number of Grants	Approved Amount	Number of Trainees	Number of Businesses
FY 1998	3	\$ 149,827	356	3
FY 1999	6	396,891	412	6
FY 2000	18	243,224	154	16
FY 2001	57	673,374	543	39
FY 2002	191	827,283	940	121
FY 2003	531	2,315,466	2,064	250
FY 2004 – Partial Year	239	971,876	881	140
FY 2005 – Under the new rules	727	2,164,004	3,018	245
FY 2006	611	1,553,468	2,371	240
FY 2007	1061	2,143,437	2,499	299
Change from FY 2006	+42.4%	+27.5%	+5.1%	+19.7%
Total for all years	3,444	11,438,850	13,238	1,359

Status of Pre-Hire Economic Development Grants

The Pre-Hire Economic Development Grants program continues to be a valuable workforce development tool for Wyoming. Driven solely by business demand for skilled workers, the success of the program is rooted in strong partnerships between trainers, businesses, economic development entities, and the Department of Workforce Services. During fiscal year 2007, there were six Pre-Hire Economic Development Grants awarded to six trainers across the state. As noted in the chart below, the Pre-Hire Economic

Development Grants program is scheduled to train 217 workers in an occupation or skill at an average per-trainee cost of slightly over \$2,600.

Training Entity	Region	Award	Number of Trainees Contracted	Cost per Trainee	Occupations	Performance Standard Met?*
1	Statewide	\$121,586.13	109	\$1,115.47	Electrician Apprentices	N/A
2	SE, SC	\$114,000.00	24	\$4,749.96	CDL	N/A
3	NE	\$114,000.00	24	\$4,729.06	CDL	N/A
4	NW	\$42,212.84	10	\$4,221.28	Railcar Repairers	N/A
5	West	\$12,830.00	8	\$1,603.75	Railcar Repairers	N/A
6	NW	\$170,914.50	42	\$4,069.39	Web-based Instructors	N/A
Totals		\$575,543.47	217	\$2,652.27		

*N/A indicates that final reporting was not required by the close of the Fiscal Year.

Status of Pre-Obligation of WDTF Funding Program

The Pre-Obligation program was established to formalize what the DWS could offer the economic development community to assist new, relocating, or expanding businesses in Wyoming. Prior to the original offering of Pre-Obligation as an economic development tool, WDTF found that competition developed because the economic development community and the established business were competing for the same limited funds that were located in the Business Training Grant budget. As a result, WDTF requested in the 2007 – 2008 biennial budget that money be set aside which would be utilized solely by the Pre-Obligation Program.

This “set-aside” of WDTF funds is especially valuable to large projects such as in-state business expansions or business relocations to Wyoming, which often require a funding commitment from the WDTF well in advance of actually submitting an application. With the funding committed to a specific project in the early planning stages, the applicant has no concerns about availability of funds months later, when the applications are actually submitted. The WDTF has been cited as one of the main reasons that businesses are willing to commit to relocation to Wyoming.

The rules for the Pre-Obligation program were effective in November 2006, and the program was initially funded with an appropriation of \$2,040,000. By the close of fiscal year 2007, one economic developer had applied for Pre-Obligation funding to support a business expansion into Wyoming. This application was approved for \$400,000 in

funding which is planned to be applied toward a Business Training Grant for New Positions.

Results from Marketing and Outreach Efforts

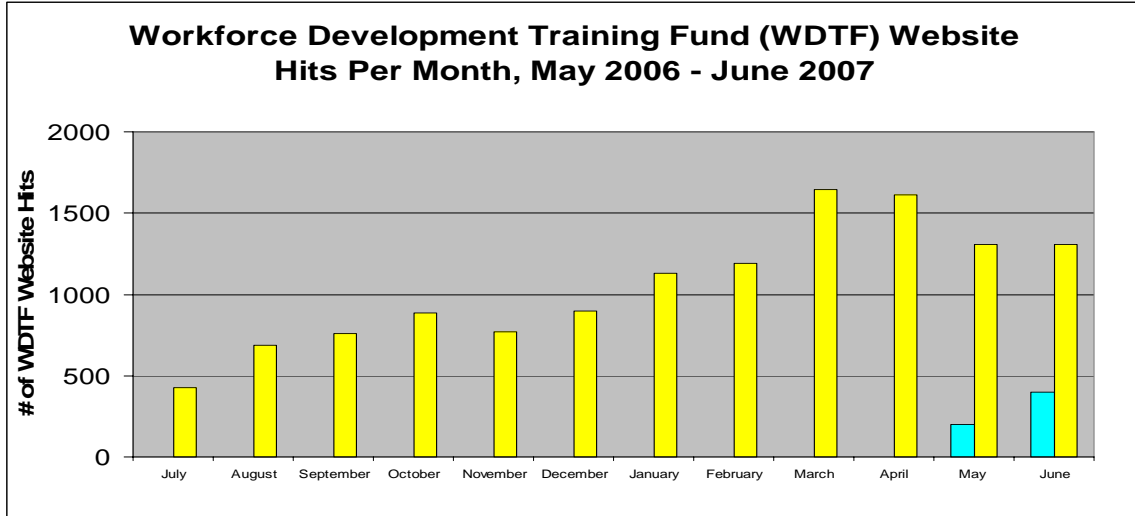
During the latter portion of fiscal year 2006, in an effort to increase statewide visibility of the WDTF, a comprehensive marketing plan for Business Training Grants was drafted. This strategy targeted the top five industries projected to have the highest growth potential through the year 2012. These industries included Manufacturing, Construction, Retail Trade, Accommodation and Food Services, and Other Services.

The plan included a training session for Employment Services Division staff, printing of brochures and postcards, and identification of approximately 12,500 Wyoming businesses which would receive either a direct mailing or an in-person visit to publicize the WDTF. The WDTF marketing plan was launched in August 2006, and concluded in November 2006. A total of 9,819 mailings and 2,381 contacts resulted in providing WDTF program information to approximately half of the registered Wyoming businesses.

In addition to direct marketing, a number of outreach activities were conducted throughout the year for both expanding businesses and relocations to the state. The WDTF also provided funding for 171 trainees on 61 separate contracts for initial and ongoing training for a number of business startups and expansion activities around the state. WDTF was a major contributor to a number of business relocations to Wyoming, including:

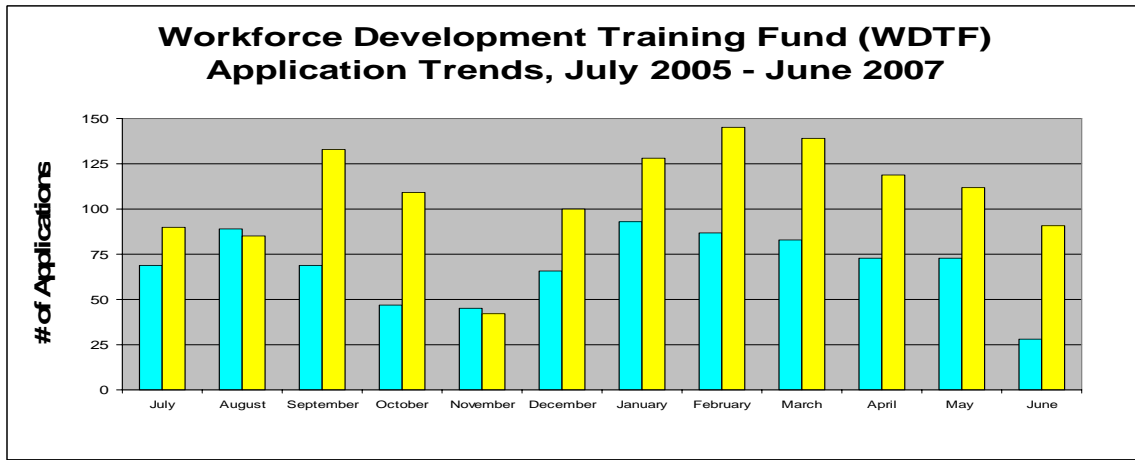
- A custom firearms manufacturing facility in Glenrock;
- A 15-employee call center in Thermopolis; and
- A 200-employee insurance service center in Cheyenne.

The following charts provide a graphic representation of how well the marketing plan has worked to increase program volume through the measurements of website hits, application volume, and number of open contracts.



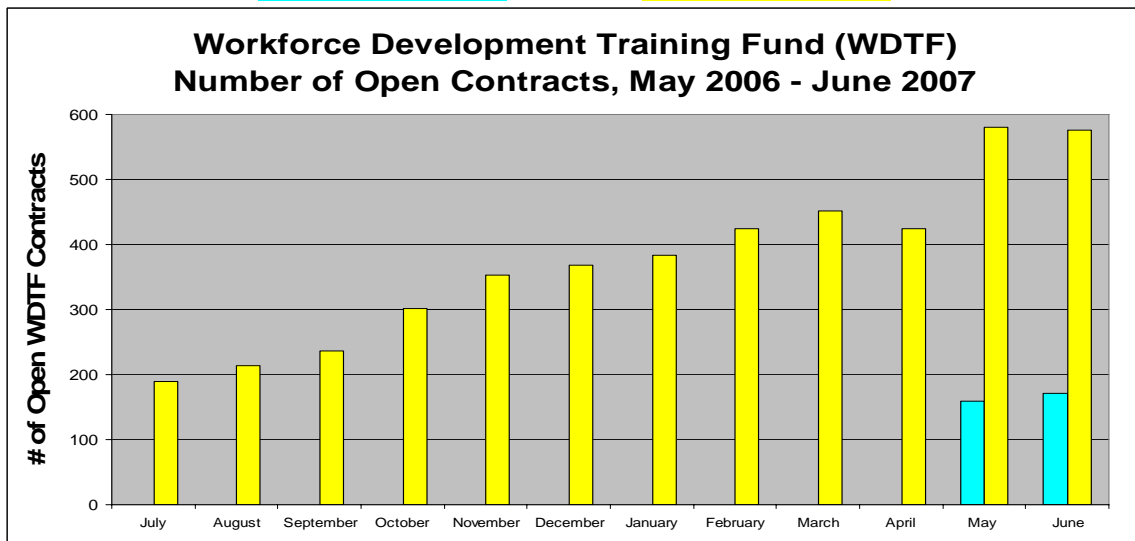
Fiscal Year 2006

Fiscal Year 2007



Fiscal Year 2006

Fiscal Year 2007



Fiscal Year 2006

Fiscal Year 2007

Impact of Increased Funding

In anticipation of higher application volume over the coming biennium, the WDTF asked for, and received, a substantial increase in grant appropriations for the 2007 – 2008 biennium from the Legislature. The 2007 – 2008 combined operating budget for all of the WDTF programs was \$8,075,592, compared to \$4,155,077 for the 2005 – 2006 biennium (an increase of 94%). As a result, the WDTF was able to provide increased services to trainers, economic development entities, businesses, and workers to strengthen the Wyoming workforce.

Operating tempo for the WDTF has kept pace with the increased appropriation, and the program is forecasting a zero balance at the close of the biennium, possibly earlier.

Results of Separation of Funds

To more proactively and accurately manage funds distribution over the entire biennium, WDTF separated funds for each of the three sections of the Program within the state accounting system: Business Training Grants, funded with \$4,278,180 for the biennium; Pre-Hire Economic Development Grants, funded with \$1.5 million for the biennium; and Pre-Obligation Economic Development Grants, funded with \$2.040 million for the biennium. This will make budget management significantly easier and more accountable, allow much-improved long range planning, and enhance our ability to provide advance funding commitments to prospective high dollar applicants.

Rewrite of Policy and Procedure

The WDTF program led the way within the Division and Agency for publishing detailed staff procedure manuals. Because the WDTF application process is operated much the same as an integrated assembly line, it is imperative that each functional area of the program have clear, specific written procedures for how to process applications, contracts, and final report functions. Each staff member wrote a detailed, outlined description of what their duties and responsibilities were, and submitted them for review. The procedure manuals were standardized for format and content, and then published in hard copy for Agency-level approval. A digitized version is also immediately available to all staff members and leadership in the DWS online shared files. Cross-training between functional positions was conducted for each WDTF staff member, so that any staff member could temporarily assume the full duties of another. This is particularly useful during peak volume periods throughout the year. Staff procedure manuals are updated every six months, ensuring the latest process and technological changes are incorporated.

WDTF policy was also rewritten during this fiscal year. This was the first major rewrite of WDTF policy since 2004, encompassing all functional areas of the program. The revised policy complements the rules, and incorporates the many changes, lessons learned and technological advances that the program has undergone over the past three years. Because the procedures and policy are written down and available, continuity of

the program is not an issue due to employee absence or turnover. Any person with a basic knowledge of the WDTF program can use these documents as a guide to function as a staff member. As a result, the Program will continue to experience increases in efficiency which will provide better service to Wyoming business needs.

Descriptions and Results of Program Improvements

During the fiscal year, WDTF staff strived to streamline the program's processes, systems, and staff procedures to ensure the program was capable of efficient operation while undergoing a major increase in volume. The results were very successful. Listed below are the major system and process changes that the program implemented during fiscal year 2007.

Digital Archiving System

WDTF implemented a digital archival system called DocStar in the fall of 2006. The new archival system has dramatically decreased the amount of paper being housed within DWS' offices and sent to State Archives. During fiscal year 2006, the contract files for the WDTF's current fiscal year occupied six four-drawer horizontal file cabinets – approximately 72 linear feet of filing space. Based on growth projections for this fiscal year, it was likely that the number of file cabinets needed would double. By planning ahead and implementing the DocStar system, the program has decreased the amount of file space required to one horizontal file cabinet, which has not only saved valuable office space, but a significant amount of resources in paper, printing, copying, and file cabinets. This savings also passes through to the State Archives Division, which now has to hard-copy archive a fraction of what the WDTF used to produce- in spite of the program's increase in volume.

The DocStar system also provides instant document retrieval and digital transmission capability for current and past contracts – greatly improving the staff's ability to provide information quickly and accurately both internally and to its customers. In contrast, using the State Archives as a storage point, staff would have to formally request return of the files, creating a delay of obtaining information as well as the cost of staff processing time.

Web Based Database and Online Applications

On July 1, 2006, the WDTF completed its transition from a MS Access database to a more robust, state of the art database written in MS-SQL (.NET). This product was over a year in development, and featured (as of July 1, 2006) 33 data tables, 182 unique queries, 768 individual business records, 2,807 individual contract records and 11,040 individual trainee records, each with a sizeable number of fields. The changeover to the new database was completed over a three-month period, with a seamless, uninterrupted transition that was transparent to WDTF customers. Some of the immediate benefits to both customers and staff include:

- Higher levels of data and user security, both for WDTF customers and DWS;

- Interoperability with web-based programs, enabling use of all database functions from any computer with web access;
- Increased ability to identify and fix problems;
- Tighter fiscal controls and improved reporting capabilities;
- The ability to capture, store, and utilize a much broader array of customer, business, and trainee information;
- Much-improved customer service due to faster, more accurate processing of applications; and
- Redundant, multi-level backups to ensure no potential loss of information.

Implementation of the database is the primary reason the WDTF has been able to effectively manage a 42% increase in Business Training Grant applications and contract volume with fewer errors, much increased accountability, no increase in staff, and a 30% reduction in processing time.

Online Business Training Grant Applications

Two weeks before the end of the fiscal year, the WDTF released a revolutionary product to its customers- the online application for Business Training Grants. Using the traditional, hard copy paper application, staff typically took two to four weeks to process and transform the application into a contract. The online application format can be processed much faster, with process times ranging between a minimum of three business days to an average of about two weeks.

The primary benefit to the applicant is turnaround time of an application, which is substantially less than a paper application. The other main advantage is that most information uploaded to the application server is retrievable, and can be used again on subsequent applications – a major time and effort saver for businesses who apply more than once. Additionally, the online application is integrated with other WDTF database enhancements, which makes the entire application process easier, faster, more reliable, and accurate for both our customers and the WDTF staff.

Online Customer Satisfaction Surveys

In the same manner as Business Training Grant applications, the WDTF also converted its customer satisfaction survey to a web-based format. Previously, this multi-page survey was mailed to customers who then had to mail it back. The WDTF utilizes two types of surveys- one for employers, which obtains information about administration of the grant and how the training event affected the business, and an employee version which asks questions about the training itself and how it affected individuals. In order to provide integration of all customer satisfaction data with the Business Training and Outreach Division, the WDTF surveys include questions developed for the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI).

Because the WDTF has been managed from a “Customer service comes first” perspective, the results of the surveys continue to be very positive overall, showing that

the program is consistent, well-received, and gives the businesses the ability to utilize the program in an efficient and positive manner. In response to suggestions on the survey, WDTF staff has changed procedures and policy to enrich the customer experience and improve accountability of the program.

Automation of Fiscal Processing

The WDTF is committed to providing customer service on a comparable level with leading business enterprises. A large percentage of the positive comments the program receives are directed toward the rapid manner in which initial payments are made after a grant application is approved and sent to contract. Over the past two years, the WDTF staff has been working closely with the DWS Information Technology (IT) staff and the State Auditor's Office to develop an automated system to process payment requests to the State Auditor's office for disbursement. Since its implementation, this process improvement has been modified several times to keep pace with software updates and procedural changes in the State Auditor's Office.

The effects of automating the WDTF payment systems are profound. In all cases, payments are processed after the contract with the business is finalized. Two years ago, all payments were made through a complicated process involving several offices utilizing hard copy checks. After processing and mailing, this system took two to three weeks to deliver a check to the customer's business address. Under the automated system currently being used, payments are routinely made through Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) directly to the customer's bank account in three business days. Using EFT, customers can also track the status of their payments at their leisure, 24/7, without having to contact DWS or the State Auditor's Office. Additionally, the automated system allows WDTF staff to closely track the payment process, which has resulted in staff being able to correct potential problems before the customer is paid – resulting in rapid, smooth, and highly accurate transactions for our customers.

Automation of Verification of Business Standing with other State Agencies

Another cooperative agreement between the WDTF and the Department of Employment paid significant dividends in processing time and efficiency. Similar in function to the automated fiscal processing system with the State Auditor's Office, the WDTF now obtains the 'good standing' status of any applying business with both the Worker's Compensation (WC) and Unemployment Insurance (UI) tax divisions through a daily automated process. By automating this process, the WDTF has shaved days off the amount of time needed to verify the status of a business with WC and UI, and greatly increased accountability with both divisions while reducing staff handling time.

Website Revision

Because the WDTF website (www.wyomingworkforce.org/wdtf) is the most frequently used starting point for any prospective customer to learn about the programs or to apply, staff is continually soliciting recommendations from customers and trying to maximize its efficiency and appeal. During the latter part of fiscal year 2007, the WDTF website underwent a major overhaul for content, reducing the amount of verbiage by half, and making it easier to navigate and apply for grants. WDTF staff will continue to solicit

and consider ideas from the public and pursue innovative methods to improve the website's function.

Status of Collections for Fiscal Year 2007

The staff of the WDTF aggressively pursued businesses who owed money in fiscal year 2007. As of June 2007, there was one outstanding account added to the WDTF bad standing list for this fiscal year – due to a corporate level bankruptcy action which caused the local business to cease operations.

All delinquent accounts are vigorously pursued by WDTF staff. During the entire existence of the WDTF, there have been only 19 businesses that have defaulted and been placed in permanent bad standing. Of these 19, two are being processed for repayment by the Attorney General's Office through the court system, one is under criminal investigation for fraudulent activities, and one is repaying the debt owed through installment payments. The remainder of the contracts are unenforceable, due to the age and nature of the contract template that was in use several years ago. This problem has been corrected, and current contracts are relatively easy to enforce if necessary.

Looking Forward

Rules and policy updates. The WDTF program is committed to self-improvement, and the WDTF staff is continuously seeking innovative methods to process applications faster and more accurately. Based on staff input, experiences gained from unusual situations, and comments from our customers, the WDTF is moving forward with formal program improvements that increase the customer satisfaction level, accountability, and efficiency of the program. WDTF staff will meet in July 2006 with current and new members of the original WDTF Workgroup, to review current trends, determine if current processes still meet the original intent of the program, and look at recommendations for improvement.

45-day rule. Currently, as stated in program rules, applications for Business Training Grants must be postmarked a minimum of 45 days prior to the start date of training. This rule was initially adopted due to the hard-copy application processing time of around four to five weeks. Since implementation of the new database and other program enhancements, WDTF staff has reduced the average processing time of an application to around two weeks, enabling a less restrictive application time window. Effective July 2, 2007, the WDTF will reduce the application minimum submission timeframe to 30 days for a 120-day trial period. If the trial works as expected, WDTF plans to move forward with a formal rule change to permanently decrease the minimum application time from 45 to 30 days. This potential change has created a large amount of discussion, all of it positive, from customers, staff, and leadership alike.

Auditing of current and past accounts and customers. The WDTF is planning a series of audits during the coming months of current and past contracts to examine results, accuracy of reporting, and fiscal information. The goal of the audit program will be to find systemic problems and fix them.

Database improvements. As time goes on, the WDTF database will be expanded to include a number of modular add-on functions, some of which include:

- The addition of an internal Message Center, which consists of an internal messaging system using the WDTF database as a communication tool to capture all application and contract related correspondence. This system is separate of the normal email system, allowing application-related correspondence to be retained with the digital application separately from the large volume of daily routine email. This allows a much increased level of customer responsiveness, and gives the customer direct access to staff concerning their respective applications and contracts. Additionally, all correspondence related to the application and contract will be filed together, creating a chronological file of all application documentation in one location.
- The ability to upload digital files and documents directly to the database, eliminating the requirement to print all material and file it.
- Implementation of a Fax Server system, which transforms a traditional fax input to a digital image file, which can then be associated with an application or contract file and stored electronically in the database. This process saves a number of costly resources including time, postage, paper, and filing space requirements.
- Bar-coding of application and contract documentation will significantly decrease staff handling time and potential processing errors while enhancing the ability to quickly retrieve information.
- The ability to produce ad hoc reports and derive various types of information about the status of the WDTF in real time and more accurately than was previously possible.
- Development and deployment of an online tutorial to assist new customers with preparing and submitting business training grant applications.

WDTF Marketing and Outreach. During the coming year, additional emphasis will be placed on making more Wyoming businesses aware of the availability of the WDTF Program, and particularly Business Training Grants. This effort will include presentations, press releases, targeted mailings, and direct contacts. The WDTF strives to maintain the support of current customers and looks forward to working with Wyoming businesses, training entities, economic development entities, and trainees to establish exceptional relationships.

Updated research to determine wage progression and job stability. The last major research project for these indicators of program performance for the WDTF was completed in 2004. We are excited to learn how the program has performed since that time, and looking forward to using measurable data to improve the program further.

Attachment A- Industry Usage Comparison between Fiscal Years 2006 and 2007

Industry	Number of FY-06 Businesses	Number of FY- 07 Businesses	Increase / Decrease
Accommodation and Food Services	15	23	+ 8 (53%)
Administration and Waste Services	1	1	0
Agriculture	4	3	- 1 (25%)
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	7	10	+ 3 (43%)
Construction	11	13	+ 2 (18%)
Educational Services	10	22	+ 12 (120%)
Finance and Insurance	17	12	- 5 (42%)
Health Care and Social Assistance	42	59	+ 17 (40%)
Information	10	11	+ 1 (10%)
Management of Companies and Enterprises	1	2	+ 1 (100%)
Manufacturing	26	24	- 1 (8%)
Mining	8	9	+ 1 (12%)
Other Services (Except Public Administration)	28	28	0
Professional and Technical Services	37	43	+ 6 (16%)
Real Estate, Rental, and Leasing	3	7	+ 3 (130%)
Retail Trade	16	20	+ 4 (25%)
Transportation and Warehousing	3	3	0
Utilities	4	8	+ 4 (100%)
Wholesale Trade	0	1	+ 1 (100%)