Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. (AFWD) hosted a four-county virtual job fair on Wednesday, March 2, 2022. With the pandemic changing the way in-person events are allowed to be held, virtual platforms are becoming more popular. Forty-two employers from Lassen, Plumas, Modoc, and Sierra counties participated in the virtual event with over 200 job openings amongst them. It was the 101 registered job seekers from the four counties that made the event a success.

Virtual hiring event platforms use chat technology and video conferencing to stimulate the interaction between job seekers and employers. Job seekers were able to upload their resumes to their profiles and, with the click of a button, apply for the positions they were interested in. Businesses were able to chat directly with job seekers, schedule/conduct video interviews, view their resumes, and schedule follow-up meetings/interviews with them on the spot. In total 214 resumes were submitted at the event.

Tim Baase with Feather River College said, “I’ve talked to a ton of people and had really good engagement. I’m super impressed with the format here and it has been really fruitful.” Jennie Mathews with Seneca Healthcare District said, “Of the 30 or so people that visited our booth, I have about 5-6 contenders for potential jobs which is a win in my book!” Chris Bielecki, Forest Engineer for the Modoc National Forest remarked that the Virtual Job Fair experience was, “Definitely a good experience and worth our time to attend. We connected with a varied mix of people and work experience. We were also able to point job seekers to the USA JOBS website to apply for our open positions.” Overall businesses were happy with the virtual platform and the interaction they were able to have with job seekers.

The use of the virtual platform gives AFWD the ability to promote, manage, and effectively capture attendees and businesses from a multitude of areas regardless of their physical location. AFWD is always striving to help the employers, community, and their clients with opportunities for employment and growth.
A GREAT NEW OPPORTUNITY

Marissa had been laid off in December, and was waiting on her unemployment application to be approved. She is a single mom and was in desperate need of a stable job. She had participated in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) program with Alliance for Workforce Development (AFWD) in the past, and came back in to see if she could get assistance in her job search.

Marissa met with a Career Center Advisor (CCA) who helped her to evaluate her goals and interests. The results showed she had a wide variety of interests, which was also indicated by her past work experiences in many different areas. She basically described herself as someone who could work just about anywhere. She was enrolled as a job seeker into the WIOA Dislocated Worker program. Marissa applied for and received a job offer as Dental Receptionist with Susanville Indian Rancheria. She needed some help in purchasing work attire, which she received. She also got some help in paying a past-due utility bill.

So far, Marissa is loving her new job, and she expressed her appreciation for all of the help she has received from AFWD. She is now earning a steady income and is able to support her family.
**ROAD TO A NEW LIFE**

Jackie was referred to our Prison to Employment program by her Probation Officer. Jackie had struggled staying on a healthy and positive path in her history and wanted change. Jackie quickly began to see her life transform into something she never thought possible. From the first day of being in the program she set her mind to completing her court ordered requirements, getting her drivers license, and holding a full-time job within the next two years. In just one years’ time, Jackie completed every single one of her goals. Jackie has put her old life behind her and now has her driver’s license for the first time and has more work than she knows what to do with at Walgreens. She has quickly gained more responsibilities at work and couldn’t be happier. Despite having so much to celebrate, Jackie just wants her children to know that they can accomplish anything. Jackie gives credit to her Probation Officer for connecting her with Alliance for Workforce Development that changed her whole life. With tears of joy she thanks him and AFWD for believing in her. We never doubted your abilities Jackie and are very proud of you.

**NEW YEAR, NEW START**

Dustin visited Alliance for Workforce Development (AFWD) in Susanville seeking a career. Dustin knew it was time for change and was very determined to find a career and succeed so he came to the office daily to use the computer lab to attend AFWD hiring workshops, complete his resume, and apply for jobs. Dustin is very grateful for all of the support he received updating his resume that focused on his job skills.

While Job Searching, Dustin found out there would soon be a Job Fair held in Susanville, which he was very excited to participate in. On the day of the Job Fair, Dustin made sure to visit with each booth. He was able to apply for numerous positions but was able to interview on the spot for a driving position with Lincare.

After the Job Fair was complete, Dustin spoke with AFWD staff and thanked them abundantly for the assistance and effort put into hosting the Job Fair. He was thankful that he was able to connect with multiple employers in one place and was looking forward to hearing back from Lincare.

AFWD employees followed up with Dustin after the Job Fair – he was hired and loves his new job! He is now working full-time and even working overtime. Great work Dustin!
MAKING THE BEST OF THINGS

Matthew had been laid off from his position as an Electrician’s Assistant/Apprentice in November, as the business was closing. He wanted to get back to work as soon as possible. He found out Nolen Properties was hiring Maintenance Workers, but the catch was that he would need to have his own equipment to bring to the job. Matthew did not have many tools of his own. He was referred for possible assistance to the Lassen office of Alliance for Workforce Development (AFWD) by Nolen Properties.

Matthew met with a Career Center Advisor (CCA) who worked with him to determine his need for supportive service assistance in order to be able to accept the job he had been offered. He was enrolled as a job seeker into the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Dislocated Worker program. Matthew definitely showed the need of assistance in purchasing appropriate work attire and the required tools for the position. His interests were also assessed to make sure he was a good match for this type of position. The results showed he would be a great match for jobs involving working with his hands, trouble-shooting and fixing things. His CCA assisted him in purchasing all of the items needed to be able to begin his new career.

Matthew was very appreciative of the assistance he received. He said he would definitely refer others for assistance, since AFWD staff were so helpful. He has now been on the job since early December of 2021, and things are still going great. Throughout the entire process, he showed resiliency and the ability to make the best of things.

HARD WORK PAYS OFF

Thomas walked into our office the day after he was released from incarceration. When he arrived, he hadn’t had employment in over a decade, needed permanent housing and had never operated technology such as a cell phone or computer. The day Thomas came into the office he brought a binder full of his accomplishments and certificates he obtained while out of the workforce. Thomas knew exactly what he wanted and was determined to reach his goals. He just wasn’t sure how to there. A day later his supervising officer sent a referral with confidence that Thomas would do very well in our Prison to Employment Program. His officer was very impressed with his organizational skills and his CCA loved his determination and knew she would be sprinting to the finish line with him.

Tommy showed determination by making sure he got the help he needed. Together his CCA and himself learned the basics of how to use a computer and put in his online applications. Through AFWD, Tommy created a resume, learned about his rights as a post incarcerated job seeker, and utilized supportive services through his job search. Sure enough, after just two applications and two weeks passing, Tommy was offered a job exactly where he wanted to be, doing exactly what he wanted to do, exactly as he said he would. Nothing will stand in Tommy’s way of his goals. He is well on his way to success. A few weeks after starting his new part time job he was promoted to a full-time employee. Tommy is always willing to help anyone in need, dependable and shows leadership qualities. His new employer knows he can be counted upon to get the job done well. Not only is Tommy an asset to his new employer but he has helped lead other Lassen county residents down a path of success through encouragement and support. Tommy also dedicates his time to Crossroads Ministries where he shares his experience with residents and instills a “can do” attitude everywhere he goes. Tommy has also found permanent housing since starting his new job. We are very proud of the hard work that you have put in Tommy. At AFWD, we are overjoyed to be apart of your transformation and journey.
The coronavirus pandemic has impacted all sectors of the economy. Businesses across the country have seen supply chain interruptions, demand for products and services decline, and government-mandated closures. Here in our small community of Lassen County, we have witnessed the harsh realities that have come with the global pandemic.

There are not enough job seekers to fill the vacant positions in our rural community and recruitment has been difficult for employers. Restaurants are shortening their hours, not due to a lack of business but because of a lack of staff. Other businesses are having to close on days they would normally be open, due to a lack of needed supplies. Some businesses throughout the area are raising their minimum hourly rate of pay just to entice people to apply or offering sign-on bonuses as an incentive to get job seekers to apply at their companies.

The new Business Service Representative (BSR) at Alliance for Workforce Development (AFWD) has been reaching out to local businesses in Lassen County in an effort to assist in recruitment. Informing our business community of the programs and services that we have to offer can be beneficial to the employer when they are struggling to keep their business open and running with short staffing. The BSR is looking forward to continuing to help as many businesses as possible, fill those vacant positions, and use the programs and resources available to help.

AFWD is ready to assist business owners and their staff in these ever-changing and challenging times.
After working on the Prison to Employment Program (P2E) for the past eighteen months, the Alliance for Workforce Development staff is busy helping to make sure that enrolled clients have the available resources they need to be successful when the program ends. During the program, staff worked with previously incarcerated individuals on probation and parole to help them balance the demands of their conditions and terms with the effort it requires to job search and readjust to society. The program was a collaborative effort between California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and California Workforce Development Board.

Going into the program, staff were well prepared, having worked with law enforcement closely for many years. Still, they acquired tons of knowledge during the program to make them “experts in the field”. Which is why AFWD staff had so much to say when researchers from the University of California, Riverside called to conduct interviews for their program evaluation study.

Staff and participants were interviewed by phone and the process was entirely voluntary and anonymous. Participants earned a $25.00 Visa Gift Card. Staff were asked their opinion on what worked and what might be improved if the program was reintroduced state-wide. Having worked closely with these participants, staff were eager to share what they learned and they all agreed that it was a program that was vital to this population of job seekers, ...and that it worked! The vast majority of the participants got jobs, and good jobs too! The University of California, Riverside’s study won’t come out for eighteen months, but staff will continue to apply what they learned to assist justice involved clients.
IT TAKES A VILLAGE

The youth staff in the Susanville office work hard to ensure that each client is aware and has access to local resources that can help them to overcome employment and educational barriers. As partner agency programs can often change, this requires a lot of effort. Fortunately, Alliance for Workforce Development and Lassen WORKs-Community Social Services are co-located. Over the years this has developed into a cohesive partnership that has been highly effective for not only both agencies, but the clients that they serve. In most youth cases, the client can benefit from not only job search assistance but the multiple programs that Lassen WORKs can offer such as CalWORKs, CalFresh, Medi-Cal, Welfare-to-Work and a variety of housing programs.

Staff from both agencies have developed a seamless in-house system of communication and coordination, including weekly updates, team meetings with the clients, and strategies to mediate challenges. With the focus and efforts of multiple agencies, client’s have an increased chance of success. Collaboration works!
PARTNERING WITH LOCAL BUSINESSES

Sierra Cascade Family Opportunities Head Start (SCFO) provides free high-quality child-development services including preschool, infant & toddler care, and services for pregnant women. They are committed to the belief that every child and family, regardless of the circumstances of birth, should have the ability to succeed in life. They encourage families to work closely with their staff to bridge any gap between home and school, ensuring success in school for years to come. They welcome parent participation in classrooms, keep parents up to date on their children’s developmental milestones, and include parents in all decisions related to their children’s education and wellbeing. They also provide leadership opportunities for parents and many avenues for parent involvement.

SCFO has four Head Start centers in Lassen County alone and is consistently looking for qualified candidates to fill their job vacancies. In November 2021 when AFWD held their in-person job fair, SCFO had a booth where-in they were able to hire for one of their open Assistant Caregiver positions from one of the many job seekers at the fair. Their candidate, Brooke, was someone who lacked some of the key skills and competencies that she would need to be successful in the position, however, she demonstrated motivation, a love for children, and a willingness to learn. AFWD was able to enroll Brooke into their Dixie AA program for an On-the-Job Training (OJT) where they can reimburse SCFO for a portion of Brooke’s wages. An OJT is a great tool for employers who are hiring and training someone whose resume lacks transferable skills for the position. Head Start is pleased with Brooke’s ongoing performance and with the partnership with AFWD.
Unemployment Information

Lassen Business and Career Network
1616 Chestnut St
Susanville, CA 96130
(530) 233-4161

AFWD - America’s Job Center of California
Statistics

Unemployment Rates
(As of: Feb. 2022)
California 4.8%
Lassen 5.1%

Unemployment Information

AFWD Region County UI Claims

Weekly Initial Claims by Industry Sector

Lassen

Top Affected Industry Sector - Lassen County
Construction

Lassen County - Through 3rd Quarter
One-Stop Visitors: 4,144
Businesses Served: 64
Business Services: 886
AFWD
Clients Enrolled: 902

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Statistics

Unemployment Rates
(As of: Feb. 2022)
California 4.8%
Lassen 5.1%