



EVALUATION OF AMERICA'S JOB CENTERS OF CALIFORNIA

Corporation for a Skilled Workforce

with the Ray Marshall Center

and the California Workforce Association

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents

Acknowledgements.....	2
Table of Contents	1
Abstract.....	8
Executive Summary.....	9
Key Findings	10
Quantitative Overview	10
Qualitative Overview	12
Key Recommendations	16
Promising Practices	17
I. Introduction and Background	18
Overview of the Request for Applications	18
Evolving Expectations for the Evaluation.....	19
Evaluation Timeline.....	21
Operational Limitations of the Evaluation	21
WIOA, the AJCC System, and California’s Training Requirement	24
Research Findings from Other Evaluations of America’s Job Centers	24
COVID Impact	25
Early Finding: Contracting the OSO and/or Career Services Provider	26
II. Quantitative Analysis Approach.....	30
Design of the Quantitative Component.....	30
Background and Theory Development	30
Research Questions	31
Research Methods	31
Data Sources	35
Qualifying Conditions	35
Program Characteristics	38
Training Characteristics	40
Differences Between WIOA Adults and Dislocated Workers	41
Impact of Training	42

Earnings	44
Association with Contracting Career Services and One-Stop Operator Functions	46
Introduction	46
Context	47
In-House and Contracted Career Services Analysis	48
Discussion of Quantitative Analysis	50
III. Qualitative Analysis Approach	52
Design of the Qualitative Component	52
IV. Themes and Observations from Case Studies	54
Selecting Career Services Provider and OSO.....	54
Theme: Training	55
Key Elements of This Theme	55
Why This Theme is Important	55
Documentation Used for the Observations Within the Case Studies	55
Training Allocation Decision-Making Process – Tracking Training Expenditures	55
Tracking Training Expenditures	56
Types of Training Offered	57
How Training Effectiveness is Assessed	59
Summary	59
The 30% training requirement is clearly a driver of policy decisions locally, but one that comes with a high administrative burden, according to most case study sites. Interviewees did not dispute the importance of training as a key component of the workforce development system, but many questioned whether the current policy could be made less onerous.	60
Theme: Business Services	60
Key Elements of This Theme	60
Why this Theme is Important	60
Documentation Used for the Observations Within the Case Studies	60
Business Services in General	61
Business Services Operational Location	61
Summary	62
Theme: Sector Partnerships	62
Key Elements of This Theme	62
Why This Theme is Important	62
Documentation Used to Develop Information on the Theme	62
AJCC Activities Related to In-Demand Sectors	63
AJCC Staff Roles in Sector Training	64
Policy direction from WDB that impacts AJCC sector work	64

Theme: Strong Local Partnerships	65
Key Elements of This Theme	65
Why This Theme is Important	65
Tracking Partner Activities	65
AJCC Structure Impact on System Partners	66
Education Partners	66
AJCC partnerships with CBOs	67
Funding streams	68
Summary	69
Theme: Equity	69
Key Elements of This Theme	69
Why This Theme is Important	69
Disaggregated Data and Outcomes	69
AJCC Specific Issues	70
Explicit Commitment to Racial Equity and Inclusion	70
V. Recommendations	72
General	72
Equity as an Overarching Framework	72
Specific Recommendations	73
Data System Expansion	73
WIOA CA Training Requirement	74
Assessing Training Effectiveness	75
Other Training Considerations	76
Differential Support to Sector Training	76
Raising Target Wages for Eligible Training Providers	77
Cohort Training for Demand Sectors	77
Setting a Narrative for State Discretionary Investments and State Policy	78
Contracting Career Services	78
Learnings from COVID-19 and Implications for the Future of AJCCs	79
Strong Partnerships	81
Equity in AJCCs of the Future	82
Other Areas of Innovation to Consider	82
Overview	84
Fresno	84
Demographics	85
Strategic Approach	85

WIOA Title I Data.....	87
Los Angeles City	89
Demographics	89
Strategic Approach	89
WIOA Title I Data.....	92
Mother Lode	93
Demographics	93
Strategic Approach	94
WIOA Title I Data.....	96
Richmond	97
Demographics	97
Strategic Approach	98
WIOA Title I Data.....	99
Sacramento	100
Demographics	100
Strategic Approach	101
WIOA Title I Data.....	103
San Bernardino.....	104
Demographics	104
Strategic Approach	105
WIOA Title I Data.....	107
San Diego	108
Demographics	108
Strategic Approach	109
WIOA Title I Data.....	111
San Jose	112
Demographics	112
Strategic Approach	113
WIOA Title I Data.....	115
Santa Cruz	116
Demographics	116

Strategic Approach	117
WIOA Title I Data	119
Sonoma	120
Demographics	120
Strategic Approach	121
WIOA Title I Data	123
Tulare	124
Demographics	124
Strategic Approach	125
WIOA Title I Data	127
Ventura	128
Demographics	128
Strategic Approach	129
WIOA Title I Data	131
Additional Promising Practices	132
PART THREE: APPENDICES	138
Appendix A: Career Services Provider Types	139
Appendix B: Local Area Survey Data	142
Appendix C: Local Director Interview Protocol	144
Appendix D: Full Case Study Interview Protocol	146
Appendix E: AJCC Contracted OSO/ Career Services Survey	150
Appendix F: Literature Scan – AJCC Promising Practices	151
Appendix G: Technical Appendix	153
Construction of Datasets	153
Data Linkage	154
Variable Construction	154
Appendix H: data FOR case study sites – WIOA Adult Workers 2019-2020	155



PART ONE: MIXED METHODS ANALYSIS

ABSTRACT

The evaluation team's analysis of five years of WIOA Title I data indicated that enrollees who received training services, as opposed to other types of services, were significantly more likely to obtain employment, and to earn higher wages in that employment. Enrollees in local areas which utilized contracted career service providers (particularly non-profit providers) were also more likely to obtain employment, and to earn higher wages, regardless of whether they received training services or not. While statistically significant, however, these differences were not large, nor were they uniform across all local workforce areas. Interviews with a cross-section of local areas illuminated the myriad approaches that communities are taking to address workforce needs through training and other services, reinforcing the importance of strong local partnerships and suggesting that heightened concerns about equity are causing local workforce areas to examine whether they are successfully serving those most in need. The team recommends that the California Workforce Development Board build on this theme in several ways to strengthen the workforce system's focus on equity as a goal.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Request for Applications (RFA) for the evaluation of the California AJCC system, issued in December of 2019, sought an assessment of the extent to which various local investment decisions and attributes of AJCCs might be associated with better access to services, mix of services, or outcomes for jobseekers. In particular, the RFA postulated that the AJCCs could be sorted into four models, based on whether they contracted certain functions or provided them directly, and questioned whether there might be a link between these models, access to services, mix of services, and outcomes. The RFA reiterated the key goals of the state's 2016-2019 Unified Strategic Workforce Development Plan: ***demand-driven skills attainment; upward mobility for all; aligning resources and providing services to meet each client's needs.***

Corporation for a Skilled Workforce (CSW) was selected as the evaluator for the AJCC evaluation in March 2020 and put under contract in November of that year to begin work on the project. During the course of the evaluation, there were adjustments in the expectations for the work based on the evolving priorities of the California Workforce Development Board. In particular, there was a heightened interest in the impact of training services, and in the overall theme of equity as reflected in AJCC operations. Ultimately, the evaluation sought to investigate the relationship between local workforce boards and their AJCCs, examining whether and how local board decisions, and the context for those decisions, influenced the work of AJCCs and the outcomes of their clients.

The project design envisioned a mixed-methods approach: first, a quantitative component, examining five years of WIOA Title I data, conducted by researchers at the Ray Marshall Center, followed by a qualitative component led by Corporation for a Skilled Workforce and centered on a dozen on-site case studies designed to illuminate and expand upon the quantitative analysis. Such an approach utilizes the available quantitative component to provide precision, so stakeholders can understand the estimated impacts and associations of services on participant outcomes, while the qualitative component provides a comprehensive exploration of the research questions. These roles allow the components of mixed-methods research play to their respective strengths: quantitative evaluations rely on accurate, consistently collected and recorded data to generate precise understandings of specific questions; qualitative evaluation allows researchers the ability to see how programs, policies, and people interact with one another to identify notable deficits and successes.

The quantitative analysis for this evaluation utilized Title I WIOA data for the years 2016 through 2020, though the evaluation team of course understands that AJCCs also served many non-WIOA funded individuals as well. The case studies surfaced considerable information on how AJCCs accessed services from the broader workforce development ecosystem, but were limited both by the pandemic and, in some local areas, by the reluctance of the local area to

commit to interviews with multiple stakeholders. Valuable information was gathered in both components which serves as the basis for this report.

Key Findings

Quantitative Overview

The quantitative component of the evaluation was structured around a working hypothesis: Local areas consciously, regularly, and consistently make decisions about contracting the functions of one-stop operator (OSO) and career services provider based at least in part on service area needs and funding. These different service provision arrangements and OSO approaches may be associated with variations in service offerings, particularly the provision of training services, which could result in differences in ultimate labor market outcomes associated with these services. However, local areas are unlikely to know whether their contracting choices represent the optimal decision for those they hope to serve.

By measuring the impacts of training and its association with contracting specific functions across all local areas, quantitative researchers examined the latter part of the theory: are these selections optimal for those served by the local areas through AJCCs? Conclusions about the quantitative results are informed by the results of the qualitative analysis, which focused on the first part of the theory of inquiry: do local areas make contracting decisions freely, consciously and regularly? From the case study interviews, it is apparent that such decisions are in fact much more complicated than a simple reliance on which model is most effective in any given local area. Decisions are often driven by past history, experience with local providers, local contracting rules, and the availability of suitable contractors. The choices local areas make are heavily influenced by factors outside the bounds of the quantitative component of this evaluation, and the results must therefore be tempered by what cannot be measured.

Key Quantitative Research Questions

1. Did engaging in training result in higher rates of employment? For those who found employment, did receipt of training result in higher earnings?
2. Did participants who received services at local areas that contracted career services experience differential outcomes than their counterparts receiving services that were not contracted?
3. Were there differences in either the likelihood of receiving training services or eventual labor market outcomes between participants served under different service provider arrangements?

Though the RFA's focus was on whether WIOA participants benefited based on whether their local area contracted out career services and/or one stop operator functions, investigations revealed a more nuanced portrait of decision-making and consequences. Local areas do not always have the option to contract out, and complex factors are related to when and how they might choose to do so and with what type of organization. CWDB and the evaluation team consequently agreed that the scope should be broadened to look at other possible factors that

could be associated with strong employment outcomes, including the degree of emphasis on training services, the strength of connections between the AJCCs and local or regional sector initiatives, and the depth of local partnerships.

Among the key questions the evaluation sought to answer was whether there was a relationship between AJCC model and the likelihood that WIOA enrollees received training services and positive employment outcomes. For the period 2016-2020, across all contracting models, the unadjusted rate of employment in the quarter after exit for those who did not receive training was 60%, while those who received training found employment at a higher rate (72%), a difference of 12 percentage points. Differences in employment outcomes could be due to multiple factors, including participant characteristics and the type and nature of training, potentially in combination with employment support services.

Results demonstrated an impact of training on both employment and earnings, illustrated by the following estimates:

- A positive, statistically significant ($p < 0.000$) impact of 7.1 percentage points on *employment* for individuals who received training compared to those who did not receive training, with a confidence interval between 6.4 and 7.9 percentage points.
- A positive, statistically significant ($p < 0.000$) impact of \$946.79 on earnings for individuals who received training and found employment compared to those who did not receive training but found employment. The 95% confidence interval of the estimate is between \$841.99 and \$1,052.59. These benefits continue through the year after training, with an estimated impact of \$3,579.37 in the first year and a two-year earnings impact of \$5,531.78.

Researchers utilized a differential intermediate and final outcomes analysis framework and examined for potential differences at each phase of participation (receipt of training, completion of training, employment, and earnings) between various contracting arrangements. This analysis follows the path of those who entered an AJCC and then qualified for WIOA services, including the regression control variables appropriate for each stage. Results of this analysis indicate the following differences in outcomes between local areas which contracted career services compared to those that performed those services in-house:

- No difference in receipt of training.
- No difference in completion of training for those who entered training.
- ***Contracted career services completers were more likely to find employment (1.21 percentage points) in their first quarter after exit than their in-house peers.***
- ***Employed completers receiving contracted career services earned \$975.67 more in their first quarter after exit than their in-house peers.***
- No difference in employment during the first quarter after exit for those who exited training without completing.
- No difference in earning during the first quarter after exit for those who exited training without completing and then found employment.

- ***Non-trained enrollees who received contracted career services were more likely to find employment (1.18 percentage points) in the first quarter after exit than their in-house peers.***
- ***Non-trained enrollees receiving contracted career services who found employment earned more (\$734.90) in their first quarter after exit than their in-house peers.***

Researchers caution that, while statistically significant, the identified differences are relatively small in scale, with the increase in employment between 1 and 2 percentage points and an increase in earnings of between \$1.40 and \$1.88 an hour for full time work, depending on whether an individual did not receive training or received and completed training.

Thus, individuals who received services at a local area that contracted career services experienced better employment and earnings outcomes if they completed training – or if they never entered training. The theme here would appear to be connection to the labor market, as it seems contracting out career services might provide some inherent benefit to connecting those receiving services when they subsequently seek employment. However, the mechanism through which this occurs is unclear using the data provided. It may be that contracts with organizations providing career services tend to contain expectations regarding employment outcomes, helping to drive employment re-integration.¹

WIOA participants in California clearly benefit from the AJCC system, and this report provides evidence of the benefits of training provided via that system. Those who received training were more likely to find employment, and those who found employment earned more than their similar peers who did not. ***Researchers can say with some confidence that WIOA-funded training effectively provided the tools and supports to link participants to the labor market and then to higher earnings immediately after exit.*** The positive impact of training appears to be consistent with that found by the California Policy Lab in its recent study of CAAL-Skills outputs. The evaluation team recommends further study of the impact of the broader workforce system, as expanded upon in the Key Recommendations below and in the body of the report. The quantitative component of the evaluation did not generate specific policy recommendations on the contracting question. While there were significant differences found in some areas, they were not large. More importantly, there are other major factors that play into such contracting decisions.

Qualitative Overview

Given the focus of the quantitative analysis on WIOA Title I data, coupled with the desire that the evaluation also look at the workforce development system writ large, it was understood from the start that a mixed-methods approach would be required to fully understand how California's AJCCs operate. Case studies are a widely used formative evaluation approach,

¹ Research shows that training organizations which link employers to recent program graduates, like Project QUEST in San Antonio, improve earnings and employment opportunities of those they serve. A recent report detailing these findings can be found here: https://economicmobilitycorp.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/NineYearGains_web.pdf

particularly in frequently changing conditions where a final mode of operating has not yet been reached. The constantly evolving nature of AJCCs made case studies an appropriate approach for this evaluation. The case studies took the form of in-depth interviews conducted in twelve local workforce areas that were selected as a cross-section of the four contracting models, encompassing large cities, small cities, rural areas, and diverse community demographics. Interviews explored service provision strategies and AJCC contracting arrangements, with a focus on understanding how and why key decisions about career services and training are made, the extent to which non-WIOA resources constitute part of the local workforce development system, and the challenges involved in connecting the AJCCs to the higher-order training and employment opportunities offered by industry sector partnerships.

Key Themes from Qualitative Research

1. Training
2. Business Services
3. Sector Partnerships
4. Strong Local Partnerships
5. Equity

The qualitative observations are based on 57 video interviews with staff and stakeholders in a dozen local workforce areas. As noted previously, the interviews were limited by the pandemic, and somewhat curtailed due to local area concerns. Local areas, and thus their AJCCs, vary tremendously across the state. This stems in part from the strong local decision-making aspect of WIOA, which allows variation based on local conditions and context. The selection of one-stop operator and career service provider appears to be largely driven by local history, expediency, and often just a simple lack of available providers. An overarching observation is that no one factor appears to be the driver in situations where local choice is embedded in the governing laws. Instead, decisions tend to be based on a confluence of factors relevant to the local area. However, there are some trends, as well as observations regarding promising practices, that could be more closely studied to determine whether investments in them are merited. The qualitative observations are structured around five key themes. Each theme relates to an aspect of AJCC operations that the experience of the evaluation team indicates impacts participant outcomes directly or indirectly.

Training

Prior to the pandemic, the amount of WIOA funding spent on training was meeting or exceeding the state's 30% requirement in just about all local areas. The types of training invested in, however, differ from one local area to another. Some local areas, for a variety of reasons, emphasize on-the-job training (OJT); others do not. ***Most local areas place a premium on training in high-demand sectors. CWDB's sector policy direction appears to be shared by most local areas interviewed.*** From what the evaluation team was able to glean across the case study sites, there is ***an ongoing shift away from merely filling entry-level, low wage jobs***

towards a stronger focus on meeting the needs of employers in high growth sectors, at least with some portion of the local area's training dollars.

Due to data constraints, the degree to which WIOA participants benefit from assistance provided by various partners is not clear. The evaluation team found a few examples of clear connections supported by outcomes, but it was not the norm. ***Overcoming the current bifurcation of tracking outcomes by funding streams is not an easy task, but if policy expectations are tied to joint partner efforts, being able to assess the effectiveness of these efforts through data aggregation must become a key policy focus.*** The recently-announced Regional Equity and Recovery Partnership initiative includes funding for such data integration and could serve as a critical steppingstone to a long-term data-sharing approach.

Business Services

While the focus of the RFA was on outcomes for job-seeker customers, the case study interviews inevitably delved into the services AJCCs provide to their other set of customers: employers. (Indeed, in some of the smaller local areas, the same staff who provide services to job-seekers also serve as business service representatives.) The evaluation team observed several variations in how business services are managed. It appears that in those cases where business services are connected to other business-oriented support efforts, there is opportunity for bringing a wider range of services to the businesses served by these broader efforts. At the same time, there is in some areas a noteworthy trend away from trying to meet the needs of all area employers, and a more proactive focus on engaging more intensively with those employers offering better jobs. Across the case study sites, business services staff increasingly find themselves in candid conversations with employers about the need to enhance wages, benefits and job flexibility in order to attract workers in the current labor market.

Sector Partnerships

Many of the local directors interviewed acknowledged that establishing and maintaining strong links between the front door of the AJCCs and the career-oriented training offered by sector partnerships was an ongoing challenge, particularly as staff turnover and as sector opportunities evolve. The roles of AJCC staff vary tremendously across local areas. In some local areas, AJCC representation in sector partnerships was outsourced to external individuals with expertise in the relevant sector. In other instances, AJCC staff were leveraged as gatekeepers for sector training opportunities, with responsibility for determining whether customers had the necessary skills and supports to benefit from long-term training. Local area leaders see job developers and career coaches as the lynchpins of a high-functioning system, responsible both for understanding business needs and appropriately matching AJCC customers to opportunities – activities critical to the success of sector skills training. Front-line staff need intensive professional development that expands their understanding of the broader workforce development system, and adjacent systems, if they are to be expected to do more than place people into entry-level jobs.

Strong Local Partnerships

Case study interviews included numerous local partners and explored the history and depth of those partnerships. Multiple interviewees noted that there is a vast difference between a ‘paper’ partnership, documented for compliance with WIOA or state requirements, and a genuine collaboration. A majority of case study sites indicated that their local CalWORKs agency served as their most robust partner, followed by education partners, particularly the Adult Education schools. After those, the Department of Housing, Department of Corrections, and Department of Rehabilitation were mentioned as key partners, with varying levels of collaboration. The case study interviews highlighted efforts of local boards to incorporate system partners, but a major concern was the lack of a data system capable of collecting consistent and accurate information on the contribution of those partners.

Education systems and institutions were frequently cited as critical partnerships enabling the local workforce system and the AJCCs to better serve their clients. Education partners were also hailed as being critical to a number of innovative strategies, such as contextualized and accelerated programming. Adult Education schools in particular were hailed by many local areas as instrumental for training workforce customers, highlighting the frequent referral (and reverse referral) process between the AJCCs and that system.

Several case study sites reported working closely with their community college partners, but some noted a level of difficulty in connecting their clients with what the colleges have to offer. Many education partners offer courses that are too long or are held in formats and timeslots that are inconvenient for AJCC customers looking to upskill or reskill quickly.

Partnerships with local community-based organizations (CBOs) were found at all case study sites. At their best, collaborations between AJCCs and CBOs provide a blueprint for how marginalized subgroups can achieve success within WIOA-funded training opportunities. In these partnerships, CBOs and AJCCs serve as access points to the myriad training and service options that exist within the local area. Across the board, however, local area directors emphasize that they and their staff are in the best position to know which local CBOs have the capacity and the commitment to contribute effectively to the workforce development system.

Discretionary funds offer an additional opportunity for the AJCCs to collaborate with system partners. Discretionary grants from the US Department of Labor, the state, or system partners can serve as a catalyst for collaboration between the AJCCs and their partners. For example, the relatively new *Prison to Employment* initiative was frequently cited as having significantly bolstered partnerships in the service of justice-involved individuals.

Equity

Advancing equity in the California workforce system is a key tenet of the CWDB strategic plan and of the state's overall goals. Locally, equity also appears to have a high priority at the present time in local government policy and direction-setting. It has become a topic of discussion in every workforce area the team interviewed, and a number of local areas have emerging plans to address it. Indeed, ***this theme was one of the few that most local areas in the case studies responded to with specific activities or plans for action. While these local efforts are in most cases just getting underway, it is clear that the system, as a whole, takes this issue seriously,*** with intent to modify operations to address service and outcome disparities in the system.

A key starting place for several local areas was ensuring they could effectively measure how their AJCCs are currently performing through an equity lens. They are asking two key questions: ***Are we reaching all of the populations we need to reach? And when we do, are we achieving equitable outcomes with those populations?*** The complexity and challenge of an equity strategy that goes beyond 'services provided' to achieve ***equitable outcomes*** was an important part of the case study interviews. Many local areas noted that their limited access to disaggregated data at the local level impedes their ability to take more explicit and actionable steps towards improving outcomes for their racially diverse constituents. Several local areas noted that diversity in their AJCC staffing, mirroring the local community, was a crucial prerequisite for gaining the trust of the populations they need to serve.

Key Recommendations

- **Equity as an Overarching Framework** – The workforce system could benefit significantly from an organizing theme that can be embraced by all, and that can readily be seen as driving actions and policies. ***The evaluation team suggests that equity is such a theme.*** Testing proposed new initiatives against the theme would send a clear and coherent message about what CWDB is interested in achieving through each of its efforts.
- **Data System Expansion** – The evaluators recommend CWDB develop a public plan with investment targets, timelines, and responsibilities for a full integration of workforce tracking systems so that the combined input of multiple partners can be assessed, using the Regional Equity and Recovery Partnerships as a beta test.
- **Enhance California's Investment in Workforce Training** – The team recommends CWDB convene a work group to examine the current 30% WIOA training requirement and explore the possibility of enhancements that could incentivize and leverage other funding streams and bring training services to scale while easing the administrative burden on local areas.
- **Quantitative Component Summary** – The evaluators make no specific policy recommendations based solely on the quantitative component. The limitations on the evaluation and the variations among local areas in applying definitions were key factors in this. The team does note that the positive impact of training outlined here aligns closely

with that found in the California Policy Lab evaluation of CAAL-Skills data. Both evaluations, while qualified by multiple factors, tend to ***support California's emphasis on training.***

The Recommendations Section of the full report contains deeper explanations of the recommendations above, as well as a number of additional areas for further examination that arose during the case studies.

Promising Practices

There are multiple ways in which promising practices are covered in this report. Promising practices identified as part of the twelve case studies are discussed at length in the **Themes** section, highlighting by topic various local efforts that the evaluators felt would be of interest to CWDB and the overall workforce system. To identify promising practices beyond the case study sites, evaluation partner CWA was tasked with identifying a dozen innovative AJCC-related projects in local areas across the state. These appear in brief summaries starting on page 127, after the case study profiles, and highlight some of the most cutting-edge work happening in the workforce system today. Finally, the appendix contains a survey of national reports and evaluations related to America's Job Centers, some of which include promising practices. The evaluation team believes they highlight potentially useful models for innovative ways of delivering services, engaging partners, and/or serving marginalized population groups.

I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Overview of the Request for Applications

The Request for Applications (RFA) for the evaluation of the AJCC system, issued in December of 2019, sought an assessment of the extent to which various investment decisions and attributes of AJCCs might be associated with better access to services, mix of services, and outcomes for jobseekers. In particular, the RFA postulated that the AJCCs could be sorted into four basic models, based on whether they contracted for certain functions or provided them directly, and questioned whether there might be a link between models and outcomes. The RFA began by citing the key goals of the state's 2016-2019 Unified Strategic Workforce Development Plan:

Extract from AJCC Evaluation RFA, including goals from CA Unified Workforce Plan 2016-2019, in effect at the time of the AJCC RFA issuance:

"The purpose of this evaluation is to support the AJCC system's efforts to effectively and efficiently provide workforce and education services to those who need it most, while advancing the three policy goals of ... California's Unified Strategic Workforce Development Plan:

1. Fostering demand-driven skills attainment. Workforce and education programs need to align program content with the state's industry sector needs so as to provide California's employers and businesses with the skilled workforce necessary to compete in the global economy.
2. Enabling upward mobility for all Californians, including populations with barriers to employment. Workforce and education programs need to be accessible for all Californians and ensure that everyone has access to a marketable set of skills and is able to access the level of education necessary to get a good job that ensures both long-term economic self-sufficiency and economic security.
3. Aligning, coordinating, and integrating programs and services to economize limited resources to achieve scale and impact, while also providing the right services to clients, based on each client's particular and potentially unique needs, including any needs for skills-development.

WIOA significantly changed the workforce system in California. As a result, the AJCC system needs to be evaluated to ensure it continues to meet the needs of its stakeholders and has the ability to support future workforce development service delivery models.

Objective 1 – To understand how the four different models of service delivery in use in California affect a) overall access to services and, more importantly, b) the mix of services provided to the client population served.

Objective 2 – To understand how investment decisions pertaining to AJCC infrastructure, staffing levels, and number of locations affect a) overall access to services and, more importantly b) the mix of services provided to the client population served.

Objective 3 – To understand whether there is any relationship between participant program outcomes and the mix of services provided to the client population served. Do some models of service delivery and some types of investment decisions pertaining to AJCCs appear to be systematically related to participant program outcomes?”

Evolving Expectations for the Evaluation

The announcement that CSW and its partners had been selected to conduct an evaluation of the AJCC system was made in March 2020 – the same week Governor Newsom issued the first COVID-19 stay-at-home order. For various reasons, however, the contract for the evaluation was not executed until November 2020. As the contract was being developed, CWDB rethought and sharpened the study questions, moving beyond the four models mentioned in the RFA to include other potential drivers of AJCC performance. The evaluation team expended considerable energy, as will be discussed further in this report, trying to find credible information to support quantitative analysis of some of these other factors thought to influence AJCC operations. Ultimately, through ongoing discussions with CWDB leadership, a growing interest emerged in the importance of *training services* provided via AJCCs as a driver of outcomes.

These evolving expectations influenced the framework of the evaluation as the evaluation team moved into the implementation phase. One critical limitation on the evaluation surfaced during contract execution. While the intent and desire was to evaluate the work of the AJCCs across all relevant funding sources, the only data available to the evaluation team was for WIOA Title I. There was universal agreement that this would limit the extent to which quantitative findings in the evaluation could be used for recommendations beyond WIOA, but clear recognition that CWDB expected the evaluation to address the broader goals of the state’s 2020-2023 Unified Workforce Development Plan, which are considerably more expansive than WIOA. In essence those goals focus heavily on moving marginalized populations into jobs paying family-sustaining wages in key growth sectors. That expectation could only be achieved through greater integration of all the workforce resources available in the state, particularly the community college system, where most of the higher-skill training resources are found.

Comprehensive data integration is a huge task, but one that is essential if there is to be a comprehensive delivery system. The evaluation team applauds the early efforts of the state, through its CAAL-Skills initiative and other efforts, to begin the data integration process. Such efforts take time and resources to reach full utility. Unfortunately, the lack of data integration at present significantly limited the scope of quantitative component of this evaluation. Through the case studies, the team was able to highlight examples of system integration and developing

partnerships, but these tend to be more in the realm of promising practices rather than hard data upon which to base policy recommendations.

Evaluation Timeline

- *Contract Award Announced* – **March 2020**
- *Contract Executed Allowing Work to Start* – **November 2020**
- *Data Sharing Agreement Initiated* – **January 2021**
- *Evaluation Design Memo Completed*– **February 2021**
- *Data Sharing Agreement Executed* – **March 2021**
- *Initial WIOA Title I Data Provided to Evaluation Team* – **June 2021**
- *Case Studies Launched* – **October 2021**
- *WIOA Participant UI Wage Record Data Provided to Evaluation Team* – **February 2022**
- *Case Studies Completed* – **March 2022**
- *Draft Report Submitted to CWDB* – **May 2022**
- *Final Report* – **May 2022**

Operational Limitations of the Evaluation

The understandable decision by CWDB to limit the quantitative component of the evaluation to Title I WIOA was driven by what data was available and accessible within a reasonable timeframe. Observations on the wider workforce investment system, of which WIOA is but one part, are necessarily qualified by this overarching data limitation. This issue is one that is fully recognized by CWDB, and efforts have been underway for several years to address it, particularly through the CAAL-Skills initiative.

Data limitations also had a significant impact on the evaluation team’s ability to address the charge articulated in Objective 2 of the RFA: *“To understand how investment decisions pertaining to AJCC infrastructure, staffing levels, and number of locations affect a) overall access to services and, more importantly b) the mix of services provided to the client population served.”*

Accessible data on most of these issues were not available from CalJOBS, the main WIOA reporting and tracking system. With the concurrence of CWDB, the team attempted to find alternate data sources through review of state-held Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) on partner contributions to AJCC infrastructure. The team determined that the lack of consistency across the MOUs precluded their use as a data source for quantitative analysis. In most cases, that lack of consistency was simply reflective of differences in how local AJCCs are designed and operated, not reporting issues.

A related attempt to gather infrastructure data took the form of a survey of all 45 local areas, conducted on behalf of the evaluation team by the California Workforce Association, to obtain information on contracting relationships with one-stop operators (OSOs) and career services providers. The survey also asked for information on Title I WIOA expenditures regarding infrastructure costs. The results of that survey reinforced the point that local systems vary significantly, as is appropriate. While the survey provided much useful information regarding OSO and career services contracting relationships, it was not successful in soliciting reliable

data on infrastructure costs. Local areas interpreted the cost questions in very different ways, giving answers that were not comparable. A number of local areas expressed concern about how the cost information was to be used; some provided very general responses that did not fully answer the questions.

The evaluation team determined that while the data regarding OSO and career services contracting relationships was credible and useful, the infrastructure spending data would never reach that level. In any event, as the team engaged with local areas during the case study interviews, the variations among local areas in how their systems operated, and who paid for what, was found to be tied to many local factors that precluded cross-analysis. Further, as was reinforced in the case study interviews, investments in infrastructure were less driven by service-related decisions than by other factors such as local rent levels, availability of space in government buildings, or an EDD office with space that could be shared.

During the course of the evaluation, the team engaged regularly with CWDB's project officer and leadership through bi-weekly meetings discussing all aspects of the project, with mutually supportive exchanges regarding perceptions and expectations. These were invaluable discussions that helped the team focus on emerging issues. One such issue was an outgrowth of the overall interest in training: what is the differential impact of various types of training, with a particular focus on training related to high-growth, in-demand sectors. To the extent feasible this was incorporated in both the quantitative and qualitative components of the evaluation. However, data limitations, including low enrollment numbers in most training types, limited what could be gleaned from the WIOA Title I data. The case study interviews did include inquiries on these topics, which are covered in the Themes and Observations section.

The original evaluation design called for the data analysis to be augmented by a dozen case studies involving extensive interviews with partners and customers, as well as job shadowing of AJCC staff to assess how their time was used on a normal day. Due to the pandemic, it became necessary to shift the interviews from on-site to virtual. During the outreach to the selected cross-section of local areas seeking their participation in the case studies, there was significant pushback regarding the amount of time that would be involved in such a wide-ranging set of interviews. This resistance was sufficiently high to result in several local areas either declining to participate or not responding to outreach attempts.

As a result, in order to complete the sample of twelve case studies, the interviews for six of the sites were significantly scaled back to focus solely on local area WIOA leadership. With that concession, the evaluation team was ultimately able to obtain participation from twelve local areas. CWDB was instrumental in convincing local areas to participate and in helping with scheduling in some instances. The California Workforce Association (CWA), a partner on the evaluation team, helped overcome resistance in several cases. As stated, the result was twelve case studies, but not in every case with the breadth or depth originally anticipated.

The US Department of Labor’s national American Job Center (AJC) locator indicates that there are nearly two hundred comprehensive and affiliate centers in California. (The survey conducted by CWA, which also included satellite centers, showed a total of 191 centers.) While CalJOBS tracks which center provides service to any participant, the evaluation team quickly established that the evaluation could not be applied at the individual center level, because the preponderance of small local areas and multiple AJCCs meant that trying to break services down by center was not feasible – the numbers were simply too small. Where any descriptive or other reference to AJCCs occurs, it is intended to apply to the local area as a whole, not to an individual AJCC. For the case studies where interviews below the leadership level did take place, those interviews were generally limited to only one comprehensive center in a given local area.

WIOA, the AJCC System, and California's Training Requirement

California received approximately 14% of all the WIOA adult and dislocated worker funding issued nationwide in Program Year 2020, making the state by far the largest recipient of WIOA funding in the country.² The national directory of American Job Centers maintained by the Department of Labor lists 95 comprehensive AJCCs in California and 100 affiliate centers.³ This is also the site used by EDD for its AJCC locator. This listing does not necessarily include satellite centers that are often access points for WIOA services, making referral to larger centers for in-person or more intensive services. The evaluation team is aware that COVID-19 has affected the number of centers. (CWA's survey showed 79 comprehensive centers and 112 other centers.) Ongoing local adjustments and procurements have also impacted center numbers and types, but the listing gives an overall picture of the size and distribution of AJCCs within the state.

All states are required to follow the legislative and regulatory requirements of WIOA. States may however, within the confines of those requirements, add additional requirements regarding how WIOA may be used. There are many examples of such additional state requirements across the country. Notably, California has a state requirement that each local area spend at least 30% of its WIOA adult and dislocated worker funding on training.⁴ This state requirement has had a significant impact on local area direction. The case studies sought to gather information on how the training requirement is applied and managed locally.

Research Findings from Other Evaluations of America's Job Centers

At the start of this evaluation, the evaluation team surveyed the national picture regarding WIOA evaluation studies and promising practices. The results of that scan are found in Appendix A. None of the recent studies found were rigorous evaluations. The last rigorous evaluation of DOL workforce programs was the Gold Standard Evaluation of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), begun in 2008 with final publication in 2017. That study used random assignment, the pinnacle of evaluation strategies, to assess the impact of WIA's three service models: basic, individualized, and training.⁵ Essentially, and with significant caveats (mainly that the impact of other funding streams was not considered), that study found that career services produced positive outcomes, and that the impact of training services was inconclusive.

Significant changes have occurred within the workforce development system since that time. In many states and local areas, the workforce system has evolved to rely much more heavily on

² [WIOA Training Expenditure Requirement](#)

³ [American Job Center Finder](#)

⁴ [WIOA Training Expenditure Requirement](#)

⁵ [WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs Gold Standard Evaluation](#)

growth sectors as drivers of policy, and has begun to articulate a widespread interest in advancing equity throughout all phases of the system for marginalized populations.

It should be noted that random assignment was far beyond the scope of this evaluation. The methodology section of the quantitative component of the evaluation covers this issue in much greater depth. But it is important to understand that, similar to the Gold Standard Evaluation's use of WIA data only, the AJCC evaluation was confined to WIOA Title I data. That limitation was noted in the Gold Standard report, and played a significant factor in the caveats regarding the observations in both the Gold Standard and this evaluation.

COVID Impact

While this evaluation was in the early planning stages, the COVID-19 pandemic arrived. More than two years later it continues to have a disruptive impact on workforce systems and on society in general. With unprecedented levels of unemployment, particularly among low-wage workers, the demands on workforce systems have been extraordinarily high. Efforts to contain the spread of COVID-19 dramatically impacted both the labor market and how workforce services were delivered. There is no clear indication of when these disruptions will finally end, or whether there will be a complete return to 'normal.' Will the system go back to full reliance on in-person contact instead of the heavy use of remote service delivery in each aspect of the workforce development process (recruitment, assessment, enrollment, career planning, and service delivery)? Regions report they have been pushed to the limit in responding to vastly higher demand for a broad range of social services, while attempting to respond to the needs of those industry sectors that continued to grow in this disrupted environment. Responding to these disruptions will, for some time, continue to be the focus of the entire workforce system.

In preparation for the case study interviews, researchers compiled two years' worth of quarterly PIRL data from the CalJOBS system to examine the extent to which the pandemic, and the subsequent Stay-at-Home order, affected the volume of participants being served. The analysis focused on the 12 sites initially selected for case study interviews, with the intent of using the PIRL data to inform the interview questions. Ten of those sites ended up participating in the case studies; the graphs on the next page show the combined totals for those ten local areas.⁶ As the graphs illustrate, there was a marked drop-off in the volume of WIOA Adult participants receiving training services in Quarter 2 of 2020 (April-June), and in the subsequent two quarters. Individualized career services participants dropped as well, but not as steeply.

The picture was different for dislocated workers, where the number of training services participants held steady during Quarters 2 and 3 of 2020, then dropped fairly significantly in Quarter 4. Individualized career services held steady throughout. Note the difference in scale between the two graphs: Far more WIOA Adults were served than dislocated workers, and WIOA Adults were much more likely to receive training services.

⁶ Detailed graphs for all 10 sites can be found in Appendices H and I

Figure 1. PIRL Data of WIOA Adult Participants from Case Study Sites

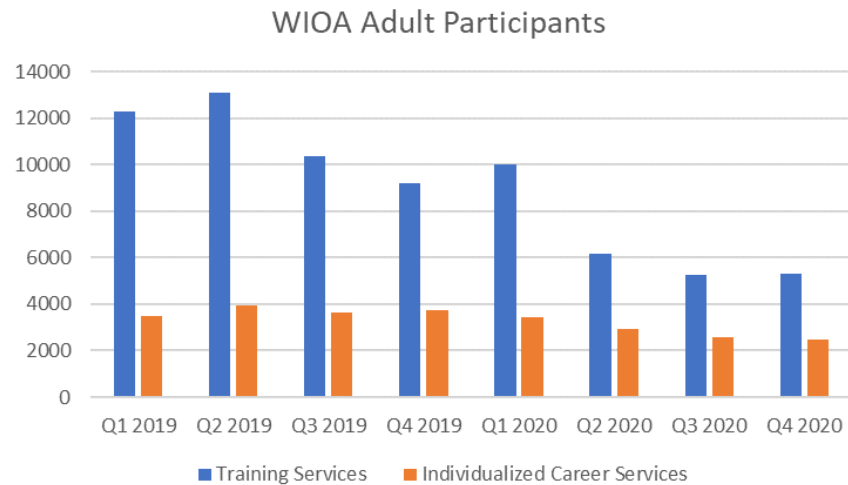
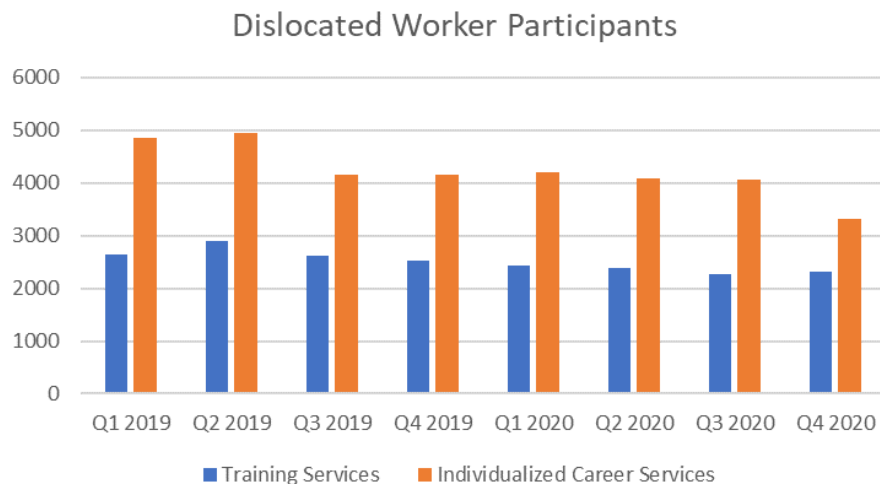


Figure 2. PIRL Data of WIOA Dislocated Worker Participants from Case Study Sites



Early Finding: Contracting the OSO and/or Career Services Provider

As noted, the Request for Applications (RFA) for this evaluation had a strong focus on determining whether there was any correlation between employment outcomes, service mix, propensity to enroll participants in particular types of services, and the structure of the local AJCC system. Based on the question of whether a local board contracted out the one-stop operator (OSO) function (as per WIOA) and/or the career services function (as strongly encouraged), or provided either or both of those services itself, the RFA postulated that there were four basic AJCC structures and asked the evaluators to analyze multi-year outcomes for the four “models.”

Four AJCC Models

1. Those which contract both OSO and career services.
2. Those which contract OSO but not career services
3. Those which contract career services but not OSO.
4. Those which contract neither.

The evaluation team spent a good deal of time exploring this premise with CWDB in order to better understand the underlying assumptions, hypotheses, and reasons for suspecting that different models might lead to different outcomes. In part, CWDB's interest stemmed from the fact that, on occasion, local areas request waivers of the WIOA requirement that the OSO be contracted, usually because the local area has been unsuccessful in procuring an OSO. Since such a waiver requires gubernatorial approval, CWDB hoped that the evaluation might provide some guidance on how to handle these periodic requests. WIOA does not require contracting the career services function, but for various reasons, contracting this function has generally been encouraged in California and elsewhere, as a way of building partnerships, increasing the professionalism and efficiency of the system, and creating a firewall between local workforce boards and the provision of services.

CWDB provided the evaluators with a 2018 list of local workforce areas which attempted to break them down into the four model categories, noting that the data was somewhat outdated and incompletely verified. As its first project, the team took on the task of (1) updating the list to the present time and (2) accurately backdating it to cover the five-year period for which WIOA data was available. Toward this end, the team designed a brief survey of the 45 local boards in order to update the 2018 list, find out if there had been any change in model between 2016 and the present, and collect basic information about OSOs, career services providers, and AJCC finances. Intended to be a quick initial project, the survey ended up taking much longer than anticipated, in large part because local boards had trouble interpreting or responding to the financial questions. However, the survey did shed significant light on the OSO contracting question in particular.

Out of the 45 local workforce areas, only five did not contract the one-stop operator. This was not surprising, since avoiding the contracting requirement requires a gubernatorial waiver. From an evaluation standpoint, however, it left little basis for comparison, especially since the five in question were among the state's smallest in terms of budget and service levels. In consultation with CWDB, the evaluation team concluded that comparing those five to the other 40 local areas was likely to yield little useful information.

When the evaluation team began looking at the data from the 40 sites that do contract the OSO function, it became clear that roughly half of the local areas appear to have coped with the WIOA OSO requirement by carving out a very small amount of money (\$15,000 per year in several places, even less in a few) and establishing a very minimal role for the OSO. While there is nothing that prohibits this, it seems clear that for an amount that small, the OSO role is inherently limited to very basic coordination/facilitation. As the team discovered in the case

study interviews, not much changed at some of those sites when the board made the shift from serving as OSO to paying another entity \$15,000 or less to do it.

Meanwhile, in the local areas where the OSO contract was many times that amount, it turned out that the contract often covered considerably more than just the OSO role. Indeed, a number of local areas had contracts that combined OSO and career services in such a way that they were unable to separate out how much of the contract was devoted to each function. While it was clear that there were places where the operator was playing a much more active role in overseeing the AJCC system than in other sites, it was ultimately not possible to get an accurate tally for all 45 sites of how much each local area was actually spending on the OSO function.

From an evaluation standpoint, there was little reason to believe that devoting a minimal amount of funding to the OSO role, with an operator who did little more than coordinate and facilitate periodic partner meetings, was likely to have any significant impact on outcomes. For this reason, the evaluation team shifted its focus to the question of contracting career services.

Just under half (22) of the 45 local areas contracted career services at the time of the survey; the balance did not. This provided a much better basis for comparison than the 40/5 OSO split. Moreover, the amount of funding expended on career services dwarfs that invested in the OSO function. And by definition, career services bear an inherent relationship to participant outcomes. For all of these reasons, the evaluation team presented an early finding to CWDB suggesting that continued focus on the OSO question would only serve to confuse, rather than clarify, the issues at hand, and proposing that the study focus on the career services function.

It is worth noting that there are significant variations within the career services realm. The most obvious distinction, perhaps, is that between non-profit and for-profit providers. Non-profits remain dominant in California, but for-profits are making inroads. There are at present five local areas that rely solely on a for-profit career services provider (up from two a few years ago), and two other local areas where a single for-profit is one of many providers. For-profit providers are not uniform: they run the gamut, from big national firms like Equus (formerly ResCare) to small California-based operations. There are also entities such as Managed Career Solutions, a 'social purpose corporation', that straddle the line between for-profit and non-profit.

Among the many non-profit career service providers, there is also a wide range. Two local boards that are embedded in county government contract with another county department for career services; a third contracts with a local community college. More common are local community-based providers, some of them having long histories of providing workforce services in the community. In a few cases, hearkening back to the War on Poverty, the local anti-poverty agency is the career services provider. These various types of partnerships and providers are discussed in the case study profiles.

A key observation from the case study interviews is that the matter of whether or not to contract career services (or for that matter the one-stop operator) is often not a choice at all,

but rather a circumstance. Several times, the evaluation team heard local directors describe a failed procurement – or a series of failed procurements, especially in the case of the OSO – in which either no responses were received, or the few responses received were deemed unacceptable by the reviewers. While larger and more urban workforce areas may have a plethora of community-based providers capable of offering career services, smaller areas often have very few organizations to choose from – and much smaller budgets with which to attract them. A number of the workforce areas that do not currently contract services told the interviewers that providing services was not actually their preference, and that they hoped to find qualified providers to contract with in the future.

As a result of this early finding, CWDB and the evaluation team agreed that the scope of the evaluation should be broadened to look at other possible factors that might be associated with strong employment outcomes, including the level of emphasis on training services, the degree of connection between the AJCCs and local or regional sector initiatives, and the types and strengths of local partnerships.

II. QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS APPROACH

Design of the Quantitative Component

Background and Theory Development

America's Job Centers of California (AJCCs) provide public workforce services through a collaboration of local, state, private, and public entities, offering "one-stop" resources for Californians. AJCCs provide guidance, support, and funding for those seeking employment, including labor market information and workforce-related education and training. Though AJCCs provide services through a host of programs, this evaluation relies on participants whose services were funded under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), passed in 2014.

The Request for Applications for this evaluation indicated an interest in measuring differences in service model delivery and outcomes related to four potential models of service resulting from two specific decisions taken by each local area: whether either, both, or neither the AJCC operator or the career services provider functions are contracted out.

Theory of Inquiry: Local areas consciously, regularly, and consistently make decisions around contracting out these functions based at least in part on service area needs and funding; however, local areas are unlikely to know whether their choices represent the optimal decision for those they serve. By examining whether certain contracting models were associated with differences in the types of services provided (e.g., training), time to completion, and post-exit outcomes, quantitative researchers examined the latter part of the theory: are these selections optimal for those served by the local areas through AJCCs? Conclusions around the quantitative results rely on observations from the qualitative inquiry, which focus on the first part of the theory of inquiry: do local areas consistently make contracting decisions freely, consciously, and regularly? From the case study interviews, it is apparent that, overall, these decisions are much more complex than simple reliance on which model is most effective in any given local area. Instead, they are typically driven by past history, local contracting rules, and availability of suitable contractors.

Quantitative research relies heavily on several qualitatively-collected variables, including which functions were contracted out, if any, and whether local areas that contracted did so to non- or for-profit organizations. Effectively interpreting quantitative analysis results relies, at least in part, on the answer to the qualitative analysis. If local areas' contracting options are constrained (for example, if there are very few or no qualified local organizations available to contract out services) then the decision to contract out or not for those local areas is not related to balancing costs and results, but rather to local conditions. Quantitative researchers engaged in their analysis with the initial assumption that the first part of the theory (local areas consciously determine whether to contract out specific functions and do so with multiple viable

options) is axiomatically true. However, quantitative research findings ultimately incorporated the results of qualitative analysis.

Research Questions

- 1) Did engaging in training result in higher rates of employment? For those who found employment, did receipt of training result in higher earnings?
- 2) Did participants who received services at local areas that contracted out career services functions experience differential intermediate and final outcomes than their counterparts receiving services that were not contracted?
- 3) Informed by discussion of potential differing strengths of CBO and for-profit providers, was there any association in the differential intermediate and final outcomes from question 2 with whether the contracted functions relied on either non-profit or for-profit organizations?

Research Methods

Measuring the impact of training

To measure the impact of training, researchers sought to find a reasonable counter-factual with which to compare outcomes. In a randomized controlled trial, individuals are randomly assigned to treatment or a control group, thus ensuring statistical balance between the two groups such that differences between the groups' outcomes are related to receipt of treatment rather than any underlying characteristics differently distributed between the two groups. Thus, the control group acts as the counterfactual: what would have happened absent treatment?

As this analysis relied on data collected in the past, researchers could not randomly assign individuals into future treatment and control groups. Instead, researchers sought to identify individuals who did not receive treatment (training) with characteristics as close as possible to those who received training. Identifying similar individuals receiving treatment and not receiving treatment could be extraordinarily complicated given the types and number of characteristics available to create these two groups. Fortunately, Rosenbaum and Rubin (1983) determined that "adjustment for the scalar propensity score is sufficient to remove bias due to all observed covariates," (Rosenbaum and Rubin, 1983). Given a suitably sized population with appropriate characteristics, the estimated propensity-to-treat estimates represent a single number that incorporates all measured characteristics such that individuals with different but close estimates share similar measured characteristics, while individuals with different and far propensity-to-treat estimates share few or no measured characteristics. Linking individuals who received treatment to those who did not but who had similar propensity scores and comparing their outcomes comes close to the goal of identifying the counter-factual: what would have happened absent the intervention?

To measure the impact of training on employment and earnings, researchers limited the treatment and control samples using propensity score matching, and then performed several regressions. The first, a logistic equation with the outcome variable being whether the

individual found employment immediately after exiting, with the variable of interest being whether or not the individual received training. The second, a linear regression with the outcome variable being the earnings of individuals who found employment, with the variable of interest being their treatment status.⁷

Researchers engaged in sensitivity testing to verify that results are consistent by performing the propensity score match and impact logistic regression while excluding each local area (i.e., remove each local area from the analysis).

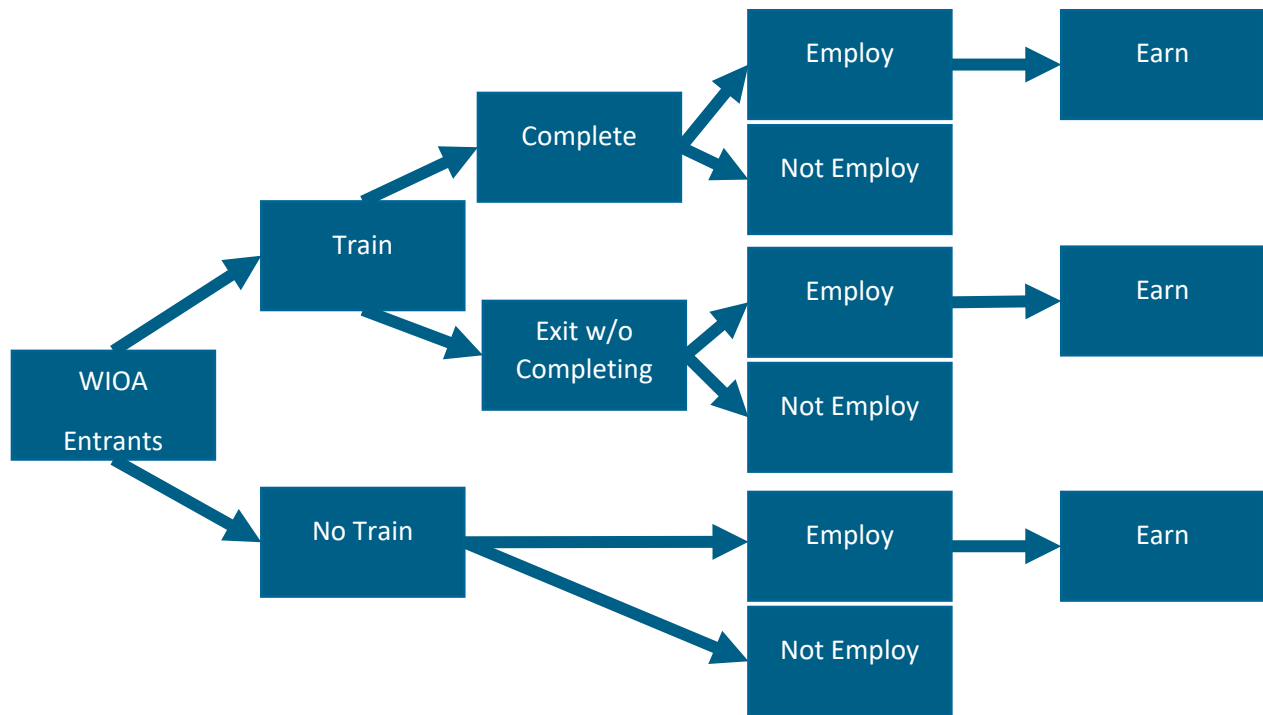
The sensitivity analysis addresses researcher concerns about sample size differentials between local areas, given that some local areas served tens of thousands of participants during the period examined while others served far fewer. By dropping each local area and re-running the analysis, researchers sought to ensure that one or two large local areas were not driving overall results. Impact analysis results include information on the sensitivity analysis.

Measuring differential associations

Researchers developed a pathways framework to examine the differential associations of various local area efforts (contracting out functions and contracting with specific types of organizations like non-profits or for-profits) on the entire process of WIOA supports: receipt of training, completion of training, employment, and earnings (Figure 3). Researchers acknowledge that each path along the framework might provide evidence to support differential outcomes. In theory local areas that contract out some functions might be more (or less) likely to provide training to those they serve; they may also be less (or more) likely to find employment for those individuals who do not receive training. Structuring the analysis through this framework provides useful specificity, indicating where local area decisions might be more likely to alter outcomes.

⁷ Researchers utilized Stata's `teffects psmatch` to execute the propensity score matching and the estimation of impacts.

Figure 3. Differential Intermediate and Final Outcomes Analysis Framework



The pathways framework provide structure to the creation of a set of unique regressions (for continuous outcome variables, like earnings) and logistic regressions (for binary outcomes, like completing training) comparing intermediate and final steps between the organizational structure of interest (i.e., the variable of interest: either (1) contracting out or not, or (2) contracting with non- or for-profit organizations) with additional control variables. There are eight framework pathways: (1) a logistic regression with receipt of training as the outcome; (2) a logistic regression with completion of training the outcome; (3) a logistic regression for those who complete training, with their immediate employment status as the outcome; (4) a regression for employed completers, with their earnings as the outcome; (5) a logistic regression for those who do not complete training, with their immediate employment status as the outcome; (6) a regression for employed non-completers, with their earnings as the outcome; (7) a logistic regression for non-trainees, with their immediate employment status as the outcome; and, (8) a regression for employed non-trainees, with their earnings as the outcome.

Researchers use this pathways framework because we seek to understand whether certain service provision arrangements have a greater propensity to place individuals on particular service pathways (training vs. career service), as well as if there are systematic differences in rates of completion once enrolled into training under the different service provision models,

and if there are differences in employment for exiting participants, and, once employed, if some service-provision arrangements are associated with higher earnings or not.

Each regression includes an outcome variable, the variable of interest, and a set of additional variables meant to serve as controls: demographic and participant characteristics, local area characteristics, training program characteristics, and their industry of employment. These controls are included in the regression only when relevant. For example, the logistic regression measuring differences in receipt of training includes demographic and participant characteristics as controls as well as local area size (accounting for local area characteristics). The earnings regression for employed training completers includes the previously mentioned control variable types, but also training program characteristics and the industry of employment. Details of the included control variable categories in each framework path regression are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Regression Control Variable Categories, by Framework Paths

Framework Paths, by Outcome	Demographics and Participant Characteristics	Local area Size	Training Program Characteristics	Industry of Employment
Receipt of Training*	X	X		
Completion of Training*	X	X	X	
Employment Status if Completed Training*	X	X	X	
Earnings if Completed Training and Employed	X	X	X	X
Employment Status for Non-Completing Exiters*	X	X	X	
Earnings if Did Not Complete Training and Employed	X	X	X	X
Employment Status for Non-Training Exiters*	X	X		
Earnings if Did Not Train and Found Employed	X	X		X

* Logistic regressions.

Participants generally lacked local area selection options (i.e., they attended an AJCC within their local area based on their home address), and their services and supports are likely similar within local areas, but less similar between local areas; regression model errors are likely independent across clusters but correlated within clusters. Thus, researchers used clustered standard errors, with participants clustered within their local area.

Because both standard and logistic regression estimates were produced using the pathways framework, researchers focused on statistical significance and the direction of associations to draw conclusions around where the pathways indicated differences in outcomes.

Data Sources

Researchers received de-identified participant enrollment and participation data through California's WIOA performance reporting system's Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL).⁸ State agencies linked PIRL data to California's Unemployment Insurance wage records prior to de-identification, providing, where possible, earnings two years prior to entry and two years post-exit. Participants included those who received WIOA-based services of any kind from 2016 through 2020. Because PIRL provides the first instance of WIOA-based support, some individuals who received services in the time period examined also received services in years prior, and a small share of those who received services between 2016 and 2020 did so more than once.

Qualifying Conditions

Though AJCCs collectively serve a large number of individuals each year in California, a relatively small share are served through WIOA. Because the numbers of individuals served at each AJCC location are relatively small, researchers lacked sufficient statistical power to measure AJCC-specific impacts and associations. Thus, researchers used the local workforce areas as the smallest unit of aggregate analysis. Even at the local area level, sample sizes in any given year alone sometimes lacked the statistical power to perform analysis, so researchers used service across the five years to achieve sufficient numbers for statistical analysis. Because decisions around contracting services, and the type of organizations with which to contract, reside at the local area level, researchers assessed that local area-level analysis, rather than AJCC-level analysis, was most appropriate.

Some of those enrolled in WIOA Title I between 2016 and 2020 completed their enrollment after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. While researchers included a pre/post pandemic time indicator (both before (0) and after (1) the governor declared a state of emergency), the analysis cannot examine year-to-year differences in performance and outcomes due to relatively small sample sizes served by some local areas within any given single year.

These sample size limitations mean that results and analyses presented in this quantitative portion of this report should be considered at a system-wide and multi-year perspective. This provides an advantage for policy makers in that any statistical findings are likely to be widely true across the system. However, the small sample sizes also prevent researchers from effectively identifying and differentiating results for specific local areas or for specific years.

⁸ Note that not all data elements collected through PIRL were available for all participants. An example of the full PIRL data can be found here: [DOL-only Participant Individual Record Layout \(PIRL\)](#)

Participant Characteristics

As Table 2 shows, women made up slightly more than half of all participants (53%). About two in five participants were Hispanic (43%), while one in five was Black (21%). Less than a tenth of participants were individuals with disabilities (8%). Only 6 percent of participants were veterans.

More than three-fourths of participants had no postsecondary degree (77%). Less than a fifth of participants were employed at the time of program entry (16%). About a fifth of all participants been unemployed for 27 or more consecutive weeks (21%). More than a third of all participants were receiving unemployment compensation (37%). About a quarter of participants reported receiving SNAP (Cal Fresh) food assistance benefits (24%). About 12% received Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Security Income, Social Security Disability Insurance, or other public assistance.

Many participants faced barriers to employment. More than two-thirds of all participants were classified as low-income (69%). Nearly a fifth of all participants were basic skills deficient or had low levels of literacy (17%). More than a tenth were single parents (12%). About a tenth were English language learners (8%). About a tenth were ex-offenders. Many individuals have more than one barrier, so totals may sum to over 100%.

Table 2. Participant characteristics

All		% homeless	7%
Count		247,082	
% female	53%	% ex-offender	9%
% White	37%	% low-income	69%
% Hispanic	43%	% ELL	8%
% Black	21%	% basic skills deficient	17%
% individuals with a disability	8%	% individuals with cultural barriers	1%
% veterans	6%	% single parents	12%
		% displaced homemakers	1%
		% migrant & seasonal farmworkers	1%
% post-secondary degree	23%		
% employed	16%		
% long-term unemployed	21%		
% unemployment claimants	37%		
% SNAP recipients	24%		
% TANF recipients	6%		
% SSI/SSDI recipients	2%		
% other public assistance recipients	4%		

Compared with WIOA Adults, dislocated workers were less disadvantaged. Dislocated workers were more likely to be white and to have a post-secondary degree, less likely to be Black, disabled, homeless, ex-offenders or single parents. Dislocated workers were less likely to be categorized as low-income or receiving public benefits. Not surprisingly, given the WIOA definition of a Dislocated Worker, such individuals were much less likely to be either employed or long-term unemployed at program entry, and much more likely to have claimed unemployment benefits.

Table 3. WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Characteristics

	Adult	Dislocated Worker	<i>Difference</i>
% female	52%	54%	2%
% White	35%	41%	6%
% Hispanic	43%	44%	1%
% Black	24%	13%	-11%
% individuals with a disability	10%	4%	-5%
% veterans	7%	6%	-1%
% post-secondary degree	20%	29%	9%
% employed	21%	4%	-17%
% long-term unemployed	24%	16%	-8%
% unemployment claimants	14%	85%	71%
% SNAP recipients	30%	13%	-17%
% TANF recipients	7%	2%	-5%
% SSI/SSDI recipients	3%	1%	-3%
% other public assistance recipients	5%	1%	-5%
% homeless	9%	2%	-7%
% ex-offender	11%	5%	-6%
% low-income	75%	57%	-18%
% ELL	8%	10%	2%
% basic skills deficient	17%	16%	-2%
% individuals with cultural barriers	1%	1%	0%
% single parents	13%	10%	-3%
% displaced homemakers	0%	1%	1%
% migrant and seasonal farmworkers	0%	2%	2%

Contracting-out local areas and in-house local areas serve a similar portion of dislocated workers (33%). However, contracting-out local areas appear to serve more disadvantaged participants. Participants at contracting-out local areas were more likely to be Black, long-term unemployed, low-income, homeless or English language learners but less likely to be white, employed, or receiving unemployment benefits.

Table 4. Participant Characteristics by Local Area Type

	In-house	Contracted out	<i>Difference</i>
% female	52%	53%	1%
% White	41%	35%	-5%
% Hispanic	46%	43%	-3%
% Black	16%	22%	5%
% individuals with a disability	7%	8%	1%
% veterans	7%	6%	-1%
% post-secondary degree	23%	23%	0%
% employed	19%	15%	-4%
% long-term unemployed	19%	22%	3%
% unemployment claimants	44%	35%	-9%
% SNAP recipients	24%	24%	0%
% TANF recipients	5%	6%	1%
% SSI/SSDI recipients	2%	3%	1%
% other public assistance recipients	1%	5%	3%
% homeless	4%	8%	4%
% ex-offender	10%	9%	-1%
% low-income	58%	73%	15%
% ELL	6%	9%	4%
% basic skills deficient	16%	17%	1%
% individuals with cultural barriers	1%	1%	0%
% single parents	12%	12%	0%
% displaced homemakers	1%	1%	0%
% migrant & seasonal farmworkers	1%	1%	0%

Program Characteristics

About a third of participants at both contracting-out and in-house local areas were dislocated workers. Nearly two-thirds of all participants received Wagner-Peyser services. Participants at

contracting-out local areas were less likely to receive Wagner-Peyser services. The vast majority of all participants at both contracting-out and in-house local areas accessed self-service activities (85%). Nearly all participants at both contracting-out and in-house local areas received staff-assisted basic career services and individualized career services (99% and 98%).

Table 5. Program Characteristics

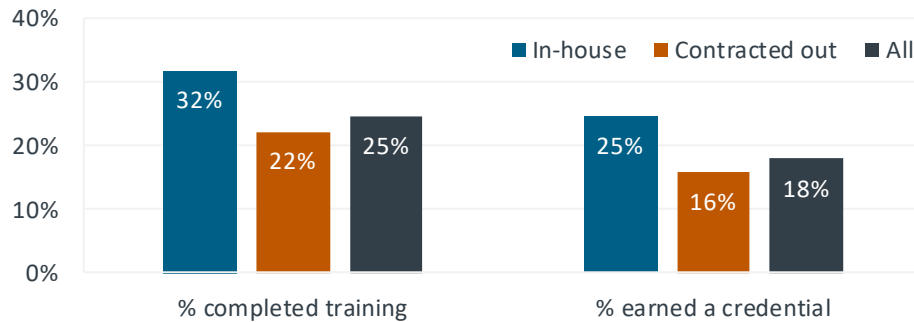
	In-house	Contracted out	All
% received WIOA Dislocated Worker services	32%	33%	33%
% received Adult Education	1%	1%	1%
% received Veterans program services	3%	1%	2%
% received Wagner-Peyser services	69%	59%	61%
& accessed self-service activities	83%	86%	85%
& received staff-assisted basic career services	99%	99%	99%
& received individualized career services	97%	99%	98%

About a third of all participants across all local areas received training services. Participants at contracting-out local areas were less likely than those in the in-house local areas to receive training services. Only 29% of participants at contracting-out local areas received training services compared with 43% of participants at in-house local areas.

Figure 4. Enrollment in training

In addition to being less likely to receive training services, participants at contracting-out local areas were also less likely than those at in-house local areas to complete a training program and receive a credential. Only 22% of participants at contracting-out local areas completed a training program compared with 32% of participants at in-house local areas. Likewise, only 16% of participants at contracting-out local areas received a credential compared with 25% of participants at in-house local areas.

Figure 5. Completion of Training and Credential Attainment

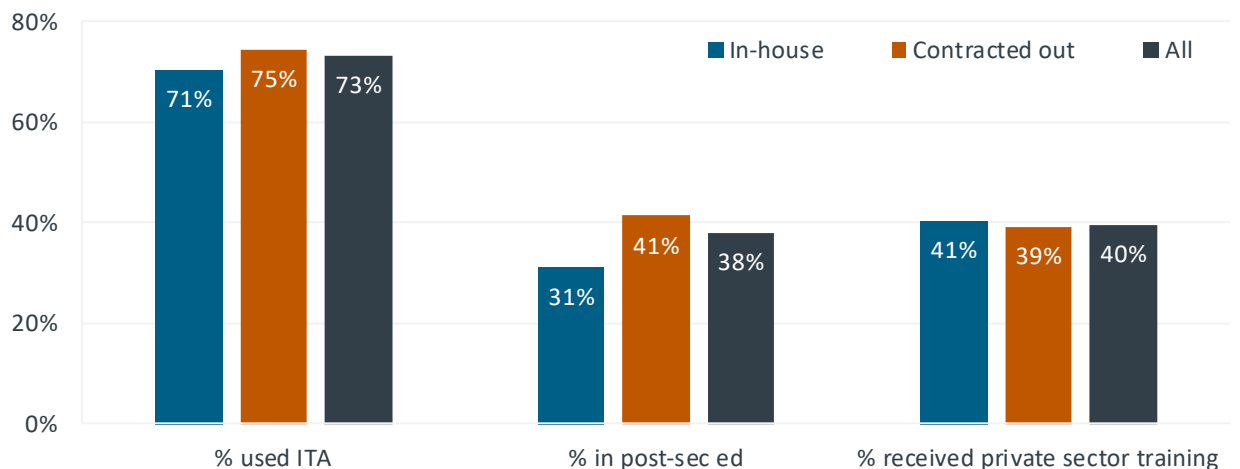


Training Characteristics

Among participants who received training services, nearly three-quarters utilized an Individual Training Account (ITA). Training participants at contracting-out WDBs were slightly more likely than those at in-house local areas to utilize an ITA. Regression analysis indicates that, accounting for personal, demographic, and other characteristics, ITA recipients were more likely to complete training (1.46 percentage points) than their other training recipient peers. Despite completing at higher rates, ITA recipients were slightly less likely to find employment, and those who did find employment showed no difference in earnings in relation to their other training recipient peers who found employment.

Overall, about two in five training participants were in a postsecondary education program. Notably, training participants at contracting-out local areas were much more likely than those in the in-house local areas to be in a postsecondary education program. About two in five training participants were categorized as having received 'private sector training,' though researchers suspect that not all local areas are using the same definition of that term, given that the range goes from 7% in one local area to 80% in another. In any event, training participants at contracting local areas were as likely as those in-house local areas to receive training services within this category.

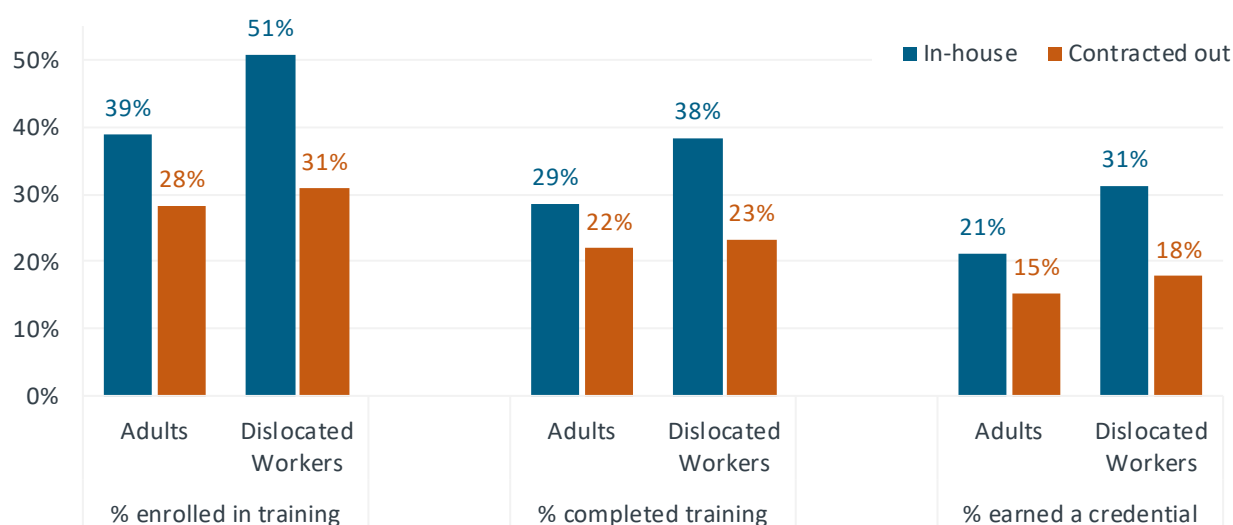
Figure 6. Training Characteristics



Differences Between WIOA Adults and Dislocated Workers

At local areas that contracted out, dislocated workers were about as likely as WIOA Adult Program participants to receive training services, complete training, and earn a credential. However, at in-house local areas, dislocated workers were much more likely than WIOA Adult participants to receive training services, complete training, and earn a credential. More than half (51%) of dislocated workers at in-house local areas received training, compared to only 39% of WIOA Adults. Thirty-eight percent of dislocated workers at in-house local areas completed training compared to only 29% of WIOA Adults. Thirty-one percent of dislocated workers at in-house local areas earned a credential compared to only 21% of WIOA Adults.

Figure 7. Training Receipt, Completion, and Credential Attainment for WIOA Adults and Dislocated Workers



Training Type

Figure 8 summarizes the types of training received by participants as recorded in CalJOBS. The vast majority of participants (80%) received occupational skills training, while 12% received on the job training.

Figure 8. Training Type

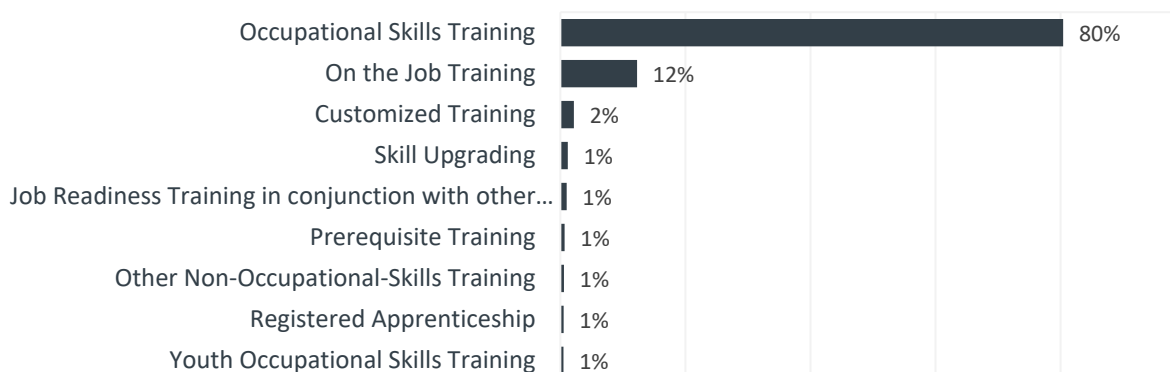
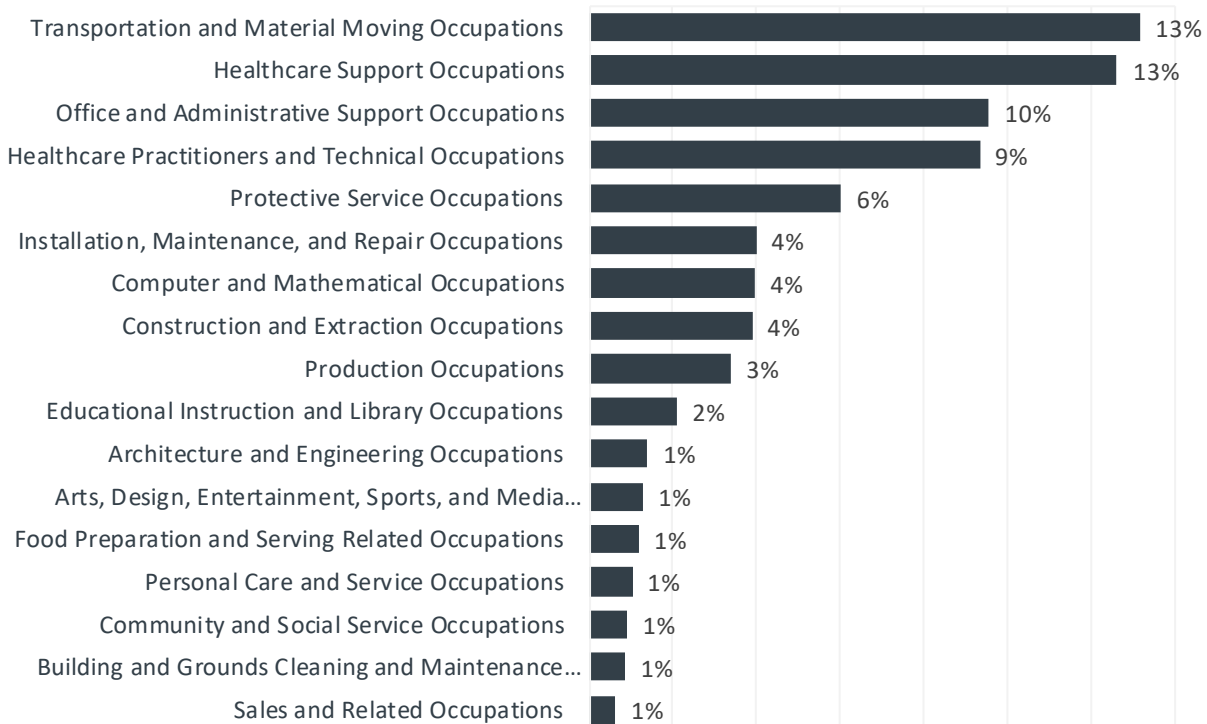


Figure 9 summarizes the training occupation for which the participant received training services. The most common occupations for which participants were trained were transportation and material moving, healthcare support, office and administrative support, and healthcare practitioners.

Figure 9. Training Occupation



Impact of Training

Researchers sought to understand whether individuals who qualified for WIOA supports received a benefit to receipt of training on their employment and earnings outcomes post-exit without regard for service provision model. By looking at the overall impact of training on outcomes, researchers increase the certainty that differential outcomes based on service provision model are methodologically valid. As stated above, researchers utilized propensity score matching to identify individuals who did not receive training who were similar in terms of measurable characteristics to those who did receive training. This comes close to measuring the counter-factual: what would have happened absent training? Obtaining accurate information about the counter-factual allows researchers to answer: what was the impact of training on various outcomes of interest?

Employment

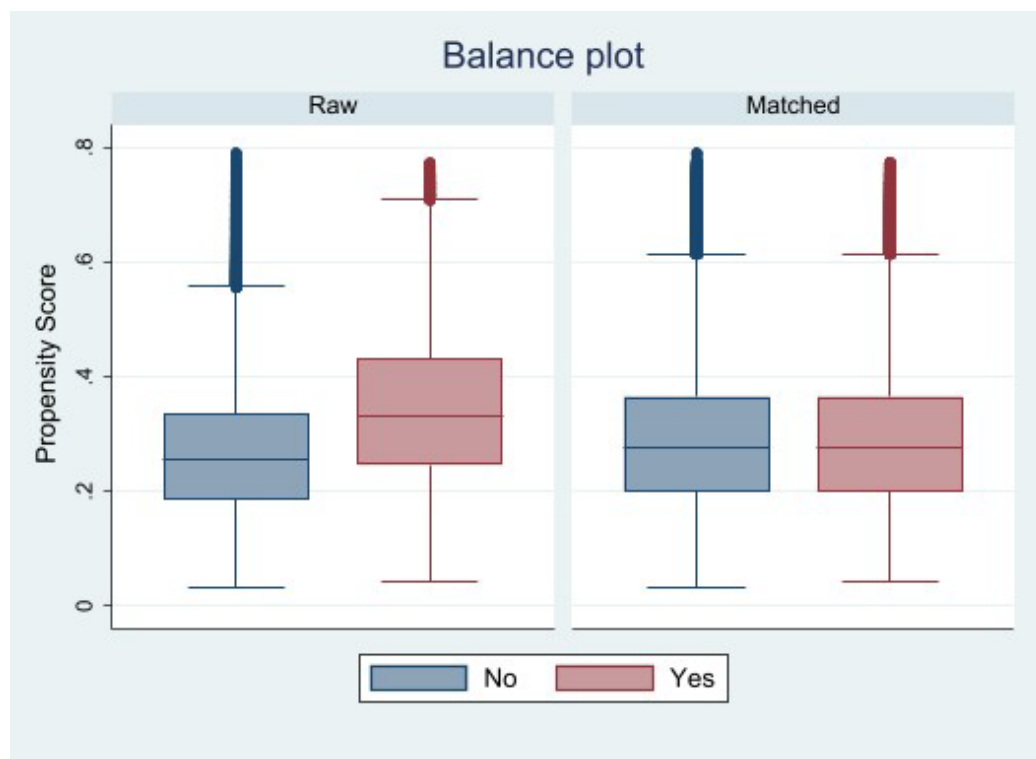
The unadjusted rate of employment in the quarter after exit for those who did not receive training was 60%, while those who received training found employment at a higher rate (72%),

a difference of 12 percentage points. Differences in employment outcomes could be due to multiple factors, including participant characteristics and the type and nature of training, potentially in combination with employment support services.

To determine the impact of training on employment, researchers created a matched comparison group, running a logistic equation with receipt of training as the outcome variable and accounting for personal and demographic characteristics (gender, race, ethnicity, disability status, veteran status, unemployment compensation eligibility, education level, receipt of TANF, SNAP/Cal Fresh, or other public assistance, homelessness, ex-offender, low-income status, and single parent status), local area size and the local area from which they received services (as a proxy for other local area characteristics), time-relevant status (completing either before or after the state of emergency), and employment status in the quarter prior to receiving supports.

The matching algorithm created a balanced dataset of those who received training and those who did not (Figure 9). From this point forward, unless balance tests indicate a lack of alignment, researchers do not include additional balance box plots.

Figure 10. Balance Box Plot of Treatment Propensity, Prior to and After Matching

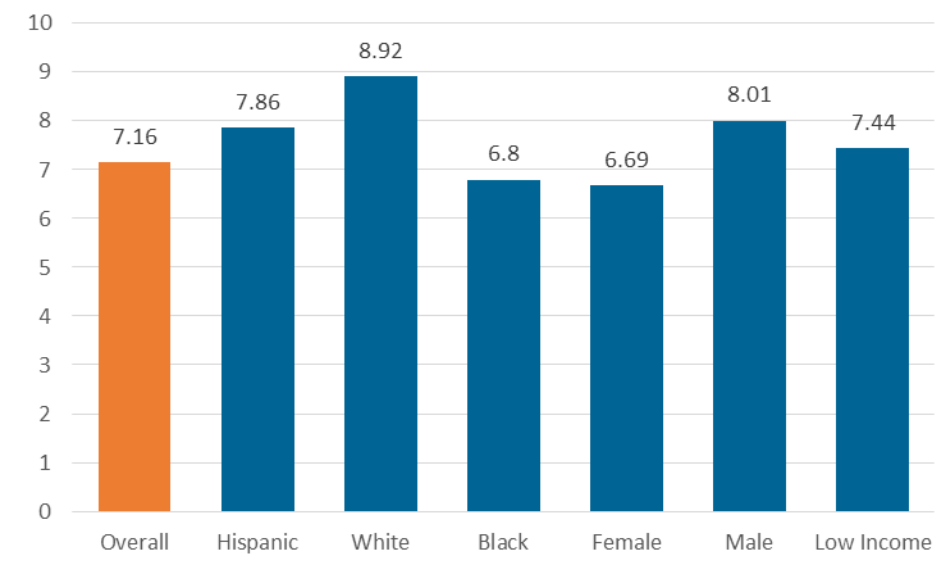


After determining appropriate balance, researchers ran a logistic regression with employment status in the quarter after exit as the outcome variable and training receipt as the variable of interest. **Results demonstrated a positive, statistically significant ($p < 0.000$) impact of 7.1 percentage points on employment for individuals who received training compared to those**

who did not receive training. Because the outcome variable is binary, the average treatment effect can be interpreted as a difference in probability such that those who received training had a higher probability of finding employment (of about seven percentage points) than their non-trained peers, with a confidence interval between 6.4 and 7.9 percentage points.

The impact of training on the probability of employment varies by demographic and participant characteristics. Researchers reduced the analysis sample to include only those with selected characteristics and performed the same procedures, finding matching individuals with similar characteristics. Estimated impacts of training on employment, overall and for select characteristics, indicate some participants received greater benefit from training, but these differences are not statistically significant (Figure 10). Thus, while the estimates of the impact of training on probability differ by demographic group, these differences are unlikely to be statistically significant.

Figure 11. Average Treatment Effects of Training on Employment for Populations of Interest



Sensitivity testing

Researchers removed each local area from the dataset one at a time prior to running the matching algorithm and impact regression to determine whether a single local area drove results of the analysis. Results indicated no change in the statistical significance of the result, meaning that the conclusions were not driven solely by one local area. Estimates of the impact of training on employment ranged from 6.77 percentage points to 8.04 percentage points.

Earnings

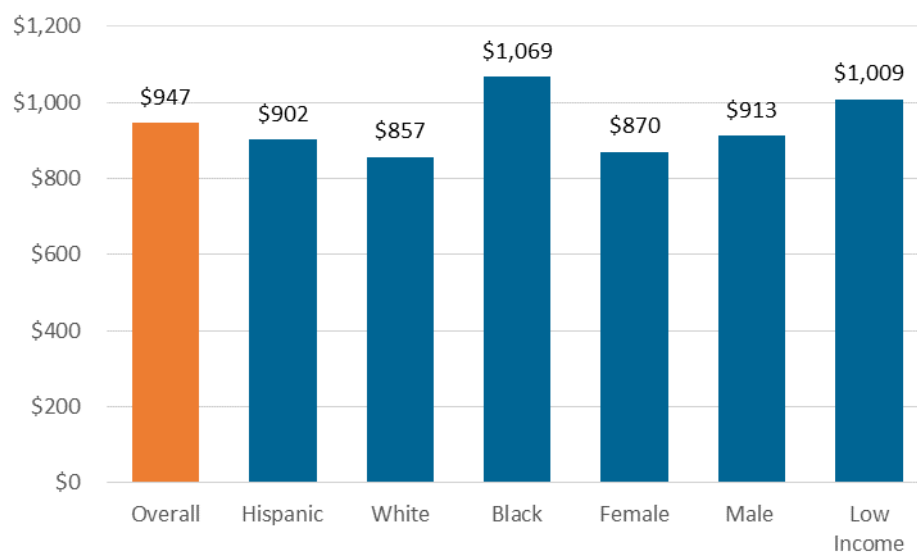
To determine the impact of training on earnings, researchers limited the sample to include only individuals who found employment in the quarter following exit. Then researchers created a matched comparison group, running a logistic equation with receipt of training as the outcome variable and accounting for personal and demographic characteristics (gender, race, ethnicity,

disability status, veteran status, unemployment compensation eligibility, education level, receipt of TANF, SNAP/CalFresh, or other public assistance, homelessness, ex-offender, low-income status, and single parent status), local area size and the local area from which they received services (as a proxy for other local area characteristics), time-relevant status (completing either before or after the state of emergency), the industry of employment (using the first two digits of the NAICS code), and earnings in the quarter prior to receiving supports. Limiting the sample to those in employment allowed researchers to measure the impact of training on earnings separate from employment.

The matching algorithm created a balanced dataset of those who received training and those who did not (not shown). After determining appropriate balance, researchers ran a logistic regression with earnings in the quarter after exit as the outcome variable, and training receipt as the variable of interest. ***Results demonstrated a positive, statistically significant ($p < 0.000$) impact of \$946.79 on earnings for individuals who received training and found employment compared to those who did not receive training but found employment.*** The 95% confidence interval of the estimate is between \$841.99 and \$1,052.59 earnings for employed individuals who received training compared to those who did not receive training.

The impact of training on earnings varies by demographic and participant characteristics. Researchers reduced the analysis sample to include only those with selected characteristics and performed the same procedures, finding matching individuals with similar characteristics. Estimated impacts of training on earnings, overall and for select characteristics, indicate some participants received greater benefit from training, though note that the confidence intervals for no group fall fully outside the confidence interval (not shown) of others (Figure 11). Thus, while the estimates of the impact of training on earnings differ by demographic group, these differences are unlikely to be statistically significant.

Figure 12. Earnings Impacts for Employed Training Completers, by Participant Characteristics



Sensitivity testing

Researchers removed each local area from the dataset one at a time prior to running the matching algorithm and impact regression to determine whether a single local area drove results of the analysis. Results indicated no change in the statistical significance of the result, meaning that the conclusions were not driven solely by one local area. Estimates of the impact of training on quarterly earnings for those in employment ranged from \$899.67 to \$1,023.20.

These benefits continue through the year after training, with an estimated impact of \$3,579.37 in the first year and a two-year earnings impact of \$5,531.78.

Association with Contracting Career Services and One-Stop Operator Functions

Introduction

The RFA for this evaluation specifically noted the potential importance of examining whether local areas contracted out the career services and/or the one-stop operator (OSO) functions. As noted in the previous section on early findings, researchers determined, in consultation with CWDB staff, that contracting out the one-stop operator function possessed little meaning, given that nearly all local areas contracted the OSO but many devoted only a very small amount of money to it. Researchers instead focused their efforts on whether or not local areas contracted out career services, which almost exactly half do. Reducing the four models outlined in the RFA into a dichotomous model provided significantly greater clarity to the analysis.

The RFA also made an implicit assumption about contracting versus not contracting various local area functions: that doing so was a conscious, periodically-revisited decision by the local area in an environment with multiple qualified for-profit or non-profit organizations seeking to perform these functions. Qualitative research revealed this to be less often true than expected.

Thus, researchers determined that the analysis of the impact of contracting career services on participant outcomes should not utilize a rigorous quasi-experimental methodology, as local areas may or may not fully control this decision due to the local marketplace of potential service providers.

Researchers determined that using multivariate regression analysis more closely approached the level of evidence sought. Beyond the impacts of training on outcomes provided above, were there any associations of differential intermediate and final outcomes between participants who received services from local areas which either did or did not contract career services?

Context

Local areas that contracted career services served different populations than those areas that did not contract these services (Table 6). Local areas that contracted career services served greater shares of Black, homeless, low income, and English language learners than local areas that did not contract career services. Local areas that did not contract career services served greater shares of white, Hispanic, and Unemployment Compensation (UC) eligible participants than their counterparts. Researchers find it likely that the decision to contract career services did not change the population served, but rather that local conditions where contracting services was possible (an area with many available non-profit or for-profit organizations to choose from) were correlated with the population needing services.

Table 6. Participants Served, by Career Services Contracting Status

	In-house Career Services	Contracted Out Career Services
Age	40	39
Female	53%	53%
Disability	7%	8%
Hispanic	46%	42%
Amerindian	3%	2%
Asian	7%	8%
Black	16%	22%
Pacific	1%	1%
White	42%	35%
Veteran	7%	6%
Emp	19%	14%
UC Eligible	44%	34%
TANF	5%	6%
Homeless	4%	8%
Low Income	57%	73%
ELL	6%	9%
Single Parent	12%	12%

Note that, because of the very different populations served between these groups, **many of the measurable differences in intermediate outcomes evaporate once adjusted for population characteristics**. For example, while it appears that local areas which contract career services are less likely to enroll participants into training (29%) compared to local areas that perform these functions in-house (43%), once demographic and personal characteristics of participants are accounted for, there is no difference in the share receiving training.

In-House and Contracted Career Services Analysis

Researchers utilized the differential intermediate and final outcomes analysis framework (Figure 3), to follow the path of those who entered an AJCC and then qualified for WIOA services, including the regression control variables appropriate for each stage (Table 1). Results of this analysis indicate the following differences in outcomes between local areas which contracted career services (CCS) compared to those that performed such services in-house:

- No difference in receipt of training.
- No difference in completion of training for those who entered training.
- ***Completers at CCSs were more likely to find employment (1.21 percentage points) in their first quarter after exit than their in-house peers.***
- ***Employed completers at CCSs earned \$975.67 more in their first quarter after exit than their in-house peers.***
- No difference in employment during the first quarter after exit for those who exited training without completing.
- No difference in earning during the first quarter after exit for those who exited training without completing and then found employment.
- ***Non-trained enrollees at CCSs were more likely to find employment (1.18 percentage points) in the first quarter after exit than their in-house peers.***
- ***Non-trained enrollees at CCSs who found employment earned more (\$734.90) in their first quarter after exit than their in-house peers.***

Researchers caution that, while statistically significant, identified differences are relatively small in scale, with the increase in employment between 1 and 2 percentage points and an increase in earnings of between \$1.40 and \$1.88 an hour for full time work, depending on whether an individual did not receive training or received and completed training.

Thus, individuals who received services at a local area that contracted career services experienced better employment and earnings outcomes if they completed training – or if they never entered training. The theme around these results is connection to the labor market, as it

appears contracting out career services might provide some inherent benefit to connecting those receiving services when they seek employment. However, the mechanism through which this occurs is unclear using the data provided. It may be that contracts with those organizations providing career services tend to contain performance expectations regarding employment outcomes which promote employment re-integration.

Contracting With Non-Profit or For-Profit Organizations Compared to In-House

One theory is that those organizations which contract out do so with types of organizations (e.g., for-profit or non-profit) that perform this work particularly well. Thus, it isn't necessarily that contracting out is itself helpful for participants, but rather that the organization type performing the work does it quite well. Researchers utilized the differential intermediate and final outcomes analysis framework (Figure 3) to follow the path of those who entered an AJCC and then qualified for WIOA services, including the regression control variables appropriate for each stage (Table 1). Instead of analyzing the dichotomous relationship of contracting or not as above, researchers generated three categories: performing the work in-house, contracting with a non-profit organization, and contracting with a for-profit organization. By utilizing the same framework and holding the reference as performing career services in-house, researchers should be able to differentiate whether measured differences rely on contracting with non-profits or for-profits. If a path (finding employment after training) is statistically significant for only one type of organization (e.g., non-profits), this would provide evidence of their effectiveness over the other type of organization (e.g., here, for-profits); thus, in this example, increased employment after completing training is true only when contracting with non-profits. A summary of this analysis is provided below:

- **Completers at CCSs were more likely to find employment (1.21 percentage points) in their first quarter after exit than their in-house peers, driven solely by non-profits.**
- **Employed completers at CCSs earned \$975.67 more in their first quarter after exit than their in-house peers, driven by both non-profits and for-profits.**
- **Non-trained enrollees at CCSs were more likely to find employment (1.18 percentage points) in the first quarter after exit than their in-house peers, driven by both for-profit and non-profit organizations.**
- **Non-trained enrollees at CCSs who found employment earned more (\$734.90) in their first quarter after exit than their in-house peers, driven by both non-profits and for-profits.**

If the local area contracted out services, both non-profits and for-profits mutually appear to explain the benefits to participants in increased earnings for employed completers and employed non-trainees, and in employment for non-trainees. Given the similar functions of these types of organizations (i.e., they are contracted to perform essentially the same work), it

is unsurprising that they each play a role in success. In these cases, the act of contracting out career services appears to have some value in comparison to performing career services in-house, though we lack the data to fully understand why.

An interesting finding is that completers at local areas which contracted out to non-profit organizations experienced higher rates of employment than their peers served either by in-house providers or for-profit providers. Traditionally, select local non-profits in this sphere may maintain intimate relationships with employers, building trust over many years regarding the quality of skills for those they train. Perhaps some similar mechanism is at play here.

Discussion of Quantitative Analysis

WIOA participants in California benefit from the AJCC system, and the report provides evidence of the benefits of training provided in that system. Those who received training were more likely to find employment, and those who found employment earned more than their similar peers who did not. These labor market benefits to receipt of training were true for every demographic examined, with overlapping confidence intervals estimated for each group. Results were not driven by any one local area, and other sensitivity tests indicate consistent estimated impacts. Researchers can say with some confidence that WIOA-funded training effectively provided the tools and supports to link participants to the labor market and then to higher earnings immediately after exit.

There also appear to be differential associations depending on whether or not the local area contracted out career services. Accounting (where applicable) for demographic and personal characteristics, local area characteristics, prior labor market performance, training program characteristics, and employment characteristics, WIOA participants who interacted with a local area where career services were contracted out are:

- *More likely to find employment once they complete training if CCSs provider is a non-profit,*
- *More likely to earn more once they complete training and find employment,*
- *More likely to find employment if they did not enroll in training, and*
- *More likely to earn more if they did not enter training.*

All of these statements are true regardless of whether the career services provider was a non-profit or a for-profit, except for the first, where it applied solely for non-profits. Thus, there does appear to be some benefit to contracting career services. Recall that participants at local areas which contract out career services were more likely to need additional supports to enter and be successful in the labor market, with higher shares of low income, homeless, and limited English proficiency participants than local areas which did not contract out career services.

Though the RFA's focus was on whether WIOA participants received benefits if their local area contracted out career services, and/or one stop operator functions, investigations revealed a

more complex portrait of decision making. Local areas do not always have the option to contract out, and complex factors are related to when and how they might choose to do so (and with what type of organization).

III. QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS APPROACH

Design of the Qualitative Component

To complement the quantitative analysis, the evaluation design envisioned a set of case studies of selected local areas to delve deeper into the “why” and “how” of the quantitative findings, and to explore the broader picture beyond WIOA Title I. The original design called for extensive interviews in a dozen local areas, conducted on site, to get a full picture of each local area’s AJCC operations. This approach was proposed in the initial evaluation plan as the most effective means of gathering a large amount of information covering a wide range of topics related to how AJCCs function. Case studies are a widely-used formative evaluation approach, particularly where there are frequently changing conditions and where a final mode of operating has not been reached. While AJCCs have been around for decades, the conditions under which they operate, the outcomes they are expected to achieve, and the modes of delivery have been constantly evolving. Clearly there is outcome data to analyze, but how those outcomes are achieved is subject to constant change.

The twelve case study sites were selected as a cross-section of the 45 local areas. Since all four contracting models needed to be represented, and since two of those models are relatively rare, that became the first criterion for selection. The sites also needed to cover major urban areas, smaller cities, and more rural parts of the state. In the end, willingness of local areas to participate became a factor as well: seven of the eventual case study sites came from the evaluation team’s initial list of twelve; the remaining five came from an alternate ‘back-up’ list.

In the end, the site-visit approach was not possible. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and response, which kept most AJCCs in a predominantly remote operating mode, necessitated that the case studies be conducted remotely as well. While the evaluators believe that good results were obtained from the 57 video interviews eventually conducted, it was not the same as putting eyes on actual operations. Also, as noted previously, delays in contracting and data-sharing meant that the case study interviews were conducted concurrently with the quantitative phase of the evaluation, and thus largely without the benefit of in-depth data analysis to inform the areas probed in the case studies.

A further complicating factor was the concern many local directors had regarding the time commitment involved in serving as a case study site. In response, six of the twelve case studies were scaled back to interviews with one or two key staff familiar with the broad policy mechanisms influencing the AJCCs (typically the local area director and a deputy), as opposed to the full range of stakeholders interviewed in the other six sites. While this restricted the opportunity to probe on some questions, and limits the evaluators’ ability to quantify responses, the evaluation team is confident that the interviews ultimately provided a good sense of the key issues described in this report. The evaluation team notes that the case

studies, while including a review of pertinent documentation, are primarily based on self-reported information obtained during the Zoom interviews. We have no reason to doubt the veracity of what was reported, but we do note the limitations of self-reported data as a basis for policy recommendations.

IV. THEMES AND OBSERVATIONS FROM CASE STUDIES

The case study profiles in Part 2 of this report are based primarily on interviews with local workforce area directors and deputies, in some case supplemented by interviews with a range of partners and system stakeholders. The evaluation team assured all interviewees of anonymity unless otherwise cleared with them. The case study theme sections below have not been shared with any local areas and thus do not attribute any observations to specific local areas. In many cases, these are an amalgamation of observations across the twelve case study sites.

One thing to note in laying out the themes and observations is that the variation across local areas, particularly in how they have structured their AJCCs, is wide. This makes sense given the strong local autonomy inherent in WIOA, which allows variation to align with local conditions and context as determined by employer-led local workforce boards.

In part, the case studies sought to ferret out how partner activities contributed to participant outcomes, but the data for this aspect of center operations was scant. Just as the quantitative component of the evaluation was limited to an emphasis on WIOA Title I because that was the only verifiable data source available, restricting its utility for broad policy recommendations, the case study observations must too be regarded as tentative since inference and self-reported information are the key sources.

The themes selected represent the key areas of AJCC operations which are under local control, i.e., not fully bound by WIOA regulations. The themes also reflect the areas of inquiry laid out in the RFA, as well as those areas where the evaluation team believes there are opportunities to learn from local experience about how the flexibility inherent in WIOA is exercised in line with local and state interests.

Selecting Career Services Provider and OSO

[Adapted from EDD policy on selection of one-stop operators and career services providers]:

The AJCCs are the core of California's workforce system. AJCC operators and career services providers play a critical role in ensuring that AJCCs are serving as all-inclusive access points to education and training for a wide range of customers. Local boards are required to conduct an open and competitive process to select their AJCC operators (WIOA Section 121[d][2][A]). With the agreement of the chief local elected official and the governor, a local board may provide adult and dislocated worker career services directly or may do so by procuring providers. Although not required by statute, local boards are encouraged to use a competitive process to select their career services providers, as they are required to do for the AJCC operator, to promote efficiency and effectiveness of these roles by regularly examining performance and costs. The AJCC operators and the career services providers fulfill two distinct and separate roles within the local AJCC system. These roles may be filled by the same entity or by different

entities based on the local board's determination regarding the needs of its customers and demographic area; however, the roles must be clearly articulated as part of the competitive procurement and selection processes. In California, AJCC operators are responsible for coordinating service delivery among all AJCC partners and service providers within the local workforce development area. Having the AJCC operator act as the local service delivery coordinator allows local boards to focus on strategic planning and developing partnerships at the local and regional level.

[Selection of AJCC Operators and Career Services Providers](#)

Theme: Training

Key Elements of This Theme

The case study interviews explored several aspects of training with regard to the AJCCs. The first area of inquiry focused on how decisions are made each year concerning the amount of WIOA funding that is allocated to training, how those expenditures are tracked, and the extent to which non-WIOA funding is also utilized for training. A second area of inquiry covered the types of training offered or prioritized and looked at differential training caps in some local areas; one local area is highlighted in this regard. The final area of inquiry concerned how training effectiveness was measured; an example is provided of one local area's strategy for tracking effectiveness.

Why This Theme is Important

CWDB expressed a keen interest in the area of WIOA-funded training, how it relates to other training provided by partners, and how many job-seekers end up receiving training. There is a general consensus that high-quality job training is the key to moving job-seekers into the better-paying jobs offered by high-growth industry sectors. The case studies highlight examples of this aspect of training, to augment the quantitative analysis, which, due to data limitations, could only focus on WIOA Title I data.

Documentation Used for the Observations Within the Case Studies

The case studies were not intended to provide measurable evidence of partner contributions, given the shortage and general unreliability of non-WIOA data, but they do include some important examples of how partner collaboration takes place. The examples and observations from the case studies provide a good basis for areas of further exploration and recommendations for action at the state level. However, they should not be taken as conclusive. The primary source of the observations were the case study interviews of key staff and review of local plans, where relevant. In some cases, local areas did not provide detailed insight into their policies and practices, or merely gave mention to a topic without deep explanation.

Training Allocation Decision-Making Process – Tracking Training Expenditures

Across all case study sites, meeting the 30% training requirement enacted by the California Legislature is a major driver in how funds are allocated. The job centers themselves appear to

have relatively little role to play in how funds are distributed among major categories, be it center location, split between career services and training, performance measures applied to centers, or a host of other policy-level decisions. Decisions about individual client paths are clearly a center-driven function, but the question of how much funding goes to training occurs above the center level. It is typically originated by staff looking across allocation levels, carryover funds, past practices, and general policy direction set by the board or local governmental authority.

There are, however, differences in the extent to which local areas choose to rely on leveraged funds to meet the 30% requirement. Some local areas focus heavily on accessing leveraged funds to support their training investments. The rationale for this approach varies. In some cases, leveraged funds are used to support training to free up other WIOA resources to provide the much-needed support services required to help marginalized populations fully benefit from training. Given the 30% training requirement, it is not surprising that, for the period 2016-2020, 31% of California WIOA Title I enrollees system wide received training services. The range among local areas, however, went from 12% to 84%.

In other cases, the rationale is just the opposite: the leveraged resources provide those crucial support services necessary for training to be successful. The difference appears to be based on which leveraged resources are available. If, for example, there are strong relationships with local Community Action agencies or similar entities that have a history of delivering support services, those agencies are more typically the support services providers. Where the relationships are with more traditional training providers, the opposite tends to be true.

These variations play into how local areas determine which funds they will tap for what purpose. But there was another issue reported that drives some of the local area thinking: the perceived difficulty in tracking those leveraged resources. As noted below, the issue of tracking is a widely-cited barrier to being able to efficiently meet the training mandate. What appears to be consistent across all case study sites is a consensus that too much staff effort is required to meet this legislative mandate, particularly to achieve a goal that almost all local areas already feel is important to them as a policy direction-setter. In addition, the 10% limitation on leveraged funds, inclusive of support services, appears to be at cross-purposes with the expectations of an integrated workforce system.

Tracking Training Expenditures

To one degree or another, all local areas track training expenditures, but in various ways. Where there are contracts in place, filling training slots and the expenditure of training funds are typically contract provisions. In all cases, tracking against the 30% requirement is carried out throughout the year and, where necessary, adjustments are made. The data made available to the evaluation team regarding compliance with the 30% requirement was somewhat dated, and certainly the pandemic has disrupted training in many local areas, but the pre-pandemic reports showed that nearly all local areas were meeting the 30% requirement.

The evaluation team observed some examples of deeper levels of tracking, and differing expectations, where there was a high priority on meeting the needs of key growth sectors. This topic is covered in more depth in a companion section to this topic, and further in the body of the case study profiles. Of note here is the way some areas have tiered their training allocations, with several establishing significantly higher limits on how much can be spent on an individual training investment for high-growth sectors than for other sectors. These caps are typically waivable, since there are often growth jobs in non-priority sectors, but they clearly have the effect of incentivizing training in high-growth sectors. Some local areas reported a driver for them was occupation type as opposed to sector type, since demand occupations occur across a multitude of sectors.

Types of Training Offered

The dominant categories of training reported in CalJOBS appear to be on-the-job training (OJT) and Individual Training Accounts (ITAs). However, the use of OJT varies rather widely among local areas, primarily keyed to the level of demand for this type of training, local contracting complexities, and prior history with OJT. For the years 2016-2020, OJT made up 50% of all training in one local area, but the average across the system was 12%.

ITAs (i.e., training vouchers) are not properly a “type” of training, but rather a delivery mechanism for various types of training across the board. The alternative to ITAs, commonly called group training or cohort training, is described by many local areas as a goal, but is also sometimes viewed as ‘boutique’ training for the few. While WIOA certainly promotes ITAs as the preferred vehicle for accessing training, there are many local areas that would like to do more cohort training but have not yet found the right fit for it across a wide range of training opportunities. Training caps (per-person maximum amounts) also vary from area to area, as does the degree to which other training funds are utilized and captured.

To illustrate one approach worthy of note, what follows is an overview of one small local area’s actions that have resulted in a near 85% training rate for their (relatively small) WIOA service population. This overview also highlights a series of promising practices that could be examples for other local areas. A couple caveats should be mentioned. This local area enrolls roughly 200 people per year in WIOA Title I and has one community college. Strong working relationships with that college have been in place and growing for many years. The level of trust built between the two systems, and the degree to which both the college and the workforce system benefit, have also developed over time.

The focus on higher skilled jobs fits the characteristics of the applicants the AJCC typically sees. And while the emphasis exists on the higher skill jobs, the local area uses truck driver training for about 25% of its overall training investment. Truck driver training meets a critical local area demand, albeit short term and not degree-oriented, but it is a relatively high-paying occupation. It should also be noted that this local area is housed in local government and has management responsibility for CalWORKs (TANF) operations, thus facilitating co-enrollment and extensive collaboration.

The local workforce board has a policy in place that offers different levels of training investment depending on how well a proposed training program meets the following criteria: a) the training is in a demand sector; b) the target job pays at or above 250% of the poverty rate; c) the target job requires a two-year degree; and d) there are at least 100 employees in like target jobs in the local area. If these criteria are met, the maximum training reimbursement is \$10,000 (although of course many people do not end up needing the maximum amount). Other training that does not meet these requirements is allowable, as long as there is a demonstration of demand. For these, the training cap is \$3,500.

This policy is only one of several factors in play that led to the high training rate. The AJCC found that offering resume writing and job search technique workshops did not fit the needs of individuals seeking services from the center. The center's focus is on assessing participants for training. A deliberate strategic move was to shift from filling low-wage entry level jobs to a focus on higher skill opportunities. However, the board also requires a strategic focus on serving those in chronically low-paying jobs, such as those in the robust hospitality industry within the local area.

A final factor worthy of mention here takes us back to the community college connection. Not only does the board have a contract with the local community college to deliver training, but that contract also includes having a WIOA staff person full-time at the college. Several benefits have accrued from that contractual relationship. First, the college refers students it deems in need of wrap-around services to WIOA through the on-site WIOA staff person. Co-enrollments and sharing of data follow. Critically, those enrolled in the college and in WIOA who receive PELL grant support are easily tracked. Since PELL grants are such a large part of educational support for low-income individuals, where there is co-enrollment the capturing PELL costs as both WIOA and college training support is easy to document.

Due to the limitations in most local areas on data-sharing between colleges and the WIOA system, PELL grant support does not consistently get captured and reported. The local area cited above has overcome that through relationship-building with its one college over many years. Would it be good for all local areas to have the same type of relationship? That may be ideal, but not necessarily realistic, given the number and diversity of institutions larger local areas must contend with. It does seem that overcoming the data-sharing issues at the state level could go far in ensuring the two systems can benefit from whatever relationships can be established locally.

How Training Effectiveness is Assessed

The ways in which training effectiveness is assessed vary widely among local areas, ranging from not doing it at all (beyond the basic WIOA measures) to sophisticated strategies that look broadly across multiple systems. An example from a relatively large local area gives some sense of how this might work. In this local area, the board oversees a large pot of workforce investment dollars, less than half of which are WIOA funds. The focus on supporting key sector growth drives investments. The board recently moved away from a heavy reliance on ITAs to more emphasis on cohort and contracted classroom training. They found that their ITAs were not reaching their target populations well enough; often the ITAs relied on reverse referrals and were not in the target sectors. This shift away from ITAs was part of a broad strategy re-focus, moving toward Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that go well beyond the WIOA measures and that can, through performance-based contracts which reward placement in higher skilled, higher wage jobs, better address the needs of target populations aligned with jobs that meet the minimum median wage target of the area (above \$18+ per hour).

Additionally, this local area recently re-designed its AJCC structure to bring career services in-house so that the broader range of opportunities across the whole of their investments could be made available to their customers, particularly those in target populations. Previously their AJCCs were essentially all about WIOA, and there was little crossover to other funding streams. A final note is that this local area has recognized the emergence of multiple new job categories that have not been addressed in existing curriculum or certifications, such as drone operator training, that offer good paying jobs but are ahead of the curve in terms of existing certifications.

This overview only touches the surface of the efforts by this local area to build a system that meets the broad community needs the local area is trying to address. The big takeaway is that focusing on those broader community needs is imperative to being able to build the kind of system that can bring multiple resources to bear on community issues. One further concluding comment: To make this shift viable, the local area had to rely on an aggregated data system that covers multiple systems; existing data systems were too segregated by funding stream to be of much utility.

Summary

From what we have gleaned across the case study sites, there has been a marked shift away from filling entry-level, low wage jobs to more of a focus on meeting the needs of employers in high growth sectors, at least with some portion of the local area's training dollars.

Due to data constraints, the degree to which WIOA participants benefit from assistance provided by various partners is not clear. We have a few examples of clear connections supported by outcomes, but this is not the norm. Overcoming the current bifurcation of tracking outcomes by funding streams is not an easy task, but if policy expectations are tied to joint partner efforts, being able to assess the effectiveness of these effort through data aggregation must be a key policy focus. We note that the recently-announced Regional Equity

and Recovery Partnership initiative includes funding for such data integration and believe this can be a key steppingstone to a long-term data-sharing approach. We understand there is much work happening to establish processes to integrate WIOA and community college data. As noted in the recommendations, this effort could serve as a beta test of system integration efforts.

The 30% training requirement is clearly a driver of policy decisions locally, but one that comes with a high administrative burden, according to most case study sites. Interviewees did not dispute the importance of training as a key component of the workforce development system, but many questioned whether the current policy could be made less onerous.

Theme: Business Services

Key Elements of This Theme

AJCCs serve two sets of customers: jobseekers and employers. While much of the attention in viewing AJCC operations and outcomes focuses on the jobseekers' side, without the full participation of employers, opportunities for jobseekers would be extremely limited. Employer satisfaction surveys are offered in many places, and WIOA employer measures are under development, in recognition of the crucial role employers' play in overall AJCC success. Traditionally, employer services have been provided by staff within the AJCCs themselves. As more collaborative efforts have emerged, it is important to look at how this element of AJCC operations has evolved.

Why this Theme is Important

While the interviews, due to time limitations, were generally not able to delve in great depth into how business services were handled, this remains a key aspect of AJCC operations. As employers' relationships with the workforce system have shifted over the course of the pandemic, some local areas are rethinking their employer engagement strategies.

Documentation Used for the Observations Within the Case Studies

A few of the interviews with local AJCC leadership uncovered efforts to carry out business services in new ways. Through document and website reviews the evaluation team was able to develop a fuller picture of business service operations across the twelve case study sites. Local plans provided some insights. The richest resource was tracking through local area websites to see what business services were offered and how they may be connected to related functions such as local and regional economic development activities.

Business Services in General

All local areas in the case study sample offer job posting, candidate screening, labor market information and other employer services directly related to finding jobs for the centers' registrant pool. Additionally, all centers offer re-employment services to the employees of qualifying employers that are facing layoffs. Most AJCCs sponsor job fairs periodically, although it should be noted that in these tight labor market times, the current trend is to host *hiring* fairs, with job offers made during the event to speed the process along and ensure participating employers have ready access to available and qualified labor as quickly as possible. The pandemic also appears to have caused some local areas to begin to think differently about employer engagement. Staff increasingly find themselves pointing out to employers that their hiring wages may no longer be competitive. Some local areas, taking it a step further, are becoming more selective in their work with employers, focusing their attention on those offering better jobs, and engaging more actively with those employers to find ways to meet their needs.

While not consistent across all case study sites, there is a definite trend for business services to include workshops on key employer issues (mostly virtual or by recorded video during the pandemic times). Similarly, there is a marked trend to offer specific business counseling to existing employers and to those wishing to start a business. This trend appears to be related to the relationship established by the local board with entities providing a wider range of business services. One local board in the case study sample is part of a twelve-member umbrella organization that offers a full range of services such as financing, business strategy, general business training, and business counseling. Participating entities include chambers of commerce, specialized organizations serving target businesses (minority- or female-owned for example) as well as governmental and non-governmental organizations focused mainly on financing options for new and expanding businesses. Often these efforts are in conjunction with local initiatives to attract new businesses or to support new start-up businesses. While not the norm, this type of partnering was evident in several of the case study sites.

The team also observed some local areas with business centers physically located apart from the AJCCs themselves. In these instances, meeting space, in addition to dedicated business services, was offered as an added option for local businesses to access. In all the case study sites, the local website included a section on services to businesses. In many cases that business section included links to other local business-oriented services such as small business loans, start-up support, and business tax-related information.

Business Services Operational Location

The norm appears to be that business services related to the AJCCs are managed by the AJCC itself. However, there are examples of alternative operational structures worthy of note. At one end of the spectrum, the business services team reports directly to the local area director rather than through the AJCC management chain. In other cases, business services are part of the local economic development structure. In one local area the county laid off its economic

development staff and assigned some of those functions to the workforce office. While creating extra work for the receiving division, it has led to much greater alignment between workforce and economic development efforts. In another case, business services are contracted to the local government's economic development department. Again, this has led to greater collaboration between the two functions, with economic development, for example, becoming the promoter and manager of OJT outreach.

Summary

The evaluation team observed several variations in how business services are managed. It appears that in those cases where business services are connected to other business-oriented support efforts, there is opportunity for bringing a wider range of services to the businesses served by these broader range efforts. At the same time, there is in some areas a trend away from trying to meet the needs of all employers, and a more proactive focus on engaging with those employers offering better jobs.

Theme: Sector Partnerships

Key Elements of This Theme

The case study interviews asked local workforce directors to detail the relationship between AJCCs and local training offerings in priority, high-growth industry sectors. In several of the case studies line staff and others familiar with local priority sectors were also interviewed on this topic. Interviewees were asked questions focused on: 1) how staff from AJCCs and sector training providers communicated; 2) strategies and best practices to ensure that AJCC staff were made aware of emerging occupations, sector training offerings, and eligibility requirements; and 3) the challenges and limitations associated with effectively directing AJCC customers into sector training offerings in high growth industries.

Why This Theme is Important

Connecting the unemployed and underemployed to foundational and advanced skills training in high growth industries is critical to meeting the goal of upward mobility for California residents. Knowledge of real-time regional labor market information, emerging occupations, and low-or no-cost skills training opportunities are critical drivers of sector partnership success for AJCC customers.

Documentation Used to Develop Information on the Theme

The case study interviews were intended to capture the variety of relationships that exist between AJCCs and sector partnerships across the state. The examples and observations detailed in this section should provide a good basis for further inquiry into the optimization of AJCC and sector training partnerships. The source of observations were the case study interviews with staff related to the sector initiatives. Not all local areas provided meaningful insight into this theme, choosing instead to focus on other topics. The evaluation team believes there were sufficient responses to make credible observations on this theme.

AJCC Activities Related to In-Demand Sectors

There exists a wide degree of variation across local areas in how AJCCs relate to in-demand sectors. Many of the local directors interviewed acknowledged that establishing and maintaining strong links between the front door of the AJCCs and the career-oriented training offered by sector partnerships was an ongoing challenge, particularly as staff turnover and as sector opportunities evolve.

At one end of the spectrum are local areas where sector training programs essentially do their own recruitment, and jobseekers who start at an AJCC are unlikely to get referred to those training opportunities. In effect, such sector partnerships and AJCCs tend to operate in silos, with limited communication, and respective staff tend to be unaware of external happenings or programmatic offerings. While none of the case study sites fit this description, several acknowledged that this would be the likely state of things absent ongoing efforts to integrate activities.

At the other end of the spectrum, interagency communication is consistent, dual staff cross-training is strategic, and support services are delivered in tandem to bolster effectiveness. Several local directors described something like this as the goal but noted that it took constant work to ensure that front-line staff knew enough about evolving sector opportunities to be able to make effective referrals. It appears interaction between AJCCs and sector partnerships has improved as sector partnerships have grown in importance locally. While room to expand interactions was noted, there were several positive examples of how AJCC staff are connected to the relevant sector partnerships.

When sector training is not well-integrated into the delivery of AJCC services, there tends to be little AJCC staff or customer knowledge of labor market trends, available training opportunities, or the requirements necessary for entry into sector training. Front-line staff may lack the skills or occupational knowledge to guide customers through a process to highlight the benefits and value of specific sector training opportunities. As a result, customers interested in training can end up with inadequate opportunity for career exploration and are likely to pursue training in industries that are already known to them. Where there is limited relationship with local sector partnership activities, customers are more likely to be steered to immediate employment rather than training in occupations leading to family sustaining wages.

According to one area director, these barriers could be removed through increased funding to allow AJCCs to attract staff skilled in the functioning of specific sectors, and a deeper investment in AJCC staff skill development. ***A number of directors highlighted the critical importance of providing front-line staff with ongoing professional development opportunities, pointing out that front-line staff need to have a deep understanding of the workforce development system writ large, not just a grasp of their particular corner of it.***

Those local areas operating more high-functioning partnerships between AJCCs and sector training initiatives appear to work collaboratively to help job seekers make labor-market-data-

informed career decisions and allow employers to access a more diverse pool of candidates. These local areas strategically integrate AJCC staff into sectoral happenings, including attendance at industry forums, tours of employer sites, and conversations with frontline staff. Such activities are designed to allow AJCC staff to gain a better understanding of the eligibility requirements, emerging occupations, and career pathways within each local area's key sectors. Local area leaders view these activities as critical to the career exploration process at AJCC centers. Directors view the utilization of sector training opportunities as reliant upon staff exposure to different industries and knowledge of labor market opportunities that support industry growth assumptions. Some sector providers go as far as to bring key industry partners to AJCC sites monthly for presentations about training opportunities and the benefits of participation. At multiple sites, collaboration between AJCC and sector training staff continues through the training and job placement process, with AJCC staff coaches working to resolve home life barriers that might preclude training attendance and completion. This collaboration is often supported through customized Google portals that allow staff to communicate and track service delivery efforts and referrals to external partners.

AJCC Staff Roles in Sector Training

The roles of AJCC staff vary tremendously across local areas. In some local areas, sector initiatives were outsourced to external individuals with expertise in the relevant sector. In other instances, AJCC staff were leveraged as gatekeepers to sector training opportunities and responsible for determining whether customers had the necessary support to benefit from long-term training. Leaders see job developers and career coaches as the lynchpins in high-functioning systems. These staff are responsible for understanding business needs and appropriately matching AJCC customers to opportunities. Such activities are critical to the success of sector skills training.

Policy direction from WDB that impacts AJCC sector work

Interviews did not generally delve deeply into the impact of local area policy direction on AJCC sector work. However, one local area interview recounted an interesting experiment in which the local board mandated that all training dollars be spent on three in-demand sectors that 1) projected growth, 2) possessed achievable career pathways, and 3) had demonstrated employer partners willing to champion the workforce system. On the surface the policy seemed appropriate and aligned with where demand existed in the regional economy. In reality, it did not align with AJCC customer interests. While they may have had interest in occupations within the key sectors, they were not interested in working in the key sectors *per se*. The local area had to rescind the policy and find other ways to connect to jobs that moved customers into higher skilled training in a more expanded list of sectors.

Theme: Strong Local Partnerships

Key Elements of This Theme

As envisioned by WIOA, partnership is not just a cornerstone of the workforce system, but indeed the foundation. State and local workforce systems are tasked with establishing strong partnerships with a range of adjacent systems to ensure that all manner of job-seekers are provided with the necessary and appropriate services to connect them to good jobs. For this reason, CWDB has placed a heavy emphasis on system alignment with partners, some of them mandatory, others optional but strongly encouraged.

The case studies highlight key differences in the partnership strategies of various local areas. Due to limitations of data collection, and the inherent difficulty in gauging the strength of any given partnership, firm conclusions remain elusive. There are however a few key distinctions between the case study sites that highlight differences in the depth and nature of partnerships between the AJCCs and their respective system partners.

Overall, a majority of case study sites indicated that CalWORKs (the CA workforce program for TANF recipients and a required WIOA partner, typically run by county human service departments), served as their most robust partner, followed by education partners, particularly the Adult Education schools. After those, the Department of Housing, Department of Corrections, and Department of Rehabilitation were mentioned as key partners with varying levels of collaboration. Cal Fresh E&T (the employment and training program for those receiving SNAP assistance and not a required WIOA partner, also typically run by county human service departments) was less frequently cited as a connection, but many case study sites expressed interest in further developing that partnership.

Why This Theme is Important

System partners have always been a core component of the vision and function of America's Job Centers that seek to serve as a "one-stop shop" for the array of services workforce customers may need. The importance of system partners was reemphasized and strengthened by the 2014 WIOA legislation. Through the interview process the evaluation team was able to gain a sense of the level of collaboration among both legislatively-required partners and entities beyond the required core. The strategy behind who and how AJCCs are leveraging as their system partners has direct implications for their effectiveness as engines of economic mobility.

Tracking Partner Activities

The case study interviews highlighted efforts of local boards to incorporate system partners, but a key concern that arose in many of the interviews was the lack of a data system capable of collecting consistent and accurate information regarding the contribution of those partners. The closest metric to determine engagement is the amount of funding leveraged by the AJCCs from their system partners. These numbers are difficult to track due to the lack of uniform or mandatory reporting requirements. Another useful metric would be the number of participants

that are co-enrolled in WIOA and education and services. Again, however, there are data limitations: while AJCCs are required to use the CalJOBS system, their partners are not, and often use separate data systems. This in turn results in many local AJCCs not requiring their staff to track co-enrollments.

AJCC Structure Impact on System Partners

The greatest differentiator in how the case study AJCCs engaged with their system partners was the underlying structure of the local area. The strongest relationships with system partners emerged from AJCCs that were nestled within a structure that tied the AJCC or its employees to the local county government, allowing the AJCC to partner with other county services relatively seamlessly. For example, in one local area the Director of Employment and Training Services oversees both the WIOA workforce development programs and the local CalWORKs program. This gives the director broad discretion to braid funding and coordinate services among dedicated staff. Similar structures also lend support to broader system collaboration, as in another local area, which operates as a nonprofit but whose staff consists of county employees, giving them access to staff and resources at the county level with their system partners.

Of course, AJCCs that operate as private entities, outside of local government, also make efforts to develop robust relationships with system partners. As a rule, they rely on their one-stop operators to facilitate partnerships and coordinate strategy between mandated and non-mandated system partners. And while such structures may lack the close connection with non-WIOA governmental funding streams, they have a distinct advantage in attracting non-governmental funding.

Education Partners

Education partners were frequently cited as critical collaborators enabling the local workforce system and the AJCCs to better serve their clients. Education partners were also hailed as being key to a range of innovative strategies, such as contextualized and accelerated programming. Adult Education schools were regularly cited by the centers as instrumental for training workforce customers, highlighting the frequent referral (and reverse referral) process between the AJCCs and those institutions.

Many boards also work closely with their education partners in order to drive the response to broader economic development and training needs in the local area. One county, for example, is leveraging High Road Training Partnership Funds in order to train individuals in the skills necessary to build electric vehicle stations across the area. Other local areas are working closely with their education partners to compensate for a few of the concerns listed above. For example, one county has worked to connect with their local Adult Education schools to collect and leverage data to inform needs assessment in their local planning, adjusting services as needed. Another local area noted that it is looking to coordinate with the community colleges in the area to construct in-house training schools that can funnel workforce customers into in-demand careers.

Local areas expressed concerns about a few policies that hinder their collaboration with education partners. For example, some areas said that the 30% training requirement restricted their ability to work with education partners and attract additional funding. A few local directors mentioned the limitation on counting leveraged funds as running counter to the expectation of full partnerships, since in some cases WIOA is best used to fill in a gap in resources for support services where a partner's funding is limited to training.

Several boards work closely with their community college partners, but some noted a level of difficulty in connecting their clients with what the schools have to offer. As one director put it *"[They] have great content but their format can be inaccessible for workforce customers."* Many education partners offer courses that may be too long or are held in formats and timeslots that are inconvenient for AJCC customers looking to upskill and reskill quickly.

AJCC partnerships with CBOs

Case study interviews with workforce leaders across the state revealed the emergence of promising practices to unlock the potential of marginalized subgroups through innovative collaborations between AJCCs and CBOs. In some local areas, these partnerships pair WIOA skills training with CBO-funded support services to provide critical support to customers throughout the training and placement processes. In other local areas, basic skills training is contextualized and combined with vocational skills training, so that English-language learners, for example, can become language-proficient while obtaining the certifications required to obtain employment in fast-growing industries like healthcare and construction.

At their best, partnerships between AJCCs and CBOs provide a blueprint for how marginalized subgroups can achieve success within WIOA training opportunities. In these partnerships, AJCCs serve as access points to the myriad training and service options that exist within the local area. In one local area, AJCCs made a concerted effort to enter strategic partnerships with the providers of homeless services. To meet the preferred learning modalities of customers, instruction is provided in a non-traditional, non-classroom environment to cohorts of individuals living in transitional housing or lacking stable long-term housing. The training is described as transitional employment more than skills training, and customers earn while they learn and collect critical job experience in the process. These partnerships allow for support services to be delivered in tandem without communication challenges that too often undermine cross-agency collaboration. According to staff, these partnerships have been hugely successful in convincing employers of the untapped potential of impacted subgroups: *"We've gotten so many of these folks into jobs, and the partnership has enabled us to connect folks who probably never would have gotten connected to employment otherwise."* In other parts of the state, cohorts of individuals from specific impacted subgroups are recruited to participate in training alongside one another. The local area does this because disaggregated data reveals that individuals from these groups do not feel comfortable autonomously navigating training services but benefit from peer support and cohort-based community.

Local directors feel strongly that they are in the best position to know which local CBOs are well-positioned to make a contribution to the local workforce development system. They argue that efforts by the state to select CBO partners for local workforce areas are unlikely to be successful, because the state has no way of knowing which local organizations actually have the capacity to deliver workforce services.

Funding streams

A variety of funding streams are critical to supporting AJCCs as they seek to successfully partner across systems. Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) establish baselines for partnerships with mandated partners. They also outline core strategies for system alignment by developing co-located services and braided funding. However, these MOUs, while foundational, could do more to promote partnership. The funding from MOUs is often essential for the baseline funding of job centers and their infrastructure. Due to persistent concerns with underfunding, job centers rely on their system partners to operate. This dynamic is further complicated and undermined when some system partners fail to provide their agreed-upon share of funding.

Discretionary funds offer additional opportunities for AJCCs to collaborate with system partners. Discretionary grants from the Department of Labor, the state, or system partners can serve as a catalyst for collaboration between the AJCCs and their partners. For example, in most localities, the Department of Corrections is a key partner, but some case studies indicated that the amount of corrections-related funding contributed through MOUs was small. On the plus side, the relatively new *Prison To Employment* initiative was cited frequently as bolstering partnerships to serve justice-involved individuals.

Many local areas also mentioned discretionary grants focused on housing, food assistance (Cal Fresh), and other needs as aiding them to better serve target populations and increase collaboration. However, there was also mention of drawbacks to discretionary grants. Chief among these concerns is that the workforce boards are often not listed as mandatory partners for such grants, leaving them at the mercy of other entities to establish partnerships. Collaboration can be intermittent as the leveraging and allocation of funds depends largely on persuasion by the workforce boards and is not specifically required in the law or statute authorizing the funds.

The regulations around discretionary grants were often cited as potentially conflicting with WIOA requirements, forcing local boards to develop initiatives separate from or on top of their day-to-day services, rather than having programs complement each other. This also increases the administrative burden on AJCC staff, which can discourage partnership. Finally, several boards noted that they are compelled to seek discretionary grants simply as a means to survive, rather than to innovate, using these funds to backfill staff and meet funding requirements rather than building and expanding services.

Summary

Many of the most innovative workforce boards look to leverage partnerships in order to broaden their impact and effectiveness. In many areas, significant progress has been made to bolster how and where the AJCCs establish partnerships. However, there are drawbacks in both the policy regime and nature of funding that limit collaboration efforts.

Theme: Equity

Key Elements of This Theme

Almost all of the case study sites acknowledged the importance of applying an equity lens to their work in order to best serve their communities. WIOA is “*all about equity and helping people who don’t have a voice, resources, or know-how*” navigate the system, as one director put it. However, local areas differ in where they are in their equity journey, with some still in the nascent stage of acknowledging that the basic WIOA metrics alone are unlikely to lead to greater impact for the underserved, while others explicitly name systemic racism as a barrier for the black and brown communities in which they sit. While all AJCCs presumably aim to be equitable in their approach, several case study sites noted new programmatic commitments to racial and gender equity, from strategic planning at the board level to cultural competency and other racial equity training, and concrete changes to practices in their AJCCs to improve the quality of diverse participants’ experiences.

Why This Theme is Important

Advancing equity in the California workforce system is a key tenet of the CWDB strategic plan and of the state’s overall goals. Locally, equity also appears to have a high priority at the present time in local government policy and direction setting. Many local WDBs are responding to that overall state and local policy direction with actions of their own. This theme is one of the few that almost all case study interviewees responded to with specific actions and/or emerging plans for action. However, the immediate impact on AJCC operations was more mixed, with equity being in the planning stages in several local areas, but with clear intent that the local AJCCs would be involved at some point in the future as plans moved into implementation. In more than a few cases local boards are examining their own make-up and policies through an equity lens, under the assumption that they needed to lead with action to be able to have an influence on service delivery. While many local efforts appeared to be just getting underway, it was clear that the system, as a whole, takes this issue seriously, with intent to change operations to address service and outcome disparities in the system.

Disaggregated Data and Outcomes

A key starting place for several local areas was ensuring they could effectively measure how their AJCCs are currently performing through an equity lens. Further, the complexity of an equity strategy that goes beyond ‘services provided’ to equitable outcomes was an important theme of the case study interviews. As one local area director put it “*The system as a whole is*

reaching diverse populations, but the outcomes are not equitable.” Other local areas noted that their limited access to disaggregated data at the local level impedes their ability to take more explicit and actionable steps towards improving outcomes for their racially diverse constituents. One local director shared that *“There is a lot of equity conversation that is ‘pat ourselves on the back,’ but not looking at the data and outcomes.”* Local areas are very interested in accessing better data in order to hold themselves accountable to their communities. In some local areas, they are moving to disaggregate data by various demographic groups and are using a critical lens to identify implicit bias.

AJCC Specific Issues

One local director argued that *“without leading with race and using a racial equity lens, we’ve barely scratched the surface.”* That local area recognized that there is a trust gap between people of color and government agencies. Black and brown people who access the system frequently choose not to identify their race and/or ethnicity. In part this is a function of the limited selections offered by US Department of Labor intake forms, along with an undercurrent of reluctance to discuss race. Consequently, in this particular local area, there is a conscious effort to normalize the conversation around race. In addition, this local area has made an effort to ensure customers see themselves reflected and included in the staffing of the AJCC. Several local areas pointed to the diversity in their AJCC staffing that mirrors the local community as a crucial factor in being able to gain the trust of the populations they serve.

Explicit Commitment to Racial Equity and Inclusion

For any local area’s commitment to racial equity and inclusion to progress to the level of systemic change, there needs to be buy-in and engagement across the system. Several of the case study sites have embedded their equity goals in their strategic plans. In one local area, the board’s executive committee is holding an equity retreat at the end of this program year to develop formalized performance metrics for measuring equity progress. That effort also includes community outreach to assess the needs of local priority population groups and how they would see these realized in their AJCCs. Another local area has taken a similar approach in tying equity to the priority goals established in the workforce board’s strategic planning process. Both areas have woven equity into all their goals, while maintaining a separate goal around diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). The DEI goal examines actual services, outreach, and board composition. Some local areas pointed to the WIOA measures as not reflecting the strategic direction their equity emphasis was taking them. Their aspirations were to move marginalized populations into careers with family sustaining wages, whereas WIOA measures are set at a much lower bar. To address this issue one local area adopted a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) approach for closing the gender and race gaps in placements and established racial equity and inclusion and racial justice as core values. KPIs are the drivers for all of this local area’s workforce policy and implementation, standing above the WIOA measures under the assumption that if the KPIs are met, the WIOA measures will be achieved.

One local area highlighted their all bi-lingual case management staff as an important factor in gaining trust and serving their diverse population. The case study interviews surfaced the

significant diversity across the state, with local areas differing significantly on which populations are the focus of equity efforts. Local areas noted priority groups that were their key targets ranging from Hispanic/Latinx, Black ‘Opportunity Youth,’ disconnected youth in general, low-income Caucasians in rural areas, women in certain occupational areas, and various others. This theme of equity for marginalized populations is at the heart of the evaluation team’s key recommendations.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

General

Equity as an Overarching Framework

WIOA assigns major responsibility for design and operation of the AJCC system to local areas. States have clear oversight and responsibility for the performance of the system, but decisions about who to serve and how best to serve them, within the parameters of the law, are a local responsibility. That doesn't mean that states can't influence service delivery, of course. The recommendations provided in this section address ways in which CWDB might exercise more effective influence over the system.

To begin with, the evaluation team suggests that organizing all CWDB initiatives and activities around an inspirational theme holds tremendous potential to influence the system overall. The theme of advancing equity within the workforce system seemed to resonate with nearly all of the local workforce areas included in the case studies. Looking across the investments, plans, and policies of CWDB, and state government in general, this theme appears to be a major driver of efforts across California. While the case studies reflected some pushback from local workforce areas on certain of the state plan goals *per se*, the core principle of achieving equity for critical target populations was one that nearly everyone could rally around. The term "rally around" is used deliberately, as it implies a campaign or a movement. The notion of organizing the work of CWDB as a campaign for equity forms the framework for the recommendations gleaned from the case studies.

The High Road Initiative, which clearly seeks to address equity, is seen by many local areas as a set of funding efforts that are not connected to the mainstream workforce development system, particularly the AJCCs, and not in line with local priorities in areas where the High Road definition of growth sectors does not align with local economies. Many smaller and more rural areas, in particular, feel significantly disconnected from CWDB's major initiatives to advance the equity agenda. We note this to shed light on how CWDB might ***frame a campaign around equity as an overarching principle, rather than around individual funding streams. The evaluation team believes CWDB and the workforce system would benefit from an organizing theme such as this, one that could be embraced by all and seen as driving actions and policies.*** Testing proposed new initiatives against this theme would send a clear and coherent message about what CWDB is interested in achieving through each of its efforts.

To give substance to this overarching recommendation, it is necessary to re-state what everyone knows about the path to equity in the workforce system: ***The goal is to move marginalized population groups into jobs that pay living wages in the communities in which they live.*** Getting there is likely to take higher-level education or training in occupations that are in demand among local employers. Typically, for members of marginalized populations, success requires multiple steps and ongoing support. Recognizing that everyone has their own

set of needs, ***the investment in support services becomes as important to success as the investment in training.*** Clearly, this requires a comprehensive, long-term investment.

The workforce system, in aggregate and beyond WIOA, controls much of the available resources to support success. Efforts to strengthen the aggregate system are at the core of these recommendations, with emphasis on the role AJCCs have in the process.

CSW recently completed its evaluation of the third iteration of CWDB's Regional Plan Implementation initiative (RPI 3.0). That evaluation report makes reference to work by Stanford University on Collective Impact, and the key elements of a collective impact model, which clearly align with the concept of a campaign around equity. The five key elements of a successful collective impact strategy are worthy of consideration here.

The Five Conditions of Collective Success

- 1) Common Agenda
- 2) Shared Measurement Systems
- 3) Mutually Reinforcing Activities
- 4) Continuous Communication
- 5) Backbone Support Organization

Specific Recommendations

Data System Expansion

It is clearly time to begin to treat the workforce system as a whole rather than a series of loosely-connected parts. One critical step toward this goal would be the development of a tracking and reporting system that covers multiple partners. This is obviously one of those things that is much easier to say than to do.

In the context of the AJCC evaluation, limiting the analysis to WIOA Title I data was an administrative necessity that unfortunately did not allow meaningful examination of the partnering efforts of AJCCs. Those partnerships are of course a crucial element of how participants are served through the AJCCs. On a broader scale, CWDB has for some time been moving toward a greater emphasis on reaching marginalized populations and connecting them to careers paying family-sustaining wages. The AJCCs have a critical role to play in that process, but their success depends on their relationships with partners that provide higher-skill training, as well as partners able to offer essential support services. Yet these things are not captured in the current reporting system.

There are promising efforts underway to enhance the workforce tracking system. The ongoing CAAL-Skills project and the upcoming Regional Equity and Recovery Partnership (RERP) investment in strengthening connections with community colleges are encouraging efforts that can be built upon. RERP has funds available to address reporting issues, and interim efforts may

find immediate solutions to achieve better tracking of RERP services and outcomes. There is clearly energy being expended to improve system-wide tracking.

To help all parties see the overall intent, and to solicit important perspectives from stakeholders, the evaluation team recommends that CWDB develop a public plan for the full integration of workforce tracking systems, with investment targets, timelines, and responsibilities, so that the combined input of multiple partners can be assessed. Publishing such a plan could show the system that this is a major priority and an endeavor that the state supports and commits to follow.

Since such plans are a huge endeavor, beta testing is highly recommended. The RERP initiative could be an excellent arena in which to beta-test the integration of data from multiple funding streams. There is already much work underway to align the community college data with that of WIOA. Adding a clear objective of tracking the equity outputs involved in moving marginalized populations into well-paid jobs would appear to be an excellent fit.

WIOA CA Training Requirement

From the (pre-pandemic) reports made available to the evaluation team, which indicated that almost all local areas were meeting or exceeding the 30% WIOA training requirement, one could conclude that the requirement has met its goal. Given the evolving workforce development ecosystem, and the shift toward a more integrated system that is focused on moving marginalized populations into jobs paying family-sustaining wages, it appears timely to re-examine what the training requirement is intended to do and how best to achieve that goal. As noted in the quantitative section, there is a positive impact associated with WIOA training. The effort to promote training in California has been successful within the confines of WIOA outcomes. Given that there is now need for a broader system approach, and one more targeted to different outcomes, it may be time to build on that success using a wider lens.

At present, any WIOA-funded training is considered acceptable for the purposes of the training requirement. Is that in line with the overall policy goal? Is the sole focus on WIOA-funded training still useful in an environment that prioritizes the leveraging of multiple partner activities? How does the system value and incentivize training provided through other funding sources? Obviously, each participant presents their own unique story, and interventions need to be tailored accordingly. But incentivizing training interventions that aim toward the overall system goal seems to be a better strategy than just supporting any type of training.

The evaluation team notes that most local areas found the tracking process for the 30% requirement to be needlessly onerous and time-consuming, especially when attempting to document leveraged funds. The limit on support services was also cited by several as counterproductive to the policy interests of CWDB, since those most in need typically must have support services to be successful in any kind of non-compensated training. For local areas that have developed, or are trying to develop, other major funding sources for training, the 10% cap on the use of leveraged funds is problematic, particularly since such funders often want their contribution to pay for training rather than ancillary services. Current policy really doesn't

incentivize leveraged training funds, since they are limited to 10%; many boards would like to use WIOA for the infrastructure costs and bring in leveraged resources for training.

Some local areas argue that the training requirement, rather than increasing the number of people receiving training, has actually led to fewer people receiving training, but at a higher cost-per-participant. This is an observation worthy of further analysis. If the equity goal is fully realized, there are likely to be consequences in terms of how many people get served through WIOA. But when contemplating the broader workforce system, one's perspective inevitably shifts. Do AJCCs serve the overall goal better as navigators to other services rather than deliverers of services? This appears to be a question worth exploring in the context of the training requirement.

The evaluation team recommends that CWDB convene a work group to identify issues with the training requirement as it is currently framed and explore the possibility of enhancements that might align better with the state's current policy emphasis. This might include revisiting the legislation or looking for ways to allow flexibility in how the current legislation is implemented. CSW has noted in other evaluations that the overall policy direction of moving marginalized populations into family sustaining jobs is commonly shared at the local level. While this has typically come up in the context of how the state is approaching regionalism, it appears generalizable to the system as a whole. Given that there is shared support for the overall goal, it appears feasible to use that agreement as a starting point for developing administrative or legislative change recommendations to enhance and improve the training requirement.

The quantitative analysis found a significant positive income impact associated with the provision of training. This finding aligns with the results of the California Policy Lab evaluation of CAAL-Skills data over a similar period. The dynamics of training are explored in the case study profiles. Further discussion of the driving factors behind these studies would be of benefit. As noted in the data expansion recommendation, testing of the full impact of the broader workforce system would be extremely beneficial, but it is dependent on the availability of aggregated system data.

The evaluation team notes that accuracy and consistency of data represents an ongoing area for improvement. For example, the "private sector training" data element in CalJOBS appears to be interpreted in widely disparate ways at the local level, contributing to an extremely wide range (7% to 80%) among local areas on this element.

Assessing Training Effectiveness

The current WIOA measures are geared toward how well that specific funding stream performed in the recent past and making incremental changes as circumstances dictate. It is a highly insular system, tied to one funding source, and fairly myopic, looking at outcomes within a short timeframe. This is exacerbated by a focus on success in relation to what was accomplished in previous years.

The evaluation team queried case study interviewees about the inherent tension between serving as many people as possible versus giving more intensive services to a smaller cohort. A few indicated they were essentially attempting to provide services to the largest number of people at the lowest cost. More, however, talked about their local areas' emerging policies on equity, and how their investments needed to support that emphasis, with greater investment in harder-to-serve clients. Indeed, in several places, the local areas indicated they are already following that path, with little regard to how it might affect their WIOA outcomes. As one director put it: *"This is who we are supposed to be serving."*

The WIOA system does of course track the category of people moving into training, but the overall focus is on what happens to participants who *exit* the WIOA system – on jobs, in other words. There is some risk for local areas in keeping participants in the system, given the chance that they may not obtain a positive outcome. It is an understandable strategy to get people into jobs as quickly as possible, and this is certainly what many job-seekers want as well. Even those who are candidates for longer-term intervention often need interim employment to meet basic needs. Such participants do not typically have linear career paths; there are too many obstacles to overcome, many of which cannot be foreseen in time to avoid them. Yet the current measuring system appears to assume almost any job is an acceptable one.

If the overall goal is clear, it seems logical that the system should be measured against that broader goal, with full consideration of all of the challenges inherent in moving marginalized populations into good jobs. That is easier to say than do given the pressure to show immediate performance. This may well be a topic for national reauthorization consideration, but there is potential for state action now. Developing state goals that supplement the WIOA measures, and are supported with discretionary funding, is a topic the evaluators recommend for further exploration. To the extent this can be carried out in a collaborative manner with local areas included in the process, the greater is the potential for success.

Other Training Considerations

While conducting the case studies, local strategies were delineated that are worthy of note and are recommended for further examination. Since these come largely from interviews with local leadership and are not based on any substantive data examination, the evaluation team highlights them for future study rather than basing recommendations on them.

Differential Support to Sector Training

Moving marginalized populations into good jobs in key local sectors has been demonstrated to be an effective strategy in many local areas. The evaluation team notes a few examples where this strategy has been positively promoted or incentivized by local areas.

The case studies found some local areas that have implemented higher cost-per-participant caps for training in local high-demand sectors. On the surface, this seems like a logical way to support the filling of jobs in sectors that pay higher wages and have career ladders. If this is proven to be the case, it would be in the state's interest to find ways to support it. But the case

study observation is just that – an observation based on responses to interview questions. There is some room to explore the effectiveness of this approach with existing WIOA data, but it could be much more powerful using data from the wider workforce system. Questions to examine include:

- Did the higher-capped training result in higher rates of job placement in the relevant demand sectors?
- Did it result in job placement paying higher wages than the norm for the area?
- Did it lead to more training (beyond WIOA) than is the norm?

The results of an evidence-based examination of this option could be used to support discretionary funding to promote this strategy as one that has demonstrated effectiveness (assuming that is the conclusion). An alternative might be to fund demonstration projects using this strategy with solid evaluation components built into the projects themselves.

Raising Target Wages for Eligible Training Providers

A few of the case study local areas are re-examining or culling their Eligible Training Provider Lists (ETPL) to achieve a focus on higher placement wages in demand sectors. In some cases, these efforts are also aimed at ensuring underserved populations are equitably represented in higher-skilled training and subsequent placement. On the surface these appear to be strong strategies that support both state and local goals around sector employment and equity. They may be models worthy of local or state evaluation. If demonstrated to be effective, discretionary funding to provide broader implementation might be an option. At a minimum, technical assistance support could help expand successful models.

Cohort Training for Demand Sectors

Much of the training occurring at the case study sites, and throughout the system, is taking place through the distribution of Individual Training Account vouchers rather than group contracts. When cohort training was discussed in the case study interviews, it was typically referred to as “boutique” training – high in quality but serving very few people – or as an idea to be pursued sometime in the future. The US Department of Labor has discouraged group training in favor of ITAs in recent years, but there are certainly examples of evaluations supporting the effectiveness of cohort training for low-income populations.⁹ Such studies also generally note that the cohort factor is only a part of the story. Solid support services, careful assessment and screening, and other factors in combination are typically cited as necessary for positive outcomes. Building on the existing body of evaluative work with discretionary investments in pilots that employ various configurations of such core success factors would help expand the existing body of knowledge on sector-based training for target populations. Assuming success with some or all of the funded models, the state could then bring a strong case to the Legislature or other funding sources to support this training model.

⁹ [Why Do Sectoral Employment Programs Work? Lessons from WorkAdvance](#)

Setting a Narrative for State Discretionary Investments and State Policy

There are multiple funding initiatives aimed at making progress toward the state's goals for the workforce system. However, the messaging on these initiatives sometimes seems to miss an opportunity bring them under a common narrative that explains how each fits into an overall strategy on equity and income mobility. To use a current example, the RERP funding initiative is all about adjacent systems working together toward a common end. Being clear on how the multiple funding opportunities fit into this bigger picture might make them more understandable and successful locally. This applies to the Regional Plan Implementation initiative as well. What is the umbrella that covers all these investments, and how does each fit in? This may be implicitly understood at the state level, but being explicit could serve to make it much easier to embrace the "why" of whatever is being proposed. The recommendation for re-examining the 30% WIOA training requirement is a prime example of a case where a discussion on *why* something is being undertaken could make the logic much easier to follow. When there is consensus on the big picture, and a story to be told, there is at least a place to start the conversation.

The evaluation team recommends that CWDB develop an overarching equity narrative and use it to frame future investment or policy decisions. There will be likely be concerns from local areas about local autonomy; those kinds of issues are inevitable. It would presumably be preferable to deal with them up front, on a general level, rather than over and over with each new initiative. The widespread support for equity as an overarching goal suggests that this theme might offer the common ground necessary to provide a base of support.

Contracting Career Services

As discussed elsewhere in this report, the evaluation team took an initial look at the question of contracting the one-stop operator function (as prescribed by WIOA) and determined that it was not a useful topic for this evaluation, given that (1) only a handful of local areas had sought and received waivers regarding the requirement, and (2) the norm appears to be either a very minimal role for the OSO, as allowed by WIOA, or combining the OSO role with the career services provider role in such a way that distinctions are not at all clear.

The question of contracting career services versus providing such services "in-house" proved to be of considerably greater interest. Half of the local areas contract these services; the rest do not, making a useful basis for comparison. However, the distinction is not quite as simple or binary as one might think.

Of those local areas that contract career services, there are a small number that contract with a for-profit entity, and a handful that contract with a government entity. Most, however, contract with some sort of non-profit entity. In addition to the handful of for-profit corporations, such as Equus (formerly ResCare) and KRA, there are also 'social purpose corporations,' like Managed Career Solutions, that fall somewhere between for-profit and non-profit.

Non-profits, likewise, run the gamut. Some local areas contract with their local anti-poverty agency to provide career services. Others contract with community-based organizations skilled

at serving specific target populations, or with local service providers having expertise in job development. A very few contract with a government entity: one local area contracts with the county Human Services Department; one contracts with the county Workforce & Economic Development Department; another contracts with the local community college.

It is important to understand that the matter of whether or not to contract is not necessarily a choice. The local areas that serve as their own OSO told evaluators that they tried – in some cases multiple times – to procure an operator, but either received no response to their RFP, or no credible response. Some of the local areas currently providing their own career services indicated that they hope eventually to find a contractor for that role. Particularly for those local areas with small budgets, and/or those located in areas with relatively few CBOs or service providers, it can be difficult finding anyone willing and able to take on the task.

Based on these varied scenarios of providers and limited choices, the evaluation team's recommendation is that CWDB continue to allow local areas flexibility in identifying the most appropriate career services provider(s) for their local area, including the option to act as their own career services provider if that ends up being in the best interest of the local system. Particularly in light of the lack of definition of the OSO role, leaving the current options for career services in place would appear to be prudent. As noted, there are many factors beyond performance that impact selection decisions.

The evaluation also highlighted wide variation in definitions of the roles of OSO and career service provider, including merging the two in some local areas. While this was an element of the evaluation, the team observes that it may not be a worthwhile investment to try to perfect the recordkeeping regarding these distinctions. It may make more sense to focus on tracking outcomes that represent CWDB's key goals, including expanding the collection of data that would support those goals.

Learnings from COVID-19 and Implications for the Future of AJCCs

During the case study interviews, local directors and staff were asked what they had learned from the pandemic, what might stick as new ways of doing business, what they were most proud of, what might be different in the future related to AJCC operations, and other open-ended questions designed to solicit their thinking on what the future might hold for AJCCs. Not all the areas listed were touched on in all interviews, and in some cases other pressing issues took precedence. Indeed, many interviewees expressed the view that it was not really possible, mid-pandemic, to predict what the future would hold for the local economy or the workforce system.

The evaluation team also reviewed innovative projects funded by the state that bear relevance to the future of AJCCs. For example, the English Language Learner projects appear to offer insight into how the workforce system could integrate partner contributions to serve a marginalized population more effectively. The final evaluation report from the first round of funding shows positive results for a service process that incorporates several of the state's core

goals. The second round may provide more evidence of the value of co-enrollment, navigators for participants in need of support services, and braiding partner funding. This initiative serves a particular target population, but English language learners exhibit needs that are shared by various populations identified in the state plan. The first-round evaluation report¹⁰ was completed pre-pandemic; perhaps wrapping elements learned from the pandemic into these approaches could help determine what might work for marginalized populations in general.

A thread in the case study interviews was that remote delivery proved to have distinct advantages over the full in-person model generally practiced prior to the pandemic. A word of caution, however, is that this was not qualified by population groups, and a number of interviewees raised the question of who might have been left behind in the shift to virtual services. An additional area of evaluative inquiry might be what elements of remote service delivery work best for which target populations. Is remote access more challenging for those with more limited digital skills? Does off-hours service availability work better for the working poor? Is less face-to-face contact as effective as in-person relationship building? Is some combination of remote service and occasional in-person contact the ideal? These are not the only questions, of course, but they illustrate how looking at the future of AJCCs through the lens of equitably serving marginalized populations could be a key driver regarding where to put policy and discretionary funding emphasis.

Other service options supporting the state goals that could be evaluated for effectiveness:

- Expand and support online registration and program eligibility verification.
 - ◆ This enhancement appears to ease the burden on all involved in this aspect of eligibility determination. Building it into future operations also appears to serve the state's interest.
- Expand and support electronic referrals.
 - ◆ The option of electronic referrals appears to benefit the optimization of service for clients. It eases tracking, can be accomplished faster, and can move a client in need that much closer to the supports or other services they may need. Since this is an administrative enhancement of an already-accepted practice to serve individuals with barriers to participation, it does not appear to need verification.
- Expand and support integrated case management and program applications.
 - ◆ The state has, over time, engaged in supporting this process through well-evaluated demonstrations such as the ELL program already discussed. It appears to be a positive factor in enhancing service to populations with multiple needs. Making this element a requirement of any enhanced system-wide tracking mechanism appears to be a logical step.

¹⁰ [Opening Doors of Opportunity: California's Immigrant English Language Learner Workforce Navigator Pilot Program](#)

- Expand and support all reasonable paper reduction efforts.
 - ◆ Moving away from paper is the way of the world. Enhancing its progress in the workforce system seems prudent.

Strong Partnerships

This general theme has been an objective of career centers since their inception decades ago, starting with the premise that co-location would help develop strong partnerships. Co-enrollment, common case management and other efforts have been emphasized over the years. Team approaches to serving clients have proven quite beneficial. In the early days of career centers, the drive toward physical presence was often paramount. As technologies have advanced, the opportunity for strong partnerships can now rely more heavily on electronic connections, as long as the corresponding state level agencies have fully endorsed the scope.

- Examine competing partner expectations and develop joint state agency plans to overcome obstacles. For example, what limits community college and WIOA partnerships? How can these limitations be overcome?
 - ◆ This question has been on the table since the early days of WIOA and before. With RERP providing a stronger push toward improving partnerships with community colleges to benefit clients across funding streams, it would seem appropriate to focus technical assistance efforts on identifying promising practices and promoting them as part of the general TA effort. This could include highlighting some of the positive steps noted in the body of this report.
- Examine sources of support services and how they are integrated in AJCC operations.
 - ◆ This is a crucial area for focus in serving marginalized target populations. This report notes a few examples of how this has been addressed in some case study sites. The TA efforts for all grants could build on those successes.

Measuring Success

Examine local efforts to develop dashboards, often related to community priorities, in order to understand their impact. If useful, promote through TA and incentives.

- ◆ The case studies noted a growing movement toward community dashboards that give updates on how well the community is addressing issues such as equity. Many of these are in the development stage. Highlighting more advanced examples in TA efforts could serve to bring this option to the forefront.
- Build measures into all WIOA discretionary and state workforce investments that relate to the broad system goals the state is trying to achieve, as opposed to being limited to a few funding expectations.
 - ◆ This may take building language into legislative efforts and educating legislators on the value of the approach in order to get buy in for an overall agenda, then fitting each funding option into the overall picture. But it appears worth the effort as part of articulating and building the overarching strategy for what CWDB is trying to achieve.

Equity in AJCCs of the Future

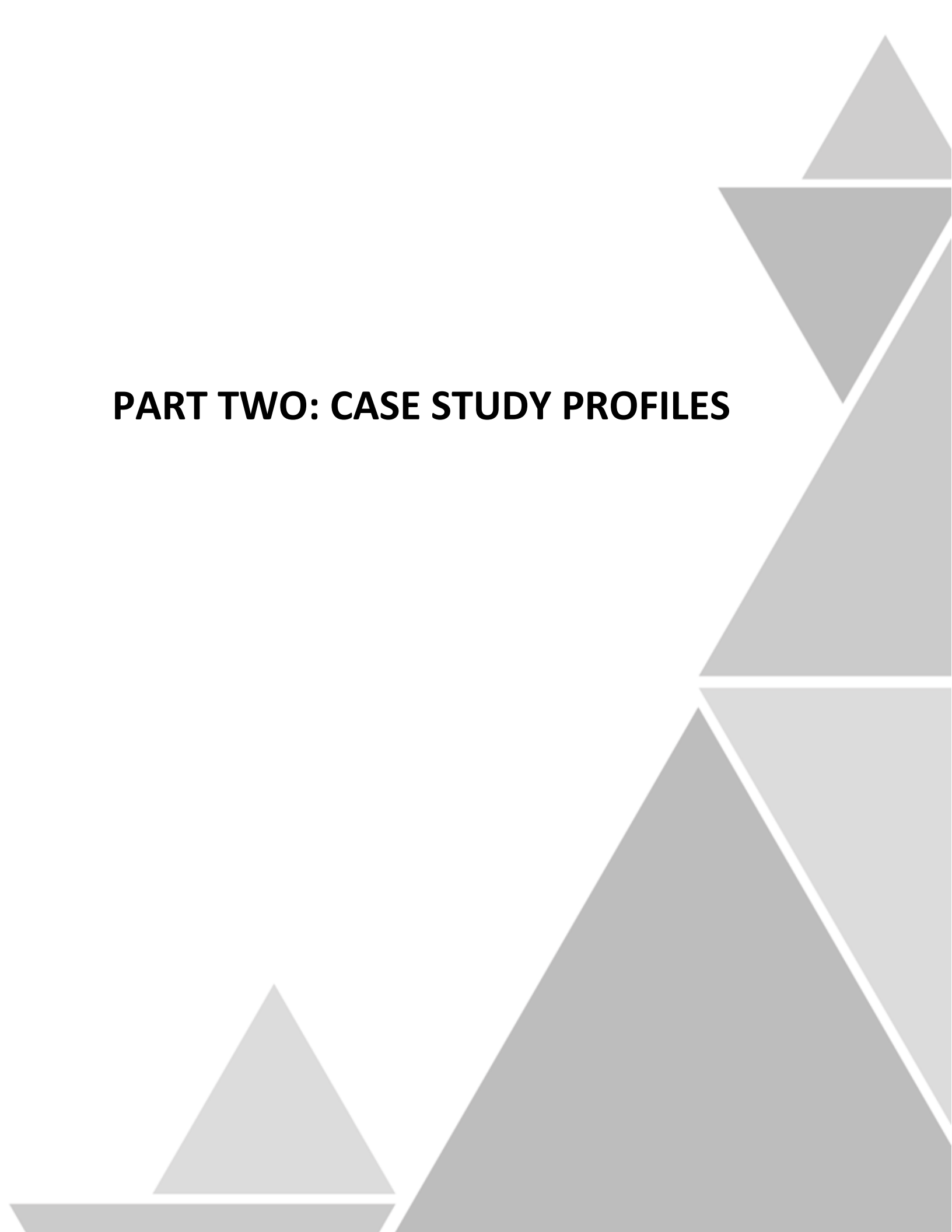
As has been noted, almost all case study sites reported high interest in increasing their efforts to ensure equity for key population groups within their local areas. Below are suggestions based on what the sites reported they were doing or expecting to do. As a whole, these represent solid efforts to increase equity. Some appear to be more aimed at access than outcomes, but that's understandable: you can't achieve outcomes with a population if you're not reaching that population in the first place. The evaluation team recommends these be examined from the standpoint of both access and outcomes; perhaps both aspects could be incorporated in pilot funding that would include an evaluation component.

- Support more access points in target communities; evaluate their success in addressing equity issues.
 - ◆ This seems like a logical step, but as with most of the others, it should be engaged in with an eye toward assessing its effectiveness through an evaluation strategy that could follow local initiatives or state investments in pilot projects.
 - ◆ It appears this strategy would address access more than outcomes. A key question to ask would be what other strategies might need to be combined with this approach to achieve both necessary intents.
- Examine local RFPs that use an equity lens in funding, e.g., prioritizing providers located in or serving underserved communities.
 - ◆ Again, on the surface, a solid approach to increasing the focus on equity. This came up as a newly-implemented practice in one case study, as well as one non-case-study site, so there was little opportunity to explore it in depth. The evaluation team recommends gathering more information about how this strategy would be employed and any ways it might be evaluated.
- Build equity-related measures into WIOA discretionary and state-funded workforce initiatives.
 - ◆ This is noted in each section but should also be viewed as a cross-cutting recommendation for any discretionary funding. An example is the RERP initiative, for which an evaluation is planned. For that evaluation to assess equity efforts, the reporting system would need to be able to produce data from multiple funding sources (at a minimum, WIOA and community colleges).

Other Areas of Innovation to Consider

The California Workforce Association, a partner in this evaluation, was charged with gathering information on additional promising practices among the state's AJCCs. These short summaries of leading-edge innovations appear after the case study profiles in Part 2. The evaluation team believes they have potential as additional areas of inquiry for CWDB and the workforce system as a whole.

PART TWO: CASE STUDY PROFILES



OVERVIEW

In the qualitative component of the evaluation, interviews were held with staff and partners from twelve local areas across the state, ranging from urban to rural and reflecting a mix of AJCC structures and models. In six of the local areas, interviewees included a broad range of job-seekers, employers, community leaders, workforce board members, service providers, one-stop operators, community-based organizations, front-line AJCC staff, managers, and local directors. In the other six local areas, the interviews were focused on local directors and management staff with AJCC oversight responsibilities. All interviews were conducted via Zoom. The local areas are profiled here in alphabetical order.

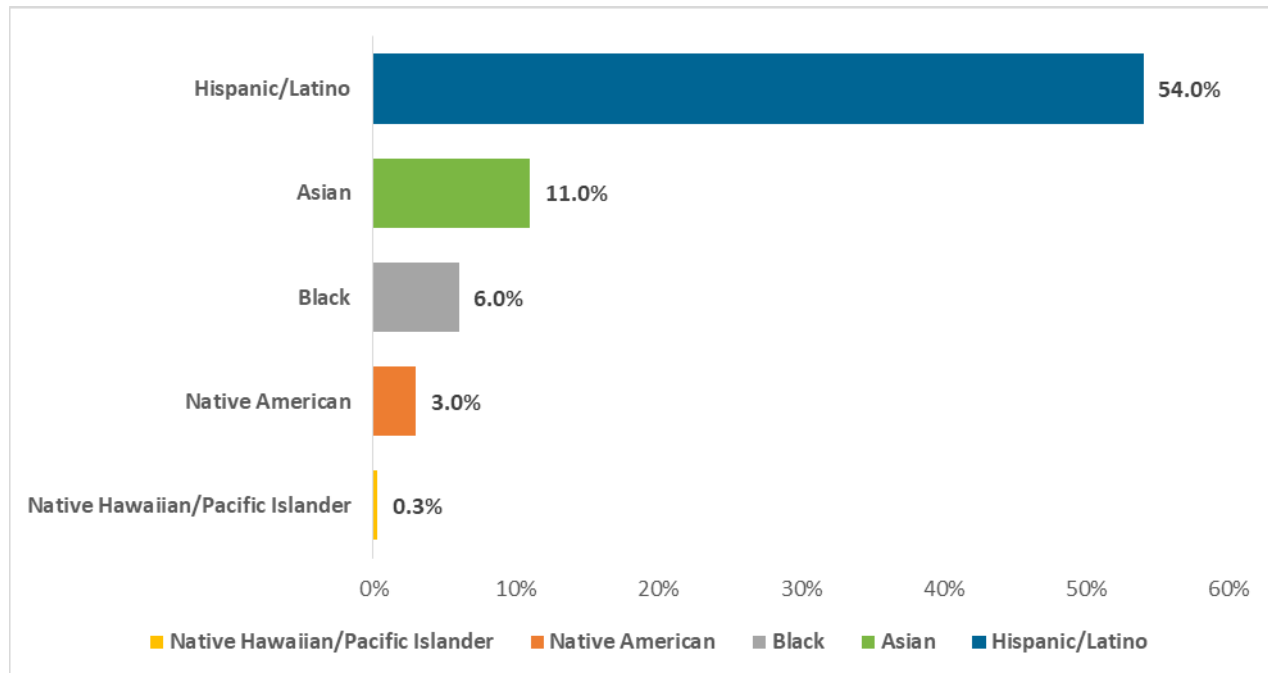
FRESNO



The Fresno Regional Workforce Development Board is the local workforce development agency for Fresno County, with a population of 1 million in a county covering 5,958 square miles. The board oversees approximately \$15.4 million per year in WIOA funding, as well as various other smaller funding sources, including \$1.5 million in Workforce Accelerator Fund monies, multiple Prison to Work grants, and a summer youth employment grant. The neighboring cities of Fresno and Clovis are the major population centers, but the county stretches from the Sierra Nevada in the east

to the Coast Range 200 miles to the west. A joint powers agreement exists between the County of Fresno and the City of Fresno; each appoints an equal number of members to the board, plus one person appointed by both.

Demographics



Nearly 54% of residents identify as Hispanic or Latino; more than 11% identify as Asian; nearly 6% identify as Black; 3% identify as Native American, with another 0.3% identifying as Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander. Of adults age 25 or older, 76% have a high school diploma. Nearly 20% of households do not have a broadband internet subscription. Census data show an estimated 171,000 individuals (17.1% of the population) living below the federal poverty line.

Strategic Approach

Fresno currently has one comprehensive AJCC, located near downtown Fresno, and two affiliates in the outlying communities of Coalinga and Reedley (a reduction from four affiliates in the past). In recent years, Fresno contracted both the one-stop operator role and the career services role to the Central Labor Council Partnership (led initially by ProPath, a California for-profit firm), but decided in 2021 to conduct separate procurements for those roles, in part to place a greater emphasis on the OSO role. This resulted in a failed procurement for OSO when no entity applied, leading Fresno to seek a waiver of the contracted-OSO requirement. (In retrospect, Fresno notes that it would have been better not to conduct the OSO, career services and youth services procurements simultaneously.)

However, Fresno did not end up becoming its own OSO in 2021, because while they were waiting for consideration of their waiver request, an agreement was reached with ProPath to continue in that role temporarily. Eventually, ProPath will phase out of that role, and the workforce board, dba Fresno Area Workforce Investment Corporation, will assume the role.

Central Labor Council Partnership was selected to be the career services provider for dislocated workers; a new provider, Equus (formerly ResCare), was selected as career services provider for disadvantaged adults. This represents a significant shift from the previous contracting model, which had procurements organized geographically around the three AJCCs, rather than by funding stream. While still in the early stages, Fresno thinks that the new arrangement has already resulted in some “healthy homogenization” of services across the three centers, as opposed to variations in the kind and quality of services offered at different sites.

Fresno notes that while they have been relatively successful in securing non-WIOA funding, their ability to leverage funds is limited: *“The only power we have over co-located partners is the power of suasion,”* noted the director. Complicating this is the fact that while other systems have funding streams that are limited to entities within that particular system, DOL and state workforce funding opportunities are increasingly made available to interested parties outside the workforce system. Fresno credits the depth of its partnerships with its success in leveraging resources and achieving strong outcomes for participants. *“We spend a lot of time talking to and connecting with partners.”*

Given its geographic location, Fresno does not have the wide mix of industry sectors found in other workforce areas. The largest industry is agriculture, with its inherent challenges of seasonal demand and low wages. Government, including public education, is the next largest sector. The workforce board also does significant concept development and design work with the manufacturing sector, with an emphasis recently on irrigation and water flow technology. Transportation and public infrastructure offer well-paid union construction jobs. Forestry technology is an emerging sector, driven by forest fires and the fact that there are not enough forestry tech workers to handle all the dead and dying trees.

Fresno considers training a top priority, noting that, “whether they realize it or not when they first walk in the door,” most job-seekers need some kind of training. Prior to California’s 30% training requirement, Fresno was already setting aside similar amounts each year for training. In the most recent year for which data was available, Fresno hit the 30% requirement with WIOA funding alone, and then expended approximately \$650,000 in non-WIOA funds for training as well. Training funds are allocated to the two career service providers, and each has a training target that they are expected to meet. The board tracks a range of AJCC metrics monthly, including training expenditures, and can move funds between providers when necessary. Fresno is very selective in its use of on-the-job training in order to ensure that the employers they work with are committed to retaining the employees after the training ends.

While Fresno in the past embraced the Integrated Service Delivery model, which posits enrolling all customers in WIOA, they do not currently do so. Once enrolled, though, Fresno does something other boards do not: they require all job-seekers to first go through a fairly lengthy course of job readiness services. The “Job Ready” workshop series was developed in response to reports from employers that many people referred by the AJCCs were not ready for

employment. Somewhat controversial at first, the program has since won accolades from job-seekers and employers alike. Several job-seekers interviewed said they initially resented the implication that they needed job readiness skills but ended up finding the workshops extremely valuable. A key component of the workshops is the focus on peer-to-peer interaction between participants, who share with and learn from each other as much as from the facilitator. Intensive assessment and career exploration, using WorkKeys and a range of career assessment tools, are utilized to help job-seekers find their best career fit.

Fresno has a cap of \$10,000 per person for high-demand sector jobs, and \$7,000 for jobs that are deemed “non-sector,” i.e., not in one of the sectors designated as ‘high-demand’. (Career services providers receive an additional \$2,000-plus to cover the case management services provided to trainees.) After participating in the “Job Ready” workshop series, applicants go through a scholarship application process to access an ITA; the caps can be waived if a sufficient case is made. Fresno tracks carefully the cost-per-participant for various types of training. A good deal of the training takes place at adult schools and community colleges. Local community colleges have developed a number of strong short-term training options. Fresno does not discourage short term training if it makes sense; security guard training, for example, is very brief; truck driver training typically takes four weeks. Training providers must maintain a 60% job placement rate, a requirement that Fresno had in place prior to the state’s similar rule.

In the words of Fresno’s executive director: *“We have accepted that we can’t serve everybody: there are just not enough funds. We have to target the right careers and offer people choices.”* Fresno markets its training programs aggressively. Each quarter, an orientation session is held for each high demand sector, where job-seekers can hear from employers about the kinds of jobs they are trying to fill, and about programs that can help prepare people for those jobs. Staff, noting that increasing numbers of people are moving from the Bay Area to Fresno County to take advantage of low housing costs while telecommuting to their jobs in or around San Francisco, say: *“We want to prepare our residents for those jobs as well.”*

WIOA Title I Data

During the five-year period from 2016 to 2021, Fresno enrolled a total of 4,595 individuals in WIOA Title I services. Close to two thirds were disadvantaged adults; 33% were dislocated workers. Of those enrolled in WIOA Title1, 46% received training services. Dislocated workers and disadvantaged adults received training services at roughly the same rate (47% vs. 48%).

Of the 2,095 individuals who received training services during the five-year period:

- *66% were disadvantaged adults*
- *35% were dislocated workers*
- *92% received their training via an Individual Training Account*
- *35% were enrolled in post-secondary programs*

■ *2% participated in on-the-job training (OJT) programs*

Of those receiving training, dislocated workers were more likely than disadvantaged adults to have accessed training through an Individual Training Account (93% vs. 91%) and to have been enrolled in post-secondary education (40% vs. 33%). Notably, disadvantaged adults and dislocated workers were equally likely to have been enrolled in on-the-job training programs (2% for both groups).

A map of Los Angeles County, California, with various cities and regions labeled. The map shows the county's irregular shape, including the San Gabriel Valley to the north, the San Fernando Valley to the northeast, and the coastal areas to the south and west. Major cities like Los Angeles, Long Beach, and Torrance are highlighted. The map also shows the surrounding states of Oregon, Nevada, and Arizona.

The City of Los Angeles Workforce Development Board oversees workforce services to a city of 3.9 million people – the nation’s second-largest city – living in a 469 square mile area. The board oversees approximately \$35 million per year in WIOA funding and estimates that it leverages another \$100-plus million in other funding. Six other local workforce boards exist in Los Angeles County (total population: 10 million), and the LA City board partners with other local boards on various programs and initiatives.

Race/Ethnicity	Percentage
Hispanic/Latino	49.0%
Asian	11.6%
Black	8.9%
Native American	7.0%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.2%

Nearly 49% of residents identify as Hispanic or Latino; 11.6% of residents identify as Asian; 8.9% of residents identify as Black; 0.7% identify as Native American, with another 0.2% identifying as Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander. Nearly 78% of residents age 25 or older possess a high school degree. A total of 7% of households lack a broadband internet subscription. Approximately 700,000 people (18% of the total county population) live below the federal poverty line.

LA City has fifteen AJCCs, called WorkSource Centers, and contracts both one-stop operator and career services. Unlike most workforce areas, however, which typically have a single OSO and

one or more career service providers, LA City has fourteen one-stop operators, most of whom are also serving as the career services provider for that particular AJCC. (One OSO covers two of the AJCCs.) The sheer size and diversity of Los Angeles – culturally, racially, economically – was the impetus for a multifaceted approach to workforce development: *“It is critical that we have the number of one-stop centers that we have.”* Some are run by, or in partnership with, other cities in the Los Angeles area: Inglewood, Long Beach, Culver City, San Fernando. The LA City board also partners with the LA County Workforce Development Board, which covers vast areas of the county not served by any of the other six boards in the region.

Each one-stop operator is required to bring at least \$600,000 in funding or leveraged resources to the table as a way of ensuring that they have some “skin in the game.” LA City leadership notes that there is no way they could serve everyone they need to serve without a network of comprehensive partnerships bringing in their own leveraged resources: One example of this is the leveraging of County funding for homeless services, in the form of the LA Rise program, which moves homeless residents into transitional and permanent employment.

Each center is expected to have a sector orientation and is required to focus on a minimum of two of LA City’s ten priority sectors; staff are expected to be familiar with the hiring needs of the chosen sectors. Each center operator/career services provider has a performance contract with expectations regarding expenditure rate, training funds expended, leveraged funding, and performance by sector, with 70% of the center’s placements required to be in their chosen priority sectors.

Los Angeles has a strong focus on youth services as part of its workforce development strategy and operates fourteen youth centers in addition to the fifteen AJCCs. The County invests \$10 million in LA City’s youth workforce development services, while the City’s general fund is supporting a new equity-focused youth initiative.

Another partnership involves the LA Unified School District’s Division of Adult and Career Education, which manages the city’s network of Adult Schools. Through this collaboration, adult education navigators with expertise in WIOA are co-located in all fifteen AJCCs, resulting in the co-enrollment of more than 800 individuals and the leveraging of approximately \$1M in training services provided by the Adult Schools. The majority of LA City’s training is provided not by private proprietary schools, but by the Adult Schools and the community colleges. LA City’s strategy is to leverage as much training as they can, while providing the support services that can help to ensure the success of the trainees.

The city’s community colleges have historically been less engaged with the workforce system than the Adult Schools, but LA City reports that this is changing. They have plans to utilize projected Regional Equity and Recovery Partnership funding to further build those partnerships.

The Mayor's Office has had a strong focus on making sure that those who have traditionally not had easy access to the workforce system are being actively engaged and served, the LA Rise transitional employment program for the homeless being a prime example. A related focus has been on the development of "earn-and-learn" opportunities in general given that so many residents are living on the margins and need an income of some sort while engaging in training. LA City prioritizes jobs that pay a living wage, or that have steppingstones to a living wage.

The City's Economic Development department is working to create employment opportunities for those who have been left out of the local economy. With a renewed focus on equity, the City is working to disaggregate data in order to track who is being served by the workforce system, and what kinds of outcomes various populations are achieving.

The LA City workforce board embraced the 2008 Integrated Service Delivery model, and as a result went from enrolling approximately 4,500 people a year in WIOA Title I to enrolling as many as 25,000 some years. They viewed this as both a gamble and a test. Not surprisingly, job placement rates dropped rather dramatically, which suggested to the board that *"our centers had either been creaming or enrolling only those that were likely to get a positive outcome."*

Today, LA City appears to operate a modified version of the Integrated Service Delivery model: everyone is enrolled in CalJOBS, and while most are then enrolled in WIOA, some are enrolled only in Wagner-Peyser services. *"Our goal was for everyone served by the system to be recorded, and then seeing what the outcomes were. Everyone is captured, so we see the true impact of our system."* At the same time, LA City has a strong emphasis on intensive services and training:

"We really do encourage intensive services. We know there is a certain population that does not need them and may simply need access to labor market information and soft-touch services to become employed; that's fine, and we want that captured in our system, but what we find is that the majority of people who come in do need some sort of case management and more intensive services."

LA City deals with the 30% training requirement by building training expectations into each of the contracts with the fifteen career services providers. They argue, however, that support services should count toward the training requirement: *"Having training requirements without support services is absurd if you want to reach the hardest to serve. We'd have more people in training if we could provide the other services they need. That's what we've learned from COVID: we find that we are providing social services. No one ever imagined the workforce development system being part of the Emergency Response / Disaster Recovery system."*

WIOA Title I Data

For the five-year period from 2016 to 2021, LA City enrolled a total of 81,819 individuals in WIOA Title I services. More than three-quarters (76%) were disadvantaged adults; 26% were dislocated workers. Of WIOA Title 1 enrollees, 20% received training services. Dislocated workers were more likely than disadvantaged adults to have received training services (24% vs. 19%).

Of the 16,614 individuals who received training services during the five-year period:

- *72% were disadvantaged adults*
- *31% were dislocated workers*
- *75% received their training via an Individual Training Account*
- *56% were enrolled in post-secondary programs*
- *5% participated in on-the-job training (OJT) programs*

Of those receiving training, dislocated workers were more likely than disadvantaged adults to have accessed training through an Individual Training Account (84% vs. 72%), and to have been enrolled in post-secondary education programs (64% vs. 53%). Notably, disadvantaged adults were more likely than dislocated workers to have received on-the-job training: 5% vs. 3%.

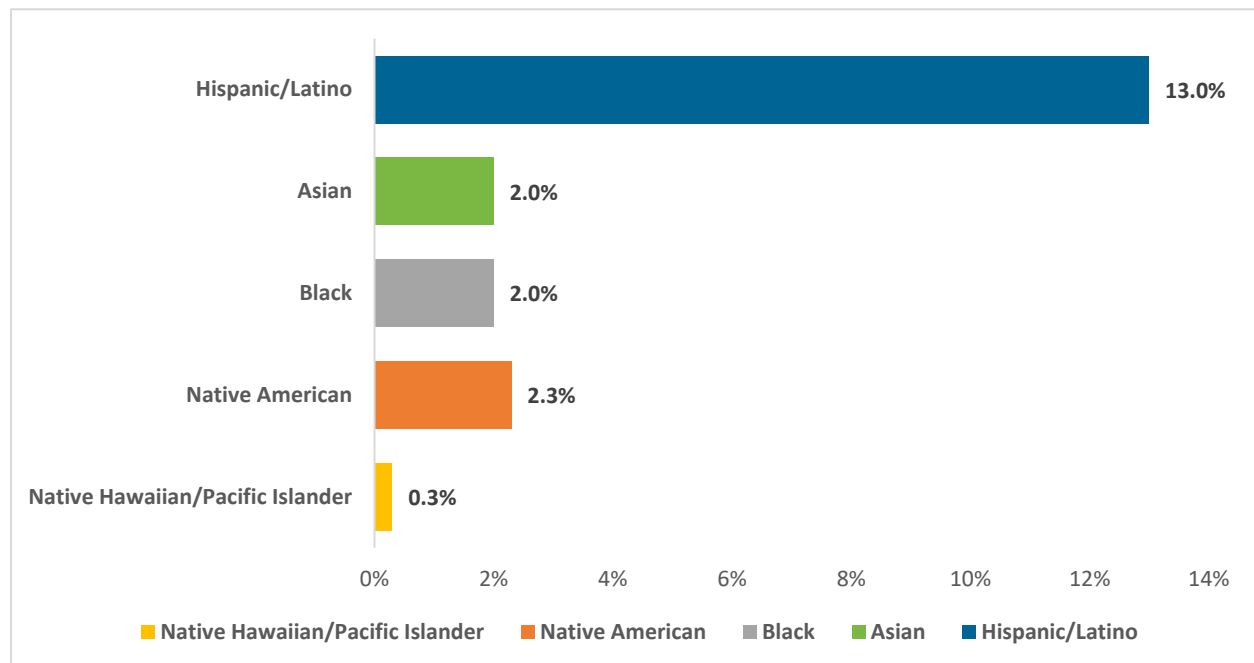
MOTHER LODGE



The Mother Lode Workforce Development Board provides workforce services to the Sierra Nevada foothills counties of Tuolumne, Calaveras, Amador and Mariposa, with a combined population of 158,100 residing in a 5,282 square mile area. In addition to the workforce board, there is a Joint Powers Agreement board comprising an elected official from each county along with the WDB chair. Mother Lode administers a little over \$1 million in WIOA funding, along with approximately \$2 million in other funding, including grants and contracts with the counties for the provision of transitional employment

services.

Demographics



Roughly 13% of residents identify as Hispanic or Latino; approximately 2% identify as Black; just under 2% identify as Asian; 2.3% identify as Native American, with another 0.3% identifying as Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander. Over 90% of the population age 25 or older has a high school diploma. An estimated 18% of households lack a broadband subscription. Approximately 12% of the population (18,000 individuals) lives below the federal poverty line.

Strategic Approach

The WDB oversees four AJCCs (one comprehensive, three affiliate), one in each of the four counties. ProPath has served as the contracted one-stop operator since 2017. Career services are provided in-house. Because of Mother Lode's small size, all AJCC staff serve both job-seekers and employers; there is no separate business services team as in most other local areas. When staff are not engaged in job-seeker casework, they are out talking to local businesses, which Mother Lode points out requires the hiring of highly versatile staff. All staff are called "job developers" – a job title that was designed to resonate with both job-seekers and employers. Mother Lode sees this as a plus, in that every staff member has a first-hand grasp of the needs of both sets of customers. As the director notes: *"It's what you do when you don't have the budget to have separate supply and demand side service people."* Beyond the standard WIOA metrics, Mother Lode tracks AJCC traffic, caseloads, and business contacts.

Mother Lode employs local Chambers of Commerce and county Economic Development departments as critical partners and key members of their business services team. Two of Mother Lode's AJCCs are in fact co-located with Chambers of Commerce. Strong partnerships also exist with county Human Services departments, for which Mother Lode provides transitional employment services for TANF recipients. Other critical partners include the one community college in the region, and the K-12 systems of the respective counties. Students in the high schools can take Certified Nursing Assistant classes for college credit, interning with local health care employers while earning a CNA degree.

Mother Lode made a deliberate shift, under WIOA, to become more demand-driven; they see themselves as serving businesses, not just job-seekers. The AJCC's actively try to steer job-seekers to the region's five priority sectors (Construction, Health Care, Hospitality, Manufacturing and Natural Resources). However, if they see evidence that training in another sector can lead to a job, Mother Lode allows the flexibility to support individuals seeking such training.

Pointing out that they leverage significantly more funding than they receive from WIOA, Mother Lode states *"For us, it's not just an innovation strategy; it's a survival strategy,"* noting that they could not function without a steady influx of non-WIOA grant and contract funding, because those sources are necessary to support their relatively small core staff.

Everyone who wants to use the resource center is registered in CalJOBS, but not necessarily enrolled in WIOA Title I; only those who need staff assistance, as opposed to self-service, are enrolled in WIOA. Mother Lode took note of the 2008 Integrated Services Delivery pilot program and observed that it seemed to work better in those local areas with a higher proportion of "low-risk" customers, while other areas found themselves in trouble when they enrolled large numbers of one-time AJCC visitors who then did not show up again. This led

Mother Lode to steer a middle course, and to be somewhat selective in who gets enrolled in WIOA.

Mother Lode observes that the 30% training requirement is more “intense” for them than for those who have larger budgets: *“It kind of ties our hands in terms of other things we could be doing.”* They argue that the training requirement holds a very real opportunity cost for them, a problem because not everybody wants training. Mother Lode creates an annual goal matrix for the agency. Each of the four AJCCs, and each individual job developer in turn, has goals for how many ITAs they are expected to generate, how many OJT opportunities they are expected to develop, how many work experience placements, etc.

On-the-job training is a major focus for Mother Lode, for a very practical reason: there are few training providers located in the region, beyond one community college and a very small handful of WDB-approved training providers. Many residents seeking training end up going outside the region, to opportunities in the Central Valley for example, which Mother Lode views as less than optimal, since those individuals are then likely to take jobs in the Central Valley, which doesn’t help local employers. To counteract this trend, and to build training capacity in the region, Mother Lode develops OJT opportunities with local employers. In general, work-based learning is the board’s strong preference.

Mother Lode, which is both a local workforce area and one of California’s 15 workforce regions, often partners with adjacent workforce areas. For example, the Fresno-based Forestry Corps recently expanded to incorporate the Mother Lode region. Staff also note that the growth of telecommuting means that more people can choose to reside locally and work for companies in the Bay Area or elsewhere. If Mother Lode is to help train people for those out-of-area jobs or refer them to training offered by other workforce areas, there ought to be a way to give ‘proportional credit’ to both workforce boards, staff suggest.

WIOA Title I Data

During the five-year period from 2016 to 2021, Mother Lode enrolled a total of 948 individuals in WIOA Title I services. Nearly three-quarters (74%) were disadvantaged adults; but 35% were dislocated workers, suggesting that, over the five-year period, many individuals moved from one category to the other. Of those enrolled in WIOA Title I, 23% received training services. Dislocated workers were more likely than disadvantaged adults to receive training services (30% vs. 23%).

Of the 221 individuals who received training services during the five-year period:

- *73% were disadvantaged adults*
- *31% were dislocated workers*
- *79% received their training via an Individual Training Account*
- *27% were enrolled in post-secondary programs*
- *17% participated in on-the-job training (OJT) programs*

Of those receiving training, dislocated workers were more likely than disadvantaged adults to have accessed training through an Individual Training Account (87% vs. 70%) and to have been enrolled in post-secondary education (34% vs. 23%). Notably, disadvantaged adults were more likely to have been enrolled in on-the-job training programs (20% vs 10%).

RICHMOND

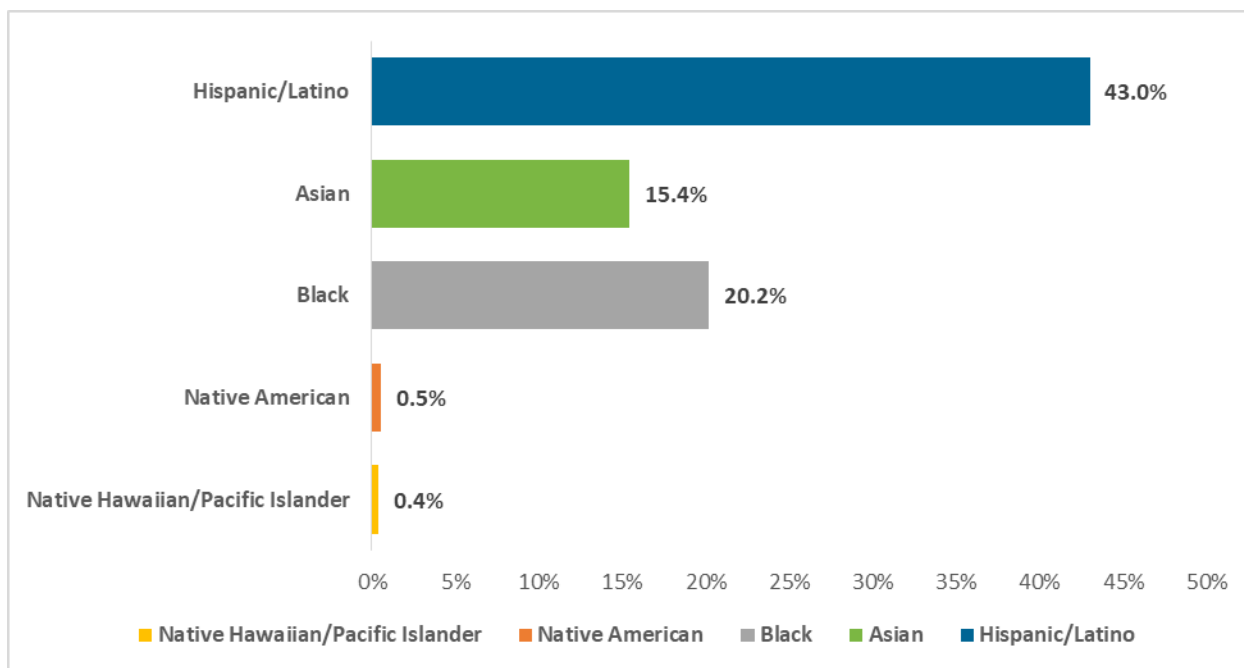
[Note: Richmond was selected as a case study site for compelling reasons of both reputation and diversity. To begin with, as a small city, Richmond receives far less WIOA funding than most other local workforce boards. Not coincidentally, theirs is also one of the few local boards that does not contract either the one-stop operator or the career services provider. Finally, Richmond has a well-deserved reputation for its strong building trades training partnership.]

The current director of the Richmond Workforce Development Board, while having worked in and around the workforce system in both Richmond and Oakland for a number of years, had only been in the position of director for two months at the time of our interview, and thus was not able to answer some of the researchers' questions about the evolution of the local workforce system. Richmond has big plans for the future, however, as reflected in this profile.]



The City of Richmond Workforce Development Board provides services to a small city of 116,000 thousand people living in a 30 square mile area located at the western tip of Contra Costa County, north of San Francisco and northwest of Berkeley. As its name implies, the workforce board is housed in municipal government.

Demographics



Nearly 43% of Richmond residents identify as Hispanic or Latino; 20.2% of residents identify as Black; 15.4% of residents identify as Asian; 0.5% identify as Native American, with another 0.4% identifying as Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander. More than 78% of residents age 25 or older possess a high school degree. More than 12% of households lack a broadband internet subscription. Approximately 17,000 people (14.7% of the total population) live below the federal poverty line.

Strategic Approach

Richmond is one of very few local workforce boards in California which serve as both one-stop-operator and career services provider. This arrangement is directly related to Richmond's size and relatively small budget: they attempted to procure those functions in accordance with WIOA, but the amount of money they were able to offer was not successful in attracting any applicants. As a result of this failed procurement, Richmond pursued a waiver, and provides both OSO and career services in-house.

Richmond operates one AJCC, operating as RichmondWORKS, located in downtown Richmond. Staff of the AJCC, and of the workforce board, are municipal employees. As one observer noted, however, *"They may be a city department, but they really function more like a community-based organization."* Staff come largely from the community and reflect the demographics of the populations they are trying to serve.

Part of the reason for this is the fact that RichmondWORKS is not overly reliant on general funds from the City. Richmond receives less than \$1 million in WIOA Title I funding each year, but, through an aggressive grant-seeking strategy, leverages an additional \$9 million from other sources, including High Roads, the Workforce Accelerator Fund and Prison 2 Employment. The City does contribute \$2.5 million in general funds towards youth employment services. But because RichmondWORKS brings in a lot of additional resources, the City allows the workforce board a high degree of leeway in determining how to allocate those resources.

Richmond's policy is to put as many people as possible in training: *"Training is number one here."* Historically, more than half of WIOA enrollees end up receiving training services, one of the highest percentages in the state. On-the-job training makes up a significant portion of Richmond's training – 13% of trainees in recent years received OJT.

Under its previous director, RichmondWORKS developed one of the strongest construction trades training programs in the state, Richmond BUILD, now in its 15th year. The Richmond BUILD Pre-Apprenticeship Construction Skills and Green Jobs Training Academy has prepared over 1,000 residents for jobs with good wages in a range of building trades and has been highly successful in attracting funding. The City's Construction Contract Compliance officer works out of the RichmondWORKS office, ensuring that project-labor agreements between the unions and contractors benefit Academy students and other customers of the workforce system.

The new director of RichmondWORKS, while valuing and supporting the emphasis on construction trades employment, has plans to expand into new sectors, particularly Information Technology. A planned partnership with Bitwise Industries is intended to train residents in relevant skills and help Richmond attract new business to the area. Other priority sectors include Health Care and Transportation, Distribution & Logistics.

Richmond reports that: *“Because we are so small; there is no disconnect between our AJCC and our sector partnerships.”* Unlike in larger operations, where staff might be in different divisions, the same staff who serve job-seekers are involved in the sector development work.

RichmondWORKS has a strong partnership with the local Adult Schools, as well as the Literacy for Every Adult Program (LEAP) and the YouthBuild-affiliated John Muir Charter School. *“We do a lot of partnering, just because we’re so small,”* notes the director.

RichmondWORKS points out that there are some drawbacks to being part of the municipal bureaucracy, particularly around things like purchasing, procurement, approval of RFPs, and the high cost of employee benefits. But they hold that the advantages of being part of the city structure – particularly in such a small city – outweigh any disadvantages.

For the future, RichmondWORKS’ director highlights the need to focus on equity, and to define what constitutes a good job: *“Our placement wages are too low. We’ve been focused on achieving the minimum, but we need to be getting people into better jobs, so that they are better off when they leave us than they were when they got here.”*

WIOA Title I Data

For the five-year period from 2016 to 2021, Richmond enrolled a total of 522 individuals in WIOA Title I services. Nearly half (49%) were disadvantaged adults, while 36% were dislocated workers, leaving 15% unaccounted for. Of WIOA Title 1 enrollees, 53% received training services. Dislocated workers were more likely than disadvantaged adults to have received training services (57% vs. 45%).

Of the 278 individuals who received training services during the five-year period:

- *41% were disadvantaged adults*
- *38% were dislocated workers*
- *79% received their training via an Individual Training Account*
- *30% were enrolled in post-secondary programs*
- *13% participated in on-the-job training (OJT) programs*

Of those receiving training, dislocated workers were more likely than disadvantaged adults to have accessed training through an Individual Training Account (79% vs. 66%) and to have been enrolled in post-secondary education programs (39% vs. 27%). Notably, disadvantaged adults were much more likely to have received on-the-job training (OJT): 20% vs. 6%.

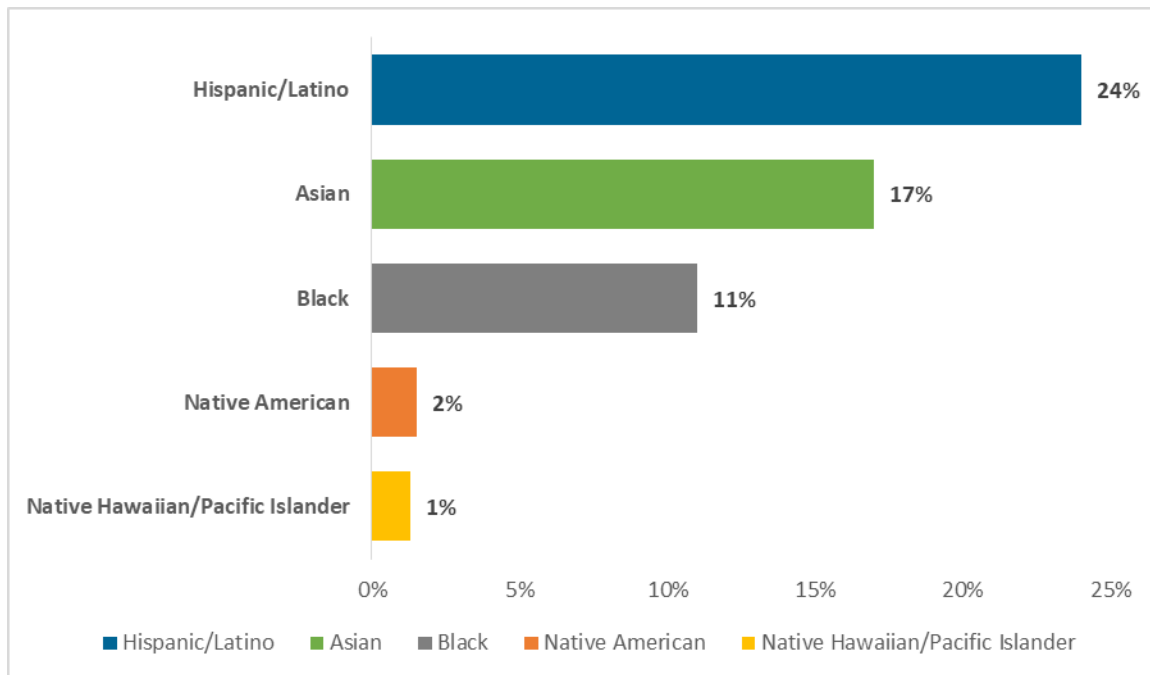
SACRAMENTO



The Sacramento Employment and Training Agency (SETA) is the local workforce development agency for both the city and the county of Sacramento. The city and county are not coterminous: the county population is over 1.5 million, with the city making up approximately one-third of that total. SETA, operating under the oversight of Sacramento's employer-led workforce development board, is the provider of WIOA services. SETA also has a governing board, comprising two city officials, two county officials and one public member. The governing board oversees approximately \$10.7 million per year in WIOA funding, along with a wide range of other

funding sources, including \$1.5 million in Community Services Block Grant funding and nearly \$60 million in Head Start funding managed by SETA. Geographically, the county covers 965 square miles.

Demographics



Nearly 24% of residents identify as Hispanic or Latino; Asians represent another 17%; just under 11% identify as Black; 1.5% identify as Native American, with another 1.3% identifying as Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander. Nearly 88% of persons age 25 or older have a high school diploma. A little over 12% of households do not have a broadband internet subscription. Census

data indicate that nearly 250,000 individuals (16.6% the county population) fall below the federal poverty line.

Strategic Approach

Historically, SETA has made a deliberate decision to focus workforce resources on those most in need, with the understanding that this is likely to have a dampening effect on certain performance indicators. This commitment is reflected in the recruitment strategy of locating numerous affiliate or satellite AJCC offices in lower-income neighborhoods across the county, and in a reliance on community-based organizations and adult schools to provide most career services. Asked what they were the most proud of, SETA leadership said: *“We’re proud of focusing on the hardest-to-serve customers – of not ‘creaming’ – and of achieving good outcomes despite that. We’re proud that equity is embedded in everything we do.”*

SETA serves as the one-stop-operator – the WDB having received no acceptable responses to its attempt to procure an OSO – while contracting out most career services. Services are offered at one designated comprehensive AJCC, known locally as Hillsdale, and 12 non-comprehensive sites throughout the county (the most of any local area in the state). SETA’s decision to contract with community-based providers for most services, and to offer access to them through a large number of affiliate centers, reflects a desire to share resources with those community providers and to take full advantage of what they bring to the table, while offering access points throughout the county. SETA’s philosophy is that, whenever there is a community solution available, that is always preferable to a government solution. As the current Deputy Director noted: *“Our big goal is to connect job-seekers, particularly those in underserved communities, with career pathways and quality careers. One lesson of the pandemic is: invest in CBOs rather than government agencies, because they bring crucial extra resources to the table.”*

SETA is heavily focused on serving job seekers with barriers to employment, noting that part of the reason for this is that they also administer federal refugee services and Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funding for the area, and consider this one of the strengths and defining characteristics of their workforce system. In the words of the former director: *“Many of our career services providers also receive CSBG or refugee funding, so we’re able to blend those resources into our AJCCs. We also fund a lot of our subcontractors with two or three other funding sources, not just WIOA, so if they’ve got a customer that needs something else, they’ve generally got immediate resources available. As a result, our AJCCs are small and neighborhood-based, but have access to multiple streams of funding flowing through SETA.”*

Beyond the standard WIOA measures, SETA assesses AJCC performance on such additional measures as the percent of customers with barriers to employment, including those who are persons with disabilities, homeless, or English-language learners. SETA’s contention is that outcome metrics only have meaning in the context of who is being served. Staff embrace a human-centered design approach, and report that these days, they spend much of their time

helping people with things like housing and food assistance before they can begin to work on employment. *“Unless you have worked in human services, you can’t really begin to understand what it takes to move a person in crisis from point A to point B,”* noted one staff person.

SETA is one of several local areas employing an Integrated Service Delivery model which endeavors to enroll all AJCC customers in CalJOBS and WIOA. As a result, the percent of enrollees who receive training services is lower than in areas that are more selective about who they enroll. SETA plans and closely tracks expenditures to meet the 30% training requirement, but prioritizes career services over training, and relies on the community colleges to do much of the training. SETA leadership notes that WIOA is one of the only systems that explicitly targets underinvested populations, and as such has a key role to play in ensuring that those most in need are connected to services, including those offered by community colleges, which are not always located in the neediest communities. CSGB and other funding sources allow SETA to offer support services to many participants. Historically, about 13% of trainees have received on-the-job training.

Many local career opportunities are in the public sector, given that Sacramento is the epicenter of government employment in the state, but SETA has initiatives in several other sectors as well, including advanced manufacturing, health care, information technology and construction. Specific sector initiatives are associated with specific AJCCs, although job-seekers can still access those initiatives from other job centers.

SETA notes that while certain AJCCs serve as gatekeepers for a given sector program, some of the CBO-led job centers can be a bit removed from the sector initiatives. The goal, however, is always to do more than triage, but rather to help job-seekers think about the long-term, not just the immediate situation. SETA views this as an ongoing communication challenge, continually ensuring that front-line AJCC staff are aware of all of the training opportunities available at any given time. Monthly meetings of AJCC staff, usually featuring a particular training provider, are used to keep everyone up-to-date. SETA leadership notes that success in this regard is largely a matter of building relationships between people, which requires constant work.

SETA takes an active approach to working with employers, particularly now that the pandemic has disrupted the labor market. Business services staff encourage employers to eliminate education requirements that screen out potential workers, and regularly show employers comparative wages being offered by other employers in or near Sacramento. As one staff person noted: *“Employers that are willing to invest in training their staff are in a better position these days.”*

WIOA Title I Data

During the five-year period from 2016 to 2021, Sacramento enrolled a total of 6,933 individuals in WIOA Title I services. More than four-fifths (82%) were disadvantaged adults; 19% were dislocated workers. Of those enrolled in WIOA Title I, 25% received training services. Dislocated workers were more likely than disadvantaged adults to have received training services (36% vs. 23%).

Of the 1,754 individuals who received training services during the five-year period:

- *75% were disadvantaged adults*
- *27% were dislocated workers*
- *79% received their training via an Individual Training Account*
- *12% were enrolled in post-secondary programs*
- *13% participated in on-the-job training (OJT) programs*

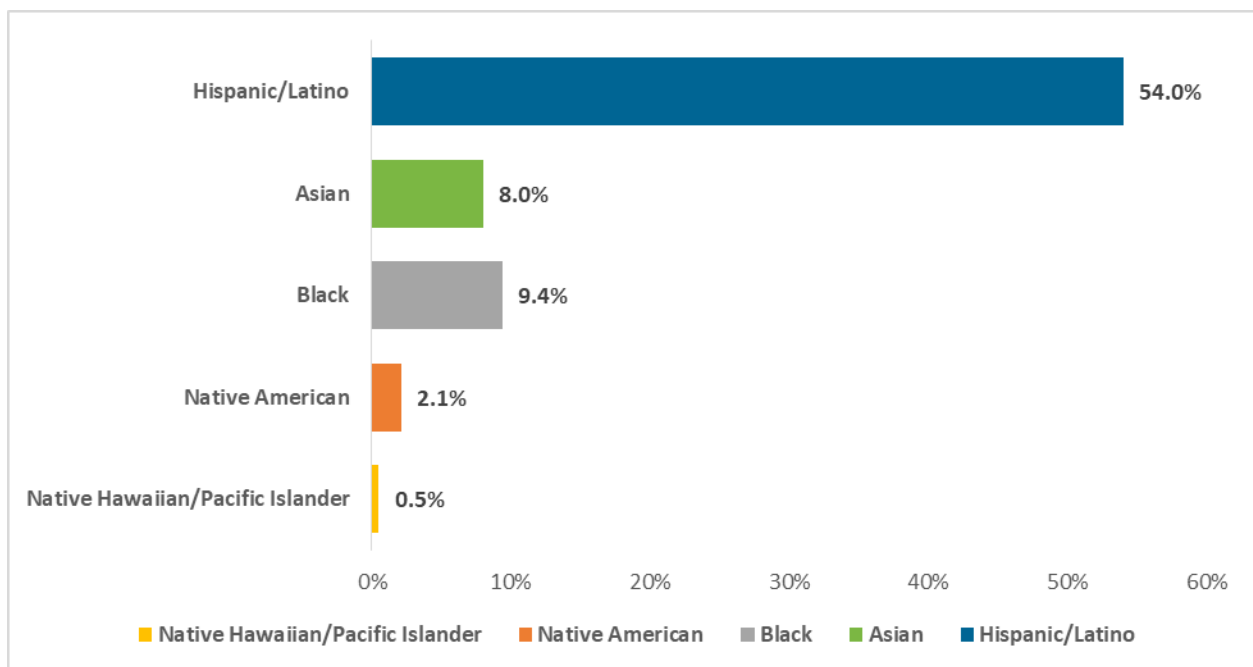
Of those receiving training, dislocated workers were more likely than disadvantaged adults to have been enrolled in post-secondary education (19% vs. 9%). Notably, disadvantaged adults were more likely to have accessed training through an Individual Training Account (81% vs. 74%) and to have been enrolled in on-the-job training programs (14% vs. 11%).

SAN BERNARDINO



The San Bernardino County Workforce Development Board (SBCWDB) serves the vast county of San Bernardino, population 2.2 million. Geographically, San Bernardino is the largest county in the US, covering 20,057 square miles, stretching from the outskirts of Los Angeles to the Arizona border. Most of the population lives in the southwestern corner of the county, in the adjacent cities of San Bernardino, Fontana, Rancho Cucamonga, and Ontario; the high desert cities of Victorville and Hesperia lie on the north side of the San Gabriel Mountains.

Demographics



More than 54% of residents identify as Hispanic or Latino; 9.4% identify as Black; 8% identify as Asian; 2.1% identified as Native American, with another 0.5% identifying as Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander. Among adults age 25 or over, 89% hold a high school diploma. Roughly 7% of households lack a broadband internet subscription. An estimated 315,000 people (14.3% of the population) in San Bernardino County fall below the federal poverty line.

Strategic Approach

The SBCWDB administers more than \$15 million annually in WIOA funding and has been successful in attracting other funding sources as well, including approximately \$10 million in non-WIOA funding, including \$6 million in TANF transitional employment funding and \$3.5 million in funding for re-entry services. (For the latter population, workforce staff are placed in correctional departments and facilities, but most training is provided under WIOA.)

The SBCWDB maintains one comprehensive AJCC in Rancho Cucamonga, and two affiliate centers, one in San Bernardino and one in Victorville. Two additional satellite sites are planned for 2022. San Bernardino has contracted for several years with Workforce Solutions (at \$150,000 per year) for one-stop operator services; that contract was being reproposed in early 2022. Career services are provided in-house. There are co-located partners in each AJCC, with dedicated staff that are partially funded by partners, helping customers to bridge any service or resource gaps.

The SBCWDB's philosophy regarding training is to ensure compliance with the state's 30% training requirement, but also use the balance for other services that support employers and job seekers in the county. Each February, in advance of WIOA allocations, a budget committee convenes to look at how much funding is likely to be carried over, how much new funding is anticipated, and how best to allocate those funds to meet the training requirement and other expectations. The committee presents a budget proposal to the full SBCWDB at a budget workshop in the spring.

Meeting the 30% requirement is relatively easy for San Bernardino, in part because of the fact that the SBCWDB has long prioritized OJT, which carries significant salary expenses that are automatically documented by employers seeking reimbursement. In recent years, approximately 27% of trainees have received OJT.

The 30% requirement is typically met with 20% from WIOA and 10% (the maximum allowable) from other sources. Leadership notes that they support training "if people need training": *"We prefer to come in right at 30%, because there are a lot of other, more cost-effective things we can provide and still get good outcomes. We like to do training when training is required, but if we can help someone get a job and don't need a \$7,000 ITA to do it, we're able to help a lot more people that way. We're trying to be the best stewards of the dollars that we've been given, and if we can serve more people with those dollars then we're absolutely going to try to do that... we want to maximize the number of people we're serving."*

San Bernardino County uses a modified version of the Integrated Service Delivery model, in which staff try to enroll all participants in CalJOBS but not necessarily in WIOA Title 1. They note that they enroll more individuals than some local areas with much larger WIOA allocations. AJCCs are central to almost all training offered in San Bernardino. Because OJT placements

originate in AJCCs, the reliance on the OJT model ensures that the AJCCs are integral to SBCWDB's training strategy. Staff at the AJCCs are very aware of what the SBCWDB's five priority sectors are, and there is a strong emphasis on helping customers understand and use labor market data. A dashboard that looks beyond WIOA measures to assess customer demographics, the kinds of training customers are accessing, and the kinds of jobs they are getting is utilized to evaluate AJCC performance.

Like some other local areas, SBCWDB staff notes that more and more customers are coming in looking for training, as opposed to jobs – often referred to the AJCC by a training provider:

“A lot of training providers have caught on to WIOA; they know they can do their own recruitment and tell people ‘If you go to this AJCC, you can get money to pay for your training.’ So, we see a lot more customers coming in saying ‘I want to get this specific training’. We’re always carefully assessing it: is it one of our priority sectors? Is there a local demand? Is it going to lead to a job? Does the person qualify? We don’t exist to be the personal bankroll for a training provider. If we see that, we try to have a conversation with them, to say ‘Don’t make promises on our behalf.’”

One successful job-seeker extolled San Bernardino's hands-on approach. Noting that she had moved from Los Angeles to San Bernardino County, she said that *“LA didn’t have the same ‘push’ to encourage me to get off public assistance and into work.”* She described being hired initially in a transitional employment position at the AJCC, and moving from there to a full-time city job, and eventually a position with EDD. (Notably, one of San Bernardino's more popular workshops – after “So You Think You Want to Be a Truck-Driver” – is called “How To Get a Government Job.”)

Equity has become a major focus of SBCWDB's work. The AJCCs already serve racially diverse and needy populations; the equity challenge is to help them access higher-wage jobs. San Bernardino plans to award future contracts on an equity basis so that resources are allocated based on need.

WIOA Title I Data

During the five-year period from 2016 to 2021, San Bernardino enrolled a total of 14,523 individuals in WIOA Title I services. Three-quarters (75%) were disadvantaged adults; 29% were dislocated workers, suggesting that many individuals, over the five-year period, moved from one category to the other. Of those enrolled in WIOA Title I, 32% received training services. Dislocated workers were more likely than disadvantaged adults to have received training services (46% vs. 28%).

Of the 4,651 individuals who received training services during the five-year period:

- *67% were disadvantaged adults*
- *41% were dislocated workers*
- *65% received their training via an Individual Training Account*
- *22% were enrolled in post-secondary programs*
- *27% participated in on-the-job training (OJT) programs*

Of those receiving training, dislocated workers were more likely than disadvantaged adults to have accessed training through an Individual Training Account (80% vs. 59%) and to have been enrolled in post-secondary education (30% vs. 18%). Notably, disadvantaged adults were more likely to have been enrolled in on-the-job training (OJT) programs (33% vs. 13%).

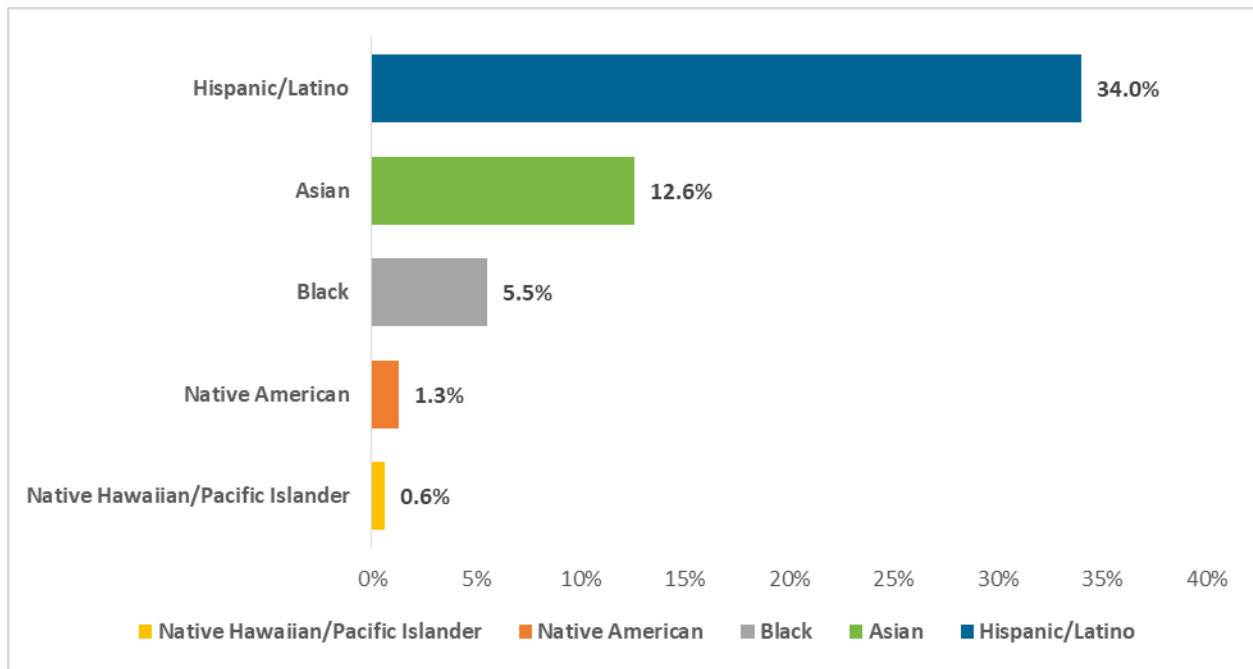
SAN DIEGO



The San Diego Workforce Partnership (SDWP) oversees services to a county of 3.3 million people living in a 4,207 square mile area. Nearly 1.4 million of those individuals live in the city of San Diego; other cities in the county include Chula Vista, Oceanside, Carlsbad, Escondido, El Cajon, and Vista. SDWP administers more than \$20 million per year in WIOA funding, which represents roughly half of their overall funding, including \$3.5 million in TANF subsidized employment funding, \$2 million in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding, and \$1 million in an innovative, philanthropy-supported fund designed to allow the workforce system to serve

non-WIOA-eligible job-seekers.

Demographics



Slightly over 34% of residents identify as Hispanic or Latino; 12.6% of residents identify as Asian; 5.5% of residents identify as Black; 1.3% identify as Native American, with another 0.6% identifying as Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander. More than 87% of residents age 25 or older possess a high school degree. Nearly 10% of households lack a broadband internet subscription. Approximately 313,500 county residents (9.5% of the total population) live below the federal poverty line.

Strategic Approach

San Diego operates six AJCCs: three comprehensive, two affiliate, and one satellite. KRA, a national for-profit workforce services provider, has been both the one-stop operator and the career services provider for several years. This contract was recently reprocured, and, in a departure from past practice, SDWP separated the OSO function from the career services function. The result of this procurement process is that, going forward, SDWP will act as its own career services provider, and will contract for OSO services with Grant Associates, a New York-based for-profit entity currently providing workforce services in that state, Texas, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Washington DC. A key feature of the RFP involved a redesign of the workforce system with the specific goal of establishing stronger connections between the AJCCs and SDWP's sector partnerships.

Given that WIOA funding makes up only about half of the Partnership's \$40M budget, SDWP is focused less on how to allocate the WIOA dollars than on how to make the best use of the full range of funding. At the start of the program year, training dollars are allocated to each of the Board's sector partnerships. Staff are constantly recalibrating throughout the year in order to ensure that the 30% training requirement is met, typically using only WIOA dollars: *"We don't track match if we don't have to."* For individuals who are WIOA-eligible, the Partnership's strategy, in many cases, is to use WIOA to pay for the cost of training while using other funding sources to cover case management and support services. While time consuming, SDWP does not view the state's training requirement itself as unreasonable, observing that *"30% is not a big deal for us, but then larger areas probably don't feel the pain as much."* Staff actively cultivate on-the-job training opportunities; 15% of trainees in recent years received OJT.

Historically, demand for training is high, and the Partnership typically runs out of training funds before the year is over, although that has not been the case during the pandemic. SDWP sets key performance indicators related to the percent of training dollars focused on key industry sectors and the percent of job placements at or above the Partnership's locally-established 'self-sufficiency' wage of \$18.66 per hour. One goal for the future is to be able to disaggregate by service code and demographics, allowing the Board to see more clearly, for example, who is (and more importantly who is not) accessing training.

SDWP's decision to redesign its AJCC structure and its approach to training was the result of significant reflection by staff and board over the past year. Staff had observed that a relatively small number of providers on the Eligible Training Provider List *"had gotten really good at reverse referral"* (recruiting participants and then sending them to an AJCC to get their training paid for) and were consequently claiming an outsized share of the available training dollars. Staff described this as *"the tail wagging the dog: certain providers who had figured out the system were getting most of the money."* They led the Partnership through a discussion on the

issue, showing them how the result of the ETPL/ITA voucher model was that the demographics of who was being served did not match the board's priorities for service and interest in equity.

While reverse referral is both understandable and allowable under the Individual Training Account model, the Partnership decided to counterbalance it by increasing the use of cohort-based training models, while simultaneously tightening up the Eligible Training Provider List. A High Roads Construction Career grant allowed the Board to create some new cohort-based training; other cohorts have been developed for Nursing, Dental Assistant, and Solar Technology. As one member of the leadership team noted: *"We refreshed our philosophy, [clarifying] that the ETPL is one way, but not the only way, to get training."*

Notably, unlike the ETPL, where providers are paid up-front, most of the cohort models have a performance-based payment structure. As noted, a "self-sufficiency" wage of \$18.66 per hour was established, and training providers who did not meet that as a median placement wage were dropped from the ETPL. That step, along with an accreditation requirement, reduced the number of providers on the list from 400 to 100. SDWP now does approximately half of its training through cohort models, half through ITAs and the ETPL. (San Diego anticipates revisiting the impact of the self-sufficiency wage requirement, noting that \$18.66 might not be the optimal figure: *"We may have swung the pendulum over a little too far; for some customers, a \$17.00 job might be OK as a first step."*)

SDWP notes an inherent tension in the relationship between the AJCCs and the sector partnerships, including High Roads. As the career services provider, KRA's performance was impacted by the outcomes achieved by the High Roads Construction Careers program, but KRA had no control over those outcomes, requiring that a high degree of trust be established between the parties. In addition, staff on some of the sector teams are providing the same services as AJCC staff, which can be tricky to sort out. SDWP is trying to be flexible and creative about building connections and shared accountability between AJCCs and the various sector teams.

WIOA Title I Data

During the five-year period from 2016 to 2021, San Diego enrolled a total of 11,988 individuals in WIOA Title I services. More than half (52%) were disadvantaged adults; 48% were dislocated workers. Of those who were enrolled in WIOA Title I, 38% received training services. Dislocated workers were somewhat more likely than disadvantaged adults to have received training services (40% vs. 37%).

Of the 4,555 individuals who received training services during the five-year period:

- *51% were disadvantaged adults*
- *51% were dislocated workers*
- *67% received their training via an Individual Training Account*
- *11% were enrolled in post-secondary programs*
- *15% participated in on-the-job training (OJT) programs*

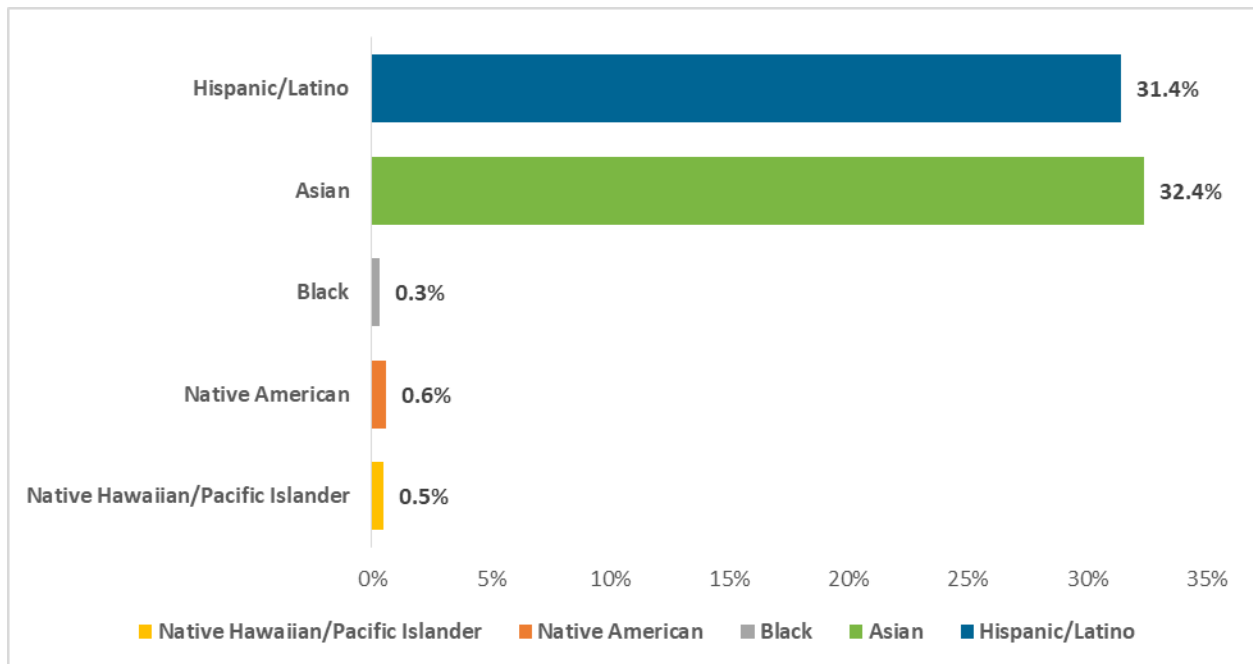
Of those receiving training, dislocated workers were more likely than disadvantaged adults to have accessed training through an Individual Training Account (80% vs. 57%) and to have been enrolled in post-secondary education (12% vs. 10%). Notably, disadvantaged adults were much more likely to have been enrolled in on-the-job training programs (21% vs. 9%).

SAN JOSE



The San Jose / Silicon Valley Workforce Development Board oversees workforce development services to the city of San Jose and six additional cities and towns (Gilroy, Morgan Hill, Campbell, Los Gatos, Los Altos Hills, and Monte Sereno) in an approximately 250-square mile portion of Santa Clara County. Cities in the northwestern portion of Santa Clara County are served by neighboring North Valley Workforce Services, aka/ NOVA. While NOVA covers most of the wealthier parts of Silicon Valley, the San Jose / Silicon Valley WDB covers a significant but somewhat lower-income portion of that region. The two boards work closely together. The workforce board oversees approximately \$6.3 million per year in WIOA funding, making it the highest-funded board in the Bay Area; the WDB also manages municipal funding and a range of grants. Board members are appointed by the mayor of San Jose.

Demographics



The total population of the local workforce area is over 1.2 million, of which more than 1 million live in the city of San Jose. Approximately 100,000 individuals in the overall workforce area live in poverty (8.2% of the population). Nearly a third (32.4%) of the population is Asian; another near-third (31.4%) identify as Hispanic or Latino. Slightly under 3% of the population identify as Black. Native Americans comprise approximately 0.6 of the population; Native

Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders another 0.5%. Nearly 8% of households lack a broadband subscription. Education levels vary rather widely across the area; 85% of San Jose city residents 25 or older have a high school diploma, but rates range from 80% in Gilroy to well over 90% in some of the smaller towns. Gilroy (pop. 60,000), the second largest city in the workforce area, is an agricultural center located 30 miles southeast of San Jose, with population that is 59% Hispanic/Latino.

Strategic Approach

San Jose has one comprehensive AJCC, recently relocated to San Jose's East Side, one affiliate, located in the southern part of the county, and one EDD-staffed satellite in the northern part of the county. Until recently, San Jose contracted with Eckerd Connects, a Florida-based 501c3, for both one-stop operator and career services. Those services were recently reprocured, and The Workforce Institute, part of the San Jose Evergreen Community College District, is the new one stop operator; the career services provider is now Equus.

San Jose notes that there is a lot of education that needs to happen to help potential partners understand the workforce development system and how they might benefit from engaging with it. Workforce operations were hard-hit by the pandemic: *"We had gotten to a good point, when unemployment was at its lowest – but then it sort of blew up."* The pandemic meant that certain partnerships had to be put on hold. Close partners, such as EDD and Santa Clara Social Services, continue to be a bit overwhelmed by the pandemic and its fallout. The workforce board is currently discussing co-location with the Adult Schools.

Upon learning the amount of their WIOA allocation each year, San Jose first sets aside the funding necessary for board priorities and ongoing special projects, including cohort-based training in key sectors such as the Trades Orientation Program. San Jose does more cohort training than other boards (and conversely, the least amount of ITA training of any of the case study sites) but is looking to increase the percentage of ITAs to achieve the right balance between the two approaches. The use of the cohort model began in earnest a few years ago with the successful Pacific Gas & Electric 'Power Pathway' program, and has since expanded to other sectors, with an emphasis on those offering high demand, living wage jobs. San Jose notes that the cohort model works best for job-seekers who need the support provided by learning alongside their peers: *"There is a great camaraderie that comes out of it."*

San Jose does a certain amount of on-the-job training, but has had some issues with it as well, and has not embraced it as the easiest way to meet the 30% training requirement the way some other areas have. They are hoping to do some incumbent worker training next year. Despite that fact that Gilroy is in the workforce area, San Jose does not do much in the agriculture sector; their emphasis has generally been on helping Gilroy residents find better-paying manufacturing jobs, either in Gilroy or in San Jose.

San Jose uses leveraged funds to meet the 30% training requirement. Once the 30% target has been established, the workforce board sets goals for each of the contractors, making sure they understand their obligation to hit those goals or have funds reprogrammed.

San Jose was part of the 2008 Integrated Service Delivery pilot but has since backed away from the model of enrolling all one-stop customers in WIOA, because they were finding it challenging to adequately track and serve such large numbers. Today they are more selective in who they enroll in WIOA, which they see as in keeping with their desire to use census tract data to address equity by targeting more resources to low-resourced communities. They see this as a work in progress, as the City of San Jose is itself still working to define equity. The workforce board is especially pleased that they were able recently to move their comprehensive center into one of the city's low-resourced neighborhoods.

The connection between AJCC services and sector training opportunities is reinforced by what San Jose refers to as a very thorough orientation for job-seekers, who learn about all of the various programs and opportunities that might be of interest. This is followed by a one-on-one meeting with a career advisor, who explores their interests, talks them through the services available, and begins to construct a career plan with the individual. There is a heavy emphasis on providing job-seekers with good labor market information, particularly for the five key sectors San Jose has identified (Finance, Health Care, Information Technology, Construction, and Manufacturing). San Jose reports that most customers come in looking for jobs, not training, and it sometimes takes a bit of time for them to reach the conclusion that they may need training after all.

San Jose does not have metrics for the AJCCs beyond the WIOA measures, noting that, for the populations they are serve *"the WIOA metrics themselves are a huge lift."* They do, however, have a continuous improvement approach, with an emphasis on client satisfaction and the achievement of specific milestones by clients.

San Jose was part of the recent state pilot initiative connecting workforce boards with local libraries and has plans to expand that collaboration going forward. They had attempted to engage the libraries in the past but ran into issues of client confidentiality. However, the possibility of funding for libraries resulted in a new willingness to work through those issues, leading to the creation of a series of well-received virtual workshops. Moving forward, the workforce board's goal is to eventually have a staff presence in the libraries.

WIOA Title I Data

For the five-year period from 2016 to 2021, San Jose enrolled a total of 5,186 individuals in WIOA Title I services. Over two-thirds (69%) were disadvantaged adults, while 35% were dislocated workers, suggesting that some people moved from one category to the other over the course of those five years. Of WIOA Title 1 enrollees, 35% received training services. Dislocated workers were more likely than disadvantaged adults to have received training services (42% vs. 33%).

Of the 1,824 individuals who received training services during the five-year period:

- 64% were disadvantaged adults
- 42% were dislocated workers
- 26% received their training via an Individual Training Account (**low**)
- 21% were enrolled in post-secondary programs
- 7% participated in on-the-job training (OJT) programs

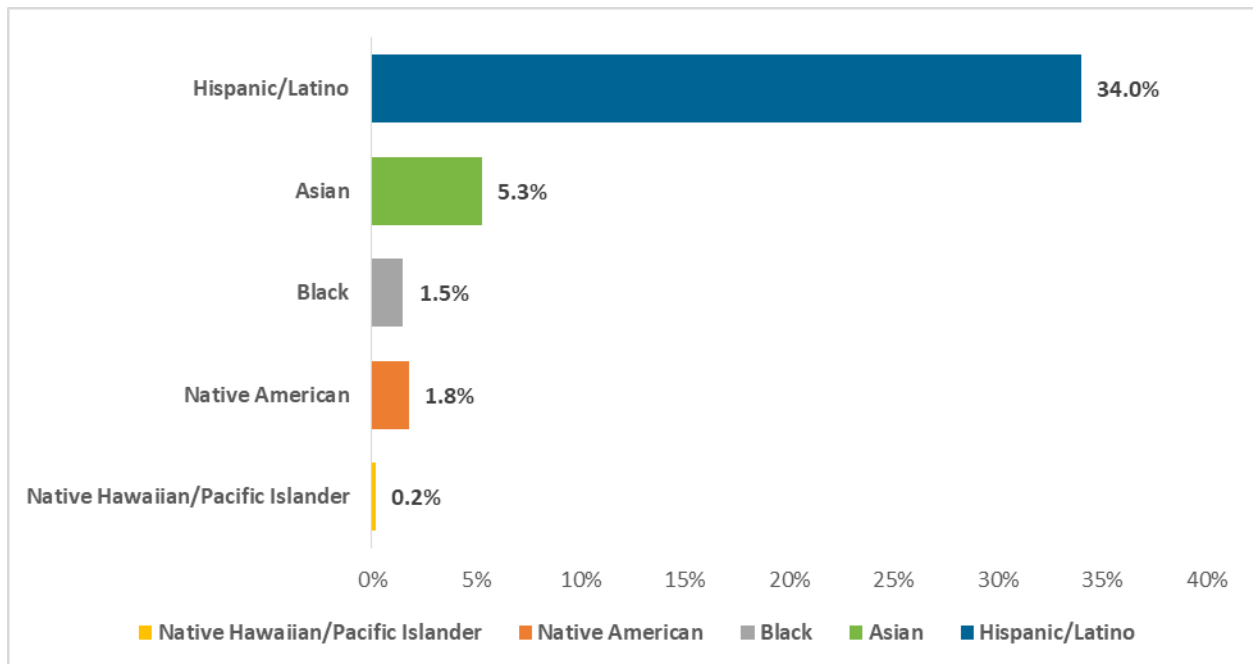
Of those receiving training, dislocated workers were more likely than disadvantaged adults to have accessed training through an Individual Training Account (39% vs. 20%) and to have been enrolled in post-secondary education (32% vs. 16%). Notably, disadvantaged adults were significantly more likely to have been enrolled in on-the-job training programs (9% vs. 2%).

SANTA CRUZ



The Santa Cruz Workforce Development Board provides workforce services to a county of 270,861 living in a geographic area of 445 square miles, which includes the cities of Santa Cruz, Watsonville, Scott's Valley and Capitola. While the City of Santa Cruz (pop. 63,000) is the county seat, Watsonville (pop. 53,000; 75% Hispanic) is the center of much of the workforce development system's activity. The Workforce Development Board oversees \$3 million per year in WIOA funding, as well as multiple other funding sources, including CalWORKs Employment Services funding.

Demographics



According to census data, 34% of residents identify themselves as Hispanic or Latino; 5.3% identify as Asian; 1.8% identify as Native American; an additional 0.2% identify as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander; 1.5% identify as Black. More than 86% of adults age 25 or older have a high school diploma. Nearly 8% of households lack a broadband internet subscription. Nearly 11% of the population (29,750) lives below the federal poverty line.

Strategic Approach

Santa Cruz operates one comprehensive career center, located in Watsonville, one affiliate center, located in Capitola, and one specialized center, focused on youth employment, located in the unincorporated community of Freedom on the outskirts of Watsonville. Goodwill is the contracted career services provider; the one-stop operator is WinterWorks LLC (Amanda Winter).

Santa Cruz points out that being part of the county government brings significant benefits. For one thing, it has allowed the workforce board to leverage TANF funding (the WDB director also oversees CalWORKs Employment Services), and to integrate WIOA and TANF in tangible ways:

“We realized we could save administrative costs and reduce duplication by bringing the programs together. We use TANF as a referral mechanism; we created a co-enrollment strategy, and we’ve been able to use the CalWORKs Employment Services program as a feeder for our WIOA program, while leveraging some of the TANF funding to provide wrap-around services. We’ve strategically plugged in WIOA funding for training for CalWORKs clients, allowing them to maximize their benefits from both programs.”

At the same time, being part of county government presents real challenges. Staffing costs for county employees are not under the control of the workforce board. Workforce staff are often pulled into working on broader county social issues, such as the shortage of affordable housing, which can take away from their core mission. Most recently, the county abolished the Economic Development department and added some of its responsibilities to the workforce staff.

A key local partnership is with the area’s one community college, which entered into a contract with the workforce board to operate a Student Resource and Support Network. The board pays for one staff person; the program provides wrap-around services and intensive counseling for every WIOA participant attending the college. As the workforce director notes, *“What that has done is open a door, inside the community college, where we can have experts in WIOA who are able to help us recruit students, on-campus, for the WIOA program.”*

In 2017, in a major transition, the workforce board decided to shift its focus from short-term training to helping residents obtain 2-year degrees. This shift followed from the observation that the jobs resulting from previous training offerings were not paying sufficient wages to allow people to rent a home in the county.

Santa Cruz concluded that most of their career services workshops, resume prep, interview prep and the like were not offering particularly high value for their clients and were taking up resources and staff time better deployed elsewhere. One person paraphrased the typical job

seeker's response to such workshops as: *"You're telling me stuff I already know, or that I could watch in a YouTube video by someone who actually knows what they're talking about, not a social worker trying to tell me what employers are looking for..."*.

The board decided that it wanted to focus on high-value activities instead. To effect this shift, they created a two-tiered training structure, whereby job seekers who want to pursue an associate's degree in an in-demand occupation can access up to \$10,000 in WIOA funding, while those seeking training in other occupations can (if they document that jobs exist) access up to \$3,500. This has had the effect of incentivizing customers to give serious consideration to the workforce area's priority sectors, the idea being to put more individuals into training that reflects the board's priorities.

One result of the two-tiered training cap is that the AJCCs are systemically connected to sector training opportunities: while front line staff may not always be familiar with the details of every sector training program, they are well aware that certain training opportunities are eligible for \$10,000 in WIOA funding, and they know which ones those are. For certain sector training programs, such as the regional community health worker training developed under SlingShot, AJCC staff are more directly involved in recruitment.

Each year, the workforce board compiles local labor market data and uses it to produce and publish a "State of the Workforce Report," which is deliberately designed to be concise and easily-understood by a general audience. The report is used to make a presentation on findings to the board, followed by an executive retreat to identify four or five key strategies for the year that are aligned with the board's long-term goals. Those strategies then become part of the organization's work plan, and a budget is developed based on that plan.

To ensure that it meets the 30% training requirement, Santa Cruz sets aside funds at the start of the program year but does not always hit 30% with WIOA funds alone. For this reason, they aggressively track and document leverage funding, including PELL grants received by program participants. Santa Cruz does not typically enroll individuals in WIOA unless they think the person is a likely candidate for training; consequently, a very high percentage of their enrollees receive training services (84% over the previous five years – the highest in the state). *"Generally speaking, we're talking to people about training from the moment they walk in the door, because the people we recruit are people who need marketable skills to gain employment. We really moved away from just helping employers in the county fill their entry-level jobs."* The trade-off, of course, is that far fewer people are enrolled in WIOA than in other workforce areas.

The board is particularly interested in tracking how many people are getting jobs that pay a living wage. In the wake of COVID-19, the board is also pushing hard to expand on-line services, while still maintaining a high-quality physical presence at the comprehensive center for anyone not able to access services virtually.

WIOA Title I Data

For the five-year period from 2016 to 2021, Santa Cruz enrolled a total of 917 individuals in WIOA Title I services. More than half (58%) were disadvantaged adults; 41% were dislocated workers. Of WIOA Title 1 enrollees, 84% received training services (the highest percentage in the state). Notably, disadvantaged adults were somewhat more likely than dislocated workers to have received training services (86% vs. 82%).

Of the 773 individuals who received training services during the five-year period:

- *59% were disadvantaged adults*
- *40% were dislocated workers*
- *96% received their training via an Individual Training Account*
- *77% were enrolled in post-secondary programs (**highest in the state?**)*
- *3% participated in on-the-job training (OJT) programs*

Of those receiving training, disadvantaged adults and dislocated workers were equally likely to have accessed training via an Individual Training Account (96% for both groups) and to have been enrolled in post-secondary programs (77% for both).

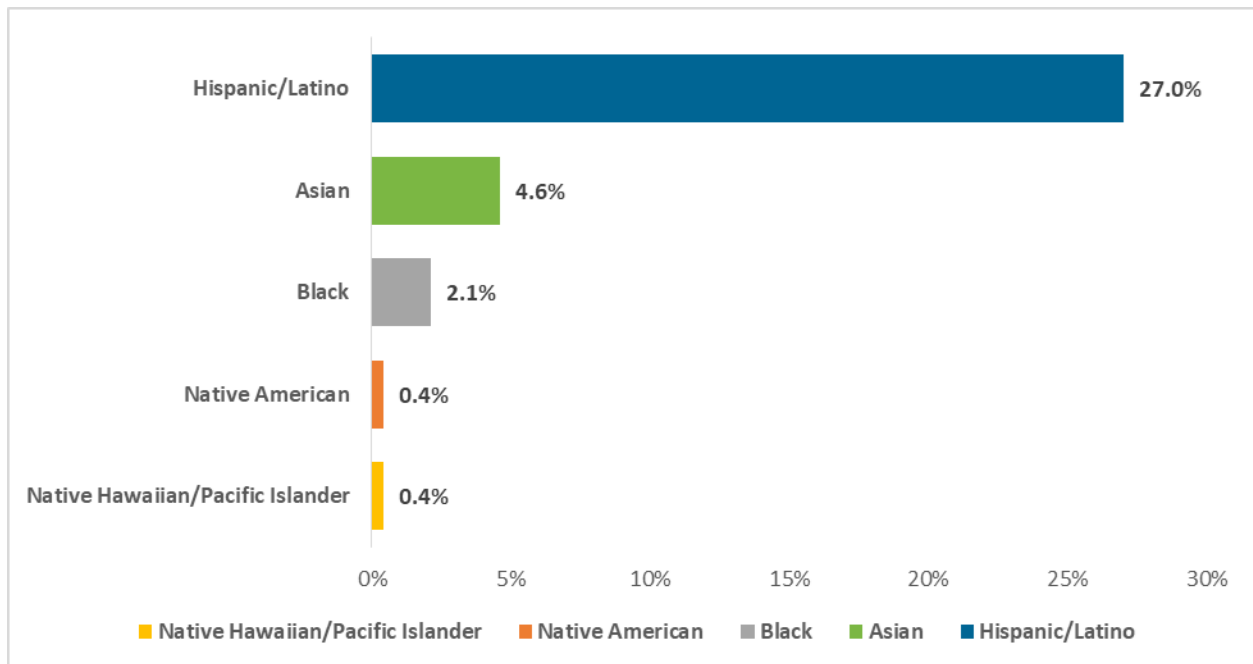
SONOMA



The Sonoma County Workforce Investment Board oversees workforce development services for a county of 1,576 square miles with 489,000 residents. The county seat and largest city is Santa Rosa (population 180,000). The Workforce Investment Board oversees approximately \$2.4 million per year in WIOA funding, in addition to smaller amounts of funding from the Community Service Block Grant and other sources. These are dwarfed, however, by the fact that the director of the Workforce Investment Board also serves as director of the Employment and Training Division of the county's Human Services Department, and as a result also manages

the county CalWORKs budget (approximately ten times the WIOA budget). Aside from CalWORKs, most of the leverage funding secured by the WIB comes from grants from the California workforce system.

Demographics



Slightly over 27% of residents identify as Hispanic or Latino; 4.6% identify as Asian; 2.1% identify as Black; 0.4% identify as Native American, with another 0.4% identifying as Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander. Nearly 90% of residents possess a high school diploma. A little over 10% of households lack a broadband internet subscription. Approximately 38,000 people (7.8% of the county population) live below the federal poverty line.

Strategic Approach

Sonoma has one AJCC, located in Santa Rosa, the county seat. Following failed procurements in 2017 and 2018 to select a one-stop operator, Sonoma approached California Human Development (CHD), the local anti-poverty agency, with roots in the federal War on Poverty, and enlisted that organization as OSO on a sole-source basis. In a departure from the typical OSO definition, CHD also plays a key role in providing career services, taking responsibility for the initial encounter with each job-seeker and initiating the assessment of what services they are likely to require. The bulk of career services are then provided in-house by county staff. In addition to the AJCC in Santa Rosa, four access points have been established (in West County, Petaluma, Healdsburg and Sonoma Valley), with navigation services provided by CHD. As reflected in the deliberate choice of an antipoverty agency as one stop operator, Sonoma has a heavy emphasis on poverty reduction. While staff report that CalJOBS registration can be a deterrent to some participants, Sonoma's goal is to enroll all customers and then work with them to identify career goals and strategies.

Each year, upon learning of their WIOA allocation, Sonoma determines what their 30% training obligation amount is, across adult and dislocated worker grants, and then takes out the 10% that can be met with leverage. A staff person is assigned the task of tracking that leverage over the course of the year and making sure they hit the 10%. Sonoma notes that some leverage inevitably goes unreported, and that there have been times when they did not hit the 10% mark: *"It is very complicated to make sure our accounting people get all of the information they need; there is a lot of manual tracking required."*

Sonoma's strategy, however, is to always maximize leverage in order to hit the 10% leverage max, because *"that gives us the most flexibility for our actual WIOA dollars."* Funding sources that typically contribute to the 10% leverage include the building trades introduction program, CalWORKs Employment Services, Cal Fresh E&T, and PELL grants.

The board and leadership look at industry trends and forecasts to identify opportunities for training, with special attention to OJT since it represents a high-cost item; in recent years, 12% of trainees received OJT. Staff note that *"the most clear-cut way to pull in that leverage is OJT, because it requires a 50/50 employer match, which counts as leverage, so there's not much tracking required."* To help facilitate OJT, the workforce board contracts with the county's Economic Development department in order to enlist the latter in the business services strategy. Construction trades training opportunities and health care have been recent board priorities; hospitality has suffered during the pandemic. Sonoma observes that *"our economy is not very 'High Road.'"*

In an interesting but ultimately unsuccessful experiment, the board adopted a policy a few years ago that limited training funds to Sonoma's priority sectors. Eventually, however, the board had to step back from that position, because not enough candidates were interested in

those careers. Staff noted that many job-seekers were interested in administrative positions, for example, but not necessarily in target sectors like health care or construction. Sonoma says this highlights the critical importance of professional development for workforce development staff, who must have both a broad understanding of the workforce development system and enough specialization and expertise regarding certain sectors to be familiar with the wide range of occupations in a given industry.

In addition to its strong anti-poverty model, the board is taking steps to build an equity focus. *“As a department, on the staff side, we’re very committed to racial equity. We need to lead with race in order to do more than scratch the surface of equity,”* notes the director. Sonoma is most proud of their success in using cohort-based training to successfully serve various high-barrier target populations, pointing out that the fact that they have an anti-poverty agency embedded in the workforce system is key. As a result, they note that they are not sure they are going to hit performance goals all of the time, something they have accepted.

Sonoma is familiar with the dilemma that the front door of the AJCC is not always well-connected to the advanced training opportunities offered by sector partnerships. As one staff member put it: *“We’re always asking: how can we get our WIOA folks into this program? It’s not usually a lack of awareness at the AJCC, but rather one of outreach and appropriate marketing – finding ways to reach the people who might benefit from and be interested in a given training opportunity.”*

Post-COVID, *“instead of waiting for people to walk in the door, we’re really gung-ho on: How can we get more people? Having to go hunt people down who need our services is a new mission for us,”* notes one manager. Sonoma is addressing this challenge with its four new satellite centers, as well as extensive virtual services. They say that as part of economic recovery, the need to serve the business community has moved to the fore. It’s no longer just *“what does the job-seeker want to do,”* but also *“what does the community need?”*

Sonoma notes that partnership at the local level is sometimes derailed by inconsistent messaging in adjacent state systems. State agencies agree to partner with the workforce system, but when the local workforce staff approach the local representatives of those adjacent systems, they are not always aware of the intended partnership. Like other local boards, Sonoma suggests that *“the vision of braided funding streams is missing something – like a ‘lever’ -- from the authorizing bodies of all of these other [state] partners, to emphasize that this is the expectation.”*

WIOA Title I Data

During the five-year period from 2016 to 2021, Sonoma enrolled a total of 982 individuals in WIOA Title I services. Nearly half (49%) were disadvantaged adults; 34% were dislocated workers. Of those enrolled in WIOA Title I, 30% received training services. Dislocated workers were more likely than disadvantaged adults to have received training services (39% vs. 25%).

Of the 293 individuals who received training services during the five-year period:

- *41% were disadvantaged adults*
- *44% were dislocated workers*
- *85% received their training via an Individual Training Account*
- *23% were enrolled in post-secondary programs*
- *12% participated in on-the-job training (OJT) programs*

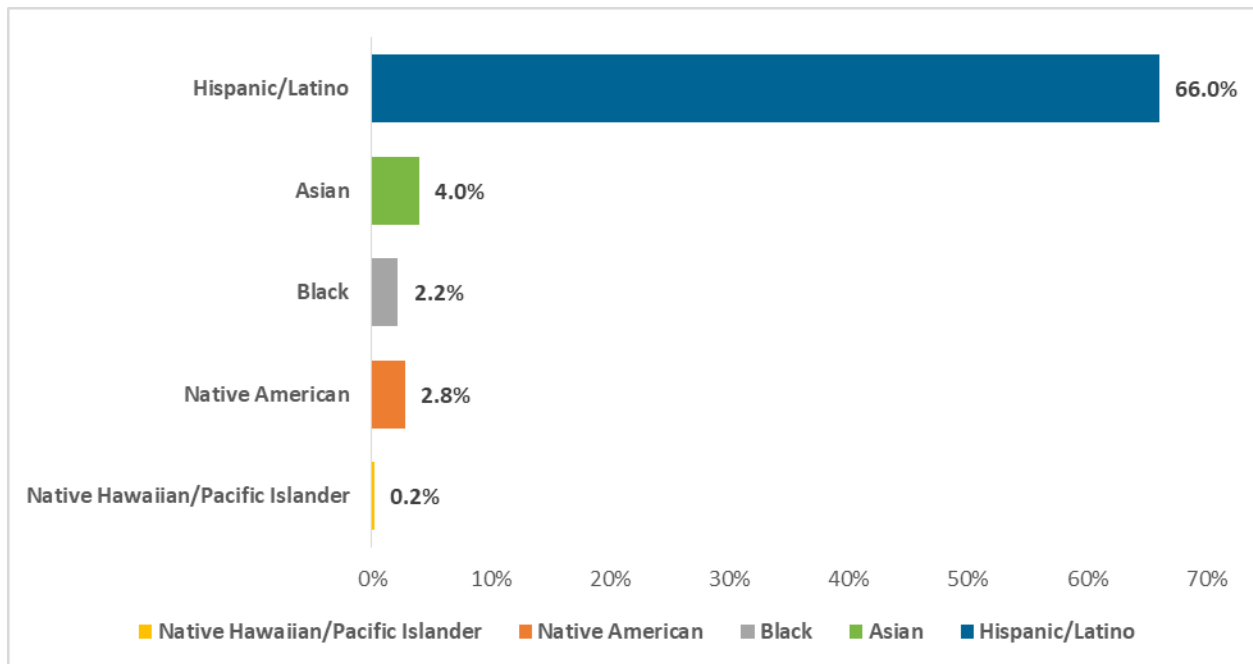
Of those receiving training, dislocated workers were more likely than disadvantaged adults to have accessed training through an Individual Training Account (96% vs. 81%). Notably, disadvantaged adults were more likely to have been enrolled in post-secondary education (27% vs. 19%) and were much more likely than dislocated workers to have been enrolled in on-the-job training programs (21% vs. 7%).

TULARE



The Workforce Investment Board of Tulare County serves a 4,824 square mile rural county with a population of slightly over 473,000, encompassing the three small cities of Visalia, Tulare and Porterville as well as a significant portion of the San Joaquin Valley south of Fresno and north of Bakersfield. The workforce board administers approximately \$8.8 million per year in WIOA funding and leverages the resources of numerous partners. While staff of the workforce board are county employees, the Workforce Investment Board of Tulare County is itself a separate non-profit organization. The organization thus reaps many of the benefits of being part of county government while simultaneously enjoying a certain degree of flexibility and freedom afforded by its 501c3 status. For example, WIB agreements and contracts do not have to be voted on by the county board of supervisors.

Demographics



Nearly 66% of residents identify as Hispanic or Latino; 4% identify as Asian; 2.8% identify as Native American, with another 0.2% identifying as Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander; 2.2% identify as Black. Nearly 71% of adults age 25 or over have a high school diploma. More than 12% of households lack a broadband internet subscription. Census data show approximately 80,000 people (17% of the population) living below the federal poverty line.

Strategic Approach

Tulare operates two comprehensive AJCCs, in Visalia and Tulare, and two affiliate centers in Dinuba and Porterville. Tulare became its own one stop operator in 2020, after a failed procurement to select an operator. Organizationally, the staff person who plays the internal OSO role is in a different division from the operations side of the house in order to create distance and a firewall.

Career services are provided by two local anti-poverty agencies: Community Services Employment & Training (CSET-- the local Community Action Agency) and Proteus, which focuses primarily on serving the farmworker population. CSET provides services at two comprehensive sites and one affiliate site, Proteus at one affiliate site.

Tulare notes that, dating back to the 1960s War on Poverty and the advent of Community Action Agencies, the County opted to use its anti-poverty resources to support a strong network of community-based organizations, rather than to create or support local government programs. As a result, they said, “CSET and Proteus have been focusing on employment for more than 40 years.” That history has clearly shaped the way workforce development services are delivered today.

As suggested by the fact that local anti-poverty agencies are the career services providers, Tulare has a strong and long-standing focus on reaching low-income residents and helping them advance out of poverty. Particularly since the pandemic, the providers see themselves as offering “*whole life counseling*,” not just employment and training services; as one front-line staff person put it, “*we help people with everything*.” Staff spoke about how the assessment process is not merely an assessment, but rather a “*partnership with the job-seeker*” in order to develop a plan and a map that will enable them to resolve issues, overcome barriers, and find a career.

Not surprisingly, Tulare has a strong emphasis on equity, using data to look at who is getting into training, for example, and what the outcomes are for different populations. Given the wide diversity within the very large Hispanic population, lack of access to disaggregated data for subpopulations is a challenge. Staff note that there is a significant amount of information contained in PIRL that they could be getting but don't: “*Under JTPA [Job Training Partnership Act], the data was viewed as ‘ours’, but since then, the state increasingly sees it as ‘their’ data.*” Ultimately, they would like to be able to look at individual wage data in combination with demographic characteristics.

Tulare was one of 14 California workforce boards that adopted the Integrated Service Delivery model as part of a 2008 pilot project sponsored by EDD, under which all AJCC customers were enrolled in WIA and provided with a range of services as needed, in contrast to the typical two-tiered approach in which some customers received very light-touch “universal services” and

others got “intensive services.” Tulare continues to adhere to the integrated services model, reflected in the fact that only 12% of WIOA enrollees received training services in recent years. As Tulare notes, theirs is *“a different strategy that leads to different outcomes.”*

As a result, Tulare tends to co-enroll a high percentage of individuals in both WIOA and other programs. Co-enrollment is used extensively between WIOA, TANF, Prison to Employment, homeless services and other programs. Instead of only serving the homeless with non-WIOA funds, for example, Tulare co-enrolls them in WIOA. Unlike some workforce boards, *“we don’t avoid enrolling the hardest-to-serve in WIOA, because we think that is who WIOA is intended to serve,”* they said. Tulare is particularly proud of its partnership with the Probation Department, noting that they enrolled more ex-offenders last year than either LA City or LA County.

Despite placing a relatively low percentage of WIOA enrollees in training, Tulare has historically met the requirement that 30% of funds be spent on training, with a lot of careful tracking of expenditures over multiple subgrants and grant years. They argue, however, that the requirement is actually a disincentive to attracting non-federal funding, noting that external funders such as foundations like to fund training – *“they love it when we can say ‘you just pay for the training, we’ll cover the rest’ – but balk at being asked to provide wrap-around services instead.”* Tulare hopes that a redefinition of what can be counted as case management might ease this issue. The result of the training requirement, in Tulare’s view, is that *“fewer people are going to training, and training has gotten more expensive.”* With fewer staff, local areas respond by increasing the training cap, and training providers respond by adjusting their price to what they can get.

AJCC staff attend regular sector partnership meetings to ensure that front-line staff are well-informed and that job-seekers are given access to sector-based training opportunities. Annually, each sector holds a “sector summit” for all potential stakeholders, described as a “day of learning” in which participants receive presentations from employers and tour facilities across the county. Sector partnerships take state LMI data, add local context to it, and create a local LMI profile for education partners and other providers.

Tulare notes that they have tended to feel “a little on the outside” with respect to initiatives like High Road: *“We don’t have Central Labor Council or a strong union presence.”*

One interviewee suggested that Tulare had some work to do in terms of understanding public sector employment opportunities as fully as they do private sector opportunities, noting that the sometimes-byzantine rules surrounding hiring and advancement in the public sector need to be appreciated for what they are and successfully navigated.

WIOA Title I Data

During the five-year period from 2016 to 2021, Tulare enrolled a total of 16,497 individuals in WIOA Title I services. More than half (55%) were disadvantaged adults; 46% were dislocated workers. Of those enrolled in WIOA Title I, 12% received training services. Dislocated workers and disadvantaged adults received training services at roughly the same rate (12% vs. 13%).

Of the 1,969 individuals who received training services during the five-year period:

- *59% were disadvantaged adults*
- *46% were dislocated workers*
- *84% received their training via an Individual Training Account*
- *13% were enrolled in post-secondary programs*
- *11% participated in on-the-job training (OJT) programs*

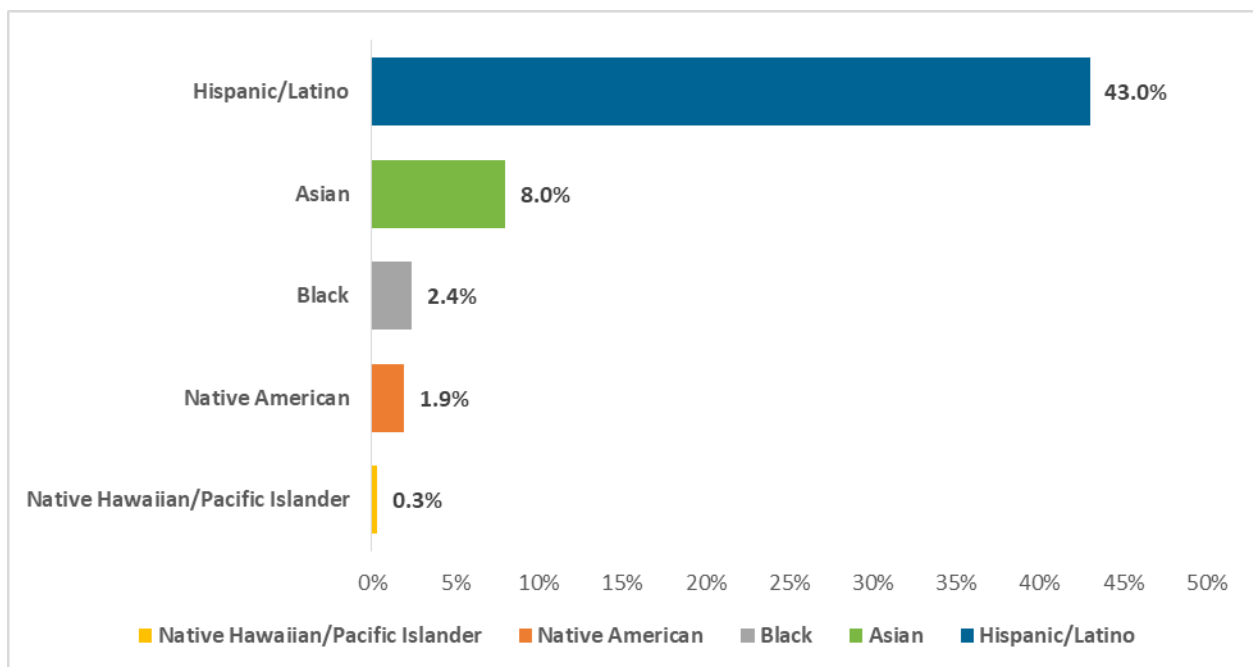
Of those receiving training, dislocated workers were more likely than disadvantaged adults to have been enrolled in post-secondary education (34% vs. 23%). Notably, disadvantaged adults were more likely to have accessed training through an Individual Training Account (85% vs. 82%) and to have been enrolled in post-secondary education (14% vs. 11%). Both groups were equally likely to have been enrolled in on-the-job training programs (11% for each).

VENTURA



The Workforce Development Board of Ventura County serves a county with a population of 844,000 living in an area of 1,843 square miles, adjacent to Los Angeles County and including the small cities of Oxnard, Thousand Oaks, Simi Valley, Ventura, and Camarillo. The Workforce Development Board oversees approximately \$5 million per year in WIOA funding.

Demographics



More than 43% of residents identify as Hispanic or Latino; nearly 8% identify as Asian; 2.4% identify as Black; 1.9% identify as Native American, with another 0.3% identifying as Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander. Of adults age 25 or older, 85% have a high school diploma. A little over 7% of households lack a broadband internet subscription. Approximately 76,800 people (9.1% of the population) in Ventura County live below the federal poverty line.

Strategic Approach

Ventura has one comprehensive career center, located in Oxnard (the largest city in the county), and one affiliate center in Simi Valley. The county Human Services department is the career services provider. Until recently, due to a failed procurement, a consortium of AJCC partners served as the one-stop operator, but a new OSO (San Diego-based Alamom Consulting, Inc., a for-profit) was recently procured, with Strumpf Associates advising.

The workforce board has been in transition over the past few years, from a historic focus on employer needs to what they intend to be a more balanced approach to meeting the needs of both job-seekers and employers. Ventura notes that their transition from WIA to WIOA took extra time in part due to an extended vacancy in the executive director position, ultimately filled in 2019. The new director found that it was necessary to work with the board and partners to clarify and establish the appropriate roles and responsibilities of the various entities that make up the workforce development system, and to bring in staff who could support that work.

Ventura understands and supports the WIOA strategy of using the workforce system to leverage the resources of other systems with similar missions, whereby a person comes into a one-stop center, has their needs assessed, and has those needs met *“with the dollars that are most directly tied to those needs.”* The WDB might pay for training, tools and a uniform, for example, while other funding sources might cover costs Ventura cannot.

The next level, Ventura notes, would be actually braiding the funding, which is a bigger challenge. They suggest that for this to really work, the braiding would either need to happen at the state level, or the state would need to provide clear blueprints or roadmaps, offering examples of how to braid funding locally. Without that, Ventura feels they would be running the risk of braiding funding at the behest of the State Board only to have a finding from a program monitor to the effect that they had done so improperly. Bureaucracy’s heightened concerns about “double-dipping” or “co-mingling funds” stands as a barrier to the kind of fully integrated system Ventura would like to develop.

Ventura uses the annual budget process to ensure that they are meeting the 30% training requirement. Each contract with a training provider contains a specific training obligation reflecting their contribution to the 30% requirement; performance is reviewed quarterly. Because they have an explicit goal of reaching job seekers with barriers to employment, Ventura relies on resources leveraged from other partners to meet the 30% goal. Like other local boards, Ventura has found it challenging to meet the 30% requirement during the pandemic, and so has implemented an improvement plan to bring training numbers up.

On-the-job training has historically been a major component of Ventura’s strategy, in part because some board members are strong advocates of the model, having successfully used it

themselves. In recent years, 30% of trainees received OJT. As noted, until about five years ago, the board was highly employer-focused; even its outreach efforts were largely focused on engaging employers rather than engaging job-seekers. The current leadership has worked to strike a balance, positing that there are two main customers, job-seekers and employers, and that the purpose of the workforce board is to utilize its funding to bridge the gap between them.

Ventura has historically been fairly selective about enrolling job seekers in WIOA Title 1, in order to emphasize and focus on training services. However, they have recently observed that staff caseloads are relatively low and have decided to shift towards a more open enrollment approach in order to serve more people and reach populations with barriers to employment while still maintaining a focus on training.

With respect to the connection between the AJCC and the sector partnerships, Ventura acknowledges that there is work to do. Interestingly, AJCC staff did participate in the sector teams when they were first established, several years ago, but their participation fell by the wayside due to staffing reductions, as the remaining AJCC staff decided they did not have the time to engage with the sector partnerships. This, not surprisingly, resulted in a lack of focus on recruitment for sector programs at the AJCC. Consequently, the sector partnerships have primarily focused on identifying the needs of employers and helping education providers adjust their offering to meet those needs. Recruitment of individuals to fill vacant positions has not been a primary focus of the sector teams, although this is changing, as the leadership of the WDB is attempting to reconnect the AJCC staff and the sector teams.

Ventura notes that the partnerships they have developed with local community-based organizations have been particularly helpful in enabling them to reach and better serve such key target populations as English language learners, farmworkers, persons with disabilities, and the homeless. Community college partnerships are growing; there are good examples of individual job-seekers connecting to the colleges, but these efforts are not yet at scale in the opinion of the local workforce director. The local area's three large community colleges operate very independently, but new leadership and a personnel change at the vice chancellor level has created opportunities for closer partnership.

The workforce director points out that partnership takes time and effort: *"If we're not careful, we will accidentally work in silos – not because we don't respect or like or need each other – It's just [that] we're busy, and ... we're all trying to keep our organizations running, and funded, and meet all of our requirements. The time it takes to step back and say 'OK, how can we work together?' – that's extra time and effort."* With all the new funding on the horizon, however, the director notes that this is an ideal time to get past any competitiveness or turf issues and find ways to work together.

Ventura established a ‘stand-alone’ goal for diversity, equity and inclusion as part of its strategic plan in 2020. There is a big push now to ensure that DEI goals are woven into each of the workforce area’s priority goals, without losing the focus on the big, overarching goal. The board is focused on three big equity questions: *“Are we appropriately serving Ventura County’s various populations? Are we conducting successful outreach to those most in need of learning about our services? Does our board composition reflect the county’s demographics?”*

Ventura is particularly proud of their work-based learning consortium, which evolved from an earlier apprenticeship consortium and has become an essential means for bringing together job-seekers in need of training and education with work-based learning opportunities offered by trainers and employers. Ventura seeks to expend such opportunities, particularly given the cost of living in the area and the pressing need for income during training.

The Ventura workforce board is not only embedded in county government, but contracts with the county Human Service Department for career services. In recent years, Ventura has contemplated moving the board out of the county structure, but ultimately opted to remain, concluding that there is nothing they have wanted to do that they were unable to do as part of county government, and that there are definite administrative, financial and resource benefits to being part of the County. While not being a 501c3 limits their ability to raise non-governmental funding and embedding case management in county government pushes labor costs up, they don’t have to provide their own IT services, payroll, HR, and other functions covered by the County.

WIOA Title I Data

For the five-year period from 2016 to 2021, Ventura enrolled a total of 2,017 individuals in WIOA Title I services. Notably, less than half (47%) were disadvantaged adults; a majority (54%) were dislocated workers. Of WIOA Title 1 enrollees, 41% received training services. Significantly, disadvantaged adults were more likely than dislocated workers to have received training services (44% vs. 39%).

Of the 834 individuals who received training services during the five-year period:

- *50% were disadvantaged adults*
- *51 were dislocated workers*
- *68% received their training via an Individual Training Account*
- *31% were enrolled in post-secondary programs*
- *30% participated in on-the-job training (OJT) programs (highest of all case study sites)*

Of those receiving training, dislocated workers were more likely than disadvantaged adults to have accessed training through an Individual Training Account (84% vs. 51%) and to have been enrolled in post-secondary education. Notably, far more disadvantaged workers than disadvantaged adults received on-the-job-training (46% vs. 15%).

ADDITIONAL PROMISING PRACTICES

The California Workforce Association, a partner in this evaluation, was charged with gathering information on additional promising practices among the state's AJCCs. The evaluation team believes that these short summaries of leading-edge innovations have potential as additional areas of inquiry for CWDB and the workforce system as a whole. They could be used as the starting points for technical assistance regarding how new strategies are formed.

Fresno Regional Workforce Development Board – Workforce Connection Centers: Exemplary Partnership between Workforce Development and Organized Labor

While it is not uncommon for workforce agencies to work with union representatives, it is out of the ordinary for organized labor, the local board, and AJCC service provider staff to work together seamlessly, effectively, and consistently for more than a decade. While the workforce development system and labor both have a strong worker focus, approaches can vary, which may result in fewer than the ideal number of collaborations. The “Valley Build” construction careers initiative in Fresno County is a uniquely effective partnership with a 14-year track record. Valley Build offers multi-craft core curriculum (MC3) pre-apprenticeship training to job seekers who, upon completion, are referred for employment and apprenticeship opportunities to local unions that represent the various trades. The AJCC sources candidates, the Building Trades Council leads the training, and the Fresno Regional Workforce Development Board manages the logistics for this successful program. The partners attribute their enduring collaboration to an environment of trust, in which each stakeholder consistently fulfills its obligation to providing quality services that lead to good jobs.

Kern, Inyo, Mono (KIM) Workforce Development Board – Recycling Lives:

Diversify Funding with Sector-Based Paid Transitional Job Training Program

KIM and its AJCC, in partnership with Bakersfield Adult School (BAS), launched Recycling Lives in June 2021, a sector-based training program and social enterprise. With donated equipment and CDBG funding from another County department, Recycling Lives has transformed into a paid Transitional Job training program. Currently in its fourth cohort, the program has an 85% employment success rate. Students are recruited through the AJCC and/or BAS and typically have significant barriers to employment. Recycling Lives teaches students how to recycle glass into construction-grade materials as well as goal setting, resource allocation, organizational

structure and management techniques. Additionally, students have the opportunity to become certified in Forklift Operations, CPR, Safety, and warehouse procedures, increasing their marketability for the Warehouse/Logistics Industry, a growth sector as identified by Kern County's most recent economic development study. Today, KIM is in the process of finalizing a contract to sell all its recycled product. The revenue generated from this agreement will transition Recycling Lives into a self-sustaining program.

Kings County Workforce Development Board – Job Training Office:

Uniquely Effective “Customers First!” Approach to One-Stop Service Delivery

Although the full range of COVID-19's long-lasting effects on society remain to be seen, what appears to be clear from the vantage point of the public workforce development system is that necessity, once again, proved to be the mother of invention. In short order, just days following the onset of the pandemic in some cases, California's workforce system migrated service delivery to online platforms. Some systems and their AJCCs went even further, as was the case in Kings County. As “contactless” services became the sole method of communicating with job seekers, Kings County's Job Training Office (the AJCC) accelerated its nascent efforts to move as many services as possible to mobile apps. Recognizing the nearly ubiquitous use of smart phones among customers and the preference of many to communicate by text, the AJCC adopted low cost and readily available smartware applications to enroll, communicate with, and provide services to job seekers. This approach has been exceedingly popular with customers and is continuing to evolve.

LA County Workforce Development, Aging & Community Services – Proterra Bus Partnership:

High Road Training Partnership and Career Pathways Lead to Green Jobs

Proterra is a leader in the design and manufacturing of zero-emission electric transit vehicles and EV technology solutions for commercial applications. Recently, in partnership with WDACS and in alignment with local and state plans for the expansion of green technology in the transportation sector, Proterra has expanded its workforce in the Los Angeles basin. As a result, there is a defined need for the development and training of local populations. To this end, the *Introduction to Electric Bus Manufacturing* program was created in partnership with Proterra, Los Angeles County WDACS, US Steelworkers, Jobs to Move America and Citrus College. The program is a pre-apprenticeship that trains local participants in specific skill sets: blueprint reading, composites, fabrication, assembly, troubleshooting, electrical theory and manufacturing principles. Participants are sourced through the local AJCCs, ensuring access for those with significant need. Upon completion, graduates are prepared to enter a career in the manufacturing and green technology sectors. As an employer partner for the program, Proterra has the first opportunity to interview and hire graduates.

Madera County Workforce Development Board – Workforce Assistance Center:

Co-location with Adult Education inside the AJCC

What if the adult school were located inside the AJCC? That's a question that was asked and answered in 2017, when both the one-stop career center and Madera Adult School found themselves looking for new space. When the new Madera Workforce Assistance Center opened, it boasted more than 8,000 square feet of versatile space, with nearly half of the facility built out to accommodate classrooms and resources necessary for academic and vocational instruction. The mutual benefits of the adult school, WIOA Title I services, and other workforce system partner programs being available under one roof are plentiful. Job seekers using the center become immediately aware of the presence of the adult school, while students working toward attaining a high school credential or completing other coursework see firsthand the numerous career exploration and resources the workforce partners offer onsite. The co-location has ultimately led to many opportunities for AJCC and adult school staff to collaborate.

Northern Rural Training & Employment Consortium (NoRTEC) – Grow Manufacturing Initiative (GMI):

Sector Training and Recruitment Drive Industry Growth

The Grow Manufacturing Initiative was created to address a lack of skilled labor in the northern region of California, which is a significant barrier to industry growth. The initial project, which started out as the North State Manufacturers Directory, served as a connection point for businesses to build locally based supply chains, collaborate on innovation, and share technology. GMI members include manufacturers, suppliers, financial institutions, professional consultants, education, and private organizations. Included in that group is NoRTEC and its network of AJCCs. GMI has grown in scope and projects, including advocacy and outreach to educators and students creating a pipeline of local talent trained on the latest manufacturing technology. One of the primary goals of this partnership is to connect middle and high school students with valuable, real-world experiences both inside and outside the classroom. This is accomplished through a mix of classroom presentations, events, job shadowing opportunities, and manufacturing plant tours. GMI is dedicated to inspiring STEM education and engineering pathways for Northern California students.

San Joaquin County Workforce Development Board – WorkNet Centers:

A Uniquely Effective Partnership with the County Child Support Services Agency

It is likely that the California Workforce Development Board had little expectation that its 2019 instructions for biennial amendments to local plans would transform the relationship between two departments of San Joaquin County and strengthen service delivery in ways that would not only help individuals but improve economic conditions for whole families. Local workforce development boards preparing to amend their plans were notified by the State Board that it had recently entered into an MOU with the State Child Support Services agency, and that similar agreements should be developed at the local level to improve employment prospects for non-custodial parents in arrears on support payments. As a result, WDB leaders, Child Support Services, and representatives of the family courts began to put their heads together about ways to effectively collaborate. Soon thereafter, several Child Support Services staff moved into the AJCC in Tracy, converting the center into a full-service location where sanctioned individuals could make arrangements concerning child support payments upon enrollment in AJCC services to prepare for and search for work.

Santa Cruz Workforce Development Board – Community College Co-location:

Mutually Beneficial Co-location Drives Strong Partnership with Community College

The Santa Cruz Workforce Development Board has funded a WIOA Title I staff person co-located at Cabrillo College's Student Resource and Support Network. This on-campus presence has been integral to helping those with significant barriers access Cabrillo's training programs, and has resulted in a deeper connection between Cabrillo College, the AJCCs and the local board. WIOA Title I case managers and the academic advisor work in partnership to provide coordinated services. WIOA-eligible students are given priority registration for the college; a Cabrillo academic advisor who is familiar with WIOA works with participants and the WIOA staff to prepare student Education/Career Plans. Coordinated support and wraparound services, including vouchers for use at the Cabrillo College Bookstore, are provided. Cabrillo also helps recruit and refer WIOA-eligible participants to Goodwill Southern California, Santa Cruz's career services provider and operator for the local AJCCs. The student community at-large benefits from the on-campus presence at the Student Resource and Support Network, as it is open to all students, with general services including information on WIOA-funded and Cabrillo College programs as well as information on, and assistance applying for, financial aid such as Pell Grants and Promise Grants.

SELACO Workforce Development Board – System Management Team:

Utilizing the One-Stop Operator Function to Manage Partnerships

While some local workforce systems are still working to understand how to best deploy the one-stop operator function on behalf of their AJCCs, SELACO WDB and its comprehensive center recognized, shortly after the implementation of WIOA, opportunities for the OSO to act as the convener of leaders. Choosing the moniker "System Management Team" (SMT) to identify the AJCC partners who meet quarterly to discuss one-stop operations, WDB and AJCC management, along with the Praxis Group, which serves as the contracted AJCC operator, intentionally elevated the role of those participating on the SMT to that of leader of the AJCC

system for Southeast Los Angeles County. Convenings of the team bring a wide range of issues before the system managers, who make decisions concerning AJCC/system operations, collaboration, and the direction of the partnership. These decisions have led a variety of unique initiatives, such as a co-enrollment pilot project between the AJCC's WIOA Title I programs and the California Department of Rehabilitation.

South Bay Workforce Investment Board (SBWIB) – One-Stop Business and Career Centers:

Going the Extra Mile to Bridge the Digital Divide

Over the last quarter of a century, as workforce development and related services have secured a greater presence online, some job seekers have, consistently, been left behind. Individuals lacking digital literacy, hardware, and Internet connections have had less access to information and services than their technology-equipped counterparts. The lack of reliable, low-cost broadband services has been the most daunting of these obstacles. In response to this persistent problem, in 2016, SBWIB, in collaboration with the South Bay Cities Council of Governments, launched the development of the South Bay Fiber Optic Network. This one hundred mile stretch of fiber optic cable, which provides increased broadband access, was completed in 2020.

Given this capacity, the South Bay Business and Career Centers (the AJCCs) stayed open throughout the pandemic and, for many job seekers, became de facto internet cafes. Not only did job seekers benefit, but so too did many businesses, which seized upon the AJCCs' ability to assemble groups of job candidates during the darkest days of the pandemic. As the economy works to recover, the centers' customers continue to benefit from reliable broadband access.

Verdugo Workforce Development Board - RxResearch Bioscience Apprenticeship and the Verdugo Jobs Center:

Career Pathways with Dedicated Career Program Navigator

Key to Verdugo's Integrated Career Pathways are the STEM Apprenticeships offered by RxResearch, particularly those in the Bioscience (Food Manufacturing). RxResearch offers apprenticeships for new workers to obtain the training and skills for higher-paying science, technology, engineering, and math opportunities in the Bioscience and Food Manufacturing sectors. Their classroom instructor is experienced in training English language learners and participants with disabilities, providing opportunities for underserved populations. Job Center staff specialize in program and career navigation, making for a seamless relationship that nets positive outcomes for target populations under WIOA. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Bioscience companies, including Food Manufacturers, were charged with producing 1,000 meals per day for local facilities. The VWDB's AJCC participants enter customized apprenticeships which vary in length from three months to six months. During the program, apprentices earn and learn in a formal OJT wherein each apprentice is paired with a mentor.

Throughout, RxResearch is the employer of record while local employers provide the OJTs and hire apprentices upon completion.

Solano Workforce Development Board – Improved Services for Individuals with Disabilities: Strategic Partnership and Targeted Outreach

According to the U.S. Census, 7.9% of Solano County residents under 65 have a disability and many experience concurrent barriers to employment. The Solano WDB – through increased coordination with the North Bay Regional Center and DOR – has built intentional partnerships that serve individuals with disabilities by improving access and utilization of the AJCC system and WIOA services. Partners came together as part of a DEA grant for customized earn-and-learn strategies for individuals with disabilities. They recently piloted common case management approaches as part of the AB1111 grant with a local community-based organization's Employment Services staff to enhance services for individuals with mental health conditions. Partners leverage and collaborate on services such as disability advocacy, benefits counseling, job coaching, transportation assistance, and other support services provided by DOR and community-based organizations. The local board has also embarked on an outreach campaign marketing AJCC services specifically targeted to individuals with disabilities seeking employment and training opportunities. The campaign includes publications in the popular regional publication *News & Review (N&R)*.

PART THREE: APPENDICES



APPENDIX A: CAREER SERVICES PROVIDER TYPES

ECONOMIC MARKET	Local Workforce Area	WDB sits	WDB contracts out	Date OSO changed (if changed)	CS Provider	CS provider type
Northern						
	NoRTEC	JPA	Operator + CS		Alliance for Workforce Development	non-profit
	Humboldt County	County	Operator + CS		Shasta PIC dba/ Smart Business Resource Center	non-profit
Sacramento						
	Sacramento City/County	County	CS at some centers		multiple	non-profit + SETA (10 of 14 non-profit)
	North Central Counties	JPA	Operator + CS		multiple	non-profit + government entity (County Office of Education)
	Golden Sierra	JPA	Operator + CS		community college	government entity (community college)
	Yolo County	County	Operator		Does not contract CS	
Bay Area						
	San Jose/Silicon Valley	County	Operator + CS		Eckerd Connects	non-profit
	Alameda County	County	Operator + CS	since 7/1/18	Rubicon Programs, Inc.	non-profit
	Contra Costa County	County	Operator + CS		Rubicon Programs, Inc.	non-profit
	NOVA	JPA	Mixed****		two different models at two AJCCs	non-profit + NOVA
	San Francisco City/County	County/City	Operator + CS		Goodwill	non-profit
	Oakland	City	Operator + CS		Oakland Private Industry Council	non-profit
	Solano County	County	Operator	since 7/1/17	Does not contract CS	
	North Bay	JPA	Operator + CS		multiple (Mendocino PIC; two county HHS agencies)	government entities
	Sonoma County	County	Operator	since 11/1/19	does not contract CS	
	Richmond	City	Neither		Does not contract CS	

ECONOMIC MARKET	Local Workforce Area	WDB sits	WDB contracts out	Date OSO changed (if changed)	CS Provider	CS provider type
San Joaquin Valley						
	Fresno County	<i>County</i>	Operator +CS		Equus (new this year) + Central Labor Council Partnership	<i>for-profit + non-profit</i>
	Kern	<i>JPA</i>	Operator		Does not contract CS	
	Tulare County	<i>County</i>	Career Services	became own OSO 7/1/20	CSET (CAP agency)	non-profit
	San Joaquin County	<i>County</i>	Operator		Does not contract CS	
	Stanislaus County	<i>County</i>	Operator		Does not contract CS	
	Merced County	<i>County</i>	Operator		Does not contract CS	
	Kings County	<i>County</i>	Operator		Does not contract CS	
	Madera County	<i>County</i>	Operator	since 7/1/17	Does not contract CS	
Eastern Sierra						
	Mother Lode	<i>JPA</i>	Operator	since 7/1/17	Does not contract CS	
Coastal						
	Monterey County	<i>County</i>	Operator + CS	since 7/1/18	Equus (since 7/1/19)	for-profit
	Santa Barbara County	<i>County</i>	Operator + CS		Equus	for-profit
	Santa Cruz County	<i>County</i>	Operator + CS		Goodwill	non-profit
	San Luis Obispo County	<i>County</i>	Operator + CS		Eckerd Connects	non-profit
	San Benito County	<i>County</i>	Operator	since 7/1/17	does not contract CS	

ECONOMIC MARKET	Local Workforce Area	WDB sits:	WDB contracts out	Date OSO changed (if changed)	CS Provider	CS provider type
Southern (Greater LA)						
	Los Angeles City	<i>City</i>	Operator + CS		12 non-profits; 1 for profit; 1 Social Purpose Corporation (MCS)	mostly non-profit (12 of 14 non-profit)
	Los Angeles County	<i>County</i>	Operator + CS		5 non-profits; 1 Social Purpose Corporation (MCS)	mostly non-profit (5 of 6 non-profit)
	Riverside County	<i>County</i>	Operator + CS	since 7/1/17	Equus	for-profit
	San Bernardino County	<i>County</i>	Operator		does not contract CS	
	Orange County	<i>County</i>	Operator + CS		Managed Career Solutions (MCS)	Social Purpose Corporation
	Ventura County	<i>County</i>	CS		County Human Services Agency provides CS	government entity
	South Bay	<i>JPA</i>	Operator	since 7/1/17	does not contract CS	
	Pacific Gateway	<i>JPA</i>	Operator		does not contract CS	
	SELACO	<i>JPA</i>	Operator		does not contract CS	
	Santa Ana City	<i>City</i>	Neither	since 9/1/19	Contracted OSO until 2019; doesn't contract CS	
	Verdugo	<i>JPA</i>	Operator		does not contract CS	
	Anaheim	<i>City</i>	Operator	since 7/1/18	does not contract CS	
	Foothill	<i>JPA</i>	Operator		does not contract CS	
Southern Border:						
	San Diego County	<i>County</i>	Operator + CS		KRA Corporation	for-profit
	Imperial County	<i>County</i>	Operator	since 1/1/20	County Workforce & Economic Development Department	government entity

Entered Employment rate from PY18 2nd Quarter after exit

APPENDIX B: LOCAL AREA SURVEY DATA

AJCC by Type: C = Comprehensive, Sp = Specialized, A = Affiliate, S = Satellite*

Local Area	2016				2017				2018				2019				2020				2021			
	C	Sp	A	S	C	Sp	A	S	C	Sp	A	S	C	Sp	A	S	C	Sp	A	S	C	Sp	A	S
Alameda	1	3	0	0	1	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Anaheim	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
City of LA**	1		13		1		13		1		13		1		13		1		13		1		13	
City of Oakland	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	0	1	1	2	0	1	1	2	0	1	1	2	0	1	1	2	0
Contra Costa	1	0	0	3	1	0	0	3	1	0	0	10	1	0	0	10	1	0	0	10	1	0	0	10
Foothill	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Fresno	1	1	4	0	1	1	4	0	1	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	4	0	1	0	2	0
Golden Sierra	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Humboldt	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Imperial	3	0	0	2	3	0	0	2	3	0	0	2	3	0	0	2	3	0	0	2	3	0	0	2
Kern-Inyo-Mono	3	2	9	0	3	2	9	0	3	2	9	0	3	2	9	0	3	2	9	0	3	2	9	0
Kings	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
LA County	7	7	3	0	7	6	4	0	7	5	6	0	7	5	7	0	7	5	7	0	7	5	7	0
Madera	1	0	0	2	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Merced	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
Monterey	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	2	1	0	1	2	1	0	1	1
Mother Lode	1	0	3	0	1	0	3	0	1	0	3	0	1	0	3	0	1	0	3	0	1	0	3	0
NCCC	5	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	4	0	0	0
NoRTEC	12	0	0	0	12	0	0	0	12	0	0	0	12	0	0	0	12	0	0	0	12	0	0	0
NOVA	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Orange	1	0	5	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	5	0	1	0	5	0
Pacific Gateway***	1				1				1				1				1				1			
Richmond	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Riverside	2	6	4	0	2	6	4	0	2	6	4	0	2	6	2	2	3	6	1	1	4	6	1	1
San Benito	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
San Bernardino	1	0	2	0	1	0	2	0	1	0	2	0	1	0	2	0	1	0	2	0	1	0	2	0
San Diego	3	0	2	0	3	0	2	1	3	0	2	1	3	0	2	1	3	0	2	1	3	0	2	1
San Francisco	1	0	3	0	1	0	3	0	1	0	3	0	1	0	3	0	1	0	2	0	1	0	2	0
San Joaquin	1	0	0	4	1	0	0	4	1	0	0	4	1	0	0	4	1	0	0	4	1	0	0	4
San Jose	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1
San Luis Obispo	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Santa Ana	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Santa Barbara	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1
Santa Cruz	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0
SELACO	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
SETA	5	8	1	0	12	0	1	0	1	0	12	0	1	0	11	0	1	0	11	0	1	0	12	1

Solano	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0
Sonoma	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
South Bay	1	0	3	0	1	0	3	0	1	0	3	0	1	0	3	0	1	0	3	0	1	0	3	0
Stanislaus	1	0	3	0	1	0	3	0	1	0	3	0	1	0	3	0	1	0	3	0	1	0	3	0
Tulare	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0
Ventura	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0
Verdugo	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1
WANB	3	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	4	0	0	0
Yolo	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Totals by Type**	8		6		9		6		7		7		7		6		7		7		7		7	
	1	29	4	16	0	21	1	15	9	15	4	22	7	15	7	25	8	15	4	23	9	15	3	23
Total AJCCs**	190				187				190				184				190				190			

**Satellite AJCCs are typically community access points, e.g., a staff person co-located part-time at a partner location.*

***Los Angeles reported 14 AJCCS but did not break them down by category. They are arbitrarily represented here as one comprehensive center and 13 affiliate centers.*

****Pacific Gateway declined to respond to the survey. Website indicates they have one AJCC.*

*****Most local areas with multiple AJCCs designate one as their "comprehensive" AJCC to make certification simpler, even though other AJCCs may also function as comprehensive.*

APPENDIX C: LOCAL DIRECTOR INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Questions used in interviews with WDB directors and deputy-level staff

1. *What other sources of funding besides WIOA have you been able to leverage? Can you estimate what percent of your total budget is non-WIOA?*
2. *Do you have other sources of funding for training services besides WIOA? If so, what are they?*
3. *After you learn what your annual WIOA allocation is going to be, what is your process to determine how much of it goes to career services and to training services? If the AJCCs have a role in this process, what is it?*
4. *What are the most common types of training, and courses of training, you support with WIOA dollars? With other dollars? Do you have readily available data on this?*
5. *What is your process for determining, within the overall WIOA training services category, which of the subcategories of training you invest in (e.g., OJT, sector-based training, ITAs)?*
6. *Are you able to say how many people are served by your AJCCs each year in total? Does everyone who receives some type of service get entered into CalJOBS? If not, who is not counted in CalJOBS?*
7. *What is the role of the AJCCs in moving participants into training and supporting them while in training?*
8. *What role do the AJCCs have with respect to any sector-based training in your area?*
9. *According to EDD, you met the 30% training requirement for PY18/19 (the last report available). Does the report accurately capture all of your investments in training, either through WIOA funds or leveraged funds? If not, please explain.*
10. *[For those that show leveraged funds:] How do you obtain the leveraged funds contributions to the 30% requirement?*
11. *[For those that show leveraged funds:] Does the report include all of your leveraged funds or just a portion? What determines the amount of leveraged funds you report? AJCC role?*
12. *How do your AJCCs access and coordinate training provided by other partners?*
13. *Who is responsible for developing career pathways and tracking participants through them, including partner program participation? What is the AJCC role in this process?*
14. *What partnerships have yielded the most productive outcomes for AJCC participants?*
15. *Most cities/counties these days seem to be emphasizing equity. I'm guessing that's true for you as well. What if anything is being done to sharpen the focus on equity by moving marginalized populations into family-supporting jobs?*
16. *Has this impacted AJCC operations? What role do they play in implementing these policies?*
17. *What metrics does the local area employ to track its policy emphases? Are any of these metrics applied to AJCCs (beyond the regular WIOA performance measures)?*
18. *How do AJCC operations reflect the growth sectors with good paying jobs that the local area has identified?*

19. *What recent adjustments, if any, have you made to local area AJCC operations or services to reflect the changing needs of your area?*
20. *Do you have any plans to shift AJCC operations to respond to growth sectors, or to meet the need of particular target populations?*
21. *Are you considering different resource models or allocations (e.g., creating more satellite centers; developing new hybrids of in-person and remote services)?*
22. *What innovations are you most proud of? Are the AJCCs involved in them?*
23. *Do you have any participant-based HRTPs serving your local area now?*
24. *If so, what is the role of your AJCCs with respect to them? The board?*
25. *Do you have any relationships with non-participant HRTPs? If so, please describe.*
26. *Many sector partnerships have reached the point of training individuals. Are any of your sector partnerships at that stage? Which ones?*
27. *For sector partnerships offering training, or planning to do so, what is the role of your AJCCs?*
28. *Some sector partnerships include career pathways and progressive development of trainees.*
29. *Are any of your partnerships at that stage? If so, what is the role of the AJCCs in that?*
30. *Are there measures that are used to track these jobs, or extracts of existing measures that apply to how well AJCCs are serving (1) these sectors, or (2) various target populations?*
31. *How do you decide where your AJCCs will be located and what the mix will be of comprehensive, affiliate and satellite centers?*
32. *What was your experience with remote service during the pandemic and what of that model might influence changes in your delivery model?*
33. *Do you track what we would call infrastructure costs – rent, etc. to determine the best “bang for the buck” from a particular service model?*
34. *What drives changes in your infrastructure model?*

APPENDIX D: FULL CASE STUDY INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview Questions (General)

Some variation on these general questions would be used with most interviewees, before moving into topics more specific to their role. Depending on the interviewee, it is likely that not all questions in each set will end up being asked. (Note: we've used "AJCCs" plural here, since most local areas have more than one, but we recognize that in some cases we will be focusing on one particular AJCC.)

The AJCCs in Your Local Area

To begin, we would like to discuss how your area's AJCCs are organized and operated.

1. *What is your relationship or role with respect to the AJCCs?*
2. *Who runs/manages the local AJCCs?*
3. *How would you describe the purpose of the AJCCs in your local area?*

Let's talk a little about industry/employer relations

1. *What are the major industry/business sectors in your local area?*
2. *What services do the AJCCs provide to these sectors?*
3. *What role does the local workforce development board play with respect to these sectors?*
4. *What feedback do you hear from employers on the services they receive from the AJCCs?*

Services to jobseekers

1. *What main demographic groups do the AJCCs serve? Are you aware of any priorities of service?*
2. *What do you think are the most important services your AJCCs provide to jobseekers?*
3. *What do you think most jobseekers want from the AJCCs?*

AJCCs' measures of success

1. *What do you use to assess the job your AJCCs are doing?*
2. *What reports on performance at the AJCCs do you see in your role?*
3. *What are you most proud of related to your AJCCs?*
4. *What has been learned during the pandemic that will inform post-pandemic operations?*
5. *Did you see pandemic-driven changes in who is being served or services being provided?*
6. *What implications for the future do you draw from these differences?*

Areas of Focus for Specific Interview Groups

Local Elected Officials or Designees

1. *Jobseeker or business services at your AJCCs.*
2. *Relationship between your local economic development strategies or plans and your AJCCs.*
3. *Key growth industry sectors in your area and the role of your AJCCs in that growth plan.*
4. *Constituent feedback on AJCCs.*
5. *Role of your AJCCs in your jurisdiction's COVID-19 response.*

LWDB Leadership

1. *Board's role with respect to the AJCCs.*
2. *Top strategic objectives of the board, and the AJCCs' role in meeting those objectives.*

3. *Key economic changes predicted in your area; role of AJCCs in addressing those changes.*
4. *Reasons for the types and geographic location of centers in your area.*
5. *Role of your AJCCs in your jurisdiction's COVID-19 response.*

Local Area AJCC Management Staff

1. *Your role in the AJCC operation.*
2. *Process for determining what services will be offered at the AJCC.*
3. *Relationship of the AJCC to the local area's sector initiatives.*
4. *AJCC role in area career pathway development and implementation; staff assigned to this function. Roughly what percent of the AJCC participant load receive career pathway plans?*
5. *Your service mix (e.g., basic career versus individualized career services).*
6. *Data you use to adjust service delivery investments and strategies.*
7. *Projected changes in your local economy in the years ahead and potential impact on AJCCs.*
8. *Adjustments made in response to the pandemic that may carry over into regular operations.*

Local Area Partner Staff Located in the Center

1. *Staffing arrangement for your agency at AJCCs; supervision of your AJCC-located staff.*
2. *Process for career pathway planning at AJCCs; your agency's role in that process.*
3. *Referral process among the partners in the AJCCs; sense of volume.*
4. *Your experience with dual enrollment with WIOA; volume.*
5. *Your agency's relationship to any sector partnerships supported by the workforce board.*
6. *Sharing participant information (assessments, outcomes, etc.) with AJCC staff and partners.*
7. *Learnings about delivering services remotely during the pandemic; what might stick.*
8. *What if anything could be improved at the AJCC?*

Community-Based Organizations

1. *The role your CBO plays with respect to the AJCCs.*
2. *Referral process to the AJCCs; from the AJCCs.*
3. *Your interaction with the AJCCs during the pandemic; what if anything changed.*
4. *Changes that might stay as permanent improvements at the AJCCs.*
5. *Benefits you derive from participating with the AJCCs.*
6. *Best features of the AJCCs; improvements needed at the AJCCs.*

AJCC Frontline Staff

(Questions 1 and 2 set the stage and may guide the rest of the conversation. Remaining question are suggestions if the interviewer needs paths to follow.)

1. *Tell me about your job and responsibilities here at the AJCC.*
2. *Your typical day and activities; how much time on average you spend on each activity.*
3. *Primary purpose of the AJCC.*
4. *Key outcome measures that the AJCC is held accountable for.*
5. *Key goals your customers want to achieve by using the AJCC.*
6. *Attitudes of customers who use the AJCC.*
7. *Job adaptations in response to COVID-19; any that you feel should stick after the pandemic.*

Business Sector Representatives

1. *Services of the AJCCs that you use.*

2. *Your assessment of quality of those services.*
3. *AJCC service delivery changes during the pandemic.*
4. *Changed needs during the pandemic; responsiveness by the AJCCs; lasting impact.*
5. *Your key labor needs in the next few years; AJCCs' role in meeting those needs.*
6. *What have we not covered that you would like to add about the local AJCCs?*

Local Apprenticeship Coordinator

1. *Tell us about the apprenticeship scope and emphasis in this local area.*
2. *Role and scope of pre-apprenticeship training in the area.*
3. *Relationship of apprenticeship programs in your area to the AJCCs.*
4. *Sense of how many customers pursue apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship through AJCCs.*
5. *Major recruitment partners for your apprenticeship programs.*

Note: The plan is to obtain job-seeker perspectives in a small focus group.

Local WDB Directors, Deputies

(These questions are primarily intended for local workforce board directors, but directors may want others, such as board leadership or management staff, to weigh in on some of these as well.)

1. *Given limited resources, what are the local board's strategies for balancing the competing demands of universal service and moving marginalized populations into family-supporting jobs?*
2. *How do these strategies or policies impact AJCC operations?*
3. *What metrics does the local area employ to track its policy emphases? Are these applied to AJCCs (beyond the regular WIOA performance measures)?*
4. *How does your identification of growth sectors offering good jobs inform AJCC operations?*
5. *Are there measures that are used to track these jobs, or extracts of existing measures that apply to how well AJCCs are serving (1) these sectors, or (2) various target populations?*
6. *What have you found to be the most effective AJCC strategies to align with key growth sectors?*
7. *Does the local area have any plans to shift AJCC operations to respond to growth sectors, or to meet the need of particular target populations?*
8. *What recent adjustments, if any, have you made to local area AJCC operations or services to reflect the changing needs of your area?*
9. *Is the local area considering different resource models or allocations (e.g., creating more satellite centers; developing new hybrids of in-person and remote services)?*
10. *What innovations in your local area are you most proud of? Are the AJCCs involved in them?*
11. *Does the local area provide any Title I WIOA services outside of the AJCCs? If so, what are they and how are they tracked?*
12. *How does the local area decide how much Title I WIOA money goes to training services? Do the AJCCs play a role in these decisions? What data is used to make these decisions?*
13. *If the local area contracts out any of its Title I WIOA operations, what role if any does the contractor have in the training allocation decisions?*
14. *How do your AJCCs access training provided by other partners?*
15. *Who is responsible for developing career pathways and tracking participants through them?*
16. *What is the local area's process to track training effectiveness, including partner services? What partnerships have yielded the most productive outcomes for AJCC participants?*
17. *How is the local area planning on building on those successful partnerships?*
18. *What partnerships appear to need the most work to become more effective?*
19. *Are there structural or policy issues that limit the effectiveness of some partnerships?*

20. *Does your local area assess the relative impact of training versus other interventions (basic and intensive career services)? If so, how is this done?*
21. *How does the local area balance the tension behind serving more people with less costly services versus serving fewer people but with more intensive services like training?*

APPENDIX E: AJCC CONTRACTED OSO/ CAREER SERVICES SURVEY

AJCC Evaluation Survey: One-Stop Operator Models PY 19

1. Local Area

2. Local Workforce Development Board Director and Email Address

3. Name(s) and Email Address(es) of Participating Individual(s)

To begin with, we are interested in understanding how your AJCC structure(s) and partnerships may have evolved from 2016 to the present day. Our understanding is that, as of early 2019, your local area **contracted out the function of both AJCC operator and career service provider.**

4. Is this information accurate for 2019? ☐ Yes ☐ No

5. Was it also true in 2016? ☐ Yes ☐ No

6. Is it true today? ☐ Yes ☐ No

7. If these contracting relationships changed at any point between 2016 and today, when did that happen and what was the change?

8. What is your operator’s role (select all that apply)?

☐ Coordinate service delivery of required one-stop partners and providers

☐ Primary provider of services within the center

☐ Provide some of the services within the center

☐ Coordinate service delivery in a multi-center area, which may include affiliate sites

☐ Other _____

9. What are the key functions or any other designated roles of your operator today?

10. How many of each type of AJCC did your local area have in **2016?**

Comprehensive _____ Specialized _____ Affiliate _____ Satellite _____

11. How many of each type of AJCC did your local area have in **2017?**

Comprehensive _____ Specialized _____ Affiliate _____ Satellite _____

12. How many of each type of AJCC did your local area have in **2018?**

Comprehensive _____ Specialized _____ Affiliate _____ Satellite _____

13. How many of each type of AJCC did your local area have in **2019?**

Comprehensive _____ Specialized _____ Affiliate _____ Satellite _____

14. How many of each type of AJCC did your local area have in **2020?**

Comprehensive _____ Specialized _____ Affiliate _____ Satellite _____

15. How many of each type of AJCC does your local area have today?

Comprehensive _____ Specialized _____ Affiliate _____ Satellite _____

AJCC Evaluation Data for each **comprehensive** center in a local area:

Total PY19 Title I Center

WIOA Title I Funds

Operator Costs

Expenditures, including training

funds Name of Center

\$ \$

\$ \$

\$ \$

\$ \$

\$ \$

TOTAL \$ \$

APPENDIX F: LITERATURE SCAN – AJCC PROMISING PRACTICES

Resource	Description
Annual Report Narrative on the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to the United States Department of Labor, Program Year 2019, WorkForce West Virginia	Overview of WorkForce West Virginia (WFWV) practices and programs under WIOA. Highlights new state approach to evaluation and WFWV's efforts to measure employer engagement using a points-based system; collaboration with regional and national VR partners to host Employer Spotlight events and Virtual Job Club services through virtual platforms; and an ongoing partnership with Boston University Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation to provide training aimed at helping people with psychiatric disabilities find and maintain integrated competitive employment.
The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Research Portfolio: A Research Evidence Scan of Key Strategies Related to WIOA, Mathematica and Social Policy Research Associates [file download] Website with link to file download: A Research Evidence Scan of Key Strategies Related to WIOA (mathematica.org)	Scan of existing evidence on key topics related to WIOA programs and services, including case management, integrated service delivery, training programs, and youth services. Includes discussion of promising practices related to case management and improving training completion in career pathways programs.
Missouri Job Center Connect initiative	Documents the overhaul of services provided at Missouri's job centers by streamlining services, tracking customer progress throughout the job seeking process, establishing performance goals that are competitive with other Midwestern states, and enhancing marketing capabilities.
WIOA Annual Report, PY 2019, South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce	Overview of South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce (SCDEW) practices and programs under WIOA. Highlights SCDEW's efforts to revitalize its Connections Points system, which utilized partners to provide UI and job search materials to hard to reach workers; partnerships with community-based organizations to help educate people about the UI claims filing process; a UI Target Messaging system to inform UI applicants about job seeker opportunities; the use of virtual service delivery, including virtual job fairs, and the use of drive-thru and walk-thru models with local employers; professional development for frontline staff to improve service delivery for employers and job seekers; and programs aimed at helping people returning from prison to obtain employment.
Lessons Learned in Workforce Innovation: How Ten Governors are Redesigning Workforce Systems for Better Employment Outcomes, National Governors Association	Among other initiatives, discusses efforts by Hawaii, Illinois, and Missouri to place jobseekers at the center of service delivery design and implementation using a

	mapping process to identify gaps in service delivery and streamline referrals for other public programs.
Memorandum on Delivering Workforce System Employment and Training Services Remotely, National Governors Association	Discusses early state efforts to continue delivering services through job centers during the COVID-19 pandemic.
Embedding Employment Services in an Opioid Treatment Facility, Mathematica	Strategy spotlight on a Pennsylvania partnership utilizing job center staff to provide services on site at an opioid treatment clinic.
Technology-Based Learning in the Public Workforce System: Emerging Policy and Practices in States and American Job Centers, Abt Associates Inc.	Discusses the use of technology-based learning in the public workforce system, including promising strategies to expand the use and increase the effectiveness of technology-based learning in job centers.
Developing American Job Centers in Jails: Implementation of the Linking to Employment Activities Pre-Release (LEAP) Grants, Social Policy Research Associates	Evaluation of the implementation of LEAP Grants, including promising practices for future jail-based employment service efforts.
An Institutional Analysis of American Job Centers: AJC Service Delivery in Rural Areas, Social Policy Research Associates	Overview of job center service delivery in rural areas. Discusses practices to increase customer access to services and facilitating access to partner services.
Study of the American Job Center Customer Experience, IMPAQ International, LLC	Evaluation of the customer experience in job centers. Includes strategies for improving job center services and customers' experiences beyond their visits.
Local Workforce Development Boards and Child Care: Insights from Five Sites, Urban Institute	Case studies illustrate how local workforce development boards can address childcare barriers for potential customers, including area profiles with information on childcare funding and community partnerships.
Customer-Centered Design Workforce Playbook, Code for America [file download] Website with link to file download: WorkforceGPS	Toolkit discusses how workforce practitioners learned about and implemented customer centered design in job center services. Includes examples of effective problem-solving and implementation of the design to improve the job seeker experience.

APPENDIX G: TECHNICAL APPENDIX

This research accessed existing datasets from California, linking them where appropriate, and including classifications identified through the qualitative analysis on whether local areas contracted out specific functions and whether they utilized for- or non-profit organizations to do so. This technical appendix discusses the construction of the administrative datasets, their linkage, and inclusion of local area categories. Researchers then briefly discuss the models used to assess outcomes and impacts.

Construction of Datasets

This research uses several datasets from California (including individual-level data from the Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL) data collected as part of WIOA for both dislocated workers and adults, Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage records, and services received by participants), data from the Census' American Community Survey 5-year estimates (including local area-level data on the median household income and mean earnings), and qualitative information regarding the classification of each local area.

Though PIRL includes copious variables, some sets of these variables applied only to specialty programs such that information from the participants examined. For example, though the PIRL includes the 'current quarter training expenditures,' as a variable, to be reported in dollars, this information was universally absent from the participant data shared. Roughly 25% of all variables provided fell into this category; researchers confirmed with CWDB staff that potentially important and relevant variables (as the example above) were truly not collected.

The PIRL also included some erroneous values for the Workforce Investment Board, with six codes not corresponding to a specific WIB. Researchers worked with CWDB staff to identify a supporting variable to replace the WIB in these cases. A remaining 4,133 individuals (1.58% of the population) lacked enough information to assign them to a specific WIB. Roughly 16% of participants (42,099) within the dataset lacked an exit date, implying they were actively receiving services, with half of those in this group (45%) having a most recent entry date within 2020 or 2021. Researchers only included participants with both of these pieces of information in their analysis. Thus, the original dataset includes 262,274 individuals, but lack of exit or missing local board information reduced the number to 230,912 participants.

Data Linkage

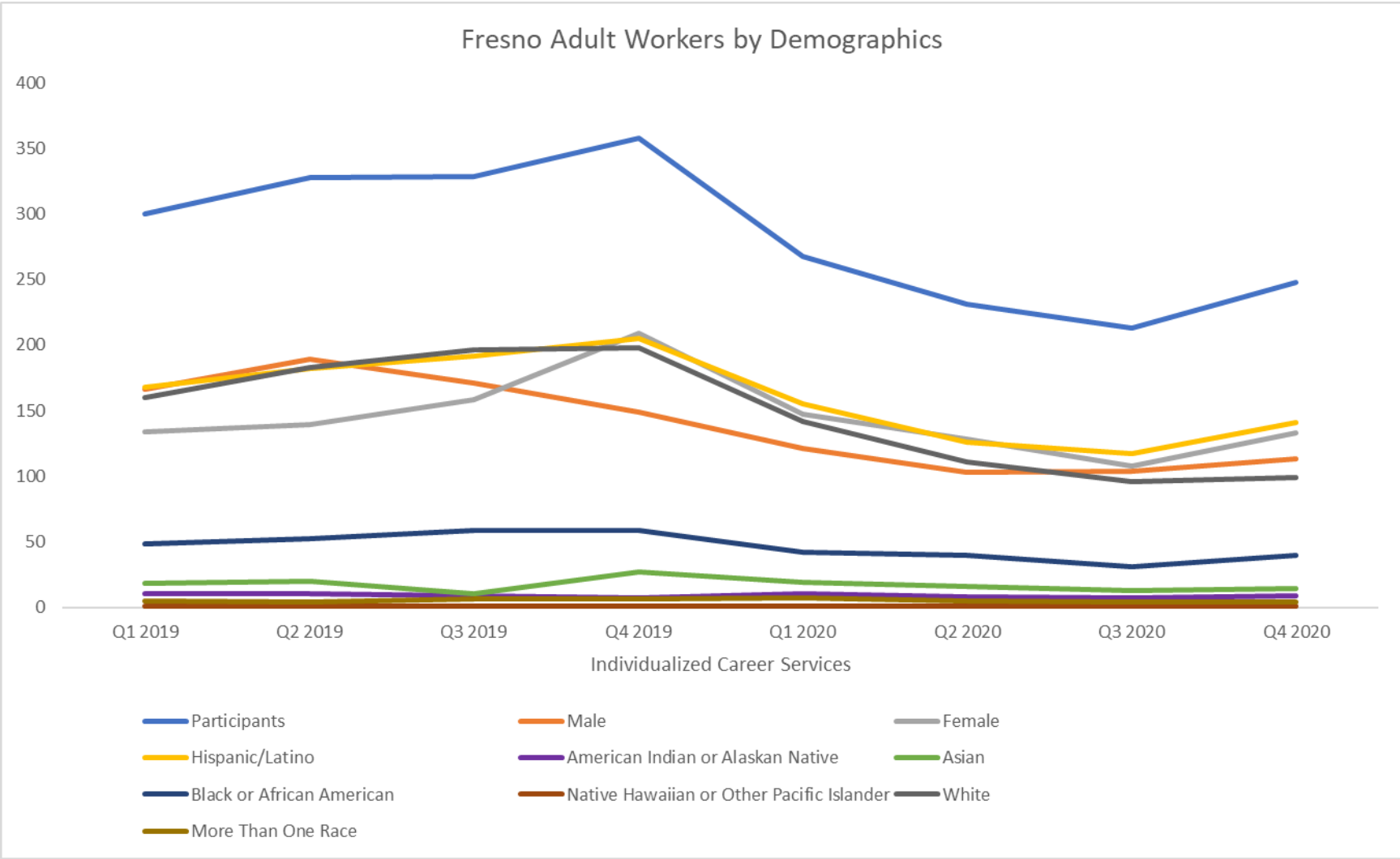
Unemployment Insurance wage records did not perfectly link to the PIRL dataset, with a total of 219,382 PIRL participants having linkable employment and earnings data. A demographic analysis comparing these two groups (those included in the analysis and those not included in the analysis due to some missing data) indicates that the excluded group is more likely to be female, possess a disability, and be black; though statistically significant, these differences are less than three percentage points.

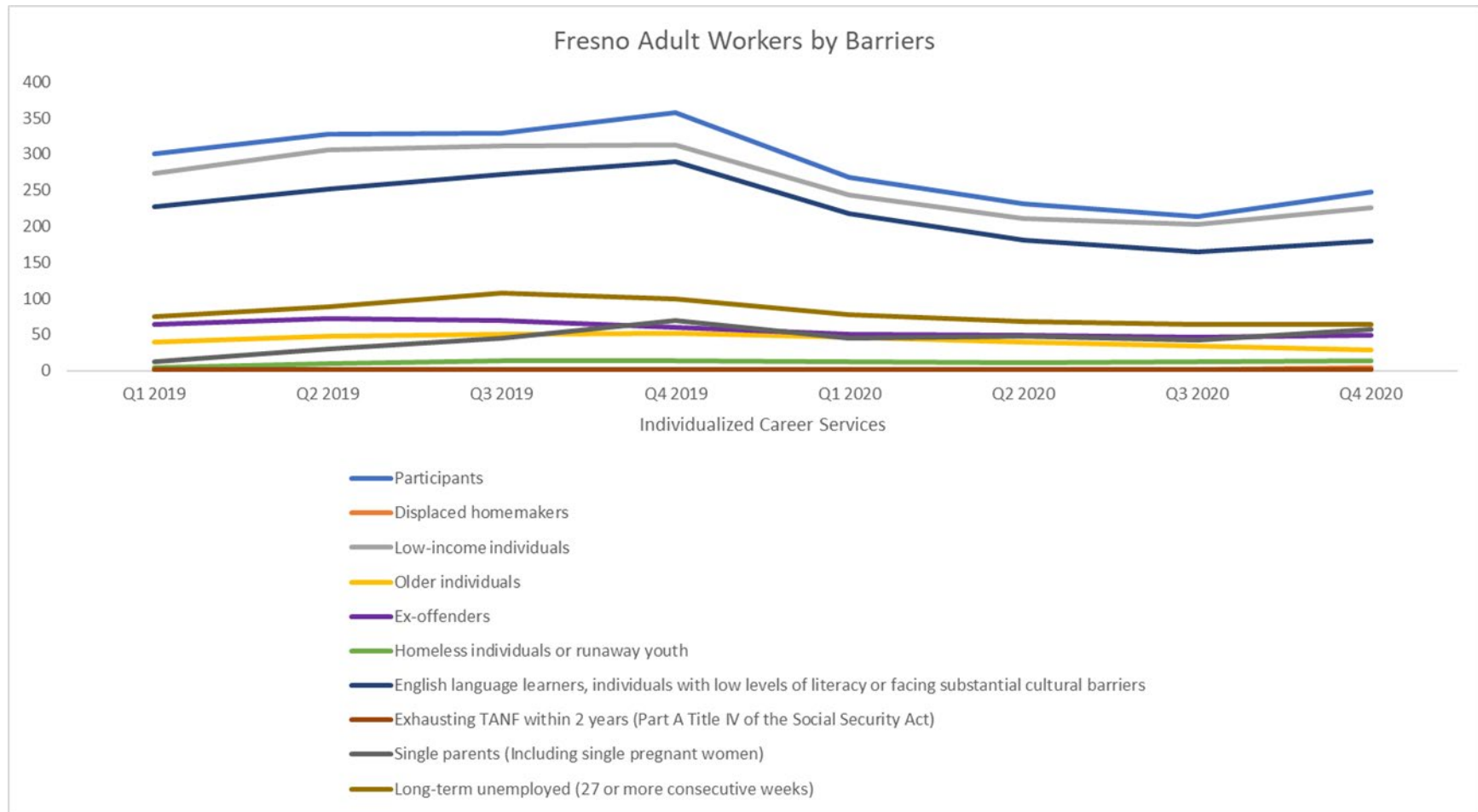
Variable Construction

Though most variables used the analysis were not modified or adjusted for research, the primary ‘constructed’ variable was the qualitatively determined contracting out category. These categories potentially differed by year, with some local areas changing their contracting out status over the years of the evaluation. In these cases, individuals were classified as belonging to these categories based on the type of contracting out status based on their exit date. A majority (73%) of participants exited a local board that contracted out career services, with most of the remainder (23%) doing so from a local board that performed career services in-house. Note a very small group (4%) exited from a local board that used a mixed model for their career services.

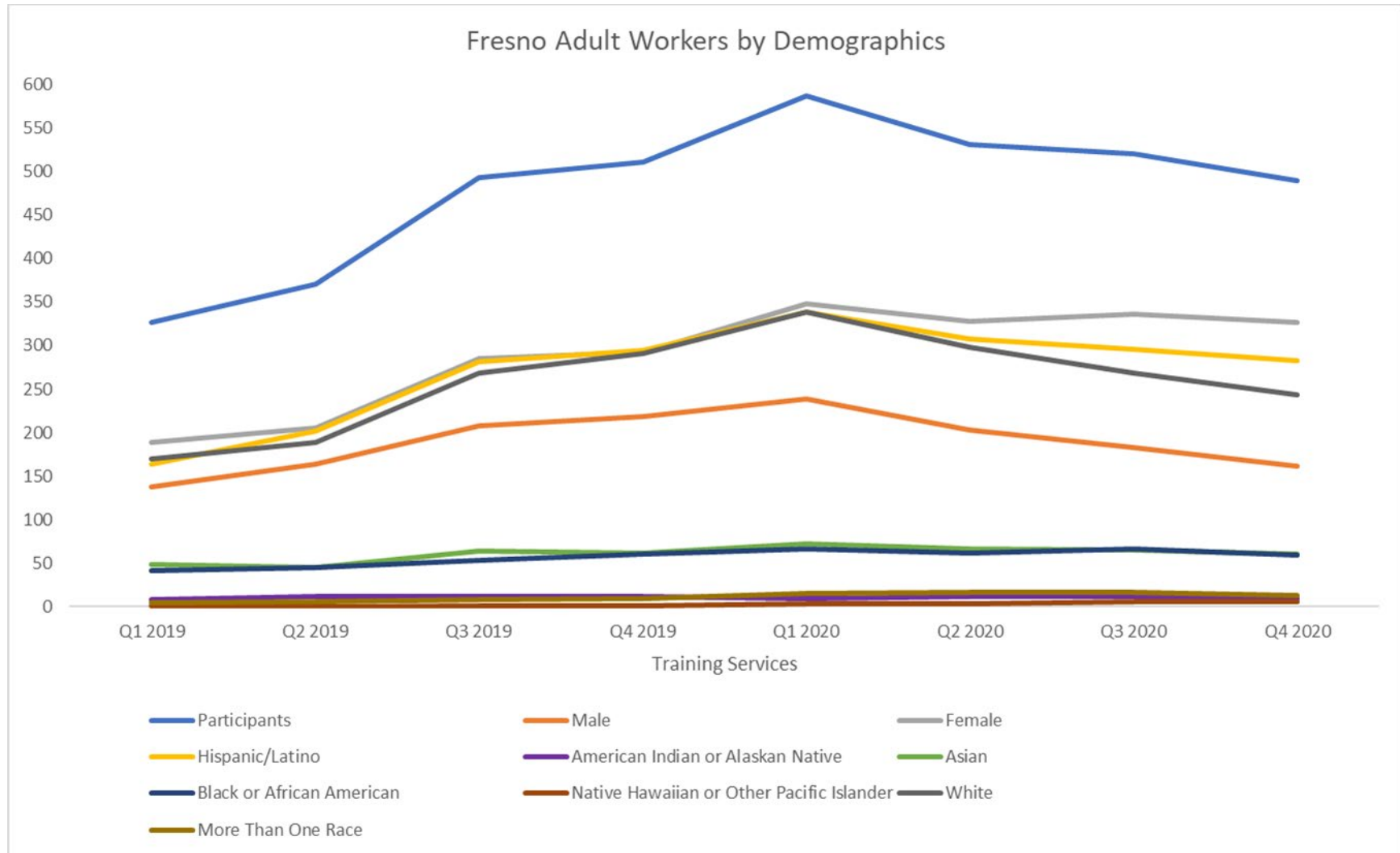
APPENDIX H: DATA FOR CASE STUDY SITES – WIOA ADULT WORKERS 2019-2020

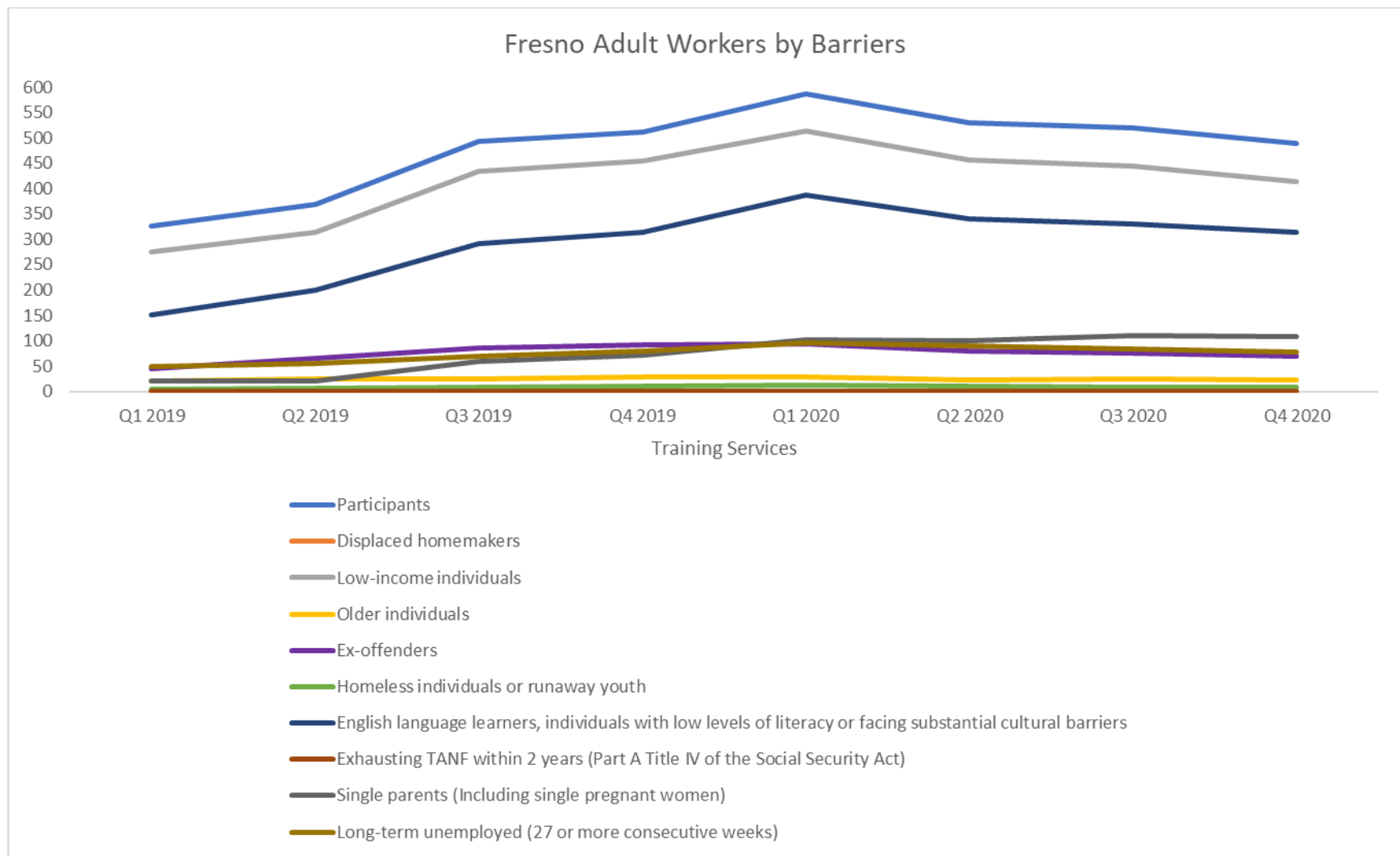
- 1. Individualized Career Services Demographics by Quarter
- 2. Individualized Career Services Barriers by Quarter



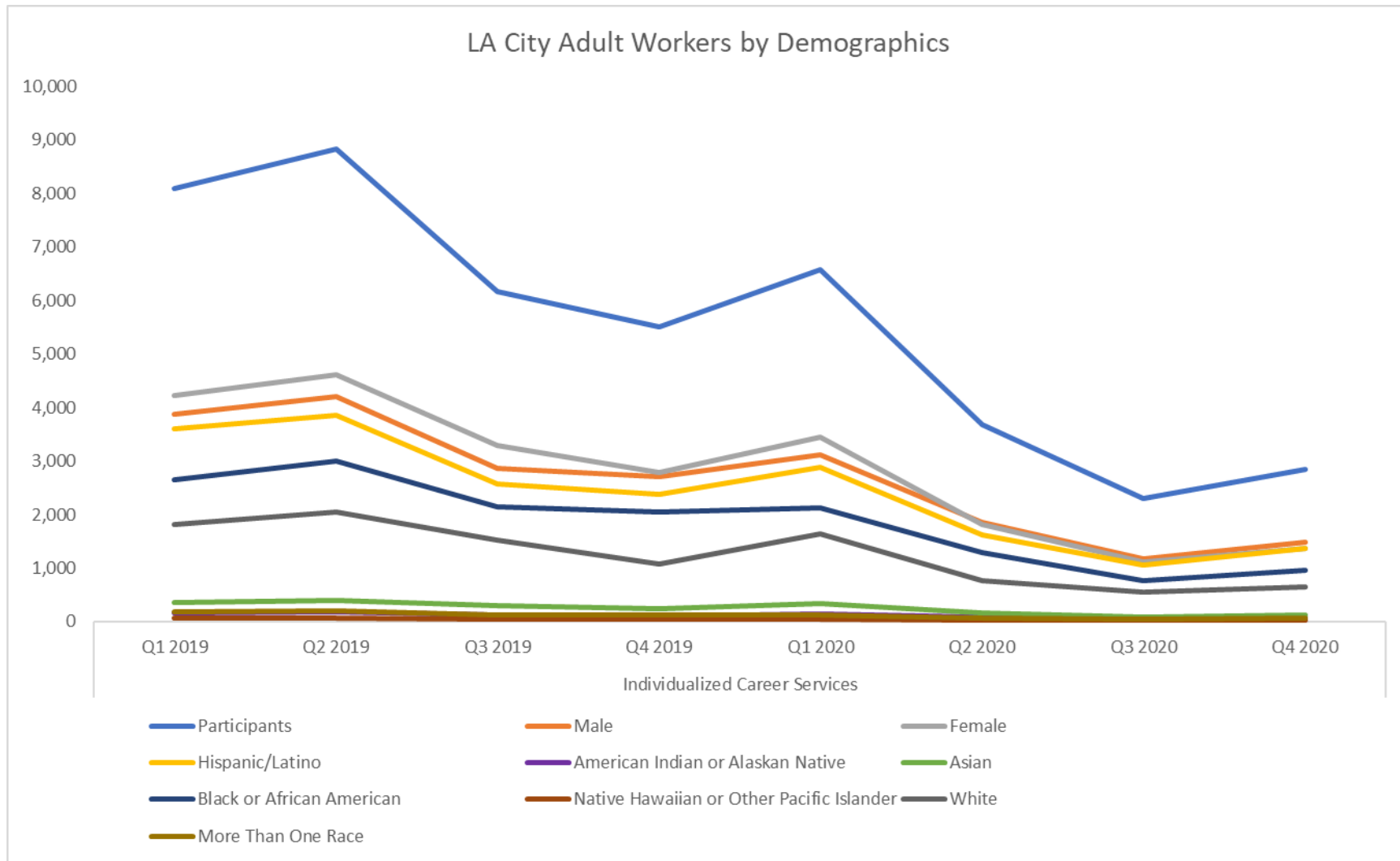


1. Training Services Demographics by Quarter
2. Training Services Barriers by Quarter

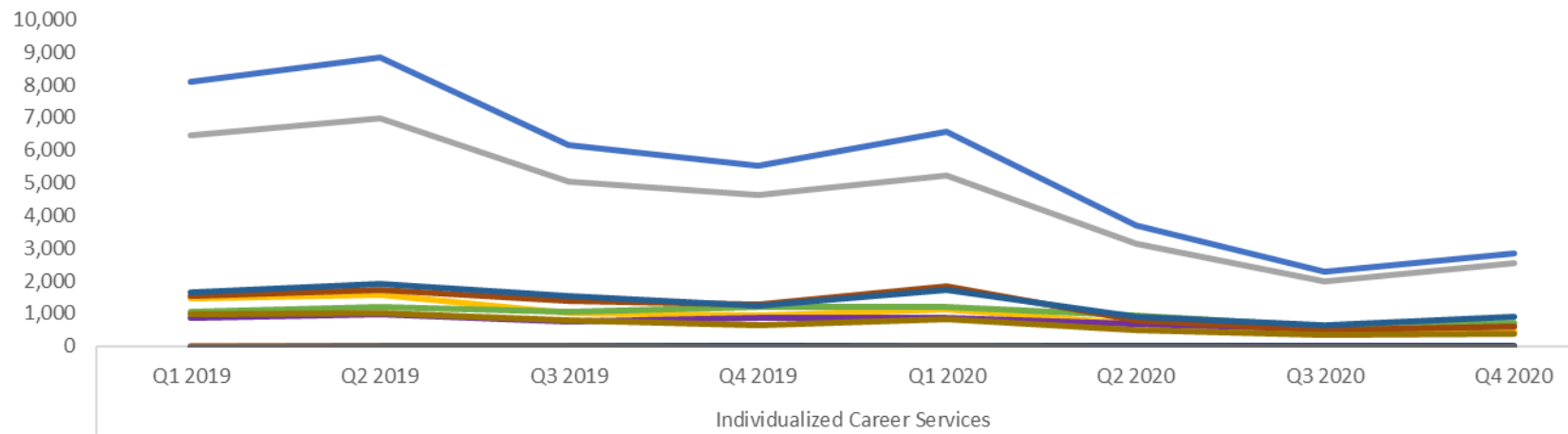




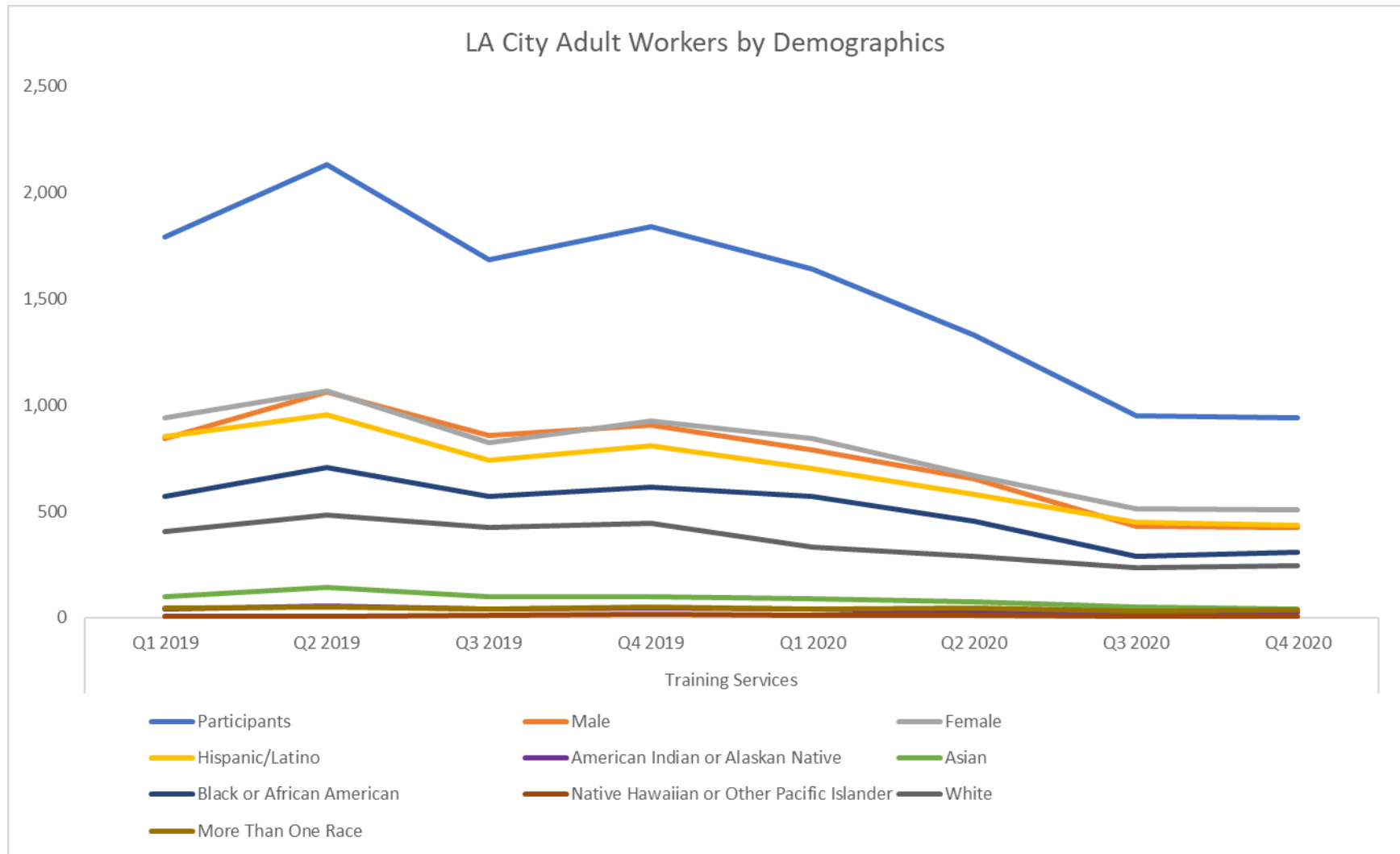
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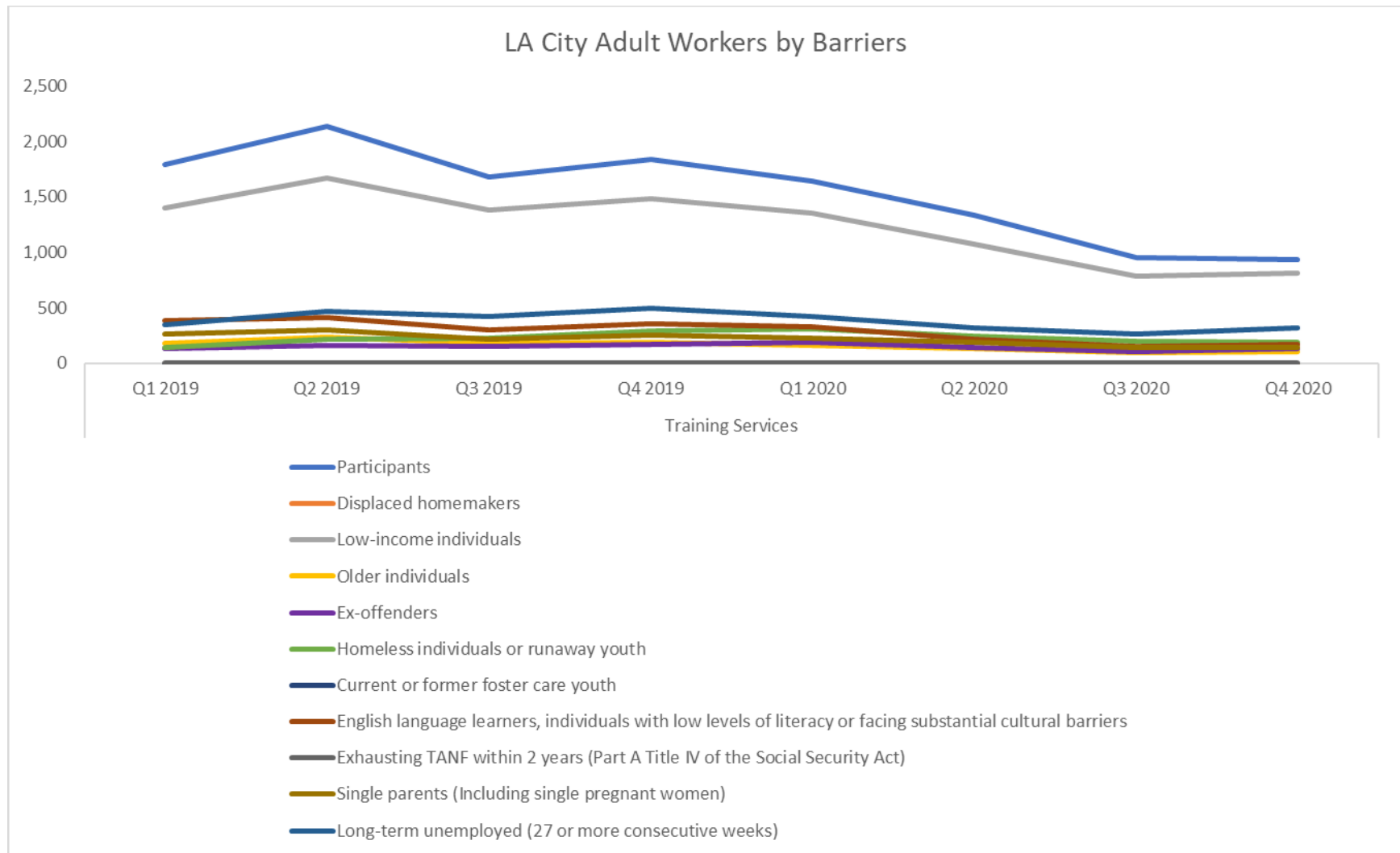


LA City Adult Workers by Barriers

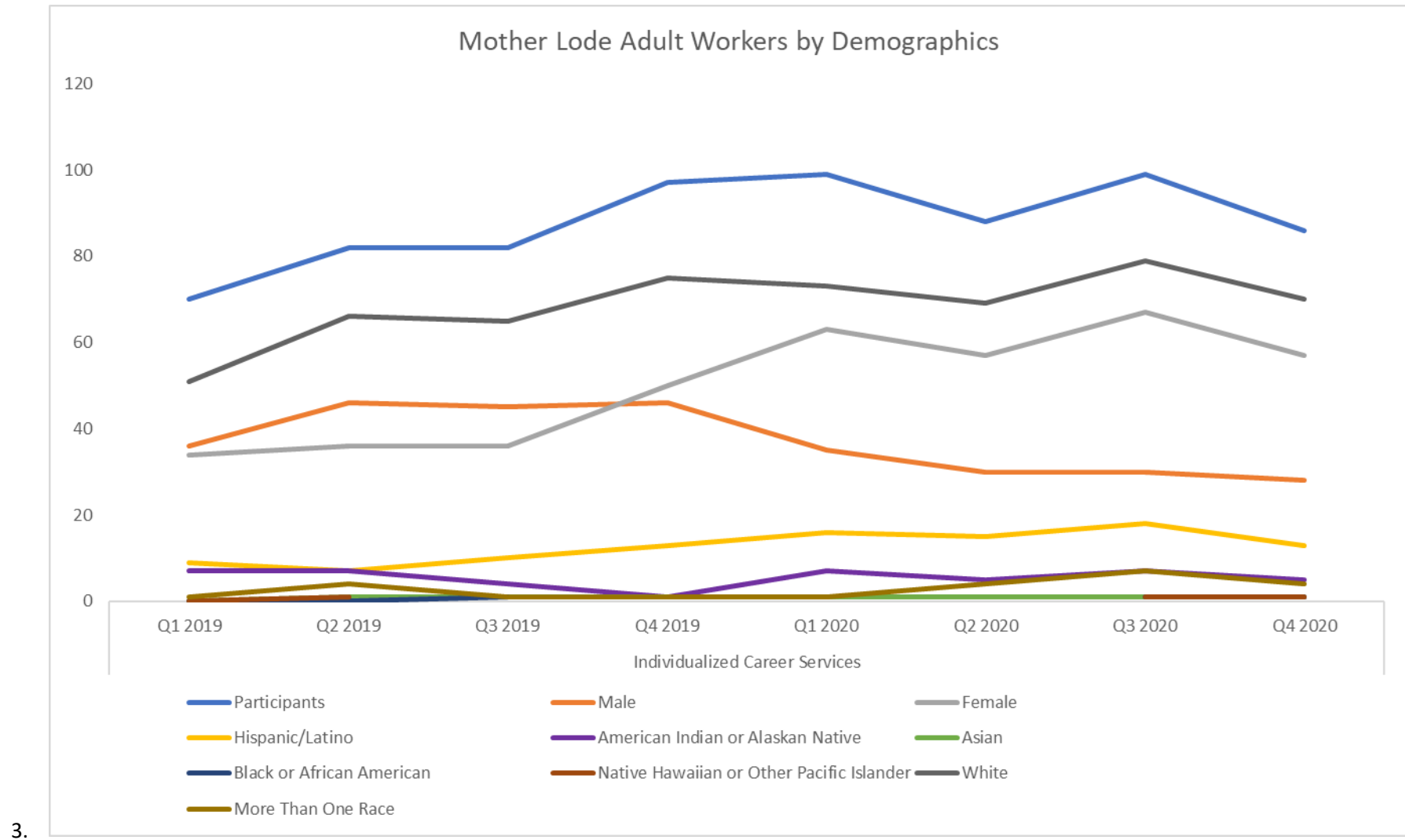


1. Training Services Demographics by Quarter
2. Training Services Barriers by Quarter

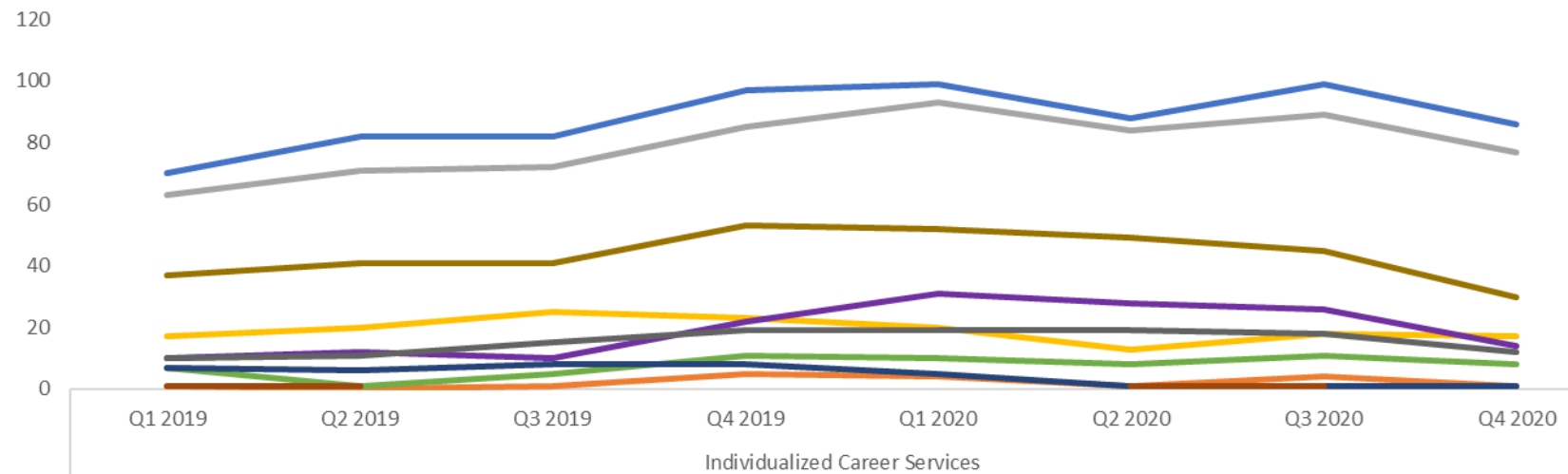




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2. Individualized Career Services Barriers by Quarter

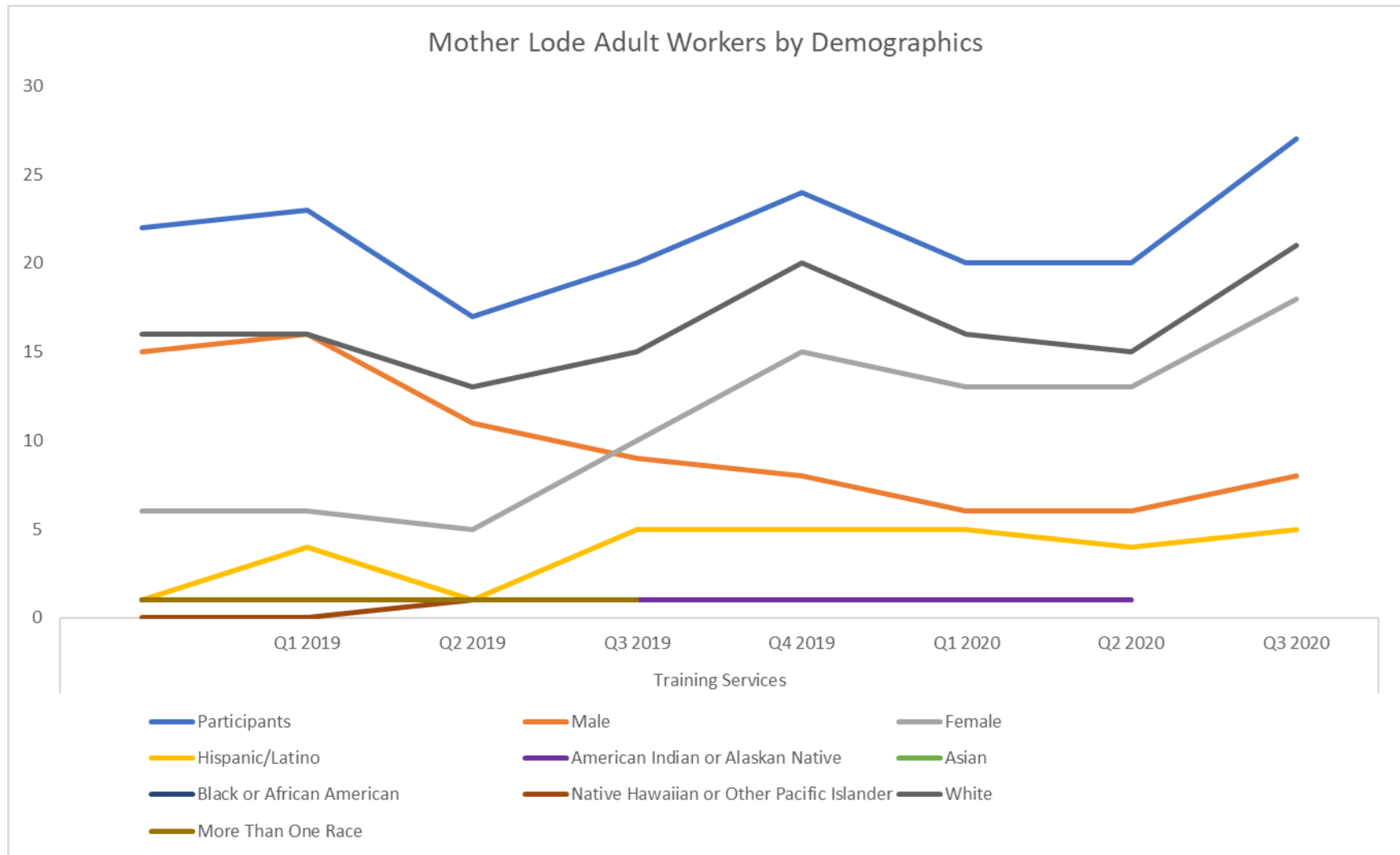


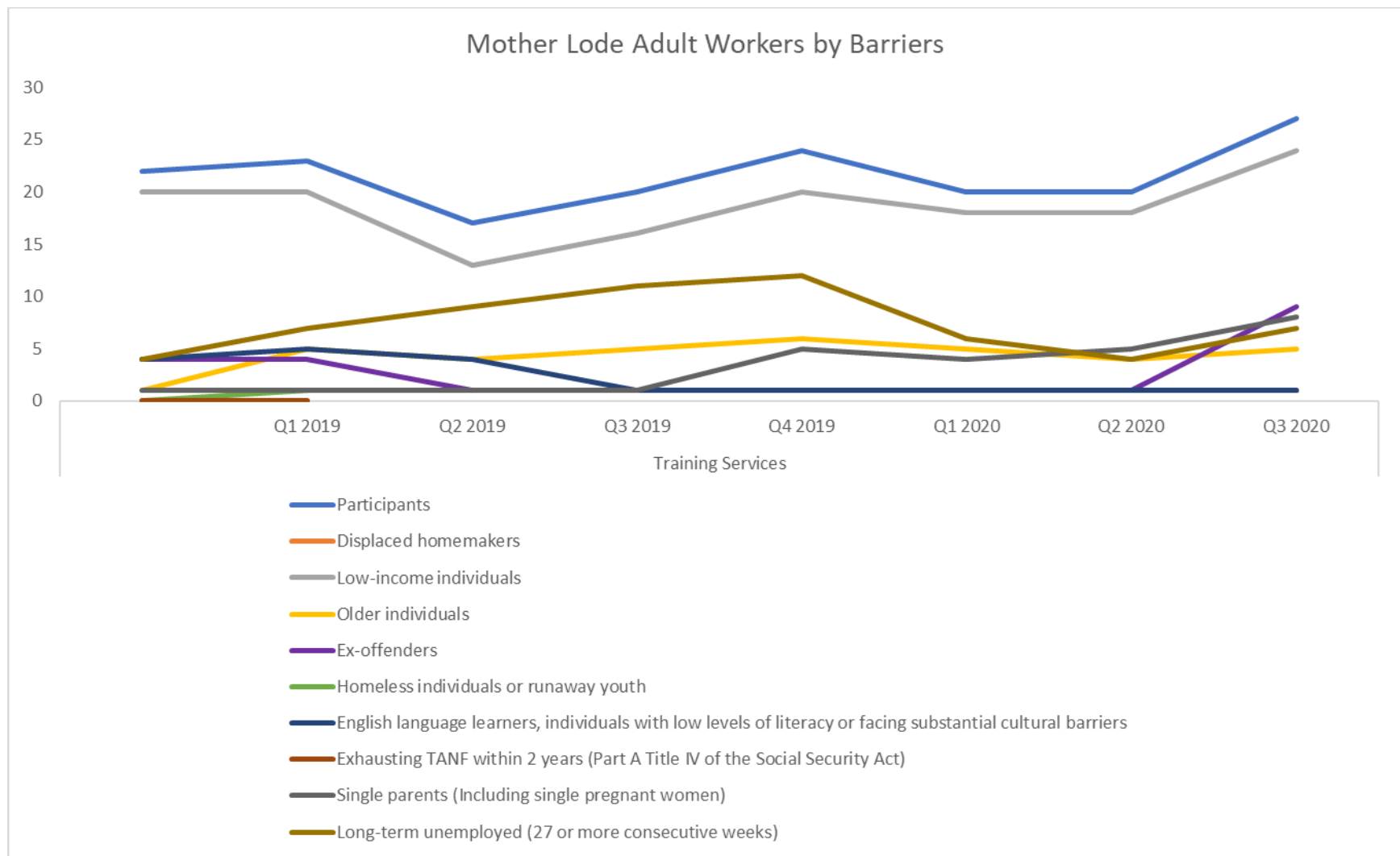
Mother Lode Adult Workers by Barriers



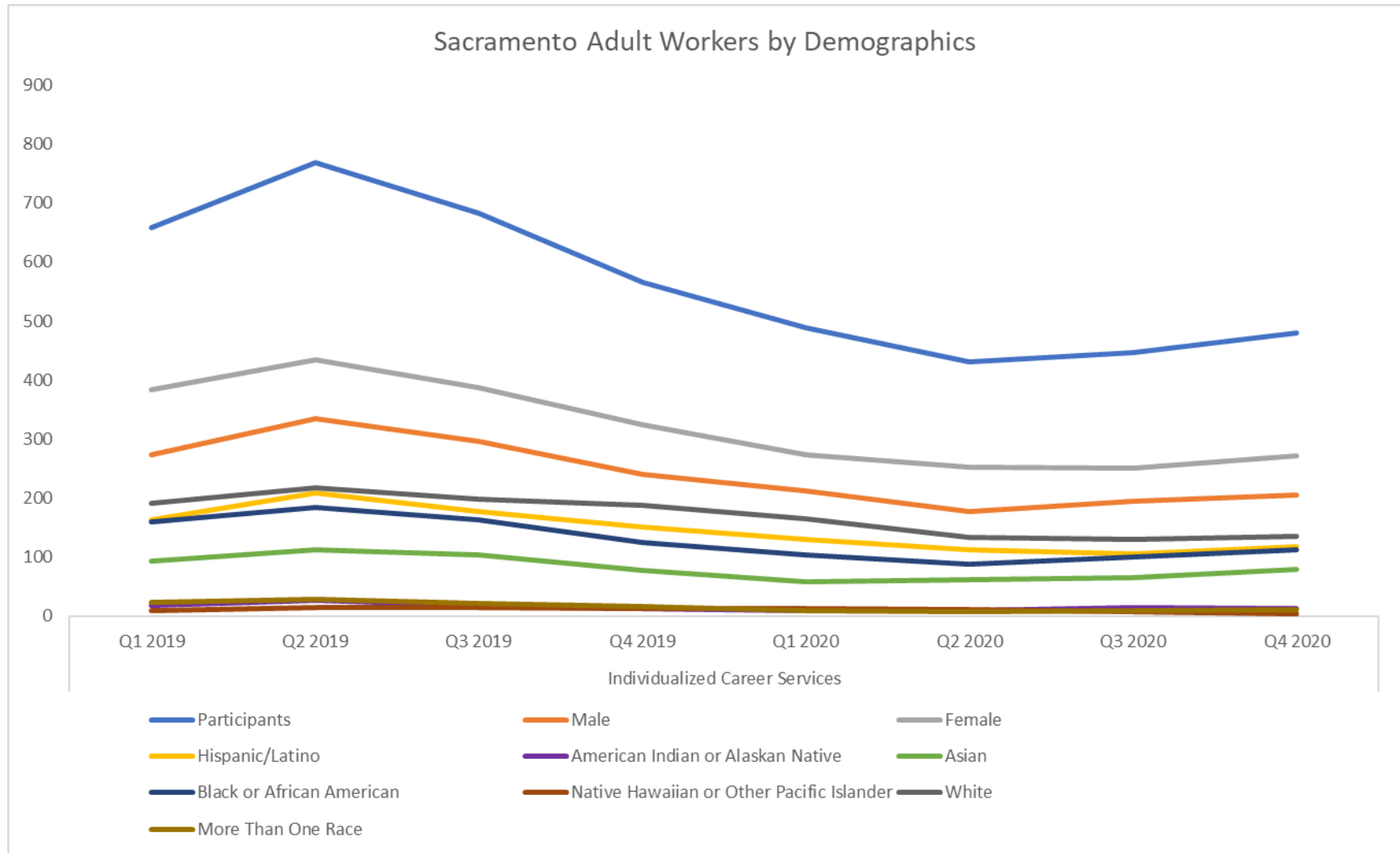
- Participants
- Displaced homemakers
- Low-income individuals
- Older individuals
- Ex-offenders
- Homeless individuals or runaway youth
- English language learners, individuals with low levels of literacy or facing substantial cultural barriers
- Exhausting TANF within 2 years (Part A Title IV of the Social Security Act)
- Single parents (Including single pregnant women)
- Long-term unemployed (27 or more consecutive weeks)

1. Training Services Demographics by Quarter
2. Training Services Barriers by Quarter

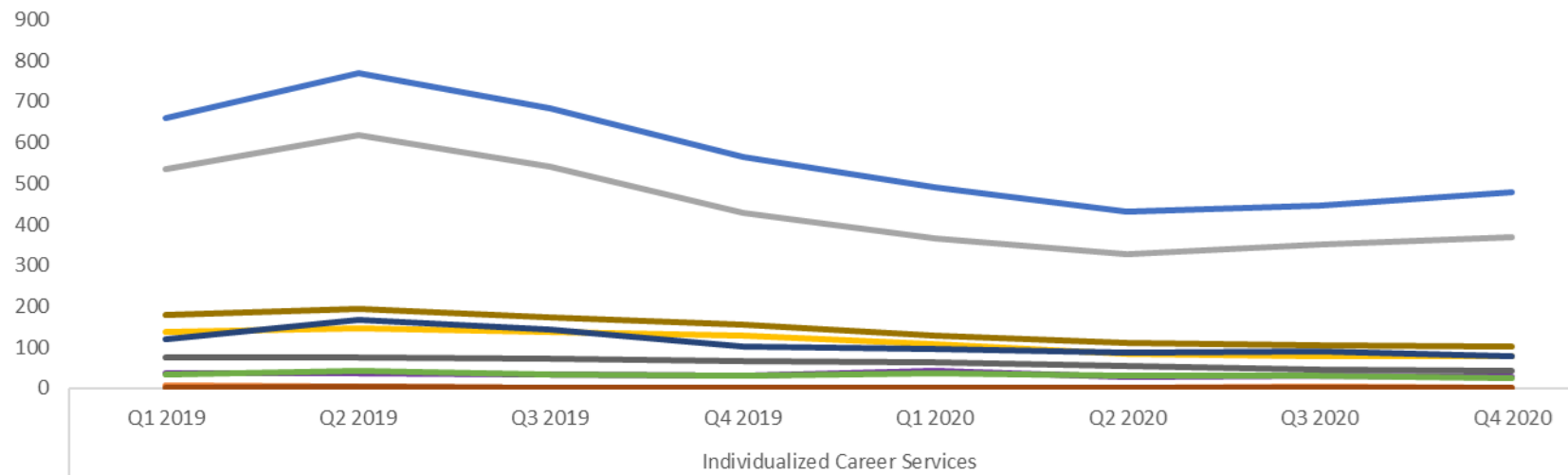




1. Individualized Career Services Demographics by Quarter
2. Individualized Career Services Barriers by Quarter

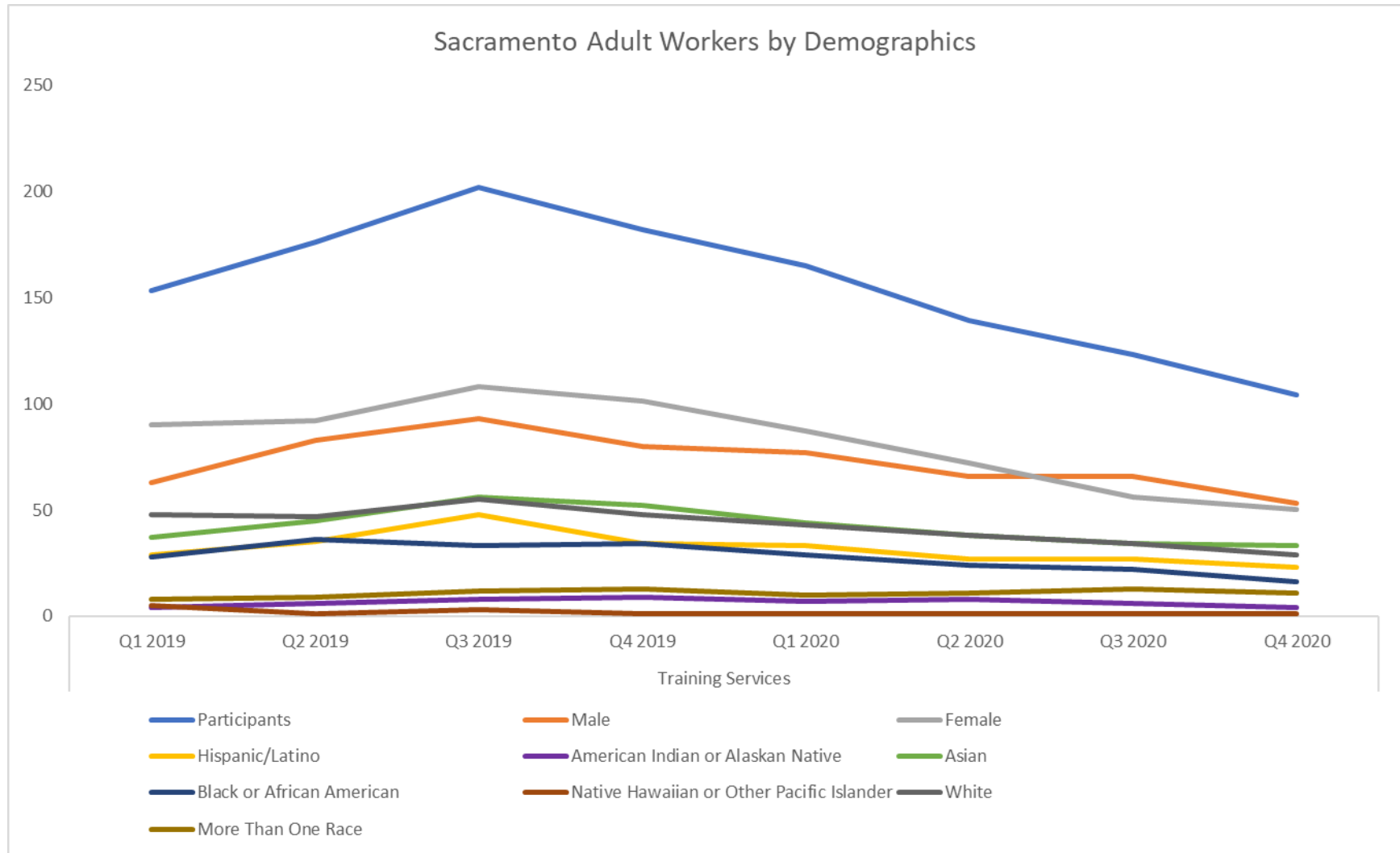


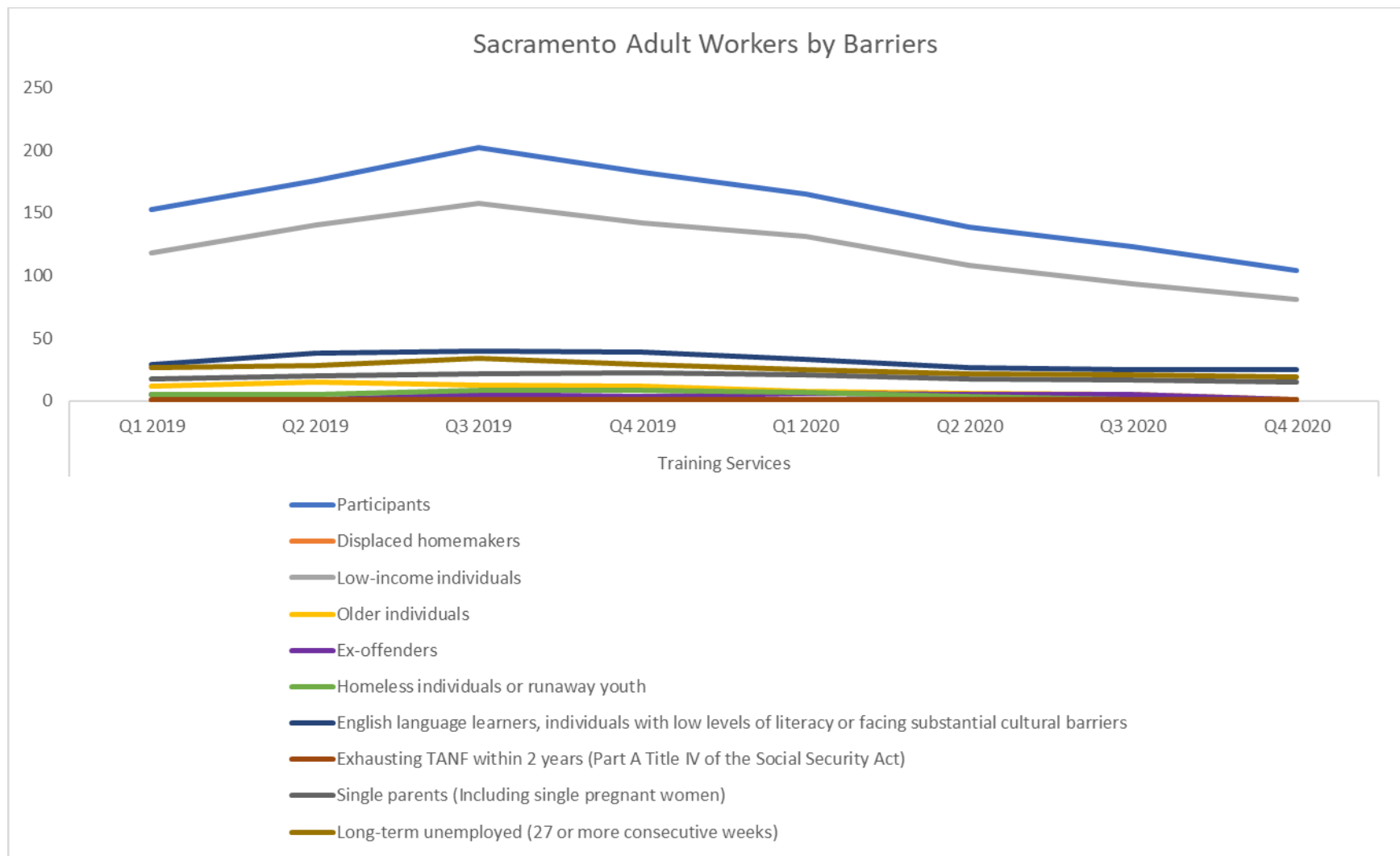
Sacramento Adult Workers by Barriers



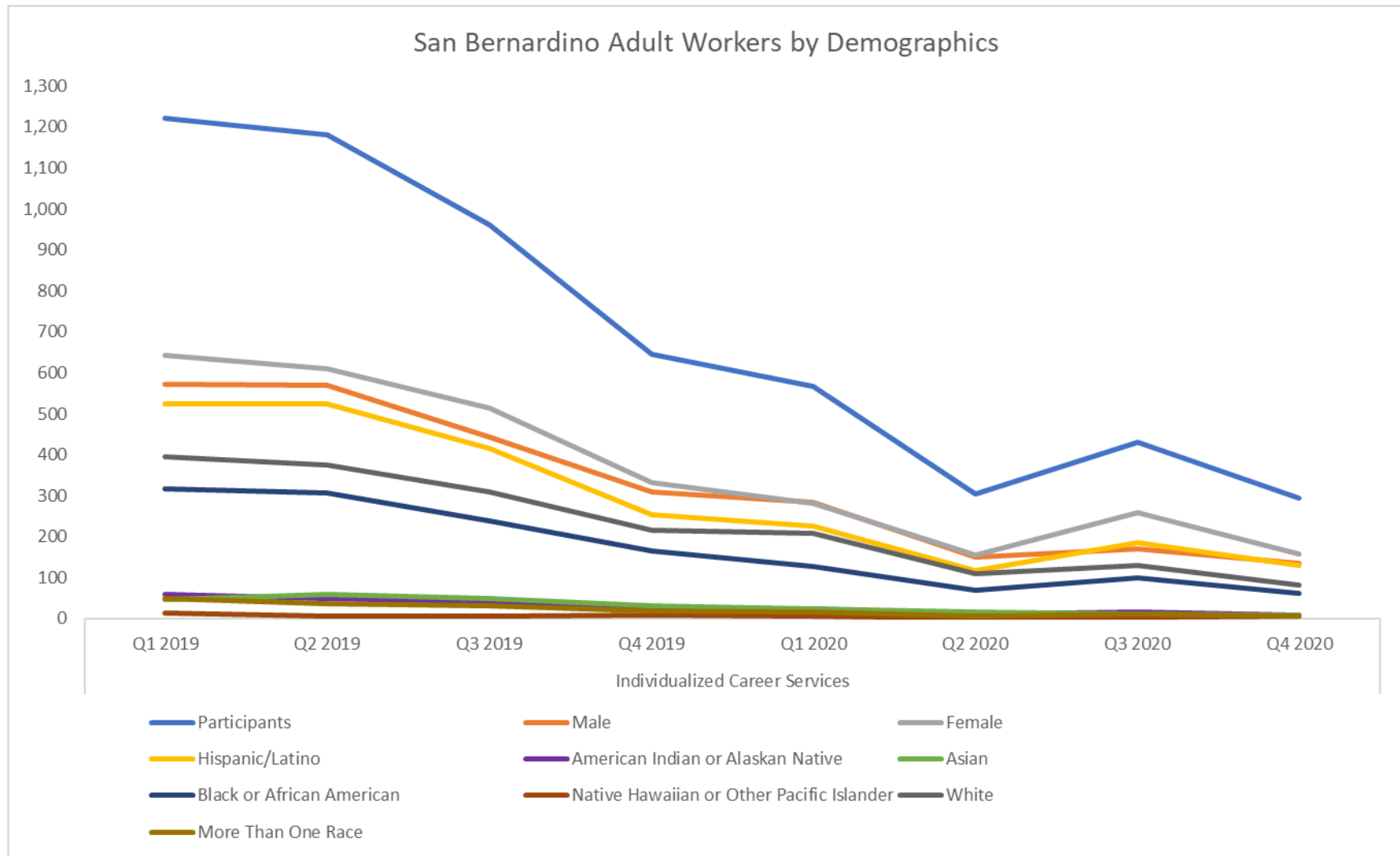
- Participants
- Displaced homemakers
- Low-income individuals
- Older individuals
- Ex-offenders
- Homeless individuals or runaway youth
- English language learners, individuals with low levels of literacy or facing substantial cultural barriers
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- Single parents (Including single pregnant women)
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1. Training Services Demographics by Quarter
2. Training Services Barriers by Quarter

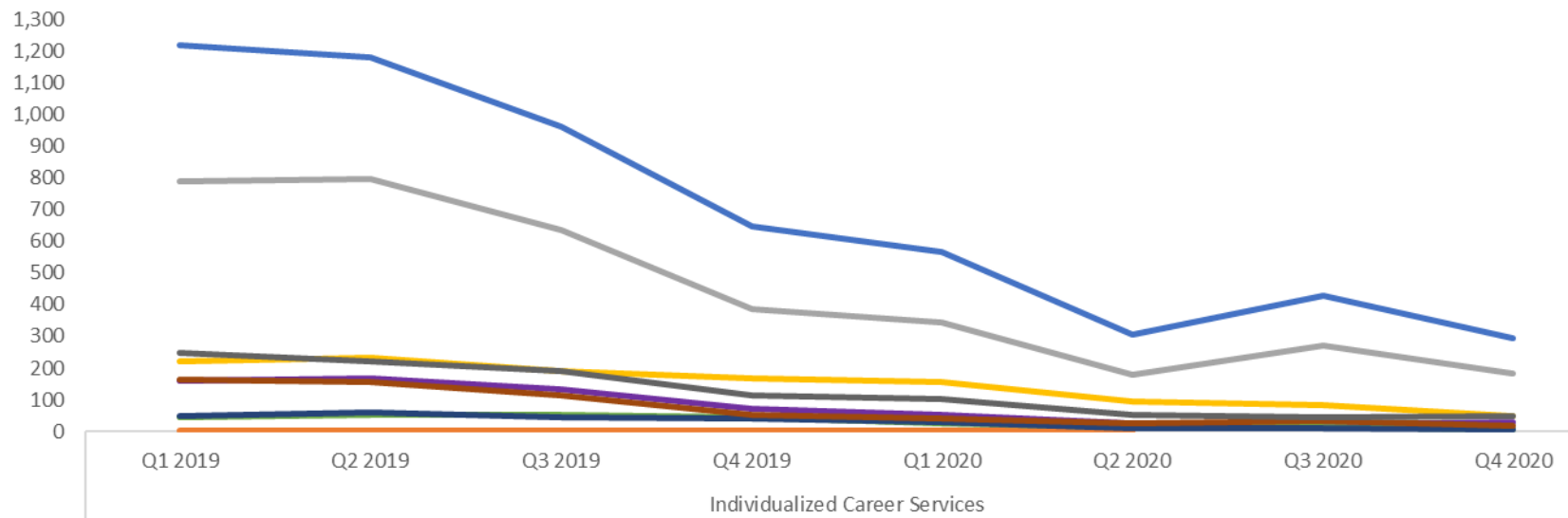




1. Individualized Career Services Demographics by Quarter
2. Individualized Career Services Barriers by Quarter

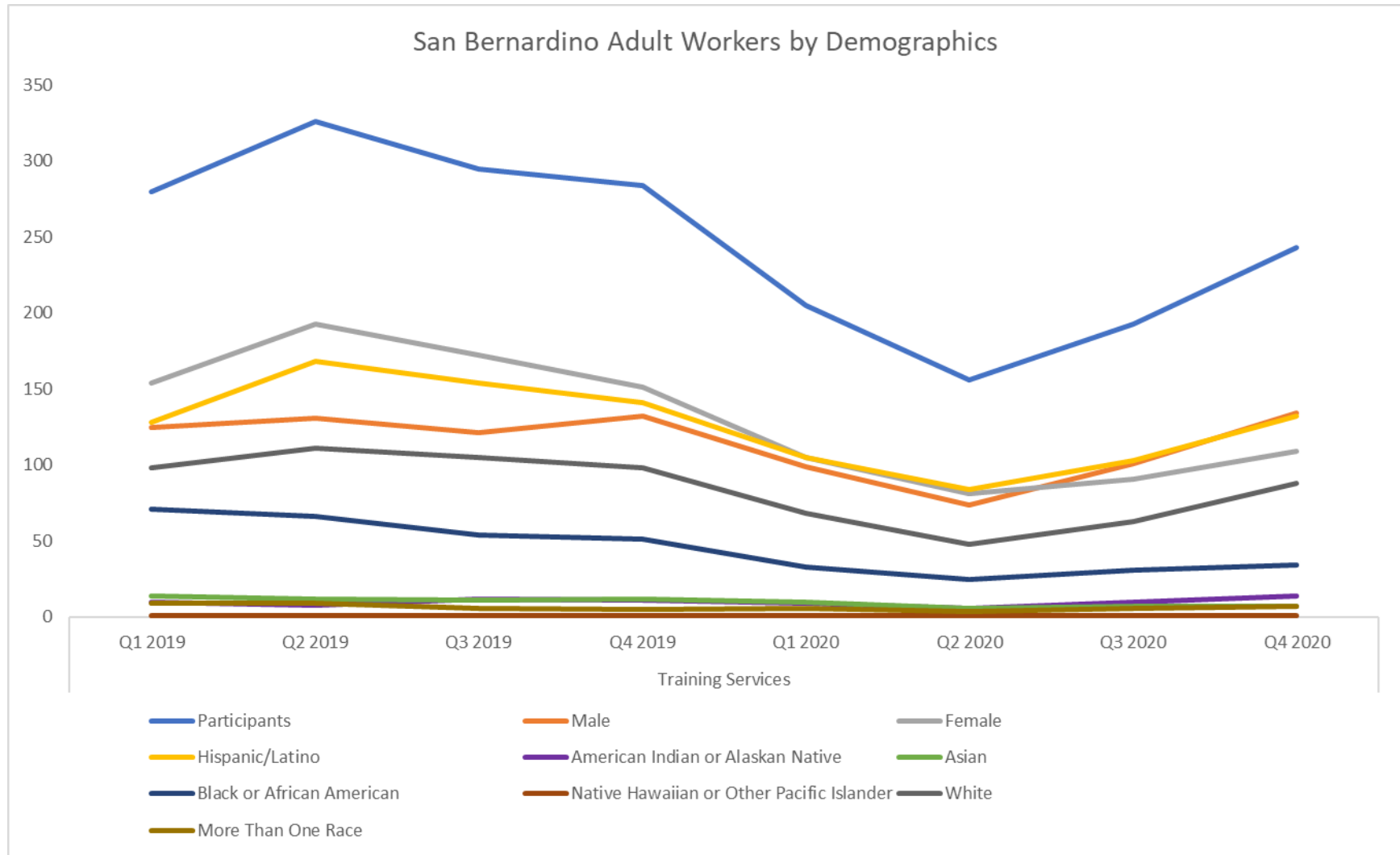


San Bernardino Adult Workers by Barriers

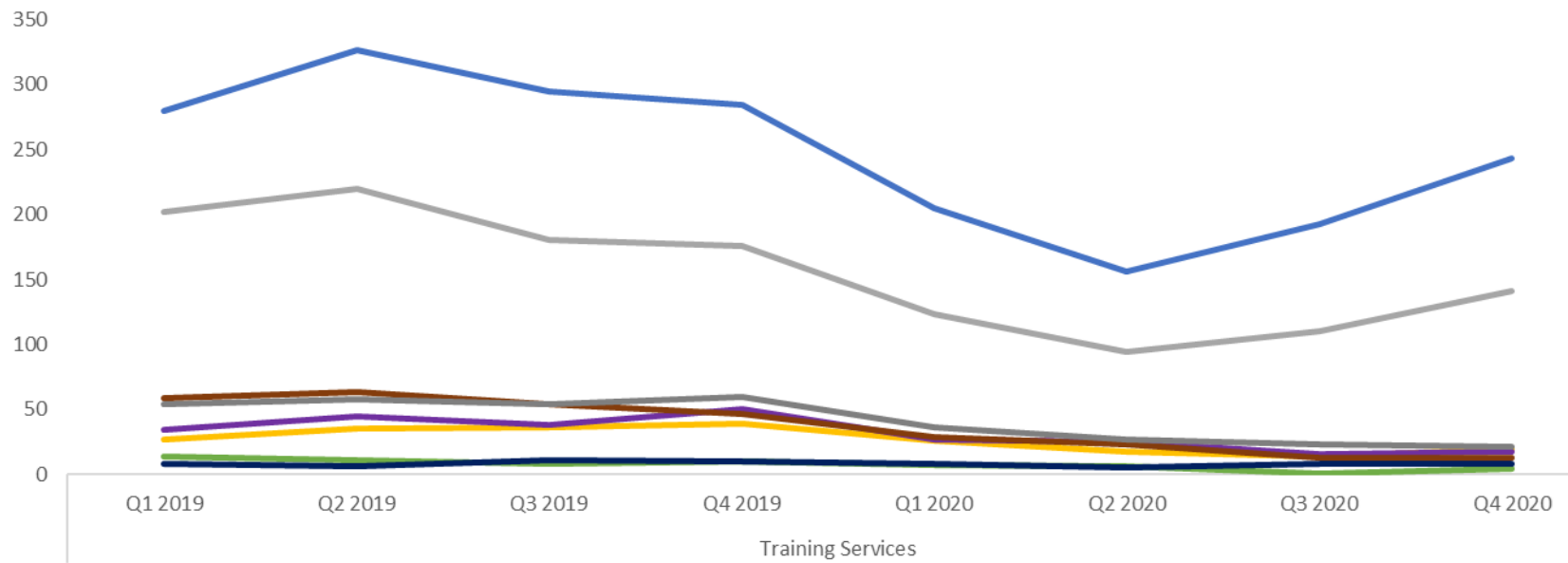


- Participants
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- Single parents (Including single pregnant women)
- Long-term unemployed (27 or more consecutive weeks)

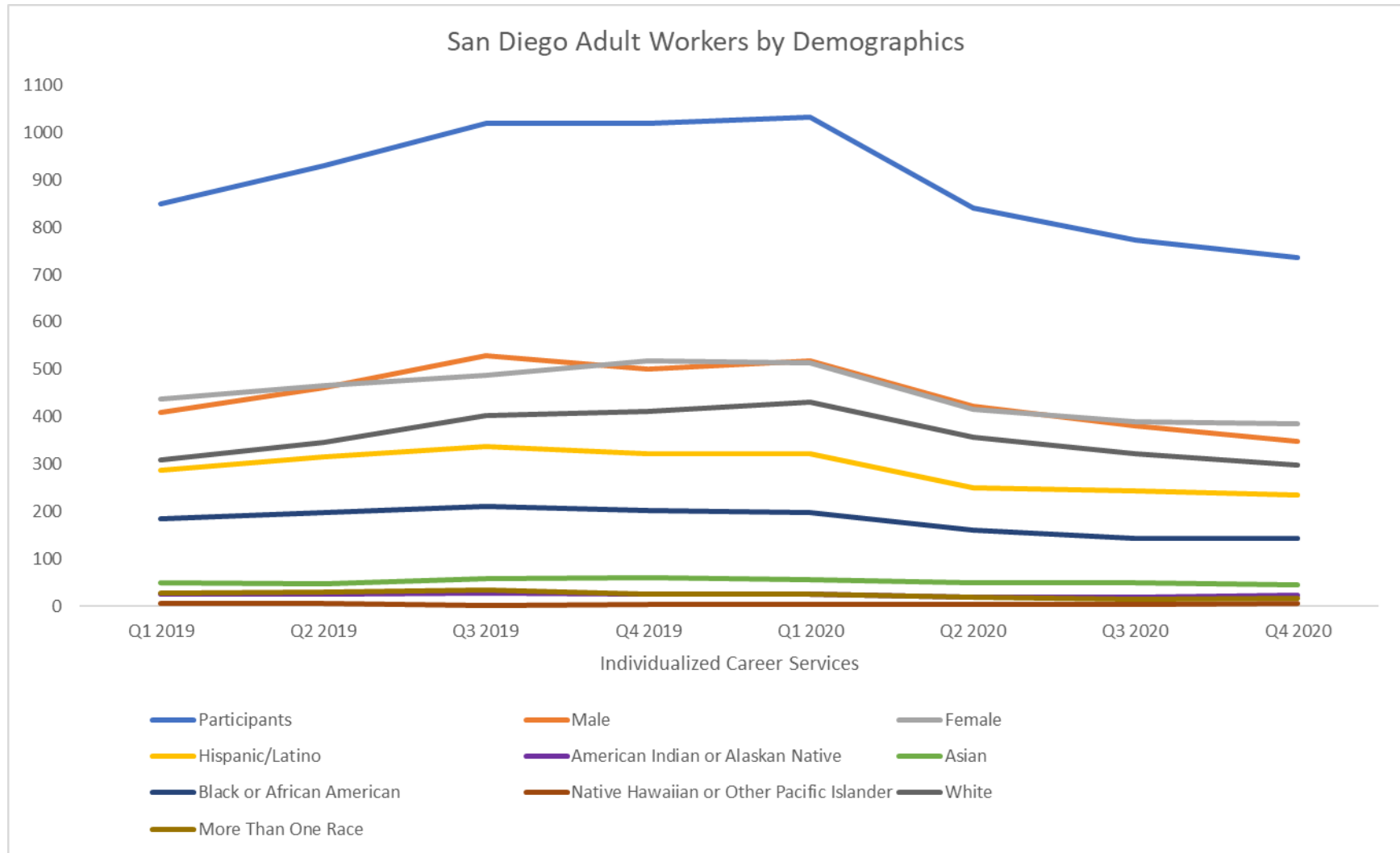
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2. Training Services Barriers by Quarter

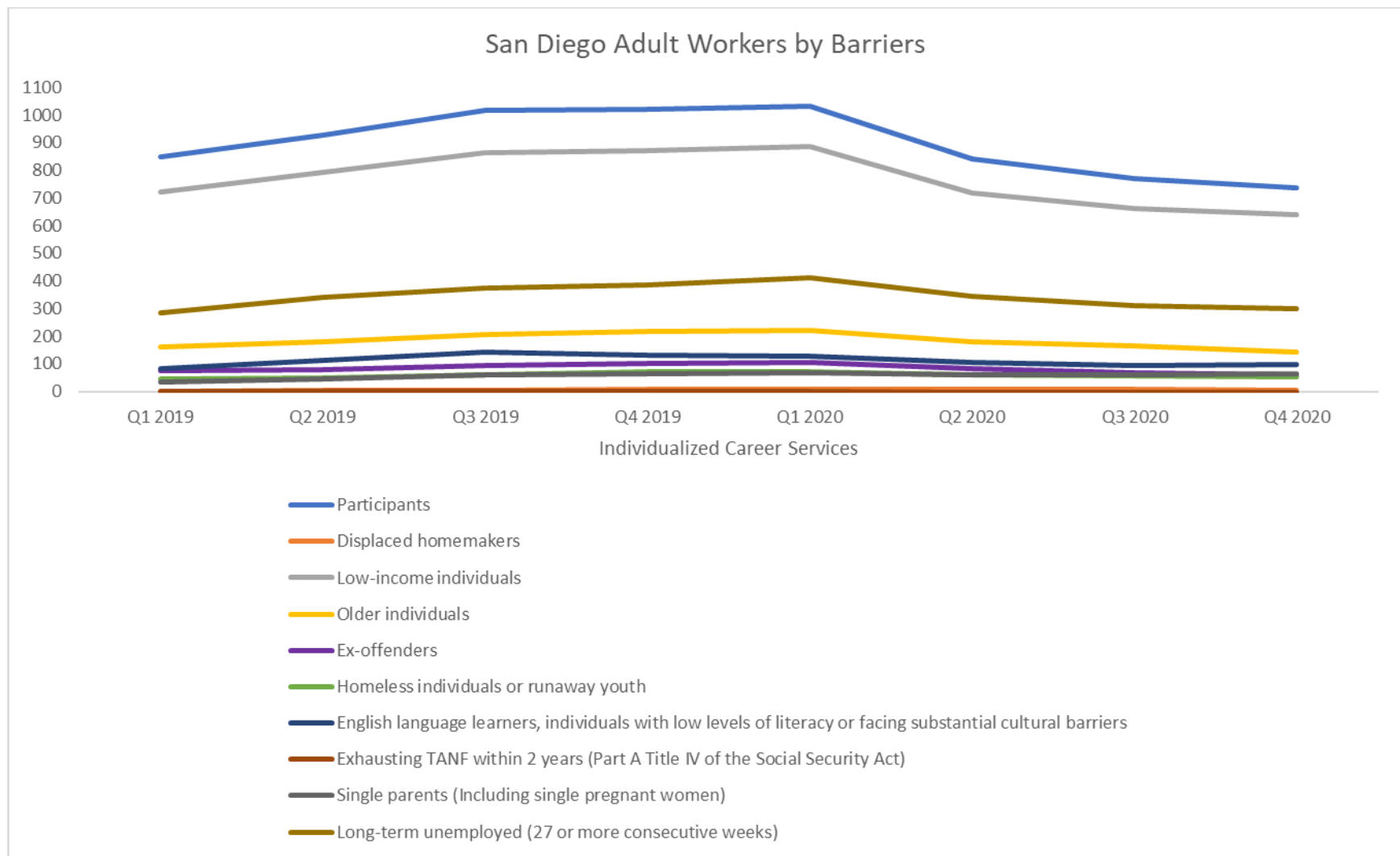


San Bernardino Adult Workers by Barriers

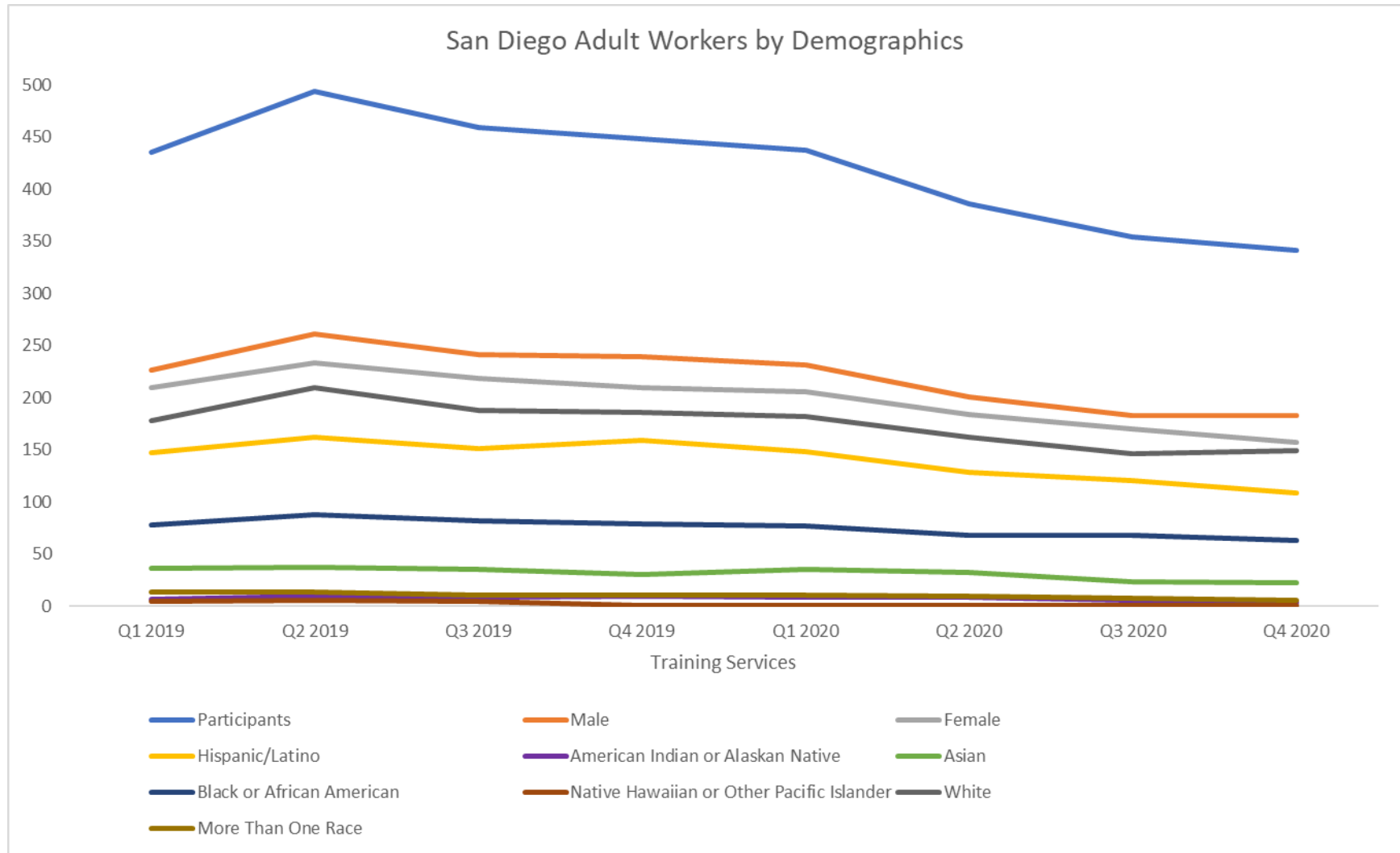


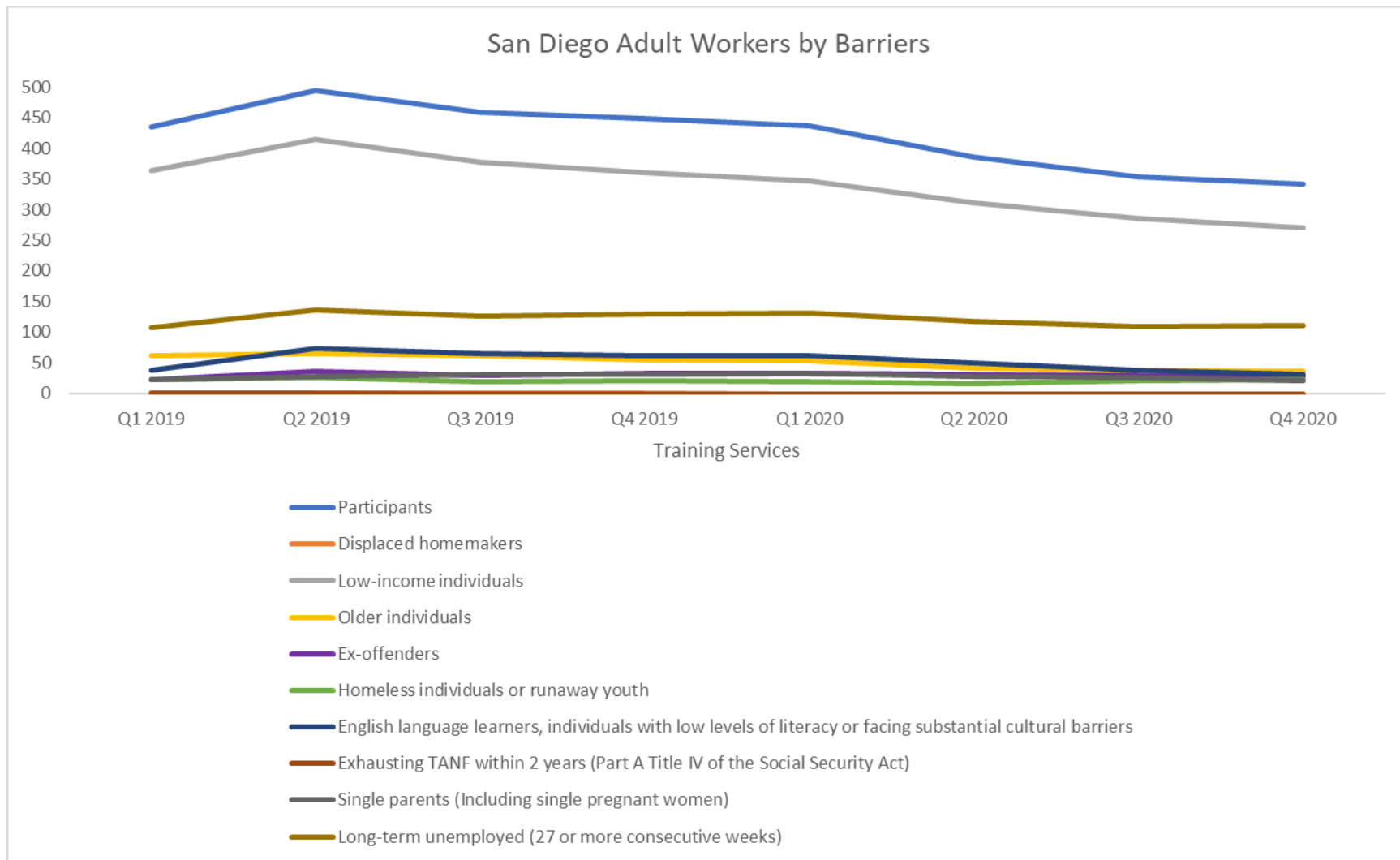
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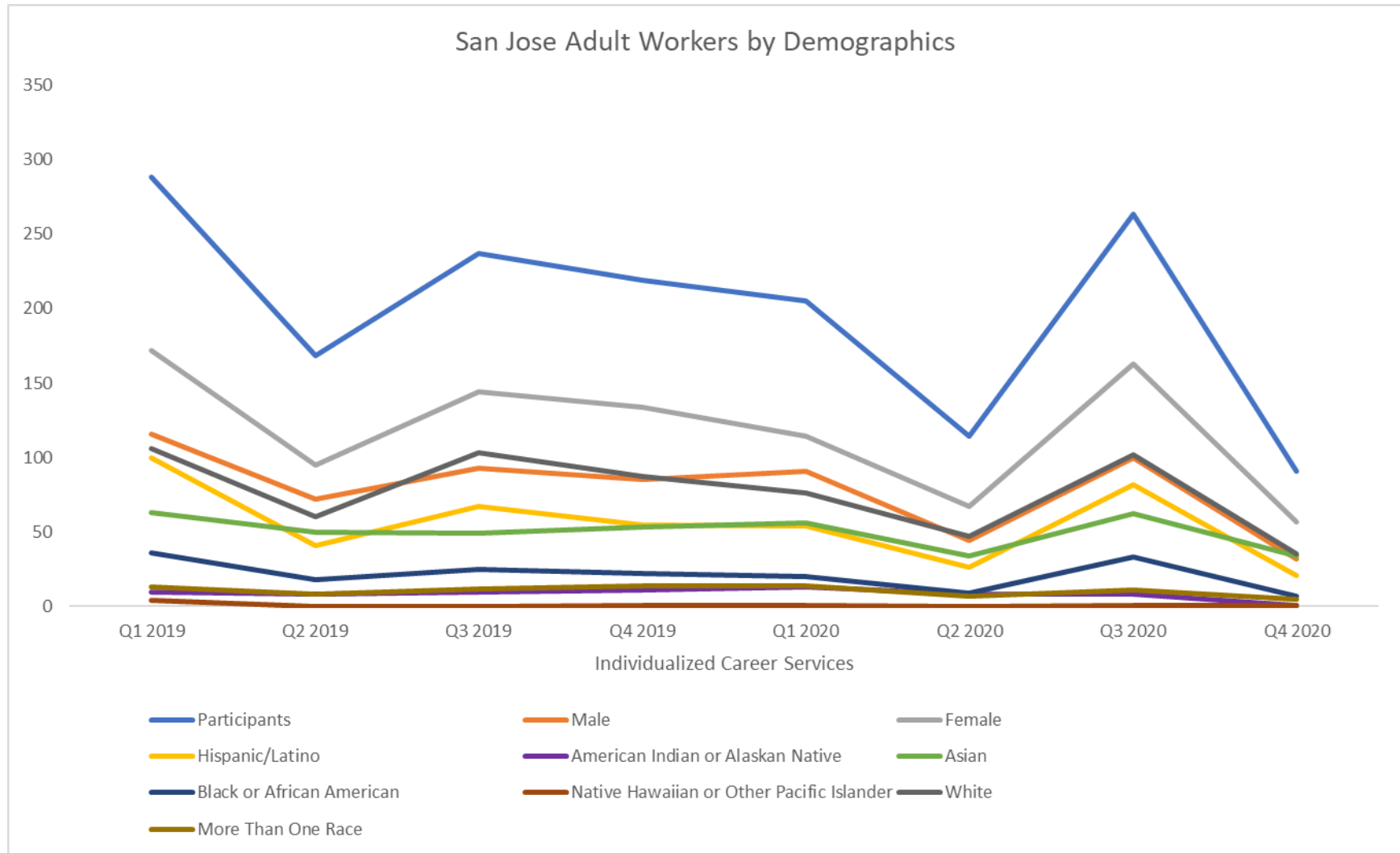


1. Training Services Demographics by Quarter
2. Training Services Barriers by Quarter

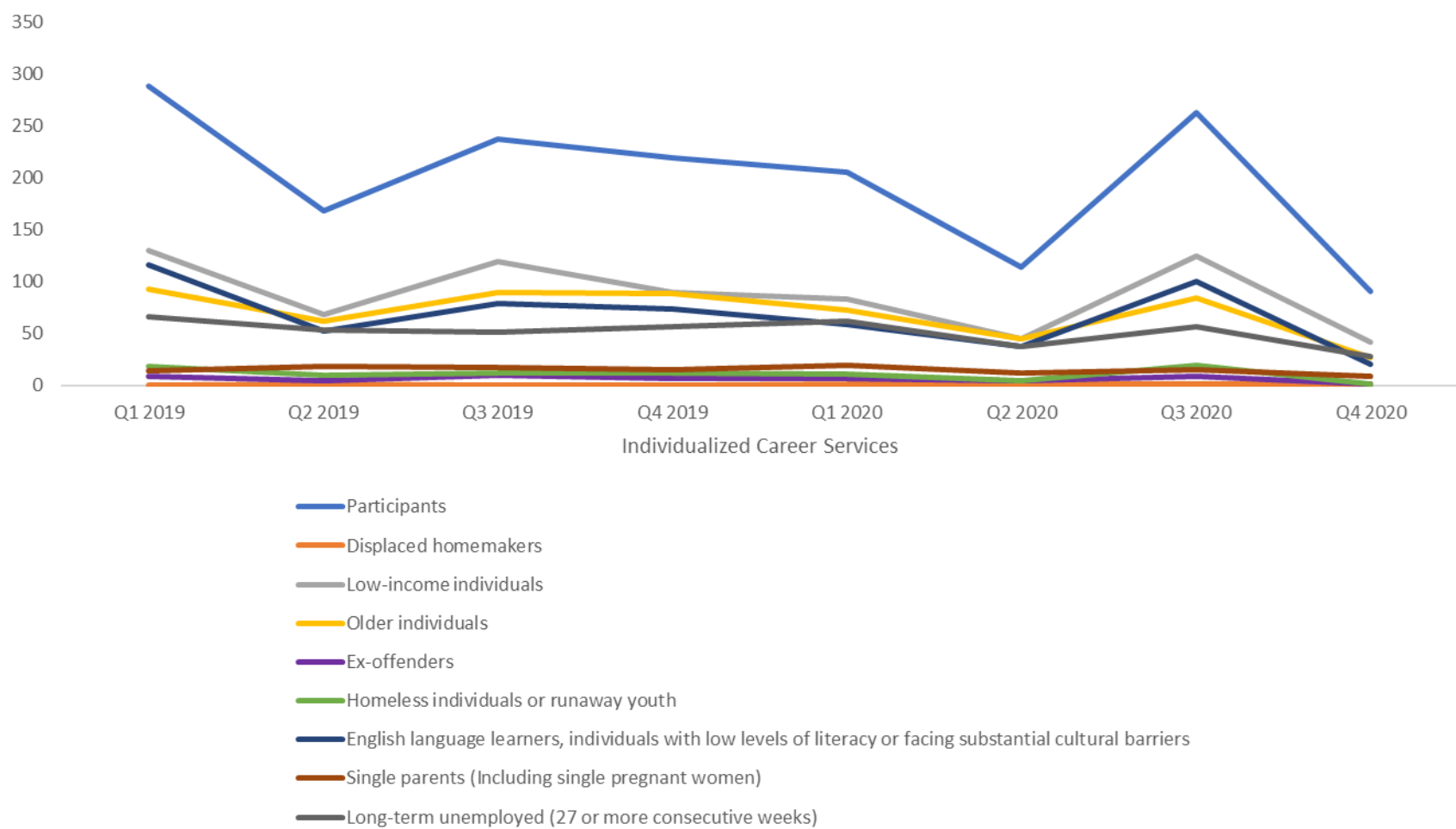




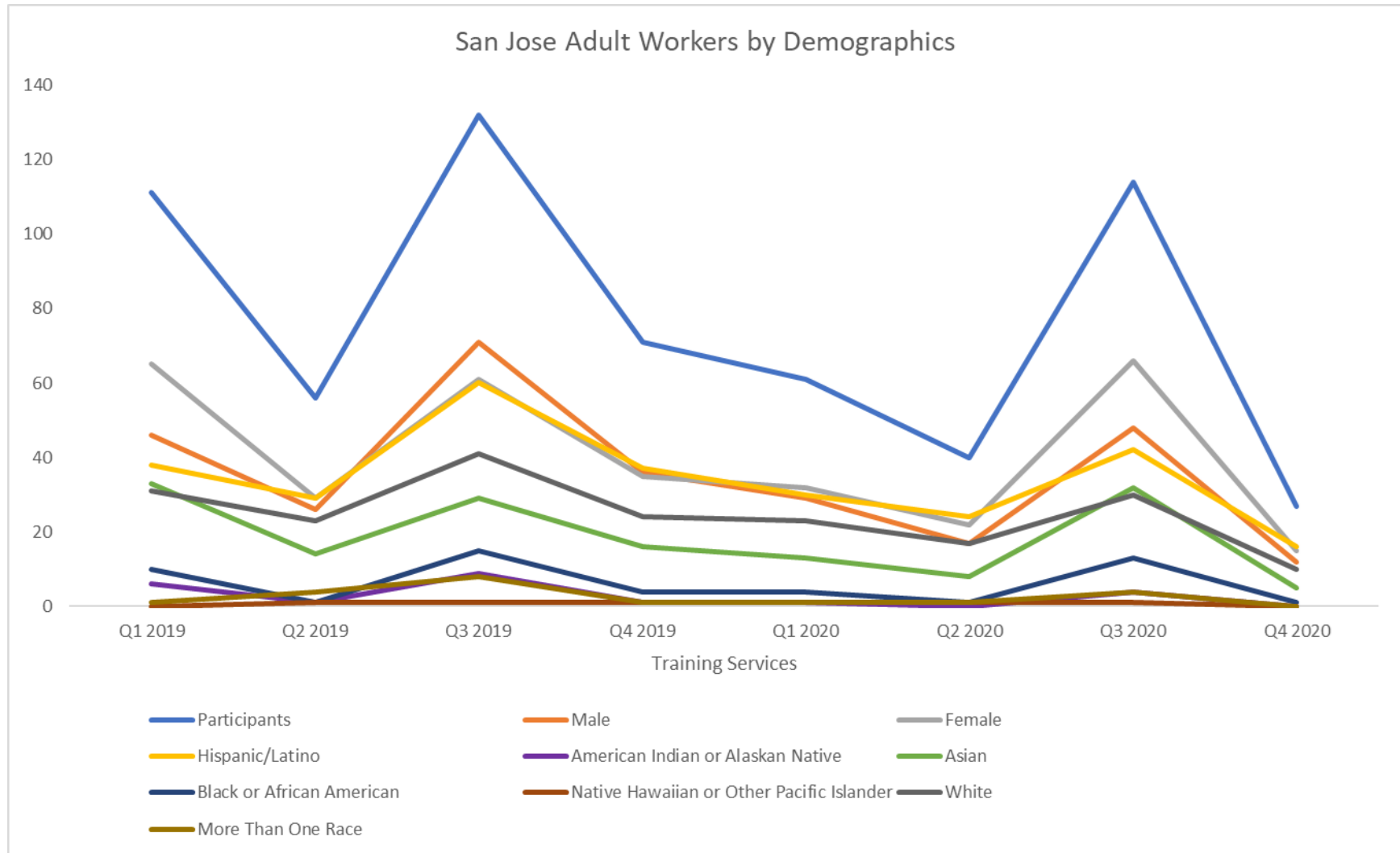
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2. Individualized Career Services Barriers by Quarter

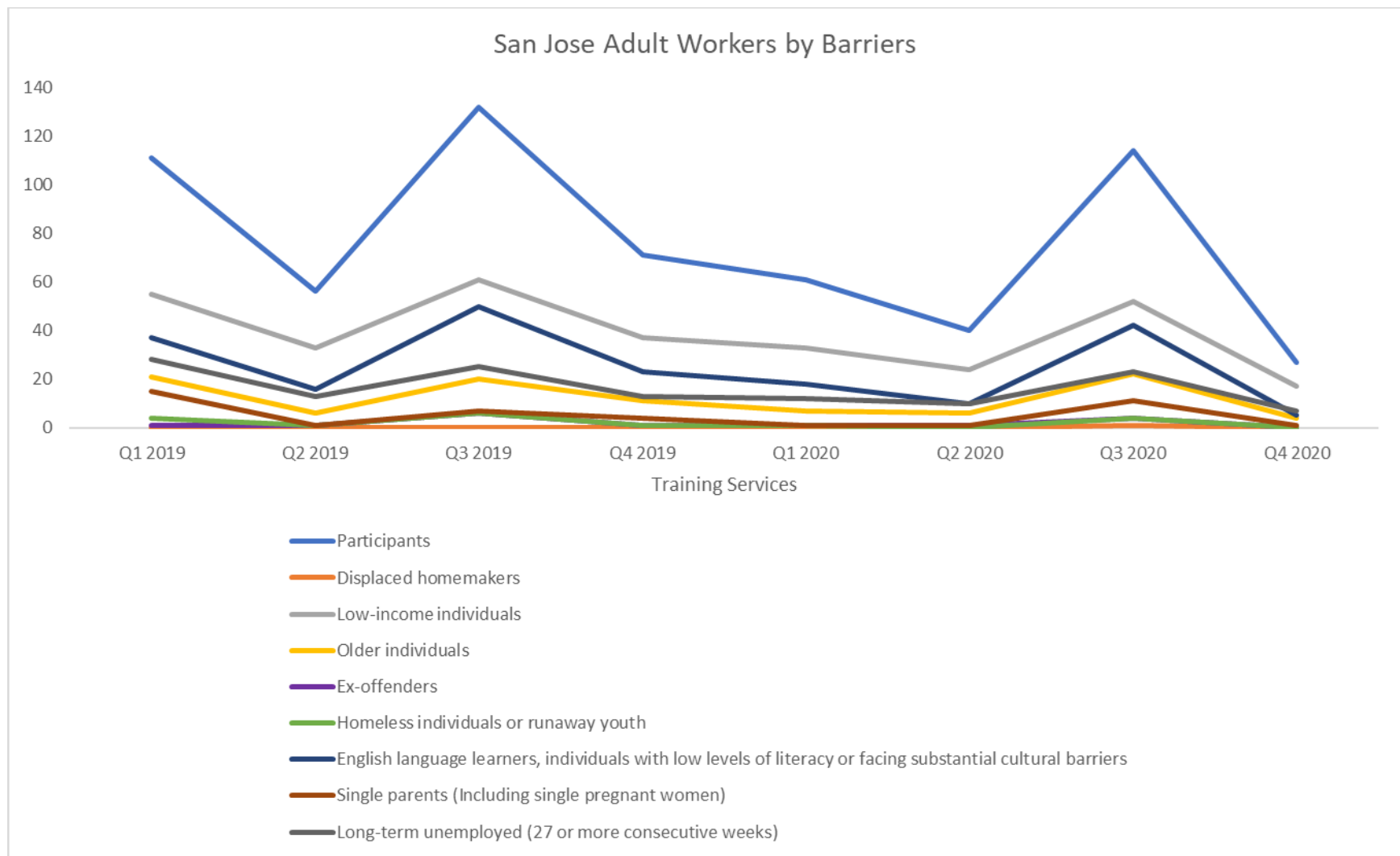


San Jose Adult Workers by Barriers

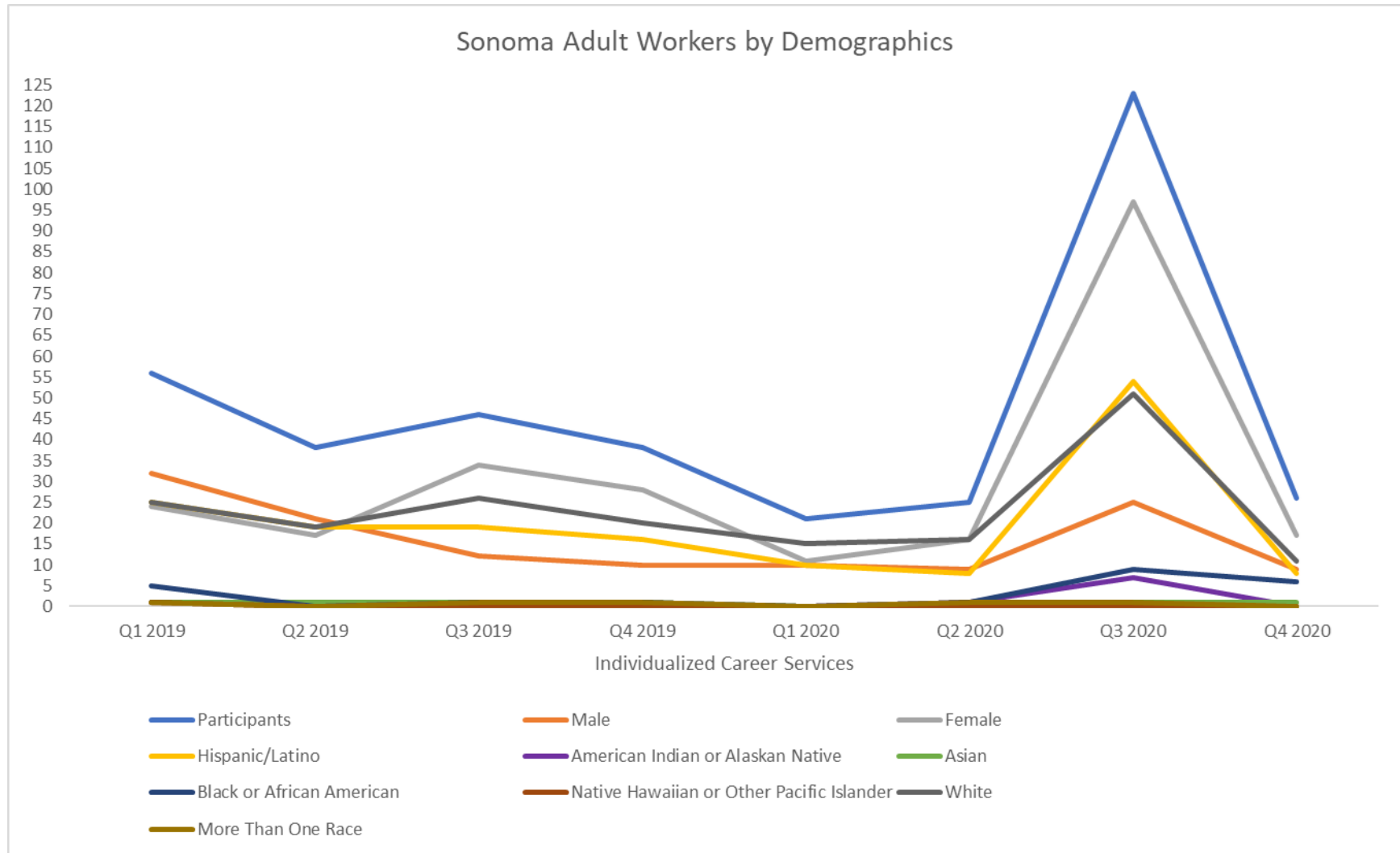


1. Training Services Demographics by Quarter
2. Training Services Barriers by Quarter

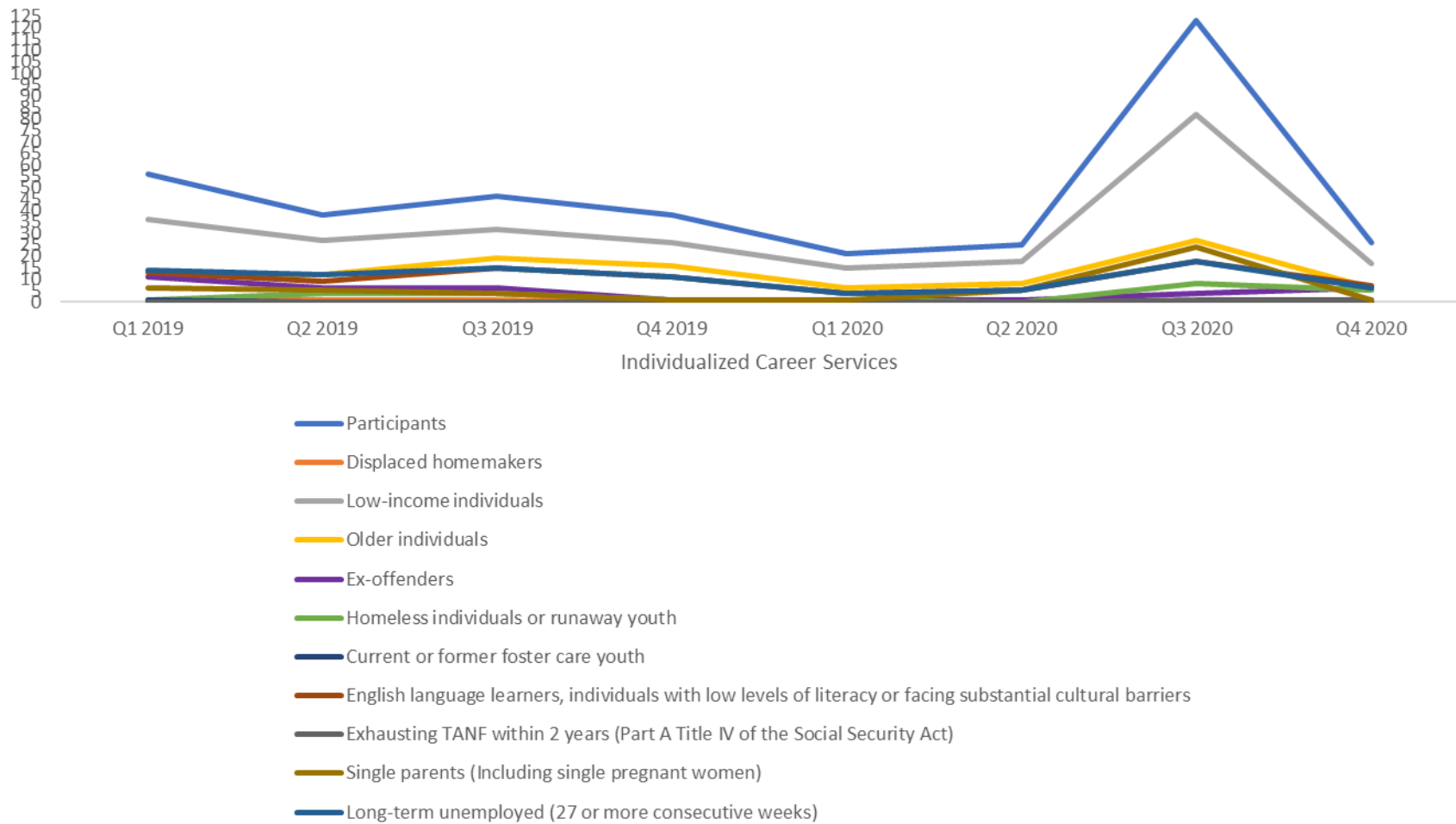




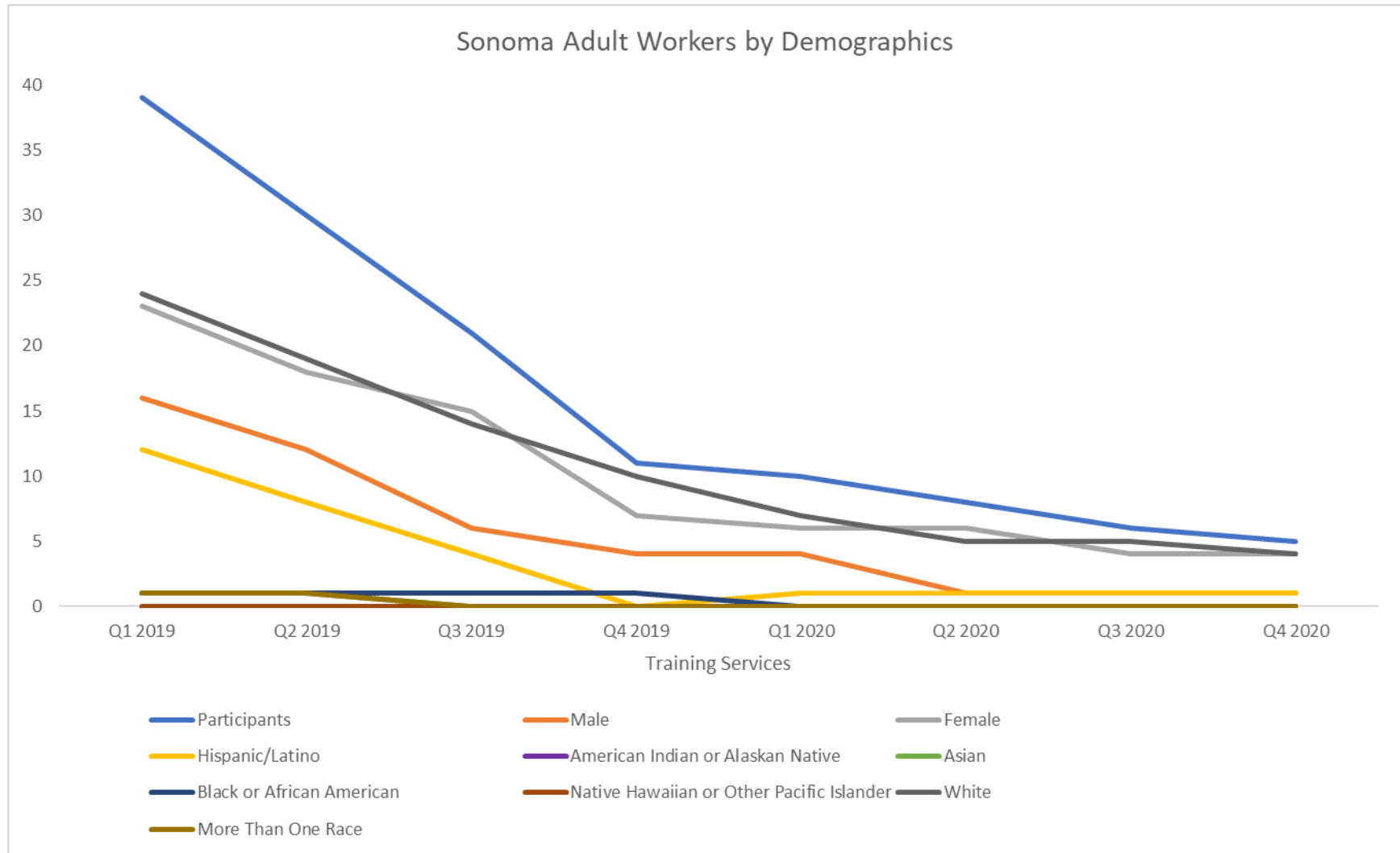
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2. Individualized Career Services Barriers by Quarter



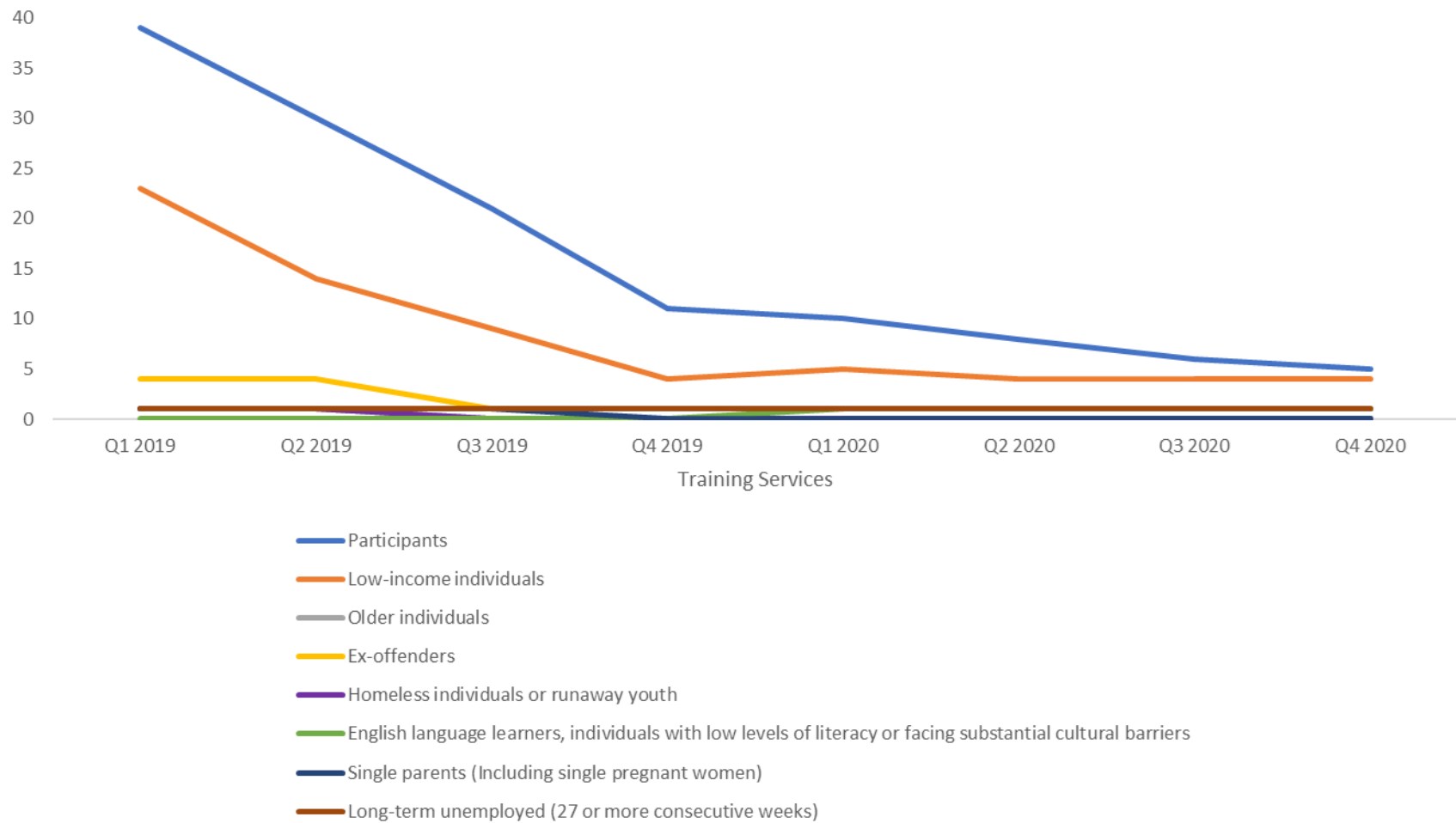
Sonoma Adult Workers by Barriers



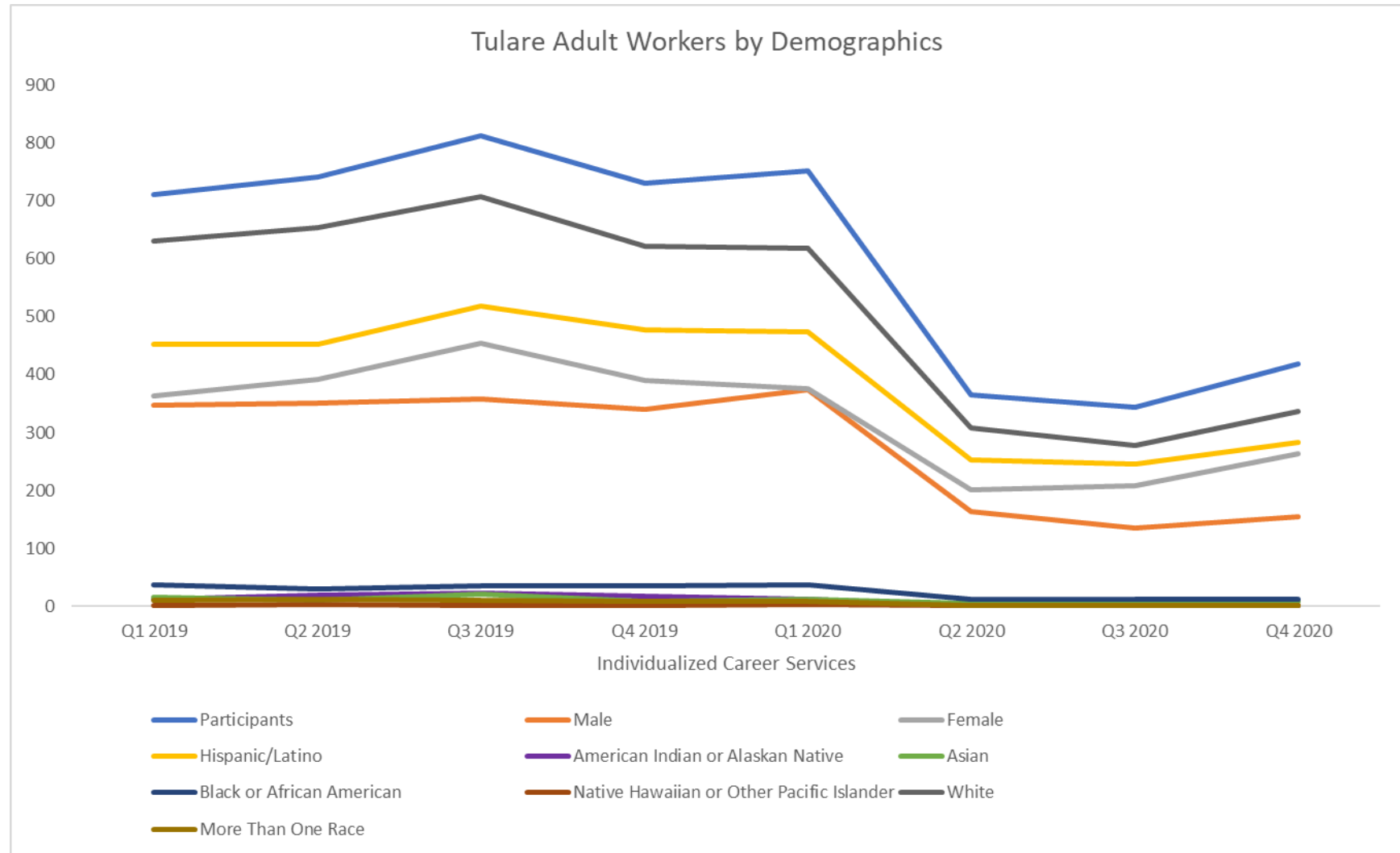
1. Training Services Demographics by Quarter
2. Training Services Barriers by Quarter

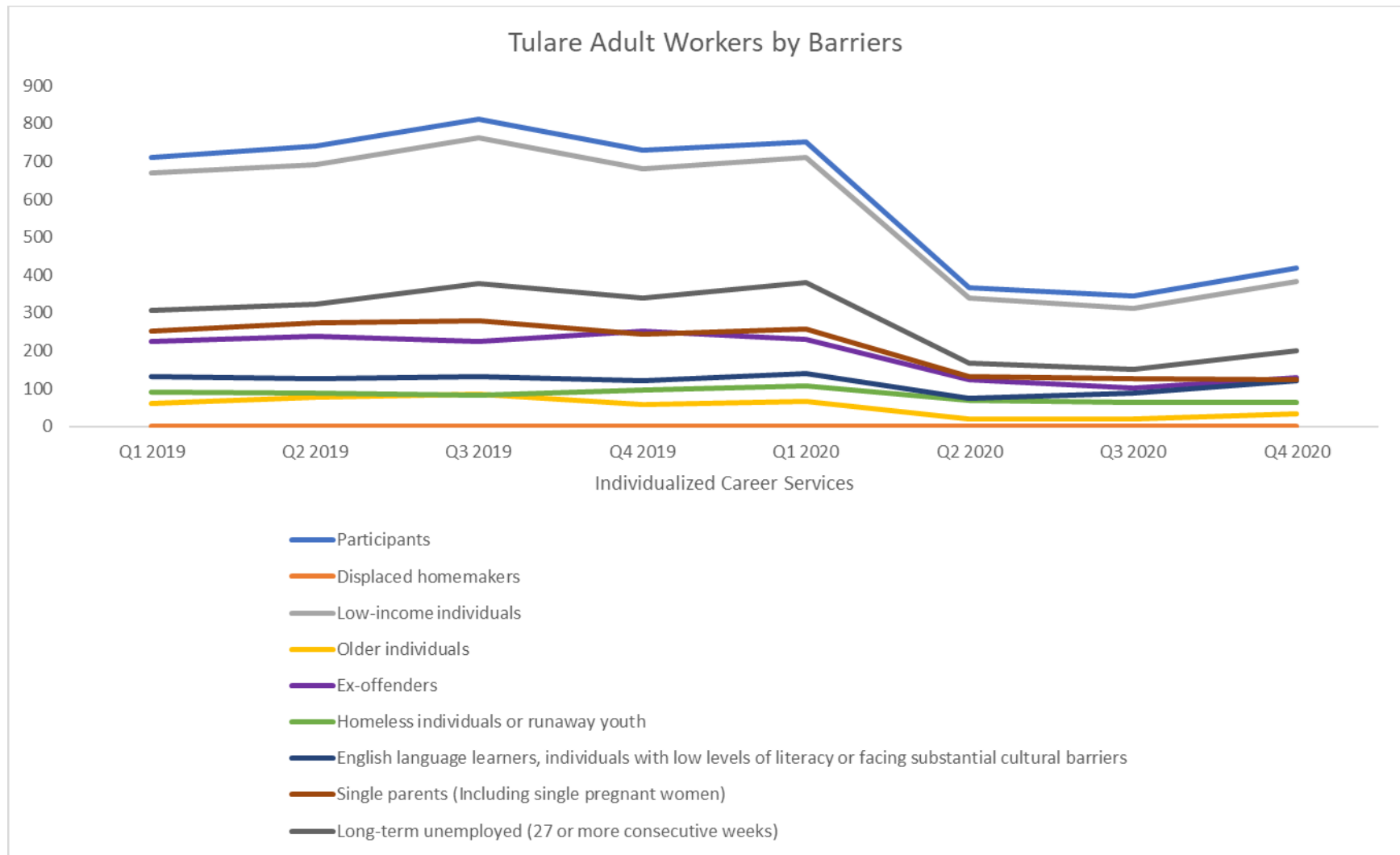


Sonoma Adult Workers by Barriers

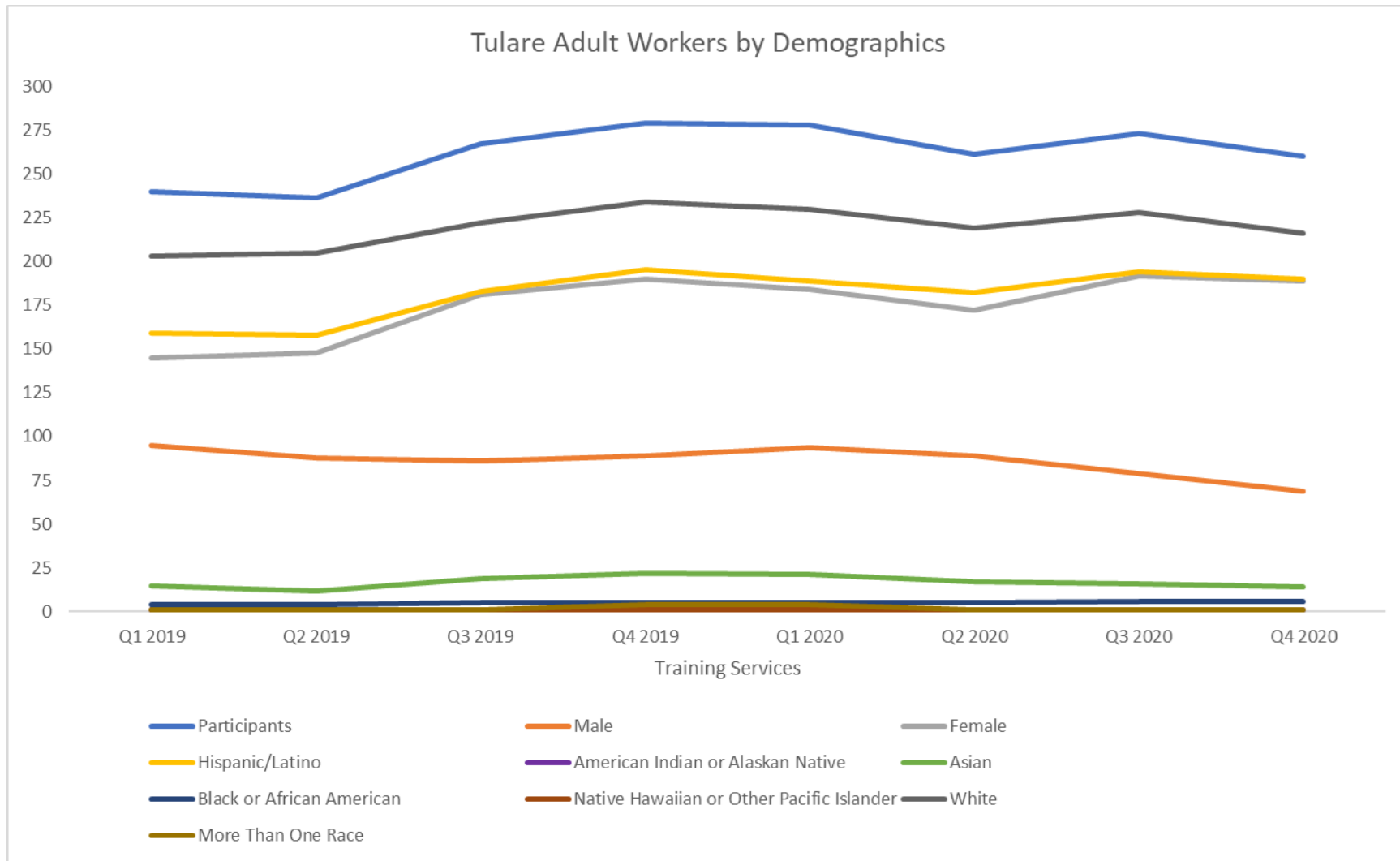


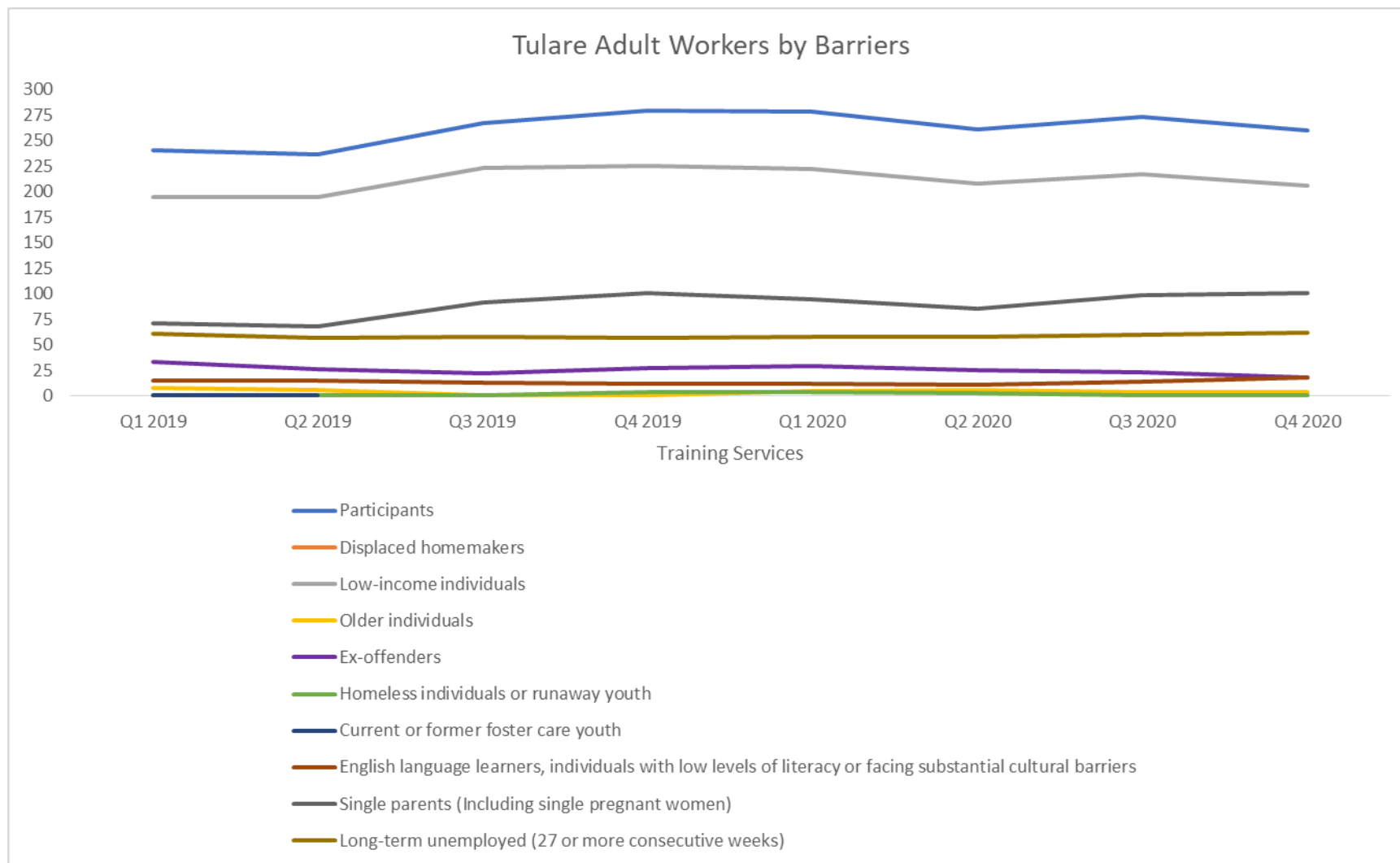
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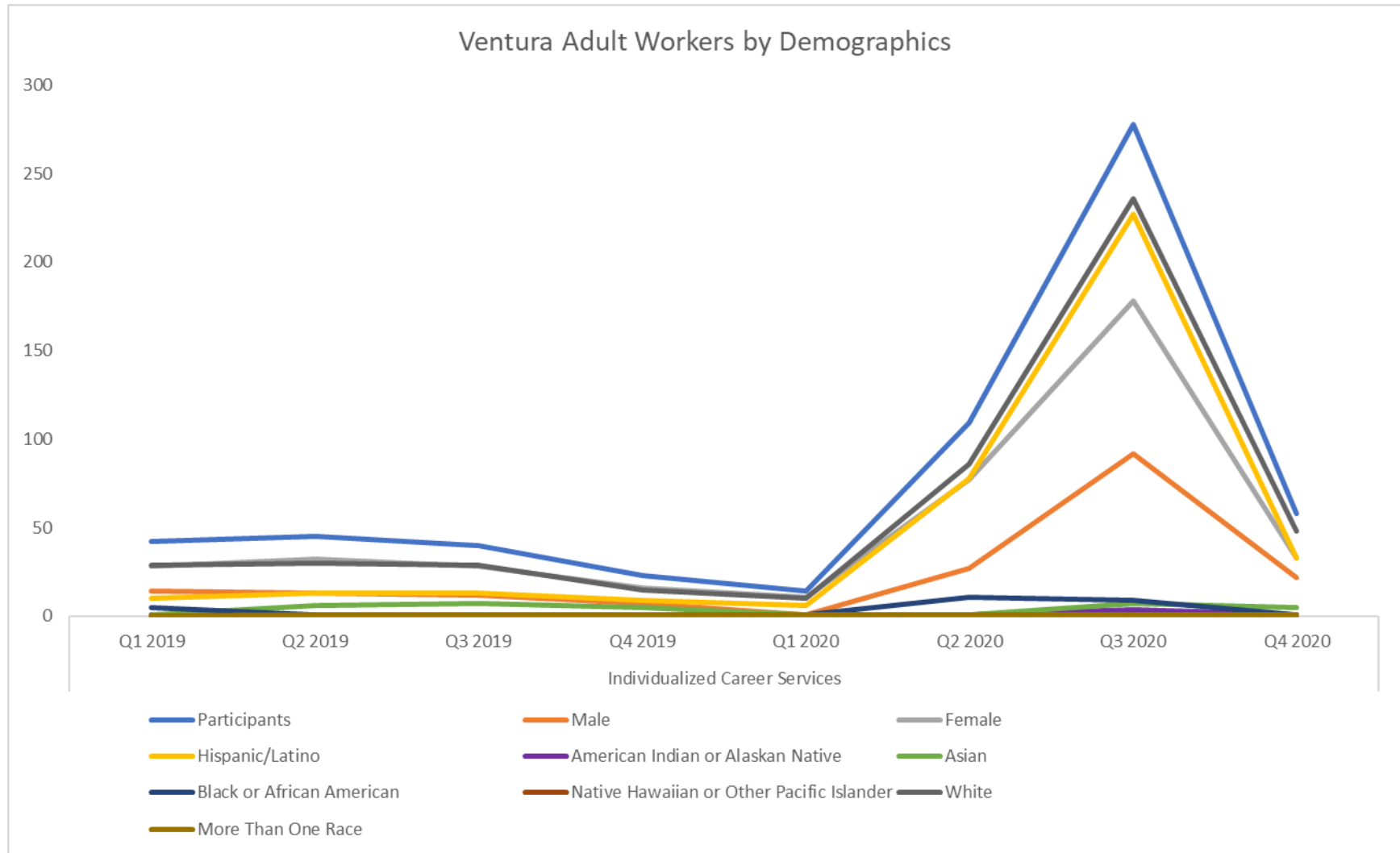


1. Training Services Demographics by Quarter
2. Training Services Barriers by Quarter

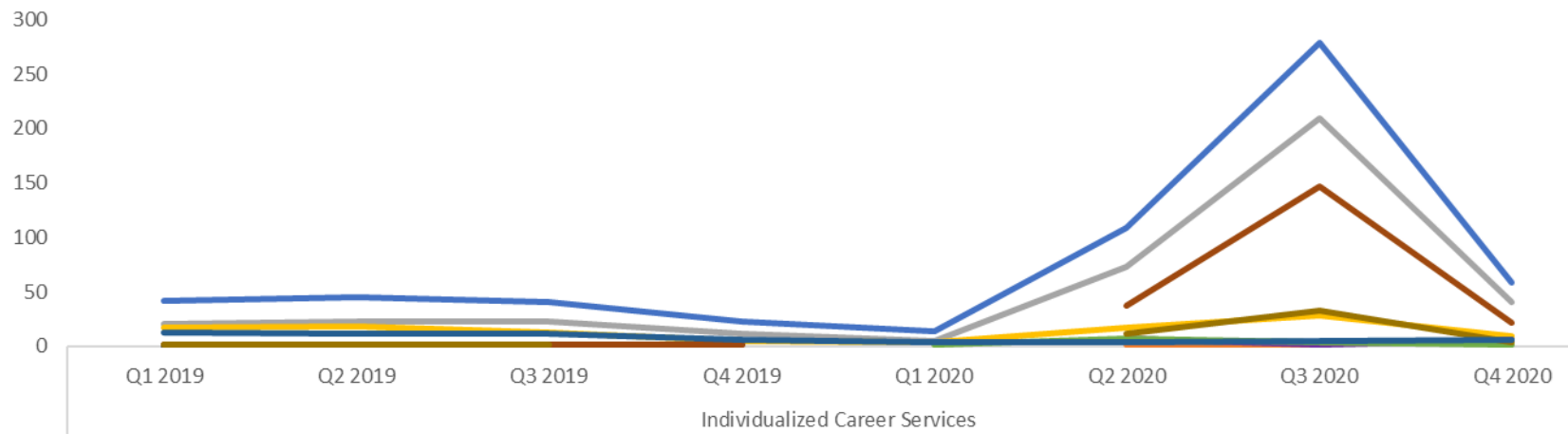




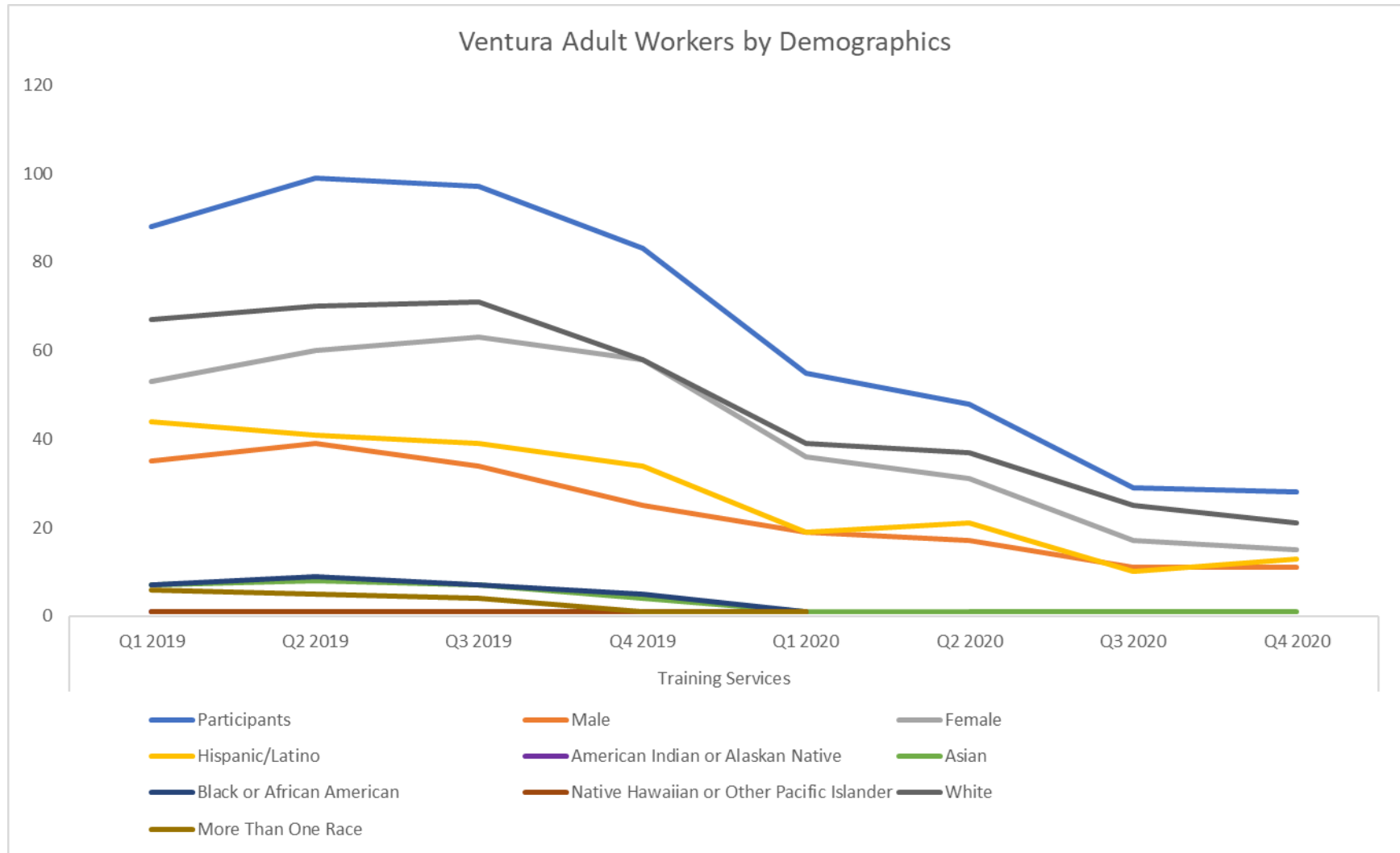
1. Individualized Career Services Demographics by Quarter
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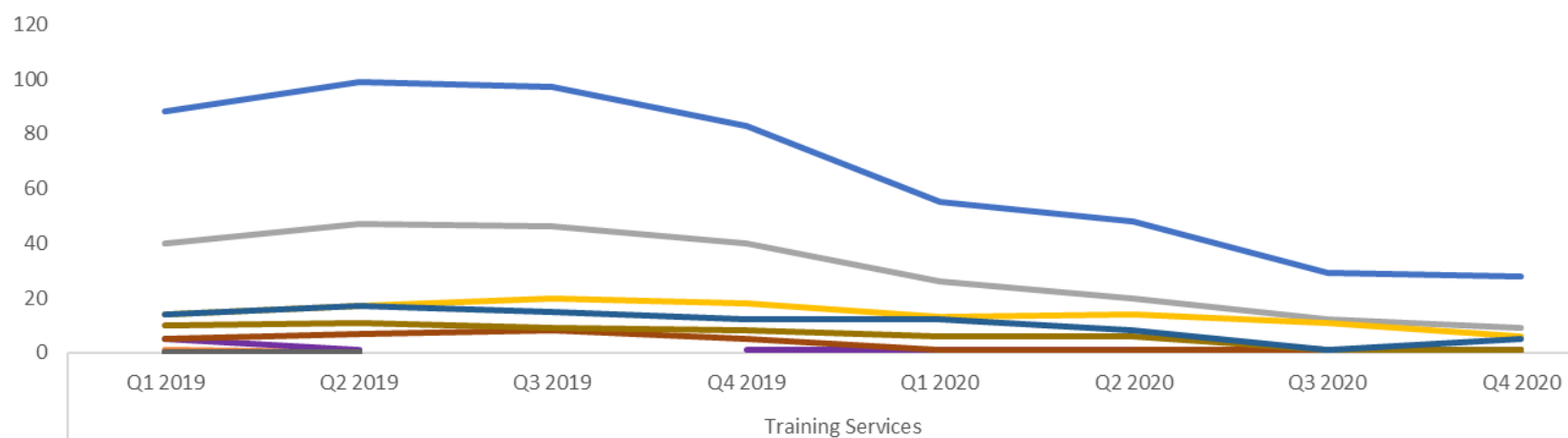
Ventura Adult Workers by Barriers



1. Training Services Demographics by Quarter
2. Training Services Barriers by Quarter

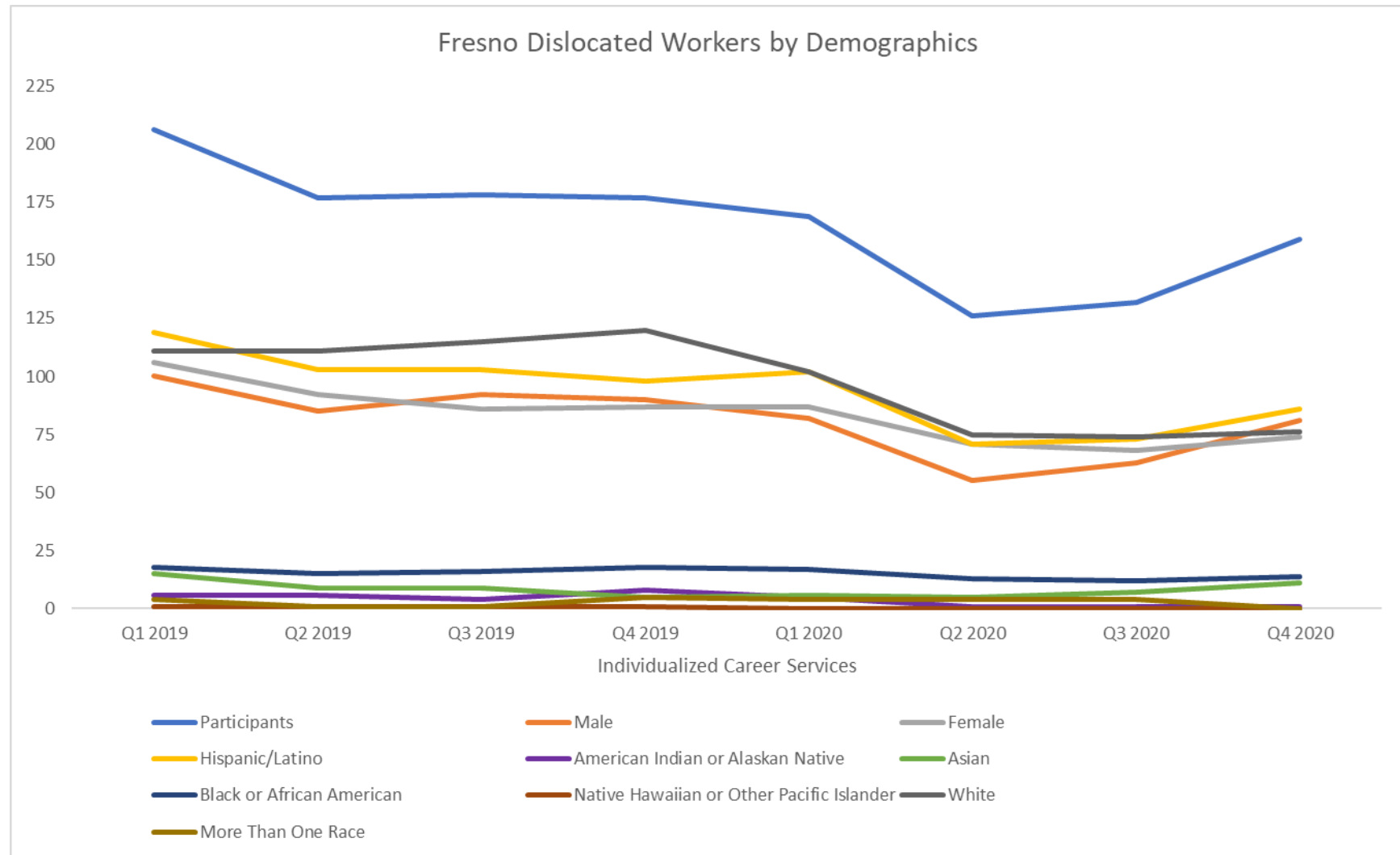


Ventura Adult Workers by Barriers

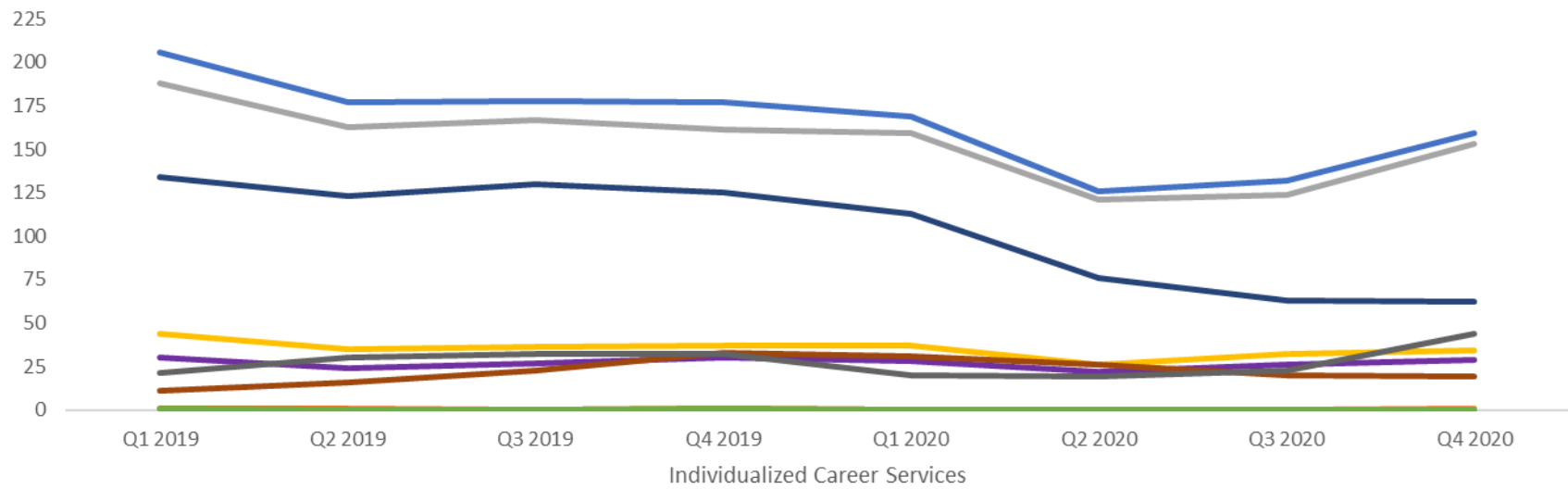


Appendix I: DATA FOR CASE STUDY SITES – WIOA DISLOCATED WORKERS 2019-2020

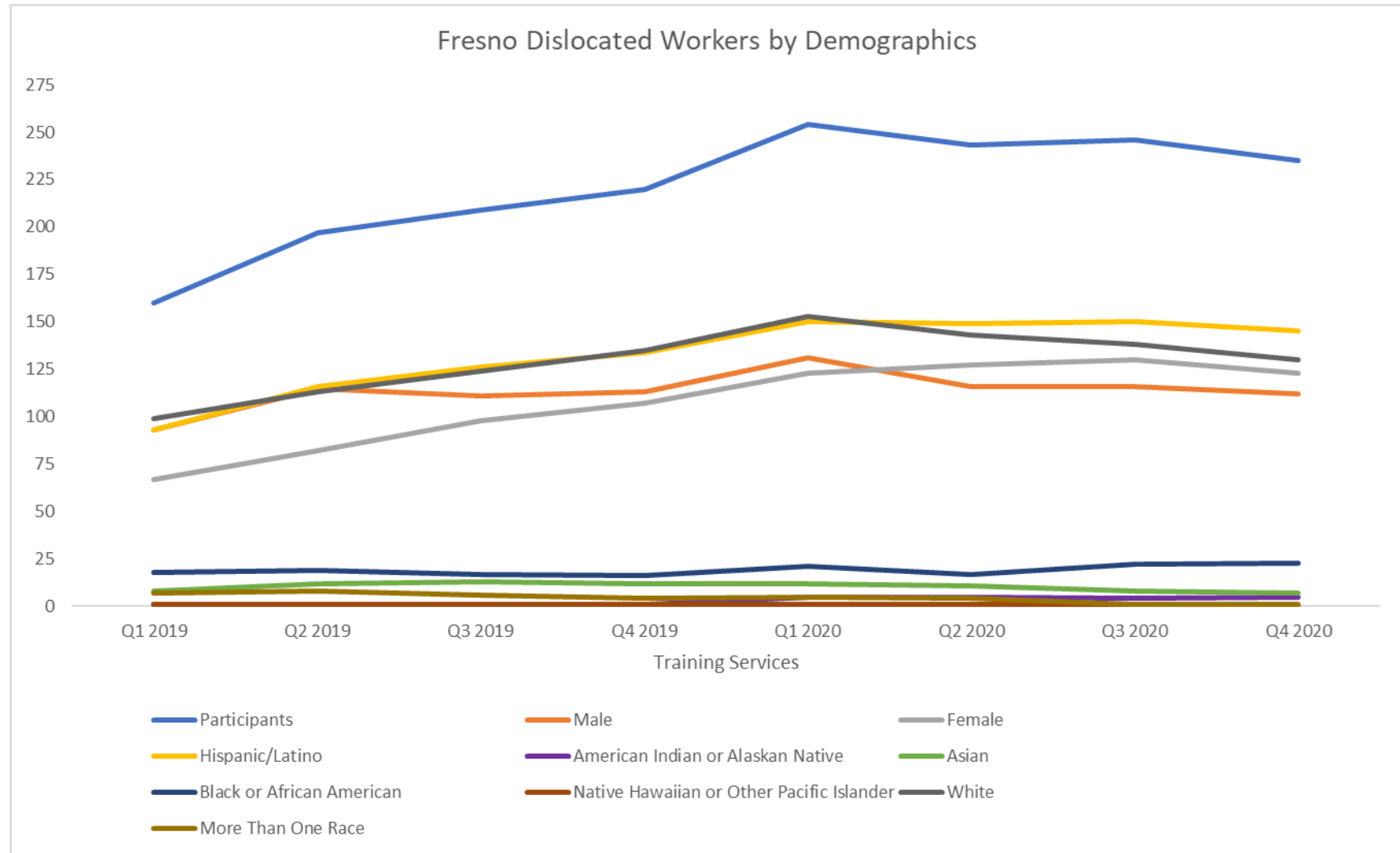
1. Individualized Career Services Demographics by Quarter
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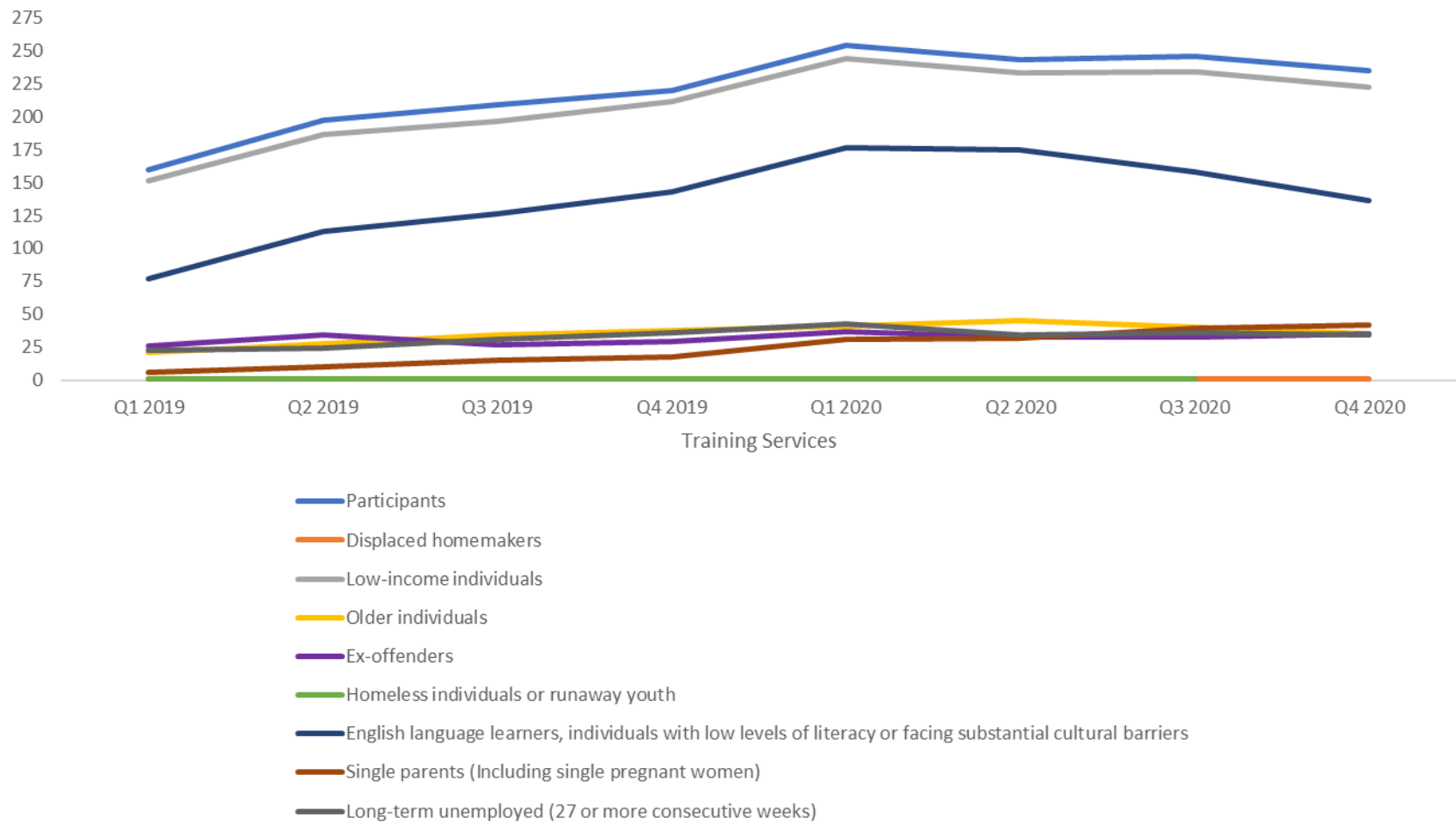
Fresno Dislocated Workers by Barriers



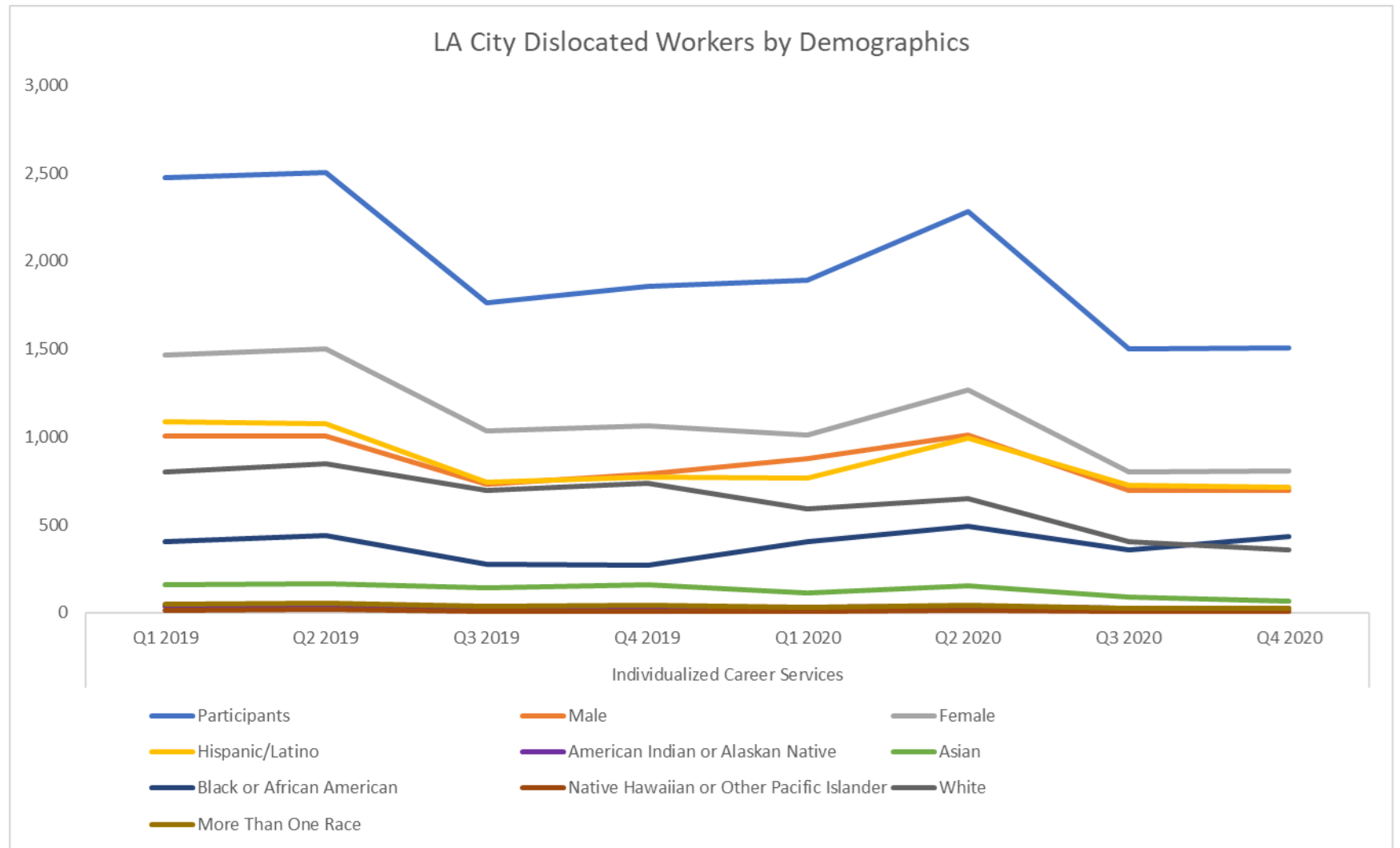
1. Training Services Demographics by Quarter
2. Training Services Barriers by Quarter

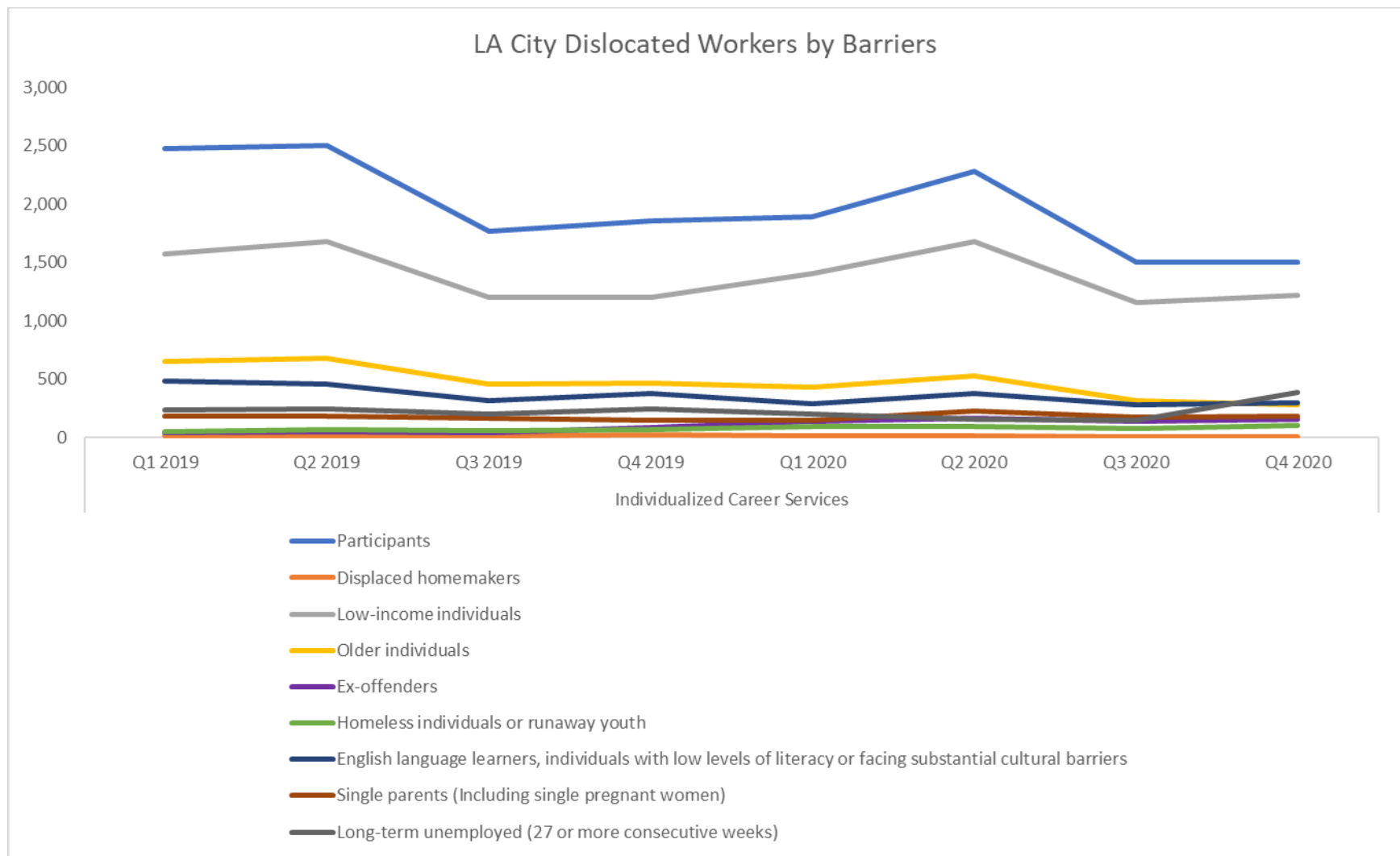


Fresno Dislocated Workers by Barriers

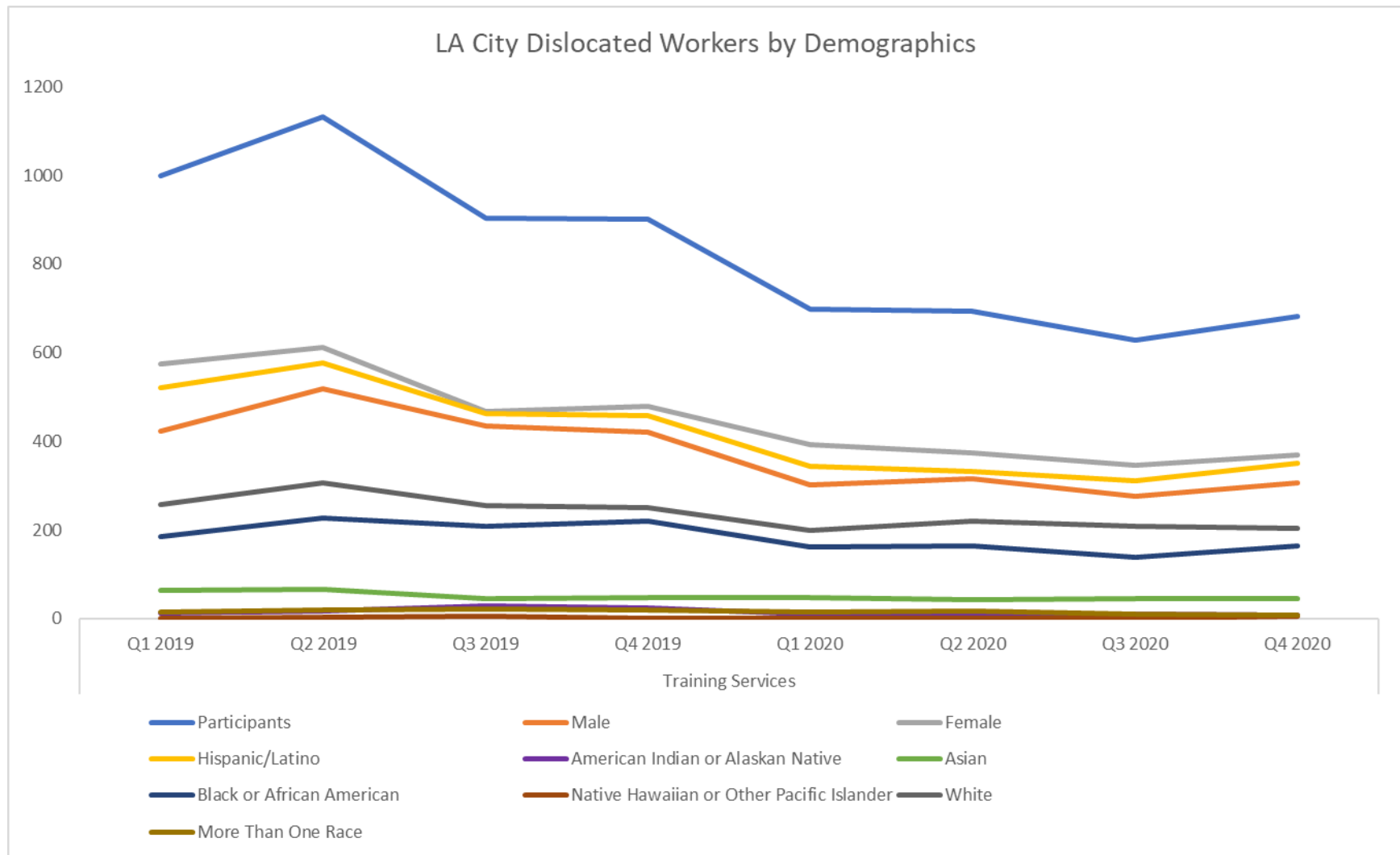


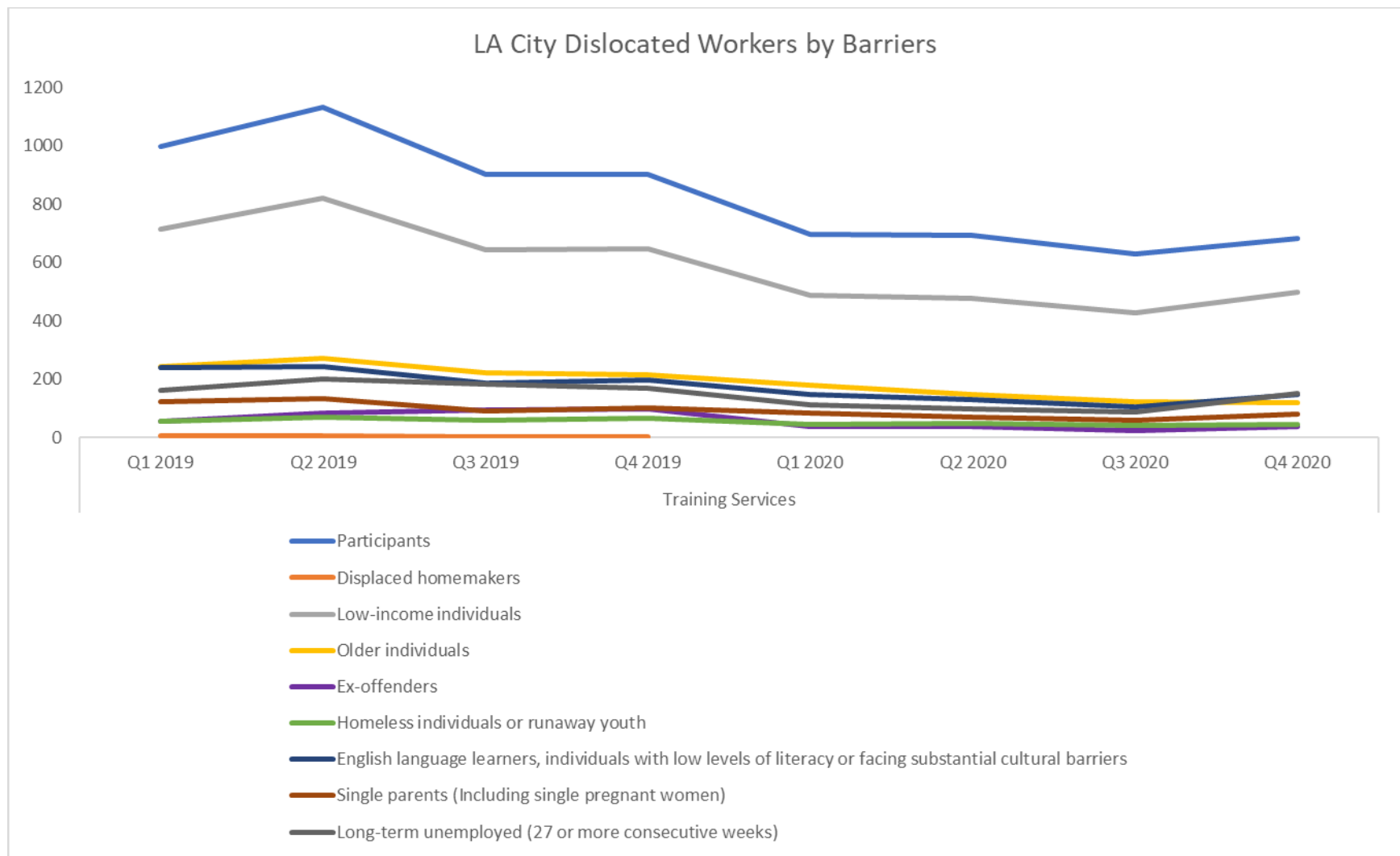
1. Individualized Career Services Demographics by Quarter
2. Individualized Career Services Barriers by Quarter

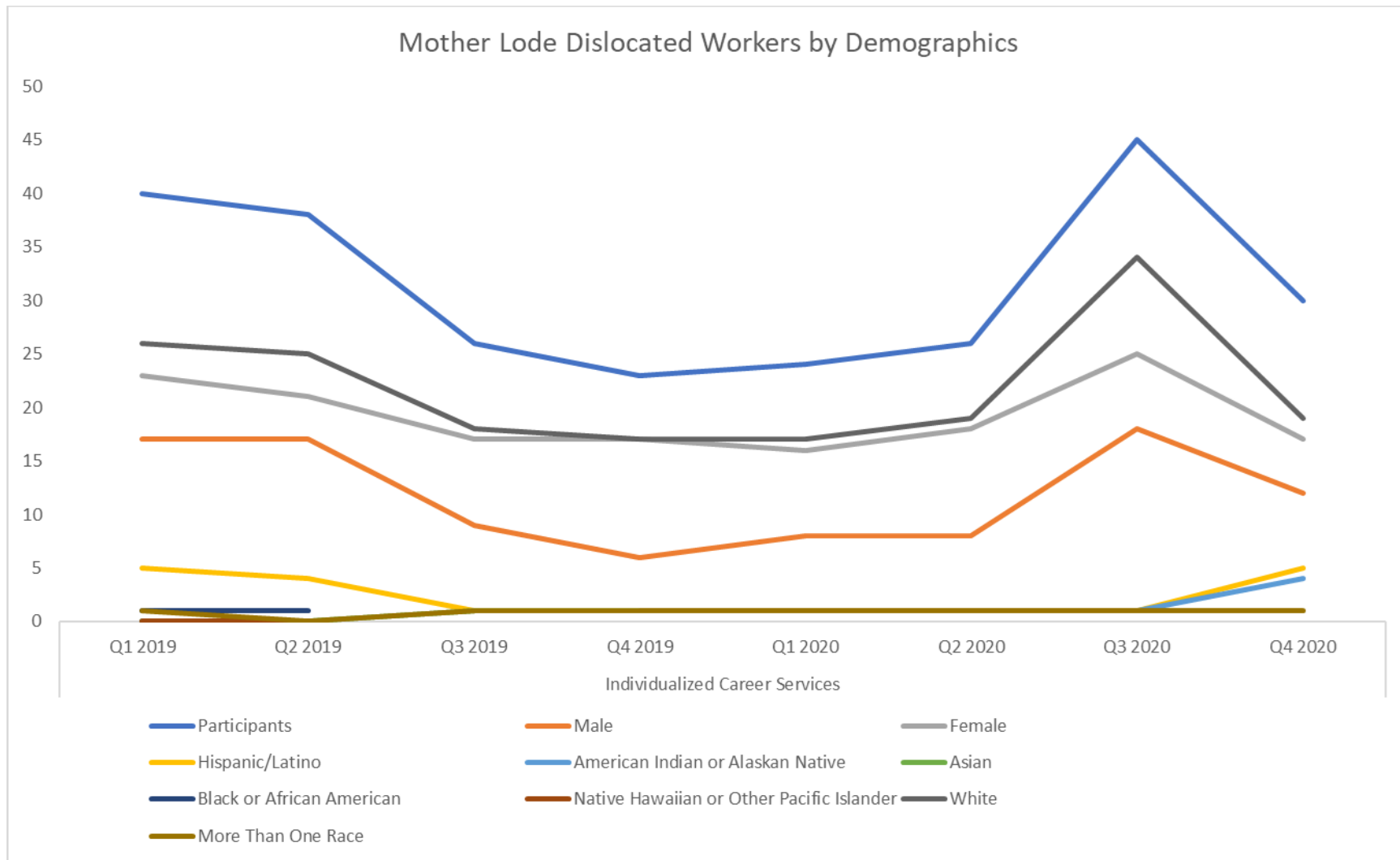




1. Training Services Demographics by Quarter
2. Training Services Barriers by Quarter

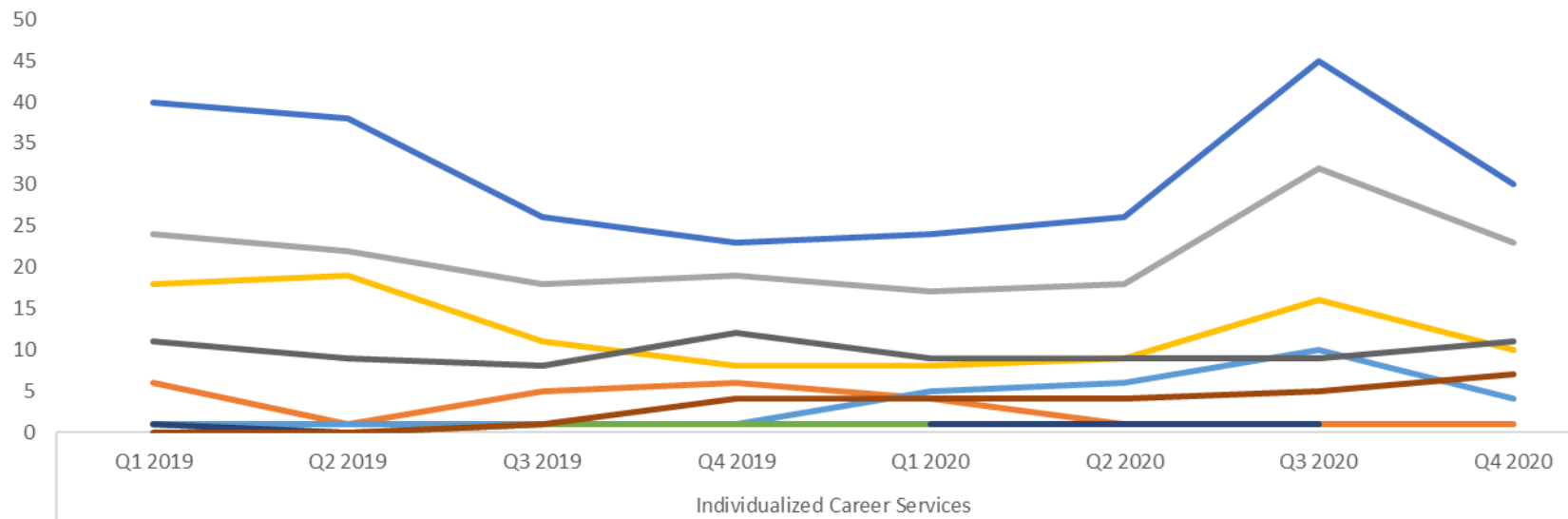






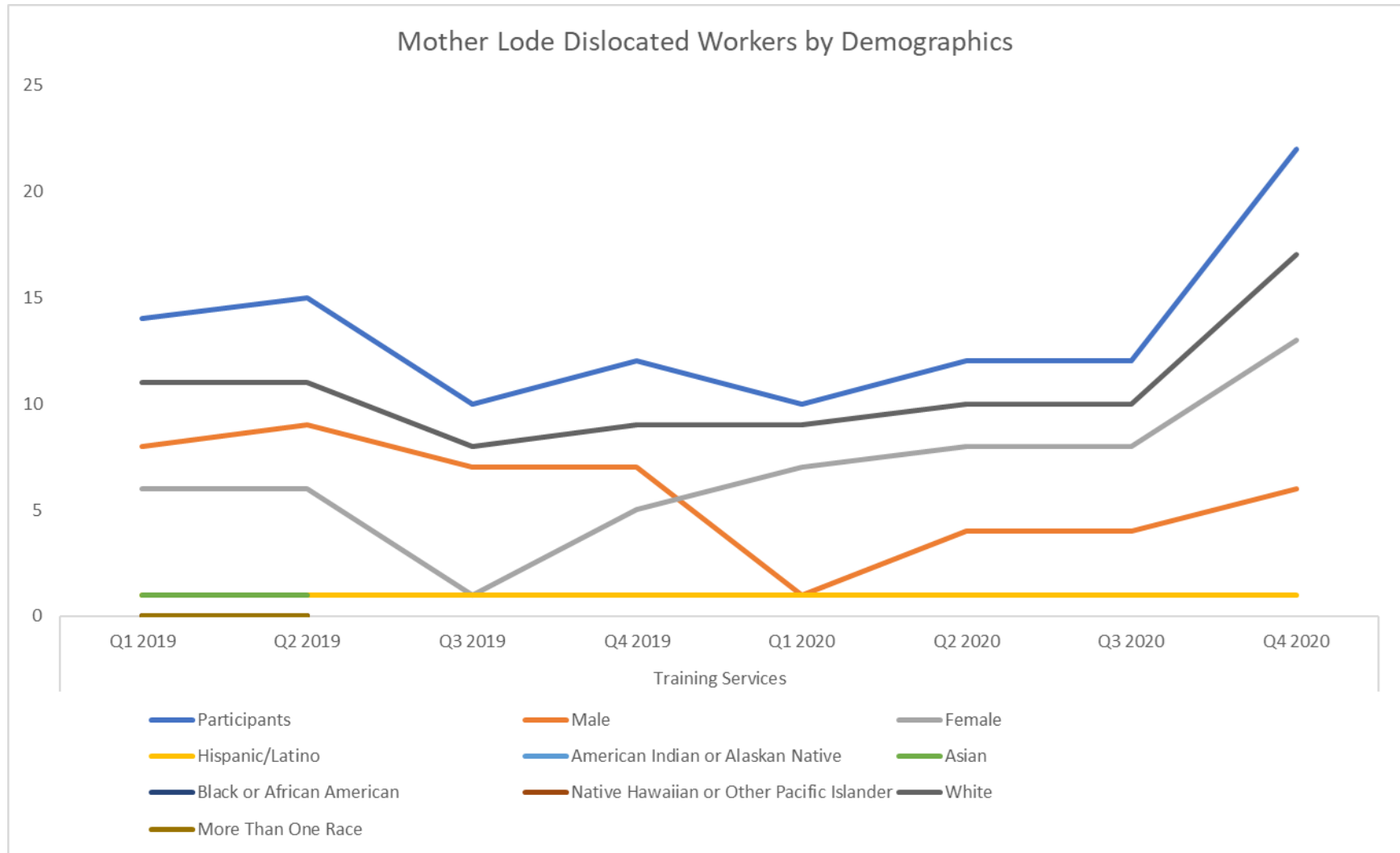
1. Individualized Career Services Demographics by Quarter
2. Individualized Career Services Barriers by Quarter

Mother Lode Dislocated Workers by Barriers

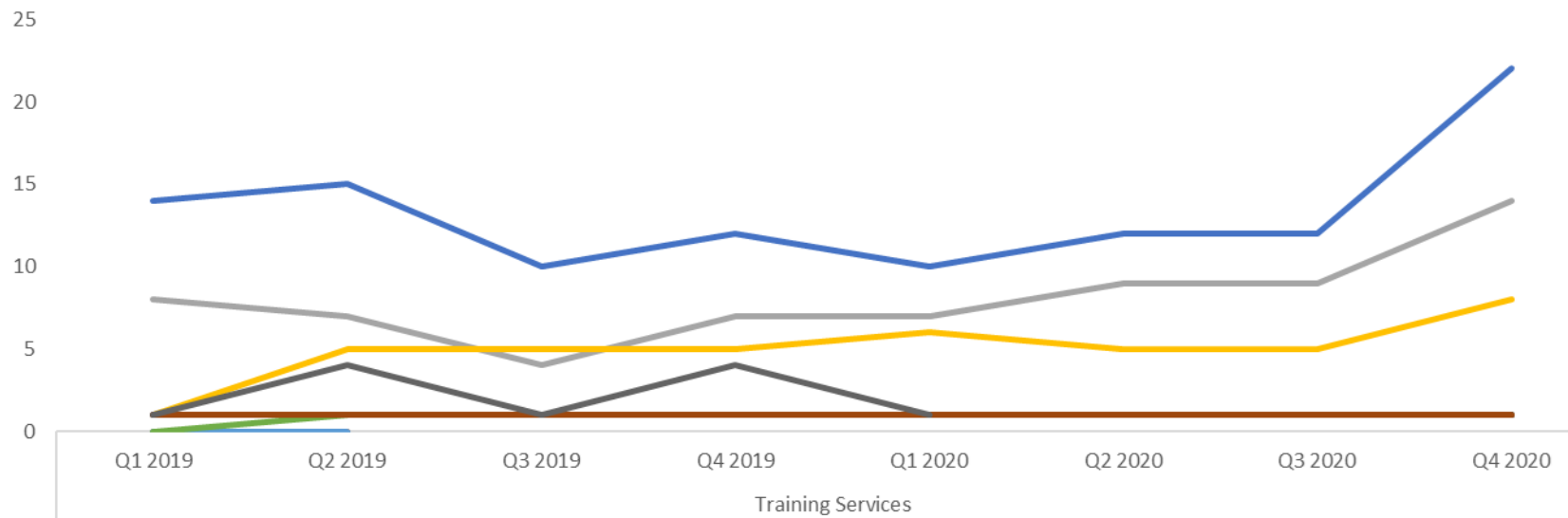


- Participants
- Displaced homemakers
- Low-income individuals
- Older individuals
- Ex-offenders
- Homeless individuals or runaway youth
- English language learners, individuals with low levels of literacy or facing substantial cultural barriers
- Single parents (Including single pregnant women)
- Long-term unemployed (27 or more consecutive weeks)

1. Training Services Demographics by Quarter
2. Training Services Barriers by Quarter

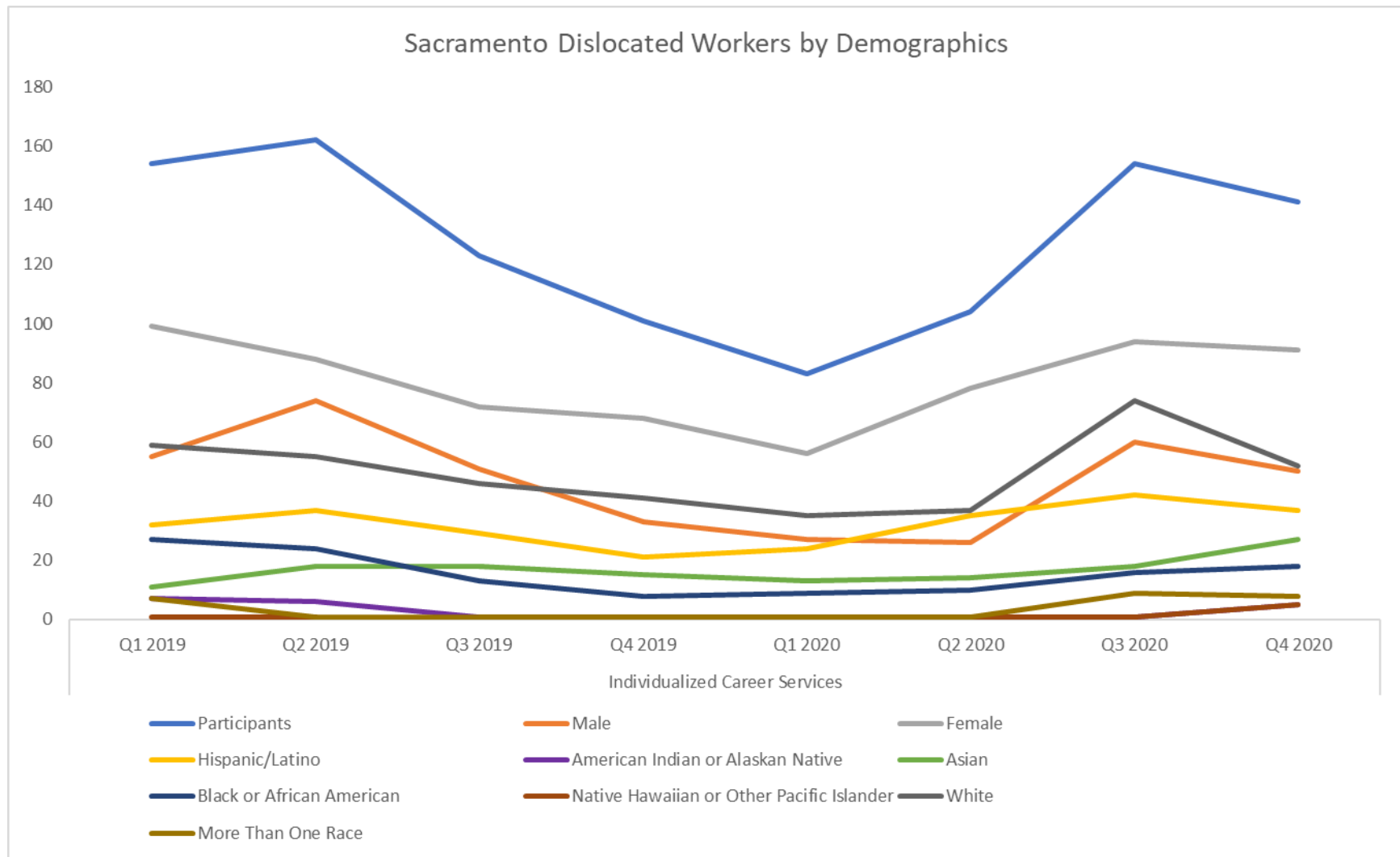


Mother Lode Dislocated Workers by Barriers

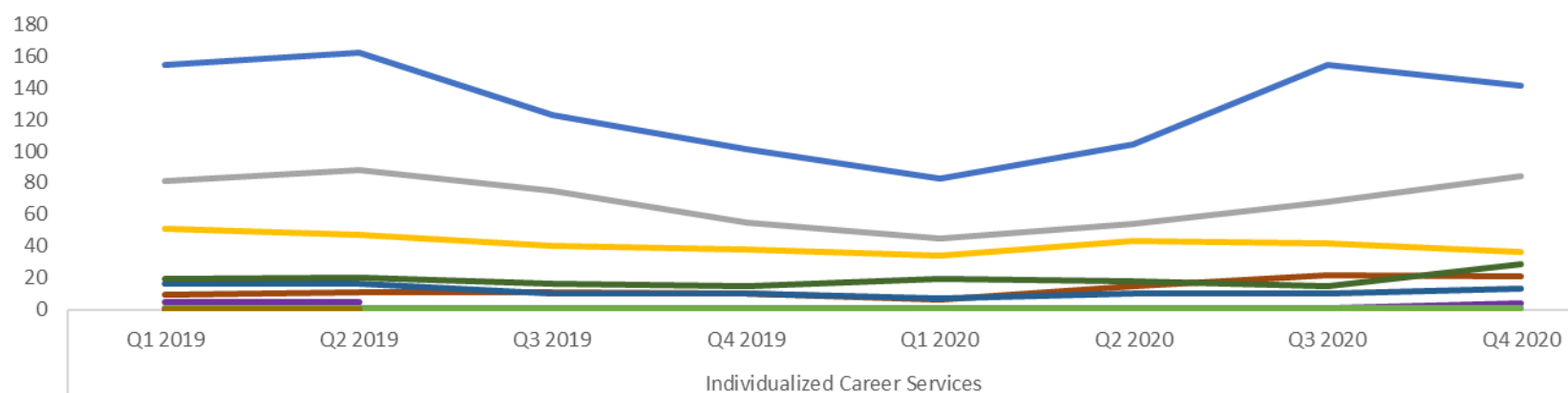


- Participants
- Displaced homemakers
- Low-income individuals
- Older individuals
- Ex-offenders
- Homeless individuals or runaway youth
- English language learners, individuals with low levels of literacy or facing substantial cultural barriers
- Single parents (Including single pregnant women)
- Long-term unemployed (27 or more consecutive weeks)

1. Individualized Career Services Demographics by Quarter
2. Individualized Career Services Barriers by Quarter

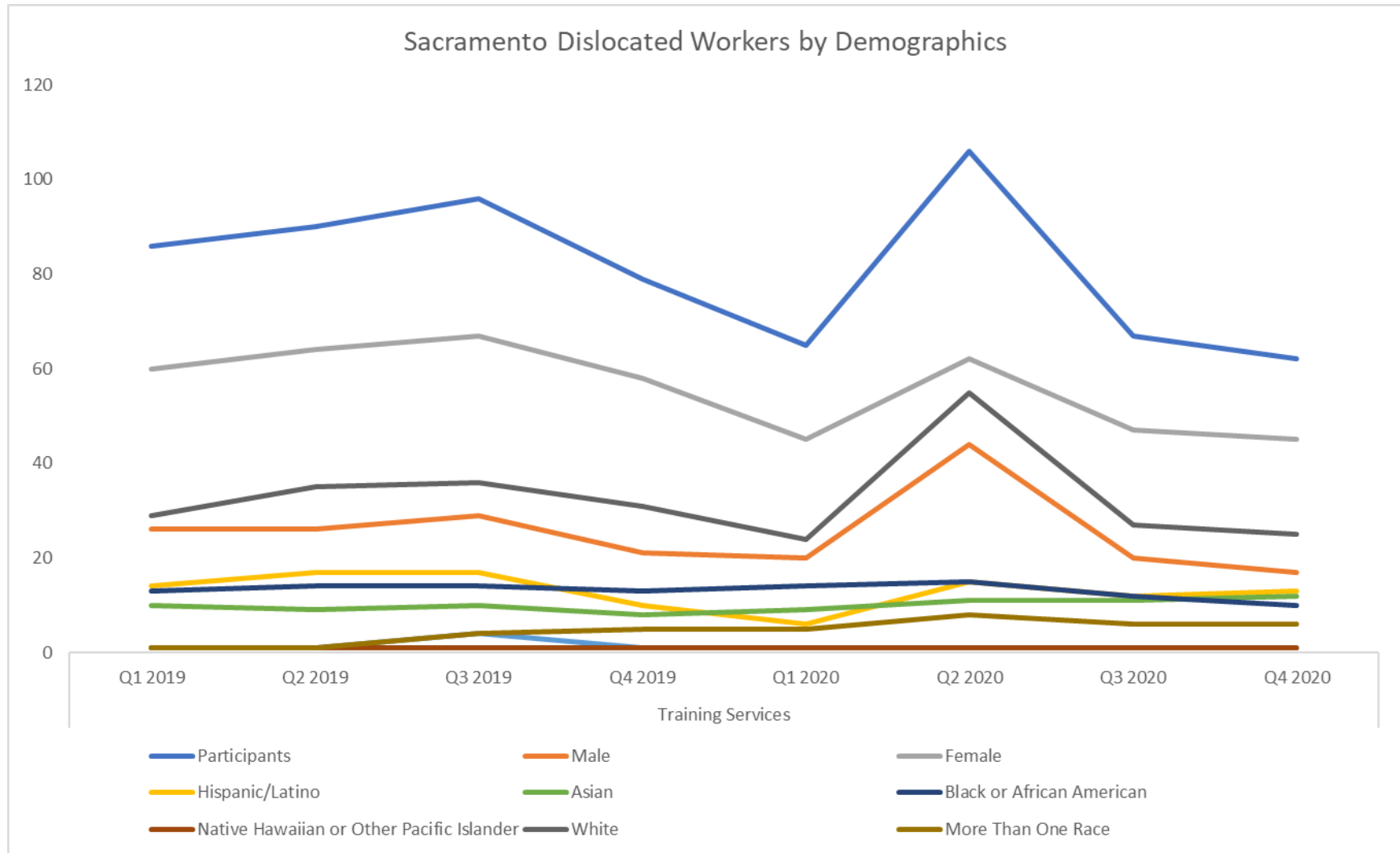


Sacramento Dislocated Workers by Barriers

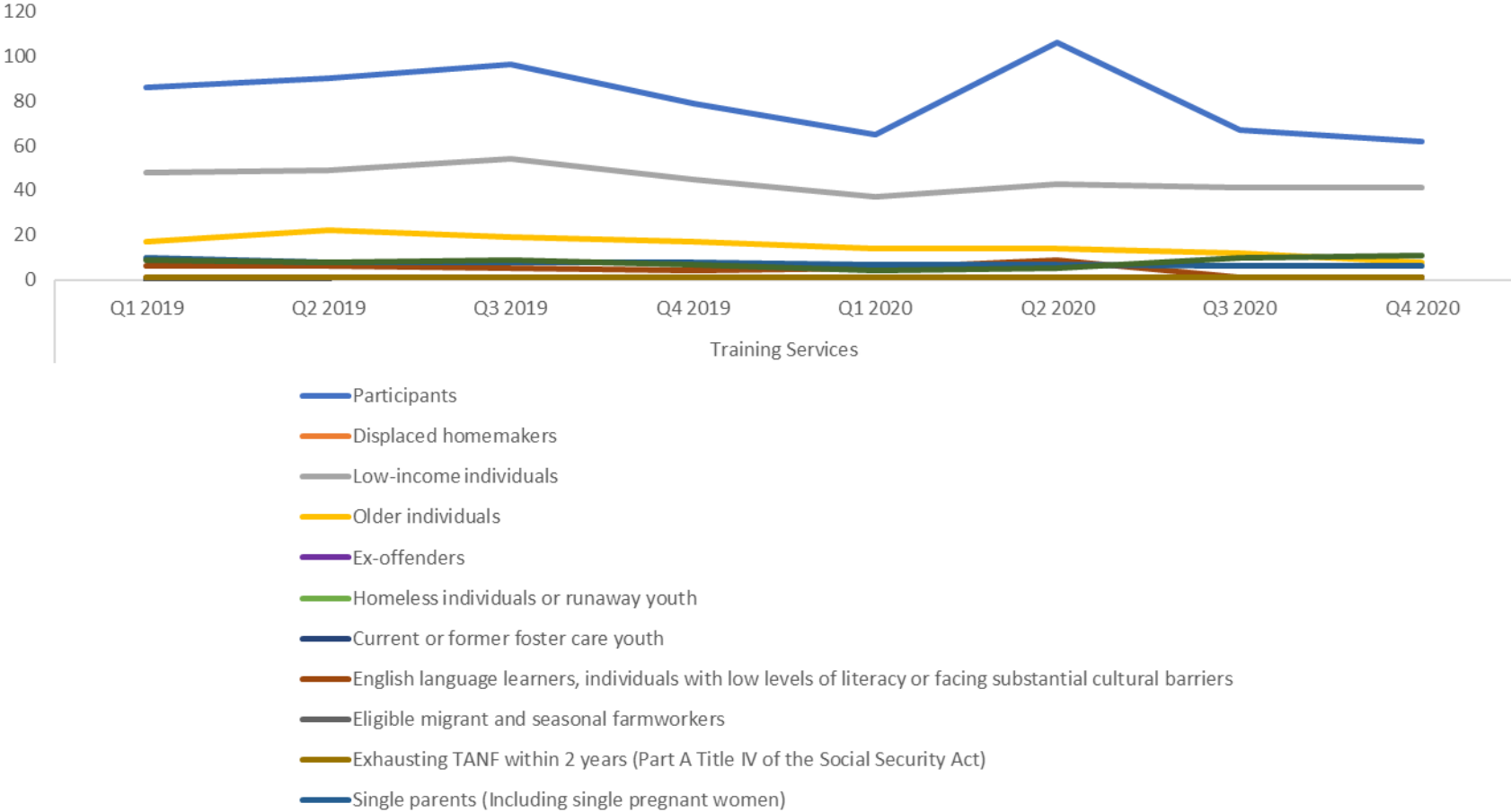


- Participants
- Displaced homemakers
- Low-income individuals
- Older individuals
- Ex-offenders
- Homeless individuals or runaway youth
- Current or former foster care youth
- English language learners, individuals with low levels of literacy or facing substantial cultural barriers
- Eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers
- Exhausting TANF within 2 years (Part A Title IV of the Social Security Act)
- Single parents (Including single pregnant women)

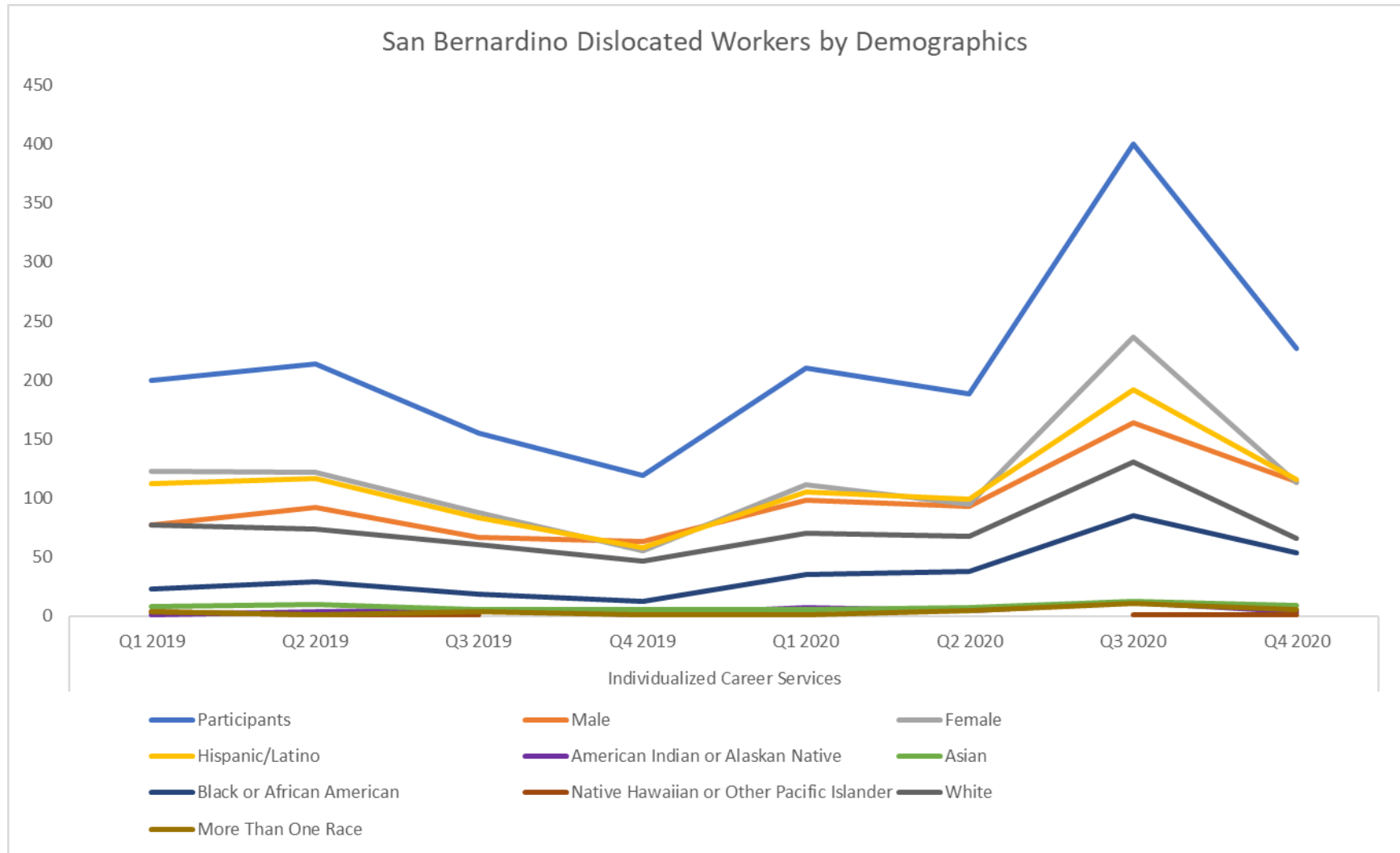
1. Training Services Demographics by Quarter
2. Training Services Barriers by Quarter



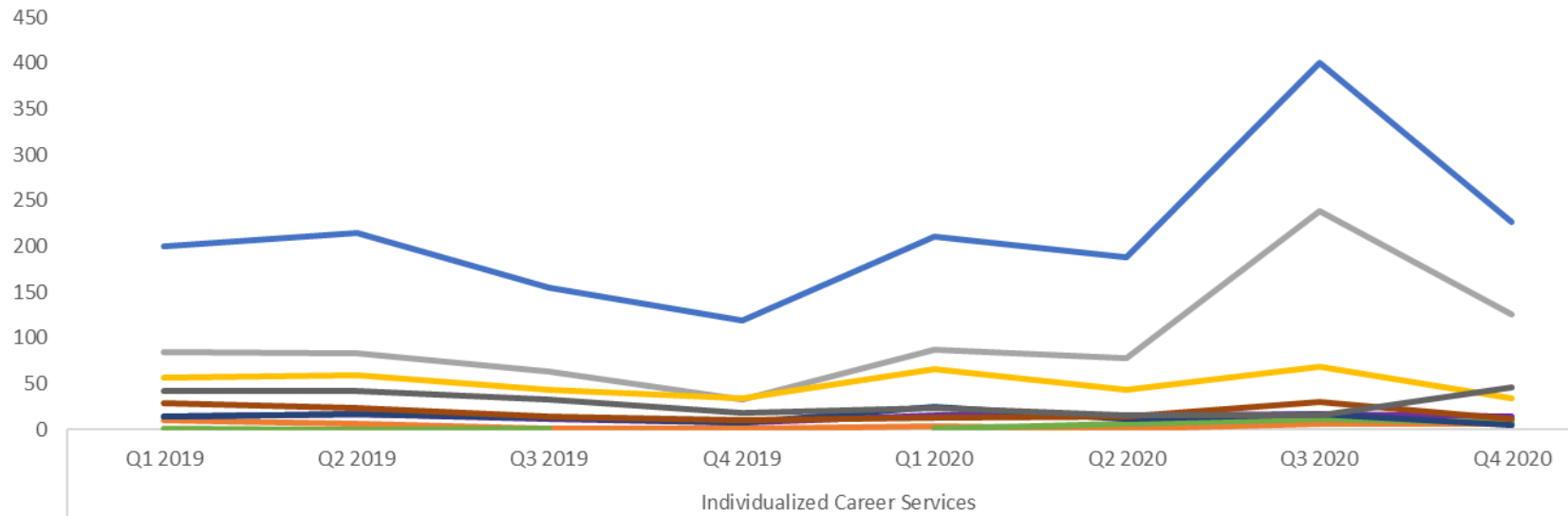
Sacramento Dislocated Workers by Barriers



1. Individualized Career Services Demographics by Quarter
2. Individualized Career Services Barriers by Quarter

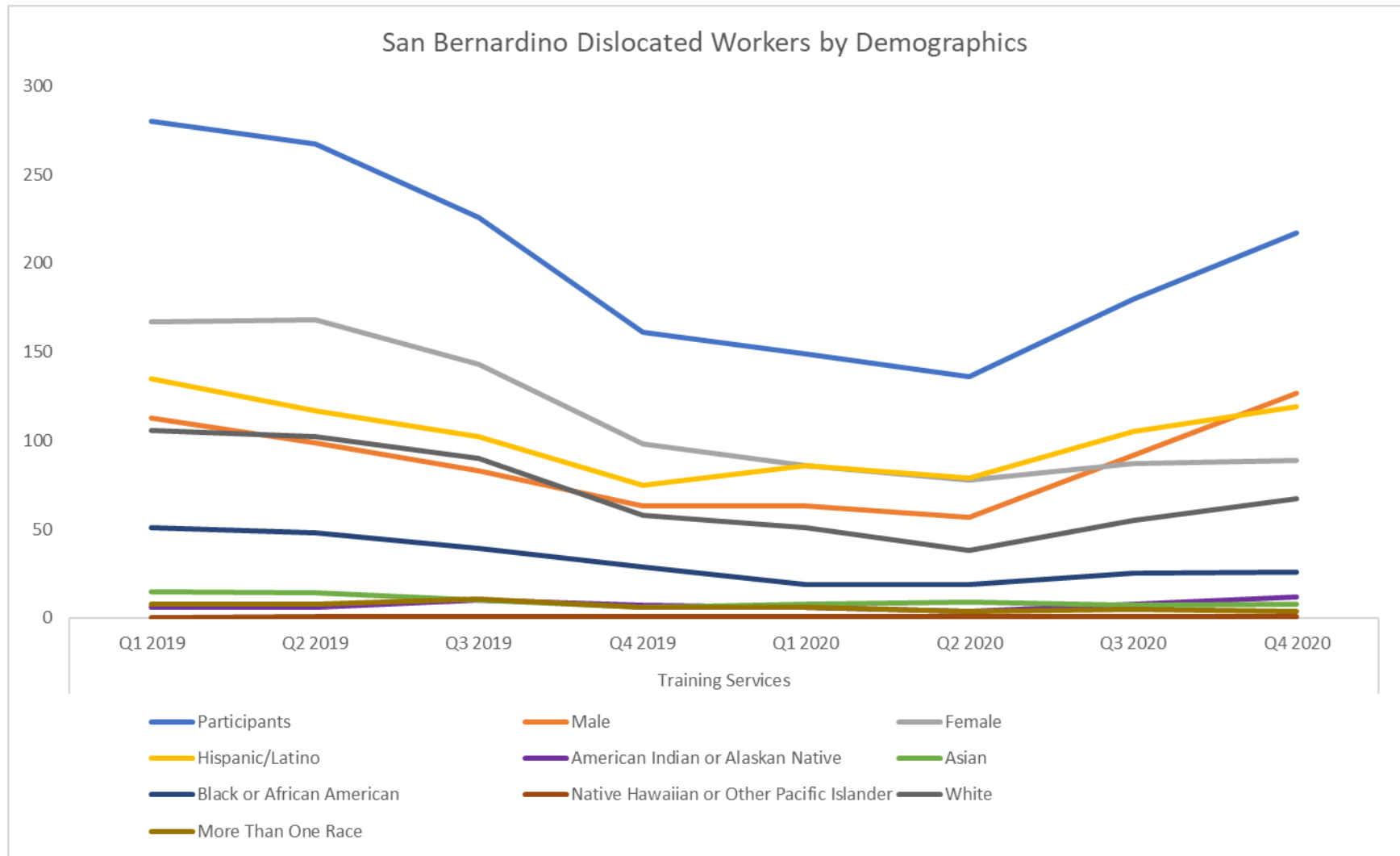


San Bernardino Dislocated Workers by Barriers

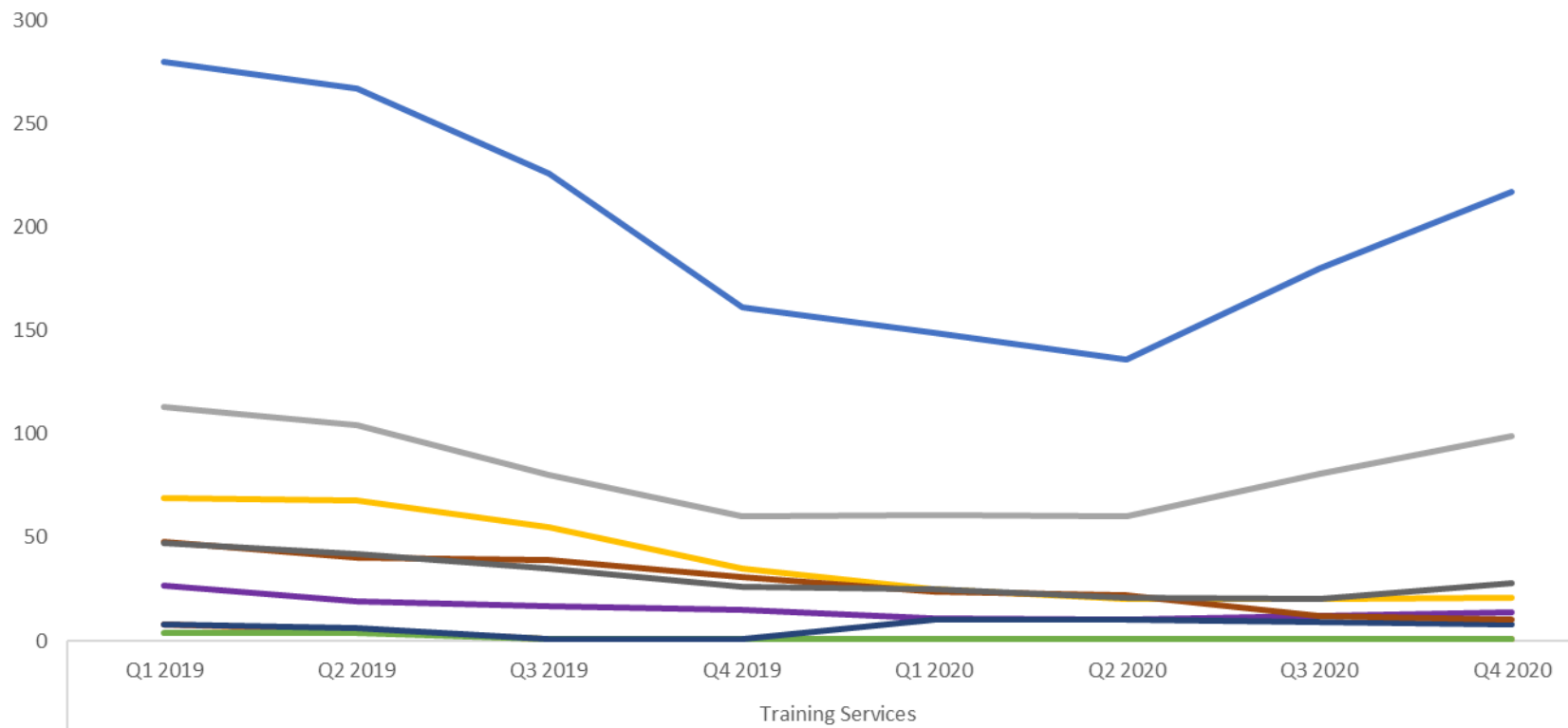


- Participants
- Displaced homemakers
- Low-income individuals
- Older individuals
- Ex-offenders
- Homeless individuals or runaway youth
- English language learners, individuals with low levels of literacy or facing substantial cultural barriers
- Single parents (Including single pregnant women)
- Long-term unemployed (27 or more consecutive weeks)

1. Training Services Demographics by Quarter
2. Training Services Barriers by Quarter

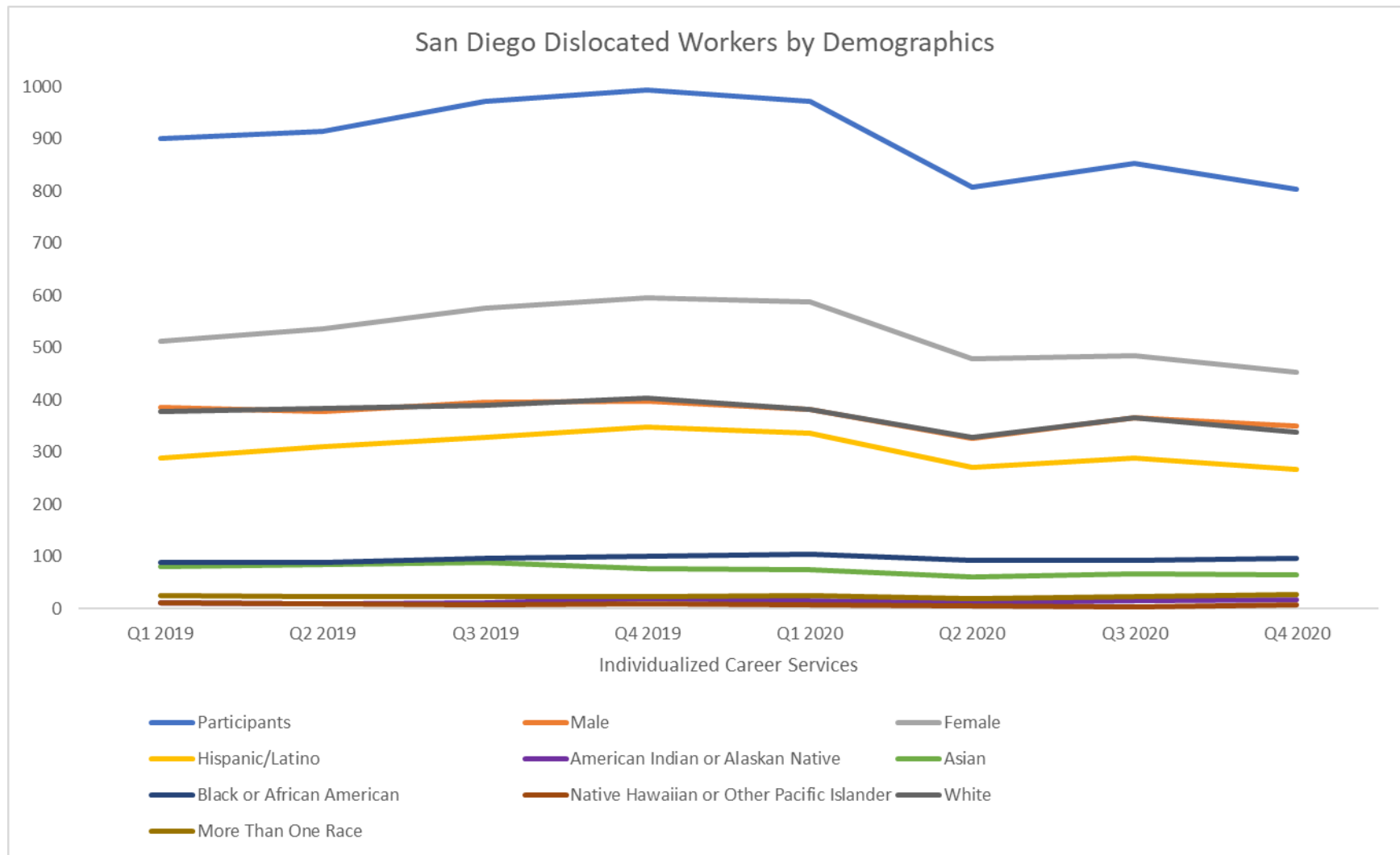


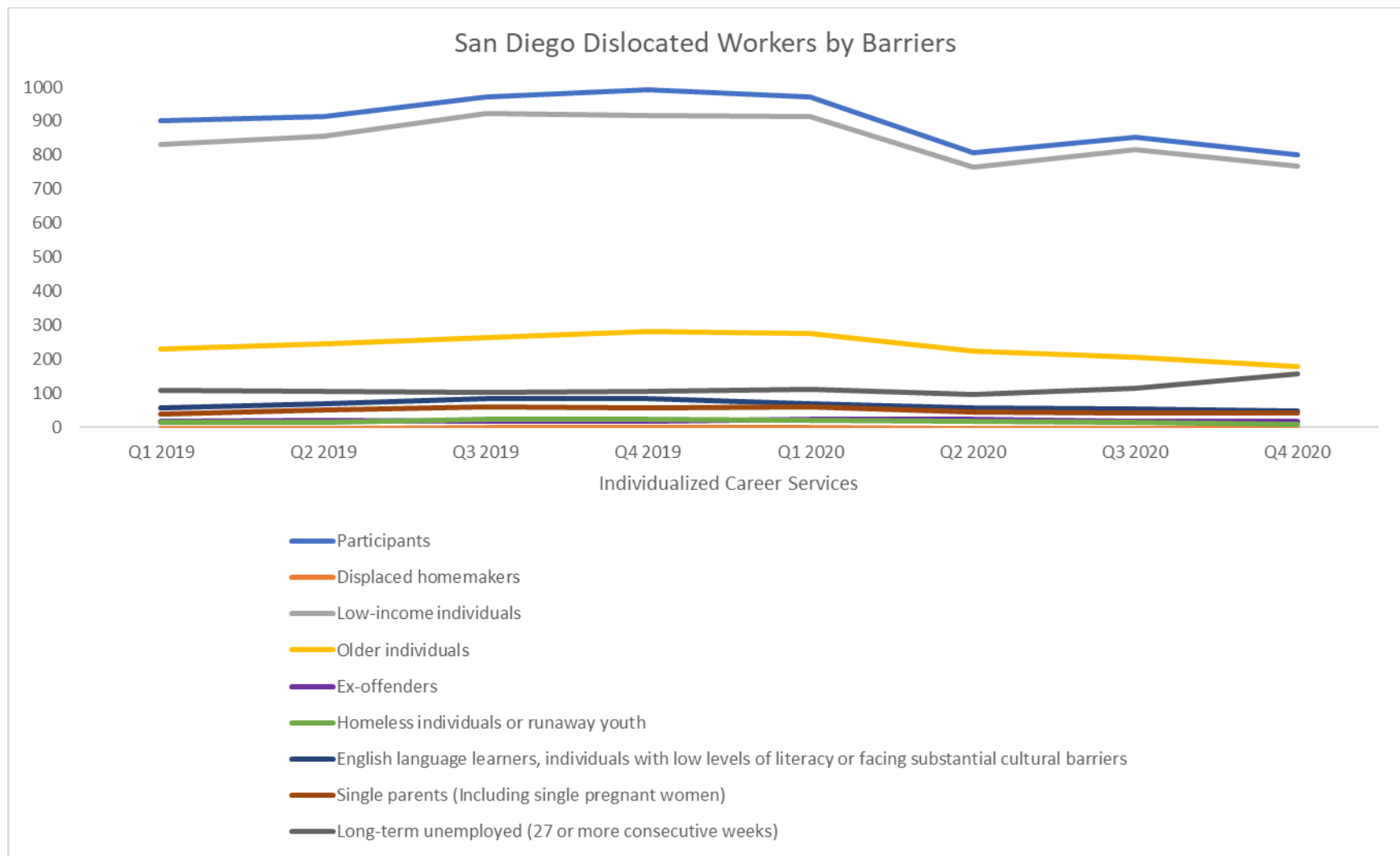
San Bernardino Dislocated Workers by Barriers



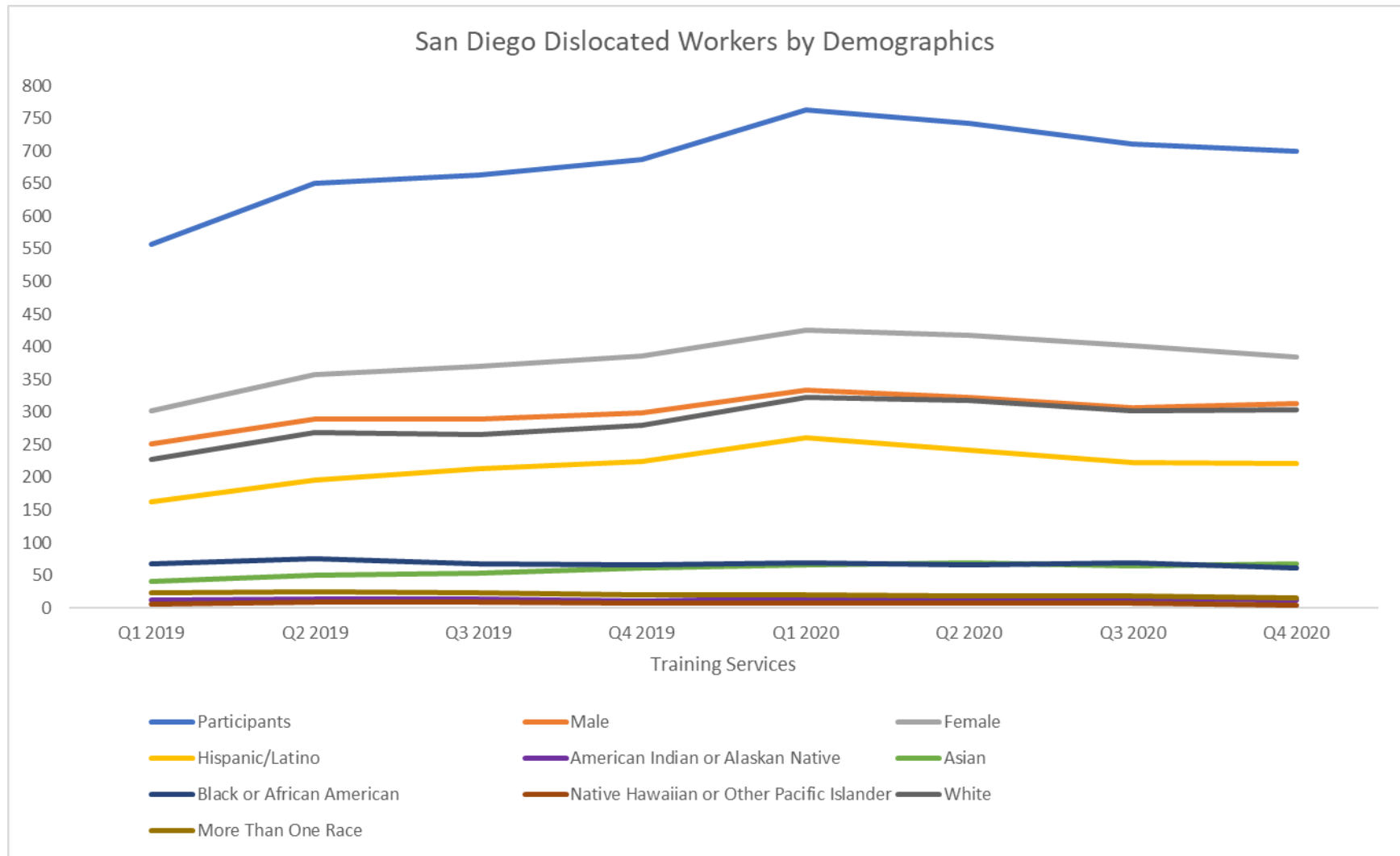
- Participants
- Displaced homemakers
- Low-income individuals
- Older individuals
- Ex-offenders
- Homeless individuals or runaway youth
- English language learners, individuals with low levels of literacy or facing substantial cultural barriers
- Single parents (Including single pregnant women)
- Long-term unemployed (27 or more consecutive weeks)

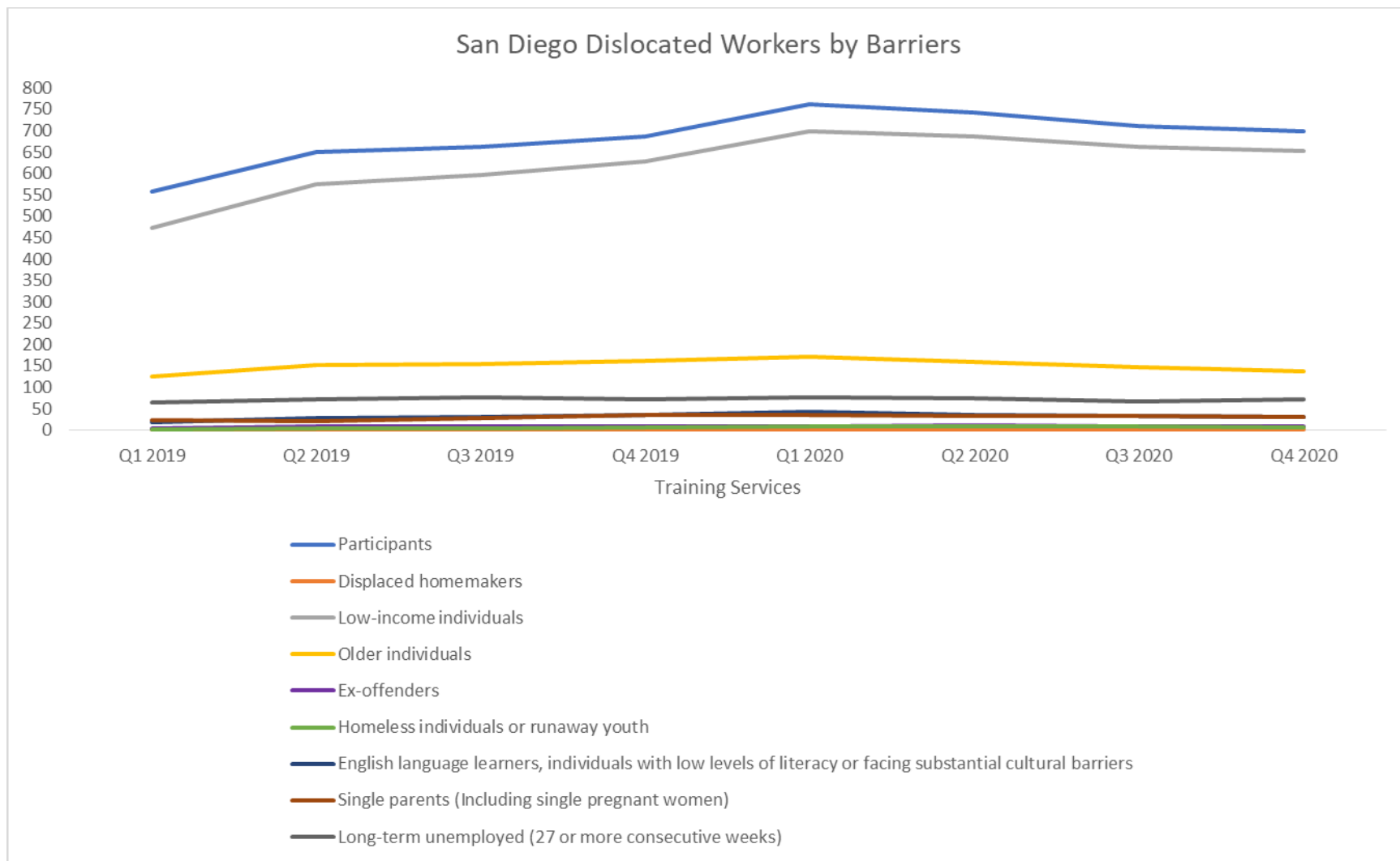
1. Individualized Career Services Demographics by Quarter
2. Individualized Career Services Barriers by Quarter



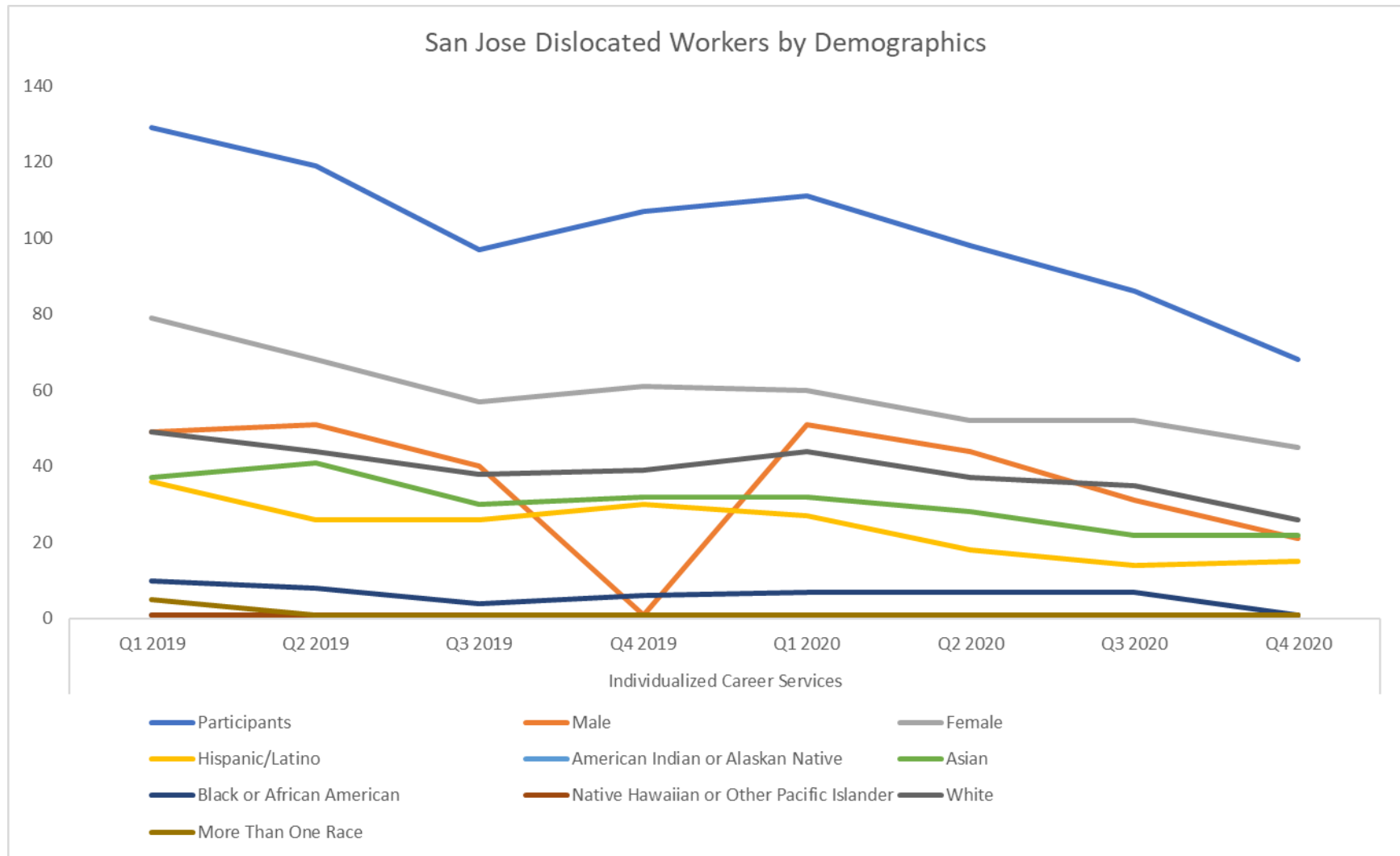


1. Training Services Demographics by Quarter
2. Training Services Barriers by Quarter

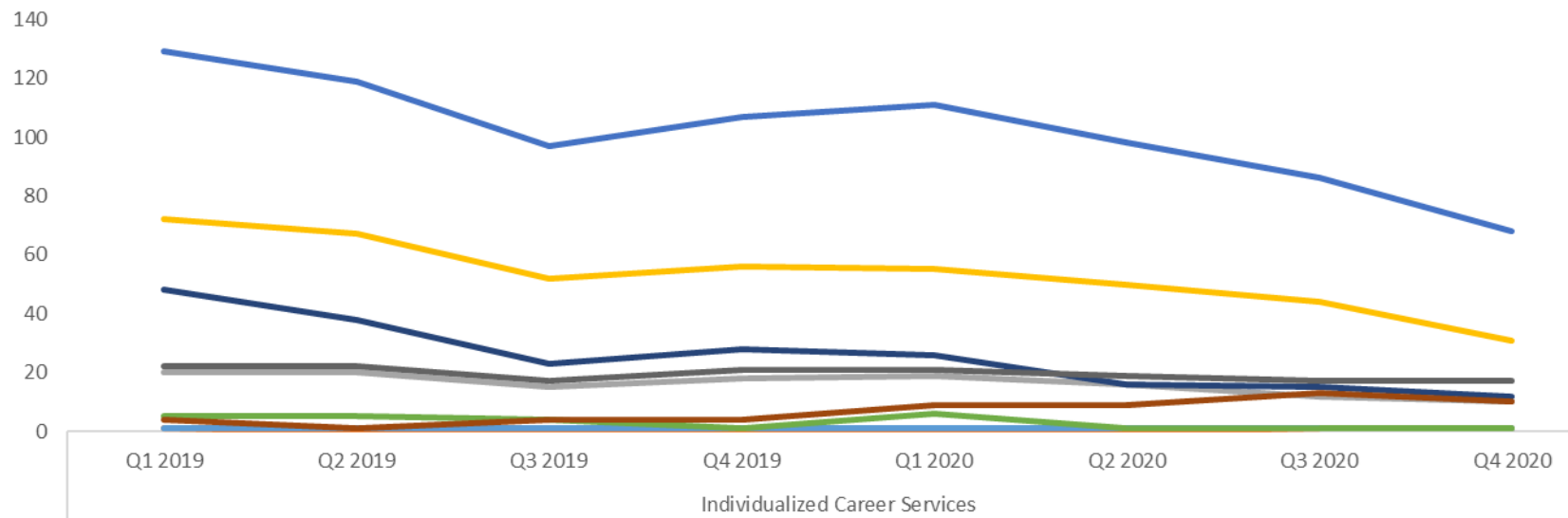




1. Individualized Career Services Demographics by Quarter
2. Individualized Career Services Barriers by Quarter

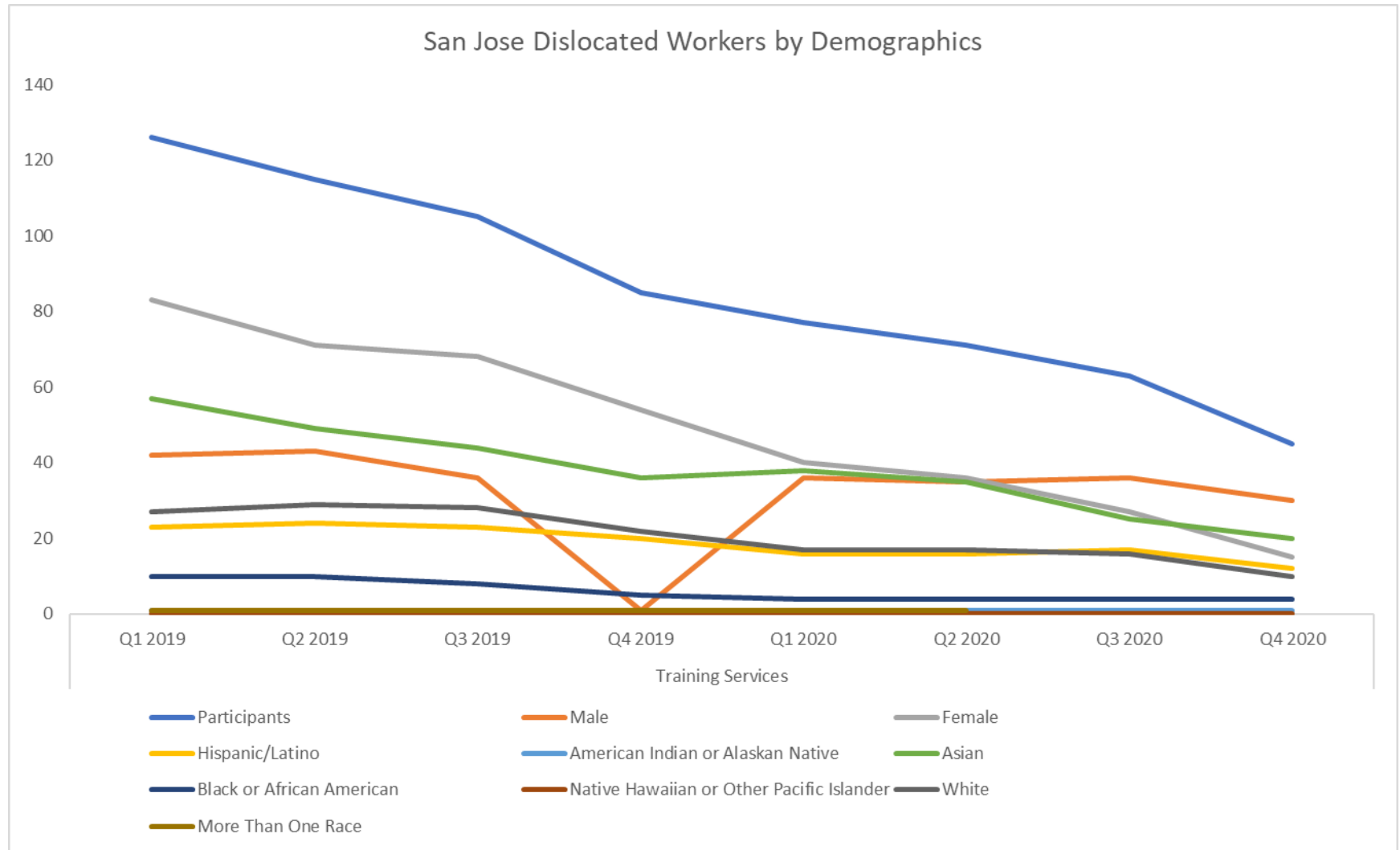


San Jose Dislocated Workers by Barriers

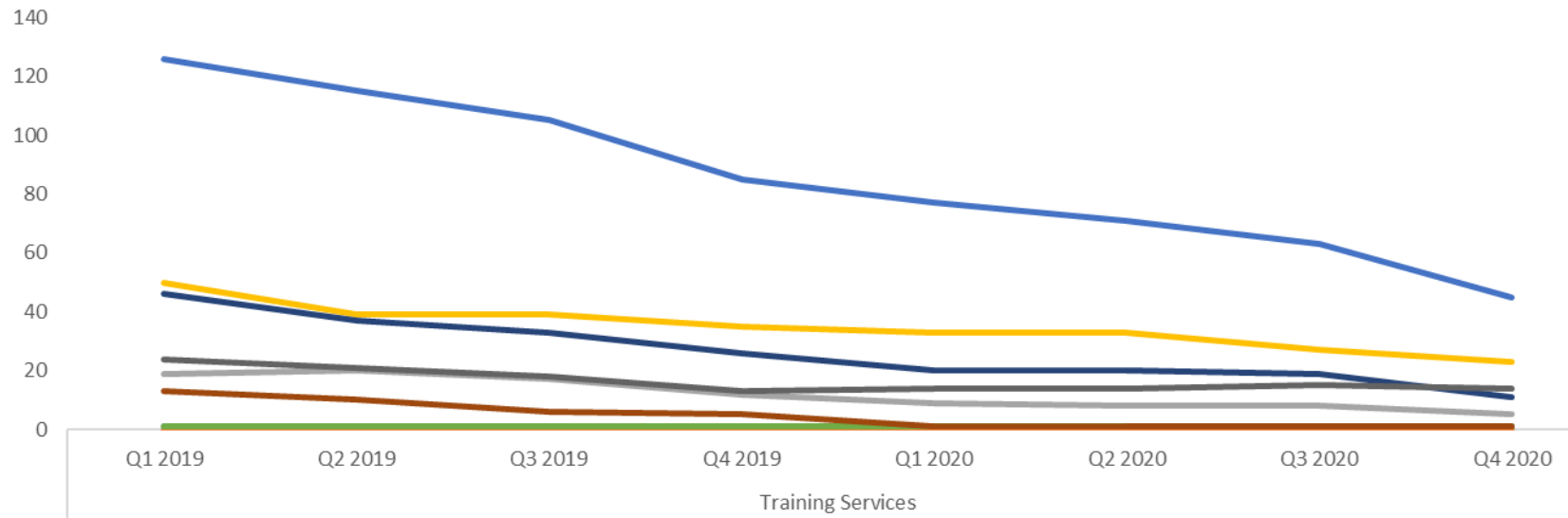


- Participants
- Displaced homemakers
- Low-income individuals
- Older individuals
- Ex-offenders
- Homeless individuals or runaway youth
- English language learners, individuals with low levels of literacy or facing substantial cultural barriers
- Single parents (Including single pregnant women)
- Long-term unemployed (27 or more consecutive weeks)

1. Training Services Demographics by Quarter
2. Training Services Barriers by Quarter

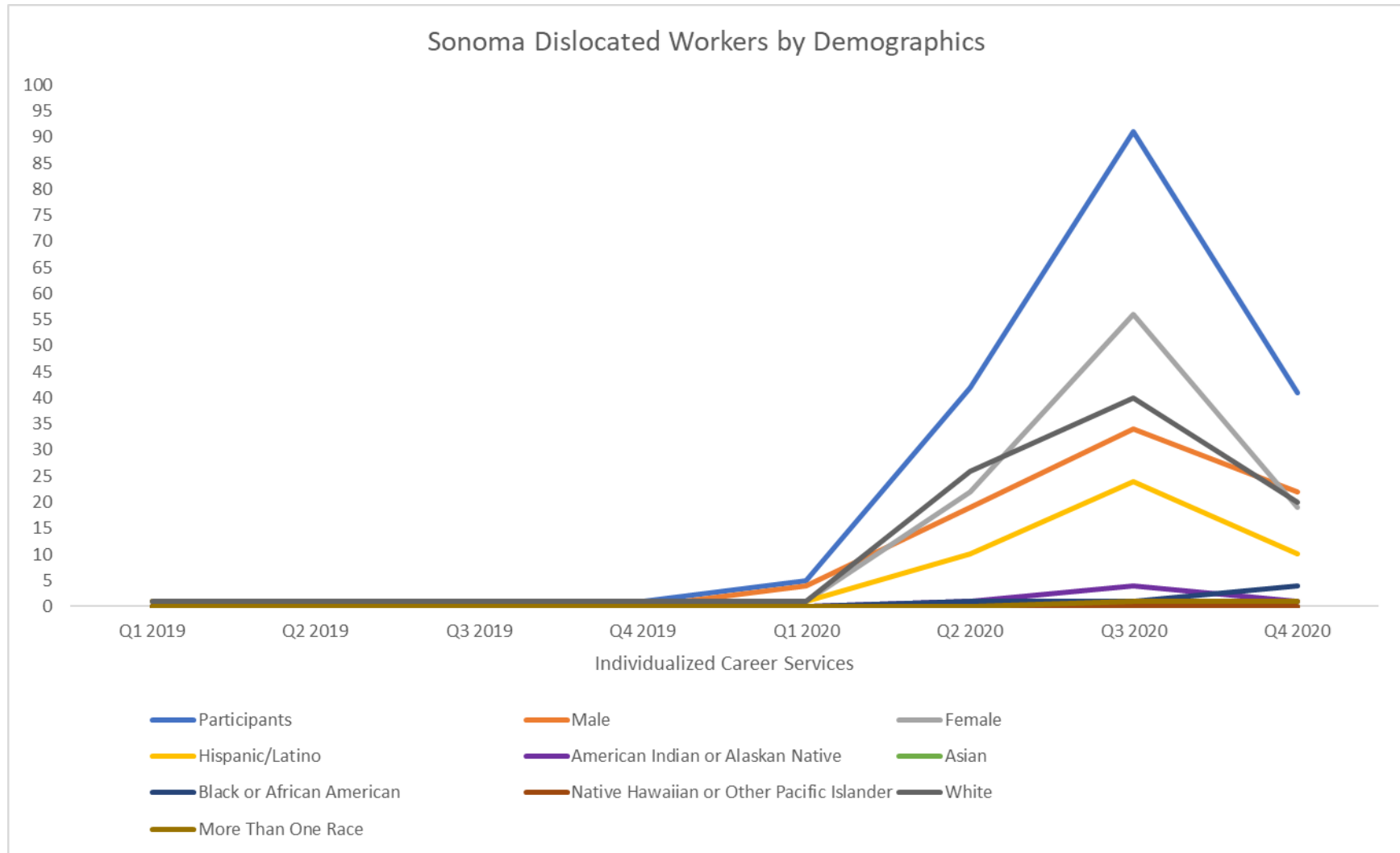


San Jose Dislocated Workers by Barriers

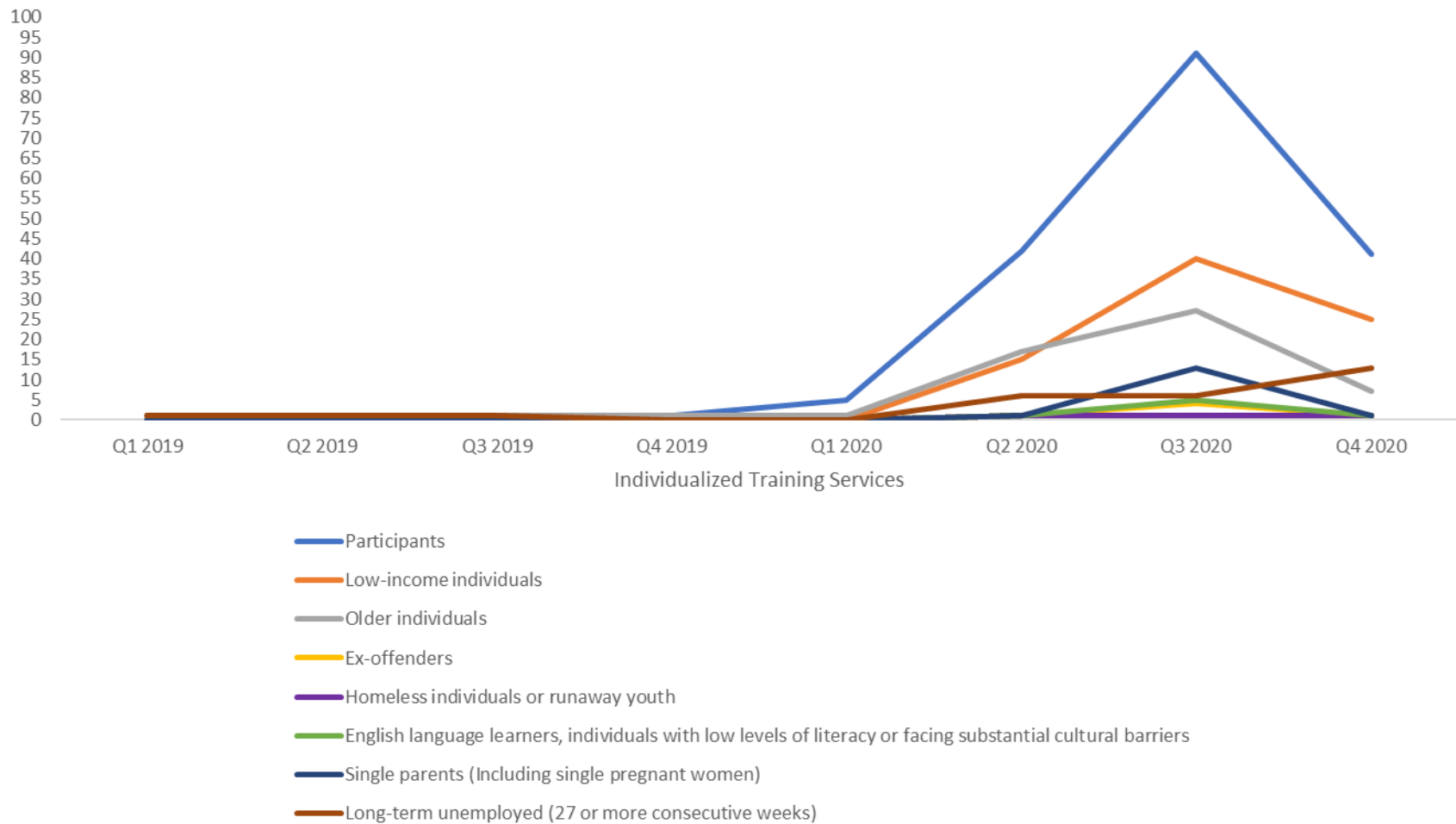


- Participants
- Displaced homemakers
- Low-income individuals
- Older individuals
- Ex-offenders
- Homeless individuals or runaway youth
- English language learners, individuals with low levels of literacy or facing substantial cultural barriers
- Single parents (Including single pregnant women)
- Long-term unemployed (27 or more consecutive weeks)

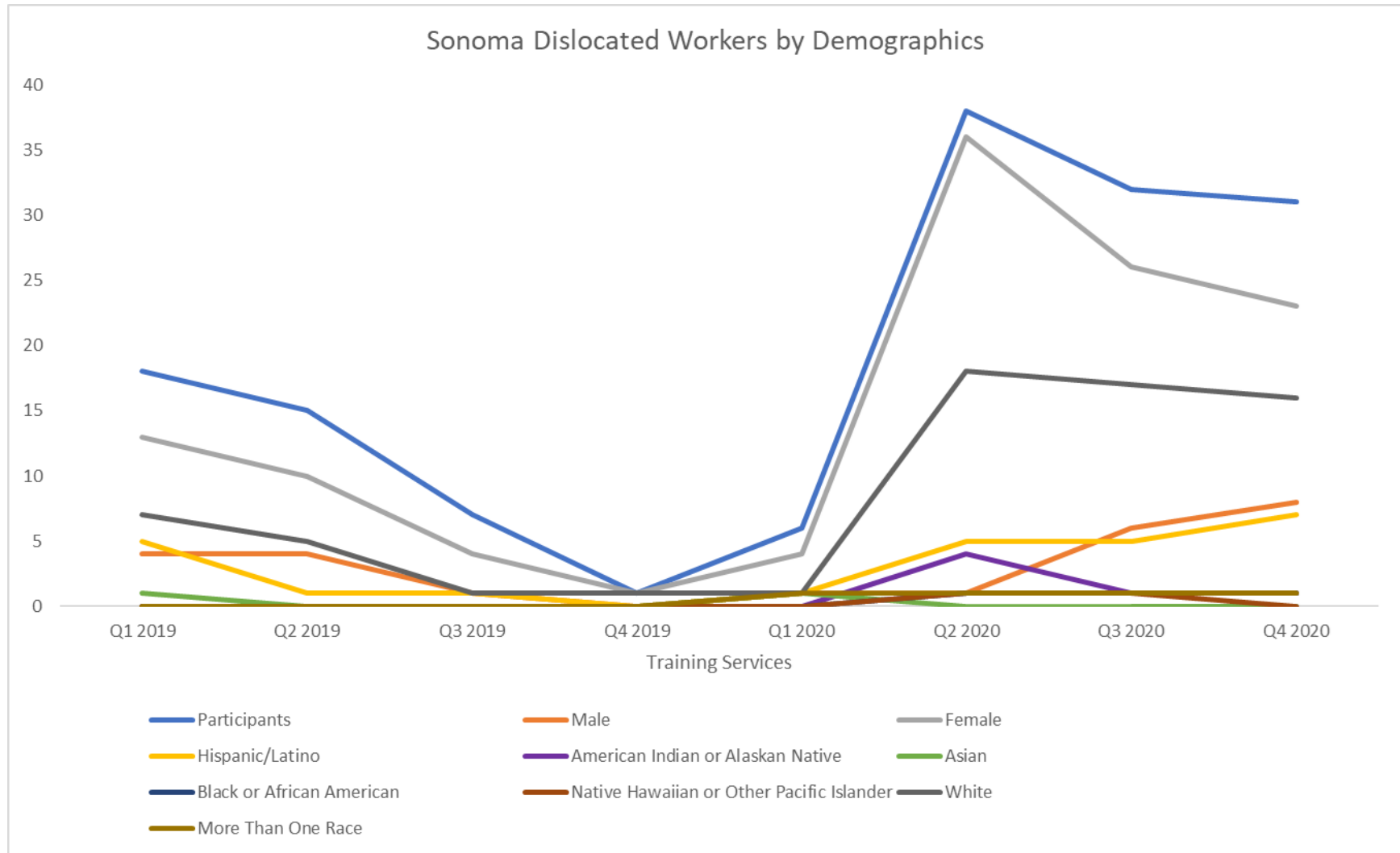
1. Individualized Career Services Demographics by Quarter
2. Individualized Career Services Barriers by Quarter



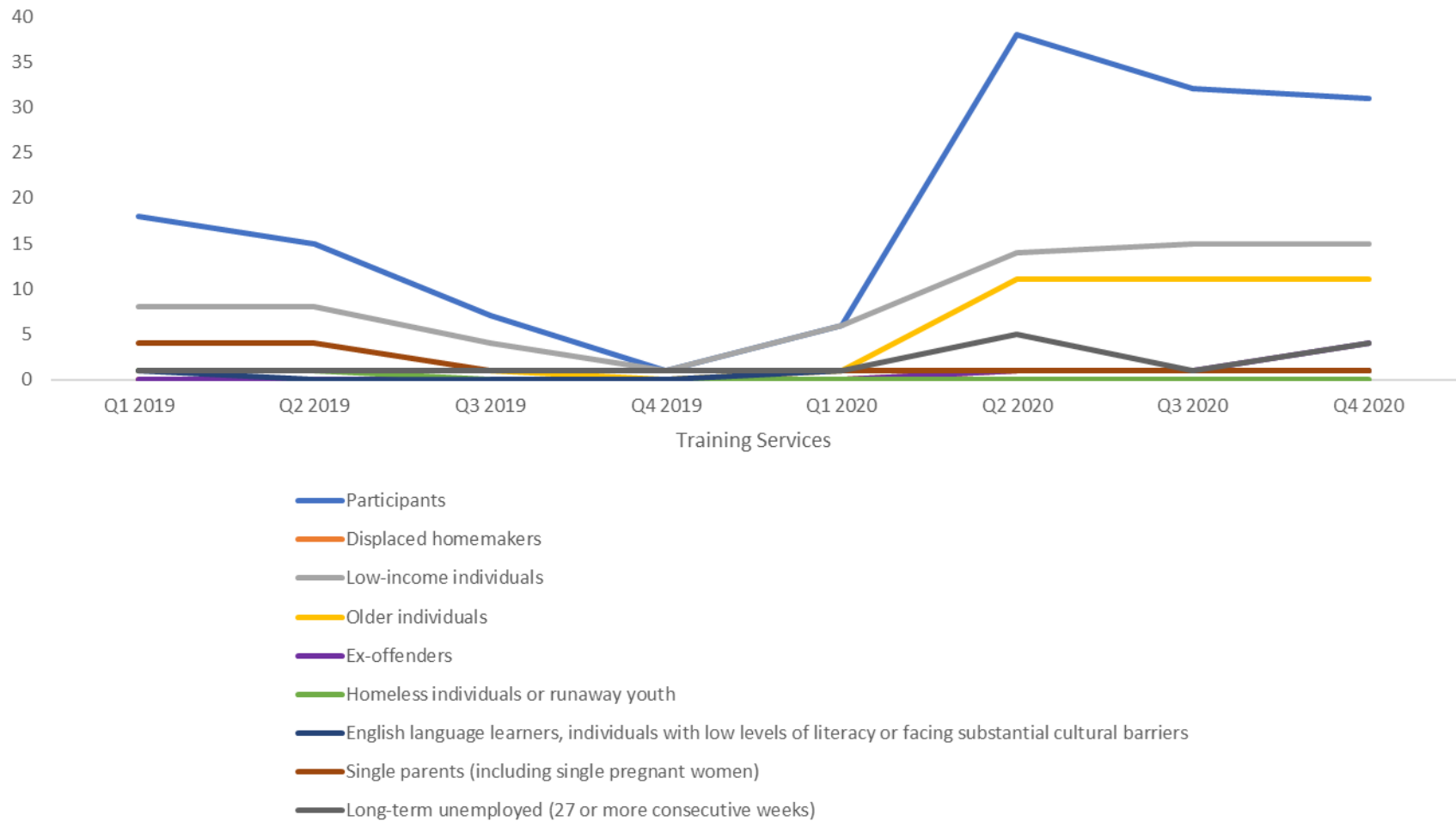
Sonoma Dislocated Workers by Barriers



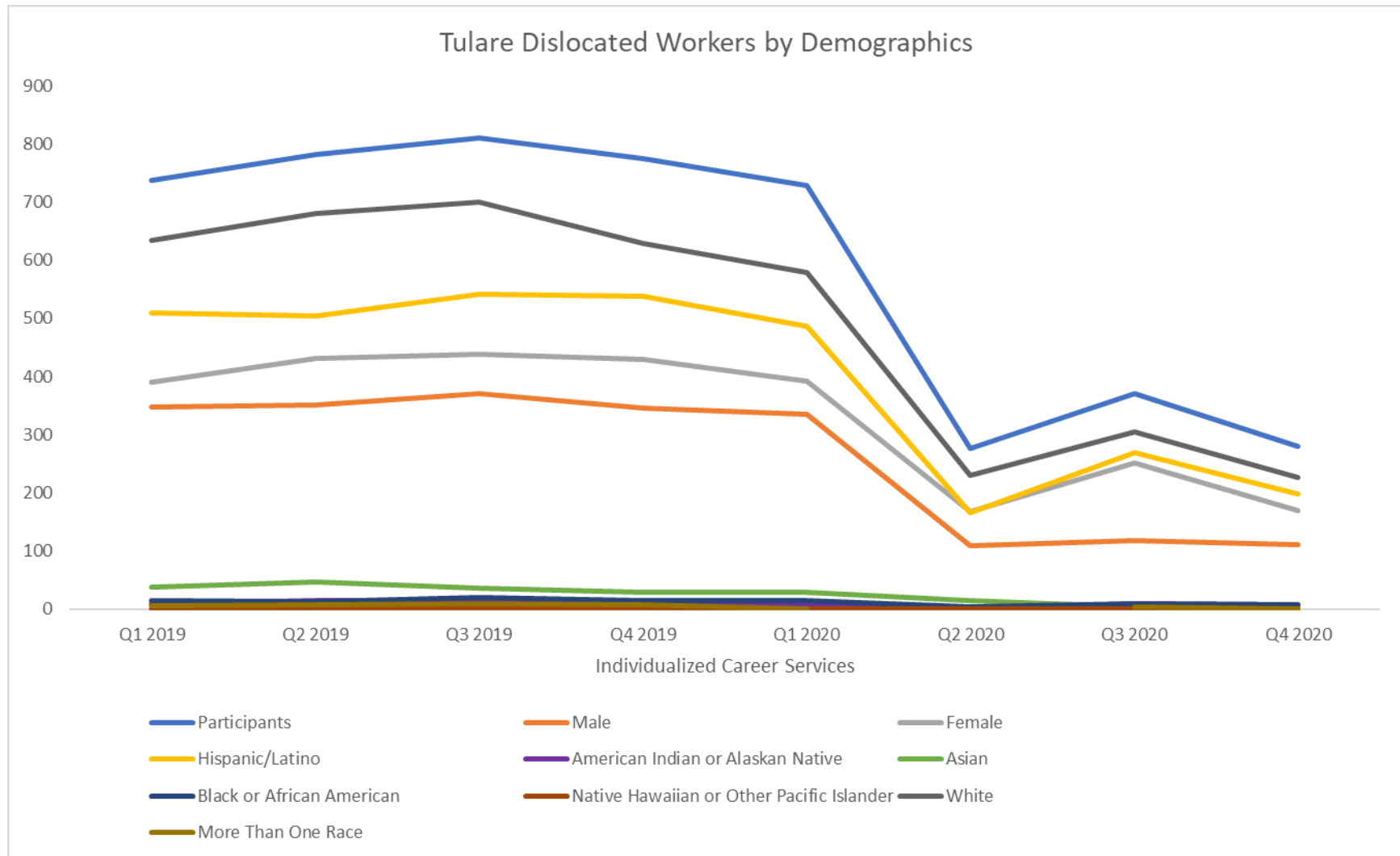
1. Training Services Demographics by Quarter
2. Training Services Barriers by Quarter



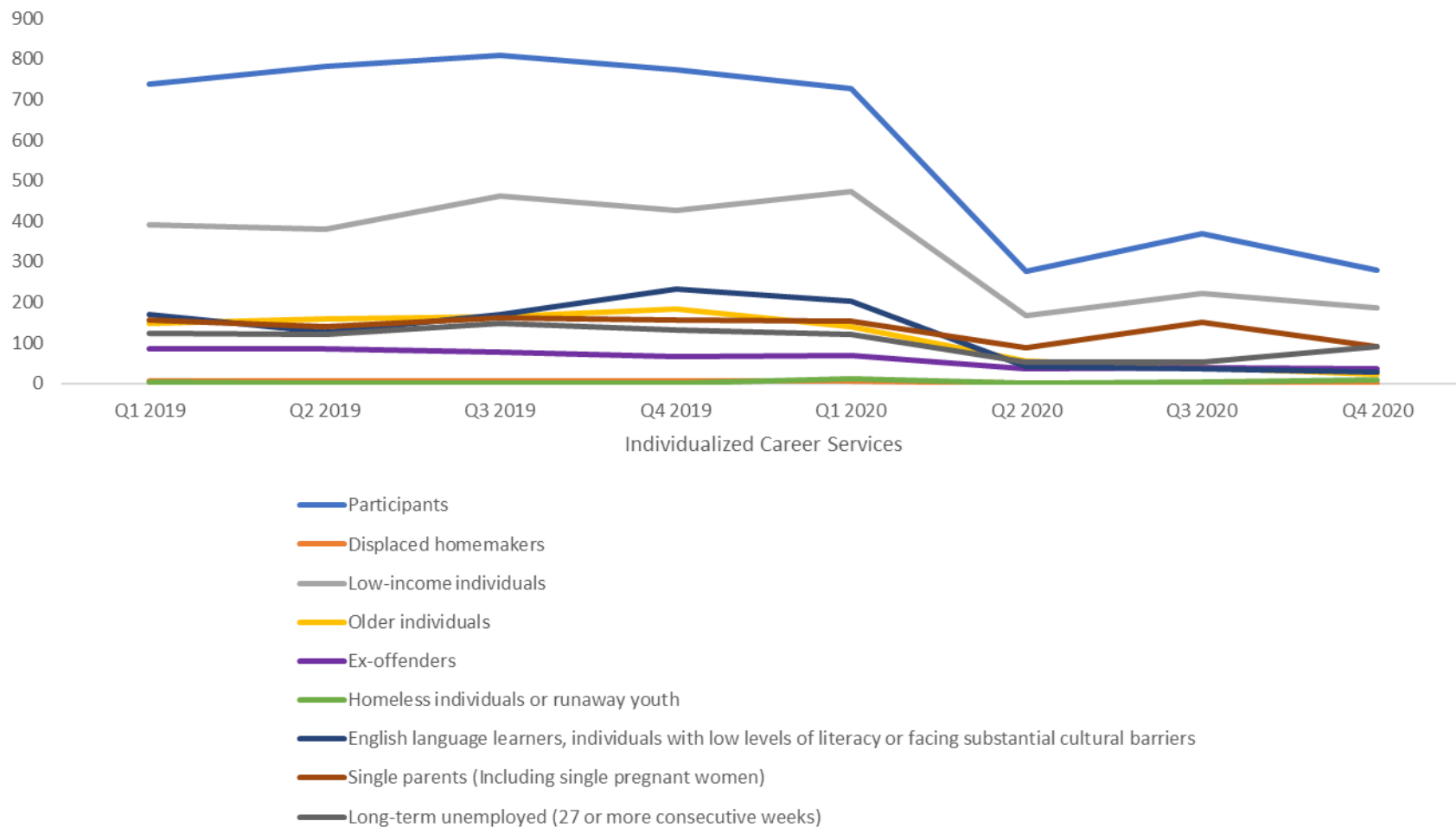
Sonoma Dislocated Workers by Barriers



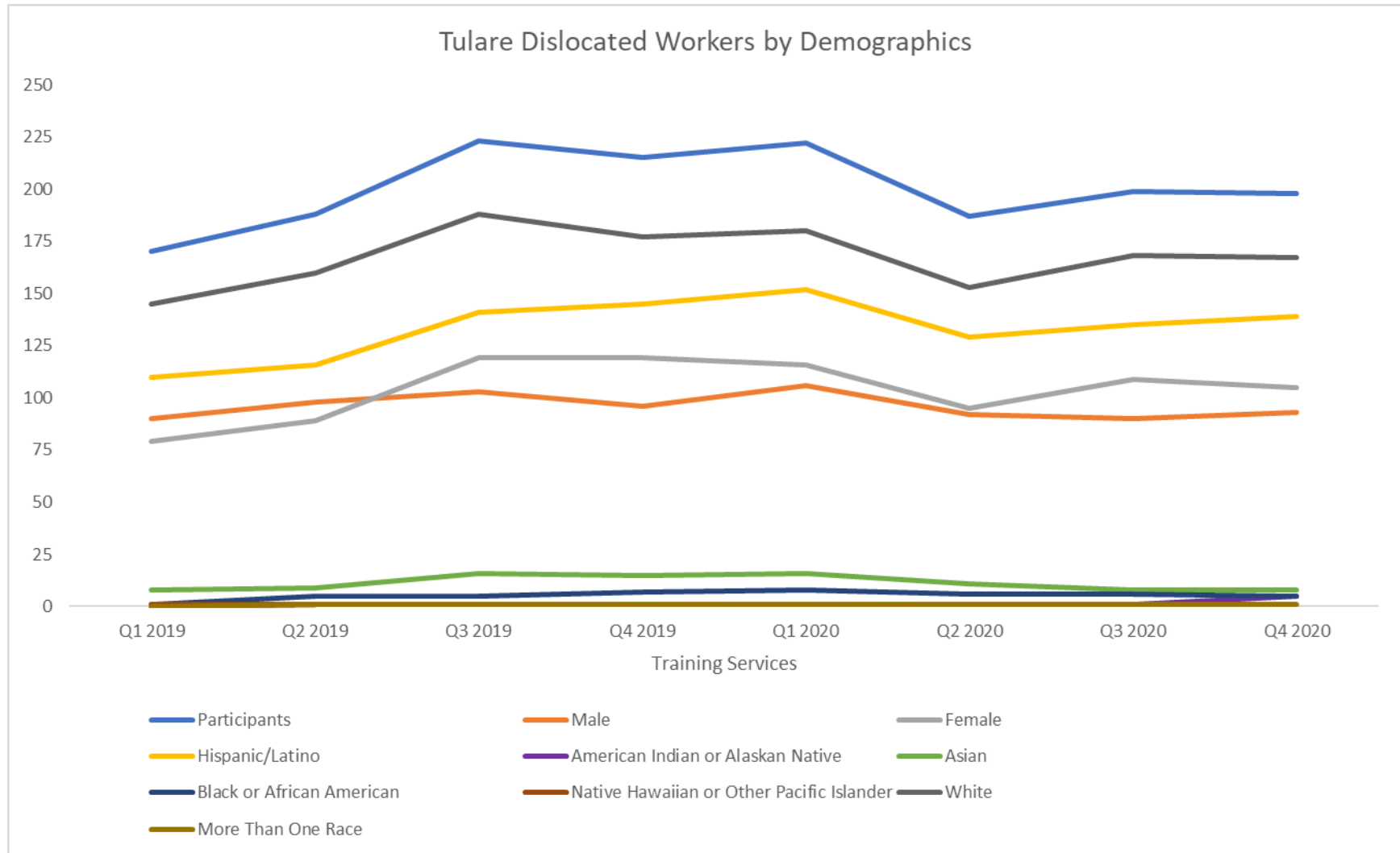
1. Individualized Career Services Demographics by Quarter
2. Individualized Career Services Barriers by Quarter

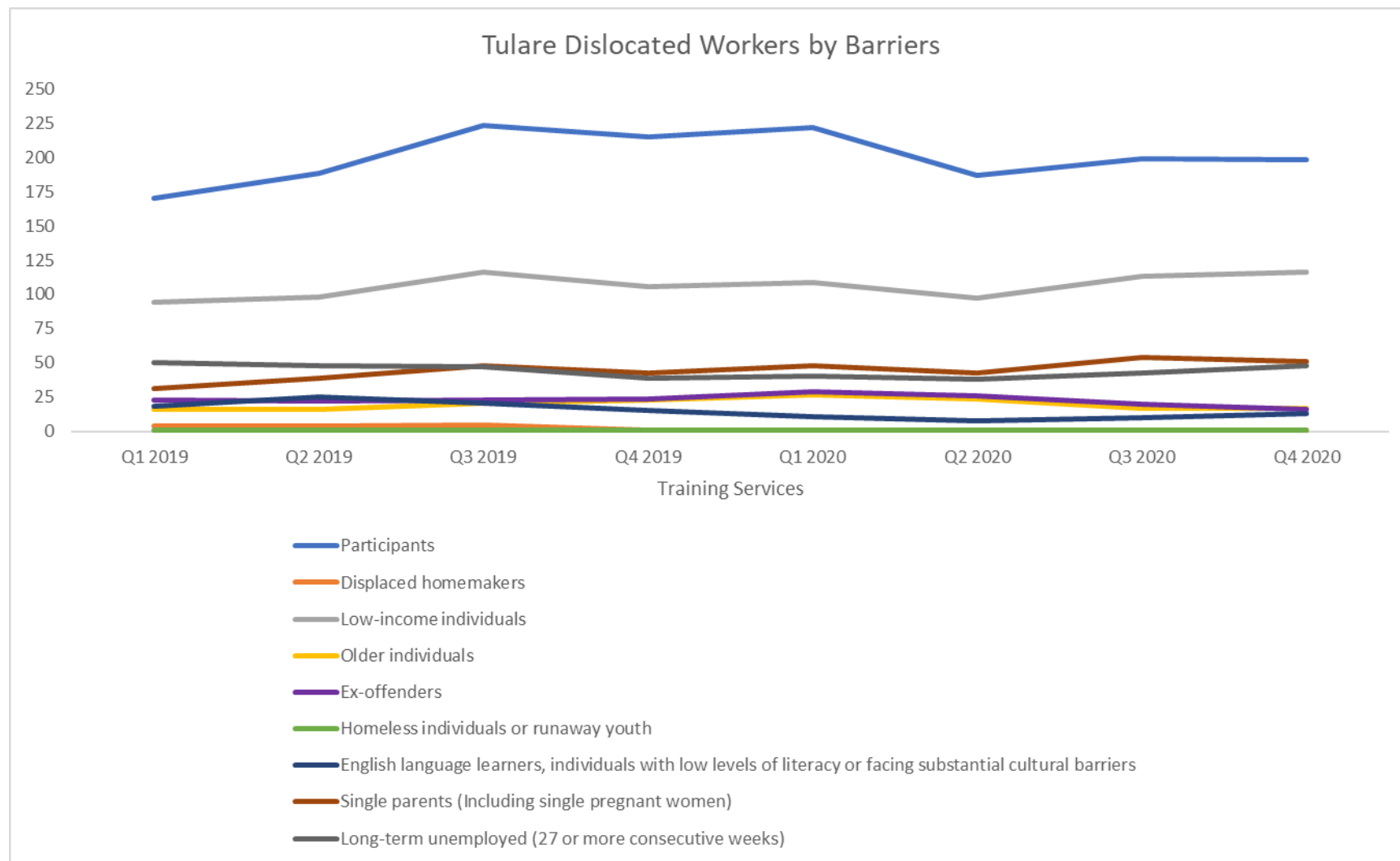


Tulare Dislocated Workers by Barriers

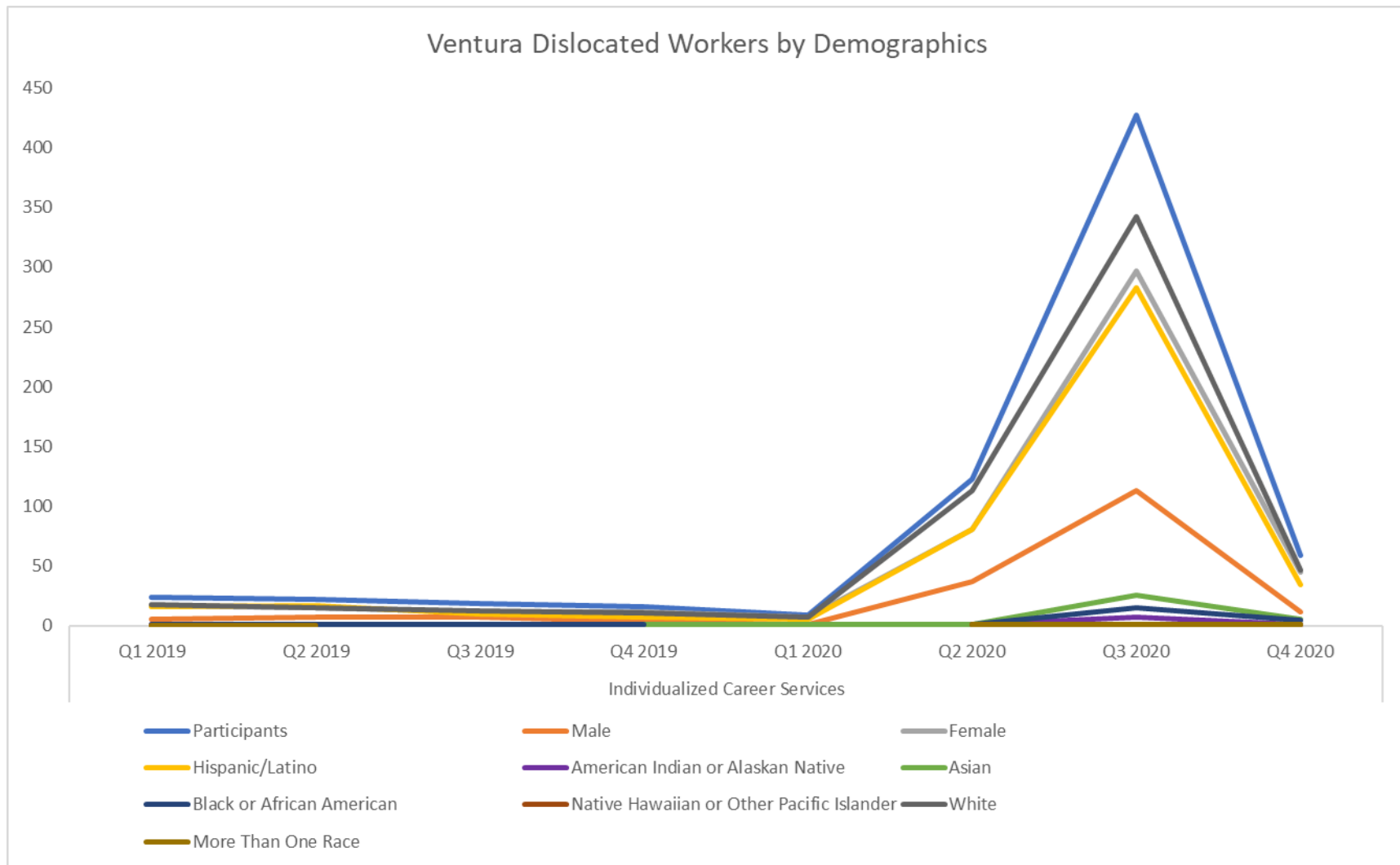


1. Training Services Demographics by Quarter
2. Training Services Barriers by Quarter

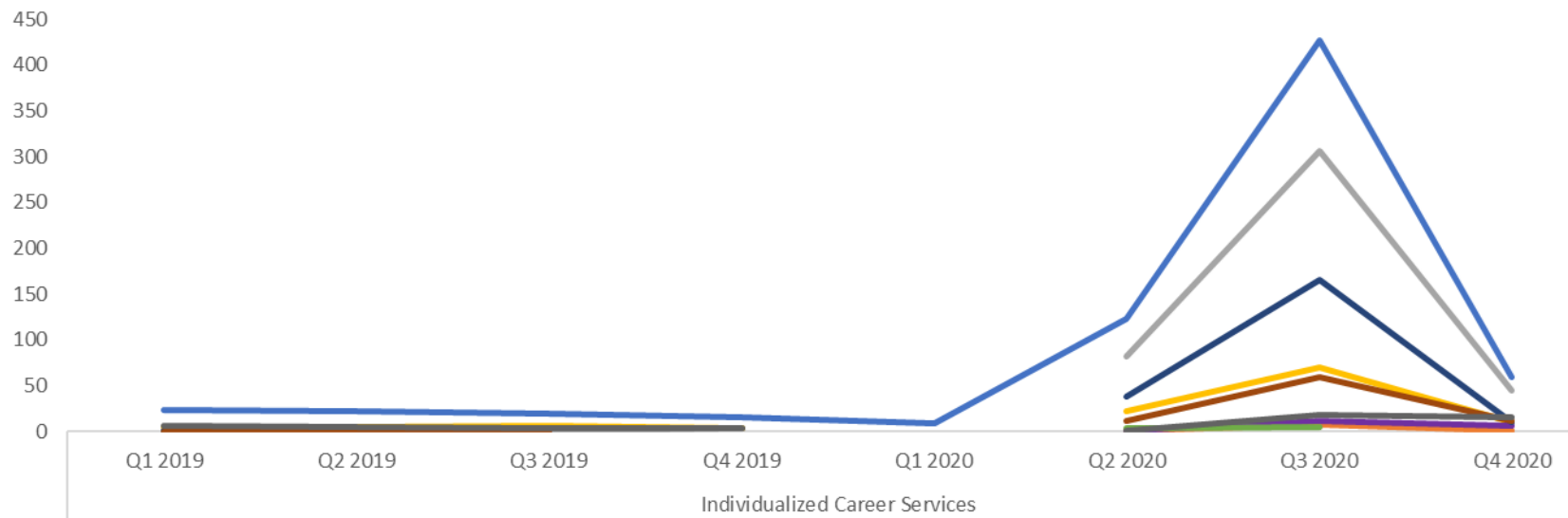




1. Individualized Career Services Demographics by Quarter
2. Individualized Career Services Barriers by Quarter

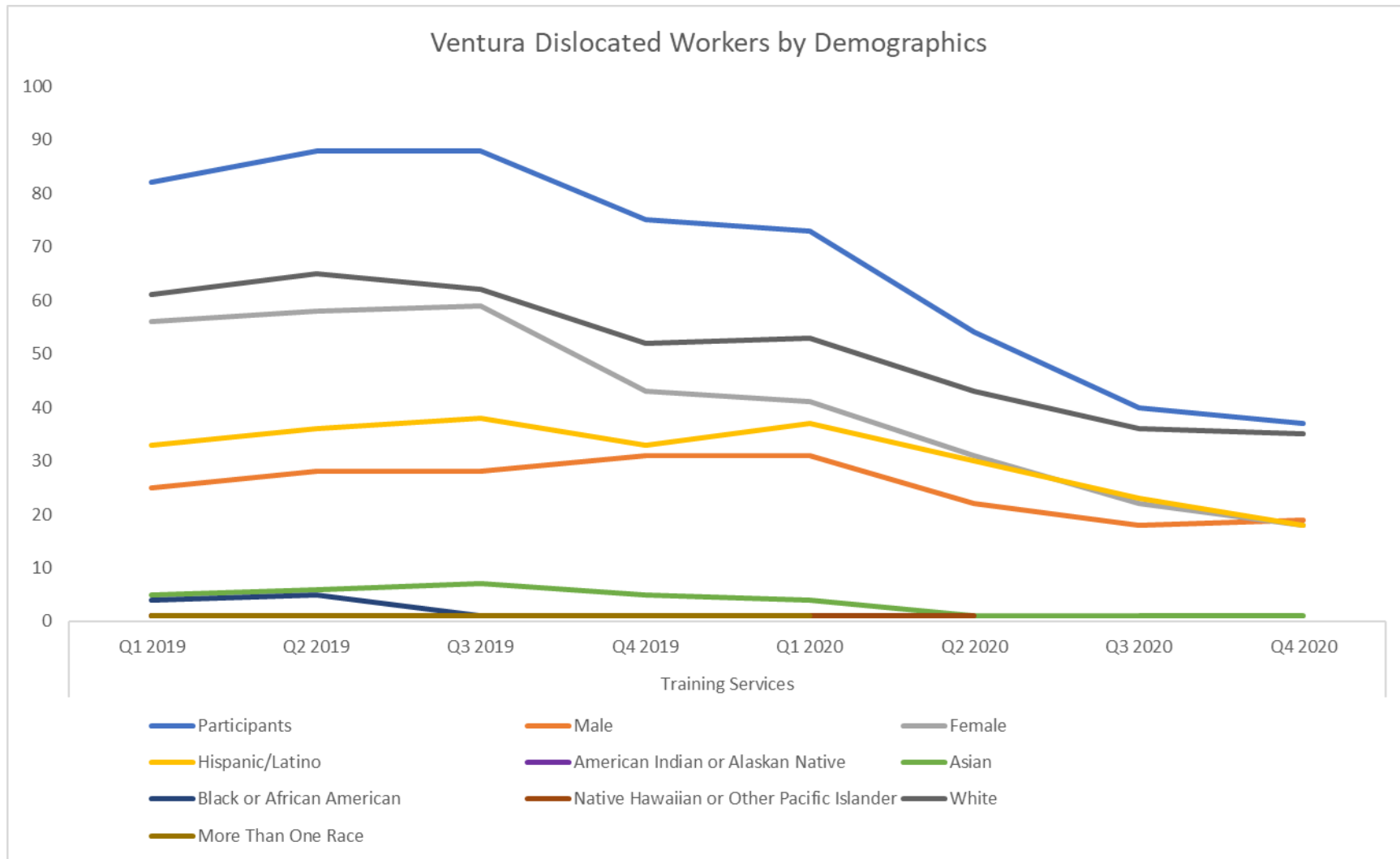


Ventura Dislocated Workers by Barriers

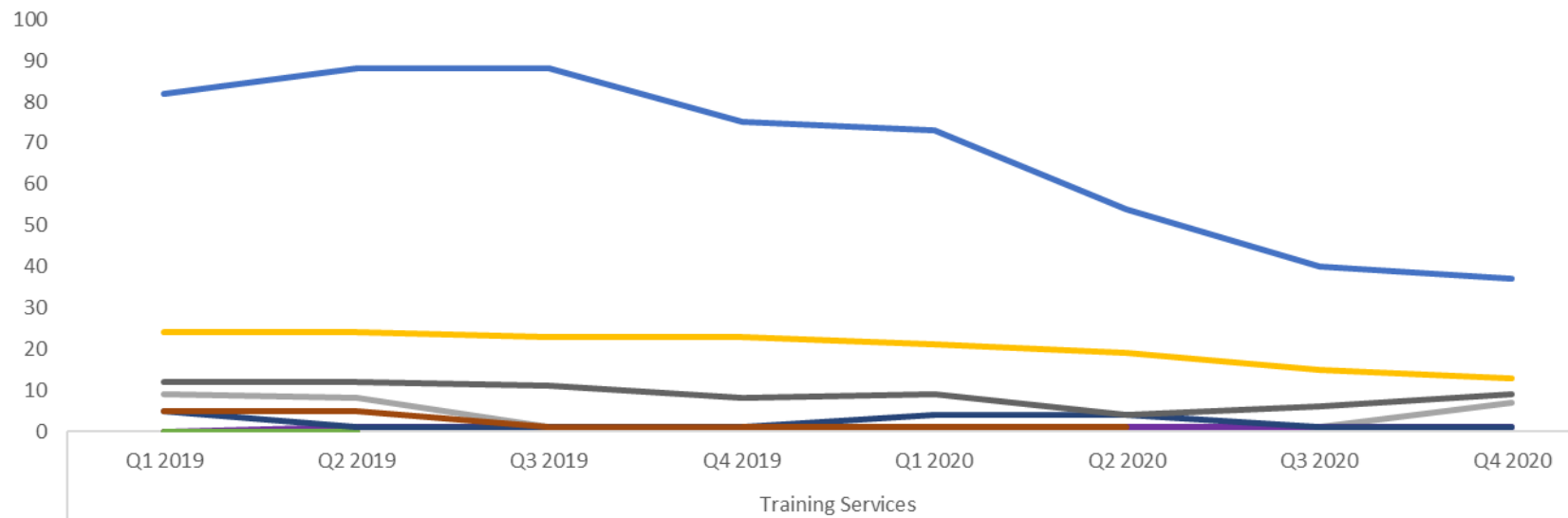


- Participants
- Displaced homemakers
- Low-income individuals
- Older individuals
- Ex-offenders
- Homeless individuals or runaway youth
- English language learners, individuals with low levels of literacy or facing substantial cultural barriers
- Single parents (Including single pregnant women)
- Long-term unemployed (27 or more consecutive weeks)

1. Training Services Demographics by Quarter
2. Training Services Barriers by Quarter



Ventura Dislocated Workers by Barriers



- Participants
- Displaced homemakers
- Low-income individuals
- Older individuals
- Ex-offenders
- Homeless individuals or runaway youth
- English language learners, individuals with low levels of literacy or facing substantial cultural barriers
- Single parents (Including single pregnant women)
- Long-term unemployed (27 or more consecutive weeks)