

IT'S YOUR BUSINESS

A PUBLICATION OF THE RAPIDES AMERICAN JOB CENTER
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The Rapides Parish Police Jury has been awarded a Reconnecting Cenla Program Grant from The Rapides Foundation. The \$300,000 grant will allow the Louisiana Workforce Operations 61 and Rapides American Job Center to expand the outreach and the services of the Youth Empowerment Services (Y.E.S.) Project.

The goal of Y.E.S. is to identify the disconnected youth in Rapides Parish and to connect them with resources within the American Job Center and with external partners. Disconnected youth are defined as young adults ages 16 to 24 who are not employed and not in school.

The focus of this grant will center around identifying, recruiting, and connecting disconnected youth in Rapides Parish to employment and educational opportunities. It allows us to partner up with communities and link them together to provide resources such as securing clothing for potential interviews, getting them connected with area youth groups, aiding with mental health issues, facilitating continuing education, or finding a job that fits their interest level.

We are very excited about the potential impact on our youth in our community through this opportunity. If you know of any youth in our community that may need help starting a career or entering/going to school, please contact Donna, Laverne, or Ginny at 318-767-6030 and Caitlin Wolff at 318-487-4721 or Cwolff@cenlaworks.org.

Youth Empowerment Services Program

Who We Serve

- Ages 16-24
- Not Working
- Not in School
- Living in Rapides Parish

OUR SERVICES

- Education and Training
- Employment
- Mental Health & Substance Abuse Counseling
- Food boxes and SNAP applications
- Community Resources

For more information:
Rapides American Job Center
318-484-4721
cwolff@cenlaworks.org



Sharon Neal

Executive Director
Rapides American Job Center

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Shanna Worth
Charlie Dupont
Deborah Randolph

Seasonally Adjusted Employed Data Shows Record Breaking Data for Third Consecutive Month

Data released today by the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that Louisiana's seasonally adjusted employed data is at a record high for the third consecutive month.

The number of seasonally adjusted employed for May 2023 is 2,039,425, a new record high for the series. The number of employed saw a gain of 2,510 individuals from the April revised estimate of 2,036,915, which was the prior record high. Compared to May 2022, the number of seasonally adjusted employed individuals increased by 20,193.

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for May 2023 is 3.6 percent. The rate is tied for the second-lowest rate in series history. The rate shows no change from the April 2023 figure but increased by 0.1 percentage points from May 2022.

[full story here](#)

Initial Unemployment Insurance Claims Rise for Week Ending June 3

The initial unemployment insurance claims for the week ending June 3, 2023, rose to 2,770 from the week ending May 27, 2023, a total of 2,447. For a comparison, during the week ending June 4, 2022, 2,094 initial claims were filed.

The four-week moving average of initial claims increased to 2,321 from the previous week's average of 2,054.

The unemployment insurance continued claims for the week ending June 3, 2023, increased to 12,450 from the week ending May 27, 2023, a total of 12,092. The continued claims were above the comparable figure of 10,820 for the week ending June 4, 2022.

The four-week moving average of continued claims increased to 11,840 from the previous week's average of 11,515.

[full story here](#)

Louisiana Central Manufacturing Career Camp

Louisiana Central kicked off their inaugural Manufacturing Career Camp in which high school sophomores and juniors were [#ExploringtheOpportunities](#) that Central Louisiana's manufacturing sector has to offer. Camp participants toured local manufacturing facilities, participated in hands-on activities, learned about the products created in Central Louisiana, and saw how the manufacturing process works in the real world.



Photo Credit: Louisiana Central

Students were also exposed to exciting educational opportunities in manufacturing at local colleges, and were delivered educational demonstrations from instructors at Central Louisiana Technical Community College. Sponsoring manufacturing companies included LaSalle Lumber Company, LLC., Crest Industries, LLC., UTLX Manufacturing, LLC., Procter & Gamble, AFCO Industries, Inc., Cleco, Boise Cascade, RoyOMartin, Plastipak Packaging, Inc., Hayes Manufacturing, and Manchac Technologies, LLC.

Source: Britni Lilley, Louisiana Central

[press release here](#)

LSUA Celebrates Historic Investment by Louisiana State Legislature and Governor John Bel Edwards

With the completion of the 2023 Regular Legislative Session, we are excited to report that historic investments have been made in LSUA by the Louisiana State Legislature and Governor John Bel Edwards in support of student success and workforce development in Central Louisiana.



Photo Credit: LSUA Strategic Communications

This year, LSUA has been awarded \$11 million in new state funding for infrastructure updates and building projects needed to sustain record-breaking enrollment growth and LSUA's position as the fastest-growing 4-year university in Louisiana!

First, the state provided an additional \$8 million to complete the Martin Family Student Success Center. With private donors also contributing \$5 million this year, we plan to begin the construction of the new student center this fall. This building will revolutionize the student experience on the LSUA campus!

[full story here](#)

Community Resources

Food Assistance

Cenla Community Action
Committee
(318) 314-3480

The Food Bank of Central Louisiana
(318) 445-2773

First Baptist Church Pineville
(318) 448-8221

Louisiana Housing Assistance
Corporation
The Child and Adult Care Food
Program
(318) 623-0795; (337) 298-5666

Rapides Parish Food Stamp Office
(318) 487-5111; 1-888-524-3578

The Salvation Army Alexandria
(318) 442-0445

Housing Services

Alexandria Housing Authority
(318) 442-8843 Ext 214

Central Louisiana Homeless
Coalition
(318) 443-0500

Pineville Housing Authority
(318) 473-9729

Rapides Parish Housing Authority
(318) 793-4751

Utility Assistance

Cenla Community Action
Committee
(318) 314-3480

Philadelphia Baptist Church
(318) 443-3692

Employment Training Services

Rapides American Job Center
(318) 767-6030

The Orchard Foundation –
Cenla Work Ready
(318) 767-6560

[Click here](#)

to view more list of
community resources

RoyOMartin Marks 100th Anniversary of Company Founding



This year, RoyOMartin celebrates the founding of Roy O. Martin Lumber Company, which was legally organized and incorporated in Alexandria, Louisiana, in 1923. Led by Indiana native Roy O. Martin, Sr., the company was borne after the entrepreneur's purchase of an older sawmill and began without a single acre of land. Today, the trade name RoyOMartin represents a group of vertically integrated companies owned by the Martin family, focused on sustainable land and timber management and wood-product manufacturing businesses.



RoyOMartin is an established American company, using only domestic raw materials in the manufacture of our superior wood products. We bear the mantle of the Martin family's 100-year reputation as a timber-industry leader. We are committed to the safety and well-being of our employees, now and for generations to come.

[full story here](#)

The Orchard Foundation Seeks Early Literacy Instructors

The Orchard Foundation is looking for individuals with education or early childhood development expertise to serve as instructors for its Read to Soar and Math to Build On early literacy programs.



Read to Soar and Math to Build On are free, eight-session early literacy workshops for children ages 5 and under and their parents or caregivers. These family sessions help develop and strengthen a culture of reading at home by educating parents, building a child's home library, and increasing awareness about community resources to help ensure the child has the tools for school success.

The responsibilities of the instructors - called Early Childhood Literacy Specialists - include facilitating workshops according to an identified curriculum, developing community partnerships and program locations within assigned parishes, and recruiting participants. A job description can be found in the "Documents to download" section.

[full details here](#)

Community Partners



**Rapides Parish
Police Jury**
(318) 473-6660



**Louisiana Workforce
Commission**
(318) 487-5532



**Louisiana Technical
& Community
College System**
(318) 487-5443



**Louisiana
Rehabilitation
Services (on site)**
(318) 487-5335



**National
Association for
Hispanic Elderly**
(318) 221-7611



**Alexandria
Housing Authority**
(318) 442-8843



LSU Alexandria
(318) 473-6417

Helpful Organizations for Employers



**US Department
of Labor**



**Louisiana Workforce
Commission**



**Cenla Regional
Chamber of Commerce**



**Louisiana
Small Business
Development Center**



Secretary of State



**Rapides Sales & Use
Tax Department**



Employer.gov

Click the logo to access the organization's website

Work Opportunity Tax Credits (WOTC)

WOTC is one tool in a diverse toolbox of flexible strategies designed to help move people into gainful employment and obtain on-the-job experience. It joins other tax credits, education, and workforce training and development programs that help American workers with barriers to employment prepare for good jobs; ease their transition from job to job; benefit from the creation of effective regional economic development strategies; and create high performance workplaces.

For more information, [click here](#).

Fidelity Bonding

The Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) offers bonding services for hard-to-place job seekers under the Fidelity Bonding Program. The federal bonding program provides insurance to employers that protects against employee dishonesty and acts as an incentive to hire at-risk applicants, including Returning Citizens (ex-offenders). Fidelity Bonding covers theft, forgery, larceny and embezzlement. Bond insurance issued ranges from \$5,000 - \$25,000 for a 6-month period with **no deductible**. The bond can be issued to employers once the applicant has received a job offer with a scheduled start date.

For more information, [click here](#).

WIOA Youth Work Experience Program

The WIOA (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act) Youth Work Experience Program provides meaningful work experience opportunities for young adults ages 17-24.

Students are uniquely positioned with employers to receive training and guidance that will allow them young to develop positive work habits and other critical skill sets necessary to secure sustainable future employment. Our goal is also for these students to have meaningful work experience in a safe environment where they walk away with skills and experience to better prepare them for the world of work.

There are fifteen (15) youth participating this summer. These youth are placed in a variety of professional settings such as dental offices, law firms, pediatric clinics, pharmacies, and several different municipal departments including recreation and utilities for the town of Boyce.

For more information about the program, you may contact Lavern, Donna or Katrina, at youth@cenlaworks.org or (318) 314-0273.

Source: Katrina Sanders

**Now recruiting GRADUATES from
Rapides Parish High Schools!**



WIOA
Call or e-mail to
APPLY NOW!!!!



Rapides American Job Center
5610-B Coliseum Boulevard
Alexandria, LA 71303

On-the-Job Training Program Success Story

Chris is a single 21 year old male, who was living in Natchitoches Parish with his parents. His parents were only able to help with room and board. He recently graduated from Northwestern State University with a BS in Business Administration. Chris was hired at Ratcliff Construction in Alexandria as a Human Resource Intern, working 40 hours a week, making \$11.00 per hour. His annualized total income was \$6382.20, which qualified him as low-income. He was driving daily to Alexandria from Natchitoches. Chris was offered an upgrade position at Ratcliff Construction to be trained as a Human Resource Coordinator. Ratcliff Construction contacted the center to see if he might qualify for On-The-Job training. Chris qualified in the WIOA Adult program as an upgrade for OJT training.

Chris started on May 30, 2022 as a Human Resource Coordinator with Ratcliff Construction Company. He was paid a rate of \$17.00 per hour while training for the approved 1,146 hours. Ratcliff Construction Company was reimbursed a rate of \$8.50 per hour for a total of \$10,000.00. The training hours were from May 30, 2022 through January 12, 2023.

Since Chris started the OJT program, he was married and was able to get his own place to live. His supervisor, C. Hathorn, stated that Chris had completed his OJT training with Ratcliff Construction and has been hired on as a full-time Human Resource Generalist making \$22.50 per hour at 40 hours per week effective January 13, 2023.

For more information about the On-the-Job Training program, you may contact Brittany Barkdull at (318) 767-6035 or bbarkdull@cenlaworks.org.

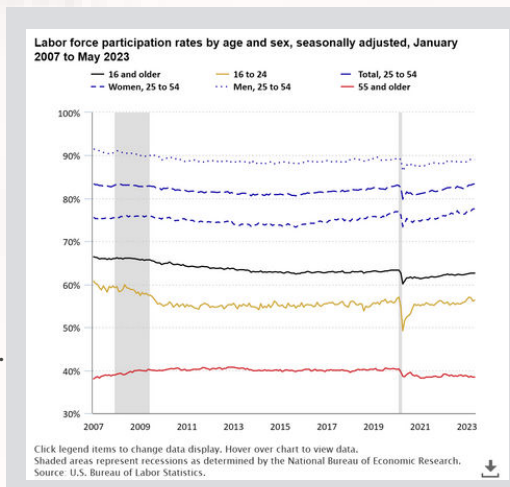
Source: Jackie Whitcher

Labor Force Participation Rate for People Ages 25 to 54 in May 2023 Highest since January 2007



The labor force participation rate for people age 16 and older was 62.6 percent in May 2023. That was 0.7 percentage point below its February 2020 level, before the COVID-19 pandemic began. The labor force participation rate for people ages 25 to 54 has returned to its pre-pandemic level. The rate was 83.4 percent in May 2023. The last time it was this high was January 2007.

The labor force participation rate for women ages 25 to 54 was 77.6 percent in May 2023, 0.6 percentage point above what it was in February 2020. This group's recovery comes after worries of lower labor force participation for women as they cared for children home from school during the pandemic or other relatives. Among men ages 25 to 54, the labor force participation rate was 89.1 percent in May 2023, having returned to its pre-pandemic level in April 2023.



[full report here](#)

Central Louisiana Regional Chamber of Commerce's Annual Legislative Appreciation Luncheon

Join the Central Louisiana Regional Chamber of Commerce's Annual Legislative Appreciation Luncheon featuring Central Louisiana State Legislative Delegation. The program offers an opportunity for Chamber members and the community to hear from legislators about the outcomes of the Legislative Session and to thank them for their work.



The luncheon is on Wednesday, July 19, 2023, from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM at The Community Center at England Airpark, 1718 Kegleman Drive, Alexandria, LA.

To learn more, sponsor a table, or purchase a ticket, click [here](#).

WIOA Mandated Partners (on-site)

**Cenla Community Action
Committee, Inc.**
318-314-3480

CLTCC
318-487-5443

Job Corps Center Alexandria
318-487-6773 x102

**Louisiana Workforce
Commission-
Employment Services**
318-487-5532

National Farm Worker Program
318-435-8885

Native American Programs
985-851-5408

Trade Adjustment Assistance
318-487-5539

Unemployment Insurance
1-866-783-5567

Wagner-Peyser
318-487-5532

**WIOA Adult/Dislocated
Worker & Youth**
318-767-6030

WIOA Mandated Partners (off-site)

**AYUDA & Institute for
Indian Development**
318-767-6040

**Louisiana Rehabilitation
Services**
318-487-5335

**Louisiana State University
Alexandria**
318-427-4441

**National Association for
Hispanic Elderly**
318- 221-7611

Labor Market Information

Unemployment Data By Parish

Allen Parish - 3.6%
 Avoyelles Parish - 3.7%
 Catahoula Parish - 3.8%
 Concordia Parish - 4.1%
 Grant Parish - 2.9 %
 La Salle Parish - 2.6%
 Natchitoches Parish- 3.8%
 Rapides Parish - 2.9%
 Vernon Parish - 4.7%
 Winn Parish - 4.2%

*Unemployment Data by
 Parishes for April 2023 released
 on May 26, 2023. Preliminary
 (not seasonally adjusted) Source:
 LWC - Labor Force Employment
 and Unemployment (LAUS)*

Job Openings Advertised online in Cenla by Parishes

Allen Parish - 148
 Avoyelles Parish - 249
 Catahoula Parish - 33
 Concordia - 134
 Grant Parish - 54
 La Salle Parish - 92
 Natchitoches Parish - 393
 Rapides Parish - 2,806
 Vernon Parish - 505
 Winn Parish - 77

*This data above shows the
 distribution number of job
 openings advertised online in
 Central Louisiana by parishes on
 June 18, 2023*

*Source: LWC-
 Online advertised jobs data*



Latest Unemployment Rates

	April 2023	March 2023	February 2023
Rapides Parish (not seasonally adjusted)	2.9%	3.0%	3.2%
Louisiana (seasonally adjusted)	3.6%	3.6%	3.6%
United States (seasonally adjusted)	3.4%	3.5%	3.6%

Source: BLS & LWC Louisiana Occupational Information System

Occupations with the Highest Number of Job Openings Advertised in Alexandria, MSA

Registered Nurses -339
 Physicians, All Other -116
 LPN & LVN - 91
 Critical Care Nurses - 51
 Retail Salespersons - 43
 Secondary School Teachers,
 exp. Special & career/Technical
 Education - 40
 First Line Spv. of Food Prep. &
 Serving Workers - 35
 Farmworkers & Laborers, Crop,
 Nursery & Greenhouse - 31
 Nursing Assistants - 31
 Elementary School Teachers,
 exp. Special Education - 31

*Source: LWC Online advertised jobs
 data: June 18, 2023*

Top 15 Largest Employers in Alexandria LA, MSA

Pinecrest Developmental Ctr
 Rapides Women's-Children's Hsp
 Rapides Regional Medical Ctr
 Christus St Frances Cabrini
 Chief of Staff
 Crest Operations LLC
 Alexandria VA Hospital Med Ctr
 Sheriff's Department
 Walmart Suprcntr - Monroe Hwy
 Walmart Supcntr - N Mall Dr
 Sheriff's Department - Jail
 Crest Industries
 Cleco Corporate Holdings, LLC
 Boise Cascade
 Walmart Supcntr - Coliseum Blvd

*Source: Louisiana Workforce
 Commission
 June 18, 2023*



Industries with Highest Job Openings Advertised Online in Alexandria, LA MSA		
Rank	Industry	Job Openings
1	Health Care and Social Assistance	702
2	Retail Trade	264
3	Public Administration	210
4	Management of Companies & Enterprises	173
5	Accommodation and Food Services	152
6	Public Administration	150
7	Administrative and Support & Waste Management and Remediation Services	69
8	Manufacturing	97
9	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	66
10	Unclassified	719

The table above shows the top ten job openings advertised online
 for the industries selected in Alexandria, LA Metropolitan Statistical
 Area on June 18, 2023.

Source: LWC Online advertised jobs data.

About the Rapides American Job Center

The Rapides American Job Center (RAJC) brings "those who need jobs" and "those who need employees" together.

The Rapides Parish American Job Center is a comprehensive AJC that includes the mandatory WIOA partners on-site offering an integrated array of quality services so that job seekers and businesses can conveniently find the help they need under one roof such as scholarship training, training referrals, career counseling, job listings, and other employment-related services for both jobseekers and employers.

Established under the Workforce Investment Act and reauthorized in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act of 2014 (WIOA), American Job Centers (AJCs) are at the heart of the workforce investment system.

The Rapides Workforce Development Board 61 is charged by the Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to certify the Rapides American Job Center, as a comprehensive One-Stop Center.

We thank and acknowledge our Contributors!

Rapides AJC - Sharon Neal
LWC - Regine Williams
Louisiana Central - Britni Lilley
LSUA - Dr. Paul Coreil, Adam Lord
RoyOMartin - Amanda Guillot
The Orchard Foundation - Kathy Gunn
WIOA Youth Program - Katrina Sanders
WIOA OJT Program - Jackie Whitcher
Louisiana Workforce Commission
Central Louisiana Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Deborah Randolph
Bureau of Labor Statistics,
U.S. Department of Labor, *The Economics Daily*

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Media Contact
Nannette Hill - nhill@lsua.edu
LSUA - SBDC Coordinator
Rapides American Job Center
One-Stop Operator



Ava Cates, Secretary

Rapides American Job Center

5610-B Coliseum Blvd.
Alexandria, LA 71303
318-767-6030
info@cenlaworks.org
Mon - Fri 8:00am - 4:30 pm



Joseph Bishop, President



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