A critical component of USAID’s Jordan Workforce Development (WFD) program was to provide women with employment opportunities. Women face many barriers to employment, including issues of safety, transportation, and discrimination.

One way WFD sought to increase female employment while addressing these issues was through a $371,000 grant to establish a design and vocational training center in Irbid as a branch of the Garment Design and Training Services Center (GSC). The grant sought to provide women in Irbid with practical training in garment design courses, helping them learn a range of clothing design and fashion skills needed by small, medium, and large textile manufacturers.

The establishment of the center in Irbid allowed women to remain within their local community and avoid conflicts that stem around transportation to and from work, a logistical barrier to employment often cited by job seekers. On 22 March 2017, after many months of hard work, officials from USAID, the Jordanian government, and industry leaders came together to jointly launch the GSC in Irbid.

With the opening of the new center, Irbid youth had the opportunity to participate in theoretical and practical training programs that will help prepare them to enter the competitive workforce as competent and knowledgeable employees of their craft.

In bringing this center to Irbid, WFD helped mitigate the everyday challenges residents face when searching for quality training that is nearby and affordable. During its first year, the center trained 120 young women and placed 60 in jobs. This center is one of the many ways that WFD is working to encourage and inspire women and youth to become empowered through vocational jobs and industrial occupations.