



Northwest Georgia

Region 1—WorkSource Northwest Georgia

Workforce Innovation and

Opportunity Act

Local Plan Update

June 2020

An Equal Opportunity Employer/Program

Auxiliary Aids and Services Available Upon Request to Individuals with Disabilities

TTY/TDD 1-800-255-0056

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Strategic Elements, Governance and Structure:

- 1. Identification of the Fiscal Agent – Provide an identification of the entity responsible for the disbursal of grant funds described in WIOA § 107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III) as determined by the chief elected official.**

Northwest Georgia Regional Commission (P.O. Box 1798, Rome, Georgia 30162-1798) is responsible for the disbursal of grant funds.

- 2. Description of Strategic Planning Elements – Provide a description of the strategic planning elements listed below. A complete answer will rely on a variety of data sources and employer input. Also describe how the information was gathered and what partners and employers were consulted.**

- a. Provide an analysis of the regional economic conditions including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations; and the employment needs of employers in those industry sectors and occupations. Include the listing of occupations in demand within the region and describe how the list was developed citing source data.**

Northwest Georgia is comprised of the 15 northwestern counties of Georgia conveniently located in the heart of the triangle area formed between Atlanta, Chattanooga, and Birmingham. The area has two Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA), Rome MSA and Dalton MSA with Bartow, Haralson, Paulding, and Pickens counties making up part of the Atlanta MSA. The I-75 corridor travels through the center of the region making the Northwest Georgia attractive to potential incoming industries. However, there are also some rural counties not in this pathway where job growth and educational opportunities are limited.

Northwest Georgia was once known as the “Carpet Capital of the World” and at one time produced 75 percent of the country’s flooring. However, with the collapse of the housing market in the mid to late 2000’s the region’s carpet manufacturers took a hit. Demand for flooring plummeted causing unemployment rates to nearly double. Dalton and the surrounding area lost 17,000 jobs over the decade. Over the last decade manufacturing has steadily been recovering. It has since rebounded with new industry.

Region 1 has also seen a significant growth in Healthcare and Social Assistance, Retail Trade and Transportation. Employers such as WellStar Health System, Hospital Corporation of America and Floyd Medical Center continue to show and increased need for healthcare employees. For the period January 1 through December 4, 2019 job posting for CDL Truck Drivers and registered nurses show a continued need for certified employees in those fields.

Industry Sector Employment

In the Fall of 2018 and Spring 2019 the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission prepared the Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The CEDS identified priority categories of what Northwest Georgia needs most.

- **Workforce Skills:** Increase the number of residents skilled in advanced manufacturing (middle-skill, living wage occupations) to meet current and changing needs of Northwest Georgia employees.
- **Educational Attainment:** Expand the number of students in the region that are prepared for future employment in skilled and professional positions through enhanced educational opportunities and active career counseling.
- **Human services:** Ensure appropriate human services are available to meet the needs of the region's current and future workforce.

Manufacturing Employment

Northwest Georgia Region's Employment in Manufacturing Subsectors

Description	2004 Jobs	2009 Jobs	2014 Jobs	2019 Jobs	Projected 2024 Jobs	Net Change 2004-2019	% Change 2004-2019	2019 Share of Manufacturing
Apparel Manufacturing	239	100	109	151	187	(88)	(37%)	0%
Beverage and Tobacco Product Manufacturing	703	712	649	909	985	206	29%	1%
Chemical Manufacturing	3,049	2,992	3,147	3,459	3,880	410	13%	5%
Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing	356	278	457	470	530	114	32%	1%
Electrical Equipment, Appliance, and Component Mfg	1,857	1,380	1,903	1,917	1,817	60	3%	3%
Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	2,127	1,763	2,217	2,484	2,838	357	17%	4%
Food Manufacturing	5,343	4,205	3,465	3,662	3,764	(1,681)	(31%)	5%
Furniture and Related Product Manufacturing	2,228	2,006	1,832	1,802	1,762	(426)	(19%)	3%
Leather and Allied Product Manufacturing	<10	11	<10	<10	<10			
Machinery Manufacturing	1,777	1,398	1,576	1,600	1,753	(177)	(10%)	2%
Miscellaneous Manufacturing	490	519	592	735	898	245	50%	1%
Nonmetallic Mineral Product Manufacturing	1,294	921	792	1,178	1,292	(116)	(9%)	2%
Paper Manufacturing	2,247	1,068	1,340	1,438	1,406	(810)	(36%)	2%
Petroleum and Coal Products Manufacturing	18	59	31	67	79	49	274%	0%
Plastics and Rubber Products Manufacturing	3,532	3,935	4,742	5,092	5,313	1,560	44%	7%
Primary Metal Manufacturing	1,488	994	1,205	1,632	1,858	145	10%	2%
Printing and Related Support Activities	2,452	1,973	1,984	2,211	2,396	(241)	(10%)	3%
Textile Mills	12,923	8,075	10,008	10,886	10,232	(2,037)	(16%)	16%
Textile Product Mills	30,453	25,784	21,210	22,350	20,566	(8,102)	(27%)	33%
Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	3,548	3,292	3,264	5,376	6,199	1,828	52%	8%
Wood Product Manufacturing	1,630	994	1,171	1,116	1,206	(514)	(32%)	2%
TOTAL	77,758	62,458	61,694	68,538	68,966	(9,220)	(12%)	100%

(Source EMSI 2020)

The table above depicts how Manufacturing Subsectors employment in Northwest Georgia Region has changed from 2004 through 2019.

The manufacturing jobs with the highest decreases are:

- Apparel Manufacturing (-37%)
- Paper Manufacturing (-36%)
- Wood Product Manufacturing (-32%)

The manufacturing jobs with the highest increases are:

- Petroleum and Coal Product Manufacturing increased 274%
- Transportation Equipment Manufacturing increased 52%
- Miscellaneous Manufacturing increased 50%
- Plastics and Rubber Products Manufacturing 44%

These numbers depict percentage of change and not number of jobs. Textile Product Mills are still projected to be the largest manufacturing industry in the region with 20,566 projected jobs in 2024 even though this is down from 2004 by 8,102 jobs (27%).

Advanced Manufacturing and Transportation

Access to major interstates, close proximity to the world's largest airport and a ready workforce makes Northwest Georgia an ideal location for both international and domestic companies.

The Appalachian Regional Port (ARP) is located here. This is an inland facility that offers importers and exporters a direct, 388-mile rail route to the Port of Savannah.

Murray County is courting businesses in China, Japan and Germany – as well as domestic companies – that are interested in being near the inland port. The companies include the recently opened GE Appliances distribution center, two tenants in the county's new industrial park and Appalachian Port Services, which repairs, maintains and stores shipping containers for customers as a value-added service to the port.

Novalis Innovative Flooring, a producer of luxury vinyl tile flooring will build a \$30-million production facility – it's first in the U.S. – next door to its North American headquarters and innovation center in Dalton. The new facility is expected to deliver 120 new jobs.

More than 30 international companies call the Dalton area home, including floor-covering giants, Shaw Industries and Mohawk Industries, along with solar panel manufacturer Hanwha Q CELLS and equine nutrition manufacturer Cavalor according to Carl Campbell, executive director of the Dalton-Whitfield County Joint Development Authority.

China-based GreenView Floors International, a manufacturer of vinyl and laminate flooring, announced in December that it would bring its first U.S. manufacturing facility to Adairsville. The \$26-million investment will deliver 238 jobs.

Georgia's own fast-food favorite Chick-fil-A announced the first company-owned distribution center last year. It's expected to open in Cartersville later this year and be home to 300 employees.

In Polk County, 2020 expansion announced this year includes Gildan Yarns' \$3-million expansion and Sheboygan Paint's \$1.2-million expansion.

Expansions announced for Rome and Floyd County include Ball Corp., a \$200-million investment in manufacturing aluminum cups;(180 jobs) *International Paper, \$150 million; Georgia-Pacific, \$30 million; and Marglen Industries, which recycles plastic bottles into sustainable fiber and resin, \$17 million. Kerry Corporation (400 jobs), Southeastern Mills, which produces gravy and baking mixes, opened a new culinary innovation center to test its products and a center for superior logistics to get goods on the road and around the world more efficiently.

*International Paper suffered a recent fire and the status of this expansion is unknown at this time.

Gordon County announced an expansion for Mannington (268 jobs).

Dade County's proximity to Chattanooga and the inland port are attractive to foreign trade. With easy access to Interstates 24 and 59, Dade draws employees from Alabama, Georgia, and Tennessee.

A byproduct of this surge in manufacturing growth is an increased need for CDL truck drivers.

Data on the Transportation and Warehousing sector in Northwest Georgia indicates that Truck Transportation in 2016 had the highest number of jobs (per available data).

Industry	Jobs	Firms	Avg. Weekly Wage
Air Transportation	Confidential	2	Confidential
Truck Transportation	4,866	270	\$966.00
Pipeline Transportation	Confidential	3	Confidential
Support Activities for Transportation	530	81	\$888.00
Couriers and Messengers	Confidential	22	\$934.00

Source: GDOL, 2016

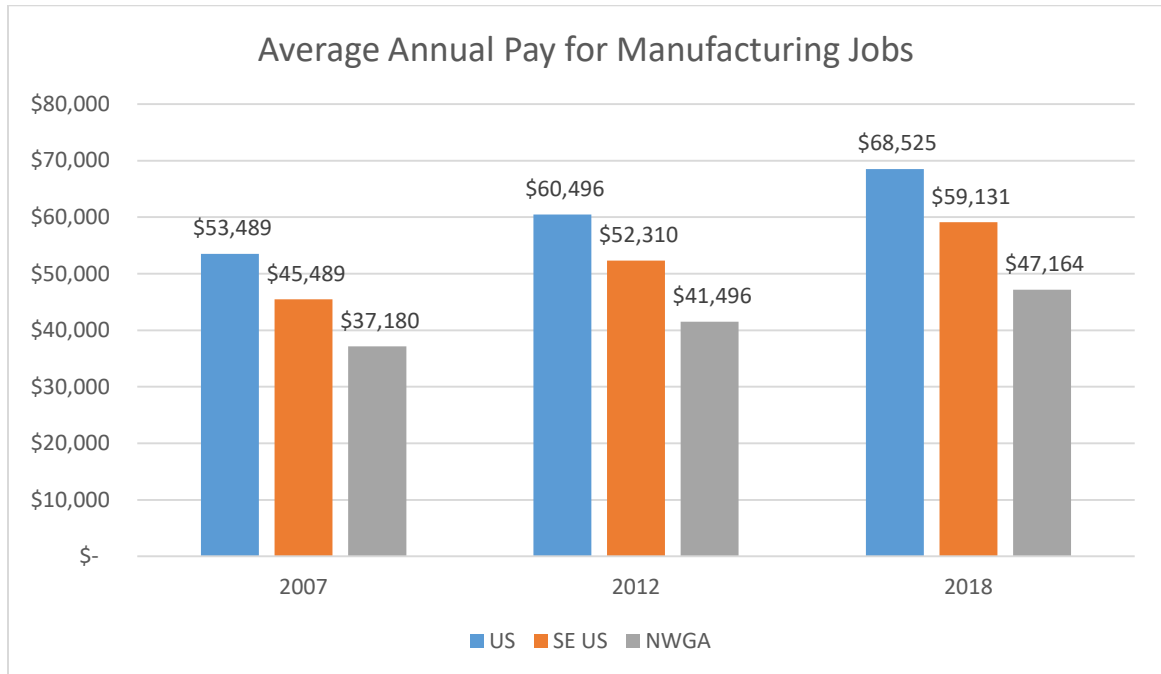
As a result of this robust growth, the Northwest Georgia area was designated as an "Advanced Manufacturing" community in June, 2014. Northwest Georgia is among 12 other communities across the nation to receive a manufacturing community designation, which could mean more federal money invested in supporting workforce development. Northwest was selected based on the strength of their economic development plans, the potential for impact in their communities, and the depths of their partnerships across the public and private sector to carry out their plans. Northwest Georgia demonstrated the significance of manufacturing already present in the area and had developed strategies to make investments in multiple areas that would benefit the industry.

(Mann, Aaron. "Designation Could Stimulate Manufacturing." Calhoun Times June 7, 2014.)
Retrieved from:

http://www.northwestgeorgianews.com/calhoun_times/news/local/designation-could-stimulate-manufacturing/article_666d6b8e-eda5-11e3-b6a2-001a4bcf6878.html

Manufacturing Wages

Average annual pay for manufacturing jobs has changed over time in the Northwest Georgia region, the Southeast U.S., and the U.S. Manufacturing pay in the region is growing, but at a slower pace compared to the Southeast and U.S. From 2007 to 2018, wages for manufacturing jobs in the region grew by 21 percent (not adjusted for inflation), while the Southeast grew by 22 percent and the U.S. grew by 22 percent.



Healthcare Industry

Northwest Georgia continues to have significant need for health care and social assistance. Of the top ten employers in Northwest Georgia in the third quarter of 2019, three of them were medical facilities. The list included Floyd Healthcare Management, Inc., Hamilton Medical Center, Inc., and Wellstar Health System, Inc. The WorkSource programs will continue to supply the regions with training to meet their needs, including Registered Nurses (RN), Certified Nursing Assistants (CNT), Patient Technologists (PT) to name a few. **(With the current Corona Virus (Covic-19) we expect the needs to increase.)**

Selected Plan Sector Focus

The chart below shows the online job advertisements. It reflects the need for the three industry sectors that have been chosen for Northwest Georgia's plan focus. The chosen sectors are: Transportation, Healthcare, and Manufacturing (Advanced only).

Online Jobs Ads by Industry, 2017

Industry (2 Digit NAICS)	Total Job Postings	Unique Job Postings	Intensity (Postings per Unique Job Posting)
Transportation and Warehousing	79,827	32,682	2:1
Administrative and Support and Waste Manag.	34,168	9,629	4:1
Retail Trade	35,497	8,690	4:1
Health Care and Social Assistance	34,558	7,867	4:1
Manufacturing	29,446	5,625	5:1
Accommodation and Food Services	10,387	4,506	2:1
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	14,327	4,159	3:1
Finance and Insurance	6,564	1,975	3:1
Wholesale Trade	9,710	1,925	5:1
Information	7,242	1,755	4:1
Other Services (except Public Administration)	2,565	1,194	2:1
Educational Services	2,090	1,152	2:1
Construction	3,434	1,072	3:1
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	2,620	876	3:1
Public Administration	2,436	862	3:1
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	1,786	433	4:1
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	638	378	2:1
Management of Companies and Enterprises	1,495	244	6:1
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	111	53	2:1
Utilities	140	47	3:1

Source: EMSI, inc.; Carl Vinson Institute of Government at the University of Georgia

Employment Needs for the Region

In April of 2014, Governor Nathan Deal announced the High Demand Career Initiative (HDCI) as a way to determine the employment needs of employers in existing and in-demand industries. The industry clusters cited for the State growth occupations - aerospace, agribusiness, energy, bio-life science, logistics and transportation, manufacturing, telecommunications and construction are of varying significance to the region with logistics and transportation, manufacturing and energy being the most predominant currently of those listed. The WDB will seek to address ongoing changes as training opportunities arise in these fields.

Skilled trades will continue to be an area of emphasis for the region and opportunities to train a skilled labor supply for Northwest Georgia will be promoted, specifically, the Go Build Georgia Initiative will be an area that the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) seeks to pursue.

The following chart lists the projected top occupations for Northwest Georgia and the education required. NOTE that the growth for in-demand occupations requiring post-secondary education aligns with Northwest Georgia's medical industry. Occupations, as a whole, are steadily requiring more education. Essentially, postsecondary education or training has become the threshold requirement for access to middle-class status and earnings in general.

(Source: Georgia Department of Labor, Workforce Statistics and Economic Research)

The Demand Occupations list for Northwest Georgia was developed over many years based on market conditions, determining what jobs were in demand and input from the WDB. In conjunction to developing this list, Northwest Georgia uses economic data provided by The Conference Board, statistical information gleaned from the Georgia Labor Market website and other LMI (Labor Market Information) portals. The information following the NWGRC Demand

Occupations list is from EMSI (a labor market information portal). This list is reviewed as economic conditions warrant and is modified accordingly.

Please see Attachment 5: The NWGRC Demand Occupation list.

b. Provide an analysis of the knowledge and skills needed to meet the employment needs of the employers in the region, including employment needs in in-demand industry sectors and occupations.

A wide variety of training is needed to meet the diverse 15-county area's training needs. Although every attempt is made to meet the State's training requirements, individual choice and the resources of the area both in training availability and job placement require that the training options remain more extensive for this region.

For a region to attract and retain businesses, workforce development must provide a consistent pipeline of educated, trained, and "work ready" employees. For the demand and supply sides of an economy to balance, employers' needs must be communicated to partners in both education and local government, and potential employees must have access to the appropriate training and education. This section details the state of the Northwest Georgia region's workforce, including job openings; top knowledge requirements; and most desired attributes.





















Job Openings Snapshot

A snapshot of the current occupational opportunities in manufacturing was from January 2019—December 2019 was developed by Georgia Tech and revealed that the top posted occupations were:

- First Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers
- Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers
- Maintenance and Repair Workers, General
- Production Worker, All Other
- Industrial Engineers

The table on the next page lists the top manufacturing occupations and intensity of job postings.

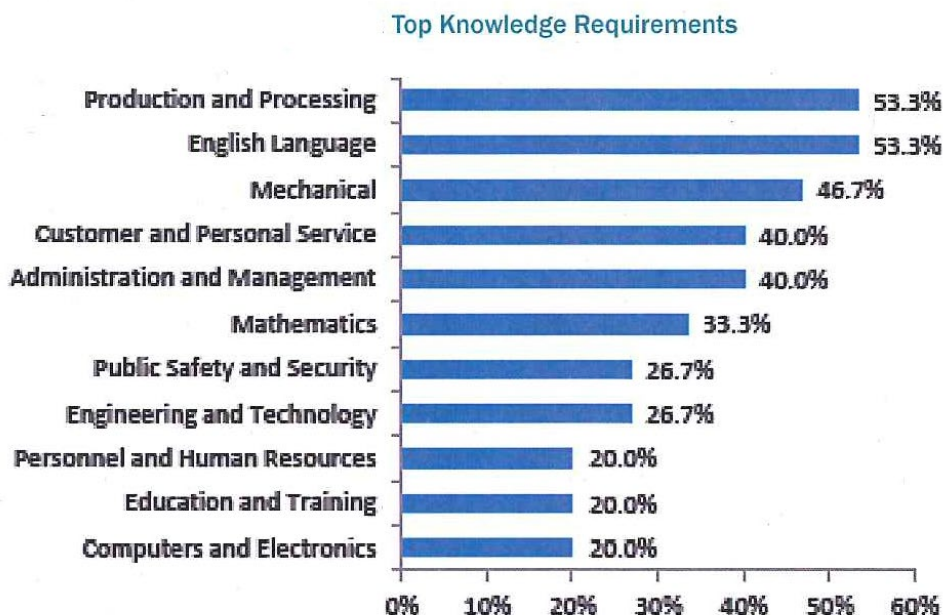
Top Posted Occupations

Occupation (SOC)	Total/Unique (Jan 2019 - Dec 2019)	Posting Intensity	Median Posting Duration
 First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	4,884 / 561	9 : 1 	32 days
 Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	1,337 / 377	4 : 1 	24 days
 Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	1,804 / 277	7 : 1 	37 days
 Production Workers, All Other	2,021 / 261	8 : 1 	34 days
 Industrial Engineers	2,243 / 252	9 : 1 	40 days
 Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	1,724 / 180	10 : 1 	39 days
 Marketing Managers	929 / 159	6 : 1 	44 days
 Stock Clerks and Order Fillers	1,058 / 147	7 : 1 	39 days
 Customer Service Representatives	755 / 146	5 : 1 	31 days
 Accountants and Auditors	1,211 / 126	10 : 1 	35 days

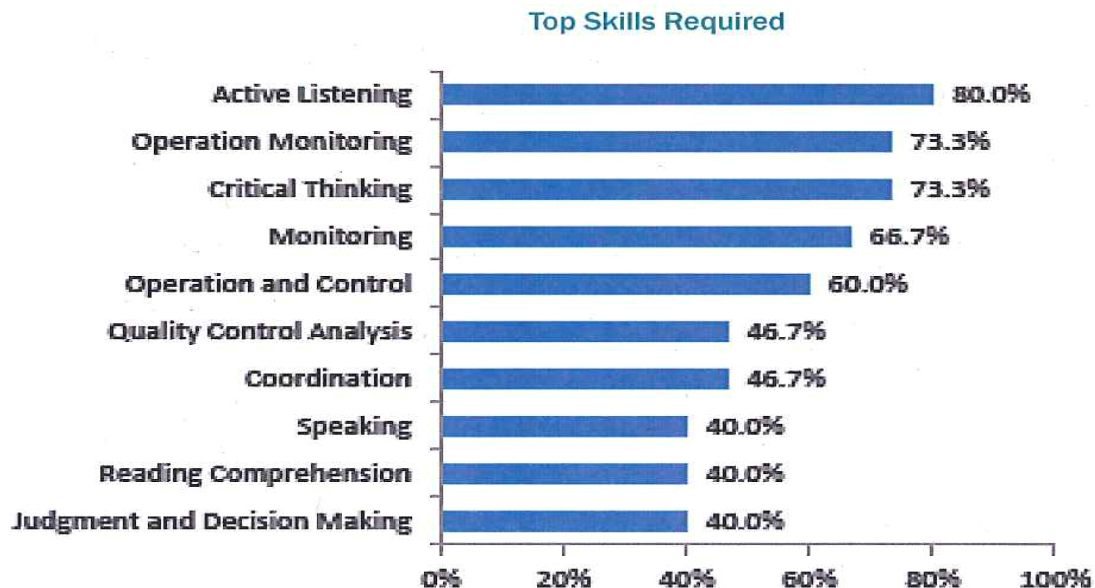
(Source EMSI)

Knowledge

The table below lists the top knowledge requirements that were listed across the selected occupations. Of the occupations analyzed, 53.3 percent required production and processing, and English language knowledge, while another 46.7 percent require mechanical knowledge. Over a third of the occupations analyzed required customer and personal services (40 percent); administration and management (40 percent); and mathematics (33.3 percent).



The table below lists the most common skills requirements that were listed across the top occupations. Of the occupations analyzed, 80 percent required active listening skills, while another 73.3 percent required operation monitoring and critical thinking skills. Two-thirds of the occupations analyzed required monitoring skills, while 60 percent required operation and control skills.



These labor market listings provide additional information regarding the real jobs available in the local area. The problem is that many of these jobs require more education than what is covered under the ITA restriction. Others, such as cashiers, retail salespersons, may require little to no training and represent low wage jobs.

Regional Occupational Analysis
 (Source: The Conference Board LMI portal CEB TalentNeuron)
 January 1, 2018 - September 28, 2018

Top 10 Occupations Advertised

Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers
Registered Nurses
Retail Salespersons
First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers
Services Offered
First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers
Cashiers
Customer Service Representatives
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General

Source: @ 2018 The Conference Board. All Rights Reserved

The State of Georgia's Workforce and Innovation Plan worked with participating companies to identify high demand skills and attributes. Following are those skills and attributes cited that are needed in Manufacturing, Healthcare and Transportation.

MANUFACTURING SKILLS/ATTRIBUTES CITED:

Blue Print Reading	Lean Principles
Business Skills	Machine Tooling
Math Skills	OSHA Regulations
Commitment to Success	Communication
Print Reading and Gaging	Computer Skills
Reading	Continuous Improvement
Robotics	Controls
Safety	Drafting
Soft Skills	Engineering
Teamwork	Environmental Health and Safety Experts
Tool and Die	Fluid Power
Troubleshooting	Knowledge of Supply chain
Welding	Leadership
Work Ethic	CNC Programming

HEALTHCARE AND LIFE SCIENCES SKILLS/ATTRIBUTES CITED:

Analytical Skills	Leadership
Attention to Detail	Mobile Workforce
Experience in Clean Room Environment	Project Management
Experience in FDA Regulated Environments	Soft Skills
Healthcare Certifications	Specialists in Blood Banking Designation

LOGISTICS AND TRANSPORTATION SECTOR SKILLS/ATTRIBUTES CITED:

Ability to Multitask	Presentation Skills
Business Writing	Soft Skills
Communication	Critical Thinking
Decision Making	Teamwork
Ethics	Time Management
Troubleshooting	Maturity
Work Ethics	Math Skills

The Pathway from Basic Skill to Advanced Training

In order to provide employers with a workforce that has the ability to learn these advanced skill requirements, steps must be taken to address the region's population lacking in basic math, English and computer literacy skills. In addition, employers continue to cite soft skills as a primary need. Northwest Georgia has a large number of individuals that do not have high school diplomas or GEDs. These workers face increased difficulties learning the advanced skills and are at risk of being affected by layoff and company closures. Area technical colleges offer GED training through the Adult Education program. Our Youth providers work with younger youth that are at risk of dropping out as well as older youth that need GED[®] and occupational skills training. We also continue to work closely with the local literacy programs to provide training for dropouts and encourage them to continue on to higher education. Basic services are also offered through counseling and group workshops at the career centers and with Youth providers that can address soft skill issues.

Northwest Georgia has been making progress in reducing the percentage of high school dropouts (see chart below). Fourteen of twenty-one (14 of 21) school systems had an increase in the graduation rate or stayed the same in the current and previous school year. The United States Department of Education's goal is to achieve a 90 percent graduation rate by 2020. Twelve school systems in the region have reached or are on target to reach 90%.

SCHOOL SYSTEM	2018 GRADUATION RATE	2019 GRADUATION RATE
Bartow County	87.1	89.2
Catoosa County	87.8	87.4
Chattooga County	82.2	87.3
Dade County	92.2	80.7
Fannin County	94.3	93.9
Floyd County	93.6	93.3
Gilmer County	83.8	92.4
Gordon County	94.8	92.3
Haralson County	94.3	97.2
Murray County	92.7	95.0
Paulding County	86.3	88.8
Pickens County	95.7	93.0
Polk County	80.5	82.1
Walker County	88.0	88.3
Whitfield County	80.3	86.8
Bremen City	98.1	98.5
Calhoun City	97.6	98.1
Cartersville City	91.3	90.4
Dalton City	78.9	81.6
Trion City	96.1	97.2
Rome City	90.5	93.3

Source: Georgia Department of Education

- c. **Provide an analysis of the workforce in the region, including current labor force employment, unemployment data, information on labor market trends and the educational and skill levels of the workforce in the region, including individuals with barriers to employment. List all data sources used to gather this information.**

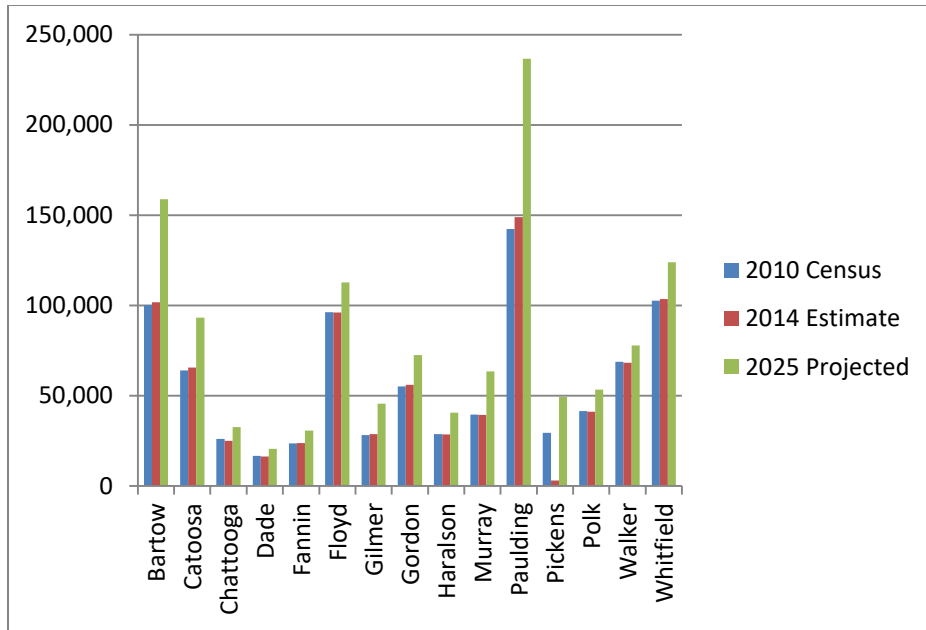
Population Growth

Area Census projections indicate the region will top 1.2 million in population by 2025. Counties with the highest projected growth are Paulding and Pickens and fall into the category of what is considered a “commuter” county, meaning residents live, eat, and sleep there but typically travel to a metropolitan area such as Atlanta to work. Other areas of growth are and will continue to be those counties on the I-75 corridor or located near the larger MSAs of Atlanta and Chattanooga.

Counties not located close to the major interstates have lower growth.

County	Population 2010 Census	2014 Estimate	2025 Projected	Percent Change 2010- 2025
Bartow	100,157	101,736	158,780	58.5%
Catoosa	63,942	65,621	93,176	45.7%
Chattooga	26,015	24,939	32,657	25.5%
Dade	16,633	16,389	20,632	24.0%
Fannin	23,682	23,753	30,612	29.3%
Floyd	96,317	96,063	112,799	17.1%
Gilmer	28,292	28,829	45,592	61.1%
Gordon	55,186	56,047	72,509	31.4%
Haralson	28,780	28,615	40,666	41.3%
Murray	39,628	39,410	63,527	60.3%
Paulding	142,324	148,987	236,668	66.3%
Pickens	29,431	29,997	49,334	67.6%
Polk	41,475	41,133	53,360	28.7%
Walker	68,756	68,218	77,810	13.2%
Whitfield	102,599	103,542	123,979	20.8%
Total Region 1 Population	863,217	1,083,305	1,212,101	40.4%

(Source U.S. Census Bureau)



Employment Trends

In years 2019 and 2020 staff and training providers have been responding to large/small layoffs and closures. In many cases the employers have been able to relocate the employees to other facilities still in operation for the company. This has lessened the impact on the region of the layoffs. Northwest Georgia is working with various contractors at local community and technical colleges and the Georgia Department of Labor On-the-Job Training Programs to assist this population by providing training and/or OJT opportunities.

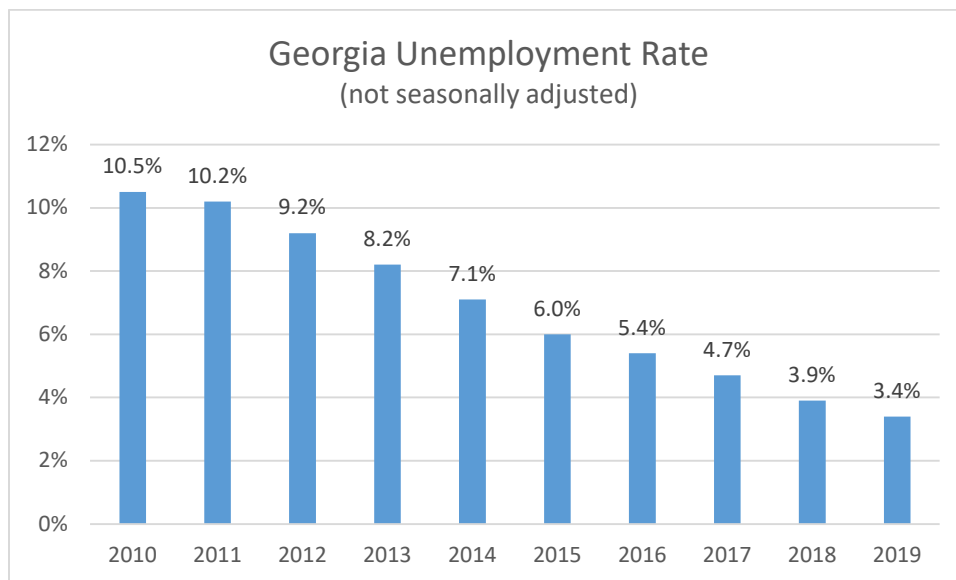
The chart below shows the unemployment rate variance since 2008. During the collapse of the housing market, unemployment rates soared to over 11 percent as carpet and flooring manufacturers were laying off due to reduction in sales. Beginning in 2012 the economy gradually began to recuperate.

By 2017 the unemployment rate had rebounded to 4.7 percent. By 2019 the unemployment rate had dropped an additional 1.2% down to 3.5% in Northwest Georgia.

Time Period	NWGA Unemployment Rate	State of GA Unemployment Rate
2008	6.6%	6.2%
2009	11.1%	9.9%
2010	11.2%	10.5%
2011	10.8%	10.2%
2012	9.6%	9.2%
2013	8.5%	8.2%
2014	7.2%	7.1%
2015	6.0%	6.2%
2016	5.4%	5.4%
2017	4.7%	4.7%
2018	3.9%	3.9%
2019	3.5%	3.4%

Source: GA Dept. of Labor, Workforce Statistics & Economic Research, Local Area Unemployment Statistics Unit

The chart below shows the layoff trends and the tremendous improvement in unemployment rates under the Obama administration which has continued under the current administration.



Below is a snapshot of the economic growth projected through 2020. However, the growth by the end of 2020 will be impacted by the current effects of Covid-19. It is too soon to know the extent of the impact.

AVERAGE U.S. ECONOMIC GROWTH	
The economy is expected to grow at a stronger pace over the next 5 years, compared to the last 15, partly because of the surge of millennials into the labor force	
1990-2000	3.3%
2001-2010	1.7%
2011-2014	2.1%
2015-2020 projection	3.0%
Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, Organization of Economical Developed Countries	

Data shows that both private and public sector jobs were reduced in the time period 2009-2019 although the public sector had the greatest reduction at -10%.

Description	2009 Jobs	2014 Jobs	2019 Jobs	2009- 2019 % Change	2009 Payrolled Business Locations	2014 Payrolled Business Locations	2019 Payrolled Business Locations	2009- 2019 % Change
Private Sector	208,047	217,797	240,591	16%	14,533	14,156	13,990	-4%
Public Sector	47,247	42,487	42,520	-10%	834	762	747	-10%
Unclassified	188	808	584	210%	295	706	585	98%
Total	255,482	261,092	283,696	11%	15,662	15,624	15,323	-2%

Workforce

The table below shows preliminary estimated labor force, employment and unemployment information in Northwest Georgia Workforce Investment Area, Georgia, and the United States for 2019. These figures are not seasonally adjusted.

Area Name	Civilian Labor Force	Number Employed	Number Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
Northwest Georgia	420,668	405,917	14,751	3.5%
Georgia	5,110,318	4,935,310	175,008	3.4%
United States	163,539,000	157,538,000	6,001,000	3.7%

Source: GA Dept. of Labor, Workforce Statistics & Economic Research, Local Area Unemployment Statistics Unit

The following list reflects the educational requirements for projected employment growth and annual openings from 2016 to 2026 for Northwest Georgia. Most of the projected employment growth can be seen in the High School Diploma or Equivalent and the bachelor's Degree categories. There is lower growth associated with the Doctoral or Master degrees.

Education	2016 Base Employment	2026 Projected Employment	Total Change in Employment	Annual Openings
Doctoral or Professional Degree	4,230	4,870	640	240
Master's Degree	3,700	4,430	730	360
Bachelor's Degree	38,410	42,800	4,390	3,490
Associate's Degree	3,450	4,010	560	310
Postsecondary Non-Degree Award	17,020	19,400	2,380	1,990
Some College, No Degree	6,570	7,000	430	740
High School Diploma or Equivalent	119,320	126,780	7,460	14,360

Barriers to Employment

Low Income – 16.7 percent of the population of Northwest Georgia is at or below the poverty level. Low Income individuals have barriers to employment because they cannot afford childcare, transportation, permanent resident, and they may lack training and skills because of the lack of education. The WIOA program is able to provide supportive services to help reduce some of these expenses. More details follow within this Plan.

Non-U.S. Citizenships – As of 2016 approximately 6.65% percent of residents living in Northwest Georgia were foreign born. The foreign-born population includes anyone who was not a U.S. citizen or a U.S. national at birth. This includes respondents who indicated they were a U.S. citizen by naturalization or not a U.S. citizen. (Source: NWGRC) Many of these residents may have barriers to employment based difficulties with English language.

Drop Outs – According to the 2010 Census, the high school dropout rate was 10.2 percent. This was higher than the state rate of 8.4 percent. The area will continue to work with program providers to bring up the high school graduation rates. Northwest Georgia has been making progress in reducing the percentage of high school dropouts (see listing on next page).

Persons with Disabilities

Per The 2017 American Community Survey (ACS), the overall percentage (prevalence rate) of working age people (ages 21 to 64) with a disability in GA was 10.7%. In other words, in 2017, 634,800 of the 5,952,100 individuals ages 21 to 64 in Georgia reported one or more disabilities.

Formerly Incarcerated Individuals

Georgia has released an average of 20,000 offenders per year over the last five years (Georgia Department of Corrections). According to one prominent study, a criminal record reduces the likelihood of a job callback or offer by nearly 50 percent (Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 2009). An estimated 87 percent of companies are conducting criminal background checks on some or all of their job candidates before hiring (Society for Human Resource Management, 2012). Floyd County is currently working as a part of the

Georgia Prison Re-entry Pilot Program. This project will provide advocacy and education for individuals re-entering society.

The following chart shows the number of inmates released during Georgia Department of Corrections' CY2019. This is data for the 15 counties in Northwest Georgia:

Inmate Statistical Profile for Inmates Released

County	Male	Female	Total
Bartow	191	48	239
Catoosa	71	24	95
Chattooga	64	6	70
Dade	22	7	29
Fannin	23	3	26
Floyd	262	56	318
Gilmer	23	4	27
Gordon	121	33	154
Haralson	64	12	76
Murray	138	38	176
Paulding	117	31	148
Pickens	50	4	54
Polk	72	18	90
Walker	139	26	165
Whitfield	277	77	354

Older Worker

Other issues facing the Northwest Georgia region is the problem of an aging workforce. Employers are expecting a large percentage of employees to retire in the upcoming years. Along with this huge exodus goes the industrial knowledge of employees who have worked 30+ years. Entrants do not possess this knowledge, nor do they possess the soft skills (communication, teamwork, problem solving, critical thinking, work ethic, attendance, timeliness) needed to continue the production of the product or service. Another, even more critical is that entrants do not possess the mathematical skills necessary to compete in the market.

- d. Provide an analysis of the workforce development activities (including education and training) in the region, including an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses and capacity of such services to address the identified education and skill needs of the workforce, and the employment needs of employers in the region.**

Northwest Georgia has a strong history of collaboration and partnerships with area agencies and educational institutions. Partner relationships in many cases have existed since JTPA in the late 1990s. Our staff and contract providers have many years of experience under the previous Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and therefore have the ability to design a strong program.

A few of the obstacles identified for Region 1 are as follows:

- The region stretches from the central part of the state in Haralson County up to the Tennessee border. Many counties such as Dade are mountainous in terrain and difficult to travel through. Many participants in these areas are unable to travel to a full service one- stop center. Although support is provided in the form of mileage reimbursement it may not cover enough to pay for the costs associated with owning or borrowing a vehicle. There is no access to public transportation in most of the region.
- The Northwest Georgia region is primarily rural and lacks Internet and broadband capabilities. This limits and hinders the students' ability to take advantage of virtual classes and programs.
- The region's drop-out rate has improved; however, area partners are still tasked with identifying and encouraging this population to seek assistance through GED[®] preparation. Many do not want to go back to the classroom because of age or difficult past experiences with school. It is difficult to assist them with getting a job because most employers require a GED[®] and most training classes also require a GED[®] to continue to the next educational level.
- Many applicants do not have the financial support to sustain them while in the program. College tuition, books, and fees increase yearly. The cost of transportation, childcare, and living expenses have caused many students to either go into debt or dropout of college.

These are just a few of the problems that are faced by the applicants and staff under the program. The activities below are ways that many of the program obstacles are addressed.

Workforce Activities

A One-Stop competitive procurement solicitation was undertaken and the Georgia Department of Labor was awarded the contract for One-Stop Operator. In addition, four career centers in the Region were identified as affiliate One-Stop centers, offering an array of services and serving as the Region's primary mechanism for creating a job-driven education system. More details of the One-Stop System can be found in this plan in Strategic Elements, Governance and Structure (number six).

A vital partner in the Northwest Georgia Workforce system is the Technical College System of Georgia and the University System of Georgia. Area 1 contracts out the Individual Training Account (ITA) program services to area colleges. Current contract providers include three Technical Colleges and one University System College: Georgia Northwestern Technical College, Chattahoochee Technical College, West Georgia

Technical College and Georgia Highlands College. These contractors provide all basic and individualized career services available to applicants seeking to continue their education. They may also make referrals to other training providers on our approved Eligible Provider List or other One-stop Partner service providers. All training program selections are subject to WDB approval. Research goes into the selection of programs to determine the need and appropriateness for training. The Board reviews and approves the need for the training in the region and the cost.

The Northwest Georgia WDB works closely with TCSG and USG, for-profit and non-profit education providers, and proprietary schools. This partnership enables all local workforce development agencies to provide customers with various educational programs that satisfy the USDOL mandate of customer choice.

In Region 1, the Georgia Department of Labor utilizes Employer Committee meetings to provide information regarding workforce development. Providers and staff often attend these meetings in order to stay informed regarding employers' specific employment needs. The in-school youth programs engage employers in the development of course offerings, particularly in the area of occupational-specific course offerings; the development of soft skills; and work experience worksites. Staff is actively working to establish other programs in the Region.

The Region has a high dropout rate and re-engaging this population is very difficult. The Region has programs in place to assist adults as well as out-of-school youth who are interested in obtaining their GED. Even with these programs, the percentage of population without a secondary school diploma is very high. Many employers in the Region require a high school diploma or GED which makes the population very difficult to assist with job placement.

The list of demand and growth occupations (previously cited) adopted by the WDB indicates the occupational areas in which skills will be needed in the future. The demand occupations and other information contained above were developed from the Labor Market Information provided by the Georgia Department of Labor, local Career Centers, Department of Community Affairs, Georgia Department of Economic Development, and Census reports. In addition, WDB members, Labor Department, Technical Institutes and Colleges, and Rehabilitation Services were consulted and provided input in compiling demand and growth occupations and areas of critical shortage. (We train individuals for short- and long-term careers that lead to self-sufficiency and an improved standard of living.)

Programs that relate to the **healthcare** sector range from a variety of programs, including but not limited to, Registered Nurse, Certified Patient Care Technician, Phlebotomy Technician, Dental Assistant, Healthcare Assistant and Healthcare Science.

Programs offered that are important in **advanced manufacturing** include, but are not limited to, various classes in computer programming, maintenance, industrial electrician classes, and welding.

Most campuses now offer CDL truck driving classes or make referrals to local training programs to meet the demand for **Transportation and truck drivers**.

Northwest Georgia also has a strong OJT program. This program offers a choice other than classroom training for individuals seeking immediate employment. With the emphasis on Work Based Learning, Incumbent Worker Training is a vital part of Work Based Training (WBT) in Northwest Georgia.

Work Experience, Apprenticeships, and Internships may be developed as a component linking Work Based Training and ITA classroom training. Work Based Training is currently contracted out to the Georgia Department of Labor (GDOL). This partnership strengthens the region because it provides access to the knowledge and programs offered through Employment Services. More information on WBT can be found in Service Delivery and Training: Number 5 of this Plan.

Area in-school and out-of-school Youth receive services through our Youth contract providers. These providers are Endless Opportunities, Georgia Northwestern Technical College, Eckerd Connects-Paxen, Chattooga BOE, and Rome City BOE. The contract providers offer the vital mentoring and program activities needed to encourage individuals 14-24 years of age to stay in school or study for the GED® test and to seek opportunities for Work Experience, OJT, and short- and long-term training. More information is provided in Service Delivery and Training: Number 4 of this Plan.

Other Area Initiatives

Northwest Georgia has a pilot program called the Floyd County Prison Program between Georgia Northwestern Technical College, the Floyd County Prison, and Northwest Georgia Regional Commission. The 13-week welding program, funded by Northwest Georgia WIOA, is for incarcerated individuals subject to release in six to twelve months. TCSG (GNTC) is providing the welding lab and instructor. Individuals will receive follow-up and job placement services for not less than 12 months after program exit.

Northwest Georgia invested in a Mobile Career Center that is taken to area events such as intake, education workshops, and career and job fairs and PRI events. The goal is to provide applicants region wide with access to services.

- e. **Provide a description of the local board's strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including youth and individuals with barriers to employment), including goals relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance in order to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency.**

The vision of the Workforce Development Board of Northwest Georgia is: ***To build a world- class workforce that enables individuals to meet the dynamic employment needs of business through customer-focused services that leverage existing resources and strategically forms and implements economic development partnerships for this purpose.***

Goals for Workforce Development

1. To identify the workforce needs of businesses through the utilization of local labor market and educational data and technology and to meet those needs by emphasizing business services.
2. To provide customer-focused services (both for the employers and individuals) through the development and implementation of sector strategies and career pathways.
3. To create a unified, seamless and vital workforce delivery system by connecting core partners, economic development stakeholders, and others; formalizing agreements between the parties as appropriate; and assuring that investments are job-driven and non- duplicative.
4. To initiate an integrated approach to the system's overall performance management through training and continuous improvement to provide an approach that (a) manage a performance-based workforce system with federally-mandated performance outcomes; and (b) identifies the processes that meet current and future system organizational needs. The Technical College System of Georgia has and will continue to provide technical assistance through the Georgia Workforce Academy.

WorkSource Northwest Georgia currently tracks WIOA measures that show increases in employment and attainment of recognized post-secondary credentials by participants. With the addition of Georgia Performs, the state performance database, local performance measures can be identified to assure that goals are met. These goals will also provide direction for the system's development and management supporting regional growth and individuals' economic self-sufficiency.

- f. **Taking into account the analyses described in sections “2. a-e” (above), provide a strategy to coordinate core programs to align resources available to the local area to achieve the strategic vision and goals.**

WorkSource Northwest Georgia, with the adaptation of a vision statement and goals, provides the basic framework whereby an alignment between core partners can occur. This will be accomplished through a number of ways:

1. The development of a committee structure for the WDB that will have core partners represented on the appropriate committee to provide direction and input to the WDB into the ongoing alignment of services between the partners. These committees are addressed in *the Local Boards and Plan Development* section of the Plan.
2. The One-Stop Partner MOU identifies the goals of WorkSource Northwest Georgia in defining the career services that are best performed by each partner and (during subsequent years) refine numerical indicators of alignment. Georgia Department of Labor was selected as the Operator through a competitive procurement process and will provide ongoing coordination of One-Stop partners and service providers.
3. The “Required Partners” and other community partners meet regularly every other month and the roles, responsibilities, workshops, and partner participation are discussed and followed up in by-monthly conference calls.
4. Through the coordination of the One-Stop Operator, Required Partners, and NWGRC, continuous improvement can occur as the system reflects actual progress year-by-year in the development of the unified workforce system.
5. Cross training of Core Partner staff will occur in order to assure the “no wrong door” approach for job seekers entering into the system through Core Partner sites that are not in implemented Comprehensive Centers. WIOA staff has already provided numerous presentations to Core Partners regarding WIOA services. But all partners must be more versed in each of the core partner services. This is a key goal of the One- Stop Advisory Council.

Directories have been developed (and are updated yearly) for both youth and individuals with disabilities to provide baseline training and employment information. Both directories are on the www.careerdepot.org web site. Other directories will either be developed or a link provided for targeted service groups.

6. The Sector Strategy Core Groups for Advanced Manufacturing represents many of the Core Partners. As additional sectors are identified, a representative of the

sector will join this group to assure that business services align with the sector strategy for all Core Partners. This will maximize the services that can be identified that are beneficial for the sector and duplication of resources and effort minimized.

3. Description of Strategies and Services – Provide a description of the strategies and services that will be used in the local area in order to accomplish the items listed below.

a. How will the area engage employers in workforce development programs, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations?

Employers will be engaged in area workforce development programs in a variety of ways. For example, the various types of employer-based work site training programs will be marketed by the WDB and its work-based training contractors. This marketing effort will inform the employers of the training available to their workers, whether on-the-job training, customized training, apprenticeship or incumbent worker training. Marketing materials will consist of fliers, brochures, emails, The Business Informer (email blast) and Facebook and other appropriate web-based postings. Face to face contact with employers will be accomplished through local Chamber of Commerce meetings, Employer Committee meetings, Sector partnership meetings and other business organizations such as Rotary Clubs. Economic development units at area Technical Colleges and State Colleges will be utilized, as appropriate, to make marketing presentations to employers taking part in seminars or other employer activities sponsored by the colleges. Additionally, work-based training contractors may make "cold calls" to employers identified as having jobs in in-demand industry sectors and occupations. Not limited to large and medium employers, these visits will also target small businesses who may not attend business meetings such as the Chambers of Commerce. Policies (such as reimbursing eligible employers for up to 75 percent of the wages in the OJT program) have been adopted to benefit small businesses and encourage their participation in WorkSource Northwest Georgia. Local customized recruiting events and job fairs will also be used to inform employers of training opportunities available.

Employers who exhibit an interest in participating in work-based training will be instrumental in developing the training to be accomplished. In concert with the work-based training contractors, employers will assist in designing training plans to meet their specific needs and the skill gaps of their employees or future employees.

Currently, the advanced manufacturing sector is targeted and health care and logistics/transportation sectors will be incorporated.

- b. How will the area support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area? Discuss the area's workforce services to businesses and how business and organized labor representatives on the Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) contributed to the development of these strategies. Provide a listing of business services available through the area(s) such as employer workshops and assessment and screening of potential employees.**

Development of the local workforce development system is an on-going process. The LWDB will continue to refine its function in enhancing the workforce system in Northwest Georgia so that the goal of supplying a workforce trained to meet employer needs is realized.

A key workforce training model promoted by Georgia WorkSmart is Registered Apprenticeship. Through a partnership with the Department of Labor's Office of Apprenticeship, the Technical College System of Georgia, and other education and state agency partners, Georgia WorkSmart helps organizations create apprenticeship programs that include curriculum and classroom instruction development. Assistance with national apprenticeship registration is also provided through this partnership. The WIOA regulations provide for non-registered apprenticeships to be added to the EPL through local review and approval. This will be considered as guidance is received and apprenticeships are developed in non-traditional skill areas.

WorkSource Northwest Georgia contracts with the Georgia Department of Labor to provide the on-the-job training and incumbent worker training for Northwest Georgia. The staff working with these business services is primarily part of the Business Service Unit of the Georgia Department of Labor. These staff members identify talent pools for employers of targeted in-demand occupations and provide a wide array of services in job readiness activities, career expos, and customized recruitment, GEORGIA BEST for Employers, regional summits, and Employer Committee activities including employer workshops.

WorkSource Northwest Georgia has worked closely with the One-Stop partners (including primarily Department of Labor and the technical and community colleges) when businesses layoff or close in the region, which initiates a Rapid Response event. The mobile lab has allowed the partners to be on-site at the employer's location to enroll the employees in Employ Georgia, receive labor market information, apply for Unemployment Insurance, develop resumes, provide assessment of career interests, provide screening of dislocated employees to refer to potential employers and, in many cases, meet with prospective employers.

Business representatives continue to be actively involved in developing the sector strategy in advanced manufacturing and will be involved as new sector strategies are developed. Detailed information regarding their involvement is provided in the *Sector*

Strategy section of this Plan. These representatives, together with organized labor representatives participated in providing input into the Plan. Employer surveys in the initial sector strategy development identified key targeted occupations. The Proposal Review Committee, consisting entirely of private business sector, will select the service providers for the implementation of the plan.

All of the region's work-based training programs are designed to be steps in a career pathway. Depending upon the skills and experience of the participant, they may enter the career pathway at any of these points of training and progress as far as needed to become proficient in their chosen career.

Northwest Georgia is known for having a rich history of floor covering manufacturing plants. Over time, the facilities that have continued to thrive were those that moved towards more advanced technologies and training. The OJT program has developed continuing relationships with employers in this industry sector and has provided services that assess and screen applicants so that quality workers can be trained in these new technologies.

A supporting industry for the manufacturing sector is transportation. The industry requires a large supply of trucking companies to move product both locally and long haul shipments. Our ITA program continues to train and refer CDL drivers for the industry.

- c. **How will the area better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development? Additionally, identify economic development partners and describe the involvement of the economic development community in developing strategies. How will the area strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs?**

The Northwest Georgia Regional Commission is the federally-designated Economic Development District for all of the counties in Region 1 through the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration and is also designated as the administrative entity and grantee for WIOA activities in the Region. Thus, staff are able to coordinate on a day-to-day basis the economic and workforce priorities for the Region. The Workforce Development Department and the Economic Development Department for NWGRC work closely with the industrial authorities and the chambers in the area to alert Workforce staff of workforce needs, initiatives, and areas for coordination as new companies are recruited and/or there are expansions. The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Planning group has several members of the Workforce Development Board of Northwest Georgia, Inc. who will participate in the planning process and assure coordination between the workforce and economic strategies with workforce strongly addressed in the Plan.

Conversely, the Workforce Development staff at NWGRC in its WIOA planning document compile workforce strategies from the existing CEDS Plan. Staff attend chamber meetings, DOL Employer meetings, and other economic development meetings to develop and maintain ongoing collaboration between economic development and workforce development.

Workforce development efforts continue to support recruiting, retention, and expansion efforts. Specifically, the regional representation from the technical and Regent colleges, the Georgia Department of Labor, Georgia Department of Economic Development, Georgia Department of Community Affairs, and the NWGRC are well-versed in the resources of those agencies and coordinate as necessary.

The Sector Strategy developed for advanced manufacturing has greatly expanded collaboration for economic development and workforce initiatives. Even at the staff level, the economic development staff and the workforce development staff have assisted each other in planning efforts, grant applications, and development of workforce training programs. Successes learned from this collaboration will be used as the Region moves to a more formal sector planning in logistics/transportation and (later) healthcare.

The workforce program has attempted to be responsive to workforce development needs and to allow more collaboration efforts by developing policies that are responsive to needs identified in both the economic development community and workforce development. For example, to be responsive to the needs of a thriving, diverse small business community, OJT was adapted to provide larger percentages of wages for the small business employer. The Small Business Center receives referrals from the workforce development staff as appropriate.

WorkSource Northwest Georgia has implemented an action-based plan using the strategy results from the Northwest Georgia Advanced Manufacturing Strategy Plan developed by Georgia Tech. This will combine regional planning, the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), and Workforce Development plan action items to address the identified needs of industry in the region.

Partners that have been involved in this process include: Community & Economic Development Staff of NWGRC; Local Chambers; Georgia Power Economic Development; Georgia Northwestern Technical College Economic Development; TCSG; and other partners that have been involved with the Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership.

The development of future coordination efforts around sector development in logistics/transportation and healthcare will use the process used in the advanced manufacturing initiative including the staff of Northwest Georgia Regional Commission being responsible for convening core partners (local technical colleges, University

System of Georgia institutions, GDOL, GVRA, Department of Economic Development, Existing Industries Representatives, local chambers of commerce, K-12, and school systems) with key industry and company representatives.

**4. Regional Service Delivery – (Only applies to regions that encompass two or more local areas)
Describe how the region will address the items listed below.**

a. Describe the plans for the establishment of regional service delivery strategies, including the use of cooperative service delivery agreements.

In 2009, the Coosa Valley Regional Development Center (based in Rome) and the North Georgia Regional Development Center (based in Dalton) consolidated into the current 15-county and 49 municipality region. Workforce services had already been consolidated into this regional configuration under the Workforce Investment Act, and this 15-county workforce region continues under WIOA.

b. Describe the plans for coordination of administrative cost arrangements including the pooling of funds for administrative costs. (if applicable)

All planning is carried out on a regional basis. Since this region is consolidated under the leadership of the Council of Chief Elected Officials and Workforce Development Board of Northwest Georgia and the NWGRC, administrative costs are addressed and there is an administrative cost pool.

c. Describe plans for coordination of eligibility documentation and participant outreach.

Worksource Northwest Georgia Eligibility Manual describes eligibility requirements and coordination of participant outreach for the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs. All participants must be eligible and enrolled prior to authorizing any type of WIOA disbursement. The plan is outlined in the following steps:

- a) Career Advisors – Career advisors should review the WIOA Eligibility Manual before they begin the eligibility process with an applicant. A basic understanding of the program objectives, performance goals, allowable activities, and program limitations will help set the stage for a successful relationship between the Career Planner and the participant. The eligibility process must include an understanding of the Worksource Northwest Georgia eligibility system and the corresponding Eligibility Manual. Since the Georgia Worksource portal data entry requirements are part of the registration process, familiarity with this system is an important part of the eligibility and enrollment process. Finally, Career Planners should review the Eligibility Manual since initial assessment begins with an applicant's first interview or contact.
- b) Resources and Coordination - The ultimate goal of WIOA enrollment focuses on employment. Therefore, all Career Advisors should have a keen awareness of employment trends and local labor market conditions. They should also be

familiar with employment services available through Georgia Department of Labor (GDOL) (dol.georgia.gov), and for GDOL Career Planners to have a working knowledge of labor exchange services available to job seekers and employers throughout Georgia.

- c) Community Outreach - Strong local connections and a comprehensive knowledge of local resources will enhance the referral process and participant outreach between local agencies and Worksource Northwest Georgia. The community resources provide participants with the best mix of employment, WIOA relationships with other employment specialists, and educators within and around the community. Vocational Rehabilitation, secondary education, GDOL, Department of Family and Children Services, Technical colleges and other community organizations are great resources for community outreach. Community outreach is another critical element of the WIOA eligibility process that target basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter, and transportation for participants. Career Advisors should know what is available and refer customers to organizations such as Health & Welfare, Housing Authority, homeless shelters, food banks, clothing banks, Goodwill, substance abuse hotlines, etc.
- d) Suitable, Appropriate; Not an Entitlement - Many applicants may be eligible for WIOA, but not appropriate for enrollment. Their needs or expectations may not match the services available or they may need to resolve personal issues before they can benefit from enrollment. In such cases, Career Planners should make appropriate referrals to other programs or services and applicants should be encouraged to reapply if/when their circumstances are such that WIOA enrollment would be appropriate. There is no limit on the number of times an applicant can apply for WIOA. To ensure compliance with EO guidelines, information collected on every individual who is interested in being considered for WIOA financially assisted aid, benefits, services, or training and who has signified that interest by submitting personal information in response to a request from WIOA staff must be entered in the Georgia Worksource portal. To comply with EO guidelines, the career advisors must collect information on gender, age, race, ethnicity, and disability status when an individual begins the application process.
- e) EEO Information - Career Planners will provide applicants with an Equal Opportunity Statement of Rights form. All applicants should read the information at the time of application and have the opportunity to ask questions about the information it contains. Career Planners will give the applicant a copy and keep the original in the applicant's file.
- f) Verification Requirements - Documentation to support program eligibility must be submitted with each enrollment application; a list of acceptable documents

is included in the Eligibility Manual. The lists are extensive but not all inclusive. As such, Career Advisors may use other documents if/when they confirm the eligibility item in question. If in doubt, career advisors are asked to contact their Contract Representative prior to enrolling the participant.

- g) Application process- The “Application” is the process of collecting information and necessary documentation to support a determination of eligibility. This information may be collected through methods that include electronic data transfer, personal interview, or an individual's application. The “application date” is the date of the application and the first day a Career Planner begins collecting eligibility information from an applicant. The eligibility date is determine once all eligibility documentation has been collected, a determination of eligibility has been made, and the Career Advisor signs the application.

The “enrollment date” is the date on which the individual begins receiving his/her first service following completion of the application. A maximum of thirty (30) days can elapse between the application date and the date of enrollment. The enrollment process is concluded once the Career Advisor completes the Georgia Worksource Portal data entry requirements. Although verification documents will reflect participant information as of the application date, demographic characteristics entered in Georgia Worksource Portal should be updated to reflect the participant’s actual circumstances as of the enrollment date. If an applicant is not enrolled within this 30 day period, the process begins again, with a new application date and (as appropriate) updated verification documents.

d. Describe plans for coordination of work-based-learning contracts such as OJT, IWT, CT, and Apprenticeship.

Region 1 currently has only one local area. Prior to 2001 the region consisted of two areas (Coosa Valley and Northwest Georgia). However, they have since consolidated eliminating the need for coordinating service delivery between multiple areas or agencies. WBL services are provided by the Georgia Department of Labor which covers all of the current 15 counties.

5. Sector Strategy Development – Provide a description of the current regional sector strategy development for in-demand industry sectors.

High Demand Career Initiative: In March of 2017, Northwest Georgia Regional Commission received a High Demand Career Initiative Grant for Advance Manufacturing Sector with the Georgia Department of Economic Development - Office of Workforce Development.

The Northwest Georgia Workforce Development Board submitted a Request for Proposal seeking consultant services through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) High

Demand Career Initiative Grant. Georgia Tech Research Corporation was approved by the WDB as the Consultant for this initiative.

Georgia Tech Innovation Technology supplied a 30% match to assist in the development of this initiative and in developing industry-led sector partnerships that creates communication and collaboration between industry, education, business and workforce

The project team worked with NWGRC to identify and develop a comprehensive list of potential partners in which to engage. Potential partners were identified from the pre-award activities, such as the HDCI regional workshops and meetings. The project team continue recruiting additional partners, specifically advanced manufacturing employers that have not been engaged in any previous planning efforts.

a. **Describe the partners that are participating in the sector strategy development.**

Northwest Georgia area sector strategy participating partners include:

- WorkSource Northwest Georgia Area 1 Workforce Development Board
- Georgia Department of Labor
- Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency
- Georgia Tech Research Corporation
- Technical College System of Georgia Adult Education
- Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency
- Area Technical Colleges (Chattahoochee, Georgia Northwestern, West Georgia)
- University System of Georgia (Georgia Highlands, Dalton State College)
- Development Authorities
- Greater Dalton Chamber of Commerce
- Rome City Redevelopment Authority
- Gordon County Career Academy
- Georgia Department Economic Development
- Industry Georgia Power
- Industry Toya Tire
- Industry Mohawk

- Industry Hanwha Q Cells
- Industry Gildan
- Georgia MEP

b. **Describe the meetings that have taken place and the strategy by which partners will continue to be engaged.**

Sector Partnership

Phase I

In May 2017 the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission and Workforce Development Board was awarded a sector partnership grant for advance manufacturing. The project officially kicked off on September 28, 2017. The Workforce system partners attend the kickoff meeting which included employers in the advanced manufacturing industry, secondary and higher education, technical colleges, economic development professionals, workforce development entities, and other state and regional partners.

Sector Partnership Goals:

- (1) Reconvene the stakeholders involved in the pre-planning phase of the HDCI grant during the fall of 2016,
- (2) Introduce Georgia Tech's EI2 as the project lead,
- (3) Review the planned process for strategy development, and
- (4) Discuss the goals and benefits of the partnership. Participants were given an opportunity to ask questions and discuss the information provided.

Industry representatives mentioned their desire for an expedited planning process, greater level of in-school funding, and revision of the curriculum development process currently in place for manufacturing. The group also participated in an activity geared to identify "who's missing" that should be engaged in the process and were asked to list one outcome they hoped would result from the project. Thirty people and/or organizations were identified as potential partners in which to connect, and six specific outcomes were submitted, all of which aligned well with the goals of the grant.

- The Sector Initiative was divided into two phases: 1) Planning & Strategy Development (September 2017 -August 2018), 2) Implementation (September 2018-June 2019). Deployment (July 2019 - Present)
- Assist in developing strategies for a long-term Sector Partnership,
- Identify and develop occupations with skills and training credentials

- Inventory existing industry and education initiatives and programs for future skills and training needs in advanced manufacturing.

In developing the sector partnership strategies for the advanced manufacturing sector in Northwest Georgia, Georgia Tech worked closely with a **steering committee** made up of manufacturers, secondary and post-secondary education, economic development organizations, NWGRC, as well as regional and state workforce development partners. The initial approach for the first planning/strategy development phase of the grant can be summarized using three overarching processes:

1. Discover: Map major assets for the advanced manufacturing talent pipeline and conduct a gap analysis of job skills and competencies needed by the advanced manufacturing industry.
2. Engage: use an assortment of tools to build relationships with key stakeholders and distribute information to target groups.
3. Develop: Create a plan for closing the skills and training gaps and aligning education and training programs in advanced manufacturing.

An inventory of existing workforce resources in the region and further classified the list of assets into four major categories:

- Workforce and technical training,
- Industry Partnership,
- Community Based Organizations and Economic Development Organizations

In addition, some of the workforce assets were inventoried which included collecting manufacturing data to begin the skills gap analysis. Data collected included top occupations in the manufacturing industry, fastest growing occupations, entry level education, training requirements, and job posting analytics. Interviews with manufacturing employers helped to validate this data to complete a comprehensive skills gap analysis. Themes and priorities that emerged from the planning/strategy development phase of the grant feed into three different categories:

- Marketing (rebranding of mills, marketing manufacturing to K-12 students and parents, encouraging industry involvement in marketing, marketing current career pathways)
- Continuing Education & Training (increasing incumbent worker training, creating pathways along the entire education spectrum, increasing dual enrollment opportunities)
- Employability/Soft Skills

During October and November of 2017, the project team inventoried some of the assets in the region. Sources for this information included data collected from the state led HDCI regional meetings, and information collected during previous planning grants, such as the **Investing in Manufacturing Community Partnership (IMCP)**. The project team used desk research to supplement, classify, and categorize the list. Most of the assets fell into one of four broad categories: Workforce and Technical Training, Industry Partnerships and Conveners, Community-based Organizations, and Economic Development Organizations. The regional inventory of programs was presented at the HDCI sector partnership workshop to obtain feedback from partners. This step helped to validate the programs and initiatives captured and acted as the first step in analyzing the alignment of the programs to the training needed. Future interviews with manufacturers will aid the alignment analysis; however, there appeared to be a gap in available funding for training and partnerships.

Stakeholders who were part of the sector partnership development phase during the first year reconvened as a larger group in November 2018 as “iWORKS” (Igniting Workforce Opportunities and Reinforcing Knowledge and Skills). iWORKS also brought new stake holders into the group, including additional leadership from the local school systems, technical colleges, state departments of education and labor, and area manufacturers. The planning process was reviewed for strategy development, goals, and the benefits of the partnership, it was determined that those stakeholders involved with iWORKS were the partners best suited and an advisory Board were established to address the key themes and priorities that came out of the strategy development phase. Each team elected a chair and co-chair and began to set goals based on the strategies created by Georgia Tech and the entire partnership during the strategy development phase.

Since November 2018, the teams have been meeting bi-monthly to set goals and provide progress updates to the larger group. Cross-team collaboration is key to building the momentum of iWORKS. These three teams will continue to work in concert with each other to ensure the long-term economic competitiveness and growth of advanced manufacturing in Northwest Georgia.

Members of the Advisory Board were nominated and elected to serve iWORKS for a one-year term. The Advisory Board will be the guiding body and sounding board on implementation efforts that result from the goals that are being developed by the iWORKS team. One of the challenges included: manufacturer involvement. The team sought to prioritize the representation of industry on the board. The board meets quarterly, beginning June 2019.

Ongoing initiatives for the core project team going into the next phase:

Currently, iWORKS teams are working on several initiatives that have given the group forward momentum going into the Sector Second round (2019-2021):

- Soft Skills: Piloting Class Craft student engagement software in the fall of 2019 to 3,400 middle schools' students, aligning the design with the Georgia Department of Labor's GeorgiaBest standards.
- Continuing Education & Training: Conducted a region-wide assessment of advanced manufacturing programming and mapping of career pathways to employment.
- Marketing: Designing and launching the iWORKS NWGA website portal.

Ongoing initiatives for the core project team going into the second round will include:

- Marketing iWORKS throughout Northwest Georgia region;
- Formalizing the iWORKS structure and creating a funding model for long-term sustainability, potentially as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.
- Growing the capacity, usefulness, and functionality of the iWORKS NWGA portal (including the addition of features and resources for employers, students, and job seeker).
- Expanding current initiatives (class craft) and tailoring to meet the needs of additional target populations.
- Continue new program design and begin analysis of logistics and healthcare.
- Continue to submit semi-annual reports to the state.

How Northwest Georgia 's Subsectors Were Identified

Inventory of Assets

The project team developed and inventoried assets in the region. Sources for this information included data collected at previous state led HDCI regional meeting, and previous planning grants. The project team used desk research to supplement, classify, and categorize the list. Most of the assets fell into one of four broad categories:

- 1) Workforce and Technical Training;
- 2) Industry Partnership and Conveners;
- 3) Community based Organizations; and
- 4) Economic Development Organizations

The regional Inventory of programs was presented at the Sector partnership workshop to obtain feedback from partners. This step helped to validate the programs and

initiatives captured. And acted as the first step in analyzing the alignment of the programs to the training needed. Future interviews with manufacturers aided the alignment analysis, but at an initial glance, there appears to be a gap in available funding for training and partnerships.

Employer Interviews (Preparation Activities) and Employers Interviews (Conduct and Analyze):

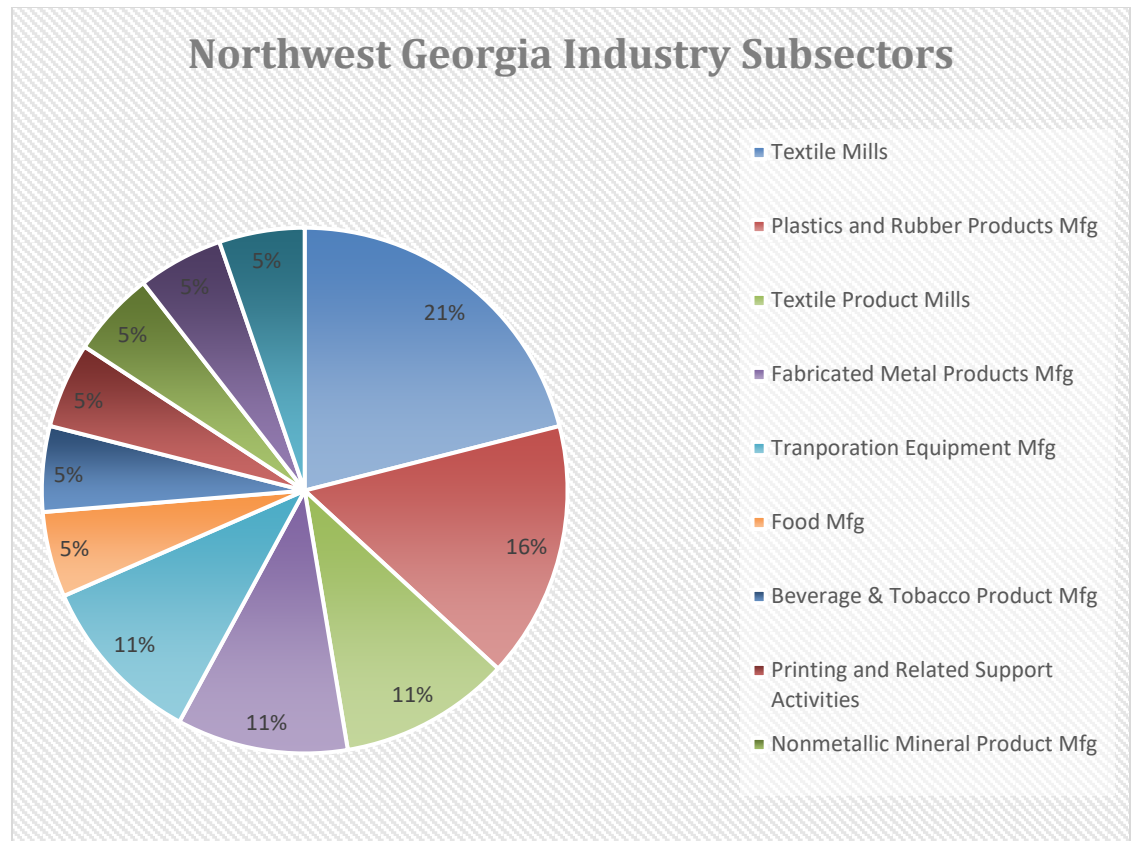
In addition to the inventory assets, quantitative research components- labor market data collection, analysis, and interpretation and qualitative research strategies, such as one-on-one interviews were used. Using confidential firm-level employment data from the Georgia Department of Labor, the largest manufacturers in each of the counties in the 15-county region were identified in which to target for interviews. Information for each of the companies on the target list were contacted and an in-person interviews was schedule with regional advanced manufacturers. These interviews were held over a three-day period throughout the northwest Georgia region. Nineteen manufacturing firms completed the workforce assessment and surveys. Surveys from 90 manufactures in northwest Georgia region from the Georgia Manufacturing Survey (<http://www.gms-ei2.org>) were completed. The information collected completed the needs assessment, included top occupations in the manufacturing industry, fastest growing occupations, entry-level education and training requirements, and job posting analytics. Interviews with manufacturing employers helped to validate this data in order to complete a comprehensive skill gap analysis.

Results:

Georgia Tech presented an analysis of the manufacturer's interviews. Ten priorities were identified and served as the foundation in which to build specific workforce strategies. However those priorities were narrowed down to three categories, 1) marketing (rebranding of mills, marketing manufacturing to K-12 students and parents, encouraging industry involvement in marketing; 2) continuing education and training, increasing incumbent worker training, creating pathways along the entire education spectrum increasing dual enrollment opportunities and; 3) soft skills or employability skills.

The chart below represents a Snapshot of Manufacturers Interviewed:

- Company size range: 8 to 1,200 employees
- Average employment of the companies interviewed: 1,400
- 1/3 of the companies employed less than 200 people in the region
- 63% have one location in the region



c. Describe the research and the data that was used to identify the sector that was chosen for the sectors strategies training.

In selecting regions to receive the High Demand Career Initiative sector partnership grant, the Office of Workforce Development reviewed the prevalence of the Northwest Georgia region's **manufacturing cluster** using Location Quotients. Location quotients (LQ) compare an area's business composition to that of a larger area (i.e., nation or a state). Economic development opportunities may exist for additional growth of the exporting or related industries because of the presence of an existing skilled labor pool or other resources such as suppliers, facilities or transportation hubs in the region. An LQ greater than 1 ($LQ > 1$) indicates a higher than average concentration in that location. and indicates that an area has proportionately more workers or firms than the larger comparison area in a specific industry sector.

The manufacturing industry is a strong segment of the economy in Northwest Georgia. Twenty-five percent of the region's total employment, or 65,000 jobs, are manufacturing-related.

Flooring is the predominant industry in the Northwest Georgia region's manufacturing cluster. Flooring is defined as carpet and rug, resilient, wood, ceramic, and floor tile manufacturing. The Textile Cluster, as defined by the Porter Cluster Mapping Project, provided an initial base of industries to include, and we expanded that cluster definition to capture resilient flooring manufacturing (NAICS Other Plastics Product

Manufacturing), wood flooring manufacturing (NAICS 32191 Millwork), and ceramic wall and floor tile manufacturing (NAICS 32712 Clay Building Material and Refractories Manufacturing). (Source: 2014 NW GA Advanced Manufacturing Strategy, p.25).

In 2012, there were 32,801 jobs in the flooring industry cluster in Northwest Georgia, a decrease of 33.6 percent from 2002 to 2012 (GDOL). This has a significant effect on the region's economy since the flooring industry cluster comprised 13.6 percent of total jobs located in the region in 2012. Location Quotients (LQs) are used to show the competitive advantage (using employment concentrations) of an industry in one area compared to another area. In other words, LQs are used to identify specializations in the local economy. Generally, a LQ that is greater than 1.0 shows that an industry has a greater share of the local area employment than the U.S.

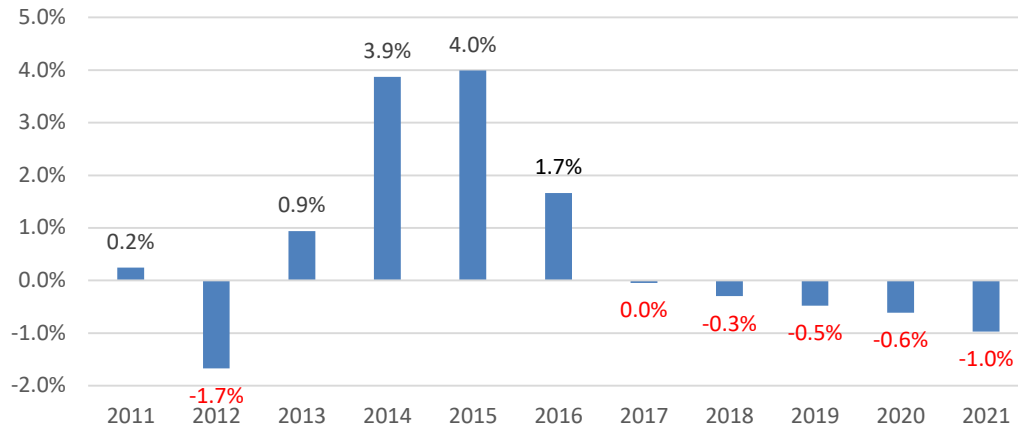
For Carpet and Rug Mills (NAICS Code 31411) the LQ of 298.7 in 2012 shows a clear specialization (Source: 2014 Advanced Manufacturing Strategy, p. 26). Across all subsectors of the flooring industry, the average LQ is 36.3, again showing a clear regional advantage in this sector (Source: 2014 NWGA Advanced Manufacturing Strategy, p. 27).

During the Great Recession, employment within 13 of the 19 subsectors (with available data) decreased from 2002 to 2012. Employment in Northwest Georgia's manufacturing cluster experienced a 27 percent decline during this time period, greater than that of the Southeast U.S. and the nation.

The manufacturing subsectors "Textile Mills" and "Textile Product Mills" formed 15 percent and 36 percent, respectively, of manufacturing employment in 2012. Textile Mills and Textile Product Mills, which make up part of the region's flooring industry, posted the largest net declines of all the manufacturing subsectors, falling 38.8 and 37.4 percent, respectively. These two subsectors form the backbone of the manufacturing industry in the region – they lost over 18,000 jobs combined during this time period.

The chart on the next page shows that the region posted four years of consecutive employment growth. Manufacturing employment in the region grew by a faster rate from 2011 to 2016 compared to the state (11 percent and 9 percent, respectively).

Year over Year Percent Change of Manufacturing Employment for Northwest Georgia



Much of this growth has been driven by Transportation Equipment and Textile Mills. These industries both grew by more than 1,500 jobs during this time period. Other strong performers are Fabricated Metal Products, Electrical Equipment, and Plastics. The largest component of the region's manufacturing cluster, Textile Product Mills, saw the largest numeric decrease from 2011 to 2016 due in part to the recession.

Specific components of the manufacturing industry that have grown are Textile Mills (added almost 1,600 jobs from 2011 to 2016) and Transportation Equipment Manufacturing, which has grown the fastest (71 percent) and the most in terms of absolute number of jobs. While Textile Mills seem to be one of the more volatile industries in the region, flooring still dominates the manufacturing sector.

Efforts to diversify the manufacturing base have included seeing the rise of **transportation and logistics** sector (due in part to the opening of the Georgia Port Authority's Appalachian Regional Inland Port in 2018) and other industries like solar cell manufacturing (Hanwha Q-Cells) that want to be in close proximity to the port facility. Occupations in **healthcare** (such as occupational therapists, physician's assistants, home health aides, physical therapists, nurse practitioners, and medical assistants) are also projected to grow an average of 36 percent from 2016 to 2026 (Source: Georgia Department of Labor, Long-Term Occupational Projections, LWDA 1). Therefore, the Northwest Georgia iWORKS group is poised to focus on workforce development in three sectors during the 2019 – 2021 grant period: 1) manufacturing, 2) transportation and logistics, and 3) healthcare.

d. Provide a completed outline of the sector strategy for the previously identified sector that includes the following details:

- i. Participating employers--** Toyo Tires, Shaw, Mohawk, Gildan, Georgia Power, Q-cell

- ii. **Target occupations**—robotics, PLC, industrial maintenance, mechatronics, etc. to include career pathways in engineering, marketing, and business disciplines.
 - iii. **Training programs**-- Welding, robotics, industrial maintenance, mechatronics
 - iv. **Target Populations**—middle and high school students, minority and female students, post-secondary and incumbent workers, formerly incarcerated individuals, veterans, individuals with disabilities, low income, recipients of TANF, and long-term unemployed who need additional training to advance in their career.
- e. **Describe the plans for future strategy development for future sectors. If applicable, discuss the next sectors to be targeted.**

The Northwest Georgia Regional Commission completed a research study on the Advanced Manufacturing in the region, according to industries during a series of interviews, Workforce and training was identified as the most critical need facing manufacturing in the region. In 2018, regional demographics based on an area within a 60-minute drive time of Dalton, included a regional population of 1,070,321 with a median household income of \$47,903, median age of 39.2 years and bachelor's degree held by 22.5 percent of the population, according to ESRI (Environmental Systems Research Institute). ESRI estimated that annual population growth rate from 2018 – 2023 will be .83 percent.

According to the Environment System Research Institute, Georgia was the top state for floor covering products in 2019, with a total export value of \$485.4 million. Most of the state's floor covering manufacturers are located in its northwest corner.

Today, Northwest Georgia is home to more than 30 international companies, according to the Dalton Whitfield County Joint Development Authority. The three largest private employers in the area are Shaw Industries, Mohawk Industries and Engineered Floors LLC. All but one of the 15 largest employers are either flooring manufacturers or directly related to flooring manufacturers.

Future Focus

As a result of the region's rich history, skilled workforce, infrastructure and natural resources, the region stands to maintain its dominance in the flooring industry. Northwest Georgia continued innovation and investment in manufacturing operations and a commitment to future workforce development are key to ensuring the regional strengths are fully realized. The number of College and Career Academies in the state continues to grow. In the state of Georgia, currently there are 48 operating or proposed College and Career Academies. Eight (8) are operating and 1 pending in Northwest Georgia. The following section is a sample of strategies that are currently underway.

Strategies for Youth (In-School and/or transitioning to post-secondary)

- Strategy W1.1. (Underway) Create new industry-focused program to help prepare youth for the region's workforce. Georgia Northwestern Technical College (GNTC) is launching three new industry-focused programs to help prepare the next phase of the region's workforce. Launching on the college's Whitfield Murray Campus (WMC) in Dalton, Georgia are the Automation Engineering Technology, Diesel Mechanic, and Flooring Production programs. These latest additions are part of a major line-up of programs to be offered in a brand new 80,000-square foot facility located on the Whitfield Murray Campus.
- Strategy W1.2. (Underway) Expand the high school co-op employment program (after school hours) during the school year. As part of the program, consider a small financial incentive or scholarship, and credit towards graduation. Now currently offered at two of eight career academies in the region, Floyd College and Career Academy and Northwest Georgia College and Career Academy/Phoenix Academy.
- Strategy W1.3 (Underway) Provide digital learning experiences at local colleges and career academies, where applicable. Northwest Georgia College and Career Academy is already implementing digital learning in its programming. Partnership with Clemson University ATE Center to facilitate and mentor a digital learning program in Northwest Georgia.
- Strategy W2.1. (Impending) Introduce robotic and Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) programs into middle schools that make connections with real world applications. Support the expansion of STEAM programs and STEAM labs at the secondary school level.
- W2.2 Impending Sector Partnership IWORKS proposed to pilot "Class Craft an interactive game based app approach to teaching soft skills to 3400 middle school students in Northwest Georgia. Class Craft is designed to encourage student participation, good behavior, collaboration. In class, the students will create a character and work together with peers to earn and use special powers to support their own academic learning as well helping peers. The goal is to scale up the apps for use with more middle schools, high schools and out-of-school youth in the region.
- Strategy W3.1. (Impending) Support efforts to expand apprenticeships, internships, and on-the-job training programs. Re-focus the Northwest Georgia College and Career Academy on floor covering and advanced manufacturing career pathways. Offer more youth pre-apprenticeships from high school from to post-secondary education and/or employment. Design and implement pathways of study in regional career academies/technical high schools and postsecondary institutions and combine with work experience in the manufacturing setting that will prepare students for careers in manufacturing.

Strategies for Out-of-School Youth, Adult, Dislocated Worker (WIOA sponsored) in Advanced Manufacturing

- Strategy 1.1 Develop a comprehensive incumbent worker strategy to determine target occupations; develop training curriculum to produce competent worker with appropriate skills; and determine appropriate employers needing this service.
- Strategy 1.2 Continue offering on-the-job training to eligible out-of-school youth, adults, and dislocated workers including those with disabilities and other barriers to employment, as needed.
- Strategy 1.3 Develop customized training options as the opportunity presents itself in the Region to serve unemployed individuals and meet the needs of employers.
- Strategy 1.4 Develop registered apprenticeships in conjunction with the Technical College System of Georgia—Workforce Division or through other non-registered apprenticeships as appropriate offered as ITAs.
- Strategy 1.5 Continue to utilizing the mobile career center to promote training opportunities and business services to employers in advance manufacturing sector.
- Strategy 1.6 Develop class size training options if existing training through ITAs does not meet the needs of employers.

Advanced Manufacturing

Advanced Manufacturing is the selected sector for development and has had considerable success. However, WorkSource Northwest Georgia will continue to advance further in the coming year as new strategies are planned and implemented. Other proposed strategies, not yet accomplished, may grow from future partnership efforts.

*High Demand Career initiative (HDCI) The Governor’s launch of the High Demand Career Initiative (HDCI), will allow employers and businesses to work with members from an expanded advance manufacturing partnership to assess the regional workforce hiring needs and to coordinate with institutions of education in providing the training necessary for future workforce and to expand advanced manufacturing partnerships that will reach populations not currently being served.

- **Strategy P3.1** Create a regional “supplier match program” that would encourage the use and location of suppliers in the region. GaMEP and AIS may assist.
- **Strategy P4.2** Invite career academy manufacturing student teams to accompany industry partners at product/industry conventions or expo events. This will be a natural outgrowth of the apprenticeship programs currently being launched with several manufacturers in the region.
- **Strategy P5.2** Build an “invention studio” located at the advanced manufacturing hub (S-FLOR) using donated equipment from industry. This could take the form of an upgraded robotics lab at the NWGCCA/AMBA. Approximately \$50,000 in upgrades are currently needed to the lab.
- **Strategy P5.4** Create middle and high school student design competitions to solve a client or industry problem, from concept to product. Expand First Robotics programs across other career academies and high schools across the region.

Targeted populations of the in-school initiative to be engaged through training and marketing included middle and high school students, minority and female students, as well as their parents and teachers, to attract and retain students interested in manufacturing as a career whether seeking an occupation in manufacturing itself (robotics, PLCs, industrial maintenance, mechatronics, etc.) or in engineering, marketing, and business disciplines. The out-of-school youth, adult, and dislocated worker program sponsored through WIOA will target all eligible applicants interested in pursuing a career in advanced manufacturing, Special care will be taken to implement the Priority of Services by the WDB.

*Logistics/Transportation

Logistics/Transportation sector strategy will be pursued as an expansion in a new sector to enhance the advanced manufacturing sector's products being taken to market and will enhance the regional workforce development. Many of the same employers in advance manufacturing are also involved in providing logistics/transportation and will allow for program success. The Inland Port will serve as a major thruway to advanced manufacturing in Northwest Georgia.

*Healthcare

Additionally, WorkSource Northwest Georgia, the WDB regional employers and economic development partners plan to explore development of a healthcare sector strategy. This will serve the needs of the region's numerous healthcare facilities (hospitals, nursing homes and others) for a pipeline of well-trained workers to provide quality healthcare to the region's residents.

6. **Description of the One-Stop Delivery System – Provide a description of the one-stop delivery system in the local area that includes the items detailed below.**
 - a. **Provide a description of how the local board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services through the system and ensure that such providers meet the employment needs of local employers, workers, and job seekers.**

WorkSource Northwest Georgia staff annually conduct comprehensive monitoring of required and optional one-stop service providers and other core service providers in order to ensure strict adherence to local, state, and federal outcomes and regulations and provide quality service to the workforce system customer.

Once a training provider's application, including specific performance goals, cost data, and program certifications/accreditation, meets all requirements, it must be approved by the LWDB in order to be placed on the state's ETPL. Performance will then be monitored by staff. Providers, who are not within budget, are not meeting outcome expectations, or not providing training for demand occupations may be removed from the list.
 - b. **Provide a description of how the local board will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system, including in remote areas, through use of technology, and other means.**

The NWGA One-Stop System has a comprehensive site in Rome that has a self-service resource area equipped with internet and video-telecommunications connectivity, and other multi-media

resources. The www.careerdepot.org web site ensures that individuals can, with internet access, can view information about the services and resources in the Northwest Georgia region. Also, some services can be accessed through use of the Georgia Department of Labor's internet-based enrollment and services system, Employ Georgia (EG). One Stop visitors are directed by a greeter to appropriate services via internet access, and partner staff members are available to provide assistance in basic computer software, internet applications, résumé preparation, job search and career opportunities, etc. Partner agencies who are co-located or visit the one-stops have dedicated computers and access to all available technology.

An on-line application for WIOA services is available on the Career Depot web site, which will greatly expedite the process by minimizing meetings with career advisers made necessary in order to receive or provide information. Partners that have developed web-based applications and materials have made them available at the one-stops and other partner locations so that participants may easily obtain them. When a one-stop is not conveniently located, additional access points for WIOA services are available through Career Advisors located on technical college campuses on a scheduled basis.

Northwest Georgia WDB purchased a state-of-the-art and ADA-accessible mobile computer lab to be used as a mobile career center, delivering a variety of job skills and development services to more areas of the region while increasing awareness of the services provided by the WDB and its partner agencies. Even with five one-stop career centers serving the region, most cities are more than twenty miles away. Traveling to the centers can place an undue hardship on those with disabilities that are not able to travel to the career centers, as well as individuals with limited incomes, unemployment benefits, or no access to transportation. The mobile career center is equipped with twelve computer stations, internet access, video-telecommunications connectivity, and a printer. Thus, more services will be provided to a greater number of individuals and employers, allowing individuals to achieve their highest potential; ensuring employers have the skilled workers they need to compete effectively in the global economy; and capitalizing on the untapped potential of underemployed and discouraged workers, youth and other job seekers with special needs.

- c. **Provide a description of how entities within the one-stop delivery system, including one-stop operators and the one-stop partners, will comply with WIOA § 188, if applicable, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology and materials for individuals with disabilities. This should include the provision of staff training and support and addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities.**

Individuals who seek to utilize the Region's workforce system can expect facilities, policies, and programs, whether physical or virtual, to meet federally-mandated accessibility standards. A complete assessment of all one-stop facilities has been completed to ensure compliance with WIOA §188, ADA/504, EEOC, and Vocational Rehabilitation guidelines. All questions and directives from the foregoing were assimilated, and then separated into the following categories: 1) facility, 2) programs and policies, and 3) operations and procedures. Self-assessments for "Programs and Policies" and "Operations and Procedures" were completed by the one-stop operators and reviewed by WorkSource Northwest Georgia staff during the monitoring process. The assessment of all facility assets was conducted by ADA-qualified staff, and all are wheelchair accessible and equipped with up-to-date disability assistive technology.

Furthermore, all one-stops have either on-site bilingual staff or available translation services to assist individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP).

Per federal law, WorkSource Northwest Georgia has designated a local Equal Opportunity Officer to receive and resolve local grievances and complaints, and to ensure WIOA § 188 compliance. All one-stops and off-site partners will be certified every two years. Regulatory updates and guidance will be provided by the local Equal Opportunity Officer as needed. The “Equal Opportunity” tag line will continue to be prominently displayed in all advertising and print materials and included in personnel policies.

A review of the mobile career center was conducted by GVRA accessibility specialists and assistive technology and equipment was purchased following their suggestions. In addition to a factory-installed hydraulic lift and wheelchair accessible computer station, an additional equipment purchase included a ZoomText Magnifier/Reader, a large print keyboard, a screen reader, Universal Reader Plus, noise cancelling headphones, an FM System plus neck-loop, Marble Mouse, an ergonomic keyboard, and a bariatric heavy-duty chair. The mobile lab will deliver services throughout the region to individuals with special needs who would otherwise be unable to access them.

d. Provide a comprehensive description of the roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners.

The WIOA Law requires the providers of certain programs to be partners in the One-Stop System. The NWGRC provides fiscal administration, and oversight of WIOA programs and projects. All other partners provide some, if not all, basic career services. The Georgia Department of Labor, Vocational Rehabilitation, and the partner colleges provide individualized career services. In addition, the comprehensive one-stop center coordinates with additional agencies to expand the availability of career services for customers.

The Comprehensive One-Stop is located in Rome. Affiliate one-stop centers are located in Department of Labor facilities, Georgia Highlands College, and all TCSG campuses where WIOA is offered. It has been agreed that equipment and areas designated as common areas within the partnership facilities may be used by all partners. All partners further agree to:

- participate in the development and maintenance of the Centers’ procedures/policies, business plan, or operational agreement
- participate in establishing and complying with the Center’s client flow, assessment and case management, referrals, and other management processes
- participate in the System’s program review, monitoring and evaluation process
- participate in Center/System training, when appropriate
- work to support Center/System performance measures, goals, and objectives which includes applicable WIOA measures and any adopted or the local one-stop center’s management team
- ensure that its legislated programs, services, and activities are provided in accordance with its goals, objectives, and performance measures
- maintain and provide to monitoring entity appropriate procedures, controls, and records
- abide by Confidentiality, Indemnification, and Referral Agreements

- participate in quarterly and annual reviews by providing budget and activity data

The programs and their providers for WorkSource Northwest Georgia are listed on the next page:

Partner Program	Partner Organization
WIOA title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) program	Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG)
Career and technical education (CTE) programs at the postsecondary level, authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.)	Georgia Northwestern Technical College (GNTC)
Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (CSBG) (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.)	Tallatoona Community Action Partnership
State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 720 et seq.), as amended by title IV of WIOA	Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency
Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.)	Mercy Care
Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG), authorized under chapter 41 of title 38, U.S.C.	Legacy Link
Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), authorized under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.)	Georgia Department of Labor
1974 Wagner-Peyser Employment Services (ES) program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.), as amended by title III of WIOA	Georgia Department of Labor
Unemployment Insurance (UI) programs under state unemployment compensation laws.	Georgia Department of Labor
WIOA title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs	
WIOA title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs	Georgia Department of Labor
	Georgia Northwestern Technical College (GNTC)
	Georgia Highlands College
Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD E&T Services)	Northwest Georgia Housing Authority

Currently, a tracking system is used to quantify each center partner's contributions and benefits. Expenses and services provided are reported quarterly and data received provides a comparative record of the services to budget ratio for each center. Resource sharing agreements are in place and tracking activities are coordinated through the One-Stop Operator.

- e. **Identify the current One-Stop Operator in the local area(s) and describe how the region/local area is preparing for the competitive process for operator selection. Describe how market research, requests for information and conducting a cost and price analysis are being conducted as part of that preparation.**

Northwest Georgia's current operator is the Georgia Department of Labor. They are in the third year of a three year bid cycle. A Request for Proposal (RFP) to acquire a One Stop Operator to begin services in July of 2020 was issued in late 2019 with a deadline for proposal submission of January 17, 2020.

The One Stop RFP process begins with market research to collect a list of agencies with the interest and capabilities to provide the Operator services. Staff requested a copy of the bidders list from other WIOA regions in Georgia to review for common or similar potential bidders in our region. In addition, current and past bidders were reviewed and updated and area agencies researched. Once all interested bidders had been added to the list, the RFP notice was published in local news outlets and sent to those on the bidders list.

A Bidder's conference was held at Northwest Georgia Regional Commission to review the RFP and answer questions. The questions and answers were then posted on the local WorkSource website. In addition, questions with answers that were submitting prior to the meeting were posted.

Once the proposals were submitted, the procurement process calls for a committee of WDB staff to review and score the proposals. The selected proposal will be put before the Proposal Review Committee for approval. If approved they will present the WDB for their approval.

Negotiations with the selected agency will be held prior to the start of the contract. For more details about the One Stop procurement process please see the attached Procurement policy (Attachment 6).

- 7. **Awarding Sub-grants and Contracts – Provide a description of the competitive process to be used to award the sub-grants and contracts in the local area for activities carried out under Title I.**

Northwest Georgia Regional Commission, as the administrative entity/fiscal agent, is responsible for the competitive procurement process for WIOA sub-grants and contracts. The requirements set forth in the Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments (2 CFR 200) were followed in designing the Procurement Policy and Procedure. NWGA utilizes two types of procurement for sub-grants and contracts: Request for Proposal (RFP) and Sole Source Procurement.

- a. **Request for Proposal** –When awarding sub-grants to Adult, Dislocated Worker, or Youth service providers staff develops an RFP that outlines the desired services based on WIOA law and Federal and State policies and regulations. Once drafted, a timeline for issuing the RFP is

designed and will include a date for advertising the RFP, dates allowing bidders' access to the RFP – both online and hard copies, the date of the Bidders' Conference, the deadline for submitting questions regarding the RFP, the deadline for accepting proposals, and the date for approval by the Proposal Review Committee or Youth Committee, and Workforce Development Board.

In the competitive procurement process, the Workforce Development Board publicizes the opportunity to bid by providing newspapers with the information regarding the RFP or other solicitation and posting it on the www.careerdepot.org website. By providing to the public its meeting time(s), minutes of the meetings, the plan, and other guiding documents to select sub-grants and contractors, it assures transparency in the selection process. Once proposals are received and reviewed for compliance, eligible proposals are reviewed and scored by staff members of NWGRC for, at a minimum, project design and implementation, prior experience of proposer, financial capability of the proposer, and cost effectiveness of proposal.

All eligible proposals for Adults and Dislocated Worker Services will be discussed and approved or rejected by the Proposal Review Committee. Its composition is representation of the private sector and/or organized labor representative.

Youth proposals are reviewed for approval by the Youth Committee. Youth Committee members may represent agencies such as education, training, health, mental health, public assistance, or be representatives of philanthropic or economic and development organizations, employers, and/or parents, participants, and youth and well as WDB members.

- b. Sole Source Procurement** - A sole source procurement may be awarded only if one the follow criteria are met:
 - a. The good/service is only available from one source.
 - b. After solicitation from a number of sources, competition is determined inadequate. This is typically met through insufficient bid responses.
 - c. Through a formal request to Technical College System of Georgia- Workforce Division for authorization for a non-competitive proposal.
 - d. Public emergency will not allow a delay resulting from the competitive procurement process. Technical College System of Georgia – Workforce Division must be notified in advance.
- c. Purchase Procedures and Code of Conduct** - Included in Attachment 6 is the policy for Purchase Procedures and Code of Conduct.
 - a. Small Value Purchasing Authority (SVPA) less than \$2500 (Non-Competitive)
 - b. Purchasing of Goods or Administrative Services \$2,500 or more but less than \$25,000
 - c. Purchasing of Goods and Administrative Services \$25,000 or greater
 - d. Sub-Contractor Purchases
 - e. Code of Conduct

The Proposal Review Committee and Youth Committee meeting times are announced as stated in order that all levels of review are available to the public. More information about the committees can be found If the committee approval is met, the selected proposal(s) will be recommended by the appropriate Committee to the Workforce Development Board for approval. **See Attachment 6 for a detailed description of the process.**

8. **EEO and Grievance Procedures – Provide a description of local procedures and staffing to address grievances and complaint resolution.**

For the EEO and Grievance Procedures, please see Attachment 7.

Local Boards and Plan Development

1. **Local Boards – Provide a description of the local board that includes the components listed below.**

- a. **Describe how local board members are identified and appointed. Include a description of how the nomination process occurs for adult education and labor representatives. (§ 679.320(g))**

The President of the Georgia State AFL-CIO nominates the organized labor representative. This continues to be the first priority for nominations. Should a nomination not be made through this process, local organized labor representatives will be contacted including the union-affiliated registered apprenticeship representative. Registered apprenticeships will continue to grow in the Region to foster this training option and to provide continued leadership on the Board. The two organized labor representatives and the registered apprenticeship representative were part of the requirement to meet 20 percent of the membership with workforce representatives. Two other suggested members were a community-based organization representative and members representing demonstrated experience and expertise in serving the youth. The adult education representative supervises an out-of-school program and was selected to meet dual requirements (adult education and youth programs). Future appointments will be made by soliciting nominations from similar organizations. The remaining required representation (i.e. higher education; governmental and economic development entities; Wagner-Peyser, Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973) are part of the administrative entities as specified. The remaining representatives provided in 679.320E (1-4) are flexible and will be considered as openings on the Board occur. Only an elected official was added as a required member on the Board.

The adult education nominations are solicited from three adult education partners in the One-Stop Memorandum of Understanding: Chattahoochee Technical College, Georgia Northwestern Technical College, and West Georgia Technical College. Once again, however, the Chief Elected Officials selected a representative of Technical and Adult Education to initially serve as higher education/adult education.

b. Describe the area's new member orientation process for board members.

The Workforce Development Board Member Orientation Manual has been developed to assist new members in learning about the Workforce Development Board goals, responsibilities, programs, initiatives, member listing, bylaws, and other information. The Manual is provided on the Career Depot website. Not only are members given a copy, orientation opportunities are scheduled throughout the year for new members or individualized orientation meetings.

c. Describe how the local board will coordinate local workforce development activities with regional economic development activities being carried out within the planning region.

WorkSource Northwest Georgia has implemented an action-based process using the strategy results from the Northwest Georgia Advanced Manufacturing Strategy Plan. This combines regional planning, the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and WIOA plan action items to address the identified needs of industry in the region.

Partners that have been involved in the process include: Community & Economic Development Staff of NWGRC; local Chambers of Commerce; Georgia Power Economic Development; GNTC Economic Development; TCSG; and other partners that have been involved with the Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership.

WorkSource Northwest Georgia has a long history of working closely with the region's economic development partners. They understand that all stakeholders: economic development, education, businesses, workforce development and community providers, must work together to develop optimal solutions that ensure the region's economic prosperity.

d. Describe how local board members are kept engaged and informed.

Board members have determined that their involvement can be enhanced through opportunities to work through a committee structure. There are currently four committees, which have 15 of the 21 Board members actively engaged. This committee structure provides the opportunity to look more closely at issues, local priorities, and funding initiatives. Every effort has been made to assure that Board members participate in state, regional, and/or federal meetings and conferences where training opportunities for Board members are available. The Georgia Workforce Leadership Association, Southeast Education and Training Association, and National Association of Workforce Boards are opportunities afforded to the Board members for vital information sharing.

The Northwest Georgia Workforce Development Board receives the Career Depot newsletter and The Business Informer email blasts periodically to provide valuable information regarding training and work-related activities and resources. The WDB meetings have also been an opportunity for members to be more informed regarding

regional activities. Presenters at the last few meetings include: TCSG, Georgia Department of Labor, Georgia Tech Innovation Institute, Georgia Tech Research Corporation, and the Northwest Georgia Advanced Manufacturing sector representative. These presentations providing a solid background for members regarding one-stop services and other resources.

2. Local Board Committees – Provide a description of board committees and their functions.

a. If committees have not been utilized, provide a description of why.

The four committees of the Workforce Development Board of Northwest Georgia are currently: Executive Committee, Nominating Committee, Proposal Review Committee, and Youth Committee.

- The Executive Committee reviews significant monitoring findings of sub-grantees and contractors and acts as needed to review issues not assigned to other committees or when the Workforce Board is not able to meet.
- The Nominating Committee provides a slate of Officers for consideration of the Workforce Development Board. Other nominations, however, may come from the Board Members in the selection of Officers. This Committee is appointed by the Chairman of the WDB and serves as terms expire or officers resign or otherwise vacate their office.
- The Proposal Review Committee serves as an integral part of the procurement review and approval/disapproval process. All adult and dislocated workers proposed activities including one-stop procurement are reviewed through this Committee. Its composition is representation of the private sector and/or organized labor representative. The Proposal Review Committee reviews funding recommendations from the staff and makes their recommendation to the Workforce Development Board. In the event that a quorum is not present, the full Board receives recommendations from the staff and makes a decision based upon the information provided in a proposal summary which includes information regarding the type of training proposed; the agency/individual that is proposing services; the counties proposed to be served; the total cost and cost per participant, if applicable; the review score; and the recommendation by the staff or by the Proposal Review Committee, if appropriate.
- The Youth Committee, under the guidance and approval of the WDB shall, in accordance with an agreement of the WDB with the CCEO:
 - A. Recommend policy direction to the Local Board for the design, development, and implementation of programs that benefit all youth;
 - B. Recommend the design of a comprehensive community workforce development system to ensure a full range of services and opportunities for all youth, including disconnected youth;

- C. Recommend ways to leverage resources and coordinate services among schools, public programs, and community-based organizations serving youth;
- D. Recommend ways to coordinate youth services and recommend eligible youth service providers;
- E. Provide on-going leadership and support for continuous quality improvement for local youth programs;
- F. Assist with planning, operational, and other issues relating to the provision of services to youth;
- G. Oversee eligible youth providers, as well as other youth program oversight responsibilities; and
- H. Serve to review staff recommendation of funding for youth services and make recommendations to the Workforce Development Board.

The Northwest Georgia Workforce Development Board Youth Committee shall include the following:

1. A minimum of one (1) member of the local Workforce Development Board who chairs the Youth Committee and has special interest or expertise in youth policy. Consideration of business, education and human service agency members is encouraged.
2. Members of community-based organizations with a demonstrated record of success in serving eligible youth and other individuals with appropriate expertise who are not members of the local Board.
3. Other members may include other appropriate individuals as determined by the WDB in cooperation with the local Chief Elected Officials and should reflect the needs of youth including out-of-school youth. Members may represent agencies such as education, training, health, mental health, public assistance, or be representatives of philanthropic or economic and development organizations, employers, and/or parents, participants, and youth.

The maximum number of members of the Youth Committee shall be twenty (20). Youth Committee members who are not members of the WDB shall be voting members of the Youth Committee and non-voting members of the WDB.

During the Youth Committee meetings, goals and objectives are discussed and updated to reflect the committee member's efforts in providing youth services to Northwest Georgia. Below is an updated outline of how goals and objectives are being met:

1. **To identify the workforce needs of businesses through the utilization of the local labor market and educational data and technology and to meet those needs by emphasizing business services.**
 - a) Providing resource directory where individuals and organizations can locate training resources, education, and business resources.

- Staff provided a full array of applicable services available through community partners and one-stop partners. (Underway)
- Update the youth resource directory annually and add additional information about youth services through the www.careerdepot.org website. (Staff updates this annually)

b) To improve the economic self-sufficiency of individuals.

- Strengthening referrals to ensure participants receive appropriate training and educational programs that are customer driven (Staff routinely makes referrals to youth advisers, sector partners, and the youth committee members about educational programs in the region).
- Accessible and easy to understand Labor Market Information (LMI) that can engage young job seekers in career exploration, seeking employment and looking to improve skills and education (Through the youth advisers, participants are given opportunities to explore the Labor Market Information website daily and engage in seeking employment to improve their current condition).
- Provide annual training to service provider's staff on identifying and using LMI (The youth committee is executing a plan to provide training via Zoom or Go-to-Meeting to provide this webinar to all youth providers).

2. To provide customer-focused services (both for the employers and individuals) through the development and implementation of sector strategies and career pathways.

- a) Identify strategies to develop career pathways, career counseling, job readiness, and post-secondary education.
- Provide Industry sectors in advance manufacturing, medical fields, and logistics (Youth participants are encouraged to explore the Trade Five website).
 - Provide career counseling and career exploration in determining career pathways and goals to be successful (Youth contractors provide year-round mentoring and counseling).
 - Career pathways that include customer center approach connecting employers, training (post-secondary education), and adult education to meet the needs of the individuals and employers (Youth participants are encouraged to complete the Georgia Best program and Job Career Ready soft skills training).

- Work with technical colleges in developing career pathways programs that make it easier for people to earn industry-recognized credentials and skills that can transfer to work. Including short-term training programs. (The Youth program provides an opportunity for out-of-school youth to complete short-term training that will lead to securing a job in one of the Five Trades outlined in the State Initiative. In addition, Youth may be eligible for enrollment into an Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) training program from eligible training providers. This allows the youth participants to make a self-informed choice about their own employment future and the training needs).
 - Re-brand and re-launch the "Your Success Academy" (formerly "Youth Success Academy") website to provide more timely and relevant information to youth, employers, and community partners. (Underway)
- b) Develop new initiatives for youth programs
- Partner with local organizations and agencies such as: Housing & Urban Development (HUD) and Youth Build, Habitat for Humanity; and Family Connections and Teen Maze; (Underway)
 - Develop and coordinate regional youth conferences with resources and employment opportunities. (Planning)
 - Develop more pre-apprenticeship programs for in-school youth (Planning)
 - Create a comprehensive strategy to help unemployed older youth reconnect with work and /or further educational opportunities. (Underway)

The 2018 update to the Plan was provided by staff with partners' input. Currently, the Workforce Development Board uses two advisory councils to work on the Plan in detail. The Youth Committee members discussed planning issues, identified goals, and were asked to participate in identifying both resources and needs.

The **Promoting Access for Individuals with Disabilities (PAID)** Advisory Council meets quarterly (at a minimum) to assist individuals in finding employment opportunities, training and individual resources with the following goals:

A. Ensure accessibility of online services

1. Accessibility of online services (from http://accessga.org/wiki/Web_Accessibility)
 - a. Content must be perceivable;
 - b. Interface components in the content must be operable;
 - c. Content and controls must be understandable;

- d. Content should be robust enough to work with current and future user agents (including assistive technologies); and
 - e. The PAID Committee members will develop an interactive page for the www.careerdepot.org site.
- B. Ensure that individuals with disabilities experience seamless customer service across Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and partner programs by:
 - 1. Exploring a partnership with the Georgia High School High Tech Program
 - 2. Continuing to braid service strategies and funding to fully use expertise and funds of all partners; and
 - 3. Continue to routinely refer individuals to partner agencies including Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA), WIOA, Centers for Independent Living (CIL), the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG), the University System of Georgia, and other partner agencies for appropriate services.
- C. Provide customer-focused information and resources (both for the employers and individuals) through continued input to the local workforce area regarding:
 - 1. Partnering with the High Demand Career Initiative (HDCI) to help ensure that job seekers with disabilities are included in sector strategies
 - 2. Providing necessary supports to individuals with disabilities, particularly:
 - a. Transportation
 - b. Housing ;
 - 3. Develop strategies to market veterans to employers;
 - 4. Develop a "packet" and separate link on the website for employer-specific resources (contact info for agencies, tax credits, etc.); and
 - 5. Attend Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) meetings in order to disseminate information to employers regarding recruitment/employment of individuals with disabilities.
 - 6. Employer Panel--Research developing an employer panel inviting employers who regularly hire individuals with disabilities and representatives from GVRA, DOL, TCSG, University System of GA, and WIOA to participate and provide information to employers at large.

D. Assist in providing an integrated approach to the system's overall performance management by:

1. Assist the local area in providing a system-wide approach of continuous improvement by:
 - (a) conducting work sessions with committee members, board members, business representatives, employer committee members, chambers of commerce, the Center for Independent Living, other interested parties, and individuals with disabilities in order to continuously improve services and support a culture of high performance
 - (b) assisting in identifying current and future system organizational needs;
 - (c) adopting a monitoring plan/schedule for the affiliate sites; monitor on a quarterly basis and report to the Council; and
 - (d) make recommendations to the WDB routinely.

The **One-Stop Partner Advisory Council** is a group of workforce partners that, under WIOA, are required to be a part of the One-Stop System. The local group meets quarterly with monthly calls on other months to discuss issues and events that affect the One-Stop Partners and the WorkSource Northwest Georgia Workforce System. The group activities and meetings are coordinated by the One-Stop Operator who also provides update to the WDB periodically. The purpose of the One-Stop System is to provide the community with a variety of workforce services at each One-Stop location. The System has one Comprehensive Center where all partners are either physically present or accessible via electronic access. Other Affiliate sites have at least one workforce service. All partners provide services through their participation and receive the benefit of referrals to their programs. The partner group meetings/calls are a way of updating each other on activities in the region and to cross train other partners to better provide partner referrals. Recently the group has developed a One-Stop Referral Guide with partner input that lays out the methods for the referral system between the partners. The goal of this Advisory Council is to increase community knowledge of the Center and to increase the community's utilization the One-Stop System.

The Executive committee of the Northwest Georgia Workforce Board met on April 21, 2020 and provided their input into the Plan and took action to approve posting the plan for the 30-day comment period. The WDB regular schedule meeting will be May 20, 2020, during which time the WDB/CCEO will ratify the approval of the plan.

Upon approval of the Plan by the Executive committee, public notice was given to all legal organs in the regions. This publicized the availability to the of the plan to the public, both in printed at the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission, 1 Jackson Hill Drive, Rome, Georgia, and online at www.careerdepot.org. Any comments received will be included with submission of the Plan

Service and Delivery Training

1. **Expanding Service to Eligible Individuals – Provide a description of how the local board, working with the entities carrying out core programs, will expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment. Include how the local board will facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment in core programs, as appropriate; and how it will improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary, academic, or industry-recognized credential.**

Worksource Northwest Georgia has provided services to the 15 counties in Northwest Georgia beginning with JTPA, WIOA, and now WIOA. The Region was the first in the state to implement a full service One-Stop Center.

Worksource Northwest Georgia has now expanded the One-Stop Delivery System to include one comprehensive One-Stop and seven affiliate One-Stop Centers. The centers are responsible for providing career and training program activities comprised of partner agencies including, but not limited to WIOA, TCSG, GVRA, and DOL. The partners have a common goal of building a workforce system that enables individuals to achieve their highest potential and to ensure that employers have the skilled workforce needed to compete effectively in the global economy.

The Board will work closely with our core partners and others to expand access to services for eligible individuals. Quarterly and as-needed meetings will be held with all core partners to ensure all services can be easily accessed and are available to the region's eligible population. Cross-referrals and staff cross-training are utilized to facilitate access to program activities which will enhance the development of career pathways and, if appropriate, encourage co-enrollment in other programs, specifically training that will lead to a credential, which will, of course, enhance the employment and employment retention of the area's eligible population.

2. **Description of Service to Adults and Dislocated Workers – Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area.**

WorkSource Northwest Georgia works in a coordinated effort with key partners to provide career services to all adults and dislocated workers. Employment and training services are administered through the one-stop system. WIOA seeks to deliver a broad array of integrated services to individuals seeking jobs and skills training, as well as employers seeking skilled workers. This is achieved by: improving the workforce system; more closely aligning it with regional economies; and strengthening the network of one-stop centers. Customers must have access to a seamless system of high-quality services through coordination of programs, services and governance structures. The Act builds closer ties among key workforce partners—business leaders, workforce boards, labor unions, community colleges, non-profit organizations, and State and local officials—in striving for a more job-driven approach to training and skills development.

Under WIOA, there is no longer a sequence of services; a participant may receive services in any order that is deemed appropriate and Core and Intensive services have been combined into “Career Services.”

Career services for adults and dislocated workers include three types of career services, as identified in Section 678.430 of the NPRMs: Basic career services; individualized career services; and follow-up services.

- A. Basic career services must be made available and, at a minimum, must include the following services, as consistent with allowable program activities and federal cost principles:
- Determination of whether the individual is eligible to receive assistance from the adult, dislocated worker or youth programs;
 - Outreach, intake and orientation to information and other services available through the one-stop system;
 - Initial assessment of skills levels, including literacy, numeracy and English language proficiency, as well as aptitudes, abilities (including skills gaps) and support service needs;
 - Labor exchange services, including:
 - Job search and placement assistance, and, when needed by an individual, career counseling, including the provision of information regarding in-demand industry sectors and occupations;
 - Appropriate recruitment and other business services on behalf of employers, including information and referrals to specialized business services not traditionally offered through the one-stop system
 - Provision of **referrals** to and coordination of activities with other programs and services, including programs and services within the one-stop system and, when appropriate other workforce development programs;
 - Provision of workforce and labor market employment statistics information, including information related to local, regional and national labor market areas, such as:
 - Job vacancy listings in labor market areas
 - Information on job skills necessary to obtain the vacant jobs available; and
 - Information relating to local occupations in demand and the earnings, skills requirements and opportunities for advancement in those jobs
 - Provision of performance information and program cost information on the eligible providers of training services, by program and provider type
 - Provision of information on how the LWDA is performing on federal performance measures:
 - Provision of information on the availability of support services or assistance, and appropriate referrals to those services and assistance, including:

- i. child care
 - ii. child support
 - iii. medical or child health assistance available through the State's Medicaid program and Children's Health Insurance Program
 - iv. benefits under SNAP
 - v. assistance through the earned income tax credit
 - vi. housing counseling and assistance services sponsored through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
 - vii. assistance under a state program for TANF, and other support services and transportation provided through that program
 - viii. Per Section 134(c)(2)(a)(x) regulations requires as a career service the provision of both information and assistance to customers regarding filing of UI claims. Such assistance must be meaningful and provided by staff who are well training in UI claims. This service helps meet the requirement that the one-stop system, established under WIOA, provides participants with a seamless and professional experience.
- Assistance in establishing eligibility for programs of financial aid assistance for training and education programs not provided under WIOA, including HOPE and Pell.
- B. Individualized career services must be made available if determined to be appropriate in order for an individual to obtain or retain employment. In accordance with TEGL 3-15, individuals must be declared eligible to receive these services. These include the following services, as consistent with WIOA requirements and federal cost principles:
- Comprehensive and specialized assessments of the skills levels and service needs of adults and dislocated workers, including diagnostic testing and use of other assessment tools; and in-depth interviewing and evaluation to identify employment barriers and appropriate employment goals;
 - Development of an individual employment plan to identify the employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives and appropriate combination of services for the participant to achieve his or her employment goals, including the list of and information regarding the ETPL;
 - Group counseling;
 - Individual counseling and mentoring;
 - Career planning;
 - Short-term pre-vocational skills, including development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills and professional conduct services to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training;
 - Internships and work experience that are linked to careers;

- Workforce preparation activities;
- Financial literacy services;
- Out-of-area job search and relocation assistance; and
- English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs.

Career services are provided by the one-stop system through the MOUs developed between partners and contracts or agreements with service providers procured through and approved by the local WDB. The WDB and the one-stop center operator will review career services to determine if any of these services are being provided or may be provided by a partner at the one-stop center(s) and update MOUs as appropriate.

- C. Follow-up services must be made available, as appropriate, and include counseling regarding the workplace for adult and dislocated worker participants who are placed in unsubsidized employment. These services must be provided at a minimum of 12 months from the first day of employment.

- D. Training

The one-stop centers are equipped with staff that administers testing and evaluations to aid in determining which training program would best benefit the participant.

- Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) allows an individual to select from the Eligible Provider List, a training institution that has been State approved. Career Advisers/Career Planners consult with each participant and document in their Individual Employment Plan (IEP) the results of their assessments, employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives and the successful academic progress of the participant. The Career Adviser can utilize labor market information from O*NET to assist with the preparation for employment.

The participant must first apply for financial assistance through PELL and HOPE. If a determination is made of an unmet need, WIOA can assist with tuition cost and books. Participants are also eligible to receive support payments to help defray the cost of travel and child care, NRPs, and other support as necessary.

- The On-the-Job Training (OJT) program provides training to participants through hands-on experience with eligible employers. The participant is hired by the employer and engages in productive work for the employer. On-the-Job Training is used to provide knowledge or skills essential for the full and adequate performance of a job. It is limited in duration, as appropriate to the occupation for which the participant is being trained, taking into account the content of the training, the prior work experience of the participant, and the service strategy of the participant, as appropriate.

The WIOA system provides reimbursement to the OJT employers. WIOA regulations allow reimbursements up to 75 percent of the hourly wage of the participant for a pre-determined length of time, to assist with the extraordinary costs of providing the training and additional supervision related to the training. OJT may be provided under contract with an employer in the public, private non-profit, or private sectors.

- The Work Experience Program, also known as Transitional Jobs, provides time-limited work experience through subsidized employment in private, non-profit, or public sector jobs for individuals with barriers to employment who are chronically unemployed or have an inconsistent work history, poor work history, or no work history.

Work Experience can be an effective solution for individuals to gain necessary work experience that they would not be able to get through training or an OJT contract. The goal is to establish a work history for the individual, demonstrate work success, and develop skills that lead to entry into unsubsidized employment. Adult Work Experience opportunities are explored to assist the region's hardest-to-serve populations. Transitional jobs/work experience is not currently available for adults/dislocated workers but may be implemented at a later date.

- An Internship is a short-term or part-time work assignment with a private for-profit, non-profit, or public employer, designed to enhance skills learned in a classroom setting, and to provide the opportunity for the application of these learned skills. Internships occur prior to, concurrent with, or subsequent to occupational classroom training, or basic skills training aiding the participant in applying the basic skills necessary to compete successfully in the labor market.
- Customized training is designed to provide our local area with flexibility to ensure that training meets the unique needs of the job seeker and employer or groups of employers. Customized training is to be used to meet the special requirements of an employer, with a commitment by the employer to employ all individuals upon successful completion of training. The employer pays a significant share of the training cost. The WDB is formalizing a customized training policy for selection of providers.
- Incumbent Worker Training is designed to assist workers in obtaining the skills needed to advance within the company or to avert layoffs and increase both a participant's and a company's competitiveness. An IWT policy has been developed to meet the needs of businesses in the region.
- The Apprenticeship program offers a combination of on-the-job training and related classroom instruction in which workers can learn the practical and theoretical aspects of a highly-skilled occupation. Apprenticeship programs are sponsored by joint employer and labor groups, individual employers, and/or employer associations. The region will seek out apprenticeship opportunities through partnerships with area businesses.

3. Description of Rapid Response Services – Provide a description of how the local board will coordinate workforce development activities carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response activities.

The LWDA Division and its partners provide a variety of services to assist companies and dislocated workers. These services help workers return to work quickly with job search assistance, education and training options. A rapid response team organized quickly can develop the state and local resources tailored to the needs of workers. For large numbers services may be provided in onsite or freestanding transition centers.

The Georgia Department of Labor Rapid Response Coordinator, partners, and LWDA staff will provide much of the front line services that the dislocated workers will need. Although the Georgia Department of Labor RRC will coordinate all necessary services, the job of the LWDA will be to assist in giving presentations, providing Workshops, and assisting the dislocated workers in accessing other necessary services.

The Rapid Response team along with local staff may discuss with employers when there is

Adequate time and opportunity for layoff aversion efforts. The layoff aversion strategies are activities which gather information and build partnerships. Assistance to area employers in managing reductions in force is coordinated with rapid response activities and with strategies for aversion of layoffs. This may include strategies such as early identification of firms at risk of layoffs, use of feasibility studies to assess the needs of and options for at risk firms, and the delivery of employment and training activities to address risk factors.

The LWDA Staff is responsible for the following:

- Respond to layoffs of 25+ workers or more under the direction of the Georgia Department of Labor
- Make presentations to employers and employees
- Assist in organizing workshops on the job search techniques, interviewing skills, resume building, salary negotiation, etc.
- Job development training
- Coordination of services with GDOL to provide Unemployment Insurance (UI) Claims Assistance, Trade service assistance
- Provide referral for various services
- Individual and group counseling
- Perform skills assessment and case management, as necessary
- Review Labor Market information (LMI) and match to job openings
- Regional group meetings to work with the Georgia Department of Labor and local Partners in assisting Dislocated Workers (DW)

- Interact at job fairs, expos and opportunities fairs
- Job search assistance and resume' writing

COORDINATION BETWEEN GDOL AND LWDA

The LWDA provides many of the Rapid Response services. The lead representative assigned by the Georgia Department of Labor coordinates these services. In some instances, the LWDA representative may be the lead coordinator in providing Rapid Response services while the Georgia Department of Labor RRC provides support and leverage for additional resources. The Georgia Department of Labor RRCs are in constant communication with the LWDA to follow up on the progress of the events. When a WARN is received notifications are submitted to the LWDA.

OTHER COMMUNITY PARTNERS

In addition to the Georgia Department of Labor Rapid Response Coordinator, LWDA and GDOL staff, there are multiple community partners which may be able to support a layoff event. The NWGRC LWDA partners are the Technical College System of Georgia, Georgia Department of Labor staff, University System, Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Vocational Rehabilitation, DFCS, community organizations such as Chamber of Commerce, City/County Economic Development Authorities, County Parole/Probation Re-Entry Program, Veterans Affairs and Education

LWDA RESPONSIBILITIES

When a WARN notice is received by Georgia Department of Labor, it is submitted to the LWDA with details. The Georgia Department of Labor contacts the employer and schedules an employer meeting to introduce and discuss the initial response plan. Services are then customized to address the needs of the company and affected employees. Most of these services made available to employers are in response to an immediate separation event.

RAPID RESPONSE TRADE ACT BENEFITS

All Trade customers are entitled to Rapid Response and employment services, which are provided consistent with the process for all layoff notifications. Based on the nature of the layoff, early-intervention may include discussions with the employers about TAA before a petition is filed. Once a petition is filed, Georgia Department of Labor TAA staff will notify partners, LWDA and GDOL Career Centers. TAA coordinates and facilitates worker orientations to inform the workers about the benefits and services they may receive as well as the eligibility requirements associated with each benefit. The worker orientations include the LWDA representative to provide guidance on demand occupations and available training in the LWDA.

ADULT AND DISLOCATED PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Those who are dislocated may benefit from retraining and may be assisted by the WIOA career planners in applying for adult or dislocated services. The NWGA WDB mobile lab is used extensively for some of the closings. This permits onsite services for employees, such as completing a resume, filing for Unemployment Insurance, taking an assessment and conducting job searches.

4. Description of Youth Services – Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce development activities in the local area, including activities for youth with disabilities. This description and assessment shall include an identification of successful models of such youth workforce development activities.

Purpose: The main purpose of the Youth Services Program is to increase the focus on longer-term academic and occupational learning opportunities and provide long-term comprehensive service strategies. Youth services funded through WIOA will meet specific guidelines by preparing WorkSource Northwest Georgia's youth to enter post-secondary education, training, or employment upon completion of their secondary education.

WIOA-Eligible Youth - are individuals between the ages of 14 and 24, that are either OSY or ISY as defined by WIOA Section 129(a)(1), and meet one of the following additional conditions: Basic skills deficient; English language learner; an offender; homeless, runaway, in foster care or aged out of the foster care system; pregnant or parenting; an individual with a disability; or a person who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment.

Services are provided to eligible youth participants through a network of youth service providers and their partners. The Act lists fourteen program elements that must be made available to eligible youth. Youth providers in Northwest Georgia have the discretion to determine what specific program services they plan to provide to the youth participants they will serve, based on each participant's objective assessment and individual service plan. Providers who do not provide all elements needed by the individuals enrolled in their program must identify the methods by which those elements will be provided for each WIOA youth participant, as applicable for the individual youth. Collaborative relationships with community resources may be the source of the additional service elements.

The local design provided by WorkSource Northwest Georgia Youth Providers for services include: Eligibility intake, objective assessments, the development of individual service strategy, mentoring/case management, 14 Program Elements and other program activities and follow-up services as deemed necessary to enhance the participant's future.

- Provide for a Comprehensive Objective Assessment of each youth participant that meets the requirements of WIOA. All youth participants must receive a comprehensive assessment to examine the individual basic skills levels, interests, occupational aptitudes, capabilities, and job potential. The comprehensive assessments must include, but are not limited to, a reading and math assessment, interest inventory, occupational

aptitude assessment, and personal interviews. The “Test of Adult Basic Education” levels (TABE) must be used by all providers for all youth participants to assess the participants reading and math skills. Other assessment tools to be used for the interest inventory and occupational aptitude assessments, as well as any other assessments planned for use in the program is individually approved according to their specific needs. The assessment also determines the service needs, of each youth for the purpose of identifying appropriate services and career pathways for participants in developing the individual service strategy.

In addition to the Comprehensive Objective Assessment, an Individual Service Strategy (ISS) is completed for all youth. This ISS must include, but is not limited to, reading and math grade levels, interest and occupational aptitude assessments, the youth participant’s steps to attaining unsubsidized employment or post-secondary training, and identifying the appropriate career pathways that include education (post-secondary) and employment goals. In addition, it will help participants in career planning and determining the prescribe achievement objectives and services for the participant. In addition, mentoring as well as case management for youth participants, including follow-up services will be provided for not less than 12 months after exit.

The LWDB ensures that WIOA youth service providers make the correct and necessary referrals as appropriate including:

- Providing participants with information about the full array of applicable or appropriate services available through the eligible providers, and/or one- stop partners; and
- Referring these participants to appropriate training and educational programs that have the capacity to serve them either on a sequential or concurrent basis.

The Youth Committee and LWDB makes each of the required 14 youth program elements, described in the section below, available to youth participants. A minimum of 75 percent of the state and local youth funding will be used to serve out-of-school youth and a minimum of 20 percent of local Youth formula funds will be used for work based learning/ work experience, such as year round work experience, pre-apprenticeship, OJT, or internships and job shadowing.

WorkSource Northwest Georgia recognizes the value of youth and adults gaining strong foundational skills, completing high school equivalence, and earning industry-recognized certificates and degrees in order to gain economic stability and self-sufficiency. WIOA requires that local areas allocate at least 75 percent of their youth expenditures to serve out-of-school-youth. Some of the local areas struggle with OSY recruitment and retention, thus OWD submitted a waiver of the requirement to expend at least 75 percent of funding on OSY population to be lowered to 50 percent for both statewide and local activities

ETA approved the requested waiver for Program Years 2018 and 2019 on June 18, 2019. WorkSource Northwest Georgia has designed and implemented programming reflective of the new funding limits.

WorkSource Northwest Georgia also promotes and encourages the development of pre-apprenticeship programs. Pre-Apprenticeships are designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in a Registered Apprenticeship program and are considered strong WIOA programs that lead to quality youth performance measures. Pre apprenticeships are comprised of training and curriculum based on industry practices and provides valuable work experience. Northwest Georgia is actively seeking service providers to formalized agreements with training providers and Registered Apprenticeship sponsors.

Lastly, WorkSource Northwest Georgia considers YouthBuild and JobCorp as essential partners to the workforce system when creating pre-apprenticeships. These programs provide specific knowledge and resources invaluable to successful youth-focused training programs. Connecting these partner programs to Registered Apprenticeships sponsors builds stronger pathways for youth populations, while simultaneously addressing the growing employer pipeline needs.

LWDB's Youth Providers and Partners will make available to participants, as needed, the following required 14 youth program elements:

- (1) Tutoring, Study Skills Training, Instruction and Evidence based Dropout Prevention and Recovery Strategies: These services must lead to the completion of requirement for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized post-secondary credential.
- (2) Alternative Secondary School Services or Drop-out Recovery Services: Alternative Secondary School Services or Dropout Recovery Services provide options for students who are at risk of dropping out of high school to remain engaged in an alternative learning environment that focuses on their particular skills, abilities, and learning style.
- (3) Paid and Unpaid Work Experience: Paid and Unpaid Work experiences are planned, structured learning experiences that take place in a workforce for a limited period of time. A work experience may take place in the private for profit sector, the non-profit sector, or the public sector. Labor standards apply in any work experience where an employee/employer relationship, as defined by the Fair Labor Standards Act or applicable State law, exists. Work experiences provide the youth participant with opportunities for career exploration and for skill development. The types of youth work experiences include the following categories:
 - A. Summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year; summer employment opportunities are a component of the work experience program element.

- B. Pre-apprenticeship programs; a pre-apprenticeship is a program of set strategies designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in a registered apprenticeship program and has a documented partnership with at least one, if not more, registered apprenticeship programs;
 - C. Internships and job shadowing; and
 - D. On-the-job training opportunities.
- (4) Occupational Skills Training: Occupational Skills Training is an organized program of study that provides specific vocational skills that lead to proficiency in performing actual tasks and technical functions required by certain occupational fields at entry, intermediate, or advanced levels. Priority consideration to training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that align with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the LWDA.

In order to enhance individual participant choice in their education and training plans and provide flexibility to service providers, WIOA allows ITAs to be provided to out-of-school youth, ages 18-24, using WIOA youth funds when appropriate.

- (5) Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation: This program element reflects the integrated education and training model and requires integrated education and training to occur concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training. This program element describes how workforce preparation activities, basic academic skills, and hands on occupational skills training are to be taught within the same time frame and connected to training in a specific occupation, occupation cluster, or career pathway.
- (6) Leadership Development: Leadership Development includes community service and peer- centered activities focusing on positive social and civic behaviors that encourage responsibility, confidence, employability, self-determination, and other positive behaviors, such as:
- A. Exposure to postsecondary educational possibilities;
 - B. Community and service learning projects;
 - C. Peer-centered activities, including peer mentoring and tutoring;
 - D. Organizational and team work training, including team leadership training;
 - E. Training in decision making, including determining priorities and problem solving;
 - F. Citizenship training, including life skills training such as parenting and work behavior training;

- G. Civic engagement activities which promote the quality of life in a community; and
- H. Other leadership committees, such as a standing Youth Committee.

Positive social and civic behaviors are outcomes of leadership opportunities, which are incorporated by local programs as part of their menu of services. Positive social and civic behaviors focus on areas such as:

- Positive attitudinal development;
 - Self-esteem building;
 - Openness to work with individuals from diverse backgrounds;
 - Maintaining healthy lifestyles, including being alcohol and drug free;
 - Maintaining positive social relationships with responsible adults and peers, and contributing to the well-being of one's community, including voting;
 - Maintaining a commitment to learning and academic success;
 - Avoiding delinquency;
 - Responsible parenting, including child support education;
 - Positive job attitudes and work skills; and
 - Keeping informed in community affairs and current events.
- (7) Supportive Services: Supportive services enable a youth to participate in WIOA activities. More information regarding the Supportive Services policy is provided within this plan beginning on page 87 and also as Attachment 8.
- (8) Adult Mentoring: Adult mentoring must occur for duration of at least 12 months and may occur both during and after program participation. Adult mentoring for youth must:
- A. Last at least 12 months. Be documented and may take place both during the program and following exit from the program;
 - B. Be a formal relationship between a youth participant and an adult mentor that includes structured activities where the mentor offers guidance, support, and encouragement to develop the competence and character of the mentee;
 - C. Include a mentor who is an adult other than the assigned youth case manager. While group mentoring activities and mentoring through electronic means are allowable as part of the mentoring activities, at a minimum, the local youth

program must match the youth with an individual mentor with whom the youth interacts on a face-to-face basis.

Mentoring may include workplace mentoring where the local program matches a youth participant with an employer or employee of a company.

- (9) Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling: Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling provides individualized counseling to participants. This includes career and academic counseling, drug and alcohol abuse counseling, mental health counseling and referral to partner programs, as appropriate.

When referring participants to necessary counseling that cannot be provided by the local youth program or its service providers, the local youth program must coordinate with the organization it refers to in order to ensure continuity of service.

- (10) Financial Literacy Education: Financial Literacy Education includes a variety of activities, including – but not limited to:
 - A. Support the ability of participants to create budgets, initiate checking and savings accounts at banks, and make informed financial decisions;
 - B. Support participants in learning how to effectively manage spending, credit, and debt, including student loans consumer credit, and credit cards;
 - C. Teach participants about the significance of credit reports and credit scores; what their rights are regarding their credit and financial information; how to determine the accuracy of a credit report and how to correct inaccuracies; and how to improve or maintain good credit;
 - D. Support a participant’s ability to understand, evaluate, and compare financial products, services, and opportunities and to make informed financial decisions;
 - E. Educate participants about identity theft, ways to protect themselves from identify theft, and how to resolve cases of identity theft and in other ways understand their rights and protections related to personal identity and financial data;
 - F. Support activities that address the particular financial literacy needs of non-English speakers, including providing the support through the development and distribution of multilingual financial; literacy and education materials;
 - G. Provide financial education that is age appropriate, timely, and provides opportunities to put lessons into practice, such as by providing access to safe and affordable financial products that enable money management and savings; and

- H. Implement other approaches to help participants gain the knowledge, skills, and confidence to make informed financial decisions that enable them to attain greater financial health and stability by using high quality, age appropriate, and relevant strategies and channels, including, where possible, timely and customized information, guidance, tools and instructions.
- (11) Entrepreneurial Skills Training: Training should provide the basis of starting and operating a small business. Such training must develop the skills associated with entrepreneurship. Some examples of entrepreneurial skill development include, but are not limited to, the ability to:
- A. Take initiative;
 - B. Creatively seek out and identify business opportunities;
 - C. Develop budgets and forecast resource needs;
 - D. Develop a customer-centered environment;
 - E. Understand various options for acquiring capital and the tradeoffs associated with each option; and
 - F. Communicate effectively and market oneself and one's ideas.
 - G. Entrepreneurship education that provides an introduction to the values and basics of starting and running a business, Entrepreneurship education programs often guide youth through the development of a business plan and may also include simulations of business start-up and operation;
 - H. Enterprise development which provides support and services that incubate and help youth develop their own businesses. Enterprise development programs go beyond entrepreneurship education by helping youth access small loans or grants that are needed to begin business operation and by providing more individualized attention to assist in the development of viable business ideas.
- (12) Labor Market and Employment Information Services: Labor Market and Employment Information Services provide labor market and employment information about demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services. The Labor Market Area is an economically integrated geographic area within which individuals can reside and find employment within reasonable distance or can readily change employment without changing their place or residence.

- (13) Activities that Prepare for Transition to Postsecondary Education and Training: Activities include career exploration and research. LWDAs are encouraged to provide youth with relevant information and opportunities.

LWDAs may utilize case managers to assist students with gaining entrance into postsecondary education and training and financial aid applications. LWDAs may provide access to postsecondary education and training entrance examination preparation, and may also provide access to the remedial coursework necessary to gain entrance into post-secondary education and training.

- (14) Follow-up Services: Follow-up Services are provided following a youth's exit from the program to help ensure the youth is successful in employment and/or post-secondary education and training.

Other Youth Program Elements:

Career Portfolios - Out-of-School youth providers must incorporate into their program design individual career portfolios for each youth served. A career portfolio is a place to record and store information about the individual's values, skills, and ideas regarding their career plans. It is also a place to record career goals and plans for achieving those goals. As the individual takes the time to reflect on his or her life and work, the career portfolio becomes a place to arrange that data and, as such, it becomes a worthwhile investment in the future. Career portfolios are not intended for use by employers but rather are to be a place for the individual to keep up-to-date information about themselves, the skills acquired, and credentials/certificates received. It is also to be used to add new information that will help the youth each time he or she needs to make a career decision.

Computer Skills and Other Innovative Training – WorkSource Northwest Georgia's youth providers are encouraged to incorporate computers and other innovative training to ensure that participants attain basic computer skills and financial literacy .

Model: Georgia Northwestern Technical College, an out-of-school youth provider, offer a program designated as "Global University". This program is an innovative process where out-of-school youth can gain a thorough understanding of financial literacy at an important stage in their life, which is vital to ensure proper money management skills later in life. Setting a realistic budget, responsibly managing credit and debt, saving for unexpected expenses, and learning how to invest will all be important life skills for every young adult to master. Unfortunately, there are many out-of-school youth who enter into adulthood without entirely understanding how to manage their finances properly. Global University is defined as a "meaning-making process", in which individuals use acquired skills, external resources, and contextual knowledge to accurately process information and make competent decisions in regards to potential consequences of their financial decisions. Although there are lessons to be learned from trial and error, Global University is about managing finances proactively and with good intention.

Pre-employment, Work Readiness Skills Training - In addition to the 14 program element requirement, all WIOA youth may be able to receive work readiness skills training. Pre-employment/work readiness skills training topics include, but may not be limited to, the following:

- a. Making Career Decisions;
- b. Using Labor Market Information; Interviewing Skills;
- c. Job Keeping Skills;
- d. Preparing Resumes;
- e. Filling out Applications;
- f. Maintaining Consistent Punctuality;
- g. Maintaining regular attendance;
- h. Demonstrating Positive Attitudes and Behaviors;
- i. Presenting Appropriate Appearance;
- j. Exhibiting Good Interpersonal Relationship skills; and
- k. Completing Tasks Effectively.

Local Trade Five Strategy - In support of in-demand careers, Governor Deal launched Go Build Georgia on January 17, 2012, a state initiative designed to increase awareness of skilled trade careers that are focused on manufacturing, telecommunications, energy, logistics, and construction. On March 24, 2017, Governor Deal retitled the Go Build Georgia as Trade Five. Trade Five is a workforce initiative that shows Georgians the benefits and opportunities of careers in the “skilled trades” of five industries: Construction, Energy, Logistics, Manufacturing, and Telecommunications. The Trade Five initiatives educate future workers about in-demand skilled trade careers and supplies employers with a young, talented workforce to meet their business needs. The goal of this public-private partnership is to enhance the state’s talent pipeline in these high-demand industries by educating Georgia’s future workforce on promising careers in the skilled trades. Trade Five launched a grant and scholarship program in early 2016.

The Trade Five Grant program is a \$500 grant, awarded to Georgia high schools who seek financial support for the enhancement of their skilled trade education efforts. The Trade Five Scholarship program is a \$1,000 scholarship, awarded each year to graduating Georgia high school seniors who will be attending a Technical College System of Georgia institution to study a skilled trade-related program. The Trade Five Foundation Board funds both the Trade Five Grant and Scholarship programs, a private entity of employers and industry leaders who support the mission of skilled trade education in Georgia. WorkSource Northwest Georgia will refer youth as

appropriate to learn about the options through the Trade Five initiative. The local Trade Five Strategy includes:

- a. Key to the success of Trade Five is the Career Pathways initiative endorsed by Georgia, whereby every high school student has the financial support to study a skilled trade related program. Northwest Georgia's WIOA in-school participants will have as part of the Individual Service Strategy the identification of the career cluster and the additional WIOA services which can enhance the youth's achievement of their career clusters.
- b. The Career Depot website will maintain a link to the Trade Five web site. This website will provide general information regarding skill trades (and corresponding Career Pathway).
- c. The 14 required services of WIOA will be constantly monitored to assess how they can be enhanced for youth desiring to work in the trades.
- d. Mentors will be identified in the trade-related professions (with proper background checks) on an annual basis in each county where participants are being served.
- e. Work sites/apprenticeships will be identified when possible that support participants' desires to work in trades per the ISS.
- f. The out-of-school participants will receive information about the career pathways deemed appropriate that shows the benefits and opportunities of careers in the "skilled trades" of five industries: Construction, Energy, Logistics, Manufacturing, and Telecommunications.
- g. Trade Five representatives will be invited to participate in WDB meetings, Youth Committee meetings, and other appropriate venues. Additionally, information helpful to business and community organizations will be published as achievements, opportunities, or noteworthy events occur. The importance of youth and young adults in gaining strong foundation skills, completing high school equivalency, and earning industry-recognized certificates and degrees to gain economic stability and self-sufficiency cannot be understated. WIOA requires that local areas allocate at least 75 percent of their youth expenditures to serve out-of-school youth and 20 percent in work-based, work experience component. WorkSource Northwest Georgia has completed this funding transition and continues to work closely with the youth providers and State staff to learn more about the available and expanding youth programs.

Working with Adult Education – WorkSource Northwest Georgia is working to build a better educated and more employable workforce by enrolling and graduating a greater number of youth who are co-enrolled in WIOA youth services and adult education programs. The objective is to increase the number of GED ® completers, through programming that is innovative and

responsive to the needs of the participants. The youth providers will work to increase the number of GED® completers annually. Providers will also find opportunities to work with Adult Education to increase the number of customers taking part in Adult Basic Education, Secondary Education, GED® preparation and testing, and English as a Second Language programs.

TCSG OAE, in partnership with OWD, has launched a pilot program to expand the current high school equivalency credential options in the state. Currently, Georgia only offers the GED as an accepted high school equivalency credential. After compiling a high school equivalency credential committee with stakeholders from OWD and Adult Education, research was done on how to increase high school equivalency rates in Georgia. There are currently approximately 1.1 million Georgians without a high school diploma or recognized equivalent credential. Adult Education issues about 10,000 GED diplomas each year. The committee decided to pilot alternative pathways for a high school equivalency. In January/February 2020, Georgia will launch a “Career Plus HSE” option at five Adult Education providers that will be sponsored by LWDA funds. For example, the “Career Plus” HSE option will allow individuals to combine previously-earned high school credits, completed portions of the GED exam, and technical college credentials to receive a HSE diploma. By expanding high school equivalency options, Northwest Georgia will be able to target OSY in new and innovative ways.

Model: Georgia Northwestern Technical College, an out-of-school youth provider, has partnered with Adult Education to assist in recruiting customers for the WIOA program by building relationships with the adult education staff. This ensures that all youth participants who are attending adult education instruction and who meet eligibility requirements are served through the WIOA Youth Success Academy. Orientation sessions are conducted with registrants to complete the proper paperwork and enter participant information into the Georgia Adult Learner Information System (GALIS - the adult education data management system), which benefits the Adult Education Program. The Adult Education program also maintains participants’ class attendance in GALIS daily, maintains post-test scores, assessments and conference notes in GALIS as they occur. Adult Education also monitors each participant’s file to ensure that all applicable paper work is included. This effort ensures that participants will be more attractive as future employees upon receipt of their GED® credential.

Short Term Training - During this post-recession period, young adults are experiencing above average rates of job loss which reduces access to highly-skilled positions. Young adults are competing against more qualified workers for fewer available entry-level positions. By creating multiple points of entry into the local workforce system, WorkSource Northwest Georgia is working with youth customers to best match their skills with high-demand occupations. Youth who are not interested in or able to continue on to post-secondary education are offered technical skills short-term training in industry-recognized skills, such as Serv-Safe, Forklift Operations, Welding, and CNA. This strategy offers out-of-school youth an enhanced set of skills, with which they can greatly increase their chances of securing employment.

Youth with Disabilities – GVRA/VR partners with local education agencies in the provision of transition services for students and youth with disabilities. Working with students and youth with disabilities supports the goal of ensuring employment opportunities for all citizens as well as providing a skilled workforce for employers. GVRA/VR also cooperates with the GDBHDD to provide the services needed to help mutual clients reach their competitive integrated employment goals. GVRA/VR continues to participate with all school systems in the provision of Project Search, pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) and/or VR funded and provider delivered transition services. Georgia's one-stop system engages youth in customized career pathways through collaborative partnerships between GVRA/VR and GaDOE. GVRA/VR provides transition services to out of school youth with the timely development and approval of an individualized plan for employment. The GVRA/VR is in the final and fifth year of implementing the Georgia Pathways to Work program, which was an RSA grant funded initiative. The overall goal of the Georgia Pathways to Work program is to increase the number of students who achieve competitive integrated employment through improved access to the 18 existing career pathways for students with disabilities.

GVRA partners with local education agencies in the provision of transition services for students and youth with disabilities. Working with students and youth with disabilities supports the goal of ensuring employment opportunities for all citizens as well as providing a skilled workforce for employers. GVRA continues to participate with all school systems in the provision of supported employment services, pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) and/or VR funded and provider delivered transition services. To complement the utilization of the technical college system, Georgia will further leverage relationships with educational institutions by enhancing GVRA/VR services in schools. GVRA/VR provides support to eligible students in their pursuit of achieving their post-secondary academic and vocational training (including those thriving in an inclusive post-secondary education program).

Registered Apprenticeships - Registered Apprenticeships are a top priority for the Office of Workforce Development. As a proven training model to best meet the needs of businesses and provide long-term sustainable career opportunities for individuals, apprenticeships are the ideal workforce development tool to address the diverse challenges faced by the public workforce system. Therefore, Northwest Georgia is investing significantly in the implementation of Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs) throughout the regional. WorkSource Northwest Georgia will assemble a sub-committee of the Youth committee members to assist employers and partners across the regional with establishing new RAPs. This sub-committee will be designed to engage business partners, serve as the intermediary for the businesses to the USDOL Office of Apprenticeship and other essential workforce and education partners, and help eliminate the complexity and intimidation that is often associated with the RA process.

Alignment with the Criminal Justice System - Serving individuals with a criminal background is another strategy Georgia is employing to address a tightened labor market. Some LWDA's have implemented programs in the local jails and prisons to provide those individuals with training opportunities to increase the likelihood of obtaining employment or continuing their education

upon release. These LWDAs have coordinated with the Georgia Department of Corrections, the Georgia Department of Community Supervision, and various community partners, such as local business and faith-based organizations. With regard to youth, OWD actively participates in the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice's Reentry Task Force, which aims to increase collaborative grant opportunities and develop an integrated system of care for youth returning home from custody in a DJJ facility. Adult education providers who receive WIOA Section 225 funding for corrections education also partner with the Georgia Department of Corrections to offer adult education services such as classes, tutoring, and training opportunities. WorkSource Northwest Georgia will continue to collaborate with the local DJJ office to develop an integrated system of care for out-of-school youth returning home from custody.

Formerly Incarcerated Individuals - In order to support citizens returning to the labor market from incarceration, GDOL provide incentives to the business community. The Federal Bonding Program (FB), managed by GDOL, is a program that alleviates much of the potential risk involved in hiring a formerly incarcerated individual. FB provides employers with liability coverage at no cost when they hire job applicants who cannot be covered by a commercial bond. In addition, business can benefit from WOTC, a tax incentive to businesses that hire and retain new employees who are members of qualified groups, including returning citizens. Information on and WOTC is available online and at one-stop centers across the state. Georgia also helps to reduce recidivism through The Offender Parolee Probationer State Training Employment Program (TOPPSTEP), where GDOL staff provide services and information on how to navigating the application and interview process with barriers to employment. These services are designed to help returning citizens find and keep a job. Additionally, GDOL staff provides assistance to businesses seeking to interview and hire these skilled workers.

OWD has a strong relationship with the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). OWD will utilize this partnership to bridge the gap for youth who have interacted with the justice system in Georgia. OWD and local areas work with youth correctional facilities across the state to ensure that out-of-school youth leaving facilities are given a "warm hand-off" to education and training opportunities. Case managers work with these youths to enroll them in training options and assess their need for additional services. Local areas have worked with facilities, courts systems, transitions centers, and parole officers to ensure that these youths are given the opportunity to successfully connect to the workforce system.

Post-program and follow-up services - These services are critical as they continue to develop early in their career path. Staff dedicated to these follow-up services contact all youth for one year after officially completing WIOA services. Some young adults require continued follow-up to increase their chances of staying employed and progressing on their chosen career path. Staff provides referrals to local one-stops for continued job search services, career coaching, mentoring, and employability skills, to offer a continual improvement process for the young people in our area.

WorkSource Northwest Georgia will continue to focus on reaching youth with barriers directly after high school graduation, by offering services to help them transition into postsecondary education in high-demand occupation training areas. In order for this to be successful, the local area will partner with high schools, Juvenile Justice and adult education programs to identify and engage the youth. The local area will partner with community organizations, non-profits and GVRA to engage youth with disabilities, foster youth, youth who are English language learners, and youth leaving the Juvenile Justice system. These partnerships will ensure that the youth are provided with the resources to ensure their successful entry into the workplace. The training provided to the youth will focus on GEDs, the use of career pathways and stackable credentials to promote lifelong learning and upward mobility. The local area will ensure all engaged youth are afforded the opportunity to successfully connect to the workforce system.

5. **Implementation of Work-Based Learning Initiatives – Provide a description of how the area will implement initiatives such as Incumbent Worker Training programs, On-the-Job Training programs, Customized Training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives, utilization of effective business intermediaries and other business services and strategies designed to meet the needs of employers in the corresponding region in support of the business service strategy. If these services are not utilized, provide a description of why.**

WorkSource Northwest Georgia has provided training programs to the region since the implementation of JTPA and continued with WIA (1998) and now WIOA (2014). The area has been a long-time provider of OJT, Youth Services, and ITA training and has begun to implement strategies to expand into other work-based training areas. With WIOA's increased emphasis on work-based training, WorkSource Northwest Georgia assessed resources available to provide these services. All of our services are contracted out to service providers in the region via a bid process. The collaboration with service providers and one-stop partners provides us with additional resources we might not ordinarily have.

The area's WBL service provider is Georgia Department of Labor. Their team of WIOA WBL recruiters has been integrated into the GDOL Business Service Unit (BSU) to more effectively target employer needs. This partnership with the BSU has provided the WBL/OJT team with access to the many business relationships and regional collaborations that BSU has developed. It is proving to be a highly successful program as the WIOA team is involved in all BSU initiatives to reach out to area businesses.

In addition, WIOA Work Based Learning (WBL) opportunities are communicated to area businesses through the network of collaborations in the region. Georgia Department of Economic Development Region 1 Business and Industry Manager collaborates with the BSU/OJT Recruiters to share the WIOA programs to business contacts region wide.

The region's Incumbent Workers Training Program began in PY 16-17. IWT opportunity is now shared with area employers as an option available through WIOA. Demand for IWT has greatly increased during PY19-20.

Other ways the region communicates with area business is through participation in Chamber of Commerce meetings, Employer Committees, SHRM events, HDCI meeting participation to name a few. Through these events the staff has met many people in industry as well as other service providers. Information is distributed via social media, Business Informer newsletter, One Stop partners, brochures and flyers handed out at area events.

Work Based Training Utilizing ITAs

- Apprenticeship - Through our ITA program the region will be able to offer students the opportunity to train via approved registered apprenticeship programs. Any apprenticeship program approved by USDOL that is listed on the Eligible Provider List can be utilized as a training provider for WorkSource Northwest Georgia participants. The ITA will cover funding for the first two years of a four-year apprenticeship, up to the limit allowed under the LWD's current policy for ITAs. Support may also be paid prior to the participant earning wages. This is a new initiative in the area. In addition, the region will participate with the Georgia WorkSmart program when appropriate by providing the OJT component.

Work-Based Training RFP

Under WIOA, the decision was made to expand the Region's RFP to include, in addition to OJT, other work-based training, such as Work Experience, Incumbent Worker Training, Customized Training, Internships, and Apprenticeships. As a result, the region approved a proposal that has provided two of these services: OJT and Incumbent Worker Training.

Through the provider contract we are able to tap into the vast resource of dislocated workers and employers that they do business with. This approved Work-Based Training provider is a part of our one-stop system and the participants will, therefore, have easy and convenient access to other partner services available as well.

- **On-the-Job Training** is training provided by an employer to the WIOA participant. The participant is hired by the employer and engages in productive work for the employer. OJT must be for a job that teaches the participant the skills needed to be proficient at the job. It is limited in duration to the time it takes to learn these skills, taking into account the content of the training, the prior work experience of the participant, and the service strategy of the participant. The WIOA system provides reimbursements to the employer for up to 75 percent of the training wages earned during the agreed-upon training hours. The OJT program is designed to assist the employer with the extraordinary costs of providing the training and additional supervision related to the training, while providing the participants with an opportunity into a career pathway.

- **Incumbent Worker Training** is designed to either assist workers in obtaining the skills necessary to retain employment or to avert layoffs. The training must increase both a participant's and a company's competitiveness. Workers who receive training should have been employed with the company for at least six months. This training should, wherever possible, allow the participant to gain industry-recognized training experience, and must include a wage increase or bonus for IWT trainees within one year of training completion (which will be tracked during training follow-up) unless such an increase will infringe on a current collective bargaining agreement. An ideal incumbent worker training program would be one where a participant acquires new skills allowing him or her to move into a higher-skilled and higher paid job within the company, thus allowing the company to hire a job seeker to backfill the incumbent worker's position.

Area employers have expressed a need for incumbent worker training. IWT will be used in coordination with Rapid Response to avert layoffs, where possible. The employees at risk of layoff would receive incumbent worker training in an effort to upgrade their skills and avoid the layoff.

Future training opportunities for Internships and Customized Training for adults and dislocated workers may be developed. The plan may consist of combining an OJT with a classroom component developed through area training providers. The difference in the two types of training is that Customized Training is at the request of the employer and targets specific skills required by the expanding business and their anticipated needs. Internships are the combination of classroom training and occupational training in a related field.

In addition, the region will collaborate with Georgia WorkSmart, a work-based learning initiative operated by the Technical College System of Georgia. The initiative promotes work-based learning programs (apprenticeship, internship, on-the-job training, etc.) as a workforce development tool and assists Georgia companies in developing and implementing customized programs to meet their specific hiring and training needs.

A key workforce training model promoted by Georgia WorkSmart is Registered Apprenticeship. Through a partnership with the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Apprenticeship, the Technical College System of Georgia, and other education and state agency partners, Georgia WorkSmart helps organizations create apprenticeship programs that include curriculum and classroom instruction development. Assistance with national apprenticeship registration is also provided through this partnership.

All of the region's work-based training programs are designed to be steps in a career pathway. Depending upon the skills and experience of the participant, the individual may enter the career path at any of these points of training and progress as far as needed to become proficient in their chosen career.

Northwest Georgia is known for having a rich history of textile manufacturing plants. Over time, the facilities that have continued to thrive have been those that moved toward more advanced

technologies and training. Our OJT program has developed continuing relationships with employers in this industry sector and has provided services that assess and screen applicants so that quality workers can be trained in these new technologies.

A supporting industry for the manufacturing sector is transportation. The textile industry requires a large supply of trucking companies to move product both locally and via long-haul shipments. Our ITA program continues to train and refer CDL drivers for the industry.

6. Provision of ITAs – Provide a description of how training services in WIOA § 134 will be provided through the use of ITAs. If contracts for the training services will be used, describe how the use of such contracts will be coordinated with the use of ITAs and how the local board will ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs regardless of how the training services are to be provided.

- a. ITAs are prioritized in programs leading to a recognized post-secondary credential that are aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area.
- b. Career Advisers will be contracted to provide eligibility, exploration of eligible provider approved programs, case management, and assistance to customers and follow-up throughout their training. Informed customer choice will be ensured as the career adviser inform potential customers of what training is available and work with them to assure that they are referred to appropriate training through the use of ITAs or other services.
- c. The WDB/NWGRC will maintain information on the EPL regarding all training offered (OJT and customized) with the performance and cost information, as appropriate, and make referrals based on customer choice.
- d. Should the WDB/NWGRC determine that there are insufficient eligible training providers and there are identified programs of demonstrated effectiveness offered by a community-based organization or another private organizations serving individuals with barriers to employment or that it would be appropriate to serve multiple individuals in a contract with a institution of higher education (or other eligible training provider; and the contracts do not limit customer choice) other training options may be used.
- e. If the contract is a pay-for-performance contract, it may be used instead of an ITA to provide an alternative training service.

7. Entrepreneurial Skills Training and Micro-enterprise Services – Provide a description of how the area will coordinate and promote entrepreneurial skills training and micro-enterprise services.

NWGRC will continue to educate and promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services by focusing on partnerships with local businesses, labor organizations, colleges and technical schools. Staff and contractors attend monthly Chamber of Commerce

meetings, employer meetings and one-on-one meetings with employers to determine the needs of the employer and the community. Also, NWGRC will continue to research labor market information (LMI) to stay abreast of, and provide information on, in-demand industries and industry sectors. Strategic partnerships continue in place to build strong, sustainable and successful businesses.

WorkSource Northwest Georgia contracts with technical colleges and other providers who offer entrepreneurial skills training programs (via speakers from business owners, and various videos on how to write a business plan, etc.) to build skills needed to start and maintain a small business. Some of the types of training include various Accounting and Business Administration degrees that would assist prospective business owners in learning basic accounting principles and in developing, implementing and refining their business plan. The students are introduced to financial literacy, management, business law, human resources, marketing, business feasibility and business plan development. The region's colleges and technical schools also offer student support services in career guidance, resume writing and job search upon graduation. Many approved areas of study (such as HVAC) require that the student first work for another employer prior to their own business development. The students are provided referrals to the employer to help them acquire the skills still needed after program completion. This collaboration prepares a pipeline of ready and skilled labor through Advanced Manufacturing career-based courses at the technical colleges in the area. These institutions provide opportunities for Georgians to research and explore careers, to develop skills and knowledge to meet the needs of the 21st century workforce and to transition seamlessly into the workforce, thereby becoming a self-sufficient, contributing community member.

In addition, technical assistance is available to small and start-up businesses in the 15-county region, including IBM Kenexa Assess (an online assessment software), on-the-job training, and services with the intent of helping them to succeed. Focus is given to the phased needs of a business, such as starting a business, growing a business, and seeking capital. Employers are referred to the colleges and technical colleges for specialized training for their employees and future employees. The colleges will work with them to design the learning activities that will meet their specific needs. If on-the-job training is the preferred training method, up to 75% of the wages may be reimbursed to such business owners (per the Small Business Administration [SBA] definition) for the cost of training. NOTE: The U.S. SBA is a United States government agency that provides support to entrepreneurs and small businesses. The mission of the SBA is "to maintain and strengthen the nation's economy by enabling the establishment and viability of small businesses and by assisting in the economic recovery of communities after disaster". The agency's activities are summarized as the "3 Cs" of capital, contracts and counseling.

To further the entrepreneurial endeavor, NWGRC, in collaboration with Georgia Northwestern Technical College (GNTC) and Floyd County Prison, is developing a newly created pilot welding training program - The Floyd Prison Training Project. This pilot is a re-entry intervention program that focuses on inmates that will be returning citizens of Floyd, Chattooga, Polk, Haralson, Bartow or Gordon counties equipped with skills to enter the work environment

towards self-sufficiency. The vision is to transform lives from offender to resident status where essential life skills are taught, vocational training and employment are obtained, consequently proving an opportunity for participants to become a contributing member of the community.

WorkSource Northwest Georgia is committed to providing entrepreneurial skills training for in-school and out-of-school youth, involving them in the 14 required youth elements, and services are provided to eligible youth participants through a network of competitively-procured youth service providers. The work experiences that the youth receive are often with small, entrepreneurial-like, start-up businesses. These companies are willing to serve as work sites for youth, due to the expansion of business. This experience leads youth participants to their next level of education or full-time employment.

NWGRC prepares the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Plan, which emphasizes an entrepreneurship focus. This allows WorkSource Northwest Georgia to work with chambers of commerce, lending institutions, area makerspaces (places in which people with shared interest, especially in computing or technology, can gather to work on projects while sharing ideas, equipment and knowledge), technical colleges, community colleges and providers such as the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and Community Development Financial Initiative (CDFI) in assisting entrepreneurs.

The Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant program directly supports the IMCP initiative to boost the manufacturing sector and create well-paying manufacturing jobs, using economic development resources available through existing Federal programs.

NWGRC will continue working with the Appalachian Regional Commission's (ARC's) Georgia representatives through activities that support entrepreneurship and economic development, especially those promoting new product and technology development. Activities that support entrepreneurship and economic development - business incubation or business mentoring/coaching services and activities that assist the citizens of Appalachia access to higher-paying jobs, and activities that assist businesses make use of new technology; especially those activities that will result in job creation.

The economic status of Georgia improved significantly in 2019. As of June, 2019, Georgia had no distressed counties. Per the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), most of Georgia's counties are described as "Transitional" or "At-Risk" with some "Transitional" counties that contain areas considered "Distressed". For details regarding the economic status of Georgia's counties, refer to the webpage link below:

http://www.arc.gov/images/appregion/economic_statusFY2020/CountyEconomicStatusandDistressAreasFY2020Georgia.pdf

Counties containing distressed areas are: Bartow, Gordon, Haralson, Walker, Whitfield). Three counties are considered "At-Risk" are in the area covered by WorkSource Northwest Georgia – Chattooga, Murray and Polk. Staff will continue to work closely with The ARC regarding

potential opportunities for these smaller governments. These three counties automatically receive first consideration for ARC funding, and are given bonus points on applications for their economic status.

NWGRC will work closely with local non-profit organizations and USDA Rural Development to support the development and ongoing success of rural micro entrepreneurs and microenterprises. This program will provide loans and grants to Microenterprise Development Organizations for startups and growth through a revolving fund, provide training and technical assistance to the borrowers and micro-entrepreneurs. Businesses with 10 or fewer full-time employees that are located in an eligible area may apply for the loans. Eligible areas are rural areas outside a city or town with a population of less than 50,000. Such businesses may include any type of legal business that meets local standards of decency. Business types may also include agricultural producers, provided they meet the stipulations in this definition.

Grants are available to provide technical assistance to rural micro-entrepreneurs or microenterprises, up to \$205,000 annually. The maximum term is 20 years. For grant information and details, refer to the webpage link below:

<https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-microentrepreneur-assistance-program>

NWGRC will continue to work closely with the SBA locations in Rome and Dalton, Georgia to help small businesses in the 15-county area succeed. As such, several programs and laws have been sponsored that directly affect small business owners. Staff can keep up-to-date about how legislation, such as the Small Business Jobs Act and SBA initiatives (for example, the Emerging 200 program) can help the microenterprise succeed. For more information regarding the Emerging 200 program, refer to the webpage link below:

<https://www.federalgrants.com/SBA-Emerging-200-Initiative-14015.html>

For more information regarding entrepreneurs in the US, see the webpage links below:

<https://www.businessnewsdaily.com/4990-back-to-school-lessons.html>

<https://www.cnbc.com/2020/03/10/why-male-entrepreneurs-in-the-us-make-double-their-female-counterparts.html>

- 8. Coordination with Education Programs – Provide a description of how the local board will coordinate education and workforce development activities carried out in the local area with relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services and avoid duplication of services.**

A big part of WorkSource Northwest Georgia's success under WIOA will be partnerships and collaboration with educational institutions and our local board.

Coordination of Adult Services with Educational Institutions

The WDB's primary mechanism for creating a job-driven education and training system is through the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG). TCSG's Office of Adult Education (OAE) will fund local providers of adult education services who will in turn work collaboratively with other core programs and partner agencies to coordinate comprehensive, wraparound services for program participants.

Local providers of adult education services will actively participate in the One-Stop program. One-stop centers provide a place for connecting individuals with local adult education programs through intake/orientation/assessment for adult education services, transition resources, referral processes, and other joint mechanisms developed through agency partnerships.

OAE is responsible for administering funds to eligible local providers, and providing program/performance oversight to grantees. OAE will provide funding to eligible local entities for the provision of adult education services through a competitive Request for Application (RFA) process. The RFA is the mechanism through which OAE will identify, assess, and award multi-year grants to eligible providers (an organization that has demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education activities to eligible individuals). Local adult education programs are driven by performance measures that are monitored by OAE.

Eligible local providers will have direct and equitable access to apply and compete for grants. OAE will award funds to local providers for the delivery of adult education services, which are academic instruction and education services below the postsecondary level that increase an individual's ability to:

- Read, write and speak English and perform mathematics or other activities necessary for the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent;
- Transition to postsecondary education and training; and
- Obtain employment.

Coordination of WIOA Services with Educational Institutions

WorkSource Northwest Georgia works closely with the TCSG, University System of Georgia (USG), as well as for-profit and non-profit education providers. This partnership enables our local area to provide customers with a large amount of educational offerings, satisfying the USDOL mandate of customer choice. WIOA offers tuition assistance, supportive services and comprehensive case management as part of the individual services. All education providers are listed on the State's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). The ETPL can be found on the Georgia Work Ready Online Participant Portal (GWROPP) that all potential customers as well as local staff are able to view. The state actively maintains the ETPL.

As the unified provider of technical education, adult education, and customized business and industry training, TCSG is the largest provider of ITAs to our workforce system participants. WIOA funding supports a growing number of participants within these training institutions. TCSG also has a 100 percent employer guarantee, meaning that if a TCSG graduate was educated under a standard program and his/her employer finds that the graduate is deficient in one or more competencies as defined in the standards, the technical college will re-train the employee at no instructional cost to the employee or the employer.

Coordination of Vocational Rehabilitation Services with Educational Institutions

In line with the State's use of the technical college system, WorkSource Northwest Georgia will continue to build relationships with educational institutions by enhancing Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA) services in schools. Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA) is working closely with GaDOE to develop a collaborative plan to enhance transition services region-wide for individuals with disabilities. The two agencies established a formal Interagency Cooperative Agreement to assure that cooperation and collaboration exist in implementing and maintaining a system of vocational rehabilitation service delivery to eligible individuals with disabilities. The main objective of this Agreement is to improve and expand the GVRA services that support secondary and postsecondary schools. Consultation and technical assistance services are essential components of this Agreement and enable educational agencies to utilize current and developing GVRA program practices.

Additional Financial Resources

Many grant/scholarship programs in the local area can be used in conjunction with WIOA funding to make post-secondary degree attainment a reality for students with financial needs. A few additional financial resources available are:

- Georgia's HOPE Grant/Scholarship is available to Georgia residents who have demonstrated high academic achievement. The grant/scholarship provides money to assist students with the educational costs of attending a HOPE eligible college in Georgia.
- Georgia's Zell Miller Scholarship is available to Georgia residents who have demonstrated academic achievement. The scholarship provides money to assist students with their educational costs of attending a Zell Miller-eligible college located in Georgia.
- The Strategic Industries Workforce Development Grant (SIWDG) is a financial award for Technical College System of Georgia students and was first presented by the Governor's Office in fall 2013. It awards funds to students meeting certain criteria who are enrolled in certain programs.
- The Federal Pell Grant Program provides need-based grants to low-income undergraduate and certain post-baccalaureate students to promote access to postsecondary education. Students may use their grants at any one of approximately 5,400 participating post-secondary institutions. Grant amounts are dependent on: the student's expected family contribution (EFC); the cost of attendance (as determined by the institution); the student's enrollment status (full-time or part-time); and whether the student attends for a full academic year or less.

WorkSource Northwest Georgia works closely with education providers to ensure participant access to postsecondary credentials in for-credit diplomas, certificates, and degrees. However, both TCSG and USG also have continuing education programs which provide access to non-credit industry credentials. In some cases, diploma, certificate and degree-earning programs also incorporate industry credentials. For example, a technical college welding diploma may incorporate industry certifications as students progress in the program. These types of stackable

credentials enable participants to learn the specific skills needed to gain employment in demand occupations. Stackable credentials also enable participants to continue earning additional credentials at a later point. The area's two-year and four-year institutions have done extensive work to ensure that credits seamlessly transfer between institutions. This work enables the region to better create career pathways for participants.

9. Description of Supportive Services – Provide a description of how the local board will coordinate workforce development activities carried out under this title in the local area with the provision of transportation, including public transportation, and other appropriate supportive services in the local area. Describe the coordination of transportation and other supportive services regionally, if applicable.

The 15-county area of Northwest Georgia is a single service area. The WDB/CCEO that represents the 15-county area requires coordination with other programs in the area for supportive services to ensure efficient, effective, and non-duplicative delivery of services. The coordination requirements are included in the Supportive Services Policies.

Coordination of Funds: Funds provided through WIOA are only to be used to pay for services (i.e., child care and transportation) not covered by other agencies such as DFCS.

The Northwest Georgia Region has limited capacity for workforce needs through a public transportation system. It varies from county to county and the hours are daytime 8-5 and may require prior scheduling. Consequently, the WDB has elected to pay transportation for individuals needing it.

The NWGRC supportive service policy is included as ATTACHMENT 8.

Additionally, some participants may qualify for needs related payments. Needs-related payments (NRP) provide financial assistance to participants for the purpose of enabling them to participate in training and are a supportive service authorized by WIOA Sec. 134(d)(3). Unlike other supportive services, in order to qualify for needs-related payments a participant must be enrolled in training under WIOA Sec. 134 (c)(3). The provision of needs-related payments may be determined on an individual basis.

The NWGRC Needs-Related Payment policy is included as ATTACHMENT 9.

10. Coordination with Social Service Programs – Provide a description of how the local board will coordinate with social service providers, including SNAP and TANF. The description should include the utilizations of both programs as a referral source.

The Worksource Northwest Georgia Workforce Board continues to coordinate with the school systems, business and industry, social services, civic groups, post-secondary institution, parents, and mentors/volunteers. The population in Northwest Georgia is increasingly more culturally

and ethnically diverse. The Programs outlined below were created to meet these changing needs and must equip non-profits organization with the knowledge and skills to become effective partners. SNAP and TANF are both used as referral sources from these organizations.

Business Relationships

Worksource Northwest Georgia staff regularly attends local Chamber of Commerce, Society for Human Resources Management, and Employer Committee meetings in order to build and grow relationships with businesses in the Region.

Individuals with Disabilities

Staff attends meetings and workshops through the local Center for Independent Living (CIL). Though the CIL, connections are built with the Salvation Army, Tallatoona, Network Day Center, Highland Rivers, and other organizations whose mission it is to assist individuals with disabilities.

The Greater Rome Chamber of Commerce hosts a “Non-Profit Roundtable” once a quarter, thereby allowing representatives from organizations and agencies whose missions are to assist in recovery, mental illness, food insecurity, and housing insecurity, among others, to gather at the table to discuss resources and challenges.

Formerly Incarcerated Individuals

In the past, staff has served on the Steering Committee for the Floyd County Prisoner Reentry Initiative. Currently, staff is collaborating with the local housing authority, Department of Community Services, Living Proof (a recovery center), NAMI, and other organizations to assist individuals with incarceration histories to reenter successfully.

At-Risk Youth

Agencies serving youth are represented on the Workforce Development Board and Youth Committee. Additionally, staff regularly collaborates with multiple agencies and organizations who work with foster children and their families, juvenile justice, boards of education, post-secondary education as the Region continues to research best practices for serving our at-risk youth.

Coordination with Core Partners

- 1. Description of the Workforce System – Provide a description of the workforce development system in the local area that identifies all relevant programs and how the local board will work with the entities to carry out both core and other workforce development programs to deliver well aligned services in support of the strategies identified in the state plan. This should include programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.).**

The active collaboration between the LWDB and WorkSource Northwest Georgia's one-stop delivery system is the key component of workforce development in the local area. Our LWDB is geared towards creating an effective and efficient method in meeting the needs of our local economy and aligning programs and resources towards the needs of our local employers. To do this, the WDB's strategy is focused on supporting a unified workforce system that involves the coordinated services and resources of all core program partners. WorkSource Northwest Georgia has programs focused on enhancing services to veterans and individuals within the criminal justice system.

Our local area aims to increase the opportunities the workforce system provides, both to individuals and to businesses. The One-Stop Operator is also embarking on efforts to analyze and improve the referral process and case management systems to further unify activities at the participant level. These efforts include standardized training for staff, use of virtual training and staff meetings and increased participation in job fairs, resource fairs and other collaborative meetings.

LWDA and Labor Market Information

The local area continues to coordinate with all core program partners to ensure data and data analytics are at the forefront of the workforce development system. WorkSource Northwest Georgia has several tools at its disposal to support this strategy, which are described in the Implementation of Technology section.

As in-demand occupations grow and the skill-gap widens, employers have an increased need for skilled positions and training programs. To meet these, WorkSource Northwest Georgia has developed long-term learning strategies such as those delivered through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs). The use of ITAs along with use of labor market information to identify employer needs, will build partnerships of employers, training providers, community organizations, and other key stakeholders around specific industries to address the workforce needs of employers and the training, employment, and career advancement needs of workers. The defining elements of our local area strategies include a focus on customized solutions for specific industry/industries at a regional level, bringing the industry partnerships together.

LWDA and Workforce System

Some of our core program partners, including WFD, GDOL, GVRA, and TCSG, have recently joined other regional agencies and offices on a Career Pathways initiative. WorkSource Northwest Georgia is looking to increase the number of high school graduates who also attain a postsecondary credential that can enhance their value in the labor market. Local area partners are engaging educators and employers in building a system of career pathways that launches young people into promising careers.

The long-term goal for our local area is to create seamless pathways for students from primary and secondary education, through college and training, and into successful in-demand careers. This work will include: increasing the level of communication and collaboration between educational institutions and the businesses in the local area, increasing the number of work-based learning programs in the region, improving the early exposure students have to industry and career options, analyzing state and local policies to ensure they properly foster this work, as well as other efforts.

LWDA and Employer Participation

Our local area provides a variety of customized services to employers in various formats. For example, labor market information can be self-accessed by employers or provided through varying levels of staff assistance. Employer centers in one-stop locations are used by employers in a self-service mode for recruitment and interviewing or with staff-assisted screening and testing.

Various marketing materials are also available and used to educate employers and facilitate employer involvement. The local area also markets to employers consistently by providing information related to employment, Unemployment Insurance and partial Unemployment benefits, tax and wage reports and payments, employing individuals with disabilities, employer committees, layoff information and resources, child labor info, tax credits and incentives, workforce and business development services and resources, employment law issues, and employee recruitment services.

LWDA and Carl Perkins Act

The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins) sits at a critical stage between national, state, and local education and workforce development systems. The need for cross-system collaboration between these communities is more important than ever before, and one important step is to appropriately and effectively align the federal investments made through WIOA and Perkins. This collaboration is important due to the increasingly complex education and training necessary for students to succeed in the current economy. In order to do this, career and technical education (CTE) must find the appropriate balance between the educational needs of students and the needs of employers. WorkSource Northwest Georgia believes the implementation of WIOA and the reauthorization of the Perkins Act provide

important opportunities to efficiently collaborate across these systems and to develop and strengthen mechanisms to further encourage this work.

Currently, Perkins funds are used in Georgia to fund vocational-technical education. The Perkins Act defines vocational-technical education as organized educational programs offering sequences of courses directly related to preparing individuals for paid or unpaid employment in current or emerging occupations that don't require a baccalaureate or advanced degree. Programs include competency-based applied learning which contributes to an individual's academic knowledge, higher-order reasoning, problem solving skills, and the occupational-specific skills necessary for economic independence as a productive and contributing member of society. Perkins Act funds are allotted between GaDOE, as the secondary-level recipient, and TCSG, as the post-secondary recipient.

GaDOE, in accordance with the Perkins Act, will distribute funds on an annual basis to eligible recipients according to several allocation factors. The majority of the funds are distributed based on two main factors:

- Local population of school-age children relative to state population of school-age children; and
- Percentage of local system enrollees whose families qualify for free/reduced school lunch

An additional portion of the funds may be withheld from allocation under the above formula and may be allocated based on a combination of factors that include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Rural or urban designations;
- Local percentage of CTAE enrollees; and
- Local number of CTAE enrollees.

Carl Perkins Act secondary funds may only be used for students in grades 7-12, and only for new programs or improvement of existing programs. Carl Perkins Act also encourages state and local recipients to ensure that students are engaged in programs related to high-skill, high-wage, or high-demand occupations.

TCSG, in accordance with Section 132(a) of the Perkins Act, distributes post-secondary Perkins funds to eligible institutions within the state by a formula which allocates funding proportionately to the college's percent of the statewide total of Pell grant recipients. No grant provided to any institution under this section shall be for an amount less than \$50,000. Any amount which is not allocated pursuant to Section 132(c) (2) shall be redistributed to eligible institutions in accordance with provisions of this section.

From amounts made available under subsection 112(a)(1), TCSG will allocate up to a 10 percent reserve to each eligible recipient as allowed under Section 112(c)(1) of the legislation. The reserve will be allocated using the percentage of rural areas in the State. Rural areas will be determined by the percent rural population for the college's service area according to 2000 census data.

2. Coordination with Wagner-Peyser – Provide a description of plans and strategies for, and assurances concerning, maximizing coordination of services provided by the state employment service under the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.) and services provided in the local area through the one-stop delivery system, to improve service delivery and avoid duplication of services.

Provision of referrals to and application assistance for training and education programs and resources

The coordination of service delivery is a primary principle of WIOA, which brings together the core programs of Federal investment in skill development. GDOL embraces WIOA's primary goal of service delivery integration to provide a more seamless experience for participants in federal skills development and employment services programs, as indicated below:

- Providing information to GDOL customers on community resources, labor market information, GED®, occupational training, OJT, and support services that make training possible to enhance an individual's ability to return to work;
- As the "front door" to the workforce system, staff from the One-Stop career centers throughout the region identify customers' needs, assist them with UI, employment and reemployment assistance, trade services, automated resources, workshops and referrals to more intensive services such as training, which are provided by WIOA through LWDBs, and other partners.

Employment Service Professional Staff Development

Georgia Department of Labor's local One-Stop Career Centers continuously improve and update staff knowledge through training and partner information sharing. This training may be provided by or supported by the State office resources. This consistent and strategic investment in staff development reflects Georgia's commitment to integrated workforce services. Employment Services staff of GDOL are trained in both employment services and UI programs, enabling customers to receive seamless services geared to facilitate their return to employment.

GDOL Staff is provided with training to equip them with the knowledge to provide high-quality services to both job seekers and businesses. Training is comprised of intensive interviewing techniques, administering career assessments, accessing and interpreting labor market information, customized service strategies for employers and job seekers, identifying the potential need for soft skills and skills gap training, developing workforce partnerships, identifying available supportive services, résumé writing expertise, and counseling to address barriers to employment and to assist with career selection.

Additional staff training is provided in the following areas: strategies for business recruitment events, as well as multiple methodologies to connect qualified job seekers with employers; providing workforce statistics and prevailing industry wages; guidance on employment laws as it

relates to the workplace; UI, Federal Bonding, the Work Opportunity Tax Credit and other workforce services. Staff also has access to customer service training to enhance services to job seekers and businesses.

Other staff development activities include:

- Comprehensive online resources on GDOL's website at www.dol.georgia.gov;
- Job shadowing for new staff at State and local offices;
- Active participation in IAWP; hosting the international conference in 2015;
- Active participation in SETA;
- Departmental leadership training program through EXCEL, offered through the Carl Vinson Institute of Government at the University of Georgia;
- Ongoing assessment of GDOL and partner staff training needs by local GDOL career center managers;
- Participation on LWDBs to keep abreast of information on local, State, and national issues; and
- Regular reviews by the STAR team, delivering on-site extensive technical assistance and staff training during site visits, and identifying training needs based on policy changes, new initiatives, etc.

Career Center Partners

The One-Stop Operator Staff offer training, technical assistance and support to partner staff who serve local job seekers and employers. This ensures that program partners are highly engaged in local and State workforce partnerships providing constant exchange of information on core programs, UI legislation, new workforce training providers, and available programs.

Workforce partners have access to select data elements, such as customer contact information and work history from GDOL. Sharing data between organizations assists staff in providing comprehensive, unduplicated services while eliminating unnecessary trips or contacts for the customer.

Additional Initiatives and Services available in NWGA through WP and Partner Agencies

- Georgia Department of Labor's Business Service Units (BSU) was developed in 2013 to promote economic growth in the region by fostering relationships with employers and potential employers. The BSU in Northwest Georgia works in coordination with the OJT Team to provide customized or specialized recruitment events. The OJT Staff funded by WIOA is now a part of the Business Service Unit and continues to work with WP staff to address job seekers with pre-employment needs such as work readiness skills and overcoming barriers to employment. The OJT staff also provides employers with recruitment, pre-employment services such as occupational assessments and screenings as well as reimbursement of up to 75 percent of training costs.
- WP Services will also be utilizing the NWGA Mobile Learning Unit/Lab to provide ES services at employer closings, recruitment events, and training events. They will be working coordination with the WIOA staff to promote the availability and benefits of the mobile unit and services available.

The Use of WP Funds to Support UI Claimants

Coordination of and provision of labor exchange services for UI claimants are required by the WP Act; Georgia's UI and WP labor exchange systems are each administered by GDOL, and UI staff has access to all ES job referral, case management, employment, and other information as needed. Staffing is funded in accordance with Federal circulars, to the allowable benefiting fund source.

Aside from a limited number of exempt UI recipients, all receive reemployment services, as they are required to register with the State ES. Each GDOL One-Stop center has a resource area that customers can access for their employment needs. All One-Stop partners are available in the resource room either in person or via electronic access. Some of the resources available to all customers include: the Job Information System which includes jobs in Georgia, throughout the Southeast, and across the nation; labor market information, O*Net tools and others; self-directed career exploration and assessment tools; instructional software for typing and résumé development; automated job referral options; training and education resources; financial aid information; online filing of initial UI claims; telephones, fax machines and copiers.

Services routinely provided to ES job seeker customers (including UI claimants) by local centers include:

- Self-service resources such as EG labor exchange services, unemployment claims application, books, videos, and pamphlets;
- Access to computers and job search software;
- Résumé development and typing tutorials;
- Job openings in Georgia, the Southeast, and across the nation;
- Labor market information for career exploration, fields in demand, average salaries, etc.;
- Training and education resources, financial aid options;
- Vocational assessment;
- Automated referral assistance;
- Workshops on a variety of employment-related topics (e.g., effective job search, interviewing, résumé development, coping with job loss, financial management);
- Career expos;
- Job search assistance and job referral;
- Job development;
- Job clubs;
- Individualized assistance for customers with unique needs;
- Assistance for formerly incarcerated individuals;
- Assistance with federal bonding; and
- Referral to partner and community provider services.

WAGNER-PEYSER ASSURANCES

The State of Georgia hereby certifies the following: *Common Assurances:*

1. The Wagner-Peyser Employment Service is co-located with one-stop centers or a plan and timeline has been developed to comply with this requirement within a reasonable amount of time. (sec 121(e)(3));
2. The State agency is complying with the requirements under 20 CFR 653.111 (State agency staffing requirements) if the State has significant MSFW one-stop centers;
3. If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I; and
4. State agency merit-based public employees provide Wagner-Peyser Act-funded labor exchange activities in accordance with Department of Labor regulations.

3. Coordination with Adult Education – Provide a description of how the local board will coordinate workforce development activities carried out in the local area with the provision of adult education and literacy activities under Title II in the local area, including a description of how the local board will carry out the review of local applications submitted under Title II, consistent with subparagraphs (A) and (B)(i) of section 107(d)(11) and section 232 of WIOA.

The local providers of adult education services will coordinate efforts with other WIOA service providers to develop additional (and strengthen existing) career pathway systems for students that specifically align to the regional sector strategies. The State Office of Adult Education (OAE) will implement measures to ensure that local eligible providers are prepared to collaborate with key community partners to provide access to career pathway opportunities that lead to meaningful employment.

Local providers of adult education services will seek opportunities to partner with postsecondary institutions or other training providers to develop career pathways. Career pathways may include, but are not limited to, Ability to Benefit or Accelerating Opportunity. Career pathways will offer a combination of rigorous, high-quality education, training, and supportive services that lead to employment in key industries. A robust career pathway system will enable participants to obtain the requisite credentials, training, and workforce exposure to equip them for sustainable employment. Collaboration may include referral processes, literacy education, workforce training, and other resources.

The State's primary mechanism for creating a job-driven education and training system is through TCSG. TCSG's Office of Adult Education (OAE) will fund local providers of adult education services who will in turn work collaboratively with other core programs and partner agencies to coordinate comprehensive, wraparound services for program participants.

Local providers of adult education services will actively participate in the One-stop program. One-stop centers provide a place for connecting customers with adult education services through intake/orientation, transition resources, referral processes, and other joint mechanisms developed through agency partnerships.

Local Applications for Title II Funds

OAE is responsible for administering funds to eligible providers, and providing program/performance oversight to grantees. OAE will provide funding to eligible local entities for the provision of adult education services through a competitive Request for Application (RFA) process. The RFA is the mechanism through which OAE will identify, assess, and award multi-year grants to eligible providers (an organization that has demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education activities to eligible individuals). Local adult education programs are driven by performance measures that are monitored by OAE.

Eligible local providers will have direct and equitable access to apply and compete for grants. OAE will award funds to local providers for the delivery of adult education services, which are academic instruction and education services below the post-secondary level that increase an individual's ability to:

Those institutions or agencies who wish to become a local provider of adult education services will submit the completed RFA package to the Regional Commission of Northwest Georgia for review and comment prior to submission to OAE.

Local providers of adult education services will further enhance adult education content through the adoption and execution of CCR Standards for Adult Education that were disseminated through the OCTAE. Local providers will be required to adhere to these standards in order to maximize the effectiveness of curricula and instruction, and to prepare students for transition to post-secondary education and/or the workforce. In order to ensure that all instructors are knowledgeable on CCR standards and that they understand how to use them effectively to guide classroom instruction, OAE will provide significant levels of professional development to all instructional staff in currently funded programs and to any future adult education grantees.

- 4. Coordination with Vocational Rehabilitation – Provide a description of the cooperative agreement between the local Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation office and the local board which describes efforts made to enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities and to other individuals, cross-train staff, provide technical assistance, share information, cooperate in communicating with employers and other efforts at cooperation, collaboration and coordination.**

In 2018, Northwest Georgia partnered with Gilmer County Board of Education to to serve 25 high school seniors through the WIOA Youth program. WorkSource Northwest Georgia youth program provided work experience opportunities throughout the school year, as well as mentoring and case management. Basic skills, along with remedial activities for youth aged 16 – 21, were also provided. This includes credit recovery and instruction leading to the acquisition of primary computer or problem-solving skills, reading, writing or speaking English at or below the 8th-grade level or the level necessary to function on a job, in the youth's family or society.

WorkSource Northwest Georgia also provides tutoring, internships and job shadowing, occupational skills training, leadership development, financial literacy, entrepreneurial skills training, career counseling, and support services. Of the 25 students enrolled in the Gilmer High School in- school youth program, 15 were referred by GVRA, and all succeeded in attaining their

goals. Currently, Gilmer County Board of Education does not have a contract with Worksource Northwest Georgia. The Gilmer County Board of Education plans are to submit a youth RFP for the 2021-2022 school year.

During the 2018 school year, GVRA staff assisted the students with the application process for WIOA, assistive technology and other accommodations, as needed. GVRA staff work closely with WIOA staff in assisting students with any barriers that may arise during their program participation. Barriers might include housing, transportation or work clothes - anything that is employment-related.

Cave Spring Center (CSC) became a satellite program of RWS in July 2014. CSC provides an integrated, multi-disciplinary rehabilitation program that operates twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Services include, but are not limited to: daily living skills, self-determination and interpersonal skills, work ethics, employability skills, academic education, health education and recreation and fitness. CSC provides an opportunity for students to develop work skills and gain independence as they prepare for competitive integrated employment. As a part of Northwest Georgia, programs and services at CSC will ultimately align with those offered throughout the region while accounting for the unique abilities and learning needs of CSC's student population, including a significant number who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf/Blind. Some staffs are specially trained and skilled in the use of American Sign Language (ASL), though the campus is equipped to address all types of disabilities. CSC's multi-disciplinary team members include Certified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors, Employment Specialists, Daily Living Skills Instructors, Academic Teachers and Health Services staff. A consulting psychiatrist provides additional support to students on site.

To enhance workforce services to individuals with disabilities, GVRA in Rome has worked closely with WorkSource Northwest Georgia in selecting assistive technology to be installed in the mobile lab. This resource will be used throughout the 15-county area to assist with testing, assessment and job search for WIOA applicants and participants.

In line with input GVRA has received from stakeholders during listening sessions and public hearings, WorkSource Northwest Georgia will participate in ongoing statewide initiatives to:

- Improve communication between GVRA and WIOA staff about opportunities provided by the WDB and other workforce partners
- Enhance collaborative relationships between GVRA and WIOA staff regarding employment potential and abilities of individuals with disabilities. This will also include identifying opportunities through grants and blended funding
- The WDB has established a Promoting Access to Individuals with Disabilities Council Service to Individuals with Disabilities Committee to formulate goals to assist in finding employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. It is included under Committee Structure within this planning document. WorkSource Northwest Georgia will work closely with GVRA Business Division staff to ensure all businesses in the region

are aware of all qualified candidates for job openings, and to ensure that services to businesses are coordinated among partners. The WorkSource partners will develop integrated approaches for regional sector strategies and other employer-related initiatives.

Performance, ETPL and Use of Technology

1. **Description of Performance Measures – Provide a description of the local levels of performance negotiated with the Governor and chief elected official pursuant to WIOA § 116(c), to be used to measure the performance of the local area and to be used by the local board for measuring the performance in the local area of the local fiscal agent (where appropriate), eligible providers under subtitle B, and the one-stop delivery system.**

Performance accountability measures apply across the core programs and assess the effectiveness of States and local areas in achieving positive outcomes for individuals served by those programs. WIOA mandates six performance measures for its core programs. Performance measures are calculated using the following methodology:

Entered Employment Quarter 2 - Measures the percentage of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program. For youth, the measure also includes the percentage of who was in education or training activities during the second quarter after exit.

Entered Employment Quarter 4 - Measures the percentage of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program. For youth, the measure also includes the percentage of who was in education or training activities during the fourth quarter after exit.

Median Earnings Quarter 2 - Measures the median earnings of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program.

Credential Attainment Rate - Measures the percentage of participants who obtained a recognized post-secondary credential or a secondary school diploma, or its recognized equivalent, during participation in or within one year of exit from the program.

In-Program Skill Gains - Measures the percentage of participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized post-secondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains, which are defined as documented academic, technical, occupational, or other forms of progress toward such a credential or employment.

Effectiveness in Serving Employers – Measures the state workforce system’s effectiveness in serving employers by evaluating the employee retention, employee penetration and repeat business customer rates.

One way the State ensures effectiveness of local areas is through yearly performance negotiations. During performance negotiations the WFD data and information team studies

each LWDA's previous year's performance. The data and information team also consults with the programs team to identify considerations that could affect performance in a positive or negative manner. These considerations could include, but are not limited to, the following: the receipt of additional grant funding, commitment to serve "hard-to-serve" populations, an increased number of layoffs in the area, etc. Using this information, the data and information team prepares customized reports for each LWDA. Every year LWDA's are encouraged to show continual improvement, which is reflected in the goals that WFD negotiates. Should LWDA's feel that their final negotiated rates are unattainable, WFD programs staff offer technical assistance with program design and exit strategy.

The state's data and information team also monitors performance year round, and LWDA's are given an opportunity to renegotiate their performance levels if they are under-performing based on special and/or unforeseen considerations. WFD staff will also take a proactive stance, making every effort to intervene early if quarterly performance data suggests that an LWDA is struggling with a measure. This type of support ensures that program design changes can be made in time to rectify issues and ensure final performance measures are met.

WFD utilizes GWROPP to store participant information and to enroll WIOA participants. The system collects information which can be utilized by LWDA case managers and management to provide systems reports on LWDA performance. LWDA's can produce reports on hard-to-serve populations as well as pre-determine performance measure achievement. This self-assessment by LWDA's is encouraged and the GWROPP is used extensively by WFD for performance monitoring.

WIOA performance percentages were negotiated with TCSG.

Performance Measure	WIOA
ADULTS AND DISLOCATED WORKER MEASURES	
Q2 Entered Employment Rate	Employed in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit
Q4 Entered Employment Rate	Employed in unsubsidized employment 4 th quarter after exit
Median Earning	Median earnings in Q2 after exit only
Credential Rate	Percentage of participants who obtain a credential or diploma during or up to 1 year after exit from participation
Measureable Skills Gain	Percentage of participants in education leading to credential or employment during program year, achieving measurable gains.
YOUTH MEASURES	
Q2 Entered Employment Rate	Employed in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit
Q4 Entered Employment Rate	Employed in unsubsidized employment 4 th quarter after exit
Median Earnings	Median earnings in Q2 after exit only
Credential Rate	Percentage of participants who obtain a credential or diploma during or up to 1 year after exit from participation
Measureable Skills Gain	Percentage of participants in education leading to a credential or employment during program year, achieving measurable gains.

Past Performance for Northwest Georgia

The following report shows quarters of performance for Program Year 2018.

Local Area	Area 1	<---- Select LWDA		
Measure	Actual	*Goal	% of Goal	Line
Adult Q2 Employment Rate	84.9%	85.0%	99.9%	
Adult Q4 Employment Rate	85.8%	82.0%	104.6%	
Adult Median Earnings	\$6,401	\$6,300	101.6%	
Adult Credential Attainment	79.5%	77.0%	103.3%	
DW Q2 Employment Rate	89.8%	87.0%	103.2%	
DW Q4 Employment Rate	91.3%	86.0%	106.2%	
DW Median Earnings	\$8,166	\$6,500	125.6%	
DW Credential Attainment	85.9%	78.0%	110.1%	
Youth Q2 Employment Rate	77.1%	76.0%	101.5%	
Youth Q4 Employment Rate	82.2%	76.0%	108.2%	
Youth Credential Attainment	85.4%	81.0%	105.5%	

Overall

Adult	102.3%
DW	111.3%
Youth	105.1%

Source: Technical College
System of Georgia

Above is the available Performance for PY18. Northwest Georgia is meeting all required Performance Measures. Two new Performance Standards, Measureable Skills Gain and Q2 Median Earnings, will be monitored and tracked for reporting.

- 2. One-Stop System Performance and Assessment – Provide a listing of locally/regionally developed one-stop performance standards and describe the criteria used to develop the performance standards. Describe how the one-stop system and regional service delivery is assessed by the local board.**

The one-stop centers are monitored annually by WDB staff to evaluate the level of compliance with the criteria. Evaluations are based on interviews with one-stop managers and extensive data provided about services to customers. Recertification of the one-stops occurs on a biennial schedule, based on the monitoring reviews. All monitoring results and recertification recommendations are reported to the WDB/CCEO for approval. All centers have been certified based upon state/federal guidelines.

Each partner agency is responsible for ensuring that its legislated programs, services, and activities are provided in accordance with its goals, objectives, and performance measures. Each partner agrees to work to support the achievement of the one-stop center/system performance measures, goals, and objectives which include applicable WIOA measures and those additional measures established by the WDB, Consortium and/or the local one-stop center's management team.

The One-Stop Operator, WDB/CCEO and/or their designated staff, and officials from the State/Federal entities have the right to monitor the one-stop system and one-stop center activities to ensure that performance goals are being met; that appropriate procedures, controls, and records are maintained; and that terms and conditions of all Memorandum(s) of Understanding (MOU) and Agreement(s) are being fulfilled.

3. ETPL System – Describe the regional Eligible Training Provider System, including the elements listed below.

a. Provide a description of the public notification to prospective providers.

Prospective eligible providers can learn of our program through our web site, career advisers, local partners, and are encouraged to call our agency for more information on how to apply to be a provider. It is our policy to run an ad in the paper every two years soliciting new providers.

b. Provide a description of how the board(s) evaluates providers and proposed training programs for initial eligibility, based on (at a minimum) criteria of proven effectiveness, local employer/industry demand, accreditation and customer accessibility.

After completing a Georgia ETP Application, our agency looks at past performance information, accreditation of the agency, training credentials, if the training provided is an in-demand/growth occupation, plus all of the information provided by the State on the program/provider application responsiveness checklist. This information is gathered on the Georgia ETP application. After staff reviews the application it is brought before the Proposal Review Committee and their recommendation is brought to the Workforce Development Board (WDB) for final approval. It is then submitted to the State for inclusion on the ETPL.

c. Provide a description of the formal appeals process for aggrieved ITA customers and providers of unapproved training programs.

Aggrieved ITA customers and providers first contact the Worksource Northwest Georgia WDB staff. Every attempt is made for an informal resolution of their concern or alleged grievance. If this is not successful, then the area follows our agency complaint/grievance procedure, which is Included in Attachment 7.

d. Provide a description of the ongoing process used to update the data on the eligible providers list (exclusive of the state-conducted continued eligibility process).

Data is updated on the eligible provider list as providers notify us of any cost increases or changes in the program rate. Changes such as price increases go through the Proposal Review Committee and WDB and are then communicated to the State and updated on the ETPL.

e. Provide a description of any regional policies or agreements for ITAs or training providers.

An Individual Training Account (ITA) is similar to a bank account in that a sum of money is set aside to assist in paying for an individual's training. In Northwest Georgia's 15-county area, the ITA system is managed by the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission. Adults or dislocated workers determined eligible for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funded services may select a provider from the STATE and local approved listing after consultation with a WIOA Career Advisor. If a participant receives career advisement and support services and the program is funded by PELL/HOPE funds, the Individual Training Account (ITA) policies will apply. The following policies may be utilized to establish local parameters for service.

Policies:

- Training must be in occupations identified in the local WIOA Plan as growth and/or demand occupations or documentation of employment prospects for areas not listed in the Plan should be provided.
- Training must result in an employment wage sufficient to attain self-sufficiency without the aid of public assistance.
- Training must be at full-time status (as defined by the institution as specified in the contract with NWGRC). Exceptions to this policy may be approved, in writing, on a case-by-case basis.
- Programs should not exceed 104 weeks (two years). Exceptions to this policy may be approved on a case-by-case basis and requests should include evidence that financial support is available during extended training periods.
- RN, dental hygienist, teachers and radiological technicians, without limitations of funding, may be extended for three years. If necessary, and with approval of staff, the four occupations may be extended beyond the three year limitation.
- In general, all training programs must be within a reasonable commute of the WIOA local area that may include out-of-the-area and out-of-state training institutions. Out-of-the-area and out-of-state training programs that are not

within commuting distance to the local area may be approved on a case-by-case basis. All approved training must be located within the contiguous United States.

- All applicants must apply for the PELL Grant and/or HOPE Grant/Scholarship program, if eligible. All grants must be applied towards tuition and fees prior to the use of WIOA funding. If it is determined through an analysis of cost of attendance that the total cost of attending training exceeds the amount available through HOPE and WIOA funding, NWGRC allows Pell funds to be utilized by the participant for living expenses and other appropriate personal expenses during the training period. [WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(B)]
- WIOA funding may be provided for college level instruction only if all of the following conditions have been met:
 - (a) The customer must be accepted into a certificate, diploma, or degree program, and the course of study must be occupation specific (i.e. Radiologic technician, accounting, teacher certification, etc.);
 - (b) Total course of study will take no longer than 104 weeks (2 years) to complete and will be a certificate, diploma, or degree program;
 - (c) The customer must demonstrate that he/she has the financial resources to attend long-term training;
- Continuing education and other similar courses may be approved if the following conditions apply:
 - (a) The customer must have a specific occupational goal;
 - (b) The customer must present evidence describing how the proposed training will increase their employment marketability.
- ITAs may be utilized for expenses related to training, including, but not limited to, the following: books, tuition and fees, supplies, uniforms and shoes, certification, licensing, testing fees, drug testing for entrance into training, medical requirements for training entrance, etc.
- Customers accepted on a provisional basis may receive assistance on a case-by-case basis.
- ITAs will not be used for payment of late fees caused by customer error or delay. The customer will be responsible for these fees, as he/she is responsible for other fines or penalties.

- Each local Workforce Development Board will determine funding limitations. A guide to training limitations follows:
 - (a) Up to \$6,500 in training costs, excluding support, may be expended for each participant for the first year of training;
 - (b) For training that extends beyond one year, total training costs may not exceed \$10,400, excluding support.

If the cost of training exceeds funds limitation guidelines, career advisers should assist in developing a financial plan to cover total costs of training. Customers shall not be required to apply for or access student loans, or incur personal debt as a condition of participation.

f. Provide a description of the process to track and manage all ITA activity.

ITAs and enrollments are tracked through the State GEO Solutions system and Tracksource. Data is entered by the customer's career adviser. Reports are generated and used to follow performance.

g. Provide a description of local board policy on use of statewide eligible training provider list (including financial and duration limits, out-of-area training, service to out-of-area customers, etc.).

Local Board policy limits tuition and other costs, excluding support, to \$6,500 for one-year training or up to \$10,400 for two-year training. We have had training agreements with a few providers out of our 15-county areas if they are within a reasonable distance of our service area and are on the State EPL. Service to out-of-area customers is limited to Dislocated Workers who were laid off within our region.

h. Provide a description of how registered apprenticeship programs are added to the ETPL.

Registered apprenticeships have been approved by the United States Department of Labor (USDOL). They are deemed automatically eligible to be placed on the state's ETP list if they request to do so. They are not subject to the same initial application and performance information as regular ITAs as they are subject to a detailed application and vetting process with the USDOL. We will still send them a Training Provider Agreement to work with us and notify the state that they wish to be placed on the EPTL. Non-apprenticeships that ETP must follow local procedures.

We will continue to work with the State on how to eliminate the complexity and intimidation that is often associated with the Registered Apprenticeship program.

4. Implementation of Technology – Provide a description of the technology used to enhance customer (participant and business) experience and any additional data analytics used to enhance planning and measure outcomes beyond mandated performance measures.

WorkSource Northwest Georgia recognizes the challenges that come with limited resources, conservative budgeting to maximizing taxpayer value and is implementing effective changes and leveraging technology to best utilize resources. Meetings have been more effectively centralized and, whenever possible, multiple committees have been combined in to one meeting as well as expanding the use of technology for these meetings to make them more efficient.

Other technologies, such as tele- and video-conferencing, that will increase productivity, are also being used for applicable application to conducting meetings.

WorkSource Northwest Georgia is taking proactive steps in continually reviewing work processes and procedures to identify opportunities and solutions and how the use of technology can improve productivity and establish guidelines for best practices. Of particular note, with the implementation of participant file information being electronically scanned in to the management database, staff was able to effectively and efficiently and very successfully perform virtual eligibility and data validation monitoring, through the use of this digital information technology and use of electronic communication, without leaving the office thereby not expending any additional costs associated with the scheduling, rescheduling or physical travel to the contractor's worksite. With this virtual process being so very successfully managed in-house, other data monitoring processes will be reviewed to determine suitability for virtual monitoring.

On-going training of the data management system capabilities is being done, with emphasis on using the pre-written management reports to effectively manage performance markers.

The Career Depot website underwent a complete technological advancement and redesign to accommodate and be in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The website was modified to make the information about WIOA services as accessible as possible to Americans with a range of disabilities (sight, hearing). The Career Depot website was also enhanced to ensure the website was not only accessible to individuals with disabilities, but to all web users, including those with highly limited devices. Efforts are ongoing to ensure the website pages conform to ADA requirements.

Other areas of technology to increase productivity and manage expenses within the agency are being researched for relevance, user-friendliness and implementation are:

- Use of digitally signed, fillable PDF applications and required documentation forms for eligibility
- Electronic signatures for individualized employment plans.

- Use of video conferencing to conduct applicant interviews/testing for individuals who live in rural areas and/or who have transportation issues, which will allow these individuals access to services.
- Expanded use of video conferencing technologies, such as Zoom and Goto Meeting, to conduct virtual meetings.

WorkSource Northwest Georgia recognizes the importance of the use of technology to enhance customer experience. Staff uses a variety of tools (webinars, on-site training, video conferencing, seminars, workshops, etc.) to ensure training partners and providers are adequately equipped to foster continued improvement and maintain an ability to meet performance outcomes beyond mandated performance measures.

Following those lines, WorkSource Northwest Georgia uses a data collection/management system provided by the Georgia Department of Labor (GeoSolutions) to track participant's services, attainment of credentials and financial information. In addition, the region has purchased TrackSource, software used to track participant expenses to ensure participants do not exceed their maximum financial expenditures allowed and to reconcile the information to the data collection system.

WorkSource Northwest Georgia also uses a labor market information (LMI) website called the Georgia Market Explorer. This website is maintained by the Georgia Department of Labor, Workforce Statistics and Economic Research. This information is used to track state and local unemployment information. This information is then communicated to the WDB and service contractors.

With current economic conditions on the rise, WorkSource Northwest Georgia staff continues to help customers identify in-demand jobs. WIOA has added the requirement to promote an alignment of workforce development programs with regional economic development strategies, to meet the needs of local and regional employers. To achieve this alignment, WorkSource Northwest Georgia is researching other LMI products to ensure individuals attain proper skills for in-demand occupations. Access to LMI is critical in analyzing the dynamic regional and sector-focused labor markets to align educational/training systems with the public workforce system. LMI systems analyze demographics (population, education attainment), industry, occupation, wage information (growing or declining occupations, staffing patterns, wages) and skill/certification requirements by occupation and career exploration. The LMI portal will not only be used to provide economic information but also provide real-time job postings (current and historical trends) and matching job seekers with existing job experience, skills, certifications and competencies to other potential occupations and careers.

WorkSource Northwest Georgia's vision of a LMI portal is to actualize an opportunity to expand the scope of WIOA services to the WDB, individuals, businesses and community colleges. Never before has the link between training/education and job prospects been more important. NWGRC's goal is to provide career counseling and thereby close the job information gap by

giving job seekers access to information needed to become employed. A LMI tool would allow WIOA to identify top employers and top occupations (via easy-to-understand illustrated graphs and charts), to communicate what occupations are available to be filled by trained and skilled applicants. For WIOA staff to be able to offer this type of labor market information and assistance, a LMI system would prove invaluable.

The goal of a more in depth LMI is to:

- Utilize labor market and educational data and technology, in coordination with local data, to inform and guide strategic workforce development decisions.
- Increase the value of the workforce system as a tool for employers by emphasizing business services.
- Increase the participation and utilization of the workforce system by both employers and individuals.
- Serve as the convener of economic development stakeholders in order to connect individuals, educational systems, and employers, thereby helping create a sustainable, skilled workforce.

In early 2016, the WDB purchased a 13-station, state-of-the-art, fully accessible, computer lab (equipped with Microsoft Office and assessment software). The unit offers a full array of services. Internet connection is via satellite. Printer, scanner, and copy services are available on the unit. A fully accessible ADA workstation and auxiliary equipment is available adjacent to the Wheelchair Lift.

The Mobile Career Resource Center provides workforce solutions for businesses and individuals. Businesses may use the mobile unit for recruiting, pre-employment screening, interviewing and training. Individuals will be served through various job search/career development activities such as on-line job search, resume and cover letter development, on-line tutorials and individual assessments and exploration of training eligibility and options.

Also, there have been technological advances in promoting WIOA services through an outreach program. With the use of technology, brochures were developed, as a way to communicate what WIOA training and/or job services are available in our region.

Worksource Northwest Georgia is, and will continue to be, very proactive in researching and using new technologies to support WIOA initiatives and to provide information to the WDB, contractors and business partners. The mission of this advancement is to assist in providing our region with resources to enable local participants and/or employer to establish effective strategies for job development, job search, hiring, assessment, and information on the local labor market, services offered, and providers of services.

State Initiatives and Vision

1. **State Branding – Provide a description for how the area has adopted and will continue to utilize the state brand.**

In order to achieve a coordinated and unified identity across the one-stop system, the LWDA incorporated the state's branding standards into all signage, print and media materials used for training, marketing, and communication purposes. The LWDA marketing campaign was coordinated with the WFD branding roll-out, using consistent logo, colors, and message to create awareness of, and provide information about the services provided and funded by WorkSource Northwest Georgia and WIOA.

2. **Priority of Service – Describe how the area/region will identify and administer the state's priority of service policy. Identify if the region will add target populations in addition to those specified by state and federal policy.**

All persons will be identified at the point of entry to WIOA programs and/or services so they can take advantage of priority of service. The points of entry include WorkSource Northwest Georgia locations, One-Stop Career Center(s), websites and other virtual service delivery resources. All persons will be made aware of their entitlement to priority of service, the full array of programs and services available to them, and any applicable eligibility requirements for those programs and/or services.

Worksource Northwest Georgia established a priority of services policy whereby veterans are given priority for services. Veterans and eligible spouses, who are also recipients of public assistance, are low income individuals, or who are basic skills deficient receive the highest priority. Since military earnings are not included as income for veterans or transitioning service members, they will receive every consideration to receive priority and be enrolled in services in local programs if they meet other entrance requirements. The Operation: Workforce initiative, however, assures that they are able to use existing skills to transition to civilian jobs and careers and that they are knowledgeable of all options available to them across the State—not just in Northwest Georgia. (See *Priority of Service Policy; Attachment 11*).

3. **Alignment with State Goals – Describe how the area/region will align with each of the goals listed in the State Unified Plan.**

- a. **Utilize sector partnerships to inform and guide strategic workforce development strategies and enhance partnership coordination**

The Northwest Georgia Sector Partnership will continue to inform and guide strategic workforce activities to develop an integrated approach to the area's impact on advance manufacturing in career pathways and industry-recognized credentials. The Partnership is comprised of key workforce development representative, and community -based

organizations, business and industry, education institutions and training providers throughout the region. The sector partnership is a strategic tool for improving regional collaboration and integration. The initiative will bring together workforce development entities to focus on meeting the talent needs of employers in Northwest Georgia manufacturing sector. The strategic direction for the partnership is to coordinate and align curriculum with industry-recognized credentials. The partnership evaluates existing industry credentials that develop career pathways, short-term and long term training to meet the skills gap industry employers' needs.

b. Further develop regional integration to ensure streamlined services to both businesses and individuals

Worksource Northwest Georgia's goal for the region is to create a comprehensive system where, regardless of how a customer accesses the system, they will be provided with seamless, integrated, and consistent services. Worksource Northwest Georgia continues to work with its contractors and sector partners to streamline their intake and eligibility procedures and work toward a uniform process across the region. Staff will continue to have followed up meetings with contractors and stakeholders, gather input during public meetings, and reflect on ways coordinate services that best meet the needs of the region.

WorkSource Northwest Georgia maintains One-Stop Career Resource Centers that serve Bartow, Catoosa, Chattooga, Dade, Fannin, Floyd, Gilmer, Gordon, Haralson, Murray, Paulding, Pickens, Polk, Walker, and Whitfield counties. Professionals at these centers assist job-seekers with career assessment testing, job readiness training in areas such as effective communication and problem solving, job search training assistance and help locating approved training and education providers and registering for programs. WorkSource Northwest Georgia also provides a range of services for businesses seeking a skilled workforce, including training and skills development for new and existing employees, assistance with employee recruitment and data tools that provide insight into labor market trends.

c. Utilize the workforce system to increase statewide prosperity for rural and urban communities

Worksource Northwest Georgia aims to increase the opportunities the workforce system provides, both to individuals and businesses and across rural and metro areas. As noted in the State's goals, Worksource Northwest Georgia's coordination between the Workforce Development Board, Sector Partnerships, Rapid Response, and Registered Apprenticeships to further enhanced Northwest Georgia as a destination for business. Northwest Georgia is a predominately rural region; however, the northern counties are part of the Chattanooga MSA and the southern counties are within parts of the Atlanta metropolitan area. These counties, and those located along the I-75

corridor, continue to experience elevated population growth relative to other counties in the region, which is expected to continue in the near future.

In conjunction with the efforts mentioned above, Worksource Northwest Georgia has utilized three programs that increase statewide prosperity for rural and urban communities. First, the Incumbent Worker Training Program is designed to provide funding assistance to qualifying Georgia for-profit businesses to provide skills training to full-time, permanent company workers. Second, the On the Job Training (OJT) program allows individuals to learn job skills on-the-job while allowing employers to train new qualifying employees for specific job duties required by that employer. The training allows employers to teach new qualified employees the skills necessary to perform a job adequately while reimbursing them for the loss of productivity during the training period. Last, the Rapid Response program is a proactive tool that offers workforce services to employers throughout the business lifecycle, in addition to during layoffs and other large events. Rapid Response leverages the relationships and knowledge of the local workforce board to help provide services to employers and workers. This integrated approach allows Worksource Northwest Georgia to not only assist with mass layoffs and employment needs but to assist local employers as they seek to identify key next steps. Throughout this process, key stakeholders communicate regularly with UI and TAA to help ensure the full range of services are available to both employers and employees.

d. **Align the workforce system with education systems at all levels.**

Worksource Northwest Georgia has always had a long-term commitment to creating continuous pathways for students from primary and secondary education, through college and/or training, into successful careers regardless of zip code. This work will include: increasing the level of communication and collaboration between educational learning programs in the region, improving the early exposure students have to industry and career options, analyzing local policies to ensure they properly foster this work, as well as other efforts. To ensure the agencies engaged in this work can work together to address this goal, and in compliance with WIOA requirements, Worksource Northwest Georgia has representation on the Local Workforce Development Boards, respectively. In addition, through the local workforce board working committees Worksource Northwest Georgia offers short-term and long-term training programs through the sector partnerships throughout the 15 counties region. Furthermore, Worksource Northwest Georgia is currently partnering with the Georgia Department of Corrections and Georgia Northwestern Technical College to develop a pilot welding training program. The Floyd Prison Training Project will be a re-entry intervention program that focuses on incarcerated individuals returning to Floyd, Chattooga, Polk, Haralson,

Bartow, and Gordon counties. The goal is to transform lives where essential life skills and vocational training obtained will lead to gainful employment.

e. Alleviate a tightened labor market by increasing the participation of strategic populations in the workforce system.

WorkSource Northwest Georgia understands that in order to reach citizens in the regions, efforts must focus on improving communication between all partner agencies servicing jobseekers. This can be accomplished by developing programs focus on enhancing and promoting resources and support services to youth, individuals with disabilities, returning citizens, veterans and transitioning service members. A priority of WorkSource Northwest Georgia is to serve strategic populations with barriers to employment and increase their access to the workforce system. Workforce Development will work to increase public awareness and to remove any barriers that may hinder individuals from seeking these services.

In addition to assisting strategic population with career services, Northwest Georgia will work to promote increase access points for training and employment assistance in rural and remote areas. This will enhance the workforce ability to serve individuals in rural counties that has limited access to services. A number of resources available to accomplish this include utilizing the Mobile Career Center which has twelve computer stations, satellite and internet access, and is accessible to individuals with disabilities. Also, public libraries and local technical colleges are excellent resources. The goal is to remove all barriers that negatively impact individuals within these strategic populations.

Strategies	Aligned Goals	Activities
Growing the capacity, usefulness and functionality of the sector partnership iWORKS NWGA portal to align career pathways (education, training) with industry-recognized credentials and industry placement.	Sector Partnership (1) Regional Integration (2) Education Alignment (4)	Continue to upgrade pathways development on the iWORKS Portal, with access point for entrance, exit credential and industry placement.
Worksource Northwest Georgia will support local programs in developing strong and strategic relationships with one-stop partners.	Sector Partnerships (1) Regional Integration (2)	Continue to update One-stop MOUs; and invite sector partners to participate in LWDB meetings.
Expand opportunities to individuals and to businesses to utilized IWT, OJT, and Rapid Response.	Sector Partnership (1) Regional Integration (2) Increase Prosperity (3)	Business service staff will continue to make referrals to employers about IWT, OJT, and Rapid Response.
Offering and expanding more short-term, long-term, and continuing education classes.	Increase Prosperity (3) Education Alignment (4)	Connect with the educational sector's plans on new and innovative programs. Continue to be involved with DOC, Adult Education, and GNTC.
Enhance career services & training services to individuals with barriers to employment that live in remotely rural locations in Northwest Georgia.	Sector Partnerships (1) Increase Prosperity (3) Education Alignment (4) Tighten labor force (5)	MCC can remotely promote access points for career services to strategic population in rural and remote areas.

Attachments

Attachment 1: Local Workforce Development Board Member Listing

MEMBER NAME	TITLE	ENTITY	BOARD CATEGORY
Lisa Adkisson	Regional Coordinator	Georgia Department of Labor	Wagner-Peyser Representative
Bruce Bowman	Vice President	Fox Systems, Inc.	Business Representative
Illya Copeland	Executive Director	Murray County Industrial Dev. Authority	Economic Development
Nicole Green	HR Representative	Meggitt Polymers and Composites	Business Representative
Paige Green	President & CEO	Gilmer County Chamber of Commerce	Business Representative
Michael Hamilton	Business Manager	Millwright Local 1263	Labor Representative
Jim Henry	President	Customer Precision Components	Business Representative
Scott Jackson	Unit Manager	Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency	Vocational Rehabilitation
Beth Kelley	Owner	KBruce Farms, Inc.	Business Representative
Randy Long	Plant Manager	Pilgrim's	Business Representative
Linda McEntire	Director, Technical Training	Mohawk Industries	Business Representative
Mitchell Morgan	Chairman	United Community Bank Board	Business Representative
Mike Murphy	COO	McWhorter Capital	Business Representative
Anthony Nash	Director of Training & Safety	IUOE 926	Apprenticeship
Cam Parker	Area Manager	Georgia Power	Business Representative
John Parton	VP Institutional Effectiveness	West Georgia Technical College	Higher Education Representative
April Rogers	Community Services Director	Tallatoona CAP, Inc.	Community-Based Organizations
Lisa Shaw	Georgia Northwestern Technical College	Vice President, Adult Services	YSA/Adult Education
Larry Stansell	Mayor	Town of Trion	CCEO
Lee Tubbs	President	Enviroguard, Inc.	Business Representative
Carey Tucker	Marketing Representative	Plumbers, Pipefitters, and HVACR Technicians, Local 72	Labor Representative

Attachment 2: Local Negotiated Performance

WIOA Performance Measure	PY20 Goal	PY21 Goal
Adult Q2 Entered Employment	86%	86%
Adult Q4 Entered Employment	82.5%	82.5%
Adult Median Earnings	\$6,300	\$6,400
Adult Credential Rate	78%	78%
Adult In-Program Skills Gain		
DW Q2 Entered Employment	88%	88%
DW Q4 Entered Employment	87%	87%
DW Median Earnings	\$6,600	\$6,600
DW Credential Rate	78%	78%
DW In-Program Skills Gain		
Youth Q2 Placement in Employment or Education	77%	77%
Youth Q4 Placement in Employment or Education	77%	77%
Youth Median Earnings		
Youth Credential Rate	80%	80%
Youth In-Program Skills Gain		
Employer Measure		

* At this time we haven't negotiated PY 20 and PY 21 Performance Measures

Attachment 3: Comments that Express Disagreement

Comment 1
Originating Entity:
Comment:

Comment 2
Originating Entity:
Comment:

Comment 3
Originating Entity:
Comment:

Comment 4
Originating Entity:
Comment:

Attachment 4: Signature Page

The undersigned hereby agree to adhere to all applicable federal, State, and local laws, regulations, and policies in performing any duty associated with the funds made available to under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

Name: _____

Title: Local Workforce Area Director

Entity Representing: _____

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Title: Chief Local Elected Official

Entity Representing: _____

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Title: Local Workforce Development Board Chair

Entity Representing: _____

Signature: _____

Attachment 5: Demand Occupations

2017 Projections Northwest Georgia Most Projected Job Growth Occupations	Career Curriculum
11-0000 Management and Supervisory	11-1011 General Manager, Top Executive 11-1021 Team Manager 11-2021 Marketing/Sales Supervisor 11-3021 Computer Information Systems (CIS) Manager 11-9021 Construction Technology (Manager) 11-9013 Horticulture (Manager)
13-0000 Business and Financial Operations	13-1031 Insurance Claims Adjuster, Property and Casualty Agent 13-1071 Personnel Recruiter 13-1151 Industrial Trainer 13-2011 Accountant 13-2082 Tax Specialist
15-0000 Computer and Mathematical	15-1121 Systems Analyst 15-1131 Computer Programmer/Aide 15-1133 Certified Novell Engineer 15-1133 MS Certified Systems Engineer 15-1134 Certified Internet Webmaster/Web Designer 15-1143 Networking NT/Telecommunications 15-1151 Computer Support Specialist 15-1152 Computer Network Support Specialist 15-1199 Information/Office Technology; Project Mgmt PMP Test Prep/Technology Mgmt
17-0000 Architecture and Engineering	17-2061 Computer Engineer 17-2111 Fire Science Technology 17-3011 CAD Operator and Technician 17-3019 Drafter 17-3029 Nondestructive Testing Technician 17-3029 Certified Manufacturing Specialist 17-3029 Six Sigma Certification, Mfg. Prod. Technician
19-0000 Life, Physical and Social Science	19-1032 Forestry 19-4091 Environmental Safety Specialist
21-0000 Community and Social Services	21-1093 Public Worker Civil Tech/Human Service Worker
23-2011 Legal	23-2011 Paralegal
25-0000 Education, Training and Library	25-1081 Education 25-1194 Vocational Education Teacher/Instructor 25-2011 Preschool Teacher 25-2031 Teacher 25-2054 Special Education Teacher 25-9041 Parapro Teacher's Aide/Assistant
27-0000 Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports and Media	27-0000 Film Industry (added 9/20/17) 27-1024 Computer Graphics Tech 27-2022 Instructor and Coach Sports 27-3022 Journalist 27-3091 Interpreter

	29-1122 Occupational Therapist 29-1123 Physical Therapist 29-1126 Respiratory Therapist 29-1141 Registered Nurse (RN) 29-1071 Physician Assistant 29-2012 Medical and Clinical Lab Tech 29-2031 Cardiovascular Tech 29-2032 Echocardiography 29-2034 Radiological Tech 29-2041 Emergency Medical Tech 29-2052 Pharmacy Tech 29-2055 Surgical Tech 29-2061 Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) 29-2071 Health Records Management 29-2071 Medical Records Tech 29-2099 X-ray Tech 29-9011 Occupational Safety Specialist
29-0000 Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	
31-0000 Healthcare Support	31-1011 Home Health Aide 31-1014 Patient Care Technician 31-1015 Nursing Aide/Orderly 31-2021 Physical Therapy Assistant 31-9011 Neuromuscular Therapy/Massage Tech 31-9091 Dental Assistant/Dental Hygienist 31-9092 Medical Assistant/Medical Office Worker 31-9094 Transcriptionist 31-9097 Phlebotomy Tech
33-0000 Protective Service	33-2011 Forestry and Fire Tech 33-3012 Correction Officer 33-3051 Law Enforcement Officer
35-0000 Food Preparation and Serving Related	35-1011 Culinary Arts 35-2021 Food Prep Worker 35-3021 Combination Food Prep/Service Worker
37-0000 Building /Grounds Cleaning/Maintenance	37-3011 Laborer, Landscaper/Groundskeeper
39-0000 Personal Care and Service	39-9011 Childcare Worker 39-9021 Health Care Assistant
41-0000 Sales and Related	41-2031 Retail Salesperson 41-3021 Insurance: Life, Accident, Sickness Agent 41-4011 Sales Rep, Executive Retail
43-0000 Office and Admin Support	43-1011 Clerical Supervisor 43-3011 Bill/Account Collectors 43-3021 Accounting Clerk/Assistant/Medical Billing/Insurance Specialist/Medical Coding 43-3031 AR Clerk/Bookkeeper 43-4051 Customer Service Rep 43-4171 Reception/Information Clerk 43-6012 Legal Secretary 43-6013 Medical Secretary 43-6014 Adm Asst/Business Office Technology

47-0000 Construction and Extraction	47-2021 Brick mason 47-2031 Carpenter 47-2041 Carpet Installer 47-2044 Hard Tile Setter 47-2073 Heavy Equipment Operator 47-2081 Drywall Installer 47-2121 Glazier 47-2142 Painter and Paperhanger 47-2152 Plumber, Pipefitter, Steamfitter 47-2161 Plasterer, Stucco Mason 47-2181 Roofer
49-0000 Installation, Maintenance, Repair	49-2011 Computer Repair Tech, Data Processing Equip Repair 49-2022 Telecommunications 49-2093 Electronic Technician 49-2094 Industrial Electronics 49-3011 Aviation Tech 49-3021 Automotive Structural Repairer 49-3023 Automotive Mechanic 49-3053 Small Engine Repair 49-9021 Heating/AC Tech 49-9041 Industrial Machinery Mechanic/Industrial Maintenance Tech 49-9052 Fiber Optics Line Installer/Repairer, Lineman 49-9062 Biomedical Instrumentation Specialist 49-9071 Maintenance Repairer General Utility 49-9098 Mechanic/Repairer Helper
51-0000 Production	51-1011 Production Tech 51-3022 Meat, Poultry, Fish Cutter 51-4041 Machine Tool Tech/Machinist 51-4121 Welder and Cutter 51-5112 Print Graphics Tech 51-6031 Sewing Machine Operator* (Approved by WIB. Added 1/21/15) 51-6064 Machinery Mech/Textile Mach Oper/Tendor Textile Carpet Industry 51-9081 Dental Laboratory Technician 51-9199 Production Workers All Others
53-0000 Transportation, Equipment Mfg	53-3032 Truck Driver, Heavy 53-3033 Delivery/Route Truck Driver 53-4031 Freight Conductor 53-6051 Automotive Automatic Transmission/Transaxle Tech 53-7051 Industrial, Large Truck and Tractor Driver/Operator 53-7064 Hand Packers/Packager

*51-6031 Sewing Machine Operator - Limited to carpet industry only, \$10.50 minimum base wage, maximum 8 weeks training.

Attachment 6: _Procurement Policy

A. REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) PROCESS FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS OR VENDORS

1. The WDB/CCEO Agreement assigns the procurement process to the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission (NWGRC).
2. A Bidders' List will be maintained to be used in acquiring goods and services and will to the degree possible identify enough sources to ensure fair and open competition.
3. The procurement rules contained herein do not apply to pass through monies from any unit of state or local government (or Service Delivery Region [SDR] administrative entities) to other such units. To qualify as a pass through, the receiving entity must pass the funds to another such entity which will then procure services in accordance with these procedures.
4. At least once every two years, all organizations on the Bidders' List will receive letters by mail inquiring if they wish to remain on the Bidders' List and a return checklist to indicate the services/training areas in which they wish to be notified when RFP's are issued. The check list also requests, for administrative purposes only, information regarding small and minority/female owned business, community based organizations and/or educational agency status for service provider applications.
5. All potential service providers and/or vendors representing small, minority, and women's businesses (SMW), known labor surplus area suppliers, community- based organizations and/or educational status will be identified on the Bidder's List in regard to this status.
6. In the competitive procurement process, notice of the RFP and the Bidders' Conference will be advertised in all legal newspaper organs of the counties and the Atlanta and Chattanooga papers.
7. The Workforce Development Director is authorized to issue solicitations for proposals for service provider/vendor and to establish funding parameters or ranges within such solicitations. Individual staff members may compile the request for proposal documents. Each RFP document will contain responsiveness criteria and the minimum competitive score and meet any requirements specified by Technical College System of Georgia, Office of Workforce Development policies and procedures.
8. Announcements of RFP's and RFP Amendments will be mailed to appropriate agencies and organizations as indicated on the Bidders' List. RFP's and RFP Amendments will be mailed to those requesting RFP's in writing or the RFP's may be picked up at the NWGRC office. In the event a request for an RFP is received near the submission deadline, the Workforce Development Director may instruct the Workforce Development Administrative Assistant to send the proposal by overnight express. RFP's and RFP Amendments may be provided online or by hard copy.
9. Those desiring to pick up the RFP at NWGRC will sign a statement in receipt of the RFP. The Workforce Development Administrative Assistant is responsible for maintaining this log.
10. Appropriate Educational and known Community-Based Organizations will be maintained on the Bidders' List and will receive routinely notice of all training service solicitations.

They will receive RFP's in the areas that they have previously indicated interests unless they specifically request in writing or pick up additional RFP's in response to the notification of solicitations or request that the documents not be mailed to them.

11. The term "community-based" organizations means private non-profit organizations which are representative of communities or significant segments of communities and which provide job training services, for example: literacy organizations, agencies or organizations serving older individuals, organizations that provide service opportunities, youth corps programs, organizations operating career intern programs, neighborhood groups and organizations, community action agencies, community development corporations, vocational rehabilitation organizations, rehabilitation facilities, agencies serving youth, agencies serving individuals with disabilities and disabled veterans, agencies serving displaced homemakers, union-related organizations, and employer-related nonprofit organizations, and organizations serving non-reservation Indians, as well as tribal government and Native Alaskan groups. "Educational organizations" include the public schools, the vocational technical institutes, and the colleges which must be located within the area.
12. Technical assistance regarding the RFP will be provided only at the Bidders' Conference unless an error in notification is made by NWGRC. If so, questions may be submitted in writing to the staff for consideration and responses mailed to all to whom the solicitation (RFP) has been distributed; or an additional Bidders' Conference may be scheduled. All other inquiries during the RFP process are prohibited. Comments regarding any errors in the RFP are welcomed and will be recorded in order to issue corrections if necessary. Additionally, an opportunity to submit questions by email or in written format by a particular date may be provided due to the complexity of the RFP. These questions will be addressed together with the questions from the Bidder's Conference, if applicable.
13. A copy of each question/answer at the Bidders' Conference (and any other questions as qualified in Number 12 preceding) will be maintained. This will be available to any person requesting it and it will be posted online at www.careerdepot.org.
14. Proposals will be stamped and logged in as to date and time of receipt by the Workforce Development Administrative Assistant or the receptionist.
15. Should proposals be received and only one (or no) responsive proposals are received in a category, the non-responsive bidders may be notified of a failed competition and offered an opportunity to re-submit. The opportunity to re-submit will not be re-publicized in the newspapers. Or, if appropriate, non-competitive negotiation with the one responsive offeror may occur.
16. The proposal responsiveness checklist will be utilized to determine responsive proposals. Those deemed non-responsive will not be considered for funding. Offerors submitting bids which are judged to be non-responsive will be notified with the reason(s) for non-responsiveness identified.
17. No proposal will be considered to be responsive if it is received after the date and time specified (unless staff error was the cause). Faxed RFP's will not be considered responsive. The correct number of copies of the proposal (one with original signature) and the correct number of completed proposals must be submitted in order to be considered responsive.
18. The Workforce Development Director will assign Workforce Development staff

members to the RFP's considered to be "responsive" for their evaluation of proposals. At least two (2) staff members will review each RFP and evaluate the information contained in the proposal utilizing the evaluation criteria presented in the RFP. Staff members reviewing the proposals will not possess conflicts of interests (as specified in the Code of Conduct) which would prevent fair and impartial review. Each scorer's scores should be given by the rater independently and consistently, based upon the individual's best judgement.

19. Pertinent performance data will be provided to each of those rating the proposals to facilitate the evaluation of proposals. For training services, evaluators will be given performance data consistent with the performance standards negotiated with Technical College System of Georgia, Office of Workforce Development and/or pertinent to the type of contract (Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, etc.). Other information/instructions will be provided as needed to facilitate the evaluation process, including allocability, appropriateness, and necessity.
20. An average of the scores will be presented to the Proposal Review Committee or Youth Committee along with a summary of each proposal. Results of proposals for Youth Services will first be presented to the Youth Committee for their review and recommendation to the WDB. Adult and Dislocated Worker recommendations will be made to the Proposal Review Committee for funding. The Proposal Review or Youth Committee, respectively, will then select those to be recommended for funding to the Workforce Development Board (WDB). The Youth Committee and/or Proposal Review Committee may request additional information and/or request staff to obtain additional information from the offeror. Additionally, the Youth Committee or the Proposal Review Committee may request a "best and final offer" prior to the final award of the contract.
21. Only competitive proposals will be considered for funding. If the proposals are evenly rated and one of these proposals has been submitted by a community-based organization (CBO) or educational agency, the tie breaker may go to the CBO or educational agency if the organization passes the performance test.
22. Scores on the evaluation form are not the only criteria for funding. For example, a proposal with a lesser score may be selected for funding if it serves a geographic area or target group needing additional services. This applies also to those on the contingency list. The evaluation criteria then serve primarily to determine the competitiveness of the proposals and lesser scored proposals may be awarded over other higher ranked proposals if other factors necessitate.
23. The WDB will approve proposals for funding prior to the execution of contracts with service providers/vendors. A review of the ability of the training service offeror to achieve competency standards for participants with deficiencies will be part of the evaluation for competitiveness for training service offerors. Any new contractor must have a favorable rating on the technical performance and business capabilities as specified in the RFP prior to the execution of the contract. These capabilities include proposed facilities and equipment of the service provider, qualifications and experience of staff, required financial capability, systems and procedures for reporting and record keeping and adequate financial management systems. Current service providers need only the absence of any noted significant deficiencies in monitoring reports from the preceding program year to document technical performance. A re-evaluation of financial capability, however, must occur for all contracts. The award letter should state this condition for funding.

24. The CCEO will concur with the selection of service providers. Additionally, NWGRC must approve all contracts.
25. NWGRC Procurement Procedures are designed to promote fair and open competition. Specifically the system will assure:
 - a. That it will prohibit noncompetitive pricing practices between firms, organizations or affiliated companies or organizations; and
 - b. That it will prohibit noncompetitive awards to consultants who are on a retainer contract.
26. The Conflict of Interest and Code of Conduct Policy will be adhered to in procurement and the award of contracts process. This is found in Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. R. 159.21-06.
27. Priority for funding will be:
 - a. Those approved by the WDB in the initial review will be funded.
 - b. Those placed on the contingency list may be considered at later dates and may be funded contingent upon the availability of funds and the current training or other needs of the SDR.
 - c. The "Contingency List" shall list all backup proposals by category of training, geographical area proposed, and population to be served. The Contingency List for vendors shall list the services/goods, price and critical capabilities, if applicable. Only responsive and competitive proposals will be placed on the Contingency List. Priority for award of a contract among bidders listed on the List shall be on the basis of ranking within the areas in which the bid was made unless:
 - (1) The offeror declines the award;
 - (2) The offeror cannot serve the geographical area and/or the population for which the SDR has determined an additional need exists; or
 - (3) The training proposed duplicates existing services and the training is not considered more effective than the existing services.

In the above instances, proposals with lower scores may be awarded contracts over proposals with higher scores.

28. Notification of the outcome of the solicitation process will be provided to both successful and unsuccessful bidders within a reasonable period of time as specified in the solicitation. Competitive bidders not awarded a contract may be notified that they have been placed on a contingency list and how that list will be used.
29. Contractors will be selected competitively utilizing the most economical process to acquire goods and/or services under the following conditions plus any others specified within these procedures:
 - a. Effectiveness in delivering comparable or related services based on demonstrated performance capability, in terms of the likelihood of meeting performance goals, cost, quality of training, and characteristics of participants reflected in the solicitation.
 - b. Consideration will be given to community-based organizations as service

providers.

- c. Funds will not be used to duplicate services unless alternatives would be more effective or more likely to achieve the SDR's performance goals.
 - d. Education agencies in the SDR shall be provided the opportunity to provide educational services unless alternatives would be more effective or have greater potential to enhance the participants' continued occupational and career growth.
 - e. Opportunity to participate in the procurement process shall be provided to small, minority, and women's businesses and labor surplus suppliers.
 - f. Assurance will be secured by NWGRC that contracts meet WIOA cost allocation criteria.
30. To ensure that the solicitation provides the necessary information for the development of competitive bids, the following information will be provided in the Service Provider RFP:
- a. Name and address of Northwest Georgia Regional Commission;
 - b. Name, address, and telephone number of person(s) representing NWGRC to contact regarding the solicitation;
 - c. Preparation and submission requirements including due date and time, content and format, number of copies, number of original signed copies, and location/person to where/whom bid should be submitted;
 - d. If need for training and/or services is based on a multi-year training plan, it may be stated in the solicitation, with a provision that contract performance must be evaluated prior to renewal based on criteria established in the contract;
 - e. General description of program including specification of applicable federal and state laws and regulations with which bidders must comply including:
 - (1) Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 and directives, 2 CFR parts 200, 215, 225, 230 and Appendices I through XI including any exceptions identified at 2 CFR part 2900.
 - (2) Applicable policies and procedures issued by Technical College System of Georgia, Office of Workforce Development.
 - f. Description of training and other services requested, population to be served, minimum service levels to specific target groups, period of performance, estimated number (or range) of individuals to be served, coordination requirements, funding parameters (or ranges), and expected program results;
 - g. Process and procedures by which proposals will be evaluated including factors to be used to determine responsiveness and competitiveness, provisions for ensuring independence of ratings by those involved in the evaluation process, minimum competitive score, and specific weighted criteria and an evaluation worksheet which will be used for proposal review;
 - h. Applicable reporting and monitoring requirements including, but not limited to, data entry, performance, and financial reporting;
 - i. Method to be used for invoicing and/or payment;

- j. Documentation required to establish programmatic and financial capability to perform the work and debarment and suspension requirements;
 - k. Code of Conduct;
 - l. Approximate dates scheduled for review and award, information on the Bidders' Conference, and how inquiries of Bidders will be handled;
 - m. Affirmative action assurance that the offeror will comply fully with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of the WIOA of 2014, including the Nontraditional Employment for Women Act of 1991; Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended; and with all applicable requirements imposed by or pursuant to regulations implementing those laws, including but not limited to 29 CFR part 34. The United States has the right to seek judicial enforcement of this assurance;
 - n. Prohibition against sub-contracting without SDR approval and full disclosure of the relationship with any approved subcontractor and any profits to be realized by the entity;
 - o. Line item budget of proposed costs including funds to be contributed by the organization;
 - p. Other services or requirements that may affect proper budgeting by the offeror;
 - q. Applicable coordination requirements.
31. In making the selection for contract awards, the WDB will negotiate with the most responsible bidder(s). This is the offeror(s) who appear(s) to possess the ability to perform most successfully under the terms and conditions of a proposed procurement.
32. The following elements will be included in evaluation and selection procedures:
- a. All proposals must first be deemed responsive prior to being evaluated. A checklist documents responsiveness.
 - b. Criteria by which proposals are evaluated which may include the following:
 - (1) Adequate financial resources and technical skills to perform the work;
 - (2) The ability to meet the program design specifications at a reasonable cost;
 - (3) The ability to meet performance goals;
 - (4) Justification of additional need for any proposed expenditures for new facilities;
 - (5) Justification of additional need for class-size training in occupations in which training is already being provided in the service area;
 - (6) A satisfactory record of past performance in applicable training or related activities including quality of training, reasonable outcomes in areas such as service to target groups, training completion, job placement, job retention, wages at placement or median wage, number of participants credentialed,

reasonable drop-out rates in past programs, the ability to provide or arrange for appropriate supportive services, including child care;

- (7) If applicable, the ability to provide services that can lead to the achievement of competency standards for participants with identified deficiencies;
- (8) A satisfactory record of integrity, business ethics, and financial accountability;
- (9) Technical skills to perform the work;
- (10) The necessary organization, experience, accounting, and operational controls;
- (11) Cost effectiveness including allowability, allocability, appropriateness, and necessity.

33. The procurement record will include:

- a. A copy of the solicitation package;
- b. A copy of the public notification;
- c. Bidders' List to which notices were mailed;
- d. List of all organizations/entities sent a solicitation;
- e. Agenda and minutes of the Bidders' Conference, if a conference is conducted;
- f. A copy of each question and answer issuance, if applicable;
- g. Log sheet for receipt of bids;
- h. A copy of each bid which was received;
- i. Rating and scoring sheets completed in the evaluation process;
- j. Business operation capability evaluations;
- k. Documentation of the rationale for selection and funding of any offeror which did not receive the highest score/ranking in the evaluation process;
- l. Completed Negotiations Checklist for each subrecipient contract and memo, as applicable;
- m. Completed cost analysis for each selected bidder;
- n. A copy of any submitted grievances and the resolution of each;
- o. High risk determinations and special award/contract conditions, if appropriate.

34. The WDB reserves the right to accept or reject any/or all bids received as qualified, to accept other than the lowest bid and/or to cancel in part or in its entirety, the request if it is in the best interests of the WDB to do so.

35. Situations may arise during the course of the year which prompts the need to plan for the use of additional resources beyond those identified in the RFP and provided under a contract. If appropriate, a new RFP may be issued.

36. Competitive procurement requirements are not required for on-the-job training contracts executed with individual employers provided that an employer/employee relationship exists and that the employer will provide job training to enable the participant to perform as a regular employee of the employer's establishment. On the other hand, where a service provider is responsible by contract for operating an on-the-job training program, including the identification of OJT sites and participants to fill them, all requirements for competitive procurement would apply.

B. REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) PROCESS FOR COMPREHENSIVE ONE-STOP OPERATOR

1. Introduction and Background
 - a. All RFPs that contain requests for one-stop operators must include the minimum duties set forth in 20 CFR 678.620 which cites the mandatory duties of the One-Stop Operator.
 - b. An entity serving in a different role within the One-Stop delivery system, may be selected and designated as the One-Stop Operator provided there are sufficient firewalls and conflict of interest policies and procedures in place (Reference: 20 CFR 678.620b; 20 CFR 679.430).
 - c. The RFP will include a reference page that provides relevant WIOA references, the local entity's policies and procedures, and other applicable state and/or federal regulations.
2. Procurement Procedures/Process
 - a. The planning phase of the procurement process must include the following steps:
 - (1) Specify all parameters to be negotiated with the one-stop operator and outlined in the subsequent contract, agreement, or MOU (e.g., duties, budget, performance levels, duration);
 - (2) Conduct market research;
 - (3) Issue Requests for Information (RFIs);
 - (4) Identify procurement method;
 - (5) Develop requirements for one-stop operator;
 - (6) Develop procurement solicitation (e.g., RFP or IFB);
 - (7) Develop factors for evaluation/scoring; and
 - (8) Identify panel and signatory authority.
 - b. A list will be developed using information gathered on eligible entities that may be able to provide One-Stop Operator services. These entities will be added to the bidder's list to ensure a comprehensive bidder's list is maintained. The bidder's list should contain both local and non-local eligible entities, including non-profit as well as for-profit agencies. Best practices include allowing at least a thirty (30) day response time for receipt of bids or proposals from the date of issuance of a solicitation in widely circulated publication.
 - c. The RFP will be published in all applicable legal organs, as well as on the procuring entity's website. The RFP will be published as widely as possible. This can be done by

sending the written solicitation to local, State, and national entities that will assist in advertising the competition. These efforts may include posting on WFD's website or working with groups such as the Association of County Commissioners of Georgia and the Georgia Municipal Association.

- d. A bidder's conference will be held to ensure clarity of requirements.

3. Requested Documentation

- a. In order to be considered responsive, a bidder must provide two years of audited financial history. Adequate documentation could include recent audit reports, the entity's CAFR, an independent CPA review, tax records, or another recognized review of accounting process and procedures. Bidders who fail to provide this information will be deemed non-responsive.
- b. In order to be considered responsive, a bidder must provide an organizational chart.
- c. All bidders must provide a completed Georgia Security and Immigration Compliance Act affidavit at the time of submitting a bid.
- d. All organizations that are private, for-profit, or not-for profit should be able to provide documentation of the registration under either Georgia or their home state's Secretary of State's office.
- e. All bidders are required to provide a DUNS number. NWGRC will verify that the bidders are not on the federal debarred/suspended list prior to reviewing the responses.

4. Requested Information/Responses for Evaluation

- a. Bidders must discuss how they will work to incorporate all partners into the comprehensive one-stop. This discussion must include partners who are electronically present in the comprehensive one-stop.
- b. Bidders should be able to describe how the proposed one-stop operations will fit into their organization chart and whether current or newly hired staff would be providing the services. Where possible, bidders should either provide resumes of current staff or titles and job descriptions/posting for any new positions that would be hired.
- c. Bidders should describe their customer service experience and discuss any experience with handling complaints and/or concerns from customers. Other required experience should include oversight of staff teams and experience in developing and delivering technical assistance.
- d. Bidders should propose outcome measures that effectively capture and evaluate their efficacy and system effectiveness. This response should also include a proposed data collection and validation methodology as well as a proposed reporting method.
- e. Bidders should discuss how they will ensure all partner agencies are collaborating and cooperating in the implementation of the partner programs. This should include discussions on both training for the one-stop operator staff and cross-training for the partner-program staff. Capacity building experience would be relevant to this discussion.
- f. Bidder should discuss how they will bring together the partner programs to ensure adequate outreach of the one-stop center and demonstrate a thorough

understanding of target populations for partner programs. Discussion should also include how the bidder will take ownership/leadership in ensuring all partners are contributing to the center, both financially as well as through resources and staff time.

- g. Bidders should discuss how they will comply with all federal/state/local regulations, as well as provide oversight to ensure that all partner agencies are also in compliance.

5. Requirements for Evaluation Criteria

- a. There must be at least one evaluation criterion that assesses the bidder's financial capabilities.
- b. There must be at least one evaluation criterion that assesses the bidder's technical/programmatic capabilities.
- c. There must be at least one evaluation criterion that assesses the bidder's service delivery experience. (It is not mandatory that bidders have WIOA experience, but it is recommended that the bidders have some experience with customer service and/or service delivery.)

6. Upon receipt of the responses, the WDB will evaluate and score each proposal.

7. If the submitted proposals/bids do not reach an awardable score based upon the evaluation criteria, the WDB may identify an operator and develop an award under a sole source method consistent with 2 CFR 200.320(f).

C. SOLE SOURCE PROCUREMENT

Sole source procurement may be awarded only if one of the following criteria is met:

- 1. The good/service is only available from one source.
- 2. After solicitation from a number of sources, competition is determined inadequate. This is typically met through insufficient bid responses.
- 3. Through a formal request, Technical College System of Georgia, Office of Workforce Development authorizes a noncompetitive proposal.
- 4. Public emergency will not allow a delay resulting from the competitive procurement process. If the WDB plans to use the public emergency criteria, Technical College System of Georgia, Office of Workforce Development must be notified in advance.

D. PRE-VOCATIONAL SERVICES

These services are intended for individuals who lack occupational credentials/certifications and require short-term services to enhance and upgrade skills for employment. Pre-vocational services may include services that:

- Prepare individuals for licensing or certification exams
- Enhance the employability of individuals who already possess occupational skills in demand but lack up-to-date skills required in most workplaces hiring for the occupation

Examples of pre-vocational services include, but are not limited to, nursing license exam courses and computer skills training to enhance employability when individuals already possess a set of core occupational skills but do not have the technology skills required. Short-term is defined as less than 120 clock hours.

Additionally, documentation procedures are outlined below:

- a. A review of assessment results, customer interests and work experience should support the need for the services and should be documented in the individual employment plan.
- b. If the service/training is not available in an approved course on the ETPL, small purchase competitive procurement should be used to purchase the services. Three price quotes or bids showing name of course, number of instruction hours, instructional fee, cost of curriculum materials, credential information, exam fee and school withdrawal/refund policy must be obtained. A printout of a web page will suffice. The provider with the lowest price quote or bid will be selected to provide the prevocational activity. If the vendor who submitted the lowest bid is not selected, justification for choosing a higher bid must be documented for reasons such as: distance, start date too late, schedule prohibits attendance at instructional hours, etc.

Customers in short-term pre-vocational services will be enrolled in GWROPP as 215 “Short Term Pre-Vocational Training”.

E. CLASS-SIZE SERVICES

Class-size service contracts are groups of WIOA registrants receiving occupational skills training in a demand occupation. Class-size services include the full range of occupational skills training, adult education and literacy services, prevocational services, and customized training as described in WIOA Section 134. (The class may be comprised solely of WIOA registrants or may be combined with customers of other programs such as TANF, Trade, etc. or non-WIOA students). In the case of non-WIOA students, the cost of service is prorated based on the number of WIOA students in the class.

Class-size services may be offered in lieu of an ITA when it is determined appropriate to contract with an institution of higher education or other eligible providers of training services in order to facilitate the training of multiple individuals for in-demand industry sectors or occupations and such contract does not limit customer choice.

1. Applicants interested in class-size training will be subject to the same eligibility requirements as other WIOA applicants.
2. Customers enrolled in short-term pre-vocational services will be enrolled in GWROPP as 215 “Short Term Pre-Vocational Training”.
3. Training provider should develop the class curriculum detailing skills to be learned.
4. Attendance for each class session must be verified with a signature on the class roster.
5. Provider will invoice NWGRC at the completion of the training.
6. Training provider will provide NWGRC with a copy of each participants credential.

NORTHWEST GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION

PURCHASE PROCEDURES

It is the policy of the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission (Commission or RC) that all procurement transactions shall be conducted in a manner that provides maximum open and free competition consistent with applicable Federal and State regulations. This policy will be carried out in such manners as to insure that procurements are transacted which are most beneficial to the Commission in terms of efficiency, economy, and effectiveness. The purpose of these procedures is to provide fair and equitable procurement guidelines. The objective is to get a quality product at a fair price in the most economical and cost effective manner. The Commission, when possible, desires to purchase locally (within the Region) in support of the local economy as long as it meets the above requirements.

If a state agency has made arrangements for purchases which are available to the RC at the substantially lowest price through state procurement procedures, the RC may purchase through the state in lieu of the procedures set forth herein.

Any state or federal contract entered into by NWGRC which has more stringent purchasing requirements, shall supersede these purchasing procedures. This shall include adhering to dollar thresholds established by pass-through agencies that require prior written approval before purchase.

SMALL VALUE PURCHASING AUTHORITY (SVPA) LESS THAN \$2,500 (NON-COMPETITIVE)

The small value purchasing procedure may be used to purchase consumable materials without a formal award or competitive bidding process. The Small Value Purchasing Method may be used if all of the following requirements are met.

1. Purchases are limited to consumable goods and/or supplies and may not exceed \$2,500 per transaction.
2. It is used for immediate over the counter purchases and/or to take advantage of cost-saving purchases such as advertised specials. Splitting or multiple orders to avoid the dollar limitation is not allowable.
3. Documentation of each purchase is maintained, such as purchase order or a detailed sales receipt to show that the item was bought.
 - a. A purchase order shall be used for each purchase. The purchase order will list name and address of the vendor, the quantity ordered, the part number, and the price of each item. A grand total of all items listed shall be printed after all items are listed. The purchase order will be signed and dated by the Program Manager, Fiscal Officer, Director of Finance and the Executive Director.
 - b. The packing slip or other receiving documentation will be attached to the purchase order. The purchase order and all documentation shall be stapled to the Invoice and submitted to the Director of Finance for payment approval. The invoice shall be entered into the Accounts Payable System and paid.
 - c.

PURCHASING OF GOODS OR ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES \$2,500 OR MORE - BUT LESS THAN \$25,000

For items or administrative services costing \$2,500 or more, at least three (3) vendors or potential vendors will be identified and solicited for price quotes. If three quotes cannot be obtained, sole source justification must be explained and attached to the purchase order with all other documentation.

The identification or solicitation of quotes must be documented. The following may be used as documentation:

1. Product or service catalogs with current price lists;
2. A log of telephone contacts to obtain quotes;
3. Written quotes;
4. A combination of the above

After all quotes are received, the basis for the selection of a vendor to supply the goods or services would be the lowest price. If the basis is something other than the lowest price, the Commission staff will prepare a memo describing the criterion for selection, relevance to need, and the advantage of choosing a vendor other than the one with the lowest price.

Upon selection of a vendor, a purchase order is then issued and signed by the Program Manager, Fiscal Officer, Director of Finance and the Executive Director. A numbered Purchase Order system is used and PO Numbers are issued by the Director of Finance or his/her designee.

Purchases where the unit price is \$5000 or greater and the useful life of the proposed purchase is more than one calendar year must be submitted to the State for approval. A narrative explaining the need for the purchase, documentation to illustrate that all local, state, and federal procurement regulations were met, and copies of all quotes and supporting documentation considered in selecting a vendor.

Additional information may be required if the unit price is \$50,000 or more. The State will review all requests and provide a written determination within 30 days of receiving the documentation.

PURCHASING OF GOODS OR ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES - \$25,000 OR GREATER

If the item or administrative service requested is \$25,000 or more, formal Invitations to Bid or Requests for Proposal are required. A copy of proposal specifications will be mailed to prospective bidders. Sealed Bids or Proposals are then received and the vendor whose bid is most beneficial to the Commission is selected. A formal Contract, letter of intent to contract or Purchase Order will be provided to those selected.

SUB-CONTRACTOR PURCHASES

For the procurement of Services from Sub-Contractors, the RC will follow the procedures authorized and/or required by the Grantor Agency. If the Grantor Agency utilizes, is governed by, or promulgates procurement procedures which are less restrictive than those of the RC, then the RC is to follow those less restrictive procurement procedures in lieu of those set forth herein.

CODE OF CONDUCT

The Commission's officers, employees, or agents shall neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from contractors or potential contractors. This is not intended to preclude bona fide institutional fund-raising activities.

No Commission employee, officer, or agent shall participate in the selection, award, or administration of a contract if a conflict of interest, real or apparent, would be involved. Any violation of the above code shall be communicated to the Commission Personnel/Financial Management Committee, and the appropriate disciplinary action will be prescribed by the same.

Attachment 7: EEO/Grievance Policy

Pursuant to section 181 and 188 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and in compliance with 29 U.S.C. 3241 and 29 U.S.C 3248, the Northwest Georgia Workforce Development Board (WDB) shall adhere to an established complaint and grievance procedure.

The following complaint and grievance procedure shall be implemented for any complaints and/or grievances that arise at the Workforce Development Area – Region 1 (WIOA-1) level:

GENERAL POLICY

If any individual, group, or organization has a complaint, the problem should first be discussed informally between those involved before a grievance is filed. Applicants and Participants for services through WIOA Title I paid for by the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission (NWGRC) and/or the Northwest Georgia Regional Workforce Development Board (NWGWDB) will be treated fairly. Complaints/grievances should be filed in accordance with the written procedures established by Northwest Georgia Regional Commission. Signed and dated grievance forms with accurate contact information are included in all participant case files. **If you believe you have been harmed by the violation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act or regulations of this program, you have the right to file a complaint/grievance.**

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICY

NWGRC adheres to the following United States law: "No individual shall be excluded from participation, denied the benefits of, subjected to discrimination under, or denied employment in the administration of or in connection with any such program or activity because of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions, sex stereotyping, transgender status), national origin (including Limited English Proficiency (LEP)), age, gender identity, disability, or political affiliation, belief, or against any beneficiary of being considered for any WIOA Title I financially assisted aid, benefit, service, or training, or an individual who has been determined eligible to participate in and who is receiving any aid, benefit, service or training under a program or activity financially assisted in whole or in part under Title I of WIOA, or citizenship/status as a lawfully admitted immigrant authorized to work in the United States." References include: The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 P. L. 113-128 USDOL Regulations Implementation of the Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 29 C.F.R.§ 38.1 effective January 3, 2017.

COMPLAINTS OF DISCRIMINATION

The NWGRC is prohibited from, and does not engage in, discriminating against all individuals in the United States on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, gender identity, disability, political affiliation or belief, and against beneficiaries on the basis of either citizenship/status as a lawfully admitted immigrant authorized to work in the United States or participation in any WIOA Title I financially assisted program or activity.

If you think that you have been subjected to discrimination under a WIOA-funded program or activity, you may file a complaint within 180 days from the date of the alleged violation with the Northwest

Georgia Regional Commission, WIOA Equal Opportunity Officer, Phyllis Walker, P.O. Box 1798, Rome, GA 30162-1798, 706.295.6485, TDD 800.255.0056, pwalker@nwgrc.org, or with the Director, Civil Rights Center (CRC), U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue NW, Room 4123, Washington, DC 20210.

OR

Complaints may also be filed with the TCSG OWD Compliance Director, State-Level WIOA, Title I, Equal Opportunity Officer, Technical College System of Georgia, Office of Workforce Development, 1800 Century Place NE, Suite 150, Atlanta, GA 30345-4304, 404.679.1371, TTY/TDD 800.255.0056, WIOAcompliance@tcsge.edu.

Furthermore, the USDOL Civil Rights Center provides a complaint form which should be utilized, if sending a discrimination-based complaint, and can be found at <http://www.dol.gov/oasam/programs/crc/external-enforc-complaints.htm>

If the complainant chooses to file the discrimination complaint with the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission or with the TCSG OWD Compliance Director, State-Level WIOA, Title I, Equal Opportunity Officer, then the TCSG OWD Compliance Director, State-Level WIOA, Title I, Equal Opportunity Officer or the NWGRC has 90 days to resolve the complaint and issue a written Notice of Final Action. The Notice of Final Action for each issue raised in the complaint will contain a statement from either NWGRC or the TCSG OWD Compliance Director, State-Level WIOA, Title I, Equal Opportunity Officer, a decision on the issue and an explanation of the reason underlying the decision or a description of the way the parties resolved the issue.

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the resolution of his/her complaint at NWGRC or the TCSG OWD Compliance Director, State-Level WIOA, Title I, Equal Opportunity Officer, the complainant may file a new complaint with the Civil Rights Center (CRC) within 30 days of the date on which the complainant receives the Notice of Final Action. Options for resolving the complaint must include alternative dispute resolution (ADR) at the complainant's choice. The complainant may attempt ADR at any time after the complainant has filed a written complaint with NWGRC or the TCSG OWD Compliance Director, State-Level WIOA, Title I, Equal Opportunity Officer, but before a Notice of Final Action has been issued. The choice whether to use ADR or the customary process rests with the complainant. A party to any agreement reached under ADR may notify the Director in the event the agreement is breached. In such circumstances, the non-breaching party may notify the Director within 30 days of the date on which the non-breaching party learns of the alleged breach and the Director must evaluate the circumstances to determine whether the agreement has been breached. If the Director determines that the agreement has been breached, the complaint will be reinstated and processed in accordance with NWGRC's procedures. If the parties do not reach an agreement under ADR, the complainant may file a complaint with the EO Officer (or the person who has been designated for this purpose) or Director. Complaints filed with the Director should be sent to: The Director, Civil Rights Center (CRC), U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue NW, Room N-4123, Washington, DC 20210, or electronically at www.dol.gov/crc.

If the TCSG OWD Compliance Director, State-Level WIOA, Title I, Equal Opportunity Officer, or NWGRC fails to issue the Notice within 90 days of the date on which the complaint was filed, the complainant may file a new complaint with CRC within 30 days of the expiration of the 90-day period (in other words, within 120 days of the date on which the original complaint was filed).

NWGRC will offer full cooperation with any local, state, or federal investigation in accordance with the aforementioned proceedings, or with any criminal investigation.

PROCEDURES FOR PROCESSING A COMPLAINT

At a minimum, the procedures will include the following elements:

1. Initial, written notice to the complainant that contains the following information:
 - a. An acknowledgment that the complaint has been received; and
 - b. Notice that the complainant and respondent have the right to be represented in the complaint process by an attorney or other representative;
 - c. Notice of rights contained in the Equal Opportunity poster; and
 - d. Notice that the complainant has the right to request and receive, at no cost, auxiliary aids and services, language assistance services, and that this notice will be translated into non-English languages.
2. NWGRC will issue a written statement of the issue(s), provided to the complainant, that includes the following information:
 - a. A list of the issues raised in the complaint; and
 - b. For each such issue, a statement whether NWGRC will accept the issue for investigation or reject the issue, and the reasons for each rejection.
3. A 30 day period for fact finding or investigation of the circumstances underlying the complaint.
4. A 60 day period during which NWGRC attempts to resolve the complaint

Procedures for filing a complaint are listed at www.careerdepot.org .

COMPLAINTS OF FRAUD, ABUSE OR OTHER ALLEGED CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

In cases of suspected fraud, abuse or other alleged criminal activity, you should direct your concerns to one of the following:

1. TCSG OWD Compliance Director, State-Level WIOA, Title I, Equal Opportunity Officer
Tel: 404.679.1371, TTY/TDD 800.255.0056
Email: WIOAcompliance@tcsgeu.edu
Mailing Address: Technical College System of Georgia, Office of Workforce Development
Attn: OWD Compliance Team
1800 Century Place, NE, Suite 150
Atlanta, GA 30345-4304

2. Georgia Office of Inspector General
Tel: 866.435.7644 (866.HELPOIG)
Mailing Address: 2 M.L.K. Jr. Drive, SW
1102 West Tower

Atlanta, Georgia 30334

Complaint Form: <http://oig.georgia.gov/file-Complaint>

3. United States Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General
Tel: 202.693.6999 or 800.347.3756
Mailing Address: Attn: Hotline, Office of Inspector General
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue, NW
Room S-5506 Washington, D.C. 20210
Complaint Form: <https://www.oig.dol.gov/hotlinecontact.htm>

COMPLAINTS AGAINST PUBLIC SCHOOLS

If the complaint is not resolved informally and it involves public schools of the State of Georgia, the grievance procedure will comply with WIOA and OCGA 20-2-989.5.

ALL OTHER COMPLAINTS (VIOLATIONS OF THE ACT OR REGULATIONS)

All other complaints must be filed within 180 days after the act in question by first submitting a **written** request for resolution to:

Phyllis Walker
WIOA Equal Opportunity Officer
Northwest Georgia Regional Commission
P.O. Box 1798
Rome, Georgia 30162-1798
709.295.6485
pwalker@nwgrc.org

Lloyd Frasier
Executive Director
Northwest Georgia Regional Commission
P.O. Box 1798
Rome, GA 30165
706.295.6485
lfrasier@nwgrc.org

Complaints filed with NWGRC must contain the following:

- A. Full name, telephone number, email (if any), and address of the person making the complaint.
- B. Full name, telephone number, email, and address of the person/organization against whom the complaint is made.
- C. A clear but brief statement of the facts that the alleged violation occurred, including date(s), identification of ALL relevant parties, and any supporting documentation.
- D. Relief requested.
- E. Complainant's printed name, signature and date.

For the grievance/complaint submission form, see pages six and seven of these procedures. The staff of the NWGRC shall provide assistance with the filing of the grievance/complaint submission form upon request of the person making the complaint. Such assistance may include, but shall not be limited to, providing instructions on how to file a complaint; providing reasonable accommodations to complainants with disabilities in accordance with Federal law; providing relevant copies of documents such as WIOA, regulations, local rules, contracts, etc.; and providing clarifications on the relevant provisions. This requirement shall not be interpreted as requiring the release of identifiable information.

A complaint will be considered to have been filed when NWGRC receives from the complainant a written statement, including information specified above which contains sufficient facts and arguments to evaluate the complaint.

Upon receipt of the complaint, the NWGRC WIOA Equal Opportunity Officer will initiate efforts with the complainant and others involved bringing resolution as soon as possible. This will include a meeting of all parties with the hope of reaching a mutually satisfactory resolution. If the complaint has not been resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant during the informal resolution effort, the NWGRC WIOA Equal Opportunity Officer will arrange appointment of a hearing officer to conduct a hearing for settlement of the complaint to be held within 60 days of grievance filing, if the complainant wishes. Complainant may request a hearing provided that such request must be written and addressed to the NWGRC WIOA Equal Opportunity Officer.

A complaint may be amended to correct a technical deficiency at any time up until the date of resolution or the date of a hearing, if a hearing is requested in writing prior to the issuance of a resolution. Complaints may be withdrawn by the complainant at any time prior to the issuance of a resolution. In the event a Complaint is received which does not contain enough information to enable the NWGRC to resolve the issue, the NWGRC shall make reasonable efforts to contact the complainant and gather additional, necessary information.

In the event that a complaint is filed and NWGRC lacks jurisdiction to resolve the complaint, NWGRC shall notify the complainant in writing within 5 business days of making such determination, informing him/her of their lack of jurisdiction.

NWGRC shall record all complaints in a complaint log. At a minimum, the following information shall be collected: complainant's name and contact information; the date the complaint was filed; the date the NWGRC issued a formal or informal resolution; and a brief description of the complaint. As the complaint log may contain personally identifiable information, the NWGRC shall take every step necessary to ensure the information is protected and only made available to staff or management authorized to view it. In compliance with 29 C.F.R. § 38.39, all alleged discrimination records will be kept at a minimum of three (3) years at a second facility. If the file is in litigation, the file will be kept until the issue has been resolved.

NWGRC shall issue a written resolution for each complaint received no later than 60 days from the date the complaint is filed. The written resolution shall contain the following, at a minimum:

- A recitation of the issues alleged in the complaint;
- A summary of any evidence and witnesses presented by the complainant and the respondent;

- An analysis of the issues as they relate to the facts; and
- A decision addressing each issue alleged in the complaint.

Every complainant shall have the opportunity for a hearing for any complaint that is filed. A request for a hearing must be made in writing by the complainant, preferably at the time the complaint is initially filed. However, a complainant may file a written request for a hearing within 60 days of the date the complaint was filed. If a request for a hearing is made, then the hearing shall be held as soon as reasonably possible to enable a resolution of the complaint no later than 60 days from the day the complaint is filed. The NWGRC shall use the following procedures if a hearing is requested:

Upon receiving written notice of the complainant's request for a hearing, the NWGRC shall respond in writing acknowledging the complainant's request and notifying the complainant and the respondent of the date of the hearing. Such acknowledgment and notice shall be transmitted to the complainant and the respondent within 10 business days of receipt of the complainant's request. The notice shall include, at a minimum:

1. The date of issuance;
2. The name of the complainant;
3. The name of the respondent against whom the complaint has been filed;
4. A statement reiterating that the complainant and respondent may be represented by legal counsel at the hearing;
5. The date, time, and place of the hearing, including the name of the hearing officer serving as an impartial party;
6. A statement of the alleged violations of WIOA (This may include clarification of the original complaint, but must accurately reflect the content of the submitted documentation of the complainant);
7. A copy of any policies or procedures for the hearing or identification of where such policies may be found; and
8. The name, address, and telephone number of the contact person issuing the notice.

The hearing must include an impartial hearing officer selected by the NWGRC; an opportunity for both the complainant and respondent to present an opening statement, witnesses and evidence; an opportunity for each party to cross-examine the other party's witnesses; and a record of the hearing which the NWGRC shall create and retain.

The hearing officer, considering the evidence presented by the complainant and respondent, shall issue a written decision which shall serve as the official resolution of the complaint. The decision shall include the following information, at a minimum: the date, time, and place of hearing; A recitation of the issues alleged in the complaint; a summary of any evidence and witnesses presented by the complainant and the respondent; an analysis of the issues as they relate to the facts; and a decision addressing each issue alleged in the complaint.

Hearings on any complaint/grievance filed shall be conducted within 30 days of any failed informal resolution. Written decisions shall be rendered not later than 60 days after the hearing. Attempts at informal resolution may proceed during the 30-day period between the filing and hearing of the complaint/grievance and prior to the rendering of a decision on the complaint/grievance.

If the complainant(s) does not receive a written decision from the Hearing Officer within 60 days of the hearing of the complaint/grievance, or receives a decision unsatisfactory to the complainant(s), the complainant(s) then has/have a right to request a review by the state using the WIOA complaint Information Form found at

<https://tcsgeorgia.edu/workforce/worksource-georgia/eo-and-grievance-procedure-information/>.

TCSG OWD Compliance Director, State-Level WIOA, Title I, Equal Opportunity Officer
Technical College System of Georgia, Office of Workforce Development
1800 Century Place NE, Suite 150
Atlanta, GA 30345-4304
Telephone: 404.679.1371, TTY/TDD 800.255.0056
Email: WIOAcompliance@tcsgeorgia.edu

Such appeal shall be filed within 60 days of the date of the written decision issued by the NWGRC.

The TCSG OWD Compliance Director, State-Level WIOA, Title I, Equal Opportunity Officer, shall act as the Governor's authorized representative. Either an informal resolution or a hearing will take place within 60 calendar days of the filing. If the State does not respond within the 60 days, or either party wants to appeal the decision, WIOA allows for a formal appeal by certified mail, return receipt requested to Secretary, U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20210, Attention: ASET 202.693.3015. A copy of the appeal must be simultaneously provided to the appropriate ETA Regional Administrator and the opposing party.

Federal appeals must be made within 30 calendar days of the receipt of the local or State decision. USDOL will make a final decision no later than 120 days after receiving a formal appeal. USDOL will only investigate grievances and complaints arising through the established procedures. WIOA does not allow for federal intervention until and unless the proper, formal procedure has been followed.

No applicant, participant, employee, service provider or training provider will be intimidated, threatened, coerced or discriminated against because they have made a complaint, testified, assisted or participated in any manner in an investigation, proceeding or hearing.

Attachment 8: Supportive Services Policy

I. Definition:

Supportive Services are defined as services such as transportation, child care, dependent care, housing, and needs-related payments that are necessary to enable an individual to participate in activities authorized under WIOA.

WIOA §3 (59)

II. Supportive Services

Supportive Services are services which are reasonable and necessary to enable a WIOA participant, who cannot afford to pay for such services, to participate in career and training activities funded under WIOA. **The provision of Supportive Services must be determined on an individual basis.** Limited Supportive Services may be provided to individuals receiving Basic Career Services; however such individuals must be registered as a WIOA participant, are subject to performance outcomes and must receive prior approval from the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission.

Follow-up career services are not a qualifying service for the receipt of supportive services; therefore, an adult/dislocated worker who is only receiving follow-up services may not receive supportive services. Supportive services also may not be used to extend the date of exit for performance accountability purposes. Supportive Service, like follow-up services, does not make an individual a participant or extend participation (TEGL 19-16).

A participant may waive WIOA payments (except for Work Experience) if accepting payment would mean the loss of benefits. The participant may request the payment start at a later date, but may not claim retroactive payments. Advances against future payments are not allowed.

To be eligible for any WIOA financial assistance payments, a participant must have been determined WIOA eligible and:

- A. Participating in career services and/or training services. *Exception:* Limited supportive services may be provided to eligible applicants (e.g., paying for a birth certificate) before they are enrolled as participants to permit participation in assessment activities;
- B. Are unable to obtain supportive services through other programs providing such services; and
- C. Must have complied with program regulations and policies during the period of training and/or enrollment.

Service providers should provide no further payments to participants that fail to participate without good cause. Participants must be attending classes on campus, be registered as full-time students, and attending *all required* hours. In order to receive support while in training, students must be in good standing and making satisfactory progress (a minimum of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale or a

minimum of “C” on an “A, B, C, D, F” scale or 70% on a 100% scale). Those in pre-vocational or other approved career services must meet required attendance and make satisfactory progress as provided by the signed agreement.

Except for extenuating circumstances (such as an approved exception for child care specified below), payments will not be made for days that the participant does not attend training (sick days, holidays).

The Career Advisor will use forms provided to document all support payments. These payment requests shall be submitted on a bi-weekly basis. Any childcare and attendance forms submitted for payment for classes/training held more than eight (8) weeks in the past will not be eligible for payment. Northwest Georgia Regional Commission will issue the transportation, dependent, and child care payments directly to the participant. Other support payments may be made to the Vendor. This will be addressed case-by-case and will be upon Career Advisor recommendation and NWGRC approval, represent extenuating circumstance, and have proper documentation in the participant’s file.

The use of supportive services is encouraged to enable the hard-to-serve population to participate in longer-term interventions. The provision of supportive services must be determined on an individual basis and require proof of expenditure in the participant’s file.

- III. The policies are consistent with all applicable federal regulations and requirements mandated by the State Workforce Board and the Technical College System of Georgia, Office of Workforce Development.

A. Eligibility and determination of need for supportive services:

1. All participants will be determined eligible as WIOA participants utilizing the Northwest Georgia Eligibility Manual. They will be enrolled in the Georgia Work Ready Online Participant Portal (GWROPP) prior to the support service being provided.
2. Each support service provided will have justification in the file as to the need for the service. (*See forms attached*). These services must be necessary to enable the individual to participate in activities authorized under WIOA, Title I.
3. The Career Advisor will conduct the needs assessment for support services on a case-by-case basis.

B. Documentation of eligibility and determination of need for supportive services:

1. The Career Advisor will document the participant’s eligibility and determination of need in each participant’s case file and/or their GWROPP utilizing forms as provided by Northwest Georgia Regional Commission.
2. The documentation must cover:
 - a.) Financial/physical need:

There must be documentation in the case file that participants are incapable of providing these services for themselves.

Examples: low income status as documented by family/household income determination, receipt of federal or state public assistance, UI benefits, documentation of skill upgrading that would lead to employment in a local or state in-demand occupation, documentation of lack of employment or underemployment, separation notice, birth certificates for children receiving childcare, documentation of transportation distance to attend training, etc.

b.) Resource Coordination:

There must be documentation supporting that these services or funds for these services were not available from any other state and/or federal grant/program/funding stream/agency. There should be an analysis of all federal/state/local resources available in the LWIOAs and how they are being coordinated to promote the most efficient use of resources.

Examples: UI records, application for applicable state and federal funds (HOPE, Pell, etc.). The cost of attendance form will show both training and support needs and resources and the unmet need that the support services are meeting in public institutions receiving Hope, Pell, and other resources.

- c.) Type of supportive service requested and how the supportive service will assist their participation in WIOA Title I activities. (See supportive service request form.)
- d.) Amount approved and justification for the amount being necessary and reasonable to enable participation in qualifying WIOA activities. (See supportive service request form.) Case notes must be entered in the GWROPP to document the justification. The supportive service request form and case notes in the GWROPP will stipulate the time frame for support service.
- e.) Receiving support service payments. Each participant will complete a Direct Deposit Authorization form provided by NWGRC (*see attached*). They will complete all required information and provide documentation as needed to verify account information. Paper checks will be on a case-by-case basis and must be approved through NWGRC.

- 3. This documentation should be collected and included in the participant's case file and/or the participant's GWROPP profile.

4.

C. Process of how supportive services will be provided:

NWGRC will reimburse participants for transportation, dependent, and child care costs to the participant at specified limits through check or direct deposit issuance bi-weekly. Proper authorization and documentation is provided to NWGRC by the Career Advisor. All other support costs will be paid by check to the vendor providing the support service. Proper documentation must be provided by the vendor prior to issuance of checks. Extenuating circumstances may necessitate payment to the participant. This will be done upon recommendation by the Career Advisor and approved by NWGRC.

D. Allowable Supportive Services:

1. The supportive services are primarily provided to qualifying participants in classroom training and to youth in out-of-school programs. Others included in career services such as pre-vocational training must receive prior approval from Northwest Georgia Regional Commission.
2. Those enrolled in Work-Based Training where wages are paid will not qualify for supportive services except for work-related tools, clothing, shoes, equipment, or other necessary items needed for the job. In addition, cost of credential training and books and supplies may be paid as support. These can be paid the day training begins.
3. Flat rate payments are made to qualifying adults and dislocated workers (who must attend a minimum of three hours per day, or hours available to attend, to receive a payment for that day) for the following support services:

a.) Assistance with Transportation:

Providing transportation for a participant enables him/her to get to and from WIOA activities approved or applicable by the WDB. A reimbursement to the participant is limited to amounts specified below and represents round trips:

- 0.5 – 10 miles = \$7.50 per day
- 11 – 25 miles = \$10.00 per day
- 26 + miles = \$12.50 per day

b.) Assistance with Childcare for children ages 12 and under:

- Child(ren) must reside in the home of the participant and the participant must be the primary caregiver or the custodial parent. In the case where there is equal custody, only one parent is eligible to receive child care supportive services.
- Reimbursement to the participant is limited to a maximum of \$15.00 per day, per child, up to two (2) children,
- Birth certificates are necessary to verify the age of the

child(ren),

- Childcare may not be paid to a provider who resides in the same residence with the participant (example: spouse, older child, live-in parent). Therefore, ALL documentation of provision of daycare services must include, Provider's full name and license number (if applicable), address, phone number, relationship to the participant and the Provider's signature verifying that they are being paid for their services.
- Payments for child care may be required by the provider for a space to be maintained for the child even when the child is not in attendance for sickness or holidays. If this is the policy of the child care center, the provider must provide verification of that for the day(s) in question.
- Weekly receipts will be necessary to verify payments by the participant to the provider.

c.) Assistance with Dependent Care:

Dependent care - may be paid when an immediate family member (spouse, child, father or mother of the participant or of the participant's spouse, or any relative domiciled in the participant's household) residing in the home has to be cared for by the WIOA participant and this care prohibits the WIOA participant from attending training. If a WIOA participant cannot find adequate outside care for the dependent care family member and no other agency is providing or can provide the cost of the care, then WIOA may pay up to a total weekly amount of \$75 or \$15 per day to whomever the WIOA participant has chosen to aid in the care of the dependent family while the participant is attending school. The dependent's doctor must provide a medical statement for the dependent indicating that care is needed. A copy of the statement must be given to the WIOA Career Advisor. Weekly receipts will be necessary to verify payments by the participant to the provider.

d.) Assistance with Lodging:

Lodging – Lodging may be requested if a participant's training location is more than 50 miles, one way, from their residence. The participant will be required to obtain three (3) lodging quotes, within the area of the training provider, if the training provider does not offer their own lodging. After all the quotes are received, basis for the selection of the lodging would be the lowest quote. If the basis is something other than the lowest

quote, the Career Advisor will prepare justification for the selection, relevance of need, and the advantage of choosing the lodging other than the one with the lowest quote. The Career Advisor will need to submit the completed lodging form, the approved quote, and the bill to NWGRC for payment. Total lodging cost should not exceed \$2,500 per participant. Participants are not eligible for transportation support costs if they receive lodging, but childcare support costs can be determined on a case-by-case basis.

e.) Other supportive services:

Other allowable supportive services include but are not limited to (based on the recommendations of the Career Advisor):

- 1.) Assistance with educational testing;
- 2.) Needs-Related Payments;
- 3.) Reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities;
- 4.) Assistance with uniforms or other appropriate work attire and related tools*, including eyeglasses and protective eye gear and other essential safety equipment;
- 5.) Emergency auto repair
- 6.) Emergency Health care and medical services - these services are of a one-time nature, such as a physical examination, prescription drugs, prescription eyeglasses, immediate dental care, and mental health care which are needed to enable an individual to participate in any training activity.
- 7.) Assistance with books, fees, school supplies, and other necessary items for students enrolled in post-secondary education classes;
- 8.) Payments and fees for employment and training-related applications, tests, and certifications; and
- 9.) Legal Aid Services

*If the total cost of required tools exceeds \$1,000, there will need to be three (3) quotes and documentation from the instructor that the tools are required for the program of training.

f.) Allowable supportive services provided while the participant is still participating in career or training services in order to obtain employment include, but are not limited to:

- Assistance with uniforms or other appropriate work attire and related tools, including eyeglasses and protective eye gear;
- Tools, work clothing, and boots/shoes required for employment;

- Drug testing required by employer;
- Financial counseling; and
- Auxiliary aids and services necessary for persons with disabilities to obtain and retain employment

g.) Unallowable Supportive Services

Payments are not allowed for titled or deeded items or when recovery of the expense is anticipated. Such items include:

- 1.) Rent deposits or housing deposits;
- 2.) Mortgage payments;
- 3.) Car payments;
- 4.) Purchase of vehicles; and
- 5.) Fines

E.) Documentation of the provision for supportive services:

- a.) All supportive service information for participants *must* be entered into the GWROPP (type of supportive service, amount, date of service, etc.). All supporting documentation for a participant's supportive services can either be scanned into the GWROPP or maintained in another system or physical case file (participant time sheets, income determination, UI records, supportive service request form, etc.).
- b.) All participants' supportive service information is required to be accurate in the GWROPP within sixty (60) days of their exit. The amount, type, and timeframe in which the supportive service was given must be accurate and reconciled with the case file and all accounting records. If a participant receives a supportive services increase, whether that is the addition of a new service or the increase in the amount of an existing service, that information must be updated in the GWROPP in real time. No payment can be made to the participant until that amount has been updated in the GWROPP. Supporting documentation of the participant's qualifying WIOA activity, for which the participant is receiving supportive services, should be included in the case file and/or scanned into the participant's GWROPP profile.

Examples of this supporting documentation include, but are not limited to, in-training participant time sheets signed by instructor/supervisor/career Advisor, documents providing participation in other types of intensive or training services.

Attachment 9: Needs Related Payments Policy

Needs-related payments (NRP) provide financial assistance to participants for the purpose of enabling them to participate in training and are a supportive service authorized by WIOA Sec. 134(d)(3). Unlike other supportive services, in order to qualify for needs-related payments a participant must be enrolled in training under WIOA Sec. 134 (c)(3). **The provision of needs-related payments may be determined on an individual basis.**

Needs-related payments will be payable to eligible participants (Adults and Dislocated Workers) who meet the following criteria:

Adults must: (Ref. § 680.940)

- a. be unemployed;
- b. not qualify for, or have ceased qualifying for, unemployment compensation; and
- c. be enrolled in a program of training services under WIOA Sec. 134 (c)(3).

Dislocated Workers must: (Ref. § 680.950)

- a. be unemployed, and;
 1. have ceased to qualify for unemployment compensation or trade readjustment allowance under TAA; and
 2. be enrolled in a program of training services under WIOA Sec. 134 (c)(3) by the end of the 13th week after the most recent layoff that resulted in a determination of the worker's eligibility as a dislocated worker, or, if later, by the end of the 8th week after the worker is informed that a short-term layoff will exceed six (6) months; or
- b. be unemployed and did not qualify for unemployment compensation or trade readjustment assistance under TAA and be enrolled in a program of training services under WIOA Sec. 134 (c)(3).

The term "enrolled in a program of training services" means:

The participant's registration application for training under WIOA Sec. 134 (c)(3) has been approved by the training provider and that the training provider has enrolled the participant in a qualified training that will begin within thirty (30) calendar days. Extension of the 30-day period (to address appropriate circumstances) requires approval from Technical College System of Georgia, Office of Workforce Development.

Training Services include:

- i. Occupational Skills Training, including training for nontraditional employment;
- ii. On-the job training;
- iii. Incumbent worker training in accordance with subsection (d)(4);
- iv. Programs that combine workplace training with related instruction, which may include cooperative education programs;

- v. Training programs operated by a private sector;
- vi. Skill upgrading and retraining;
- vii. Entrepreneurial training;
- viii. Transitional jobs in accordance with subsection (d)(5);
- ix. Job readiness training provided in combination with services described in any clauses (i) through (viii);
- x. Adult education and literacy activities, including activities of English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs, provided concurrently or in combination with services described in any clauses (i) through (vii); and
- xi. Customized training conducted with a commitment by an employer or group of employers to employ an individual upon successful completion of the training.

Adults and Dislocated Workers must:

- a. be enrolled in school/college on a full-time basis. (Full-time status will be based on school definition)
- b. maintain a “C” average or above while receiving NRP. (a minimum of 2.0 gpa on a 4.0 gpa scale)
- c. have their eligibility for NRP determined prior to their receipt of this service if they desire this service option. Current participants will have their eligibility redetermined for NRP at a minimum of every six (6) months from their original begin date of receiving NRP or when the participant receives other income which is self-reported that may make the participant ineligible. Eligibility will be determined by the WIOA Career Advisor. Staff will be verifying on a weekly basis that the participant is not receiving unemployment compensation.
- d. not be out more than thirty (30) calendar days during the school’s vacation break in order to receive NRP.
- e. notify their Career Advisor and NWGRC if they are no longer attending school/college on a full-time basis and/or if they change their program of study.
- f. notify their Career Advisor and NWGRC of any monetary change in individual/family income during any particular week.
- g. complete a weekly attendance sheet.
- h. not be receiving income allowances such as employer severance, TRA under TAA, union member supplemental benefits, out-of-area job search assistance, payments under WIOA such as internships, any wages under OJT, work experience or other activities under WIOA where payments may be available except support. If a customer is not receiving but is eligible to receive any of the assistance listed above, every effort will be made to ensure that other assistance is provided prior to application for NRP being approved in accordance with WIOA Sec. 134.

Furthermore, WIOA NRP should not replace or reduce any other federal financial assistance for which the individual may be eligible or entitled, including WIOA support payments.

Adults Guideline:

All participants must meet all eligibility requirements for “adult” services under WIOA provisions. Any adult applying for NRP assistance must meet the income guidelines for WIOA Low Income Poverty Level.

Adults whose income meet the poverty level and are attending school/college on a full-time basis will receive weekly needs-related payments in the amount of \$228. Their eligibility will be reviewed at a minimum of every six (6) months from their original anniversary date of participation in WIOA.

Dislocated Workers Guideline:

All participants must meet all eligibility requirements and be deemed a dislocated worker under WIOA provisions. Payments must not exceed the greater of either of the following levels:

- a.) the applicable weekly level of the unemployment compensation benefit, for participants who were eligible for unemployment compensation as a result of the qualifying dislocation; or
- b.) the poverty level for an equivalent period, for participants who did not qualify for unemployment compensation as a result of the qualifying layoff. The weekly payment level cannot be adjusted lower due to our income limit being the lowest a participant can receive on the poverty scale.

Eligibility will be determined on the day of contact with the applicant. Applicants who *did* qualify for unemployment compensation must provide documentation of their layoff and their benefit amount. Applicants who *did not* qualify for unemployment compensation must have proof of unemployment denial in order to qualify for NRP.

NOTE: Participants enrolled in approved training who are unemployed, but who receive payments as a member of a reserve component of the U.S. Armed Services, or as a member of the Georgia National Guard, for periods of duty of 72 consecutive hours or less, shall be considered unemployed for a purpose of qualifying for NRP.

Payment Limitations:

Needs-related payments shall not exceed 14 weeks (amount of time for UI payment period) per program year and/or will be paid until the week limitation is reached or until the participant completes training, whichever comes first. Participants can begin to receive payments once they start training and submit weekly attendance sheets.

Attachment 10: ITA Policy

Adults or dislocated workers determined eligible for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funded services may select a provider from the STATE approved listing after consultation with a WIOA career advisor. If a participant receives career advisement and support services and the program of study is funded by PELL/HOPE funds, the Individual Training Account (ITA) policies will apply. The following policies may be utilized to establish local parameters for service.

Policies:

- (1) Training must be in occupations identified in the local WIOA Plan as growth and/or demand occupations or documentation of employment prospects for areas not listed in the plan should be provided.
- (2) Training must result in an employment wage sufficient to attain self-sufficiency without the aid of public assistance.
- (3) Training must be at full-time status (as defined by the institution as specified in the contract with NWGRC). Exceptions to this policy may be approved, in writing, on a case-by-case basis.
- (4) Programs should not exceed 104 weeks (two years). Exceptions to this policy may be approved on a case-by-case basis and requests should include evidence that financial support is available during extended training periods.
- (5) Depending on the availability of funding, RN, dental hygienist, radiological technicians and teachers, without limitations of funding, may be extended for three years. If necessary, and with approval of staff, the four occupations may be extended beyond the three year limitation, if funding is available.
- (6) In general, all training programs must be within a reasonable commute of the WIOA local area that may include out-of-the-area and out-of-state training institutions. Out-of-the-area training programs that are not within commuting distance to the WIOA local area may be approved on a case-by-case basis. All approved training must be located within the contiguous United States.
- (7) All applicants must apply for the Pell Grant and/or HOPE Grant/Scholarship program, if eligible. The following will be applied for the order of payment by grants:
 - ❖ If it is determined through an analysis of the cost of attendance that the total cost of attending training exceeds the amount available through HOPE and WIOA funding, NWGRC allows Pell funds to be utilized by the participant for living expenses and other appropriate personal expenses during the training period. [WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(B)]

- (8) WIOA funding may be provided for college level instruction only if all of the following conditions have been met:
 - (a) The customer must be accepted into a certificate, diploma, or degree program, and the course of study must be occupation specific (i.e. Radiologic technician, accounting, teacher certification).
 - (b) Total course of study will take no longer than 104 weeks (two years) to complete and be a certificate, diploma, or degree program.
 - (c) The customer must demonstrate that he/she has the financial resources to attend long term training.
- (9) Applicants with multiple degrees other than an associate's degree will not be eligible for enrollment. Those with a degree which is considered obsolete, or those that are working towards a bachelor's degree and lack two years or less of training to complete, will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine if they can be enrolled into the program.
- (10) Continuing Education and other similar courses will be approved if the following conditions apply:
 - (a) The customer must have a specific occupational goal.
 - (b) The customer must present evidence describing how the proposed training will increase his/her employment marketability.
- (11) ITAs may be utilized for expenses related to training, including, but not limited to, the following: books, tuition and fees, supplies, uniforms and shoes, certification, licensing, testing fees, drug testing for entrance into training, medical requirements for training entrance, etc.
- (12) Customers accepted on a provisional basis may receive assistance on a case-by-case basis.
- (13) ITAs will not be used for payment of late fees caused by customer error or delay. The customer will be responsible for these fees, as he/she is responsible for other fines or penalties.
- (14) Each local Workforce Development Board will determine funding limitations. A guide to training limitations follows:
 - (a) Up to \$6,500 in training costs, excluding support, may be expended for each participant for the first year of training.
 - (b) For training that extends beyond one year, total training costs may not exceed \$10,400, excluding support.

If the cost of training exceeds funds limitation guidelines, career advisors should assist in developing a financial plan to cover total costs of training. Customers shall not be required to apply for or access student loans, or incur personal debt as a condition of participation.

Attachment 11: Priority of Service Policy

I. Service Priority for Individualized Services and Training Services

Priority of service is not an eligibility criterion, but rather a means to ensure emphasis on providing services to populations.

Priority for adult services must be given to recipients of public assistance or other low-income individuals; with added priorities for individuals who are basic skills deficient. Priority of service applies regardless of the amount of funding available. Individualized career services and training services must be given on a priority basis, regardless of funding levels, to:

- A. Public assistance recipients, other low-income adults; and
- B. Individuals who are basic skills deficient.

Per 20 CFR 681.290, An individual who is unable to compute or solve problems, read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society satisfies the basic skills deficient requirement for WIOA adult services. In assessing basic skills, Boards must use assessment instruments that are valid and appropriate for the target population and must provide reasonable accommodation in the assessment process, if necessary, for individuals with disabilities.

For an adult, a participant is basic skills deficient if they:

- A. Lack a high school diploma or high school equivalency and is not enrolled in any secondary education; or
- B. Are enrolled in a Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) program authorized by WIOA and administered by the Education Department (ED); or
- C. Are reading or writing English at or below an 8.9 grade level, according to a TABE assessment.

Veterans under WIOA Sec. 3 (63)(A) receive priority of service as described in the Jobs for Veterans Act (38 U.S.C 4215 (2)). Veterans and eligible spouses of veterans who otherwise meet the eligibility requirements for adults programs must receive the highest priority for services. TEGL 19-16 references TEGL 10-09 regarding order of priority for veterans and eligible spouses. Priority must be provided in the following order:

- First, to veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, are low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient. Military earnings are not included as income for veterans and transitioning service members.
- Second, to individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses who meet WIOA priority criteria.
- Third, to veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in WIOA's priority groups.
- Last, to individuals outside the groups given priority under WIOA including individuals with disabilities, single parents, older individuals, long-term unemployed, ex-offenders, individuals who lack a high school diploma or GED, individuals lacking self-sufficiency, and other groups needing assistance as long as the priorities groups are adhered to in order.
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II. Veterans' Service Priority

In accordance with the Veterans' Priority Provisions of the "Jobs for Veterans Act" (PL107 288) and as specified by the Veterans' Benefits, Health Care, and Information Technology Act of 2006 the following policy and procedure is adopted by the Northwest Georgia Workforce Innovative and Opportunity Act Program.

References:

- **Associated Regulations (20 CFR Part 1010)**
- **Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 10-09**
- **Workforce Innovative and Opportunity Act Regulations - 20 CFR Section 663.600**

- Definitions -

For priority of service purposes, a covered person is a:

1. Veteran - an individual who has served at least one day in active military, naval or air service, and was discharged under "other than dishonorable" conditions. This includes full-time duty in the National Guard or a Reserve component, except full-time duty for training purposes.
2. Eligible spouse - the spouse of:
 - a. any veteran who died of a service-connected disability;
 - b. any member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty who, at the time of the spouse's request for priority has been listed for at least 90 days as: missing in action; captured in line of duty by a hostile force; or forcibly detained or interned in line of duty by a foreign government or power;
 - c. a veteran who has a total disability resulting from a service-connected disability (as determined by the Department of Veterans Affairs); or
 - d. a veteran who died while a total disability, resulting from a service-connected disability, was in existence

* Veteran, as specified at 38 U.S.C. 101(2) and under the Workforce Innovative and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and codified at 29 U.S.C. 2801(49)(A)

- Identifying and Informing Covered Persons:

All covered persons will be identified at the point of entry to WIOA programs and/or services so they can take advantage of priority of service. Point of entry includes WIOA physical locations, One Stop Career Centers, web sites and other virtual service delivery resources. All covered persons must be made aware of their entitlement to priority of service; the full array of programs and services available to them; and, any applicable eligibility requirements for those programs and/or services. Covered persons must be given priority of services throughout the continuum of services.

Each One Stop will have posters and brochures in use as well as the GDOL Veteran/Eligible Spouse Priority of Service Information form.

Verification of veteran status does not need to be established at point of entry except in limited circumstances.

All entities specified above must have in place policies and procedures to insure that all covered persons are quickly identified and informed of their priority to obtain services throughout the continuum of services. Compliance will be monitored as part of overall programmatic monitoring.

- Implementing and Applying Priority of Service

Veterans and eligible spouses will receive priority of service.

Eligible covered persons have the right to take precedence over eligible non covered persons in obtaining services which means that the covered person receives access to the service or resource earlier in time than the non-covered person; or the covered person receives access to the service or resource instead of or before the non-covered person if the service or resource is limited. Priority of service shall be applied as stated in Section I previously.

The data to be collected includes the services provided to and the outcomes experienced by covered persons and non-covered persons receiving services.

NWGRC and the One-Stop Operator will meet on a regular basis and assist in the development and dispensing of One-Stop policies. These policies are then provided on-line at www.careerdepot.org.

All veteran's priority posters are placed near equal opportunity posters at point of entry of customers.

The One-Stops and other service providers will refer Veterans with significant barriers to employment to the Disable Veterans Outreach Program to ensure the most effective provision of services. Staff contact information will be provided to each of the One-Stops and other service providers and will be updated periodically. Contact information will also be provided at www.careerdepot.org.

NWGRC will monitor Veteran participation by on-going data collection. Veteran participation will be encouraged through marketing and outreach efforts.

- Services to Individuals Not Residing in the Area:

Priority for training services will be given to residents of the Northwest Georgia area for adult, youth, and dislocated worker applicants. Services for dislocated workers will also be given to employees of companies whose place of employment is/was within the Northwest Georgia service area. Informational and core services will be universally available to all customers regardless of residence. Residents of other service areas desiring intensive

and/or training services, unless dislocated workers as stated above, will be referred to the WDB in their area.