



Northwest Georgia

## **Region 1—WorkSource Northwest Georgia**

**Workforce Innovation and**

**Opportunity Act**

**Local Plan Update**

**September 2022**

*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 (Region 1)**

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 with a population of 98,584 (2020 Census) and Dalton MSA with a population of 142,827 (2020 Census). Although Bartow, Haralson, Paulding, and Pickens counties are included in the Atlanta MSA, Bartow and Paulding individually are the largest and fastest growing populated areas within Northwest Georgia counties. According to the US Census, **Paulding** County in 2021 had a population of 173,780 which is a 22.1% increase from 2010 making it the most populated county in the region. **Bartow** County in 2021 had a population of 110,843 which is a 10.7% change from 2010 making it the second most populated area.

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. In addition, there has been significant growth in Healthcare and Social Assistance, Retail Trade and

Transportation. Employers such as WellStar Health System, Hospital Corporation of America, AdventHealth Redmond, and Atrium Health Floyd continue to show and increased need for healthcare employees.

**Economic Conditions**

**Fallout from COVID-19 Pandemic** - Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, 2020 was a challenging year for the Northwest Georgia and our local communities alike. The pandemics impacts could be felt in all sectors of the region’s economy. The regional unemployment rate topped 12% before recovery began in mid-year. Northwest Georgia ended 2020 with a regional unemployment rate just over 4%; however, many sectors of the economy are still struggling with the hospitality and tourism industries being hardest hit.

**Economic Distress**

The Northwest Georgia Economic Development District is performing below the national average in each of the economic distress criteria. This indicates that, although the region has recovered from the Great Recession, northwest Georgia has still not achieved socioeconomic parity with the nation. In March 2020, Governor Brian Kemp issued stay-at-home orders due to the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The stay-at-home orders had a significant impact on the economy, as the monthly unemployment rate details.

**Unemployment Rate and Economic Distress**

The 2021 Unemployment Rate for Northwest Georgia is 3.3%, which is 0.6% lower than the national rate. As of May 2022, 12 of the 15 NWGA counties have an unemployment rate below3%, with the lowest being Dade County at 2.2% and the highest is Whitfield county at 3.5%. The 2021 Per Capita Personal Income calculated by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) for the region is \$39,438.

**Ten Largest Employers in Northwest Georgia**

The Georgia Department of Labor’s Area Labor Profile lists the ten largest employers for northwest Georgia. Of those ten employers, four of those are medical facilities (Atrium Health Floyd, Hamilton, AdventHealth Redmond, and Wellstar).

(source: NW Georgia Economic Development Strategy Annual Update)

TEN LARGEST EMPLOYERS IN NORTHWEST GEORGIA	
1.	Engineered Floors
2.	Floyd Healthcare Management (Atrium Floyd)
3.	Gordon Hospital (Advent Healthcare)
4.	Hamilton Medical Center
5.	Mohawk Carpet Distribution
6.	Roper Corporation
7.	Shaw Industries Group
8.	Toyo Tire
9.	Walmart
10.	Wellstar Health System

## **REGION 1 SECTOR HIGHLIGHTS:**

### **The Changing Face of Healthcare Across the Region**

Three major hospitals across Northwest Georgia now have new names as they have been bought out by larger Healthcare organizations.

**Floyd Medical Center** is now **Atrium Health Floyd**. Based in Charlotte, North Carolina, Atrium Health is an integrated, nonprofit health system with more than 70,000 teammates serving patients at 40 hospitals and more than 1,400 care locations. Atrium Health Floyd is a leading medical provider and economic force. As part of the largest, integrated, nonprofit health system in the Southeast, it is also able to tap into some of the nation's leading medical experts and specialists with Atrium Health, allowing it to provide the best care close to home – including advanced innovations in virtual medicine and care. At the hub of these services is Floyd Medical Center, a 304-bed full-service, acute care hospital and regional referral center. Atrium Health Floyd employs more than 3,400 teammates who provide care in over 40 medical specialties at three hospitals: Floyd Medical Center in Rome, Georgia; Floyd Cherokee Medical Center in Centre, Alabama; Floyd Polk Medical Center in Cedartown, Georgia, as well as Floyd Behavioral Health Center, a freestanding 53-bed behavioral health facility, also in Rome; and a primary care and urgent care network with locations throughout the service area of northwest Georgia and northeast Alabama.

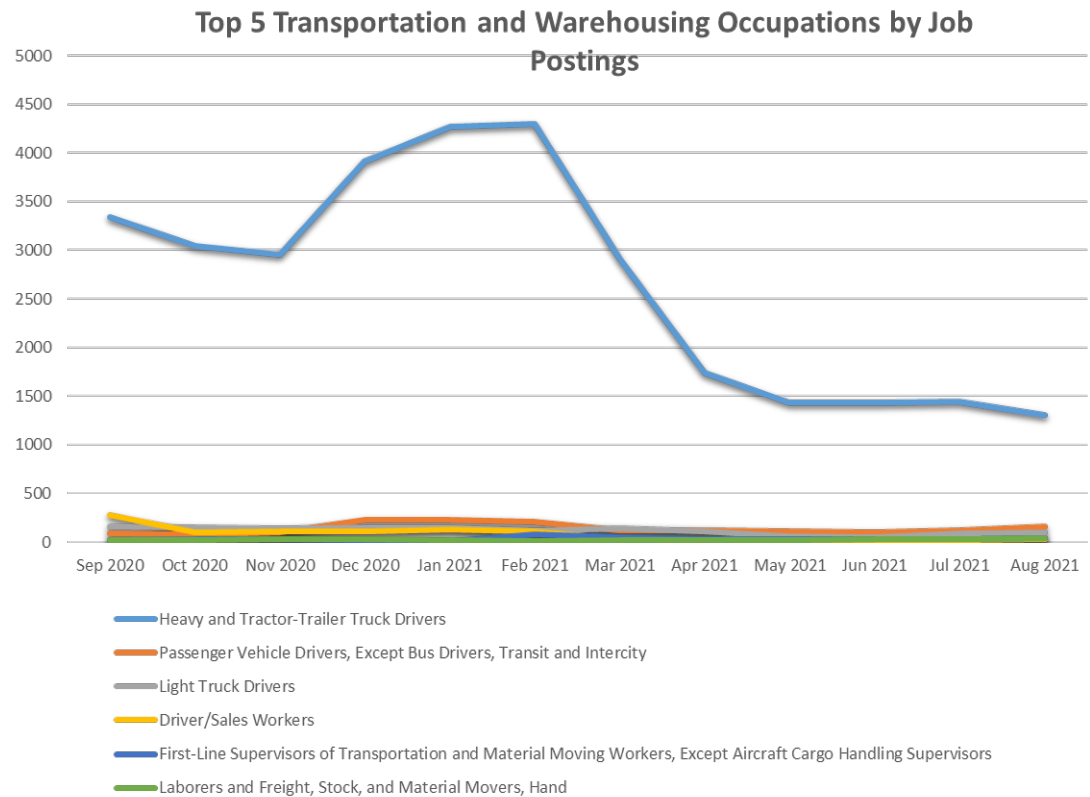
**Redmond Regional Medical Center** was purchased by AdventHealth. They are now **AdventHealth Redmond**. The agreement was signed in May 2021. The \$635 million agreement includes the 230-bed facility as well as the Rome hospital's related businesses, physician clinic operations, outpatient services and all issued and outstanding equity interests.

AdventHealth, a Christian-based hospital system headquartered in Altamonte Springs, Florida, currently has 45 hospital campuses around the country, including in Gordon and Murray counties.

**Cartersville Medical Center** was bought out by Piedmont Healthcare in August 2021. **Piedmont Cartersville Medical Center** is a 119-bed acute care hospital, Chest Pain Center, Certified Primary Stroke Center, Level III Trauma Center, Certified Total Joint program and Gold Seal Inpatient Diabetes program facility accredited by the Joint Commission. The Breast Imaging Center at The Women's Center provides mammography services that are gold seal accredited by the American College of Radiology. The Advanced Wound Healing Center provides specialized treatment for chronic or non-healing wounds. The Hope Center, a regional cancer treatment facility, is conveniently located on the hospital campus and provides over 4,000 treatments with over 300 new patients per year from a ten-county region.

### **Employment Needs**

For the period September 2020 through February 2021 job posting for heavy Tractor-Trailer Trucks and Drivers surged to meet the demands of an economy struggling to adapt to the changes during the Pandemic. These postings leveled off in the months that followed. Other types of transportation seemed to almost flatline during this time. See chart below



### Industry Sector Employment

The 2020 Update of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) identified the 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:** Increased number of residents that have high school diplomas, have now graduated from College and Career Academies, and have received post-secondary certificates or degrees.
- **Human services:** Ensure appropriate human services are available to meet the needs of the region's current and future workforce.

SOC	Top 10 Occupations by Job Postings	Median Hourly Earnings	Median Advertised Salary*
51-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	\$ 25.48	\$ 42,112
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	\$ 21.45	\$ 72,064
51-9199	Production Workers, All Other	\$ 13.85	\$ 31,104

<b>49-9071</b>	<b>Maintenance and Repair Workers, General</b>	<b>\$ 18.41</b>	<b>\$ 46,464</b>
<b>53-7051</b>	<b>Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators</b>	<b>\$ 16.80</b>	<b>\$ 31,104</b>
<b>17-2112</b>	<b>Industrial Engineers</b>	<b>\$ 36.27</b>	<b>\$ 74,496</b>
<b>51-9111</b>	<b>Packaging and Filling Machine Operators and Tenders</b>	<b>\$ 15.33</b>	<b>\$ 32,128</b>
<b>53-7065</b>	<b>Stockers and Order Fillers</b>	<b>\$ 13.11</b>	<b>\$ 28,032</b>
<b>51-9198</b>	<b>Helpers--Production Workers</b>	<b>\$ 13.93</b>	<b>\$ 30,080</b>
<b>11-2021</b>	<b>Marketing Managers</b>	<b>\$ 45.28</b>	<b>\$ 72,448</b>

#### Northwest Georgia Region's Employment in Manufacturing Subsectors

Description	2006 Jobs	2011 Jobs	2016 Jobs	2021 Jobs	2026 Jobs	2006 - 2021 Change	2006 - 2021 % Change	2021 Share of Manufacturing
Food Manufacturing	5,659	3,545	3,482	3,253	3,389	(2,406)	(43%)	5%
Beverage and Tobacco Product Manufacturing	663	595	868	784	812	121	18%	1%
Textile Mills	12,171	9,336	10,688	9,750	9,242	(2,421)	(20%)	15%
Textile Product Mills	30,646	22,483	21,729	20,173	17,372	(10,473)	(34%)	31%
Apparel Manufacturing	227	107	140	28	36	(199)	(88%)	0%
Leather and Allied Product Manufacturing	<10	18	<10	<10	12			
Wood Product Manufacturing	1,727	996	1,130	1,288	1,468	(440)	(25%)	2%
Paper Manufacturing	2,016	1,209	1,603	2,152	2,344	135	7%	3%
Printing and Related Support Activities	2,306	2,006	1,988	1,742	1,568	(564)	(24%)	3%
Petroleum and Coal Products Manufacturing	34	15	56	81	122	47	137%	0%
Chemical Manufacturing	3,041	3,000	3,134	3,589	4,115	548	18%	6%
Plastics and Rubber Products Manufacturing	3,927	4,403	4,931	5,400	6,128	1,473	37%	8%
Nonmetallic Mineral Product Manufacturing	1,694	805	908	921	937	(773)	(46%)	1%
Primary Metal Manufacturing	1,569	1,368	1,343	1,985	2,254	416	26%	3%
Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	2,303	1,711	2,382	2,666	3,325	364	16%	4%
Machinery Manufacturing	1,898	1,602	1,394	1,751	1,965	(146)	(8%)	3%
Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing	418	403	438	332	364	(86)	(21%)	1%
Electrical Equipment, Appliance, and Component Manufacturing	1,974	1,327	1,793	1,672	1,843	(302)	(15%)	3%
Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	4,033	2,510	4,918	5,098	6,005	1,064	26%	8%
Furniture and Related Product Manufacturing	2,622	1,687	1,828	1,958	2,038	(664)	(25%)	3%
Miscellaneous Manufacturing	822	695	452	556	710	(266)	(32%)	1%
Total	79,760	59,820	65,213	65,188	66,050	(14,572)	(18%)	100%

(Source Georgia Tech)

The table above depicts how Manufacturing Subsectors employment in Northwest Georgia Region has changed from 2006 through 2021.

The manufacturing jobs with the highest decreases are:

- Apparel Manufacturing (-88%)
- Non-metallic Mineral Products (46%)
- Food Manufacturing (43%)



The manufacturing jobs with the highest increases are:

- Petroleum and Coal Product Manufacturing increased 137%
- Plastics and Rubber Products Manufacturing 36%
- Transportation Equipment Manufacturing increased 26%
- Primary Metal Manufacturing increased 26%

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 17,372 projected jobs in 2026 even though this is down from 2006 by 13,274 jobs.

#### 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, brings its first U.S. manufacturing facility to Adairsville. The \$26-million investment will deliver 238 jobs.

In Spring 2020, Chick-fil-A Supply opened its first full-scale distribution center in Bartow County, which employs approximately 200 people and has the capacity to serve up to 300 restaurants.

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.

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**.

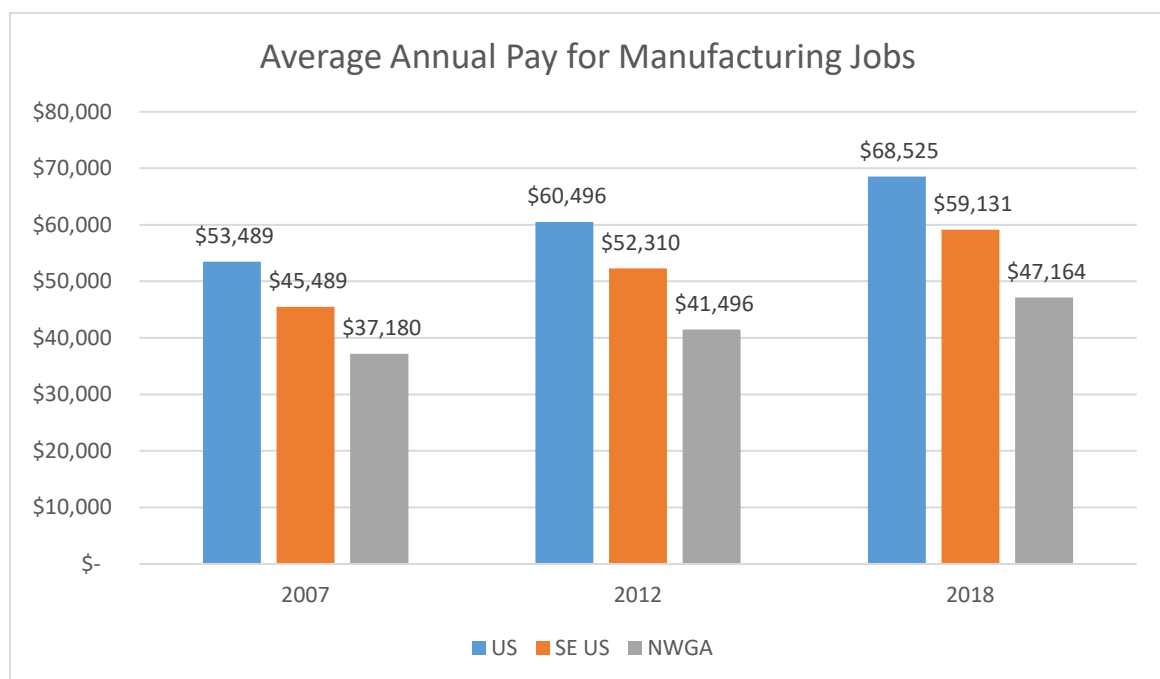
Data on the Transportation and Warehousing sector in Northwest Georgia indicates that Truck Transportation in 2016 had the highest number of jobs (per available data).

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

Source: GDOL, 2016

### 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.



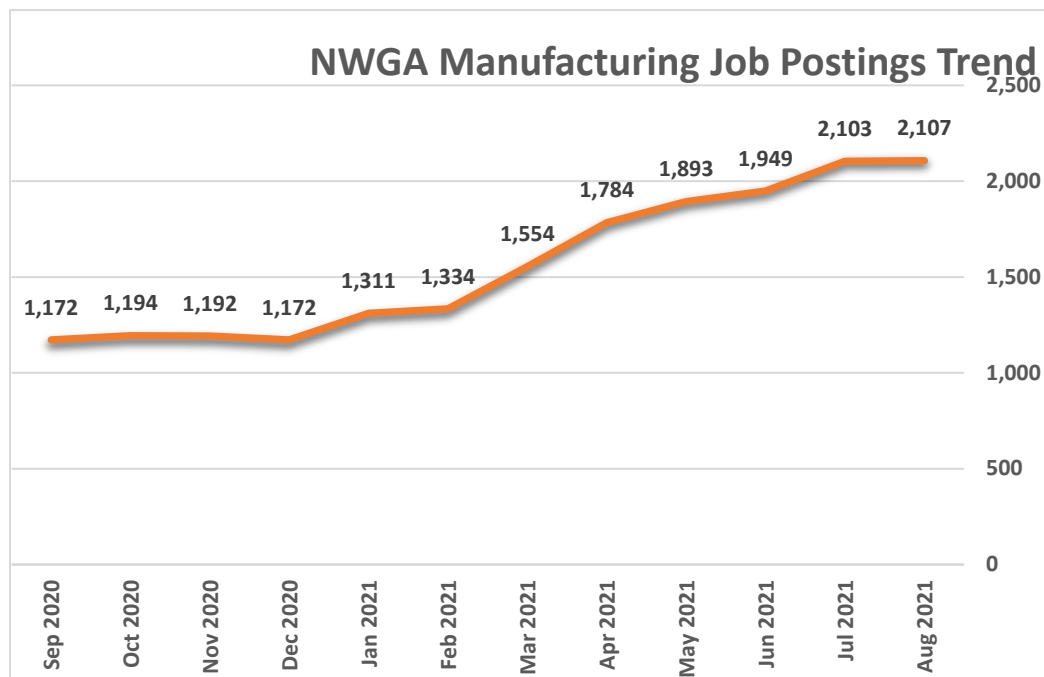
### Healthcare Industry

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 (Covid-19) we expect the needs to increase.)**

### Selected Plan Sector Focus

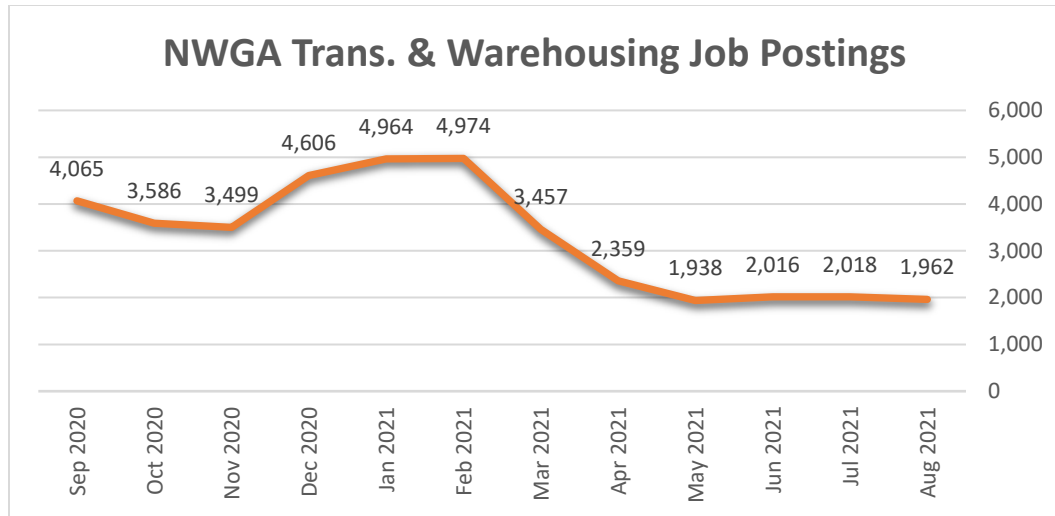
The chart below shows the online job advertisements. They reflect the need for the three industry sectors that have been chosen for Northwest Georgia's plan focus. The chosen sectors are Transportation, Healthcare, and Manufacturing (Advanced only).

### Employment Needs for the Region



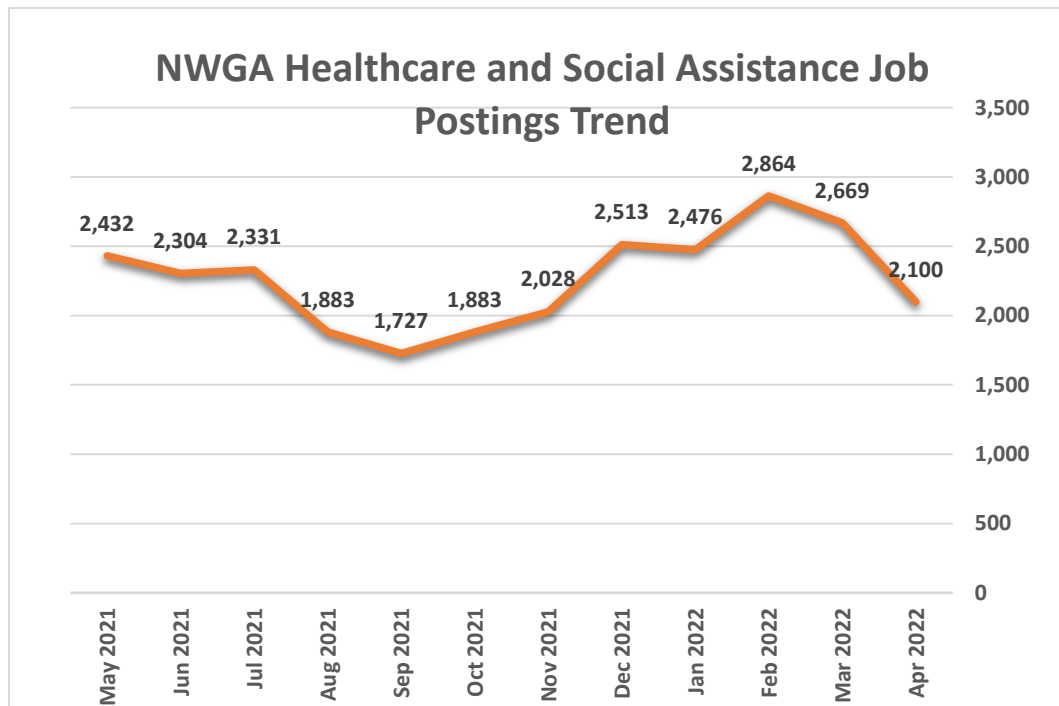
(Source: EMSI Burning Glass Analytics)

- **Manufacturing** Postings have increased 80% from Aug 2021 to Sept 2020.
- Unique postings averaged 1,564 for the 12 months ending Aug 2021



(Source: EMSI Burning Glass Analytics)

- **Transportation and Warehousing** postings have decreased 52% from Aug 2021 to Sept 2020.
- Unique postings averaged 3,287 for the 12 months ending Aug 2021



(Source: EMSI Burning Glass Analytics)

- **Healthcare and Social Assistance** job postings have increased 16% from May 2021 to April 2022.
- Unique postings averaged 2,268 for the 12 months ending April 2022

In April of 2014, Governor Nathan Deal announced the High Demand Career Initiative (HDCI) 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.**

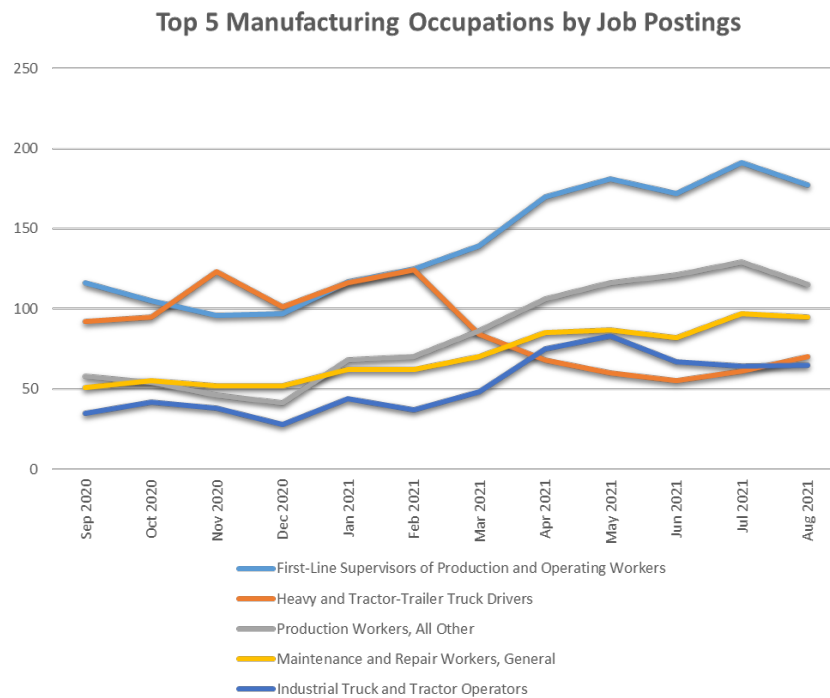
A wide variety of training is needed to meet the diverse 15-county area's training needs. Although every attempt is made to meet the State's training requirements, individual choice and the resources of the area both in training availability and job placement require that the training options remain 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 September 2020—August 2021 was developed by Georgia Tech and revealed that the top posted occupations were:





















Top 10 Occupations by Job Postings	Unique Postings (Sep 2020 - Aug 2021)
First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers	760
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	467
Production Workers, All Other	452
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	314
Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	267
Industrial Engineers	237
Packaging and Filling Machine Operators and Tenders	210
Stockers and Order Fillers	207
Helpers--Production Workers	206
Marketing Managers	180



(Source: Georgia Tech Real Time LMI)

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

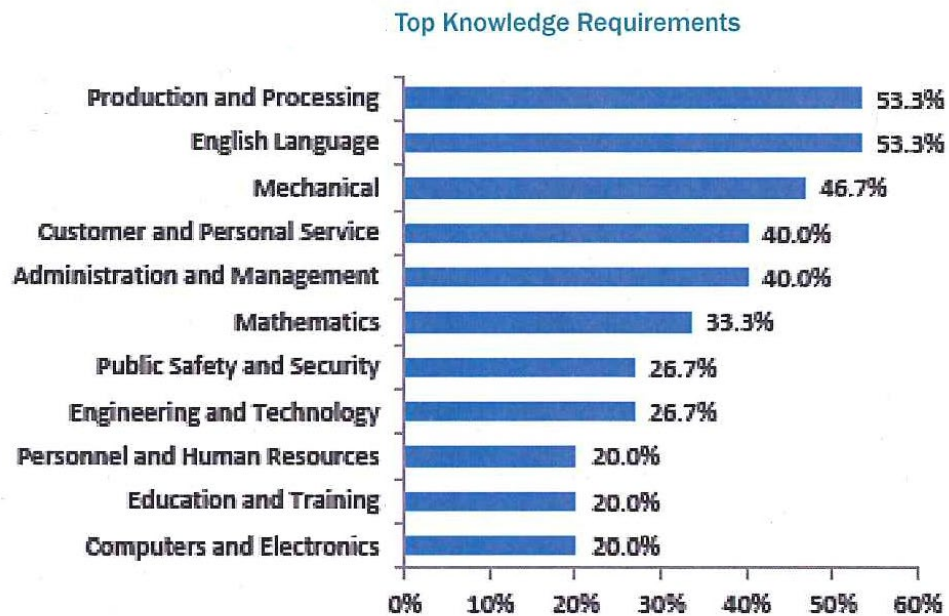
(Source EMSI)

Industry	Total Postings (Jan 2021 - Dec 2021)	Unique Postings (Jan 2021 - Dec 2021)	Intensity
Retail Trade	30,850	9,953	3:1
Health Care and Social Assistance	28,624	9,767	3:1
Manufacturing	26,468	8,408	3:1
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	20,639	7,076	3:1
Accommodation and Food Services	12,099	4,615	3:1
Transportation and Warehousing	9,648	3,842	3:1
Professional, Scientific, and Technical	4,010	1,801	2:1
Wholesale Trade	4,099	1,790	2:1
Finance and Insurance	3,431	1,639	2:1
Information	3,890	1,249	3:1
Other Services (except Public	2,012	978	2:1
Construction	1,277	652	2:1
Educational Services	788	477	2:1
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	983	393	3:1
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	451	236	2:1
Public Administration	413	227	2:1
Management of Companies and	380	213	2:1
Utilities	157	49	3:1
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas	29	17	2:1
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and	29	13	2:1

Source: Emsi Burning Glass; Center for Economic Development Research at the Georgia Institute of Technology

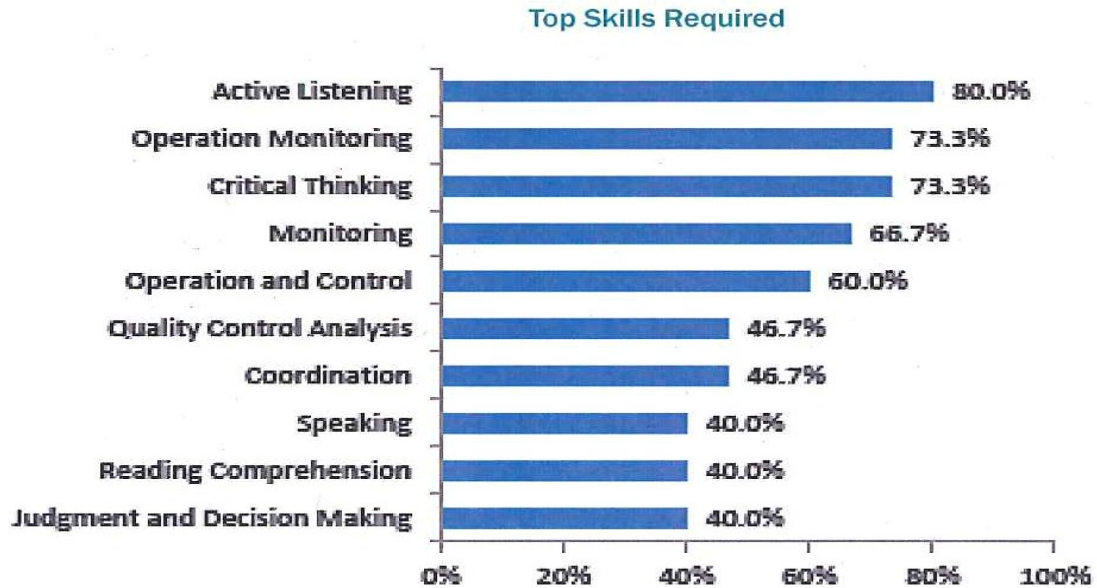
## Knowledge

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:

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

HEALTHCARE AND LIFE SCIENCES SKILLS/ATTRIBUTES CITED:

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

LOGISTICS AND TRANSPORTATION SECTOR SKILLS/ATTRIBUTES CITED:

<b>Ability to Multitask</b>	<b>Presentation Skills</b>
<b>Business Writing</b>	Soft Skills
<b>Communication</b>	Critical Thinking
<b>Decision Making</b>	Teamwork
<b>Ethics</b>	Time Management
<b>Troubleshooting</b>	Maturity
<b>Work Ethics</b>	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<sup>®</sup> 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%.

<b>SCHOOL SYSTEM</b>	<b>2020 GRADUATION RATE</b>	<b>2021 GRADUATION RATE</b>
Bartow County	91.6	93.63
Catoosa County	89.61	88.19
Chattooga County	84.54	79.61
Dade County	87.12	84.1
Fannin County	95.18	90.53
Floyd County	94.63	94.14
Gilmer County	90.31	94.07
Gordon County	93.50	96.99
Haralson County	97.64	96.59
Murray County	95.80	97.32
Paulding County	90.80	89.29
Pickens County	93.5	94.93
Polk County	86.82	87.5
Walker County	90.68	90.69
Whitfield County	86.83	87.2
Bremen City	97.14	97.58
Calhoun City	100	100
Cartersville City	90.53	91.25
Dalton City	80.0	85.06
Trion City	99.12	98.73
Rome City	92.99	92.94

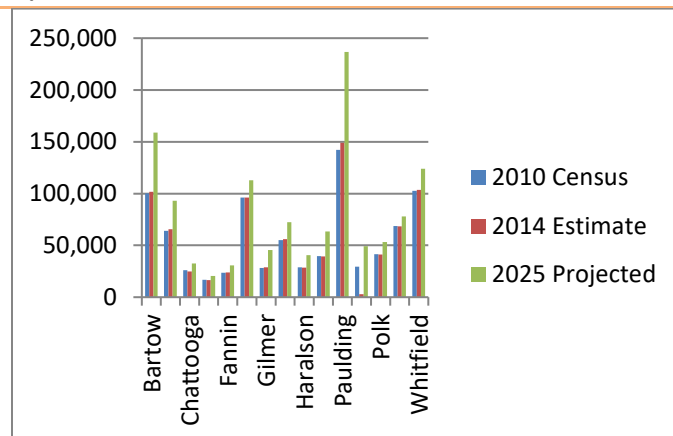
Source: Georgia Department of Education

- 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%
<b>Total Region 1 Population</b>	<b>863,217</b>	<b>1,083,305</b>	<b>1,212,101</b>	<b>40.4%</b>

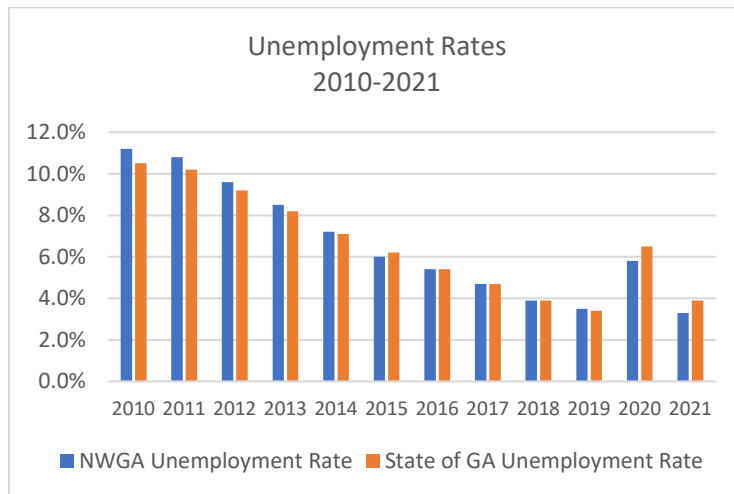


(Source: US Census Bureau)

### 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 charts below show the trends in the unemployment rates since 2010. The rates for both NWGA and GA have steadily declined from 2010-2019. The last two years 2020 and 2021 show the effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on unemployment rates. Many companies had to downsize, work from home, close completely, etc. This was due to the changing demands for goods and services while the bulk of the population was on lockdown for several months.



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

	NWGA Unemploy ment Rate	Georgia Unemploy ment Rate
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%
2020	5.8%	6.5%
2021	3.3%	3.9%

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.

<b>AVERAGE U.S. ECONOMIC GROWTH</b>	
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
<b>Private Sector</b>	208,047	217,797	240,591	16%	14,533	14,156	13,990	-4%
<b>Public Sector</b>	47,247	42,487	42,520	-10%	834	762	747	-10%
<b>Unclassified</b>	188	808	584	210%	295	706	585	98%
<b>Total</b>	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, 2020, and 2021. The area circle shows the effects of COVID-19 on the area workforce.

Area Name	Civilian Labor Force	Number Employed	Number Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
Northwest Georgia	424,316 (2019)	408,954(2019)	15,362(2019)	3.6%(2019)
	414,285 (2020)	390,374(2020)	23,911(2020)	5.8%(2020)
	425,469 (2021)	411,281(2021)	14,188(2021)	3.3%(2021)
Georgia (2019)	5,110,318	4,935,310	175,008	3.4%
United States (2019)	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's 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 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** – 15.2 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 2018 approximately 4.26% 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 GA Dept of Education (2021), the high school dropout rate was 7.8 percent. This was lower than the state rate of 16.2 percent. The area will continue to work with program providers to bring up the high school graduation rates.

### **Persons with Disabilities**

Per The Center for Disease Control (CDC) (2020 data) the overall percentage (prevalence rate) of working age people (ages 18 to 64) with a disability in GA was 24.8%. The highest disability is cognitive function, then hearing, mobility, vision, and self-care. This is significantly higher than previous years. (10.7% in 2017) possibly due to self-reporting and removal of the stigma.

### **Formerly Incarcerated Individuals**

Georgia has released 13,783 offenders in CY2021 per 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' CY2019-2020. This is data for the 15 counties in Northwest Georgia:



### **Inmate Statistical Profile for Inmates Released**

<b>County</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
Bartow	189	58	247
Catoosa	72	19	91
Chattooga	88	21	109
Dade	18	2	20
Fannin	29	2	31
Floyd	236	42	278
Gilmer	33	8	41
Gordon	136	24	160
Haralson	40	11	51
Murray	111	33	144
Paulding	113	19	132
Pickens	38	3	41
Polk	64	23	87
Walker	145	30	175
Whitfield	268	54	322

### **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 and operate 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<sup>®</sup> 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<sup>®</sup> and most training classes also require a GED<sup>®</sup> 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 increase in transportation, childcare, and living expenses have caused many students to either go into debt or dropout of college. The COVID-19 Pandemic has caused many individuals to move on-line and hybrid classes.

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. 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, and West Georgia Technical College. These contractors provide all basic and individualized career services and training 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, 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, prior to the Pandemic, 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's high dropout rate has decreased 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 remains a focus point for the Region. Many employers in the Region require a high school diploma or GED which makes the population harder 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 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, LPN, Medical Office Assistant, Certified Patient Care Technician, Phlebotomy Technician, Dental Hygienist, 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 and robotic 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**.

The Northwest Georgia's On-the-Job Training (OJT) program. offers a choice other than classroom training for individuals seeking immediate employment. 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 has been a good partnership in the region. 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**

WorkSource Northwest Georgia's piloted two cohorts with the Floyd County Prison System and Georgia Northwestern Technical College. The 13-week welding program, funded by Northwest Georgia WIOA, was designed to give incarcerated individuals subject to release in six to twelve months an advantage toward seeking and securing employment. TCSG (GNTC) provided the welding lab and instructor. Follow-up and job placement services for not less than 12 months after program exit were provided. To date 23 individuals were served with a completion rate of 99%. Sixty (60) percent of those served were released and are working.

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. Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Mobile Career Center has not been utilized. Currently staff is working towards updating computer software and providing needed maintenance to the mobile unit. The unit should be in full operation in 2022.

- 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 and training.
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. During the COVID-19 Pandemic all partner meetings were held virtually.
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 continue 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](http://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. Beginning July 1, 2022, the OJT staff will be incorporated into Regional Operations with GDOL and will no longer be a part of the Business Service Unit. All program services will remain the same.

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 unit allowed regional partners to be on-site at the employer's location to enroll 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. Looking forward, when rapid response is needed the mobile unit will be available to assist.



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 can 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 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. Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, staff has not been attending in person meetings but will resume during the time-period covered under this plan. They will 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 regions. 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](http://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 determined 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.

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**

*The Region 1 sector partnership successes have been a culmination of the work that's been in progress since 2017. This partnership began with a strong foundation, with development of a workforce strategy (2018) and implementation plan (2019). To develop the sector partnership strategies for the advanced manufacturing and transportation/logistics industries (the industry focus of the Northwest Georgia Sector Partnership) in the 15-county Northwest Georgia region, Georgia Tech was approved as the consultant and they worked closely with a steering committee made up of manufacturers, secondary and post-secondary education, economic development organizations, as well as regional and state workforce development partners to develop a vision and mission for the effort. The group responsible for facilitating the region's workforce goals is iWORKS (igniting Workforce Opportunities and Reinforcing Knowledge and Skills).*

*The existing workforce resources in the region were inventoried and a list classified assets into four major categories: 1) Workforce and Technical Training, 2) Industry Partnership, 3) Community Based Organizations, and 4) 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 manufacturers helped to validate this data to complete a comprehensive skills gap analysis.*

*The themes and priorities that emerged from this planning/strategy development phase of the grant fell into three different categories: 1) **Marketing** (rebranding of mills, marketing manufacturing to K-12 students and parents, encouraging industry involvement in marketing, marketing current career pathways), 2) **Continuing Education & Training** (increasing incumbent worker training, creating pathways along the entire*

education spectrum, increasing dual enrollment opportunities), and 3) **Employability/"Soft" Skills.**

Stakeholders who were part of the Sector Partnership development phase during the grant's first year reconvened as a larger group in November 2018 as "iWORKS" (Igniting Workforce Opportunities and Reinforcing Knowledge and Skills). iWORKS also brought new stakeholders into the group, including additional leadership from local school systems, technical colleges, 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 to address the key themes and priorities that came out of the strategy development phase. At the group's first meeting, attendees divided into three working "teams" based on the categories that emerged from the planning/strategy development phase. Each team elected a chair and co-chair and began to set goals based on the strategies created by Georgia Tech during the strategy development phase of the grant. These teams began bi-monthly meetings in November 2018 to set goals and provide progress updates to the larger group. Cross-team collaboration was key to building the momentum of iWORKS. These three teams continued to work in concert with each other during the round one grant to ensure the long-term economic competitiveness and growth of advanced manufacturing in the Northwest Georgia region.

#### **iWORKS Advisory Board**

After being identified by the project team, the iWORKS steering committee nominated an Advisory Board to provide oversight for the project's implementation. Advisory Board members were voted in January 2019, and in February 2019 the iWORKS Chair at the time, invited members to serve a one-year term on the board. The Advisory Board is the guiding body and sounding board on implementation efforts that result from the goals that were developed by the iWORKS teams. Because one of the challenges during round one of the HDCI grant was manufacturer involvement, the project team felt that it needed to prioritize the representation of manufacturers on the board. In addition to industry leadership, the initial iteration of the Advisory Board included the Chair of iWORKS, the chairs of each of the iWORKS working groups, local K-12 school system leadership, university and technical school leadership, resource partners like Georgia Department of Labor, Georgia Power and the Georgia Department of Economic Development, and local chambers of commerce/economic development representatives.

#### **Major Initiatives**

The Advisory Board and iWORKS teams launched several initiatives going into the third round of Sector Partnership grant funding:



- The **iWORKS website** includes verified career pathways within all advanced manufacturing-related curriculum in secondary and post-secondary schools in the region. Georgia Tech inventoried and contacted each school for verification of their related programs. These programs were validated and mapped to the appropriated career pathway in the six (6) larger "bucket areas" identified during phase 1 of HDCI: Advanced Manufacturing, Business Management & Administration, Health Science, Information Technology, STEM, and Transportation/Distribution/Logistics.
- Implemented the "**Classcraft**" learning app that "gamifies" learning by empowering students to take control of their learning process. Classcraft was launched as a pilot project in two middle schools in Northwest Georgia, and as of the Fall 2022, will be launched at Woodlands Middle School in Bartow County.
- **Virtual Career/Resource fairs** were held during 2020 and 2021, where companies would meet individually with potential candidates to "screen" them for a possible future interview. These events included brief presentations from college and career academies, post-secondary institutions, the Georgia Department of Economic Development, the GDOL Incumbent Worker Training Program, the Georgia Department of Education's CTAE program, the Georgia Center of Innovation for Manufacturing, and the Georgia Manufacturing Extension Partnership.
- **Quarterly virtual stakeholder speaking events** presented in a "panel" format that promotes education and workforce development resources and/or facilitates connections between employers and job seekers. During the current round, iWORKS hosted four virtual events: 1) Using Nonprofits to Build Your Workforce (August 2021), 2) Classcraft webinar (October 2021), 3) Innovative Hiring Strategies (February 2022), 4) Affordable Housing for Hiring and Retaining Your Workforce (May 2022).
- **The iWORKS monthly newsletter** is circulated to over 600 subscribers across the region. The newsletter features news and events relevant to employers and job seekers in the region, as well as monthly highlights (manufacturer spotlights, student/instructor spotlights, unique post-secondary programs in the region, hiring success stories, post-secondary enrollment in manufacturing and transportation-related fields, etc.)
- **Be Pro Be Proud Georgia (BPBPG)** is a comprehensive initiative aimed at changing the perception of the skilled professions by linking career opportunities, needed training, and where to find jobs. The Cherokee Office of Economic Development leads the initiative, which includes a hands-on interactive mobile workshop highlighting five in-demand skilled professions. iWORKS sponsored visits to

*schools across the region, specifically targeting high schools in counties without a career academy. Over 900 Northwest Georgia high school students toured the mobile workshop during this sector partnership round.*

**c. How has sector partnership work better connected industry employers to WIOA funded services?**

*The region's sector partnership work is primarily one that is based in forging partnerships and better awareness of WIOA funded services through WorkSource Northwest Georgia. One of the best opportunities for iWORKS to connect employers to the region's services is through quarterly stakeholder events, where the group can have the greatest reach. A good example of this was the quarterly event held May 2021 on the Floyd Co. Work Release Program, a program between the Floyd Co. Prison, the Floyd Work Release Center, local employers like Jefferson Southern Corp., and Georgia Northwestern Technical College. Many employers who attended the webinar were not aware of the program and the services offered through GNTC (mobile welding program, funded through WorkSource Northwest Georgia). After the webinar, companies located in Floyd Co. requested to connect with the prison so they could participate in the program, and other communities expressed interest in starting a program at their local prison.*

*The sector partnership work is exactly that: a partnership. iWORKS is the platform and the vehicle to connect employers, workforce development professionals, and job seekers. The focus of iWORKS during the current phase of the grant was to help raise awareness of manufacturing and logistics as viable careers to high school teachers and students, and to highlight the work being done around the region by local communities, post-secondary institutions, and employers to engage these populations. Another focus of iWORKS is development of the talent pipeline within the region. To increase industry-related employment opportunities for the region's workforce, iWORKS hosted the virtual career fair in 2020 with 25 employers, and then the virtual resource fair in 2021 with presenters from 13 organizations around the region. The demand for these connections has only grown as the labor market has tightened. As students returned to in-person learning, iWORKS transitioned to hosting several in-person facility tours for high school students, pre-identified by their school counselors as having an interest in manufacturing and/or open to employment after graduation. These facility tours are invaluable for providing a "day in the life" of career in manufacturing, and can lead to part-time work, summer apprentices, or full-time work after graduation.*

## How Northwest Georgia 's Subsectors Were Identified

### Inventory of Assets

The Georgia Tech project team developed and inventoried assets in the region. Sources for this information included data collected at previous state-led HDCI regional meetings, and previous planning grants, collecting manufacturing data for the skill gap analysis, which included the top occupations in the manufacturing industry, fastest-growing occupations entry-level, *education, training requirements, and job posting analytics*. 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

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):

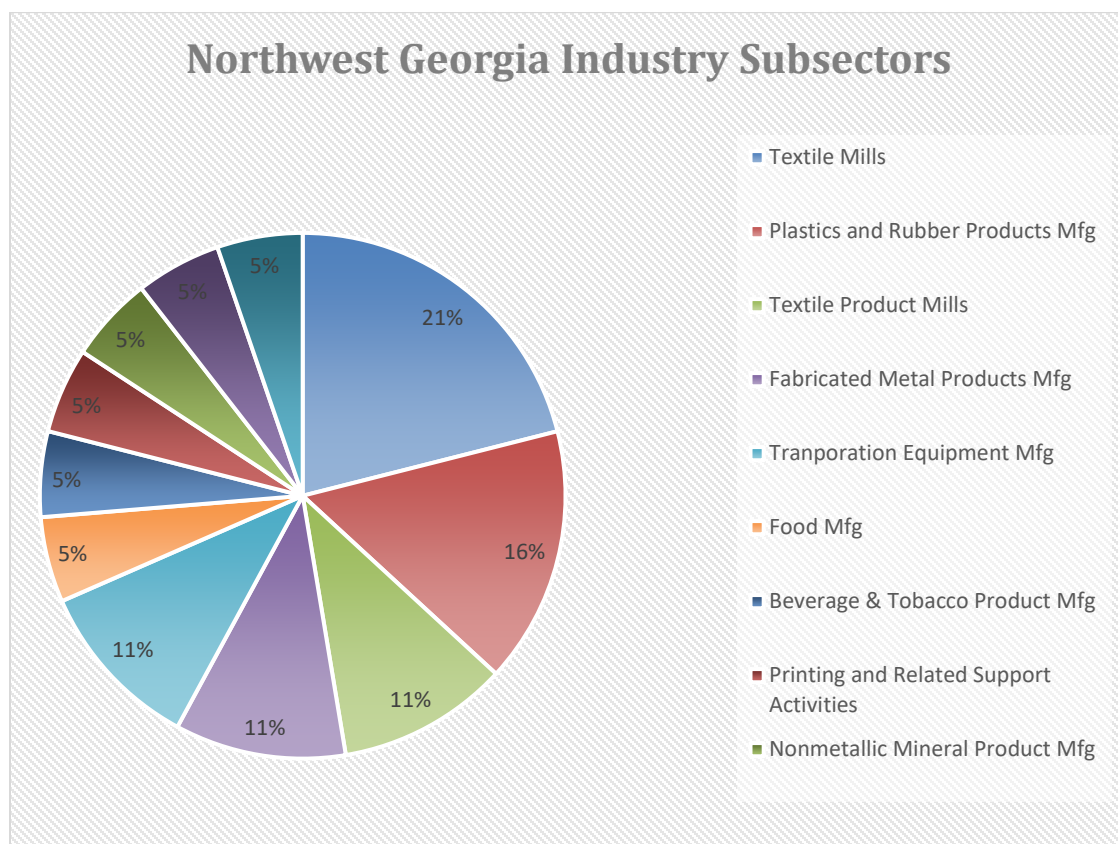
In addition to the inventory assets, quantitative research components- labor market data collection, analysis, and interpretation and qualitative research strategies, such as one-on-one interviews were used. Using confidential firm-level employment data from the Georgia Department of Labor, the largest 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:

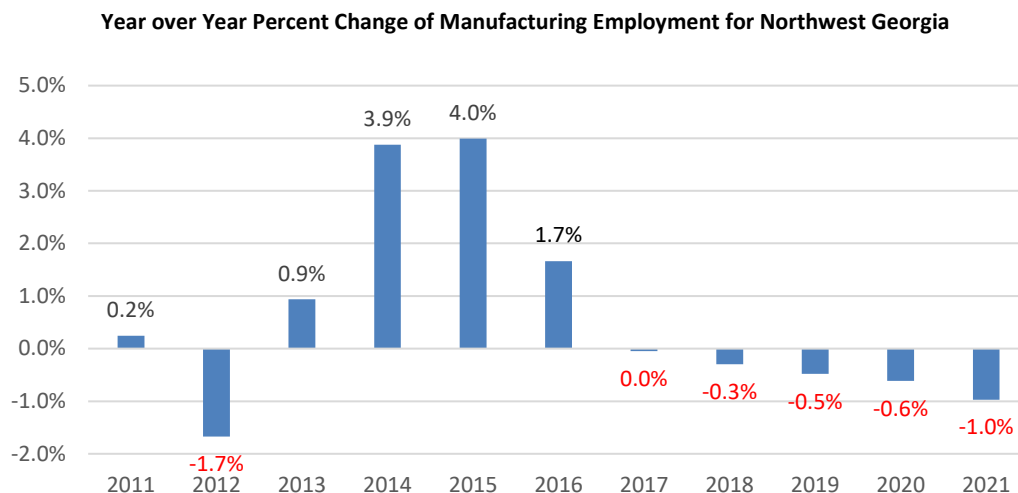
- Company size range: 8 to 1,200 employees
- Average employment of the companies interviewed: 1,400
- 1/3 of the companies employed less than 200 people in the region
- 63% have one location in the region



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

Please see Sector Partnership section above.

The chart below 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).



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 1.1. (Completed) 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 1.2 (On going) 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.
- Strategy 1.3 (Impending) Sector Partnership IWORKS proposed to pilot "Class Craft an interactive game based app approach to teaching soft skills *Implemented the "Classcraft" learning app that "gamifies" learning by empowering students to take control of their learning process. Classcraft was launched as a pilot project in two middle schools in Northwest Georgia, and as of the Fall 2022, will be launched at Woodlands Middle School in Bartow County.*
- Strategy 1.4 (Impending) Support efforts to expand apprenticeships, internships, and to re-focus the Northwest Georgia College and Career Academy on advanced manufacturing career pathways. Offer more youth pre-apprenticeships from high school 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 Develop customized training options as the opportunity presents itself in the Region to serve unemployed individuals and meet the needs of employers.

- Strategy 1.3 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 1.4 Continue to utilize the mobile career center to promote training opportunities and business services to employers in advance manufacturing sector. Due to Covid-19 the Mobile Unit has not been utilized as much.
- Strategy 1.5 Develop class size training options if existing training through ITAs does not meet the needs of employers. Currently, Meg and Tig welding and Fork Lift are the training options.

### 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 1. 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 2. **Be Pro Be Proud Georgia** (Completed) A comprehensive initiative aimed at changing the perception of the skilled professions by linking career opportunities, needed training, and where to find jobs. The Cherokee Office of Economic Development lead the initiative, which includes a hands-on interactive mobile workshop highlighting five in-demand skilled professions. IWORKS sponsored visits to schools across the region, specifically targeting high schools in counties without a career academy. Over 900 Northwest Georgia high school students toured the mobile workshop during this sector partnership round.*
- **Strategy 3.** Local College and Career academies middle and high school students will participate in 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.
- **Strategy 4** 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 5** 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. The 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](http://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 at [www.careerdepot.org](http://www.careerdepot.org) which will expedite the process by minimizing meetings with career advisers made necessary in order to receive or provide information. When Covid guidelines were implemented, WorkSource Northwest Georgia developed a virtual intake process to assist individuals in applying for services. Some partners developed web-based applications and materials have made them available via the Careerdepot.org website and at the one-stops and other partner locations for easy access. 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. Due to Covid-19 the Mobile Unit was not utilized between March 2020 and May 2022. We anticipate getting back to a normal schedule as soon as possible.

- 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, Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA) ~~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 (PY2022 Georgia Highlands will no longer be an affiliate one-stop), and all TCSG campuses where WIOA services are 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
<b>WIOA title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs</b>	Georgia Department of Labor
<b>WIOA title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs</b>	Georgia Northwestern Technical College (GNTC)

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 second year of a three-year bid cycle. A Request for Proposal (RFP) to acquire a One Stop Operator to begin services in July of 2023 issued in late 2022.

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](http://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.**

In 2019 due to unforeseen circumstances, there was a change in the Workforce Development Board Chairperson. The Vice-Chair was appointed and became the chair person. Instructions were given to assist in the transition.

The Workforce Development Board Member Orientation Manual and new member orientations have 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. Also, if needed, individualized orientation meetings may be scheduled.

**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.**

In response to the challenges of the pandemic, the Northwest Georgia Workforce Development Board remained committed to its vision and mission. During the pandemic we used a blend of virtual and in-person meetings that best suited the members. During the Governor's announced public state of emergency, all meetings were held virtually using the GoTo Meeting, and Zoom platforms. The Board members were able to conduct and performed all stated agenda items. The Board involvement and attendance were improved during the pandemic.



The Workforce Development 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– 7 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: Georgia Justice Project, GACEO, Murray County Industrial Development Authority, and the Cartersville-Bartow Chamber of Commerce. These presentations provide a solid background for members regarding 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, and budgets 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](http://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.
  - 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 2022 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, discussed 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--Must be perceivable, operable, understandable, robust, and interactive.
  - 1. Website (careerdepot.org) accessibility
  - 2. Social Media accessibility
  - 3. Create an interactive page (on careerdepot.org)
- B. Seamless customer service for individuals with disabilities across WIOA and partner programs
  - 1. Use expertise and funds of all partners to best provide a variety of services and supports for customers
  - 2. Refer customers to partner agencies, as appropriate
- C. Provide customer-focused information and resources (employers and individuals) through continued input to the local workforce area.
  - 1. HDCI/iWORKS
  - 2. Necessary supports
    - a. Transportation
    - b. Housing
  - 3. Veterans
  - 4. A "packet" to distribute and also place on the website.
  - 5. SHRM
  - 6. Virtual Employer Panel
- D. Assist in providing an integrated approach to the system's overall performance management
  - 1. Continuous improvement
    - a. Work sessions with council members, WDB, CCEO, business representatives, employer committees, chambers of commerce, CIL, interested parties, and individuals with disabilities to continuously improve services and support a culture of high performance.
    - b. Identify current and future organizational needs
  - c. Make recommendations to the WDB

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 met virtually with bi-monthly meetings during the COVID-19 shutdown. They discussed 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~~ Coordinator who also provides updates 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. The Coordinator will be working to improve the One-Stop Referral System 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 of the One-Stop System

The Executive Committee of the Northwest Georgia Workforce Board met on July 18, 2022, and provided their input into the Plan, and took action to approve the plan and comments from the 14-day comment period. The WDB regular scheduled meeting will be on July 20, 2022, during which time the WDB/CCEO will ratify and approve the plan.

Before approval of the Plan by the Executive committee, public notice was given to all legal organs in the region and on the Career Depot website. The availability of the plan was publicized to the public, both in print at the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission, 1 Jackson Hill Drive, Rome, Georgia, and online at [www.careerdepot.org](http://www.careerdepot.org). Any comments received will be included for WDB and CCEO approval.

## 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~~ multiple 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 is 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 the 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 GWDA 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, ~~OWD~~, 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 (unless there is a waiver). 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 the waiver for PY 2019 and 2020, notice was received on 9-28-2020, and for PY 2021, waiver was received on 5-20-2021. Program year PY 2022 and PY 2023 waiver was received on 6-7-2022. 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 formalize agreements with training providers and Registered Apprenticeship sponsors.

Lastly, WorkSource Northwest Georgia hope to considers YouthBuild and JobCorp as 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 .

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.
- 
- 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

**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. Until recently, 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 launched 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, 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 and short-term training in industry-recognized skills, such as 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 LWDAs 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 provides 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, businesses 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. 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 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.

Other ways the region communicates with area business is through participation in Chamber of Commerce meetings, Employer Committees, SHRM events, HDCI Sector Partnership 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.

## Apprenticeships 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.

## 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, career assessments, orientation, 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. Career Advisors will develop an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) with each enrolled customer.
  - 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 determines 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 an institution of higher education (or other eligible training providers; 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 alternative training service.
  - f. Customers may apply for training utilizing our website at [www.careerdepot.org](http://www.careerdepot.org).
  - g. Information pertaining to how the customer may receive assistance a career advisor is located on the website.
  - h. Customers will have the option of contacting the local area for information pertaining to their training interest.
  - i. Career Advisors developed a plan to meet the Pandemic challenge of transitioning students from face-to-face to on-line training.

**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 plans. 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 works 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 transition seamlessly into the workforce, thereby becoming a self-sufficient, contributing cocommunity members

In addition, technical assistance is available to small and start-up businesses in the 15-county region, including Aspiring Minds (AMCAT, 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 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 a pilot welding training program entitled - 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 (CEDs), which emphasizes an entrepreneurship focus. This allows WorkSource Northwest Georgia to work with chambers of commerce, lending institutions, maker spaces (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/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/CountyEconomicStatusandDistressAreasFY2020Georgia.pdf>

Counties containing distressed areas are: Bartow, Chattooga, Floyd, Gordon, Haralson, Murray, Polk, Walker, Whitfield). Four counties are considered “At-Risk” are in the area covered by WorkSource Northwest Georgia – Chattooga, Gilmer, 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 is 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 along with their training programs 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) has worked ~~is working~~ closely with GaDOE in ~~to~~ developing a collaborative plan to enhance transition services region-wide for individuals with disabilities. GVRA also collaborates with the GaDOE, the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD), and contracted SE providers to meet the employment needs of transitioning students with significant disabilities through the project search as well as the three models of SE. 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:

- HOPE Grant stands the Helping Outstanding Pupils Educationally and is a state-funded program awarded to Georgia residents enrolled in a certificate or diploma program who maintain at least a 2.0 cumulative postsecondary GPA. As of 22-23 aid year, the grant pays for 90% of the tuition costs. The 90% that HOPE covers goes toward tuition costs only and does not include the \$356 of fees. As long as eligibility is maintained, qualifying students may receive the HOPE Grant until they reach the Grant Award Limit
- HOPE Career Grant is state funded. The HOPE Career Grant is available to HOPE Grant-qualified students who enroll in select majors specifically aligned with industries in which there are more jobs available in Georgia than there are skilled worker to fill them. These industries have been identified as strategically important to the state's economic growth.
- Georgia's Zell Miller Grant is available to Georgia residents who have demonstrated exceptional academic achievement. The grant pays 100% of tuition rate for certificate and diploma-seeking students. The grant follow the same guidelines as the HOPE grant with the exception that the GPA requirement to qualify for Zell Miller is 3.5 GPA.
- 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 students seeking secondary education. Grant amounts are determined by the student's Estimated Family Contribution (EFC); the number of credit hours for which a student is enrolled for classes and whether the student attends each semester within the academic year. If a student is enrolled in an associate degree program, an eligible diploma program, or an eligible certificate program, he/she may be eligible for the Federal PELL Grant.
- Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant (FSEOG) is a needs-based grant for undergraduate students with exceptional financial needs. Only students who receive the federal PELL grant and have the greatest financial need will receive the FSEOG first. Each participating school is allotted only a certain amount of funds each year from the US Department of Education's Office of Federal Student AID. Therefore, this is a type of "first-come first-serve" grant. Once the allotted amount of FSEOG funds has been awarded for the aid year, no additional FSEOG awards can be administered until the next fiscal year.

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, 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 are 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

Prior to the Covid pandemic Worksource Northwest Georgia staff regularly attended 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

The Promoting Access for Individuals with Disabilities (PAID) advisory council, and WorkSource staff continues to meet quarterly with partner agencies to develop strategies for assisting individuals with employment needs, and accommodation. Partner connections are offered through the local Center for Independent Living (CIL), Salvation Army, Tallatoona, Elevation House, Network Day Center, Highland Rivers, Georgia Northwestern Technical College, Georgia Highlands College and other organizations whose mission 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. In the last year, staff has collaborated with employers and service providers to host two “Second Chance Employment and Resource Fairs” in Floyd County (Rome) and Bartow County (Cartersville). Currently, the staff is collaborating with the local housing authority, Department of Community Services, Living Proof (a recovery center), NAMI, Georgia Justice Project, the Manufacturing Institute, Envoy, 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 that work with foster children and their families, juvenile justice, boards of education, and 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~~ working 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](http://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 post-secondary 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'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 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.

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. As previously stated, PY2020 and PY 2021 have been challenging years due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Performance indicators have been impacted and NWGA will continue to see the effects COVID has had on the economy. 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 LWDAs are encouraged to show continual improvement, which is reflected in the goals that WFD negotiates. Should LWDAs 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 LWDAs 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. LWDAs can produce reports on hard-to-serve populations as well as pre-determine performance measure achievement. This self-assessment by LWDAs is encouraged and the GWROPP is used extensively by WFD for performance monitoring.

WIOA performance percentages were negotiated with TCSG.

Performance Measure	WIOA
<b>ADULTS AND DISLOCATED WORKER MEASURES</b>	
Q2 Entered Employment Rate	Employed in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit
Q4 Entered Employment Rate	Employed in unsubsidized employment 4 <sup>th</sup> 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.
<b>YOUTH MEASURES</b>	
Q2 Entered Employment Rate	Employed in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit
Q4 Entered Employment Rate	Employed in unsubsidized employment 4 <sup>th</sup> 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 2020.

	Actual	LWDB Plan	% LWDB Achieved
Employment Q2 Adult	85.7%	79.0%	108.5%
Employment Q4 Adult	83.0%	79.0%	105.0%
Credential Adult	72.7%	77.0%	94.4%
Skill Gains Adult	64.3%	45.0%	142.9%
Q2 Median Earnings Adults	\$6,210.00	\$6,000.00	103.5%
Employment Q2 DW	87.9%	78.0%	112.7%
Employment Q4 DW	84.5%	78.0%	108.4%
Credential DW	68.7%	76.0%	90.3%
Skill Gains DW	70.7%	46.0%	153.6%
Q2 Median Earnings DW	\$7,581.00	\$6,500.00	116.6%

Employment Q2 Youth	78.9%	74.0%	106.6%
Employment Q4 Youth	80.5%	75.0%	107.4%
Credential Youth	82.9%	78.0%	106.3%
Skill Gains Youth	64.0%	65.0%	98.5%
Q 2 Median Earnings Youth	\$3,220.00	\$2,000.00	161.02%

Source: Technical College System of Georgia/Georgia Performs

Above is the available Performance for PY20. Northwest Georgia is meeting all required Performance Measures.

**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.
- Depending on the availability of funding, 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. 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;
  - (d) Applicants with multiple degrees other than an associate degree will not be eligible for enrollment. Those with a degree which is considered obsolete, are those that are working towards a bachelor's degree and lack 2 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.
- 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 Tracksourc. 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. Please see attachment

**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 telephonic and video-conferencing, will increase productivity, are also being used for relevant 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 continuous 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 and flyers 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 the 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
Marian Barber	Job Developer	Tallatoona CAP, Inc.	Community-Based Organizations
Angela Berch	VP, Economic Development	West Georgia Technical College	Higher Education Representative
Eli Falls		Murray County Industrial Dev. Authority	Economic Development
Selena Galmon	Human Resources Manager	Yanmar	Business Representative
Nicole Green	HR Representative	Meggitt Polymers and Composites	Business Representative
Harry Harvey	Mayor	City of Summerville	CCEO
Jim Henry	President	Customer Precision Components	Business Representative
Beth Kelley	Owner	KBruce Farms, Inc.	Business Representative
Randy Long	Plant Manager	Pilgrim's	Business Representative
Linda McEntire	Director, Technical Training	CFL Flooring	Business Representative
Mitchell Morgan	Chairman	United Community Bank Board	Business Representative
Mike Murphy	COO	McWhorter Capital	Business Representative
Cam Parker	Area Manager	Georgia Power	Business Representative
Matthew Salmon	District 1 Supervisor	Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency	Vocational Rehabilitation
Elizabeth Scott	Regional Coordinator	Georgia Department of Labor	Wagner-Peyser Representative
Lisa Shaw	Vice President, Adult Services	Georgia Northwestern Technical College	YSA/Adult Education
Robert Strickland	Marketing Representative	IUOE 926	Apprenticeship
Carey Tucker	Marketing Representative	Plumbers, Pipefitters, and HVACR Technicians, Local 72	Labor Representative
Gregg Webb	Plant Manager	Gildan Yarns	Business Representative
<b>Vacancy</b>			Labor Representative
<b>Vacancy</b>			Business Representative

**Attachment 2: Local Negotiated Performance**

WIOA Performance Measure	PY20 Goal	PY21 Goal
Adult Q2 Entered Employment	79%	81%
Adult Q4 Entered Employment	79%	80%
Adult Median Earnings	\$6,000	\$6,200
Adult Credential Rate	77%	78%
Adult In-Program Skills Gain	45%	50%
DW Q2 Entered Employment	78%	80%
DW Q4 Entered Employment	78%	79%
DW Median Earnings	\$6,500	\$6,600
DW Credential Rate	76%	79%
DW In-Program Skills Gain	46%	47%
Youth Q2 Placement in Employment or Education	74%	76%
Youth Q4 Placement in Employment or Education	75%	77%
Youth Median Earnings	\$2,000	\$2,200
Youth Credential Rate	78%	79%
Youth In-Program Skills Gain	65%	66%

**Employer Measure** \* At this time we haven't negotiated PY 22 and PY 23 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**

### **NWGRC Demand Occupations**

The NWGRC WDB provides occupational specific skills training for industries that are stable or have projected growth. Skills training will not be provided in declining industries or jobs that offer minimum wage pay.

This listing serves as a guide. There may be additional occupations in which demand occurs based on the job market or specific opportunities within the broad spectrum of occupations. The NWGRC WDB may provide training for a job where demand is limited, but current openings exist.

<b>2022 Projections Northwest Georgia Most Projected Job Growth Occupations</b>	<b>Career Curriculum</b>
<b>11-0000 Management and Supervisory</b>	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)
<b>13-0000 Business and Financial Operations</b>	13-1031 Insurance Claims Adjuster, Property and Casualty Agent 13-1071 Personnel Recruiter 13-1151 Industrial Trainer 13-2011 Accountant 13-2082 Tax Preparer
<b>15-0000 Computer and Mathematical</b>	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 User Support Specialist 15-1152 Computer Network Support Specialist 15-1199 Information/Office Technology; Project Mgmt PMP Test Prep/Technology Management
<b>17-0000 Architecture and Engineering</b>	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
<b>19-0000 Life, Physical and Social Science</b>	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 27-1024 Computer Graphics Tech 27-2022 Instructor and Coach Sports 27-3022 Journalist 27-3091 Interpreter
29-0000 Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	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/Paramedic 29-2052 Pharmacy Tech 29-2055 Surgical Tech 29-2061 Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) 29-2071 Health Medical Records Management/Health Information Technician 29-2071 Medical Records Tech 29-2099 X-ray Tech 29-9011 Occupational Safety Specialist
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 Secretary/Medical Office Worker 31-9094 Transcriptionist 31-9097 Phlebotomy Tech
33-0000 Protective Service	33-2011 Forestry and Fire Tech 33-3012 Correctional 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 Assistant 43-6013 Medical Assistant 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 WDB. Added 1/21/15) 51-6064 Industrial 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 Service Technician and Mechanic/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 3 3or 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. 3At 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.
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](http://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 ensure 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 \$5,000 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, favor or anything of monetary value from contractors or potential contracts. 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](mailto: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@tcsg.edu](mailto:WIOAcompliance@tcsg.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](http://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](http://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@tcsg.edu](mailto:WIOAcompliance@tcsg.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

Lloyd Frasier

WIOA Equal Opportunity Officer

Executive Director

Northwest Georgia Regional Commission  
P.O. Box 1798

Northwest Georgia Regional Commission  
P.O. Box 1798

Rome, Georgia 30162-1798

Rome, GA 30165

709.295.6485

706.295.6485

[pwalker@nwgrc.org](mailto:pwalker@nwgrc.org)

[lfrasier@nwgrc.org](mailto: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://tcsgeu/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@tcsgeu](mailto:WIOAcompliance@tcsgeu)

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, childcare, dependent care, housing, and needs-related payments that are necessary to enable an individual to participate in activities authorized under Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (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 (NWGRC).

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 (for exceptions refer to Page 6, Section F), 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 childcare 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. NWGRC will issue the transportation, dependent, and childcare 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 (Portal) prior to the supportive service being provided.
2. Each supportive service provided will have justification in the file as to the need for the service. 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 supportive 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 Portal utilizing forms as provided by NWGRC.
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 Portal to document the justification. The Supportive Service Request form and case notes in the Portal will stipulate the time frame for support service.
- e.) Receiving supportive 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 Portal profile.

**C. Process of How Supportive Services Will be Provided:**

NWGRC will reimburse participants for transportation, dependent, and childcare 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 NWGRC.
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. Payments will be made to qualifying adults and dislocated workers for the following supportive 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 a Child Age 12 and Under:

- The children 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 childcare supportive services.
- Reimbursement to the participant is limited to a maximum of \$15.00 per-day, per child, up to 2 children.
- Birth certificates will be required 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 childcare 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 childcare 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 \$15 per day (maximum weekly payment of \$75) 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 – 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 (NRPs)
- 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
- 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
- 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

## 5.) Fines

### **E.) Documentation of the Provision for Supportive Services:**

- a.) All supportive service information for participants *must* be entered into the Portal (the type of supportive service, amount, date of service, etc.). All supporting documentation for a participant's supportive services must be scanned into the Portal and maintained in a physical case file (participant time sheets, income determination, UI records, Supportive Service Request form, etc.).
- b.) If a participant's supportive service amount changes, that information must be updated in the Portal. 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 Portal 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.

### **F.) Online Student Support:**

In the event adult or dislocated worker students must take online classes they will receive a flat rate of \$10 per day, for a maximum of 3 days a week (\$30), Monday through Friday, in lieu of a travel supplement. They will not be eligible for childcare on days attending online training. However, in the event they are required to attend in person for tests, clinicals, meetings with teacher, etc. they will be eligible for the traditional rates for travel and childcare as stated in *D. Allowable Supportive Services, Section 3a*.



### **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 13<sup>th</sup> 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 8<sup>th</sup> 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 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 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.

**Funding for any reimbursement is contingent upon the availability of funds from the Technical College System of Georgia's Office of Workforce Development.**

## **Attachment 11: Priority of Services 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 higher needs populations. However, inclusion in a priority group does not bypass WIOA eligibility requirements.

Priority for adult services must be given to recipients of public assistance or other low-income individuals and individuals who are basic skills deficient. Unlike its predecessor,

WIOA requires that priority of service applies regardless of the amount of funding available making the priority of service automatic for all WIOA Adult funding.

WIOA sec. 3(5) defines basic skills deficient as referring to an individual: who is a youth or adult, that is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society.

\* Note: Individuals who are English language learners meet the criteria for "basic skills deficient" and must be included in the priority populations for the Title I Adult program. See TEGL 19-16 for the definition.

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.

Veterans under WIOA Sec. 3 (63)(A) receive priority of service for all USDOL funded programs as described in the Jobs for Veterans Act (38 U.S.C. 4215 (2)) meaning priority must be given to veterans and eligible spouses of veterans who otherwise meet the eligibility requirements for adult, dislocated worker and youths programs must receive the highest priority for services. According to TEGL 10-09 regarding order of priority for veterans and eligible spouses, including widows and widowers as defined in the statute and regulations, are eligible for priority of service. The Final Rule requires that the broad definition of "veteran" found in 38 U.S.C. 101 (2) be used. Additionally, "eligible spouse" is defined in section 2(a) of the Jobs for Veterans Act.

While Veterans receive priority for WIOA services, LWDs and applicable service providers must have a referral process in place for directing Veterans with significant barriers to employment to the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program to ensure the most effective provision of service.

### **Implementing Priority of Service in WIOA Adult Programs**

Implementing priority means that these individuals receive services earlier in time or instead of nonpriority individuals. Veterans and eligible spouses of veterans who otherwise meet the eligibility requirements for Adult programs must receive the highest priority for services. For Adult programs, WIOA priority and Veteran priority categories should be merged and provided in the following order:

- First, to veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance,

low-income individuals, or 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 (but who still meet the eligibility criteria).

NOTE: Individuals with a disability are not automatically included in a priority category solely on the basis of the disability. However, individuals with disabilities are considered a family of one for income determination purposes, which usually (but not always) indicates their status as low-income. Additionally, receipt of SSI would qualify an individual as a recipient of public assistance and meets the definition of low-income detailed below, thus placing that individual in a priority category.

## **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, TEGL 19-16**
- **Workforce Innovative and Opportunity Act Regulations - 20 CFR Section 663.600**
- **TCSG OWD Policy Manual: Section 3.2.5 (II) and 3.2.7**
- **Workforce GPS Training TEGL 07-20**

- **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 inaction; 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 with 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](http://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](http://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.

## **Attachment 12: Individual Training Account System and Eligible Training Provider**

Worksource Northwest Georgia (WorkSource Northwest Georgia) is responsible for procurement activities for the Northwest Georgia Workforce Development Board (WDB) and prepares a bidders' list consisting of training providers interested in potentially offering services in the WDB area. Solicitation of bids through an initial public invitation process was accomplished through public notice in the newspapers and the posting of a training provider application on the careerdepot.org web site. Letters of notice of applications were forwarded to all agencies indicated on the bidders' list. Although the solicitation was an open solicitation, further solicitations may be offered on an as-needed basis.

Receipt, logging of applications, and evaluation of responsiveness to the request will occur upon application transmittal to WorkSource Northwest Georgia. Applications will be reviewed for responsiveness; and a letter of non-responsiveness will be forwarded to training providers, if necessary. Letters will denote reasons for non-responsiveness and information needed to resolve and resubmit the application. If unable to resolve at the staff level, WorkSource Northwest Georgia will utilize the WDB Executive Committee and the Technical College System of Georgia OWD in the appeals process.

### **Review and Evaluation**

Training provider applications will be reviewed and evaluated by staff. The evaluation will include the application evaluation elements in the evaluation criteria, pre-award visits to new providers, verification of performance information, employee interviews, participant/student interviews, etc. The comparison to local criteria will include evaluation of stated performance against regional measures. Letters will be forwarded to training providers who fail to submit adequate information and applications may be reviewed upon submission of additional information. If fraudulent or faulty information is received, the application is denied, and an appeal ensues; WorkSource Northwest Georgia will utilize the WDB Executive Committee in the appeals process. Once an Eligible Training Provider (ETP) has filed an appeal with the LWDB, received a written resolution, and is dissatisfied with the LWDB's resolution, the ETP may file a second level appeal with the State Workforce Development Board. Conversely, in the event that an entity is denied designation on the State ETPL, or if the ETP is removed from the State ETPL, the ETP, may file an appeal directly with the State Workforce Development Board.

WorkSource Northwest Georgia will prepare summary reports on evaluation of training provider applications and submit to the Proposal Review Committee for approval and recommendation to the WDB and CCEO. A composite listing of eligible providers will be forwarded to the Technical College System of Georgia, Office of Workforce Division for approval. Following State approval and listing of eligible providers on the State list, the State will provide letter notification to state-approved training providers. If a training provider is rejected during the initial WorkSource Northwest Georgia review, WorkSource Northwest Georgia will notify the bidder. If the bidder subsequently appeals, WorkSource Northwest Georgia will utilize the WDB Executive Committee in the appeals process. Any appeals based on local policies will be handled by the WDB Executive Committee. Should the ETP not agree with the decision rendered and a 2nd appeal is needed they may contact SWDB.

## **Evaluation and Verification of Past Performance of Providers Not Automatically Eligible During the Initial Eligibility Period**

After receiving the eligible training provider application from proposers, WorkSource Northwest Georgia will review past performance. For applicants providing services under Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) for the last program year, WorkSource Northwest Georgia will review The Worksource Georgia Portal (WSGP) reports for past performance evaluation and verification. The reports may indicate provider and evaluation data such as completion rate, entered employment rate, average wage at placement, earnings replacement rate, employment in a training-related occupation, and percentage of jobs with benefits. Past performance evaluation will include reviewing data against established performance outcomes measures. State WIOA performance goals, regional goals, and WorkSource Northwest Georgia goals will be considered in establishing provider performance outcome goals. For all applicants, WorkSource Northwest Georgia may contact customer references provided in applications to help verify provider data and customer satisfaction. Also, for all applicants, UI Wage Reports may be used to verify employment, employment dates, and wages. Employer references will be verified to ascertain both customer satisfaction and placement outcomes.

### **Process to be used to update the Eligible Provider List**

WorkSource Northwest Georgia will accept and review eligible provider applications throughout the program year. WorkSource Northwest Georgia will review and evaluate applications using the above-mentioned established process.

Procedures for review and approval of additional programs and price increases for approved training providers will be provided in an initial agreement. These procedures applicable for initial providers not automatically eligible, describe instructions for submitting program/price changes. Procedures for review and approval of additional programs and price increase are described below: Procedure for Review and Approval of Additional Programs for Approved Training Provider:

1. Training providers should submit the Georgia ETP Application (attached) to WorkSource Northwest Georgia. Programs included in the application must exist at the time of application and be approved by the NPEC; the program(s) must be currently available to the general public and not solely dedicated/available to WIOA customers. At a minimum the following should be addressed: have at least five (5) students who have completed the program(s) of study and obtained training related employment, an identification of stable employment availability, employee benefits, starting wage, program length, all program costs, and if applicable, any program approval from an accrediting agency/organization and program history. Training providers are encouraged to submit other pertinent program information that may be helpful for review.
2. For requested programs that are not associated with demand occupations, training providers should submit to WorkSource Northwest Georgia the items listed above and three statements from employers verifying they would employ an individual who complete training.

3. WorkSource Northwest Georgia will compare the requested program(s) with other similar programs offered by approved training providers. Areas for comparison include price, length of the program, wage at placement, and provider location.
4. WorkSource Northwest Georgia will review the training provider's past efforts in providing services to customers. The training provider's success in achieving the WDB performance outcome goals will be reviewed.
5. Based on the results of the above steps, staff will either approve or disapprove the request and inform the WDB of the decision and reason at its next meeting.
6. WorkSource Northwest Georgia will notify the provider, in writing, stating conditional approval or disapproval.
7. If the results of the review are satisfactory, WorkSource Northwest Georgia will proceed to make an amendment to the provider's agreement adding the conditionally approved program to the provider's agreement.
8. If the additional program(s) is (are) approved, WorkSource Northwest Georgia will conduct a review of the training provider's success in achieving the appropriate WDB performance outcome goals.
9. WorkSource Northwest Georgia will notify Technical College System of Georgia, Office of Workforce Division upon final approval for inclusion on the state-approved training provider listing.

#### **Procedure for Review and Approval of Eligible Training Provider Price Increases for Approved Training Providers**

1. Training providers must submit to WorkSource Northwest Georgia notification of the price increase(s). Included in the notification should be a justification for the price increase(s) and, if applicable, any accrediting agency/organization that gave approval for these increases.
2. WorkSource Northwest Georgia will review the reasons for the price increase(s), the amount of the increase(s), and the provider's past success in achieving applicable WDB performance goals. The review will be submitted to the Proposal Review Committee for approval and recommendation to the WDB and CCEO.
3. WorkSource Northwest Georgia will notify the provider, in writing, stating approval or disapproval of the price increase(s) request. If approved, a formal amendment to the existing provider agreement will be processed and signed by both parties. Increased prices will not take effect until the amendment is signed and executed.
4. WorkSource Northwest Georgia will forward updated prices to Technical College System of Georgia, Office of Workforce Division for inclusion on the state-approved training provider listing.

## **Other Area or Regional Policies for Training Providers**

The Technical College System of Georgia, Office of Workforce Division, as required by the WIOA, maintains a list of approved training providers and programs in Georgia. All other states maintain a list as well.

1. If a training provider located in Northwest Georgia applies to be an Individual Training Account (ITA) provider for the Northwest Georgia Workforce Development Region, the provider and its programs will be investigated by staff and brought before the WDB and CCEOs for approval or disapproval.
2. If a State approved training provider in a region located outside Northwest Georgia applies to be an ITA provider for the region, staff will investigate and determine if the Page 4 of 5 ITA System and ETP Procedures Rev. 3/5/21 provider and its programs are appropriate to provide services for our region. If found appropriate, the provider's application will not be brought before the WDB and CCEO.
3. If a training provider in another state applies to be an ITA provider for Northwest Georgia, staff will determine if the provider is on its own State approved ITA Provider List; if it is, staff will investigate and determine if the provider and its programs are appropriate to provide services for our region. Their application, also, will not be brought before the WDB and CCEO for approval.
4. If a training provider in another state applies to be an ITA provider for Northwest Georgia and is found to not be on an approved State ITA Provider List, the provider and its programs will be investigated by staff and brought before the WDB and CCEOs for approval or disapproval.

## **Process for Determining Which Customers Receive ITAs**

This area is covered in Training Policies

## **How Training Provider Performance Information will be Gathered, Verified, and Used to Determine Continuing Provider Eligibility**

To gather training provider information, WorkSource Northwest Georgia contractors will contact customers throughout training and during follow-up. After the customer is employed, a career advisor will contact the employer by phone, letter, or e-mail to document performance information such as whether the job is training related, the starting wage, and whether the job offers benefits. The career advisor may refer to customer information taken during intake such as wage at dislocation for assistance in comparing customer entry wage with dislocated wage. The career advisor will conduct follow-up by contacting the customer and/or employer to note customer retention information. All training provider performance related to individual customers will be documented in customer files.

To determine continued eligibility of training providers, WorkSource Northwest Georgia will require each provider to submit their performance. Once performance has been submitted, it will be compared to local performance requirements. In general, WorkSource Northwest Georgia will require that each provider's performance meet and/or exceed established WDB performance measure goals. If the goals are met, the

training provider agreement may be allowed to continue. For providers that do not meet goals, WorkSource Northwest Georgia may place them on a limited slots' restriction. Under this restriction, a limited number of customers may be allowed to attend the provider's training; however, once the number has been reached, no other customers may attend training until another review of performance is conducted. Depending on the results of the review, the training provider agreement may be allowed to continue or be terminated.

**Local Policies concerning other Financial Resources for Training (e.g., Pell, HOPE Grant, HOPE Scholarship, TANF, etc.) and other Linkages/Agreements Regarding Training across the Region**

It is the policy of the Northwest Georgia WDB to coordinate WIOA training funds with Pell and HOPE funding. All customers must apply for Pell and HOPE funding, if eligible, and a cost of attendance worksheet be completed. Customers should apply as soon as a school is selected. Customers may begin training while these applications are in process. If another financial resource subsequently pays for or includes the cost-of-attendance in its financial package, the customer must pay back to WIOA the tuition and/or other duplicate costs of attendance expended on the customer's behalf. This policy applies to those customers who are seeking assistance for funding for schools that provide financial assistance under Title IV of the Higher Education Act and the Georgia HOPE Scholarship Program. If Pell and HOPE funding is denied, documentation of the denial must be included in the customer's file.

**Board Policies Regarding Training Contracts with Community-based Organizations or Other Training Providers with Proven Expertise in Serving Special Populations with Multiple Barriers to Employment and Populations to be served through these Existing Contracts.**

Community-based organizations may apply to become eligible training providers by completing and submitting an eligible training provider application. The same method used to evaluate applications submitted by other types of entities will be used for applications submitted by community-based organization.

**Registered Apprenticeship**

Per directions from the Technical College System of Georgia, Office of Workforce Division, Registered Apprenticeships who request to be placed on the Eligible Training Provider List, are automatically included, as long as their program is registered with the United States Department of Labor (USDOL). They simply have to send their information to a local area, which passes it along to the state to be put on the State ETP list. Registered Apprenticeships are not subject to the same initial application and performance information as regular ITA's, as they are subject to a detailed application and vetting process with the USDOL. When requesting to work with our area, we will still send them a Training Provider Agreement to work with us.

The Final Rule allows apprenticeship programs that are not registered to go through the eligible training provider (ETP) process if they want to be on the ETP list. The rule does not provide apprenticeship programs that are not registered special access to the ETPL. The Registered Apprenticeship application is attached.