Region 1—WorkSource Northwest Georgia
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
Local Plan

August 2016

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 Sec. 107(d)(12)(B)(i)(III) as determined by the chief elected official.

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

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

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

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

   Northwest Georgia has long been 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. Announcements of new plants and expansions are now making headlines. The industry has steadily been recovering.

   Manufacturing Employment

   Since 2002, the loss of jobs was not equal across all major employment sectors. Manufacturing, which accounts for nearly 25 percent of total employment in 2012, was one of the hardest hit. The table below depicts how manufacturing employment in the Northwest Georgia region has changed over time and also provides a comparison to the southeast U.S. and the United States as a whole. From 2002 to 2012, the region experienced a 27 percent decline in manufacturing sector—greater than both the southeast U.S. and the nation as a whole which fell by 24.8 percent and 21.7 percent, respectively.
The current civilian labor force is 403,097 with a per capita income for 2014 of $30,922 which has increased each year since the beginning of the economic recovery in 2010 when it was $26,905.

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

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<td>Apparel</td>
<td>619</td>
<td>198</td>
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<td>Beverage and Tobacco Product</td>
<td>872</td>
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<td>Chemical</td>
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<td>2,888</td>
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<td>Computer and Electronic Product</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>399</td>
<td>520</td>
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<td>Electrical Equipment, Appliance, and Component</td>
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<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
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<td>Fabricated Metal Product</td>
<td>2,070</td>
<td>2,522</td>
<td>1,851</td>
<td>-219</td>
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<td>Food</td>
<td>5,136</td>
<td>5,051</td>
<td>3,456</td>
<td>-1,680</td>
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<td>6%</td>
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<td>Furniture and Related Product</td>
<td>2,208</td>
<td>2,508</td>
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<td>Leather and Allied Product</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Machinery</td>
<td>1,735</td>
<td>1,788</td>
<td>1,559</td>
<td>-176</td>
<td>-10.1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>625</td>
<td>664</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>83.9%</td>
<td>1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nonmetallic Mineral Product</td>
<td>1,223</td>
<td>1,482</td>
<td>754</td>
<td>-469</td>
<td>-38.3%</td>
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<td>Paper</td>
<td>1,940</td>
<td>777</td>
<td>1,202</td>
<td>-738</td>
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<td>Petroleum and Coal Products</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>110.5%</td>
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*Data not Available, Source: GDOL

### Manufacturing Subsectors

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<tr>
<td>Plastics and Rubber Products</td>
<td>2,950</td>
<td>3,124</td>
<td>4,152</td>
<td>1,202</td>
<td>40.7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary Metal</td>
<td>1,370</td>
<td>1,702</td>
<td>1,284</td>
<td>-46</td>
<td>-6.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Printing and Related Support Activities</td>
<td>2,476</td>
<td>2,422</td>
<td>1,907</td>
<td>-569</td>
<td>-23.0%</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Textile Mills</td>
<td>14,575</td>
<td>11,299</td>
<td>8,914</td>
<td>-5,661</td>
<td>-38.8%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textile Product Mills</td>
<td>33,599</td>
<td>29,897</td>
<td>21,029</td>
<td>-12,870</td>
<td>-37.4%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation Equipment</td>
<td>2,496</td>
<td>4,954</td>
<td>3,835</td>
<td>1,399</td>
<td>53.6%</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wood Product</td>
<td>1,299</td>
<td>1,369</td>
<td>1,010</td>
<td>-289</td>
<td>-22.2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Manufacturing</td>
<td>80,859</td>
<td>75,748</td>
<td>58,855</td>
<td>-22,004</td>
<td>-27.2%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Advanced Manufacturing and Transportation

Since 2014, several companies have relocated or expanded into Georgia. Specific to Northwest Georgia are: Toyo Tire, Shaw Industries, Lowes Distribution Center, Engineered Floors, LLC, and Surya Rug. Due to the recovery of the flooring industry, employment at Shaw Industries and Mohawk has increased. 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 2012 had the highest number of jobs; however, in comparison to the other transportation statistics it had the lowest wage. Pipeline Transportation had the highest weekly wage. The chart below was developed for and reported in the Northwest Georgia Regional Advance Manufacturing Strategy Report in 2014.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Jobs</th>
<th>Firms</th>
<th>Avg. Weekly Wage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Air Transportation</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>$1,250</td>
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<tr>
<td>Truck Transportation</td>
<td>4582</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>$755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pipeline Transportation</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$2,058</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support Activities for Freight</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>$822</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couriers and Messengers</td>
<td>379</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>$759</td>
</tr>
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</table>

As a result of this robust growth, the Northwest Georgia area was designated as an “Advanced Manufacturing” community in June, 2014. Northwest Georgia is among 12 other communities across the nation to receive a manufacturing community designation, which could mean more federal money invested in supporting workforce development. Out of a pool of 70 applicants across the U.S., Northwest Georgia received the designation as part of the Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership initiative. The program is led by the United States Commerce Department and designed to stimulate the resurgence of manufacturing in communities nationwide. Through solicitations from the local Chamber of Commerce and Northwest Georgia Regional Commission partners, 12 communities in the United States were selected based on the strength of their economic development plans, the potential for impact in their communities, and the depths of their partnerships across the public and private sector to carry out their plans. Northwest Georgia demonstrated the significance of manufacturing already present in the area and had developed strategies to make investments in multiple areas that would benefit the industry. It was shown that Northwest Georgia represented a diverse group of communities with the most comprehensive economic development plans to attract business investment to increase the area’s competitiveness. The Advanced Manufacturing designation will strengthen the American manufacturing sector and attract more investments to the United States. It will also support job creation and accelerate manufacturing growth. Innovative programs such as these encourage American communities to work together to craft strong, clear, strategic plans to attract manufacturing investment and jobs to transform themselves into globally competitive commercial hubs. A designation
as an Advanced Manufacturing community shows diverseness which has also put in place best practice economic development strategies that can be replicated by other American communities.

At the state level, in 2011, Governor Nathan Deal announced the Georgia Competitiveness Initiative, a public-private partnership to enhance the state’s economic development strategy. The initiative focuses on the key factors that drive long-term economic success: Business Climate, Education & Workforce Development, Innovation, Infrastructure, Global Commerce, and Government Efficiency & Effectiveness. This initiative also led to strategic efforts to support both the manufacturing and construction industries in Georgia. As a result of this designation, the state of Georgia has been ranked #1 in the nation in which to do business (per leading business and economic development publications). Georgia has become a strong business climate and is attracting jobs.

**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 2002 to 2012, wages for manufacturing jobs in the region grew by 31 percent (not adjusted for inflation), while the Southeast grew by 39 percent and the U.S. grew by 37 percent.

Average annual pay for floor covering jobs in the region follow. In 2012, the wages for floor covering jobs in the region was $38,784. While this is an increase from the $29,501 reported in 2002, it still falls short compared to the U.S.

**Manufacturing Outlook**

Northwest Georgia continues to rebound from the Great Recession, due in part to immigration, the recovery of the housing sector, and the ability of the floor covering industry to adjust its product offerings.
Healthcare Industry

Northwest Georgia has also seen significant growth in health care and social assistance. Employers like Floyd Medical Center continue to show increased need for healthcare employees such as Registered Nurses (RNs) and will continually show need for certified employees in the medical field. The medical field within our region continues to expand with the development of a long-term acute hospital (a state funded mental healthcare facility), a cancer treatment facility and a new non-special mega-voltage radiation therapy service. But, by the same token, Northwest Georgia experienced the closing of Northwest Georgia Regional Hospital, which took place at the end of September 2011. This closure impacted 764 workers. Hutcheson Memorial, Polk County Nursing Home, and Blue Ridge Hospitals have also closed.
recently. Some of the services they provided have been picked up by other providers. Yet the need remains strong for healthcare workers. There continues to be a need for more specialized training such as Long-Term Acute Care Registered Nurses (LTAC RN). Some of our local colleges have waiting lists for many of their medical programs including Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN) and Registered Nurses (RN). As a result, the WDB may fund stand-alone nursing classes when a significant number of dislocated workers want training in that occupation.

Other Sector Growth of Interest

Another enterprise that has located to Northwest Georgia is the LakePoint Sporting Community in Emerson, GA (Bartow County). In addition to being able to host various sporting events, this mega complex is bringing in restaurants, hotels, medical facilities, and entertainment facilities. Continued growth in the tourism industry is expected as a result of this. The other two sectors of health care and transportation are impacted by this development.

Three of the top industry sectors for Northwest Georgia (as shown on the chart) will be the focus of our regional plan: Transportation, Healthcare, and Manufacturing (Advanced only). Retail trade (service industry) is a component of the top 4 listed ties into the Lake Point
project under way in Bartow County, however, skill requirements for retail are low and do not generally require training. Therefore, it was not selected for sector focus.

Occupations associated with industry sectors of Transportation, Healthcare, and Advanced Manufacturing are shown on the graph above.

The location of the I-75 corridor through the region makes the area attractive to manufacturing. This drives the demand for Transportation jobs making Tractor-Trailer Truck drivers the number one occupation. These heavy transportation vehicles transport raw materials and finished goods to and from plants and distribution centers in the area.

Registered Nurse (RN) jobs follow in the number two position. The graph shows that including RN, six of the occupations charted are in the Healthcare industry. The areas near the Rome MSA and Dalton MSA have an abundance of medical facilities including Redmond Regional Hospital, Floyd Medical Center, Harbin Clinic, Southeastern Cardiovascular Center, Hamilton Medical Center and Gordon Hospital. The need for experienced medical staff is in continuous demand.
Advanced Manufacturing occupations include general production laborers, maintenance, sales representatives, and managers to name a few. Many of the manufacturing jobs in the region are directly or indirectly tied in to the flooring industry and automotive industry with the close proximity to Volkswagen in Chattanooga as manufacturers or suppliers.

**Employment Needs for the Region**

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

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

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

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

The Demand Occupations list for Northwest Georgia (see below) 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.

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<tr>
<th>2015 NWGRC Demand Occupations</th>
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<tr>
<td>The NWGRC WIB 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.</td>
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<tr>
<td>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 WIB may provide training for a job where demand is limited, but current openings exist.</td>
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<td>Approved by WDB March 18, 2015</td>
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<table>
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<th>2015 Projections</th>
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<td>Northwest Georgia Most Projected Job Growth Occupations</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 31-0000 Healthcare Support | 31-1011 Home Health Aide  
31-1014 Patient Care Technician  
31-1015 Nursing Aide/Orderly  
31-2021 Physical Therapy Assistant  
31-9011 Neuromuscular Therapy/Massage Tech  
31-9091 Dental Assistant/Dental Hygienist  
31-9092 Medical Assistant/Medical Office Worker  
31-9094 Transcriptionist  
31-9097 Phlebotomy Tech |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 33-0000 Protective Service | 33-2011 Forestry and Fire Tech  
33-3012 Correction Officer  
33-3051 Law Enforcement Officer |
| 35-0000 Food Preparation and Serving Related | 35-1011 Culinary Arts  
35-2021 Food Prep Worker  
35-3021 Combination Food Prep/Service Worker |
| 37-0000 Building /Grounds Cleaning/Maintenance | 37-3011 Laborer, Landscaper/Groundskeeper |
| 39-0000 Personal Care and Service | 39-9011 Childcare Worker  
39-9021 Health Care Assistant |
| 41-0000 Sales and Related | 41-2031 Retail Salesperson  
41-3021 Insurance: Life, Accident, Sickness Agent  
41-4011 Sales Rep, Executive Retail |
| 43-0000 Office and Admin Support | 43-1011 Clerical Supervisor/Supervisor/Assistant/Assistant Accounting Clerk/Assistant/Medical Billing/Insurance Specialist/Medical Coding/3-3011 AR Clerk/Bookkeeper/4-4051 Customer Service Rep/4-4171 Reception/Information Clerk/4-6012 Legal Secretary/4-6013 Medical Secretary/4-6014 Adm Asst/Business Office Technology |
| 47-0000 Construction and Extraction | 47-2021 Brick mason  
47-2031 Carpenter  
47-2041 Carpet Installer  
47-2044 Hard Tile Setter  
47-2073 Heavy Equipment Operator  
47-2081 Drywall Installer  
47-2121 Glazier  
47-2142 Painter and Paperhanger  
47-2152 Plumber, Pipefitter, Steamfitter  
47-2161 Plasterer, Stucco Mason  
47-2181 Roofer |
| 49-0000 Installation, Maintenance, Repair | 49-2011 Computer Repair Tech, Data Processing Equip Repair  
49-2022 Telecommunications  
49-2093 Electronic Technician  
49-2094 Industrial Electronics  
49-3011 Aviation Tech  
49-3021 Automotive Structural Repairer  
49-3023 Automotive Mechanic  
49-3053 Small Engine Repair  
49-9021 Heating/AC Tech  
49-9041 Industrial Machinery Mechanic/Industrial Maintenance Tech  
49-9052 Fiber Optics Line Installer/Repairer, Lineman  
49-9062 Biomedical Instrumentation Specialist  
49-9071 Maintenance Repairer General Utility  
49-9098 Mechanic/Repairer Helper |
| 51-0000 Production | 51-1011 Production Tech  
51-3022 Meat, Poultry, Fish Cutter  
51-4041 Machine Tool Tech/Machinist  
51-4121 Welder and Cutter  
51-5112 Print Graphics Tech  
51-6031 Sewing Machine Operator* (Approved by WIB. Added 1/21/15)  
51-6064 Machinry Mech/Textile Mach Oper/Tender Textile Carpet Industry  
51-9081 Dental Laboratory Technician  
51-9199 Production Workers All Others |
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.

Activities in the region include:

- The most in-demand occupations in the region are: recycling and reclamation workers; textile winding, twisting, and drawing out machinists; extruding and forming machinist; industrial truck and tractor operators; and first-line supervisors of production and operations.

- A job opening snapshot revealed that top knowledge requirements across openings include: production and processing; English language; mechanical, customer and personal service; and administration and management.

- Occupational projections forecast that interior designers, computer-controlled machine tool operators, computer system analysts and vehicle and equipment cleaners will either remain stable or experience job growth in both the floor covering industry and across all occupations.

- Occupations projected to increase employment in both the floor covering industry and across all occupations include interior designers, computer-controlled machine tool operators, computer system analysts, and vehicle and equipment cleaners.

- Industry announcements from 2013 to 2014 estimate the job creation of more than 4,000 jobs with an estimated investment of more than one billion dollars in the region. Over half of these job projections are focused on the floor covering industry.

- Between 2000 and 2011, patents within the "textile technologies" field amounted to over 70 percent of total technology patents within the Dalton MSA.
Research suggests that there is high demand for workers in the floor covering industry with a relatively high level of analytical competence. While a highly skilled workforce and the industry’s concentration in the region provide fertile ground for innovation activity, both workforce skill level and patent activity could benefit from a talent and innovation pipeline with a research university.

**Job Openings Snapshot**

A snapshot of the current occupational opportunities in the floor covering industry was collected in May 2014, revealing 626 open positions at major floor covering manufacturing firms in the region. Openings were obtained from the employment search website, Randstad, and the job boards of individual regional employers, including the region’s most prominent floor covering manufacturers: Beaulieu, Engineered Floors, IVC Group, J+J Flooring Group, Mohawk, and Shaw. These openings represent a “snapshot” of the industry’s need, and do not take into account proposed/future jobs, such as industry announcements. The table lists the top occupations, by current job openings advertised.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOC Code</th>
<th>SOC Description</th>
<th>Openings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>51-9199.01</td>
<td>Recycling and Reclamation Workers</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-6064</td>
<td>Textile Winding, Twisting, and Drawing Out Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-6063</td>
<td>Textile Knitting and Weaving Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-6091</td>
<td>Extruding and Forming Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Synthetic and Glass Fibers</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53-7051</td>
<td>Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-1011</td>
<td>First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53-3032</td>
<td>Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-2022</td>
<td>Sales Managers</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-4012</td>
<td>Sales Representatives</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49-9041</td>
<td>Industrial Machinery Mechanics</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-3023.03</td>
<td>Electrical Engineering Technicians</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-4191</td>
<td>Heat Treating Equipment Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-9199</td>
<td>Production Workers, All Other</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-9061</td>
<td>Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49-9043</td>
<td>Maintenance Workers, Machinery</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top Occupational Openings</td>
<td>417</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Current openings were assigned Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system codes based on their job descriptions. Using the Occupational Information Network (O*NET) of the US Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration (USDOL/ETA), an estimate of the skills required, as well as projected national growth and earnings potential was collected.

**Requirements for Current Position Openings**

For each occupational code listed above, information was gathered regarding the knowledge, skills, abilities, work activities and work styles. The results were aggregated to determine which requirements were most commonly in demand across all occupational codes analyzed.
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 required 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.
The charts below mirror Northwest Georgia’s area designation as “advanced manufacturing” as deemed by Gov. Nathan Deal in 2014.

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 two-year ITA restriction. Others, such as cashiers, retail salespersons, may require little to no training and represent low wage jobs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Northwest Georgia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Top 10 Occupations Advertised</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered Nurses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Salespersons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Service Representatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cashiers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance and Repair Workers, General</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: © 2016 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:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blue Print Reading</th>
<th>Lean Principles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business Skills</td>
<td>Machine Tooling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math Skills</td>
<td>OSHA Regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to Success</td>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print Reading and Gaging</td>
<td>Computer Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Continuous Improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robotics</td>
<td>Controls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>Drafting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft Skills</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>Environmental Health and Safety Experts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tool and Die</td>
<td>Fluid Power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Troubleshooting</td>
<td>Knowledge of Supply chain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welding</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Ethic</td>
<td>CNC Programming</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HEALTHCARE AND LIFE SCIENCES SKILLS/ATTRIBUTES CITED:

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

LOGISTICS AND TRANSPORTATION SECTOR SKILLS/ATTRIBUTES CITED:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ability to Multitask</th>
<th>Presentation Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business Writing</td>
<td>Soft Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision Making</td>
<td>Teamwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics</td>
<td>Time Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Troubleshooting</td>
<td>Maturity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Ethics</td>
<td>Math Skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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. Our Youth providers work with younger youth that are at risk of dropping out as well as older youth that need GED ® 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 listing below). “Georgia graduation rates rose 6 percent from 2014 to 2015 (this is the state’s largest gain since 2011). All counties had an increase in the graduation rate except Fannin which had an insignificant drop from 92.3 percent to 92.1 percent. The United States Department of Education’s goal is to achieve a 90 percent graduation rate by 2020. Georgia was sixth worst in a ranking of the 50 states and the District of Columbia for the 2013-2014 school year”. (www.americangraduateatl.org/stories/2015-2016-research-dropout-crisis-georgia)
Area employers currently participating in the On-the-Job Training (OJT) program have expressed an interest in Incumbent Worker Training (IWT). The OJT contract provider will begin working to identify qualified employers. From those qualified, appropriate employees will be enrolled in Incumbent Worker Training to help upgrade existing skill levels and to avert potential layoffs.

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.

The counties with the lowest projected growth are Floyd and Dade, both of which are not located close to major interstate access. Floyd County is heavy in Healthcare facilities with the region’s largest hospitals located there. Dade County is geographically close to Chattanooga, but surrounded by mountainous terrain that isolates the county from other areas.

### Table: Population Projections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Population 2010 Census</th>
<th>2014 Estimate</th>
<th>2025 Projected</th>
<th>Percent Change 2010-2025</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bartow</td>
<td>100,157</td>
<td>101,736</td>
<td>158,780</td>
<td>58.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catoosa</td>
<td>63,942</td>
<td>65,621</td>
<td>93,176</td>
<td>45.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chattooga</td>
<td>26,015</td>
<td>24,939</td>
<td>32,657</td>
<td>25.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dade</td>
<td>16,633</td>
<td>16,389</td>
<td>20,632</td>
<td>24.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fannin</td>
<td>23,682</td>
<td>23,753</td>
<td>30,612</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floyd</td>
<td>96,317</td>
<td>96,063</td>
<td>112,799</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gilmer</td>
<td>28,292</td>
<td>28,829</td>
<td>45,592</td>
<td>61.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gordon</td>
<td>55,186</td>
<td>56,047</td>
<td>72,509</td>
<td>31.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haralson</td>
<td>28,780</td>
<td>238,641</td>
<td>40,666</td>
<td>41.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murray</td>
<td>39,628</td>
<td>39,410</td>
<td>63,527</td>
<td>60.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paulding</td>
<td>142,324</td>
<td>148,987</td>
<td>236,668</td>
<td>66.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pickens</td>
<td>29,431</td>
<td>29,997</td>
<td>49,334</td>
<td>67.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polk</td>
<td>41,475</td>
<td>41,133</td>
<td>53,360</td>
<td>28.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walker</td>
<td>68,756</td>
<td>68,218</td>
<td>77,810</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitfield</td>
<td>102,599</td>
<td>103,542</td>
<td>123,979</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Region 1 Population</td>
<td>863,217</td>
<td>1,083,305</td>
<td>1,212,101</td>
<td>40.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source U.S. Census Bureau)
Employment Trends

At the beginning of “The Great Recession” in 2008, and continuously since, staff and training providers have been responding to large and small layoffs and closures. Even now, we are experiencing layoffs and closures. As of January 1, 2016, there have been seven closures/layoffs and three pending closures/layoffs affecting over 450 employees. Northwest Georgia is working with various contractors at local colleges and the Department of Labor’s OJT programs to assist this population by providing training and/or OJT opportunities.

The chart below shows the unemployment rate variance since 2008. During the collapse of the housing market, unemployment rates soared to over 11 percent as carpet and flooring manufacturers were laying off due to reduction in sales. Beginning in 2012 the economy gradually began to recuperate.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Unemployment Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By 2015 the unemployment rate had rebounded to 5.8 percent which, for the first time, is higher than pre-recession numbers. As of March of 2016 rates continue to hover around 5.6 percent in Northwest Georgia which is slightly higher than the state rate for the same period which is 5.4 percent and the U.S. rate of 5.1 percent. (See below)
The chart below details the layoff trends and the tremendous jump in unemployment during the time span of 2009 through 2012.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GEORGIA LAYOFFS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration

(Layoffs peaked in 2010)

Although the manufacturing recession continues to impact Georgia, our region has shown slight employment growth due to existing manufacturing companies restructuring and expanding, and new businesses coming to our area. Economic growth is expected to continue to improve up to 3 percent by 2020 as shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AVERAGE U.S. ECONOMIC GROWTH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-2020 projection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, Organization of Economical Developed Countries

In 2012, there were 15,393 business establishments in the Northwest Georgia region that accounted for a total of 240,513 jobs. From 2002 to 2012, the number of jobs in the region fell by more than 5 percent. During that same time span, the number of establishments in the region grew by more than 8 percent. This suggests that businesses in the region have had to do more with less. Further, private sector jobs, which dropped by 7.1 percent, were more adversely affected by the economic downturn than the public sector, which experienced a small bump up in jobs (3.6 percent).
The table below shows preliminary estimated labor force, employment and unemployment information in Northwest Georgia Workforce Investment Area, Georgia, and the United States for March, 2016. These figures are not seasonally adjusted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area Name</th>
<th>Civilian Labor Force</th>
<th>Number Employed</th>
<th>Number Unemployed</th>
<th>Unemployment Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northwest Georgia Workforce Investment Area</td>
<td>403,097</td>
<td>380,695</td>
<td>22,402</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>4,846,801</td>
<td>4,583,037</td>
<td>263,764</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>158,854,000</td>
<td>150,738,000</td>
<td>8,116,000</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 2012 to 2022 for Northwest Georgia. Most of the projected employment growth can be seen in the Bachelor’s Degree category. There is lower growth associated with the Doctoral or Master degrees. To reiterate the GDOL’s information noted previously, there are projections that indicate there will still be a need for individuals with lower levels of education as indicated in the high school/equivalent and less than high school category.
LONG-TERM OCCUPATIONAL PROJECTIONS
Region 1 Northwest Georgia
2012 to 2022

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>2012 Base Employment</th>
<th>2022 Projected Employment</th>
<th>Total Change in Employment</th>
<th>Annual Openings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral or Professional Degree</td>
<td>3,500</td>
<td>4,500</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's Degree</td>
<td>3,370</td>
<td>4,430</td>
<td>1,060</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's Degree</td>
<td>32,110</td>
<td>39,170</td>
<td>7,060</td>
<td>1,330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate's Degree</td>
<td>7,300</td>
<td>9,040</td>
<td>1,740</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postsecondary Non-Degree Award</td>
<td>18,400</td>
<td>21,300</td>
<td>2,900</td>
<td>690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College, No Degree</td>
<td>3,580</td>
<td>4,640</td>
<td>1,060</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Diploma or Equivalent</td>
<td>111,640</td>
<td>118,630</td>
<td>6,990</td>
<td>3,510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Than High School</td>
<td>71,340</td>
<td>76,850</td>
<td>5,510</td>
<td>2,930</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Barriers to Employment

Low Income – 18.5 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 – From 2010-2014 approximately 9.7 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: U.S. Census) Many of these residents may have barriers to employment based difficulties with English language.

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

Per Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA), the Northwest Georgia region had 300,000 people with Disabilities from 2011 through 2014. People with disabilities made up 8.7 percent of the population of Georgia from 2011 through 2014.

## Ex Offender

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

The following chart shows the number of inmates released during Georgia Department of Corrections’ FY2015. This is data for the 15 counties in Northwest Georgia:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTY</th>
<th>2015 GRADUATION RATE</th>
<th>2014 GRADUATION RATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bartow County</td>
<td>78.6</td>
<td>70.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catoosa County</td>
<td>84.9</td>
<td>80.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chattooga County</td>
<td>79.9</td>
<td>62.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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Inmate Statistical Profile for Inmates Released

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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 considers the strong history of collaboration with area agencies an important strength in going forward in the upcoming years under WIOA. Partner relationships in many cases have been in play since JTPA in the late 1990s. Our staff and contract providers have many years of experience under previous Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and therefore have the ability to design a strong program under the new law.

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 region has a high drop-out rate and area partners have the task of identifying and encouraging this population to seek assistance through GED® preparation. Many do not want to go back to the classroom because of age or difficult past experiences with school. It is difficult to assist them with getting a job because most employers require a GED® and most training classes also require a GED® to continue to the next educational level.

- Many applicants do not have the financial support to sustain them while in the program. The requirement to apply Hope and/or Pell prior to determining WIOA funding needed eliminates any funding they may have been able to use for living expenses. Some may also need to find adequate child care, but cannot afford this even with the added support of the program. Family members such as grandparents are not considered a childcare provider and are not eligible for the support reimbursement.

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**

The workforce system in Northwest Georgia is comprised of a One-Stop System that was developed under WIA and during that time contained seven full service One-Stop Centers. The centers had complete participations from all required partners under WIA. The purpose of having seven was so that customers would not have to drive more than 30 minutes for services. With the new law and recently released regulations for WIOA, the Northwest Georgia One-Stop system is being studied to determine if the needs of the region and the requirements of the new law are being met. The designation of the One-Stop Operator will be determined via a bidding process. More details of the One-Stop system can be found in Strategic Elements, Governance and Structure: Number 6 of this Plan.

A vital partner in the Northwest Georgia Workforce system is the Technical College System. The area contracts out the Individual Training Account (ITA) program services to area colleges. Current contract providers include three Technical Colleges and one University System College: Georgia Northwestern Technical College, Chattahoochee Technical College, West Georgia Technical College and Georgia Highlands College. These contractors provide all basic and individualized career services available to applicants seeking to continue their education. They may also make referrals to other training providers on our approved Eligible Provider List or other One-stop Partner service providers. All training program selections are subject to WDB approval. Research goes into the selection of programs to determine the need and appropriateness prior to presentation to the WDB. The Board takes into account the need for the training in the region and the cost.

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,
Rehabilitation Servicers were consulted and provided input in compiling demand and growth occupations and areas of critical shortage. We train individuals for long-term careers that lead to self-sufficiency and an improved standard of living unless specifically approved by the NWGRC staff for an individual because of their circumstances.

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

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

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

Northwest Georgia also has a strong OJT program. This program offers a choice other than classroom training for individuals seeking immediate employment. With the emphasis on Work Based Learning under WIOA, other options will also be designed including Incumbent Worker Training. Work Experience, Apprenticeships, and Internship may be developed as a component linking Work Based Training (WBT) and ITA classroom training. Work Based Training is currently contracted out to the Georgia Department of Labor (GDOL). This partnership strengthens the region because it provides access to the knowledge and programs offered through Employment Services. More information on WBT can be found in Service Delivery and Training: Number 5 of this Plan.

Area in-school and out-of-school Youth receive WIOA services through our Youth contract providers. These providers are Endless Opportunities, Georgia Northwestern Technical College, Paxton, Chattooga BOE, Fannin BOE, Gilmer 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 and OJT. More information is provided in Service Delivery and Training: Number 4 of this Plan.

Other Area Initiatives

Our agency is also working with CHAMP Partner Education, Careers in Healthcare Atlanta Mobility Project. This project is a collaborative effort, launched in 2016 led by Atlanta area healthcare employers in partnership with government agencies, workforce development boards, academic institutions and community provider. CHAMP’s goal is to:

- Identify the skills gap within the workplace and determine the needed competencies.
- Explore ways to close the workforce skills gap.
- Empower us to adjust our curriculum based on local demands or shifts among employers.

Several libraries in our region also provide various services to improve the quality and quantity of employment and training services for job seekers. Collaboration with public libraries can offer another access point for individuals to receive needed career information and assistance.
Northwest Georgia has recently invested in a Mobile Lab that can be taken to area events such as intake and education workshops. The goal is to provide applicants region wide with access to services.

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

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

**Goals for Workforce Development**

1. To identify the workforce needs of businesses through the utilization of local labor market and educational data and technology and to meet those needs by emphasizing business services.

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

3. To create a unified, seamless and vital workforce delivery system by connecting core partners, economic development stakeholders, and others; formalizing agreements between the parties as appropriate; and assuring that investments are job-driven and non-duplicative.

4. To initiate an integrated approach to the system’s overall performance management through the implementation of the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program that provides a system-wide approach to: (a) manage a performance-based workforce system with federally-mandated performance outcomes and locally-endorsed system utilization goals; (b) enable a mechanism for continuous improvement that supports a culture of high performance; (c) identify processes that meet current and future system organizational needs; and (d) help manage the system during periods of change.

WorkSource Northwest Georgia currently tracks WIA measures that show increases in employment retention and earnings of participants and the attainment of recognized post-secondary credentials by participants. With the adaptation of the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, local performance measures will be identified (together with the new WIOA measures) to assure that goals for utilization by employers and participants of the new system are developed. 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 MOUs that will be updated between the partners during 2016-2017 will functionalize 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. Plans are underway to select the One-Stop Operator(s) through a competitive procurement process to provide an ongoing coordination of One-Stop partners and service providers.

3. The “Required Partners” will continue to meet on an ongoing basis until such time as the roles, responsibilities, and alignment opportunities/obstacles are defined and complete implementation of WIOA has occurred.

4. Once the Malcolm Baldrige Continuous Improvement criteria are implemented (defining key elements that will lead to alignment of the Core Partners), continuous improvement can occur as the system reflects actual progress year-by-year in the development of the unified workforce system.

5. Cross training of Core Partner staff will occur in order to assure the “no wrong door” approach for job seekers entering into the system through Core Partner sites that are not in implemented Comprehensive Centers. WIOA staff has already provided numerous presentations to Core Partners regarding WIOA services. But all partners must be more versed in each of the core partner services.

Directories are currently being developed for both youth and individuals with disabilities to provide baseline training and employment information. This will be on the www.careerdepot.org web site. Other directories will either be developed or a link provided for targeted service groups.

6. The Sector Strategy Core Groups for Advanced Manufacturing represents many of the Core Partners. This group was convened by the Georgia Department of Economic Development—Workforce Division in winter 2016 to assist local areas in development of a service strategy. 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 (a publication of the LWDA) 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 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 small 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.

The advanced manufacturing sector has been targeted but the new sector of health care and logistics/transportation will be added as specific strategies are developed.

b. How will the area support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area? Discuss the areas 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. Building on the foundation of WIA, 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. Businesses and organized labor representation met in Calhoun, Georgia on June 14, 2016 through a workshop sponsored by the Georgia Department of Economic Development—Workforce Division to learn more about registered apprenticeships. This served as a baseline for future development. Although currently emphasizing registered apprenticeships only, 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.

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

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

Business representatives were 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 and organized labor representation, 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.**

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 Investment plan action items to address the identified needs of industry in the region (NW GA Regional Development Strategy Plan, p. 15).

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 (described later in the plan).

d. **How will the area strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs?**

As the provider of Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Wagner-Peyser (WP) services, GDOL is uniquely poised to welcome customers into the workforce system and provide comprehensive and targeted referrals to the other core partners. The staff may 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 provided by WIOA through LWDBs, and other partners. The coordination of service delivery is a primary principle of WIOA, which brings together the core programs.

No matter the entry point into the workforce system, customers are first provided career services (previously core and intensive services) through WP at one-stop system and other affiliate sites. If the customer is deemed to be ready for gainful employment after receiving career services, WP staff may assist the customer with job search and placement. If the customer is deemed to need training services, then the WP staff may refer the customer to other core partners, based on the needs of the customer. Training services are then provided to the customer through WIOA, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), or Adult Education Services.

Key components in strengthening the link between the one-stop system and UI programs are driven by: Workforce Development; GDOL’s Business Services Unit (BSU); the Rapid Response Team; and Employ Georgia (EG) Career Explorer.

**Workforce Development** – The region’s Workforce Development (WFD) Programs under the guidance of the Workforce Development Boards of Northwest Georgia are uniquely designed to provide training for adults, dislocated workers, and youth through contracted service providers. The process of contracting out the services allows for direct services to be provided by partner agencies experienced in providing training customized to meet the needs of area’s demand occupations. Partner agencies include the Technical College System of Georgia
(TCSG), GDOL, and various local youth service providers. The providers are located in the communities that they serve and therefore have personal interest in the program successes.

**Business Services Unit** - The Business Services Unit (BSU), housed within GDOL, emphasizes employer-driven service delivery, and is dedicated to fulfilling the needs of Georgia’s employers. BSU partners with economic developers, employers, and businesses to identify talent pools for target industries, customize solutions for workforce issues, and assist with critical industry expansion needs. BSU also manages the Job Readiness Program, Career Expos, Customized Recruitment Services, GeorgiaBEST for Students, GeorgiaBEST for Employers, Regional Summits, and the Employer Committee.

Locally, NWGA’s BSU has teamed up with WIOA’s On-the-Job Training (OJT) program to provide OJT, Work Experience, and Incumbent Worker Training for the region. The OJT provider is focused on continued improvement of the program by expanding beyond OJT into these additional work-based training or career services areas; and improvement of the staff through continuing education via conference trainings and coursework in Career Development Facilitator training.

**Rapid Response Team** - The Rapid Response program is a proactive tool that now 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 LWDA’s to help provide services to employers and workers. This integrated approach is used to assist LWDA’s and local employers as they seek to identify key next steps. Throughout this process, key stakeholders communicate regularly with UI and Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) to help ensure the full range of services is available to both employers and employees.

**Employ Georgia Career Explorer** - With integration of service delivery, it is anticipated that more WIOA customers will access GDOL services, including the new Employ Georgia (EG) Career Explorer. The EG Career Explorer is a state-of-the-art software application that offers job seekers a self-service tool to manage their career path and interact with Wagner-Peyser staff and services online to support successful career placement. It is a user-friendly system with real-time BGLI data to support career search. Customers are now able to upload, paste and create up to five resumes and identify gaps in skills, experience, and education.

Each of these core partners brings unique programs and strategies to employers which can be leveraged with one or more of the other partners. For example:

- **GDOL’s BSU** routinely partners with **WFD** to work with employers seeking to quickly fill demand positions.

- **GDOL** may provide Customized Recruitment to identify the unique skills and experience required for an employer’s positions.

- Working with the **Rapid Response Team and LWDA** participant enrollments, GDOL can leverage **UI** claimants to quickly create a pool of qualified candidates. In order to receive UI, all applicants must register with **Employ Georgia (EG) Career Explorer**.

- If the employer is looking to train these new hires in place, **WFD** can also coordinate with **BSU** to funnel selected applicants through work-based learning.
Meaningful Assistance Offered Via the One-Stop System

The ability to file a UI claim will be available at each and every comprehensive one-stop center. Access and meaningful assistance is critical, whether the customer is in rural Georgia, relies on public transportation, or needs access to the internet. Assistance is assured through:

- UI orientation provided to every new claimant, explaining the full range of workforce services available to help them return to work;
- Online access via www.dol.georgia.gov where customers can file electronically from career centers, home, libraries or any other Internet portal;
- Dedicated, experienced staff at every one-stop;
- Fully-staffed resource centers at all career centers, including Internet access, copiers, phones, fax and resource libraries;
- A dedicated toll-free number for customers filing for UI at one-stops;
- Access points at over seven one-stops and career centers across the region and 40 across the state;
- An opportunity for each claimant to access in-person reemployment services as they come to career centers and one-stops to complete the UI filing process;
- The use of state-of-the-art Employ Georgia résumé and job matching service as a requirement for ES registration for claimants;
- The availability of staff, technology, and written materials in a variety of languages to meet the needs of all customers;
- Fully accessible services, online and in person, to serve any customer with a disability;
- Joint participation of UI staff with other workforce partners in large layoff events;
- Daily referrals of customers from workforce partners to UI specialists to ensure that customers have access to all benefits to which they are entitled.

Strategy for providing reemployment assistance

With Georgia’s recovering economy, GDOL and partner staff has the opportunity to provide more in-depth services to customers who are most in need and face multiple barriers to reemployment.

Employment services provided with WP funding are available to all individuals eligible to work in the United States – those with jobs looking for better career opportunities; individuals who have lost their jobs; and those seeking employment for the first time. These services form a continuum ranging from self-service online, to group presentations, to customized one-on-one assistance. Individuals with more specialized needs (e.g., veterans, migrant and seasonal farmworkers) receive customized services to further their career goals.

Per State law, all UI recipients must register for ES. Georgia continues to run its federal profiling model when job seekers file their UI claims, at which time claimants are made aware of the requirements for reemployment services and the varied services available to them. These services may include: an assessment of skills relative to available jobs; workshops on
effective job search, interviewing techniques and résumé development; an overview of multiple self-service employment resources; detailed labor market information related to growth occupations and industries, and wage surveys to assist with decision making; and direct referrals to job training, educational and supportive service opportunities in the community.

Profiling is a federally-mandated program designed to assist UI claimants who may be unlikely to find employment before their benefits are exhausted. The UI claim process links information from intake records and employers' files to assess each claimant's likelihood of finding another job within the period of UI eligibility. Those UI claimants who are least likely to find work quickly will receive structured job search services. The claimant's occupation, job tenure, education, last employer's industry, and the area's unemployment rate are factors used in calculating a percentile score. The higher the score, the more likely a claimant will exhaust benefits before finding work.

For workload management purposes, career center managers monitor the number of profiled claimants served each week, and, if necessary, adjust their career center's threshold (minimum score) to ensure that workshops are neither over- nor under-utilized, and that services can be delivered. All claimants who are identified by the system as meeting or exceeding the career center's threshold and are mandated to participate in required services must complete either a Service Needs Evaluation/Assessment or a Quick Initial Assessment.

Other activities to promote reemployment of UI claimants include claimant access to:

- Information 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
- Integrated workforce services for citizens released from correctional facilities through the Governor’s GA-PRI
- An Events tool on the Department’s website to allow customers to access hundreds of career fairs, hiring events, and other activities to connect with hiring businesses
- A strong network of faith-based organizations that support reemployment efforts
- Collaborative services for claimant trainees and TAA-eligible customers
- Collaboration with HomeSafe Georgia for citizens needing mortgage assistance
- Job clubs sponsored by GDOL, faith-based organizations, and others
- Older worker workshop – the SCSEP
- Veteran work study program sponsored by the Veterans Administration that allows veterans in training to work part-time in career centers

**RESEA Program**

Recently, GDOL operated a Reemployment Assistance (REA) pilot program targeting UI claimants in five GDOL career centers. As Georgia worked with the REA customer population, it became apparent that there were thousands of customers in other areas of the State in need of intensive reemployment services. Many of the customers are in areas of the State
where there are military bases, resulting in a high number of UCX claimants. As a result of these direct customer needs, Georgia redesigned its REA program to target UI claimants who are profiled and are most likely to exhaust their weekly benefits. This redesign will increase the number of GDOL career centers delivering RESEA services across the state to nine, including four new offices with the highest UCX claimant population in the State.

Georgia’s REA program will provide RESEA intensive services to a large percentage of traditionally underserved UI claimants with low education levels, language barriers, limited skill sets, and/or who are homeless veterans, justice-involved individuals, and seniors. This population includes a large percentage of food service workers and other workers in low-paying service jobs who cycle through the UI system regularly. They experience multiple layoffs and move laterally from one low-paying job to another, never developing the skills or solid work history needed to advance to a more stable position in the workforce. The expansion of the RESEA program over its REA predecessor allows it to serve more customers across a larger area of the State, and allows the State to evaluate the impact of delivering the intensive reemployment services to a significant number of veterans with workforce challenges.

The RESEA service delivery strategy focuses on UI claimants who are profiled and identified as most likely to exhaust all UI benefits. Customers are identified upon being determined eligible for UI benefits, and are advised of RESEA’s mandatory participation requirements immediately upon being notified of their selection to participate. RESEA intensive customer services begin with an orientation to services, individual review and discussion of O*Net My Next Move assessment results, and development of a reemployment plan. Staff provides referrals to in-house workshops (e.g., résumé development, job search, and financial management), training, and other community workforce and supportive services as needed. Customers receive relevant labor market information and learn about helpful web sites which could enrich their job search. Work history evaluation is conducted and job matches are identified in the EG system.

Georgia’s robust and intensive approaches to facilitating the reemployment of UI recipients, including initiatives such as the former REA and emerging RESEA programs, has directly contributed to the lowest average UI duration average in the nation for the eight consecutive quarters (9.8 weeks through Calendar Year 2015, Q2).

Georgia law requires that UI claimants register with the State’s Employment Service. This process is fully integrated into the claims application process. Until a claimant registers, benefits are not released. Once Georgia UI claimants are approved for their first UI payment, they are required to create an account and at least one searchable résumé in the EG system described previously. WP and UI staff members, in addition to the job seeker, are able to manage and track job match alerts and job search activities.

Georgia maintains an active eligibility review program through which UI customers are evaluated, typically at the 5th, 9th, and 14th weeks of their claim. At each of these dates, they receive additional guidance and resources for effective reemployment. Centers also offer workshops during these visits, on topics including interviewing techniques, networking, and dressing for success. These strategies contribute to the State’s unmatched low average UI duration.
State UI system, eligibility assessments, and providing job finding and placement services for UI claimants

Individuals receiving unemployment benefits in Georgia must be able to work, available for work, and actively seeking full-time work. If an individual earned the majority of wages in the base period used to establish the claim or part-time work, the individual would be allowed to restrict their work search to part-time. The only exceptions to the work search requirements are for the following:

- Individuals with a job attachment - This would include individuals for whom their employer has filed a “partial” unemployment claim for them or those individuals with a definite recall to work within six (6) weeks of their last day worked;
- Union members in good standing; and,
- Individuals who are approved and enrolled in a Commissioner-approved training program.

In Georgia’s automated workforce system, customers enter work search information weekly. Staff has access to that information 24/7 and can contact a customer should questions arise or concerns be raised. In addition, EG captures a customer’s résumé, job referrals and information regarding a customer’s response to an employer’s request. Should an employer contact GDOL that a job candidate did not respond to a request for an interview, that claimant can be contacted to determine if compliance with the required work test occurred. To ensure accessibility to the automated system, staff members are always on hand to assist claimants with the use of the labor market exchange. In addition, if the customer does not have a résumé EG will build one for them. All claimants are subject to a work search audit and can be called into the office should questions arise.

During the initial claims filing application, individuals are asked questions regarding their availability. Negative responses require adjudication of the potential availability issue by GDOL claims examiners or services specialists.

Individuals referred to the UI REA program must report to their initial REA appointment, and must participate in all subsequent in-person and telephone appointments. During the in-person appointments, UI ERPs are performed, and staff question the individual about availability for work and any barriers to work they may be facing during all contacts. During all eligibility reviews (i.e., UI, REA, and REU) staff review the individual’s work search, discuss the individual’s availability, and any barriers to work.

Weekly UI benefit certification includes a question about whether the individuals are able, available, and actively seeking employment. A negative response places an issue on the certification which cannot be removed until a statement is obtained regarding availability. If an issue is determined, a benefits eligibility review is performed by the GDOL services specialist or claims examiner and a determination released, if in order.
Employers and anonymous individuals can report suspected UI fraud on the GDOL web site. This can include employers reporting individuals who do not report for interviews, individuals who are incarcerated, or are otherwise not able, available, and/or actively seeking work.

ES staff have contact with employers and receive notice when individuals fail to report to an interview or refuse work – resulting in an issue on the individual’s claim. In the event a potential issue is discovered from any source, a Benefits Eligibility Review is scheduled with a claims examiner or GDOL services specialist. If the individual is not able, available, and actively seeking work (and is not exempted from work search), an appropriate determination regarding UI benefits is released.

4. Regional Service Delivery – 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 (if applicable).

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

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

      All planning is carried out on a regional basis. Since this region is consolidated under the leadership of the Council of Chief Elected Officials and the NWGRC, administrative costs are addressed at the regional level and there is no need for a cost pool.


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

      Northwest Georgia is home to the largest concentration of floor covering manufacturers in the world, producing more than 70 percent of the world’s total floor covering output, valued at over 9 billion dollars. It was this industry concentration in one of the southeast region’s key technology sectors that led the Georgia Tech’s Enterprise Innovation Institute (EI²) and the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission (NWGRC) to receive a grant through the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration’s (EDA) for the Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership (IMCP) initiative to develop a comprehensive advanced manufacturing strategy focused on advanced manufacturing in the floor covering industry in the 15-county northwest Georgia region in September 2013. Prior to IMCP, the region had never before come together in an organized capacity with the specific charge of elevating one of the largest manufacturing clusters in the country. IMCP brought a number of ad-hoc efforts and scattered players together around a common goal. Its vision was:

      *The Northwest Georgia Regional Advanced Manufacturing Strategy will create “A world class manufacturing workforce cultivating a culture of talent and innovation in a vibrant and diverse region.”*
The region was one of twelve communities designated as a first-round Manufacturing Community in 2014. Since the designation, the partnership created the “Northwest Georgia Floor360 IMCP Consortium”. Floor360 Consortium includes 20 committed industry and workforce partners, and serves as the IMCP program’s oversight body, and meets bi-monthly with the floor covering industry’s top employers to review projects that request the IMCP designation. The list below includes the primary leaders/partners in the Northwest Georgia IMCP project who have been engaged since the Manufacturing Communities designation in 2014.

**Research:**
1. Georgia Tech Institute for Materials (IMat)
2. Georgia Tech Manufacturing Institute (GTMI)
3. Georgia Institute of Technology

**Education:**
4. Northwest Georgia College and Career Academy
5. Georgia Tech Professional Education (GTPE)
6. Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG)
7. Dalton State College
8. Georgia Northwestern Technical College

**Government:**
9. Georgia QuickStart
10. Greater Dalton Chamber of Commerce
11. Greater Rome Chamber of Commerce
12. Northwest Georgia Regional Commission

**Manufacturers:**
13. Mohawk Industries
15. J&J Industries

**Suppliers:**
16. ArrowStar, LLC
17. Carpet Industry Clearinghouse, Inc. (CINCH)

**Associations & Utilities:**
18. Carpet and Rug Institute (CRI)
19. Georgia Association of Manufacturers (GAM)
20. University of Georgia Archway Partnership
21. The Alliance for Innovation and Sustainability (AIS, a 501c3 nonprofit)
In addition to the Consortium and participating partners, other industries, firms and organizations have participated in IMCP working groups, including Dalton Utilities, Gordon County Chamber of Commerce, Bartow County Development Authority, Northwest Georgia Joint Development Authority, Polk County Schools/College and Career Academy, Calhoun City Schools, Gordon County Schools/College and Career Academy, Engineered Floors, Alrol Industries, Evco Plastics, F & P Automotive, Southern Company/Georgia Power, and others. State agency partners include Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG), Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Georgia Department of Economic Development, Georgia Department of Education, Governor’s Office of Student Achievement, Georgia Department of Transportation, Governor’s Office, and the 15 counties and 49 cities of Northwest Georgia.

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

Partner engagement in the Northwest Georgia IMCP program has continued to evolve. Floor360 Consortium meetings operate like most board meetings. The Steering Committee (voting members) reviews and votes on federally-aligned grant applications, discuss funding opportunities, and strategize pathways to implement projects. The project team had also been hosting a second, larger group called the Implementation Committee, formed of five working groups addressing: 1) workforce development, 2) sustainability and innovation, 3) marketing of advanced manufacturing, 4) partnerships among leaders in the region, and 5) manufacturing infrastructure (including utilities, buildings, and transportation). These working groups meet independently, as needed, to work on projects and are open to new and potential partners. Since its designation in 2014, the Floor360 Consortium has included 20 committed industry and workforce partners, and serves as the IMCP program’s oversight body, and meets bi-monthly.

The May 25, 2016 Floor360 meeting was held at the Carpet and Rug Institute, and provided an opportunity for Consortium members to review progress, discuss the role and function of the five working groups, and to address issues of adding/removing members and expanding the reach and impact of the Floor360 Consortium and across other industry sectors prevalent in the region, including the chemical, plastics, and automotive manufacturing industries.

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

In selecting regions to receive the Investing in Manufacturing Community Partnerships designation, the Economic Development Administration reviewed the strength of a region’s manufacturing cluster using KTS and Location Quotients to compare industry ecosystems; only communities that showed a top third ranking in the nation for that industry cluster were considered. The purpose for the top-third ranking requirement for a community’s KTS was to ensure that regions are building on existing strengths (rather than starting from scratch). Thus, EDA encouraged IMCP applicants to provide as much evidence as possible that points to the importance and growth of their KTS compared to other similar regions and the nation. This enabled reviewers to better understand the strength and growth of a community’s KTS and assess whether it is a national leader. Communities measured their top third status either by using the absolute scale of activity (such as employment or sales) in their KTS, or by using location quotients (LQs).
Location quotients (LQ) compare an area’s business composition to that of a larger area (i.e., nation or a state). Economic development opportunities may exist for additional growth of the exporting or related industries because of the presence of an existing skilled labor pool or other resources such as suppliers, facilities or transportation hubs in the region.

An LQ greater than 1 (LQ>1) indicates a higher than average concentration in that location and indicates that an area has proportionately more workers or firms than the larger comparison area in a specific industry sector.

The floor covering industry cluster is defined as carpet and rug, resilient, wood, ceramic, and floor tile manufacturing. The Textile Cluster, as defined by the Porter Cluster Mapping Project, provided an initial base of industries to include, and we expanded that cluster definition to capture resilient floor covering manufacturing (NAICS Other Plastics Product Manufacturing), wood flooring manufacturing (NAICS 32191 Millwork), and ceramic wall and floor tile manufacturing (NAICS 32712 Clay Building Material and Refractories Manufacturing). (Source: 2014 NW GA Advanced Manufacturing Strategy, p.25).

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

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

Northwest Georgia continues to rebound from the Great Recession, due in part to in-migration, the recovery of the housing sector, and the ability of the floor covering industry to adjust its product offerings quickly in response to the changing needs of its customers. If job announcements in 2013 and 2014 are any indication, the region will continue to see a modest rise in manufacturing-related jobs, albeit with different skills required than manufacturing jobs required 10 years ago (2014 Advanced Manufacturing Strategy, p. 28).

Since 2002, employment within the manufacturing sector in Northwest Georgia experienced a 27 percent decline, greater than that of the southeast U.S. and the nation as a whole, but in 2012 manufacturing still formed 25 percent of total employment for the region. Manufacturing subsectors of textile mills and textile product mills formed 15 percent and 36 percent respectively of manufacturing employment in 2012, having sustained an employment loss of 38.8 percent for textile mills and 37.4 percent for textile product mills respectively from 2002-2012 (Source: Georgia DOL, 2014 NW GA Advanced Manufacturing Strategy).

Within the manufacturing sector, employment within 13 of the 19 subsectors (with available data) decreased from 2002 to 2012. Textile Mills and Textile Product Mills, which make up part of the region’s floor covering industry cluster, posted the largest net declines of all the
manufacturing subsectors, falling 38.8 and 37.4 percent, respectively. Combined, these two subsectors lost over 18,000 jobs. This is important because these two sectors are also the backbone of the manufacturing industry in the region encompassing more than 50 percent of employment in the region’s manufacturing sector. (Source: Georgia DOL, 2014 NW GA Advanced Manufacturing Strategy, p.25).

In 2012, the wages for floor covering jobs in the region was $38,784. While this is an increase from the $29,501 reported in 2002, it still falls short compared to the U.S. as a whole (Source: GDOL, 2014 Advanced Manufacturing Strategy, p. 27).

What’s the secret to facilitating steady job creation going forward? A recent article in the Georgia Trend indicates that, “to become a [region] where manufacturing activity concentrates, Georgia must develop a much better educated and more highly-skilled blue-collar workforce and become a more fertile ground for innovative productivity-enhancing technologies”. (“Economy: The 2014 Georgia Outlook.” Georgia Trend online http://www.georgiatrend.com/December-2013/Economy-the-2014-Georgia-Outlook/). This statement validates the emphasis placed on workforce development and innovation during the interviews with manufacturers. (2014 Advanced Manufacturing Strategy, p. 29)

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 appropriate training and education. This section details the state of the Northwest Georgia region’s workforce, including job openings; top knowledge requirements; most desired hard and soft skills; occupational projections; recent industry announcements; forecasted direct and indirect job creation; educational enrollment; workforce training programs; workforce gaps; and innovation indicators (2014 Advanced Manufacturing Strategy, p. 29).

- The most in-demand occupations in the region are: recycling and reclamation workers; textile winding, twisting, and drawing out machinists; extruding and forming machinist; industrial truck and tractor operators; and first-line supervisors of production and operations (2014 Advanced Manufacturing Strategy, p. 29).

- A job opening snapshot revealed that top knowledge requirements across openings include: Production and processing; English language; mechanical, customer and personal service; and administration and management (2014 Advanced Manufacturing Strategy, p. 29).

- Occupational projections forecast that interior designers, computer-controlled machine tool operators, computer system analysts and vehicle and equipment cleaners will either remain stable or experience job growth in both the floor covering industry and across all occupations (2014 Advanced Manufacturing Strategy, p. 29).

- Occupations projected to increase employment in both the floor covering industry and across all occupations include interior designers, computer-controlled machine tool operators, computer system analysts, and vehicle and equipment cleaners (2014 Advanced Manufacturing Strategy, p. 29).
Industry announcements from 2013 to 2014 estimate the job creation of more than 4,000 jobs with an estimated investment of more than one billion dollars in the region. Over half of these job projections are focused on the floor covering industry (2014 Advanced Manufacturing Strategy, p. 29).

Between 2000 and 2011, patents within the “textile technologies” field amounted to over 70 percent of total technology patents within the Dalton MSA (2014 Advanced Manufacturing Strategy, p. 29).

Research suggests that there is high demand for workers in the floor covering industry with a relatively high level of analytical competence. While a highly skilled workforce and the industry’s concentration in the region provide fertile ground for innovation activity, both workforce skill level and patent activity could be benefit from a talent and innovation pipeline with a research university (2014 Advanced Manufacturing Strategy, p. 29).

Various industry partners have engaged with different working groups and related initiatives of the IMCP effort, including the Communities that Work Partnership and the Alliance for Innovation and Sustainability, both of which continue to recruit and attract additional partners to their workforce initiatives.

The 501c3 Alliance for Innovation and Sustainability (AIS) grew out of the initial Floor360 Consortium’s energy sustainability working group and has developed into a regional network of industries interested in shared efforts in education and best practices for energy, water and waste sustainability and innovation. Currently, AIS members include Caraustar, Dalton Whitfield Solid Waste Authority, Engineered Floors, J&J Industries, Propex, Tandus, and Budweiser.

The Northwest Georgia region was one of seven regions and the only IMCP-designated region selected to participate in 2015-2016 Communities That Work Partnership (CTWP). CTWP is a joint project of the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) at the Department of Commerce and the Workforce Strategies Initiative at the Aspen Institute (AspenWSI). The purpose of this project was to work with the seven regional partnerships across the country to accelerate each region’s pursuit of industry-driven talent development strategies to promote economic growth and better integrate workforce and economic development. In addition to providing technical assistance to each partnership, this initiative convened the selected communities not only to learn from one another, but to develop common practices from their individualized solutions that can be applied and shared across our country. The lessons learned will be used to inform and improve workforce efforts nationally and support the creation of new partnerships.

The development of the Advanced Manufacturing and Business Academy at the Northwest Georgia College and Career Academy is a direct result of the CTWP sessions. The Advanced Manufacturing and Business Academy (AMBA) is a curriculum designed to prepare students for a progressive career in the manufacturing industry. Students will gain foundational knowledge that will allow them to achieve both required certifications and college credits that will accelerate entry into the various manufacturing career opportunities – immediately after high school or after pursuing further education at a technical college or four-year university. Three concentrations are available in manufacturing, logistics, or corporate administration.
Companies currently participating in the AMBA program through apprenticeships and internships include Beaulieu, Shaw, Mohawk, and J & J Flooring Group.

Because manufacturers are integral to the success of the Northwest Georgia IMCP, it is critical that we maintain their interest in projects arising out of IMCP. Manufacturers are results-driven individuals, so the project team similarly realized that the Floor360 Consortium would have to be run like a business in order to keep industry engaged. Manufacturers are given leadership roles in the working groups, meetings are kept task-oriented and brief, and there is value-added content in meetings - either from a speaker or a facility tour. Going forward, the project team will be looking for ways to maintain that engagement in Floor360’s permanent role in the community.

Floor360 has led to the creation of several new manufacturing initiatives across the spectrum of ecosystem pillars, in addition to many more initiatives in the planning phases:

- The Alliance for Innovation and Sustainability (AIS), a 501c3 non-profit sustainability-focused ideation and networking forum for manufacturers across multiple disciplines in the Northwest Georgia region
- Advanced Manufacturing and Business Academy at the Northwest Georgia College and Career Academy (part of the Technical College System of Georgia)
- Selection into Aspen Institute’s “Communities That Work Partnership” workforce development program
- New apprenticeship programs (including a statewide apprenticeship program with the American Apprenticeship via the U.S. Department of Labor)
- Appalachian Regional Inland Port in Murray County in partnership with the Georgia Ports Authority, CSX, Murray County and the state of Georgia
- Post-consumer carpet recycling technology pilot facility in Dalton
- Veterans hiring program for transitioning military through Georgia Tech’s VET2 program.

The coordination between partners and the resulting initiatives have been a direct product of IMCP. Since 2014, the Floor360 Consortium and various IMCP working committees have provided a space to begin the conversation about what manufacturing means to the Northwest Georgia region, how the region can leverage its strengths, and a platform for discovering innovative ways to overcome potential threats facing its manufacturing base. The team realized that bringing the industry’s biggest competitors to the same table would be a challenge, but quickly discovered that there was shared interest in sustainability-related issues, as well as workforce development needs that were not being met across several interrelated manufacturing sectors in the region. Working on these common interests has led to opportunities for broadening the discussion around how to strengthen manufacturing in the region, and putting competition aside for the greater community good.

The Northwest Georgia IMCP and Floor360 Consortium have been active in IMCP-related conferences and events, and have hosted several senior-level White House officials in the region.
• The Northwest Georgia Regional Workforce Partnership hosted USDOC Secretary Penny Pritzker and Deputy Secretary Jay Williams on May 6th, 2016 in Dalton, Georgia. Visit included a tour of Engineered Floors and the Northwest Georgia College and Career Academy (future home of the Advanced Manufacturing and Business Academy), and participating in a roundtable discussion with Floor360 and CTWP leaders from industry, workforce development and the College and Career Academy.

• EDA National Conference, April 7th - 8th, 2016 in Washington, D.C. Georgia Tech presented on a conference panel that discussed “Partnerships that Drive Results in Advanced Manufacturing”.

• IMCP Summit, October 20th, 2015 in Washington, D.C. Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) organized a meeting with other IMCP manufacturing communities in the ARC service area (Tennessee DRIVE and Greater Pittsburgh) to discuss respective experiences with IMCP. Trip also included a site visit to the Front Royal Inland Port. Also met with Congressman Tom Graves and Senator Johnny Isakson and their staff regarding support for the “Made in America Manufacturing Communities Act”. The Northwest Georgia delegation also attended the IMCP Summit in 2014.

• Georgia Tech hosted USEPA Administrator Gina McCarthy on October 2nd, 2015 in Atlanta, Georgia. For National Manufacturing Day, the Administrator was briefed on how IMCP incorporates sustainability in advanced manufacturing through the newly-formed Alliance for Innovation and Sustainability (AIS) and the recently announced Appalachian Inland Port project in Murray County.

• Georgia Tech hosted USDOT Deputy Secretary Victor Mendez on July 27th, 2015 in Atlanta, Georgia. Discussed the need for transportation and infrastructure related to the development of the Appalachian Regional Inland Port.

According to the Economic Development Administration, vibrant industrial ecosystems are comprised of six key elements that can create a cycle of development for a region’s key technology or supply chain (KTS) through integrated investments and relationships among the following areas:

1. Workforce and training;
2. Supplier network;
3. Research and innovation;
4. Infrastructure/site development;
5. Trade and international investment; and
6. Operational improvement and capital access.

The theory is that the more interactions within and between these investment elements can yield the creation of various “public goods” which can help a region’s private sector thrive. It is believed that public investment in these six key elements is needed to develop a self-sustaining ecosystem that attracts private investment from new and existing manufacturers and leads to “broad-based prosperity” - namely in terms of job and investment creation - in the region.
d. Provide a completed outline of the sector strategy for the previously identified sector that includes:

i. **Participating employers** - Beaulieu, Shaw, Mohawk, and J & J Flooring Group

ii. **Target Occupations** - robotics, PLCs, industrial maintenance, mechatronics, etc. too include career pathways in engineering, marketing, and business disciplines

iii. **Training programs** – see below Strategy W1.1 through W3.4 for in-school and transitioning youth; Strategy 1.1 for out-of-school youth, adult, and dislocated worker populations.

iv. **Target Populations** - middle and high school students, minority and female students, post- secondary and incumbent workers who need additional training to advance in their career.

**Outline of Sector Strategy**

In developing the Advanced Manufacturing Strategy for the Northwest Georgia region, Georgia Tech worked closely with a core group of local stakeholders representing advanced manufacturing and the floor covering industry, secondary and post-secondary education, the public sector, as well as regional and state partners, to conduct a thorough assessment of the region’s future needs for advanced manufacturing, including:

- Baseline demographic and economic analyses
- Employment and occupational analyses
- Regional occupational projections and job announcements
- Workforce skills analysis of existing workers vs. skills needed
- An educational infrastructure analysis
- Assessment of job occupation codes (O*Net) with industry crosswalk
- Target industry and cluster analyses, including a supply chain analysis for the floor covering industry and other related industries in the region
- Stakeholder Interviews
- Best Practice Research

Workforce and training was identified as the most critical need facing manufacturing in the region, according to industries during a series of interviews developing the Advanced Manufacturing Strategy, and was identified as the region’s “bonus element.” Over 500 mechatronics, industrial maintenance, electronics, and electrical positions need to be immediately filled. Since 2013, over 4,000 manufacturing job announcements have been made in the Northwest Georgia region to staff new facilities, plant expansions, and headquarters operations in the region; about half of these positions are slated for the flooring industry. However, only 4.9 percent of students are enrolled in manufacturing related tracks at the Northwest Georgia College and Career Academy, while regional employment in the manufacturing sector is around 25 percent. The following section is a sample of strategies that are either complete, or currently underway. A complete list of the strategies in this
element can be found in the Northwest Georgia Regional Advanced Manufacturing Strategy on the Floor360 website.

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

- **Strategy W1.1. (Underway)** Create a task group comprised of representatives from industry and education to assess the needs of the industry, and develop requirements and a curriculum that is responsive to those needs while meeting educational requirements. Currently, industry-specific training and education needs are identified through the Floor360 Workforce group. CTWP established the Advanced Manufacturing and Business Academy (AMBA) as well as an advanced manufacturing curriculum based on industry-identified needs, with 200 students enrolled for Fall 2016 and 12-14 industries participating. GNTC and Northwest Georgia College and Career Academy partnered to develop the Chemical Technology certificate and diploma programs with 24 students enrolled. These programs were designed for replication in other areas of the region.

- **Strategy W1.2. (Completed)** Conduct an assessment of historical, current, and projected future job needs, employment trends, and in-house training programs. This was completed during development of the strategy, and should be updated periodically as new data is available.

- **Strategy W1.3. (Underway)** Expand the mechatronics certification at Northwest Georgia College and Career Academy to other career academies in the region. Develop multiple industry recognized certifications at college and career academies in industrial systems, electronics, or electrical engineering to allow students to transition to immediate employment in a manufacturing career, or obtain partial tech college credit. Mechatronics certification is complete. Other certifications are focus of second phase of Floor360, expansion of pilot efforts to Northwest Georgia region.

- **Strategy W1.5. (Partially Complete)** Expand the high school co-op employment program (after school hours) during the school year. As part of the program, consider a small financial incentive or scholarship, and credit towards graduation. Now currently offered at two of five career academies in the region, Floyd College and Career Academy and Northwest Georgia College and Career Academy/Phoenix Academy.

- **Strategy W1.6. (Partially Complete)** Develop a two-year apprenticeship program (during school hours) with college and career academies and participating employers. Leverage Georgia’s dual enrollment/dual credit program, which is available to Georgia high school students to take college-level courses and earn concurrent credit toward a high school diploma and a college degree. Currently being offered at Floyd College and Career Academy and Northwest Georgia College and Career Academy/Phoenix Academy. $1.5M grant sought from the Kellogg Foundation to hire and train five STEM Coaches who will work with local middle schools, and secondary schools; while not funded, DSC and AIS are seeking other funding from foundation and local sources.

- **Strategy W1.9. (Underway)** Provide digital learning experiences at local colleges and career academies, where applicable. Northwest Georgia College and Career Academy is already implementing digital learning in its programming. Partnership with Clemson University ATE Center to facilitate and mentor a digital learning program in Northwest Georgia.
• **Strategy W1.12. (Underway)** Expand student access to college and career academies, marketing manufacturing career pathways to rural communities. *Marketing working group began in 2015, utilizing marketing professionals from Shaw and Mohawk; in 2016, expanding to regional efforts in partnership with college and career academies and local chambers of commerce.*

• **Strategy W2.1. (Underway)** Partner with Georgia Tech’s VET2 veteran hiring program to funnel transitioning military personnel into the civilian workforce in Northwest Georgia. *Shaw Industries, one of the largest flooring firms in the world based in Dalton, is currently working with the VET2 program to train and place military personnel in the company.*

• **Strategy W3.1. (Partially Complete, Underway)** Re-focus the Northwest Georgia College and Career Academy on floor covering and advanced manufacturing career pathways. Track student movement from high schools 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. *Launching the AMBA in Fall 2016 at the existing Northwest Georgia College and Career Academy.*

• **Strategy W3.2. (Complete)** Invest in a mobile STEM/engineering classroom and/or a mobile “maker space” that could travel to schools to provide hands-on learning opportunities for elementary and middle school students. *NWGRC acquired a mobile career center that can provide flexible teaching space.*

• **Strategy W3.3. (Underway)** Expand existing Design, Engineering and Manufacturing (DEM) camp offerings. *June 2015 Camp DEM for Dalton and Whitfield middle schoolers completed with 125 graduating students; now taking applications for 2016 camp.*

• **Strategy W3.4. (Underway)** Implement an “AMP It Up” program (Advanced Manufacturing and Prototyping Integrated to Unlock Potential) in local middle schools to enable students to explore their creativity and apply STEM knowledge using rapid prototyping equipment. *In their first ever competition, Northwest Georgia College and Career Academy’s Team 5900 recently won accolades at the FIRST Robotics worlds competition in April 2016 in St. Louis, MO using a robot designed at the academy’s robotics lab, which includes a 3D printer operated by the students.*

Several strategies that will be reviewed and/or modified in 2016 include those focused on efforts to recruit students or teaching resources from outside the region. Currently, efforts are focused on recruiting from within the region. Also, recruiting activities have not been a primary focus of the group. While the larger manufacturers continue to recruit at college employment events, Floor360’s focus has concentrated on getting more students from within the region interested in manufacturing first before attracting talent from outside the region. Strategies that Floor360 has not yet started but would like to address in 2016 include developing and implementing a workforce assessment tool and working with local schools to create an industry mentoring program to give elementary students a subtle STEM foundation.

To implement an Advanced Manufacturing Strategy that spans 15 counties and impacts multiple states, regional collaboration is needed among educators, Chambers of commerce,
economic development professionals, manufacturers, and other stakeholders. Other regional
efforts that include the Northwest Georgia region are the 69-county Tennessee DRIVE IMCP
and the 16-county THRIVE2055 regional planning effort. The following section is a sample of
strategies that are either complete, or currently underway. A complete list of the strategies in
this element can be found in the Northwest Georgia Regional Advanced Manufacturing
Strategy on the Floor360 website.

• **Strategy P1.1 (Underway)** Support goals of regional initiatives, including the Tennessee Valley
IMCP, and Thrive 2055 studies. Representatives of THRIVE2055, DRIVE, and Floor360 have
made efforts to support shared regional projects and needs including workforce development
and development of the Appalachian Regional Port (April 20, 2016 meeting with TDOT
Commissioner as example), and sustainability-related projects like the upcoming waste-to-
energy technology, which could be broadened to include tire scraps.

• **Strategy P1.2 (Underway)** Conduct international site visits with GDEcD to identify potential
export and foreign direct investment opportunities. IMCP Floor360 Consortium members
participated in 2015 GDEcD visit to Wolfsburg, Germany to develop potential automotive
supplier relationships.

• **Strategy P2.1 (Initial stages)** Create an advanced manufacturing center for the floor covering
industry that provides training and equipment (S-FLOR). Other services include:
commercialization assistance, incubator space, advanced materials research lab, energy
studio, and R&D space. *A proposed ARC POWER application would feature SFLOR as central
project.*

• **Strategy P5.3 (Under Development)** Partner with a Makerspace or create a new community
manufacturing-focused makerspace, where students/parents, the community at large, and
industry professionals can interact through hands-on experiences and competitions. *A
$100,000 ARC award was made in 2016 with IMCP designation to the Calhoun City Schools
“Fab Lab” for this purpose.*

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

• **Strategy 1.1** Develop a comprehensive incumbent worker strategy to determine target
occupations; develop training curriculum to produce competent worker with appropriate
skills; and determine appropriate employers needing this service.

• **Strategy 1.2** Continue offering on-the-job training to eligible out-of-school youth, adults, and
dislocated workers including those with disabilities and other barriers to employment, as
needed.

• **Strategy 1.3** Develop customized training options as the opportunity presents itself in the
Region to serve unemployed individuals and meet the needs of employers.

• **Strategy 1.4** Develop registered apprenticeships in conjunction with the Georgia Department
of Economic Development—Workforce Division or through other non-registered
apprenticeships as appropriate offered as ITAs.

• **Strategy 1.5** Utilizing the mobile career center to promote training opportunities and business
services to employers in advance manufacturing sector.
• **Strategy 1.6** Develop class size training options if existing training through ITAs does not meet the needs of employers.

e. **Describe the plans for future strategy development for future sectors. If applicable, discuss the next sectors to be targeted.**

**Advanced Manufacturing**

As new initiatives launch from IMCP and the reach of the initiative broaden, partnership development continues to play a key role in the region’s success. Other proposed strategies, not yet accomplished, may grow from future partnership efforts for Floor360 including the following:

• **Strategy P3.1** Create a regional “supplier match program” that would encourage the use and location of suppliers in the region. GaMEP and AIS may assist.

• **Strategy P4.1** Develop a manufacturing equipment donation tax credit for new/used equipment donation from industry. Consortium has seen the success of this tax credit applied in other states in its best practice “workforce center” research. Partnerships are needed at the state level to move this forward.

• **Strategy P4.2** Invite career academy manufacturing student teams to accompany industry partners at product/industry conventions or expo events. This will be a natural outgrowth of the apprenticeship programs currently being launched with several manufacturers in the region.

• **Strategy P5.2** Build an “invention studio” located at the advanced manufacturing hub (S-FLOR) using donated equipment from industry. This could take the form of an upgraded robotics lab at the NWGCCA/AMBA. Approximately $50,000 in upgrades are currently needed to the lab.

• **Strategy P5.4** Create middle and high school student design competitions to solve a client or industry problem, from concept to product. Expand First Robotics programs across other career academies and high schools across the region.

Targeted populations of the in-school initiative to be engaged through training and marketing include 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.

Additionally, WorkSource Northwest Georgia, the WDB, regional employers and economic development partners plan to explore development of a healthcare sector strategy and logistics/transportation 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 and further development of logistics/transportation sector to support the advanced manufacturing initiative.
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 listed 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. During this process, the Malcolm Baldrige Continuous Improvement ©system will be used to identify data that will be collected and to manage the outcomes. Sample files will then be reviewed and evaluated and interviews will be conducted with service providers. If any findings, observations, or exceptions are noted, LWFB staff will work with the service provider to confirm that any required corrective action is completed and that process improvement occurs.

      Once a training provider’s application, including specific performance goals, cost data, and program certifications/accreditation, meets all requirements, it must be approved by the LWDB in order to be placed on the state’s ETPL. Performance will then be monitored by staff and presented to the LWFB on an annual basis. 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 seven comprehensive one-stop sites currently serving the geographically diverse 15-county region each have a self-service resource area equipped with internet and video-telecommunications connectivity, and other multi-media resources. The www.careerdepot.org and the www.youthsuccessacademy.org web sites ensure that individuals can, from any location with internet access, access information about the services and resources in the Northwest Georgia region. Also, the one-stops use the Georgia Department of Labor’s internet-based enrollment and services system. Individuals are directed by a greeter to appropriate services via internet access, and “Tech Reps” are available to provide assistance in basic computer, software, internet applications, résumé preparation, job search and career opportunities, etc. Partner agencies who are co-located or visit the one-stops have dedicated computers and access to all available technology.

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

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

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

Individuals who seek to utilize the Region’s workforce system can expect facilities, policies, and programs, whether physical or virtual, to meet federally-mandated accessibility standards. A complete assessment of all one-stop facilities has just 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 assessed annually, and training, regulatory updates and guidance will be provided by the local Equal Opportunity Officer and GVRA staff on an annual or as-needed basis. 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 recently purchased mobile computer lab 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.

Currently, the operators of, and partners in, WorkSource Northwest Georgia’s one-stop system include:

- Northwest Georgia Regional Commission (NWGRC) Workforce Division – fiscal administrative and program management services
- Georgia Department of Labor – including Wagner-Peyser, Trade Act, Unemployment Insurance, Veterans and Ex-Offender Re-entry, Business Services
- Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency, representing Vocational Rehabilitation
- Georgia Department of Human Resources, Division of Family and Children Services representing Temporary Assistance to Needy Families
- Technical College System of Georgia, represented by Chattahoochee, Georgia Northwestern, and West Georgia Technical Colleges – Adult Education and literacy activities and post-secondary vocational education
- University System of Georgia, represented by Georgia Highlands College – Adult Education and literacy activities and post-secondary vocational and traditional education

The NWGRC provides fiscal administration, and oversight of WIOA programs and projects. All other partners provide some, if not all, basic career services. The Department of Labor provides limited intensive service, and Vocational Rehabilitation, the Division of Family and Children Services, and the four partner colleges provide individualized career services. In addition, each comprehensive one-stop center coordinates and cooperates with additional agencies and organizations that expand the availability of career services for customers of the system.

Six one-stop centers are located in Department of Labor facilities, and one in West Georgia Technical College’s Waco campus. 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 of the Centers’ procedures/policies, business plan, or operational agreement
- participate in establishing 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 by the Consortium and/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

Currently, a tracking system is used to quantify each center partner’s contributions. Expenses and services provided are reported quarterly by center managers to WDB staff, and data received provides a comparative record of the services to budget ratio for each center. The WDB is currently in the process of reviewing the One-Stops in light of new regulations. New resource sharing agreements will be negotiated and a reassessment of the number and location of One-Stops that are feasible based upon the requirements of final regulations and cost restrictions.

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.

From 2000 to the present, the current One-Stop Operator for the LWDA has been the Northwest Georgia One-Stop Consortium, selected in accordance with the Workforce Investment Act, § 121 (d) through “an agreement reached between the local board and a consortium of entities that, at a minimum, includes 3 or more of the One-Stop required partners described.”

In October 2015, a planning meeting was convened by the WDB One-Stop Committee with WIOA-required partners to discuss, among other items, competitive procurement of the one-stop operator(s). In attendance were the LWDB chairperson and appointed designees from Northwest Georgia Regional Commission, Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency, Georgia Department of Labor, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and Adult Education. In an effort to avoid any conflict of interest and/or construct firewalls, each agency was asked to express its intent regarding submittal of a bid for the Operator position. Additional Consortium partners not in attendance were also queried and all responses filed. The Northwest Georgia Regional Commission elected not to bid and could thus be positioned to develop the Request for Proposal for the Operator and staff assistance in its review.

An RFP for consulting services was distributed in appropriate locations and to known vendors for assistance with the development of the RFP for the one-stop operator(s), resulting in no response. Until such time as RFP guidelines and technical assistance are received from WFD, inquiries will continue to be made to potential targeted consultants who could begin the process by initiating dialogue and developing a framework for operator position.

Due to the uncertainty of future one-stop locations, a survey of current one-stops, technical colleges and other partner agencies was conducted to determine if their current facilities could accommodate additional personnel and programs. In addition, other sites have been, and continue to be, researched and cataloged as potential alternatives. Collected data includes, but is not limited to location, size, access, cost, and renovation needs. NWGRC will
query adjacent areas regarding agencies on their “bid list” to increase interest and provide a larger pool of respondents for the RFP.

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 this 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. Requests for Proposal have been issued for career services/case management; work-based training; and youth services. Contracts have been awarded in these areas. The One-Stop Operator will be procured during this fiscal year. A Consortium is currently responsible for One-Stop operation but will not bid as a consortium next year. Northwest Georgia Regional Commission will not bid on the One-Stop Operator and consequently can procure this service properly.

Northwest Georgia Regional Commission also issues contracts to ITA providers that are on the Eligible Provider List. This is covered under “6. Provision of ITAs” under the “Service Delivery and Training Section” of this Plan. The Procurement Policies are available at [www.careerdepot.org](http://www.careerdepot.org). The WDB publicizes the opportunity to bid by providing newspapers with the information regarding the RFP or other solicitation and by posting it on the [www.careerdepot.org](http://www.careerdepot.org) website. By providing to the public its meeting time(s) to select sub-grants and contractors, minutes of the meetings, the plan, and other guiding documents, it assures transparency in the selection process. The Proposal Review Committee and Youth Committee are also announced to ensure that all levels of review are available to the public. Additionally, a Conflict of Interest Policy has been implemented to assure fair and open competition in selecting and awarding sub-contracts and contracts.

8. **EEO and Grievance Procedures** – Briefly describe local procedures and staffing to address grievances and complaint resolution.

The Northwest Georgia Regional Commission Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Program Services Complaint/Grievance Policy and Procedures is provided as Attachment 3.

**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. *(Proposed § 679.320(g))*

   In the spring of 2015, the Council of Chief Elected Officials met to review requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act regarding the Workforce Development Board’s composition. At that time, it was determined that existing members of the Workforce Investment Board be given the opportunity as the first priority if they were deemed to meet WIOA representation requirements and if they desired to serve on the newly formed Board. The Council of Chief Elected Officials also determined that the Board should be as small in number as feasible and that it was a preference that at least one member for each county be appointed, if possible.
The President of the Georgia State AFL-CIO has nominated the organized labor representative in the past. 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. The union-affiliated registered apprenticeship representative was difficult to locate and only one nominee was found. Hopefully, registered apprenticeships will 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. One of the existing members was initially selected who was a community-based organization representative. The adult education representative that was chosen also supervises a successful 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) will come in the future from 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 and the existing WDB member representing elected officials was selected.

The adult education nominations were solicited from the 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. When this was determined to be unallowable - since the individual did not supervise adult education - another individual was selected from the original nominations. In the future, the adult education representative will continue to be solicited from the partner organizations in the MOU that represents adult education partners.

Private business representatives, who comprise at least 51 percent of the Board, may be nominated by Chambers of Commerce, industrial authorities, the University of Georgia Small Business Development Center (Rome/Dalton area) or other means. At least two members will represent small business. Members meeting these requirements were selected from the Workforce Investment Board membership for initial appointments, but will be selected through an open process in the future.

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

The Workforce Development Board Member Orientation Manual has been developed to assist new members in learning about the Workforce Development Board goals, responsibilities, programs, initiatives, member listing, bylaws, and other information. The Manual is provided on the Career Depot website. Not only are members given a copy, opportunities are scheduled throughout the year for orientation sessions or for individualized orientation meetings.
c. Describe how the local board will coordinate workforce development activities carried out in the local area with regional economic development activities carried out in the region (in which the local area is located or planning region).

As noted earlier in the plan, 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. The regional partners also work with the Tri-State partners: Southeast Tennessee and Northeast Alabama, as true sector solutions often cross state boundaries.

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

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

The Northwest Georgia Workforce Development Board receives the Career Depot and The Business Informer newsletters 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. Among the presenters at the last few meetings have been partners such as Adult Education, Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency, Georgia Department of Labor, Georgia Department of Family and Children Services, and the Advanced Manufacturing sector representative from the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission. These presentations are providing a solid background for members regarding one-stop services and other resources.

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

The six committees of the Workforce Development Board of Northwest Georgia are currently: Executive Committee, Nominating Committee, One-Stop/Adult/Dislocated Workers Committee, Proposal Review Committee, Services to Individuals with Disabilities 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.

• 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 One-Stop/Adult/Dislocated Worker Committee addresses all adult and dislocated worker services, in addition to specifically assisting with operational and other issues relating to the one-stop delivery system. This committee is comprised primarily of one-stop partners and will, during Program Year 2016, meet to address and adopt proposed responsibilities currently performed by the Northwest Georgia One-Stop Consortium as an expansion of the one-stop operator’s role. These functions will be proposed for review and approval by the WDB. It is envisioned that this committee will address items such as: input into one-stop/adult/dislocated worker components of the plan; responding to large layoffs in a coordinated fashion; marketing one-stop services; providing a training plan for partners; implementing continuous improvement strategies, and other functions.

• The Proposal Review Committee serves as an integral part of the procurement review and approval/disapproval process. All adult and dislocated workers proposed activities including one-stop procurement are reviewed through this Committee. Its composition is representation of the private sector and/or organized labor representative. The Proposal Review Committee reviews funding recommendations from the staff and makes their recommendation to the Workforce Development Board. In the event that a quorum is not present, the full Board receives recommendations from the staff and makes a decision based upon the information provided in a proposal summary which includes information regarding the type of training proposed; the agency/individual that is proposing services; the counties proposed to be served; the total cost and cost per participant, if applicable; the review score; and the recommendation by the staff or by the Proposal Review Committee, if appropriate.

• The Services to Individuals with Disabilities Committee’s purpose is to assist in finding employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. It assures this through the following:

  A. Providing a directory and other means where individuals can locate employment and training resources;

  B. Assuring accessibility of services in compliance with WIOA Sec. 188, if applicable and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 121 et. seq.);

  C. Researching and providing as feasible innovative program offerings to improve the economic self-sufficiency of individuals with disabilities; and

  D. Marketing individuals with disabilities to employers and providing necessary supports for success.
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.

3. Plan Development – Provide a description of the process by which the plan was developed including the participation of core partners, providers, board members and other community entities. Also describe the process used by the local board to provide a 30-day comment period.
prior to the submission of the plan including an opportunity for public comment, including comment by representatives of businesses and comment by representatives of labor organizations, representatives of education and input into the development of the local plan.

WIOA staff and required partners reviewed the State Plan to determine overall goals, strategies, and State resources that had been identified in the State Plan. Based on the information gleaned from this review, the local plan guidance was divided between the partners for an in-depth study of local adaptation needed to develop the Regional Plan. Partners (technical college representatives, including adult education and others, the Georgia Department of Labor, Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency, and WIOA representatives) submitted drafts of pertinent plan sections, consistent with the overall State vision, goals and strategies as adapted for local/regional priorities. A consultant then reviewed the sections and made recommendations, which resulted in modifications, as necessary, by the agency submitting the section.

The Workforce Development Board used two committees to work on the Plan in detail: the Youth Committee members discussed their planning issues at two meetings and were asked to participate in identifying both resources and needs. The Services to Individuals with Disabilities Committee met and developed a strategy to best meet the needs of individuals. The committee adopted goals and agreed to meet on a regular basis to ensure the goals are met.

The One-Stop/Adult/Dislocated Worker Committee met prior to the release of the draft document to the full board, providing their input into the Plan as did a local focus group of youth participating in the WIOA program. The WDB will meet on July 27, 2016 to approve posting the plan for the 30-day comment period or later should a quorum not occur.

Upon approval of the Plan by the WDB/CCEOs, public notice was given to all legal organ newspapers in the region. This publicized the availability to the public of the Plan, both in printed form at the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission, 1 Jackson Hill Drive, Rome, Georgia, or online at www.careerdepot.org. Any comments received will be included with submission of the Plan.

**SERVICE DELIVERY AND 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, as appropriate, in core programs, and how it will improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential, academic or industry-recognized.

WorkSource Northwest Georgia has provided workforce services to the 15 counties in Northwest Georgia beginning with JTPA, WIA, 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 seven full service one-stop centers. The centers, which are responsible for providing core program activities, are comprised of partner agencies including, but not limited to WIOA, TCSG, DFCS, 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.
Employment Services through One-Stop Partners - Six of the region’s seven one-stop Centers are located in area Georgia Department of Labor Career Centers which provide many services, including Unemployment Insurance (UI). While there are several points of entry into the workforce system, UI serves as the portal for many customers. As the provider of UI and Wagner Peyser (WP) services, GDOL is uniquely poised to welcome customers into the workforce system and provide comprehensive and targeted referrals to the other core partners. While a large amount of WP referrals come from UI, that system is not the only source of workforce customers. GDOL also utilizes the Business Service Unit (BSU) to attract customers. No matter the entry point into the workforce system, customers are first provided career services (previously core and intensive services) through WP. These services are provided through the one-stop system and other affiliate sites. If the customer is deemed to be ready for gainful employment after receiving career services, WP staff assists the customer with job search and placement. If the customer is deemed to need training services, then the WP staff refers the customer to the other core partners based on the needs of the customer. Training services are then provided to the customer through WIOA, VR, or Adult Education Services.

Career Advisers/Planners (WIOA funded through contracts with the technical colleges and the Georgia Department of Labor) assist in additional assessments as individuals formulate their training plan. The one-stops are constantly referring individuals based on their need for assistance with tuition, books, supplies, and/or support. Or individuals may be referred to OJT or Employment Services should academic training not be a viable solution.

With integration of service delivery, it is anticipated that more WIOA customers will access GDOL services, including the new Employ Georgia (EG) Career Explorer. The EG Career Explorer is a state of the art software application that offers job seekers a self-service tool to manage their career path and interact with Wagner-Peyser staff and service online to support successful career placement. It is a user-friendly system with real time BGLI data to support career search. Customers are now able to upload, paste and create up to five resumes and identify gaps in skills, experiences, and education. This is applicable to those who need only career services; those who may need work based training; or those who have completed training and now seek employment.

Mobile Lab - In PY 2014, Northwest Georgia invested in a state of the art Mobile Learning Unit/Lab to provide Core Services “on the road.” The region has rural counties that do not have a Career Center in close proximity. The Mobile Unit is equipped to bring the Career Center services to business closings, job fairs, and recruitment and training events. It is a fully-equipped mobile lab with 13 computers with flat screen monitors and satellite internet connection.

Promoting WIOA—WorkSource Northwest Georgia distributes two newsletters to area service providers and individuals. The letter distribution has been expanded to include the tristate area and reaches over 3,500 businesses and agencies.

One of the region’s Youth Providers utilizes area events for youth, such as Block Parties organized by partner agencies, as avenues to meet and recruit youth participants.
The Region will begin transitioning marketing materials to include the State Brand by utilizing the State Branding Tool. One identifiable brand will improve program recognition and knowledge for employers, participants, businesses and industries statewide.

2. Description of Services to Adult 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 referral 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:
  o Job vacancy listings in labor market areas
  o Information on job skills necessary to obtain the vacant jobs available; and
  o 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:
  o 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

• Provision of information and assistance regarding filing claims for unemployment compensation, by which the LWDA must provide assistance to individuals seeking such assistance;

• 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 also utilizes 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 predetermined 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. A 10 percent limitation in expenditures is requested in the Adult/Dislocated Program WIOA requirements for transitional jobs. This service option may be provided when more guidance of new regulations is provided.

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. Policies for incumbent training are in the development process 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.

Rapid Response is a service that is utilized by LWDA’s when layoffs and company closures occur. Once the local staff or State staff has been notified of a company closure or layoff, a WARN notification is issued.

Georgia’s local workforce development areas provide many of the Rapid Response services. In most instances, the LWDA representative assigned to coordinate these services provides direct services to customers, while the state Rapid Response Coordinator provides support, leverages additional resources on behalf of area customers and forwards WARNS notices to the LWDA representative. The LWDA representative then contacts the affected employer within two business days. In Northwest Georgia, all announced layoffs receive the same level of service, whether a WARN notice is received or not.

During the initial employer contact, the LWDA representative explains the purpose of Rapid Response services evaluates employer needs and presents services available to the affected company and its employees. An in-person employer meeting is scheduled to introduce and discuss the initial response plan. Services are then customized to address the needs of the company and affected employees.

State and local staff coordinates closely regarding layoff events. Additionally, there are multiple community partners that may support layoffs. In Northwest Georgia, these partners include: Vocational Rehabilitation; the Department of Family and Children Services; Department of Education; County Parole/Probation Re-Entry Programs; Veterans Affairs; and community economic development organizations, such as Chambers of Commerce and the City or County Economic Development Authorities.

The NWGA WDB mobile lab has been 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.

Although most of the services through Rapid Response are in response to immediate separation events, if there is adequate time and opportunity, layoff aversion strategies can be developed and implemented. A key to the success in an ongoing business/service relationship between Rapid Response staff and local business leaders is to foster sharing of information regarding possible cutbacks. Flexibility by the Rapid Response team to meet the needs of business operations and employers during non-traditional work hours, off-site, virtually, or other means should be standard operating procedures to assure layoff aversion and other Rapid Response activities is fully available.
All Trade customers are entitled to Rapid Response and employment services. Based on the nature of the layoff, early intervention by the LWDA representative may include discussions with the employer about Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) before a petition is filed. Once a petition is filed, TAA staff notify partners, the LWDA representative and Georgia DOL Career Centers. TAA staff coordinates and facilitate worker orientations to inform the affected employers about the benefits and services they may receive, as well as the eligibility requirements associated with each benefit. These worker orientation sessions include the LWDA representative, who provides guidance on demand occupations and available training in the local area.

Additional opportunities may be discussed 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.

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.

Youth services funded through WIOA will meet specific guidelines, including provisions for serving greater numbers of out-of-school youth.

**WIOA-Eligible Youth** - Eligible youth are individuals between the ages of 14 and 24, that are either out-of-school youth (OSY) or in-school youth (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 framework provided by WorkSource Northwest Georgia Youth Providers for services include: Eligibility intake, objective assessments, the development of individual service strategy, mentoring/case management, 14 Program Elements and other program activities and follow-up services as deemed necessary to enhance the participant’s future.

- Provide for a Comprehensive Objective Assessment of each youth participant that meets the requirements of WIOA. All youth participants must receive a comprehensive assessment to
examine the individual basic skills levels, interests, occupational aptitudes, capabilities, and job potential. The comprehensive assessments must include, but are not limited to, a reading and math assessment, interest inventory, occupational aptitude assessment, and personal interviews. The “Test of Adult Basic Education” levels (TABE) must be used by all providers for all youth participants to assess the participants reading and math skills. Other assessment tools to be used for the interest inventory and occupational aptitude assessments, as well as any other assessments planned for use in the program is individually approved according to their specific needs. The assessment also determines the service needs, of each youth for the purpose of identifying appropriate services and career pathways for participants in developing the individual service strategy.

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

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

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

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

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. The Supportive Services policy is provided within this plan beginning on page 86.

(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 into the training to ensure that participants attain basic computer skills.

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

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

Local Go Build Georgia Strategy - In support of in-demand careers, Governor Deal launched Go Build Georgia on January 17, 2012, a state initiative designed to increase awareness of skilled trade careers that are focused on manufacturing, telecommunications, energy, logistics, and construction. This labor neutral, public-private partnership is designed to inform youth, educators, and the public at large about the benefits and opportunities within skilled trade industries. By building a broad coalition of key public and private stakeholders, Go Build Georgia strives to increase the number of individuals entering the skilled trade workforce, while increasing the awareness of existing training programs leading to these in-demand occupations. WorkSource Northwest Georgia will refer youth as appropriate to learn about the options through the Go Build initiative. The local Go Build Strategy include:
a. Key to the success of Go Build Georgia is the Career Pathways initiative endorsed by Georgia, whereby every high school student has a plan to guide their education to achieve success in a particular career cluster. Northwest Georgia’s WIOA in-school participants will have as part of the Individual Service Strategy the identification of the career cluster and the additional WIOA services which can enhance the youth’s the youth’s achievement of their career clusters.

b. The Career Depot web site will maintain a link to the Go Build Georgia web site. This 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 in Go Build Georgia: manufacturing, industrial construction, energy, telecommunication, and transportations.

g. Go Build Georgia representatives will be invited to participate in WDB meetings, Youth Committee meetings, and other appropriate venues. Additionally, information helpful to business and community organizations will be published as achievements, opportunities, or noteworthy events occur.

The importance of youth and young adults in gaining strong foundation skills, completing high school equivalence and earning industry-recognized certificates and degrees in order to gain economic stability and self-sufficiency cannot be understated. WIOA requires that local areas allocate at least 75 percent of their youth expenditures to serve out-of-school youth and 20 percent in a work-based, work experience component. WorkSource Northwest Georgia has begun this funding transition and will work closely with the youth providers and State staff to learn more about the available and expanding youth programs.

**Working with Adult Education** – WorkSource Northwest Georgia is working to build a better educated and more employable workforce by enrolling and graduating a greater number of youth who are co-enrolled in WIOA youth services and adult education programs. The objective is to increase the number of GED completers, through programming that is innovative and responsive to the needs of the participants. The youth providers will work to increase the number of GED completers annually. Providers will also find opportunities to work with Adult Education to increase the number of customers taking part in Adult Basic Education, Secondary Education, GED preparation and testing, and English as a Second Language programs.

**Model:** Georgia Northwestern Technical College, an out-of-school youth provider, has Adult Education Liaisons who 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 Liaison also maintains participants’ class attendance in GALIS daily, maintains post-test scores, assessments and conference notes in GALIS as they occur. They also monitor each participant’s file to ensure that all applicable paperwork is included. The liaisons are able to co-enroll every youth participant in adult education and WIOA. This effort ensures that participants will be more attractive as future employees upon receipt of their GED® credential.

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

**Youth with Disabilities** - Georgia’s one-stop system engages youth in customized career pathways through collaborative partnerships between VR and other core partner programs in the one-stop system. Georgia recently developed a strategic initiative to expand and improve VR services for youth with disabilities who is in or out-of-school. The purpose of this initiative is to bring together existing and new resources to offer a robust, comprehensive array of VR services to all schools. WorkSource Northwest Georgia and VR have worked together by co-enrolling in-school youth in the WIOA Work Experience Program. Current VR program policies and procedures are being reviewed and amended to reflect this new way of doing business. The plan includes the provision of pre-employment transition services and timely development and approval of an individualized plan for employment for each youth served. One subset of the proposed plan to expand and improve services is a newly awarded, five-year demonstration project entitles “Georgia Pathways to Work” funded through the US department of Education’s Rehabilitation Services Administration.

The proposed **Georgia Pathways to Work** program aims to significantly change the way the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA) transitions students and youth with disabilities throughout the state, in partnership with the core program partners and local employers. This will be accomplished by working with statewide initiatives such as HDCI to ensure responsiveness to the known workforce demands in Georgia, as well as supporting their efforts to better engage those with disabilities. The overall goal of the Georgia Pathways to Work program is to increase the number of youth who achieve competitive integrated employment through improving the 18 existing career pathways for students with disabilities, and creating community-based alternative career pathways for out-of-school youth. This will be achieved by tailoring the career pathways to a variety of work opportunities available in the communities. The program will also engage employers in the model design and employ social media strategies to connect youth across the nation. Additionally, a result of the
program will be to increase the average weekly wage and employer benefits of participants in each occupational cluster through successful completion of career pathways.

**Ex-Offenders** - Georgia’s workforce development system works in concert with GOTSR and DJJ to help returning citizens find jobs, training and support services to become productive citizens. The partnership also includes a close relationship with the business community to solicit employer feedback to find ways for returning youth to become gainfully employed. In doing so, Georgia enhances reentry success by increasing opportunities for returning citizens.

GA-PRI is a state/local partnership managed by GOTSR that includes a core team of state agency representatives. A critical focus of GA-PRI is to support businesses to help smooth the reemployment process for former inmates. One ground-breaking initiative is an Executive Order signed by Governor Deal in 2015 to remove the requirement that job applicants disclose their criminal histories on employment applications. This requirement applies to all those seeking work with state agencies, thereby prohibiting those agencies from using a prior criminal history as an automatic disqualifier for job applicants. Those applicants will have the opportunity to discuss their criminal records in person.

Georgia also helps to reduce recidivism through The Offender Parolee Probationer State Training Employment Program, or TOPPSTEP, operated by GDOL and DCS. GDOL delivers workshops and staffs a TOPPSTEP coordinator in over 40 centers across the state to help returning citizens find and keep a job. Additionally, GDOL staff provides assistance to businesses and job seekers on the use of criminal records and background checks in the application process. Youth contactors will assess each youth need and make referrals as necessary.

**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 post-secondary education in high-demand occupation training areas. In order for this to be successful, the local area will partner with high schools, Juvenile Justice and adult education programs to identify and engage the youth. The local area will partner with community organizations, non-profits and GVRA to engage youth with disabilities, foster youth, youth who are English language learners, and youth leaving the Juvenile Justice system. These partnerships will ensure that the youth are provided with the resources to ensure their successful entry into the workplace. The training provided to the youth will focus on GEDs, the use of career pathways and stackable credentials to promote lifelong learning and upward mobility. The local area will ensure all engaged youth are afforded the opportunity to successfully connect to the workforce system.
5. Implementation of Work-Based Learning Initiatives – Provide a description of how the area will implement initiatives such as incumbent worker training programs, on-the-job training programs, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathways initiatives, utilization of effective business intermediaries and other business services and strategies designed to meet the needs of employers in the corresponding region in support of the business service strategy.

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.

Work Based Training Utilizing ITAs

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

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 in youth, Incumbent Worker Training, Customized Training, Internships, and Apprenticeships. As a result, the region approved a proposal that will provide three of these services: OJT, Work Experience, and Incumbent Worker Training. The Work Experience component is currently provided for youth.

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.
Historically, OJT was offered to adults and dislocated workers; however, WorkSource Northwest Georgia has expanded the OJT program to include out-of-school youth (OSY). The OJT service for OSY started in April 2016 and will continue into and through PY2016. The OSY will be co-enrolled with the work-based training provider and an eligible youth provider who will recruit the youth and make appropriate referrals to OJT services based on the individual’s readiness for permanent work. All other Youth services will be provided by the Youth service provider.

- **Work Experience**, also known as Transitional Job Training, as stated previously, provides time-limited work experiences for individuals with barriers to employment who are chronically unemployed or have an inconsistent work history. Work experience can be an effective solution for the individual to gain necessary work experience needed to advance on a career pathway. The goal is to establish a work history for the individual, demonstrate work success, and develop skills that lead to entry into unsubsidized employment.

  The work-based training provider may have this option available for those adults that have barriers to permanent work and need to gain work readiness skills. They may then move successful work experience participants into their OJT program.

- **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 ultimately should lead to an increase in wages. 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. This will also be a new program to be developed following WIOA guidelines.

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 Georgia Department of Economic Development. 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 Section 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/Career Planners will be contracted to provide eligibility, exploration of eligible provider approved programs, case management, and assistance to customers and follow-up throughout their training. Informed customer choice will be ensured as the career adviser inform potential customers of what training is available and work with them to assure that they are referred to appropriate training through the use of ITAs or other services.

   c. The WDB/NWGRC will maintain information on the EPL regarding all training offered (OJT and customized) with the performance and cost information or appropriate and make referrals based on customer choice.

   d. Should the WDB/NWGRC determine that there are insufficient eligible training providers and there are identified programs of demonstrated effectiveness offered by a community-based organization or another private organizations serving individuals with barriers to employment or that it would be appropriate to serve multiple individuals in a contract with a institution of higher education (or other eligible training provider; and the contracts do not limit customer choice) other training options may be used.

   e. If the contract is a pay-for-performance contract, it may be used instead of an ITA to provide an alternative training service.
7. **Entrepreneurial Skills Training and Microenterprise Services** – Provide a description of how the area will coordinate and promote entrepreneurial skills training and Microenterprise services.

NWGRC will continue to promote entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services by focusing on partnerships with local businesses, labor organizations, faith and community-based 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. Strategic partnerships continue in place to build strong, sustainable and successful businesses.

WorkSource Northwest Georgia contracts with technical colleges and other providers who offer Accounting and Business Administration degrees that would assist prospective business owners in learning basic accounting principles and in developing, implementing and refining their business plan. The students are introduced to financial literacy, management, business law, human resources, marketing, business feasibility and business plan development. The region’s colleges and technical schools also offer student support services in career guidance, resume writing and job search upon graduation. Many approved areas of study (such as HVAC) require that the student first work for another employer prior to their own business development. The students are provided referrals to the employer to help them acquire the skills still needed after program completion. This collaboration prepares a pipeline of ready and skilled labor through Advanced Manufacturing career-based courses at the technical colleges in the area. These institutions provide opportunities for Georgians to develop skills and knowledge to meet the needs of the 21st century workforce.

Technical assistance is available to small and start-up businesses in the 15-county region, including Prove-It assessments, on the job training, and services with the intent of helping them to succeed. Focus is given to the phased needs of a business, such as starting a business, growing a business, and seeking capital. Employers are referred to the colleges and technical colleges for specialized training for their employees and future employees. The colleges will work with them to design the learning activities that will meet their specific needs. If on-the-job training is the preferred training method, up to 75 percent of the wages may be reimbursed to such business owners (per the SBA definition) for the cost of training.

WorkSource Northwest Georgia is committed to providing entrepreneurial skills training for in school and out-of-school youth 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 many times with small start-up businesses. These companies are willing to serve as work sites for youth, due to the expansion of business. This experience leads youth participants to their next level of education or full-time employment.

NWGRC prepares the region’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Plan, which has an entrepreneurship focus. This allows WorkSource Northwest Georgia to work with Chambers, lending institutions, area makerspaces, 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.

Georgia had three distressed counties in 2016, two of which are in the area covered by WorkSource Northwest Georgia - Chattooga and Murray. Six others in NWGA are designated “at risk.” Staff will continue to work closely with The Appalachian Regional Commission regarding potential opportunities for these smaller governments. These two 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.

NWGRC will continue to work closely with the Small Business Administration 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 (e.g. the Emerging 200 program) can help the microenterprise succeed.

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

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

Coordination of Adult Services with Educational Institutions

The WDB’s primary mechanism for creating a job-driven education and training system is through the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG). TCSG’s Office of Adult Education (OAE) will fund local providers of adult education services who will in turn work collaboratively with other core programs and partner agencies to coordinate comprehensive, wraparound services for program participants.
Local providers of adult education services will actively participate in the One-Stop program. One-stop centers provide a place for connecting individuals with local adult education programs through intake/orientation/assessment for adult education services, transition resources, referral processes, and other joint mechanisms developed through agency partnerships.

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

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

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

Coordination of WIOA Services with Educational Institutions

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

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

Coordination of Vocational Rehabilitation Services with Educational Institutions

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

Additional Financial Resources

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

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

WorkSource Northwest Georgia works closely with education providers to ensure participant access to postsecondary credentials in for-credit diplomas, certificates, and degrees. However, both TCSG and USG also have continuing education programs which provide access to non-credit industry credentials. In some cases, diploma, certificate and degree-earning programs also incorporate industry credentials. For example, a technical college welding diploma may incorporate industry certifications as students progress in the program. These types of stackable credentials enable participants to learn the specific skills needed to gain employment in demand occupations. Stackable credentials also enable participants to continue earning additional credentials at a later point. The area’s two-year and four-year institutions have done extensive work to ensure that credits seamlessly transfer between institutions. This work enables the region to better create career pathways for participants.
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. Please include region/local area Supportive Service Policies.

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 support services will leverage all available services available through DFCS - such as child care and transportation assistance to maximize resources and prevent duplication of services. WIOA will verify the TANF weekly assessed fee to be paid by the participant which is based on family income. The TANF client is responsible for paying the weekly family fee to the child care provider(s) after DFCS has paid the difference. WIOA can then reimburse the assessed weekly family fee to the participant, if within WIOA child care maximum allotted guidelines.

Resource Coordination: Documentation supporting that these services or funds for these services were not available or received from any other state and/or federal grant/program/funding stream/agency shall be placed in the participating file. There should be referrals to other agencies in the LWIAs and coordination of services to promote the most efficient use of resources. Examples: supportive service requested and how the supportive service will assist their participation in WIOA Title I activities.

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. Written information concerning supportive services received by each customer shall be placed in the participant’s file showing the need for the service and agency that provided the support service.

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 as follows:

I. Definition

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

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 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.

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. Are participating in career and/or training services. 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. Have complied with program regulations and policies during the period of training and/or enrollment.

Service providers should provide no further payments to participants that fail to participate without good cause. Participants must be attending classes on campus, be registered as full-time students, and attending all required hours. In order to receive support while in training, students must be in good standing and making satisfactory progress (a minimum of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale or a minimum of “C” on an “A, B, C, D, F” scale or 70 percent on a 100 percent scale). Those in pre-vocational or other approved career services must meet required attendance and make satisfactory progress as provided by the signed agreement. Youth out-of-school contracts will specify the “full-time” definition to be used to qualify for support service payments.

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

The Career Adviser/Career Planner will use forms provided to document all support payments. These payment requests shall be submitted on a bi-weekly basis. Registrants are expected to comply with these requirements. However, in the event that they do not, for extenuating circumstances such as illness, incapacity, etc., any support claims not submitted shall be limited to three months’ recovery of these payments and must have approval of the Career Adviser. Worksource Northwest Georgia will issue the transportation, dependent, and child care payments directly to the participant. Other support payments may be made to the vendor. This will be addressed case-by-case and will be upon Career Adviser 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. Policies are consistent with all applicable federal regulations and requirements mandated by the State Workforce Board and the Georgia Department of Economic Development,
Workforce Development.

A. Eligibility and determination of need for supportive services:

1. All participants will be determined eligible as WIOA participants utilizing the Northwest Georgia Eligibility Manual. They will be enrolled in the Georgia Work Ready Online Participant Portal (GWROPP) prior to the support service being provided.

2. Each support service provided will have justification in the file as to the need for the service. (See forms attached). These services must be necessary to enable the individual to participate in activities authorized under WIOA, Title I.

3. The Career Adviser will conduct the needs assessment for support services on a case-by-case basis.

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

1. The Career Adviser will document the participant’s eligibility and determination of need in each participant’s case file and/or their GWROPP utilizing forms as provided by Northwest Georgia Regional Commission.

2. The documentation must cover:
   a. Financial/physical need:
      There must be documentation in the case file that participants are incapable of providing these services for themselves.
      Examples: low income status as documented by family/household income determination, receipt of federal or state public assistance, UI benefits, documentation of skill upgrading that would lead to employment in a local or state in-demand occupation, documentation of lack of employment or underemployment, separation notice, birth certificates for children receiving childcare, documentation of transportation distance to attend training, etc.
   b. Resource Coordination:
      There must be documentation supporting that these services or funds for these services were not available from any other state and/or federal grant/program/funding stream/agency. There should be an analysis of all federal/state/local resources available in the LWIOAs and how they are being coordinated to promote the most efficient use of resources.
      Examples: UI records, application for applicable state and federal funds (HOPE, Pell, etc.). The cost of attendance form will show both training and support needs and resources and the unmet need that the support services are meeting in public institutions receiving Hope, Pell, and other resources.
   c. Type of supportive service requested and how the supportive service will assist their participation in WIOA Title I activities. (See supportive service request form.)
   d. Amount approved and justification for the amount being necessary and reasonable to enable participation in qualifying WIOA activities. (See supportive service request form.) Case notes must be entered in the GWROPP to document the
justification. The supportive service request form and case notes in the GWROPP will stipulate the time frame for support service.

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

C. **Process of how supportive services will be provided:**

NWGRC will reimburse participants for transportation, dependent, and child care costs at specified limits through bi-weekly checks. Proper authorization and documentation is provided to NWGRC by the Career Adviser. 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 Adviser and approved by NWGRC.

D. **Allowable Supportive Services:**

1. The supportive services are primarily provided to qualifying participants in classroom training and to youth in out-of-school programs. Others included in career services such as pre-vocational training must receive prior approval from Northwest Georgia Regional Commission.

2. Those enrolled in Work-Based Training where wages are paid will not qualify for supportive services except for work-related tools, clothing, shoes, equipment, or other necessary items needed for the job. In addition, cost of credential training and books and supplies may be paid as support. These can be paid the day training begins.

3. In-school youth may receive support payments on a case-by-case basis.

4. Flat rate payments are made to qualifying adults, dislocated workers, and youth (who must attend a minimum of three hours per day, or hours available to attend, to receive a payment for that day) for the following support services:
   a. Child care for children ages 12 and under:
      - Child(ren) must reside in the home of the participant,
      - Reimbursement to the participant is limited to a maximum of $15.00 per day, per child, up to two (2) children,
      - Birth certificates are necessary to verify the age of the child(ren),
      - Childcare may **not** be paid to a provider who resides in the same residence with the participant (example: spouse, older child, live-in parent). Therefore, ALL documentation of provision of daycare services must include, Provider’s full name and license number (if applicable), address, phone number, relationship to the participant and the Provider's signature verifying that they are being paid for their services.
      - Payments for child care may be required by the provider for a space to be maintained for the child even when the child is not in attendance for sickness or holidays. If this is the policy of the child care center, the provider must provide
verification of that for the day(s) in question.

- Weekly receipts will be necessary to verify payments by the participant to the provider.

b. 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 = $2.50 per day
- 11 – 25 miles = $5.00 per day
- 26 – 75 miles = $7.50 per day
- 76+ miles = $10.00 per day

c. Other supportive services:

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

1.) **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.

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

d. Allowable supportive services provided after training in order to obtain employment include, but are not limited to:

- Tools, work clothing, and boots/shoes required for employment
- Bonding and liability insurance for employment
- Drug testing required by employer
- Financial counseling and assistance
- Auxiliary aids and services necessary for persons with disabilities to obtain and
e. Unallowable Supportive Services

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

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

E. Documentation of the provision for supportive services:

a. All supportive service information for participants must be entered into the GWROPP (type of supportive service, amount, date of service, etc.). All supporting documentation for a participant’s supportive services can either be scanned into the GWROPP or maintained in another system or physical case file (participant time sheets, income determination, UI records, supportive service request form, etc.).

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

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

F. Financial cap to be placed on supportive services:

a. There is a limit on total supportive service expenditures for an LWDA by funding stream. No more than 35 percent of the allocation for a particular funding stream (i.e., adult, dislocated worker, or youth) will be spent on support unless a waiver is granted by the State. The 35 percent determination will be taken from that program year’s total allocation per funding stream. Separate caps will be determined for each funding stream.

b. Waivers to this policy will be requested from Georgia Department of Economic Development, Workforce Division on a case-by-case basis unless specific populations, groups, or classes are approved.

Needs-Related Payments 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). NWGRC has developed a needs-related payment policy to ensure it meets WIOA guidelines and assists eligible participants.

The NWGRC Needs-Related Payment policy is as follows:

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). (Ref. § 680.930)

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;

1. have ceased to qualify for unemployment compensation or trade readjustment allowance under TAA; and

2. be enrolled in a program of training services under WIOA Sec. 134 (c)(3) by the end of the 13th week after the most recent layoff that resulted in a determination of the worker’s eligibility as a dislocated worker, or, if later, by the end of the 8th week after the worker is informed that a short-term layoff will exceed six (6) months; or

b. be unemployed and did not qualify for unemployment compensation or trade readjustment assistance under TAA and be enrolled in a program of training services under WIOA Sec. 134 (c)(3).

Adults and Dislocated Workers must:

a. be enrolled in school/college on a full-time basis. This does not have to necessarily be WIOA funded training.

b. maintain a “C” average or above while receiving NRP.

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 re-determined 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) 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 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.

**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 LWDB is also embarking on efforts to analyze and improve the referral process and case management systems to further unify activities at the participant level. These efforts include standardized training for staff, use of virtual training and staff meetings and increased participation in job fairs, resource fairs and other collaborative meetings.

   Finally, local core program partners are collaborating with Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS), which was recently awarded a USDA grant to develop a multiagency assessment and case management delivery system. This collaboration will enable staff delivering Wagner-Peyser services and related partner programs to provide intensive customized reemployment services to a broad segment of customers in need. Staff will be able to continuously share information and insights via a centralized case management system. Similarly, all necessary participants tracking and reporting will be accomplished within a single system.

**LWDA and Labor Market Information**

The local area plans 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 upcoming 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 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 Career Centers continuously improve and update staff knowledge through training and Career Center 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.

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

Additional staff training is provided in the following areas: strategies for business recruitment events, as well as multiple methodologies to connect qualified job seekers with employers; providing workforce statistics and prevailing industry wages; guidance on employment laws as it relates to the workplace; UI, Federal Bonding, the Work Opportunity Tax Credit and other workforce services. Staff also has access to customer service training to enhance services to job seekers and businesses.

Other staff development activities include:

- Comprehensive online resources on GDOL’s website at www.dol.georgia.gov;
• Job shadowing for new staff at State and local offices;
• Active participation in IAWP; hosting the international conference in 2015;
• Active participation in NASWA;
• 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
GDOL offers 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.

UI and Regional Operations Division
The UI and Regional Operations (RO) Division of GDOL provide subject matter expertise and technical assistance on UI policies, rules, procedures, and systems to all staff. In the training modules, staff is educated on how to detect, address, and resolve issues that affect UI eligibility. While in-depth training is provided to career center staff managing the UI claims process, an overview of the UI process, including the appeals process, is also available to WIOA and other workforce partners.

In addition to providing UI training, the UI & RO Division provides a dedicated customer service line staffed by experienced benefits analysts who address UI issues, questions and concerns; specify the benefits of ES; and resolve inquiries from WIOA customers. The robust training and partnerships encourage exemplary service delivery to job seekers and employers, and create opportunities to identify and/or create new training opportunities as laws and regulations change.

Finally, 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. Approximately 60 percent of ES registered customers are UI claimants. Each GDOL career center has a resource area that customers can access for their employment needs. 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, including GLME, O*Net tools and others; over 40 TapDance Live! 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 ex-offenders;
• Assistance with federal bonding; and
• Referral to partner and community provider services.

Staff-assisted employment services are provided to more than 500,000 individuals annually, and
tens of thousands of additional individuals receive self-services made available by GDOL at career
centers and online. More than 1.6 million job referrals were provided during Program Year 2014.
Also, Georgia businesses list approximately 150,000 available jobs on a daily basis, with a goal of
increasing that number to 300,000 in the future. This increased number of job openings is a result
of growth in the local economy and the strengthening of employer relationships with the
workforce system. As a result of the improving economy and the focused reemployment
strategies of connecting job seekers to meaningful job opportunities, Georgia's Entered
Employment Rate shows steady recovery and is approaching pre-recession rates.

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 services under Title II in the local area, including a description of
how the local board will carry out, consistent with subparagraphs (A) and (B)(i) of section
107(d)(11) of the WIOA law, the review of local applications submitted under Title II.

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

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

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

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

Local Applications for Title II Funds

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

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

- 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 post-secondary education and training; and
- Obtain employment.

In accordance with federal regulation, eligible providers may receive adult education funding for the delivery of any of the following adult education and literacy activities:

- Adult education;
- Literacy;
- Workplace adult education and literacy activities;
• Family literacy activities;
• English language and acquisition activities;
• Integrated English literacy and civics education;
• Workforce preparation activities; or
• Integrated education and training.

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.

To complement the State’s use of the technical college system, the region will further leverage relationships with educational institutions by enhancing Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services in schools. The Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA) is working closely with the Georgia Department of Education to develop a collaborative plan to enhance transition services region-wide for students with disabilities. The two agencies established a formal Interagency Cooperative Agreement to assure that cooperation and collaboration exist in implementing and maintaining a system of VR services to eligible students with disabilities. The main objective of this Agreement is to improve and expand the VR 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 VR program practices.

Currently, GVRA has Interagency Cooperative Agreements with 89 school districts throughout the state. Through these agreements, GVRA provides a transition counselor to work with students. Gilmer County Board of Education served 33 high school seniors through the WIOA Youth Success Academy (YSA) program in the 2015 – 2016 school year. The YSA provides youth work experience throughout the school year, as well as mentoring and case management. Basic skills, along with remedial activities for youth aged 16 – 21, are also provided. This includes credit recovery and instruction leading to the acquisition of basic 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 in society. The YSA also provides tutoring, internships and job shadowing,
occupational skills training, leadership development, financial literacy, entrepreneurial skills training, career counseling and support services. Of the 33 students enrolled in the YSA, 17 were referred by GVRA and all but one succeeded in attaining their goals.

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. Follow-up services are also provided to the students, in coordination fashion among WIOA, school staff and GVRA.

Through a cooperative agreement with the Area School for the Deaf, GVRA is hiring a dedicated counselor to serve the school. The school is located in Cave Spring, in the WorkSource Northwest Georgia area, and serves students from elementary through high school graduation. Services are also provided to the students to assist them with the college application process. Students entering Georgia School for the Deaf must be legal residents of Georgia. Day school is available to students ages three to 21. The residential program serves students aged four to 21. All referrals to the school must come from the local school district in which the prospective student resides.

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
- Improve communication among GVRA and other regional agencies that serve a common population and/or specialty populations, including USG, TCSG and the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities
- 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 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 Sec. 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 of the local fiscal agent (where appropriate), eligible providers under subtitle B and the one-stop delivery system, in the local area.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Effectiveness in Serving Employers** - USDOL has not yet determined a definition for this measure.

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

The chart below shows how WIOA measures compare with WIA Common Measures. Past performance shown in this report was reported while under WIA Common Measure requirements. WIOA performance percentages will be negotiated when federal guidance is received.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Measure</th>
<th>WIOA</th>
<th>WIA Common Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adults and Dislocated Worker Measures</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entered Employment</td>
<td>Employed in Q2 after exit</td>
<td>Employed in Q1 after exit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Retention</td>
<td>Employed Q4 after exit</td>
<td>Of those employed Q1 the percentage still employ in Q2 and Q3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Earnings</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>Average earnings of Q2 and Q3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Earnings</td>
<td>Median earnings in Q2 after exit only</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credential Rate</td>
<td>Percentage of participants who obtain a credential or diploma during or up to 1 year after exit from participation</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measureable Skills Gain</td>
<td>Percentage of participants in education leading to credential or employment during program year, achieving measurable gains.</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Youth Measures</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entered Employment</td>
<td>Employed in Q2 after exit</td>
<td>Employed in Q1 after exit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Retention</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>Percentage of participants in education, training, or unsubsidized employment; measured in Q4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Earnings</td>
<td>Median earnings in Q2 after exit only</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credential Rate</td>
<td>Percentage of participants who obtain a credential or diploma during or up to 1 year after exit from participation</td>
<td>Attainment of a Degree or Certificate – Rate of youth participants who obtain a diploma, GED®, or certificate by the end of the Q3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy and Numeracy Gains</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>Rate of youth participants who increase one or more educational functioning levels during first year in program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measureable Skills Gain</td>
<td>Percentage of participants in education leading to a credential or employment during program year, achieving measurable gains.</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Negotiated levels for 2016 and 2017 are included as Attachment 2.

Past Performance for Northwest Georgia

The following report shows quarters of performance for Program Year 2014. The region was meeting or exceeding in all measures for an overall status of “meeting”.

WIA PY 14 (Q4)
Quarterly Performance Report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Area Name</th>
<th>(Return to Main)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northwest Georgia (Area 01)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Measure</th>
<th>Performance Group</th>
<th>1st Perf Qtr</th>
<th>2nd Perf Qtr</th>
<th>3rd Perf Qtr</th>
<th>4th Perf Qtr</th>
<th>PY To Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entered Employment Rate</td>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Rate</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Rate</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dislocated Workers</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>71.4%</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>76.9%</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retention Rate</td>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>90.9%</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>90.0%</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dislocated Workers</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>95.8%</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>94.0%</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Earnings</td>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>$13,085</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>$13,309</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dislocated Workers</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>$13,620</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>$14,882</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placement in Employment or Education</td>
<td>Youth (14-21)</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>84.6%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>73.3%</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attainment of Degree or Certificate</td>
<td>Youth (14-21)</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>84.6%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy or Numeracy Gains</td>
<td>Youth (14-21)</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>87.3%</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>82.1%</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The three-year comparison below indicates that while PY 14 recorded a dip in Entered Employment Rate, the numbers rebounded in data available through third quarter of PY15. In PY15, both Entered Employment and Retention Rates are up significantly based on available data. Average Earning show a steady increase in both Adults and DW over the three-year span. The three Youth performance indicators in the following chart shows that while overall numbers may be slightly lower; the performance rates are steady or rising with the exception of Literacy or Numeracy Gains which shows a 2 percent drop for PY15 through Q3.
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 assessment by the local board.

A tri-level structure utilizing the Malcolm Baldrige Continuous Improvement© criteria (available at [www.careerdepot.org](http://www.careerdepot.org)) was developed and adopted by the WDB/CCEO for use in chartering and evaluating the one-stop centers. By applying the Malcolm Baldrige© criteria, continuous improvement and provision of high-quality service is measurable.

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 provisionally recertified, pending receipt of new state/federal guidelines, and/or one-stop operator procurement.

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, Consortium, 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 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 3.

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 approved listing after consultation with a WIOA Career Advisor. If a participant receives career advisement and support services and the program is funded by PELL/HOPE funds, the Individual Training Account (ITA) policies will apply. The following policies may be utilized to establish local parameters for service.

**Policies:**

- Training must be in occupations identified in the local WIOA Plan as growth and/or demand occupations or documentation of employment prospects for areas not listed in the Plan should be provided.

- Training must result in an employment wage sufficient to attain self-sufficiency without the aid of public assistance.

- Training must be at full-time status (as defined by the institution as specified in the contract with NWGRC). Exceptions to this policy may be approved, in writing, on a case-by-case basis.

- Programs should not exceed 104 weeks (two years). Exceptions to this policy may be approved on a case-by-case basis and requests should include evidence that financial support is available during extended training periods.

- RN, dental hygienist, teachers and radiological technicians, without limitations of funding, may be extended for three years. If necessary, and with approval of staff, the four occupations may be extended beyond the three year limitation.

- In general, all training programs must be within a reasonable commute of the WIOA local area that may include out-of-the-area and out-of-state training institutions. Out-of-the-area and out-of-state training programs that are not within commuting distance...
to the local area may be approved on a case-by-case basis. All approved training must be located within the contiguous United States.

- All applicants must apply for the PELL Grant and/or HOPE Grant/Scholarship program, if eligible. All grants must be applied towards tuition and fees prior to the use of WIOA funding.

- 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.). No funds shall be provided for general academic programs (i.e. General Studies, Bachelors of Art, etc.);

  (b) Total course of study will take no longer than 104 weeks (2 years) to complete and will be a certificate, diploma, or degree program;

  (c) The customer must demonstrate that he/she has the financial resources to attend long-term training.

- Continuing education and other similar courses may be approved if the following conditions apply:

  (a) The customer must have a specific occupational goal;

  (b) The customer must present evidence describing how the proposed training will increase their employment marketability.

- ITAs may be utilized for expenses related to training, including, but not limited to, the following: books, tuition and fees, supplies, uniforms and shoes, certification, licensing, testing fees, drug testing for entrance into training, medical requirements for training entrance, etc.

- Customers accepted on a provisional basis may receive assistance on a case-by-case basis.

- ITAs will not be used for payment of late fees cause by customer error or delay. The customer will be responsible for these fees, as he/she is responsible for other fines or penalties.

- Each local Workforce Development Board will determine funding limitations. A guide to training limitations follows:

  (a) Up to $6,500 in training costs, excluding support, may be expended for each participant for the first year of training;

  (b) For training that extends beyond one year, total training costs may not exceed $10,400, excluding support.

If the cost of training exceeds funds limitation guidelines, career advisers should assist in developing a financial plan to cover total costs of training. Customers shall not be required to apply for or access student loans, or incur personal debt as a condition of participation.
f. **Provide a description of the process to track and manage all ITA activity.**

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

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

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

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

Registered apprenticeships, if approved by the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) are 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.

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

Following those lines, WorkSource Northwest Georgia uses a data collection 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.

In 2012, WorkSource Northwest Georgia purchased occupational skills assessment software (ProveIt!) to be used by the Department of Labor OJT Career Counselors to better evaluate an OJT participant’s skills, skills gap and recommend a career path for the participant. This tool has been thoroughly tested for its effectiveness and will be purchased at the DOL level.

In 2013, the region purchased a subscription with The Conference Board and their occupational tool – Wanted Analytics. Economic webinars with The Conference Board have proven invaluable to understand national, state and local economies and the potential effect on employment and unemployment. Wanted Analytics has provided occupational and employer information that is
disseminated to the WDB for use in analyzing the market for upcoming in-demand occupations and trends.

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 (in collaboration with economic data provided by The Conference Board), to track state and local unemployment information. This information is then communicated to the WDB and service contractors.

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.

In the summer of 2015, WorkSource Northwest Georgia developed a computer-based interactive system using Skype. This tool can be used to conduct participant interviews and long distance interactions with WDB, contractors and business partners, minimizing time and reducing cost-prohibited travel. This program was successful tested and is pending “roll out”.

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

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.

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 will adopt and utilize the state brand.**

   In order to achieve a coordinated and unified identity across the one-stop system, the LWDA will incorporate the state’s branding standards into all signage, print and media materials used for training, marketing, and communication purposes. An ongoing LWDA marketing campaign will be 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. **State Initiatives – Describe how the area will coordinate with WFD state initiatives, including: Go Build Georgia, Operation: Workforce, WorkSmart Georgia and the High Demand Career Initiative.**

   **Go Build Georgia** is a state initiative designed to increase awareness of skilled trade careers in manufacturing, telecommunications, energy, logistics, and construction. Because of the tremendous opportunity for youth to receive training in skilled trades that will lead to high wage jobs and of the increased manufacturing employer’s need for skilled workers, the NWGA WDB Youth Committee will seek to promote activities each year to develop the pipeline for this training. Every youth should receive information on skilled trade careers to assure that the local area coordinates in a comprehensive manner with this initiative.
**Operation: Workforce** has a tremendous web-based information platform for returning veterans. WorkSource Northwest Georgia has sought to inform the public of the resources of this initiative by covering it in newsletters and providing a link on the careerdepot.org web site. WorkSource Northwest Georgia’s service providers participated in a Summit for Veterans sponsored by Operation: Workforce and will continue to coordinate with other statewide events to promote training and employment for veterans. Local employers have been encouraged to list their jobs on the website in order not only to assist them in getting good workers but to help the veterans, in many cases, find jobs near their families and homes.

The Office of Apprenticeship and the Georgia Department of Economic Development/Workforce Division have collaboratively launched **WorkSmart Georgia** in an effort to assist employers in developing a registered apprenticeship training track. This viable training option is among the most respected both by employers and by employees because of the vetting by USDOL/ETA that must occur prior to approval of the apprenticeships. It is also a way to maximize resources by sharing both public and private dollars to accomplish this. Local WIOA funds will be used as needed and as available to fund ITAs or OJT in this design. WorkSource Northwest Georgia will coordinate with the Department of Economic Development—Workforce Division staff to identify and develop apprenticeship sites, particularly in the key sectors of advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and logistics/transportation, and will refer eligible individuals to this training as appropriate.

Representatives of WorkSource Northwest Georgia met with key advanced manufacturing leaders in the region in 2014 through Governor Deal’s **High Demand Career Initiative** (HDCI) to receive input from the private sector representatives regarding the Region’s workforce needs and challenges. Among the outcomes of the meetings were the expressed need for more apprenticeships, internships, on-the-job training, and co-op programs. Consequently, WorkSource Northwest Georgia has substantially increased OJT opportunities for individuals from 117 OJT placements from July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015 to 190 OJT placements from July 1, 2015 through May 27, 2016. Additionally, internships and work experience are projected to be an integral sequence for many individuals entering the workforce either directly from occupational skills training, where they have little or no experience in this field of study or no work experience at all. Skills learned in the workplace regarding soft skills, work culture, and skill gaps for an individual transitioning from an academic setting to actual work can be overcome as more opportunities for work-based learning are available.

Career Planners will assist in placements in work-based settings as the need for supplemental training is identified for individuals without work experience. Co-op programs have also been identified as a service strategy. WorkSource Northwest Georgia will identify key opportunities currently available in the Region and seek to expand this option. Apprenticeships are viable options for individuals learning advanced manufacturing principles and operations, as cited above.

The Region intends to identify from the HDCI lessons learned from private sector representatives across the State. This will help to identify other demand occupations that could lead to sector strategies for WorkSource Northwest Georgia. Specifically, healthcare and logistics will be examined and key workforce needs for these industries found across the state will lead to appropriate service strategy and design for WorkSource Northwest Georgia.
The Region will also utilize Georgia.org/Workforce Assessment, specifically for healthcare and logistic businesses in the Region, to develop a more comprehensive inventory of workforce needs in these sectors. With this undertaking, Chambers, technical colleges, the Georgia Department of Labor, and other partners will be utilized to assure adequate response is obtained and maximum coordination achieved.

3. Special Populations – Describe how the area will provide services to the special populations specified in the state plan, to include ex-offenders, veterans, at-risk youth, long-term unemployed, adult learners and individuals with disabilities. If the region has identified additional target groups, please list.

   A. Low-Income Individuals – At the state level, WIOA and WP grant administrators are collaborating with DFCS to develop a strategy to reduce the number of Georgians who rely on SNAP support. The purpose of this collaborative initiative is to create a long-term reemployment solution to assist this population in regaining meaningful employment. This collaboration will enable one-stop Operators delivering WP and related partner programs to provide intensive customized reemployment services to a broad segment of Georgians in need.

Through this initiative, Georgia will develop and utilize a coordinated, multiagency assessment and case management delivery system. Rather than merely “handing off” or “passing along” participants from one entity to another, an integrated case management system will be employed. Primary case managers will work closely with secondary case managers (i.e., specialists in partner organizations), continuously sharing information and insights via a centralized management information system. Similarly, all necessary participant tracking and reporting will be accomplished within a single system.

The State will carefully catalogue identified barriers and create a unique intervention plan for each participant. Customized supportive services will occur prior to, concurrently, or after specific activities. The proposed system will also include a state-of-the art online labor exchange platform that will combine unique self service capabilities to foster SNAP recipient self-reliance, with case management tracking capabilities. Finally, the project will rely on a newly created, multi-agency advisory committee that will not only ensure informed guidance throughout the life of the grant, but will also engender sustainability beyond the grant and technical assistance for all that choose to reprise the design.

Outreach recruitment efforts are underway in the region in an effort to enroll low income participants who are primarily SNAP recipients into the WIOA program. The region offers GED® training, classroom training, support services, work experience, OJT, and other programs for this population. Both Basic Skills and Individualized services are available. The outreach representatives also educate DFCS staff so they may make appropriate referrals.

   B. Individuals with Disabilities - As the lead agency in serving individuals with disabilities, GVRA supports core partner programs in serving individuals with disabilities. Staff training via webinars provided by Job Accommodation Network (JAN) have been held to education program providers in current laws and regulation effecting people with disabilities.

The WDB has established a Disability Committee comprised of GVRA, WIOA, TCSG, and private sector representatives, who will tend to any special circumstances required for
equitable and fair treatment of this population. This committee has completed a review of all One-Stops to ensure they are in compliance with the law. Northwest Georgia also has staff members that are trained as Disability Navigators.

C. **Youth with Disabilities** - Georgia’s one-stop system engages youth in customized career pathways and SES through collaborative partnerships between VR and other core partner programs in the one-stop system. Georgia recently developed a strategic initiative to expand and improve VR services for youth with disabilities who are either in-school or out-of-school. The purpose of this initiative is to braid existing and new resources to offer a robust, comprehensive array of VR services to all schools. Current VR program policies and procedures are being reviewed and amended to reflect this new way of doing business. The plan includes the provision of pre-employment transition services and timely development and approval of an individualized plan for employment for each youth served. One subset of the proposed plan to expand and improve VR services is a newly awarded, five-year demonstration project entitled “Georgia Pathways to Work” funded through the US Department of Education’s Rehabilitation Services Administration.

The proposed Georgia Pathways to Work program aims to significantly change the way GVRA does business statewide in transitioning students and youth with disabilities in partnership with the core program partners, GaDOE, as well as local employers. This will be accomplished by working with statewide initiatives such as HDCI to ensure responsiveness to the known workforce demands in Georgia, as well as supporting their efforts to better engage those with disabilities. The overall goal of the Georgia Pathways to Work program is to increase the number of youth who achieve competitive integrated employment through improving the 18 existing career pathways for students with disabilities, and creating community-based alternative career pathways for out-of-school youth. This will be achieved by tailoring the career pathways to a variety of work opportunities available in the communities. The program will also engage employers in the model design and employ social media strategies to connect youth across the nation. Additionally, a result of the program will be to increase the average weekly wage and employer benefits of participants in each occupational cluster through successful completion of career pathways.

D. **Ex-Offenders** - Georgia’s workforce development system works in concert with GOTSR and DJJ to help returning citizens find jobs, training and support services to become productive citizens. The partnership also includes a close relationship with the business community to solicit employer feedback to find ways for returning citizens to become gainfully employed. In doing so, Georgia enhances reentry success by increasing opportunities for returning citizens.

GA-PRI is a state/local partnership managed by GOTSR that includes a core team of state agency representatives. A critical focus of GA-PRI is to support businesses to help smooth the reemployment process for former inmates. One ground-breaking initiative is an executive order signed by Governor Deal in 2015 to remove the requirement that job applicants to disclose their criminal histories on employment. This requirement applies to all those seeking work with state agencies, thereby prohibiting those agencies from using a prior criminal history as an automatic disqualifier for job applicants. Those applicants will have the opportunity to discuss their criminal records in person.
Another way to support returning citizens is to provide incentives to the business community. The Federal Bonding Program, managed by GDOL, is a program that alleviates much of the potential risk involved in hiring an ex-offender. Federal Bonding provides employers with liability coverage at no cost when they hire job applicants who cannot be covered by a commercial bond. In addition, business can benefit from WOTC, a tax incentive to businesses that hire and retain new employees who are members of qualified groups, including ex-offenders. Information on Federal Bonding and WOTC is available at one-stop centers across the state.

Georgia also helps to reduce recidivism through The Offender Parolee Probationer State Training Employment Program, or TOPPSTEP, operated by GDOL and DCS. GDOL delivers workshops and staffs a TOPPSTEP coordinator in over 40 centers across the state to help returning citizens find and keep a job. Additionally, GDOL staff provides assistance to businesses and job seekers on the use of criminal records and background checks in the application process.

It is our practice that no individual is turned away from receiving services from our program. Our area is working very closely with the GA-PRI initiative in an attempt to capture returning citizens and assist them with returning to the workforce. The GA-PRI Steering Team consists of individuals from WIOA, the Housing Authority, GVRA, Dept. of Corrections, Dept. of Human Services, Dept. of Labor, a minister to name a few. There have been numerous obstacles identified for these returning citizens. However, The Community Coordinator from the Governor’s Office of Transition, Support and Reentry has taken this special project as a mission to aid those who have been incarcerated for a period of time and need the assistance of the community to become self-reliant. The plan is to transition these citizens into the community with as much ease as possible.

The Community Coordinator has reached out to our WIOA Director to give presentations to law enforcement agencies as to how our program operates and the benefits it has to offer the returning citizens in our community and surrounding areas.

E. **TANF** - Through the TANF Family Service Plan (TFSP) and TANF work activities, these individuals with barriers to employment are served.

F. **Long-Term Unemployed** - The State has many strategies to reduce the number of weeks an individual spends separated from the workforce, with a particular focus on reconnecting the long-term unemployed.

G. **Workforce Services for Veterans** - Georgia’s unemployment rate for post 9/11 veterans is significantly higher than the national average. Services to veterans are provided by LVERs and DVOPs specialists located in one-stop centers across the state.

Georgia is also committed to helping veterans who enter, or are at risk of entering, the criminal justice system to identify and connect with appropriate services, treatment, and any other support they need to become productive citizens. As an example, GDOL is partnering with the Cobb County Court System, various veterans support entities and volunteer veteran mentors from the community to operate a Veterans Treatment Court in Cobb County. Veterans Treatment Courts are specialized diversion courts that work with troubled, justice-involved veterans. Active combat experience has left a growing number of
veterans with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury. When left untreated, these mental health disorders often contribute to substance abuse, unemployment, anger management issues, including domestic violence, chronic illness, homelessness, and a host of other issues leading to involvement in the criminal justice system.

Georgia’s DVOP specialists provide direct services to Georgia’s Veteran Treatment Court system to help address the numerous barriers to employment of troubled veterans convicted of non-violent crimes. While the offender is on probation, the DVOPs work directly with the court to provide case management services, job opportunities, and the full array of services available in Georgia’s one-stop system to help the veteran become reintegrated into his or her community. DVOPs also coordinate with other supportive partnership agencies, for example community-based volunteer veteran mentors, to further encourage the veterans continued connection to sustainable employment and self-sufficiency.

Services to the special populations will be given through contract agreements with our service providers. Providers will offer services that include, but are not limited to training, employment and career guidance, counseling services, follow-up services, internships, assessments, on-the-job training, GED®, individual training accounts, IEP or ISS, eligibility, career pathways, tracking and referral.

Service priority for adults must be given to recipients of public assistance or low income individuals; with added priorities of individuals who are basic skills deficient; regardless of funding level.

Services will be offered to all customers that enter into our one-stop center(s) regardless of their target group identification. Career Advisors will complete a face to face interview to help them better access the need of the customer. Once a plan has been identified, the Career Advisor will initiate the eligibility process, complete an assessment, determination of suitability, develop a plan, record the plan on the customer’s Individual Employment Plan (IEP) or Individual Service Strategy (ISS), make the appropriate referral and determine what is the best route for the customer.

4. **Priority of Service – Describe how the region will identify and administer the state’s priority of service policy. Identify if the region will add target populations in addition to ones specified by state and federal policy.**

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

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 4).
# Attachments

**Attachment 1: Local Workforce Development Board Member Listing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEMBER NAME</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>ENTITY</th>
<th>BOARD CATEGORY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lisa Adkisson</td>
<td>Regional Coordinator</td>
<td>Georgia Department of Labor</td>
<td>Wagner-Peyser Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike Babb</td>
<td>Chairman</td>
<td>Whitfield County Board of Commissioners</td>
<td>CCEO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dickie Bone</td>
<td>Training Director</td>
<td>Southeastern Carpenters Training Trust</td>
<td>Apprenticeship/Local 225/Millwright 1263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruce Bowman</td>
<td>Vice President</td>
<td>Fox Systems, Inc.</td>
<td>Business Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carl Campbell</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>Dalton-Whitfield County Joint Development</td>
<td>Economic Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura Gammage</td>
<td>Vice President, Economic Development</td>
<td>West Georgia Technical College</td>
<td>Higher Education Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Hamilton</td>
<td>Business Manager</td>
<td>Millwright Local 1263</td>
<td>Labor Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jim Henry</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Customer Precision Components</td>
<td>Business Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seth Houts</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Dade County Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>Business Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beth Kelley</td>
<td>Owner</td>
<td>KBruce Farms, Inc.</td>
<td>Business Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack Killian</td>
<td>Owner</td>
<td>KCP Architects</td>
<td>Business Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Martin</td>
<td>Controller</td>
<td>QSR, Inc.</td>
<td>Business Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cody McCarson</td>
<td>Owner</td>
<td>Alfa Insurance—The Cody McCarson Agency</td>
<td>Business Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lance McCravy</td>
<td>Special Representative</td>
<td>Plumbers, Pipefitters, and HVACR Technicians, Local 72</td>
<td>Labor Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linda McEntire</td>
<td>Director, Technical Training,</td>
<td>Mohawk Industries</td>
<td>Business Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitchell Morgan</td>
<td>Chairman</td>
<td>United Community Bank Board</td>
<td>Business Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike Murphy</td>
<td>COO</td>
<td>McWhorther Capital</td>
<td>Business Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jonathan Ray</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>North Georgia Community Action, Inc.</td>
<td>Community-Based Organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Ray</td>
<td>Unit Manager</td>
<td>Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency</td>
<td>Vocational Rehabilitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike Schwaderer</td>
<td>Manufacturing Division Manager</td>
<td>Honda Precision Parts of GA, LLC</td>
<td>Business Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerri Hosmer</td>
<td>Director of Instruction</td>
<td>Georgia Northwestern Technical College</td>
<td>Adult Ed/Supervisor of Youth Success Academy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Attachment 2: Local Negotiated Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WIOA Performance Measure</th>
<th>PY16 Goal</th>
<th>PY17 Goal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult Q2 Entered Employment</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Q4 Entered Employment</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Median Earnings</td>
<td>$6,000</td>
<td>$6,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Credential Rate</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult In-Program Skills Gain</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DW Q2 Entered Employment</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DW Q4 Entered Employment</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DW Median Earnings</td>
<td>$6,700</td>
<td>$7,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DW Credential Rate</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DW In-Program Skills Gain</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Q2 Placement in Employment or Education</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Q4 Placement in Employment or Education</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Median Earnings</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Credential Rate</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth In-Program Skills Gain</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer Measure</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pursuant to section 181 and 188 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and in compliance with 29 U.S.C. 2938, 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, national origin, age, gender identity, disability, or political affiliation, belief 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.§ 38.36 effective July 22, 2015.

**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.

The complainant has the right to be represented in the complaint process by an attorney or other representative.

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 1-800-255-0056, pwalker@nwgrc.org, or with the Director, Civil
Rights Center (CRC), U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue NW, Room 4123, Washington, DC 20210.

OR

Complaints may also be filed with the Georgia Department of Economic Development, Workforce Division, WIOA Title I Equal Opportunity Officer, 75 Fifth Street, NW, Suite 845, Atlanta, GA 30308, (404) 962-4136, TTY/TDD 1-800-255-0056.

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 Georgia Department of Economic Development, Workforce Division, (GDEcD-WD) then GDEcD-WD or the NWGRC has 90 days to resolve the complaint and issue a written Notice of Final Action. Options for resolving the complaint must include alternative dispute resolution, at the complainant’s choice.

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the resolution of his/her complaint at NWGRC or the State level, the complainant may file a new complaint with the CRC within 30 days of the date on which the complainant receives the Notice of Final Action.

If GDEcD-WD, 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 filing a complaint are listed at www.careerdepot.org.

COMPLAINTS OF FRAUD, ABUSE OR OTHER ALLEGED CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

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

1. Georgia Department of Economic Development, Workforce Division
   Tel: 404-962-4005
   Mailing Address: GDEcD, Workforce Division
   Attn: Compliance Team
   75 Fifth Street, NW, Suite 845
   Atlanta, GA 30308

2. Georgia Office of Inspector General
   Tel: 1-866-435-7644 (1-866-HELPOIG)
   Mailing Address: 2 M.L.K. Jr. Dr., 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 1-800-347-3756
   Mailing Address: Attn: Hotline, Office of Inspector General
                    U.S. Department of Labor
                    200 Constitution Ave., NW
                    Room S-5506 Washington, D.C. 20210
   Complaint Form: https://www.oia.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 20-2-1160.

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 Northwest Georgia Regional Commission
P.O. Box 1798          P.O. Box 1798
Rome, Georgia 30162-1798 Rome, GA 30165
709.295.6485           706.295.6485
pwalker@nwgrc.org      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 within 30 days, 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. 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 the NWGRC lacks jurisdiction to resolve the NWGRC shall immediately issue written notice to the Complainant 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 sixty (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 sixty (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 sixty (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 ten (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 http://www.georgia.org/competitive-advantages/workforce-division/technical-assistance/.
Such appeal shall be filed within sixty (60) days of the date of the written decision issued by the NWGRC.

The Deputy Commissioner 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 4: Priority of Services

Priority of Service

I. Service Priority for Individualized Services and Training Services

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

A. Public assistance recipients, other low-income adults; and

B. Individuals who are basic skills deficient.

Veterans under WIOA Sec. 3 (63)(A) receive priority of service as described in the Jobs for Veterans Act (38 U.S.C 4215 (2)). Veterans and eligible spouses of veterans who otherwise meet the eligibility requirements for adults programs must receive the highest priority for services. TEGL 3-15 references TEGL 10-09 regarding order of priority for veterans and eligible spouses. Priority must be provided in the following order:

- First priority will be given to veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient. Military earnings are not included as income for veterans and transitioning service members.

- Second, to individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses who meet WIOA priority criteria.

- Third, to veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in WIOA's priority groups.

- Last, to individuals outside the groups given priority under WIOA including individuals with disabilities, single parents, older individuals, long-term unemployed, offenders, individuals who lack a high school diploma or GED, individuals lacking self-sufficiency, and other groups needing assistance as long as the priorities groups are adhered to in order.

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 Investment Program.

References:

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

Definitions-

For priority of service purposes, a covered person is a:
1. Veteran - an individual who has served at least one day in active military, naval or air
   service, and was discharged under "other than dishonorable" conditions. This includes full-
   time duty in the National Guard or a Reserve component, except full-time duty for training
   purposes.

2. Eligible spouse - the spouse of:
   a. any veteran who died of a service-connected disability;
   b. any member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty who, at the time of the
      spouse's request for priority has been listed for at least 90 days as: missing in action;
      captured in line of duty by a hostile force; or forcibly detained or interned in line of
      duty by a foreign government or power;
   c. a veteran who has a total disability resulting from a service-connected disability (as
      determined by the Department of Veterans Affairs); or
   d. a veteran who died while a total disability, resulting from a service-connected
      disability, was in existence

*Veteran, as specified at 38 U.S.C. 101(2) and under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) 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 WIA physical locations,
One-stop Career Centers, web sites and other virtual service delivery resources. All covered
persons must be made aware of their entitlement to priority of service; the full array of
programs and services available to them; and, any applicable eligibility requirements for those
programs and/or services. Covered persons must be given priority of services throughout the
continuum of services.

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

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

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

Implementing and Applying Priority of Service
Veterans and eligible spouses will receive priority of service.

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

NWGRC and the One-Stop Operator will meet on a regular basis and assist in the development and dispensing of One-Stop policies. These policies are then provided on-line at www.careerdepot.org.

All veteran's priority posters are placed near equal opportunity posters at point of entry of customers.

The One-Stops and other service providers will refer Veterans with significant barriers to employment to the Disable Veterans Outreach Program to ensure the most effective provision of services. Staff contact information will be provided to each of the One-Stops and other service providers and will be updated periodically. Contact information will also be provided at www.careerdepot.org.

NWGRC will monitor Veteran participation by on-going data collection. Veteran participation will be encouraged through marketing and outreach efforts.

Related Definitions:

- **Basic Skills Deficient**—An individual 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. Criteria used to determine whether an individual is basic skills deficient includes the following:
  a. Enrolled in a Title II Adult Education/Literacy program in first four Educational Functioning Levels.
  b. Unable to read English or write at an 8.9 or below grade level (through TABE assessment) or assessing as appropriate using BEST Literacy any of the six Adult Educational functioning levels at or below 78 score.
  c. Unable to speak English and determined to be Limited English speaking proficient through staff-documented observations or administering Best Plus which meets any of the six Adult Education levels at or below 540 score.
  d. Being at an 8.9 or below grade level on TABE in computing skills.
  e. Other objective criteria determined to be appropriate by the local area and documented in its required policy.

- **Lacks self-sufficiency**—WIOA section 134 (a)(3)(A)(xii) and section 134 (d)(1)(A)(x) addresses state and local determinations of economic self-sufficiency standards that specify the income needs of families, by family size, number and ages of children in the family, and sub-state geographical considerations.

Under WIOA sec. 134(c)(3)(A), training services may be made available to employed and unemployed adults and dislocated workers who, among other criteria, are unlikely or unable to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment through career services,
and are in need of training services to obtain or retain employment leading to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment.

An individual is declared to "lack self-sufficiency" if:

1) An individual has a personal or family income that is at or below 175 percent of the Lower Living Standard Income Level (LLSIL) (Supporting documentation must be provided);

2) A Food stamp or TANF recipient (current or within the last six months);

3) A Supplemental Social Security Income recipient; or

4) An individual (single family of one) who is employed, but in a job earning $10.69 (Living Wage Calculator for the State of Georgia) an hour or less. (See the Living Wage Calculator Section Below) for individual counties with respective wage in Northwest Georgia).

Dislocated workers may be considered to lack self-sufficiency if they are employed, but in a job/occupation that is at a wage or skill level that is at 80 percent or less than the job of dislocation.

**Living Wage Calculator** - The living wage shown is the hourly rate that an individual must earn to support their family, if they are the sole provider and are working full-time (2080 hours per year). All values are per adult in a family unless otherwise noted. The living wage calculator estimates the living wage needed to support families of twelve different compositions: one adult families with up to three dependent children, two adult families where both adults are in the work force with up to three dependent children, and two adult families where one adult is not in the work force with up to three dependent children.

The calculator includes estimates for single adult households, two adult households with one adult working, and two-adult households with two adults working. In two adult households with children and one adult working, the second adult is assumed to be providing child care. Working adults are assumed to be working full-time; work is assumed to be year-round, 40 hours per week for 52 weeks, per adult.

The living wage is calculated at the county, metropolitan area, state, regional, and national level. Unless otherwise noted, geographic definitions are consistent with those published by the Office of Management and Budget. Reported national values are calculated as the average (mean) state living wage.

The Living Wage Calculator at [http://livingwage.mit.edu/](http://livingwage.mit.edu/) will be utilized at the discretion of the Career Planner to document "lacks self-sufficiency" standards.

- **Underemployed (All Programs)**

An individual who is working part time but desires full time employment or who is working in employment not commensurate with the individual's demonstrated level of educational attainment. [TEGL 14 00 Change 1.]
Service 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 5:** Comments that Express Disagreement

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Attachment 6: 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: Gwen Dellinger
Title: Director of Workforce Development
Entity Representing: Northwest Georgia Regional Commission
Signature: [Signature]

Name: Ted Rumley
Title: Chief Local Elected Official
Entity Representing: Council of Chief Elected Officials of Northwest Georgia
Signature: [Signature]

Name: Bruce Bowman
Title: Chairman
Entity Representing: Workforce Development Board of Northwest Georgia, Inc.
Signature: [Signature]