SOUTH CAROLINA PYS 2024-2027

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OVERVIEW

Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the Governor of each State must submit a Unified or Combined State Plan to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor that outlines a four-year strategy for the State's workforce development system. The publicly-funded workforce development system is a national network of Federal, State, regional, and local agencies and organizations that provide a range of employment, education, training, and related services and supports to help all job-seekers secure good jobs while providing businesses with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. States must have approved Unified or Combined State Plans in place to receive funding for core programs. WIOA reforms planning requirements, previously governed by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), to foster better alignment of Federal investments in job training, to integrate service delivery across programs and improve efficiency in service delivery, and to ensure that the workforce system is job-driven and matches employers with skilled individuals. One of WIOA's principal areas of reform is to require States to plan across core programs and include this planning process in the Unified or Combined State Plans. This reform promotes a shared understanding of the workforce needs within each State and fosters development of more comprehensive and integrated approaches, such as career pathways and sector strategies, for addressing the needs of businesses and workers. Successful implementation of many of these approaches called for within WIOA requires robust relationships across programs. WIOA requires States and local areas to enhance coordination and partnerships with local entities and supportive service agencies for strengthened service delivery, including through Unified or Combined State Plans.

OPTIONS FOR SUBMITTING A STATE PLAN

A State has two options for submitting a State Plan— a Unified State Plan or a Combined State Plan. At a minimum, a State must submit a Unified State Plan that meets the requirements described in this document and outlines a four-year strategy for the core programs. The six core programs are—

- the Adult program (Title I of WIOA),
- the Dislocated Worker program (Title I),
- the Youth program (Title I),
- the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program (Title II), and
- the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program (authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III),
- the Vocational Rehabilitation program (authorized under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV).

Alternatively, a State may submit a Combined State Plan that meets the requirements described in this document and outlines a four-year strategy for WIOA's core programs plus one or more of the Combined State Plan partner programs. When a State includes a Combined State Plan partner program in its Combined State Plan, it need not submit a separate plan or application for that particular program. If included, Combined State Plan partner programs are subject to the "common planning elements" (Sections II-IV of this document) where specified, as well as the program-specific requirements for that program where such planning requirements exist separately for the program. The Combined State Plan partner programs are—

- Career and technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, as amended by the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.)
- Employment and Training programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(d)(4)))
- Work programs authorized under section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(o))
- Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers programs (Activities authorized under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.))
- Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (programs authorized under 38, U.S.C. 4100 et. seq.)
- Unemployment Insurance programs (programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws in accordance with applicable Federal law)
- Senior Community Service Employment program (programs authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.))
- Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Community Services Block Grant (Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.))[1]

HOW STATE PLAN REQUIREMENTS ARE ORGANIZED

The major content areas of the Unified or Combined State Plan include strategic and operational planning elements. WIOA separates the strategic and operational elements to facilitate cross-program strategic planning.

- The **Strategic Planning Elements** section includes analyses of the State's economic conditions, workforce characteristics, and workforce development activities. These analyses drive the required vision and goals for the State's workforce development system and alignment strategies for workforce development programs to support economic growth.
- The **Operational Planning Elements** section identifies the State's efforts to support the State's strategic vision and goals as identified in the Strategic Planning Elements section. This section ensures that the State has the necessary infrastructure, policies, and activities to meet its strategic goals, implement its alignment strategy, and support ongoing program development and coordination. Operational planning elements

[1] States that elect to include employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.) under a Combined State Plan would submit all other required elements of a complete CSBG State Plan directly to the Federal agency that administers the program. Similarly, States that elect to include employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development that are included would submit all other required elements of a complete State Plan for those programs directly to the Federal agency that administers the program.

- State Strategy Implementation,
- State Operating Systems and Policies,
- Assurances,
- Program-Specific Requirements for the Core Programs, and
- Program-Specific Requirements for the Combined State Plan partner programs. (These requirements are available in a separate supplemental document, Supplement to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Unified and Combined State Plan Requirements. The Departments are not seeking comments on these particular requirements).

When responding to Unified or Combined State Plan requirements, States must identify specific strategies for coordinating programs and services for target populations.2 States must develop strategies that look beyond strategies for the general population and develop approaches that also address the needs of target populations. Use of links to external websites and documents is permitted within the State Plan narrative submission if such links remain active and adhere to Section 508 accessibility requirements.

Paperwork Reduction Act: The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA) provides that an agency may not conduct, and no person is required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. Public reporting burden for this information collection is estimated to be 86 hours per state; including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering, and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Responding to this collection is required to obtain or retain the Federal grant benefit. In addition, responses to this information collection are public, and the agencies offer no assurances of confidentiality. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Workforce Investment, and reference OMB control number 1205-0522. Note: Please do not return the completed plan to this address.

I. WIOA STATE PLAN TYPE AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. WIOA STATE PLAN TYPE

Unified or Combined State Plan. Select whether the State is submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan. At a minimum, a State must submit a Unified State Plan that covers the six core programs.

Unified State Plan. This plan includes the Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser Act, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, and Vocational Rehabilitation programs.

Combined State Plan. This plan includes the Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser Act, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, and Vocational Rehabilitation programs, as well as one or more of the optional Combined State Plan partner programs identified below.

South Carolina has opted to submit a Combined State Plan covering federal programs.

[2] Target populations include individuals with barriers to employment, as defined in WIOA Sec. 3, as well as veterans, unemployed workers, and youth.

COMBINED PLAN PARTNER PROGRAM(S)

Indicate which Combined Plan partner program(s) the state is electing to include in the plan.

Career and technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, as amended by the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.)

No

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.)

Yes

Employment and Training programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(d)(4)))

Yes

Work programs authorized under section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(o))

No

Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers programs (activities authorized under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.))

Yes

Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (programs authorized under 38, U.S.C. 4100 et. seq.)

Yes

Unemployment Insurance programs (programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws in accordance with applicable Federal law)

No

Senior Community Service Employment program (programs authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.))

Yes

Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development

No

Community Services Block Grant (Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.))

No

B. PLAN INTRODUCTION OR EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Unified or Combined State Plan may include an introduction or executive summary. This element is optional.

II. STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a Strategic Planning Elements section that analyzes the State's current economic environment and identifies the State's overall vision for its workforce development system. The required elements in this section allow the State to develop data-driven goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce and to identify successful strategies for aligning workforce development programs to support economic growth. Unless otherwise noted, all Strategic Planning Elements apply to Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan as well as to core programs. Where requirements identify the term "populations", these must include individuals with barriers to employment as defined at WIOA Section 3.Thisincludes displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 35-14); individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals. Additional populations include veterans, unemployed workers, and youth, and others that the State may identify.

A. ECONOMIC, WORKFORCE, AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES ANALYSIS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the economic conditions, economic development strategies, and labor market in which the State's workforce system and programs will operate.

I. EXISTING DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS

Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which there is existing demand.

II. EMERGING DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS

Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which demand is emerging.

III. EMPLOYERS' EMPLOYMENT NEEDS

With regard to the industry sectors and occupations identified in (A)(i) and (ii), provide an assessment of the employment needs of employers, including a description of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required, including credentials and licenses.

I. Existing Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations

South Carolina's economy has been on a steady climb over the past several years, gaining momentum since the COVID-19 pandemic. GDP had grown to over $375 billion by the second quarter of 2025, an increase of 28.9 percent from the first quarter of 2022.

Table 1

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) Summary, 2022-2025

Year:Quarter	Real GDP (millions of chained 2017 dollars)	Annualized Growth Rate	Nominal GDP (millions of current dollars)	Annualized Growth Rate
2022:Q1	$252,093	0.7%	$291,451	2.6%
2022:Q2	$255,474	1.3%	$301,724	3.5%
2022:Q3	$257,729	0.9%	$309,000	2.4%
2022:Q4	$261,138	1.3%	$318,105	2.9%
2023:Q1	$262,204	0.4%	$323,924	1.8%
2023:Q2	$263,134	0.4%	$328,021	1.3%
2023:Q3	$267,893	1.8%	$337,259	2.8%
2023:Q4	$270,921	1.1%	$342,584	1.6%
2024:Q1	$273,533	1.0%	$348,621	1.8%
2024:Q2	$276,295	1.0%	$354,148	1.6%
2024:Q3	$279,004	1.0%	$358,995	1.4%
2024:Q4	$283,299	1.5%	$366,534	2.1%
2025:Q1	$283,478	0.1%	$369,593	0.8%
2025:Q2	$285,864	0.8%	$375,755	1.7%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

Examining GDP by industry sector reveals areas of substantial activity. The real estate sector represented 15.8 percent of the state's economy in the second quarter of 2025 with government at 13.1 percent. The private sector was nearly 87 percent of the state's GDP.

Table 2

Gross Domestic Product (millions of current dollars), 2nd Quarter 2025

Description	GDP	Percent
All industry total	*$375,755*	*100%*
Private industries	*$326,698*	*86.9%*
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	$1,944	0.5%
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	$938	0.2%
Utilities	$6,498	1.7%
Construction	$20,671	5.5%
Manufacturing	$47,877	12.7%
Durable goods manufacturing	$28,751	7.7%
Nondurable goods manufacturing	$19,127	5.1%
Wholesale trade	$24,689	6.6%
Retail trade	$30,030	8.0%
Transportation and warehousing	$9,040	2.4%
Information	$10,204	2.7%
Finance and insurance	$18,960	5.0%
Real estate and rental and leasing	$59,526	15.8%
Professional, scientific, and technical services	$23,823	6.3%

Description	GDP	Percent
Management of companies and enterprises	$4,013	1.1%
Administrative and support and waste management and remediation services	$13,480	3.6%
Educational services	$2,600	0.7%
Health care and social assistance	$24,611	6.5%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	$2,786	0.7%
Accommodation and food services	$16,349	4.4%
Other services (except government)	$8,658	2.3%
Government and government enterprises	*$49,057*	*13.1%*
Federal civilian	$7,183	1.9%
Military	$5,563	1.5%
State and local	$36,311	9.7%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

Another important measure of demand is the employment required to produce the goods and services in the economy. In the second quarter of 2025, South Carolina had over 2.2 million jobs located throughout the state. The industry sector Health Care and Social Assistance led the state in employment, followed by Retail Trade, then Manufacturing.

The Trident WDA had the highest number of jobs, with the Midlands and Greenville WDAs following. Health Care and Social Assistance was the leading industry sector in all three areas. Retail Trade was the first or second leading industry in eight of the 12 WDAs, while six WDAs had Manufacturing as one of the top two sectors.

Table 3

Employment by Workforce Development Area, 2025 Quarter 2 (part 1)

NAICS	Sector	Statewide	Catawba	Greenville	Lowcountry	Lower Savannah	Midlands
10	Total, All Industries	2,270,941	142,834	297,927	94,417	108,921	359,755
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	8,777	470	211	996	1,151	830
21	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	2,604	866	88	35	106	498
22	Utilities	16,288	1,554	977	775	1,005	2,391
23	Construction	120,574	6,349	17,974	6,842	7,855	15,222
31-33	Manufacturing	261,328	16,852	30,568	2,425	16,151	25,807
42	Wholesale Trade	84,261	7,057	13,422	1,756	2,286	12,878
44-45	Retail Trade	265,542	17,307	31,540	15,240	12,707	39,674
48-49	Transportation and Warehousing	86,423	5,796	9,698	1,750	4,476	13,435
51	Information	30,201	2,421	5,253	578	612	4,340

NAICS	Sector	Statewide	Catawba	Greenville	Lowcountry	Lower Savannah	Midlands
52	Finance and Insurance	85,116	4,571	12,403	2,173	1,802	24,332
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	35,510	2,360	4,296	2,448	723	5,802
54	Professional and Technical Services	138,647	7,424	24,334	4,473	4,753	19,031
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	23,462	4,673	5,762	355	243	2,298
56	Administrative and Waste Services	154,131	6,331	27,889	5,077	12,229	24,189
61	Educational Services	186,403	13,882	19,751	6,757	9,991	32,503
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	322,434	16,705	45,448	14,446	13,566	55,985
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	37,410	2,950	5,073	3,364	1,330	4,280
72	Accommodation and Food Services	236,446	14,847	28,150	14,721	9,976	33,880
81	Other Services, Except Public Administration	61,700	3,925	7,586	4,784	2,356	11,348
92	Public Administration	113,611	6,492	7,475	5,422	5,598	31,030

Source: DEW, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW)

Table 4

Employment by Workforce Development Area, 2025 Quarter 2 (part 2)

NAICS	Sector	Pee Dee	Santee-Lynches	Trident	Upper Savannah	Upstate	Wacca-maw	Work-link
10	Total, All Industries	125,012	62,844	384,773	80,215	182,239	170,764	138,169
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	691	889	497	1,572	286	676	408
21	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	191	61	186	72	135	118	142
22	Utilities	1,114	284	3,063	756	954	1,032	1,804

NAICS	Sector	Pee Dee	Santee-Lynches	Trident	Upper Savannah	Upstate	Wacca-maw	Work-link
23	Construction	3,540	3,760	22,687	3,414	8,198	11,319	5,937
31-33	Manufacturing	19,730	9,113	33,276	22,229	45,043	6,233	27,772
42	Wholesale Trade	4,152	1,141	11,223	1,731	7,571	3,417	4,709
44-45	Retail Trade	14,765	9,307	44,277	7,808	20,797	28,984	18,914
48-49	Transportation and Warehousing	9,282	1,561	17,254	2,130	11,132	3,663	3,077
51	Information	678	274	6,580	383	1,043	1,774	937
52	Finance and Insurance	2,453	1,507	10,273	1,177	3,389	4,815	2,344
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1,212	368	8,381	464	1,765	4,417	1,126
54	Professional and Technical Services	2,951	1,978	30,150	1,435	5,445	5,926	3,841
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	1,673	259	3,223	164	1,494	719	295
56	Administrative and Waste Services	6,225	2,929	23,771	2,945	8,438	9,695	4,452
61	Educational Services	10,019	5,942	31,499	8,126	15,480	12,536	17,565
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	24,035	10,709	55,540	12,174	25,131	23,578	18,344
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	837	602	7,467	807	1,510	6,039	2,383
72	Accommodation and Food Services	11,467	6,126	46,617	5,540	15,232	32,009	15,311
81	Other Services, Except Public Administration	2,469	1,865	11,040	1,609	3,992	4,431	3,246
92	Public Administration	7,520	4,168	17,753	5,676	5,202	9,382	5,564

Source: DEW, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW)

The average weekly wage in the second quarter of 2025 was $1,261. The two highest paying sectors for the period were Information and Management of Companies and Enterprises, while the two lowest paying sectors were Accommodation and Food Services and Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation.

The more urbanized areas of the state paid the highest wages along with the Catawba area, located within the Charlotte metropolitan area. The largely coastal area of Waccamaw, with a higher portion of its economy in lower-paying tourist sectors, paid the lowest wages, along with Santee-Lynches.

Table 5

Average Weekly Wage by Workforce Development Area, 2025 Quarter 2 (part 1)

NAICS	Sector	Statewide	Catawba	Greenville	Lowcountry	Lower Savannah	Midlands
10	Total, All Industries	$1,261	$1,281	$1,299	$1,066	$1,154	$1,295
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	$990	$909	$738	$1,192	$894	$1,075
21	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	$1,992	$2,435	$2,619	$1,789	$1,451	$1,856
22	Utilities	$2,252	$2,558	$1,637	$1,842	$2,289	$2,806
23	Construction	$1,726	$1,523	$1,880	$1,342	$1,666	$3,164
31-33	Manufacturing	$1,563	$1,478	$1,607	$1,262	$1,562	$1,519
42	Wholesale Trade	$1,951	$1,886	$1,813	$1,857	$1,245	$1,844
44-45	Retail Trade	$757	$764	$798	$772	$643	$755
48-49	Transportation and Warehousing	$1,165	$1,269	$1,125	$1,224	$1,139	$1,186
51	Information	$2,461	$2,539	$1,886	$2,217	$1,448	$1,539
52	Finance and Insurance	$2,298	$2,192	$2,373	$2,595	$1,544	$2,051
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	$1,345	$1,566	$1,313	$1,150	$1,021	$1,244
54	Professional and Technical Services	$1,939	$1,975	$1,915	$1,676	$1,883	$1,812
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	$2,459	$3,368	$1,985	$1,906	$1,647	$1,754
56	Administrative and Waste Services	$969	$1,056	$913	$1,033	$1,588	$838
61	Educational Services	$1,076	$1,013	$948	$1,030	$986	$1,198
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	$1,260	$1,128	$1,376	$1,110	$875	$1,298
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	$540	$404	$459	$695	$560	$519
72	Accommodation and Food Services	$488	$427	$487	$588	$390	$426
81	Other Services, Except Public Administration	$949	$883	$916	$936	$867	$1,064
92	Public Administration	$1,187	$1,098	$1,212	$1,280	$1,102	$1,212

Source: DEW, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW)

Table 6

Workforce Development Area Average Weekly Wage, 2025 Quarter 2 (part 2)

NAICS	Sector	Pee Dee	Santee-Lynches	Trident	Upper Savannah	Upstate	Waccamaw	Worklink
10	Total, All Industries	$1,056	$978	$1,377	$1,031	$1,155	$959	$1,070
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	$927	$895	$1,238	$988	$874	$928	$920
21	Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	$1,299	$2,062	$1,992	$1,393	$1,491	$1,368	$1,663
22	Utilities	$2,579	$1,623	$2,036	$1,551	$1,739	$1,699	$2,854
23	Construction	$1,176	$1,261	$1,626	$1,130	$1,391	$1,176	$1,144
31-33	Manufacturing	$1,523	$1,292	$1,909	$1,278	$1,481	$1,587	$1,332
42	Wholesale Trade	$1,343	$1,487	$1,881	$1,725	$1,446	$1,294	$1,719
44-45	Retail Trade	$664	$671	$806	$622	$699	$692	$665
48-49	Transportation and Warehousing	$1,013	$1,057	$1,244	$1,157	$1,110	$979	$1,125
51	Information	$1,572	$1,524	$3,116	$1,534	$1,523	$1,630	$1,505
52	Finance and Insurance	$1,624	$1,661	$3,299	$1,377	$1,948	$1,718	$1,559
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	$1,055	$845	$1,593	$965	$1,305	$957	$990
54	Professional and Technical Services	$1,397	$1,429	$2,036	$1,300	$1,479	$1,572	$1,418
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	$1,545	$2,417	$2,571	$1,707	$3,318	$1,940	$2,130
56	Administrative and Waste Services	$669	$866	$920	$690	$851	$890	$888
61	Educational Services	$962	$893	$1,144	$876	$957	$1,075	$1,273
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	$1,166	$1,077	$1,471	$1,146	$1,193	$1,189	$1,143
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	$598	$370	$621	$410	$415	$503	$393
72	Accommodation and Food Services	$394	$371	$589	$362	$488	$512	$377
81	Other Services, Except Public Administration	$798	$709	$999	$854	$892	$736	$790

NAICS	Sector	Pee Dee	Santee-Lynches	Trident	Upper Savannah	Upstate	Waccamaw	Worklink
92	Public Administration	$985	$983	$1,346	$1,004	$1,019	$1,182	$970

Source: DEW, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW)

Occupational employment and wages provide another measure of the economy and its existing demand. Office and Administrative Support Occupations had the highest level of employment in 2024 statewide, followed by Sales and Related Occupations and Food Preparation and Serving Occupations. Transportation and Material Moving Occupations and Production Occupations as the fourth and fifth-ranked categories highlight the importance of the goods-producing sectors of the economy. Management Occupations, Architecture and Engineering Occupations, and Computer and Mathematical Occupations led the state in median wages. Food Preparation and Serving Occupations paid the lowest.

Table 7

Employment and Median Wage by Major Occupation Group, 2024

SOC	Occupation Group	Employment	Hourly Median Wage	Annual Median Wage
00-0000	All	2,271,770	$21.52	$44,760
11-0000	Management	126,830	$50.20	$104,420
13-0000	Business and Financial Operations	119,780	$36.30	$75,490
15-0000	Computer and Mathematical	54,010	$41.73	$86,810
17-0000	Architecture and Engineering	42,130	$42.65	$88,700
19-0000	Life, Physical, and Social Science	16,040	$32.33	$67,250
21-0000	Community and Social Service	29,300	$24.28	$50,490
23-0000	Legal	16,980	$30.06	$62,520
25-0000	Educational Instruction and Library	116,050	$27.33	$56,840
27-0000	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	20,610	$22.93	$47,690
29-0000	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	147,700	$37.46	$77,920
31-0000	Healthcare Support	89,400	$16.82	$34,990
33-0000	Protective Service	53,060	$21.83	$45,400
35-0000	Food Preparation and Serving Related	225,620	$13.40	$27,870
37-0000	Building and Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	70,540	$15.34	$31,900
39-0000	Personal Care and Service	49,380	$14.06	$29,250
41-0000	Sales and Related	234,440	$16.50	$34,310
43-0000	Office and Administrative Support	283,500	$19.81	$41,210
45-0000	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	3,310	$21.45	$44,610
47-0000	Construction and Extraction	80,560	$23.26	$48,390
49-0000	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	100,730	$24.81	$51,610
51-0000	Production	188,920	$21.65	$45,020
53-0000	Transportation and Material Moving	202,870	$18.32	$38,110

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

II. Emerging Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations

Emerging industries and occupations in South Carolina present opportunities for economic growth and innovation. By identifying and supporting these sectors, the state can create new jobs and business prospects, driving overall economic expansion.

Emerging industries are characterized by being smaller than average, but they exhibit a concentrated statewide presence and are projected to grow faster than the state average. These sectors are typically large enough to have a critical mass of employment—allowing the enterprises to persist—while also having the necessary momentum to make an impact.

As industries evolve and technologies advance, the demand for specific skills and job roles changes. Recognizing emerging industries enables policymakers, educators, and individuals to prepare for the future job market and acquire the necessary skills to remain relevant. The table below presents those industries in the state at the 3-digit subsector level.

Table 8

Emerging Industries, 2022-2032

NAICS	Subsector	2022 Base Employment	Location Quotient	Projected Percent Change
212	Mining (except Oil and Gas)	1,906	0.81	14.64
335	Electrical Equipment, Appliance, and Component Manufacturing	16,997	2.74	32.47
456	Health and Personal Care Retailers	16,032	1.02	29.02
457	Gasoline Stations and Fuel Dealers	20,373	1.37	26.37
458	Clothing, Clothing Accessories, Shoe, and Jewelry Retailers	17,455	1.07	14.24
459	Sporting Goods, Hobby, Musical Instrument, Book, and Miscellaneous Retailers	21,605	0.99	21.02
531	Real Estate	23,992	0.90	17.69
711	Performing Arts, Spectator Sports, and Related Industries	5,446	0.76	22.53

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, DEW Employment Projections Program

Emerging Occupations are those with employment below the state's average per occupation (2,859), above the state's average growth rate (11.12%) with at least 50 annual job openings, and above a 0.75 location quotient. Examples of emerging occupations include Physicians Assistants, Speech-Language Pathologists, and Nurse Anesthetists in the Health Science field. Supervisors, Personal Care and Service Workers, and Tour and Travel Guides are examples of emerging occupations in the Hospitality and Tourism career cluster, while several types of machine operators, mechanics, and maintenance workers qualify in the Manufacturing cluster. Table 9 provides a list of Emerging Occupations.

Table 9

Emerging Occupations, 2022-2032

SOC	Title	2022 Base Employment	Projected Percent Change	Annual Job Openings
11-2032	Public Relations Managers	1,138	14.50	98
11-3061	Purchasing Managers	961	14.67	89
11-3071	Transportation, Storage, and Distribution Managers	2,810	23.74	313
11-3121	Human Resources Managers	2,128	15.08	201
11-3131	Training and Development Managers	668	17.66	68
11-9041	Architectural and Engineering Managers	2,766	13.67	222
11-9072	Entertainment And Recreation Managers, Except Gambling	511	13.70	64
13-1121	Meeting, Convention, and Event Planners	1,834	16.79	237
13-2020	Property Appraisers and Assessors	980	14.80	100
15-1231	Computer Network Support Specialists	2,677	11.54	217
15-1254	Web Developers	1,522	29.11	151
17-2071	Electrical Engineers	2,438	12.39	167
17-2081	Environmental Engineers	667	12.74	53
17-2131	Materials Engineers	614	17.10	50
17-3026	Industrial Engineering Technologists and Technicians	1,922	13.37	210
19-2031	Chemists	1,423	14.55	124
19-4061	Social Science Research Assistants	497	11.87	70
19-4099	Life, Physical, and Social Science Technicians, All Other	922	16.16	135
19-5011	Occupational Health and Safety Specialists	2,130	18.73	285
21-1022	Healthcare Social Workers	2,186	21.82	252
21-2011	Clergy	880	17.27	93

SOC	Title	2022 Base Employment	Projected Percent Change	Annual Job Openings
25-1011	Business Teachers, Postsecondary	1,182	15.14	117
25-1022	Mathematical Science Teachers, Postsecondary	644	11.18	60
25-1032	Engineering Teachers, Postsecondary	874	17.73	90
25-1042	Biological Science Teachers, Postsecondary	622	16.88	63
25-1072	Nursing Instructors and Teachers, Postsecondary	826	27.12	95
25-1081	Education Teachers, Postsecondary	1,185	11.81	111
25-4011	Archivists	375	20.53	57
27-1013	Fine Artists, Including Painters, Sculptors, and Illustrators	447	14.77	52
27-3023	News Analysts, Reporters, and Journalists	963	21.50	136
27-4011	Audio and Video Technicians	693	16.02	77
27-4021	Photographers	2,110	13.74	227
29-1011	Chiropractors	911	22.50	57
29-1021	Dentists, General	2,517	17.76	121
29-1031	Dietitians and Nutritionists	966	14.60	79
29-1071	Physician Assistants	1,800	39.67	177
29-1122	Occupational Therapists	1,733	19.73	138
29-1126	Respiratory Therapists	1,701	12.17	110
29-1127	Speech-Language Pathologists	2,350	32.68	221
29-1131	Veterinarians	1,747	25.70	109
29-1151	Nurse Anesthetists	1,002	14.97	57
29-2032	Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	985	17.77	72
29-2043	Paramedics	1,775	12.73	108

SOC	Title	2022 Base Employment	Projected Percent Change	Annual Job Openings
29-2056	Veterinary Technologists and Technicians	1,845	26.45	238
29-2057	Ophthalmic Medical Technicians	798	28.07	119
29-2072	Medical Records Specialists	2,858	18.09	258
29-2081	Opticians, Dispensing	983	16.28	104
31-2011	Occupational Therapy Assistants	581	29.26	108
31-2021	Physical Therapist Assistants	2,111	37.61	419
31-9011	Massage Therapists	2,402	23.27	414
31-9096	Veterinary Assistants and Laboratory Animal Caretakers	1,929	28.10	479
35-1011	Chefs and Head Cooks	2,730	13.63	380
37-2021	Pest Control Workers	2,420	15.54	371
39-1014	First-line Supervisors of Entertainment And Recreation Workers, Except Gambling Services	2,089	11.78	262
39-1022	First-line Supervisors of Personal Service Workers	2,543	14.90	331
39-2011	Animal Trainers	1,798	21.91	315
39-5094	Skincare Specialists	1,116	13.53	177
39-7010	Tour and Travel Guides	883	16.65	216
39-9041	Residential Advisors	2,000	13.90	397
39-9099	Personal Care and Service Workers, All Other	820	52.80	228
41-3041	Travel Agents	693	12.70	100
41-9011	Demonstrators and Product Promoters	686	11.22	139
43-5111	Weighers, Measurers, Checkers, and Samplers, Recordkeeping	1,224	23.86	196
47-2071	Paving, Surfacing, and Tamping Equipment Operators	642	11.37	63
47-4051	Highway Maintenance Workers	2,630	13.84	287

SOC	Title	2022 Base Employment	Projected Percent Change	Annual Job Openings
47-5022	Excavating and Loading Machine and Dragline Operators, Surface Mining	454	12.78	54
49-2094	Electrical and Electronics Repairers, Commercial and Industrial Equipment	1,043	11.12	105
49-3042	Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics, Except Engines	2,719	11.59	268
49-3051	Motorboat Mechanics and Service Technicians	753	14.08	90
49-9043	Maintenance Workers, Machinery	1,030	17.48	121
49-9044	Millwrights	791	12.14	76
49-9062	Medical Equipment Repairers	719	25.45	91
51-2051	Fiberglass Laminators and Fabricators	766	20.76	105
53-6032	Aircraft Service Attendants	300	20.67	54
53-7011	Conveyor Operators and Tenders	534	18.91	67
53-7063	Machine Feeders and Offbearers	1,565	25.62	314

Source: DEW, Employment Projections Program

Occupations that typically require postsecondary education comprise 65 percent of emerging occupations, while those requiring only a high school diploma are 29 percent of the total.

Recognizing emerging occupations is vital, as they cater to evolving consumer needs and preferences. Businesses can adapt their strategies and product offerings to remain relevant and competitive in the marketplace. By staying attuned to these trends, South Carolina can continue to foster economic growth and innovation in the state. Recognizing these emerging areas helps bridge skill gaps and prepares the workforce for future demands, ensuring individuals remain employable.

Emerging Technologies

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is an emerging technology with potential impacts on the economy. It is something of a cipher, as there is no clear consensus on the forthcoming effects on the labor market. Jobs may be created, they may be augmented, and they may be lost. Whatever the combination of effects, however, they are not likely to be equally distributed across all job types and income levels.

According to the current literature, the sectors most vulnerable to total automation from AI are manufacturing/production, retail (particularly food services), office support, and transportation. The sectors of Retail Trade, Manufacturing, and Accommodation and Food Services are ranked second, third, and fourth by number of employees in South Carolina, respectively. The advent of AI could present challenges and opportunities for the state's

workforce. A report by CNBC in 2023 cited evidence that AI-related jobs (as in, jobs for humans) were driving that year's increase in postings on global work marketplace Upwork. It found that year-over-year for the 2nd quarter of 2023, job posts in all fields rose 230 percent, whereas AI job posts were up more than 1,000 percent for the same period. These were roles like deep learning engineers, chatbot developers, and AI ethicists. Upwork itself released the results of a 2023 study by its research arm that found most companies intended to hire "more professionals of all types" due to AI, since it could boost capacity for a range of work tasks.

Given the tightness of the labor market, the bulk of hiring of this type would have to come from the active labor force. A study by the McKinsey Institute posited that the economy could "reweight toward higher-wage jobs," with 12 million occupational transitions by 2030. To make the leap, workers in lower-wage positions and automation-prone sectors would be faced with acquiring new skills and education.

South Carolina expects AI to present both difficulties and opportunities. But strong preparation will enable the state to capitalize on the opportunities while mitigating the difficulties. In one recent example of preparation, in February 2024, it was announced that Governor McMaster would chair a new Southern Regional Education Board Commission on AI and Education. The commission's goal is to shape the use of AI in classrooms to better prepare the workforce of the future.

iii. Employers' Employment Needs

Examining online job advertisements is a useful method in assessing the economy's employer demand. For South Carolina over the past year, Retail Trade is the sector with the highest demand, followed by Administrative and Support in second, and Health Care and Social Assistance rounding out the top three.

Table 10

Job Postings by Sector, October 2024-September 2025

Sector	Count
Retail Trade	50,792
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	45,829
Health Care and Social Assistance	21,514
Public Administration	20,775
Accommodation and Food Services	19,525
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	12,459
Manufacturing	11,042
Educational Services	10,964
Finance and Insurance	8,839
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	4,223
Other Services (except Public Administration)	4,094
Transportation and Warehousing	3,883
Wholesale Trade	3,336
Information	3,326
Construction	3,027
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1,186

Sector	Count
Management of Companies and Enterprises	476
Utilities	68
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	9

Source: JobsEQ®

In terms of occupations, Registered Nurses had the highest demand, followed by Retail Salespersons, and First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers. Most of these occupations are among those with the highest levels of employment, where there is high turnover and ongoing employer need for replacements.

Table 11

Job Postings in Top Occupations, October 2024-September 2025

SOC	Occupation	Count
29-1141	Registered Nurses	39,268
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	21,066
41-1011	First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	20,350
11-9111	Medical and Health Services Managers	15,349
49-9071	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	12,738
35-1012	First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	10,963
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	10,632
21-1093	Social and Human Service Assistants	10,321
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	9,546
35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers	9,366
41-3091	Sales Representatives of Services, Except Advertising, Insurance, Financial Services, and Travel	9,078
29-2034	Radiologic Technologists and Technicians	8,052
41-3031	Securities, Commodities, and Financial Services Sales Agents	7,983
43-6014	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	7,637
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	6,965
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	6,673
13-1071	Human Resources Specialists	6,613

SOC	Occupation	Count
29-1123	Physical Therapists	6,572
13-1199	Business Operations Specialists, All Other	6,323
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	5,685

Source: JobsEQ®

Employers often require, recommend, or suggest specific certifications they would like for a job candidate to possess. Many of the occupations in the medical field require certification for employment. According to job postings data from JObsEQ, the top certifications requested by employers in that field include Basic Life Support, Registered Nurse, and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation. The most in-demand certification overall in the job postings data is a valid Driver's License. Commercial Driver's License and Secret Clearance are also among the top non-medical certifications requested.

Table 12

Job Postings by Certification Requested, October 2024-September 2025

Certification	Count
Driver's License	24,902
Basic Life Support (BLS)	23,206
Registered Nurse (RN)	19,161
Certification in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)	13,853
Advanced Cardiac Life Support Certification (ACLS)	8,870
Commercial Driver's License (CDL)	4,892
First Aid Certification	3,691
Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)	3,623
The American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT) Certification	3,129
Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)	3,033
Class A Commercial Driver's License (CDL-A)	2,605
Secret Clearance	2,577
Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS)	2,225
Certified Public Accountant (CPA)	1,893
Medical Assistant Certification (MA)	1,866
Project Management Professional (PMP)	1,225
Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)	1,139
Neonatal Resuscitation Program (NRP)	1,126
Forklift Certified	1,107
Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC)	1,040

Source: JobsEQ®

In addition to certifications, employers demand skills specific to the occupations they are trying to fill. According to JobsEQ's job postings data, the hard skills most in-demand are related to the top occupational needs and include computer software, lifting ability, and sales. Other top skills requested in job advertisements are manufacturing, merchandising, and teaching.

Table 13

Job Postings by Hard Skill Requested, October 2024-September 2025

Skill	Count
Microsoft Office	49,002
Microsoft Excel	42,210
Ability to Lift 41-50 lbs.	38,696
Ability to Lift 51-100 lbs.	30,659
Sales	19,784
Manufacturing	18,041
Microsoft Outlook	17,947
Ability to Lift 21-30 lbs.	16,166
Mathematics	16,140
Retail Sales	15,787
Cash Handling (Cashier)	14,598
Microsoft Word	14,344
Microsoft PowerPoint	14,313
English	13,355
Teaching/Training, Job	10,980
Merchandising	10,400
Teaching/Training, School	10,337
Spanish	10,186
Customer Relationship Management (CRM)	9,745
Plumbing	9,399

Source: JobsEQ®

Another measure that can be used to assess employer demand comes from the U.S. Department of Labor's O*NET occupational dataset. This dataset defines many attributes of each occupation, including job skills and knowledge. This information combined with projected job openings from the employment projections program reveals the expected demand by skill and job knowledge.

The top skills are those common to most occupations, such as critical thinking, active listening, and speaking. The skills less frequently demanded, such as science, management of financial resources, and programming, are more likely to apply to specific occupations.

Table 14

Projected Annual Job Openings by O*NET Job Skill Needed, 2022-2032

Skills	Average Annual Job Openings	Skills	Average Annual Job Openings
Critical Thinking	257,334	Quality Control Analysis	27,894
Active Listening	248,383	Negotiation	26,172
Speaking	240,879	Mathematics	24,726
Reading Comprehension	211,335	Management of Personnel Resources	20,914

Skills	Average Annual Job Openings	Skills	Average Annual Job Openings
Monitoring	208,174	Learning Strategies	16,984
Coordination	191,116	Instructing	16,238
Social Perceptiveness	174,910	Troubleshooting	14,826
Service Orientation	141,969	Equipment Maintenance	12,877
Time Management	116,551	Repairing	12,192
Judgment and Decision Making	102,743	Systems Analysis	7,083
Writing	101,216	Systems Evaluation	4,964
Active Learning	70,545	Operations Analysis	2,680
Persuasion	59,129	Science	2,375
Operation Monitoring	50,778	Installation	1,635
Operation and Control	47,455	Management of Financial Resources	1,209
Complex Problem Solving	34,859	Programming	811

Source: DEW, Employment Projections Program; U.S. Dept. of Labor

O*NET's skill assessment for recent employment in the state, rather than projections, shows many of the same skills.

Table 15

Estimated Employment by O*NET Job Skill Needed, 2022

Skills	Employment	Skills	Employment
Critical Thinking	2,045,482	Negotiation	197,269
Active Listening	1,954,216	Mathematics	186,971
Speaking	1,882,197	Management of Personnel Resources	174,394
Reading Comprehension	1,735,839	Instructing	149,668
Monitoring	1,597,950	Learning Strategies	148,127
Coordination	1,392,934	Troubleshooting	141,834
Social Perceptiveness	1,304,316	Equipment Maintenance	119,709
Service Orientation	977,344	Repairing	117,889
Writing	916,038	Systems Analysis	72,373
Time Management	861,831	Systems Evaluation	47,118
Judgment and Decision Making	829,530	Operations Analysis	29,600
Active Learning	610,463	Science	28,689
Operation Monitoring	413,181	Installation	16,524
Persuasion	408,873	Management of Financial Resources	12,398
Operation and Control	371,020	Programming	9,782
Complex Problem Solving	338,003	Equipment Selection	1,825
Quality Control Analysis	223,605		

Source: DEW, Employment Projections Program; U.S. Dept. of Labor

The most requested categories of job knowledge are English language and customer and personal service. Less frequently requested job knowledge categories include history and archeology, fine arts, and foreign language.

Table 16

Projected Annual Job Openings by O*NET Job Knowledge Required, 2022-2032

Knowledge Required	Average Annual Job Openings	Knowledge Required	Average Annual Job Openings
English Language	252,825	Law and Government	21,530
Customer and Personal Service	250,106	Design	20,964
Mathematics	189,955	Economics and Accounting	19,935
Education and Training	166,530	Building and Construction	17,969
Computers and Electronics	148,690	Medicine and Dentistry	17,674
Administration and Management	145,168	Sociology and Anthropology	16,792
Clerical	120,486	Therapy and Counseling	16,737
Public Safety and Security	101,438	Biology	15,487
Sales and Marketing	78,371	Geography	8,832
Mechanical	75,297	Physics	7,817
Production and Processing	68,787	Communications and Media	7,620
Psychology	68,182	Philosophy and Theology	5,247
Personnel and Human Resources	35,405	Telecommunications	4,471
Transportation	34,123	History and Archeology	2,155
Food Production	30,897	Fine Arts	1,250
Engineering and Technology	30,562	Foreign Language	169
Chemistry	27,530		

Source: DEW, Employment Projections Program; U.S. Dept. of Labor

Employer's ideal candidates have a variety of skills. Many of these skills are basic in nature and are referred to as soft skills. Soft skills are those attributes not defined by technical accomplishments or certifications attained. They are interpersonal skills or character traits that define an individual. An examination of job postings shows the top soft skills requested by

employers include communication, cooperative/team play, customer service, organization, and detail-oriented/meticulous.

Table 17

Most Common Soft Skills Requested in Job Postings, October 2024-September 2025

Soft Skill
Communication (Verbal and written skills)
Cooperative/Team Player
Customer Service
Organization
Detail Oriented/Meticulous
Adaptability/Flexibility/Tolerance of Change and Uncertainty
Problem Solving
Self-Motivated/Ability to Work Independently/Self Leadership
Interpersonal Relationships/Maintain Relationships
Ability to Work in a Fast-Paced Environment

Source: JobsEQ, Inc.

South Carolina employers are reporting that finding workers for open positions is a challenge. Nationally, there were more than seven million job openings as of June 2025, and the state's employers reported139,000 openings in the same month.[3] As job openings have declined from recent peaks, the nation's non-farm employment growth has slowed. Even so, South Carolina has continued adding jobs in 2025 with total separations falling below previous levels.

The state's job openings rate, as measured by the Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey (JOLTS), was 5.4 percent in June 2025, while for the same month the national rate was 4.4 percent, indicating even greater relative demand for workers in South Carolina than the nation as a whole. While the job openings rate both nationally and for the state had been increasing steadily throughout the last expansion (2009-2019), the rates surged in late spring 2020 as the economy began to reopen as well as in the first half of 2021 as the vaccine rollout prompted more spending in the service economy before reaching all-time highs in early 2022. The rates have since fallen well below the peak, reaching their lowest levels in 2025. Table 18 shows the job openings rate for both South Carolina and the United States over the past several years.

Table 18

Job Openings Rate, South Carolina vs. United States, 2023-2025

Month-Year	South Carolina	United States
Jan-23	7.5%	6.3%
Feb-23	7.1%	6.0%
Mar-23	7.5%	5.8%
Apr-23	7.3%	6.0%
May-23	7.1%	5.6%
Jun-23	6.8%	5.6%

[3] U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Job Openings and Labor Turnover, https://www.bls.gov/jlt/.

Month-Year	South Carolina	United States
Jul-23	7.0%	5.2%
Aug-23	6.6%	5.6%
Sep-23	6.7%	5.6%
Oct-23	6.7%	5.2%
Nov-23	6.6%	5.2%
Dec-23	6.2%	5.2%
Jan-24	6.4%	5.1%
Feb-24	6.5%	5.1%
Mar-24	6.0%	4.9%
Apr-24	5.9%	4.6%
May-24	5.8%	4.8%
Jun-24	5.4%	4.5%
Jul-24	5.4%	4.5%
Aug-24	6.0%	4.6%
Sep-24	5.3%	4.3%
Oct-24	5.6%	4.6%
Nov-24	6.1%	4.8%
Dec-24	5.4%	4.5%
Jan-25	5.3%	4.7%
Feb-25	4.8%	4.5%
Mar-25	4.6%	4.3%
Apr-25	4.9%	4.4%
May-25	5.6%	4.6%
Jun-25	5.4%	4.4%

Source: Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey, SA; U.S. Dept of Labor.

B. WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the current workforce in the State and within various state regions. Provide key analytical conclusions in aggregate as well as disaggregated among populations to identify potential disparities in employment and educational attainment and understand labor force conditions for items (i)-(iii) below. Populations analyzed must include individuals with barriers to employment described in the first paragraph of Section II. Analysis must include—

I. EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Provide an analysis of current employment and unemployment data, including labor force participation rates, and trends in the State.

II. LABOR MARKET TRENDS

Provide an analysis of key labor market trends, including across existing industries and occupations.

III. EDUCATION AND SKILL LEVELS OF THE WORKFORCE

Provide an analysis of the educational and skill levels of the workforce.

I. Employment and Unemployment

An important component of workforce analysis is labor force participation. Per the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the labor force is the sum of employed and unemployed persons, and the labor force participation rate is the labor force as a percent of the civilian non-institutionalized population, that is people, aged 16 and over, who are not serving in the military, in jail or prison, living permanently in nursing homes, or in other institutions. The labor force participation rate has been between 57.5 percent and 58.2 percent since January 2024. South Carolina's prime-age labor force participation rate, however, was significantly higher, averaging 81.1 percent for 2024. The prime-age population is between 25 and 54 years old. As the name suggests, this group is the most likely to be in the labor force, as those younger than 25 are more likely to be in school, and those older than 54 are more likely to be retired.

The working-age population in the state has grown faster than the labor force, resulting in a small decline in the total participation rate. South Carolina is an attractive retirement destination, which will tend to increase the working-age population while not simultaneously increasing the supply of labor. This trend is likely to continue and will be a challenge for many sectors that are actively seeking ways to expand their workforce.

Table 19

Labor Force Statistics, 2024-2025

Year	Month	LFPR	Labor Force	Employment	Unemployment	Rate
2024	Jan	57.8%	2,506,326	2,420,352	85,974	3.4%
2024	Feb	57.8%	2,510,960	2,422,031	88,929	3.5%
2024	Mar	57.9%	2,517,294	2,424,087	93,207	3.7%
2024	Apr	58.0%	2,525,305	2,426,252	99,053	3.9%
2024	May	58.1%	2,534,021	2,428,597	105,424	4.2%
2024	Jun	58.1%	2,541,821	2,430,644	111,177	4.4%
2024	Jul	58.2%	2,547,361	2,432,238	115,123	4.5%
2024	Aug	58.1%	2,550,374	2,433,798	116,576	4.6%
2024	Sep	58.1%	2,551,404	2,435,531	115,873	4.5%
2024	Oct	58.0%	2,551,157	2,436,946	114,211	4.5%
2024	Nov	57.8%	2,550,137	1,437,183	112,954	4.4%
2024	Dec	57.7%	2,549,653	2,437,016	112,637	4.4%
2025	Jan	57.6%	2,549,008	2,439,667	109,341	4.3%
2025	Feb	57.6%	2,550,162	2,443,050	107,112	4.2%
2025	Mar	57.5%	2,551,068	2,445,437	105,631	4.1%
2025	Apr	57.5%	2,555,043	2,448,573	106,471	4.2%
2025	May	57.5%	2,559,405	2,453,711	105,694	4.1%
2025	Jun	57.6%	2,565,184	2,459,294	105,890	4.1%
2025	Jul	57.7%	2,572,045	2,464,298	107,747	4.2%
2025	Aug	57.6%	2,575,593	2,464,843	110,750	4.3%

Source: DEW. Note: LFPR = labor force participation rate

II. Labor Market Trends

South Carolina's industry employment is projected to grow by 11.12 percent over the 10-year period 2022-2032 from 2.352 million jobs to 2.614 million jobs. Management of Companies and Enterprises (+39.08%), Transportation and Warehousing (+28.90%), and Health Care and Social Assistance (+17.36%) are projected to grow the fastest, whereas Health Care and Social Assistance (+46,674), Retail Trade (+29,063), and Transportation and Warehousing (+24,044) are expected to grow the most in numeric terms. Overall, the state is projected to add nearly 262,000 jobs by 2032.

Table 20

Sector Employment Projections, 2022-2032

NAICS	Sector	2022 Base Employment	2032 Projected Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change
10	Total, All Industries	2,352,883	2,614,627	261,744	11.1%
11	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	13,948	13,660	-288	-2.1%
21	Mining	2,044	2,359	315	15.4%
22	Utilities	10,950	11,357	407	3.7%
23	Construction	108,505	111,371	2,866	2.6%
31-33	Manufacturing	261,052	283,123	22,071	8.5%
42	Wholesale Trade	79,871	85,650	5,779	7.2%
44-45	Retail Trade	259,475	288,538	29,063	11.2%
48-49	Transportation and Warehousing	83,196	107,240	24,044	28.9%
51	Information	30,201	34,591	4,390	14.5%
52	Finance and Insurance	78,850	91,156	12,306	15.6%
53	Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	32,974	37,997	5,023	15.2%
54	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	118,791	135,179	16,388	13.8%
55	Management of Companies and Enterprises	24,851	34,562	9,711	39.1%
56	Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	162,830	180,897	18,067	11.1%
61	Educational Services	170,197	184,200	14,003	8.2%
62	Health Care and Social Assistance	268,891	315,565	46,674	17.4%
71	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	32,538	36,093	3,555	10.9%

NAICS	Sector	2022 Base Employment	2032 Projected Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change
72	Accommodation and Food Services	232,193	255,744	23,551	10.1%
81	Other Services (except Government)	102,608	109,681	7,073	6.9%
92	Government	156,655	165,295	8,640	5.5%

Source: DEW, Employment Projections Program

Through the year 2032, both Transportation and Material Moving occupations and Food Preparation and Serving Related occupations will continue to remain in high demand as their employment levels are expected to increase by 34,779 and 25,052, respectively. The occupation group showing the smallest amount of growth is Farming, Fishing, and Forestry, with slightly more than 300 projected jobs for 2032. Through a combination of economic growth as well as job replacement (due to retirement or other factors), the state will have more than 304,000 annual job openings across all occupations.

Table 21

Occupational Employment Projections, 2022-2032

SOC Code	Occupation Group	2022 Base Employment	2032 Projected Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change	Annual Job Openings
00-0000	Total, All Occupations	2,352,883	2,614,627	261,744	11.1%	304,271
11-0000	Management	150,610	171,970	21,360	14.2%	14,392
13-0000	Business and Financial Operations	112,590	130,967	18,377	16.3%	11,408
15-0000	Computer and Mathematical	51,220	63,459	12,239	23.9%	4,603
17-0000	Architecture and Engineering	40,578	46,386	5,808	14.3%	3,481
19-0000	Life, Physical, and Social Science	15,447	17,398	1,951	12.6%	1,649
21-0000	Community and Social Service	30,364	35,263	4,899	16.1%	3,179
23-0000	Legal	17,980	20,196	2,216	12.3%	1,427
25-0000	Educational Instruction and Library	109,245	120,229	10,984	10.1%	10,854
27-0000	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	27,887	31,867	3,980	14.3%	3,316
29-0000	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	136,875	158,774	21,899	16.0%	10,434
31-0000	Healthcare Support	81,853	101,247	19,394	23.7%	14,953
33-0000	Protective Service	47,905	51,796	3,891	8.1%	5,859
35-0000	Food Preparation and Serving Related	218,037	243,089	25,052	11.5%	45,968

SOC Code	Occupation Group	2022 Base Employment	2032 Projected Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change	Annual Job Openings
37-0000	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	83,089	90,504	7,415	8.9%	12,334
39-0000	Personal Care and Service	64,208	71,665	7,457	11.6%	12,787
41-0000	Sales and Related	238,991	262,526	23,535	9.9%	35,223
43-0000	Office and Administrative Support	307,743	315,503	7,760	2.5%	36,365
45-0000	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	9,790	9,462	-328	-3.4%	1,368
47-0000	Construction and Extraction	96,685	101,931	5,246	5.4%	8,958
49-0000	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	101,460	112,251	10,791	10.6%	10,338
51-0000	Production	196,724	209,763	13,039	6.6%	22,743
53-0000	Transportation and Material Moving	213,602	248,381	34,779	16.3%	32,632

Source: DEW, Employment Projections Program

One goal of projecting employment is to understand which occupations are growing and which ones are declining. This information can help career advisors counsel their clients and students into meaningful careers while avoiding obsolete ones. Many growing occupations are in the Healthcare field, while most declining occupations are being displaced by technological innovation.

Table 22

Fastest Growing Occupations, 2022-2032

SOC Code	SOC Title	Percent Change
47-2231	Solar Photovoltaic Installers	119.4%
29-1171	Nurse Practitioners	60.5%
39-9099	Personal Care and Service Workers, All Other	52.8%
15-2051	Data Scientists	48.4%
15-2041	Statisticians	42.9%
15-1212	Information Security Analysts	42.8%
29-1071	Physician Assistants	39.7%
13-2052	Personal Financial Advisors	39.2%
15-1252	Software Developers	39.2%
11-9111	Medical and Health Services Managers	37.7%
31-2021	Physical Therapist Assistants	37.6%
15-2011	Actuaries	36.9%
15-2031	Operations Research Analysts	35.0%
29-2092	Hearing Aid Specialists	34.3%

SOC Code	SOC Title	Percent Change
13-2061	Financial Examiners	34.3%
13-1081	Logisticians	34.1%
31-1120	Home Health and Personal Care Aides	33.9%
49-3091	Bicycle Repairers	33.3%
29-1127	Speech-Language Pathologists	32.7%

Source: DEW, Employment Projections Program.

Table 23

Fastest Declining Occupations, 2022-2032

SOC Code	SOC Title	Percent Change
43-9022	Word Processors and Typists	-27.8%
41-9091	Door-to-Door Sales Workers, News and Street Vendors, and Related Workers	-22.8%
51-6021	Pressers, Textile, Garment, and Related Materials	-21.7%
51-5111	Prepress Technicians and Workers	-21.1%
43-2011	Switchboard Operators, Including Answering Service	-18.8%
43-6012	Legal Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	-17.5%
51-5113	Print Binding and Finishing Workers	-17.2%
41-9041	Telemarketers	-16.8%
43-9021	Data Entry Keyers	-16.3%
43-6011	Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants	-15.8%
51-4071	Foundry Mold and Coremakers	-15.1%
43-9081	Proofreaders and Copy Markers	-15.0%
43-3041	Gambling Cage Workers	-13.3%
47-3011	Helpers--Brickmasons, Blockmasons, Stonemasons, and Tile and Marble Setters	-12.8%
51-2041	Structural Metal Fabricators and Fitters	-11.0%
51-6063	Textile Knitting and Weaving Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	-11.0%
51-6061	Textile Bleaching and Dyeing Machine Operators and Tenders	-10.6%
51-4061	Model Makers, Metal and Plastic	-10.5%
51-6031	Sewing Machine Operators	-10.5%
51-6064	Textile Winding, Twisting, and Drawing Out Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	-10.4%

Source: DEW, Employment Projections Program

III. Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce

Educational Attainment

Educational attainment of the workforce gives an overall measure of the potential of the economy in the state. The educational attainment in the labor force refers to the highest level of education that a person has successfully completed. According to data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), workforce participation increases, and unemployment decreases as educational attainment rises. Those with more education have higher rates of employment and lower rates of unemployment than those with less education.

According to BLS, employment status in South Carolina was found to vary by educational attainment. In 2024, nearly 66 percent of those holding a Bachelor's degree or higher were in the labor force, while only 40 percent of those without a high school education were. Greater proportions of the population participate in the workforce as educational attainment increases.

Table 24

Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population 25 years and older, by educational attainment

Educational Attainment	Civilian Non-Institutional Population	Civilian Labor Force (in thousands)					
		Total	Percent of Population	Employed		Unemployed	
				Total	Percent of population	Total	Rate
Less than a high school diploma	319	129	40.4%	118	37.2%	11	8.2%
High school graduates, no college	1,140	637	55.9%	614	53.9%	23	3.6%
Some college or associate's degree	998	599	60.0%	582	58.3%	17	2.8%
Bachelor's degree and higher	1,299	856	65.9%	832	64.1%	24	2.8%
Total	3,756	2,221	59.1%	2,146	57.1%	75	3.4%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

BLS produces a listing of the typical level of education that is needed for *entry* into over 800 detailed occupations but does not necessarily advocate using those as the sole measure of educational demand. The goal of their system is to provide career advice to students as well as for individuals who are interested in switching careers. The actual distribution of educational attainment within each occupation can be significantly different than the educational requirement category listed by BLS. For example, in 2022, 7.0 percent of fast-food cooks held a bachelor's degree or higher, which is well above the requirement for the occupation. Despite these limitations, educational requirements by occupation represent one method for attempting to determine potential educational demand in South Carolina. However, these estimates and any conclusions drawn from these estimates should be approached with caution.

Educational requirements can be grouped into four general categories: less than high school, high school diploma or equivalent, some college or associate degree, and bachelor's degree or higher. According to measures of labor demand from BLS, 25 percent of jobs in South Carolina require a bachelor's degree or higher while 64 percent of jobs require only a high school diploma or less. Only about 11 percent of jobs require some college or an associate degree.

Table 25

2024 Employment of Detailed Occupations by Education Required for Entry

Education	Occupational Employment	Percent of Population
Less than high school	559,020	26%
High school diploma or equivalent	811,250	38%
Some college or Associate degree	245,930	11%
Bachelor's degree or higher	544,230	25%
Total	2,160,430	100%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Occupational Employment and Wage Survey (OEWS), 2024 Education assignment to occupations from BLS' Employment Projections Program.

Whereas educational attainment shows the potential for the economy, employment outcomes of graduates from South Carolina colleges and universities highlight their actual engagement with employers in the state. Specifically, DEW examined employment outcomes for postsecondary graduates to understand differences in employment and wage rates across fields and degrees. The information utilized college completion data and matched it with wage records from the state's unemployment insurance program, also housed at DEW.

Three cohorts were used: students who completed undergraduate or graduate programs at a public or independent institution in FY 2009-10, FY 2014-15, and FY 2019-20. These graduates were matched with wage data from unemployment insurance wage records, and earnings were annualized and then analyzed one year, five years, and ten years post-graduation. Specifically, the effect of degree level, college major, and demographic characteristics was investigated. From one year to five years post-graduation, there was a decrease in the percentage of students found in wage records across all demographic characteristics. A similar but smaller decrease was seen from five to ten years post-graduation.

The analysis found that students graduating from South Carolina's colleges and universities are often absent from the state's wage records five or more years post-graduation. In general, only about 53 percent of graduating students are found in the wage records one year after graduation. This falls to around 48 percent five years post-graduation and around 43 percent ten years post. Female and African American graduates are usually found at higher rates in the wage records post-graduation compared to male students and other racial groups. Students graduating from the state's technical college system tend to be most likely to be found in the state's wage records, reflecting the fact that many of their programs are career or workforce centered.

Across the three cohorts, the disciplines with the most students found in wage records one-year post-graduation were varied, but those graduating in STEM fields were consistently the least likely to be found in the wage records. Five years post-graduation, there was a decline in the percentage of students found in the wage records for arts and humanities. By ten years post-graduation, there was the largest drop in the percentage of education majors found in the wage records, and those graduating in the trades had the smallest drop.

Supply Gap

To better understand South Carolina's workforce needs, the Statewide Education and Workforce Development Act (Act No. 67 of 2023) directs the development of an annual statewide workforce supply gap analysis that will help improve the understanding of the workforce climate and inform education decisions in order to align the supply of graduates with changes in demand from employers. The analysis examines the difference between the number of adjusted postsecondary graduates qualified for a given occupation and the amount of new annual demand within that occupation. The supply gap across all occupations in South Carolina is about 29,000 annual workers. The supply gap for occupations requiring bachelor's degrees accounts for about half of the total.

Beyond these overall numbers, it is possible to evaluate the supply gap by career cluster, as shown in Table 26, to determine areas of the state's economy where this issue is most acute. At the career cluster level, the largest supply gaps are in:

1. Health Science
2. Education and Training
3. Business Management and Administration

At the career cluster level, the smallest supply gaps are:

1. Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources
2. Government and Public Administration
3. Arts, Audio/Video Technology & Communications

Table 26

Supply Gap by Career Cluster, 2025

Career Cluster	Supply Gap	Demand Supply Ratio	Adjusted Postsecondary Graduates	New Annual Demand
Health Science	6,951	2.13	6,167	13,118
Education & Training	3,827	2.04	3,696	7,523
Business Management & Administration	3,216	2.64	1,957	5,173
Finance	2,480	3.82	880	3,360
Information Technology	2,455	3.41	1,018	3,473
Human Services	2,176	2.40	1,550	3,726
Marketing	1,745	3.00	871	2,616
Transportation Distribution & Logistics	1,597	8.95	201	1,798
Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security	1,219	3.21	551	1,770
Architecture & Construction	1,138	2.47	775	1,913
Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics	933	1.55	1,695	2,628
Manufacturing	766	3.17	353	1,119
Arts, Audio/Video Technology & Communications	394	1.72	546	940
Government & Public Administration	281	3.15	131	412
Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources	206	2.70	121	327
Total	29,386	2.43	20,512	49,898

Source: DEW, Postsecondary Supply Gap Analysis

Complementary to overall and career cluster data, supply gaps are calculated at the occupation level. Across all occupations requiring a post-secondary credential, the largest gaps are in the 12 occupations identified in Table 27 below.

Table 27

Largest Supply Gaps by Occupation

Rank	Occupation	Rank	Occupation
1.	Accountants and Auditors	7.	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education
2.	Software Developers	8.	Substitute Teachers, Short-Term
3.	Nursing Assistants	9.	Paralegals and Legal Assistants
4.	Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	10.	Medical and Health Services Managers
5.	Human Resources Specialists	11.	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics
6.	Medical Assistants	12.	Registered Nurses

Source: DEW, Postsecondary Supply Gap Analysis

The demand supply ratios for the state are summarized in Table 28 by award type.

Table 28

Demand Supply Ratio by Award Type

Award Type	Demand Supply Ratio
Certificate	1.69
Associate Degree	2.52
Bachelor's Degree	2.63
Master's Degree	2.31
Doctoral or Professional Degree	3.30
Total	2.43

Source: DEW, Postsecondary Supply Gap Analysis

Overall, the demand supply ratio shows that for postsecondary education the demand exceeds supply by nearly two and a half times. The state may satisfy demand by increasing the number of qualified graduates, retaining more qualified graduates, or recruiting credentialed workers from outside the state.

IV. COMPARISON OF ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYTICAL CONCLUSION. DESCRIBE AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY FOR MEETING HIRING, EDUCATION, AND SKILLS NEEDS IDENTIFIED IN THE ECONOMY COMPARED TO THE ASSETS AVAILABLE IN THE LABOR FORCE IN THE STATE.

Over the past three and a half years, the state's GDP has been in strong growth mode. Amongst industry sectors, Health Care and Social Assistance leads the state in employment, including in the more urbanized workforce areas, where the highest industry wages are found. Among occupational categories, Office and Administrative Occupations are the most common in the state, followed by Sales and Related Occupations. Management Occupations top the occupational list for wages.

The state's emerging industries and occupations offer insight into the smaller but growing sub-sections of the economy. Generally, the upsurge appears in lesser-known corners of the state's already well-performing areas: manufacturing, trade, and real estate. Despite being thought of as mature industries, this is evidence they still have significant growth potential.

Data collected on employer needs also show that in-demand skills, knowledge, and credentials are concentrated in the largest industries and occupations, such as Basic Life Support, Registered Nurse, and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation being frequently sought for jobs in Health Care. Outside of medical credentials, there is demand for valid Driver's Licenses, Commercial Driver's Licenses, and Secret Clearances. The top job skills are those common to most occupations, such as critical thinking, active listening, and speaking.

Currently, the state's employment landscape requires 64 percent of the workforce to have only a high school education or less, with 25 percent of jobs requiring a bachelor's degree or higher. When studying these middle- and upper-skill jobs, there is a clear labor supply gap that afflicts key sectors, indicating a need for not only more educational program graduates, but also a more tangible and reciprocal pipeline between the institutions of higher learning and employers. The clusters with the widest labor supply gap are Health Science, Education and Training, and Business Management and Administration.

South Carolina's labor environment is growing more complex and facing, in turn, more complex challenges. The trends revealed in this plan illustrate the intense effort made by the state to collect and analyze its workforce data. This data-driven approach has positioned South Carolina to build on its strengths, mitigate its challenges, and take advantage of new opportunities.

2. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES ANALYSIS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the workforce development activities, including education and training in the State, to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, as identified in (a)(1)(B)(iii) above, and the employment needs of employers, as identified in (a)(1)(A)(iii) above. This must include an analysis of—

A. THE STATE'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Provide an analysis of the State's workforce development activities, including education and training activities of the core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and required[4] and optional one-stop delivery system partners.[5]

B. THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Provide an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the workforce development activities identified in (A), directly above.

C. STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY

Provide an analysis of the capacity of State entities to provide the workforce development activities identified in (A), above.

A. The State's Workforce Development Activities

[4] Required one-stop partners: In addition to the core programs, the following partner programs are required to provide access through the one-stops: Career and Technical Education (Perkins), Community Services Block Grant, Indian and Native American programs, HUD Employment and Training programs, Job Corps, Local Veterans' Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program, National Farmworker Jobs program, Senior Community Service Employment program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) (unless the Governor determines TANF will not be a required partner), Trade Adjustment Assistance programs, Unemployment Compensation programs, and YouthBuild.

[5] Workforce development activities may include a wide variety of programs and partners, including educational institutions, faith- and community-based organizations, and human services.

Governance of the State's Workforce Development System

The State's education and workforce system is governed by the Statewide Education and Workforce Development Act (Act No. 67 of 2023). The Education and Workforce Act seeks to coordinate and align the state's workforce development efforts with centralized oversight for improved accountability and transparency, address obstacles unique to rural areas, and enhance responsiveness to industry needs and economic development commitments. The Act:

- Transfers workforce development responsibilities from the Department of Commerce to the Department of Employment and Workforce.
- Creates the Office of Statewide Workforce Development.
- Expands membership of the Coordinating Council for Workforce Development (CCWD), adding 19 new members.
- Builds upon the unified state plan for workforce development initially established pursuant to Act 194 of 2022.
- Requires employers to include standard occupational classification (SOC) codes and total number of hours worked in their quarterly wage records filed with DEW.

Through the Unified State Plan for Education and Workforce Development, the CCWD established a strategic vision and mission for education and workforce development in the state, and outlined goals related to awareness, skills, and obstacles to employment and strategies. Agencies and programs that administer education and workforce programs will align their programmatic strategies to that of the CCWD and unified state plan. This unified direction ensures that state, federal, and non-profit workforce programs are all working toward a common goal and encourages collaboration and resource leveraging.

K-12

Career and Technical Education

Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs are offered across South Carolina throughout the 76 school districts. There are 47 career and technical education centers in South Carolina, of which 10 are multi-district shared centers offering a variety of programs that correspond with the SC Department of Education career clusters and provide a pathway for students to continue their education and/or transition to postsecondary employment.

Dual Enrollment

Dual enrollment offers eligible high school students the opportunity to enroll in college coursework to earn both high school and college credit. Dual enrollment was made possible in South Carolina by the 2005 Education and Economic Development Act. College courses are provided by an accredited institution of higher education either at the high school or on the college/university campus. Local technical colleges are a primary provider of college-level courses for dually enrolled students. Generally, students can choose from general and career and technical education courses that can lead to a post-secondary degree or in-demand certificates, diplomas, or degrees. Dual enrollment helps put students on a college and/or career pathway before graduating from high school and increases the attainment of high-value credentials.

Career Readiness Assessment

South Carolina passed legislation in 2014 requiring all 11th-grade students to take a career readiness assessment. The South Carolina Career Ready Test includes four component subtests – one soft skills specific assessment and three employability skills (math/reading/data) assessments. Together, the four assessments measure the most common transferable skills that employers nationwide define as foundational for career readiness. The assessments provide students an opportunity to apply job skills – not just simply demonstrate concept knowledge.

Adult Education

Family Literacy

The purpose of Family Literacy is to provide an initiative that interrupts generational poverty and low literacy by equipping adult students who are parents or guardians and their children for lifelong learning and economic stability. Family Literacy provides adult education students who are parents or guardians with opportunities to improve their academic skills and use those skills to enhance the literacy skills of their children. Family Literacy is an extension of services that may be offered by local adult education programs. Family Literacy programs are required to include the four components of Family Literacy:

1. Adult Literacy (i.e., Adult Education) with the goal of obtaining a high school diploma, high school equivalent diploma, career readiness certificate, career pathway, postsecondary education, or the military;
2. Training for Parents (i.e., Parent Education), guardians, or family members regarding how to be the primary teacher for their children and full partners in the education of their children;
3. Educational Activities between Parent and Child (i.e., Interactive Literacy Activities (ILA)) between parents or family members and their children. ILA must be supported by partnerships such as with the local school district, Head Start, Early Head Start, First Steps to School Readiness, and private partnerships;
4. Early Childhood Services (i.e., Early Care and Education (ECE)) is age-appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and life experiences. These services may be supported by partnerships such as the local school district, Head Start, Early Head Start, First Steps to School Readiness and/or private partnerships.

Family literacy through Adult Education Programs can be found in 15 locations, at least one in every workforce area.

Integrated English and Literacy and Civics Education

The Integrated English Literacy/Civics Education (IEL/CE) program is authorized by Title II (Adult Education) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA). The purpose of the IEL/CE program is to assist immigrants and other individuals who are English language learners to improve their reading, writing, and comprehension skills in English and mathematics, as well as understanding the American system of government, individual freedom, and the responsibilities of citizenship. In addition to requiring that the program of instruction be designed to help English language learners achieve competence in reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension of the English language, it also requires that the program of instruction must lead to the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and transition to postsecondary education and training or employment. Twelve Adult Education programs, representing one from each Workforce Area, received funding to provide these services.

Integrated Education and Training

The SC Department of Education (SCDE) Office of Career Readiness - Adult Education (OCR-AE) has worked with local adult education providers across the state to develop Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs. IET is a process that, concurrently and contextually, combines student academic preparation, workforce preparation, and occupational training. The OCR-AE currently has approved IET programs in all 46 counties in SC, which covers all 12 workforce areas of SC. All approved IET programs are in alignment with the high-growth sectors as identified by the State Leadership team, the LWDB plan and employers are directly linked to local employment needs.

Secondary Diploma Completion

Out of school youth 17 to 21 years old and adult learners 22 and older enroll in adult education programs at all academic skill levels (adult basic, adult intermediate, and adult secondary). To assist with secondary diploma completion, adult education providers offer flexible schedules for high school diploma credit classes and high school equivalency diploma preparation classes to youth and adult learners across all workforce areas. These secondary diploma completion classes include workforce preparation activities like digital literacy and other soft skills training. Moreover, secondary diplomas are often prerequisites for accessing higher education programs and specialized industry recognized occupational training.

Skills Upgrade

Adult education programs offer opportunities for upskilling and reskilling that meet the evolving needs of community and industries in the areas of math, reading, writing, English as a second language, and digital literacy training. Programs are equipped to strengthen the workforce pipeline through targeted education, workforce preparation, and soft skills training.

Two- and Four-Year Educational Opportunities

Technical College System

The SC Technical College System consists of 16 colleges that offer credit and non-credit certificates, diplomas and degree programs, short-term training, and continuing education, and two internationally renowned statewide programs, readySC™ and Apprenticeship Carolina™. As the state's largest higher education system, the Technical College System serves more than 134,000 students each year and educates nearly half of all South Carolina undergraduates attending a public college or university. The Technical College System plays a key role in educating and training South Carolina's workforce for the in-demand, high-skilled jobs of today and tomorrow. In addition, the System's internationally-recognized statewide programs – readySC™ and Apprenticeship Carolina™ – work to attract new companies to the state as well as provide comprehensive workforce solutions to ensure they stay and grow here.

readySC™

readySC™ is a division of the SC Technical College System and is a key contributor to the state's economic development efforts. Recognized internationally as a premier program of its kind, readySC™ provides recruiting and initial training for new and expanding businesses, with over 300,000 people trained since 1961. Partnership and collaboration with readySC™ facilitates coordinated delivery of employer services.

Apprenticeship Carolina™

Apprenticeship Carolina™, a division of the SC Technical College System, works to develop Registered Apprenticeship programs (RAPs) and certified pre-apprenticeship programs across the state. Our apprenticeship consultants and implementation specialists are a no-cost resource for employers to help build, maintain, and maximize the use of registered youth, adult, and pre-apprenticeship programs. Apprenticeship Carolina™ is committed to creating and strengthening career pathways that enrich and enhance South Carolina's existing and future workforce.

Our industry-driven youth and adult apprenticeship programs are nationally recognized in the US Department of Labor's Registered Apprenticeship System and combine job-related education with critical on-the-job training.

Pre-apprenticeship is yet another program offered by the SC Technical College System designed to build a talent pipeline for business and industry in South Carolina. Pre-apprenticeship programs are custom designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in apprenticeship programs. These programs have many benefits for both employers and participants. For participants, they provide the knowledge and skills training needed for specific jobs and industries and are especially helpful to individuals who may have barriers to employment, such as underrepresented populations. Employers also benefit by getting screened, trained employees who are ready to work, saving them recruiting time and resources, and reducing turnover rates.

Colleges, Universities, and Professional Schools

South Carolina has three research institutions, 10 comprehensive four-year colleges/universities, and four two-year regional University of South Carolina campuses. There are also 23 private senior and two-year institutions, and two professional schools.6 A recent agreement between the SC Technical College System and the state's public research institutions makes is easier for students to transfer credits.7 Key components of the agreement include:

- Establishment of 30 or more credit hours of guaranteed acceptance and applicability to the student's major designed to reduce credit loss at the time of transfer.
- Maintenance of the acceptance of a minimum of 60 credit hours for students completing an Associate in Arts or Associate in Science.
- A reverse transfer credit option enabling credits earned at the university to be transferred back to the technical college for the completion of an associate degree.
- Establishment of annual data sharing in an effort to highlight successes and opportunities for further collaboration to increase transfer student success.
- A commitment to ongoing, regular collaboration through the facilitation of faculty and staff convenings to promote better advising.

Work-Based Learning and Training Programs

Work-based learning and training models are widely used across programs as an effective vehicle for career exploration, training new workers, and upskilling existing workers. For students, work-based learning experiences support school-to-work opportunities, especially for

[6] About The Commission on Higher Education. <https://www.che.sc.gov/about-commission-higher-education>.
[7] Norton, Ross. "Agreement formalizes credits transfer among South Carolina technical colleges, universities." 12 January 2024. *GSA Business.* <https://gsabusiness.com/agreement-formalizes-credits-transfer-among-south-carolina-technical-colleges-universities/>.

students in grades 7-12 and postsecondary education. Work-based learning types and terminology vary across programs, agencies, and organizations. Some types of work-based learning require active employment, like on-the-job training, apprenticeship, and incumbent worker training, where others are more of a work experience or job tryout that does not require an employer-employee relationship. Additionally, some opportunities are paid, while others are not. The goals are largely the same – to provide career exploration opportunities, to allow students and jobseekers to experience work or a specific type of job, to build skills, and a pipeline for current and future jobs.

The following types of work-based learning are a sampling of offerings in South Carolina:

Workplace Adult Education and Literacy Activity

Workplace literacy is a process that is used by local adult education providers where the employer identifies educational needs in reading, writing, mathematics, English as a second language for existing employees. This process could also be modified and used to identify potential employees that qualify to work at the employer site based on scores.

On the Job Training (OJT)

OJT is primarily used to help individuals secure employment and obtain the specific skills and competencies needed for full performance of the job. Each program has specific OJT requirements, but generally, a program participant is matched with an employer to fill an open position. The employer trains the new employee on-the-job and is reimbursed for a percentage of the employee's wages during the period of training.

Job Try Outs

Job try-outs are a stipend-funded training service coordinated between SCVRD, the client, and a business partner. During a job try-out, a career-ready client learns specific, basic skills for a job at a company's worksite(s). While like OJT, clients are not employed at the time of training.

Work Experience

Work experience is a structured activity designed to provide participants with supervised training based on an individual's vocational objective. Work experience placements can be at public, private non-profit and private for-profit agencies, businesses, or institutions that provide supervision in a real work environment. Work experience activities are available across partner programs and used as a secondary education tool to create school-to-work opportunities.

Work-Based Learning Experiences for Students with Disabilities

A work-based learning experience is one of the five required activities provided as a Pre-Employment Transition Service. These experiences may be used to expose students to a real work situation, so they may become familiar with employer expectations and what it is like to work. Experiences are also used to explore careers. These may be paid or unpaid, and a student may perform actual work tasks to determine interest in the career and what the career will require. These are often coordinated with the local school district during the school year.

Job Readiness Training Centers

Local SCVRD job readiness training centers are working within their communities to identify demand-driven training opportunities and needs. The SCVRD training centers utilize customized job readiness training contracts to build foundational skills and refer qualified clients to business partners for employment opportunities. SCVRD is developing demand-driven

and customized trainings for identified industries and employers throughout the state. There are currently 30 demand-driven training programs available across the state, some leading to industry-recognized credentials, and there are 12 customized training initiatives in place with more planned for the future.

Incumbent Worker Training (IWT)

IWT is designed to ensure that current employees can gain the skills necessary to retain employment and advance within the company. Ideally, IWT will result in industry recognized credentials, as well as pay increases and/or promotion opportunities. The Title I Adult program routinely uses IWT to engage businesses and provide funding to upskill existing employees. Local Workforce Development Areas can use up to 20 percent of their combined Adult and Dislocated Worker funding to provide IWT. SC also uses Governor's Reserve Funding to provide additional IWT funding to LWDAs.

Pre-Apprenticeship and Apprenticeship

Apprenticeship is an industry-driven, high-quality career pathway where employers can develop and prepare their future workforce, and individuals can obtain paid work experience, classroom instruction, and a portable credential. A RAP is a model of apprenticeship that has been validated by the U.S. Department of Labor or a State Apprenticeship Agency. South Carolina has more than 1,000 RAPs with the U.S. Department of Labor, many of which are available on the Eligible Training Provider List for selection by WIOA Title I participants. Program components include a paid job, on-the-job training, related instruction, mentorship, and credentials.

Pre-apprenticeship programs are designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in apprenticeships. Pre-apprenticeship programs are not registered or regulated by DOL. However, Apprenticeship Carolina™, through the SC Technical College System, can certify pre-apprenticeship programs for providers. Pre-apprenticeship programs have a strong relationship with at least one apprenticeship program, provide training and curriculum that align with that program, including a wide range of support services explicitly designed to ensure student success – allowing for greater chances of success and access to apprenticeship programs.

Digital Literacy and Soft Skills Training Opportunities

SC Career Readiness Program/WIN Learning Digital Literacy, Essential Soft Skills, and Professional Skills Credential

Through funding from the General Assembly, the WIN Learning Digital Literacy, Essential Soft Skills, and Professional Skills Credential are available to individuals and jobseekers statewide. Courseware provides instruction and practice before taking the related assessment. A credential is awarded to individuals who pass a proctored assessment.

The Digital Literacy credential demonstrates competency in the following areas:

- Computer operations
- Internet browsing
- Digital communication
- Digital documents

- Digital security

The Essential Soft Skills credential demonstrates competency in the following areas:

- Communicating effectively
- Conveying professionalism
- Promoting teamwork and collaboration
- Thinking critically and solving problems

The Professional Skills Credential is a custom offering that combines the Digital Literacy and Essential Soft Skills credentials into one. Individuals and jobseekers who successfully pass the individual Digital Literacy and Essential Soft Skills assessments are awarded the Professional Skills Credential.

Other Soft Skills Training and Instructional Tools

There are several other soft skills instructional tools used across the state. For example, SCVRD incorporates soft skills training into the delivery of Pre-Employment Transition Services to students as well as Job Preparedness Instruction courses offered in/by its Job Readiness Training Centers. SC Works centers provide individual and group soft skills workshops and programs like Back to Work and JET (Job Endurance Training) heavily incorporate soft skills or employability skills. Adult education providers use NorthStar and econdary education providers use the Microburst EmployABILITY Soft Skills Certification. All of these are acceptable models and demonstrate the importance and commitment to equipping the emerging and existing workforce with soft skills.

retrainSC Training Incentives

The retrainSC program incentivizes upskilling education and training by allowing South Carolina manufacturing, processing, tech-intensive, and warehousing & distribution companies to utilize the Job Retraining Tax Credit (retrainSC) program, which reimburses training and education-related expenses. After approval by the State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education, companies may claim reimbursement for eligible out of pocket training costs up to $1,000 per eligible employee per calendar year.

Programs and Activities that Enhance Services to Priority Populations

Some jobseekers face multiple challenges in entering and thriving in the labor market. While there are many programs within the state to support individuals with barriers to employment, partnerships will continue to be pursued with businesses, community-based organizations, and non-profits to ensure vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals have opportunities to succeed within the labor market.

Youth with Barriers

Jobs for America's Graduates-SC

Jobs for America's Graduates-South Carolina (JAG-SC) is a dropout prevention program focused on academic success and career readiness skills. A dedicated career specialist in each of the affiliated schools functions as a teacher, coach, counselor, and advocate for students with documented barriers to success. Over the course of their multi-year enrollment, students master up to 81 competencies identified by businesses as essential to successful employment. JAG-SC operates within 34 high schools spanning across 17 counties. The program currently

serves approximately 1,400 active participants. Program outcomes continue to exceed JAG National Standards.

Job Corps

The Bamberg Job Corps Center is federally funded by the US Department of Labor (USDOL) and has been in operation since 1979. It is a residential training center for youth, providing a variety of workforce development and educational activities, including GED preparation and testing, academic coursework and support, career readiness training and assessment, and job placement services, among other activities.

The Bamberg Job Corps Center has several partnerships with local WIOA programs, adult education providers, technical colleges, and SCVRD. Participants are referred to Job Corps through these partnerships.

National Guard Youth Challenge (SCNGYC)

The SCNGYC is a two-phase program consisting of a two-week residential phase that allows cadets a short opportunity to adjust to the rigors and discipline of the program, followed by a 20-week program where cadets receive military-based training, engage in supervised work experience and complete eight core program components. These include academic excellence, health and hygiene, job skills, leadership/followership, life-coping skills, physical fitness, responsible citizenship, and service to community. Cadets are also matched with a mentor who provides one-on-one support to graduates during the 12-week post-residential phase.

Juvenile and Adult Offenders

Birchwood School

DJJ's Birchwood School, is a comprehensive middle and high school that offers male and female students in grades 4 through 12 a variety of Career and Technology Education (CTE) and academic courses. The Academy is accredited by Cognia and has completed the High Schools That Work reform model review. It was the first school in the nation to have an Army JROTC program inside a correctional institution. In addition to academic subjects such as English (ELA), math, science, and social studies, the Birchwood School offers CTE Completer programs in the following areas: carpentry, ceramics, culinary arts, digital desktop publishing, entrepreneurship, integrated business applications, matting & framing, music technology, personal finance, and welding.

Work related transitional courses, such as woodworking and upholstery, are also available to some youth. In preparing high school graduates for life beyond DJJ, students can earn industry certifications in areas such as ServSafe (Food Handlers and Manager), OSHA 10, NCCER, and Forklift Operator. A SC Vocational Rehabilitation Department (SCVRD) counselor is housed at the Academy to assist eligible students with school-to-work transition and the full range of SCVRD services, including work-based learning opportunities and connecting students with local SCVRD staff in their home community as they approach release. High school graduates have an opportunity to earn college credits through partnership with Allen University, South Carolina State University, Voorhees College, and Spartanburg Community College.

Career Readiness Center (CRC)

All students are eligible for career readiness services provided by the Career Readiness Center (CRC). The Mission of the CRC is to equip, expose and assist DJJ-involved youth with employment readiness skills throughout the State of South Carolina. The CRC is equipped with

four regional job developers/career development facilitators that provide services across the state to DJJ-involved youth concerning employment, vocational training, and postsecondary education. Most of these youth are eligible for the Youth Empowerment Sites (YES) paid internship Program.

E.A.R.N. Program

Through E.A.R.N (Empathy, Attitude, Respect, Knowledge), a DJJ volunteer provides employment readiness skills to youth at all SCDJJ campuses. Companies seek to hire new employees who possess soft skills and can enter the workplace capable of communicating effectively. This workshop equips students with interpersonal and communications skills to help open doors of opportunity, enable them to be successful in business, and empower them to be engaged citizens for their community and the world.

Teen After-School Centers (TASC)

DJJ partners with local churches, community centers, and other youth serving organizations across the state to provide Teen After-School Centers (TASCs). These centers offer structured time, activities, and supervision between the end of the school day and when parents return from work, which is a risky time for young people, and when serious and violent crime committed by youth increases. This nationally recognized program is specifically designed to reduce the likelihood that participants could be incarcerated and is geared toward those youth in need of additional structure and assistance, often supplementing the normal supervision that DJJ provides to youth on probation, parole, or on contract.

TASC provide youth with many opportunities including, but not limited to:

- Educational support and after-school tutoring.
- Development of employability skills and job placement.
- Computer labs and instruction.

Youthful Offender Parole and Reentry Services (YOPRS)

The SC Department of Corrections (SCDC) Division of YOPRS provides both institutional and community-based services for male and female offenders sentenced under the Youthful Offender Act (YOA). Eligible individuals must be between 17 and 25 years of age at the time of conviction and have no previous YOA convictions. The mission of this division is to reduce the recidivism of youthful offenders by utilizing evidence-based principles and practices that teach accountability, promote public safety, and enhance skill development with a focus on employability.

While incarcerated, SCDC's institutional staff provides youthful offenders with job and career development. Upon reentry into the community, the officers guide the offenders in locating resources within the community that can assist with employment and other reentry needs. Additionally, SCDC's intensive supervision officers provide parole supervision while assisting these young adults with seeking and maintaining employment.

Self-Paced In-Classroom Education Program (SPICE)

The SPICE program is a voluntary inmate education and employment initiative that provides meaningful educational opportunities, such as vocational skills training, career readiness training, life skills training, and spiritual awareness. This initiative is a faith–based community partnership between SCDC, SC Department of Probation, Parole and Pardon Services

(SCDPPPS), SCVRD, and the SC Technical College System. The SPICE program consists of two components: an institutional component and a community-based supervision component.

The Institutional Component is operated by SCDC at designated facilities throughout the state where inmates participate in a SPICE program curriculum consisting of educational, spiritual, social/life skills, vocational, health education, and wellness training. SCDPPPS operates the community-based supervision component during which individuals on probation participate in vocational skills training or high school equivalency diploma (HSED) preparation, attend spiritual events (e.g., Church), and are assigned community/church sponsors and mentors to assist in their transition. Offenders who choose not to participate in spiritual events may opt to participate in approved public works programs or community events with assistance from their sponsor or mentor. Upon completion of the vocational/educational training element, SCDPPPS agents coordinate with community sponsors and mentors and other service agencies to facilitate offender employment.

Reentry One-Stops

DEW and SCDC partner to help offenders find jobs through a work-ready initiative. With onsite support from SC Works at the Manning Correctional Institution, this partnership allows inmates to participate in a series of workshops that develop key employability skills. After completing the required workshops and intensive services, job ready participants are referred to a recruiter or career development specialist for additional training and services. DEW provides each inmate, who successfully completes the program, a letter detailing the Federal Bonding Program that they can share with employers. DEW also assists employers through the process of utilizing the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC), which can reduce an employer's federal tax liability up to $2,400 for each qualifying ex-offender hired. The addition of virtual mock interviews and virtual hiring events were added for the participants at Manning. Since the programs launch, classes have been offered at additional Correctional Institutions in the state, this includes the Camille Griffin Graham Correctional Institution, an all-female facility.

Connecting Inmates to Vital Records and Resources

Through collaboration with the Social Security Administration, SCDC helps inmates obtain social security cards and critical resources for self-sufficiency. Partnerships with SC Thrive and Catholic Charities support these efforts.

Bounce Back

Bounce Back is a multi-disciplinary program designed to help address many of the challenges faced by individuals with a criminal background. The program is designed to help prepare individuals to enter or re-enter the workforce. Two of the greatest challenges facing individuals with a criminal background are finding and maintaining employment. The program brings together community partners for a common purpose and goal. Coordinated and offered by the SC Vocational Rehabilitation Department, the program invites agencies and service providers to share information that will help participants learn greater skills for a life without crime. The day-long program introduces participants to many of the resources available in their community. Each VR office designs and offers a program they feel best addresses the needs of their clients with a criminal background. Common topics that all offices address include working with the client's Probation Counselor, gaining insight into remaining in compliance with SCDPPPS, as well as how to apply for a pardon and the expungement process. Additional topics include:

- The Value of Work

- Attitude for Success
- Finding Employment and Maintaining Employment
- Services found at the Library
- Quick Jobs (Technical Colleges)
- Alcohol & Drug Treatment and Awareness
- Client Success Story
- Addressing Transportation Challenges
- Employer Presentation (What they look for in an employee)
- Goal Setting
- Social Media: The Good and the Bad
- Time Management

The following partners have participated in the Bounce Back program: SC Department of Probation, Parole and Pardon, Technical Colleges, SC Department of Motor Vehicles, County Libraries, SC Works, the State Solicitors Office, SC Legal Services, Austin Wilkes Society, Goodwill Services, and local nonprofits who provide resources.

Veterans and Eligible Spouses

Veterans Programs and Services

SC Works representatives are available in centers throughout the state to help veterans transition into the workforce. Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVER) staff conduct employer outreach and job development in the local community to assist veterans in gaining employment, including conducting seminars for employers and, in conjunction with employers, conducting job search workshops and establishing job search groups. Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists are trained to provide intensive case management services to veterans and eligible spouses with Qualifying Employment Barriers (QEB), as well as age-priority veterans ages 18 to 24, Vietnam-era veterans, and eligible transitioning service members, spouses, and family caregivers. Case management services include individual career coaching, job referral, resume preparation assistance, career fairs and job search workshops, job training programs, and referrals to supporting or training services.

SCVRD has an ongoing partnership with DEW's LVERs and DVOPs to coordinate outreach efforts with federal contractors. Federal contractors are required to establish an annual hiring benchmark for protected veterans and individuals with disabilities or adopt the national benchmark provided by the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP). Through this informal partnership, SCVRD and DEW LVERs and DVOPs identify work ready individuals and coordinate employment opportunities with federal contractors. SCVRD also partners with the Veteran's Administration to provide work evaluations in SCVRD's Job Readiness Training Centers for referred veterans to determine their work potential. SCVRD has developed a partnership with the South Carolina Veteran Coalition program which will allow individuals to be referred to SCVRD as well as provide an opportunity for SCVRD consumers who are veterans to be linked with additional resources from other partnering agencies.

Individuals with Disabilities

Strategic Partnerships

South Carolina Pathways Project (SCPP)

SCPP is a disability-led collaborative addressing the need for better transition resources and programming for students with disabilities as they progress from high school to adulthood and attain meaningful employment. This statewide partnership brings together the South Carolina Department of Education, Able South Carolina, AccessAbility, Walton Options for Independent Living, the South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department, University of South Carolina, and local education agencies. Together, we aim to establish SCPP as a replicable model for empowering students with disabilities and enhancing their opportunities for success.

Subminimum Wage Taskforce

On May 23, 2022, (S.533), a Joint Resolution to end subminimum wage in South Carolina, was signed into law by Governor Henry McMaster following years of grassroots advocacy by Able SC and partners. South Carolina became the third state in the Southeast and the thirteenth in the nation to pass legislation ending subminimum wage. S.533 prioritizes the stability of individuals with disabilities who are currently subject to subminimum wage by developing a task force to create a two-year transition plan to phase out subminimum wage by August 1, 2024, ensuring that those currently working under subminimum wage can successfully transition to other types of employment.

SC Disability Employment Coalition

The SC Disability Employment Coalition, led by Able SC, is a statewide systems improvement effort formed in 2014 that comprises a broad stakeholder group working to improve employment recruitment, retention, and advancement for South Carolinians with disabilities. Primary activities of the coalition include raising awareness among South Carolina's businesses regarding hiring people with disabilities, supporting systems to ensure employment is the preferred service option and outcome for people with disabilities, disseminating information relating to employing people with disabilities, and collecting quantitative and qualitative data about the experiences of employers and employees with disabilities, among other activities.

There are over 40 partnering organizations including Able SC, AccessAbility, Walton Options for Independent Living, SC Vocational Rehabilitation Department, SC Commission for the Blind, SC Department of Disabilities and Special Needs, SC Department of Education, SC Department of Employment and Workforce, SC Department of Health and Human Services, Disability Rights SC (Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Disabilities), SC Developmental Disabilities Council, Family Connection of SC, University of South Carolina Center for Disability Resources, and SC Department of Mental Health.

Hire Me SC

People with disabilities can work, want to work, and should be afforded every opportunity to work. Powered by Able SC and the South Carolina Disability Employment Coalition, Hire Me SC is a statewide campaign and resource hub that promotes a culture of inclusion across the state of South Carolina, one in which employment for every individual, disability or not, is the norm rather than the exception. Hire Me SC provides information about job training programs, resources to help employers empower or hire an individual with a disability, and a platform to join in advocacy for policy change.

SC Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE)

Established in 2018, South Carolina developed a statewide APSE chapter. APSE is the only national membership organization focused exclusively on Employment First to facilitate the full inclusion of people with disabilities in the workplace and community. APSE members recognize that everyone has abilities to contribute, and their work should be recognized and rewarded with fair pay, creating inclusive workplaces. Employment enriches and adds meaning to every life, and workplaces and communities are enhanced when they embrace differences.

Transition Alliance of South Carolina (TASC)

The Transition Alliance of South Carolina is a broad systems improvement and technical assistance resource for professionals working with students with disabilities. Their primary outcome is to empower students to transition into community-based employment. Local transition programs choose to enhance their curriculum through a variety of evidence-based transition practices, including student-led IEP meetings, goal setting and attainment, socializing in the workplace, job accommodations, and other activities meant to empower students with disabilities to control their career strategy. TASC consists of a state-level interagency steering committee that supports local interagency transition teams across the state.

Programs/Initiatives

Able Access

Able Access, a program of Able SC, helps employers build inclusive, accessible workplaces that strengthen workforce development and expand talent pipelines. Through accessibility assessments, technical assistance, and customized guidance, Able Access supports businesses in removing physical, digital, and programmatic barriers while improving inclusive hiring, onboarding, and retention practices. By connecting employers to an often underutilized talent pool, qualified workers with disabilities, and promoting disability confidence across organizations, Able Access helps reduce turnover, boost productivity, and create a more resilient, competitive workforce.

SC AgrAbility

SC AgrAbility is a statewide, collaborative initiative led by Clemson University in partnership with Able SC, dedicated to strengthening South Carolina's agricultural workforce by supporting farmers, ranchers, and agricultural workers with disabilities. Through personalized on-site assessments, assistive technology and equipment adaptations, education and training, and connections to critical services and resources, SC AgrAbility empowers individuals to maintain independence, enhance safety, and continue productive careers in agriculture. Beyond direct services, SC AgrAbility actively promotes agriculture as a viable and rewarding career path for people with disabilities, including youth and emerging farmers to build a more inclusive and resilient agricultural community. SC AgrAbility serves as South Carolina's official chapter of AgrAbility, a national initiative committed to advancing accessibility, innovation, and sustainability in agriculture across the United States.

Centers for Independent Living

CILs are designed and operated within a local community by individuals with disabilities and provide an array of independent living services, such as one-on-one and group training on topics such as employment soft skills, transportation utilization, accommodation requests, and transition from high school to postsecondary life. CILs have been strong resources to SC Works Centers, such as providing disability sensitivity awareness training, assessing centers for

accessibility, and serving on local boards. South Carolina has three CILs: Able SC, Walton Options for Independent Living, and AccessAbility.

Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA)

Able SC is South Carolina's WIPA provider that empowers SSI and SSDI beneficiaries with disabilities to make informed decisions regarding their career strategies and transitioning to self-sufficiency. Community Work Incentives Coordinators provide in-depth counseling about benefits and the effect of work on those benefits; conduct outreach efforts to beneficiaries of SSI and SSDI (and their families) who are potentially eligible to participate in federal or state work incentives program; and work in cooperation with federal, state, and private agencies and nonprofit organizations that serve social security beneficiaries with disabilities.

Ticket to Work

Ticket to Work is a voluntary program for people receiving disability benefits from Social Security and whose primary goal is to find good careers and have a better self-supporting future. Consumers may receive employment services through an employment network provider, including career counseling, socialization to the workplace, and job support advice, among others. Able SC, and SC's Department of Employment and Workforce, Commission for the Blind, and Vocational Rehabilitation Department serve ticket beneficiaries under SSA's Ticket to Work program.

Pre-Employment Transition Services for Students with Disabilities

In PY 2024 SCVRD opened 1524 new cases for students referred through the school system, which represents 14% of the agency's total new referrals. 6023 students received at least one Pre-ETS service during the year, including 2471 who do not have an open VR case, but who are potentially eligible. SCVRD continues to maintain a presence in local school districts and add new partnerships with nontraditional schools to include two major virtual programs. Of the consumers that SCVRD served in PY 24, 15% are students (age 13-21 and enrolled in education) and 40.4% are youth (age 14-24).

The SCCB provides Pre-employment Transition Services to students with disabilities who are eligible or potentially eligible for SCCB's Vocational Rehabilitation program. SCCB employs three Transition Counselors who travel statewide to coordinate Pre-employment Transition Services in conjunction with local school districts and the SC School for the Deaf and Blind. In addition, SCCB has contractual partnerships with SCVRD, Able SC, NFB Successful Transitions, and Walton Options to provide work-place readiness, work-based learning experiences, counseling on postsecondary opportunities, and instruction in self-advocacy. SCCB Transition Counselors provide job exploration counseling in addition to the other four required Pre-Employment Transition Services. SCCB has worked to ensure that these services are available in all areas in SC including rural areas and works with partners to assist with transportation to enhance service delivery to this population.

Career Boost

The Career BOOST (Building Occupational Options for Students in Transition) contract has ended at this time. This contract was resolicited to provide middle and high school Self-Advocacy Services statewide. The current vendors for this contract are Able, AccessAbility, Walton Options, and Empowered to Win. Under this contract, eligible and potentially eligible students with disabilities receive instruction in self-advocacy skills, work readiness (soft) skills, job exploration, work-based learning and counseling on opportunities for postsecondary

enrollment. The purpose of Career BOOST is to provide these "Pre-Employment Transition Services" to give middle and high school aged students with disabilities career exploration and preparation experiences before exiting the public school system.

Student Internship Program (JSIP)

The SCCB provides eligible high school students with an opportunity to gain valuable work experience during a summer internship with business partners throughout the state. Participants receive a stipend upon successful completion of the program. This program is also available to college students.

Summer Teen Program

Traditionally, Summer Teen is a multi-week summer residential program located at the SCCB Training Center in Columbia. Summer Teen includes work readiness skills training, soft skills training, self-advocacy skills training, and work-based learning experiences.

Project SEARCH

Project SEARCH is an international program first developed in 1996 at the Cincinnati Children's Hospital. South Carolina currently has eleven Project SEARCH locations. Project SEARCH is a unique, business-led transition program designed to provide education and job training to young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Students participate in the program for a full school year. They receive classroom instruction, including training in employability and independent living skills, and master core job skills through three 9- to 10-week internship rotations. Upon successful completion of the program, students are employed in nontraditional, complex, and rewarding jobs in the host-company and community. Along with job skills, the Project SEARCH program gives students self-confidence, opportunities, and hope for a thriving future.

Job Driven Vocational Training Programs

SCVRD continues to develop job driven skills training based on specific business needs in local communities. Skills training is delivered through the department's local area offices in partnership with community entities including technical colleges to grow skilled talent pools from which local business partners can recruit and hire. Used in conjunction with other statewide workforce development efforts, this individualized training assists individuals with disabilities to access training that is customized to meet their needs and the needs of businesses. This initiative is coordinated through SCVRD's Business Services Team, whose members also collaborate at the local and regional level on interagency business services teams including all WIOA core partners.

An example of this customized training approach is SCVRD's partnership with North American Rescue. In the Greenville, Greer, and Laurens area, consumers work in the agency's Job Readiness Training Centers with NAR to assemble specialty medical kits for EMS first responders and the US military. During the COVID-19 pandemic, NAR's operations were deemed critical due to the nature of the work. Agency consumers worked alongside NAR employees to prepare medical kits for all types of emergency situations. As a result, many consumers were hired by NAR after demonstrating the hard skills needed for this job. NAR continues to employ VR consumers at competitive wages in the Upstate region.

Older Workers and Workers that Acquire Disabilities

Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)

SCSEP is the only federal job-training program focused exclusively on helping low-income seniors. The program promotes personal dignity and self-sufficiency through work. People 55 and older who qualify for the program work in their local communities. The South Carolina Department on Aging is designated to administer all Older Americans Act programs, including Title V, SCSEP. The goal of South Carolina SCSEP is to provide participants with the training experiences, supportive services and information needed to improve their lives by becoming economically self-sufficient through gainful employment.

Identifying and meeting the needs of older workers to support their continued participation in employment is essential to meeting the need for talent and experience in the workforce. As an example, SCVRD provides Job Retention Services (JRS) for individuals who are currently employed but may face the jeopardy of losing their employment due to a variety of factors. Through evaluation of their strengths and abilities, identification of supports, and the use of rehabilitation technology, older workers can often maintain employment or retrain in a new role before losing their jobs.

Services and interventions must be adapted to meet the diverse needs of mature workers. This includes, but is not limited to, timely provision of supports, identification of training needs and process/procedure barriers, and planning effective strategies to enhance outcomes and work options later in life.[8]

Homeless Population

Back to Work Program

The Back to Work program was created to help individuals gain self-sufficiency and soft skills. A partner agency works with individuals to develop life skills and address challenges such as housing, addiction, and medical needs, while DEW staff conducts an intensive employment boot camp, creating the opportunity for long-term success. Participants are trained in areas such as soft skills, diversity in the workplace, conflict in the workplace, résumé writing, financial management, interviewing skills, and dress for success. The culmination of the Back to Work program is a hiring event exclusively for participants and a graduation ceremony with family, friends, mentors from partnering organizations and community leaders. For some participants, this is the first milestone they have ever completed. The program has expanded to all 12 local workforce areas with partner organizations such as shelters, addiction treatment centers, community organizations, and state agencies.

Low-Income

Individuals receiving SNAP or TANF often have difficulty finding and keeping living-wage employment. Recognizing the importance of expanding career opportunities that lead to long-term self-sufficiency, DSS provides employment and training services for SNAP and TANF recipients, such as resume assistance, soft skills development, job search assistance, and referrals to employers and partner organizations. DSS works to assist participants with removing barriers that prevent successful employment and to coach participants through the process of obtaining and retaining employment.

DSS employs Workforce Consultants who work with employers and training providers across the state to develop opportunities for SNAP and TANF recipients that assist them in achieving their highest level of self-sufficiency. Workforce Consultants promote employment as a means of stabilizing the lives of SNAP and TANF recipients by encouraging participation in Work

[8] University of Arkansas CURRENTS, The Aging Workforce Primary Study Group 34th IRI, 2009.

Experience activities, DSS' On-the-Job Training program, and the Family Independence Tax Credit in their local area. DSS has co-located Workforce Consultants in all SC Works Comprehensive Centers and in several affiliate centers.

SNAP Employment and Training (SNAP E&T)

The SNAP Employment & Training (SNAP E&T) program is designed to expand the state's skilled workforce while increasing employment and training opportunities for recipients of the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as the Food Stamp program. The SNAP E&T program provides training and employment opportunities to low income, working-age individuals to increase their income and ultimately leading to self-sufficiency. SNAP E&T plays a critical role in helping participants meet federal work requirements by offering structured pathways to employment through qualifying activities. By enrolling in SNAP E&T, individuals subject to time limits can maintain SNAP eligibility and reduce the risk of loss of benefits.

The SNAP E&T program provides federal funding to providers of employment and training services to SNAP participants through a "third-party reimbursement" model. Partner agencies, state agencies, non-profit organizations, foundations, and others use non-federal funding for the necessary and reasonable costs of an employment and training component available to SNAP participants and DSS uses that funding to leverage a 50% percent federal reimbursement to help pay for partner services.

The SNAP E&T program is designed to address both the needs of employers for qualified staff and the needs of low-income participants to find meaningful work. SNAP E&T has ongoing partnerships with state agencies, technical colleges, and community-based organizations across South Carolina. Through the partnership with Adult Education, SNAP E&T recipients can gain skills, training, and work experience that help move them toward self-sufficiency. Emphasis for dually enrolled SNAP/Adult Ed participants is placed on obtaining a high school diploma (HSD) or HSED, and a career readiness certificate.

To better align and coordinate programs that help individuals prepare for competitive employment, DSS' SNAP E&T employees are co-located in each of the comprehensive SC Works Centers across the State and in several affiliate centers.

The Pathways Scholarship Program (PSP) is a scholarship opportunity available for participants in the SNAP Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) program. These scholarships are awarded to SNAP recipients who wish to further their education and to gain skills and certifications that can lead to employment. The PSP provides scholarships that will pay for tuition and books for SNAP recipients attending any accredited organization that provides employment-related certifications within South Carolina.

Childcare and Transportation

Access to affordable childcare and transportation create an obstacle to education and employment for many in South Carolina. The challenge for childcare and transportation providers is complex including provider workforce challenges and funding.

Childcare

Led by the Department of Social Services, the Division of Early Care and Education serves as the lead for the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) federal funding. Childcare funded partners are taking a multifaceted approach to creating more affordable, accessible, and quality childcare options. Strategies include grants and resources to help entrepreneurs start new childcare

facilities, professional development, technical assistance, and coaching to new and existing childcare programs and professionals, and the development of pathways into early care and education occupations.

When it comes to helping families locate available childcare, the South Carolina Child Care Resource and Referral (SCCCR&R) is a premier resource. SCCCR&R promotes high-quality early care and education by providing free, statewide services to families, early childhood programs, and communities. The SCCCR&R website features a childcare search tool. For families that need more assistance, SCCCR&R staff provide person-to-person assistance and referrals to childcare programs. Through trainings, conferences, and technical assistance, SCCCR&R provides coaching services to childcare programs and professionals. SCCCR&R can also help employers evaluate childcare options for their workforce.

The South Carolina legislature formed a bipartisan Special Joint Committee in 2023 to study childcare. The Committee is charged with addressing and drafting legislation on the availability and affordability of childcare.

Transportation

The Transportation Association of South Carolina (TASC) is leading legislative efforts to increase funding for public transportation to ensure access statewide. Workforce development is a primary driver behind the conversation as it supports access for jobseekers and current and future employers who need access to a workforce. The Regional Transit Authorities provide a variety of public transit options to include ridesharing. Other providers like Commute with Enterprise have also created ridesharing models supporting major South Carolina employers.

B. The Strengths and Weaknesses of Workforce Development Activities

The key strengths of the activities identified above are:

Workforce System Governance and Clear Statewide Strategic Direction

The State's education and workforce system is governed by the Statewide Education and Workforce Development Act (Act No. 67 of 2023). Act 67 seeks to coordinate and align the state's workforce development efforts with centralized oversight for improved accountability and transparency, address obstacles unique to rural areas, and enhance responsiveness to industry needs and economic development commitments.

Through the unified state plan, the CCWD establishes the strategic vision and direction for education and workforce development in the state. Agencies and programs that administer education and workforce programs will align their programmatic strategies to that of the CCWD and unified state plan. This unified direction ensures that state federal, and non-profit workforce programs are all working toward a common goal and encourages collaboration and resource leveraging.

Abundance of Programs and Activities

The inventory of programs in preceding pages shows that workforce development, education, and training programs are plentiful in South Carolina. Additionally, these programs are accessible across the continuum from secondary education through career and are aligned to serve the state's most vulnerable citizens.

Willingness to Partner and Collaborate

While there are still opportunities to strengthen partner alignment, there is a strong willingness among partners to collaborate to develop a more customer-focused, outcome-driven workforce system. Several of the activities identified above are examples and outcomes of collaboration.

Weaknesses

Identifying weaknesses is important but addressing them with a strategic approach is vital to overcoming them to ensure a more robust and effective workforce system. Each weakness below is being addressed by one or more objectives and corresponding strategies of the Combined Plan.

Program Alignment and Coordination

While there is an abundance of programs in the state, there is always an opportunity for greater alignment, coordination of services, and resource leveraging to create a workforce system that is more accessible and effective. Strategies like implementation of an integrated case management system, cross-partner staff training and development, and strategic outreach to employers, support alignment and coordination.

Access to Services

Many South Carolinians, especially those in rural areas, struggle to access employment and training services. Rural communities with limited broadband service have difficulty pursuing employment opportunities, education and training, entrepreneurship, and healthcare. Additionally, jobseekers can lack digital literacy skills to effectively use the resources on hand. Other employment barriers, such as access to transportation, childcare, broadband, and affordable housing, impact South Carolina's workforce. While most workforce programs offer supportive services that address aspects of these barriers, there is a need for a more innovative, proactive, and collaborative approach to providing employment services and support. Strategies such as increasing access to digital literacy education and training, increasing awareness of resources to mitigate obstacles to employment, and implementing a multifaceted rural outreach strategy will help to improve overall access to workforce, education, and training activities.

C. State Workforce Development Capacity

South Carolina is positioned to continue providing high-quality workforce development programs and activities that prepare jobseekers for high-demand, high-wage careers. The focus on partnership, collaboration, and innovation will better align programs and resources, creating a more customer-centered workforce delivery system. Centralized governance of the workforce system and development of a state strategic plan for education and workforce development will help to direct program efforts and resources in support of the overarching state vision.

The capacity to deliver workforce, education, and training activities has only improved over the last several years. In addition to at least one comprehensive SC Works center in each local workforce area, the delivery system also includes more than 200 Connection Points, a Virtual Engagement Center that supports virtual job fairs and hiring events, and the SC Works Career Coach and other mobile units managed by local workforce areas and partner programs. Through these centers and connection points, individuals and businesses can access resources and services offered by WIOA core programs and other one-stop programs like the Trade Adjustment Assistance program, Jobs for Veterans State Grant program, and the SNAP Employment & Training program, which is co-located in all SC Works comprehensive centers. Center staff is available to assist with filing a claim for UI benefits and to provide reemployment assistance. Jobseekers and businesses can also access employment services remotely using SC

Works Online Services (SCWOS), and individuals can manage their UI benefits through the MyBenefits portal.

To help eliminate some transportation barriers for many adult learners, adult education and literacy activities are delivered through 51 Adult Education Programs (47 school-district programs, which includes the Palmetto Unified School District of SC, and four community-based organizations) covering more than 150 physical locations. The adult education and literacy activities include South Carolina High School Diploma and High School Equivalency study and completion for out of school youth 17 to 21 years old, and adults 22 and above for all 79 school districts. Moreover, to support high school equivalency preparation, there are multiple GED Tests centers in every workforce area. Industry-recognized credential career pathway development and Integrated Education and Training collaboration with the SC Technical College System and other post-secondary training providers, College and Career Navigation (Global Career Development Facilitator) wrap-around services, Northstar Digital Literacy training, WIN Courseware, WIN Academic testing, WIN soft skills assessment, workforce preparation activities, and Skills Upgrade classes are all part of adult education literacy activities. Skills Upgrade classes are offered to individuals who already have a high school diploma or a higher education level and need to improve math, reading, English, writing, or digital literacy skills.

Adult Education teachers are trained educators who are required to hold and maintain valid SC teacher licenses. Programs offer flexible schedules to meet the demanding schedules of individuals seeking services. Through Workplace Literacy, Adult Education seeks to serve employers directly by providing customized academic and workforce preparation instruction as determined by specific employer needs. These services can be delivered on-site at an employer's location or off-site at the Adult Education program site.

SCVRD has 31 area offices and 25 job readiness training centers across the state. Through a team approach, SCVRD staff work to prepare consumers for employment opportunities within their local labor market, as well as develop relationships with business and industry to individually match consumers with employment opportunities that fit their strengths, abilities, capabilities, and skill sets. Comprehensive programs, including occupational therapy and physical therapy services, rehabilitation engineering, and a residential alcohol and drug recovery center further expand the capacity of SCVRD to meet the individualized needs of eligible individuals with disabilities.

SCCB has nine area offices across the state through which vocational rehabilitation services for the blind are delivered. SCCB staff work to prepare consumers for employment opportunities within their local labor market, as well as develop relationships with business and industry to individually match consumers with employment opportunities that fit their unique strengths, skills, abilities, capabilities, and informed choice. Through the SCCB Training Center, consumers learn adjustment to blindness skills such as Braille Literacy, Orientation and Mobility Skills, and Daily Living Skills that support employment. SCCB works in partnership with South Carolina's K-12 and higher education systems to enable individuals who are blind or visually impaired to obtain the education and training necessary for employment.

There are several education and training opportunities available to jobseekers through the technical college system and private providers. The SC Technical College System has a network of 16 technical colleges serving the 46 counties. Many of these colleges have satellite campuses, making them accessible to jobseekers in rural communities, and offer online and non-traditional formats to reach those who cannot participate in the traditional classroom experience.

B. STATE STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the State's strategic vision and goals for developing its workforce and meeting employer needs in order to support economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. This must include—

1. VISION

Describe the State's strategic vision for its workforce development system.

2. GOALS

Describe the goals for achieving this vision based on the analysis in (a) above of the State's economic conditions, workforce, and workforce development activities. This must include—

(A) Goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including preparing youth and individuals with barriers to employment[9] and other populations.[10]

(B) Goals for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers.

3. PERFORMANCE GOALS

Using the tables provided within each Core Program section, include the State's expected levels of performance relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA. (This Strategic Planning element only applies to core programs.)

4. ASSESSMENT

Describe how the State will assess the overall effectiveness of the workforce development system in the State in relation to the strategic vision and goals stated above in sections (b)(1), (2), and (3) and how it will use the results of this assessment, which may include evaluation findings, and other feedback to make continuous or quality improvements.

1. Vision

The vision for South Carolina's education and workforce system is to *achieve and sustain South Carolina's workforce potential.*

The vision for South Carolina's education and workforce system is clearly articulated in the Statewide Education and Workforce Development Act. The Act expanded the Coordinating Council for Workforce Development (CCWD) to include additional public and private workforce development stakeholders, identified specific ways to optimize our state's workforce, and designated the SC Department of Employment and Workforce Executive Director as its chair. The Act aims to eliminate duplication, improve efficiency, and achieve a more coordinated workforce and education pipeline. The legislation is designed to maximize the opportunity for

[9] Individuals with barriers to employment include displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 35-14); individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals.

[10] Veterans, unemployed workers, and youth and any other populations identified by the State.

citizens by meeting the immediate and future needs of specialized industry workforce demand of South Carolina businesses.

The Act requires the CCWD to develop a statewide strategic plan for education and workforce. The plan approved by the CCWD in June of 2024 incorporates the vision and mission as articulated in the Act and outlines goals and strategies covering three main areas: awareness, skills, and obstacles, with the idea being that all South Carolinians benefit from a more coordinated system that allows individuals to move seamlessly through education and career pathways. To ensure that the public workforce system is in alignment and supportive of the state's overarching vision and goals, the WIOA State Plan also incorporates the vision statement set forth in the Act and outlines goals and strategies that will help to achieve those in the South Carolina state plan.

2. Goals

Original State Plan –Approved June 2024

To move towards this vision, the State identified four primary goals/objectives:

Objective 1: Develop and create an effective customer-driven workforce system through alignment of programs and policies, the use of leading-edge technology, and high-quality staff.

Objective 2: Prepare job seekers for high-wage, high-growth, high-demand, and high-mobility (4H) occupations through relevant training and skills acquisition, and match job seekers to open employer positions.

Objective 3: Improve the education and workforce infrastructure network to decrease obstacles to work to improve recruitment and retention of workers, which is necessary to maintain economic development competitiveness.

Objective 4: Create alignment between the workforce development system and the states agencies and organizations directing implementation of the IIJA, IRA, and CHIPS and Science Act funding.

Modification and Alignment with America's Talent Strategy

While the goals/objectives listed above embrace the core essence, vision, and direction described in America's Talent Strategy, this modification adopts the five pillars outlined in the Talent Strategy: Building the Workforce for the Golden Age, aligns existing strategies to each of the pillars, and identifies new strategies, to more clearly demonstrate the State's intent to be a leader in transforming the nation's workforce system. The pillars are provided below:

- **Pillar I:** Industry-Driven Strategies: Building reliable talent pipelines through a workforce system led by industry and aligned with American's economic priorities.
- **Pillar II:** Worker Mobility: Bringing more Americans into the labor force and helping them advance, including through the innovative use of technology and labor market data.
- **Pillar III:** Integrated Systems: Replacing a fragmented web of duplicative programs with a streamlined, coordinated system that delivers unified workforce services.
- **Pillar IV:** Accountability: Ensuring federally funded workforce programs deliver measurable results by linking investments to outcomes and enforcing performance discipline.
- **Pillar V:** Flexibility and Innovation: Creating new models of workforce innovation built to match the speed and scale of AI-driven economic transformation.

(A) Goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including preparing youth and individuals with barriers to employment and other populations.

Pillars II and III focus primarily on streamlining and simplifying program intake processes, using integration capabilities, supporting initiatives that address barriers to training enrollment, program consolidation, and streamlining program administration. South Carolina will use the following strategies to support Pillars II and III:

- Implement a case management system that integrates data across the WIOA Core Programs.
- Develop and implement cross-partner staff training to enhance service delivery to jobseekers.
- Increase the percentage of participants that obtain high-value credentials.
- Increase access to credentials that validate attainment of essential skills including soft skills and digital literacy skills.
- Increase awareness of resources to mitigate obstacles to employment.
- Implement a multifaceted outreach strategy to rural communities to ensure that individuals living in rural areas have access to employment and training resources.

(B) Goals for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers.

Pillar I focuses on engaging employers in the development of industry-driven training strategies and investing in training programs that lead to employment outcomes. South Carolina will use the following related strategies to advance this pillar:

Improve strategic outreach and service delivery to employers to effectively match jobseekers with employers.

In support of this strategy, State Plan partners anticipate executing the following activities:

- Joint guidance (across State Plan partners) to the workforce system on effective delivery of employer services, including the utilization of data, such as InformSC, to identify new operations or expansions.
- Guidance on employer survey methods and questions.
- Utilization of a statistically relevant survey to gauge employer needs.
- Continued utilization of local Integrated Business Services Teams.
- Growth and expansion of industry-led sector partnerships.
- Improved data sharing between partners to facilitate referrals and co-enrollment of participants to ensure the availability of all services to prepare for employment.
- Leveraging resources for allowable activities such as on-the-job training.

3. Performance Goals

Expected levels of performance for the WIOA Core Programs can be found in the table within each Core Program section of the plan.

4. Assessment

State Plan partners have adopted the following measures for assessing system effectiveness:

- The WIOA Primary Indicators of Performance assess employment, earnings, credential attainment, skill gains, and effectiveness in serving employers. These indicators apply to all the WIOA Core Programs and measure effectiveness of program services.
- The State-established SC Works Certification Standards evaluate local SC Works centers and the SC Works delivery system for effectiveness, including customer satisfaction, physical and programmatic accessibility, and continuous improvement. LWDBs are required to certify SC Works centers at least once every three years. The six core programs and the combined partner programs of TANF, SNAP E&T, TAA, and JVSG are part of the certification process, a key assessment tool of system effectiveness.
- SC Works centers are required to collect customer feedback from jobseekers and employers and report the number of surveys collected and the overall satisfaction rate to the state each year. The satisfaction rate measures jobseeker and employer satisfaction with the services received and the outcome of such services. Feedback is used to continuously improve the SC Works system.
- Labor and employment statistics like the number of people employed, labor force participation, and the unemployment rate will give an indication of whether workforce programs are helping more people access employment.

System effectiveness is assessed annually using the WIOA primary indicators of performance, SC Works Center Certification Standards, customer satisfaction ratings, and labor and employment statistics. Performance results are reported to the State Workforce Board and included in the state's WIOA Annual Report. Assessment results are used to support the development and provision of technical assistance, opportunities for collaboration, and resource investments. Failed measures or system feedback communicate the need for technical assistance in the form of policy development and guidance to local workforce development boards or specific programs based on the indicated need and the pervasiveness of the issues. New partnerships or deeper collaboration with core and partner programs is a strategy commonly used to support or develop initiatives to answer areas of deficiency. Additionally, resources are allocated and aligned to address specific areas of need.

C. STATE STRATEGY

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the State's strategies to achieve its strategic vision and goals. These strategies must take into account the State's economic, workforce, and workforce development, education and training activities and analysis provided in Section (a) above. Include discussion of specific strategies to address the needs of populations provided in Section (a).

1. DESCRIBE THE STRATEGIES THE STATE WILL IMPLEMENT, INCLUDING INDUSTRY OR SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS RELATED TO IN-DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS AND CAREER PATHWAYS, AS REQUIRED BY WIOA SECTION 101(D)(3)(B), (D)."CAREER PATHWAY" IS DEFINED AT WIOA SECTION 3(7) AND INCLUDES REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP. "IN-DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTOR OR OCCUPATION" IS DEFINED AT WIOA SECTION 3(23)

South Carolina will implement the following strategies to support the vision and objectives of the state workforce system:

- **Pillar I:** Industry-Driven Strategies: Building reliable talent pipelines through a workforce system led by industry and aligned with America's economic priorities.

    - Increase access to credentials that validate attainment of essential skills including soft skills and digital literacy skills.
    - Improve strategic outreach and service delivery to employers to effectively match jobseekers with employers.
- **Pillar II:** Worker Mobility: Bringing more Americans into the labor force and helping them advance, including through the innovative use of technology and labor market data.
    - Implement a case management system that integrates data across the WIOA Core Partner programs.
    - Increase awareness of resources to mitigate obstacles to employment.
    - Implement a multifaceted outreach strategy to rural communities to ensure that individuals living in these areas have access to employment and training resources.
- **Pillar III:** Integrated Systems: Replacing a fragmented web of duplicative programs with a streamlined, coordinated system that delivers unified workforce services.
    - Develop and implement cross-partner staff training to enhance service delivery to jobseekers and employers.
- **Pillar IV:** Accountability: Ensuring federally funded workforce programs deliver measurable results by linking investments to outcomes and enforcing performance discipline.
    - Increase percentage of participants that obtain high-value credentials.
- **Pillar V:** Flexibility and Innovation: Creating new models of workforce innovation built to match the speed and scale of AI-driven economic transformation.
    - Leverage existing WIOA flexibilities through the evaluation and submission of waiver requests.
    - Utilize WIOA Governor's Reserve Funding to support AI literacy and training programs.

Strategies to Support Industry Sector Partnerships and Career Pathways, including Registered Apprenticeship Programs

Sector partnerships are a core component of the state's strategy for serving employers. To improve strategic outreach and service delivery to employers to effectively match jobseekers to employers, DEW will encourage the continued utilization of industry-led sector partnerships as a tool for partners to collectively identify the needs of employers within the industry and region and to respond with coordinated and strategic solutions. Continued utilization will be encouraged in three ways: discretionary funding, policy, and technical assistance:

- DEW provided discretionary funding to local workforce boards to launch new partnerships or reinvigorate existing partnerships. The funding for these activities remained in effect through the first year of State Plan implementation. WIOA core program partners are included on the regional teams that support these industry-led partnerships.
- DEW developed guidance to the workforce system on regional strategies including industry-led sector partnerships, education and training partnerships, expanded access to service delivery, and innovative funding mechanisms. See *Regionalism Strategies*, https://scworks.org/sites/scworks/files/2024-07/Regionalism%20Strategies%20-%202024%207%208.pdf. Additional guidance will be provided in Program Year 2025, through a business services policy.
- Regional Senior Business Service Consultants provide support and assistance to sector partnerships on an "as needed" basis.

While DEW has encouraged local workforce boards to convene sector partnerships, as required by WIOA, the State has also observed, encouraged, and supported partnerships convened by non-WIOA partner entities like the Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce, where WIOA and other WIOA core programs are partners, but not the convening entity. Additionally, different models have emerged such as the Next Gen model and the US Department of Commerce Talent Pipeline model.

Education and workforce development almost always emerge as top issues that industry-led partnerships want to tackle. Typically, the discussion centers around critical demand occupations and the skills, credentials, and training required for entry into the occupations. The vision is for jobseekers, students, parents, counselors, etc., to have access to educational tools and career pathways that help them make informed decisions about educational programs and pathways to employment. The Coordinating Council for Workforce Development (CCWD) is leading the effort to develop education and career pathway tools as a requirement of the Statewide Education and Workforce Development Act. The development of education and career pathway tools begins with the completion of a labor supply-gap analysis and the identification of priority occupations. For each of the occupations, additional effort will be given to identifying skills, education and training programs, and pathways from entry-level to more advanced positions. Employers and industry representatives will offer input and feedback. Once these tools are developed, they will be made available to education and workforce partners and the public through an education and workforce portal.

RAPs are an important pathway for individuals who need an "earn and learn" strategy, such as individuals with barriers to employment, where employment can help to remove or mitigate these barriers. Employer and industry representatives are critical in the development of Registered Apprenticeship opportunities. Apprenticeship Carolina™, a division of the SC Technical College System, works to ensure all employers have access to the information and technical assistance they need to create demand-driven RAPs. Apprenticeship consultants are available to guide companies through the registered apprenticeship development process from initial information to full recognition in the national Registered Apprenticeship System. Apprenticeship Carolina™ has successfully secured funding from the USDOL to expand youth and adult apprenticeships in the state across all industries. The supply-gap analysis and priority occupations will inform the types of Registered Apprenticeships that are needed in the state. SC Works partners work closely with Apprenticeship Carolina™, referring interested employers and improving access to Registered Apprenticeships for jobseekers. The State has identified several areas of opportunity to improve access to RAPs:

- Support increased collaboration between LWDAs and local technical colleges to support common or shared priorities.
- Increase awareness of available funding to support RAPs to inform how LWDAs and technical colleges can leverage and braid funding to support increased access to RAPs.
- Create referral processes from Apprenticeship Carolina™ to SC Works and vice versa to ensure that jobseekers and employers receive the full benefit of services available to support creation, implementation, and access to RAP opportunities.
- Identify and use a common job board for RAPs to improve awareness of opportunities, openings, and application processes.

2. DESCRIBE THE STRATEGIES THE STATE WILL USE TO ALIGN THE CORE PROGRAMS, ANY COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN, REQUIRED AND OPTIONAL ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS, AND ANY OTHER RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO THE STATE TO ACHIEVE FULLY INTEGRATED CUSTOMER SERVICES CONSISTENT WITH THE

STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS DESCRIBED ABOVE. ALSO DESCRIBE STRATEGIES TO STRENGTHEN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES IN REGARD TO WEAKNESSES IDENTIFIED IN SECTION II(A)(2)

While partnership and collaboration at the state and local levels are stronger than ever, more steps can be taken to align workforce development programs and strengthen activities for the benefit of both employers and jobseekers. Alignment across programs was identified as an area that warrants continuous improvement by partner programs in the activities analysis. All the strategies discussed in this plan support alignment across programs, resulting in a fully integrated workforce system by:

- creating the framework for common intake, co-enrollment, and effective referrals, which the workforce system has tried for many years to incorporate into its service strategy.
- ensuring that workforce professionals have the knowledge and awareness of other programs and resources they can leverage to support job seekers and employers.
- encouraging coordination and alignment in the delivery of employer services.
- innovating the workforce system by leverage existing WIOA flexibilities through the evaluation and submission of waiver requests.

III. OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an Operational Planning Elements section that supports the State's strategy and the system-wide vision described in Section II(c) above. Unless otherwise noted, all Operational Planning Elements apply to Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan as well as to core programs. This section must include—

A. STATE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include–

1. STATE BOARD FUNCTIONS

Describe how the State board will implement its functions under section 101(d) of WIOA (i.e., provide a description of Board operational structures and decision-making processes to ensure such functions are carried out).

Consistent with the functions of the SWDB as outlined in WIOA sec. 101(d), the SWDB provides direction to the South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce (DEW) regarding administration of WIOA Title I and the public workforce system. In support of the priorities identified and co-created by state plan partners, the WIOA State Plan serves as a blueprint for the SWDB to execute its role through policy development, program alignment, and strategic investments.

The functions of the SWDB are delegated to four standing committees:

- **The Executive Committee**: the "management" arm ensures that deliverables are in line with the Governor's vision for workforce development.
- **The Board Development Committee**: the "administrative" arm ensures that the Board is prepared to govern the state' workforce system.
- **The SC Works Management Committee**: the "operations" arm ensures effective and consistent service delivery.

- **The Committee on Workforce Innovation**: the "innovation" arm encourages the identification and expansion of promising practices that drive increased effectiveness and efficiencies in serving job seekers and employers.

The Board and each standing committee meet quarterly. Additional meetings, committee planning calls, and work sessions are scheduled as needed. Key stakeholders and workforce partners are invited and encouraged to attend quarterly SWDB meetings. Partners are routinely included on agendas to highlight promising practices and partner contributions to the workforce system. The SWDB convenes stakeholders and partners through ad hoc councils, work groups, or taskforces to address specific priorities and action items.

2. IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE STRATEGY

Describe how the lead State agency with responsibility for the administration of each core program or a Combined Plan partner program included in this plan will implement the State's Strategies identified in Section II(c). above. This must include a description of—

A. CORE PROGRAM ACTIVITIES TO IMPLEMENT THE STATE'S STRATEGY

Describe the activities the entities carrying out the respective core programs will fund to implement the State's strategies. Also, describe how such activities will be aligned across the core programs and Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan and among the entities administering the programs, including using co-enrollment and other strategies, as appropriate.

Pillar I: Industry-Driven Strategies: Building reliable talent pipelines through a workforce system led by industry and aligned with American's economic priorities.

Increase access to credentials that validate attainment of essential skills including soft skills and digital literacy skills.

In support of this strategy, State Plan partners improved communication and coordination with the Office of Regulatory Staff (ORS) Digital Opportunity Department – the agency responsible for implementing the state's Digital Equity Plan. ORS presented the Digital Equity Plan and anticipated funding opportunities to SC Works partners and staff.

Additionally, State Plan partners will provide digital literacy instruction and assessments to certify that individuals have core digital literacy competencies for life and the workplace. Existing instructional tools include, but are not limited to, Northstar Digital Literacy and WIN Learning Digital Literacy Courseware and Assessment. WIN Learning Courseware and Assessments are available through numerous partner locations across the state.

All partners will evaluate current digital literacy offerings and consider the adoption of WIN Learning's Digital Literacy Credential, funding for which is provided by the South Carolina legislature and the State Workforce Board, where no other offerings exist. Partners that have existing offerings, such as Title II's Northstar product, may continue utilization.

Improve strategic outreach and service delivery to employers to effectively match job seekers with employers.

Identifying employer needs is the starting point to effective service delivery. The State will provide comprehensive guidance on customer satisfaction, requiring the utilization of state-specific survey questions for jobseekers and employers. Feedback from employers will inform service delivery models and continuous improvement efforts. Additionally, there is consideration for developing a statistically relevant survey to gather information from

employers about pain points and how the workforce system can help. Results of the survey will inform employer's top concerns related to recruiting, hiring, and retaining employees. This activity is consistent with WIOA requirements as well as the national benchmark measures of the SCSEP program.

Local workforce areas will continue to utilize Integrated Business Services Teams (IBSTs) to coordinate outreach and service delivery to employers. Additionally, local workforce boards are revitalizing existing industry-led sector partnerships and establishing new partnerships as a strategy to identify and address employer needs collaboratively. These efforts are ongoing and continue to support the State's strategy for engaging employers. To provide guidance on the delivery of local business services, State Partners will develop joint guidance on the expectations of strategic planning, utilizing data to anticipate employer needs, IBSTs, the utilization of sector partnerships as part of the local business service strategy, and carrying out delivery in a coordinated approach to reduce duplication of efforts.

To improve the seamless integration of Title II programs with other partners, Adult Education will provide College and Career Navigators at all One-Stop Comprehensive sites to assist with connecting job seekers with education and employment opportunities.

All partners will continue participating in local IBSTs. Additionally, partners will contribute to the development of business services and customer satisfaction guidance to the SC Works system. DEW will lead the development of a statistically relevant employer survey.

Pillar II: Worker Mobility: Bringing more Americans into the labor force and helping them advance, including through the innovative use of technology and labor market data.

Implement a case management system that integrates data across the WIOA core partner programs.

WIOA envisions a customer-centered workforce system that provides efficient access to a variety of education and training programs and services using a one-stop model. The Act encourages the use of common intake applications, co-enrollment strategies, and referral procedures that make it easier for individuals to access the network of partners and services represented in the one-stop. Partners are also encouraged to share data for service delivery and reporting purposes. Currently, SC Works partners use individual systems to manage customer service delivery, data, and reporting. The lack of connectivity between the systems diminishes our ability to create a seamless customer experience.

A responsibility of the SWDB is to 'develop strategies for aligning technology and data systems across SC Works partner programs.' To this end, in January 2023, the SWDB allocated funding to conduct a feasibility study and recommend options for achieving a more integrated system. The study was completed November 2023, and the recommendation is to procure a case management system to be used by Title I, III, Trade Adjustment Assistance, and the Jobs for Veterans State Grant program that will integrate with the case management systems used for Title II and IV, at a minimum. The State is expected to have an active procurement in the first year of the State Plan and to implement the new system within the four-year planning period. Procurement of the case management system will be led by the Department of Employment and Workforce.

Increase awareness of resources to mitigate obstacles to employment.

South Carolina has a vast network of partners that provide resources and services to mitigate or remove obstacles to employment. Some partners operate statewide while others have specific geographic service areas in the state. The State is actively building an inventory of education,

training, and supportive services that will be publicly available to help facilitate connection to these resources. Through efforts like the SC Works Partner Series and the SC Works Learning Management System, partners will inform and educate workforce system professionals about the availability of these resources. Leveraging dedicated staff, the State will catalog promising practices and models for removing obstacles, primarily related to transportation, childcare, and housing, but not limited to these.

All partners will provide information about resources and services to mitigate obstacles to employment to support the development of an inventory. DEW will lead the development, distribution, and management of the inventory. All partners will also participate in staff training and encourage their center staff to participate.

Implement a multifaceted outreach strategy to rural communities to ensure that individuals living in these areas have access to employment and training resources.

Rural communities face several barriers that tend to stifle economic development as well as job opportunities. Partners define "rural" differently based on their program mandates; however, all the programs covered in this State Plan are focused on ensuring service delivery in communities with the greatest need for access to employment and training services. Across programs, the state is utilizing strategies like targeted resource allocations to High Poverty Index Areas, deployment of mobile units to serve rural communities, and a focus on local and regional collaboration.

In support of collaboration, DEW will hire and deploy a Rural Outreach Team that will work in Tier III and IV communities helping to expand access to employment and training resources for jobseekers and employers. The team will utilize a regional approach to foster collaboration with rural stakeholders through implementation of regional collaboration meetings, events, small business outreach, and the promotion of virtual services. The Rural Outreach Team will engage state and local partners to collect information on existing communication channels in rural areas, research and identify churches that have a significant presence and influence in each rural community, and to research and identify community organizations that are involved in rural development. This team will work closely with business services staff and staff dedicated to identifying strategies for removing barriers to work and improving labor force participation overall.

Pillar III: Integrated Systems: Replacing a fragmented web of duplicative programs with a streamlined, coordinated system that delivers unified workforce services.

Develop and implement cross-partner staff training to enhance service delivery to job seekers and businesses.

Over the last several years, State Plan partners have collaborated on the development of SC Works Frontline Staff Training, which included the creation of SC Works 101 – an online course that provided an overview of the SC Works system and the partners and partner roles within the system. More than 900 SC Works staff completed SC Works 101 between its launch in 2019 through 2023. The partners also launched WIOA Partner Series – a series of lunch and learns spotlighting SC Works partners and their program offerings. Starting in PY'24, the State will relaunch the Partner Series with new content that aligns with and supports the strategic direction as outlined in the State Plan. Additionally, the State will complete initial implementation of the SC Works Learning Management System, which will support the development and delivery of timely and relevant training material. DEW will administer the learning management system but will seek input and feedback from State Plan partners on the

training needs of their staff and the content desired for creation and distribution to SC Works staff.

Pillar IV: Accountability: Ensuring federally funded workforce programs deliver measurable results by linking investments to outcomes and enforcing performance discipline.

Increase the percentage of participants that obtain high-value credentials.

As required by the Statewide Education and Workforce Development Act, South Carolina will complete a supply-gap analysis of critical occupations requiring postsecondary credentials to evaluate and compare the demand for labor and the available labor supply to fill projected job openings. The analysis will provide information to workforce programs as well as the public, increasing awareness about jobs for which there is an oversupply of labor and those where additional workers are needed. Presumably, this information will be used by workforce programs to facilitate strategic alignment of training investments, including recruitment of training providers to the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), and career guidance and coaching into career pathways that are projected to have an undersupply of labor. For current and emerging jobseekers, or career changers, this information will help to identify potential pathways.

The supply-gap analysis will inform the definition of "high-value credentials" at the state and local levels. To support alignment and ensure that program participants have access to these credentials, South Carolina will make an intentional effort to expand training offerings to include those that lead to or result in high-value credentials. In collaboration with Title II, another opportunity the State may consider is creating additional Integrated Education and Training Pathways that strategically align with occupations that are changing or emerging. These pathways provide clear opportunities for individuals earning their high school credential to simultaneously earn a high-value occupational skills credential.

All State Plan partners will review and evaluate their current education and training investments and providers to ensure alignment, where appropriate and allowable, within program requirements with the findings of the supply-gap analysis and the list of high-value credentials. Additionally, Title II may consider the development of new IET pathways.

Pillar V: Flexibility and Innovation: Creating new models of workforce innovation built to match the speed and scale of AI-driven economic transformation.

Leverage existing WIOA flexibilities through the evaluation and submission of waiver requests.

USDOL Employment and Training Administration (ETA) Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) No. 05-25, Maximizing Innovation in Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Programs, directs states to review current policies and practices to maximize opportunities provided by WIOA to modernize and innovate operations and optimize service delivery of workforce development programs. ETA encourages states to use waivers of statutory requirements to support innovative solutions for building a skilled workforce in alignment with America's Talent Strategy.

As the State Workforce Agency (SWA), DEW will lead review of current policies and practices and gather input from state and local partners, including Combined State Plan partners, on flexibilities that would enhance and modernization South Carolina's workforce system and support achievement of State education and workforce goals. As appropriate, DEW will develop

waiver requests with guidance from ETA. Additionally, DEW will communicate and reinforce existing flexibilities in the legislation that do not require a waiver.

Utilize WIOA Governor's Reserve Funding to support Artificial Intelligence (AI) literacy and training programs.

Combined State Plan partners, in coordination with education and training partners, will identify and evaluate AI literacy and training programs and inform workforce boards and programs about the availability of such programs. Eligible programs may be added to the State's ETPL, and DEW will seek to align utilization of Governor's Reserve funding to support high quality AI training programs.

Additionally, partners will research and understand AI-related occupations, skills requirements, and the impact of AI on existing occupations, including any new occupations that may result from changing technology.

B. ALIGNMENT WITH ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THE PLAN

Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be aligned with programs and activities provided by required one-stop partners and other optional one-stop partners and activities provided under employment, training (including Registered Apprenticeships), education (including career and technical education), human services and other programs not covered by the plan, as appropriate, assuring coordination of, and avoiding duplication among these activities.

It is critical that partner programs beyond those covered by the plan are engaged in the implementation of these strategies early on to ensure alignment and to avoid duplication of activities. The following are examples of efforts that have and/or will be made in support of alignment and coordination:

Formation of and/or Participation in Work Groups and Committees

Work groups are created to work on specific priorities and action items. Some work groups are ad hoc, and others are created by statute, executive order, or other more formal rules. Work groups provide an opportunity for partners to be engaged in implementation of the state strategy. Participation in these work groups provides an opportunity for the workforce system to share and receive information, ensure that the system's efforts are coordinated with other partner initiatives and programs, identify potential linkages, and seek feedback and input. Where appropriate, State Plan partners will utilize the work group format to advance the strategies and activities discussed in this plan.

Participation in Partner Board and Commission Meetings

Partner staff often participate in partner board and commission meetings. This listening and learning opportunity allows staff to hear current and planned partner activities and serves as a starting point for collaboration. Sometimes, partners may be invited to share or present, which furthers the conversation and opportunities for alignment.

Direct Outreach to Partners

Often, direct outreach to a partner is the most effective and appropriate tool. To advance the SC Works Partner Series initiative, for example, we anticipate engaging SC Works center staff to identify areas of interest and then contacting state and local partners that can develop and deliver related content. In the past, we have partnered with entities like South Carolina First Steps to provide an overview of their First Five portal and application platform.

Local and Regional Collaboration

Key partners are engaged through local and regional strategic planning efforts as well as ongoing partner meetings and events. Communication, coordination, and collaboration will be a primary method of aligning activities with programs and activities provided by other partners.

Coordination with Registered Apprenticeship Programs

Apprenticeship Carolina™, a division of the SC Technical College System, works to ensure all employers have access to the information and technical assistance they need to create demand-driven RAPs. Apprenticeship consultants are available to guide companies through the registered apprenticeship development process from initial information to full recognition in the national Registered Apprenticeship System. Apprenticeship Carolina™ has successfully secured funding from the USDOL to expand youth and adult apprenticeships in the state across all industries. Our current focus is on identifying the funding available to support participation in Registered Apprenticeship activities, creating examples of how State Plan partner funding can be leveraged to support participants in registered apprenticeship activities, and developing a cross-referral process for job seekers and employers interested in apprenticeship opportunities. Partnership and coordination with Apprenticeship Carolina™ is critical to the state's ability to incorporate RAPs into its strategy for service design and delivery.

C. COORDINATION, ALIGNMENT AND PROVISION OF SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS

Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and required and optional one-stop partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality, customer-centered services, including supportive services (e.g., transportation), to individuals, including those populations identified in section II(a)(1)(B), and individuals in remote areas. The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

Several strategies have been identified that will support coordination and alignment across partners to services individuals, including individuals with barriers to employment, who are low income, and those living in remote or rural areas:

Implement a case management system that integrates data across the WIOA core partner programs.

Implementation of an integrated case management system is by far the most impactful step toward coordination and alignment among WIOA Core Program partners. This system will allow for a single point of entry for job seekers into the SC Works system. It will support common intake, co-enrollment, and referrals among partners, removing the need for individuals to go through multiple eligibility interviews or to provide the same information several times to different program staff. This seamless approach embodies the one-stop model and customer-centered design that is a hallmark of WIOA and is critically important to serving individuals with barriers. For example, individuals that lack transportation do not have the means to visit multiple offices or to make several trips to a center just to complete eligibility and enrollment. Similarly, individuals living in remote or rural areas may be able to get to a center once and need to be able to complete all activities while there. By removing an access barrier, this system will improve service delivery to jobseekers.

Coupled with a system that integrates data across programs, the state has also increased its utilization of virtual services and Connection Points. The Virtual Engagement Center (VEC) is an online access point to SC Works. It is staffed by a live consultant that can address individual, and employer needs remotely and make referrals to a nearby center for those that need more

intense service. Title III staff work the VEC, but it is available to all programs. For implementation of these strategies, the State will continue promotion of Connection Points as a network of partners and a physical location where job seekers can access unemployment and employment services.

Develop and implement cross-partner staff training to enhance service delivery to job seekers and businesses.

Staff training increases knowledge and awareness of information critical to support effective case management and referrals to other partners. Through webinars and other training modalities, SC Works staff learn about partner agencies and organizations, programs, and how to make effective referrals. Historically, SC Works staff training has included training on the SC Works customer, including customers with disabilities and individuals who are low income, partner programs that provide services to individuals disabilities or TANF and SNAP programs that assist individuals who are low income, how to make effective referrals to those programs, and accessibility of materials including fliers and other written documents.

Increase awareness of resources to mitigate obstacles to employment.

It is through this awareness of resources that staff can more effectively match jobseekers to the education, training, and supportive services and coordinate service delivery with relevant partners. An integrated case management system is integral to the system's ability to effectively match jobseekers to the services they need. It is the technology that supports co-enrollment and referral strategies, which is why State Plan partners view it as the most impactful strategy for coordinating service delivery.

Varying supportive services are available through both SNAP E&T and TANF programs. Both programs have supportive services designed to temporarily meet the needs of participants while they are engaged in employment or training activities. SNAP E&T and TANF provide a transportation stipend, for example, to participating individuals fully engaged in their individualized employment plan. Other available support services include, but are not limited to, childcare assistance, rental assistance, and funding for work-related expenses.

Implement a multifaceted outreach strategy to rural and underserved communities to outreach strategy to ensure that individuals living in these rural areas of South Carolina have access to employment and training resources.

Partners define "rural" differently based on their program mandates; however, all the programs covered in this State Plan are focused on ensuring service delivery in communities with the greatest need for access to employment and training services. Across programs, the state is utilizing strategies like targeted resource allocations to High Poverty Index Areas, deployment of mobile units to serve rural and underserved communities, and a focus on local and regional collaboration.

D. COORDINATION, ALIGNMENT AND PROVISION OF SERVICES TO EMPLOYERS

Describe how the entities carrying out the respective core programs, any Combined State Plan partner program included in this plan, required and optional one-stop partner programs will coordinate activities and resources to provide comprehensive, high-quality services to employers to meet their current and projected workforce needs and to achieve the goals of industry or sector partners in the state. The activities described shall conform to the statutory requirements of each program.

Each of the State Plan partners provides employer services, ranging from recruitment and hiring services, training services, and layoff and closure assistance. The top services provided to employers across programs include assessing, screening, and matching candidates, posting jobs, hosting career fairs, and hiring events, training, access to labor market information, and strategic planning and industry partnership activities. A survey of SC Chamber of Commerce members showed that employers do not want to be contacted by multiple programs or organizations to offer services. This confirms what we have always known – that a "one-knock approach" or coordination of services is important to ensure that employers receive the most benefit from the workforce system, but in a way that does not cause undue burden to the employer. To avoid duplication and achievement alignment and coordination of activities, State Plan partners currently:

- Participate in local Integrated Business Services Teams. These teams meet regularly to discuss and plan outreach to employers.
- Coordinate job fairs and hiring events throughout the state. Job fairs and hiring events hosted by SC Works provide an opportunity for all partners to be included in the planning and execution of the event. Joint job fairs avoid each program hosting a separate event and inviting the same employers.
- Participate in sector partnership activities. State Plan partners are invited to participate as members of the public partner team that supports regional industry-led partnerships. Participation allows all program partners to hear the same feedback and input from employers and to collaboratively develop industry solutions.

Planned activities to implement strategic outreach to employers include:

- Joint guidance (across State Plan partners) to the workforce system on effective delivery of employer services, including the utilization of data, such as InformSC, to identify new operations or expansions
- Guidance on employer survey methods and questions.
- Utilization of a statistically relevant survey to gauge employer needs.
- Continued utilization of local Integrated Business Services Teams.
- Growth and expansion of industry-led sector partnerships.
- Improved data sharing between partners to facilitate referrals and co-enrollment of participants to ensure the availability of all services to prepare for employment.
- Leveraging resources for allowable activities such as on-the-job training.

E. PARTNER ENGAGEMENT WITH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND OTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROVIDERS.

Describe how the State's Strategies will engage the State's community colleges, adult education providers, area career and technical education schools, providers on the State's eligible training provider list, and other education and training providers, as partners in the workforce development system to create a job-driven education and training system. WIOA section 102(b)(2)(B)(iv). Include how the State's strategies will enable the State to leverage other Federal, State, and local investments to enhance access to workforce development programs at these institutions.

South Carolina has a robust network of educational institutions at the secondary and postsecondary levels. These institutions are vital partners in the workforce development ecosystem, providing education and training programs that result in or lead to high-value credentials, putting individuals on family-sustaining career pathways. The state's vision for workforce development cannot be accomplished without the engagement and partnership of all education and training providers. As discussed below, there are two primary strategies that will engage the state's educational institutions:

Increase the percentage of participants that obtain high-value credentials.

The SC Technical College System consists of 16 technical colleges. Every community college is a 30-minute drive or less to the communities they serve. Technical colleges offer more than 1,000 programs including 78 degrees, 28 diplomas, and nearly 1,000 certificate programs. Technical college programs are included on the state's ETPL and State Plan partners promote and refer clients and participants to education and training programs offered at the state's 16 technical colleges. Students who attend a South Carolina technical college can use Lottery Tuition Assistance (LTA), SC WIN Scholarships, Pell Grants, and discretionary grants like the apprenticeship expansion funding awarded to South Carolina, to pursue their academic goals. Programs leverage these resources to increase access to education, training, and supportive services and in turn, support credential attainment.

The ETPL is compiled to provide WIOA Title I participants with a full array of training programs designed to meet their needs for employment or a career pathway. The South Carolina ETPL is housed on the Palmetto Academic and Training hub (PATh) website. The ETPL is a comprehensive list of approved training providers and programs of training. Each training provider and program of training must be approved by at least one local workforce development area. Only approved training providers and programs listed on the ETPL are eligible to receive WIOA Title I training funds through the use of Individual Training Accounts (ITA's). WIOA emphasizes informed customer choice, job-driven training, provider performance, and continuous improvement. The ETPL is utilized by WIOA participants, training providers, SC Works staff, and program partners when researching career and training options. Other programs are not required to use the ETPL; however, they utilize contracted or otherwise approved training providers to provide relevant training to their participants or clients.

The completion of secondary diplomas is a critical part of the workforce development process. Adult Education Programs provide the opportunity for out-of-school youth 17 to 21 years old and adult learners 22 and older to earn the South Carolina High School Diploma or the High School Equivalency Diploma. Most post-secondary education or training programs require the secondary diploma as a prerequisite to start industry recognized occupational training, or work towards an associate or bachelor's degree. Adult Education Programs continue to develop and implement Integrated Education and Training (IET) Career Pathways that are developed with the SC Technical College System and other workforce training providers to meet local and regional workforce area needs. Concurrently with IET classes, adult education programs offer flexible and tailored instruction to accommodate the diverse needs of adult learners, including those seeking to earn high school diplomas or GEDs, improve basic literacy and numeracy skills, learn English as a second language, or acquire job-specific skills required for occupational credentials. Pathways that are aligned to high-value credentials, yielding both a high school credential and an occupational credential. There is an opportunity to align these IET programs to occupations that are changing or emerging because of recent federal investments.

With the administration's strong emphasis on job growth in advanced manufacturing, energy, and technology, including artificial intelligence, and quantum computing, the state has

recognized the need to strategically recruit and diversify its training providers to include a mix of public and private training providers. Aligning approved programs to the training needs for jobs in these target sectors will ensure that participants can earn high-value credentials that are relevant in today's marketplace.

Increase access to credentials that validate attainment of essential skills including soft skills and digital literacy skills.

In support of this strategy, State Plan partners improved communication and coordination with the Office of Regulatory Staff (ORS) Digital Opportunity Department – the agency responsible for implementing the state's Digital Equity Plan. ORS presented the Digital Equity Plan and anticipated funding opportunities to SC Works partners and staff.

Additionally, State Plan partners will provide digital literacy instruction and assessments to certify that individuals have core digital literacy competencies for life and the workplace. Existing instructional tools include, but are not limited to, Northstar Digital Literacy and WIN Learning Digital Literacy Courseware and Assessment. WIN Learning Courseware and Assessments are available through numerous partner locations across the state.

All partners will evaluate current digital literacy offerings and consider the adoption of WIN Learning's Digital Literacy Credential, funding for which is provided by the South Carolina legislature and the State Workforce Board, where no other offerings exist. Partners that have existing offerings, such as Title II's Northstar product, may continue utilization.

General comment on participant coenrollment.

Workforce system alignment is a primary goal of the SC WIOA State Plan. State Plan partners seek opportunities to remove or mitigate duplication of services and leverage the funding and resources available through other programs as appropriate. Enrolling a client or participant in a program for which scholarship funding is available, or where the cost can be covered by another program, allows the partner to invest their dollars in wrap-around and supportive services that are needed to remove obstacles to program participation and often employment. Where applicable, partners seek to co-enroll participants to leverage funding and program services.

F. IMPROVING ACCESS TO POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIALS

Describe how the State's strategies will improve access to activities leading to recognized postsecondary credentials, including Registered Apprenticeship certificates. This includes credentials that are industry-recognized certificates, licenses, or certifications, and that are portable and stackable.

Improving access to postsecondary credentials requires a multifaceted approach, including (1) awareness about high-growth, high-demand occupations and education, training, and credentials required for entry into these critical occupations; (2) education and training activities that result in skills and high-value credentials, and (3) removal or mitigation of obstacles that prevent individuals from accessing credentials, including financial, transportation, and childcare obstacles. The following strategy supports awareness about priority occupations and high-value credentials:

Increase the percentage of participants that obtain high-value credentials.

As required by the Statewide Education and Workforce Development Act, South Carolina will complete a supply-gap analysis of critical occupations requiring postsecondary credentials to evaluate and compare the demand for labor and the available labor supply to fill projected job

openings. The analysis will provide information to workforce programs as well as the public, increasing awareness about jobs for which there is an oversupply of labor and those where additional workers are needed. Another important action is to define the credentials of value for South Carolina both at the state and local/regional levels. The supply-gap analysis will inform this definition.

The supply-gap analysis and list of high-value credentials will be used by workforce programs, including the WIOA core programs, to facilitate strategic alignment of training investments, recruitment of training providers, and career guidance and coaching into career pathways that are projected to have an undersupply of labor.

- Strategic alignment of training investments ensures that workforce programs utilize available funding to provide education and training opportunities to clients and participants that lead to recognized credentials and employment. Using data to align resources mitigates the risk that funding is used on programs that do not result in credentials or employment.
- Recruitment of training providers enables access to education and training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials for in-demand occupations. For Title I, training providers must be approved on the ETPL in order to receive WIOA funding. While other WIOA core programs do not have the same ETPL requirement, they each have similar policies regarding training providers or training contracts. The workforce system's ability to strategically partner with training providers is critical to our ability to provide clients and participants with access to the right credentials.
- Career guidance and coaching ensures that clients and participants are informed about jobs with critical shortages, the credentials required to enter those occupations, and resources available to help access the required credentials.

For current and emerging jobseekers, or career changers, this information will help to identify potential career pathways, including Registered Apprenticeship opportunities. Registered Apprenticeships are an important career pathway, and completion certificates are a recognized postsecondary credential of value. Core programs will increase the utilization of Registered Apprenticeships and Registered Apprenticeship completion certificates through the following strategies: partnership and collaboration with Apprenticeship Carolina™, the state's leader in apprenticeship development and technical assistance, promoting awareness of apprenticeship opportunities, allocation of Governor's Reserve funds for allowable costs related to participation in a Registered Apprenticeship activity, and sharing promising models.

- Partnership and Collaboration - Apprenticeship Carolina™, a division of the SC Technical College System, leads South Carolina in RAPs. Apprenticeship Carolina™ works to ensure all employers have access to the information and technical assistance they need to create demand-driven RAPs. Apprenticeship consultants are available to guide companies through the registered apprenticeship development process from initial information to full recognition in the national Registered Apprenticeship System. Apprenticeship Carolina™ has successfully secured funding from the USDOL to expand youth and adult apprenticeships in the state across all industries. Our current focus is on identifying the funding available to support participation in registered apprenticeship activities, creating examples of how other funding can be leveraged to support participants in registered apprenticeship activities, and developing a cross-referral process for job seekers and employers interested in apprenticeship opportunities. Partnership and coordination with Apprenticeship Carolina™ is critical to the state's ability to incorporate RAPs into its strategy for service design and delivery.

- Awareness - Individuals have many avenues to view RAP opportunities in South Carolina including, ApprenticeshipUSA, Apprenticeship Explorer, and the Palmetto Academic and Training Hub (PATh). PATh is used to make program information about registered apprenticeships available to the public while serving as a tool for Title I case managers to inform participants of the career and training options available through Title I funding. An ongoing goal for DEW is to expand the network of Title I training providers to ensure inclusion of programs across industries – this includes RAP opportunities. Although all WIOA programs are not required to use PATh, PATh is publicly available and can be viewed by anyone.
- Funding - Program funding is commonly used to cover the On-the-Job Training (OJT) and Related Training Instruction (RTI) portions of a RAP and supportive services. There are several active examples of WIOA core programs coordinating with employers and non-employer sponsors to support apprenticeship activity. Leveraging program funding for RAP activity ensures that participants are given the opportunity. There is an opportunity to highlight these models so that all programs are aware of them and to provide technical assistance for developing similar models where none exist. Written guidance and virtual learning opportunities may be used to share information about promising and effective models.

The following strategies support removal or mitigation of obstacles to employment.

- **Increase access to credentials that validate attainment of essential skills including soft skills and digital literacy skills.**
- **Increase awareness of resources to mitigate obstacle to employment.**
- **Implement a multifaceted outreach strategy to rural communities to outreach strategy to ensure that individuals living in these rural areas of South Carolina have access to employment and training resources.**

For implementation of these strategies, State Plan partners will provide digital literacy instruction and assessments to certify that individuals have core digital literacy competencies for life and the workplace. The ability to use the Internet opens a number of training, education, and even employment opportunities for individuals and communities and removes the information access barrier. Other actions to implement these strategies include relaunching the SC Works Partner Series, compiling, and distributing promising practices for mitigating or removing obstacles, updating the SC Works Partner Resource page, and implementing a rural strategy including local and regional coordination, utilization of mobile units, and targeted resource investments.

The cost of education and training is a known barrier for many individuals, and there are a wealth of resources in South Carolina to mitigate financial barriers. First and foremost are the resources available through each of the State Plan partners – generally, these programs have funding to cover the cost of education or training for eligible participants. Funding may be limited to certain programs of study or may only be available after all other funds are exhausted. Additionally, the SC Technical College System has several scholarship opportunities that make it more affordable for an individual to receive short-term training in specific areas. An important strategy for removing obstacles is to leverage resources, which requires strong partnerships and coordination with partners that are not included in the state plan.

G. COORDINATING WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Describe how the activities identified in (A) will be coordinated with economic development entities, strategies, and activities in the State.

South Carolina has experienced record economic development in the past several years. The Department of Commerce, the State's economic development agency, announced a new strategic direction in January 2024, which will encompass life sciences, company headquarters, and advanced energy. These new areas are in addition to existing priorities such as manufacturing. Commerce provides information about new economic development projects, investments, and job creation through its site InformSC. The workforce system utilizes this information to anticipate and prepare for job development.

readySC™, the economic development arm of the SC Technical College System, is a major contributor to the State's economic development efforts. In partnership with the 16 technical and community colleges, readySC™ provides customized recruiting and training solutions for new and expanding companies. readySC™ provides a listing of active projects to DEW to ensure alignment in the delivery of services to employers. Additionally, DEW assists readySC™ with recruitment outreach through job fairs and hiring events and other activities to help build awareness and interest in readySC™ projects.

There are two primary strategies that will require coordination with economic development and an overarching strategy to ensure ongoing communication, collaboration, and coordination of economic development and workforce activity:

Improve strategic outreach and service delivery to employers to effectively match job seekers with employers.

To support implementation of this strategy, DEW will continue to foster collaboration with economic development agencies through a collaborative that formed in 2023. The collaborative currently includes DEW, Commerce, and the SC Manufacturing Extension Partnership (SCMEP). It was created after passage of the Statewide Education and Workforce Development Act, which transferred workforce development responsibilities from the Department of Commerce to DEW. The primary focus of the collaborative is to ensure continuation of workforce development services to existing industry. In addition, the collaborative has deepened the cooperation and engagement of the partners involved and resulted in the development of common tools and procedures to improve coordination of service delivery to employers. While the current makeup of the collaborative lends itself to a manufacturing focus, there is opportunity to expand the collaborative or model the collaborative in other sectors like healthcare, which has ongoing needs for workforce recruitment.

Industry-driven sector partnerships as well as Integrated Business Services Teams will continue to support coordination and collaboration with economic development and other partners.

Increase the percentage of participants that obtain high-value credentials.

Economic development strategies will inform the types of credentials that are considered "high-value" and the number of credentials needed in the marketplace to support job creation. Agencies like Commerce and readySC™ are usually first to learn of the types of jobs an employer will create when they establish operations in the State. Routine and regular communication, especially on new projects, is critical to understanding whether the existing workforce has the appropriate credentials or if new skills need to be developed.

B. STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a description of the State operating systems and policies that will support the implementation of the State strategy described in section **II Strategic Elements**. This includes—

1. THE STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS THAT WILL SUPPORT COORDINATED IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE STRATEGIES (E.G., LABOR MARKET INFORMATION SYSTEMS, DATA SYSTEMS, COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS, CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS, JOB BANKS, ETC.).

Labor Market Information (LMI)

DEW's Labor Market Information Division (LMI) collects, analyzes, and disseminates various data in cooperation with the US Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). Data includes employment statistics, job forecasts, wages, demographics, and other labor market information to help public and private organizations, researchers, and others better understand today's complex workforce. LMI helps monitor and forecast national, statewide, and local economic trends, helping employers and job seekers make more informed career, education, and economic development decisions.

LMI's website provides real-time, monthly, quarterly, and annual information and publications. The following are a sampling of what is available on the LMI website:

- Community Profiles: A comprehensive report with economic, demographic, industry, occupation, and education statistics for the state, counties, metropolitan, and workforce areas.
- Trends: A monthly publication with employment and unemployment analyses for the state, counties, and Metropolitan Statistical Areas.
- Regional Economic Overview Reports: Comprehensive quarterly reviews of population demographics, industry and occupational employment, and other labor force statistics.
- LMI Insights: Easily absorbed short-form articles on key education, economic development, or labor market statistics.

Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth, TAA, JVSG, and Wagner-Peyser Programs

The information management system for WIOA Adult, DW, and Youth programs, TAA, and Wagner-Peyser is the web-based SC Works Online Services (SCWOS) system developed by Geographic Solutions, Inc. The WIOA service delivery and case management components of the system have been deployed in South Carolina since October of 2002 and have been continuously upgraded and enhanced.

The Trade Adjustment Assistance module was added in 2008 to track participants in that program. This portion of the system includes a module that tracks Trade Readjustment Allowance (TRA) payments and is updated daily. Wagner-Peyser, the state job matching system that integrates employer and jobseeker data, was implemented in 2010 and has enhanced DEW's ability to track services across programs.

SCWOS interfaces with Southeastern Consortium Unemployment Benefits Integration (SCUBI), which enables automatic registration of UI claimants into the system if accounts do not already exist and produces files that provide information about UI claimants. South Carolina requires that all UI claimants conduct at least two of their work searches through SCWOS every week. To facilitate this verification, an electronic file is provided to UI each week. Electronic files are also provided that allow UI to verify whether a claimant should be waived from the mandatory work search requirements due to participation in training. SCWOS's integration and interfaces help support the coordinated implementation of state strategies and training and employment activities.

The Customer Relationship Management (CRM) module was added to SCWOS in 2015 to manage and track employer engagement efforts. This module allows employers to be added to the system directly by designated staff while maintaining the security and integrity of the system. Additionally, spidered or unregistered employers can be converted to Marketing Leads using a mini-registration that collects only enough data for logging and tracking purposes. This mini-registration allows all employer engagement efforts to be documented regardless of registration status.

For traffic counts and services received, we implemented a Greeter Kiosk, which allows jobseekers and center visitors to check in to the system for one or multiple reasons. These visit reasons are then reportable through SCWOS and roll-up to state-level visit reasons. A state instruction was issued at the end of October 2021, requiring statewide use of the Kiosk at all comprehensive and affiliate centers to be effective in April 2022. This instructs local workforce development areas to standardize visit reasons, allowing for normalized traffic counts and services received to be reported.

The Advanced Individual Fund Tracking (AIFT) module was added in July of 2021 to document participant-funded activities. The purpose of this implementation was to provide local workforce areas and state staff with real-time obligation and expenditure data.

The use of the SC Works system statewide also allows for local workforce areas to partner with state staff to submit required reporting data for other WIOA and non-WIOA grant activities. An H-1B Rural Healthcare grant was awarded to two of the State's local workforce boards and the use of SCWOS has allowed for the LWDAs involved to concentrate on serving customers and less on federal reporting. Additionally, a CAREER Dislocated Worker Grant was awarded to a consortium of five LWDAs. Limited state involvement was necessary to ensure the consortium was able to report federal performance because of the shared case management system.

SCWOS is the system used for the state's job bank and labor exchange activities. Employers can post jobs, search resumes, and find qualified staff for their operations. Jobseekers can search for jobs added in the system as well as from hundreds of spidered in job boards and company websites, post resumes, and get access to a wide variety of educational and workforce information.

SCWOS integrates case management and labor exchange services with required performance reporting file generation and oversight through on-demand reports. The vendor works directly with their state clients to ensure that any changes made to federal reporting guidelines are adhered to within the system and subsequently through the Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL) file generation. System-generated reports, as well as our state-developed ad hoc reports, are used to evaluate the efficiency, performance, and effectiveness of the workforce system. Reports also help staff identify data issues within the system so that data may be corrected in a timely fashion.

South Carolina has made quarterly and annual submissions through the Workforce Integrated Performance System (WIPS) since it became available in October 2016. Data specific to LWDAs within our state was first made available in WIPS for the period ending December 31, 2017, and has been disseminated to each LWDA since. Additionally, the state requests wage records each quarter from the Unemployment Insurance Division of the South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce. The state has data- sharing agreements with State Wage Interchange System (SWIS), and South Carolina began using this system in January 2020

Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program

The SC Department of Education (SCDE) Office of Career Readiness - Adult Education (OCR-AE) uses the vendor- provided web-based software application Literacy, Adult, and Community Education System (LACES). This system provides day-to-day academic activity documentation, compiles, and produces all reports required by the National Reporting System (NRS) and allows the state office to track performance outcomes.

Local providers eligible for adult education use a state standardized registration/intake form to collect student information upon entry into the local program. A virtual intake/registration platform was employed in 2021 which allows students to register for programs electronically.

All data entry occurs at the local provider level. Instructional hours are added on a monthly basis to document student attendance. Goals and Cohorts are entered and marked "met" as required by federal guidance. The OCR-AE has access to all local program information through LACES, and each local program has the capability to run the federally required reports on only their program. At the state level, the OCR-AE can run these reports on all eligible providers. Additionally, the OCR-AE collects reports such as the WIOA Indicator Six (i6R) employer reports that documents local adult education providers interaction with local employers, and the College and Career Navigation report that collects all career and wrap-around services delivered to students.

The OCR-AE has access to each local program's database as well as a combined database for state reporting. While Adult Education produces aggregate reports for a number of partners and other entities, the OCR-AE and local providers are the only entities that have access rights to this web-based application. OCR-AE conducts data matches with DSS, DEW, the Technical College System, and with the Commission on Higher Education.

Rehabilitation Programs

SC Vocational Rehabilitation Department

The Case Management System (CMS) for SCVRD is an internally developed set of programs that provide agency staff with real-time access to client information to support integrated service delivery and data reporting based on the agency's unique needs. Client information is collected and reported to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) and includes the quarterly Case Service Report (RSA-911) and the quarterly Vocational Rehabilitation Financial Report (RSA-17). Within CMS are time management tools that facilitate casework and ensure compliance with policy. These tools include automatic tasks, appointments, and compliance notifications that are recorded in the consumer record. CMS also provides data for customized reports available in real-time. An accuracy rate identifies trends and needed areas for improvement at the caseload, area, region, and state level. Additionally, the system allows for quality assurance to take place online locally and at the SCVRD state office.

CMS includes the Universal Business System components that allow the agency to support employers by preparing, identifying, and referring consumers with disabilities for their hiring needs. In addition, these components assist employers receiving federal contracts to meet their hiring and reporting requirements under Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (Section 503), at 41 CFR Part 60-741. This enhances outreach to local business communities, provides greater detail in planning and reporting business outreach, manages the assignment of SCVRD points of contact to local businesses, and augments the SCVRD's ability to identify trends and respond effectively to employer needs.

Since the 2020 WIOA State Plan was approved, SCVRD has developed new capacities for gaining insights and managing performance data. For example, area analyses are prepared, which include comparisons of area-level data on career-ready consumer vocational objectives (by SOC code) and job openings for those occupations in their counties from the LMI published by DEW. Managers are able to see if the labor supply on their caseloads aligns with employer demand, or if there are gaps in meeting business needs for particular occupations, or oversupply of workers for jobs available. Additionally, an employer services dashboard was built to track in real-time the volume, type, and location of employer services delivered by the agency.

SCVRD has also entered into a data-sharing agreement with the SC Department of Education, which will allow for data matches to identify and provide supporting evidence for reporting of secondary students served by the agency who meet criteria for Measurable Skill Gains and Credential Attainment (i.e., high school diploma).

SC Commission for the Blind

SCCB currently uses the AWARE (Accessible Web-Based Activity and Reporting Environment for Vocational Rehabilitation) VR Case Management System. This system collects and manages case information for all SCCB consumer services programs (Vocational Rehabilitation, Older Blind, Children's Services, Independent Living for the Blind and Prevention of Blindness). Counselors and service providers have the capability of managing cases and training services online with real-time data entry and reporting. Although the standard rehabilitation case flow process is used to organize all data pages, system parameters are adaptable to meet the SCCB business process as needed. The functionalities of AWARE include, but are not limited to, a chronological history of key events of a case, audit logging of critical data, use of multiple caseload or reporting structure search criteria, caseload reports, managed layouts, standardized letters and forms catalog, and caseload activity due reminders.

Regarding data sharing, SCCB shares data with DEW. The purpose of data sharing is to obtain wage data for social security reimbursement and the WIOA primary performance indicators.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

The Department of Social Services utilizes the Participation and Tracking System (PATS) to monitor TANF work program participation and time-limit requirements. PATS provides electronic documentation of the TANF participant's engagement in activities designed to further self-sufficiency. Case management efforts to assist a TANF benefit group and the associated tracking of these efforts are also maintained in PATS.

The Participation and Tracking System (PATS) has existing reporting capabilities to calculate the state's TANF participation. These routine, system-generated reports are reviewed at the state, local workforce development area, county, and individual level to monitor the provision of effective case management services for TANF work program participants. Whenever necessary, ad hoc reports can be generated to retrieve TANF data associated with special initiatives or pilots.

Workforce Consultants who are responsible for assisting TANF recipients with obtaining employment opportunities utilize the SC Works Online Services (SCWOS) system, operated by the Department of Employment and Workforce. These co-located Workforce Consultants have partner access which allows for referrals to listed vacancies, enrolling employers, and jobseeker services.

SNAP Employment and Training Program

In 2019, the Department of Social Services' SNAP Employment & Training (SNAP E&T) program created a secure portal for E&T training providers to obtain eligibility information, a streamlined process for inputting all of the contractual information related to each provider, a modernized tracking system for all participation information, a queue for E&T staff to manage their workload, and the framework for future enhancements to include invoicing, data collection, and ad hoc reporting. This system, the South Carolina Comprehensive Employment and Training System (SCCETS), allows real-time access to client information for both case management staff as well as providers while also maintaining the required data for the SNAP E&T national reporting measures.

SNAP E&T Coordinators, who are co-located in SC Works Centers, utilize the SC Works Online Services (SCWOS) system, operated by the Department of Employment and Workforce. Their partner access allows these SNAP E&T Coordinators to assist job seekers and employers.

2. THE STATE POLICIES THAT WILL SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STATE'S STRATEGIES (FOR EXAMPLE. CO-ENROLLMENT POLICIES AND UNIVERSAL INTAKE PROCESSES WHERE APPROPRIATE). IN ADDITION, PROVIDE THE STATE'S GUIDELINES FOR STATE-ADMINISTERED ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS' CONTRIBUTIONS TO A ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM AND ANY ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE FOR ONE-STOP PARTNER CONTRIBUTIONS.

TAA and WIOA Dislocated Worker Program Co-enrollment Policy

The Department of Labor (DOL) issued a new final rule implementing the Trade Act, effective September 21, 2020. DOL has aligned the Final Rule with WIOA requirements, promoting integrated service delivery for the TAA program within the nation's public workforce system. With the Final Rule, DOL mandates co-enrollment between the TAA program and the WIOA DW program. While the TAA program will pay for all training and related costs and the majority of employment and case management services for eligible participants, trade-affected workers can also benefit from WIOA's supportive services and post-employment follow-up services, which cannot be funded through the TAA program.

A hallmark of WIOA is its emphasis on Integrated Service Delivery across multiple core and partner programs to serve workforce customers better. An integrated workforce system connects workers with the full range of services available in their communities by interweaving partner program resources on behalf of shared customers. Program staff are encouraged, and in some cases required, to co-enroll participants in partner programs to increase participant access to services and thereby increase their likelihood of successfully securing and advancing in employment with family-sustaining wages.

To promote integrated service delivery, TAA program participants who are eligible must be co-enrolled in the WIOA Title I DW program. Most adversely affected workers meet the eligibility criteria of a DW defined at WIOA § 3(15). Participants in the DW program who are eligible for the TAA program but are not currently enrolled in that program must be co-enrolled in the TAA program.

Required Use of SCWOS for Referrals

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) places a strong emphasis on planning across multiple partner programs to ensure alignment and collaboration in service delivery. The SC Works system brings together a series of partner programs and entities responsible for workforce development, education, and other human resources programs to collaborate in the

creation of a seamless customer-focused service delivery network that enhances access to the programs' services. Effective referrals are essential to maximizing resources and aligning critical services for SC Works customers.

A vital responsibility of each SC Works partner is the effective referral of customers to the appropriate partner for services, in a manner that reduces duplication and ensures tracking of referrals to build accountability. Additionally, WIOA strongly encourages the use of an integrated system of case management, using technology to achieve alignment in service delivery that meets customers' needs, including referrals. In order to facilitate such a system, the following programs are required to conduct all customer referrals through SCWOS:

- WIOA Title I
- Wagner-Peyser (WP)
- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)
- Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG)
- Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment Grants (RESEA)

The use of SCWOS for referrals will foster a more streamlined referral system, while further supporting a coordinated delivery of service to SC Works customers. Additionally, electronic referrals via SCWOS can be more easily tracked, including outcomes.

Guidelines for Resource Sharing and Infrastructure Funding

A work group of state partners was established to discuss and better understand the complexities of resource sharing and infrastructure funding of the one-stop delivery system. Guidance was developed and reviewed by the work group that will assist local boards in determining equitable and stable methods of funding infrastructure. The guidance advises local workforce boards that infrastructure and shared services costs should be allocated proportionately among partners unless not permitted due to partners' funding restrictions. Determining the proportionate share attributable to a specific partner program is part of the negotiation process. Partners should first review SC Works Center budgets to determine which costs should be shared. The USDOL-issued One-Stop Comprehensive Financial Management Technical Assistance Guide is referenced as a resource for federally accepted cost-sharing methodologies. Local boards and partners are expected to negotiate in good faith. Costs must be allowable, allocable, and reasonable. Partners may pay for their share of the system through cash payments or fairly evaluated in-kind contributions. The proportionate share methodology and payment mechanisms developed, negotiated, and approved by each partner must be included in the Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA) as part of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to ensure costs are allocated to partners in proportion to the benefit received.

A MOU template, which includes the IFA and related documents, was developed in collaboration with core and other partners at the State level using the two preferred and currently used cost allocation methodologies in SC, Full-time Equivalency (FTE) and Square Footage (SF). The template is designed to give guidance in the development of local area service delivery agreements and to ensure that Local Boards and partners are in compliance with US Department of Labor directives, as well as those of the partners' federal cognizant agencies. Local Boards and partners must utilize the template of their choosing and all attachments when negotiating the MOU to increase consistency among all partners and maximize partner participation in the development and execution of the agreements. Additionally, the template

and attachments must be used as formatted to streamline the signature process, including ease of administration for partners with multiple agreements to review.

MOUs are executed on a three (3)-year cycle, in alignment with the SC Works Certification Standards. To ensure compliance and fiduciary responsibility, all MOUs must be fully executed no later than June 30th of each cycle. Local Boards must ensure all required partners are engaged in a timely manner to allow for the necessary negotiations. To facilitate state partner engagement and participation in the local negotiation process, specific meeting dates are determined and issued to the Local Boards annually by the State. Additionally, Local Boards must report the outcome of negotiations to the State by April 15th in accordance with state policy.

SC Works Center Certification

As required by WIOA, the State has established SC Works Certification Standards to evaluate local SC Works centers and the SC Works delivery system for effectiveness, including customer satisfaction, physical and programmatic accessibility, and continuous improvement. The Standards are divided into Management, Jobseeker, and Business Services standards, including baseline measures for each standard. Included within the standards is the expectation that local areas have a Combined Center Operations and Business Engagement Plan (COBE Plan) and implement a customer feedback system, and that all SC Works center staff complete the identified trainings. LWDBs are required to certify SC Works centers at least once every three years. Centers must receive certification again by June 2028.

SC Works Customer Satisfaction Survey

State Instruction Letter 24-02, SC Works Customer Satisfaction Surveys, provides standardized customer satisfaction survey guidance, including questions that must be used in jobseeker and employer surveys for evaluating customer satisfaction in LWDAs. Local areas are required to submit area-specific customer satisfaction data to the state each year to support the strategic direction of both their LWDB and the SWDB. State staff look for trends and areas of opportunity to address through technical assistance, policy development, and/or resource allocation. LWDBs must perform reviews of their customer satisfaction survey feedback to identify opportunities for continuous improvement and describe their process(es) for developing actionable improvements of the system based on this feedback as required by their COBE Plans. Additionally, local areas are encouraged to review their customer satisfaction surveys annually to see if supplemental questions could achieve more relevant and pertinent feedback for strategic LWDB initiatives.

3. STATE PROGRAM AND STATE BOARD OVERVIEW

A. STATE AGENCY ORGANIZATION

Describe the organization and delivery systems at the State and local levels for the programs covered in the plan, including the organizational structure. Include an organizational chart.

South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce (DEW)

DEW is a cabinet agency and is the state administrative entity for Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs, Title III Wagner-Peyser Program, Trade Adjustment Assistance Program, and Jobs for Veterans State Grant program. The Executive Director and members of the SWDB are appointed by the Governor. The SWDB executes the vision for the state's public workforce development system by setting policy and providing strategic direction.

DEW has four key divisions: Unemployment Insurance, Employment Services, Workforce Development, and Labor Market Information. DEW also houses the Office of Statewide Workforce Development (OSWD). Through these divisions, the agency is responsible for paying unemployment insurance benefits, collecting unemployment taxes, helping people find jobs, matching businesses with qualified candidates, and collecting and disseminating state/federal employment statistics.

Local administration of the WIOA Title I program is delegated to 12 Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDA). Each LWDA also has at least one comprehensive SC Works Center where individuals and businesses can access program services, resources, and activities. Some LWDAs also have affiliate centers, access points, and mobile units making programs and services more readily accessible. DEW provides oversight through financial and programmatic monitoring and technical assistance to ensure compliance and improve the delivery of services.

Figur1 2: DEW Agency Organization Chart

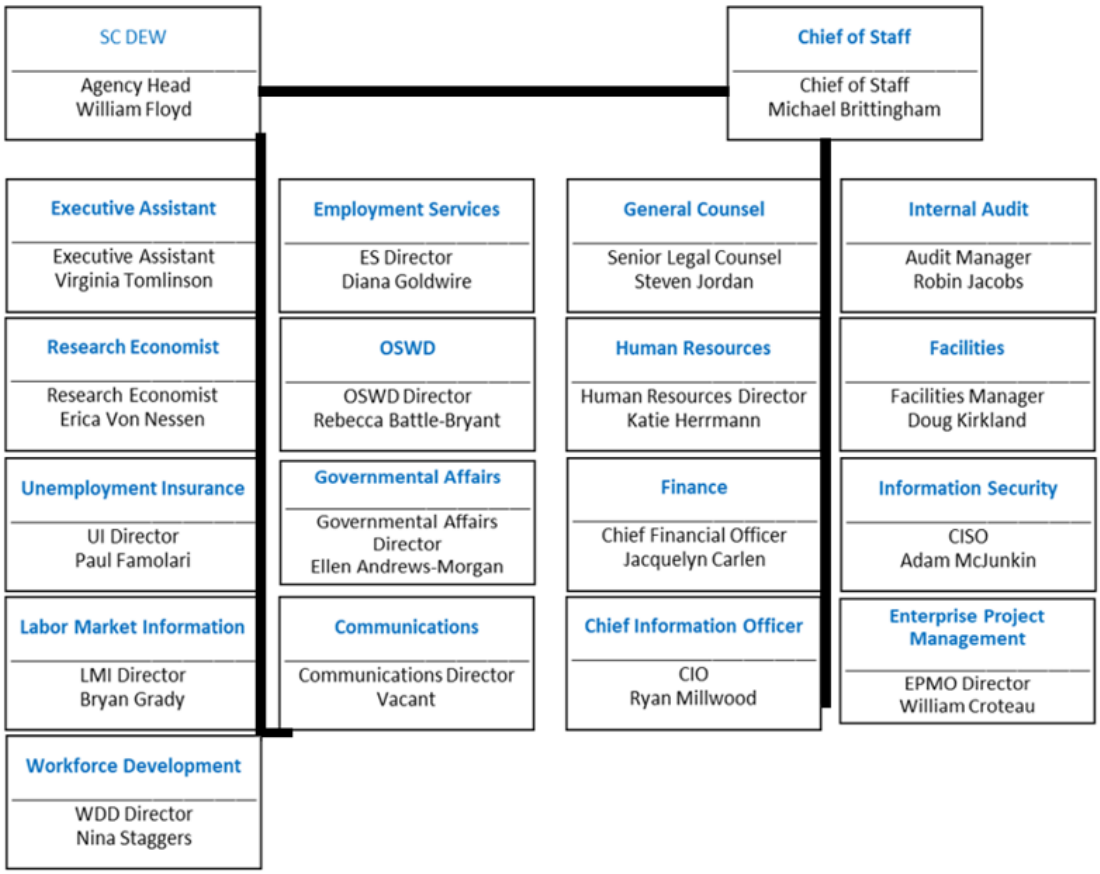


Figure 2: Map of South Carolina Local Workforce Development Areas

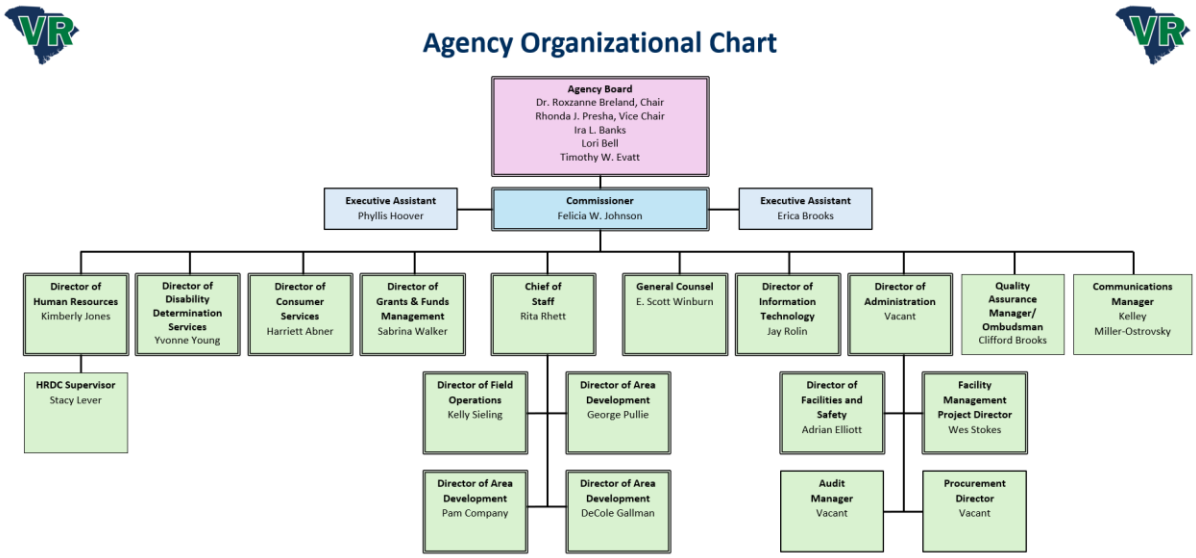
South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department (SCVRD)

The SCVRD board sets policy under which the Vocational Rehabilitation Department operates. Board members are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate, serving seven-year terms.

The agency operates in 24 area offices (plus 7 sub-offices) and 25 job readiness training centers (JRTCs) across the state, through which services are provided to all eligible individuals who desire to enter or maintain competitive, integrated employment. Through a team approach, SCVRD counselors, assessment and career exploration specialists, job readiness training staff, job preparedness instructors, and business development specialists work to prepare consumers for employment opportunities within their local labor market, as well as develop relationships with business and industry to match consumers individually with employment opportunities that fit their strengths, abilities, capabilities, and skillsets. JRTCs are expanding offerings to include more demand-driven and customized occupational/vocational training. Comprehensive programs, including occupational therapy and physical therapy services, rehabilitation engineering, as well as residential alcohol and drug recovery facilities further expand the capacity of SCVRD to meet the needs of eligible individuals with disabilities.

The SCVRD State Office consists of the following Departments: Administration; Business Services; Communications; Consumer Services; Facilities/Safety and Security Management; Field Operations; Finance Operations; Grants and Funds Management; Human Resources; Human Resource Development; Internal Audits, Privacy and Risk Management; Information Technology; Job Readiness Training Center Services; Legal; Policy and Internal Controls; Program Evaluation, Quality Assurance; and Procurement.

Figure 3: SC Vocational Rehabilitation Agency Organization Chart



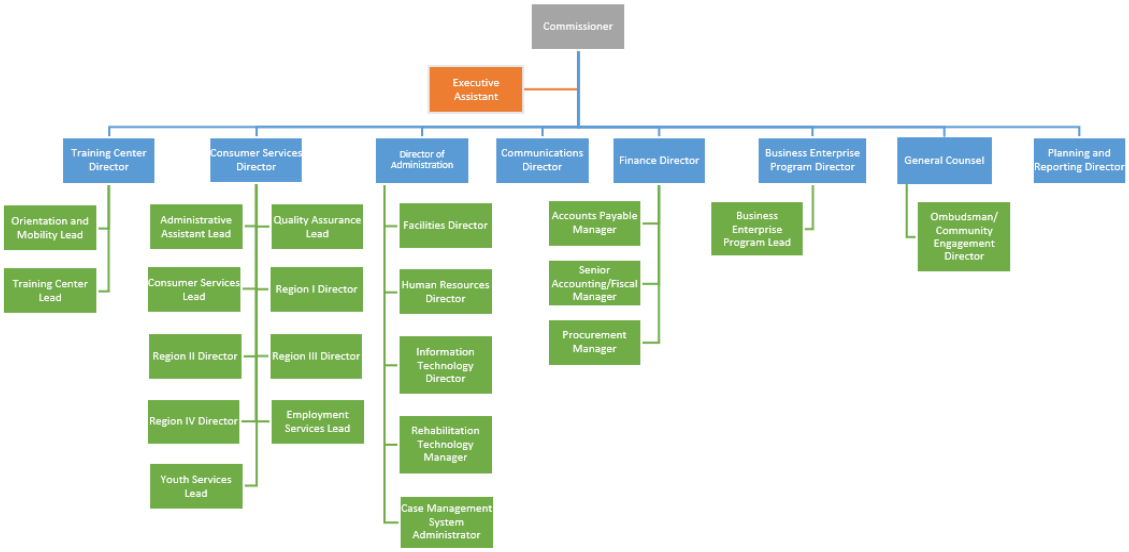
South Carolina Commission for the Blind (SCCB)

The SCCB Board of Commissioners works with the Agency Commissioner and Senior Management Team to set policy, establish goals and strategic plans, and ensure the quality provision of vocational rehabilitation services to blind consumers. Board members are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate, serving four-year terms.

The Commission operates nine local area offices through which services are provided to all eligible individuals who desire to enter or maintain competitive integrated employment. The

SCCB Training Center in Columbia provides comprehensive adjustment to blindness services including personal adjustment to blindness, orientation and mobility skills, daily living skills, Braille literacy skills, and pre-vocational training on the use of Assistive Technology devices. SCCB counselors, Adjustment to Blindness Instructors, Vocational Evaluators, and Employment Consultants work to prepare consumers for employment opportunities within their local labor market. Employment Consultants build relationships with businesses in order to provide talent acquisition and talent retention services. In addition, the Commission manages a state-funded Prevention of Blindness Program, the Older-Blind Program, Low Vision Clinics, and the Business Enterprise Program.

Figure 4: SC Commission for the Blind Organization Chart



SC Department of Education, Office of Career Readiness - Adult Education (OCR-AE)

The South Carolina State Board of Education oversees the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE). The SCDE is responsible for K-12 public education and is under the supervision of the elected State Superintendent of Education. The OCR-AE is

contained within the SCDE under the Division of College, Career, and Military Readiness and is managed by the position of State Director of Adult Education.

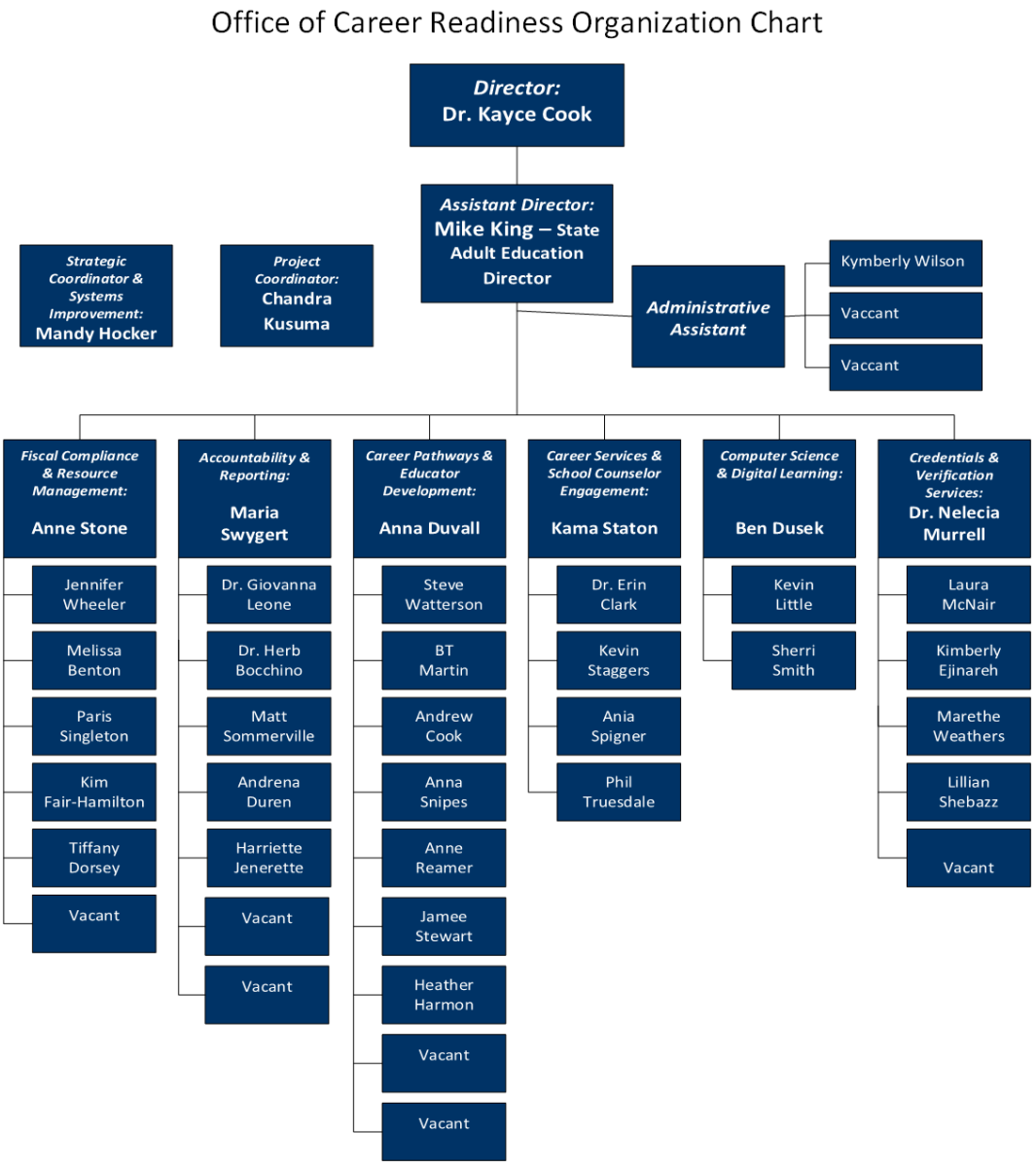
Technical support, professional development, and compliance monitoring are provided by Education Associates within the OCR-AE. There are 79 school districts in South Carolina. Fifty-two Adult Education Programs with more than 150 physical locations provide adult education and literacy activities in all 79 school districts.

Adult education programs are voluntary and afford opportunities for adult learners 17 and older to obtain a high school diploma, GED, a career readiness certificate, participate in English as a second language classes (ESL), and family literacy (FL). Some adults enroll in Skills Upgrade classes to improve their basic literacy and/or numeracy skills. Integrated education and training career pathways can occur concurrently with these options. Additionally, adult learners are provided instruction to prepare for the WIN academic tests and earn a South Carolina Work Ready Credential, and the WIN Soft Skills Credential. Adult education classes are taught by certified teachers and trained volunteers who are overseen by certified teachers. Each adult education program has a program director, instructors, administrative support, a designated

data specialist, a college and career navigator, and key staff to support initiatives offered by the program.

Figure 5: Office of Career Readiness Organization Chart

South Carolina Department of Education – Office of Career Readiness
Division of College, Career, and Military Readiness



SC Department of Social Services

The Department of Social Services (DSS) is a cabinet agency with the State Director appointed by the Governor of South Carolina with the advice and consent of the Senate. The Department has offices in each county and regional offices for adoptions, intensive foster care and clinical services, and child support enforcement.

The Department's mission is to serve South Carolina by promoting the safety, permanency, and well-being of children and vulnerable adults, helping individuals achieve stability and strengthening families.

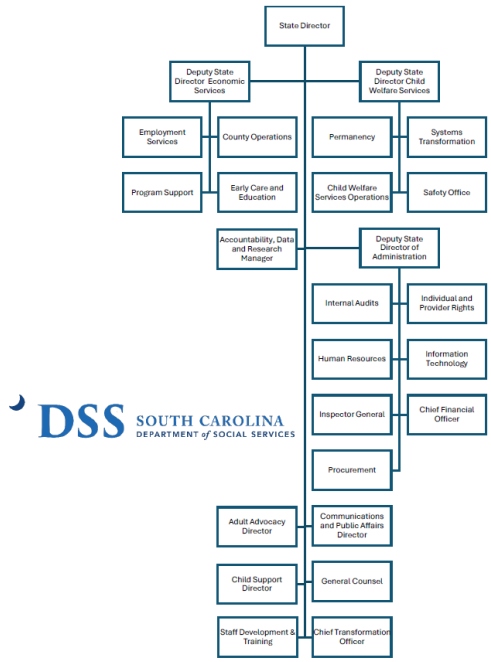
DSS provides protective services for children and vulnerable adults, adoption, and foster care services. It administers federal Title IV-B Child Welfare Services and Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance program. Additionally, the Department is the administrator of the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children. The Department also establishes standards for and licenses childcare providers and residential group homes for children.

Through its Division of Economic Services, DSS administers economic assistance programs including the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, which provides employment and training for people receiving cash assistance. The Department administers food assistance programs in every county in South Carolina. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a federal benefit to assist low-income individuals in purchasing food. Also, a commodities program distributes supplemental food through a network of food banks. Other food programs provide financial assistance for child and adult care providers, homeless shelters, and summer feeding sites for children. The Department also administers the child support enforcement program under federal Title IV-D and other child support services, including fatherhood initiatives.

Under the Economic Services umbrella, the Division of Employment Services offers programs and services to individuals who often have the most qualifying barriers to employment. These programs include:

- The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program provides transportation, childcare assistance, job training, employment activities, and other support services while simultaneously receiving case management and cash assistance. Using a holistic approach, case managers work to promote self-sufficiency for the benefit of the entire family.
- The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training Program provides support services to SNAP recipients in an effort to increase their long-term employability. Support services include childcare, transportation, job retention services, and rent assistance, among others.

Figure 6: SC Department of Social Services Agency Organization Chart

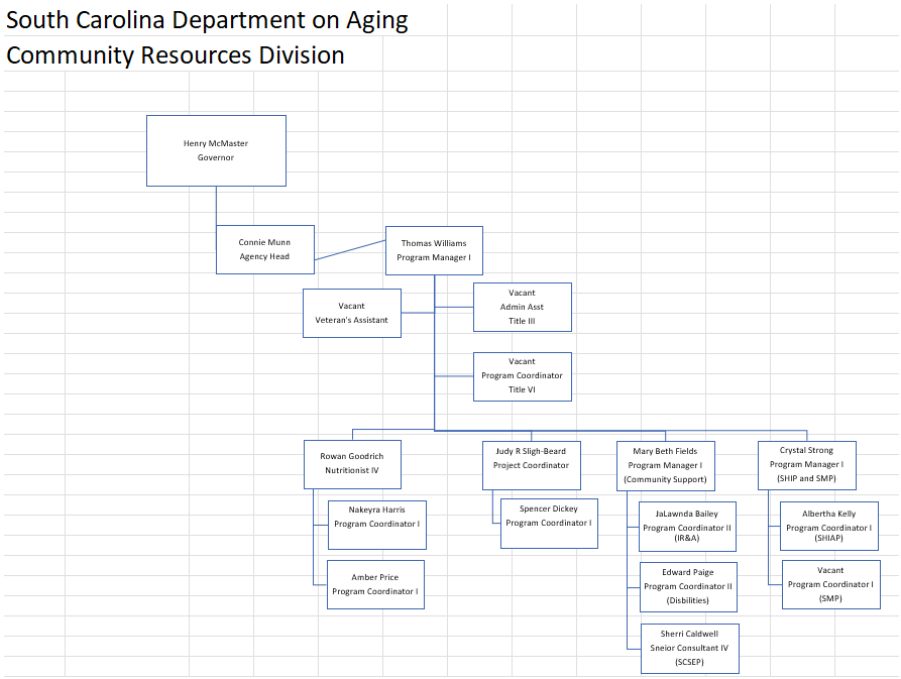


South Carolina Department of Aging

The Department on Aging (SCDOA) is the federally designated State Unit on Aging (SUA) in South Carolina. The Older Americans Act (OAA) gives the Department on Aging (SCDOA) authority to administer aging programs and services in South Carolina. The Department on Aging was established to study, plan, promote, and coordinate a statewide program to meet the present and future needs of aging citizens in South Carolina and to administer all federal programs relating to aging that are not the specific responsibilities of another state agency under the provisions of federal or state law. The Department on Aging is the administrator and steward of the OAA and its funds in South Carolina.

The state is divided into 10 regional Area Agencies on Aging (AAA's) and their contracted service providers. The 10 AAAs and their providers provide core Older American Act services. SCSEP is an Older Americans Act program but is administered by the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) at the US Department of Labor. In South Carolina, there are two SCSEP grantees. The South Carolina Department on Aging serves as the state grantee, and Goodwill Industries International serves as the national grantee. ETA determines which counties are served by each of the grantees. SCSEP serves older adults 55+ who are at 125% of the Federal Poverty level. The goal of South Carolina SCSEP is to provide participants with the training experiences, supportive services, and information needed to improve their lives by becoming economically self-sufficient through gainful employment.

Figure 7: SC Department on Aging Organization Chart



B. STATE BOARD

Provide a description of the State Board activities that will assist State Board members and staff in carrying out State Board functions effectively. Also, provide a membership roster for the State Board consistent with 20 CFR 679.110-120, including members' organizational affiliations and position titles.

I. Membership Roster

Governor

- The Honorable Henry McMaster, SC Office of the Governor, Governor

Legislature

- Mr. Donald G. Chapman, South Carolina House of Representatives, Representative
- Mr. Ross Turner, South Carolina Senate, Senator

Business

- Mr. Thomas Freeland, Door Systems, part of Assa Abloy, Sales Coordinator
- Mr. Cliff Bourke, Jr., Southeastern Freight Lines, Inc., VP of Legal Services
- Mr. Gregory Cannon Clark, Wells Fargo, Senior Vice President
- Ms. Susan Cohen, SC Restaurant and Lodging Association, President and CEO
- Mr. Jay Holloway, OCS Garage Doors & Hurricane Services, Owner
- Ms. Robyn Knox, The HR Business Connect, LLC, CEO
- Ms. Elaine Morgan, Berkeley Chamber of Commerce, CEO
- Mr. Michael W. Sexton, Piedmont Bushings and Insulators, LLC, Woodruff, President

- Dr. Windsor W. Sherrill, Clemson University School of Health Research, Associate VP of Health Research
- Mr. James W. Snead, Cooper Standard, HR Manager
- Mr. Jeremy Stephens, Tidelands Health, Executive VP & Chief Human Resource Office
- Mr. Gregory L. Tinnell, Schaeffler, Senior VP of HR
- Mr. John Uprichard, Find Great People (FGP), CEO
- Ms. Britt Vergnolle, BDV Solutions, Founder

Labor

- Mr. Charles Brave, Jr., International Longshoremen Association, President
- Mr. James “Chris” Hall, SMART Local 399, Business Manager

Community-Based Organization

- Mr. Patrick "Pat" Michaels, Goodwill Industries of the Upstate/Midlands South Carolina, CEO & President
- Mr. Craig J. Currey, Transitions Homeless Center, President & CEO

Government – Core Program

- Ms. Felicia W. Johnson, SC Vocational Rehabilitation Department, Commissioner
- Mr. Mike King, SC Department of Education, State Director of Adult Education/State GED Administrator
- Mr. William H. Floyd, III SC Department of Employment and Workforce, Executive Director
- Ms. Darline Graham, SC Commission for the Blind, Commissioner

Government – Local

- Mr. George Patrick "GP" McLeer, Jr., City of Fountain Inn, Mayor
- Mr. Tyler Servant, Horry County Council, Vice Chair

Other Partners

- Dr. Tim Hardee, SC Technical College System, President

II. Standing Committees

The Board executes its functions through three standing committees:

The purpose of the **Board Development Committee** is to prepare, assist, and equip the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) to govern the state’s public workforce system.be the leading advocate for innovative, coordinated workforce development in South Carolina. Its functions include:

- equipping SWDB members with resources and tools to be leaders and drivers of workforce development;

- providing opportunities for SWDB members to be engaged with workforce efforts and support SWDB initiatives;
- developing and monitoring board-related policies;
- gathering and presenting data for establishment of promising practices for development of board members and overall management of the board; and
- facilitating recognition of workforce development board members.

The purpose of the **SC Works Management Committee** is to build a demand-driven workforce delivery system that equips job seekers with the skills businesses need. Its functions include:

- championing initiatives to make in-person and online services and access to services more user-friendly;
- overseeing the implementation of the SC Works Certification process by the local areas, and monitoring and maintaining the progression of the standards;
- Developing benchmarks and baseline standards to measure and evaluate SC Works system performance;
- identifying training needs (hard, middle, and soft skills) and opportunities for businesses and job seekers and implementing and/or driving efforts to close gaps;
- initiating statewide operational practices to improve service delivery;
- improving communication with local workforce development boards; and
- promoting business engagement with the workforce system.

The purpose of the **Committee on Workforce Innovation** is to strengthen South Carolina's workforce system through technology and strategic innovation that drives increased effectiveness and efficiencies in serving job seekers and employers. Its functions include:

- using data to understand and plan for workforce trends;
- identifying strategies deployed by other states that drive strong employment outcomes for job seekers and employers;
- incentivizing innovation and proven strategies in the SC Works system; and
- providing recommendations to facilitate improved access to and resiliency of the workforce system.

Key state and local stakeholders are routinely invited to participate in ad hoc work groups and taskforces and to attend or present at committee and full board meetings, lending their expertise and feedback to policy development and workforce strategies.

Term Limits

Members of the SWDB serve for a term of years as provided below. Term of service is defined as beginning at the time of appointment and ending upon resignation or removal from the board.

Three-year term:

- State Legislators and Chief Elected Officials

- "Other" Representatives as the Governor may designate

Four-year term:

- Representatives of Business
- Representatives of Labor
- Representatives of Community-Based Organizations

Board members may serve two terms. Their second term will automatically begin at the end of their first term unless the appointing party indicates otherwise. Board members may serve in a hold-over capacity at the end of their second term until the appointing party makes a new appointment, a successor is duly elected, or the board member resigns or is otherwise removed.

Board members may be reappointed for a third (3rd) term after a break in service. A break in service shall be defined as at least 12 consecutive calendar months after resignation or removal. Persons removed from the board are not eligible for reappointment.

The Board Chair serves for a period of time as requested by the Governor after which time he/she may be appointed to the Board as a member according to the term limits provided above.

4. ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF PROGRAMS AND ONE-STOP PROGRAM PARTNERS

A. ASSESSMENT OF CORE AND ONE-STOP PROGRAM PARTNER PROGRAMS.

Describe how the core programs will be assessed each year based on State performance accountability measures described in section 116(b) of WIOA. Describe how other one-stop delivery system partner program services and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan will be assessed each year. This State assessment must include the quality, effectiveness, and improvement of programs broken down by local area or provider. Such state assessments should take into account local and regional planning goals.

WIOA Primary Indicators of Performance

The WIOA Core Programs are assessed each year using the WIOA Primary Indicators of Performance. The WIOA core programs provide data for federal reporting on the common indicators of performance required by section 116(b) of WIOA:

1. Employment in the 2nd quarter after program exit;
2. Education or training, or employment 2nd quarter after program exit (youth);
3. Employment in the 4th quarter after program exit;
4. Education or training, or employment 4th quarter after program exit (youth);
5. Median earnings in the 2nd quarter after program exit;
6. Postsecondary credential attainment during program participation or within 1 year after program exit or secondary school diploma or equivalent;
7. Measurable skill gains; and
8. Effectiveness in serving employers.

The State's expected levels of performance for the WIOA Core Programs are provided in Appendix 1.

Compliance Monitoring and Technical Assistance

The programs included in this plan each have a well-established process for programmatic and financial monitoring to ensure that federal awards are used for authorized purposes in compliance with laws, regulations, and terms and conditions of contracts or grant agreements and that programs are being implemented as intended in an efficient and effective manner. The monitoring process helps identify opportunities for improvement resulting in recommended or required actions, such as technical assistance, including training, policy development, or implementation of promising practices.

Certification Standards

By providing access to programs, activities, and services, SC Works partners contribute to the overall effectiveness of the workforce delivery system. The SC Works Certification Standards, which measure the effectiveness of system management and services to jobseekers and employers, is the primary method used to assess core, mandatory, and optional partner programs and the effectiveness of South Carolina's one-stop system.

State Instruction number 24-01 (SC Works Certification Standards) outlines Management, Jobseeker, and Business Services standards as well as baseline measures and proposed evaluations for each standard. Included in the state instruction is the expectation for partner integration and efficient and effective service delivery through non-duplication of services and required training to ensure each center staff member is aware of the full range of services provided by the system.

Local workforce development boards submit documentation of the SC Works certification standards assessment process and documentation of a full certification determination to the state every three years. Centers were last certified in 2025.

Customer Satisfaction

State Instruction Letter 24-01, SC Works Certification Standards, also provides criteria that must be used to evaluate one-stop centers and the one-stop delivery system for effectiveness, including customer satisfaction, physical and programmatic accessibility, and continuous improvement. The Job Seeker and Business Services Standards require local areas to have a customer feedback system in place that assesses customer satisfaction with both the service(s) provided and the outcome(s) of the services. Customer satisfaction surveys are the primary method used to collect jobseeker and employer feedback. Local areas use a combination of paper and electronic survey methods:

- Digital surveys are more commonly distributed to customers through email platforms.
- Products such as Survey Monkey and Century Link are used for electronic surveys.
- Paper surveys are available in resource rooms and on or near staff workstations.
- Some SC Works centers have a central location where customers can submit completed paper forms.

State Instruction Letter 24-02, SC Works Customer Satisfaction Surveys, provides standardized customer satisfaction survey guidance, including questions that must be used in jobseeker and employer surveys for evaluating customer satisfaction in LWDAs. Local areas are required to

submit area-specific customer satisfaction data to the State each year. State staff look for trends and areas of opportunity to address through technical assistance, policy development, and/or resource allocation. LWDBs must perform reviews of their customer satisfaction survey feedback to identify opportunities for continuous improvement and describe their process(es) for developing actionable improvements of the system based on this feedback as required by their COBE Plans. Additionally, local areas are encouraged to review their customer satisfaction surveys annually to see if supplemental questions could achieve more relevant and pertinent feedback for strategic LWDB initiatives.

Program-Specific Assessment Processes

Each individual program has assessment processes in place, such as program performance, annual monitoring, and/or program needs assessment. Examples of assessment processes include:

- For WIOA Title I, the State Workforce Board has identified three state-specific fiscal measures including Obligation Rate, Fund Utilization Rate, and Participant Cost Rate. These measures are tracked through the monthly submission of financial data from local workforce areas to the State.
- SNAP Employment and Training is required to report outcome data in an annual report to monitor the effectiveness of programming. This annual report is monitored at the regional and national levels.
- TANF annual reports are required to monitor a variety of caseload data to include spending, work participation, characteristics, and financial circumstances.
- TAA is evaluated on a quarterly basis through submission of program data to DOL.
- U.S. Department of Labor, Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) conducts triennial audits of each state's Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG). The purpose of the audit is to determine compliance of the statutory roles and responsibilities of the JVSG-funded staff in South Carolina, as well as audit services to nonveterans.

B. PREVIOUS ASSESSMENT RESULTS

For each four-year state plan and state plan modification, provide the results of assessments of the effectiveness of the core programs and other one-stop partner programs and Combined State Plan partner programs included in the Unified or Combined State plan during the preceding 2-year period (i.e., the 2-year period of the plan modification cycle), in accordance with methods described in 4(A). Describe how the State is adapting its strategies based on these assessments.

- South Carolina has met or exceeded all negotiated performance indicators for Program Years 2023 and 2024.
- All SC Works centers required to be certified received certification in PY 2024.
- Jobseekers and employers reported satisfaction levels of 82.29% and 92.01% respectively, with SC Works services in PY 2024.

While achievement of negotiated performance is commendable, there is opportunity to improve overall satisfaction with service delivery and individual and employer outcomes. The strategies outlined in this plan will help to improve overall system access and efficiency, as well as attainment of high-value credentials and digital literacy skills leading to employment or advancement along a career pathway, coordination of service delivery to employers, and

removal or mitigation of obstacles to employment. Implementation of these strategies is expected to improve overall satisfaction with service delivery and outcomes.

C. EVALUATION

Describe how the State will conduct evaluations and research projects of activities carried out in the State under WIOA core programs; how such projects will be coordinated with, and designed in conjunction with, State and local boards and with State agencies responsible for the administration of all respective core programs; and, further, how the projects will be coordinated with the evaluations provided for by the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of Education under WIOA (WIOA Section 116(e)).

South Carolina's history of conducting evaluations on WIOA and workforce strategies, in general, has been initiated under the direction of the State Workforce Development Board and in collaboration with WIOA State Plan Partners. With representatives from the core partners as well as the educational system serving on the SWDB, the SWDB is uniquely positioned to identify the need for further evaluations and to ensure cross-agency awareness and participation in the evaluations. Additionally, South Carolina welcomes the opportunity to partner with the Secretary of Labor and/or Education to coordinate and align evaluation activities.

South Carolina utilizes WIOA Governor's Reserve funds (set aside) to conduct relevant workforce evaluations. To meet this requirement, DEW envisions completing the following evaluation:

- Evaluate business conditions to gauge the needs and expectations of South Carolina employers to generate a better understanding of the state's economy and workforce. The scope of work will include hiring experts to develop a statistically rigorous survey and improve the survey response rate to ensure valid results reflect a representative private sector sample. The survey will periodically include additional questions about employer services to inform programmatic offerings.

5. DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

Describe the methods and factors the State will use in distributing funds under the core programs in accordance with the provisions authorizing such distributions.

A. FOR TITLE I PROGRAMS

Provide a description of the written policies that establish the State's methods and factors used to distribute funds to local areas for—

I. YOUTH ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA SECTION 128(B)(2) OR (B)(3)

Title I Youth program funds are distributed to LWDAs according to the following fund allocation formula:

- 33⅓ percent based on the relative number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment in each workforce development area, compared to the total number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment in the state;
- 33⅓ percent based on the relative excess number of unemployed individuals in each workforce development area, compared to the total excess number of unemployed individuals in the state; and

- 33⅓ percent based on the relative number of disadvantaged youth in each workforce development area, compared to the total number of disadvantaged youth in the state.

Hold Harmless

Applies to each funding stream. Ensures that funds are distributed without significant shifts in funding levels. A local area will not receive an allocation percentage that is less than 90 percent of the average allocation percentage of the local area for the two preceding years.

II. ADULT AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA SECTION 133(B)(2) OR (B)(3)

Title I Adult program funds are distributed to LWDAs according to the following fund allocation formula:

- 33⅓ percent based on the relative number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment within each workforce development area, compared to the total number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment in the state;
- 33⅓ percent based on the relative excess number of unemployed individuals in each workforce development area, compared to the total excess number of unemployed individuals in the state; and
- 33⅓ percent based on the relative number of disadvantaged adults in each workforce development area, compared to the total number of disadvantaged adults in the state.

Hold Harmless

Applies to each funding stream. Ensures that funds are distributed without significant shifts in funding levels. A local area will not receive an allocation percentage that is less than 90 percent of the average allocation percentage of the local area for the two preceding years.

III. DISLOCATED WORKER EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA SECTION 133(B)(2) AND BASED ON DATA AND WEIGHTS ASSIGNED

Title I Dislocated Worker program funds are distributed to LWDAs according to the following fund allocation formula:

The distribution formula is based on the following factors and weights:

- Insured Unemployment Data 30%
- Unemployment Concentrations 25%
- Mass Layoff Data.....10%
- Declining Industries Data 5%
- Farmer-Rancher Economic Hardship Data.....5%
- Long-Term Unemployment Data.....25%

Hold Harmless

Applies to each funding stream. Ensures that funds are distributed without significant shifts in funding levels. A local area will not receive an allocation percentage that is less than 90 percent of the average allocation percentage of the local area for the two preceding years.

B. FOR TITLE II

I. DESCRIBE THE METHODS AND FACTORS THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY WILL USE TO DISTRIBUTE TITLE II FUNDS.

The State will distribute Title II funds to eligible providers through four grant opportunities. The South Carolina Department of Education, OCR-AE, will use the following process to distribute Grant Awards for the Adult Education Grant, the Family Literacy Grant, and the Corrections Education Grant.

The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) is authorized by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014. The WIOA is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. The WIOA brings together, in strategic coordination, federal core programs of skill development such as:

- employment and training services for adults, dislocated workers, and youth and Wagner-Peyser employment services administered by the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) through formula grants to states; and
- adult education and literacy programs and Vocational Rehabilitation state grant programs that assist individuals with disabilities in obtaining employment as administered by the U.S. Department of Education (USED).

The purpose of AEFLA is to create a partnership among the federal government, states, and localities to provide, on a voluntary basis, adult education, and literacy activities, in order to—

1. assist adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and economic self-sufficiency;
2. assist adults who are parents or family members to obtain the education and skills that—
    a. are necessary to becoming full partners in the educational development of their children; and
    b. lead to sustainable improvements in the economic opportunities for their family;
3. assist adults in attaining a secondary school diploma and in the transition to postsecondary education and training, including through career pathways; and
4. assist immigrants and other individuals who are English language learners in—
    a. improving their—
        i. reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension skills in English; and
        ii. mathematics skills; and
    b. acquiring an understanding of the American system of government, individual freedom, and the responsibilities of citizenship.

The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) will use a competitive process to award to eligible local providers/applicants subgrants for the development, implementation, and improvement of adult education and literacy activities within South Carolina. Each eligible provider receiving a subgrant must use the funding to establish or operate programs that provide adult education and literacy activities, including programs that provide such activities concurrently.

AEFLA funds are to support Adult Education, Corrections Education, Family Literacy, and Integrated English Literacy/Civics Education (IEL/CE) subgrant programs. To be eligible to apply for the Family Literacy subgrant or the IEL/CE subgrant, an applicant must apply for the Adult Education subgrant.

The maximum subgrant period is five years, July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2030, and is subject to the availability of federal funds and the subgrantee meeting all applicable program requirements (Adult Education, Corrections Education, Family Literacy, and IEL/CE). The year-one subgrant budget period is July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026. Funds may not be carried over to subsequent years.

Official grant award documents will be processed annually as continuation of funding is not automatic. In determining continuation funding, the SCDE will consider the grantee's evidence of a project's effectiveness in achieving objectives, timely submission, and quality of all required reports (including the interim and annual progress reports), and rationale for budget expenditures. Submission of a continuation application may also be required in subsequent years.

The subgrantee may obligate funds upon receipt of the grant award notice. However, no funds will be disbursed until after July 1, 2025. Subgrant payments are made on a cost-reimbursement basis, so applicants should have at least three months of operating funds at their disposal to implement the program to compensate for any delays in receiving reimbursement payments.

Not less than 82.5 percent of the grant funds are used to award grants and contracts under section 231.Local assistance grants will be distributed based on the ability to meet the requirements of AEFLA Purposes outlined in WIOA:

1. Assist adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and economic self-sufficiency;
2. Assist adults who are parents or family members to obtain the education and skills that
    a. are necessary to becoming full partner in the education development of their children; and
    b. lead to sustainable improvements in the economic opportunities for their family;
3. Assist adults in attaining a secondary school diploma and in the transition to postsecondary education and training, including through career pathways;
4. Assist immigrants and other individuals who are English language learners in
    a. improving their
        i. reading, writing, math, speaking, and comprehension skills in English and
        ii. mathematics skills; and

b. acquiring an understanding of the American system of government, individual freedom, and the responsibilities of citizenship.

In accordance with 34 CFR 463 subpart C, although competed as a part of the larger AEFLA competition and distributed simultaneously and in the same format, each grant will require a separate application submission. Funds will be allocated based on a combination of formula and performance factors. The 2025-30 grant cycle will allocate funds to selected providers each year for a duration of 5 years. The grant competition will ensure that all eligible providers have direct and equitable access to apply for these funds. Applicants will respond to each of the AEFLA 13 considerations in the application package. The applications will go through a two-step process in order to be considered for funding. The applicant must submit documentation of demonstrated effectiveness; applicants that meet this requirement will move on to the formal review conducted by independent reviewers and the respective Local Workforce Development Boards.

The SCDE-OCR-AE will use up to 20% of the 82.5% of their grant, not the full amount of the grant, for the Corrections Education Section 225.

Grant Awards for the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education Grant will be distributed as follows:

The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IEL/CE) program is funded under WIOA Section 243 funds. In accordance with 34 CFR 463 subpart C, South Carolina will conduct a statewide grant competition in the fall of 2024. The IEL/CE Section 243 competition will be competed as a part of the larger AEFLA competition; though distributed simultaneously and in the same format, the application package will require a separate submission for the IEL/CE program. These funds will be allocated based on a combination of formula and performance factors. The 2025-30 IEL/CE grant cycle will allocate funds to selected providers each year for a duration of 5 years. The grant competition will ensure that all eligible providers have direct and equitable access to apply for these funds. Applicants will respond to each of the AEFLA 13 considerations in the application package. The applications will go through a two-step process in order to be considered for funding. The applicant must submit documentation of demonstrated effectiveness; applicants that meet this requirement will move on to the formal review conducted by independent reviewers and the respective Local Workforce Development Boards.

II. DESCRIBE HOW THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY WILL ENSURE DIRECT AND EQUITABLE ACCESS TO ALL ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS TO APPLY AND COMPETE FOR FUNDS AND HOW THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY WILL ENSURE THAT IT IS USING THE SAME GRANT OR CONTRACT ANNOUNCEMENT AND APPLICATION PROCEDURE FOR ALL ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS.

The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) – OCR-AE ensures that all eligible providers have direct and equitable access to apply and compete for grants and contracts under AEFLA. The entire RFP process, from beginning to end, is managed by the SCDE, and eligible providers submit proposals through the SCDE's grants submission system. Eligible applicants are not required to apply nor submit proposals through any other agency or agencies.

The SCDE – OCR-AE also ensures direct and equitable access in its processes and procedures related to the RFP announcement/distribution, the grant application, and technical assistance.

RFP Announcement/Distribution: Announcements of the availability of federal funds, under the auspices of WIOA – Title II, are circulated to the widest extent possible. Various sources and mediums are used to make the public and eligible providers aware of the RFP. SCDE's Public

Information Office notifies the public, school districts, and other stakeholders. Grant opportunities are posted on the SC Department of Education's website and distributed via SCDE's GrantNews listserv. Announcements are forwarded to current adult education providers and organizations such as the SC Association of Nonprofit Organizations (SCANPO); the South Carolina Library Association (SCLA); South Carolina Technical Education Association (SCTEA); South Carolina Association of School Administrators (SCASA); and others.

South Carolina Department of Education - OCR-AE holds a full and open competition consistent with the standards of CFR 200.319. All eligible agencies are granted direct and equitable access to apply and compete for grants or contracts. The OCR-AE is in compliance with all state and federal laws regarding the award of contracts and the expenditure of public funds as well as requirements outlined in Title II of the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act of 2014.

The following steps are initiated to ensure direct and equitable access:

- The same grant and application process is used for all eligible providers in the state.
- Standard criteria for evaluation of local proposals is used for all eligible providers.
- Technical assistance workshops are held to review the entire process and provide information to all eligible providers interested in applying. Dates, times, and places of these workshops are included in the announcements and the Request for Proposal.

The announcement contains information such as:

- Type of grants available
- Contact person to obtain RFP guidelines
- Timeline with grant application due date
- Other pertinent items
- Any information required by state law in regard to the awarding of contracts and the expenditure of public funds

C. VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM

In the case of a State that, under section 101(a)(2)(A)(i) of the Rehabilitation Act designates a State agency to administer the part of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan under which VR services are provided for individuals who are blind, describe the process and the factors used by the State to determine the distribution of funds among the two VR agencies in the State.

In South Carolina, vocational rehabilitation services are delivered by two agencies: SCVRD and SCCB. The Agencies maintain an agreement that outlines the roles and respective duties of each Agency. Federal grant funding is allocated as follows: 13 percent is allocated to SCCB, and 87 percent is allocated to SCVRD. This is proportionally consistent with the client service and operational needs of the two agencies.

6. PROGRAM DATA

A. DATA ALIGNMENT AND INTEGRATION

Describe the plans of the lead State agencies with responsibility for the administration of the core programs, along with the State Board, to align and integrate available workforce and education data systems for the core programs, unemployment insurance programs, and

education through postsecondary education, and to the extent possible, the Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan. The description of the State's plan for integrating data systems should include the State's goals for achieving integration and any progress to date.

Describe data-collection and reporting processes used for all programs and activities, including the State's process to collect and report data on co-enrollment, and for those present in the one-stop centers.

I. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S PLANS TO MAKE THE MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS FOR THE CORE PROGRAMS INTEROPERABLE TO MAXIMIZE THE EFFICIENT EXCHANGE OF COMMON DATA ELEMENTS TO SUPPORT ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

In late 2022, the SWDB approved discretionary funding to procure a consultant to conduct a feasibility study for an integrated case management system across the WIOA required partners as well as an assessment for DEW for system development and modernization. The state was able to procure Gartner Consulting, Inc., and the project began in August 2023, completing in December 2023. Key items from the study included current state assessment, business capability model, market scan, options analysis, and finally a high-level roadmap and recommendations. The current state assessment included 15 interviews and 8 workshops with multiple partners and stakeholders. Key themes resulting from the study include:

- a desired future state to increase system interoperability to connect and exchange information with partner agencies,
- a 360-degree view of the customer so that staff can have a full picture of an individual or business in the case management process,
- a seamless user experience that is intuitive, consistent, and seamless automation of current manually intensive processes, and
- better understand the efficacy of jobseeker support programs across case management and labor exchange systems.

DEW will implement the recommendations over the course of several years, resulting in a case management system primarily used by Title I, Title III, TAA, and JVSG, that is capable of integration with the systems used by Title II and IV.

II. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S PLANS TO INTEGRATE DATA SYSTEMS TO FACILITATE STREAMLINED INTAKE AND SERVICE DELIVERY TO TRACK PARTICIPATION ACROSS ALL PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN

During the feasibility study mentioned above, it was made clear to the vendor that each of the required partners were operating systems in their own space using program-specific solutions and were not ready to migrate to a single system.

To streamline processes and track participation across all programs, the main focus of any procurement for a new case management system and/or labor exchange system will be system interoperability. Having the necessary interfaces of common data elements as well as enrollment information will allow each program to have a holistic view of a participant.

DEW is in the process of completing a procurement for a case management and labor exchange system (titled the "SCWOS Modernization Project"). The applicable priorities of this project are system interoperability, granting a 360° view of the customer, and reducing manually intensive processes. DEW is measuring success by establishing the following goals: execute at least 2 external WIOA core partner data sharing agreements within one year from the "go-live" date

and decrease partner referrals that don't have a documented outcome by 10%. This is in direct alignment with South Carolina's plans for systems integration and enhancement of service delivery and collaboration amongst the partners.

Additionally, DEW has a signed data sharing agreement with the South Carolina Revenue and Fiscal Affairs office (RFA) whereas RFA will house specific WIOA data for the purposes of longitudinal reporting. Exchange of this data is scheduled to start once Program Year 2023 annual performance has been submitted.

III. EXPLAIN HOW THE STATE BOARD WILL ASSIST THE GOVERNOR IN ALIGNING TECHNOLOGY AND DATA SYSTEMS ACROSS REQUIRED ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS (INCLUDING DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMON INTAKE, DATA COLLECTION, ETC.) AND HOW SUCH ALIGNMENT WILL IMPROVE SERVICE DELIVERY TO INDIVIDUALS, INCLUDING UNEMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS

The SWDB funded a feasibility study to determine if an integrated case management system would be an effective solution in South Carolina. The results of the study indicated the top priority for a future system would be interoperability between the different case management systems. Under the direction of the SWDB, a vendor was procured in late Program Year 2023 to create functional requirements for inclusion in the state's request for procurement for a case management and labor exchange system. The current timeline estimates the procurement will be issued late calendar year 2024, with possible implementation at the end of Program Year 2025.

IV. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S DATA SYSTEMS AND PROCEDURES TO PRODUCE THE REPORTS REQUIRED UNDER SECTION 116, PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM. (WIOA SECTION 116(D)(2)).

Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth and Title III Wagner-Peyser Act Programs

Title I and III services are provided in a shared case management and labor exchange system called SC Works Online Services (SCWOS), powered by Geographic Solutions, Inc. The vendor proactively makes system upgrades, adjustments to business rules based on federal and state guidance, and updates federal reporting system requirements. The system has a nightly job which generates a combined PIRL file for the Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser, Trade Adjustment Assistance, National Dislocated Worker Grant, and Jobs for Veterans State Grants programs. This combined PIRL is then uploaded into the Workforce Integrated Performance System (WIPS) to generate the ETA-9173 and ETA-9169.

Eligible Training Provider List reporting is conducted within two systems in South Carolina. The client facing ETP site, SC Palmetto Academic and Training Hub (SC PATh), collects provider and program information as well as allows providers of training to upload student data. PATh data is then migrated into SCWOS where the vendor generates the ETP data file to submit into WIPS for the ETA-9171.

DEW is the lead agency that reports Effectiveness in Serving Employers (ESE) data to DOL. In accordance with TEGL 10-16, Change 3, data sharing agreements were updated to reflect the changes to the ESE measure. The updated data sharing agreement between the administrative agencies for the WIOA core programs was established August 13th, 2025. Annual procedures are in place to communicate deadlines and instructions for submitting ESE data to DEW. Once data is received from all partners, it is combined, de-duplicated, and submitted into WIPS. As WIOA Titles I and III are the only core programs with a common exit policy, these are the only programs of which deduplication is conducted.

Tile II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program

The SCDE OCR-AE utilizes the Literacy, Adult and Community Education System (LACES) to collect and analyze program data from local adult education programs throughout the state. Local providers input data into LACES on a regular basis. The data collected from this system is used for annual state and federal reporting, which includes the following:

- Student demographic information
- Student performance and outcomes
- Employment
- Post-secondary education and/or training
- Credential attainment

Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation Act Programs

SC Vocational Rehabilitation Department

The Case Management System (CMS) for SCVRD is an internally developed set of programs that allows for the flexibility of interfacing with partners as necessary. For example, SCVRD's system works with the South Carolina Enterprise Information System (SCEIS) to process consumer procurements, the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (SCDHHS) for Social Security verification and beneficiary status through the State Verification and Exchange System (SVES), and the South Carolina Workers' Compensation Commission. An exchange of data from DEW is now in place for wage data necessary for reporting on WIOA performance measures: employment 2nd quarter after exit, employment 4th quarter after exit, and median earnings 2nd quarter after exit. CMS also allows the agency to make changes and improvements quickly, deliver consistent services to consumers statewide, react to data changes enacted by RSA as mandated, and provide real-time reporting.

SC Commission for the Blind

SCCB's data collection process consists of data that is collected directly from consumers, medical health providers (eye and medical doctors), educational institutions, consumer organizations, and advocacy groups, and the Social Security Administration. Although Counselors in all consumer services programs have the primary responsibility of collecting and entering data, other staff, such as Counselor Assistants, Supervisors, and service providers can also collect and enter consumer data as needed.

SNAP Employment and Training

The South Carolina Comprehensive Employment and Training System (SCCETS), allows real-time access to client information for both case management staff as well as providers while also maintaining the required data for the SNAP E&T national reporting measures. The SNAP E&T program submits an annual report which measures the impact of E&T components. In addition to its security as a centralized data repository for SNAP E&T, SCCETS was internally developed to collect the data required for the annual performance report. SCCETS interfaces with the Department of Social Services' TANF and SNAP eligibility system, Client History, and Information Profile (CHIP), to allow providers to securely and remotely determine if a participant is eligible to participate in the SNAP E&T program.

Annually, the SNAP E&T program is responsible for achieving specific goals to ensure the program continues to achieve its mission and is accountable for the funds allocated. In federal fiscal year 2021, the SNAP E&T program created framework for a return on investment analyses to assist with providing a better understanding of programmatic outcomes and to better determine the extent of the programs' success in reducing reliance on SNAP benefits. In 2022, development of the ROI continued with a further review of data elements and deeper analysis of the relationships of participants, providers, and outcomes. Financial expenditures were evaluated by provider and provider type to ensure an equitable performance study. In 2023, the development of an ROI dashboard was initiated to provide real-time data for program management regarding participation, demographic, and performance data. The dashboard was launched in the Fall of 2023 and users can see statewide demographic data alongside participation data with a simultaneous county comparison. Future enhancements include a further review of the SNAP E&T program's financial elements through additional real-time performance metrics which synthesize both provider and employee data and provide a view of the entire program's performance.

Senior Community Service Employment Program

Grantee Performance Management System (GPMS) is the application for all grantees and sub-grantees of SCSEP use as required by the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) of the US Department of Labor (DOL), which administers the SCSEP Program. GPMS is a new data collection system which started in July 2022.GPMS serves as the primary source for entering, tracking, and submitting program participant data more efficiently, providing visibility and reporting capabilities for the data captured for Participant cases (GPMS User Guide for Grantees, page 9).The data captured in GPMS is used to benchmark the grantees in South Carolina performance measures.

B. ASSESSMENT OF PARTICIPANTS' POST-PROGRAM SUCCESS

Describe how lead State agencies will use the workforce development system to assess the progress of participants who are exiting from core programs in entering, persisting in, and completing postsecondary education, or entering or remaining in employment. States may choose to set additional indicators of performance.

Primarily, programs will use the WIOA sec. 116(b) indicators of performance to assess participant success post-program. The applicable measures are:

- Employment during 2nd and 4th quarter after exit,
- Education, training, or employment 2nd and 4th quarter after exit (Title I Youth),
- Median earnings 2nd quarter after exit,
- Credential Attainment Rate (during or 1 year after program exit), and
- Measurable Skill Gains

These measures will be used to evaluate the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs. Only second and fourth quarter employment and median earnings are used to evaluate the Wagner-Peyser and JVSG programs. Other program-specific reports will be used, such as the Trade Adjustment Assistance Data Integrity (TAADI) report, which will be utilized to further assess the TAA program beyond common performance indicators. Additionally, the MSFW program employs the Equity Ratio and Minimum Service Level Indicators reports to further assess outcomes.

C. USE OF UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) WAGE RECORD DATA

Explain how the State will meet the requirements to utilize quarterly UI wage records for performance accountability, evaluations, and as a source for workforce and labor market information, consistent with Federal and State law. (This Operational Planning element applies to core programs.)

DEW is the State Unemployment Insurance Agency (SUIA) and also the Performance Accountability and Customer Information Agency (PACIA) for the State Wage Interchange System (SWIS) for Title I and III of WIOA. DEW performance and reporting staff query SWIS at the earliest point allowable to match wages for participants. Wages are then processed into SCWOS for inclusion in PIRL reporting. State UI wages are housed within DEW and are queried quarterly and annually to match wages to participants. Results are then processed into SCWOS for inclusion in PIRL reporting.

DEW's LMI Division utilizes wage records from the State's UI system to complete labor market and economic analyses, provide return on investment data, and to provide job seekers and employers with LMI data garnered from wage records and national data.

D. PRIVACY SAFEGUARDS

Describe the privacy safeguards incorporated in the State's workforce development system, including safeguards required by section 444 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232g) and other applicable Federal laws.

The South Carolina workforce system complies with all federal and state laws and guidelines for the handling and protection of Personally Identifiable Information (PII), including but not limited to 2 CFR and TEGL 39-11, and ensures compliance through the following means: data sharing agreements with workforce partners, state, and local memorandums of understanding (MOU), local area agreements, and resource sharing agreements. Additionally, PII is maintained and disposed of in a secure and confidential manner, and policies and procedures for the handling of PII are in place and reviewed regularly.

The State's case management system for Titles I and III is accessible to the public to search for jobs and access information-only services such as Labor Market Information, employer information, and job orders active in the system. Expanded capabilities such as uploading a resume, applying to jobs, posting jobs, and searching resumes is available only through registration into the system. Employers must complete verification processes prior to being able to post job orders or view resumes.

Access to jobseekers and employer data is granted on a need-to-know basis. Staff accounts are created manually by administrative staff. All staff accounts are granted privileges that exclusively align with the program(s) they support, their role in the program, and their duties with jobseeker and employer customers. Prior to being granted access to the system, staff and the assigned supervisor must read and acknowledge the confidentiality agreement and PII safeguard expectations. Any detailed individual data is only available by authorized users and not provided to the public.

To prevent unauthorized access to existing employer and staff accounts which may have access to sensitive information or the ability to communicate with individuals, multi-factor authentication (MFA) was implemented in 2023.

The SC Works Online Services system includes a publicly available, privacy statement, as well as tips on how to protect against online scams and identify theft. The State's management

information system also employs software programs to monitor network traffic to identify unauthorized attempts to upload or change information and registrants are notified accordingly if any activity is noticed. Unless otherwise required, reports are typically aggregated to avoid disseminating individual student or participant data.

7. PRIORITY OF SERVICE FOR VETERANS.

A. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL IMPLEMENT THE PRIORITY OF SERVICE PROVISIONS FOR COVERED PERSONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE JOBS FOR VETERANS ACT, CODIFIED AT SECTION 4215 OF 38 U.S.C., WHICH APPLIES TO ALL EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMS FUNDED IN WHOLE OR IN PART BY THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR.

B. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL MONITOR PRIORITY OF SERVICE PROVISIONS FOR VETERANS.

C. DESCRIBE THE SCREENING AND REFERRAL PROCESS FOR ELIGIBLE VETERANS AND OTHER POPULATIONS DETERMINED ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE SERVICES FROM THE JOBS FOR VETERANS STATE GRANTS (JVSG) PROGRAM'S DISABLED VETERANS' OUTREACH PROGRAM (DVOP) SPECIALIST/CONSOLIDATED POSITION.

A. Veterans and other eligible persons, defined as covered persons, are ensured Priority of Service (POS) upon entering the Workforce System with the implementation of the following services:

- Identified at the point of entry to programs & services
- Made aware of priority of service
- Made aware of full array of programs and services available to them
- Take precedence over non-covered person in accessing and obtaining services

Covered person means any of the following individuals:

1. A veteran. The term means a person who served at least one day in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable, as specified in 38 U. S. C. 101. Active service includes full-time Federal service in the National Guard or a Reserve component.
2. The spouse of any of the following individuals:
    - Any veteran who died of a service-connected disability
    - Any member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty who, at the time of application for assistance under this section, is listed, by the secretary concerned in one or more of the following categories and has been so listed for a total of more than 90 days:
        - Missing in action
        - Captured in line of duty by hostile force
        - Forcibly detained or interned in line of duty by a foreign government or power
    - Any veteran who has a total disability resulting from a service-connected disability.

- Any veteran who died while a disability so evaluated was in existence.

Depending on the type of service or resource being provided, priority of service may mean:

- Covered person gains access to services or resources earlier than the non-covered persons when resources are limited

- Priority of Service applies to every qualified job training program funded, in whole or in part, by the Department of Labor

- The proposal states that those with the greatest need should receive priority of service in programs for which they are eligible.

All covered persons are to receive POS at any "point of entry", which includes physical locations, such as AJCs, as well as websites and other virtual service delivery resources. They must also have access to adult and dislocated worker programs.

POS is the responsibility of each staff member within the AJC with oversight and compliance provided by the One-Stop Operator. Reports and on-site reviews ensure adherence to mandated legislative requirements.

JVSG staff work closely with all WIOA partners providing training on current issues that affect Veterans and other eligible persons. The spirit of assisting Veterans and providing priority of service is primarily a legal requirement, but also a moral imperative and meaningful way of doing business.

B. Describe how the state will monitor priority of service provisions for veterans.

The requirement to provide priority of service applies to all WIOA, Wagner-Peyser Act, discretionary grants, targeted programs (Senior Community Service Employment Program, Indian and Native American Programs, National Farmworkers Job Programs, and Trade Adjustment Assistance) and all other programs and services funded in whole or in part by the DOL. Agreement by a program operator to implement priority of service is a condition of receipt of DOL funds.

Monitoring will be performed by Veterans' Employment and Training Service, DEW, and Program Operators responsible for the qualified job training program's administration and oversight. Program operators are required to ensure that priority of service is applied throughout their respective service delivery systems, including service delivery points maintained by all sub-recipients. It is expected that program operators will monitor local service delivery operations to ensure that their internal policies and procedures result in compliance with the priority of service requirements.

DEW will monitor priority of service to ensure that veterans and eligible spouses are made aware of and afforded priority of service. SC Works centers operate under the direction of an Operator. This assures that DEW, as well as all partner staff, is continually made aware of the established office policies and procedures and their responsibility to provide priority services to all veterans. At the SC Works Center level, monitoring of priority of service is conducted LVERs utilizing automated reports produced through South Carolina Works Online Services (SCWOS) and local office self-assessments. At the state level, the Veteran Services Director utilizes the Manager's Quarterly Report on Services to Veterans, scheduled trainings, calls with program managers, and on-site visits at local Workforce Centers. DEW analyzes the data to ensure covered persons gain access to services or resources earlier than non-covered persons, that

priority of service is applied to every qualified job training program, and covered persons with the greatest need are receiving priority. Any compliant, non-compliant, or anomalies are reported through normal reporting channels.

C. Describe the screening and referral process for eligible veterans and other populations determined eligible to receive services from the Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist/consolidated position.

Local AJCs must ensure that veterans and eligible persons are served first and that this protocol is addressed in the customer flow process. During the registration process, a series of questions identifies veteran status. Once the veteran or eligible person is identified, the first available WFC staff conducts an initial assessment. This initial assessment uses a customized Veteran Intake Survey, to help determine if the veteran or eligible person has a Qualifying Employment Barrier (QEB) or that they may be a member of another special priority group. During the initial assessment if it is determined that the veteran has an QEB; they will be immediately referred to a Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist (DVOP) or other trained staff for the provision of Individual Career Services and other services the veterans may need to meet their career goals.

8. ADDRESSING THE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners), will comply with section 188 of WIOA (if applicable) and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) and Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAA) regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities. This also must include a description of compliance through providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities. Describe the State's one-stop center certification policy, particularly the accessibility criteria.

South Carolina's one-stop delivery system is designed to be fully accessible so that all job seekers and employers can participate in the services offered. DEW's Nondiscrimination Plan (NDP) – a document required by the Civil Rights Center – is a "living" document that describes how current federal regulations and directives are implemented and monitored by both DEW's Office of Equal Opportunity and the Local EO Coordinators. The NDP details how compliance with WIOA Section 188 and 29CFR 38 will be accomplished.

Monitoring performed at both the state and local level ensures that all SC Works Centers follow Section 188 of WIOA, the ADAAA, and other applicable regulations. Individuals who seek to utilize South Carolina's workforce system can expect facilities, whether physical or online (e.g., SC Works Online Services), to meet federally mandated accessibility standards. Complaints of discrimination are directed to the State Equal Opportunity Officer.

Per federal regulations, each LWDA must appoint a LWDA Equal Opportunity Coordinator who is responsible for ensuring local WIOA Section 188 compliance. Local Equal Opportunity Coordinators are trained to use the "ADA Checklist for Readily Achievable Barrier Removal," and the "Checklist for Existing Facilities." Each LWDA Equal Opportunity Coordinator is provided with detailed training on regulations, policies, and procedures following appointment. Ongoing training is provided through EO Roundtables and on-site training on such topics as, "Serving Customers with Disabilities," "Current EO Trends," as well as topics deemed relevant by LWDAs and designed in response to their training requests.

Local Equal Opportunity Coordinators are responsible for informing senior staff of applicable federal regulations, ensuring all programs and activities implemented are in compliance, and providing training for staff and center partners. Additionally, local Equal Opportunity Coordinators accept and resolve local grievances as needed. Each of the local Equal Opportunity Coordinators monitors for compliance independently and actively liaises with DEW's Office of Equal Opportunity and USDOL's Civil Rights Center to remain current on regulatory updates and guidance. They are then responsible for circulating new information locally and ensuring it is properly implemented.[11]

Additionally, DEW issued State Instruction Letter 14-03, Change 1, requiring each LWDB to designate a standing committee that will provide information and assist with operational and other issues relating to the provision of services to individuals with disabilities. Members of these committees will be individuals who have specific expertise serving individuals with disabilities.

The OCR-AE meets regularly with SCDE Office of Special Education Services to ensure compliance with all special education regulations. Additionally, OCR-AE requires that all funded local providers have a written plan with local Special Education Departments to transition IEP (Individualized Education Plan) students and that local providers comply with the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) which requires each provider to describe the steps they propose to take to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, its federally assisted programs. The OCR-AE monitors for compliance with the written transition IEP as part of its annual compliance process and collaborates with the Office of Special Education to monitor all other GEPA requirements and to provide training to local programs regarding serving students with special needs.

As a condition of partnering with SCVRD, other organizations are informed in the written agreement of their obligation to comply with applicable Civil Rights laws and regulations. Postsecondary training vendors are required to complete SCVR 153 – Assurance of Compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. This form acknowledges that the training vendor complied with Section 504, which ensured that individuals with disabilities have equal access to any federally funded program. The form is signed by the training vendor when the initial application is submitted for approval. Similarly, applicants, eligible individuals, and other interested persons are also informed in writing that services are provided on a nondiscriminatory basis, as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, as amended, and Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act, as amended. Additionally, all staff members are required to complete the Office of Civil Rights training modules.

As part of the SC Works center certification process, LWDBs are required to evaluate the accessibility of the SC Works delivery system. Each center must meet the following accessibility baseline measures:

- The Center is compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Every workforce area cooperates with Vocational Rehabilitation partners and DEW EO staff (Office of Equal Opportunity), to ensure ADA compliance.

[11] 2025 DEW Non-discrimination Plan, https://scworks.org/sites/scworks/files/South%20Carolina%20Nondiscrimination%20Plan%20eff%2006012025.pdf

- The center provides assistive technology for customers to use when accessing computers and other services. This includes customers with visual and hearing impairments and physical disabilities.
- Staff is trained to assist people with disabilities, including individuals with service animals, at the first point of contact and in case of emergency.
- There are linkages to Auxiliary aids and services available for people with disabilities, including veterans and others.
- The center is accessible to individuals with limited-English proficiency. Interpreter services are available, and staff is aware of how to access and utilize interpreter services when needed.
- The center provides free parking that is adequate for the average customer traffic flow, and the required number of accessible parking spaces under ADA are available.
- Centers have flexible scheduling and work hours, when needed, to accommodate job seekers and employers.

These measures ensure that all South Carolinians have equal access to workforce development activities and programs.

9. ADDRESSING THE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners) will ensure that each one-stop center is able to meet the needs of English language learners, such as through established procedures, staff training, resources, and other materials. Describe how English language learners will be made aware of the opportunity to enroll and/or co-enroll in all the core programs for which they are eligible.

Languages other than English are identified at the point of first contact through Census language identification flash cards. To ensure the accurate transmittal of information, individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) are provided services via a qualified interpreter service when qualified bilingual staff is not available. Each LWDA has submitted an LEP Plan of Action outlining procedures on identifying customer language needs, provision of services in the language identified, and the right to free language assistance. The LEP Plan of Action is an ongoing process identifying procedures to meet the needs of LEP customers. A Request for Interpreter Service form has been made available to expedite the interpreter request process.

Training on the provision of services to LEP individuals, as well as current interpretation resources and other materials, are provided on an ongoing basis. LEP individuals are notified of their rights under law via posters in Spanish and other significant language groups identified within each LWDA.[12] As part of the SC Works center certification process, LWDBs are required to evaluate LEP accessibility.

When referrals occur from local one-stop delivery centers, adult education programs have a process to enroll these students into the program and provide appropriate English language instruction.[13] Currently, there are 33 programs for LEP adults in SC to serve individuals in need of English language instruction.

[12] 2025 DEW Non-discrimination Plan, Element #3: Notice of Communication [29 CFR 38.34 through 38.39], https://scworks.org/sites/scworks/files/South%20Carolina%20Nondiscrimination%20Plan%20eff%2006012025.pdf.
[13] 2025 DEW Non-discrimination Plan, Element #4: Data Collection and Maintenance [29 CFR § 38.41 through § 38.45]

IV. COORDINATION WITH STATE PLAN PROGRAMS

Describe the methods used for joint planning and coordination among the core programs, and with the required one-stop partner programs and other programs and activities included in the Unified or Combined State Plan.

South Carolina's Combined Plan represents a co-created strategy for expanding and developing a skilled workforce and responsive workforce system. The plan covers the following programs:

- Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth
- Wagner-Peyser
- Jobs for Veterans State Grant
- Trade Adjustment Assistance
- Adult Education
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance
- Senior Community Service Employment

The Department of Employment and Workforce led development of the state plan and related modification. For the modification, a planning kick-off meeting occurred in October 2025, followed by a series of monthly meetings to collect and compile data and information for the plan. Representative(s) from each program participated in these meetings and development of the plan. The Combined State Plan was published on January 16, 2026, for public comment.

V. COMMON ASSURANCES (FOR ALL CORE PROGRAMS)

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include assurances that:

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The State has established a policy identifying circumstances that may present a conflict of interest for a State Board or local board member, or the entity or class of officials that the member represents, and procedures to resolve such conflicts;	Yes
2. The State has established a policy to provide to the public (including individuals with disabilities) access to meetings of State Boards and local boards, and information regarding activities of State Boards and local boards, such as data on board membership and minutes;	Yes
3. The lead State agencies with optimal policy-making authority and responsibility for the administration of core programs reviewed and commented on the appropriate operational planning elements of the Unified or Combined State Plan, and approved the elements as serving the needs of the populations served by such programs;	Yes
4. (a) The State obtained input into the development of the Unified or Combined State Plan and provided an opportunity for comment on the plan by representatives of local boards and chief elected officials,	Yes

https://scworks.org/sites/scworks/files/South%20Carolina%20Nondiscrimination%20Plan%20eff%2006012025.pdf
https://www.scworks.org/sites/scworks/files/2023%20NDP_South%20Carolina.pdf

The State Plan must include	Include
businesses, labor organizations, institutions of higher education, the entities responsible for planning or administrating the core programs, required one-stop partners and the other Combined Plan programs (if included in the State Plan), other primary stakeholders, including other organizations that provide services to individuals with barriers to employment, and the general public, and that the Unified or Combined State Plan is available and accessible to the general public; (b) The State provided an opportunity for review and comment on the plan by the State Board, including State agency official(s) for the Unemployment Insurance Agency if such official(s) is a member of the State Board;	
5. The State has established, in accordance with WIOA section 116(i), fiscal control and fund accounting procedures that may be necessary to ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for, funds paid to the State through allotments made for the core programs to carry out workforce development activities;	Yes
6. The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with uniform administrative requirements in this Act, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the uniform administrative requirements under WIOA section 184(a)(3);	Yes
7. The State has taken the appropriate action to be in compliance with WIOA section 188, Nondiscrimination, as applicable;	Yes
8. The Federal funds received to carry out a core program will not be expended for any purpose other than for activities authorized with respect to such funds under that core program;	Yes
9. The State will pay an appropriate share (as defined by the State board) of the costs of carrying out section 116, from funds made available through each of the core programs;	Yes
10. The State has a one-stop certification policy that ensures the physical and programmatic accessibility of all one-stop centers with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA);	Yes
11. Service providers have a referral process in place for directing Veterans with Qualifying employment barriers (QEB) to DVOP services, when appropriate; and	Yes
12. Priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses is provided in accordance with 38 USC 4215 in all workforce preparation, development or delivery of programs or services funded directly, in whole or in part, by the Department of Labor.	Yes

VI. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

The State must address all program-specific requirements in this section for the WIOA core programs regardless of whether the State submits either a Unified or Combined State Plan.

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE I-B

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the following with respect to activities carried out under subtitle B—

A. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

1. REGIONS AND LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREAS

A. IDENTIFY THE REGIONS AND THE LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREAS DESIGNATED IN THE STATE

South Carolina re-designated all 12 LWDAs that were designated as local areas for purposes of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and identified four (4) intrastate planning regions:

- Link Upstate – Greenville, Upper Savannah, Upstate, and WorkLink
- Central – Catawba, Lower Savannah, and Midlands
- Pee Dee – Pee Dee, Santee-Lynches, and Waccamaw
- South Coast – Lowcountry and Trident

B. DESCRIBE THE PROCESS AND POLICY USED FOR DESIGNATING LOCAL AREAS, INCLUDING PROCEDURES FOR DETERMINING WHETHER THE LOCAL AREA MET THE CRITERIA FOR "PERFORMED SUCCESSFULLY" AND "SUSTAINED FISCAL INTEGRITY" IN ACCORDANCE WITH 106(B)(2) AND (3) OF WIOA. DESCRIBE THE PROCESS USED FOR IDENTIFYING REGIONS AND PLANNING REGIONS UNDER SECTION 106(A) OF WIOA. THIS MUST INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION OF HOW THE STATE CONSULTED WITH THE LOCAL BOARDS AND CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIALS IN IDENTIFYING THE REGIONS

The designation of new local workforce areas follows the process outlined in State Instruction Letter 20-01, Change 2 LWDA Subsequent Designation and LWDB Subsequent Certification. The Governor, in consultation with the State Board, CEOs, and LWDBs must consider the following factors when designating LWDAs:

- Alignment with labor market areas in the State;
- Common economic development areas, and
- Available the Federal and non-Federal resources necessary to effectively administer activities and provisions required by WIOA, including appropriate education and training providers, such as institutions of higher education and area career and technical education schools.

State Instruction 20-01, Change 2, LWDA Subsequent Designation and LWDB Subsequent Certification, outlines the process used for subsequent designation of local areas and certification of local boards. After the period of initial designation and if requested by the CEO(s) and LWDB in a local area, the Governor must approve the request for subsequent designation if the local performed successfully, sustained fiscal integrity, and met the regional planning requirements, for the two most recent program years of initial designation.

The policy defines "performed successfully" as meeting the performance goals for the WIOA common measures for the most recently completed program years. It further provides that "sustained fiscal integrity" means that the Secretary has not made a formal determination that either the grant recipient or the administrative entity of the area misexpended funds due to willful disregard of the requirements of the provision involved, gross negligence, or failure to comply with accepted standards of administration for the two-year period preceding the determination.

Each local workforce area submits a formal subsequent designation petition that includes:

- A consortium agreement (if applicable);
- For existing workforce areas, certification that the area performed successfully and sustained fiscal integrity for the preceding two-year period;
- A list of LWDB members, to include composition categories and contact information;
- Identification of grant recipient/fiscal agent and a signature of lead official;
- Signatures of CEOs from petitioning counties; and
- Documentation that public input was solicited, and any comments received.

The designation of new local workforce areas follows the process outlined in State Instruction Letter 14-05, WIOA Local Workforce Development Area Designation and Local Workforce Development Board Certification. The policy provides that the Governor, in partnership with the State Board, may approve a request from any unit of general local government (including a combination of such units) for designation as a local workforce area if the proposed area meets the following criteria:

- Are consistent with labor market areas in the State;
- Are consistent with regional economic development areas in the State, and
- Have available the Federal and non-Federal resources necessary to effectively administer activities and provisions required by WIOA, including whether the areas have the appropriate education and training providers, such as institutions of higher education and area career and technical education schools.

A formal designation petition is required, which includes:

- A consortium agreement;
- A narrative regarding how the area meets the considerations outlined in Section 106(b)(1)(B);
- List of local board members;
- Identification of grant recipient/fiscal agent and signature of lead official;
- Signatures of chief elected officials from petitioning counties; and
- Documentation that public input was solicited, and any comments received.

State Instruction 15-08, Identification and Alignment of WIOA Planning Regions, provides an overview of the process used to identify planning regions. In making this determination, the state considered the factors listed in Sec. 106(b)(1)(B): the extent to which the local areas in a

proposed region are consistent with labor market areas in the state, are consistent with regional economic development areas in the state and have available the federal and non-federal resources necessary to effectively administer activities under subtitle B and other applicable provisions of WIOA. This also includes whether the areas have the appropriate education and training providers, such as institutions of higher education and area career and technical education schools. South Carolina also considered population centers, labor force conditions, commuting patterns, industrial composition, location quotients, geographic boundaries, income, poverty, educational attainment, and in-demand occupation groups.

The data collected was examined by the cross-agency data subcommittee, and state workforce partners convened as part of the South Carolina Sector Strategies/Talent Pipeline Project. Four planning regions were identified and presented to workforce partners and stakeholders during a September 2015 webinar on WIOA Region Identification. There was a public comment period at the end of September. After reviewing the comments, the SWDB approved the planning regions as proposed in October 2015.

C. PROVIDE THE APPEALS PROCESS AND POLICY REFERRED TO IN SECTION 106(B)(5) OF WIOA RELATING TO DESIGNATION OF LOCAL AREAS

Appeal to the SWDB

A unit of local government (or combination of units) or a local area that has requested but has been denied its request for designation as an LWDA under 20 CFR § 679.250 may appeal the decision to the SWDB, in accordance with the State Plan, WIOA § 106(b)(5), and 20 CFR § 683.630(a). The appealing entity must explain why it believes the denial is contrary to the provisions of WIOA § 106(b)(2) or WIOA § 106(b)(3) and 20 CFR § 679.250. No other cause for appeal will be considered under this section.

Such a unit or local area may submit a written appeal to the SC Department of Employment and Workforce within thirty calendar days of the denial. If the thirtieth day falls on a weekend or holiday, the deadline will be extended to the next business day. Appeals must be submitted by registered mail, clearly identified as "Dated Material," and addressed to:

State Workforce Development Board

C/O: SC Department of Employment and Workforce

Attn: Workforce Support—Appeal of Denial of LWDA Designation, Suite 515

P.O. Box 995

Columbia, SC 29202

The following procedures will apply:

- The Chair will designate the Executive Committee or an Ad Hoc Committee of at least three SWDB members to hear the appeal.
- The designated SWDB representatives will hear the appeal and issue a written decision within sixty business days.

Appeal to the Secretary of Labor

A unit of general local government (including a combination of such units) or grant recipient whose appeal of the denial of a request for designation as an LWDA to the SWDB has not resulted in such designation, may appeal the SWDB's denial to the Secretary of Labor. Appeals

must be filed no later than thirty days after receipt of written notification of the denial from the SWDB, and must be submitted by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the Secretary:

U.S. Department of Labor

Attn: ASET

200 Constitution Ave. NW

Washington, DC 20210

The appellant must establish that the petitioning LWDA was not afforded procedural rights under the state appeal process described in the State Plan or establish that the entity meets the requirements of WIOA § 106(b)(2) or WIOA § 106(b)(3) and 20 CFR § 679.250. If the Secretary determines that the appellant has met its burden of establishing one of these allegations, the Secretary may require that the area be designated as an LWDA. In making this determination, the Secretary may consider any comments submitted by the SWDB in response to the appeal.

The Secretary will issue a written decision to the Governor and the appellant.

D. PROVIDE THE APPEALS PROCESS AND POLICY REFERRED TO IN SECTION 121(H)(2)(E) OF WIOA RELATING TO DETERMINATIONS FOR INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

All Parties will actively participate in local IFA negotiations in a good faith effort to reach agreement. Any disputes shall first be attempted to be resolved informally. Any part may call a meeting to discuss and resolve disputes.

If the Local Board and required partners fail to reach consensus on funding infrastructure costs under the Local Funding Mechanism (LFM), the State Funding Mechanism (SFM) is triggered. The SFM cannot be triggered by additional partners not reaching consensus. Even if all required partners except one agree on the terms of the IFA, consensus is not reached, and the SFM is triggered for all partners in the local area.

Under the SFM, the Governor is required to determine the partners' contributions for infrastructure costs for local areas, applying WIOA statutory caps. The SFM's programmatic caps create uncertainty for partners regarding contribution toward infrastructure costs and the level of service available to participants. It is the expectation that Local Boards and partners reach consensus on infrastructure funding during local negotiations, thus avoiding the necessity of utilizing the SFM.

State Funding Mechanism Steps:

1. Notice of failure to reach consensus given to the Governor. The Local Board must submit all materials and documents used in negotiations under the LFM to assist the Governor in determining appropriate calculations by partner program.

1. The Governor determines the infrastructure budget for each center in a local area.
2. The Governor establishes cost allocation method(s).
3. The Governor determines the partners' proportionate shares.
4. The Governor calculates the statewide partner program caps using the limiting percentages required under WIOA.

5. The Governor must ensure that the funds required to be contributed by each partner program in the local area(s) that did not reach consensus, do not exceed the applicable program caps. The partners' proportionate shares must be adjusted if necessary.

Appealing the State Funding Mechanism:

Appeals must be made to the SWDB within 14 days of the Governor's determination and submitted in writing to the following address:

South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce

Attn: SWDB - Appeal of SFM, Suite 511-H

P.O. Box 995

Columbia, SC 29202

2. STATEWIDE ACTIVITIES

A. PROVIDE STATE POLICIES OR GUIDANCE FOR THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM AND FOR USE OF STATE FUNDS FOR WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES

South Carolina has several policies that govern the workforce development system and its programs as a whole, including but not limited to the following:

- 24-07 – Local MOU Guidelines
- 18-01 – Individual Employment Plans
- 18-06 – Youth Objective Assessments and Individual Service Strategies
- 24-01 – SC Works Certification Standards
- 19-03, Change 1 – SC Works Centers and the One-Stop Delivery System
- 19-05, Change 3 – WIOA Youth Program Guidance
- 24-12 – Disaster Recovery DWG
- 25-01 – Local, Statewide, and Rapid Response Incumbent Worker Training Policy
- 20-12, Change 1 – Virtual Events Platforms
- 20-15, Change 1 – Participant Eligibility for WIOA Title I Programs
- 21-03 – TAA and WIOA Dislocated Worker Program Co-enrollment Policy

Active, replaced, and expired policies can be found on the SC Works.org website under the Policies and Guidance page: https://scworks.org/workforce-system/policies-and-guidance.

B. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE INTENDS TO USE GOVERNOR'S SET ASIDE FUNDING FOR MANDATORY AND DISCRETIONARY ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING HOW THE STATE WILL CONDUCT EVALUATIONS OF TITLE I ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES.

Statewide Activities

The SWDB retains 10 percent of the Governor's set aside to incubate promising workforce development, education, and training models. Funding proposals are developed by SWDB

leadership, staff, and key stakeholders, based on the priorities identified in the WIOA State Plan and SWDB. priorities. Proposals are presented to the SWDB for review, discussion, and approval.

Examples of activities funded through the Governor's set aside include, but are not limited to:

- *Workforce Innovation Funding,* awarded to LWDAs on a competitive basis to implement or scale effective strategies in partnership with local organizations for delivering workforce development resources in their local communities.
- *Career Readiness/Soft Skills Courseware*, used to expand the availability of courseware to additional locations, including technical colleges, connection points, and employer locations.
- *Targeted Outreach and Branding/SC Works Center Signage Refresh*, to support state-level outreach and promotion of the SC Works system and workforce programs and refresh SC Works center signage.
- *Statewide Operating Costs,* to support maintenance costs for the Title I and III case management system and labor exchange. Other operating costs include Performance and Reporting staff that collect and report performance data to the US Department of Labor for six federal programs, the annual Blanket Accident Insurance policy renewal, and participation in national organizations such as the National Governors Association.
- *High-Performing Workforce Board Award,* to recognize and incentivize LWDBs for their leadership and support of the state's workforce system through innovative practices and performance achievements.
- *SC Works Conference,* to unite WIOA programs, SC Works staff, and partners to discuss current and future workforce development challenges while facilitating networking among workforce development leaders and staff across our state.
- *LWDA Funding for Training and Participant Supportive Services,* to provide in-demand training services that align with local area needs, participant supportive services, and/or support initiatives to alleviate barriers to employment such as access to transportation, childcare, broadband, and affordable housing, that prevent consumers from obtaining and retaining successful employment.
- *LWDA Restoration Funding,* to provide LWDAs that received a decrease in Program Year PY 2024 funding a grant in the amount of 75 percent of the loss experienced.
- *SC Works Security Funding,* to support SC Works center security.

As required by WIOA, South Carolina also utilizes Governor's Reserve funds (set aside) to conduct relevant workforce evaluations. To meet this requirement, DEW envisions completing the following evaluations:

- Evaluate business conditions to gauge the needs and expectations of South Carolina employers to generate a better understanding of the state's economy and workforce. The scope of work will include hiring experts to develop a statistically rigorous survey and improve the survey response rate to ensure valid results reflect a representative private sector sample. The survey will periodically include additional questions about employer services to inform programmatic offerings.

State Administration

DEW retains 5 percent of the Governor's set aside for state-level administration of the Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs, including administrative support to the SWDB.

C. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL UTILIZE RAPID RESPONSE FUNDS TO RESPOND TO LAYOFFS AND PLANT CLOSINGS AND COORDINATE SERVICES TO QUICKLY AID COMPANIES AND THEIR AFFECTED WORKERS. STATES ALSO SHOULD DESCRIBE ANY LAYOFF AVERSION STRATEGIES THEY HAVE IMPLEMENTED TO ADDRESS AT RISK COMPANIES AND WORKERS.

Fifteen percent of Dislocated Worker funds are used to manage Rapid Response services, which include planning for and responding to layoffs and closures. Rapid Response services are designed to provide early intervention assistance to businesses faced with closures or layoffs and to provide dislocated workers with information and resources to quickly seek and obtain alternate employment. DEW uses a proactive, comprehensive approach to Rapid Response by identifying, planning, and responding to layoffs, and preventing or minimizing the impact of layoffs wherever possible.

DEW's proactive and comprehensive approach is organized in the following process:

- *Stage 1*: Discovery and Notification. Once the Rapid Reemployment Team receives notification of a potential layoff or closure, the team assesses the situation by gathering information/facts, preparing materials, and identifying potential tactics for layoff aversion and analyzing industry and occupational trends to identify whether the business and impacted workers will need short-term or more sustainable services.
- *Stage 2*: Management Meeting. At an initial meeting, circumstances for the anticipated layoff are discussed along with the demographics of affected workers. Descriptions of Group Informational Sessions and Onsite Services are provided to the employer.
- *Stage 3*: Group Informational Sessions. The purpose of this session is to inform impacted workers of available reemployment services and prepare them for job search activity prior to their anticipated layoff.
- *Stage 4*: Onsite Reemployment Services. This provides customized services which address workers' unique needs for reducing unemployment. These services consist of resume building, interviewing skills, job searching, SCWOS registration, computer literacy, UI portal registration, and job fairs.

The Rapid Response team works closely with the Existing Industry Division at the South Carolina Department of Commerce (SCDOC). The Existing Industry Division provides referrals and coordinates with the DEW Rapid Response team to provide services to employers who may be experiencing a layoff or closure.

Rapid response funds are used to provide Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) to businesses at risk of imminent layoffs or closures. Once a company completes an application, local areas review the training application, assess the business, the worker group and proposed training prior to endorsing the application and forwarding it to DEW for final funding approval. In determining whether to fund Rapid Response IWT applications, training is evaluated to ensure the skills are transferrable to future employment opportunities if the aversion strategy is unsuccessful.

Rapid Response funds are also used to supplement local funds in serving dislocated workers. This additional assistance provides training, supportive services, and increased front-line staff

when needed to meet local needs. Given the size and location of a layoff, Rapid Response funds will assist with establishing transition centers specifically designed to increase the capacity and accessibility of services needed quickly for large numbers of laid-off workers.

D. DESCRIBE THE STATE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES TO PROVIDE RAPID RESPONSES IN CASES OF NATURAL DISASTERS INCLUDING COORDINATION WITH FEMA AND OTHER ENTITIES.

In the case of a disaster declaration, workforce services and recovery efforts are coordinated with FEMA and the SC Emergency Management Division. Rapid Response staff assists in the identification of businesses adversely affected and workers who lost jobs as a result of the disaster. Information is disseminated on disaster unemployment assistance and reemployment services available. Relevant to public assistance declarations, staff coordinates with local areas to determine if applying for a National Dislocated Worker Grant is needed to secure additional funding for cleanup and/or humanitarian efforts. The state coordinates with FEMA to ensure non-duplication and adherence to maintenance of effort requirements.

E. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE PROVIDES EARLY INTERVENTION (E.G., RAPID RESPONSE) AND ENSURES THE PROVISION OF APPROPRIATE CAREER SERVICES TO WORKER GROUPS ON WHOSE BEHALF A TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE (TAA) PETITION HAS BEEN FILED. (SECTION 134(A)(2)(A) AND TAA SECTION 221(A)(2)(A) .)THIS DESCRIPTION MUST INCLUDE HOW THE STATE DISSEMINATES BENEFIT INFORMATION TO PROVIDE WORKERS IN THE GROUPS IDENTIFIED IN THE TAA PETITIONS WITH AN ACCURATE UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROVISION OF TAA BENEFITS AND SERVICES IN SUCH A WAY THAT THEY ARE TRANSPARENT TO THE DISLOCATED WORKER APPLYING FOR THEM (TRADE ACT SEC. 221(A)(2)(A) AND SEC. 225; GOVERNOR-SECRETARY AGREEMENT).DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE FUNDS THAT HAVE BEEN RESERVED FOR RAPID RESPONSE TO PROVIDE SERVICES FOR EVERY WORKER GROUP THAT FILES A TAA PETITION AND HOW THE STATE WILL ENSURE THE PROVISION OF APPROPRIATE CAREER SERVICE TO WORKERS IN THE GROUPS IDENTIFIED IN THE PETITION (TAA SEC. 221(A)(2)(A)).NOTE: UNTIL THE TAA PROGRAM IS REAUTHORIZED, THE REQUIREMENTS TO PROVIDE RAPID RESPONSE AND APPROPRIATE CAREER SERVICES TO WORKER GROUPS ON WHOSE BEHALF A PETITION HAS BEEN FILED IS NOT APPLICABLE.

DEW administers the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Program, providing early intervention to worker groups on whose behalf a TAA petition has been filed.

DEW leads Rapid Response efforts across the state. When working with a business to provide Rapid Response services, DEW staff activates team efforts locally. Whenever possible, the team conducts on-site presentations at the business location. Every effort is made to provide information sessions prior to the commencement of the lay-off and/or plant closure. The presentation consists of an overview of the benefits and services that can be expected from each of the partner groups. During these sessions, the Rapid Response team emphasizes how the partner agency staff representatives will be working together as a team to offer the customer individualized and comprehensive reemployment benefits and services.

Once a petition is approved, additional sessions with affected workers are scheduled to provide information about TAA services only and enroll affected workers into the TAA program. These sessions give the workers the opportunity to ask detailed questions and may be set up through the employer, if the business is still open, or through TAA staff at the nearest SC Works center, or at another convenient location.

When an individual enters the SC Works center and is identified as TAA eligible, a Trade Workforce Consultant provides the impacted worker with a one-on-one orientation to explain available Trade benefits and services.

Rapid Response funds are used for TAA staff to monitor, identify, and communicate available benefits with worker groups that file a TAA petition.

It is important to note that as of July 1,2022, the termination provision under Section 285(a) of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended, took effect. Until further notice, the Department of Labor (DOL) may not issue determinations or process new petitions or requests for reconsideration. Workers who were certified and separated from their job on or before June 30, 2022, may still be eligible for benefits and services and should be served.

B. ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKERS PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

1. WORK-BASED TRAINING MODELS

If the State is utilizing work-based training models (e.g., on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, transitional jobs, and customized training) as part of its training strategy and these strategies are not already discussed in other sections of the plan, describe the State's strategies for how these models ensure high quality training for both the participant and the employer.

On-the-job training and incumbent worker training are the most widely utilized work-based training models across the state. Local areas incorporate these models into their service delivery strategies as a tool to engage and serve employers and to train and upskill workers. While not as common, LWDAs leverage transitional jobs to help job seekers develop job skills for more long-term employment opportunities. This is a beneficial strategy for jobseekers who have been out of the workforce for some time, such as offenders. Customized training is also less common but is used by local areas when there is a lack of sufficient training providers in the area. The Governor's Reserve is typically used to augment local funding to provide work-based training opportunities. Other work-based training models are discussed in the Workforce Education and Training Analysis.

2. REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP

Describe how the State will incorporate Registered Apprenticeship into its strategy for service design and delivery (e.g., outreach to sponsors and prospective sponsors, identifying potential participants and connecting them to apprenticeship opportunities).

The Statewide Education and Workforce Act (Act 67) directs the Coordinating Council for Workforce Development (CCWD) to develop a state strategic plan for education and workforce. The goals and strategies outlined in the draft plan are organized into three themes: awareness, skills, and obstacles. The "skills" goal is to increase skills and experiences of South Carolinians at all ages, to ensure they can progress through the career path of their choice. An indicator used to measure the achievement of this goal is the level of participation in workforce-based learning experiences, including RAP activity.

The South Carolina education and workforce plan is designed to be a roadmap for all education and workforce programs in the state to align initiatives, strategies, and resources. The vision, goals, and strategies outlined in the WIOA State Plan loosely align to the themes seen in the education and workforce plan, and DEW envisions supporting this goal through partnership and collaboration with Apprenticeship Carolina™, the state's leader in apprenticeship development and technical assistance, promoting awareness of apprenticeship opportunities to WIOA participants, braiding and leveraging funding, and sharing promising models.

Apprenticeship Carolina™, a division of the SC Technical College System, leads South Carolina in RAPs. Apprenticeship Carolina™ works to ensure all employers have access to the information and technical assistance they need to create demand-driven RAPs. Apprenticeship consultants are available to guide companies through the registered apprenticeship development process from initial information to full recognition in the national Registered Apprenticeship System. Apprenticeship Carolina™ has successfully secured funding from the USDOL to expand youth and adult apprenticeships in the state across all industries. As the administrative entity for the federal workforce system, DEW has a strong partnership with Apprenticeship Carolina™. Our current focus is on understanding the organization of the Apprenticeship Carolina™ division, identifying the funding available to support participation in registered apprenticeship activities, creating examples of how WIOA Title I funding can be leveraged to support participants in registered apprenticeship activities, and developing a cross-referral process for jobseekers and employers interested in apprenticeship opportunities. DEW's partnership and coordination with Apprenticeship Carolina™ is critical to the state's ability to incorporate RAPs into its WIOA Title I strategy for service design and delivery.

Individuals have many avenues to view RAP opportunities in South Carolina, including ApprenticeshipUSA, Apprenticeship Explorer, and the Palmetto Academic and Training Hub (PATh). PATh is used to make program information about registered apprenticeships available to the public while serving as a tool for Title I case managers to inform participants of the career and training options available through Title I funding. An ongoing goal for DEW is to expand the network of Title I training providers to ensure the inclusion of programs across industries – this includes RAP opportunities.

Title I funding is commonly used to cover the On the Job Training (OJT) and Related Training Instruction (RTI) portions of a RAP. The State Workforce Board allocates funding to support training initiatives, which can be used to cover RAP activities and there are several active examples of local workforce board coordination with employers and non-employer sponsors to support apprenticeship activity. Leveraging WIOA funding for RAP activity ensures that WIOA participants are given the opportunity and helps local areas achieve related performance goals such as the Youth Work Experience requirements and state Fund Utilization and Participant Cost requirements.

While there are active examples of WIOA apprenticeship models, there is an opportunity to highlight these models so that all local areas and boards are aware of them and to provide technical assistance for developing similar models where none exist. DEW envisions using written guidance and virtual learning opportunities to share information about promising and effective models.

3. TRAINING PROVIDER ELIGIBILITY PROCEDURE

Provide the procedure, eligibility criteria, and information requirements for determining training provider initial and continued eligibility, including RAPs (WIOA Section 122).

An Eligible Training Provider (ETP) is an entity that has met the eligibility requirements to receive funding through an Individual Training Account (ITA) to provide training services to eligible individuals.

All training providers must meet the following requirements to be eligible for inclusion on South Carolina's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL):

- Qualify as one of the following:

    - Institution of higher education that provides a program of training that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential
    - Entity that carries out RAPs
    - Public or private training provider, including community-based organizations, joint labor-management organizations, pre-apprenticeship programs, and joint labor-management organization
    - Provider of adult education and literacy activities, if such activities are provided concurrently or in combination with other training services
    - Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDB) if it meets the conditions of WIOA§ 107(g)(1)
- Be a legal entity
- Be licensed, accredited, or exempted from licensure by the appropriate South Carolina or federal licensing authority prior to applying for placement on the ETPL
- Be in good standing and current on state unemployment insurance taxes
- Provide an appropriate program of service (see below for program requirements)
- Have the ability to do all of the following:
    - Offer programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials or certifications
    - Meet the needs of local employers and participants
    - Serve individuals with barriers to employment
- Have refund policies specifying when refunds for tuition and other costs associated with the training program will be allowed that are in writing and are published to ensure students are aware of how to request a refund
- Have a written grievance policy for students to file complaints within an organization against faculty, staff, or other employees that is published to ensure that students are aware of how to file a complaint
- Comply with all applicable non-discrimination and equal opportunity provisions as potential recipients of WIOA funds, in accordance with WIOA § 188

Licensure and Accreditation

Providers of training are prohibited from advertising, soliciting, or operating until licensed or determined exempt from oversight by the SC Commission on Higher Education (CHE; see S.C. Code Ann. § 59-58-50(A)). In-state and out-of-state postsecondary providers of training must provide evidence of licensure, accreditation, or exemption from licensure by the appropriate South Carolina or federal licensing authority prior to placement on the ETPL. Licensing requirements do not apply to Registered Apprenticeships.

Licensing entities may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- SC Commission on Higher Education
- SC Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation

- SC Department of Motor Vehicles
- SC Department of Health and Human Services
- SC Department of Health and Environmental Control
- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges

Out-of-State Provider

A WIOA participant in South Carolina may choose a training provider located outside of the local workforce development area (LWDA) and/or outside of the state, including an online training program, in accordance with local policies and procedures. An out-of-state training provider must be included on that state's ETPL and South Carolina's ETPL. LWDAs are responsible for ensuring out-of-state providers offer quality training programs that meet local demand occupation requirements.

Requesting inclusion on SC's ETPL is soliciting in South Carolina in such a way that a physical presence is created within the state. Such out-of-state providers must meet the licensure and accreditation requirements noted above.

Training Program Requirements

A training provider must provide a program of training services (one or more courses or classes, or structured regiment) that leads to:

- An industry-recognized certificate or certification, a certificate of completion of a registered apprenticeship, a license recognized by the State or the Federal government, or a postsecondary credential;
- A secondary school diploma or its equivalent if such activities are provided in combination with other training services;
- Employment; or
- Measurable skill gains toward a recognized credential or employment.

Training programs may be delivered as stackable services and can be provided in-person, online, or in a blended approach. Certificates must recognize technical or industry/occupational skills for the specific industry/occupation rather than general skills related to safety, hygiene, etc., even if such general skills certificates are broadly required to qualify for entry-level employment or advancement in employment. Certificates awarded by the LWDB, and work readiness certificate programs are not included. These types of certificates are not recognized industry-wide and do not document the measurable technical or industry/occupational skills necessary to gain employment or advancement within a specific industry/occupation.

Some training services are exempt from WIOA § 122 eligibility requirements and are not included on the state's ETPL, including: On-the-Job training (OJT), customized training, Incumbent Worker Training (IWT), internships, paid or unpaid work experiences, and transitional employment. Additionally, training services are exempt from the eligibility requirements when the LWDB provides training services through a pay-for-performance contract or the LWDB determines and documents that:

- There are insufficient providers;

- There is a training services program that has demonstrated effectiveness offered in the local area by a community-based organization, or other private organization, to serve individuals with barriers to employment; and
- It would be most appropriate to award a contract to an institution of higher education or other eligible provider in order to train multiple individuals in in-demand industry sectors or occupations, and such contract does not limit customer choice.

Initial Eligibility and Application Process for New Training Providers

Training providers and programs seeking approval for initial eligibility on the South Carolina's ETPL must apply online by submitting an application through the PATh website at www.scpath.org. New training providers and programs will be continually added to the ETPL as they become eligible and approved. Once approved, initial eligibility status remains in effect for one (1) year from the eligibility date. After the initial eligibility period expires, training providers and each program of training are subject to procedures for continued eligibility status, as described later in this guidance.

A training provider seeking to be approved as an ETP on the South Carolina ETPL must provide a completed ETPL application in PATh, which must include the following:

- Descriptions of each program of training services to be offered, including all of the following:
    - Program-specific performance information based on South Carolina's identified factor related to the WIOA performance indicators (See note below.)
    - Identification of businesses that developed the training in partnership with the provider if any
    - Information on cost of attendance, including costs of tuition and fees
    - Description of how the program of training services aligns with in-demand industry sectors and occupations, to the extent possible
    - Documentation of compliance with all state licensure requirements and current licensing status

A signed Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) in which the provider agrees to share data with the State pertaining to training outcomes, including individual student coursework and other Personally Identifiable Information (PII) to match training and employment data and outcomes for all students, including WIOA-funded students and non-WIOA funded students.

Starting January 1, 2021, ETPs submitting new programs of training must provide the following program-specific performance information based on South Carolina's identified factor related to the WIOA performance indicators from the previous program year (July 1st – June 30th) for each program of training via PATh:

- Number of students that participated in the program of training in the last completed program year
- Number of students who exited the program of training in the last completed program year
- Number of students that obtained a credential in the last completed program year

The state will review the application content in PATh to ensure all required information has been submitted correctly and make a content-only determination within 15 calendar days of the initial application. If an application is determined to be incomplete, the training provider will be notified, and the application will remain open for a period of 60 calendar days from the date of receipt. If a training provider fails to submit all required information or materials within this 60 day period, the State will delete the application. The training provider may resubmit an application at any time.

Upon content-only approval by the State, the application will be sent to all applicable LWDAs, as the Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) hold the final approval authority for each LWDA in which the training provider is located or providing training services. A training provider and at least one program of training must be approved by a minimum of one LWDA in order to be published on the ETPL. The local approval process and timeline may differ between each LWDA. For example, some LWDAs may require presentation to the LWDB and other LWDBs may grant direct approval authority to the designated local administrative entity. LWDBs are required to have a local ETPL policy outlining the local approval criteria, process, and timeline, including a local appeals process for training providers.

Approved ETPL training providers are responsible for maintaining up-to-date information for the ETPL in PATh in order to continue receiving WIOA training referrals and funds. Failure to update program information may result in removal of the program from the ETPL. Any significant change to a program, including a change in the program's cost, may require re-evaluation for approval.

Continued Eligibility Application Process

After the initial eligibility period of one (1) year, the training provider, with the exception of RAP sponsors, must submit an application for continued eligibility for each program of training and resubmit an application every year thereafter. The continued eligibility application requirement ensures that training provider and program information is accurate and that performance reporting standards are met. The continued eligibility application is required for any program of training that has been previously approved for the ETPL. A system-generated email notification will be sent to the training provider's listed point of contact 60 days prior to the expiration of a program's approval status. ETPs must update point of contact information if there is a change.

A training provider seeking continued ETPL eligibility approval must provide all of the following in PATh:

- Any changes to provider or program information previously approved must be submitted, including a current program description, breakdown of tuition costs and fees, credentials to be attained, and contact information;
- A signed MOA in which the training provider agrees to share data with the State pertaining to training outcomes, including individual student coursework and other PII to match training and employment data and outcomes for all students, including WIOA-funded students and non-WIOA-funded students.

In making a continued eligibility determination, the state will consider the following:

- ETP performance on WIOA performance indicators;
- Quality of the program of training services including programs leading to a recognized postsecondary credential;

- Description of the accessibility of training services throughout the state, including in rural areas, and through the use of technology;
- The degree to which training programs relate to in-demand industry sectors and occupations in the state;
- Documentation of compliance with all state licensure requirements and the current licensing status, as applicable;
- Current status with state unemployment insurance taxes;
- Evidence indicating the training program leads to an industry-recognized certificate or credential, including any recognized post-secondary credentials;
- ETP's ability to provide trainings that are physically and programmatically accessible for individuals who are employed and individuals with barriers to employment, including individuals with disabilities;
- Information reported to state agencies on federal and state training programs other than WIOA title I-B programs; and
- Timeliness and accuracy of ETP's performance reports.

The State will review the application content in PATh to ensure all required information has been submitted correctly and make a content-only determination within 15 calendar days of the application. The State will notify a provider if an application is determined to be incomplete and will keep the application open for a period of 60 calendar days from the date of receipt. If a provider fails to submit all required information or materials within this 60-day period, the State will delete the application. The training provider may resubmit an application for continued eligibility at any time once all required data has been submitted.

Approved Eligible Training Providers are responsible for maintaining up-to-date information for the ETPL in PATh in order to continue receiving WIOA training referrals and funds. Failure to update program information may result in removal of the program from the ETPL. Any significant change to a program, including a change in the program's cost, may require re-evaluation for approval.

Registered Apprenticeship

RAPs registered with the US Department of Labor's (DOL) Office of Apprenticeship (OA) are automatically eligible to be included on the ETPL. However, RAPs must indicate their interest in being included on the ETPL. The State works with DOL to contact RAPs within the State in order to allow the RAP sponsors to indicate interest. RAPs are not subject to the same eligibility, performance, or reporting requirements as other providers since they go through a detailed application and vetting procedure with DOL and are monitored on a regular basis by DOL. RAPs are exempt from WIOA performance and reporting-related requirements, including the requirements for annual ETP reporting, enabling these programs to be placed on the statewide ETPL with minimal burden. RAP providers, however, are encouraged to voluntarily report performance information in accordance with 20 CFR § 680.470(e).

For inclusion on the ETPL, RAP providers must provide the following information:

- Occupations included within the RAP,
- The name and address of the RAP sponsor,

- The name and address of the Related Technical Instruction (RTI) provider and the location of instruction if different from the sponsor's address,
- The method and length of instruction, and
- The number of active apprentices.

RAP sponsors that do not provide the RTI portion of the apprenticeship program may be required to provide additional information about their education provider, including the cost of instruction.

LWDBs may not impose additional requirements on RAP sponsors. Additionally, it is not necessary for local areas to determine if a RAP is on their local in-demand occupation list. RAPs included on the ETPL are automatically considered to be an in-demand training if the program's selection process is open. However, enrollment on the ETPL does not automatically entitle RAPs to funding by the LWDB.

To include a RAP on the ETPL, RAP sponsors can obtain an application through PATh or request an application by emailing SCETPLSupport@dew.sc.gov. Any questions or concerns about the status of a RAP sponsor should also be emailed to SC ETPL Support.

Once a RAP opts for inclusion on the ETPL, the RAP will remain on the ETPL until one of the following applies:

- The program sponsor notifies the state that it no longer wants to be included on the list.
- The program sponsor is deregistered under the National Apprenticeship Act.
- The program sponsor intentionally supplied inaccurate information.
- The program sponsor substantially violated any provision of WIOA Title I or the WIOA regulations, including 29 CFR Part 38.

Pre-apprenticeship Programs

Pre- apprenticeship programs do not have the same automatic ETP status under WIOA and are required to go through the same vetting process and performance reporting requirements as all other training providers in the State. Pre-apprenticeship programs funded with WIOA funds must have at least one registered apprenticeship partner; such pre-apprenticeship programs must possess or develop a strong record of enrolling their pre-apprenticeship graduates into a RAP. See TEGL 13-16 for additional information on pre-apprenticeship program requirements.

4. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR FOR THE ADULT PRIORITY OF SERVICE REQUIREMENT IN WIOA SECTION 134 (C)(3)(E) THAT REQUIRES AMERICAN JOB CENTER STAFF, WHEN USING WIOA ADULT PROGRAM FUNDS TO PROVIDE INDIVIDUALIZED CAREER SERVICES AND TRAINING SERVICES, TO GIVE PRIORITY OF SERVICE TO RECIPIENTS OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE, LOW-INCOME INDIVIDUALS, AND INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE BASIC SKILLS DEFICIENT (INCLUDING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS).

The Priority of Service Policy (State Instruction Letter 15-17, Change 3) requires that 75 percent of Title I Adult participants receiving individualized career services and training be low-income or basic skills deficient. LWDBs are responsible for establishing local procedures to comply with this policy and for conducting outreach to these priority populations. Compliance with the policy is monitored through ad hoc reports from SC Works Online Services.

5. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S CRITERIA REGARDING LOCAL AREA TRANSFER OF FUNDS BETWEEN THE ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKER PROGRAMS

Local workforce areas may request approval from DEW to transfer funds between the Adult and Dislocated Worker fund streams. Transfer requests must be made in writing to the state via a "Fund Transfer Request Form" any time after receipt of the corresponding program year/fiscal year funds authorization.

Local areas are required to provide documentation of local workforce development board approval (e.g., board meeting minutes) of any requested transfers, excluding administration to program transfers within a fund stream. Local boards may provide staff to the board the Authority to transfer funds from Dislocated Worker to Adult funding streams and vice versa as needed for the current program year, but not to exceed that program year. Each transfer request must provide sufficient justification regarding the percentage of formula allocation being requested.

The state reviews the Notice of Funds Authorization (NFA) requesting area's program Year/fiscal year allocation (according to the last NFA), the percentage of allocation requested for transfer, the amount of allocation requested, the local area's justification for transfer, the current number of participants in both programs, the local area's expenditures on the most recent monthly Financial Status Report, and documentation of board approval. For a transfer to be approved, the local area must have funding available to cover the amount of the transfer request and available funding to serve the area's existing participants within the program from which the funds are being earmarked. Local areas may be requested to provide information on additional funding sources, to ensure there is adequate funding available to serve the existing participants. Requests may be denied if a local area, does not submit the required documentation, does not have funding available to cover the amount of the transfer request, or is unable to demonstrate that there is adequate funding available to serve the existing participants.

The issuance of an adjusted NFA reflecting funds earmarked for another program (e.g., Dislocated Worker funds for Adult), serves as the local workforce area's official notification that the transfer is approved.

6. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S POLICY ON WIOA AND TAA CO-ENROLLMENT AND WHETHER AND HOW OFTEN THIS POLICY IS DISSEMINATED TO THE LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARDS AND REQUIRED ONE-STOP PARTNERS. TRADE ACT SEC. 239(F), SEC. 235, 20 CFR 618.325, 20 CFR 618.824(A)(3)(I).

The TAA and WIOA Dislocated Worker Program Co-enrollment Policy (State Instruction 21-03), provides guidance on co-enrolling participants in the TAA and WIOA programs. The policy promotes integrated service delivery. TAA program participants who are eligible must be co-enrolled in the WIOA Title I DW program. Eligible workers of TAA are referred to the WIOA program in their local areas through a formal referral process for assessment of eligibility for supportive services. The policy is kept updated within the policy section of our state website and the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs are monitored against said policy.

7. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S FORMAL STRATEGY TO ENSURE THAT WIOA AND TAA CO-ENROLLED PARTICIPANTS RECEIVE NECESSARY FUNDED BENEFITS AND SERVICES. TRADE ACT SEC. 239(F), SEC. 235, 20 CFR 618.816(C)

State Instruction Number 21-03, TAA and WIOA Dislocated Worker Program Co-enrollment Policy was issued on July 29, 2021. To promote integrated service delivery, the policy requires

TAA program participants who are eligible to be co-enrolled in the WIOA Title I DW program and DW participants who are eligible for the TAA program to be co-enrolled. To ensure all eligible participants are being co-enrolled in accordance with this policy, supervisory staff were encouraged to monitor the Co-Enrollment Summary report under Detailed Reports in SCWOS. TAA Admin will consistently track new enrollments and obtain and review data in Co-Enrollment Summary Reports from SCWOS to ensure that TAA staff are referring participants for co-enrollment and that WIOA partners are co-enrolling referred participants in accordance with the policy. Moreover, the TAA Admin will communicate local workforce development area concerns identified by the report with DEW's department responsible for the oversight of the local area administration of the WIOA DW program, for appropriate action. Additionally, TAA is collaborating with DEW's Programmatic Monitoring Team to ensure that both TAA and WIOA are following the policy.

WIOA and TAA utilize SCWOS as the case management and reporting system. TAA eligibility, enrollment, and activities are recorded in SCWOS. State Instruction Number 21-03 provides that to initiate the co-enrollment process, a referral should be made to introduce an eligible participant to the other program or service provider. WIOA strongly encourages the use of an integrated system of case management, using technology to achieve alignment in service delivery that meets customers' needs, including referrals. Electronic referrals via SCWOS can also be more easily tracked, including outcomes. In accordance with State Instruction 20-14: Required Use of SCWOS for Referrals, the instruction requires all customer referrals be conducted through SCWOS.

Program staff, in conjunction with the participant, are required to complete the following forms and upload the forms into SCWOS, and if applicable, file the form in the participant's folder:

- WIOA Acknowledgement of Referral to TAA-to be signed by WIOA program staff and the participant
- TAA Acknowledgement of Referral to WIOA-to be signed by TAA program staff and the participant

By signing these forms, program staff acknowledge that the participant is being referred to the partner program and that program staff have fully explained the benefits of co-enrollment. Assessments provided by TAA, WIOA, and other partner programs may be used and may increase efficiency, ensure that workers quickly receive appropriate reemployment services, and quickly identify those workers requiring a more comprehensive and specialized assessment of their skills. If an initial assessment completed by a partner program does not include the information required by the co-enrolling program, case managers for the co-enrolling program are required to supplement the initial assessment in conjunction with the worker to ensure all necessary information is obtained. TAA and WIOA case managers are required to ensure that IEPs are kept up to date for all co-enrolled participants to avoid duplicative services and to clearly state current goals and objectives for each participant to ensure that participants are receiving all needed and appropriate services. This includes closing out old objectives, goals, and IEPs, as appropriate.

Also, WIOA and partner programs have been provided TAA flyers that speak to services that can be provided and employers that had petitions certified in the past. The flyers provide a TAA website, and QR Code that goes directly to the website, that provides comprehensive information on services and lists employers who had petitions certified in the past.

8. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S PROCESS FOR FAMILIARIZING ONE-STOP STAFF WITH THE TAA PROGRAM. 20 CFR 618.804(J), 20 CFR 618.305

One-stop staff are familiarized with the TAA program through general information sessions and staff training where applicable.

C. YOUTH PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS.

With respect to youth workforce investment activities authorized in section 129 of WIOA, States should describe their strategies that will support the implementation of youth activities under WIOA. State's must-

1. IDENTIFY THE STATE-DEVELOPED CRITERIA TO BE USED BY LOCAL BOARDS IN AWARDING GRANTS OR CONTRACTS FOR YOUTH WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES AND DESCRIBE HOW THE LOCAL BOARDS WILL TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE ABILITY OF THE PROVIDERS TO MEET PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES BASED ON PRIMARY INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE FOR THE YOUTH PROGRAM AS DESCRIBED IN SECTION 116(B)(2)(A)(II) OF WIOA.[14] FURTHER, INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION OF HOW THE STATE ASSISTS LOCAL AREAS IN DETERMINING WHETHER TO CONTRACT FOR SERVICES OR TO PROVIDE SOME OR ALL OF THE PROGRAM ELEMENTS DIRECTLY.

State Instruction 17-07 was issued to prevent potential conflicts of interest by requiring direct providers of Title I services to be competitively procured while prohibiting an entity providing oversight and administrative services in a local workforce area from also providing operational services for youth, adults, or dislocated workers under Title I. Additionally, local areas are expected to ensure compliance with procurement provisions at the Federal, State, and local levels including 2 CFR 200. The State conducts monitoring and oversight activities of youth provider procurement and service delivery efforts to provide strategic direction and promote continuous improvement initiatives.

South Carolina has placed a high emphasis on providing quality education, training, and employment opportunities for disconnected youth. State instruction 14-03, Change 1, requires local boards to have a standing committee which provides information and assists with planning, operational, and other issues related to the provision of services to youth. These committees play a critical role in the selection and evaluation of youth service providers.

To ensure all WIOA Youth Service Providers meet basic programmatic standards, the state has developed the following criteria for LWDAs to consider during their provider selection process:

- Providers must demonstrate experience and expertise in addressing the employment, training, or education needs of eligible youth, specifically out-of-school (OSY) or disconnected youth.
- Providers must demonstrate experience and/or strategies in connecting youth to education, training, and employment opportunities with an emphasis on career readiness activities and promoting career pathways for participants.
- Providers must exhibit strong community and business linkages to ensure the ability to develop work-based learning opportunities and meet the skill and training needs of the state's talent pipeline.
- Providers must demonstrate the ability to meet performance accountability measures through program design and strategies.

[14] Sec. 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(V)

LWDAs are required to adhere to federal, state, and local procurement standards. If an area requests state review of contracts or requests for proposals, the state will provide any suggestions for how the request can be less restrictive, if possible.

Performance measures are an indicator of consistent, effective, and sustainable program models. Prospective providers must be able to present data to support their service delivery. For past WIOA youth providers, the proposal must report performance outcomes for at least the previous two program years, if applicable. Providers must speak to their ability and strategies to meet the performance measures for WIOA.

2. EXPLAIN HOW THE STATE ASSISTS LOCAL WORKFORCE BOARDS IN ACHIEVING EQUITABLE RESULTS FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL AND IN-SCHOOL YOUTH. DESCRIBE PROMISING PRACTICES OR PARTNERSHIP MODELS THAT LOCAL AREAS ARE IMPLEMENTING AND THE STATE'S ROLE IN SUPPORTING AND SCALING THOSE MODELS WITHIN THE STATE FOR BOTH IN-SCHOOL AND OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH.

Historically, South Carolina has served a predominately out-of-school youth (OSY) population with successful outcomes. The state is well-positioned to continue this trend. There are several strategies in development that will help improve outcomes for OSY:

LWDA Youth Committees: Each LWDB is required to form a Youth Committee that provides information and assists with operational and other issues relating to the provision of services to youth. The Youth Committee is charged with developing local service strategies that will increase the number of OSY served and improve outcomes for this population. All 12 LWDAs have standing Youth Committees.

Aligning Programs and Services: Aligning programs and services through co-enrollment and referral processes has historically increased the number of individuals served and generally improved outcomes. South Carolina will continue to achieve the now 50 percent OSY expenditure requirement due to alignment strategies such as co-location and co-enrollment practices.

Although the graduation rate continues to improve, South Carolina's Title I youth programs serve a high number of youths who have dropped out of secondary school. Seeing the overlap in customers, LWDAs have chosen to co-locate with Adult Education Providers to promote communication between provider staff and effectively recruit OSY and serve co-enrolled participants. Co-locating with Adult Education allows those individuals who engage in equivalency programs to access the extra supports and services that WIOA provides. Additionally, the comprehensive SC Works centers are equipped to serve the OSY population and connect them to the many services, programs, and partners represented. Some of the centers actually offer basic skills and equivalency classes on-site, further providing a holistic approach to serving youth.

Another opportunity for increased program alignment is with the Local Workforce Development Board Youth and Disability Committees. Each local area has created an LWDB committee to address the needs of youth and to ensure outreach and services for people with disabilities in the workforce. With Vocational Rehabilitation taking a leading role in the Disability Committee, the local areas are gaining a better understanding of the services that are offered to students and youth with disabilities through VR and other disability service providers. This has resulted in refined referral processes and opportunities to engage people with disabilities in the SC Works Centers.

Work-Based Learning: The state is committed to increasing the use of work-based learning opportunities to expose youth to employment and career opportunities. Increasing the use of work-based learning will help youth acquire the personal attributes, knowledge, and skills needed to obtain a job and advance in employment.

Soft Skills: Ensuring youth have the critical soft skills to pair with the technical skills required of employers is essential to fostering the success of out of school youth. Workforce programs are encouraged to align their soft skill curriculum with the six essential soft skills identified by WIOA state workforce partners, including Communication, Digital Literacy, Problem Solving, Professionalism, Teamwork, and Time Management.

3. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE ASSISTS LOCAL WORKFORCE BOARDS IN IMPLEMENTING INNOVATIVE MODELS FOR DELIVERING YOUTH WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING EFFECTIVE WAYS LOCAL WORKFORCE BOARDS CAN MAKE AVAILABLE THE 14 PROGRAM ELEMENTS DESCRIBED IN WIOA SECTION 129(C)(2); AND EXPLAIN HOW LOCAL AREAS CAN ENSURE WORK EXPERIENCE, INCLUDING QUALITY PRE-APPRENTICESHIP AND REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP, IS PRIORITIZED AS A KEY ELEMENT WITHIN A BROADER CAREER PATHWAYS STRATEGY.

South Carolina's 12 LWDAs are responsible for providing or connecting youth to the 14 required elements: (1) Tutoring, Study Skills Training, Instruction and Drop-out Prevention Services; (2) Alternative Secondary School Services or Dropout Recovery Services; (3) Paid and Unpaid Work Experience; (4) Occupational Skills Training; (5) Education Offered Concurrently with Workforce Preparation and Training for a Specific Occupation; (6) Leadership Development Opportunities; (7) Supportive Services; (8) Adult Mentoring; (9) Follow-up Services; (10) Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling; (11) Financial Literacy Education; (12) Entrepreneurial Skills Training; (13) Services that Provide Labor Market Information; and (14) Postsecondary Preparation and Transition Services. To ensure program participants have access to the 14 elements, programmatic monitors will conduct annual reviews of each local area. Additionally, each local area will be responsible for describing how the elements are integrated within their program design in their local plan.

LWDA reports are utilized to identify the local area's Work-Based Learning (WBL) rate and ensure accordance with the 20% WBL expenditure requirement. Those areas that do not meet the WBL requirement are subject to State Instruction Number 19-04, Change 1, WIOA Title I Sanctions Policy. State Instruction Number 19-05, Change 3, WIOA Title 1 Youth Program Guidance, provides or reiterates the 20% WBL requirement. Change 3 includes updates on TABE 13 & 14 and work authorization requirements and provides information regarding the inclusion of supportive services, that enable WIOA participants to participate in work experiences, in the WBL calculation. Registered apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships are included in the guidance as allowable WBL activities, and the state communicates registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship opportunities to local areas and participants through the ETPL. A minimum of 20% of WIOA youth funds must be spent on paid and unpaid work experience for both ISY and OSY. Further, the state will continue to look at opportunities to encourage and promote quality pre-apprenticeship and RAPs.

4. PROVIDE THE LANGUAGE CONTAINED IN THE STATE POLICY FOR "REQUIRING ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE TO ENTER OR COMPLETE AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM, OR TO SECURE AND HOLD EMPLOYMENT" CRITERION FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH SPECIFIED IN WIOA SECTION 129(A)(1)(B)(III)(VIII) AND FOR "REQUIRING ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE TO COMPLETE AN EDUCATION PROGRAM, OR TO SECURE AND HOLD EMPLOYMENT" CRITERION FOR IN-SCHOOL YOUTH SPECIFIED IN WIOA SECTION 129(A)(1)(C)(IV)(VII).IF THE STATE

DOES NOT HAVE A POLICY, DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL ENSURE THAT LOCAL AREAS WILL HAVE A POLICY FOR THESE CRITERIA.

The state does not have a policy for "requires additional assistance to complete an educational program." As allowed in 20 CFR § 681.300, South Carolina requires each Local Board to establish definitions and eligibility requirements in written policies when using the "requires additional assistance" criteria for out-of-school youth, as well as in-school youth.

D. SINGLE-AREA STATE REQUIREMENTS

In States where there is only one local workforce investment area, the governor serves as both the State and local chief elected official. In such cases, the State must submit any information required in the local plan (WIOA section 106(d)(2)).States with a single workforce area must include—

1. ANY COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD THAT REPRESENT DISAGREEMENT WITH THE PLAN.(WIOA SECTION 108(D)(3).)

2. THE ENTITY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DISBURSAL OF GRANT FUNDS, AS DETERMINED BY THE GOVERNOR, IF DIFFERENT FROM THAT FOR THE STATE.(WIOA SECTION 108(B)(15).)

3. A DESCRIPTION OF THE TYPE AND AVAILABILITY OF WIOA TITLE I YOUTH ACTIVITIES AND SUCCESSFUL MODELS, INCLUDING FOR YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES.(WIOA SECTION 108(B)(9).)

South Carolina is not a single-area state.

4. A DESCRIPTION OF THE ROLES AND RESOURCE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE ONE-STOP PARTNERS.

South Carolina is not a single-area state.

5. THE COMPETITIVE PROCESS USED TO AWARD THE SUBGRANTS AND CONTRACTS FOR TITLE I ACTIVITIES.

South Carolina is not a single-area state.

6. HOW TRAINING SERVICES OUTLINED IN SECTION 134 WILL BE PROVIDED THROUGH INDIVIDUAL TRAINING ACCOUNTS AND/OR THROUGH CONTRACTS, AND HOW SUCH TRAINING APPROACHES WILL BE COORDINATED. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL MEET INFORMED CUSTOMER CHOICE REQUIREMENTS REGARDLESS OF TRAINING APPROACH.

South Carolina is not a single-area state.

7. HOW THE STATE BOARD, IN FULFILLING LOCAL BOARD FUNCTIONS, WILL COORDINATE TITLE I ACTIVITIES WITH THOSE ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE II. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE BOARD WILL CARRY OUT THE REVIEW OF LOCAL APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED UNDER TITLE II CONSISTENT WITH WIOA SECS.107(D)(11)(A) AND (B)(I) AND WIOA SEC. 232.

South Carolina is not a single-area state.

8. COPIES OF EXECUTED COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WHICH DEFINE HOW ALL LOCAL SERVICE PROVIDERS WILL CARRY OUT THE REQUIREMENTS FOR INTEGRATION OF AND ACCESS TO THE ENTIRE SET OF SERVICES AVAILABLE IN THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM, INCLUDING COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH ENTITIES ADMINISTERING REHABILITATION ACT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES.

South Carolina is not a single-area state.

E. WAIVER REQUESTS (OPTIONAL)

States wanting to request waivers as part of their title I-B Operational Plan must include a waiver plan that includes the following information for each waiver requested:

1. IDENTIFIES THE STATUTORY OR REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS FOR WHICH A WAIVER IS REQUESTED AND THE GOALS THAT THE STATE OR LOCAL AREA, AS APPROPRIATE, INTENDS TO ACHIEVE AS A RESULT OF THE WAIVER AND HOW THOSE GOALS RELATE TO THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN;

2. DESCRIBES THE ACTIONS THAT THE STATE OR LOCAL AREA, AS APPROPRIATE, HAS UNDERTAKEN TO REMOVE STATE OR LOCAL STATUTORY OR REGULATORY BARRIERS;

3. DESCRIBES THE GOALS OF THE WAIVER AND THE EXPECTED PROGRAMMATIC OUTCOMES IF THE REQUEST IS GRANTED;

4. DESCRIBES HOW THE WAIVER WILL ALIGN WITH THE DEPARTMENT'S POLICY PRIORITIES, SUCH AS:

A. SUPPORTING EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT;

B. CONNECTING EDUCATION AND TRAINING STRATEGIES;

C. SUPPORTING WORK-BASED LEARNING;

D. IMPROVING JOB AND CAREER RESULTS, AND

E. OTHER GUIDANCE ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT.

5. DESCRIBES THE INDIVIDUALS AFFECTED BY THE WAIVER, INCLUDING HOW THE WAIVER WILL IMPACT SERVICES FOR DISADVANTAGED POPULATIONS OR INDIVIDUALS WITH MULTIPLE BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT; AND

6. DESCRIBES THE PROCESSES USED TO:

A. MONITOR THE PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE WAIVER;

B. PROVIDE NOTICE TO ANY LOCAL BOARD AFFECTED BY THE WAIVER;

C. PROVIDE ANY LOCAL BOARD AFFECTED BY THE WAIVER AN OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON THE REQUEST;

D. ENSURE MEANINGFUL PUBLIC COMMENT, INCLUDING COMMENT BY BUSINESS AND ORGANIZED LABOR, ON THE WAIVER.

E. COLLECT AND REPORT INFORMATION ABOUT WAIVER OUTCOMES IN THE STATE'S WIOA ANNUAL REPORT.

The State of South Carolina seeks approval of the following statutory and regulatory waiver in accordance with the Secretary's waiver authority outlined in Section 189(i)(3)(A) of the WIOA and 20 CFR and 679.600. This waiver request will assist South Carolina in delivering high-quality training programs and achieving better outcomes while continuing to focus on accountability, transparency, and consumer choice.

Statutory and/or Regulatory Requirements the State Requests to Waive:

WIOA Sections 116 and 122, and at 20 CFR 677.230 and 20 CFR 680.400 thru 680.530 requires states to collect and report performance data on all-students participating in training programs listed on the state's ETPL. The State of South Carolina is requesting a waiver of this requirement for Program Years (PYs) 2025 through 2027.

Actions the State has Undertaken to Remove State or Local Barriers:

There are no state or local statutory or regulatory barriers to implementing the requested waiver. South Carolina's regulations and policies are in compliance with current federal law.

South Carolina is requesting a waiver to exempt Eligible Training Providers (ETPs) from the requirement to report performance information for all-students in each approved program of study on the state's ETPL. While South Carolina acknowledges the importance of monitoring performance of the ETPL, data of students who do not receive WIOA support is not relative to WlOA program performance. Without a waiver of the requirement to collect and report performance related data on all-students participating in training programs, South Carolina will be forced to remove all ETPs and their programs of study from the state's ETPL that fail to submit the required data.

To ensure compliance with the priorities set by USDOL and to maintain alignment with current regulations, South Carolina has continued to enhance its ETPL in accordance with the WIOA regulations and performance reporting standards. PATh improves consumer choice by featuring 83 ETPs and 595 programs of study. Additionally, South Carolina has 120 Registered Apprenticeship sponsors, offering 197 occupational training programs. Enhancements made to PATh include the publication of individual program performance data for WlOA participants, as well as outcomes for all-student participants during PY 2022 through 2024. These reports provide detailed information on training completion rates, employment outcomes, median wages, and credential attainment for approved training providers and their programs of study. Updated annually, these resources serve as valuable tools for participants, students, jobseekers, and employers, helping them make informed training decisions. Furthermore, local workforce development areas utilize this information to determine which programs of study should receive funding based on local training needs.

The removal of ETPs and their programs of study will reduce consumer choice, hinder our ability to train the workforce, and negatively impact the effectiveness of WIOA. Due to the reduction of ETPs and their programs of study, we anticipate that the Individual Training Account (ITA) exceptions mentioned in 20 CFR 680.320 will become the standard practice, which would undermine the progress South Carolina has made in publicly displaying program performance data.

As an illustration of the ongoing negative impact that this federal mandate has on ETPs, South Carolina's 16 technical colleges play an important role in local workforce development strategies and often serve as the primary training providers in our rural communities. However, many of the state's technical colleges have expressed concerns about the challenges of collecting and reporting data on the all-student population and as a result many of the state's technical colleges have withdrawn from or significantly reduced the number of programs of study, they offer to WIOA participants.

At the conclusion of PY 2020, before the USDOL discontinued the use of waivers for states regarding all-student data reporting, all 16 of South Carolina's technical colleges were approved as ETPs, offering approximately 67% (721 out of 1,072) of programs of study on the state's ETPL. However, at the end of PY 2021, after the expiration of the all-student data reporting waiver, the number of technical colleges approved as ETPs were reduced to 11 out of 16, with those colleges offering 46% (325 out of 709) of programs of study on the ETPL. By the end of PY 2022, 11 out of the 16 state technical colleges in South Carolina participated as ETPs, offering 44% (327 out of the 737) of programs of study listed on the ETPL. By the end of PY 2023, 11 out of the 16 state technical colleges in South Carolina participated as ETPs, offering 43% (293 out of the 683) of programs of study listed on the ETPL. Finally, at the conclusion of PY 2024, only 10 out of the 16 state technical colleges participated as ETPs, providing 37% (221 out of the 595) of programs of study listed on the ETPL. This represents a 69% decrease (221 out of 721) in the number of technical college programs of study over a five-year period.

At the end of PY 2024, it was estimated that 198 of the 595 programs of study, 33% in continued eligibility status, would be denied inclusion on the ETPL due to the all-student data reporting requirement. Approximately 39% (32 out of 83) of ETPs, including nine technical colleges, would have one or more programs of study denied inclusion on the ETPL if all-student data reporting is enforced. The removal of these ETPs would place a significant burden on local workforce development areas to provide quality and cost-effective training and would be limiting to consumer choice. Consequently, local areas may be compelled to rely on ITA exceptions, which could hinder the progress South Carolina has made in collecting and displaying program performance data. *Please note that the quantities provided are based on all training providers and programs of study that were published in South Carolina's ETPL, regardless of whether they submitted student Social Security Numbers in their performance data. Therefore, these values will not equate to those reported in the USDOL's Employment & Training Administration 9171.*

South Carolina's situation is unique, as the state's technical colleges receive funding for workforce training through other state training funds, such as the South Carolina Workforce Industry Needs Scholarship (SC WINS). This state-funded program is designed to address workforce shortages in the state. Residents of South Carolina pursuing training in a high-demand occupations can receive up to $5,000 per academic year to help cover tuition, fees, and related expenses at technical colleges. The General Assembly requires colleges within the South Carolina Technical College System to provide annual data to ensure compliance with educational and financial accountability resulting from this funding. It is important to note that many students at these technical colleges do not participate in WIOA, and the demand for WIOA funding is usually low. This situation, combined with the all-student reporting mandate, creates additional ongoing reporting burdens for the technical colleges that disincentivizes participation on the ETPL.

With the release of the USDOL's, Commerce's, and Education's published report, *America's Talent Strategy: Equipping American Workers for the Golden Age,* and the subsequent release of Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) NO. 05-25, *Maximizing Innovation in Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Programs*, South Carolina is requesting that the Department reconsider its previous stance regarding the request to waive the requirement to

report performance data on all-students participating in training programs listed on the state's ETPL, due to the waivers relevancy to the following strategic pillars for America's workforce system:

- *Industry Driven Strategies* – This pillar speaks to aligning eligible training programs to career pathways within the state or regional economy. However, the all-student data reporting requirement has and will continue to discourage programs that support this vision from participating on the ETPL due to the unnecessary burden of reporting all student data.

- *Accountability* – This pillar speaks to delivering measurable and transparent results for jobseekers and employers and further provides that ineffective training providers will be removed from public funding lists and new funding models will tie resources to outcomes. South Carolina's proposed model echoes this sentiment but highlights the utilization of federal program participant data that is tracked and documented in our case management system rather than the provider reported all-student data. Additionally, the waiver highlighted in TEGL 05-25, that allows for all training services to be provided through training contracts, takes flexibility significantly further than the utilization of the all-student data waiver. South Carolina's waiver model upholds accountability, transparency, and consumer choice through the collection, display and provider comparison of WIOA student data. Whereas the utilization of contracts creates a loophole to the all-student data reporting requirement and completely abolishes accountability, transparency, and consumer choice.

- Under this waiver, South Carolina will continue to collect and report performance data for all WIOA funded participants as outlined in 20 CFR 677.230.

Projected Programmatic Outcomes Resulting from Implementation of the Waiver

South Carolina is seeking to reduce the burden on ETPs regarding the requirement to collect and report performance-related data for all students in a program of study listed on the state's ETPL. By limiting the reporting obligations to only those participants who are funded by the WIOA, ETPs will save a significant amount of time. This allows ETPs to focus on delivering high-quality training programs and achieving better outcomes.

Additionally, this waiver creates several benefits:

- Increased availability and variety of training options for individuals utilizing an ITA through the state's workforce system, leading to greater consumer choice.

- Improved utilization of the ETPL by participants pursuing training through ITAs.

- A wider selection of ETPs may result in lower training cost and more demand-driven occupational training options.

- Improved capacity for Local Workforce Development Boards to respond quickly and effectively to the immediate needs of local employers and jobseekers by offering training programs related to the high-growth and in-demand industries through the ETPL.

Individuals, Groups, or Populations Impacted by the Waiver

This waiver positively impacts all stakeholders involved. This ensures that South Carolina can continue to offer high-quality, in-demand training services that meet the needs of employers, workers, and jobseekers. Recent trends regarding the workforce skill gap in the rural counites of South Carolina as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, indicate that there are over 700 skill types in which candidates from these counites are lacking in relation to the openings that necessitate those skills. If this waiver is not granted, ETPs will continue to withdraw or be removed from the ETPL, limiting consumer choice across South Carolina, particularly in rural areas where access to in-demand training is already limited.

Monitoring Waiver Implementation

- South Carolina will continue to collect and report WIOA funded participant data annually to the USDOL.
- Annual WIOA on-site reviews will include an evaluation of how waivers are impacting local programs to ensure programmatic goals and outcomes are being met.
- Personnel responsible for administering the ETPL and Performance and Reporting will regularly evaluate the relevance and effectiveness of this waiver.
- ETPs will have the option to submit and will be encouraged to submit student data for all students if they choose to do so.

Notice to Local Workforce Development Boards and Public Comment

South Carolina's Combined State Plan is subject to the requirements outlined in the WIOA Regulations at 20 CFR 676.143(c)(1) for public review and comment. Any comments received have been attached with the submission of this plan.

7. THE MOST RECENT DATA AVAILABLE REGARDING THE RESULTS AND OUTCOMES OBSERVED THROUGH IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EXISTING WAIVER, IN CASES WHERE THE STATE SEEKS RENEWAL OF A PREVIOUSLY APPROVED WAIVER.

WIOA § 129(a)(4)(A) and 20 CFR § 681.410 requires local workforce development areas (LWDAs) to use a minimum of 75 percent of WIOA youth funds on out-of-school youth (OSY).To increase flexibility, reach performance goals, and increase services to eligible in-school youth (ISY), DEW has requested and been granted a waiver of the 75 percent OSY expenditure requirement by the US Department of Labor (DOL). Effective July 1, 2022, this waiver reduces SC's obligation for OSY expenditures to 50 percent for Program Years 2022 and 2023. South Carolina is not requesting any additional waivers at this time.

TITLE I-B ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include assurances that:

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The State has implemented a policy to ensure Adult program funds provide a priority in the delivery of training services and individualized career services to individuals who are low	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
income, public assistance recipients and basic skills deficient;	
2. The State has implemented a policy to ensure local areas have a process in place for referring veterans with qualifying barriers to employment to career services provided by the JVSG program's Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist;	Yes
3. The State established a written policy and procedure that set forth criteria to be used by chief elected officials for the appointment of local workforce investment board members;	Yes
4. The State established written policy and procedures to ensure local workforce investment boards are certified by the governor every two years in accordance with WIOA section 107(c)(2);	Yes
5. Where an alternative entity takes the place of a State Board, the State has written policy and procedures to ensure the alternative entity meets the definition under WIOA section 101(e) and the legal requirements for membership;	Yes
6. The State established a written policy and procedure for how the individuals and entities represented on the State Workforce Development Board help to determine the methods and factors of distribution, and how the State consults with chief elected officials in local areas throughout the State in determining the distributions;	Yes
7. The State will not use funds received under WIOA Title I to assist, promote, or deter union organizing in accordance with WIOA section 181(b)(7);	Yes
8. The State distributes adult and youth funds received under WIOA equitably throughout the State, and no local area suffers significant shifts in funding from year-to-year during the period covered by this plan;	Yes
9. If a State Workforce Development Board, department, or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department, or agency	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I;	
10. The State agrees to report on the impact and outcomes of its approved waivers in its WIOA Annual Report.	Yes
11. The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 2900, including that the State will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the Uniform Guidance under section WIOA 184(a)(3);	Yes

ADULT PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as "baseline" indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A "baseline" indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels. As a result, "baseline" indicators were not used in the end of the year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as "baseline" based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Credential Attainment Rate; and

- Measurable Skill Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as "baseline" for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as "baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA." The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as "baseline" for PY 2020 and PY 2021 will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as "baseline" for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs not listed as "baseline." Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state's plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each

of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	77.9	79.1	77.9	79.1
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	75.7	78.3	75.7	78.3
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$6,525	$6,900	$6,525	$7,000
Credential Attainment Rate	67.5	67.5	67.5	67.5
Measurable Skill Gains	60.1	66.3	60.1	66.3
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]

[1] The Departments have not issued the final rule defining Effectiveness in Serving Employers. As a result, states will not submit expected levels of performance for this indicator and the Departments will not establish negotiated levels of performance for PYs 2024 and 2025.

DISLOCATED PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as "baseline" indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A "baseline" indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels. As a result, "baseline" indicators were not used in the end of the year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as "baseline" based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available

to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Credential Attainment Rate; and
- Measurable Skill Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as "baseline" for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as "baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA." The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as "baseline" for PY 2020 and PY 2021 will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as "baseline" for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs not listed as "baseline." Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state's plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	80.9	81.6	80.9	82.0
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	78.3	80.9	78.3	81.4
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$7,935	$8,550	$7,935	$8,650
Credential Attainment Rate	65.6	69.1	65.6	69.6
Measurable Skill Gains	60.9	67.7	60.9	67.7
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]

[1] The Departments have not issued the final rule defining Effectiveness in Serving Employers. As a result, states will not submit expected levels of performance for this indicator and the Departments will not establish negotiated levels of performance for PYs 2024 and 2025.

YOUTH PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as "baseline" indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment

Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A "baseline" indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels. As a result, "baseline" indicators were not used in the end of the year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as "baseline" based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Credential Attainment Rate; and
- Measurable Skill Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as "baseline" for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as "baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA." The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as "baseline" for PY 2020 and PY 2021

will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as "baseline" for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs not listed as "baseline." Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state's plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	74.2	78.0	74.2	78.5
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	70.4	75.0	70.4	75.5
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$3,622	$3,985	$3,622	$4,030
Credential Attainment Rate	59.7	63.0	59.7	63.5
Measurable Skill Gains	53.9	61.5	53.9	62.5
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]

[1] The Departments have not issued the final rule defining Effectiveness in Serving Employers. As a result, states will not submit expected levels of performance for this indicator and the Departments will not establish negotiated levels of performance for PYs 2024 and 2025.

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR WAGNER-PEYSER PROGRAM (EMPLOYMENT SERVICES)

All Program-Specific Requirements provided for the WIOA core programs in this section must be addressed for either a Unified or Combined State Plan.

A. EMPLOYMENT SERVICE STAFF

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL STAFF THE PROVISION OF LABOR EXCHANGE SERVICES UNDER THE WAGNER-PEYSER ACT, SUCH AS THROUGH STATE EMPLOYEES, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO STATE MERIT STAFF EMPLOYEES, STAFF OF A SUBRECIPIENT, OR SOME COMBINATION THEREOF.

South Carolina will continue to use merit staff employees to provide labor exchange services under the Wagner-Peyser Act.

2. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL UTILIZE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES FOR EMPLOYMENT SERVICE STAFF TO ENSURE STAFF IS ABLE TO PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY SERVICES TO BOTH JOBSEEKERS AND EMPLOYERS

Staff development is an important component of South Carolina's commitment to deliver high quality and effective workforce services. Employment Services manual was developed in order to compile policies procedures and is updated annually. Routine trainings are provided to staff on contents of the manual, and it is stored on the online system. Routine trainings include veteran services, job searching, résumé writing, Rapid Response, business services training, and jobseeker services trainings. These offerings help further develop frontline staff's ability to assist the businesses and citizens of South Carolina. Onsite training and assessment are also provided in person to local staff and management. Regional Managers participate on LWDBs to provide information and are involved in workforce issues on the state and local level.

3. DESCRIBE STRATEGIES DEVELOPED TO SUPPORT TRAINING AND AWARENESS ACROSS CORE PROGRAMS AND THE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) PROGRAM AND THE TRAINING PROVIDED FOR EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND WIOA STAFF ON IDENTIFICATION OF UI ELIGIBILITY ISSUES AND REFERRAL TO UI STAFF FOR ADJUDICATION

DEW shares information and provides technical assistance to staff who serve jobseekers and employers. Additionally, DEW's website supplies answers to frequently asked questions regarding UI. Online videos and handouts are available for partners and employment services staff to review and use when assisting customers. UI claimants receive information and assistance on the full range of one-stop services offered both online and in person. Rapid Response teams provide services to employers and workers in layoff situations and conduct claim filing activities when needed.

UI programs play a vital role in the integrated workforce system by providing income support benefits to eligible individuals who continue to be important customers of the workforce system. These benefits allow unemployed workers to engage in work search activities for suitable employment, and the workforce system is a key source of services to support the reemployment of UI claimants.

Ongoing training has been developed by the Unemployment Insurance Department for employment services staff to complete. The training was also uploaded and stored on the Agency's learning management system and is available for all staff.

B. EXPLAIN HOW THE STATE WILL PROVIDE INFORMATION AND MEANINGFUL ASSISTANCE TO INDIVIDUALS REQUESTING ASSISTANCE IN FILING A CLAIM FOR UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION THROUGH ONE-STOP CENTERS, AS REQUIRED BY WIOA AS A CAREER SERVICE

Access to the online claim filing system is available at every SC Works location across the state. Resource rooms are staffed with individuals who can assist with filing a claim. A toll-free number is also available for individuals with questions specific to their claims. A network of access points has been established statewide for individuals to apply for benefits and perform their work search. Registration in the SC Works Online System (SCWOS) is required for all UI Claimants, and two required weekly work searches must be conducted within the system. Access to SCWOS is available at all comprehensive centers, affiliate centers, and access points. Claim filing guides are available in resource rooms at SC Works locations, and employment service staff is available to assist and answer questions about the filing process.

C. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S STRATEGY FOR PROVIDING REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE TO UI CLAIMANTS AND OTHER UNEMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS

The Re-employment Services and Eligibility Assessment Program (RESEA) is designed to address the individual re-employment needs of UI claimants and works to prevent and detect UI improper payments. RESEA serves as a bridge between Unemployment Insurance and Employment Services in the provision of services to lack-of-work claimants, with the goal of reducing the duration and protecting the integrity of the UI Trust Fund. Numerous services are provided through the program to include but not limited to re-employment services, provision of labor market information, one-stop orientations, development of employability plans, referrals to training and unemployment compensation eligibility reviews. The RESEA program is operated from all comprehensive SC Works Centers in coordination with DEW's Unemployment Insurance Division.

UI applicants receive Wagner-Peyser services in the SC Works Centers in the resource room and with Wagner-Peyser case managers. Based on the needs of the UI applicant, they will receive referrals to training opportunities (which may include WIOA and Adult Education services), veteran services, and job opportunities. If a claimant enrolls in a training program, WP staff will enter a code in SCWOS that allows UI to approve the training and exempt the claimant from work search and able and available requirements while they are in that approved training.

D. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE W-P FUNDS TO SUPPORT UI CLAIMANTS, AND THE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN W-P AND UI, AS APPROPRIATE INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING:

1. COORDINATION OF AND PROVISION OF LABOR EXCHANGE SERVICES FOR UI CLAIMANTS AS REQUIRED BY THE WAGNER-PEYSER ACT;

All individuals applying for UI benefits are required to register with the state Employment Service by creating an account in SCWOS. This allows individuals to search for jobs, job referrals, create a resume, set up job matching criteria, develop an employment plan, take self-assessments, and search labor market information. SC Works Centers have resource rooms that support these services, and staff is available to assist. As a result of aligning services, individuals with barriers to employment are provided staff assisted services. Additionally, referrals to partner and community service providers are available along with information on Federal Bonding.

2. REGISTRATION OF UI CLAIMANTS WITH THE STATE'S EMPLOYMENT SERVICE IF REQUIRED BY STATE LAW;

As stated previously, South Carolina law requires UI claimants to register in SCWOS and perform two work searches per week using the system. Wagner-Peyser staff is available to assist individuals with the registration process and the weekly work search if assistance is needed. Workshops on various reemployment topics are also offered at SC Works centers, and anyone interested can attend.

3. ADMINISTRATION OF THE WORK TEST FOR THE STATE UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION SYSTEM, INCLUDING MAKING ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENTS (FOR REFERRAL TO UI ADJUDICATION, IF NEEDED), AND PROVIDING JOB FINDING AND PLACEMENT SERVICES FOR UI CLAIMANTS; AND

In order to receive and maintain benefits in South Carolina, individuals must register in the SC Works Online System (SCWOS). Individuals must also be able, available, and actively seeking work. Claimants are required to perform two work searches per week in SCWOS. If an individual fails to perform a search or declines a request for an interview with a prospective employer, an issue can be placed on the claim for further clarification.

Job finding and placement services are offered both remotely and in person. To facilitate these services, each comprehensive SC Works location has staff available to assist individuals looking for employment. Employment Services staff post available positions for employers and help individuals match their skills with available positions for which they qualify, including UI claimants. SCWOS also spiders in jobs posted on many other job boards and individual company websites.

4. PROVISION OF REFERRALS TO AND APPLICATION ASSISTANCE FOR TRAINING AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES.

Staff in SC Works centers across the state use an initial assessment to determine customers' needs. Based on information received during this process, coupled with an individual's stated goals, a path forward is identified for each customer. This path could include information or workshops offered in centers or at partner locations or referrals to training programs and other partner or community-based services. In addition, staff may assist customers with training or financial aid applications as needed. Coordination and communication among partners are critical to the success of each individual in order to provide an array of options that will benefit the customer most.

In order to receive and maintain benefits in South Carolina, individuals must register in the SC Works Online System (SCWOS). Individuals must also be able, available, and actively seeking work. Claimants are required to perform two work searches per week in SCWOS. If an individual fails to perform a search or declines a request for an interview with a prospective employer, an issue can be placed on the claim for further clarification.

Job finding and placement services are offered both remotely and in person. To facilitate these services, each comprehensive SC Works location has staff available to assist individuals looking for employment. Employment Services staff post available positions for employers and help individuals match their skills with available positions for which they qualify, including UI claimants. SCWOS also spiders in jobs posted on many other job boards and individual company websites.

E. AGRICULTURAL OUTREACH PLAN (AOP). EACH STATE AGENCY MUST DEVELOP AN AOP EVERY FOUR YEARS AS PART OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN REQUIRED UNDER SECTIONS 102 OR 103 OF WIOA. THE AOP MUST INCLUDE AN ASSESSMENT OF NEED. AN ASSESSMENT NEED DESCRIBES THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF FARMWORKERS IN THE AREA BASED ON PAST AND PROJECTED AGRICULTURAL AND FARMWORKER ACTIVITY IN THE STATE. SUCH NEEDS MAY INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO: EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING, AND HOUSING.

1. ASSESSMENT OF NEED. PROVIDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF FARMWORKERS IN THE AREA BASED ON PAST AND PROJECTED AGRICULTURAL AND FARMWORKER ACTIVITY IN THE STATE. SUCH NEEDS MAY INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO: EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING, AND HOUSING.

South Carolina farms have unique characteristics that stem from the state's climate, geography, agricultural history, and the diversity of crops grown. South Carolina has over 25,000 farms, according to the Department of Agriculture, and a continued increase of a need for workers. South Carolina farmers require skilled workers who understand the unique needs of the crops they are harvesting. We are continuing to see farmers regularly request H-2A workers because of a lack of labor willing to take temporary and/or seasonal positions. The H-2A workers in SC are mostly from Latin American countries that speak Spanish. Farmers provide housing to the H-2A workers but are in need of supportive services to meet the needs of these workers that, include medical care, remedial and/or occupational training, and English as a Second Language.

Since South Carolina’s Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers (MSFWs) are mostly Hispanic/Latin, one important aspect when analyzing the needs of farmworkers is to consider the Hispanic/Latin community in the state as a whole. The Hispanic/Latin community in South Carolina is still considered an “emergent” community in this state. As a result, the Hispanic/Latin community resource network is not as widely available or as easily found as in states with a large and well-established Hispanic/Latin community such as, California, Texas, Florida, and North Carolina.

In states with larger and more established Hispanic/Latin presence, farm workers utilize Hispanic/Latin community-based and religious-based resource networks that link to the workforce system. In South Carolina, the Hispanic/Latin resource network is still under development, with many agencies are not yet offering bilingual services. As a result, we have a community that is at risk of being isolated and unable to access available resources.

2. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITY IN THE STATE MEANS: 1) IDENTIFYING THE TOP FIVE LABOR-INTENSIVE CROPS, THE MONTHS OF HEAVY ACTIVITY, AND THE GEOGRAPHIC AREA OF PRIME ACTIVITY; 2) SUMMARIZE THE AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS' NEEDS IN THE STATE (I.E. ARE THEY PREDOMINANTLY HIRING LOCAL OR FOREIGN WORKERS, ARE THEY EXPRESSING THAT THERE IS A SCARCITY IN THE AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE); AND 3) IDENTIFYING ANY ECONOMIC, NATURAL, OR OTHER FACTORS THAT ARE AFFECTING AGRICULTURE IN THE STATE OR ANY PROJECTED FACTORS THAT WILL AFFECT AGRICULTURE IN THE STATE

1) Identifying the top five labor-intensive crops, the months of heavy activity, and the geographic area of prime activity;

The top five labor-intensive crops were determined through research with information from USDA Economic Research Service, farmers, and discussions with the Clemson University Cooperative Extension. These crops are labor intensive and are the state's larger crops based on production. The chart below was created using the data collected.

Table 1: SOUTH CAROLINA 5 MOST LABOR-INTENSIVE CROPS		
Crop	**Months of Heavy Activity**	**Geographic Area**
Peaches	November – September	Statewide
Strawberries	March – July, September October	Statewide
Tobacco	March – September	Pee Dee
Tomatoes	March – September	Coastal
Melons (watermelon, cantaloupe)	March – October	Pee Dee, Lower Savannah

Data Source: Communication with South Carolina farmers and Clemson University Cooperative Extension

South Carolina's Top 10 Commodities was reviewed to assess the agricultural activity in the State relevant to crops requiring labor.

Table 2: SOUTH CAROLINA TOP 10 COMMODITIES						
		State receipts	**Share of State receipts**	**Cumulative share of State receipts**	**U.S. receipts**	**Share of U.S. receipts**
Rank	**Commodity**	*$1,000*	*Percent*	*Percent*	*$1,000*	*Percent*
1	Broilers	1,307,580	38.7	38.7	45,434,590	2.9
2	Miscellaneous crops	505,595	15.0	53.6	27,476,603	1.8
3	Cattle and calves	229,360	6.8	60.4	112,093,129	0.2
4	Corn	222,600	6.6	67.0	63,360,319	0.4
5	Chicken eggs	186,365	5.5	72.5	21,042,657	0.9
6	Peaches	174,470	5.2	77.7	925,595	18.8
7	Soybeans	170,245	5.0	82.7	46,845,996	0.4
8	Cotton lint. Upland	134,187	4.0	86.7	4,128,069	3.3
9	All other animals and products	101,245	3.0	89.7	7,391,046	1.4
10	Peanuts	85,994	2.5	92.2	1,664,480	5.2

Data Source: USDA Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture
Cash Receipts by State: https://data.ers.usda.gov/reports.aspx?ID=17843

2) Summarize the agricultural employers' needs in the State (i.e., are they predominantly hiring local or foreign workers, are they expressing that there is a scarcity in the agricultural workforce); and

Agricultural employers are predominantly hiring H-2A workers due to the scarcity of a workforce that is willing, able, and apt to stay throughout the entire duration of work contracts and seasons. Therefore, there continues to be an increase in H-2A workers. Farms continue to improve machinery methods, but for these crops, machines cannot replace the human worker.

3) Identifying any economic, natural, or other factors that are affecting agriculture in the State or any projected factors that will affect agriculture in the State

Extreme weather events such as hurricanes, early freezes, floods, and droughts can have significant short-term and long-term effects on crop yields and agricultural activity, including labor. The current sociopolitical situation makes it difficult to maintain workforce continuity. As a result, there is a continued shortage of US-based agricultureal workers causing an increase in applications for H-2A visas.

3. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF FARMWORKERS MEANS SUMMARIZING MIGRANT AND SEASONAL FARM WORKER (MSFW) CHARACTERISTICS (INCLUDING IF THEY ARE PREDOMINANTLY FROM CERTAIN COUNTRIES, WHAT LANGUAGE(S) THEY SPEAK, THE APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF MSFWS IN THE STATE DURING PEAK SEASON AND DURING LOW SEASON, AND WHETHER THEY TEND TO BE MIGRANT, SEASONAL, OR YEAR-ROUND FARMWORKERS). THIS INFORMATION MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT DATA SUPPLIED BY WIOA SECTION 167 NATIONAL FARMWORKER JOBS PROGRAM (NFJP) GRANTEES, OTHER MSFW ORGANIZATIONS, EMPLOYER ORGANIZATIONS, AND STATE AND/OR FEDERAL AGENCY DATA SOURCES SUCH AS THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR (DOL) EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION

South Carolina's Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers (MSFWs) workers often follow the seasonal demand for agricultural labor. They may move to South Carolina during planting or harvesting seasons and then migrate to other regions in the state for subsequent agricultural activities. Predominantly coming from Latin-American countries including Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean. Most of them speak Spanish, but we have also detected several indigenous dialects from the south of Mexico and regions of Central America. A good portion of identified farmworkers in the state are migrant and seasonal farmworkers that follow crops and seasons from states like Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, Virginia, Michigan, Texas, and Tennessee. In assessing the needs of the MSFWs it has been determined that the main needs are employment, education (remedial and occupational training), and supportive services to be provided in their native language or receive culturally competent interpretation assitance. SC Works Centers, DEW offers and secures, at no cost, qualified interpreters or translator services and partners with local community organizations such as Northeastern Technical College(WIOA section 167 NFJP Grantee) and Adult Education who provides additional services, such as English as a Second Language (ESL) and skills training, to migrant and seasonal farmworkers designed to overcome barriers to employment and program participation. These additional services include emergency supportive services to H-2A workers when determined necessary and are not available through any other source. Telamon/TRC works with the Employment Services Agricultural Outreach Coordinators (AOC, DEW's MSFW Outreach Workers) to collaborate in referring customers for assistance.

Since 2015, we had a steady increase in employers seeking H-2A Workers. Since program year 2020, the state has seen an increase of 13% in workers requested and 74% in Job Orders entered. This data has demonstrated a dependency on H-2A workers. This does not take in account all U.S. based workers because this labor force is hard to track due to their movements for seasonal work. South Carolina is depending on the H-2A labor force to keep the farming industry robust.

Table 3: SOUTH CAROLINA H-2A HISTORICAL DATA			
Year	**Job Orders Requested**	**H-2A Workers**	**Employers**
2015	59	3802	41
2016	83	4026	54
2017	91	4028	64
2018	112	6070	69
2019	130	6504	67
2020	136	6198	80
2021	185	7671	110
2022	226	8059	142
2023	239	8057	142
2024	237	6980	118

Data Source: H-2A Job Orders, SC Works Job Orders

Table 4: ESTIMATED PRESENCE OF AGRICULTURAL WORKERS IN THE STATE	
Number of H-2A Workers	**Number of U.S. based Workers**
6,973	1,430
Combined agricultural workforce, through 9/30/2025, is estimated to be 8,403	

Data source: Foreign Labor H-2A Applications Reports, Field Visits, Conversations with SC Farmers

4. OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

The local offices outreach activities must be designed to meet the needs of MSFWs in the State and to locate and contact MSFWs who are not being reached through normal intake activities. Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:

Outreach activities are described in sections e.4.a through e.4.e.

A. CONTACTING FARMWORKERS WHO ARE NOT BEING REACHED BY THE NORMAL INTAKE ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE OFFICES

DEW staff conduct agricultural outreach activities , within three geographic regions. Other public and private community service agencies or organizations and migrant and seasonal farmworker groups also provide outreach services. Outreach efforts occur in traditional community settings such as housing facilities, faith-based organizations, health departments, restaurants, community centers, stores, and other areas where MSFWs may congregate.

However, outreach efforts also take place in events specifically organized for agricultural workers or minority populations, such as various health clinics or community events.

Farmworkers are contacted at their working, living, gathering, or other assembly areas by the DEW (South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce) Outreach Workers. The DEW Outreach Workers are required to be bilingual and provide language-appropriate services as needed. An explanation of workforce services available to MSFWs and their rights, including the availability of referrals to agricultural and nonagricultural employment, training, supportive services, and other job development services is provided in their native language. MSFWs are also provided information about other organizations in the area that are available to serve them and the Employment Service and Employment-Related Law Complaint System.

The MSFW Program will continue to establish working relationships with local, regional, and statewide agencies to disseminate information regarding the employment and training services available to MSFWs. DEW Outreach Workers are encouraged to continuously propose new ideas for effective outreach. Resource and information sharing are essential to reaching this goal. DEW Outreach Workers are experts in their own regions and are aware of the "best practices" for reaching MSFWs who are not being reached by normal intake activities.

B. PROVIDING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO OUTREACH STAFF. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MUST INCLUDE TRAININGS, CONFERENCES, ADDITIONAL RESOURCES, AND INCREASED COLLABORATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS ON TOPICS SUCH AS ONE-STOP CENTER SERVICES (I.E. AVAILABILITY OF REFERRALS TO TRAINING, SUPPORTIVE SERVICES, AND CAREER SERVICES, AS WELL AS SPECIFIC EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES), THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE AND EMPLOYMENT-RELATED LAW COMPLAINT SYSTEM ("COMPLAINT SYSTEM" DESCRIBED AT 20 CFR 658 SUBPART E), INFORMATION ON THE OTHER ORGANIZATIONS SERVING MSFWS IN THE AREA, AND A BASIC SUMMARY OF FARMWORKER RIGHTS, INCLUDING THEIR RIGHTS WITH RESPECT TO THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT.

Technical Assistance to DEW Outreach Workers

DEW Outreach Workers participate in the following training sessions:

- SCWOS 101 Training and SCWOS Business Services Training
- MSFW Training - Roles and Responsibilities (including Outreach and Reporting)
- Employment Service and Employment-Related Law Complaint System Training
- Employment Services Provider Training
- Unemployment Insurance Benefits
- Housing Regulations
- Partner Programs
- Migrant Workers' Rights and Protections
- Different Aspects of Migrant Workers' Health

The State Monitor Advocate (SMA) serves as a resource for all DEW Outreach Workers and can provide guidance on topics inherent to the MSFW program such as: Federal Guidelines and Regulations, Performance Reporting, MSFW Service Level Indicators, DEW Outreach Worker

Roles and Responsibilities, MSFW Effective Outreach, agricultural worker rights, the Complaint System, Best Practices, and any technical assistance needed. Training sessions often include information about DEW's employment service activities and other workforce development programs, which include local and regional workforce development and supportive services programs, such as: Migrant Health Services, the Migrant Education Program, the NFJP Grantee, and other community-based programs. These sessions provide an opportunity for DEW Outreach Workers to better understand the challenges and opportunities that may arise when serving MSFWs. In an effort to ameliorate these challenges, DEW Outreach Workers have been provided with information regarding UI and job search; heat illness prevention; pesticide awareness; workplace safety; financial, legal, health, and supportive services as well as free vaccination events.

The SMA is available to work with Employment Services Area Directors and Managers to develop the training agendas. One goal of regular training is to ensure that all DEW Outreach Workers are equally proficient in their position. To this effect, the SMA has provided staff with a wide array of information and resources to encourage increased collaboration with other MSFW supportive organizations, strategize joint outreach practices, enhance the identification of MSFWs when visiting SC Works Centers as well as the marketing of employment services to agricultural workers during outreach.

Resources have been made available to Employment Services Managers and Outreach Staff to complement their outreach efforts, such as: streamlined outreach report forms; ES services flyers for MSFWs; MSFW ID signs to SC Works Centers; handouts from the US Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration, OSHA, Mexican Consulates, and more covering topics including, but not limited to, workplace health, safety, and compliance.

The Employment Services Division provides monthly MSFW and Foreign Labor Consultant Convening Meetings to increase local communication and collaboration, cover questions and/or additional trainings requests. Outreach Workers participate in required ongoing Employment Services training and local SC Works quarterly training on partner services. All SC Works staff complete a virtual course on SC Works 101 that covers WIOA and partner programs.

C. INCREASING OUTREACH WORKER TRAINING AND AWARENESS ACROSS CORE PROGRAMS INCLUDING THE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) PROGRAM AND THE TRAINING ON IDENTIFICATION OF UI ELIGIBILITY ISSUES

DEW Outreach Workers are required to attend all Employment Services Trainings, so they are able to offer MSFWs a holistic customer service approach. Trainings include programs that are included in the Employment Services Manual and their processes. These program trainings include but are not limited to Veteran Services, Rapid Response, business services, policy, technical training on systems, and referrals. Training on the statewide database system is conducted quarterly where DEW Outreach Workers can attend when needed for a 'refresher' on any database content. Employment Services trainings are delivered in different ways which include in-person training that is local or regional and statewide training offered in-person or virtually. The Unemployment Insurance Department updates their Employment Services virtual training, and it is a requirement for all DEW Outreach Workers. Trainings are stored on a shared system for staff to access after training is completed.

Locally, each workforce region offers quarterly training that reviews local policy, local resources, SC Works programs, and customer service. These trainings are usually conducted in-person and allows DEW Outreach Workers to interact with partners. DEW Outreach Workers also participate in 'Whiteboard Meetings' where Employment Services Business Consultants

and Workforce Consultants meet and discuss job opportunities for specific clients. DEW Outreach Workers participate and bring their client list to review.

D. PROVIDING STATE MERIT STAFF OUTREACH WORKERS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES TO ENSURE THEY ARE ABLE TO PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY SERVICES TO BOTH JOBSEEKERS AND EMPLOYERS

DEW Outreach Workers have access to LinkedIn Learning where they are able to complete trainings at no-cost. Employment Services requires certain LinkedIn Learning courses completion that includes resume writing training and other trainings that are relevant to the Outreach position. DEW Outreach Workers are encouraged to participate in local professional development opportunities offered by the many organizations SC Works partners with.

E. COORDINATING OUTREACH EFFORTS WITH NFJP GRANTEES AS WELL AS WITH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE COMMUNITY SERVICE AGENCIES AND MSFW GROUPS

During Program Year 2024, the NFJP Grant was awarded to Northeastern Technical College for career and training services while the housing part of the NFJP Grant did not include SC as a state to receive this service. Therefore, relationship building has become a priority, coordination with the current NFJP grantees is taking place administratively and with DEW Agribusiness Department across the state aiming to provide services, create awareness of services available, and conduct outreach to MSFWs. Outreach Staff will coordinate visits with Northeastern Technical College to locations and targeted events across the state. The coordination of outreach efforts with the NFJP grantees includes the SMA, Employment Services Management, and Outreach Staff working in conjunction with the NFJP Consortium Director and Regional Project Managers in the designated regions.

Comprehensive outreach activities are conducted to ensure that MSFWs are aware of the full range of employment services. DEW Outreach Workers and Foreign Labor Consultants will work together to coordinate outreach activities, thus maximizing program effectiveness and efficiency. Statewide, there are three, full-time DEW Outreach Worker positions dedicated to outreach activities in the three geographic areas. MSFW outreach staff, as well as Foreign Labor Consultants, will be primarily supported through Wagner-Peyser funding. Due to the varying concentrations of MSFWs in the different areas, some movement of DEW Outreach Workers between areas will be necessary.

DEW partners with other agencies across the state of South Carolina that also target the MSFW population, including the WIOA Section 167 National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) Grantee-Telamon/TRC, SC Legal Services, SC Department of Education Migrant Education Program, SCPHCA-Agricultural Worker Health Program, East Coast Migrant Head Start Program, and faith-based migrant community organizations and associations.

Staff will continue to foster cooperation with other governmental and community-based organizations in providing information and promoting the MSFW program at appropriate meetings and through other avenues. For example, the State Monitor Advocate (SMA) actively participates in different coalitions and groups across the state to advocate for the MSFW community and forge collaborative partnerships. These groups include Alianza Latina, SC Immigrant Victims Coalition, PASOS, SC Community Health Worker Association, SC Agricultural Worker Health Advisory Council, among others. The SMA also maintains contact with community and faith-based organizations, as well as media outlets, healthcare providers, government agencies, and Department of Education representatives.

The SMA is the chair of the Labor Trafficking Subcommittee, which is part of the Human Trafficking Task Force in SC's Attorney General's Office. As part of this taskforce, the SMA collaborates with organizations like SLED, HSI, USDOL Wage and Hour, EEOC, Department of State, Regional Taskforces throughout the state, victim service providers, and more. Furthermore, the SMA works closely with the Mexican and Guatamalan Consulates in Raleigh, N.C. which are entrusted with providing services to people of Mexican and Guatamalan origin in the states of South Carolina and North Carolina. One of the SMA's strategic goals is to develop a cohesive statewide effort to enhance the quality of life and quantity of services delivered to the MSFW community in South Carolina through the sharing of useful information and timely exchange of ideas.

5. SERVICES PROVIDED TO FARMWORKERS AND AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS THROUGH THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM

Describe the State agency's proposed strategies for:

A. PROVIDING THE FULL RANGE OF EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICES TO THE AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY, BOTH FARMWORKERS AND AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS, THROUGH THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM. THIS INCLUDES:

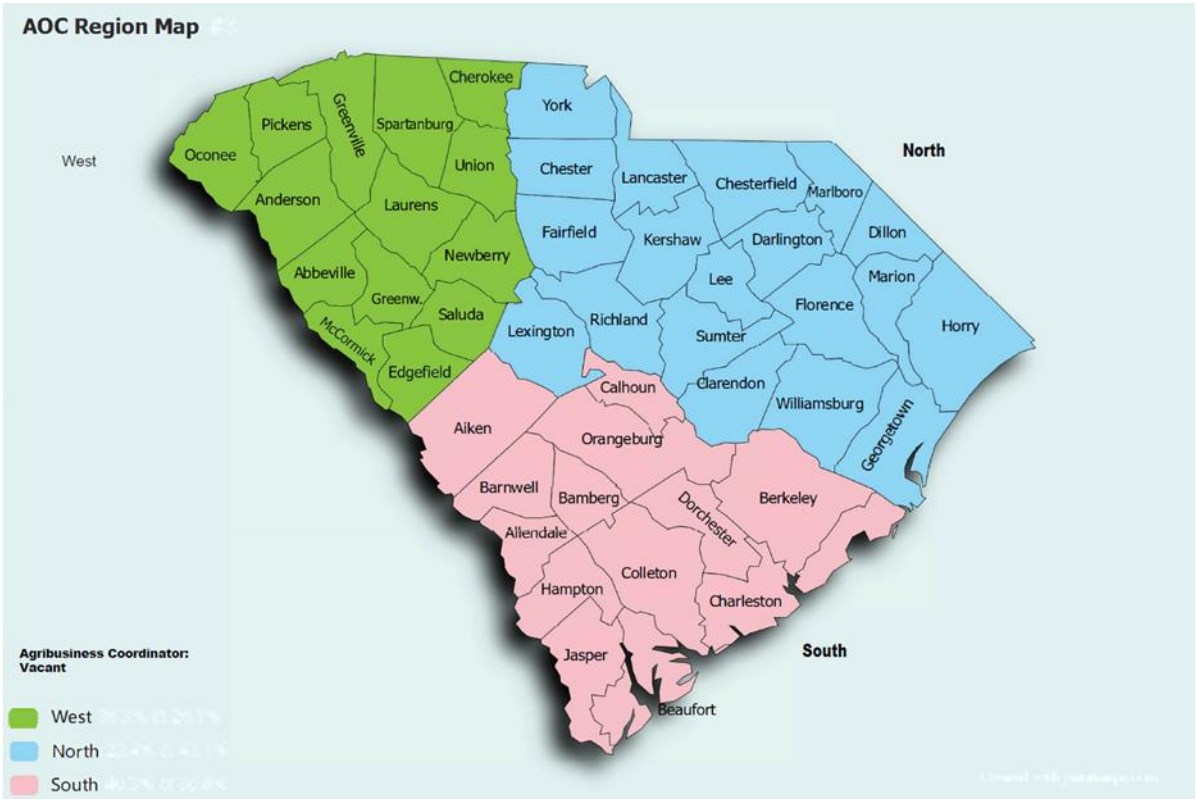
I. HOW CAREER AND TRAINING SERVICES REQUIRED UNDER WIOA TITLE I WILL BE PROVIDED TO MSFWS THROUGH THE ONE-STOP CENTERS

II. HOW THE STATE SERVES AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS AND HOW IT INTENDS TO IMPROVE SUCH SERVICES

DEW will comply with Subpart B of 20 CFR 653.107(a)-(b), in delivering services to MSFWs in three strategic outreach regions in the state (see AOC Region Map below). The roles and responsibilities of the DEW Outreach Worker include:

- Contact and locate the MSFWs where they work, live, or gather
- Observe the work*i*ng and living conditions of MSFWs
- Explain the services available at SC Works Center and other organizations serving MSFWs
- Provide information about the Employment Service and Employment-related Law Complaint System and assist in the preparation of a complaint
- Provide a basic summary of farmworker rights, including farmworker rights with respect to the terms and conditions of employment
- Refer to job openings and assist in the preparation of an application for work
- Refer to supportive services, if needed
- Assist in making appointments, preparation of applications for employment services, and arranging transportation to and from local workforce centers
- Maintain a log of daily contacts, which will include the number of MSFWs contacted and details of the assistance provided
- Provide services through SC Works Online Services (SCWOS), the state's data management and service delivery system for WIOA, Wagner-Peyser, and Trade Adjustment Assistance

- Distribute marketing materials that highlights Employment Services tailored to their needs such as “Are You A Farmworker?”, which lists the services available through the SC Works Centers and the toll-free farmworker helpline flyers



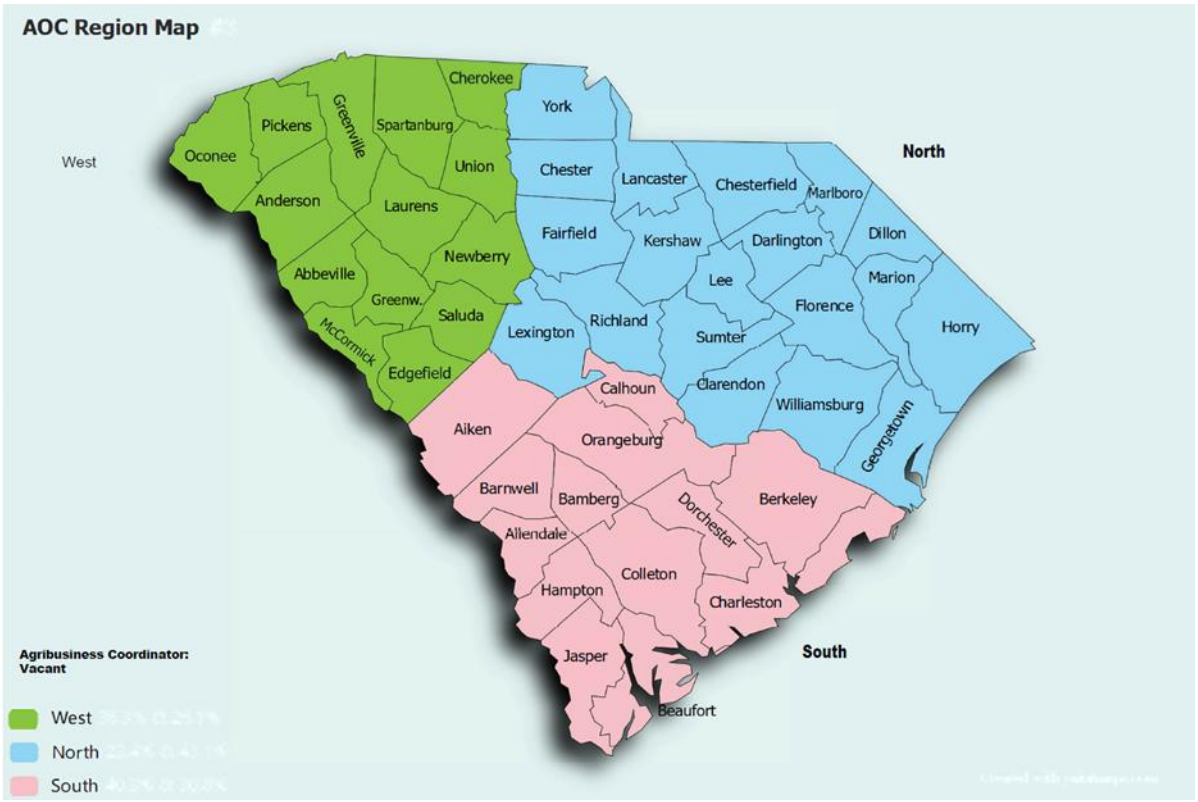
An explanation of workforce development services available to MSFWs, including the availability of referrals to agricultural and nonagricultural employment, training, and supportive services, and other job development services will be provided in a language readily understood by the farmworker. MSFW DEW Outreach Workers are required to be bilingual and provide language appropriate services as needed. MSFWs will also be provided with information about other organizations available to serve them.

DEW Outreach Workers will be familiar with working and living conditions of the migrant and seasonal farm workers. If they observe, have reason to believe, or are in receipt of information regarding a suspected violation of employment-related laws or employment service regulations by an employer, the DEW Outreach Worker will document the suspected violation and provide the information to the SC Works Center Employment Services Manager. They will provide assistance in the preparation of Employment Service and non-Employment Service complaints. Complaints will be recorded using the Complaint and Apparent Violation’s Form, the Wagner-Peyser Complaint and Apparent Violations Log and processed using the Wagner-Peyser Employment Services Complaint System.

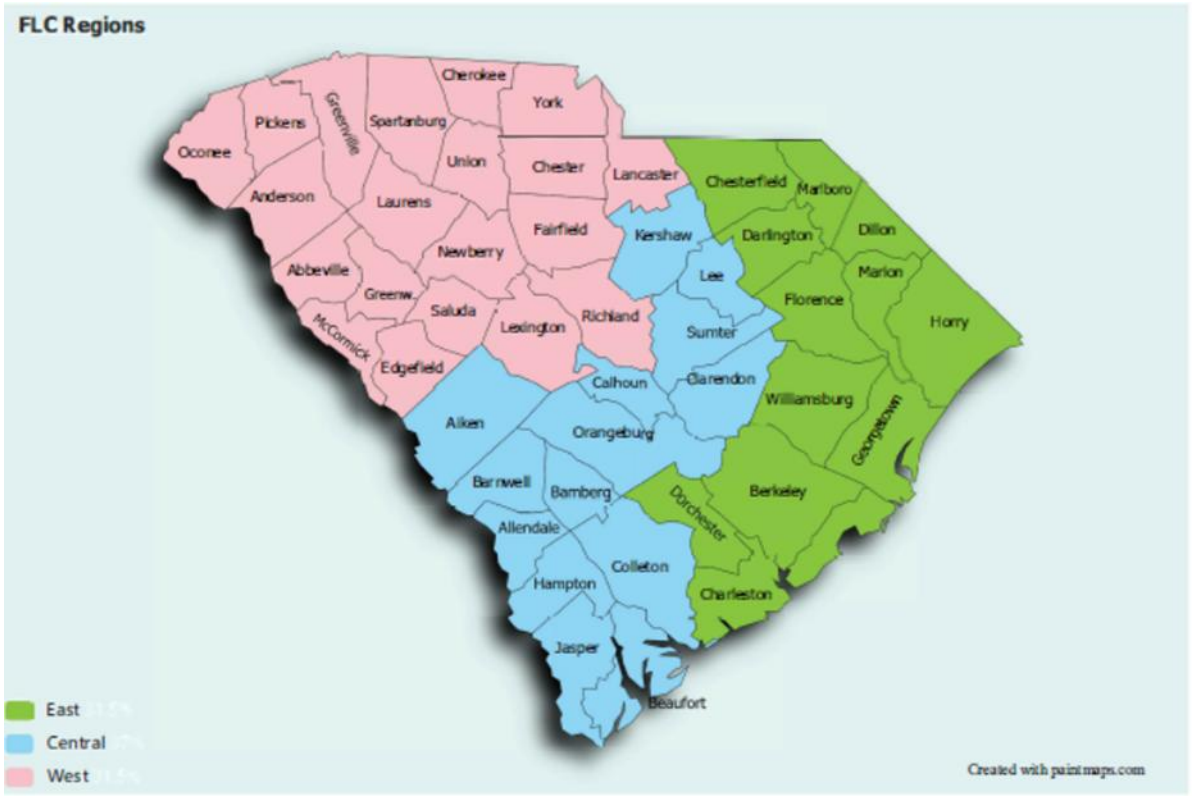
DEW Outreach Workers will inform MSFWs of and refer them to verified employment opportunities and the Employment Services Complaint System. DEW Outreach Workers will encourage the MSFWs to utilize the SC Works Centers to obtain the full range of career services; however, assistance on the field will also be offered in the preparation of Employment Services or employment-related law complaints, obtaining referrals for employment opportunities, and preparation of employment applications.

DEW Outreach Workers will refer individual MSFWs, or family members, who may be interested, to WIOA and supportive services and, as needed, will provide assistance in making appointments. MSFWs will also be shown how to use SC Works Online Services (SCWOS), SC's Internet-based workforce data management and service delivery system. Through SCWOS, MSFWs can establish a Wagner-Peyser application and apply for jobs.

In the SC Works Centers throughout the state, bilingual staff members work with MSFWs of limited English proficiency to provide career services. When no qualified and trained bilingual employee is available, DEW will offer and secure, at no cost to the client, a qualified interpreter or translator service. If there is a need for remedial and/or occupational training, the limited English proficient MSFW is generally referred to a local Adult Education office first for an "English as a Second Language" course, and then is referred to a training provider. Telamon/TRC is also a partner of the SC Works Centers and provides additional services to migrants and seasonal farm workers. In the coming program year, efforts will continue to increase closer cooperation and service collaboration with partners to ensure greater alignment of services to MSFWs.



Extensive outreach to agricultural employers is an on-going process. This is critical to maintaining interpersonal contact with the employers. Employers are contacted by Foreign Labor Consultants (FLC), which provide statewide coverage. The State of South Carolina employs 3 full-time Foreign Labor Consultants. Each of whom has been assigned a region of responsibility.



Examples of services provided to agricultural employers by DEW staff include:

- Local, regional, and national recruitment assistance
- Screening job applicants
- Provision of information such as crop conditions, labor supply, and labor market information
- Connection and coordination of services with government and community agencies
- Technical assistance with foreign labor certification
- Soliciting and filling job orders
- Disseminating information on farm-related rules and regulations
- Assisting farm labor contractors
- Providing consultant inspections of migrant housing
- Offering assistance to farmers in obtaining supplies for migrants
- Referring complaints to proper enforcement agencies
- Assisting employers in obtaining work-related posters and notices
- Participating in agricultural related meetings and notifying farmers of these meetings

Many contacts with agricultural employers are made as a result of referrals from other agencies such as the SC Department of Agriculture and Clemson University as well as by word-of-mouth from other workers or farmers. Intensive efforts will be made in the upcoming year to increase the market penetration of agricultural employers.

The most basic service provided to agricultural employers is the filling of job openings. Job orders from agricultural employers are entered in SCWOS and qualified candidates are referred. All petitioners for H-2A workers are mandated to take all qualified United States referrals through the workforce system. The state Agribusiness Staff and the Employment Services staff at the SC Works centers strive to refer qualified local applicants to all H-2A job orders through community contacts and referrals. SC Works offices provide hard copies of the H-2A job orders in each of the centers for applicants to review and so that they can be appraised of the terms and conditions of employment.

Other services include assisting in the certification and renewals of certification for farm labor contractors and housing inspections of both H-2A and MSFW camps. The Foreign Labor Consultants perform field checks and communicate with the Chicago National Processing Center in addressing matters relative to any H-2A deficiencies. They also provide critical services by coordinating the movement of MSFW crews to the growers at the appropriate times.

The Employment Services staff will strive to meet and exceed federal program requirements with respect to equity and minimum service level indicators of compliance through increased training, collaborative outreach and technical assistance.

B. MARKETING THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE COMPLAINT SYSTEM TO FARMWORKERS AND OTHER FARMWORKER ADVOCACY GROUPS

MSFWs entering SC Works centers to seek services will be able to see the Complaint System poster prominently displayed in English and in Spanish and receive assistance should they wish to file a complaint. Outreach staff have been equipped with handouts and posters containing information about farmworker rights, the Farmworker Helpline, and the complaint system. DEW will market the complaint system to farm workers utilizing field staff through oral presentations along with supplemental materials to be shared during outreach activities. Both the SMA and DEW Outreach Workers participate in partner and community events to market employment services available to agricultural workers, amongst which is the complaint system. This strategy is expected to continue.

C. MARKETING THE AGRICULTURAL RECRUITMENT SYSTEM FOR U.S. WORKERS (ARS) TO AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS AND HOW IT INTENDS TO IMPROVE SUCH PUBLICITY.

Services available to farmers and farmworkers are available online at jobs.scworks.org and included online in the SWA's official website, www.dew.sc.gov. Information will be shared with farmers and farmworkers through oral presentations by the SMA, Foreign Labor Consultants and DEW Outreach Workers as well as through the utilization of United States Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration's Agricultural Recruitment System poster. Local business services staff will work with local farmers to promote their job openings and assist in their recruitment efforts prior to the employer submitting applications for H-2A workers.

6. OTHER REQUIREMENTS

A. COLLABORATION

Describe any collaborative agreements the state workforce agency (SWA) has with other MSFW service providers including NFJP grantees and other service providers. Describe how the SWA intends to build upon/increase collaboration with existing partners and in establishing new partners over the next four years (including any approximate timelines for establishing agreements or building upon existing agreements).

DEW collaborates with other agencies across the state of South Carolina that also serve agricultural workers, including the WIOA Section 167 National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) Grantee-Telamon/TRC, SC Legal Services, SC Department of Education's Migrant Education Program, SC Primary Health Care Association's Agricultural Worker Health Program, East Coast Migrant Head Start Program, and faith-based migrant community organizations and associations. This collaboration facilitates the provision of information and promotion of services available to MSFWs at appropriate meetings, events, and other avenues. To supplement these efforts, DEW is part of the organizing committee for the South Carolina Farmworker Service Provider Institute, which is a networking and learning opportunity for agencies, organizations, and community leaders working with farm workers across the state. Furthermore, DEW Outreach Workers are encouraged to participate in local boards/meetings and become part of efforts to increase the quantity and quality of services delivered to the MSFW community.

Internally, DEW Outreach Workers collaborate with the Rural Initiatives and Business Services teams to share information with relevant individuals and employers. Information shared includes: referrals to training and supportive services, referrals to Wagner-Peyser employment services, and external partner resources. DEW Outreach Workers also participate in monthly regional collaboration meetings that include members of all DEW departments, increasing programmatic awareness and opportunities for providing services.

The State Monitor Advocate (SMA) has also established collaborative agreements with the WIOA Section 167 National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) Grantees-Northeastern Technical College to include joint outreach and training, information sharing, mutual referrals, and quarterly meetings. Similarly, the SMA has cemented a line of support to SC's Agricultural Worker Health Program and SC's Migrant Education Program. The SMA is available to deliver presentations about services available to MSFWs as well as their rights and protections when requested, to serve as a bridge to receive and channel complaints or provide technical assistance, to provide farmworker rights or helpline posters as well as helpful information to the programs and MSFWs. These collaborative efforts will continue to be alimented on a quarterly basis as per 20 CFR 653.108(l) & (n) with periodic brainstorming sessions to receive input on improving the coordination of services to MSFWs.

One of the SMA's strategic goals is to develop a statewide effort to enhance the quality of life and quantity of services delivered to the MSFW community in South Carolina through the sharing of useful information and timely exchange of ideas. Therefore, the SMA and DEW Outreach workers will continue to participate in different coalitions and groups across the state to advocate for the MSFW community and forge collaborative partnerships. These groups include the SC's Labor Trafficking Subcommittee, Alianza Latina, PASOS, the Community Health Worker Association, SC Immigrant Victim Coalition, the Mexican and Guatamalan Consulates, among others. The SMA will continue maintaining contact with community and faith-based organizations, as well as media outlets, healthcare providers, government agencies, and Department of Education representatives.

B. REVIEW AND PUBLIC COMMENT

In developing the AOP, the SWA must solicit information and suggestions from NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other interested organizations. In addition, at least 45 calendar days before submitting its final AOP, the SWA must provide a proposed plan to NFJP grantees, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other organizations expressing an interest and allow at least 30 days for review and comment. The SWA must: 1) Consider any comments received in

formulating its final proposed AOP; 2) Inform all commenting parties in writing whether their comments have been incorporated and, if not, the reasons therefore; and 3) Transmit the comments and recommendations received and its responses with the submission of the AOP.

The AOP must include a statement confirming NFJP grantees, other appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations and other interested employer organizations have been given an opportunity to comment on the AOP. Include the list of organizations from which information and suggestions were solicited, any comments received, and responses to those comments.

C. DATA ASSESSMENT

Review the previous four years Wagner-Peyser data reports on performance. Note whether the State has been meeting its goals to provide MSFWs quantitatively proportionate services as compared to non-MSFWs. If it has not met these goals, explain why the State believes such goals were not met and how the State intends to improve its provision of services in order to meet such goals.

The nation went through unprecedented circumstances during part of the previous four program years that affected service delivery to MSFWs. The COVID-19 pandemic played a major role in the state not meeting all the service delivery standards during PY 2019 and 2020 with staff turnover becoming the predominant cause for underperformance during PY 2021 and PY 2022. The pandemic required SC Works Centers to be closed to the public, for travel to be restricted, for in-person outreach to be suspended, for remote work to be practiced, and for contact with MSFWs to decrease. Relatedly, several vacancies occurred within the DEW Outreach Team that lasted over a year, which impacted registrations and services. Despite these challenges, the State met at least three (3) equity ratio indicators and one (1) minimum service level indicator each program year from PY 2021 through PY 2024 and has had consistent success in providing staff-assisted career guidance services to MSFWs.

Employment Services worked internally with the State Monitor Advocate and Human Resources to evaluate both the temporary grant Rural Manpower and the MSFW Workforce Specialist positions. This evaluation was to assist in filling vacancies. It was decided that several changes would need to be made for these two positions and continuous evaluation efforts.

Foreign Labor Consultants:

- Based on the state's continuous need for H-2A workers, positions needed to be changed from temporary grant state position to a full-time state employee position
- For the position to be recognizable for both internal and external stakeholders, the title of 'Rural Manpower' was changed to 'Foreign Labor Consultant'
- In reviewing the temporary staff position description, several changes were made for the full-time position description that incorporated communication, processes, and being collaborative with internal and external stakeholders (i.e., attending meetings, trainings, and conferences)
- Recruitment efforts involved sending out position openings to the local areas and farms

MSFW Workforce Specialists:

- Positions were evaluated based on skills needed for the position

- Pay scale matrix was developed and implemented based on bilingual skills and specialized knowledge for the position
- Recruitment efforts involved sending out position openings within the community and partners and incorporating more of the position duties into the job positing
- Evaluating the position to meet the new requirements of Training and Employment Notice (TEN) Update TEN 10-23 - Wagner-Peyser Act Staffing Final Rule

The Employment Services' evaluation of both the positions and recruitment methods for the DEW Outreach Team and Foreign Labor Consultants allowed the state to fully staff the team until the end of PY 2023. Having a full staff affords the State opportunities for improvement to increase registrations and service delivery to MSFWs with innovation, flexibility, leveraging partnerships, and determination. The State already saw improvement in meeting minimum service level indicators in PY 2024. Strategies will be set in place to increase performance achievement as well as staff training and levels.

DEW is establishing activities to increase the number of MSFWs registered in SCWOS and focusing our efforts on increasing the number of services delivered to MSFW. We are working with local employers and workforce development initiatives to develop solutions to meet the needs of these workers.

D. ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

The plan must include an explanation of what was achieved based on the previous AOP, what was not achieved and an explanation as to why the State believes the goals were not achieved, and how the State intends to remedy the gaps of achievement in the coming year.

The state plans to continue looking for effective ways to serve the migrant and agricultural communities. Nonetheless, the state has made persistent progress towards the achievement of its goals. Concrete examples of the state's successes are as follows:

- Foreign Labor Certification continues to serve serves current and new employers showing the steady need of foreign labor in our state (see table 3).
- DEW Outreach Workers are engaging in joint outreach with important partners like SC Agricultural Worker Health Program and SC Migrant Education Program.
- Implementation of employment services workshops in Spanish, which is a valuable service to MSFWs that can attend.
- Utilize the state Virtual Engagement Center (VEC) to provide bilingual materials to those looking for agricultural work.
- Continuation of training, monthly meetings, and best practices discussions to increase communication and improve performance .
- Implemented training on the Agricultural Outreach programs to Employment Services staff in the SC Works centers.
- Achievement of one more Indicator of Performance during PY 2024 and increased outreach contacts per week.
- Created the Agribusiness Department to coordinate service provision to employers and jobseekers.

- Created Growing@SC branding to promote agribusiness services across the state.
- Created the Agribusiness Coordinator position to oversee DEW Outreach Workers and the complaint system.
- Reorganized areas of responsibility for Foreign Labor Consultants and Agricultural Outreach Coordinators to eliminate coverage gaps and even workloads.
- Created "AG Fast Pass" program to expedite pre-occupancy housing inspections for the state's growers.
- Developed new trainings, policy and a process to eliminate reporting unqualified referrals to H-2A job orders.
- Incorporating the Rural Initiatives and Business Services teams to promote agricultural services.

E. STATE MONITOR ADVOCATE

The plan must contain a statement confirming the State Monitor Advocate has reviewed and approved the AOP.

South Carolina's State Monitor Advocate (SMA) has reviewed and approved the Agricultural Outreach Plan.

WAGNER-PEYSER ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include assurances that:

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The Wagner-Peyser Act 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));	Yes
2. If the State has significant MSFW one-stop centers, the State agency is complying with the requirements under 20 CFR 653.111, State Workforce Agency staffing requirements;	Yes
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 Act services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I; and	Yes
4. SWA officials: 1) Initiate the discontinuation of services; 2) Make the determination that services need to be discontinued;	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
3) Make the determination to reinstate services after the services have been discontinued; 4) Approve corrective action plans; 5) Approve the removal of an employer's clearance orders from interstate or intrastate clearance if the employer was granted conditional access to ARS and did not come into compliance within 5 calendar days; 6) Enter into agreements with State and Federal enforcement agencies for enforcement-agency staff to conduct field checks on the SWAs' behalf (if the SWA so chooses); and 7) Decide whether to consent to the withdrawal of complaints if a party who requested a hearing wishes to withdraw its request for hearing in writing before the hearing.	
5. The SWA has established and maintains a self-appraisal system for ES operations to determine success in reaching goals and to correct deficiencies in performance (20 CFR 658.601).	Yes

WAGNER PEYSER PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as "baseline" indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A "baseline" indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels. As a result, "baseline" indicators were not used in the end of the year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as "baseline" based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Credential Attainment Rate; and
- Measurable Skill Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as "baseline" for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as "baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA." The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as "baseline" for PY 2020 and PY 2021 will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as "baseline" for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation

process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs not listed as "baseline." Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state's plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	63.5	67.0	63.5	68.0
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	62.8	66.0	62.8	67.0
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$5,461	$5,755	$5,461	$5,855
Credential Attainment Rate	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Measurable Skill Gains	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]

[1] The Departments have not issued the final rule defining Effectiveness in Serving Employers. As a result, states will not submit expected levels of performance for this indicator and the Departments will not establish negotiated levels of performance for PYs 2024 and 2025.

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAMS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a description of the following as it pertains to adult education and literacy programs and activities under title II of WIOA, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA).

A. ALIGNING OF CONTENT STANDARDS

Describe how the eligible agency has aligned its content standards for adult education with State-adopted challenging academic content standards, as adopted under section 1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)(1)).

The South Carolina Department of Education – Office of Career Readiness - Adult Education has aligned its content standards for adult education by developing the Curriculum Framework for local programs. The Curriculum Framework was developed to assist local programs with aligning curriculum to the South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Standards (SCCCR) and the

College and Career Readiness Standards (CCR) for adult education. The Curriculum Framework aligns the SCCCR Standards and the CCR Standards for English-Language Arts (Reading, Language, and Writing) and Mathematics with the current adult skills and literacy assessments used in South Carolina and the standards and academic requirements for enrollment in non-remedial, for-credit courses in postsecondary educational institutions. The Curriculum Framework is organized by Educational Functioning Level (EFL) and identifies the skills and standards in which students need to demonstrate proficiency in order to complete each level.

Local adult education programs follow the standards-based classroom model of instruction to provide a personalized learning environment to empower students and help them achieve their academic and personal goals. Instructors use diagnostic tools and assessments to determine Educational Functional Levels (EFL) to identify the needs of their individual learners and use these diagnostics to develop individual learning plans for each student that includes the knowledge and skills needed to achieve a Measurable Skill Gain and prepare for entry into postsecondary education, training, or the workforce. Ongoing professional development and training opportunities in designing and implementing standards- and research-based instruction for reading, writing, speaking, and mathematics are provided at the state, regional, and local program levels throughout the year.

B. LOCAL ACTIVITIES

Describe how the eligible agency will, using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA and in accordance with 34 CFR 463 subpart C, fund each eligible provider to establish or operate programs that provide any of the following adult education and literacy activities identified in section 203 of WIOA, including programs that provide such activities concurrently. The Unified or Combined State Plan must include at a minimum the scope, content, and organization of these local activities.

ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES (SECTION 203 OF WIOA)

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

1. Provides adult education and literacy activities, concurrently and contextually with both, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster, and
2. Is for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

Special Rule. Each eligible agency awarding a grant or contract under this section shall not use any funds made available under this title for adult education and literacy activities for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are under the age of 16 and are enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State

law, except that such agency may use such funds for such purpose if such programs, services, or activities are related to family literacy activities. In providing family literacy activities under this title, an eligible provider shall attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this title prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities under this title for activities other than activities for eligible individuals.

South Carolina Department of Education serves as the administrative/fiscal agent for Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA). As administrative/fiscal agent, the Department solicits service providers to provide services to eligible individuals who: (a) have attained 16 years of age; (b) are not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under the SC Compulsory School law; and (c) are basic skills deficient; (d) do not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent and have not achieved an equivalent level of education; or (e) are English language learners.

All activities funded under WIOA are authorized, approved, and overseen by the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) – OCR-AE.

The following organizations are eligible to apply to the SCDE – OCR-AE for federal funds provided they have demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education and literacy services:

1. a local educational agency (LEA, i.e., school district);
2. a community-based organization or faith-based organization;
3. a volunteer literacy organization;
4. an institution of higher education;
5. a public or private nonprofit agency;
6. a library;
7. a public housing authority;
8. a nonprofit institution that is not described in any of items 1. through 7. and has the ability to provide adult education and literacy activities to eligible individuals;
9. a consortium or coalition of the agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described in any of items 1. through 8.; and
10. a partnership between an employer and an entity described in any of items 1. through 9.

An eligible provider must show demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education and literacy activities by submitting:

a. Performance Record—a minimum of two consecutive years of performance data (within the previous five years) on improving the skills of eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals who have low levels of literacy, in the content domains of Reading, Writing, Mathematics, and English language acquisition.

b. Participant Outcomes— a minimum of two consecutive years of data and/or information (within the previous five years) on outcomes for participants

related to Employment, Attainment of secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and Transition to postsecondary education and training.

By federal law, providers are prohibited from using federal funds to supplant state or local dollars. All federal funding will be used to enhance learner services, as outlined under WIOA, this Plan, and through a SCDE – OCR-AE AEFLA grant competition using guidance from the US Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education. Awards to eligible providers were made fall of 2025 through the Request for Proposal (RFP) application process. As described in 34 CFR 463.20(d), applicants will be required to respond to each of the 13 considerations and describe in detail how their proposed activities will align with these considerations. To help ensure direct and equitable access to funds for adult literacy and basic skills activities, RFPs will be announced directly to providers and through multiple media outlets. In addition, all providers will be considered for grants based on the same criteria. These criteria are aligned with the directions contained in this Plan and the thirteen considerations required by federal legislation.

Once all applications are received, the SCDE – OCR-AE will review each application to ensure that it is complete. Each completed application that is submitted on time and meets demonstrated effectiveness eligibility requirements will be reviewed by independent reviewers. Simultaneously, the applications will be packaged and sent to South Carolina's local workforce development board administrators. Workforce Administrators will use a rubric created by OCR-AE to review applications for alignment with local area plans, and to submit recommendations. The OCR-AE will work to resolve any alignment issues with the applicant, prior to allocating grant funds. All grants will be awarded on a five-year basis. Future efforts will be made to assess what support eligible providers might need in order to implement this Plan and broaden the discussion of how these needs can be met.

South Carolina Department of Education, Office of Career Readiness - Adult Education, will use the following process to distribute funds to approved applicants:

Not less than 82.5 percent of the grant funds to award grants and contracts under section 231.Local assistance grants will be distributed based on the ability to meet the requirements of AEFLA Purposes outlined in WIOA: (1) Assist adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and economic self-sufficiency; (2) Assist adults who are parents or family members to obtain the education and skills that (a) are necessary to becoming full partner in the education development of their children and (b) Lead to sustainable improvements in the economic opportunities for their family; (3) Assist adults in attaining a secondary school diploma and in the transition to postsecondary education and training including through career pathways; (4) Assist immigrants and other individuals who are English language learners in (a) improving their reading, writing, math, speaking, and comprehension skills in English and mathematics skills, and (b) acquiring an understanding of the American system of government, individual freedom, and the responsibilities of citizenship.

Allowable Costs: All allowable costs for the federally funded Adult Basic Education program are defined in the Office of Management and Budget Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards subpart E (2 CFR Part 200). This will be the document of determination for reasonableness, allowability, and allocability of costs. All costs must be supported by source documentation including cancelled checks, paid bills, payrolls, time and attendance records, purchase orders and signed copies of sub-grant award documents. South Carolina purchasing and procurement laws must be followed by South Carolina School Districts or other state agencies in the acquisition of all goods associated with the sub-grant.

In South Carolina, the SCDE- OCR-AE delegates it required One Stop responsibilities to one local AE provider in each local Workforce area; these local program directors are voting members on the respective local Workforce Development Boards. These delegated AE programs provide the services of a College and Career Navigator at each One Stop Comprehensive site to coordinate services between One Stop partners, Adult Education, and the general public.

Local programs, which the SCDE OCR-AE has delegated responsibility to support the local One Stop Comprehensive sites, have a 5% administrative cap that can be used to support the infrastructure costs of the local One Stop centers.

The scope of Adult Education services covers South Carolina's 79 school districts. Adult education programs are organized to meet the literacy needs of local populations across the state. These programs provide flexible scheduling to accommodate student needs. Local programs provide instruction and support to assist individuals in obtaining a secondary credential and with the transition to post-secondary education and training and/or employment. To provide additional community support, the eight activities in the following section are also offered to individuals who have completed a high school credential or a higher form of education but are considered basic skills deficient as identified by an approved National Reporting System assessment. Basic skills deficient individuals who have completed a secondary credential are assisted through Skills Upgrade Training that includes instruction in math, reading, writing, English as a second language, and digital literacy.

As the eligible agency to receive AEFLA funds, in accordance with WIOA Title II (Sec. 231), SCDE – OCR-AE requires that each eligible provider use the grant to establish or operate one or more programs that provide services or instruction in one or more of the following categories:

Adult education;

Literacy;

Workplace adult education and literacy activities;

Family literacy activities;

English language acquisition activities;

Integrated English literacy and civics education;

Workforce preparation activities; or

Integrated Education and Training (IET)

South Carolina requires that all sub-grantees for the Adult Education Grant provide adult education, literacy, workplace adult education and literacy, and workforce preparation. These same sub-grantees must also develop integrated education and training (IET) processes that are based on high employment need areas for the state, region, or for specific employers. The SCDE – OCR-AE will identify a sub-grantee in each of the 12 workforce areas to assist all workforce area sub-grantees with IET development.

WIOA Title II (Sec. 231) defines Adult Education as academic instruction and education services below the postsecondary level that increase an individual's ability to: a) read, write, and speak in English and perform mathematics or other activities necessary for the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent; b) transition to postsecondary education and training; and c) obtain employment.

Local adult education programs offer the following Adult Education and Literacy Activities:

ADULT EDUCATION

Adult Basic Education Program

Adult Basic Education instruction is designed for an adult who lacks competence in reading, writing, speaking, problem solving, or computation at a level necessary to function in society, on a job, or in a family.

Adult Secondary Education

Adult Secondary instruction is designed for adults who have some literacy skills and can function in everyday life but do not have an equivalent to a secondary school diploma.

LITERACY ACTITIVIES

This is a program designed to teach an individual to read, write, and speak in English, compute, and solve problems, at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family of the individual, and in society.

WORKPLACE ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY ACTIVITY

Local eligible providers offer these services for the purpose of improving the productivity of the workforce in their area through raising the basic skills level. Employers work with our programs and some sponsor classes at their worksites while others send them to regular adult education classes. This further allows us to provide adult education activities concurrently and contextually with any workforce preparation activities and workforce training for either a specific occupation or cluster.

FAMILY LITERACY ACTIVITIES

Family Literacy programs address the literacy strengths and needs of the family while promoting adults' involvement in children's education and their own education. Programs provide both parent-initiated and child-initiated activities to support the development of those relationships and to increase the motivation to learn for both parent and child. Family literacy programs provide services that are of sufficient intensity in terms of hours, and of sufficient duration, to make sustainable changes in a family and that integrate all the following activities:

- Interactive Literacy Activities between parents and their children (Interactive Literacy)
- Education for Parents (Parent Education) in facilitating children's learning and becoming full partners in their education
- Parent literacy training (Adult Education) that leads to economic self-sufficiency and meets adults' stated goals
- Age-appropriate education (Early Care and Education) to prepare children for success in school and life experiences

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

English Language Acquisition programs assist English language learners in a) improving their: i. reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension skills in English and ii. mathematics skills; and b) acquiring an understanding of the American system of Government, individual freedom, and the responsibilities of citizenship.

An English language learner is an individual who has limited ability in reading, writing, speaking, or comprehending the English language. These individuals’ native language is a

language other than English and usually lives in a family or community environment where a language other than English is the dominant language.

INTEGRATED ENGLISH LITERACY AND CIVICS EDUCATION (IEL/CE)

IEL/CE instruction is a program or class which focuses on enabling English language learners to achieve competency in the English language and acquire the basic and more advanced skills needed to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens in the United States. This includes instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation, which may include workforce training.

WORKFORCE PREPARATION ACTIVITIES

The term workforce preparation activities means activities, programs, or services designed to help an individual acquire a combination of basic academic skills, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and self-management skills, including competencies in utilizing resources, using information, working with others, understanding systems, and obtaining skills necessary for successful transition into and completion of postsecondary education or training, or employment.

INTEGRATED EDUCATION AND TRAINING (IET)

The term 'Integrated Education and Training' means a service approach that provides adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster for the purpose of educational and career advancement.

C. CORRECTIONS EDUCATION AND OTHER EDUCATION OF INSTITUTIONALIZED INDIVIDUALS

Describe how the eligible agency will, using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA and in accordance with 34 CFR 463 subpart C, fund eligible providers to establish or operate programs that provide any of the following correctional educational programs identified in section 225 of WIOA:

- Adult education and literacy activities;
- Special education, as determined by the eligible agency;
- Secondary school credit;
- Integrated education and training;
- Career pathways;
- Concurrent enrollment;
- Peer tutoring; and
- Transition to re-entry initiatives and other post release services with the goal of reducing recidivism.

Each eligible agency using funds provided under Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution must give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional

institution within 5 years of participation in the program.

Section 225(a) of the Act states "from funds made available under Section 222(a)(1) for a fiscal year, each eligible agency shall carry out corrections education or education for other institutionalized individuals. The funds described in subsection (a) shall be used for the cost of educational programs for criminal offenders in correctional institutions and for other institutionalized individuals, including programs for (1) adult education and literacy services, (2) special education, as determined by the eligible agency; (3) secondary school credit; and (4) integrated education and training; (5) career pathways; (6) concurrent enrollment; (7) peer tutoring; and (8) transition to re-entry initiatives and other post-release services with the goal of reducing recidivism.

In accordance with 34 CFR 463 subpart C, South Carolina will conduct a statewide grant competition in the fall of 2024. The Corrections Educations Section 225 competition will be competed as a part of the larger AEFLA competition; though distributed simultaneously and in the same format, the application package will require a separate submission for the Corrections Education program. These funds will be allocated based on a combination of formula and performance factors. The 2025-30 Corrections Education grant cycle will allocate funds to selected providers each year for a duration of 5 years. The grant competition will ensure that all eligible providers have direct and equitable access to apply for these funds. Applicants will respond to each of the AEFLA 13 considerations in the application package. The applications will go through a two-step process in order to be considered for funding. The applicant must submit documentation of demonstrated effectiveness; applicants that meet this requirement will move on to the formal review conducted by independent reviewers and the respective Local Workforce Development Boards.

The SCDE- OCR-AE will use up to 20% of the 82.5% of their grant, not the full amount of the grant, for corrections.

Corrections Education sub-grantees must provide adult education and literacy, career pathways, and concurrent enrollment. Sub-grantees have the option of providing additional academic programs (items 2, 3, 4, 7, and 8 above). If selecting to provide item 3, secondary school credit, the SCDE OCR-AE permits high school equivalency diploma preparation and High School Diploma preparation for students 22 years of age or older.

The South Carolina Department of Education - OCR-AE and each eligible agency that is using assistance provided under Section 225 of the Act to carry out a program for criminal offenders in a correctional institution, shall give priority to serving individuals who will be released within a period of five (5) years.

D. INTEGRATED ENGLISH LITERACY AND CIVICS EDUCATION PROGRAM

Describe how the eligible agency will, using the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA and in accordance with 34 CFR 463 subpart C, fund eligible providers to establish or operate Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) programs under section 243 of WIOA. Describe how adult English language learners, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, are served in IELCE programs.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be offered in combination with integrated education and training activities found in 34 CFR section 463.36.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place such adults in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency.

Describe how the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education program under section 243(a) of WIOA will be designed to integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the activities of the program.

The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IEL/CE) program is funded under WIOA Section 243 funds. In accordance with 34 CFR 463 subpart C, South Carolina will conduct a statewide grant competition in the fall of 2024. The IEL/CE Section 243 competition will be completed as a part of the larger AEFLA competition; though distributed simultaneously and in the same format, the application package will require a separate submission for the IEL/CE program. These funds will be allocated based on a combination of formula and performance factors. The 2025-30 IEL/CE grant cycle will allocate funds to selected providers each year for a duration of 5 years. The grant competition will ensure that all eligible providers have direct and equitable access to apply for these funds. Applicants will respond to each of the AEFLA 13 considerations in the application package. The applications will go through a two-step process in order to be considered for funding. The applicant must submit documentation of demonstrated effectiveness; applicants that meet this requirement will move on to the formal review conducted by independent reviewers and the respective Local Workforce Development Boards.

Funds will be used to provide services to English language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, to enable such adults to achieve competency in the English language and acquire the basic and more advanced skills needed to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens in the United States. These funds will be utilized to assist students in improving their English language proficiency as well as offering opportunities for eligible individuals to prepare for and participate in post-secondary education or workforce training concurrently with adult education activities. Approximately 12 providers in South Carolina will be awarded funds to be used to deliver English language acquisition activities integrated with workforce preparation activities. This model will assure that opportunities offered to students for employment and employment preparation and training are aligned with local employment needs. Programs receiving IEL/CE funds will be required to partner with WIOA core partners, occupational training providers and other entities to allow eligible students to participate in an IET, which combines adult education and literacy activities concurrently with workforce training or postsecondary education.

Providers receiving funds under the IEL/CE program are required to offer high quality English language acquisition activities, while integrating workforce preparation skills and contextualized instruction. Programs will use standards-based curricula to deliver instruction, aligning instruction with the English Language Proficiency Standards developed by AIR, content standards developed through the Minnesota Literacy Council, Career Development Standards, SC Adult Education Digital Literacy Standards, and the Employability Skills Framework.

IEL/CE programs will also be required to offer and implement an Integrated Education and Training (IET) program with eligible students, aligning the Adult Education instructional support to the occupational training to address employment need(s) in the local workforce area. IEL/CE grant recipients will be required to identify eligible students, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, for participation in the IET program. These IET programs will directly align with employment needs as identified by each of the Local Workforce Development areas. They will be developed directly with core partners and employers to place students in unsubsidized employment, in in-demand industries, and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency.

Each IEL/CE program will be required to have designated staff to provide English language instruction and college and career navigation services to enrolled students. Local Adult education staff will collaborate with WIOA core partners to assist students in addressing barriers toward reaching their individual academic and employment goals. These staff members are integral to moving students toward employment, post-secondary education and training and subsequent gainful employment to address local employment needs.

The South Carolina OCR-AE will be responsible for monitoring programs for compliance with WIOA Title II, Section 243 and providing technical assistance to programs participating in the IEL/CE program.

E. STATE LEADERSHIP

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE THE FUNDS TO CARRY OUT THE REQUIRED STATE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES UNDER SECTION 223 OF WIOA

ALIGNMENT OF ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES

The South Carolina Department of Education's (SCDE) OCR-AE OCR-AE has worked diligently and collaboratively to align adult education and literacy activities with core and required one-stop partners. The OCR-AE, along with core partners and other state agencies, will continue to make revisions to the State Plan as requested by our federal program offices.

Strategic goals for the workforce development system in South Carolina, as indicated in the State Plan, include the following:

Strengthen the Workforce Pipeline - Facilitation of middle skills and middle wage attainment; Creation of education and career pathways; Development of one, consistently delivered soft skills competency–based curricula; Enhancement of school–to–work transition and youth–focused programs; and Facilitation of Middle Skills and Middle Wage Attainment.

Align the state's current public workforce development resources to ensure a customer–centered delivery system - coordinate agency business engagement activity; build and use data driven decision making and evaluation methods; expand specific partnerships and collaboration; and coordinate business engagement activity.

The OCR-AE is intricately involved with state-level partners in achieving the strategic workforce goals. OCR-AE staff is a part of various workgroups that have been formed to carry out the workforce goals. The workgroups consist of all core partners and other state level partners.

Core partners have worked together to identify ways to improve customer service amongst all workforce partner staff. A statewide plan for training frontline staff has been developed to ensure all partners in the SC Works Centers and workforce system have the knowledge and

understanding of each program to guarantee all customers get the services they most need. The frontline staff training will facilitate tailored, effective, and streamlined customer service. Core partners planned the training and pooled resources and talents for the most effective delivery methods. The web-based training will continue to be a useful tool for educating and training current staff and will be helpful in onboarding new staff.

Core partners have also outlined a state-level vision for system integration along with an initial timeline. Activities that have occurred or are in process include the following: review of final rules regarding performance and reporting, review of current intake forms/applications, and identification of common elements and referral processes. Long range planning will include a review of system needs and project development in the context of final reporting guidelines and data collection instructions. Each core program is adapting and making changes to data collection and reporting systems to adhere to the final reporting requirements.

Although the WIOA Integration workgroup consisting of state and local level core and partner program representatives has been convened to plan for universal referral and intake, the integrated operating system will be the most difficult to achieve. Each agency already has a system procured and in place that works well for their programs. Adopting an entirely new system to be used by all partners may take many years to facilitate. Instead, the group will likely continue to investigate systems that offer the flexibility to use individual systems but share common data elements and reporting through a portal. All options will require a lengthy process, but integration remains a top priority for the state.

The OCR-AE continues efforts to develop and be a part of partner efforts to establish career pathways as a means to provide access to employment and training services for individuals in adult education and literacy activities. The OCR-AE will continue to provide training to local adult education programs on career pathways. Local programs are monitored on the development of their career pathways, and as a part of the request for proposal/competitive grant award, they will be required to outline or describe their plan for developing a career pathway.

In addition to the aforementioned core partner activities, the Director of the OCR-AE serves as a member of the State Workforce Development Board. His participation on the state board further facilitates alignment of adult education and literacy activities with other one-stop required partners.

The OCR-AE collaborative effort with the South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Department, a core WIOA partner, continues to be one of our most successful collaborations. Adult education classes are provided at 24 Vocational Rehabilitation Offices around the state. VR clients referred to adult education are assessed with TABE to determine the focus of instruction. Clients who have a Mathematics scale score of 496 or above and a Reading scale score of 501 or above participate in three-week class sessions provided in preparation for the Career Readiness Certificate assessments. Remediation is provided for clients who do not meet class entry requirements.

Another successful partnership is with the South Carolina Department of Social Services (SCDSS).SCDSS administers the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment and Training (E & T) initiative. SNAP recipients gain skills, training, work, or experience that will increase self-sufficiency. Adult Education has an agreement with DSS to offer adult education services to SNAP recipients to assist with meeting these goals. Emphasis will be placed on attainment of an HSD, HSED and a career readiness certificate.

HIGH QUALITY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The OCR-AE continues its efforts to establish and provide high quality professional development programs to improve the instruction provided pursuant to local activities required under Section 231(b), including instruction incorporating the essential components of reading instruction, instruction related to the specific needs of adult learners, dissemination of information about models and promising practices related to these programs, and teaching strategies to assist volunteers.

For several years, OCR-AE has operated technical assistance centers. The Technical Assistance Network (TAN) training system supports our professional development process. The TAN system serves as an extension of the OCR-AE and supplements the services of OCR-AE by providing professional development and technical assistance to help improve the quality and services of adult education programs. Local adult education staff are required and encouraged to participate in trainings offered by the state and in regional trainings offered through their local TAN. Local adult education practitioners are also encouraged to utilize existing professional development resources such as the Literacy Information and Communication System (LINCS) and WorkforceGPS.

The OCR-AE staff and other subject matter experts from local programs provide ongoing local, regional, and statewide professional development trainings. During each session, educators examined standards-based instructional practices, the standards' alignment to instructional resources, assessment strategies, and digital literacy integration to address Distance Education/Blended Learning instructional practices. Traditionally, most of our curriculum and instruction trainings are delivered in person or synchronously. However, we have begun utilizing our statewide LMS, Brightspace, to increase our asynchronous PD offerings to accommodate educators' diverse schedules. In doing so, we have identified an increased need to provide more opportunities for educators to develop their digital literacy skills. Hence, we are working to increase said professional development trainings to meet this need.

Annually, statewide training opportunities are offered during the spring and fall for both paid and volunteer adult education practitioners. These training institutes are used as a platform to inform adult education practitioners of priorities and changes and to educate them on new practices and tools. Professional development has focused on WIOA, standards, career pathways (including IET and Workplace Literacy), digital literacy, math and reading instruction, working with English language learners and other topics related to the specific needs of adult learners.

During the summer, graduate level courses are offered as an additional learning opportunity for all adult education practitioners at low to no cost. These professional development courses include training on best practices, instructional resources and WIOA requirements as they relate to adult education. As a result of the modifications, the following graduate-level courses are offered:

(EDPD 822-I) Fundamentals of Adult Education: Program Development, Design, and Implementation

(EDPD 823-W) Adult Education: Content Area Reading and Writing

(EDPD 827 D) Instructional Strategies and Practices for Adult Education Practitioners

(EDPD 807-H) Teaching English to Adult Learners ESL Academy I

(EDPD 827 C) Supporting Digital Literacy and Resiliency in Adult Learners

(EDPD 808-C) Career Development in Adult Education - Global Career Development Facilitator Training

(EDPD 827 V) Using Data to Optimize Program Performance

Trainings, meetings, and webinars serve as avenues to share information on national and local models and promising practices. Training will continue for local adult education and literacy providers using the many resources available locally, state-wide, and nationally. OCR-AE places a strong emphasis on ensuring that materials and training incorporate research-based components.

Participants are surveyed after all workshops, conference presentations, and training webinars to evaluate the activity/event. Survey results are used for continuous improvement purposes and to identify additional training needs and intensity. The survey results are also used to improve professional development offerings. The OCR-AE uses program performance date to assess the impact of professional development on student performance.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO FUNDED ELIGIBLE PROVIDERS

The OCR-AE provides technical assistance to funded providers in many ways. Technical assistance was provided to individual providers or groups of providers either face-to-face, through conference calls, or web meetings. Statewide training sessions and regional meetings were conducted as well. With input from OCR-AE, regional training was also conducted by TANs.

Overall program performance, as well as program performance through each initiative, is measured by the Desktop Monitoring Tool (DMT).Desktop monitoring allows both the state agency and local programs to understand how local programs are performing throughout the school year. Programs are required to submit this report three times per year. Programs that perform at aggregate averages of less than 65 percent for ABE and/or ESL students enter an ITAP (Intensive Technical Assistance Program) process and will remain in the process until program performance improves to levels equal to or above 65 percent for both ABE and ESL students.

The program goal is for each provider to have at least one classroom that is totally standards-based and improve from that point to cover all academic classes.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF ADULT EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

To formally monitor providers, the OCR-AE assigns a Compliance Monitoring Review (CMR) team to review all school district programs and community-based organizations (CBO) receiving federal funds and/or state aid to support approved adult learning services.

The CMR process is a systemic approach designed to assess the educational opportunities and the effectiveness of adult education programs and services in the school districts and CBO's. One-fourth of the programs are reviewed each year by a team of OCR-AE staff. The other three-fourths of the programs are informally reviewed by desktop monitoring tools, virtual and on-site visits.

The CMR Team reviews the written documentation submitted by each program director that is being formally reviewed while comparing the information to a data analysis spreadsheet.

To be successful, the CMR effort requires continuous follow-up and support activities including professional development and on-site technical assistance.

2. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE THE FUNDS TO CARRY OUT PERMISSIBLE STATE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES UNDER SECTION 223 OF WIOA, IF APPLICABLE

The OCR-AE has used funds for permissible activities to enhance the quality of programming in the adult education system. The permissible activities that were supported with federal leadership funds included:

- Technical Assistance Network (TAN) – Funding is used to support the TAN. The TAN, in collaboration with the OCR-AE, develops and provides training to adult education practitioners on various adult education-related practices and models that support program development and instruction. Professional development activities through the TAN focus on career pathways, integrated education, and training, and more.
- Standards – The OCR-AE has been working to develop adult education standards that incorporate the state's K-12 standards and OCTAE standards.
- Distance Education – The OCR-AE purchases distance education packages for use by local adult education providers.
- Graduate Level Courses – The OCR-AE uses federal leadership funds to develop and execute graduate level college courses, based on WIOA guidelines, for adult education practitioners.
- College and Career Navigator Services – OCR-AE guides implementation of transition services that are provided locally and provides training for the College and Career Navigator services.
- IET –The OCR-AE will provide technical assistance and professional development to local programs to assist them in the development and implementation of IET programs. All programs must submit IET program proposals to the OCR-AE for review and approval.
- Family Literacy programs have been incorporated into approximately 47 percent of South Carolina's adult education programs. Through partnerships, adult education programs address one of the most prevalent and universal barriers for participation in adult education, "childcare" and transportation. Programs partner with local providers (Head Start, Early Head Start, South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness, and local school districts) to offer childcare for underage children of adult education students. Childcare vouchers are provided to students through a partnership with the SC Department of Social Services and the SCDE OCR-AE. The vouchers are for full and part time services. Students who work and attend adult education are eligible for full time vouchers. Transportation is addressed through collaborative initiatives such as buses accessed through local school districts, and partnerships with public and private transportation providers.
- Programs have incorporated family literacy services to enhance adult education program offerings, and address participation barriers while intensifying student academic goals, (high school diploma (HSD), high school equivalency diploma (HSED), career readiness certification, postsecondary education and training, entering/retaining employment, and focusing on career pathways). Participating students select an academic goal and parent education goal(s): (1) Increase involvement in children's education, and (2) Increase involvement in children's literacy activities.

FAMILY LITERACY (FL) PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

- The purpose of the AEFLA FL Program initiatives (Family Literacy and Early Care and Education Career Pathway) are to provide needed support for efforts that will increase

student and family commitment in local adult education programs. The intent of FL is to provide initiatives that interrupt generational poverty and low literacy by equipping adult students who are parents or guardians and their children for lifelong learning and economic stability. FL will provide adult education students who are parents or guardians of children with opportunities to improve their academic skills and use those skills to enhance the literacy skills of their children.

- FL is an extension of services that may be offered by local adult education programs to remove barriers from an enrolled student who is a parent or guardian and increase their ability to participate fully in adult education programs. Programs may apply for the Adult Education sub-grant funds in order to provide FL services. FL program participation will support the interwoven goals of adult education and family literacy for adults to obtain a high school equivalency diploma (HSED), enter employment, retain employment, move into postsecondary education and training, choose a career pathway, and obtain the educational skills necessary to become full partners in the educational development of their children.

- Programs must offer services that include the four components of family literacy. The activities must provide a broad array of services for the student to not only gain educational skills and earn a high school credential but also gain the skills to become the primary teacher for their children and prepare both the parent and the child for success in later life. The required four components of the FL program are: Adult Literacy (i.e., Adult Education (AE)) with the goal of obtaining a high school diploma, high school equivalent diploma, career readiness certificate, career pathway, postsecondary education, or the military. Training for Parents (i.e., Parent Education (PE)), guardians, or family members regarding how to be the primary teacher for their children and full partners in the education of their children. Educational Activities Between Parent and Child, which is the contextualized part of parent education instruction, (i.e., Interactive Literacy Activities (ILA)) between parents or family members and their children), must be supported by partnerships such as with the local school district, Head Start, Early Head Start, First Steps to School Readiness, Read to Succeed, and private partnerships. Early Childhood Services (i.e., Early Care and Education (ECE)) is an age-appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and life experiences. These services must be supported by partnerships such as the school district, Head Start, Early Head Start, First Steps to School Readiness, Read to Succeed, and private partnerships. Adult Literacy, Parent Education and Interactive Literacy Activities are supported by AEFLA funds and Early Care and Education are supported through public and private partnerships.

- FL Eligible Individuals: Participation in FL Program initiatives is limited to adults and OSY, age sixteen (16) or older, who are enrolled in an adult education program; or are not enrolled or required to be enrolled in a secondary school under state law; or do not have a high school diploma or equivalent; and are basic skills deficient; or do not have a secondary school diploma or equivalent, and have not achieved an equivalent level of education; or are English language learners; and have a child(ren) ages birth (0) to eight (8) years, per South Carolina's requirement. This includes being a legal guardian, grandparent, stepparent, aunt, uncle, sibling, or other person with whom the child lives or who has been designated by a parent, legal guardian, or court to act in place of the parent.

F. ASSESSING QUALITY

Describe how the eligible agency will assess the quality of providers of adult education and literacy activities under title II. Describe how the eligible agency will take actions to improve such quality, including providing the activities described in section 223(a)(1)(B) of WIOA. Describe how the eligible agency will use evaluations, data analysis, program monitoring, or other methods to improve the quality of adult education activities in the State.

The OCR-AE will use a variety of methods to assess the quality of providers of adult education and literacy activities including:

1. Desktop Monitoring Tool (DMT)

   Local programs produce a data report three times per year that compares each program's current outcomes to the negotiated performance targets and to the prior year's performance.

2. Federal grant reports

   Interim and final annual reports include information describing the program's strengths, challenges, and quality of processes as well as fiscal, programmatic, and performance data.

   - Programs may request specific professional development or technical assistance in their interim and final reports.
   - Professional development and technical assistance needs are identified during the review of the interim and final reports. These are provided on an individual basis and are specific for each program's needs.

3. Career Navigator Annual Report (CNAR)

   The CNAR Report is a monitoring tool that is used to collect data on the assistance provided to students in the career planning process and the transition from adult education into employment and/or postsecondary education and training programs. The report includes:

   - education services
   - employment services
   - armed forces services
   - supportive services
   - Allows the South Carolina Department of Education – OCR-AE to view specific career services that indicate student progression towards the following WIOA performance measures:
   - Employment in the 2nd quarter after exiting the program
   - Employment in the 4th quarter after exiting the program
   - Credential attainment
   - Attainment of secondary school credential **and**
   - Employment and/or enrollment in postsecondary education or training within the program year or within one year after exit from the adult education program.

Insert PD/TA provided as a result of findings.

4. Statewide Performance Profile.

   This state developed report provides an in-depth analysis of the state's performance that extends beyond the NRS Tables. Each data point in the profile is connected directly to one or more WIOA Considerations. The profile uses NRS data to examine:

   - the link among participant demographics, barriers to employment, and primary reason for enrollment and participant resiliency and the effectiveness of intake and orientation processes and connections to support services (C-1, C-11)
   - the outcomes of the young adult population (C-1, C-4, C-5, C-6)
   - the outcomes of individuals with disabilities (C-2, C-5, C-6)
   - the demonstrated effectiveness of the state's program in meeting the state-adjusted levels of performance (C-3)
   - the alignment with the state and local plans and the effectiveness of the states' collaborative agreements with core partners, connections to postsecondary education and training, and the development and implementation of career pathways (C-4, C-10)
   - distance learning opportunities and outcomes (C-5, C-6, C-7)
   - program schedules, research-based instructional strategies, and alignment with the academic standards for all assessments (C-5, C-6)
   - the outcomes of contextualized instruction, integrated education and training, and career pathways (C-8)
   - the programs' intake and orientation processes, connections to postsecondary education and training, and connections to federal, state, and local support services (C-11)
   - data collection, entry, and analysis processes (C-12)
   - the outcomes of English Language Learners (C-13)
   - the outcomes of Corrections Education participants (C-5, C-6)
   - the outcomes of Family Literacy participants (C-5, C-6)
   - the outcomes of Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education participants (C-8, C-13)
   - programs' adherence to the state's Assessment Policy as it pertains to pre- and post-testing
   - the outcomes of pre- and post-testing broken down by subject, level, and form (C-5, C-6)

   The result of the Statewide Performance Profile is one of several tools used to determine areas of a statewide need for professional development. The information is shared with the appropriate state staff who develop and organize targeted training for the areas of need.

5. Program Overview.

Each year after the state's data is finalized, a Program Overview report is prepared that lists the adult education providers and their overall performance in the areas of measurable skill gain for ABE and ESL, Integrated Education and Training and Workplace Literacy participants and outcomes, and follow-up outcomes. This report is used to:

- identify providers who excel in each area. These providers are often called upon to share promising practices at statewide meetings, trainings, and conferences.
- identify widespread issues or areas in which the state needs improvement. This, in conjunction with Statewide or Program Performance Profile, is used to determine professional development needs for the state and individual providers.

6. Compliance Monitoring Review (CMR)

- Formal onsite and virtual monitoring visits are conducted to assess programs' delivery of services, performance, and compliance with state and federal regulations.
- Assigned CMR team conducts formal monitoring of all AE programs over a four-year cycle. The next grant cycle will be a five-year cycle.
- Formal written documentation is submitted by programs documenting program activities and compliance with federal and state regulations and policies.
- Onsite visit activities include
- Current, Graduate, and Permanent Records Review
- Student Attendance Records Review
- Main Site and Satellite Facility Tour (Program Operations)
- Instructional Observations
- Financial and program inventory monitoring
- Virtual visit activities include:
    - Welcome
    - The Purpose of the Formal Review
    - Compliance Monitoring Review Process Overview
    - Superintendent/Board Chair's Vision for Adult Education
    - Adult Education State Director's Response
    - Director's Overview
    - Virtual Tour (if applicable)
    - Virtual Financial Monitoring (If virtual is needed)
    - Written Documentation Review with the Director
    - Teacher Interview(s)
    - Final Exit Conference

- After completion of the formal Compliance Monitoring visit, a Final CMR Report is sent to the Superintendent or CBO Board Chair, and Program Director
- Local programs are required to respond to the Final CMR Report if there are any required actions.
- Deficiencies noted during monitoring are addressed with an individualized Corrective Action Plan
- A virtual or onsite monitoring process for follow-up will be developed and implemented in the six month and twelve-month period after the deficiencies were noted on the CAP.

7. Informal Program Review (IPR) is conducted annually for providers not formally reviewed in the current program year.

8. Intensive Technical Assistance Program (ITAP)

   Technical assistance processes have been developed for programs not reaching performance and/or programmatic thresholds for each of the following activities: Adult Education, Corrections Education, English as a Second Language and Family Literacy. Programs are required to participate in the Intensive Technical Assistance Program (ITAP) status based on the following criteria:

   - Adult Basic Education (ABE) program performance aggregate average is less than 65%,
   - English as a Second Language (ESL) program performance aggregate average is less than 65%,
   - Criteria for Corrections Education and Family Literacy will vary based on required program components.

The OCR-AE works with each identified program to strengthen areas of need through:

- The completion of a Program Performance Profile which analyzes program data for the two previous years and is aligned with each of the WIOA Considerations.
- The completion of NRS self-paced online courses by the program director and primary staff.
- The completion of the state developed MSG Bootcamp and LACES Basics trainings by program director and primary staff.
- Individualized Corrective Action Plans (CAPs). CAPs are developed by each identified program and include incremental goals, strategies, and success criteria.
- Individual and group in-person and virtual trainings and check-in meetings throughout the year led by OCR-AE and Technical Assistance Network staff.
- Tailored professional development offerings that focus on specific strategies for developing systems to reorganize practices that will impact program administration, staff development, data collection and analysis, the orientation and intake process, student exit and follow-up, standardized assessment, student, and program records, and identified instructional areas. All sessions focus on variables that directly and indirectly affect program performance.

A condensed version of the ITAP process is offered to adult education providers whose aggregate averages fall between 66% and 80% of the state's performance targets. This process does not include the required CAP but does include the Program Performance Profile analysis to identify areas of weakness and individualized professional development opportunities led by OCR-AE and TAN staff.

9. Target Professional Development – In addition to individualized professional development and technical assistance opportunities, the state uses the findings from the performance reports to determine topics and sessions for the following:

    - Fall Institute
    - Beginning of the year, mid-year, and end of year meetings
    - Summer Academy
    - Specialized webinars and in-person training opportunities

ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAM CERTIFICATIONS

States must provide written and signed certifications that:

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The plan is submitted by the State agency that is eligible to submit the plan;	Yes
2. The State agency has authority under State law to perform the functions of the State under the program;	Yes
3. The State legally may carry out each provision of the plan;	Yes
4. All provisions of the plan are consistent with State law;	Yes
5. A State officer, specified by title in the certification, has authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the plan;	Yes
6. The State officer who is submitting the plan, specified by the title in the certification, has authority to submit the plan;	Yes
7. The agency that is submitting the plan has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan; and	Yes
8. The plan is the basis for State operation and administration of the program;	Yes

ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAM ASSURANCES

The State Plan must include assurances that:

The State Plan must include	Include
1. The eligible agency will expend funds appropriated to carry out title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) only in a manner consistent with fiscal requirements under section 241(a) of WIOA (regarding the supplement-not-supplant requirement);	Yes
2. The eligible agency will ensure that there is at least one eligible provider serving each local area, as defined in section 3(32) of WIOA;	Yes
3. The eligible agency will not use any funds made available under title II of WIOA for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or activities for individuals who are not "eligible individuals" within the meaning of section 203(4) of WIOA, unless it is providing programs, services or activities related to family literacy activities, as defined in section 203(9) of WIOA;	Yes
4. Using funds made available under title II of WIOA to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution, the eligible agency will give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program.	Yes
5. The eligible agency agrees that in expending funds made available under Title II of WIOA, the eligible agency will comply with sections 8301 through 8303 of the Buy American Act (41 U.S.C. 8301-8303).	Yes

AUTHORIZING OR CERTIFYING REPRESENTATIVE

CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING

Certification for Contracts, Grants, Loans, and Cooperative Agreements

The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

1. No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

2. If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, ''Disclosure of Lobbying Activities,'' in accordance with its instructions.

3. The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly. This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

Statement for Loan Guarantees and Loan Insurance

The undersigned states, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

If any funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this commitment providing for the United States to insure or guarantee a loan, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, ''Disclosure of Lobbying Activities,'' in accordance with its instructions. Submission of this statement is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required statement shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than $10,000 and not more than $100,000 for each such failure.

Please download and sign the forms below. Please scan and return the forms to wioa@ed.gov at the same time you submit your State Plan via the portal.

1. SF424B - Assurances – Non-Construction Programs (http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html)

2. Grants.gov - Certification Regarding Lobbying (http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html)

3. SF LLL Form – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (required, only if applicable) (http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html)

APPLICANT'S ORGANIZATION	**Enter information in this column**
Applicant's Organization	South Carolina Department of Education
PRINTED NAME AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE	**Enter information in this column**
First Name	Michael
Last Name	King
Title	Director
Email	mrking@ed.sc.gov

SECTION 427 OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION PROVISIONS ACT (GEPA)

EQUITY FOR STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, AND OTHER PROGRAM BENEFICIARIES

OMB Control Number 1894-0005 Expiration 02/28/2026

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity. The State applicant is also responsible for ensuring that its subrecipient applicants complete the GEPA Section 427 form or a State developed form that sufficiently meets the GEPA Section 427 requirement for any local-level-project and activity and maintains the subrecipients' responses in the State office.

GEPA Section 427 Form Instructions for State Applicants

State applicants must respond to the following four questions:

1. Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.

2. Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?

3. Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?

4. What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?

- Applicants identify any barriers that may impede equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity, including, but not limited to, barriers based on economic disadvantage, gender, race, ethnicity, color, national origin, disability, age,

language, migrant status, rural status, homeless status or housing insecurity, pregnancy, parenting, or caregiving status, and sexual orientation.

- Applicants use the associated text box to respond to each question. However, applicants might have already included some or all this required information in the narrative sections of their applications or their State Plans. In responding to this requirement, for each question, applicants may provide a cross-reference to the section(s) in their State Plans that includes the information responsive to that question on this form or may restate that information on this form.

- Applicants are not required to have mission statements or policies that align with equity to apply.

- Applicants that have already undertaken steps to address barriers must still provide an explanation and/or description of the steps already taken in each text box, as appropriate, to satisfy the GEPA Section 427 requirement.

- Applicants that believe no barriers exist must still provide an explanation and/or description to each question to validate that perception, as appropriate, to satisfy the GEPA Section 427 requirement.

GEPA Section 427 Instructions to State Applicants for their Subrecipient Applicants

The State grantee provides a subrecipient applicant seeking Federal assistance instructions and guidance for how it must comply with the GEPA Section 427 requirement. The State grantee determines the form and content of the information a subrecipient applicant must include in its application regarding the steps it proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, its local-level project or activity. For example:

- The State grantee may require its subrecipient applicant to use and submit the GEPA Section 427 form that it is required to submit to the Department; or

- The State grantee may use a State-developed form that is sufficient to meet the GEPA Section 427 requirement.

- The State grantee maintains the subrecipient applicants' responses in the State office.

Please refer to GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for AEFLA Application Package

1. DESCRIBE HOW YOUR ENTITY'S EXISTING MISSION, POLICIES, OR COMMITMENTS ENSURE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO, AND EQUITABLE PARTICIPATION IN, THE PROPOSED PROJECT OR ACTIVITY.

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) *(20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity. The State applicant is also responsible for ensuring that its subrecipient applicants complete the GEPA Section 427 form or a State developed form that sufficiently meets the GEPA Section 427 requirement for any local-level-project and activity and maintains the subrecipients' responses in the State office.*

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for AEFLA Application Package

State applicants must respond to four questions.

The first of four questions is:

Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.

The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) - OCR-AE OCR-AE provides leadership, training, technical assistance, monitoring, and evaluation of local adult education service providers who assist adults in obtaining the literacy, credentials, knowledge, and skills necessary for self-sufficiency, employability, civic awareness, and an engaged partnership in the educational development of their children.

The existing mission and policies developed and overseen by the SCDE – OCR-AE ensure equitable access to and participation in Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) projects or activities through the following processes:

Request for Proposals (RFP) - During the RFP process, applicants must respond to General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) 427 requirements detailing how participants locally would have equitable access to and in activities or Adult Education and Family Literacy projects provided in each community. The OCR-AE oversees a five-year grant cycle that requires applicants to share how they would fulfill GEPA requirements. Applications are reviewed and scored appropriately based on responses.

Compliance Monitoring Review (CMR) – Annually, awarded subgrantees are monitored to ensure what they included in their RFP application is occurring, and if they are in compliance with GEPA requirements. The OCR-AE monitors for compliance the written transition IEP as a part of its annual compliance process and collaborates with the SCDE - Office of Special Education to monitor all other GEPA requirements.

The OCR-AE issues required actions, recommendations, or commendations as result of discoveries. OCR-AE requires that all funded local providers have a written plan with local Special Education Departments to transition IEP (Individualized Education Plan) students, and that local providers comply with GEPA which requires each provider to describe the steps they propose to take to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, its federally assisted programs.

In cooperation with SCDE - Office of General Counsel and the SCDE - Office of Special Education Services, OCR-AE delivers annual training for adult education practitioners serving students with special needs. OCR-AE meets regularly with the SCDE - Office of Special Education Services to ensure compliance with all special education regulations.

The OCR-AE also ensures that GEPA requirements are met by the State when using federal AEFLA funds for State Leadership and State Administration activities by following the same regulation requirements as subgrantees in the administration of the federal grant, and by ensuring that strong internal controls are in place within the OCR-AE.

2. BASED ON YOUR PROPOSED PROJECT OR ACTIVITY, WHAT BARRIERS MAY IMPEDE EQUITABLE ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION OF STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, OR OTHER BENEFICIARIES?

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) *(20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education.*

The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity. The State applicant is also responsible for ensuring that its subrecipient applicants complete the GEPA Section 427 form or a State developed form that sufficiently meets the GEPA Section 427 requirement for any local-level-project and activity and maintains the subrecipients' responses in the State office.

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for AEFLA Application Package

State applicants must respond to four questions.

The second of four questions is:

Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?

There are many barriers that may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, and all who need Adult Education and Family Literacy Activities, but childcare and transportation are two that state and local entities have focused on in South Carolina.

3. BASED ON THE BARRIERS IDENTIFIED, WHAT STEPS WILL YOU TAKE TO ADDRESS SUCH BARRIERS TO EQUITABLE ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION IN THE PROPOSED PROJECT OR ACTIVITY?

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) *(20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity. The State applicant is also responsible for ensuring that its subrecipient applicants complete the GEPA Section 427 form or a State developed form that sufficiently meets the GEPA Section 427 requirement for any local-level-project and activity and maintains the subrecipients' responses in the State office.*

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for AEFLA Application Package

State applicants must respond to four questions.

The third of four questions is:

Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?

Adult Education subgrantees are collaborating with core and local partners to access additional funding streams to assist students in the areas of transportation and childcare.

4. WHAT IS YOUR TIMELINE, INCLUDING TARGETED MILESTONES, FOR ADDRESSING THESE IDENTIFIED BARRIERS?

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) *(20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity. The State applicant is also responsible for ensuring that its subrecipient applicants complete the GEPA*

Section 427 form or a State developed form that sufficiently meets the GEPA Section 427 requirement for any local-level-project and activity and maintains the subrecipients' responses in the State office.

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for AEFLA Application Package

State applicants must respond to four questions.

The final of four questions is:

What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?

Although core and local partners are collaborating to address childcare and transportation barriers, the State has also identified childcare as a major barrier that needs to be addressed. The South Carolina General Assembly is working to amend a Bill that qualifies individuals to be caregivers in a licensed or approved childcare center. This amendment will allow additional people to qualify for the caregiver role.

ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as "baseline" indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A "baseline" indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels. As a result, "baseline" indicators were not used in the end of the year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as "baseline" based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Credential Attainment Rate; and
- Measurable Skill Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as "baseline" for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as "baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA." The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as "baseline" for PY 2020 and PY 2021 will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as "baseline" for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs not listed as "baseline." Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state's plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	33.0%	38.6%	35.0%	38.7%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	34.0%	46.0%	36.0%	46.3%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	3,300.00	3,680.00	3,350.00	3,685.00
Credential Attainment Rate	41.0%	41.0%	42.0%	42.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	41.0%	42.8%	42.0%	43.0%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]

[1]The Departments have not issued the final rule defining Effectiveness in Serving Employers. As a result, states will not submit expected levels of performance for this indicator and the Departments will not establish negotiated levels of performance for PYs 2024 and 2025.

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (COMBINED OR GENERAL)

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA.

A. STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL.

1. ALL VR AGENCIES, EXCEPT FOR THOSE THAT HAVE AN INDEPENDENT CONSUMER-CONTROLLED COMMISSION, MUST HAVE A STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL (COUNCIL OR SRC) THAT MEETS THE CRITERIA IN SECTION 105 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AS APPLICABLE, HAS:

Select A or B:

(A) is an independent State commission

(B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council

(A) is an independent State commission

2. IN ACCORDANCE WITH ASSURANCE (A)(1)(B), IF SELECTED, PLEASE PROVIDE INFORMATION ON THE CURRENT COMPOSITION OF THE COUNCIL BY REPRESENTATIVE TYPE, INCLUDING THE TERM NUMBER OF THE REPRESENTATIVE, AS APPLICABLE, AND ANY VACANCIES, AS WELL AS THE BEGINNING DATES OF EACH REPRESENTATIVE'S TERM.

Select 'Edit' to edit the narrative.

Note, please do not edit the table header or formatting. Only edit the table contents.

If you accidentally edit the table headers and structure, open this link to the blank table. You can copy and paste the table into the narrative field and start over if needed.

Council Representative	Current Term Number/Vacant	Beginning Date of Term Mo./Yr.
Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)		
Parent Training and Information Center		
Client Assistance Program		
Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselor (Ex Officio if Employed by the VR Agency)		
Community Rehabilitation Program Service Provider		
Business, Industry, and Labor		
Business, Industry, and Labor		
Business, Industry, and Labor		
Business, Industry, and Labor		
Disability Advocacy Groups		
Current or Former Applicants for, or Recipients of, VR services		
Section 121 Project Directors in the State (as applicable)		
State Educational Agency Responsible for Students with Disabilities Eligible to Receive Services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)		
State Workforce Development Board		
VR Agency Director (Ex Officio)		

3. IF THE SRC IS NOT MEETING THE COMPOSITION REQUIREMENTS IN SECTION 105(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT AND/OR IS NOT MEETING QUARTERLY AS REQUIRED IN SECTION 105(F) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, PROVIDE THE STEPS THAT THE VR AGENCY IS TAKING TO ENSURE IT MEETS THOSE REQUIREMENTS.

4. IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS IN SECTION 101(A)(21)(A)(II)(III) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, INCLUDE A SUMMARY OF THE COUNCIL'S INPUT (INCLUDING HOW IT WAS OBTAINED) INTO THE STATE PLAN AND ANY STATE PLAN REVISIONS, INCLUDING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COUNCIL'S ANNUAL REPORTS, THE REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF CONSUMER SATISFACTION AND OTHER COUNCIL REPORTS.

5. PROVIDE THE VR AGENCY'S RESPONSE TO THE COUNCIL'S INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS, INCLUDING AN EXPLANATION FOR THE REJECTION OF ANY INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

List each recommendation/input followed by the VR agency response

B. COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE NEEDS ASSESSMENT (CSNA).

Section 101(a)(15), (17), and (23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to provide an assessment of:

1. THE VR SERVICES NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES RESIDING WITHIN THE STATE, INCLUDING:

A. INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES AND THEIR NEED FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT;

The Agency last conducted the CSNA in 2020. SCVRD reviewed data from 2020 – 2023 to complete the 2024-2027 CSNA. Within the scope of VR services, the top needs identified in the most recent CSNA for individuals with the most significant disabilities (MSD) were job coaching (i.e., Supported Employment), Customized Employment, Work Based Learning Experiences, and Extended Services. Other potential strategies suggested by stakeholders to improve outcomes of those with MSD included increased collaboration with partner agencies (particularly the SC Department of Disabilities and Special Needs) and establishing apprenticeship and summer programs geared toward individuals with most significant disabilities.

SCVRD provides Supported Employment services to job seekers with a most significant disability who need intensive one-on-one support to gain or maintain competitive integrated employment. The agency offers Supported Employment in all areas of the state and employs job coaches who work one-on-one with consumers. As a result of state legislation that phases out 14(c) sub-minimum wage programs, SCVRD expects an increase in the number of referrals from the Office of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (OIDD) job seekers with MSD in the coming years. In preparation, SCVRD has been revising the Supported Employment policy and intends to invest in Supported Employment program enhancements. SCVRD has initiated statewide training for field staff on autism spectrum disorder and added an additional Consumer Services staff member to support Supported Employment Services across the State. SCVRD is actively working to improve our referral management system to better track referrals from OIDD and ensure timely responses to case managers, referrals, and their families.

B. INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE MINORITIES AND INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM;

According to the 2022 American Community Survey, 35.4% of South Carolinians with disabilities are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). The minority populations representing the largest proportions of people with disabilities include Black/ African American (26.7%) and Hispanic/ Latinx (3.3%).

In program year (PY) 2022, SCVRD served 21,710 people. 43.4% of consumers were White alone, and 55.8% of consumers were BIPOC, with 0.8% preferring not to answer. Black/African American (alone) consumers made up 50.4% of consumers, and Latinx/Hispanic (any race) made up 3.6% of consumers.

Race/Ethnicity	South Carolina People with Disabilities	SCVRD Consumers PY 2022
White alone	64.6%	43.4%
Black/African American alone	26.7%	50.4%
Latinx/Hispanic, any race	3.3%	3.6%
Asian alone	0.8%	0.5%
American Indian/Alaska Native alone	0.4%	0.5%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.1%
Some other race alone	1.2%	--
More than One Race (not Latinx/Hispanic)	2.9%	0.7%
Prefer not to Answer	--	0.8%

These data demonstrate that the Agency is serving the primary minority populations in the state in higher proportions than their representation among the state's total disability population. Success, in terms of the rehabilitation rate, for Black/African American consumers is also comparable to non-minorities. The rehabilitation rate for Hispanic/Latinx consumers is somewhat lower, however. The rehabilitation rate for White (alone) consumers was 58.6% in PY 2022. For the same year, minority rehabilitation rates were as follows:

Black/African American alone – 59.2%

Multiracial Hispanic/Latinx – 51.8%

No Race Reported Hispanic/Latinx – 49.3%

Although no data have been identified to substantiate the claims, various stakeholders expressed belief that particular groups might potentially be unserved or underserved, including individuals who: live in rural areas, have intellectual disabilities, are homeless, have significant disabilities (including Autism Spectrum Disorders), have mental health disabilities, have physical disabilities, and who are also LGBTQIA+. Internal Agency data refute the assertion, in particular, that individuals with intellectual disabilities and ASD are underserved, as these population make up over 14% of caseloads. This proportion is comparable to the estimated

statewide proportion of people with a disability who have intellectual disabilities and/or ASD. Additionally, over 90% of the Agency's consumers have a significant disability or most significant disability.

C. INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES SERVED THROUGH OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM; AND

At present, the Agency has a low rate of consumers documented as co-enrolled with other workforce development system partners. SCVRD reported 7.7% of participants enrolled in more than one core program for PY 2022. Before the VR service needs of individuals jointly served through other components of the workforce development system can be adequately assessed, we must first find ways to better identify who is being jointly served. In September 2023, the SC Department of Employment and Workforce (which operates the WIOA Title I and Title III programs in the state) hired a consultant to help determine the requirements for a modernized case management system (CMS) for that agency. As part of the scope of that project, the consultant also conducted interviews with WIOA partner agencies' personnel to learn about their respective CMS, and ideal functionalities to seek, such as an interface or overlay that would allow real-time determination at the point of application whether the individual is already being served by another WIOA partner and, if so, sharing of common data elements across systems. This would streamline intake and ensure consistent data are reported by multiple partners to their respective federal partners for the same individual being jointly served.

D. YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR NEED FOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES. INCLUDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES FOR TRANSITION CAREER SERVICES AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH SUCH SERVICES ARE COORDINATED WITH TRANSITION SERVICES PROVIDED UNDER IDEA.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, an estimated 659,921 South Carolinians are age 15 to 24 (13.1% of the state's population). Additionally, the statewide population 5 to 17 years old with a disability totals 49,674, or about 10.0% of the statewide population. According to the Social Security Administration, 17,516 South Carolinians under age 18 receive SSI benefits. This represents about 33.6% of the under age 18 population with disabilities in the state. In PY 2022, SCVRD served 9,018 individuals who were under the age of 25 at the time of application. This represents 41.5% of all applicants and participants served during PY 2022.

During the 2021-2022 school year, there were 42,874 students ages 13 through 21 enrolled in special education in South Carolina. Of those, 25,990 (60.7%) were in secondary education. Overall, the most prevalent disability among special education students in South Carolina is Specific Learning Disability.

The highest proportion of SCVRD youth applicants in PY 2022 were those with Specific Learning Disabilities (22.6%), followed by Mental impairments (18.2%) and Autism (17.5%). Of the 7,774 students reported on the PY 2022 RSA-911 submissions, 7,382 (95.0%) received at least one of the Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). In addition to the Pre-ETS, services appearing on Transition IPEs most often include Job Search Assistance, Job Placement Assistance, Miscellaneous (includes High School Training), Job Readiness Training, and Job Preparedness Classes.

The department continues to coordinate the development of designated staff with emerging initiatives by the SC Department of Education and the 80 local school districts (LEAs) under IDEA and state school-to-work transition efforts. Transition training efforts included the

following: a one-day transition summer series is conducted yearly for transition staff that included presentations and training on Pre-Employment Transition Services. Every month Transition Services conducts a training for Transition Staff and Supervisors. The training is an opportunity for the State Transition Services Team to share updates and new resources with the field or a refresher on a Transition related topic. It also allows the field staff an opportunity to ask questions and share resources with their fellow counselors and transition related staff members. Selected transition staff participated in a session on active training techniques and self-determination. Over 29 transition staff participated in an annual interagency transition conference, focused on local interagency planning and content sessions focused on effective service delivery for students with disabilities.

2. IDENTIFY THE NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP, OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE.

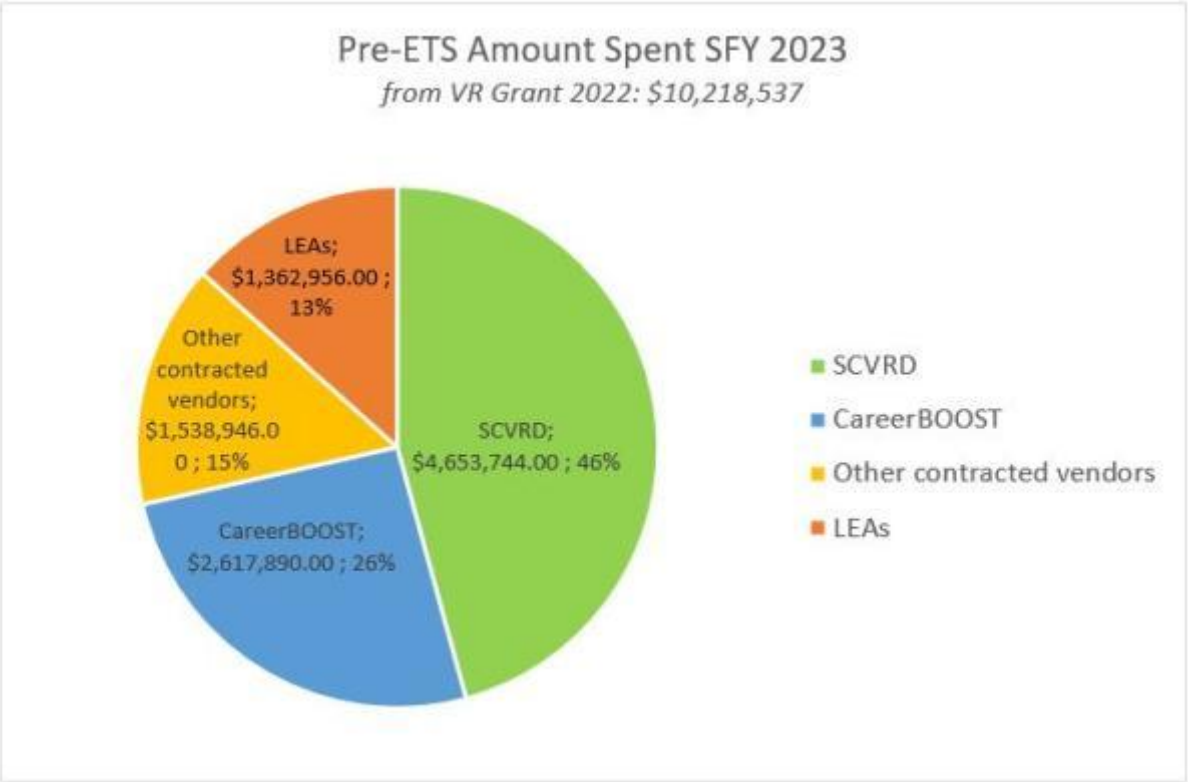
In South Carolina, SCVRD provides most vocational rehabilitation services through agency staff. The agency operates Job Readiness Training (JRT) Centers, which also serve as CRPs for the state's VR consumers. There are 27 JRT Centers across the state. These centers facilitate a variety of vocational rehabilitation training services including Customized Training, Occupational and Vocational Training, and Job Preparedness Instruction. For consumers who are unable to physically participate in a Training Center, several courses are available online through the Agency's E-Learning Platform, the LEARN Library. With access to the Library, consumers can complete career-specific training modules anytime, anywhere, and from any device. Consumers gain industry-specific skills and recognized credentials through vocational programs like the Forklift Certification course, the ISSA™ Certified Custodial Technician course, and more. Additionally, Training Centers develop partnerships with companies doing business in the state to create customized training programs that meet the unique training needs of each employer.

In PY 2022, 2,404 consumers were served in the Training Centers, with 53 obtaining industry-recognized credentials as part of their training there. The PY 2022 rehabilitation rate for Training Center consumers was 50.8%, compared to the overall rehabilitation rate of 58.6%. In PY 2022, the Training Centers utilized 12 Customized Training programs.

SCVRD is proud to have over 80 staff members providing Pre-Employment Transition Services directly to students. To supplement these valuable services. SCVRD also uses community service providers for the direct provision of Pre-Employment Transition Services to students with disabilities. These service providers must meet minimum provider standards and qualifications set forth by SCVRD, as well as follow federal guidelines and state procurement specific to Pre-ETS. SCVRD staff are able to provide all five required Pre-ETS directly to students. w In addition to the private providers who facilitate Pre-ETS, SCVRD maintains contracts with school districts to pay school-based staff to provide Pre-ETS in some parts of the state. SCVRD is reviewing these contracts and working to expand these school-based services each year.

In PY 2025, SCVRD provided Pre-ETS directly through SCVRD staff along with supplemented services through multiple contracted Pre-ETS providers. Contractors included school districts (LEAs), Centers for Independent Living, and agencies or community partners that provide services to specific groups such as Autism. In PY 2025, SCVRD spent 10,281,197.93 on Pre-ETS. For Grant 24 SCVRD spent $11,028,610.76 on Pre-ETS. Of the spend for Grant 24, $6,310,095.16 was spent on in house expenses to include staff time, Work Based Learning Opportunities and participation in Job Readiness Training for our students. For Grant 24 school contracts accounted for $2,086,725.68.Community service providers and other contracted vendors

accounted for the remaining $2,631,789.92 of Pre-ETS spending. The pie chart below displays the Grant 24 amount spent in each Pre-ETS provider category.



Vocational Rehabilitation Capital Projects – SFY – 2026-2030

The state of South Carolina requires that agencies submit for approval a five-year Comprehensive Permanent Improvement Plan (CPIP).This forms the basis for identifying needs for routine maintenance such as roofs and building repair. It also includes projects that are necessary to extend the life or expand use of existing structures, which were included in our most recent CSNA to establish the need for those projects.

Roofing Projects

The following SCVRD area office locations have re-roofing projects identified in the CPIP through SFY 2030 (WIOA PY 2029):

Berkeley-Dorchester: Reroof the Berkeley-Dorchester VR Center building consisting of approximately 21,450 square feet of roof deck with a new roofing system. Remove existing built-up roof then apply a new roofing system. The project may require removal and disposal of asbestos containing roofing and flashing materials. The roof is approximately 34 years old and has exceeded its life expectancy.

Reroof the Muscular Development Center (MDC) building consisting of approximately 22,800 SF of roof with a new shingle roofing system. The existing roof is 23 years old with numerous leaks and has exceeded its life expectancy.

SCVRD State Office Building Reroofing consisting of approximately 17,750 SF of roof deck with an existing built-up roof. Remove the existing built-up roof and replace with a new roofing system. The existing roof is approximately 34 years old and has exceeded its life expectancy.

Spartanburg: Reroof the Spartanburg VR Center building consisting of approximately 31,300 SF of roof deck with a new roofing system. Remove existing built-up roof then apply a new roofing system. The project may require removal and disposal of asbestos containing materials. The roof is approximately 29 years old and has exceeded its life expectancy.

Greenville: Reroof the Greenville VR Center building consisting of approximately 34,850 SF of roof deck with a new roofing system. Remove existing built-up roof then apply a new roofing system. The project may require removal and disposal of asbestos containing materials. The roof is approximately 27 years old and has exceeded its life expectancy.

Florence: Reroof the Florence VR Center building consisting of approximately 26,700 SF of roof deck with a new roofing system. Remove existing built-up roof then apply a new roofing system. The project may require removal and disposal of asbestos containing materials. The roof is approximately 24 years old and has exceeded its life expectancy.

Lancaster: Reroof the Lancaster VR Center building consisting of approximately 17,500 SF of roof deck with a new roofing system. Remove existing built-up roof then apply a new roofing system. The project may require removal and disposal of asbestos containing materials. The roof is approximately 23 years old and has exceeded its life expectancy.

Several satellite office buildings, storage buildings and maintenance facilities will require reroofing in the immediate future. These buildings range in size from 3,000 to 10,000 SF and have sloped roofs with a shingled roofing system.

Parking Lot Repair

The following SCVRD area office locations have repaving projects identified in the CPIP:

Conway: Repair and resurface the existing parking lot and loading area. This facility is over 47 years old, and the parking lot and loading areas are in need of repair and resurfacing. Subsurface investigations will be required to determine the depth and extent of deterioration of the existing paving prior to resurfacing. Exterior lighting will also be added to the parking areas for increased safety and security.

Lexington: Repair and resurface the existing parking lot and loading area. This facility is over 45 years old, and the parking lot and loading areas are in need of repair and resurfacing. Subsurface investigations will be required to determine the depth and extent of deterioration of the existing paving prior to resurfacing. Exterior lighting will also be added to the parking areas for increased safety and security.

Evaluation Center/State Office: Repair and resurface the existing parking lot and surrounding roadways. This facility is over 46 years old, and the parking lot and driveways are in need of repair and resurfacing. Subsurface investigations will be required to determine the depth and extent of deterioration of the existing paving prior to resurfacing.

ITTC/Rehabilitation Engineering Building: Repair and resurface the existing parking lot and surrounding roadways. This facility is over 39 years old, and the parking lot and driveways are in need of repair and resurfacing. Subsurface investigations will be required to determine the depth and extent of deterioration of the existing paving prior to resurfacing.

Beaufort: Repair and resurface the existing parking lot and loading areas. This facility is over 39 years old, and the parking lot and loading areas are in need of repair and repaving. Subsurface

investigations will be required to determine the level of deterioration of the existing paved areas. Exterior lighting will also be added to the parking areas for increased safety and security.

Other Projects

At its offices and work training centers throughout the state, SCVRD has a total of 322 HVAC units of varying ages. Despite routine preventive maintenance efforts, individual HVAC units will age/deteriorate to the point that it is more reasonable to replace versus repair the unit. In these situations, the agency will follow the State procurement process to replace affected units. SCVRD will also include an estimated number of HVAC units, to be replaced each fiscal year, in our annual aggregate prior approval request to RSA. Subject to that approval, SCVRD will be in a position to replace the units in a timely manner.

- **Information Technology Training Center (ITTC) Dormitory** – This facility was built in 1987 and is 39 years old. The ITTC dormitory was used to house SCVRD consumers from all across the state who enrolled in one of four on-site training programs lasting anywhere from four weeks to eighteen months. Updates to the dormitory were made in 2008, however, the dormitory has not been in use since 2019 and is in need of updating, to include renovations and repairs so that it can be used for consumers.

- Currently, SCVRD is spending $30,000 in licensing renewal fees and card readers annually across the state for physical access control. In order to decrease yearly reoccurring costs, the Agency will upgrade the current system with one that will allow the integration of new cameras into the system for better monitoring and the creation of an active directory. Implementation of the active directory into the system will allow autonomy to pull an employee out of multiple systems at one time. This, in turn, would decrease the work hours needed to add/remove employees.

- Currently, SCVRD is using two different camera systems to monitor the area offices for accidents, worker's compensation, and security threats. Both systems have been in place for over 10 years and are outdated. The current systems use analog wiring which prevents the Agency from updating to a technologically savvy camera system. There have been several occasions in the past where inadequate video footage has prevented the Agency from viewing crimes against the Agency. Inadequate video footage has also prevented the Agency from working with law enforcement and helping to solve these crimes. In the most recently completed program year, the Agency spent $84,000 in repairs and $30,000 in licensing fees for a total cost of $114,000. The overall goal is to eliminate reoccurring licensing fees and to eliminate the maintenance of this outdated system.

- An electronic visitor management system is needed to replace the existing paper system for logging entry to and departure from Agency facilities. Each area office has a different log that is being used to sign individuals in and out. An electronic system will help eliminate the paper visitor logs which could compromise individuals' privacy. The use of an electronic system would encourage standardization; better track who is entering and leaving SCVRD buildings; bolster privacy for visitors; and provide improved physical security as the visitor badge will have a picture and name clearly printed on the badge.

SCVRD has numerous offices that were built with cast iron sewer systems that are starting to age beyond life expectancy. Recently, two of those offices have experienced plumbing failures that have repair costs between $160,000 to $180,000 due to deterioration of sewer pipes. The

buildings are on a slab foundation which contributes to the high cost of the repairs. In an effort to avoid destruction of the new bathroom remodels currently scheduled, the agency will be requiring plumbing assessments and possible repairs to be completed on each aging facility prior to the planned bathroom remodels.

Other CPIP Projects

SCVRD will need to install a generator at the State Office to power the Agency computer servers and phone system in the event of a power outage. The entire SCVRD network is impacted if these servers and the phone system lose power. The SCVRD server room currently has UPS units for short term power outages. The UPS units can provide power for about 15-25 minutes during an outage. This allows the Agency to do a controlled shut down of the system in the event of an outage. The limitation of relying on UPS units is that an outage that lasts any longer will take down the network until power is restored and the system is rebooted and tested. The last outage happened at the end of a work day and took about three hours to restore the servers to an operational state. An outage that lasts for more than a very short while will also take out the State Office phone system. A generator system that can provide power for the equipment and A/C units will allow the system to be functional for the rest of the offices in the state as well as allow State Office users the option of connecting remotely.

The SCVRD server room requires a new fire suppression system. In the past there was a Halon system for fire suppression. However, Halon was removed from the market for environmental reasons and the system had to be removed from the server room. An appropriate fire suppression system will automatically extinguish a fire in the server room without damaging the servers and other equipment. This would minimize damage to the servers and other equipment required for the SCVRD network. Allowing the network to be restored quicker and diminish any downtime. Server room fire protection is part of the SCVRD Environmental Security policy. These policies were developed from templates provided by the South Carolina Department of Administration. The Generator will be installed in March 2026. The SCVRD Dorm Building VR Center (Heat Pump Unit Replacement) project will replace all old existing water source heat pump units with new energy efficient units, and the State Office Building Replacement of VAV Boxes replacement project will replace all existing VAV (Variable Air Volume) boxes and pneumatic controls with new VAV boxes with digital controls and a building Energy Management System.

SCVRD is the process of digitizing our personnel files. When this is completed, we will need to make renovations in our Human Resources (HR) unit to expand the HR Department.

As noted above, SCVRD owns and operates its Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP). This includes almost 1,000,000 square feet of space in our buildings. Despite routine preventative maintenance efforts, aging facilities will require some attention. Necessary maintenance, normal repairs, and alterations which:

- Keep the property in an efficient operating condition; and
- Do not add to the permanent value of the property or appreciably prolong its intended life, will be addressed as administrative costs.

Building related expenditures which add to the permanent value of property or appreciably prolong its intended life are considered capital projects. Capital projects will be addressed under either the establishment authority or construction authority (as appropriate). SCVRD will

comply with all applicable State and Federal regulations regarding capital projects including the "pre-planning" and "prior approval" requirements.

SCVRD has historically operated two substance abuse recovery facilities in the state, Holmesview Center in Greenville and Palmetto Center in Florence. Holmesview Center was destroyed in a fire in November of 2016. The absence of Holmesview has left a gap in recovery services for individuals from the Upstate Region of the State. The lone recovery center, the Palmetto Center accepts residents from all over the State; however, consumers in the Upstate struggle with transportation and experience support barriers making it difficult to access recovery services. Leading up to the sudden closure of Holmesview, SCVRD referred approximately 33% of eligible SCVRD applicants with an addition-related disability to residential addiction recovery. The majority (80%) of those referred for residential recovery completed the inpatient program and the rehabilitation rate for inpatient recovery for the five years prior to the fire was 42.8% (Rehab Rate includes both Holmesview Center and the Palmetto Center combined).

During SFYs 2019 through SFY 2022, 2,791 consumers from the Upstate region of South Carolina had a substance use-related disability. While these individuals can still access inpatient recovery services at the Palmetto Center located in the Pee Dee Region of South Carolina, most choose not to because of the distance from their home. Therefore, SCVRD intends to meet the need for residential addiction treatment services in the Upstate by rebuilding Holmesview Center.

The drop in the number of consumers with a drug and alcohol-related disability between SFY 2020 and 2021 is due to an overall drop in referrals during the COVID-19 pandemic. The overall drop in the number of people with drug and alcohol-related disabilities should not be interpreted as a decrease in the need for drug and alcohol residential treatment in the Upstate. Holmesview is a free service to our consumers unlike other treatment centers in the state. Plans for rebuilding that Center are currently going through state procedures and the federal prior approval process. The need for this facility is documented in the most recent CSNA.

Beginning in April 2022, members of the Executive Leadership Team conducted visits to each of the SCVRD locations across the state. These visits were conducted to assess each facility's condition and current needs based on requests submitted to the Director of Field Operations and the Agency's Facility Management Project Director for area improvements and employee concerns. During these office visits, each facility was evaluated for the following concerns: safety, security, esthetics, repair needs and maintenance needs. Although each facility had its own individual areas requiring attention, it was evident that the majority of restrooms in SCVRD facilities are in dire need of updates. There were twenty-five facilities identified during the evaluation that are significantly overdue for updates and in desperate need of renovation. These facilities range in age from 29 to 48 years old, and only four of the 25 locations have had partial updates, which occurred between 1998 and 2010. In addition, several of these facilities have tested positive for asbestos and are in need of an asbestos abatement. We are in the process of testing all facilities that may have asbestos issues due to the timeframe in which they were constructed and the materials that were used by builders during that timeframe. Below is a list of the identified facilities requiring restroom renovations.

Minor Projects

In the Rehab Engineering building, we will construct a new metal framed gypum wall including installation of a wood door and frame across an existing alcove to create a new office.

Additionally, the former Print Shop will be reconfigured by installing existing 5' high office partitions to create four cubicle spaces for the Communications Department.

South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department Restroom Renovation List:

All office restrooms are renovated, and consumer restrooms are scheduled for renovations.

- **Aiken** – this facility was built in 1980 and is 46 years old. There have been no updates to the original bathrooms, only minor repairs as needed. **Anderson** - This facility was built in 1987 and is 39 years old. There have been no updates to the original bathrooms, only minor repairs as needed.
- **Beaufort** – this facility was built in 1988 and is 38 years old. There have been no updates to the original bathrooms, only minor repairs as needed.
- **Berkeley** – This facility was built in 1992 and is 34 years old. There have been no updates to the original bathrooms, only minor repairs as needed.
- **Camden** – This facility was built in 1990 and is 36 years old. There have been no updates to the original bathrooms, only minor repairs as needed.
- **Conway** – This facility was built in 1978 and is 48 years old. The restrooms were updated in 2010. This facility is scheduled to be tested for asbestos during program year 2023.
- **Florence** – This facility was built in 1982 and is 44 years old. There have been no updates to the original staff bathrooms, only minor repairs as needed. The consumer restrooms had tile flooring replaced in 2022, but no additional updates. This facility is scheduled to be tested for asbestos during program year 2023.
- **Gaffney** - This facility was built in 1993 and is 33 years old. There have been no updates to the original bathrooms, only minor repairs as needed. **Greenwood** - This facility was built in 1984 and is 42 years old. There have been no updates to the original bathrooms, only minor repairs as needed.
- **Greenville** – This facility was built in 1976 and is 50 years old. There have been no updates to the original bathrooms, only minor repairs.
- **Lancaster** - This facility was built in 1982 and is 44 years old. There have been no updates to the original bathrooms, only minor repairs as needed. This facility has also tested positive for asbestos and is in need of an asbestos abatement.
- **Laurens** – This facility was built in 1985 and is 41 years old. There have been no updates to the original bathrooms, only minor repairs as needed.
- **Lexington** - This facility was built in 1980 and is 46 years old. There have been no updates to the original bathrooms, only minor repairs as needed. **Marlboro** – This facility was built in 1988 and is 38 years old. There have been no updates to the original bathrooms, only minor repairs as needed. This facility is scheduled to be tested for asbestos during program year 2023.
- **Oconee** - This facility was built in 1989 and is 37 years old. There have been no updates to the original bathrooms, only minor repairs as needed.

- **Orangeburg** - This facility was built in 1975 and is 51 years old. There have been no updates to the original bathrooms, only minor repairs as needed. This facility has also tested positive for asbestos and is in need of an asbestos abatement.
- Richland (Area Office) - This facility was built in 1994 and is 32 years old. There have been no updates to the original bathrooms, only minor repairs as needed.
- **Rock Hill** - This facility was built in 1987 and is 39 years old. There have been no updates to the original bathrooms, only minor repairs as needed.
- **Spartanburg -** This facility was built in 1979 and is 47 years old. There have been no updates to the original bathrooms, only minor repairs as needed**.**
- **Sumter –** This facility was built in 1975 and is 51years old. There have been no updates to the original bathrooms, only minor repairs. This facility has also tested positive for asbestos and is in need of an asbestos abatement.

Walterboro – This facility was built in 1975 and is 51 years old. The consumer restrooms were updated in 1998. There have been no updates to the staff restrooms. As part of the CSNA, the Agency asked staff and other stakeholders to assess the state's needs for Community Rehabilitation Programs. Overall, there was a strong agreement on the need to expand the programs offered in the JRT Centers. However, external stakeholders were more likely to respond that there is a need to establish new CRPs. Many of those external stakeholder responses came from Pre-ETS vendors.

C. GOALS, PRIORITIES, AND STRATEGIES

Section 101(a)(15) and (23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to describe the goals and priorities of the State in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs. The goals and priorities are based on (1) the most recent CSNA, including any updates; (2) the State's performance under the performance accountability measures of Section 116 of WIOA; and (3) other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the SRC and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under Section 107 of the Rehabilitation Act. VR agencies must—

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE SRC AND THE VR AGENCY JOINTLY DEVELOPED AND AGREED TO THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES AND ANY REVISIONS; AND

SCVRD is an independent State commission.

2. IDENTIFY MEASURABLE GOALS AND PRIORITIES IN CARRYING OUT THE VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS AND THE BASIS FOR SELECTING THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES (E.G., CSNA, PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES, SRC RECOMMENDATIONS, MONITORING, OTHER INFORMATION). AS REQUIRED IN SECTION 101(A)(15)(D), (18), AND (23), DESCRIBE UNDER EACH GOAL OR PRIORITY, THE STRATEGIES OR METHODS USED TO ACHIEVE THE GOAL OR PRIORITY, INCLUDING AS APPLICABLE, DESCRIPTION OF STRATEGIES OR METHODS THAT—

A. SUPPORT INNOVATION AND EXPANSION ACTIVITIES;

B. OVERCOME BARRIERS TO ACCESSING VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES;

C. IMPROVE AND EXPAND VR SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THE COORDINATION OF SERVICES DESIGNED TO FACILITATE THE TRANSITION OF SUCH

STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL TO POSTSECONDARY LIFE (INCLUDING THE RECEIPT OF VR SERVICES, POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES); AND

D. IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF THE VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS IN ASSISTING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES TO ACHIEVE QUALITY EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES.

List and number each goal/priority, noting the basis, and under each goal/priority, list, and number the strategies to achieve the goal/priority

- Priority 1 – Improve the quality of employment outcomes for eligible individuals with disabilities. (Basis: Performance accountability measures and other internal performance reports)
- Strategy 1.1 – Plan and deliver specialized, individualized services that lead to career paths.
    - Goal 1.1.1 – Percentage of program participants who are employed during 2nd quarter after exit (≥ 66%)
    - Goal 1.1.2 – Percentage of program participants who are employed during 4th quarter after exit (≥ 62%)
- Strategy 1.2 – Enhance school-to-work transition services.
    - Goal 1.2.1 – Percentage of individuals served by agency who are in transition age range (14-24) at application (≥ 40.0%)
    - Goal 1.2.2 – Proportion of students served who received Pre- Employment Transition Services as defined by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (≥ 95.0%)
- Strategy 1.3 – Increase participation in education and training programs that lead to recognized credentials and advanced career paths.
    - Goal 1.3.1 – Percentage of participants in education or training programs who achieve Measurable Skill Gains, as defined by WIOA (≥ 52.3%)
    - Goal 1.3.2 – Percentage of consumers in plan status during the year (i.e., WIOA participants) enrolled in education/training leading to a recognized credential (≥ 15.0%)
    - Goal 1.3.3 – Percentage of consumers enrolled in education/training leading to a recognized credential during participation who attain a recognized credential by case closure (≥ 43%)
- Priority 2 – We will be a team of highly-qualified professionals who have the commitment, accountability, and opportunity to excel. (Basis: CSNA and internal performance reports)
- Strategy 2.1 – Provide training to equip staff to enhance their ability to provide quality vocational rehabilitation services.
    - Goal 2.1.1 – Percentage of new employees who completed all assigned training in their first year of employment (≥ 90%)

    - Goal 2.1.2 – Percentage of Professional Development class attendees who evaluate the course as "useful" or "very useful" for their development and job performance (≥ 95%)

- Strategy 2.2 – Foster an environment promoting opportunity, staff stability and professional development for future leadership needs.
    - Goal 2.2.1 – Level of Goal Attainment Toward Equal Employment Opportunity as scored by the South Carolina Human Affairs Commission (= 100%)
    - Goal 2.2.2 – Agency staff turnover rate (≤ 11.0%)
- Priority 3 – Accountability to taxpayers through efficient and effective use of resources entrusted to us (Basis: Internal performance reports, CSNA, and performance accountability measures)
- Strategy 3.1 – Efficient service delivery that positively impacts long-term outcomes
    - Goal 3.1.1 – Median quarterly earnings of program participants who are employed at case closure (≥ $7,548.67)
    - Goal 3.1.2 – Amount estimated that each successfully rehabilitated consumer will repay in taxes for each dollar spent on his or her rehabilitation (≥ $3.00)
    - Goal 3.1.3 – Median days from application to eligibility (≤ 21)
    - Goal 3.1.4 – Median days from eligibility to vocational objective (≤ 11)
    - Goal 3.1.5 – Median days from vocational objective to Individualized Plan for Employment (≤ 5)
- Strategy 3.2 – Continued evaluation and improvement of key processes
    - Goal 3.2.1 – Agreed Upon Procedures audit findings for internal controls and accounting records by State Auditor office (= 0)
    - Goal 3.2.2 – Program Integrity Compliance [with agency Consumer Services policy] scores (≥ 95.0%)
    - Goal 3.2.3 – Proportion of compliant eligibility determination cases that used an extension letter to stay compliant with required timeframe (≤ 15.0%)
    - Goal 3.2.4 – Proportion of compliant IPE development cases that used an extension letter to stay compliant with required timeframe (≤ 13.0%)
- Strategy 3.3 – Ensure safety, security, and adequacy of infrastructure.
    - Goal 3.3.1 – Experience Modifier (E-mod) used for insurance premium levels (1.50)
    - Goal 3.3.2 – Percentage of Security Operations Center alert incidents addressed and reported to the State Division of Information Security within 24 hours (= 100%)
    - Goal 3.3.3 – Employee click rate on mock phishing email attempts (≤ 15.0%)

- Priority 4 – Maintain a dynamic network of partnerships to shape a better future for all stakeholders. (Basis: Performance accountability measures, 107 monitoring recommendations, and CSNA)
- Strategy 4.1 – Mutually beneficial partnerships with business and industry that provide employment/training opportunities for consumers and a talented, skilled workforce for the business community
    - Goal 4.1.1 – Repeat business customer rate (≥ 25.0%)
    - Goal 4.1.2 – Employers/businesses served (≥ 2,100)
    -
- Strategy 4.2 – Enhance direct outreach to and development of referral sources for targeted populations.
    - Goal 4.2.1 – Proportion of referrals and applicants with brain injury and spinal cord injury (≥ 1.4%)
    - Goal 4.2.2 – Proportion of referrals and applicants with Intellectual Disability and Autism Spectrum Disorders (≥ 13.0%
    - Goal 4.2.3 – Proportion of referrals and applicants who identify as Hispanic/Latino (≥ 3.0%)
- Priority 5 - Roofing Projects

SCVRD has identified 87 buildings with roofing systems that are beyond their useful life that will need to be reroofed and several satellite and storage buildings that will also require reroofing in the immediate future. The currently identified roofs that will need to be replaced range between 23 to 34 years old.

- Strategy 5.1 – To ensure the safety and security of Agency staff and consumers, the Agency will continuously evaluate buildings owned by SCVRD to identify those properties with roofing systems that are nearing or are beyond the useful life.
- Strategy 5.2 – Hire an architect/engineer consultant to prepare bid documents.
- Strategy 5.3 – Adhere to the instructions provided for Statewide Permanent Improvement Projects by the SC Capital Budgeting and Planning Unit.
- Strategy 5.4 – Monitor reroofing progress until completion (weekly).

The following SCVRD area office locations have re-roofing projects identified in the CPIP through SFY 2030 (WIOA PY 2029):

1.

1. Berkeley-Dorchester: Reroof the Berkeley-Dorchester VR Center building consisting of approximately 21,450 square feet of roof deck with a new roofing system. Remove existing built-up roof then apply a new roofing system. The project may require removal and disposal of asbestos containing roofing and flashing materials. The roof is approximately 29 years old and has exceeded its life expectancy.

2. Reroof the Muscular Development Center (MDC) building consisting of approximately 22,800 SF of roof with a new shingle roofing system. The existing roof is 23 years old with numerous leaks and has exceeded its life expectancy.
3. SCVRD State Office Building Reroofing consisting of approximately 17,750 SF of roof deck with an existing built-up roof. Remove the existing built-up roof and replace with a new roofing system. The existing roof is approximately 34 years old and has exceeded its life expectancy.

4. Spartanburg: Reroof the Spartanburg VR Center building consisting of approximately 31,300 SF of roof deck with a new roofing system. Remove existing built-up roof then apply a new roofing system. The project may require removal and disposal of asbestos containing materials. The roof is approximately 29 years old and has exceeded its life expectancy.

5. Greenville: Reroof the Greenville VR Center building consisting of approximately 34,850 SF of roof deck with a new roofing system. Remove existing built-up roof then apply a new roofing system. The project may require removal and disposal of asbestos containing materials. The roof is approximately 27 years old and has exceeded its life expectancy.

6. Florence: Reroof the Florence VR Center building consisting of approximately 26,700 SF of roof deck with a new roofing system. Remove existing built-up roof then apply a new roofing system. The project may require removal and disposal of asbestos containing materials. The roof is approximately 24 years old and has exceeded its life expectancy.

7. Lancaster: Reroof the Lancaster VR Center building consisting of approximately 17,500 SF of roof deck with a new roofing system. Remove existing built-up roof then apply a new roofing system. The project may require removal and disposal of asbestos containing materials. The roof is approximately 23 years old and has exceeded its life expectancy.

8. Several satellite office buildings, storage buildings and maintenance facilities will require reroofing in the immediate future. These buildings range in size from 3,000 to 10,000 SF and have sloped roofs with a shingled roofing system.

- Priority 6: Parking Lot Repair

SCVRD has identified five (5) building locations that will require parking lot repairs or replacements. The parking lots have exceeded the useful life and have had multiple temporary patches. The currently identified parking lots that will need to be replaced range between 33 to 46 years old.

- Strategy 6.1 – To ensure the safety and security of Agency staff and consumers, the Agency will continuously evaluate buildings owned by SCVRD to identify those properties with parking lots that are nearing or are beyond the useful life.
- Strategy 6.2 – Hire an architect/engineer consultant to prepare bid documents.
- Strategy 6.3 – Adhere to the instructions provided for Statewide Permanent Improvement Projects by the SC Capital Budgeting and Planning Unit.

- Strategy 6.4 – Monitor reroofing progress until completion (weekly).

The following SCVRD area office locations have repaving projects identified in the CPIP:

1. Conway: Repair and resurface the existing parking lot and loading area. This facility is over 47 years old, and the parking lot and loading areas need repair and resurfacing. Subsurface investigations will be required to determine the depth and extent of deterioration of the existing paving prior to resurfacing. Exterior lighting will also be added to the parking areas for increased safety and security.
2. Lexington: Repair and resurface the existing parking lot and loading area. This facility is over 45 years old, and the parking lot and loading areas need repair and resurfacing. Subsurface investigations will be required to determine the depth and extent of deterioration of the existing paving prior to resurfacing. Exterior lighting will also be added to the parking areas for increased safety and security.
3. Evaluation Center/State Office: Repair and resurface the existing parking lot and surrounding roadways. This facility is over 46 years old, and the parking lot and driveways need repair and resurfacing. Subsurface investigations will be required to determine the depth and extent of deterioration of the existing paving prior to resurfacing.
4. ITTC/Rehabilitation Engineering Building: Repair and resurface the existing parking lot and surrounding roadways. This facility is over 39 years old, and the parking lot and driveways need repair and resurfacing. Subsurface investigations will be required to determine the depth and extent of deterioration of the existing paving prior to resurfacing.
5. Beaufort: Repair and resurface the existing parking lot and loading areas. This facility is over 39 years old, and the parking lot and loading areas are in need of repair and repaving. Subsurface investigations will be required to determine the level of deterioration of the existing paved areas. Exterior lighting will also be added to the parking areas for increased safety and security.

Priority 7: Other Projects – HVAC Unit Replacement

At its offices and Job Readiness Training Centers throughout the state, SCVRD has a total of 322 HVAC units of varying ages. Despite routine preventive maintenance efforts, individual HVAC units will age/deteriorate to the point that it is more reasonable to replace versus repair the unit.

- Strategy 7.1 – The Agency will follow the State procurement process to replace affected units. SCVRD will also include an estimated number of HVAC units, to be replaced each fiscal year, in our annual aggregate prior approval request to RSA. Subject to that approval, SCVRD will be able to replace the units in a timely manner.

Priority 8: Other CPIP Projects. The Generator will be installed in March 2026. The SCVRD Dorm Building VR Center (Heat Pump Unit Replacement) project will replace all old existing water source heat pump units with new energy efficient units, and the State Office Building Replacement of VAV Boxes replacement project will replace all existing VAV (Variable Air Volume) boxes and pneumatic controls with new VAV boxes with digital controls and a building Energy Management System.

- Strategy 8.1. he Agency will follow the State procurement process to replace affected units and boxes. SCVRD will also include an estimate in our annual aggregate prior approval request to RSA. Subject to that approval, SCVRD will be able to replace the units and boxes in a timely manner.

- Priority 9: Information Technology Server and Phone Replacement. SCVRD will need to install a generator at the State Office to power the Agency computer servers and phone system in the event of a power outage. The entire SCVRD network is impacted if these servers and the phone system lose power. The SCVRD server room currently has UPS units for short term power outages. The UPS units can provide power for about 15-25 minutes during an outage. This allows the Agency to do a controlled shut down of the system in the event of an outage. The limitation of relying on UPS units is that an outage that lasts any longer will take down the network until power is restored and the system is rebooted and tested. The last outage happened at the end of a workday and took about three hours to restore the servers to an operational state. An outage that lasts for more than a very short while will also take out the State Office phone system. A generator system that can provide power for the equipment and A/C units will allow the system to be functional for the rest of the offices in the state as well as allow State Office users the option of connecting remotely.
- Strategy 9.1 – Develop detailed specifications for Information Technology (IT) Server and phone replacement based on Agency needs and market research.
- Strategy 9.2 – Incorporate the detailed specifications for the IT Server replacement into the IT Planning document and submit to the Department of Administration's Division of Technology Operations (DTO) for prior approval.

When this is completed, we will need to make renovations in our Human Resources unit to expand the HR Department

As noted above, SCVRD owns and operates its Crosstie includes almost 1,000,000 square feet of space in our buildings. Despite routine preventative maintenance efforts, aging facilities will require some attention. Necessary maintenance, normal repairs, and alterations which:

- Keep the property in an efficient operating condition; and
- Do not add to the permanent value of the property or appreciably prolong its intended life, will be addressed as administrative costs.

Building related expenditures which add to the permanent value of property or appreciably prolong its intended life are considered capital projects. Capital projects will be addressed under either the establishment authority or construction authority (as appropriate). SCVRD will comply with all applicable State and Federal regulations regarding capital projects including the "pre-planning" and "prior approval" requirements.

- Priority 10: Holmesview Rebuild

SCVRD has historically operated two substance abuse recovery facilities in the state, Holmesview Center in Greenville and Palmetto Center in Florence. Holmesview Center was destroyed in a fire in November of 2016. Plans for rebuilding that Center are currently going through State procedures and the federal prior approval process. The absence of Holmesview

has left a gap in recovery services for individuals from the Upstate Region of the State. The lone recovery center, the Palmetto Center accepts residents from all over the State; however, consumers in the Upstate struggle with transportation and experience support barriers making it difficult to access recovery services. Leading up to the sudden closure of Holmesview, SCVRD referred approximately 33% of eligible SCVRD applicants with an addition-related disability to residential addiction recovery. The majority (80%) of those referred for residential recovery completed the inpatient program and the rehabilitation rate for inpatient recovery for the five years prior to the fire was 42.8% (Rehab Rate includes both Holmesview Center and the Palmetto Center combined).

During SFYs 2019 through SFY 2022, 2,791 consumers from the Upstate region of South Carolina had a substance use-related disability. While these individuals can still access inpatient recovery services at the Palmetto Center located in the Pee Dee Region of South Carolina, most choose not to because of the distance from their home. Therefore, SCVRD intends to meet the need for residential addiction treatment services in the Upstate by rebuilding Holmesview Center.

The drop in the number of consumers with a drug and alcohol-related disability between SFY 2020 and 2021 is due to an overall drop in referrals during the COVID-19 pandemic. The overall drop in the number of people with drug and alcohol-related disabilities should not be interpreted as a decrease in the need for drug and alcohol residential treatment in the Upstate. Holmesview is a free service to our consumers unlike other treatment centers in the state.

- Strategy 10.1 – Work with the SC Capital Budgeting and Planning Unit to develop detailed specifications for the rebuild of Holmesview Center.
- Strategy 10.2 – Focus on expanding outreach of recovery services and overcoming transportation barriers for consumers in the Upstate Region of South Carolina.
- Priority 11: Restroom Renovations

In April 2022, members of the Executive Leadership Team conducted visits to assess each facility's condition and current needs based on requests submitted to the Director of Field Operations and the Agency's Facility Management Project Director for area improvements and employee concerns. During these office visits, each facility was evaluated for the following concerns: safety, security, esthetics, repair needs and maintenance needs. Although each facility had its own individual areas requiring attention, it was evident that many restrooms in SCVRD facilities are in dire need of updates. There were twenty-five facilities identified during the evaluation that are significantly overdue for updates and in desperate need of renovation. These facilities range in age from 29 to 48 years old, and only four of the 25 locations have had partial updates, which occurred between 1998 and 2010. In addition, several of these facilities have tested positive for asbestos and need an asbestos abatement. We are in the process of testing all facilities that may have asbestos issues due to the timeframe in which they were constructed and the materials that were used by builders during that timeframe. Below is a list of the identified facilities requiring bathroom renovations.

- Strategy 11.1 – Procure professional certified asbestos inspection of facilities that are expected to have asbestos.
- Strategy 11.2 – Ensure that all identified asbestos is abated as per DHEC regulations, Regulation 61-86.1, Standards of Performance for Asbestos Projects.

- Strategy 11.3 – Use SC Consolidated Procurement Code to ensure compliance with State procurement regulations and develop detailed specifications for the bathroom renovations.

South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department Restroom Renovation List:

All office restrooms are renovated, and consumer restrooms are scheduled for renovations.

1. Aiken – this facility was built in 1980 and is 46 years old. There have been no updates to the original bathrooms, only minor repairs as needed. .
2. Anderson - This facility was built in 1987 and is 39 years old. There have been no updates to the original bathrooms, only minor repairs as needed.
3. Beaufort – this facility was built in 1988 and is 38 years old. There have been no updates to the original bathrooms, only minor repairs as needed.
4. Berkeley – This facility was built in 1992 and is 34 years old. There have been no updates to the original bathrooms, only minor repairs as needed.
5. Camden – This facility was built in 1990 and is 36 years old. There have been no updates to the original bathrooms, only minor repairs as needed.
6. Conway – This facility was built in 1978 and is 48 years old. The restrooms were updated in 2010. This facility is scheduled to be tested for asbestos during program year 2023.
7. Florence – This facility was built in 1982 and is 44 years old. There have been no updates to the original staff bathrooms, only minor repairs as needed. The consumer restrooms had tile flooring replaced in 2022, but no additional updates. This facility is scheduled to be tested for asbestos during program year 2023.
8. Gaffney - This facility was built in 1993 and is 30 years old. There have been no updates to the original bathrooms, only minor repairs as needed. .
9. Greenwood - This facility was built in 1984 and is 42 years old. There have been no updates to the original bathrooms, only minor repairs as needed.
10. Greenville – This facility was built in 1976 and is 50 years old. There have been no updates to the original bathrooms, only minor repairs.
11. Lancaster - This facility was built in 1982 and is 44 years old. There have been no updates to the original bathrooms, only minor repairs as needed. This facility has also tested positive for asbestos and needs an asbestos abatement.
12. Laurens – This facility was built in 1985 and is 41 years old. There have been no updates to the original bathrooms, only minor repairs as needed.
13. Lexington - This facility was built in 1980 and is 46 years old. There have been no updates to the original bathrooms, only minor repairs as needed. .
14. Marlboro – This facility was built in 1988 and is 38 years old. There have been no updates to the original bathrooms, only minor repairs as needed. This facility is scheduled to be tested for asbestos during program year 2023.
15. Oconee - This facility was built in 1989 and is 37 years old. There have been no updates to the original bathrooms, only minor repairs as needed.

16. Orangeburg - This facility was built in 1975 and is 51 years old. There have been no updates to the original bathrooms, only minor repairs as needed. This facility has also tested positive for asbestos and needs an asbestos abatement.
17. Rock Hill - This facility was built in 1987 and is 39 years old. There have been no updates to the original bathrooms, only minor repairs as needed.
18. Spartanburg - This facility was built in 1979 and is 47 years old. There have been no updates to the original bathrooms, only minor repairs as needed.
19. Sumter – This facility was built in 1975 and is 51 years old. There have been no updates to the original bathrooms, only minor repairs. This facility has also tested positive for asbestos and needs an asbestos abatement.
20. Walterboro – This facility was built in 1975 and is 51 years old. The consumer restrooms were updated in 1998. There have been no updates to the staff restrooms. This facility has also tested positive for asbestos and needs an asbestos abatement.
21. Information Technology Training Center (ITTC) Dormitory – This facility was built in 1987 and is 39 years old. The ITTC dormitory was used to house SCVRD consumers from across the State who enrolled in one of four on-site training programs lasting anywhere from four weeks to eighteen months. Updates to the dormitory were made in 2008, however, the dormitory has not been in use since 2019 and needs updating so that it can be used for consumers.

- Priority 12: Access Control and Camera Integration

Currently SCVRD is spending $30,000 in licensing renewal fees and card readers annually across the state for physical access control. To decrease yearly reoccurring costs, the Agency will upgrade the current system with one that will allow the integration of new cameras into the system for better monitoring and the creation of an active directory. Implementation of the active directory into the system will allow autonomy to pull an employee out of multiple systems at one time. This, in turn, would decrease the work hours needed to add/remove employees.

Currently, SCVRD is using two different camera systems to monitor the area offices for accidents, worker's compensation, and security threats. Both systems have been in place for over 10 years and are outdated. The current systems use analog wiring which prevents the Agency from updating to a technologically savvy camera system. There have been several occasions in the past where inadequate video footage has prevented the Agency from viewing crimes against the Agency. Inadequate video footage has also prevented the Agency from working with law enforcement and helping to solve these crimes. In the most recently completed program year, the Agency spent $84,000 on repairs and $30,000 in licensing fees for a total cost of $114,000. The overall goal is to eliminate reoccurring licensing fees and to eliminate the maintenance of this outdated system.

An electronic visitor management system is needed to replace the existing paper system for logging entry to and departure from Agency facilities. Each area office has a different log that is being used to sign individuals in and out. An electronic system will help eliminate the paper visitor logs which could compromise individuals' privacy. The use of an electronic system would encourage standardization; better track who is entering and leaving SCVRD buildings; bolster privacy for visitors; and provide improved physical security as the visitor badge will have a picture and name clearly printed on the badge.

- Strategy 12.1 – Set up a Request for Information (RFI) for access control, electronic visitor management, and interior/exterior camera systems to explore and gain knowledge to compare options.
- Strategy 12.2 – Develop detailed specifications for physical access control, camara systems, and electronic visitor management based on Agency needs, market research and information received in the RFI.
- Strategy 12.3 – Create a strategic plan for implementation across the state to prevent disruption of service to consumers and staff.
- Strategy 12.4 – Coordinate with State Energy Office to ensure compliance with State regulations and utilize the State Consolidated Procurement Code to ensure compliance with State regulations.
- Priority 13: Replacement of Aging Cast Iron Sewer Systems

SCVRD has numerous offices that were built with cast iron sewer systems that are starting to age beyond life expectancy. Recently, two of those offices have experienced plumbing failures that have repair costs between $160,000 to $180,000 due to deterioration of sewer pipes. The buildings are on a slab foundation which contributes to the high cost of the repairs. To avoid destruction of the new bathroom remodels currently scheduled, the Agency will be requiring plumbing assessments and possible repairs to be completed on each aging facility prior to the planned bathroom remodels.

- Strategy 13.1 – Perform a preliminary assessment of all aging sewer systems with cast iron systems.
- Strategy 13.2 – Based on the preliminary assessment, use the bid solicitation process to identify a qualified vendor to replace all offices with aging cast iron sewer systems.
- Strategy 13.3 – Create a strategic plan for implementation across the state to prevent disruption of service to consumers and staff.

As part of the CSNA, the Agency asked staff and other stakeholders to assess the State's needs for Community Rehabilitation Programs. Overall, there was a strong agreement on the need to expand the programs offered in the JRT Centers. However, external stakeholders were more likely to respond that there is a need to establish new CRPs. Many of those external stakeholder responses came from Pre-ETS vendors.

- Priority 14: Innovation & Expansion Activities - Customized Employment

SCVRD to collaborate with Center for Independent Living to potentially pilot Customized Employment. The goal of this collaboration is evaluating a system’s approach to providing Customized Employment. With this pilot SCVRD would contract with CIL’s to increase opportunities and the supports needed by individuals with the MSD to be employed in integrated settings.

- Strategy 14.1 – SCVRD will support innovation and expansion activities by collaborating with CIL’s to develop a phased approach to introducing a new practice and evaluate success measures to effectively implement the program.
- Strategy 14.2 – Develop detailed specifications for customized employment based on consumer needs and market research.

- Strategy 14.3 – Use the South Carolina Consolidated Procurement Code to ensure compliance with procurement regulations.

- Priority 15: Innovation & Expansion Activities - Pre ETS – Work Based Learning

SCVRD continues to look for innovative ways to expand access to a variety of Pre-ETS and Youth Services. SCVRD has identified that services in rural areas continue to be a focus. SCVRD utilizes itinerant sites to serve students attending school in rural areas of South Carolina, but high-quality Work Based Learning (WBLE) opportunities continue to be a struggle for students in these areas with transportation barriers. To help ensure that students, even in our most rural communities, have access to meaningful work experiences, SCVRD put out a solicitation in August 2024 to find creative approaches to providing these services to rural communities. Through this solicitation, SCVRD held a one-year pilot contract awarded to AccessAbility to provide paid work experience opportunities through a mobile unit in rural areas of the state. This contract ended in October 2025 and SCVRD is reviewing the pilot data and working to put out a new solicitation for continued creative opportunities for rural work experiences for students.

- Strategy 15.1 – Work on a renewed solicitation for high quality Mobile WBLE options to allow students even in our most rural areas of the state to participate in these valuable paid work opportunities.

- Strategy 15.2 – Focus on expanding outreach of Pre ETS and overcoming transportation barriers for consumers in rural regions of South Carolina.

- Strategy 15.3 – Develop detailed specifications for WBLE expansion in rural areas of the State based on consumer needs and market research.

- Strategy 15.4 – Use the South Carolina Consolidated Procurement Code to ensure compliance with procurement regulations.

- Priority 16: Innovation & Expansion Activities - Pre ETS – No Post-secondary Training

SCVRD is also reviewing options for our out of school youth to participate in engaging employment preparation opportunities. SCVRD is looking to create engaging training opportunities for youth who have completed high school but do not intend to move on to post-secondary training opportunities. SCVRD is working to develop a rigorous training program to keep this population of out of school youth engaged and excited about next steps in preparing for employment.

- Strategy 16.1 – SCVRD will focus on improving and expanding services to assist youth not receiving post-secondary education to receive training opportunities that will lead to gainful employment.

- Strategy 16.2 – SCVRD will develop engaging rigorous training opportunities for youth who have completed high school but do not intend to move on to post-secondary training opportunities

Priority 17: Innovation & Expansion Activities - Pre ETS – Youth Advisory CouncilSCVRD is preparing to launch our first Youth Advisory Council, Bridge Beyond Barriers (BBB) starting January 2026. This group will include students and out-of-school youth who have participated in SCVRD services. This program will foster leadership skills and allow for feedback from youth

who are currently or recently have participated in SCVRD services. Feedback from this council will allow for planning and further improvement of innovative approaches to providing services to students and youth in South Carolina.

- Strategy 17.1 – SCVRD will support expansion of services through the feedback from the new Youth Advisory Council which will include students and out of school youth who have participated in SCVRD services.
- Strategy 17.2 – BBB will include monthly meetings where the agenda will include activities to foster leadership skills and allow feedback to further improve Agency innovative approaches.
- Priority 18: Innovation & Expansion Activities – Rural Outreach

As a rural state, it is often necessary to take extra steps to ensure residents with disabilities living in outlying areas of the state have equitable access to SCVRD program services. To expand access to SCVRD services the following actions are being taken.

- Logistics Specialist – A logistics specialist position will be created to focus on analyzing service needs throughout the state and identify locations for additional SCVRD office building to assist residents with disabilities in rural and outlying communities. This position will also identify opportunities to develop additional partnerships across the state resulting SCVRD counselors and appropriate staff being visible in the community, increasing referrals to the program and assisting community partners and disability organizations working with our shared consumer base.
- Mobile Unit – Reliable and consistent transportation continues to be an issue in many parts of our state.SC Department of Employment and Workforce (SCDEW) has modeled an innovative approach to "meeting people where they are" by deploying a mobile unit that travels across the state to help job seekers with employment needs. SCVRD is currently researching options to procure a similar unit which will focus on services for people with disabilities. This unit will have the ability for SCVRD staff to:
    - Provide information about SCVRD services and resources on site.
    - Input applications for services for potential consumers into the SCVRD database.
    - Develop Individualized Plans for Employment (IPE).
    - Conduct vocational assessments, interest inventories, etc.
    - Complete comprehensive annual reviews and/or IPE amendments.
    - Provide virtual tours of SCVRD services and show videos of various programs.
    - Provide demonstrations of career opportunities within the local community.
    - Shuttle Service – SCVRD operates Job Readiness Training Centers (JRTC) throughout the state that provide job skills training opportunities for consumers of the program, to include high school students with disabilities. In many rural areas of the state, consumers of the program who could benefit from job skills training do not have transportation to and from the centers and are not able to actively participate. SCVRD is conducting an analysis of each center developing a strategic plan to enhance job skills training services by implementing vans to transport consumers to and from the JRTC.

- Strategy 18.1 – Identify opportunities to develop additional partnerships across the state resulting in SCVRD counselors and appropriate staff being visible in the community, increasing referrals to the program and assisting community partners and disability organizations working with our shared consumer base.
- Strategy 18.2 – Focus on expansion of services by researching options to procure a Mobile Unit which will focus on services for people with disabilities.
- Strategy 18.3 - Conduct an analysis of each center developing a strategic plan to enhance job skills training services by implementing vans to transport consumers to and from the JRTC.
- Priority 19: Innovation & Expansion Activities – Statewide Collaborations and Partnerships

There is a constant need to maintain, enhance and develop partnerships to ensure agencies, community partners, employers and state leaders are working together in the best interests of the state and its residents. To foster good collaboration and effective communication, additional positions are needed to assist the Commissioner and fill gaps where SCVRD may not be properly represented. The Agency is in the process of restricting current staffing patterns and creating new positions to include:

- Public Information Officer – to ensure effective and consistent internal and external communication on behalf of the Agency.
- Community Relations and Governmental Affairs Officer – to foster positive relationships between SCVRD and disability organizations, advocacy groups, and governmental entities.

- Strategy 19.1 – Develop additional positions that will be focused on the constant need to maintain, enhance, and develop partnerships to ensure agencies, community partners, employers and state leaders are working together for the best interest of the state and its residents.

- Priority 20: Innovation & Expansion Activities – Workforce Training

SCVRD is researching new and innovative training opportunities to assist consumers in securing careers that are currently in demand as well as careers of the future. In addition to creating apprenticeships and work-based learning opportunities, SCVRD is piloting the use of virtual reality technology for job exploration. The Agency is also revamping its Learning Empowerment and Resource Network (LEARN) Center to ensure training opportunities are consistent with the skills needed for today's workforce.

- Strategy 20.1- Focus on expansion services that will assist consumers secure careers that are in demand. Identify opportunities for apprenticeships, work-based learning, and piloting the use of virtual reality technology.
- Strategy 20.2 – To increase the availability of applicable training opportunities for our consumers, the Agency will revamp its Learning Empowerment and Resource Network (LEARN) to be more comprehensive.

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- Priority 21: Innovation & Expansion Activities – Autism Contracts

SCVRD holds active contracts running through May 2027 (Low Country Behavior and Wellness, RCM Health Care Services,and Behavior and Wellness Bliss, Mindshift Counseling and Career, Project Hope Foundation, and SOS Healthcare) to provide Pre-ETS to students (eligible or potentially eligible for VR Services) with Autism in South Carolina. Services will include Self Advocacy, Job Exploration Counseling, Work Based Learning, and Workplace Readiness. Services will be provided Statewide.

- Strategy 21.1 – The Agency is committed to working with vendors that provide a focus on consumers on the Autism spectrum for instruction in Self Advocacy, job exploration counseling, work-based learning, and workplace readiness.

- Priority 22: Innovation & Expansion Activities – Centers for Independent Living (CIL)

SCVRD holds a contract to provide Self-Advocacy services to students statewide to include services from our Centers for Independent Living (AccessAbility, Able SC, Walton Options) and a community partner (Empowered to Win). TThey can provide services in person or virtually to ensure flexibility to meet the needs of the students and the schools.

SCVRD also is a partner in the Disability Innovation Funds Grant, South Carolina Pathways to Partnership. This grant is held by the Department of Education, and mandatory partners include SCVRD, CILs, and Local Education Agencies (LEAs). The focus of this grant is on assisting LEAs with developing alternative pathways to high school diploma, ensuring access to Pre-Employment Transition Services and meaningful work experiences, improved collaboration amongst partners, and connecting students to quality Apprenticeships and employment opportunities.

- Strategy 22.1 - Particiapation in the SCPP Grant provides expansion activities to consumers and assists with fostering a collaborative work environment between the Agency and CIl's.

D. EVALUATION AND REPORTS OF PROGRESS: VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT GOALS

For the most recently completed program year, provide an evaluation and report of progress for the goals or priorities, including progress on the strategies under each goal or priority, applicable to that program year. Sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to describe—

1. PROGRESS IN ACHIEVING THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED FOR THE VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS;

List the goals/priorities and discuss the progress or completion of each goal/priority and related strategies

Goal Number	Goal Description	Strategy Number	Strategy Description	Performance Measure Number	Performance Measure Description	
1	Successful employment outcomes for South Carolinians with disabilities through specialized, individualized services.	1.1	Improve the quality of employment outcomes for eligible individuals with disabilities.	1.1.1	Percentage of program participants who are employed during 2nd quarter after exit	Target: 66% Actual: 62%
1	Successful employment outcomes for South Carolinians with disabilities through specialized, individualized services.	1.1	Improve the quality of employment outcomes for eligible individuals with disabilities.	1.1.2	Percentage of program participants who are employed during 4th quarter after exit	Target: 62% Actual: 61%
1	Successful employment outcomes for South Carolinians with disabilities through specialized, individualized services.	1.2	Enhance school-to-work transition services.	1.2.1	Percentage of individuals served by agency who are in transition age range (14-24) at application	Target: 40.0% Actual: 40
1	Successful employment outcomes for South Carolinians with disabilities through specialized,	1.2	Enhance school-to-work transition services.	1.2.2	Proportion of students served who received Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) as specified by the Workforce Innovation and	Target: 95% Actual: 95.77%

Goal Number	Goal Description	Strategy Number	Strategy Description	Performance Measure Number	Performance Measure Description	
	individualized services.				Opportunity Act (WIOA)	
1						
1	Successful employment outcomes for South Carolinians with disabilities through specialized, individualized services.	1.3	Increase participation in education and training programs that lead to recognized credentials and advanced career paths.	1.3.1	Percentage of participants in education or training programs who achieve Measurable Skill Gains, as defined by WIOA	Target: 52.3% Actual: 57%
1	Successful employment outcomes for South Carolinians with disabilities through specialized, individualized services.	1.3	Increase participation in education and training programs that lead to recognized credentials and advanced career paths.	1.3.2	Percentage of consumers enrolled in education/training leading to a recognized credential	Target: 15.0% Actual: 16%
1	Successful employment outcomes for South Carolinians with disabilities through specialized, individualized services.	1.3	Increase participation in education and training programs that lead to recognized credentials and advanced career paths.	1.3.3	Percentage of consumers enrolled in education/training leading to a recognized credential during participation who attain a recognized credential by case closure	Target: 43% Actual: 51%
2	We will be a team of highly-qualified professionals who have the commitment,	2.1	Provide training to equip staff to enhance their ability to provide quality vocational rehabilitation services.	2.1.1	Percentage of new employees who completed all assigned training in their first year of employment	Target: 90% Actual:

Goal Number	Goal Description	Strategy Number	Strategy Description	Performance Measure Number	Performance Measure Description	
	accountability, and opportunity to excel.					76%
2	We will be a team of highly-qualified professionals who have the commitment, accountability, and opportunity to excel.	2.1	Provide training to equip staff to enhance their ability to provide quality vocational rehabilitation services.	2.1.2	Percentage of Professional Development class attendees who evaluate the course as "useful" or "very useful" for their development and job performance	Target: 95% Actual: 93%
2	We will be a team of highly-qualified professionals who have the commitment, accountability, and opportunity to excel.	2.2	Foster an environment promoting opportunity, staff stability and professional development for future leadership needs.	2.2.1	Level of Goal Attainment Toward Equal Employment Opportunity	Target: 100.0% Actual: 91%
2	We will be a team of highly-qualified professionals who have the commitment, accountability, and opportunity to excel.	2.2	Foster an environment promoting opportunity, staff stability and professional development for future leadership needs.	2.2.2	Agency staff turnover rate	Target: 11.0% Actual: 12.5%
3	Accountability to taxpayers through efficient and effective use of resources	3.1	Efficient service delivery that positively impacts long-term outcomes.	3.1.1	Median quarterly earnings of program participants who are employed at case closure	Target: $7,548 Actual:

Goal Number	Goal Description	Strategy Number	Strategy Description	Performance Measure Number	Performance Measure Description	
	entrusted to us.					$7,280
3	Accountability to taxpayers through efficient and effective use of resources entrusted to us.	3.1	Efficient service delivery that positively impacts long-term outcomes.	3.1.2	Amount each successfully rehabilitated consumer will repay in taxes for each dollar spent on his or her rehabilitation	Target: $3.00 Actual: $3.40
3	Accountability to taxpayers through efficient and effective use of resources entrusted to us.	3.1	Efficient service delivery that positively impacts long-term outcomes.	3.1.3	Median days from application to eligibility	Target: 21 Actual: 21
3	Accountability to taxpayers through efficient and effective use of resources entrusted to us.	3.1	Efficient service delivery that positively impacts long-term outcomes.	3.1.4	Median days from eligibility to vocational objective	Target: 11 Actual: 14
3	Accountability to taxpayers through efficient and effective use of resources entrusted to us.	3.1	Efficient service delivery that positively impacts long-term outcomes.	3.1.5	Median days from vocational objective to Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)	Target: 5 Actual: 5
3	Accountability to taxpayers through efficient and effective use of resources entrusted to us.	3.2	Continued evaluation and improvement of key processes.	3.2.1	Agreed Upon Procedures audit findings	Target: 0 Actual: 0

Goal Number	Goal Description	Strategy Number	Strategy Description	Performance Measure Number	Performance Measure Description	
3	Accountability to taxpayers through efficient and effective use of resources entrusted to us.	3.2	Continued evaluation and improvement of key processes.	3.2.2	Program Integrity Compliance Assurance results	Target: 95.0% Actual: 93%
3	Accountability to taxpayers through efficient and effective use of resources entrusted to us.	3.2	Continued evaluation and improvement of key processes.	3.2.3	Proportion of compliant eligibility determination cases that used an extension letter to stay compliant with required timeframe	Target: 15% Actual: 22.4%
3	Accountability to taxpayers through efficient and effective use of resources entrusted to us.	3.2	Continued evaluation and improvement of key processes.	3.2.4	Proportion of compliant IPE development cases that used an extension letter to stay compliant with required timeframe	Target: 13% Actual: 18.11%
3	Accountability to taxpayers through efficient and effective use of resources entrusted to us.	3.3	Ensure safety, security, and adequacy of infrastructure.	3.3.1	Experience Modifier (E-mod) used for insurance premium levels	Target: 1.50 Actual: 1.56
3	Accountability to taxpayers through efficient and effective use of resources entrusted to us.	3.3	Ensure safety, security, and adequacy of infrastructure.	3.3.2	Percentage of SOC alert incidents addressed and reported within 24 hours	Target: 100.0% Actual: 100.0%

Goal Number	Goal Description	Strategy Number	Strategy Description	Performance Measure Number	Performance Measure Description	
3	Accountability to taxpayers through efficient and effective use of resources entrusted to us.	3.3	Ensure safety, security, and adequacy of infrastructure.	3.3.3	Employee click rate on mock phishing email attempts	Target: 15.0% Actual: 5.9%
4	Maintain a dynamic network of partnerships to shape a better future for all stakeholders.	4.1	Mutually beneficial partnerships with business and industry that provide employment/training opportunities for consumers and a talented, skilled workforce for the business community.	4.1.1	Repeat business customer rate	Target: 25.0% Actual: 21.86%
4	Maintain a dynamic network of partnerships to shape a better future for all stakeholders.	4.1	Mutually beneficial partnerships with business and industry that provide employment/training opportunities for consumers and a talented, skilled workforce for the business community.	4.1.2	Employers/ businesses served	Target: 2,100 Actual: 1,766
4	Maintain a dynamic network of partnerships to shape a better future for all stakeholders.	4.2	Enhance direct outreach to and development of referral sources for targeted populations.	4.2.1	Proportion of referrals and applicants with brain injury and spinal cord injury	Target: 1.40% Actual: 1.11%
4	Maintain a dynamic network of partnerships to shape a better future for all stakeholders.	4.2	Enhance direct outreach to and development of referral sources for targeted populations.	4.2.2	Proportion of referrals and applicants with Intellectual Disability and Autism Spectrum Disorders	Target: 13.00% Actual: 13.24%

Goal Number	Goal Description	Strategy Number	Strategy Description	Performance Measure Number	Performance Measure Description	
4	Maintain a dynamic network of partnerships to shape a better future for all stakeholders.	4.2	Enhance direct outreach to and development of referral sources for targeted populations.	4.2.3	Proportion of referrals and applicants who identify as Hispanic/ Latinx	Target: 3.00% Actual: 3.84%

- 1.1-The Agency utilizes labor market information to assist consumers with identifying and obtaining employment outcomes. Our Assessment and Career Exploration Specialists (ACES) are trained to access labor market information to provide realistic and attainable employment information to our consumers. This ensures that consumers are placed in employment that is sustainable. When consumers live in rural areas of the State, access to transportation is limited. This in turn affects their ability to search for, obtain, or maintain employment.

- 1.2- The Agency actively works to engage students while they are still in school to assist with the transition from school directly into employment or post-secondary education opportunities. The Agency has interagency agreements with each Local Education Agency (LEA) to assist with referral development and coordination of services. SCVRD begins pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) as early as age 13 to begin to develop skills needed for the transition out of school and into employment or post-secondary services. Each public high school is assigned a Transition Counselor to assist with teacher, student, and family engagement. This allows for equitable provision of Pre-ETS along with referrals to transition services with the Agency. The Agency continues to look for ways to expand outreach to home school and private school students.

- 1.3- The Agency works with consumers to assess their need for education and training to achieve their employment goals. Our Assessment and Career Exploration Specialists (ACES) are trained on the local labor market and the educational requirements for careers in their area. SCVRD assesses the individual's needs as it relates to comparable benefits for training to consumers and families. Some families are unsure of assistance that can be provided through the VR Agency or other comparable benefits. The Agency has improved our tracking system to better capture Measurable Skills Gains and Credential Attainments.

- Worked to develop a rigorous training schedule for all new staff. The Human Resources Development department works closely with all supervisors to ensure New Employee Orientation Guides are complete for all new employees within their first year of hire. We aim to ensure all employees are provided with in-person and virtual training opportunities that will enhance their ability to provide quality services to consumers, and their professional growth with the Agency. New employees also attend *Consumer Services Training* within their first month with SCVRD to get an overview of the services provided by the Agency and help them better understand their role. New Counselors are provided *New Counselor Training* within their first week on the job to understand their role with consumers and the use of our Case Management System. Specialized training is

provided within the first month to staff to include Deaf and Hard of Hearing services, Transition services, Supported Employment services, Vocational Assessment, and other specialty areas. Feedback on professional development shows that almost all staff found the quality of the training to be useful or very useful for their development and job performance.

- 2.2 –The Agency is committed to achieving 100% of goal attainment in all demographic categories. When vacancies occur, the Department will continue to promote, recruit, and retain applicants who represent the diverse nature of the South Carolina workforce to eliminate any underutilization.

- 3.1 – The Agency has reviewed all policies to ensure that service provision is in line with federal regulations and does not cause unneeded breaks in case service delivery. This allows for seamless service delivery from application to IPE services. Our Assessment and Career Exploration Specialists (ACES) are trained to review labor market needs in their area and assist consumers through informed choice with finding employment opportunities that are sustainable and will meet their maximum potential. SCVRD utilizes comparable benefits to ensure that funds are used efficiently and effectively and that all resources are being accounted for. SCVRD partners with other local agencies to include Office of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (OIDD), Office of Mental Health, SC Department of Mental Health, Local Education Agencies to coordinate services and ensure efficient use of funds and resources.

- 3.3 - SCVRD utilizes mock phishing emails to assist staff with practice to identify phishing emails and to help ensure the safety, security, and adequacy of our infrastructure. Review of phishing security tests in SFY 2022 indicate that SCVRD staff phish-prone rate is significantly below the industry phish-prone rate. Yearly training is conducted to ensure all SCVRD employees stay up to date on phishing risks and how to report suspicious emails.

- 4.1 – The Agency has highly qualified Business Development Specialist (BDS) across the State who are focused on ensuring our program meets the needs of our consumers and business partners, and community. The BDS is aware of labor market trends and is dedicated to being the place employers can depend on us meeting their workforce needs. These relationships increase repeat business partners and hiring by our Job Readiness Training Center partners. The efforts are tracked in our *Universal Business System* and business employment needs are staff with local teams to assist with strong connections between consumers and business partners. Also, there are 27 JRT Centers across the State. These centers facilitate a variety of vocational rehabilitation training services including Customized Training, Occupational and Vocational Training, and Job Preparedness Instruction.

- 4.2 - The Agency focuses on referrals for targeted populations to include brain injury, spinal cord injury, intellectual disability, autism spectrum disorders, and Hispanic/Latinx. The Agency reviews referral trends and compares them with the population in the community to ensure that referrals and applicants for these targeted populations are congruent with the population proportions in the community served. Specialty caseloads serve referrals for brain and/or spinal cord injury. Relationships with community partners serving these populations to include doctor's offices, SC Spinal Cord Association, OIDD, and local education agencies are maintained to ensure outreach and referral development.

- 5.1 – The Agency must ensure the safety and security of Agency staff and consumers; therefore, the Agency will continuously evaluate buildings owned by SCVRD to identify those properties with roofing systems that are nearing or are beyond the useful life. Six of the 10 roofs currently identified have been completed.
- 5.2 – To ensure that the Agency specifications for reroofing projects are correct and prepared in a timely manner, we will hire an architect/engineer consultant to prepare bid documents.
- 5.3 – To ensure compliance with South Carolina procurement regulations, the Agency will adhere to the instructions provided for Statewide Permanent Improvement Projects outlined by the South Carolina Capital Budgeting and Planning Unit.
- 5.4 – To ensure that reroofing projects are completed in a timely manner and to ensure that the projects are progressing as planned the agency will monitor the progress of all reroofing projects weekly until completion. Any issues that may arise will be addressed immediately with the vendor.
    - – To ensure the safety and security of Agency staff and consumers, the Agency will continuously evaluate buildings owned by SCVRD to identify those properties with parking lots that are nearing or are beyond the useful life. Parking lot repairs will begin in July of 2024.
-
    - – To ensure that the Agency parking lot repair specifications are correct and prepared in a timely manner, we will hire an architect/engineer consultant to prepare bid documents.
-
    - – To ensure compliance with South Carolina procurement regulations, the Agency will adhere to the instructions provided for Statewide Permanent Improvement Projects outlined by the South Carolina Capital Budgeting and Planning Unit.
-
    - – To ensure that parking lot repair projects are completed in a timely manner and to ensure that the projects are progressing as planned the Agency will monitor the progress of all parking lot repair projects weekly until completion. Any issues that may arise will be addressed immediately with the vendor.
- 7.1 – SCVRD will work with the State Energy Office in assessing all aging HVAC units and developing plans for replacement or repair for units that meet the threshold laid out by the State Energy Office.
- 7.2 – The Agency will follow the State procurement process to replace affected units. SCVRD will also include an estimated number of HVAC units, to be replaced each fiscal year, in our annual aggregate prior approval request to RSA. Subject to that approval, SCVRD will be in a position to replace the units in a timely manner.
- 8.1 – The Agency will develop detailed specifications for Information Technology (IT) Server and phone replacement based on Agency needs and market research.

- 8.2 – The Agency will incorporate the detailed specifications for the IT Server replacement into the IT Planning document and submit it to the Department of Administration's Division of Technology Operations (DTO) for prior approval.
- 9.1 – The Agency will develop detailed specifications for IT Server Room fire suppression systems based on Agency needs and market research.
- 9.2 – The Agency will use market research and guidance provided in the SCVRD Environmental Security Policy to identify a server room fire suppression system for the Agency Server room.
-
    - – The Agency will work with the SC Capital Budgeting and Planning Unit to develop detailed specifications for an accessible bathroom in the State Office.
- 11.1 – SCVRD has historically operated two substance abuse recovery facilities in the state, Holmesview Center in Greenville and Palmetto Center in Florence. Holmesview Center was destroyed in a fire in November of 2016.Consumers in the Upstate struggle with transportation and experience support barriers making it difficult to access recovery service; therefore, the Agency will work with the SC Capital Budgeting and Planning Unit to develop detailed specifications for the rebuild of Holmesview Center.
- 11.2 - During SFYs 2019 through SFY 2022, 2,791 consumers from the Upstate region of South Carolina had a substance use-related disability. While these individuals can still access inpatient recovery services at the Palmetto Center located in the Pee Dee Region of South Carolina, most choose not to because of the distance from their home. Therefore, SCVRD intends to meet the need for residential addiction treatment services in the Upstate by focusing on expanding outreach of recovery services and overcoming transportation barriers for consumers in the Upstate Region of South Carolina.
- 12.1 – Several of the Agency facilities have tested positive for asbestos and need an asbestos abatement. To ensure the safety of Agency staff and consumers, The Agency must procure professional certified asbestos inspections of facilities that are expected to have asbestos.
- 12.2 – Ensure that all identified asbestos is abated as per SCDES/SC Department of Environment Services, Regulation 61-86.1, Standards of Performance for Asbestos Projects.
- 12.3 – Use SC Consolidated Procurement Code to ensure compliance with State procurement regulations and develop detailed specifications for the bathroom renovations.
- 13.1 – Set up a Request for Information (RFI) for access control, electronic visitor management, and interior/exterior camera systems to explore and gain knowledge to compare options.
- 13.2 – Develop detailed specifications for physical access control, camara systems, and electronic visitor management based on Agency needs, market research and information received in the RFI.
- 13.3 – Create a strategic plan for implementation access control across the state to prevent disruption of service to consumers and staff.

- 13.4 – Coordinate with State Energy Office to ensure compliance to State regulations and utilize the State Consolidated Procurement Code to ensure compliance to State regulations
- 14.1 – Perform a preliminary assessment of all aging sewer systems with cast iron systems.
- 14.2 – Based on the preliminary assessment, use the bid solicitation process to identify a qualified vendor to replumb all offices with aging cast iron sewer systems.
- 14.3 – Create a strategic plan for implementation across the state to prevent disruption of service to consumers and staff.
- 15.1 – SCVRD will support innovation and expansion activities by utilizing our in-house Job Coaches and Business Development Specialists to assist with the Job Development and Negotiation phase of CE. SCVRD and ABLE will utilize this pilot to develop a phased approach to introducing a new practice and evaluate success measures to effectively implement the program.
- 15.2 – Develop detailed specifications for customized employment based on consumer needs and market research.
- 15.3 – Use the South Carolina Consolidated Procurement Code to ensure compliance with procurement regulations.
- 16.1 – Work on a solicitation for high quality Mobile WBLE options to allow students even in our most rural areas of the state to participate in these valuable paid work opportunities.
- 16.2 – Focus on expanding outreach of Pre ETS and overcoming transportation barriers for consumers in rural regions of South Carolina.
- 16.3 – Develop detailed specifications for WBLE expansion in rural areas of the State based on consumer needs and market research.
- 16.4 – Use the South Carolina Consolidated Procurement Code to ensure compliance with procurement regulations.
- 17.1 – SCVRD will focus on improving and expanding services by utilizing unused space on our State Office Campus. .
- 17.2 – SCVRD will develop engaging rigorous training opportunities for youth who have completed high school but do not intend to move on to post-secondary training opportunities.
- 18.1 – SCVRD has expanded services by identifying participants for the Youth Advisory Council, Bridge Beyond Barriers which will include students and out of school youth who have participated in SCVRD services.
- 18.2 – Develop a curriculum/agenda that will foster leadership skills and allow feedback to further improve Agency innovative approaches.
- 19.1 – The Agency will identify opportunities to develop additional partnerships across the state resulting in SCVRD counselors and appropriate staff being visible in the

community, increasing referrals to the program and assisting community partners and disability organizations working with our shared consumer base.

- 19.2 – The Agency will focus on expansion of services by researching options to procure a Mobile Unit which will focus on services for people with disabilities.
- 19.3 – The Agency will conduct an analysis of each center developing a strategic plan to enhance job skills training services by implementing vans to transport consumers to and from the JRTC.
- 20.1 – The Agency will develop additional positions that will be focused on the constant need to maintain, enhance, and develop partnerships to ensure agencies, community partners, employers and state leaders are working together for the best interest of the state and its residents.
- 21.1 – The Agency will focus on expansion services that will assist consumers secure careers that are in demand. Identify opportunities for apprenticeships, work-based learning, and piloting the use of virtual reality technology.
- 21.2 - To increase the availability of applicable training opportunities for our consumers, the Agency will revamp its Learning Empowerment and Resource Network (LEARN) to be more comprehensive.
- 22.1 - The Agency is committed to working with vendors that provide a focus on consumers on the Autism spectrum for instruction in Self Advocacy, job exploration counseling, work-based learning, and workplace readiness.
- 23.1 - The Agency continues to foster a collaborative work environment between the Agency and CIl's.

2. PERFORMANCE ON THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY INDICATORS UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA FOR THE MOST RECENTLY COMPLETED PROGRAM YEAR, REFLECTING ACTUAL AND NEGOTIATED LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE. EXPLAIN ANY DISCREPANCIES IN THE ACTUAL AND NEGOTIATED LEVELS; AND

Indicator	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2024 Actual Level
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit	65.7%	61.6%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit	61.7%	60.9%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after Exit	$6,122	$6,511
Credential Attainment Rate	42.7%	50.2%
Measurable Skill Gains Rate	52.3%	50.3%

3. THE USE OF FUNDS RESERVED FOR INNOVATION AND EXPANSION ACTIVITIES (SECTIONS 101(A)(18) AND 101(A)(23) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT) (E.G., SRC, SILC).

SCVRD holds active contracts running through May 2027 (Low Country Behavior and Wellness, and RCM Health Care Services, Behavior and Wellness Bliss, Mindshift Counseling and Career, Project Hope Foundation, and SOS Healthcare) to provide Pre-

ETS to students (eligible or potentially eligible for VR Services) with Autism in South Carolina. Services will include Self Advocacy, Job Exploration Counseling, Work Based Learning, and Workplace Readiness. Services will be provided Statewide.

SCVRD holds a contract to provide Self-Advocacy services to students statewide to include services from our Centers for Independent Living (AccessAbility, Able SC, Walton Options) and a community partner (Empowered to Win). They can provide services in person or virtually to ensure flexibility to meet the needs of the students and the schools.

E. SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES, DISTRIBUTION OF TITLE VI FUNDS, AND ARRANGEMENTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES.

1. ACCEPTANCE OF TITLE VI FUNDS:

(A) VR agency requests to receive title VI funds.

2. IF THE VR AGENCY HAS ELECTED TO RECEIVE TITLE VI FUNDS, SECTION 606(B)(3) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT REQUIRES VR AGENCIES TO INCLUDE SPECIFIC GOALS AND PRIORITIES WITH RESPECT TO THE DISTRIBUTION OF TITLE VI FUNDS RECEIVED UNDER SECTION 603 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES. DESCRIBE THE USE OF TITLE VI FUNDS AND HOW THEY WILL BE USED IN MEETING THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES OF THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM.

Title VI funds will be used to pay the salaries of eight job coaches who provide supported employment services. The Title VI grant is divided by general and youth grant. The four employees under the general grant will provide supported employment to adult participants. The four employees under the youth grant will only provide supported employment services to youth participants.

3. SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES MAY BE PROVIDED WITH TITLE 1 OR TITLE VI FUNDS FOLLOWING PLACEMENT OF INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES IN EMPLOYMENT. IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(22) AND SECTION 606(B)(3) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, DESCRIBE THE QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED TO INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES; AND THE TIMING OF TRANSITION TO EXTENDED SERVICES.

SCVRD will provide supported employment services statewide to adult and youth participants with the most significant disabilities. A job coach will provide one-on-one supports on the job until the participant reaches stability with employment/job duties. While these supports are being provided in pursuit of job stability, an extended services provider will be identified so that a transition phase can be initiated at the point of stability. During this phase, the SCVRD job coach will fade supported employment services and follow along for 90 days. If the participant is stable for a period of 90 days without coaching, the VR case will be closed, and the extended services provider will utilize state and/or Medicaid funds to continue providing follow along supports to promote employment retention and career advancement.

4. SECTIONS 101(A)(22) AND 606(B)(4) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT REQUIRE THE VR AGENCY TO DESCRIBE EFFORTS TO IDENTIFY AND ARRANGE, INCLUDING ENTERING INTO

COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS, WITH OTHER STATE AGENCIES AND OTHER APPROPRIATE ENTITIES IN ORDER TO PROVIDE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES. THE DESCRIPTION MUST INCLUDE EXTENDED SERVICES, AS APPLICABLE, TO INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THE PROVISION OF EXTENDED SERVICES TO YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH 34 C.F.R. § 363.4(A) AND 34 C.F.R. § 361.5(C)(19)(V).

SCVRD will provide supported employment services directly for adult and youth participants with the most significant disabilities. A memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Office of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (OIDD) has been executed to outline shared objectives, each party's roles, and responsibilities for service provision (including extended services), and methods for evaluating the success of the partnership and identifying opportunities for improvement.

F. ANNUAL ESTIMATES

Sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act require all VR agencies to annually conduct a full assessment of their resources and ability to serve all eligible individuals before the start of the Federal fiscal year. In accordance with 34 C.F.R. § 361.29(b), annual estimates must include the following projections:

1. ESTIMATES FOR NEXT FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR—

A. VR PROGRAM; AND

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Priority Category (if applicable)	No. of Individuals Eligible for Services	No. of Eligible Individuals Expected to Receive Services under VR Program	Costs of Services using Title I Funds	No. of Eligible Individuals Not Receiving Services (if applicable)
	8,000	7,000	$18,500,000	0

In FFY 2023, 2024 and 2025 the Agency developed 6,830, 7,202 and 7,425 IPEs respectively. South Carolina has passed legislation to phase out the use of subminimum wage employment opportunities. Due to the end of subminimum wage, SCVRD is expecting to see an increase in referrals from OIDD. We do expect that some eligible individuals may choose to close their case prior to IPE development, thus will not receive services under VR program.

B. SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM.

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Priority Category (if applicable)	No. of Individuals Eligible for Services	No. of Eligible Individuals Expected to Receive Services under Supported Employment Program	Costs of Services using Title I and Title VI Funds	No. of Eligible Individuals Not Receiving Services (if applicable)
	2,000	1,500	$1,000,000	N/A

In FFY 2025 the Agency had 7,425 IPEs and 1,144 individuals who closed in status 08. In FFY 2024 the Agency had 7,202 IPEs and 1,231 individuals who closed in status 08. In FFY 2025 the Agency had 7,425 IPEs and 1,402 individuals who closed in status 08. South Carolina has passed legislation to phase out the use of subminimum wage employment opportunities. Due to the end of subminimum wage, SCVRD is expecting to see an increase in referrals from OIDD.

G. ORDER OF SELECTION

1. PURSUANT TO SECTION 101(A)(5) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, THIS DESCRIPTION MUST BE AMENDED WHEN THE VR AGENCY DETERMINES, BASED ON THE ANNUAL ESTIMATES DESCRIBED IN DESCRIPTION (F), THAT VR SERVICES CANNOT BE PROVIDED TO ALL ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE STATE WHO APPLY FOR AND ARE DETERMINED ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES.

*VR agencies may maintain an order of selection policy and priority of eligible individuals without implementing or continuing to implement an order of selection.

The VR agency is not implementing an order of selection and all eligible individuals will be served.

2. FOR VR AGENCIES THAT HAVE DEFINED PRIORITY CATEGORIES DESCRIBE—

A. THE JUSTIFICATION FOR THE ORDER

N/A

B. THE ORDER (PRIORITY CATEGORIES) TO BE FOLLOWED IN SELECTING ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS TO BE PROVIDED VR SERVICES ENSURING THAT INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES ARE SELECTED FOR SERVICES BEFORE ALL OTHER INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES; AND

N/A

C. THE VR AGENCY'S GOALS FOR SERVING INDIVIDUALS IN EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY, INCLUDING HOW THE AGENCY WILL ASSIST ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS ASSIGNED TO CLOSED PRIORITY CATEGORIES WITH INFORMATION AND REFERRAL, THE METHOD IN WHICH THE VR AGENCY WILL MANAGE WAITING LISTS, AND THE PROJECTED TIMELINES FOR OPENING PRIORITY CATEGORIES. NOTE: PRIORITY CATEGORIES ARE CONSIDERED OPEN WHEN ALL INDIVIDUALS IN THE PRIORITY CATEGORY MAY BE SERVED.

N/A

3. HAS THE VR AGENCY ELECTED TO SERVE ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS OUTSIDE OF THE ORDER OF SELECTION WHO REQUIRE SPECIFIC SERVICES OR EQUIPMENT TO MAINTAIN EMPLOYMENT?

N/A

H. WAIVER OF STATEWIDENESS.

The State plan shall be in effect in all political subdivisions of the State; however, the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (Commissioner) may waive compliance with this requirement in accordance with Section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act and the implementing regulations in 34 C.F.R. § 361.26. If the VR agency is requesting a waiver of statewideness or has a previously approved waiver of statewideness, describe the types of services and the local entities providing such services under the waiver of statewideness and how the agency has complied with the requirements in 34 C.F.R. § 361.26. If the VR agency is not requesting or does not have an approved waiver of statewideness, please indicate "not applicable."

Not applicable

I. COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT.

In accordance with the requirements in Section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act, the VR agency must develop and maintain annually a description (consistent with the purposes of the Rehabilitation Act) of the VR agency's comprehensive system of personnel development, which shall include a description of the procedures and activities the State VR agency will undertake to ensure it has an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professionals and paraprofessionals that provides the following:

1. ANALYSIS OF CURRENT PERSONNEL AND PROJECTED PERSONNEL NEEDS INCLUDING—

A. THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL CURRENTLY NEEDED BY THE VR AGENCY TO PROVIDE VR SERVICES, BROKEN DOWN BY PERSONNEL CATEGORY; AND

B. THE NUMBER AND TYPE OF PERSONNEL THAT ARE EMPLOYED BY THE VR AGENCY IN THE PROVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES, INCLUDING RATIOS OF QUALIFIED VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION COUNSELORS TO CLIENTS;

C. PROJECTIONS OF THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL, BROKEN DOWN BY PERSONNEL CATEGORY, WHO WILL BE NEEDED BY THE VR AGENCY TO PROVIDE VR SERVICES IN 5 YEARS BASED ON PROJECTIONS OF THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS TO BE SERVED, INCLUDING INDIVIDUALS WITH SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL EXPECTED TO RETIRE OR LEAVE THE FIELD, AND OTHER RELEVANT FACTORS.

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Personnel Category	No. of Personnel Employed	No. of Personnel Currently Needed	Projected No. of Personnel Needed in 5 Years
Counselors	192	226	268
Area Consumer Services Managers	24	26	31
Vocational evaluators and Job Preparedness Instructors	31	32	38
Job Readiness Trainers	77	98	116
Area Supervisors	26	28	33
Training Center Managers	23	23	27
Employment/Job Coaches	38	44	52
Administrative Team Support Specialists and Area Administrative Assistants	64	67	80
Addictions Counselors	5	6	7
Transition Coaches	15	19	23
Business Development Specialists	23	27	32

D. RATIO OF QUALIFIED VR COUNSELORS TO CLIENTS:

1: 117

E. PROJECTED NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS TO BE SERVED IN 5 YEARS:

South Carolina has passed legislation to phase out the use of subminimum wage employment opportunities. Due to the end of subminimum wage, SCVRD is expecting to see an increase in referrals from OIDD. SCVRD also continues to increase efforts to serve students with disabilities with Pre-ETS and Transition Services. Due to an increase in the number of individuals eligible for services since FFY 2021 and a noted annual increase of 700 more consumers per year, we are projecting to serve 10,500 consumers in PY 2028.

2. DATA AND INFORMATION ON PERSONNEL PREPARATION AND DEVELOPMENT, RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION, AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING:

A. A LIST OF THE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE STATE THAT ARE PREPARING VR PROFESSIONALS, BY TYPE OF PROGRAM; THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED AT EACH OF THOSE INSTITUTIONS, BROKEN DOWN BY TYPE OF PROGRAM; AND THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO GRADUATED DURING THE PRIOR YEAR FROM EACH OF THOSE INSTITUTIONS WITH CERTIFICATION OR LICENSURE, OR WITH THE CREDENTIALS FOR CERTIFICATION OR LICENSURE, BROKEN DOWN BY THE PERSONNEL CATEGORY FOR

WHICH THEY HAVE RECEIVED, OR HAVE THE CREDENTIALS TO RECEIVE, CERTIFICATION OR LICENSURE.

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Institute of Higher Education	Type of Program	No. of Students Enrolled	No. of Prior Year Graduates
University of South Carolina	Courses to meet criteria for CSPD for counselors	46	4
South Carolina State University	Masters in Rehabilitation Counseling	37	19
University of South Carolina	Masters in Rehabilitation Counseling	48	16

B. THE VR AGENCY'S PLAN FOR RECRUITMENT, PREPARATION AND RETENTION OF QUALIFIED PERSONNEL, WHICH ADDRESSES THE CURRENT AND PROJECTED NEEDS FOR QUALIFIED PERSONNEL; AND THE COORDINATION AND FACILITATION OF EFFORTS BETWEEN THE VR AGENCY AND INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS TO RECRUIT, PREPARE, AND RETAIN PERSONNEL WHO ARE QUALIFIED, INCLUDING PERSONNEL FROM MINORITY BACKGROUNDS AND PERSONNEL WHO ARE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

Progress toward meeting the required CSPD standard began in January 2001. The department has a working relationship with the University of South Carolina and South Carolina State University (a historically black university), both of which offer all of the courses required by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). A recruitment plan is in place to recruit graduates from all schools in South Carolina as well as out-of-state schools which have counseling and rehabilitation counseling degree programs. When this is not possible due to high demand, the department will continue to hire counselors with closely related master's degrees. In accordance with South Carolina state law, each transcript is assessed, and the counselor is placed in a plan that allows up to 30 months to complete the current state educational requirements.

The University of South Carolina and South Carolina State University prepare individuals for graduate degrees in rehabilitation counseling. SCVRD conducts outreach programs to these universities and other universities to include publications and distribution of targeted recruiting material, attendance at career days and job fairs, and recruitment events. In addition, practicum placements and internships are offered to students who are in CSPD qualifying programs. These efforts are designed to recruit qualified personnel, including minority graduates and those with disabilities. SCVRD Human Resources and Human Resources Development (HRD) offices coordinate recruitment efforts with active support from local supervisors.

Employees of the department work with school officials to provide input for curriculum development for the graduate school programs. SCVRD leadership has actively participated on advisory boards for the rehabilitation counseling programs at the University of South Carolina

and South Carolina State University. SCVRD has been especially successful in recruiting personnel from the South Carolina universities, particularly those from minority backgrounds. Students from these programs and out-of-state programs are encouraged to accept student internships and practicum placements with the department. The HRD staff, with input from the Human Resources department, coordinates the placement of non-paid practicum, and the Human Resources department coordinates placements for students who qualify for non-paid internships. In addition, university faculty members periodically conduct skills classes for staff at department facilities.

A substantial New Employee Orientation and onboarding program is vital to the recruitment and retention of SCVRD staff. All new staff members are required to complete New Employee Orientation and onboarding. The orientation program incorporates training in the following topics:

- A history of vocational rehabilitation
- Philosophical overview
- SCVRD agency mission, policies, procedures, and benefits
- An overview of training requirements and an intro to online training
- Ethics in the workplace
- Consumer Relations and CAP (Client Assistance Program)
- Disability awareness and disability etiquette
- Customer service
- True Colors (personality assessment for team building)
- Medical and psychosocial aspects of specific disabilities
- Safety in the workplace
- Cyber Security and Personally Identifiable Information (PII)
- Panic alarm system
- Human Resources Development
- Communications
- Time management
- Job specific training
- SCVRD Grievance Procedures for Handling Consumer Discrimination Complaints

New employees are assigned mentors, participate in job shadowing, and receive performance coaching from their supervisors.

New counselors and selected direct service delivery staff are required to take the following training sessions:

- Motivational Interviewing
- Medical terminology (for those who did not have this as a graduate course)

- Consumer Services training
    - *Counseling Skills training
- Rehabilitation technology online trainings

In addition to the New Employee Orientation program and to retain qualified staff, SCVRD uses a system for staff evaluation that is a modification of a system that is available to all state employees (The Employee Performance Management System or EPMS). The system focuses on the individual employee's job duties compared to stated goals and objectives. These goals and objectives are identified and discussed with the employee at the beginning of the rating period. Ongoing communication between the employee and supervisor clarifies the employee's understanding of how to meet the performance standards and enhance service delivery to the consumer. At the conclusion of the rating period, an evaluation is performed to rate the employee on each duty in relation to performance objectives. The system provides for employee input into the development of the goals and objectives in order to support successful performance. Another feature of the system allows objectives to be amended throughout the review period. This system also provides a mechanism for helping a substandard performer improve and a means of removing an employee from a position should performance not improve to an acceptable level. It is as follows:

- A covered employee is entitled to adequate notice of substandard performance and the opportunity to improve the substandard performance before receiving a "below performance requirements" rating and being removed from the position. If during the performance period an employee is considered "below performance requirements" in any essential job function or objective which significantly impacts performance, the employee may be provided with a written "Warning Notice of Substandard Performance." The warning notice shall provide for an improvement period of no less than 30 days and no more than 120 days. The warning notice may be issued at any time during the review period. An employee who receives more than two warning notices within a 365-day period shall be removed from the position. A warning notice is not required on the third occurrence.
- The department has developed career path matrices for staff to encourage retention of qualified staff and promotion to higher level positions. These career paths are keyed to requirements in the areas of education, experience, productivity, quality, and training. The matrices include elements related to the department's Program Integrity model which emphasizes a balance among customer service, compliance, and productivity. Counselors are required to meet the state's CSPD standard within the required timeframe in order to maintain status as a counselor and to advance to a higher level. A counselor who does not achieve the state CSPD standard within the required timeframes will be removed from his/her position. The career path matrices are published on SCVRD's intranet site.
- The department takes an active role in employee/employer relations. Through strong leadership and the assistance of all staff, the department provides a healthy and safe work environment. Employee behavior and performance problems are dealt with appropriately and in a timely manner, with an emphasis on assisting the employee to improve. The department promotes internal and external customer service and has made teamwork an integral part of day-to-day operations.

C. DESCRIPTION OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND ACTIVITIES THAT ENSURE ALL PERSONNEL EMPLOYED BY THE VR AGENCY RECEIVE APPROPRIATE AND ADEQUATE TRAINING AND CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR PROFESSIONALS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS:

I. PARTICULARLY WITH RESPECT TO ASSESSMENT, VOCATIONAL COUNSELING, JOB PLACEMENT, AND REHABILITATION TECHNOLOGY, INCLUDING TRAINING IMPLEMENTED IN COORDINATION WITH ENTITIES CARRYING OUT STATE PROGRAMS UNDER SECTION 4 OF THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 1998; AND

II. PROCEDURES FOR THE ACQUISITION AND DISSEMINATION OF SIGNIFICANT KNOWLEDGE FROM RESEARCH AND OTHER SOURCES TO VR AGENCY PROFESSIONALS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS AND FOR PROVIDING TRAINING REGARDING THE AMENDMENTS TO THE REHABILITATION ACT MADE BY THE WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT.

New Employees are provided mandatory onboarding training to introduce them to the Agency mission, policies, procedures, structure, and services. In addition to training that is required for all new employees, additional role-specific training is assigned by their supervisor in accordance with role training matrices. Trainings modes include, but are not limited to, instructor-led, e-learning modules, shadowing, one-on-one, and on-the-job training.

New Counselor Training is a required training that newly hired counselors and vocational case managers participate in directly after their New Employee Orientation and before going to their local office to begin their job duties. Individualized Learning Plans are developed for New Supervisors and emerging leaders. The plans include core training that is essential in leadership development. Additional course work/shadowing/activities are added based on results from a Leadership Potential Indicator Assessment, supervisor feedback and employee self-assessment. The Learning Plan is a living document that can change as needs are identified. Transcripts of newly hired counselors are closely reviewed to determine if additional coursework is required to meet CSPD criteria. If additional coursework is needed, an agreement form is developed by the Agency's Training Director which identifies the needed CSPD coursework and states the required date of completion. The agreement is sent to the employee's supervisor who verbally reviews the requirements detailed on the form with the counselor. The agreement is accepted and executed by signatures of the supervisor and employee. The agreement is then returned to the Training Director and CSPD course enrollment is coordinated and tracked by Human Resources.

SCVRD's Consumer Services department provides field support through policy and procedure development, training, coaching and technical assistance. This department provides services to include vocational assessments, benefits counseling, Pre-Employment Transition Services, cardiac rehabilitation, deaf and hard of hearing services, mental health/IPS supported employment, offender services, and Alcohol & Drug abuse services.

SCVRD's Field Operations department ensures that Area Office and Comprehensive Program teams have the knowledge, resources, and support to serve VR consumers efficiently and effectively. This is accomplished by:

- ensuring staff understand the Agency mission, quality service provision, and the Standards of Excellence.
- coordinating with Area and Comprehensive Services supervisors and their staff to execute Agency initiatives.

- coaching and mentoring supervisors; coordinating training and professional development.
- coordinating programmatic development of offices and providing direction.
- measuring, analyzing, and communicating progress toward meeting the Agency's goals.

Training and professional development of all SCVRD staff is coordinated through the Human Resource Development (HRD) Department and can include, but is not limited to:

- in-house developed, instructor-led trainings (in-person and virtual).
- speaker contracts for outside trainers to provide training.
- attendance at training offered outside of the Agency.
- e-module trainings on the Agency's Learning Management System.
- online trainings through Fred Pryor Seminars, LinkedIn Learning, and other role-specific online resources.
- continuing education through local technical colleges or universities.
- CSPD courses through the University of South Carolina.
- conferences attendance.

The Human Resource Development (HRD) Department can be contacted to assist with identifying training resources for needs identified by the supervisor or the Agency's senior leadership.

External training events, training conferences, or workshops may be requested by employees by completing and submitting a request form, which can be located on the Agency's employee intranet. The request must be submitted to the employee's supervisor with all required supporting documentation. If the supervisor approves the request, it should be routed through the appropriate chain of command and forwarded to the Training and Development Director for approval. A response will be sent back to the requesting supervisor and employee(s), indicating approval or denial, and will include special instructions or reason for denial. Approval of requests is dependent upon the availability of funds and is subject to approval of the Commissioner.

If an employee is required to take a specific course at a college, university, technical school, or other educational institution to improve his/her performance on the job or to qualify for a specific position, the Department will pay all costs of the course, including tuition, fees, and stipulated books. If the class schedule requires it, reasonable work time will be allowed for completion of course requirements and attendance. Employees are required to obtain a passing grade in each course. Unsatisfactory completion of a course will result in the employee retaking the course, or an equivalent course, at the expense of the employee. Future sponsorship of required courses provided by the Department would not be made available until the required make-up course is successfully completed.

Courses required to attain or maintain any type of professional certification shall be borne by the employee. Costs for courses required to maintain a professional license, necessary for the performance of an employee's job, may be borne by the Department.

Courses which may be of interest to an employee, but which are deemed by the Department as not related to performance or qualifications, are the employee's responsibility regarding costs, course demands, and class scheduling. Course work should be completed during off-hours and should not include the use of Department equipment (consistent with the Agency's policy on equipment usage). The use of annual leave to accommodate a class schedule, which infringes upon Department work hours, should not detract from the job performance and is subject to the supervisor's review and approval.

Academic training must be directly related to employee performance. The Department will determine an employee's need for training and, when necessary, require specific courses. The immediate supervisor must request that an employee be enrolled in an academic course and provide justification for the need.

- The employee will obtain a copy of the course description from the university/college catalogue and furnish the same to his/her supervisor. The supervisor will complete the required form describing how the course relates to the employee's current job performance (as stated on the Employee Performance Management System annual planning stage document, as a performance deficiency or special objective related to the enhancement of Program Integrity), and how the academic training will contribute to the achievement of the Department's mission. Factors to consider in the justification include caseload and/or facility reviews, performance appraisals, or changes in job responsibilities.

- The supervisor will forward the approved form along with a copy of the course description from the institution's catalogue, through the appropriate channels, to the Director of Human Resource Development at least four weeks prior to the beginning of the training.

- If approved, a copy of the form and an authorization for tuition will be returned to the employee through supervisory channels.

- Employees taking a course that meets during working hours must have written permission. The employee's immediate supervisor should make the request, stipulating the amount of time to be lost from work and arrangements made to cover during the absence, plans to make up the time lost, and any other pertinent information.

- Courses required to meet the standards of CSPD are coordinated by the Human Resource Development Center.

The Rehabilitation Technology Department is focused on assisting with overcoming barriers that keep our consumers from obtaining or maintaining employment or gaining new job skills. Solutions can engage assistive technology and devices, mobility aids, accessibility modifications, adaptive driving and vehicle services, and other accommodations. The process begins with an individual evaluation to understand and address a consumer's needs, requirements and concerns. Based on the evaluation, recommendations are made for appropriate assistive technology, modifications, design, and fabrication services, or even training to reduce barriers.

The Rehabilitation Technology Department also assesses needs and requirements at the workplace, including for specific job tasks, through worksite evaluations. Recommendations can vary from commercially available tools and items to customized accommodations and adaptive equipment. To determine if there are barriers at home that would interfere with preparing for work, home evaluations may be conducted. Adaptive driving and vehicle services are available for individuals who need specialized transportation equipment and/or training to operate a

motor vehicle with modified driving controls. Mobility aid evaluations are completed for individuals who need assistive mobility devices for access to their workplace. The Rehabilitation Technology department also assesses other needs requiring assistive technology and adaptive tools to ensure the best opportunity for competitive employment.

The staff in the Rehabilitation Technology department stay current in the Assistive Technology fields by attending relevant conferences and utilizing available e-learning and webinar trainings. They also educate Agency employees and other stakeholders through presentations and booths at such events. For example:

- **SC Assistive Technology Program (SCTAP) expo –** The Agency's Rehabilitation Technology Supervisor and Field Operations Director both serve on the advisory council.
- **Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America (RESNA)** annual conference
- **Assistive Technology Industry Association (ATIA) conference**
- **National Mobility Equipment Dealers Association (NMEDA) and The Association for Driver Rehabilitation Specialists (ADED) annual conference** – The two groups used to hold separate conferences but now hold joint conferences due to shared interest between the two organizations. NMEDA provides reimbursement of travel expenses, hotel, and conference registration for up to 4 VR representatives from each VR program across the country every year.
- **South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Association (SCVRA) Annual Meeting**

The acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research or other sources are typically coordinated/implemented through the Consumer Services, Field Operations, and Human Resources Development departments. Numerous local and virtual trainings take place and extensive research is conducted when planning these sessions in order to provide the most up-to-date information that will assist staff in providing quality services to consumers. When conducting disability-related trainings, SCVRD uses individuals who experience the specific disabilities and other experts who are current with the latest research in their field. For designated staff, the Department sponsors graduate courses that provide information on cutting-edge initiatives in the field. The SCVRA Annual Meeting provides training sessions, contracted speakers, panels, and vendors with significant subject matter knowledge.

Executive staff is actively involved with the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) and the SCVRA. Staff also subscribe to numerous professional and research journals.

3. DESCRIPTION OF VR AGENCY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF PERSONNEL STANDARDS CONSISTENT WITH SECTION 101(A)(7)(B) TO ENSURE THAT VR AGENCY PROFESSIONAL AND PARAPROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL ARE ADEQUATELY TRAINED AND PREPARED, INCLUDING—

A. STANDARDS THAT ARE CONSISTENT WITH ANY NATIONAL OR STATE-APPROVED OR -RECOGNIZED CERTIFICATION, LICENSING, REGISTRATION, OR OTHER COMPARABLE REQUIREMENTS THAT APPLY TO THE PROFESSION OR DISCIPLINE IN WHICH SUCH PERSONNEL ARE PROVIDING VR SERVICES; AND

B. THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(7)(B)(II) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, TO ENSURE THAT THE PERSONNEL HAVE A 21ST CENTURY UNDERSTANDING OF THE EVOLVING LABOR FORCE AND THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

Section 101(a)(7)(B) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.18 indicates that the state VR agency is to establish and maintain standards to ensure that all professional personnel are prepared and trained and that the standards are consistent with national or state approved requirements. Given this option of selecting federal or state standards in order to achieve stability regarding standards and to develop a diverse staff, SCVRD has opted to use state standards to manage its CSPD, which are consistent with the initial guidelines. In 2006, the South Carolina General Assembly passed a bill, which established a state standard for the minimum educational and training requirements for counselors of the public vocational rehabilitation agency. This bill was signed by the governor on March 15, 2006. Under this state law, the department can continue its practice of hiring individuals with rehabilitation-related master's degrees while mandating that they complete master's level rehabilitation courses commensurate with their degree. The law reads as follows:

A State Agency of Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor must meet the following standards: a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling, a master's degree in the field of counseling with a graduate course in theories and techniques of counseling, or a Master's degree in any discipline. In the case of the latter, the individual shall be required to document at least 18 credit hours of coursework at the Master's level or above, within thirty months of date of hire, in the core areas that follow: one graduate course with a primary focus on the theories and techniques of counseling and three graduate courses, each with a primary focus on one of the following areas: occupational information, job development and placement, medical aspects of disabilities, foundations of rehabilitation, psychological aspects of disabilities, and personal and vocational adjustment; and two graduate courses, each with a primary focus on one of the following areas: assessment, research methodology, vocational and career development, community resources, case management, and delivery of rehabilitation services, or a current Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) certification, regardless of degree.

As stated in detail in the previous section of this document, qualified candidates are recruited from universities who meet the minimum requirements of the state's CSPD standard. Internships and practicum opportunities are also offered to qualified candidates. Each candidate's transcript is reviewed and evaluated. New hires who do not meet the standard are immediately placed in a program to meet the standard within the 30-month time frame.

Funding support for the implementation of a retraining plan to assist VR counselors to meet the state educational requirement of CSPD has traditionally been provided by the department's In-Service Training Grant. Due to discontinuation of the RSA in-service training grant this cost has been absorbed into the agency's overall budget effective 10/1/2015. Other funding options may be provided by RSA grants, if available. Evaluation of the plan to ensure that VR counselors meet the CSPD requirements is conducted through an analysis of transcripts and the department's electronic training records.

As part of the agency's initiative to expand skills-based, demand driven training, staff are currently trained on accessing and utilizing labor market information for their local communities. In coordination with local Business Development Specialists (BDSs), staff identifies in-demand industries and occupations and develops localized training or connects with the technical college system and other institutions of higher education to provide consumers access to training commensurate with the evolving labor force. In addition, SCVRD is

a partner in a statewide Talent Pipeline/Sector Strategies Project aimed at closing skills gaps and meeting the workforce needs of the current and emerging labor market through collaborative development of career pathways and identification of training and certifications required by employers to meet their hiring needs.

Paraprofessional staff must meet minimum hiring requirements according to position descriptions.

4. METHOD(S) THE VR AGENCY USES TO ENSURE THAT PERSONNEL ARE ABLE TO COMMUNICATE IN APPROPRIATE MODES OF COMMUNICATION WITH OR IN THE NATIVE LANGUAGE OF APPLICANTS OR ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE LIMITED ENGLISH SPEAKING ABILITY.

The department sponsors Spanish classes for staff to facilitate communication with this minority group. Hiring incentives are also utilized for staff who are bilingual in English and Spanish, which has resulted in an increased number of staff who are bilingual. The remaining minority populations are distributed among Native Americans, Asian, or multiple race.

In addition, the department continues to place emphasis on services for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to ensure that a counselor in each area can communicate effectively. The department takes advantage of web-based trainings and has certified interpreters on staff who provides video remote and on-site interpretation, as well as serving as a Consumer Services Specialist for this area of expertise. In addition, qualified interpreters are used if accessing a certified interpreter would delay service provision.

5. AS APPROPRIATE, DESCRIBE THE PROCEDURES AND ACTIVITIES TO COORDINATE THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT'S COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT WITH PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT.

The Transition Alliance of South Carolina (TASC) is spearheaded by the Center for Disability Resources (CDR) at the University of South Carolina’s School of Medicine. TASC utilizes funding and support from the South Carolina Department of Education, Office of Special Education Services. TASC partners, and project staff housed at the CDR developed an infrastructure to support local interagency transition teams. SCVRD Transition staff participate in these local interagency teams, and TASC project activities are focused on providing interagency teams the resources needed to increase their capacity to collaboratively and effectively serve students with disabilities who are transitioning from high school to adult life. TASC builds capacity for transition programming at the state level, while also serving as a bridge to and between local communities in South Carolina. State VR Transition staff participate in the State Interagency Team, now called SCENTRIC.

The Department continues to coordinate the development of designated staff with emerging initiatives by the SC Department of Education and the 80 local school districts (LEAs) under IDEA and state school-to-work transition efforts. Transition training efforts included the following: a one-day transition summer series for transition staff that includes presentations and training on Pre-Employment Transition Services. Every month Transition Services conducts a training for Transition Staff and Supervisors. The training is an opportunity for the State Transition Services Team to share updates and new resources with the field or a refresher on a Transition related topic. It also allows the field staff an opportunity to ask questions and share resources with their fellow counselors and transition related staff members. Selected transition staff participate in a session on active training techniques and self-determination. Over 29 transition staff participate in an annual interagency transition conference, hosted by SCENTRIC,

focused on local interagency planning and content sessions focused on effective service delivery for students with disabilities.

Disability-specific modules on learning disabilities, Intellectual Disability, and Autism Spectrum Disorders are available for all staff via LOTIS, the agency's online training site. In addition to the disability-specific training modules, a two-day transition basics training, with a focus on evidence-based practices and quality service delivery, has been developed and is delivered in person to all SCVRD transition personnel. This has become the standard training for all new staff working with transition students. VR continues a collaborative approach to the provision of Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) and Transition Services through contracts with 26 school districts. This approach designates a Transition Services Specialist – who is a school district employee – to act as a liaison to refer students to the Department and assist these students in participating in transition activities and work-based learning experiences in the community. This outreach effort has improved access to VR services for students with disabilities in the areas in which the program is operating and has increased our collaborative efforts with the local school district.

The Department continues to designate a liaison counselor who provides Pre-Employment Transition Services and Transition Services to each public secondary school throughout the state. During this past year, State Office and local staff have provided in-service training to school staff, parents, and students regarding service availability. Also, cooperative agreements with DJJ and the Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School afford the ability to work collaboratively to serve at-risk youth prior to their exit from high school.

J. COORDINATION WITH EDUCATION OFFICIALS.

In accordance with the requirements in Section 101(a)(11)(D) of the Rehabilitation Act—

1. DESCRIBE PLANS, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES FOR COORDINATION BETWEEN THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND EDUCATION OFFICIALS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PUBLIC EDUCATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, THAT ARE DESIGNED TO FACILITATE THE TRANSITION OF THE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES FROM THE RECEIPT OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES IN SCHOOL TO THE RECEIPT OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES, INCLUDING PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES.

SCVRD Transition Services Policy outlines the collaboration between SCVRD and the SC Department of Education (SCDE). Policy states that SCVRD staff will make every effort to develop and maintain cooperative working relationships with state, school districts, and secondary education staff, postsecondary education staff, workforce development partners (e.g., SC Works and Workforce Development Boards) and other vocational service providers that foster effective provision of Pre-ETS. The services that are necessary for arranging and providing the required activities include:

(1) Attending individualized education program (IEP) or 504 plan meetings for students with disabilities, when invited;

(2) Working with the local Workforce Development Boards, one-stop centers (i.e., American Job Centers) and employers to develop work opportunities for students with disabilities, including internships, summer employment, youth apprenticeships, adult apprenticeships, and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year;

(3) Working with schools to coordinate and ensure the provision of Pre-ETS; and

(4) When invited, attending person-centered planning meetings for individuals receiving services under title XIX of the Social Security Act.

The policy further describes outreach responsibilities and that the SCVRD Transition Service unit, area office management, and transition counselors are responsible for providing outreach/identification activities about vocational rehabilitation services to students, parents, school districts and other educational institutions to educate them about services that are available and how VR can assist with transition planning.

SCVRD maintains cooperative agreements with the SCDE and with each Local Education Agency (LEA) to outline the collaborative efforts between SCVRD and SCDE/the LEA.

SCVRD also has contracts with 30 LEAs for the provision of Pre-ETS and is working to expand this collaboration to be offered Statewide by 2028.

SCVRD continues to review service provision and offer additional contracted Pre-ETS in areas that show potential gaps in service provision.

2. DESCRIBE THE CURRENT STATUS AND SCOPE OF THE FORMAL INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE VR AGENCY AND THE STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCY. CONSISTENT WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE FORMAL INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT PURSUANT TO 34 C.F.R. § 361.22(B), PROVIDE, AT A MINIMUM, THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION ABOUT THE AGREEMENT:

A. CONSULTATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, WHICH MAY BE PROVIDED USING ALTERNATIVE MEANS FOR MEETING PARTICIPATION (SUCH AS VIDEO CONFERENCES AND CONFERENCE CALLS), TO ASSIST EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES IN PLANNING FOR THE TRANSITION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES FROM SCHOOL TO POST-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES AND OTHER VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES;

B. TRANSITION PLANNING BY PERSONNEL OF THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND EDUCATIONAL AGENCY PERSONNEL FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES THAT FACILITATES THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THEIR INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS (IEPS) UNDER SECTION 614(D) OF THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT;

C. THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, INCLUDING FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES, OF EACH AGENCY, INCLUDING PROVISIONS FOR DETERMINING STATE LEAD AGENCIES AND QUALIFIED PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE FOR TRANSITION SERVICES AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES;

D. PROCEDURES FOR OUTREACH TO AND IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES WHO NEED TRANSITION SERVICES AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES. OUTREACH TO THESE STUDENTS SHOULD OCCUR AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE DURING THE TRANSITION PLANNING PROCESS AND MUST INCLUDE, AT A MINIMUM, A DESCRIPTION OF THE PURPOSE OF THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM, ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS, APPLICATION PROCEDURES, AND SCOPE OF SERVICES THAT MAY BE PROVIDED TO ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS;

E. COORDINATION NECESSARY TO SATISFY DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS SET FORTH IN 34 C.F.R. PART 397 REGARDING STUDENTS AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE SEEKING SUBMINIMUM WAGE EMPLOYMENT; AND

F. ASSURANCE THAT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH 34 C.F.R. § 397.31, NEITHER THE SEA NOR THE LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY WILL ENTER INTO A CONTRACT OR OTHER ARRANGEMENT WITH AN ENTITY, AS DEFINED IN 34 C.F.R. § 397.5(D), FOR THE PURPOSE OF OPERATING A PROGRAM UNDER WHICH YOUTH WITH A DISABILITY IS ENGAGED IN WORK COMPENSATED AT A SUBMINIMUM WAGE.

SCVRD maintains cooperative agreements with the SCDE and with each Local Education Agency (LEA) to outline the collaborative efforts between SCVRD and SCDE/the LEA. These agreements specify that SCVRD staff will perform the following functions:

SCVRD is the designated state unit with the mission of preparing and assisting eligible South Carolinians with disabilities to achieve and maintain competitive employment. To accomplish this mission, as mandated by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (Public Law 113-128), SCVRD staff must develop rapport with students and their parents/guardians, become aware of the students' vocational rehabilitation needs, and to facilitate and coordinate the receipt of pre-employment transition services, transition services and employment related VR services to students with disabilities who are eligible or potentially eligible for VR services in order to facilitate their smooth transition from school to post-school employment-related activities and competitive, integrated employment.

To that end, the SCVRD counselor and/or designated personnel shall perform appropriate vocational rehabilitation functions as follows:

- Serve as a consultant by providing information and outreach/identification activities regarding vocational rehabilitation services to students, parents, and the School District for use in transition planning. This will include outreach activities as early as possible to identify students with disabilities who are in need of transition services, to include a description of the purpose of the vocational rehabilitation program, eligibility requirements, application procedures, and scope of services that may be provided to eligible individuals.

- Assist in the coordination of transition services, by attending meetings when appropriate, thereby avoiding duplication of effort and minimizing gaps in services. This may include meetings during the transition planning phase of the IEP to ensure that the vocational or employment-related provisions of the IEP are coordinated with the VR services needed under an IPE for those students determined eligible for the VR program. By doing so, the timing of a student's referral to SCVRD can be mutually determined and should be based upon individual student need. Generally, referrals for services in addition to Pre-Employment Transition Services should be made no later than the last semester of the junior year;

- Provide consultation and technical assistance regarding information about the local employment community to School District personnel as a means to link school personnel to employers, which could result in a more practical curriculum and more positive employment outcomes. This may be provided using alternative means for meeting participation if needed (such as videoconferencing and conference calls);

- Facilitate and coordinate required Pre-Employment Transition Services to potentially eligible students between the ages of 13 and 21. These services include:

    1. job exploration counseling

    2. work-based learning experiences

3. counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education
4. workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living
5. instruction in self-advocacy, which may include peer mentoring

- Determine student eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services and identify the extent of the student's vocational rehabilitation needs; and
- Develop an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) with students determined eligible for services prior to exiting school. Services on the IPE should begin while a student is still in secondary school to facilitate a seamless transition from school to work and/or post-secondary training. Services outlined on the IPE are designed to facilitate the attainment of competitive integrated employment.

SCVRD also has contracts with 30 LEAs for the provision of Pre-ETS and is working to expand this collaboration to be offered Statewide by 2028.

SCVRD continues to review service provision and offer additional contracted Pre-ETS in areas that show potential gaps in service provision.

Under IDEA, 34 C.F.R 300.101, state and local education agencies must ensure that a free appropriate public education (FAPE) is made available to all eligible children with disabilities between the ages of 13 and 21, inclusive, and consistent with State law. FAPE includes provision of special education and related services at no cost to the parents as stated. SCVRD is required to provide or arrange for the provision of Pre-employment transition services in collaboration with local education agencies. SCVRD ensures that all students who are eligible or potentially eligible for VR services have access to the needed Pre-Employment Transition Services while coordinating with the school. The Department of Education is aware that SCVRD provision of Pre-ETS does not reduce the LEA's requirements to provide FAPE.

SCVRD has an active MOU with SCCB. SCVRD meets at least quarterly with the SCCB to review service provision and trends.

The current MOA with the South Carolina Commission for the Blind (SCCB) was signed by the Commissioners of both agencies and in effect as of 10/25/2022. This MOA will remain in effect for 5 years.

This MOA intends to promote mutual cooperation and communication between SCCB and SCVRD to serve South Carolinians with disabilities more effectively. SCCB and SCVRD are committed to seek opportunities to better coordinate and maximize service delivery for eligible individuals with disabilities. If one agency refers an individual to the other agency, information will be made available based on a signed release by the individual, to determine eligibility for services. To avoid duplication of services, for individuals with visual impairments who are eligible for VR services, the visual disability will always be considered the primary disability for those cases in which the disabling condition of blindness meets the eligibility criteria for SCCB. Individuals with multiple disabilities, including visual impairments, will be dually served by SCVRD and SCCB. SCVRD and SCCB will train their staff in appropriate use of each agency's services as well as the sharing of consultation services and assistive technology expertise regarding disabilities. Cross-training will occur, as needed, with both agencies' staff.

As the experts on blindness, SCCB will provide job placement and services in support of visual impairments. SCVRD will provide services in support of all other identified disabling conditions.

Both agencies will hold an IPE, in accordance with 34 CFR 361.24€, in an effort to ensure a successful employment outcome is achieved for the consumer.

The MOA outlines the referral process and how it promotes a close working relationship to ensure that the consumer will receive services in a timely manner.

SCCB agrees to conduct accessibility reviews, with recommendations, of SCVRD facilities and provide orientation and mobility training, as needed, to accommodate use by SCCB consumers. SCCB staff member will accompany SCCB consumers for all assessments/reviews that occur at SCVRD facilities, as needed.

SCCB and SCVRD will share training information as appropriate. The respective liaisons will establish a meeting schedule to coordinate training activities, identify best practice regarding business engagement efforts and review opportunities for collaborative partnerships. Meetings should occur at least annually.

SCCB and SCVRD continue to maintain cooperative agreements with institutions of higher education and their financial aid office regarding the provision of support services and Financial aid to students with disabilities who qualify for such services.

SCVRD Disability Determination Services will continue to provide referrals to SCCB for individuals who are found to meet the eligibility criteria for SCCB. The referrals will include the minimum contact information necessary to follow up on such referrals.

SCCB and SCVRD agree to coordinate the delivery of transition services where possible, including the delivery of Pre-Employment Transition Services for eligible and potentially eligible students age 13-21. To support these efforts both SCCB and SCVRD will continue to be active members of the Transition Alliance of South Carolina (TASC). Both SCCB and SCVRD will coordinate and provide mutual updates on the operation of programs designed to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services for students and potentially eligible students with disabilities.

As required by Section 511 of WIOA, SCVRD conducts career counseling and information and referral sessions for individuals with disabilities. including individuals who are blind. who are participating in or seeking to participate in sub-minimum wage employment. Both SCCA and SCVR D coordinate to provide these sessions for all individuals involved in or seeking to participate in sub-minimum wage employment in addition to the delivery of Pre-Employment Transition Services, determination of eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services and IPE development as appropriate for youth with disabilities interested in entering sub-minimum wage employment.

When feasible SCCB and SCVRD will provide office meeting space for each other's staff.

SCCB and SCVRD agree to collaborate in preparing for and engaging in negotiations with the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) for setting state targets on WIOA Common Performance Measures. As negotiated levels of performance are established, SCCB and SCVRD will work collaboratively to ensure accurate, validated, aggregate data are reported to RSA for the ETA-9169 WIOA Statewide Performance Report.

SCCB and SCVRD will coordinate efforts to provide Pre-ETS to students with disabilities under 34 CFR 361 .48(a)

SCCB and SCVRD will collaborate quarterly, at a minimum, to ensure quality provision of Pre-ETS while also ensuring no duplication of services rendered.

Should a referral for Pre-ETS be made to either agency for which referral to the other is deemed appropriate. both SCCB and SCVRD agree to coordinate the referral for service delivery.

Both SCCB and SCV RD agree to reserve at least 15% of their federal grant award for the provision of Pre-ETS.

The SCCB Director of Consumer Services and the SCVRD Director of Consumer Services will meet quarterly to share statewide WIOA accountability performance data. to include funds reserved for the provision of Pre-ETS.

K. COORDINATION WITH EMPLOYERS

In accordance with the requirements in Section 101(a)(11)(E) of the Rehabilitation Act, describe how the VR agency will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of VR services; and transition services for youth and students with disabilities, including pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities.

The South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department (SCVRD) partners with the National Employment Team (NET) to utilize The Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP). TAP is an online system which includes both a national talent pool of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) candidates looking for employment and a job posting system for businesses looking to hire individuals with disabilities.

TAP offers businesses the opportunity to post jobs, search candidate resumes based on skill sets and geographic availability, capture job metrics, generate compliance and application click reports, interview candidates, have online job fairs, and have their jobs seen by individuals with disabilities across the country. Businesses also benefit from SCVRD Counselors and qualified candidates searching the available opportunities. Small, medium, and large businesses all have the opportunity to receive all the benefits TAP offers through flexible job posting packages, and outreach opportunities. TAP is supported by the NET which includes VR Business Consultants in every state.

SCVRD serves as a partnering Agency for Be Pro Be Proud SC, which is an initiative led by the Associated Industries of South Carolina Foundation (AISCF). Be Pro Be Proud SC is a custom-designed, military-grade, double-expandable semi- trailer loaded with hands-on simulators of a variety of skilled trades, including welding, truck driving, heavy equipment operation, diesel technician, lineman, and more. This mobile unit travels throughout the state to schools, fairs, career centers, conventions, government events, military re-entry programs, and more. SCVRD partners with Be Pro Be Proud SC to bring exposure to workforce opportunities and help close the skills-gap in South Carolina. It takes a unique, targeted approach to remove the stigma from “blue-collar” jobs with the goal of educating students and the public on the appeal and the importance of these jobs for our economy.

SCVRD continues to make upgrades to our Universal Business System (UBS), which is designed to capture the effectiveness in serving employers and collect the business engagement data elements. The next integration of SCVRD’s Case Management System (CMS) and the Universal Business System (UBS) will involve listing the employment opportunities (e.g., National Employment Team, ReadySC™, and Apprenticeship Carolina™ postings) and recruiting consumers for these opportunities.

SCVRD surveys our business partners to capture information for their employment needs. The surveys also capture SCVRD effectiveness in meeting those needs. This information is then evaluated to help our Agency improve on our effectiveness in serving our business partners.

SCVRD will analyze prior Business Services outcomes to look for expansion of future business assistance and placement opportunities.

The SCVRD Transition Team partners with the Business Service Team to ensure that Transition students have access to information about employment opportunities in their areas. Transition staff work with the local resources and the BDS to identify opportunities to provide Job Exploration and Work Based Learning Opportunities to students who qualify for Pre-Employment Transition Services. Transition staff review employment opportunities and training opportunities in their area and set up opportunities and contracts with community and business partners in line with the needs in their community. Efforts are tracked in CMS and the UBS respectively.

L. INTERAGENCY COOPERATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES

In accordance with the requirements in Section 101(a)(11)(C) and (K), describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system to develop opportunities for community-based employment in integrated settings, to the greatest extent practicable for the following:

1. STATE PROGRAMS (DESIGNATE LEAD AGENCY(IES) AND IMPLEMENTING ENTITY(IES)) CARRIED OUT UNDER SECTION 4 OF THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 1998;

SCVRD continues to be involved with the SC Assistive Technology Program and ensures staff participates in expos and webinars as appropriate. The SC Assistive Technology Program (SCATP) uses technology and services to help individuals with disabilities to live, work, and learn more independently.

2. PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT BY THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE;

SCVRD is participating in the AgrAbility Project. South Carolina's AgrAbility project is a joint partnership between Clemson University, South Carolina State University and Able SC. Supported through USDA, the partnership will increase South Carolina disabled farmers' productivity on the farm through programs and training through education, networking, direct assistance, and marketing.

3. NON-EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES SERVING OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH;

SCVRD partners with community partners to assist with services to out-of-school youth. Non-educational agencies that SCVRD partners with include the Centers for Independent Living (Able SC, AccessAbility, and Walton Options), Family Connection, and Office of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (OIDD). SCVRD ensures that students and families are aware of services available in these community partners to assist them with the transition into adult life. SCVRD includes *Information and Referral* services on IPEs to assist with referring families to Center's for Independent living, OIDD and Family Connections to assist them with needs outside the scope of VR Pre-ETS and IPE services. SCVRD also maintains close relationships with these partners at the state and local level to ensure that both parties are up to date with service opportunities offered. Finally, SCVRD coordinates with OIDD case managers to ensure that consumers who will need long term follow up from a OIDD provider are aware of the options and connected prior to SCVRD Case Closure to ensure a smooth transition from SCVRD to long term OIDD supports.

4. STATE USE CONTRACTING PROGRAMS;

No such State Use Contracting Program exists in South Carolina.

5. STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR ADMINISTERING THE STATE MEDICAID PLAN UNDER TITLE XIX OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT (42 U.S.C. 1396 ET SEQ.);

SCVRD has a draft MOU with SCDHHS that outlines service provisions to include mutual roles and responsibilities, and the implementation and evaluation of services.

- Department of Health and Human Services: The current draft MOU reflects the 2 agencies will work together regarding the ongoing identification and referral of Medicaid beneficiaries with disabilities who are eligible for and can benefit from vocational rehabilitation services.
- The MOU draft has been reviewed by SCVRD Legal Team and is awaiting review and signature from our DHHS partner. Implementation will begin immediately upon receipt of the signed MOU. Once signed it will remain in effect for 5 years.
- Mutual roles and responsibilities include:
  - Engaging in periodic strategic planning, troubleshooting, consultation, and technical assistance to ensure successful implementation of this agreement.
  - Establishing standardized procedures and
  - Sharing relevant information for the purposes of integrated service delivery to mutual consumers, with appropriate signed release from the consumer.
- SCVRD roles and responsibilities include:
  - Maintaining active representation on the interagency Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) settings work groups
  - Receiving and processing referrals of Medicaid beneficiaries with disabilities, determining eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services in accordance with federal regulations
  - Providing vocational rehabilitation services, as necessary, for eligible Medicaid beneficiaries referred by SCDHHS or its agents/contracted service providers.
  - Serving all Medicaid beneficiaries who are appropriately referred and who meet VR eligibility criteria, including those with the most severe disabilities, regardless of their job-ready status.
  - Encouraging SCVRD Benefits Specialists to identify SCVRD clients who may be eligible for Medicaid benefits, particularly those receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and assisting them in initiating the application process.
  - Identifying an extended services provider for individuals who require SCVRD supported or customized employment services who can deliver ongoing, time-unlimited employment support following a Medicaid beneficiary's successful SCVRD case closure.
  - Attending staffing of mutual consumers when required, and

- Disseminating information regarding SCVRD services upon request via printed materials, digital resources, workshops/seminars, etc.

- SCDHHS roles and responsibilities include:
  - Referring Medicaid beneficiaries who have disabilities and who desire to seek competitive, integrated employment, including those receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and/or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits, to SCVRD, with a signed release from the beneficiary, provide any available records relevant to determining eligibility for SCVRD services, upon request.
  - Encouraging employees, agents and contracted Medicaid Targeted Case Management and Waiver Case Management providers to refer Medicaid beneficiaries who have disabilities and who desire to seek competitive, integrated employment to SCVRD.
  - Seeking to establish/develop Medicaid reimbursable services in HCBS programs to provide extended employment support to consumers who require SCVRD supported employment services and are successfully closed by SCVRD.
  - Including SCVRD services as appropriate on HCBS waiver service plans.
  - Assisting in facilitating communication with SCVRD for referred Medicaid beneficiaries who miss appointments with SCVRD, and
  - Attending staffing of mutual consumers when required.

6. STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES;

SCVRD continues to work with DDSN to ensure individuals are provided opportunities related to competitive integrated employment.

- The MOU draft has been reviewed and signed by both agencies. The MOU will remain in effect for 5 years. Mutual roles and responsibilities:
  - Engage quarterly in strategic planning, troubleshooting, and consultation to ensure successful implementation of this agreement.
  - Establish standardized procedures and forms as well as facilitate counterpart contacts (OIDD, Case Manager and SCVRD Counselor) for referral, eligibility determination, employment outcomes and long-term supports (if applicable) regarding OIDD eligible individuals.
  - Provide Employment First, person-centered employment services.
  - Share relevant information for the purpose of integrated service delivery to mutual clients with the appropriate signed release.

- Participate in interagency meetings, when required, to discuss services and anticipated outcomes for mutually served individuals.

- SCVRD Roles and Responsibilities:
  - In accordance with Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (Public Law 113-128), Vocational Rehabilitation Services has been and Opportunity Act (Public Law 113-128), Vocational Rehabilitation Services has been established as the State Designated Unit to assist individuals with physical or mental impairments. Responsibility for determining an applicant's eligibility for these services rests solely with SCVRD.
  - Receive referrals and process OIDD eligible individuals including those with the most significant disabilities.
  - Make available all applicable vocational rehabilitation services for SCDDSN eligible individuals referred by SCDDSN contracted service providers, teachers, OIDD Transition Coordinators or self-referral.
  - Coordinate with OIDD case managers to notify them of the need to offer individuals who are anticipated to achieve a successful employment outcome a choice of providers for on-going, long-term employment supports, following the individual's successful SCVRD case closure.
  - Communicate eligibility status regarding all OIDDN referrals, once determined, to OIDD and Case Manager (if applicable).
- OIDD Roles and Responsibilities:
  - Home and Community-Based Waiver Services (HCBS) may only be furnished to an enrolled waiver participant to the extent that they are not available under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.
  - Refer all OIDD eligible individuals with disabilities, including those with the most significant disabilities, who desire competitive, integrated employment.
  - Provide any pertinent information for the purpose of establishing SCVRD eligibility.
  - Assist in facilitating SCVRD intake for referred OIDD eligible individuals who miss appointments with SCVRD.
  - Coordinate long-term employment supports to maintain competitive employment.

7. STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES; AND

SCVRD has a MOA with the South Carolina Office of Mental Health (OMH) to provide Individual Placement and Support (IPS) services. SCVRD provides job coaches that are housed at the mental health centers to provide supported employment services. The SCVRD job coaches and the OMH employment specialists work in collaboration to assist consumers in their pursuit of finding competitive, integrated employment. The MOA also outlines 17 centers throughout the

state that provide IPS services, referral procedures, vehicle procedures, implementation, and confidentiality of consumers information.

8. OTHER FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS OUTSIDE THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM.

SCVRD partners with the Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School to provide vocational rehabilitation services to “at risk” youth with disabilities and with the SC Department of Corrections to assist inmates with disabilities prepare for employment upon release. Additionally, SCVRD has an agreement with the Veterans Administration (VA) to provide work evaluations for the VA's Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment program.

9. OTHER PRIVATE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS.

SCVRD continues to have a working relationship with our SC Centers for Independent Living (ABLE SC, AccessAbility, and Walton Options).

SCVRD also partners with the Project HOPE Foundation, SOS Healthcare and the Unumb Center. These organizations provide a wide range of services including family support, Applied Behavior Analysis therapy, education, training, social groups, and adult programs. SCVRD provides employment services.

ASSURANCES

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner, that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances:

The VR agency must select the “Edit” button to review and agree to the VR State plan Assurances.

The State Plan must include
1. Public Comment on Policies and Procedures: The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.
2. Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement: The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the case of the submission of a Unified State plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.
3. Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan: The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:

The State Plan must include
3.a. the establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.b. either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.c. consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.d. the financial participation by the State, or if the State so elects, by the State and local agencies, to provide the amount of the non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out the VR program in accordance with section 101(a)(3).
3.e. as applicable, the local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.f. as applicable, the shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.g. statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.h. the requirements for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11) and (24)(B); and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.i. all required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.j. the requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.k. the compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.l. the reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities as set forth in section 101(a)(18)(A).
3.m. the submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4. Administration of the Provision of VR Services: The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:
4.a. comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(E) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.b. impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.c. provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services or, if

The State Plan must include
implementing an order of selection, in accordance with criteria established by the State for the order of selection as set out in section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.d. determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.e. comply with the requirements for the development of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.f. Comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act
4.g. provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.h. comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual reviews, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as required by sections 101(a)(14) and 511 of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.i. meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs.
4.j. With respect to students with disabilities, the State,
4.j.i. has developed and will implement,
4.j.i.A. strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and
4.j.i.B. strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the State, to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities on a statewide basis; and
4.j.ii. has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services (sections 101(a)(15), 101(a)(25) and 113).
4.j.iii. shall reserve not less than 15 percent of the allocated funds for the provision of pre-employment transition services; such funds shall not be used to pay for the administrative costs of providing pre-employment transition services.
5. Program Administration for the Supported Employment Title VI Supplement to the State plan:
5.a. The designated State unit assures that it will include in the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan all information required by section 606 of the Rehabilitation Act.
5.b. The designated State agency assures that it will submit reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Commissioner may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for individuals

The State Plan must include
receiving supported employment services under title I and individuals receiving supported employment services under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.
6. Financial Administration of the Supported Employment Program (Title VI):
6.a. The designated State agency assures that it will expend no more than 2.5 percent of the State's allotment under title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the designated State agency or agencies will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10 percent of the costs of carrying out supported employment services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(H) and (I) of the Rehabilitation Act.
6.b. The designated State agency assures that it will use funds made available under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities, who are eligible to receive such services; and, that such funds are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, when providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act.
7. Provision of Supported Employment Services:
7.a. The designated State agency assures that it will provide supported employment services as defined in section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act.
7.b. The designated State agency assures that the comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act an individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act, which is developed and updated with title I funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and606(b)(7)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act.

Do you attest that these assurances will be met?
Yes

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (COMBINED OR GENERAL) CERTIFICATIONS

States must provide written and signed certifications that:

1. THE (ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AS APPROPRIATE,) IS AUTHORIZED TO SUBMIT THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN UNDER TITLE I OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 (REHABILITATION ACT), AS AMENDED BY TITLE IV OF WIOA,[15] AND ITS STATE PLAN SUPPLEMENT UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT;

[15] Public Law 113-128.

ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AS APPROPRIATE

South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department

2. IN THE EVENT THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY IS NOT PRIMARILY CONCERNED WITH VOCATIONAL AND OTHER REHABILITATION OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES, THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY MUST INCLUDE A DESIGNATED STATE UNIT FOR THE VR PROGRAM (SECTION 101(A)(2)(B)(II) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT).AS A CONDITION FOR THE RECEIPT OF FEDERAL FUNDS UNDER TITLE I OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES, THE (DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WHEN THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY HAS A DESIGNATED STATE UNIT)[2]AGREES TO OPERATE AND IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE STATE VR SERVICES PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN[3], THE REHABILITATION ACT, 34 CFR 361.13(B) AND (C), AND ALL APPLICABLE REGULATIONS[4], POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED BY THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION. FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE TO STATES UNDER SECTION 111(A) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT ARE USED SOLELY FOR THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN;

[2] All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

[3] No funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

[4] Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 79, 81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3474; and the State VR Services program regulations at 34 C.F.R. part 361.

ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY

South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department

3. AS A CONDITION FOR THE RECEIPT OF FEDERAL FUNDS UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES, THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY, OR THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WHEN THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY HAS A DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AGREES TO OPERATE AND IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SUPPLEMENT TO THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN[5], THE REHABILITATION ACT, AND ALL APPLICABLE REGULATIONS[6], POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED BY THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION. FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE UNDER TITLE VI ARE USED SOLELY FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE SUPPLEMENT TO THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN;

[5] No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supported employment supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

[6] Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in footnote 4, as well as Supported Employment program regulations at 34 C.F.R. part 363.

4. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT OR, IF NOT APPLICABLE, THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY HAS THE AUTHORITY UNDER STATE LAW TO PERFORM THE FUNCTIONS OF THE STATE REGARDING THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT AND IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH 34 CFR 361.13(B) AND (C);

5. THE STATE LEGALLY MAY CARRY OUT EACH PROVISION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT.

6. ALL PROVISIONS OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT ARE CONSISTENT WITH STATE LAW.

7. THE (ENTER THE NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW) HAS THE AUTHORITY UNDER STATE LAW TO RECEIVE, HOLD, AND DISBURSE FEDERAL FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE UNDER THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINEDSTATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT;

ENTER THE NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW

Felicia W. Johnson

8. THE (ENTER THE TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW) HAS THE AUTHORITY TO SUBMIT THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINEDSTATE PLAN AND THE SUPPLEMENT FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES;

ENTER THE TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW

Commissioner of the South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department

9. THE AGENCY THAT SUBMITS THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT HAS ADOPTED OR OTHERWISE FORMALLY APPROVED THE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Public Law 113-128.

[2] All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

[3] No funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

[4] Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 79, 81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3474; and the State VR Services program regulations at 34 C.F.R. part 361.

[5] No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supported employment supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

[6] Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in footnote 4, as well as Supported Employment program regulations at 34 C.F.R. part 363.

CERTIFICATION SIGNATURE

To review and complete the Certification section of the VR portion of the State plan, please select the "Edit" button.

Note, please do not edit the table header or formatting. Only edit the table contents.

If you accidentally edit the table headers and structure, open this link to the blank table. You can copy and paste the table into the narrative field and start over if needed.

Signatory information	Enter Signatory information in this column
Name of Signatory	Felicia W. Johnson
Title of Signatory	Commissioner, South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department
Date Signed	March 28, 2024

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Each State VR program must submit expected levels of performance in its Unified or Combined State Plan and in the two-year modification of that plan. Expected levels of performance for the first two years of a state plan must be submitted in the initial submission of the Unified or Combined State Plan and in the initial submission of the two-year modification of that Plan, for years three and four, as described in 34 CFR § 361.170(a). Expected levels of performance must be stated to the nearest tenth of a percent (XX.X %) or to the nearest whole dollar for median earnings. State VR programs are reminded that the expected levels of performance must be published for public comment prior to plan submission in accordance with state law, regulation, and policy.

After the Unified or Combined State Plan submission, each State VR program must reach agreement with RSA on the negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the Unified or Combined State Plan (or for the third and fourth years of the Unified or Combined State Plan during the required two-year modification process) in accordance with WIOA section 116(b)(3)(A)(iv).

RSA will use its statistical adjustment model to derive pre-program year estimated levels of performance for each indicator. Each State VR program and RSA will consider the negotiation factors outlined in WIOA section 116(b)(3)(A)(v) during the negotiation process. Once negotiated levels of performance are agreed upon, each State VR program must incorporate the negotiated levels of performance into the Unified or Combined State Plan and the two-year modification of that plan prior to the plan's approval (section 116(b)(3)(A)(iv) of WIOA).

Effectiveness in Serving Employers

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	65.7%	65.7%	65.8%	65.8%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	61.7%	61.7%	61.8%	61.8%

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$6,112	$6,112	$6,234	$6,234
Credential Attainment Rate	42.7%	42.7%	44.8%	44.8%
Measurable Skill Gains	52.3%	52.3%	54.9%	54.9%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]

[1] Effectiveness in Serving Employers is reported as a state by the Department of Employment and Workforce. There are no Expected or Negotiated Levels for this measure.

GEPA 427 FORM INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICATION PACKAGE - VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

EQUITY FOR STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, AND OTHER PROGRAM BENEFICIARIES

OMB Control Number 1894-0005 Expiration 02/28/2026

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.

GEPA Section 427 Form Instructions for State Applicants

State applicants must respond to the following four questions:

1. Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.

2. Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?

3. Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?

4. What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?

• Applicants identify any barriers that may impede equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity, including, but not limited to, barriers based on economic disadvantage, gender, race, ethnicity, color, national origin, disability, age, language, migrant status, rural status, homeless status or housing insecurity, pregnancy, parenting, or caregiving status, and sexual orientation.

• Applicants use the associated text box to respond to each question. However, applicants might have already included some or all this required information in the narrative sections of their applications or their State Plans. In responding to this requirement, for each question, applicants may provide a cross-reference to the section(s) in their State Plans that includes the information responsive to that question on this form or may restate that information on this form.

• Applicants are not required to have mission statements or policies that align with equity to apply.

• Applicants that have already undertaken steps to address barriers must still provide an explanation and/or description of the steps already taken in each text box, as appropriate, to satisfy the GEPA Section 427 requirement.

• Applicants that believe no barriers exist must still provide an explanation and/or description to each question to validate that perception, as appropriate, to satisfy the GEPA Section 427 requirement.

Please refer to GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

1. DESCRIBE HOW YOUR ENTITY'S EXISTING MISSION, POLICIES, OR COMMITMENTS ENSURE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO, AND EQUITABLE PARTICIPATION IN, THE PROPOSED PROJECT OR ACTIVITY.

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) *(20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.*

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

State applicants must respond to four questions.

The first of four questions is:

Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.

The mission of SCVRD is to prepare and assist eligible South Carolinians with disabilities to achieve and maintain competitive employment. There is a VR office that serves each county to ensure services are rendered statewide. Itinerant sites are visited by counselors regularly to ensure services are rendered to those who may not be able to visit the local office and to also ensure continued relationships with partners. SCVRD currently holds cooperative agreements with each Local Education Agency (LEA) to outline how SCVRD can access and provide services to students with disabilities in their schools. SCVRD also contracts with LEAs to ensure Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) are rendered in schools throughout the state and counselors visit schools regularly to provide Pre-ETS and Transition Services. SCVRD also contracts with other community partners to ensure that Pre-ETS are available statewide to students.

As a WIOA core partner, SCVRD has staff co-located at SC Works Centers (one-stops) in every workforce development area of the state and contributes to the development and revision of certification standards for those centers to ensure they are physically and programmatically accessible. The SCVRD Commissioner serves on the State Workforce Development Board,

representing the needs of job seekers with disabilities. Additionally, Area Supervisors are designated to serve on their respective Local Workforce Development Boards.

Through internal reporting, SCVRD monitors service provision levels to ensure that, demographically, caseloads resemble the state's population. The Agency strives to ensure that all races, ethnicities, genders, and disabilities are served at least proportionately to their representation in the disability community.

2. BASED ON YOUR PROPOSED PROJECT OR ACTIVITY, WHAT BARRIERS MAY IMPEDE EQUITABLE ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION OF STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, OR OTHER BENEFICIARIES?

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) *(20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.*

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

State applicants must respond to four questions.

The second of four questions is:

Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?

Lack of transportation

Lack of knowledge/false perceptions about people with disabilities

Lack of needed technology

3. BASED ON THE BARRIERS IDENTIFIED, WHAT STEPS WILL YOU TAKE TO ADDRESS SUCH BARRIERS TO EQUITABLE ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION IN THE PROPOSED PROJECT OR ACTIVITY?

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) *(20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.*

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

State applicants must respond to four questions.

The third of four questions is:

Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?

Transportation – SCVRD works to ensure equal access to all by having contracts in place with transportation vendors, ongoing statewide partnerships, and counselors at itinerant sites to limit travel distance for consumers in rural areas.

Education – SCVRD works with business partners, referral sites, etc. to educate and inform them of the abilities of people with disabilities.

Technology – SCVRD's Rehabilitation Engineering department assesses consumers' technology needs and makes recommendations to assist with accommodations.

4. WHAT IS YOUR TIMELINE, INCLUDING TARGETED MILESTONES, FOR ADDRESSING THESE IDENTIFIED BARRIERS?

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) *(20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.*

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

State applicants must respond to four questions.

The final of four questions is:

What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?

The efforts identified above are ongoing. SCVRD reviews programs and policies annually to continue to work to identify new ways to address these concerns.

Contracts with transportation vendors will continue to be renewed upon expiration. Assisting consumers with their transportation needs is one of many services SCVRD offers for consumers who are eligible for assistance.

Education and outreach are a pillar of the SCVRD program and remain an ongoing initiative. The focus on education extends to SCVRD staff as well to ensure competence in achieving the Agency's mission. Quarterly, SCVRD reviews referral source data to identify areas that may have a reduction in referrals and to ensure that referrals are representative of the demographics of the area. As anomalies are identified by these quarterly reviews, initiatives are developed to address the populations potentially being underserved.

Assistive technology is also a service provided through SCVRD and is an ongoing initiative.

GEPA 427 FORM INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICATION PACKAGE - SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

EQUITY FOR STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, AND OTHER PROGRAM BENEFICIARIES

OMB Control Number 1894-0005 Expiration 02/28/2026

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.

GEPA Section 427 Form Instructions for State Applicants

State applicants must respond to the following four questions:

1. Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.

2. Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?

3. Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?

4. What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?

• Applicants identify any barriers that may impede equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity, including, but not limited to, barriers based on economic disadvantage, gender, race, ethnicity, color, national origin, disability, age, language, migrant status, rural status, homeless status or housing insecurity, pregnancy, parenting, or caregiving status, and sexual orientation.

• Applicants use the associated text box to respond to each question. However, applicants might have already included some or all this required information in the narrative sections of their applications or their State Plans. In responding to this requirement, for each question, applicants may provide a cross-reference to the section(s) in their State Plans that includes the information responsive to that question on this form or may restate that information on this form.

• Applicants are not required to have mission statements or policies that align with equity to apply.

• Applicants that have already undertaken steps to address barriers must still provide an explanation and/or description of the steps already taken in each text box, as appropriate, to satisfy the GEPA Section 427 requirement.

• Applicants that believe no barriers exist must still provide an explanation and/or description to each question to validate that perception, as appropriate, to satisfy the GEPA Section 427 requirement.

Please refer to GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

1. DESCRIBE HOW YOUR ENTITY'S EXISTING MISSION, POLICIES, OR COMMITMENTS ENSURE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO, AND EQUITABLE PARTICIPATION IN, THE PROPOSED PROJECT OR ACTIVITY.

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) *(20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.*

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

State applicants must respond to four questions.

The first of four questions is:

Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.

SCVRD assists and prepares South Carolinians with disabilities to achieve and maintain competitive employment. The Agency provides quality services to assist consumers with the most significant disabilities in obtaining employment opportunities. These services are in line with Consumer Services Policy on Supported Employment.

Consumers participate in vocational assessments to help them identify their skills, abilities, and employment preferences. Once the consumer has identified an interest/vocational goal with the assistance of a VR Assessment & Career Exploration Specialist, they work diligently with their counselor to develop a plan of service to reach this goal. A key part of this plan includes the assistance of a VR Job Coach that will help them navigate employment opportunities with support. The Job Coach provides job analysis, job matching, intensive on the job training, and use of natural supports to help the consumer maintain employment. When the consumer has become stable with employment, Job Coaches gradually decrease their services and provide observation as needed, while connecting the consumer to an extended services provider. Before the VR case is closed the consumer would have identified a provider to follow along once VR services come to an end.

2. BASED ON YOUR PROPOSED PROJECT OR ACTIVITY, WHAT BARRIERS MAY IMPEDE EQUITABLE ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION OF STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, OR OTHER BENEFICIARIES?

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) *(20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.*

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

State applicants must respond to four questions.

The second of four questions is:

Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?

Barriers that impede equitable access to VR services include issues with transportation and rural status. Transportation assistance is a consistent barrier with consumers in South Carolina. These barriers often stem from consumers being unable to afford transportation or it not being accessible to them. Also, due to the state being rural in many areas, this serves as a barrier as there is a lack of transportation or providers who are available to deliver assistance.

3. BASED ON THE BARRIERS IDENTIFIED, WHAT STEPS WILL YOU TAKE TO ADDRESS SUCH BARRIERS TO EQUITABLE ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION IN THE PROPOSED PROJECT OR ACTIVITY?

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) *(20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.*

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

State applicants must respond to four questions.

The third of four questions is:

Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?

SCVRD is a member of the state's Disability Employment Coalition and participates in the coalition's Infrastructure Committee, which focuses on collaboration among state partners to decrease barriers related to employment of individuals with disabilities, including individuals with the most significant disabilities. SCVRD also provides transportation assistance according to SCVRD policies and procedures to help consumers with services related to employment.

4. WHAT IS YOUR TIMELINE, INCLUDING TARGETED MILESTONES, FOR ADDRESSING THESE IDENTIFIED BARRIERS?

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) *(20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.*

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

State applicants must respond to four questions.

The final of four questions is:

What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?

SCVRD's efforts to address concerns with transportation issues across the state are ongoing. Although transportation is a barrier for many, it is a service SCVRD provides to assist eligible consumers. Contracts with transportation vendors will continue to be renewed upon expiration's will also continue collaborative partnerships with committees tasked with addressing this issue and developing strategies to formulate a solution.

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (BLIND)

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan must include the following descriptions and estimates, as required by sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA.

A. STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL.

1. ALL VR AGENCIES, EXCEPT FOR THOSE THAT HAVE AN INDEPENDENT CONSUMER-CONTROLLED COMMISSION, MUST HAVE A STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL (COUNCIL OR SRC) THAT MEETS THE CRITERIA IN SECTION 105 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT. THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AS APPLICABLE, HAS:

Select A or B:

(A) is an independent State commission

(B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council

(A) is an independent State commission

2. IN ACCORDANCE WITH ASSURANCE (A)(1)(B), IF SELECTED, PLEASE PROVIDE INFORMATION ON THE CURRENT COMPOSITION OF THE COUNCIL BY REPRESENTATIVE TYPE, INCLUDING THE TERM NUMBER OF THE REPRESENTATIVE, AS APPLICABLE, AND ANY VACANCIES, AS WELL AS THE BEGINNING DATES OF EACH REPRESENTATIVE'S TERM.

Select 'Edit' to edit the narrative.

Note, please do not edit the table header or formatting. Only edit the table contents.

If you accidentally edit the table headers and structure, open this link to the blank table. You can copy and paste the table into the narrative field and start over if needed.

Council Representative	Current Term Number/Vacant	Beginning Date of Term Mo./Yr.
Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)		
Parent Training and Information Center		
Client Assistance Program		
Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselor (Ex Officio if Employed by the VR Agency)		
Community Rehabilitation Program Service Provider		
Business, Industry, and Labor		
Business, Industry, and Labor		
Business, Industry, and Labor		
Business, Industry, and Labor		
Disability Advocacy Groups		
Current or Former Applicants for, or Recipients of, VR services		
Section 121 Project Directors in the State (as applicable)		
State Educational Agency Responsible for Students with Disabilities Eligible to Receive Services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)		
State Workforce Development Board		

Council Representative	Current Term Number/Vacant	Beginning Date of Term Mo./Yr.
VR Agency Director (Ex Officio)		

3. IF THE SRC IS NOT MEETING THE COMPOSITION REQUIREMENTS IN SECTION 105(B) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT AND/OR IS NOT MEETING QUARTERLY AS REQUIRED IN SECTION 105(F) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, PROVIDE THE STEPS THAT THE VR AGENCY IS TAKING TO ENSURE IT MEETS THOSE REQUIREMENTS.

SCCB is an independent State commission.

4. IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS IN SECTION 101(A)(21)(A)(II)(III) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, INCLUDE A SUMMARY OF THE COUNCIL'S INPUT (INCLUDING HOW IT WAS OBTAINED) INTO THE STATE PLAN AND ANY STATE PLAN REVISIONS, INCLUDING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COUNCIL'S ANNUAL REPORTS, THE REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF CONSUMER SATISFACTION AND OTHER COUNCIL REPORTS.

SCCB is an independent State commission.

5. PROVIDE THE VR AGENCY'S RESPONSE TO THE COUNCIL'S INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS, INCLUDING AN EXPLANATION FOR THE REJECTION OF ANY INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

List each recommendation/input followed by the VR agency response

SCCB is an independent State commission.

B. COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE NEEDS ASSESSMENT (CSNA).

Section 101(a)(15), (17), and (23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to provide an assessment of:

1. THE VR SERVICES NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES RESIDING WITHIN THE STATE, INCLUDING:

A. INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES AND THEIR NEED FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT;

SCCB completed the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) on May 31, 2023, and covers program years 2019-2021. Overall, the CSNA found that the pandemic significantly impacted SCCB offices, which were working virtually for up to a year. During this time, staff worked to ensure minimal disruption to service delivery. SCCB worked to increase recruitment and retention by achieving salary parity between SCCB and other state agencies. Overall, consumers were positive about their long-term services with SCCB, however some did express concern over the timeliness of service delivery. It was noted that SCCB has worked to improve these processes. The CSNA identified the need to continue to develop trainings, policies, and procedures related to rapid engagement to speed up service delivery and improve outcomes for consumers.

The CSNA identified several service needs related to individuals with the most significant disabilities. The need for accessible transportation, affordable housing, and access to broadband

internet remains a significant need for all South Carolinians, especially in rural areas. SCCB, along with all state agencies, continue to explore solutions to these issues. Assistive technology and training continue to be a significant need for independent living and employment. There is also a continued need to educate employers about the capability of individuals who are blind or low vision to work in competitive integrated employment. This remains an untapped pool of talent for workforce development. Many consumers who receive SSI/SSDI continue to fear losing those benefits if they return to work. There is a need to increase coordination of comprehensive mental health services to meet the needs of SCCB consumers who may have a mental health impairment as a secondary disability. There is also a need to expand the number of supported employment (SE) providers for SCCB consumers and to increase SE as an option for those with the most significant disabilities.

SCCB provides supported employment (SE) services to eligible consumers with most significant disabilities. SCCB is in the planning stage of providing training for VR staff to improve and increase the delivery of SE services. Staff who complete this training will receive a National Certificate in Employment Services (Basic) issued by ACRE. The agency's Employment Consultants provide job coaching services to assist the consumer with preparing for or maintaining employment. SCCB will continue exploring providers, such as DDSN and other vendors available throughout the State, to build a network of qualified SCCB providers for these services. SCCB works with the Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center for Quality Employment (VRTAC-QE) to develop Supported Employment training. This includes training for staff so they can effectively provide supported employment services to consumers.

SCCB is exploring ways to improve transportation options for consumers. This includes orientation and mobility training for navigating public transportation, encouraging paratransit (where available), and ride share options.

SCCB is in the process of compiling a database of state-wide resources including but not limited to transportation, independent living, self-care, housing, utility assistance, mental health, and healthcare. This database will be updated quarterly and accessible to all SCCB staff.

SCCB is continuing to recruit qualified and experienced staff for the training center to improve the timeliness of service delivery.

SCCB continues to partner with Able SC to help consumers understand the impact of gainful employment on their Social Security benefits. Additionally, SCCB has identified a staff member who is completing the training to become a Community Work Incentives Coordinator (CWIC) at Cornell University. Once certified, the agency will be able to provide benefits counseling internally to applicants and consumers.

B. INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE MINORITIES AND INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM;

The CSNA determined that SCCB does not underserve any population based on race other than possibly Hispanics. The rehabilitation needs of underserved individuals were no different for any other individuals served by SCCB. However, the need for qualified language interpreters continues to grow.

SCCB has hired a Bilingual Deaf-Blind Coordinator to address the unique needs of bilingual and deaf-blind individuals, two populations which until recently have been identified as being underserved. Additionally, SCCB has hired other VR counselors and/or staff who are bilingual. SCCB has also increased outreach among Hispanic populations. SCCB will continue to establish partnerships within Hispanic communities to serve individuals with blindness and low vision,

increase awareness of our services, and build trust within this population. SCCB will continue to recruit and hire bilingual staff to increase our ability to communicate with minority populations and address their needs. The agency collaborates with vendors to provide interpreter services (including sign language and tactile interpreters) to consumers when needed to access services or achieve their vocational goal (this includes providing interpreters for job interviews, on the job training, etc.).

SCCB is also exploring ways to provide training for staff on trauma informed care and the effects of long-term poverty on individuals who are blind or low vision.

C. INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES SERVED THROUGH OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM; AND

The CSNA determined that when individuals with blindness or low vision enter SC Works Centers for services, they are referred to SCCB. It was also noted that there is a need for improved accessibility and assistive technology in the SC Works Centers.

SCCB will continue to partner with SC Works Centers across the state and identify employment opportunities for individuals who are blind and low vision. SCCB intends to further educate SC Works Center staff on the needs of those who are blind or low vision. SCCB will make training available to staff on how to effectively work with this population of consumers. Training will include up-to-date information on available assistive technology, devices, and applications, as well as additional resources that may benefit consumers who are blind or low vision. SCCB will also work with SC Work Centers to provide recommendations on improving accessibility to individuals who are blind or low vision.

SCCB will explore opportunities to bring consumers to SC Works Centers and provide orientation and mobility instruction to help them navigate the Centers. SCCB will also explore ways to provide this type of assistance, in partnership with the SC Works Center staff, to individuals who are blind or low vision and enter the workforce development system through the SC Works Centers.

Although SCCB has not formally established Integrated Resource Teams (IRTs) with SC Works Centers, the agency has MOUs/IFAs (Memoranda of Understanding/Infrastructure Funding Agreements) in place with SC Works and co-locates staff at a number of Centers across the state. SCCB is exploring options to develop new or enhance existing MOUs with the South Carolina Department of Mental Health (SCDMH), Local Education Agencies (LEAs), Centers for Independent Living, programs for veterans, etc.

In addition to continuing cross training, SCCB is exploring opportunities for agency Assistive Technology staff to provide trainings to SC Works Centers and other local partners.

D. YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR NEED FOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES. INCLUDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES FOR TRANSITION CAREER SERVICES AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH SUCH SERVICES ARE COORDINATED WITH TRANSITION SERVICES PROVIDED UNDER IDEA.

The CSNA found that the rehabilitation needs of students and youth who are blind or low vision include a continued need for transportation, work experiences, training, soft skills, and assistive technology. There is also a continued need to educate employers about the capability of individuals who are blind or low vision to work in competitive integrated employment. Employer misconceptions continue to be one of the most significant issues limiting opportunities for students and youth who are blind or low vision.

The pandemic adversely impacted students and youth who are blind or low vision due to attending school virtually. There is an overall need to increase the delivery of the five required pre-employment transition services (pre-ETS), especially instruction in self-advocacy and work-based learning experiences (WBLE). Additionally, there is a need for consistent, state-wide outreach to students who are blind or low vision and their parents to increase awareness and engagement.

SCCB will continue to engage in outreach to youth and students who are blind or low vision throughout the state. The agency has increased counseling staff to meet the needs of consumers, and it will continue to partner with LEAs across the state by utilizing MOUs to ensure all parties are effectively collaborating to provide quality, timely, and individualized pre-employment transition services.

The five required pre-employment transition services are available to all eligible and potentially eligible students with disabilities. SCCB has hired a Youth Services Lead to coordinate the provision of pre-ETS and other services for youth who are blind or low vision. Additionally, the Youth Services Lead will work to increase outreach and awareness of services across the state. This includes not only partnering with schools, but also directly with Teachers for the Visually Impaired (TVIs) and other organizations that serve youth who are blind or low vision.

SCCB will continue to increase staff capacity and contract out the delivery of pre-employment transition services. Contracting with providers allows SCCB to serve more youth who are blind or low vision and offer a greater variety of work-based learning experiences. SCCB is in the process of identifying additional pre-ETS vendors who can provide services across the state.

SCCB continues to diversify the provision of postsecondary training and self-advocacy opportunities. SCCB is exploring options to increase service delivery throughout the year for youth who are blind or low vision. In addition to peer mentoring opportunities through SCCB's summer teen program, SCCB is exploring options to partner with vendors to develop a peer mentoring program. SCCB also provides opportunities for youth to connect with companies and professionals to explore various career paths.

2. IDENTIFY THE NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP, OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE.

There is a need to improve Orientation and Mobility (O&M) services across the state. While SCCB can meet some of this need at the Training Center, establishing additional O&M providers will help SCCB service more consumers and reduce wait times. SCCB will continue to work with institutions of higher learning to increase the number of O&M providers and provide staff and vendors with the necessary training to meet this need.

There is also a need for Supported Employment (SE) services. Unfortunately, many providers are inexperienced in working with individuals with blindness and low vision. To ensure that our consumers with blindness and low vision receive the job coaching services they need, SCCB will continue to train staff to assist them in providing these services for consumers.

Improvements needed for the SCCB Columbia Training Center

The SCCB Training Center in Columbia, South Carolina is the State-owned and operated comprehensive rehabilitation center. The Training Center is a community rehabilitation program providing necessary vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities. To keep the center operational and ensure continuity of service provision, at times it is

necessary for the State to repair or replace systems and equipment within the center, including, but not limited to electrical, plumbing, and hot water, fire prevention, ventilation, sewage, etc., that go beyond ordinary repairs and maintenance. These requested areas for improvement and their projected costs are detailed below.

Campus Parking Lots ($260,000) - The parking lots have not been resurfaced in many years. Dangerous potholes and a rough surface make it troublesome for consumers to cross safely. SCCB developed a "master plan" to address all of these issues. The agency needs to move forward with these repairs to the campus.

Campus Plumbing Project ($400,000) – The current plumbing inside all four of our campus buildings is damaged and deteriorating quickly. These buildings need a complete overhaul of this system using updated materials.

Campus Gutter Project ($60,000) – There is currently limited guttering on the buildings on campus, this has caused significant damage to the sidewalks, seating areas and bedding areas. Additional guttering will protect these areas, making the campus safer and more usable by consumers and staff.

Campus Ramp Project ($50,000) – There currently is non-ADA-compliant ramp to get from the courtyard to the parking lot behind the classroom building at the Training Center. There is a ramp behind the dormitory, but it requires staff to exit through the other side of the campus and travel the length of the dormitory just to get to the far end of that parking lot. This new ramp will provide a shorter and safer way to access that side of the campus parking lots.

C. GOALS, PRIORITIES, AND STRATEGIES

Section 101(a)(15) and (23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to describe the goals and priorities of the State in carrying out the VR and Supported Employment programs. The goals and priorities are based on (1) the most recent CSNA, including any updates; (2) the State's performance under the performance accountability measures of Section 116 of WIOA; and (3) other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the SRC and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under Section 107 of the Rehabilitation Act. VR agencies must—

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE SRC AND THE VR AGENCY JOINTLY DEVELOPED AND AGREED TO THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES AND ANY REVISIONS; AND

SCCB is an independent State commission. SCCB's Commissioner maintains frequent and transparent communication with the agency's Board of Commissioners. This included keeping the Board of Commissioners up to date throughout the process of conducting the CSNA. The Board provided feedback and guidance based on the final report, and their responses were incorporated into the strategic plan. Each year, the Board of Commissioners participates in strategic planning with agency leadership. They provide feedback on the agency's progress towards achieving the goals and priorities of the strategic plan and direct the establishment of future goals and priorities.

2. IDENTIFY MEASURABLE GOALS AND PRIORITIES IN CARRYING OUT THE VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS AND THE BASIS FOR SELECTING THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES (E.G., CSNA, PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES, SRC RECOMMENDATIONS, MONITORING, OTHER INFORMATION). AS REQUIRED IN SECTION 101(A)(15)(D), (18), AND (23), DESCRIBE UNDER EACH GOAL OR PRIORITY, THE STRATEGIES

OR METHODS USED TO ACHIEVE THE GOAL OR PRIORITY, INCLUDING AS APPLICABLE, DESCRIPTION OF STRATEGIES OR METHODS THAT—

A. SUPPORT INNOVATION AND EXPANSION ACTIVITIES;

B. OVERCOME BARRIERS TO ACCESSING VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES;

C. IMPROVE AND EXPAND VR SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THE COORDINATION OF SERVICES DESIGNED TO FACILITATE THE TRANSITION OF SUCH STUDENTS FROM SCHOOL TO POSTSECONDARY LIFE (INCLUDING THE RECEIPT OF VR SERVICES, POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES); AND

D. IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF THE VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS IN ASSISTING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES TO ACHIEVE QUALITY EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES.

List and number each goal/priority, noting the basis, and under each goal/priority, list, and number the strategies to achieve the goal/priority

SCCB does not have an SRC. The goals and priorities listed in this section were developed based on consideration of the 2023 CSNA and the WIOA Accountability Performance Measures (section 116).

A. Support innovation and expansion activities

- Goal 1: Increase the provision of Pre-Employment Transitions Services to students who are blind or low vision.
    - Strategy 1.1: Engage in outreach to students with blindness and low vision throughout South Carolina.
    - Strategy 1.2: Collaborate with TVIs to ensure students have needed assistive technology at home and in school.
- Goal 1 Performance Measures:
    - Number of SWDs receiving pre-ETS services (PY)
    - Number of students who receive AT (PY)
- Goal 2: Improve quality of AT provision to consumers, including youth and students with disabilities.
    - Strategy 2.1: Staff attends expos, trade events, and conferences to maintain knowledge on current, innovative assistive technology
    - Strategy 2.2: Maintain inventory of up-to-date AT equipment for demonstrations, evaluations, and assessments
- Goal 2 Performance Measures:
    - Number of AT expos, trade events, and conferences attended by staff (PY)
    - Inventory of AT reviewed each PY
- Goal 3: Increase the provision of O&M services to SCCB consumers.

    - Strategy 3.1: Increase the number of O&M Instructors hired (in-house) or contracted to provide O&M services.
    - Strategy 3.2: Encourage and sponsor staff to receive continuing education for O&M certification.
    - Strategy 3.3: Continue partnering with USC Upstate's O&M program.
- Goal 3 Performance Measures:
    - Number of O&M instructors available (PY)
    - Number of staff that obtains credits towards an O&M certification (PY)
- Goal 4: Develop and strengthen partnerships with relevant state agencies to support the provision of VR services.
- Strategy 4.1: Refer consumers with a secondary disability to the appropriate agency or community resource for support services and resources. Goal 4 Performance Measures:
    -

Develop and update an agency-wide community resource database**B. Overcome barriers to accessing VR and supported employment services**

- Goal 1: Increase referrals for Supported Employment (SE) service delivery.
    - Strategy 1.1: Provide SE training for staff to increase the appropriate use of these services.
- Goal 1 Performance Measures:
    - Number of SE trainings provided to staff (PY)
    - Utilize external vendor(s) to provide SE services (PY)
- Goal 2: Increase the provision of services to populations who are underserved.
    - Strategy 2.1: Increase outreach in minority communities.
    - Strategy 2.2: Continue recruiting and hiring bilingual staff.
- Goal 2 Performance Measures:
    - Number of WIOA core and community partner outreach events attended statewide (PY)
    - Number of bilingual staff (PY)

C. Improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities

- Goal 1: Increase the provision of transition services to youth and students who are blind or low vision.
    - Strategy 1.1: Explore opportunities to contract with additional vendors for the provision of pre-employment transition services.
    - Strategy 1.2: Promote counseling on postsecondary education opportunities for youth in transition.

    - Strategy 1.3: Increase the provision of work-based learning opportunities by increasing partnerships with businesses across the state.

- Goal 1 Performance Measures:
    - Number of pre-ETS vendors (PY)
    - Number of students receiving counseling on postsecondary education opportunities (PY)
    - Number of WBLEs provided (PY)

D. Improve the performance of the VR and Supported Employment programs in assisting individuals with disabilities to achieve quality employment outcomes

- Goal 1: Increase successful competitive integrated employment outcomes.
    - Strategy 1.1: Utilize the case management system to track competitive integrated employment outcomes for consumers.
    - Strategy 1.2: Utilize reports and data from the case management system to identify and develop procedures and trainings.
- Goal 1 Performance Measures:
    - Number of trainings resulting from quarterly QA reviews and CMS reports (PY)
    - Develop quarterly successful employment outcome reports utilizing CMS data (PY)
- Goal 2: Strengthen partnerships with SC Works Centers across SC.
    - Strategy 2.1 Provide training to SCCB staff on SC Works center locations and services.
- Goal 2 Performance measures:
    - Number of trainings on SC Works centers provided to SCCB staff (PY)
- Goal 3: Update policy and procedure on rapid engagement and eligibility to expedite service delivery and improve outcomes for consumers.
    - Strategy 3.1: Establish agency policy that eligibility determinations are to be made within 45 days.
- Goal 3 Performance Measures:
    - Revised policy approved
    - Staff trained on revised policy

E. Establishment Projects

- Goal 1: Complete various capital projects to maintain SCCB's Columbia campus (comprised of four buildings, including the training center) to improve consumer, visitor, and staff safety, and continuity of service provision. This will ensure that SCCB continues to provide services in an environment that is safe, accessible, and conducive to training and learning. Throughout the process of completing these projects, SCCB is striving to ensure that there is minimal or no disruption to consumer service delivery

(services will be provided at alternative locations, virtually, and in-person as much as possible).

- Strategy 1.1: Install a new ramp to provide an additional, safe, ADA compliant access to the campus from the parking lot for consumers, visitors, and staff.
- Strategy 1.2: Install additional guttering to prevent damage to sidewalks, seating areas, and flower beds.
- Strategy 1.3: Repair and replace outdated aspects of each building, including electrical wiring, ventilation ducts, lighting, etc. This will be performed in conjunction with the installation of the HVAC system. It is planned for this work to occur primarily in one building at a time to minimize the impact on consumers, staff, and service delivery.
- Strategy 1.4: Upgrade security cameras and fire monitoring/safety systems.
- Strategy 1.5: Install new HVAC system to replace an outdated and failing system and to provide and maintain a safe, productive learning environment.

- Goal 1 Performance Measures:
  - Number of projects completed (PY)

D. EVALUATION AND REPORTS OF PROGRESS: VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT GOALS

For the most recently completed program year, provide an evaluation and report of progress for the goals or priorities, including progress on the strategies under each goal or priority, applicable to that program year. Sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act require VR agencies to describe—

1. PROGRESS IN ACHIEVING THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED FOR THE VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS;

List the goals/priorities and discuss the progress or completion of each goal/priority and related strategies

A. Support innovation and expansion activities

Goal 1: Increase the provision of Pre-Employment Transitions Services to students who are blind or low vision.

Strategy 1.1: Engage in outreach to students with blindness and low vision throughout South Carolina.

- In PY 2024, 149 students with disabilities (SWD) received at least one pre-ETS service. SCCB also increased the percentage of SWDs receiving pre-ETS in PY 2024 from 37% in quarter one to 56% in quarter 4.

Strategy 1.2: Collaborate with TVIs to ensure students have needed assistive technology at home and in school.

- In PY 2024, 61 SWDs received Assistive Technology services from SCCB.

Goal 2: Improve quality of AT provision to consumers, including youth and students with disabilities.

Strategy 2.1: Staff attends expos, trade events, and conferences to maintain knowledge on current, innovative assistive technology

- In PY 2024, several staff members attended four different expos, trade events, and conferences to maintain knowledge on current and innovative assistive technology. Those events included the University of South Carolina's annual Assistive Technology Expo, webinars, Assistive Technology Industry Association conference, and California State University Northridge's Assistive Technology Conference.

Strategy 2.2: Maintain inventory of up-to-date AT equipment for demonstrations, evaluations, and assessments

- SCCB's Assistive Technology Consultants now review their inventory of demo equipment on a quarterly basis and purchase updated technology as needed.

Goal 3: Increase the provision of O&M services to SCCB consumers.

Strategy 3.1: Increase the number of O&M Instructors hired (in-house) or contracted to provide O&M services.

- SCCB has two Certified Orientation and Mobilist Specialists (COMS). SCCB has started contracting with the Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ABVI) to provide O&M to consumers across the state and increase the number of service providers available. Additionally, SCCB contracts with NFBSC to work with Dr. Penny Rosenblum and Dr. Tina Herzberg (the Director of the Visual Impairment Program at the University of South Carolina Upstate) to provide O&M to students with disabilities during pre-ETS seasonal programming. SCCB will continue its efforts to hire additional COMS.

Strategy 3.2: Encourage and sponsor staff to receive continuing education for O&M certification.

- In PY 2024, one staff member successfully obtained a COMS certification. SCCB will continue to support current staff to explore seeking COMS certification.

Strategy 3.3: Continue partnering with USC Upstate's O&M program.

- SCCB continues to partner with USC Upstate to provide O&M to students with disabilities during pre-ETS seasonal programming and will continue to encourage current staff to explore seeking COMS certification.

Goal 4: Develop and strengthen partnerships with relevant state agencies to support the provision of VR services.

Strategy 4.1: Refer consumers with a secondary disability to the appropriate agency or community resource for support services and resources.\

- SCCB developed a community resource guide and has published it for internal staff use on its intranet. The resource guide will be updated at least quarterly. SCCB continues to refer individuals with multiple disabilities to SCVRD.

B. Overcome barriers to accessing VR and supported employment services

Goal 1: Increase referrals for Supported Employment (SE) service delivery.

Strategy 1.1: Provide SE training for staff to increase the appropriate use of these services.

- Program leads, VR counselors, Youth Services counselors, and Employment Consultants received training through VRTAC-QE on SE services. SCCB continues to explore opportunities to contract with vendors in South Carolina to provide SE services to its consumers.

Goal 2: Increase the provision of services to populations who are underserved.

Strategy 2.1: Increase outreach in minority communities.

- SCCB has attended 64 events in partnership with WIOA core and community partners statewide (including rural communities). SCCB will continue to participate in and attend events of WIOA core and community partners to increase outreach to minority communities.

Strategy 2.2: Continue recruiting and hiring bilingual staff.

- In PY 2024, SCCB had five bilingual staff members/interns. One of which is the Deaf-Blind Bilingual Coordinator who works with consumers who may experience cultural or language barriers to employment.

C. Improve and expand VR services for students with disabilities

Goal 1: Increase the provision of transition services to youth and students who are blind or low vision.

Strategy 1.1: Explore opportunities to contract with additional vendors for the provision of pre-employment transition services.

- SCCB works with organizations and individuals for the provision of pre-employment transition services. In PY 2024, SCCB worked with five different providers and expects to maintain or increase this number.

Strategy 1.2: Promote counseling on postsecondary education opportunities for youth in transition.

- In PY 2024, 31 SWDs received Counseling on enrollment in postsecondary education programs. SCCB expects this number to increase over the next two years.

Strategy 1.3: Increase the provision of work-based learning opportunities by increasing partnerships with businesses across the state.

- In PY 2024, 30 SWDs participated in Work Based Learning Experiences. SCCB continues to explore opportunities to partner with SCSDB and LEAs to increase WBLEs for SWDs.

D. Improve the performance of the VR and Supported Employment programs in assisting individuals with disabilities to achieve quality employment outcomes

Goal 1: Increase successful competitive integrated employment outcomes.

Strategy 1.1: Utilize the case management system to track competitive integrated employment outcomes for consumers.

- SCCB has developed a template for quarterly successful employment outcome reports and is implementing the report in PY 2025.

Strategy 1.2: Utilize reports and data from the case management system to identify and develop procedures and trainings.

- Quality Assurance has helped identify training needs on eligibility, plan development, self-employment, and service categories. QA has also identified individualized training needs for counselors based on case reviews. QA will continue to identify training needs for staff.

Goal 2: Strengthen partnerships with SC Works Centers across SC.

Strategy 2.2: Provide training to SCCB staff on SC Works center locations and services available.

- SCCB is exploring opportunities to collaborate with SC Works center staff to provide training to SCCB staff about the centers and their services.

Goal 3: Update policy and procedure on rapid engagement and eligibility to expedite service delivery and improve outcomes for consumers.

Strategy 3.1: Establish agency policy that eligibility determinations are to be made within 45 days.

- SCCB has drafted the policy, and it has been reviewed by the VR technical assistance center and RSA. SCCB is in the process of planning training for staff on the policy and corresponding procedures.

E. Establishment Projects

Goal 1: Complete various capital projects to maintain SCCB's Columbia campus (comprised of four buildings, including the training center) to improve consumer, visitor, and staff safety, and continuity of service provision. This will ensure that SCCB continues to provide services in an environment that is safe, accessible, and conducive to training and learning. Throughout the process of completing these projects, SCCB is striving to ensure that there is minimal or no disruption to consumer service delivery (services will be provided at alternative locations, virtually, and in-person as much as possible).

Strategy 1.2: Install a new ramp to provide an additional, safe, ADA compliant access to the campus from the parking lot for consumers, visitors, and staff.

- SCCB has architectural approval for this project.

Strategy 1.3: Install additional guttering to prevent damage to sidewalks, seating areas, and flower beds.

- SCCB completed this project in PY2024.

Strategy 1.4: Repair and replace outdated aspects of each building, including electrical wiring, ventilation ducts, lighting, etc. This will be performed in conjunction with the installation of the HVAC system. It is planned for this work to occur primarily in one building at a time to minimize the impact on consumers, staff and service delivery.

- SCCB anticipates completing this project in PY 2025.

Strategy 1.5: Upgrade security cameras and fire monitoring/safety systems.

- SCCB anticipates completing this project in PY 2025.

Strategy 1.6: Install new HVAC system to replace an outdated and failing system and to provide and maintain a safe, productive learning environment.

- SCCB anticipates completing this project in PY 2025.

2. PERFORMANCE ON THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY INDICATORS UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA FOR THE MOST RECENTLY COMPLETED PROGRAM YEAR, REFLECTING ACTUAL AND NEGOTIATED LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE. EXPLAIN ANY DISCREPANCIES IN THE ACTUAL AND NEGOTIATED LEVELS; AND

The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program;

- Actual: 61.6%
- Negotiated: 65.7%

The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program;

- Actual: 60.9%
- Negotiated: 61.7%

The median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program;

- Actual: $6,511
- Negotiated: $6,112

The percentage of program participants who obtain a recognized postsecondary credential, or a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (subject to clause (iii)), during participation in or within 1 year after exit from the program; and

- Actual: 50.2%
- Negotiated: 42.7%

The percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains toward such a credential or employment.

- Actual: 50.3%
- Negotiated: 52.3%

SCCB WAS SLIGHTLY UNDER THE PY 2024 NEGOTIATED RATES FOR EMPLOYMENT RATES SECOND AND FOURTH QUARTERS AFTER EXIT AND MEASURABLE SKILL GAINS. SCCB RECENTLY PROVIDED TRAINING TO FIELD STAFF ON THE COMMON PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND IS EXPLORING OPPORTUNITIES FOR DATA SHARING AGREEMENTS WITH NATIONAL STUDENT CLEARINGHOUSE AND OTHER ENTITIES TO MORE EFFICIENTLY CAPTURE THIS DATA. SCCB EXCEEDED THE NEGOTIATED RATES FOR MEDIAN EARNINGS AND CREDENTIAL ATTAINMENT. 3. THE USE OF FUNDS RESERVED FOR INNOVATION AND

EXPANSION ACTIVITIES (SECTIONS 101(A)(18) AND 101(A)(23) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT) (E.G., SRC, SILC).

- SCCB continues to increase its presence in SC Works facilities and focused on continuing to develop resources and expand services. SCCB has staff co-located at SC Works sites and others who, while not co-located, have a significant presence and involvement.
- SCCB increased staff pay, training, and promotional opportunities, which resulted in a decreased vacancy rate and reduced staff turnover.
- SCCB diversified its workforce to increase outreach and services to traditionally underserved groups such as Veterans, individuals that do not speak English, and those who are Deaf-Blind.
- SCCB updated its policies and continues to develop and refine its procedures. SCCB contracts with a technical writer to assist with this.
- SCCB enhanced WIOA partnerships and One-Stop system engagement by formalizing partnerships with SC Works Centers, including infrastructure cost agreements, specified co-located staff office times and space, center accessibility, and staff cross training.
- SCCB updated an MOU with SC Vocational Rehabilitation Department.
- SCCB developed several agreements with community-based qualified fee-for-service vendors and other partners that expand capacity and available resources statewide.
- SCCB provided ZoomText, Job Access With Speech (JAWS), and other assistive technology training through a fee-for-service contract with the National Federation of the Blind of South Carolina.
- SCCB contracted with the National Federation of the Blind's Successful Transitions for the provision of Pre-Employment Transition Services.
- SCCB continues to conduct public awareness outreach and utilize LinkedIn to enhance agency visibility.
- SCCB updated curriculum and courses offered at the Training Center to provide for continuous improvement.
- SCCB Identified an existing staff member to participate in the Community Work Incentives Coordinator (CWIC) training. That staff member successfully completed their training and SCCB now provides benefits counseling to consumers in house. .

SCCB COLLABORATED WITH THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND OF SOUTH CAROLINA AND DR. PENNY ROSENBLUM AND DR. TINA HERZBERG TO DEVELOP AN ORIENTATION AND MOBILITY PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS AGES 13-21. SCCB RECEIVED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FROM SEVERAL FEDERALLY FUNDED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTERS FOR SUPPORT DEVELOPING STAFF TRAINING, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES.E. SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES, DISTRIBUTION OF TITLE VI FUNDS, AND ARRANGEMENTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES.

1. ACCEPTANCE OF TITLE VI FUNDS:

(A) VR agency requests to receive title VI funds.

2. IF THE VR AGENCY HAS ELECTED TO RECEIVE TITLE VI FUNDS, SECTION 606(B)(3) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT REQUIRES VR AGENCIES TO INCLUDE SPECIFIC GOALS AND PRIORITIES WITH RESPECT TO THE DISTRIBUTION OF TITLE VI FUNDS RECEIVED UNDER SECTION 603 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES. DESCRIBE THE USE OF TITLE VI FUNDS AND HOW THEY WILL BE USED IN MEETING THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES OF THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM.

The South Carolina Commission for the Blind (SCCB) provides Supported Employment (SE) services to individuals with most significant disabilities. SCCB is exploring opportunities to establish a partnership with the South Carolina School for the Deaf and Blind's Cedar Springs Academy to provide SE services to individuals with most significant disabilities. This is to support their achievement of an employment outcome in competitive integrated employment consistent with their unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice. Funds received under section 603 of the Rehabilitation Act for Supported Employment will be used to provide job coaching as a part of SE services to assist individuals in acquiring and maintaining competitive employment. SCCB understands that SE services must be provided even if title VI funds are not received.

3. SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES MAY BE PROVIDED WITH TITLE 1 OR TITLE VI FUNDS FOLLOWING PLACEMENT OF INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES IN EMPLOYMENT. IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(22) AND SECTION 606(B)(3) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, DESCRIBE THE QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED TO INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES; AND THE TIMING OF TRANSITION TO EXTENDED SERVICES.

SCCB provides job coaching services for the development, modification, implementation, and monitoring of consumer participation in Supported Employment services. Funds received for Supported Employment services are utilized to fund the costs of on-the-job supports for consumers. After completion of Supported Employment services, SCCB may assist consumers with identifying extended service providers. Ongoing support services are limited up to 24 cumulative months. Extended services are available for youth with most significant disabilities for up to four years or when the consumer turns 22 (or they no longer meet the definition of a student with a disability in South Carolina). On the job supports may include but are not limited to job coaching, customized training, and assistive technology. Additionally, SCCB is in the planning process of providing training for VR staff to improve and increase the delivery of SE services. Staff who complete this training will receive a National Certificate in Employment Services (Basic) issued by ACRE.

4. SECTIONS 101(A)(22) AND 606(B)(4) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT REQUIRE THE VR AGENCY TO DESCRIBE EFFORTS TO IDENTIFY AND ARRANGE, INCLUDING ENTERING INTO COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS, WITH OTHER STATE AGENCIES AND OTHER APPROPRIATE ENTITIES IN ORDER TO PROVIDE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES. THE DESCRIPTION MUST INCLUDE EXTENDED SERVICES, AS APPLICABLE, TO INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THE PROVISION OF EXTENDED SERVICES TO YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH 34 C.F.R. § 363.4(A) AND 34 C.F.R. § 361.5(C)(19)(V).

SCCB has designated staff to provide Supported Employment services to eligible consumers. In addition, SCCB has a Partnership Plus Agreement under the Ticket to Work program to provide

support through an Employment Network (Able SC). SCCB also assists consumers with identifying Extended Services providers.

F. ANNUAL ESTIMATES

Sections 101(a)(15) and 101(a)(23) of the Rehabilitation Act require all VR agencies to annually conduct a full assessment of their resources and ability to serve all eligible individuals before the start of the Federal fiscal year. In accordance with 34 C.F.R. § 361.29(b), annual estimates must include the following projections:

1. ESTIMATES FOR NEXT FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR—

A. VR PROGRAM; AND

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Priority Category (if applicable)	No. of Individuals Eligible for Services	No. of Eligible Individuals Expected to Receive Services under VR Program	Costs of Services using Title I Funds	No. of Eligible Individuals Not Receiving Services (if applicable)
	1,819	1,462	$10,630,553	0

B. SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM.

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Priority Category (if applicable)	No. of Individuals Eligible for Services	No. of Eligible Individuals Expected to Receive Services under Supported Employment Program	Costs of Services using Title I and Title VI Funds	No. of Eligible Individuals Not Receiving Services (if applicable)
	19	19	$39,000	

G. ORDER OF SELECTION

1. PURSUANT TO SECTION 101(A)(5) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT, THIS DESCRIPTION MUST BE AMENDED WHEN THE VR AGENCY DETERMINES, BASED ON THE ANNUAL ESTIMATES DESCRIBED IN DESCRIPTION (F), THAT VR SERVICES CANNOT BE PROVIDED TO ALL ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE STATE WHO APPLY FOR AND ARE DETERMINED ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES.

*VR agencies may maintain an order of selection policy and priority of eligible individuals without implementing or continuing to implement an order of selection.

The VR agency is not implementing an order of selection and all eligible individuals will be served.

2. FOR VR AGENCIES THAT HAVE DEFINED PRIORITY CATEGORIES DESCRIBE—

A. THE JUSTIFICATION FOR THE ORDER

SCCB is not implementing an order of selection.

B. THE ORDER (PRIORITY CATEGORIES) TO BE FOLLOWED IN SELECTING ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS TO BE PROVIDED VR SERVICES ENSURING THAT INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES ARE SELECTED FOR SERVICES BEFORE ALL OTHER INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES; AND

SCCB is not implementing an order of selection.

C. THE VR AGENCY'S GOALS FOR SERVING INDIVIDUALS IN EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY, INCLUDING HOW THE AGENCY WILL ASSIST ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS ASSIGNED TO CLOSED PRIORITY CATEGORIES WITH INFORMATION AND REFERRAL, THE METHOD IN WHICH THE VR AGENCY WILL MANAGE WAITING LISTS, AND THE PROJECTED TIMELINES FOR OPENING PRIORITY CATEGORIES. NOTE: PRIORITY CATEGORIES ARE CONSIDERED OPEN WHEN ALL INDIVIDUALS IN THE PRIORITY CATEGORY MAY BE SERVED.

SCCB is not implementing an order of selection.

3. HAS THE VR AGENCY ELECTED TO SERVE ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS OUTSIDE OF THE ORDER OF SELECTION WHO REQUIRE SPECIFIC SERVICES OR EQUIPMENT TO MAINTAIN EMPLOYMENT?

Yes

H. WAIVER OF STATEWIDENESS.

The State plan shall be in effect in all political subdivisions of the State; however, the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (Commissioner) may waive compliance with this requirement in accordance with Section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act and the implementing regulations in 34 C.F.R. § 361.26. If the VR agency is requesting a waiver of statewideness or has a previously approved waiver of statewideness, describe the types of services and the local entities providing such services under the waiver of statewideness and how the agency has complied with the requirements in 34 C.F.R. § 361.26. If the VR agency is not requesting or does not have an approved waiver of statewideness, please indicate "not applicable."

SCCB is not requesting a waiver of statewideness.

I. COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT.

In accordance with the requirements in Section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act, the VR agency must develop and maintain annually a description (consistent with the purposes of the Rehabilitation Act) of the VR agency's comprehensive system of personnel development, which shall include a description of the procedures and activities the State VR agency will undertake to ensure it has an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professionals and paraprofessionals that provides the following:

1. ANALYSIS OF CURRENT PERSONNEL AND PROJECTED PERSONNEL NEEDS INCLUDING—

A. THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL CURRENTLY NEEDED BY THE VR AGENCY TO PROVIDE VR SERVICES, BROKEN DOWN BY PERSONNEL CATEGORY; AND

B. THE NUMBER AND TYPE OF PERSONNEL THAT ARE EMPLOYED BY THE VR AGENCY IN THE PROVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES, INCLUDING RATIOS OF QUALIFIED VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION COUNSELORS TO CLIENTS;

C. PROJECTIONS OF THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL, BROKEN DOWN BY PERSONNEL CATEGORY, WHO WILL BE NEEDED BY THE VR AGENCY TO PROVIDE VR SERVICES IN 5 YEARS BASED ON PROJECTIONS OF THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS TO BE SERVED, INCLUDING INDIVIDUALS WITH SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, THE NUMBER OF PERSONNEL EXPECTED TO RETIRE OR LEAVE THE FIELD, AND OTHER RELEVANT FACTORS.

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PERSONNEL CATEGORY	NO. OF PERSONNEL EMPLOYED	NO. OF PERSONNEL CURRENTLY NEEDED	PROJECTED NO. OF PERSONNEL NEEDED IN 5 YEARS
Administrative Assistant	9	10	15
Administrative Assistant Lead	1	1	1
Assistive Technology Consultants	3	3	5
Benefits Counselor (CWIC)	1	1	1
BEP Consultant	3	5	5
BEP Director	1	1	1
BEP Lead	1	1	1
BEP Technicians	3	3	4
Consumer Services Director	1	1	1
Consumer Services Program Coordinator	1	1	1
Consumer Services Program Lead	1	1	1

Consumer Services Training Coordinator	1	1	1
Deaf-blind Bilingual Coordinator	1	1	1
Employment Consultant	3	4	5
Employment Services Lead	1	1	1
Intake Specialist	2	2	3
LPC	1	1	1
Orientation and Mobility Lead	1	1	1
Statewide Counselor	2	2	2
Training Center Director	1	1	1
Training Center Instructor	4	8	10
Training Center Lead	1	1	1
Training Center Program Coordinator	1	1	1
Training Center Support Staff	3	4	5
Vocational Evaluator	0	1	1
VR Counselor	9	11	16
Youth Services Counselor	2	4	6
Youth Services Lead	1	1	1

D. RATIO OF QUALIFIED VR COUNSELORS TO CLIENTS:

1:122

E. PROJECTED NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS TO BE SERVED IN 5 YEARS:

2,048

2. DATA AND INFORMATION ON PERSONNEL PREPARATION AND DEVELOPMENT, RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION, AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING:

A. A LIST OF THE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE STATE THAT ARE PREPARING VR PROFESSIONALS, BY TYPE OF PROGRAM; THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED AT EACH OF THOSE INSTITUTIONS, BROKEN DOWN BY TYPE OF PROGRAM; AND THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO GRADUATED DURING THE PRIOR YEAR FROM EACH OF THOSE INSTITUTIONS WITH CERTIFICATION OR LICENSURE, OR WITH THE CREDENTIALS FOR CERTIFICATION OR LICENSURE, BROKEN DOWN BY THE PERSONNEL CATEGORY FOR WHICH THEY HAVE RECEIVED, OR HAVE THE CREDENTIALS TO RECEIVE, CERTIFICATION OR LICENSURE.

Select 'Edit' to edit the narrative.

Note, please do not edit the table header or formatting. Only edit the table contents.

If you accidentally edit the table headers and structure, open this link to the blank table. You can copy and paste the table into the narrative field and start over if needed.

Institute of Higher Education	Type of Program	No. of Students Enrolled	No. of Prior Year Graduates
South Carolina State University	Master of Arts in Rehabilitation Counseling	31	11
University of South Carolina	Master of Arts in Counseling and Rehabilitation	42	8

B. THE VR AGENCY'S PLAN FOR RECRUITMENT, PREPARATION AND RETENTION OF QUALIFIED PERSONNEL, WHICH ADDRESSES THE CURRENT AND PROJECTED NEEDS FOR QUALIFIED PERSONNEL; AND THE COORDINATION AND FACILITATION OF EFFORTS BETWEEN THE VR AGENCY AND INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS TO RECRUIT, PREPARE, AND RETAIN PERSONNEL WHO ARE QUALIFIED, INCLUDING PERSONNEL FROM MINORITY BACKGROUNDS AND PERSONNEL WHO ARE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

SCCB utilizes a variety of methods to recruit, train, and retain qualified employees. To stay competitive, the agency has implemented salary adjustments (for all staff) to align salaries with state averages, increased starting salaries, and applied referral and sign-on bonuses for key positions. A review of market data continues to be used to assist with determining salary offers for new staff or adjusting salaries of existing staff. SCCB was one of the first agencies to implement this type of strategy. It is now a common practice within other agencies.

SCCB continues to explore ways to fill critical and hard-to-fill positions. Due to a shortage of orientation & mobility (O&M) instructors in-state and nationally, SCCB is increasing contract rates to attract additional O&M vendors and collaborating with the University of South Carolina Upstate to support an in-state two-year O&M Specialist training program. In addition, HR is assisting SCCB staff who are interested in obtaining O&M certification. These efforts will help assure the availability of quality and timely O&M services to consumers.

The agency is strengthening relationships with the University of South Carolina and South Carolina State University's Rehabilitation Counseling Programs, and other similar programs, to offer training and internship opportunities to students. Collaborative efforts such as this help increase awareness of SCCB, its mission, and employment opportunities available at the agency.

SCCB strives to ensure that all staff receive the training and mentoring they need to perform their job duties effectively and efficiently. HR continues to expand use of the YesLMS learning management system to document trainings received by staff. Plans include utilizing YesLMS tools to develop and update training modules and archive training resources. SCCB continues to expand cross training for new employees to ensure they fully understand the agency mission, each of its programs, and how the various departments collaborate and support service delivery. This will improve staff's ability to work as a team and help decrease barriers to service delivery. Job-specific training, options for certification, and professional development

opportunities for all staff are encouraged and supported. Additionally, SCCB's Consumer Services Team is developing a series of trainings that will be conducted over the next year to ensure VR staff fully understand agency policies and procedures.

To improve consumer service delivery and administration, SCCB continues to add key positions that include a general counsel, a data analyst within information technology (IT), an Employment Services Lead, and an Intake Specialist. These positions will provide programmatic support, assist with maintaining the agency's case management system, ensure the accuracy of federal reports, provide training to employment consultants and other staff, and engage with businesses and other partners to develop and expand employment and training opportunities for consumers. The intake specialist position, which was recently piloted, will assume more administrative tasks from counselors, thereby freeing counselors to spend more time providing direct services and improve communication with consumers. Based on the success of the pilot, the agency will seek to hire additional intake specialists.

The agency has created and implemented a counselor track series, providing increased opportunities for VR counselors to grow and advance in their positions. This led to a significant reduction in turnover of counselor positions. As a result, the agency is exploring ways to provide similar opportunities for other positions to increase retention.

The agency is in the process of implementing a new performance management system to assist managers in tracking and maintaining employee performance, streamlining the employee performance review process, and maintain planning documents. The system, which has received positive feedback, will help supervisors set clear expectations and facilitate communication between employees and supervisors.

C. DESCRIPTION OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND ACTIVITIES THAT ENSURE ALL PERSONNEL EMPLOYED BY THE VR AGENCY RECEIVE APPROPRIATE AND ADEQUATE TRAINING AND CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR PROFESSIONALS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS:

I. PARTICULARLY WITH RESPECT TO ASSESSMENT, VOCATIONAL COUNSELING, JOB PLACEMENT, AND REHABILITATION TECHNOLOGY, INCLUDING TRAINING IMPLEMENTED IN COORDINATION WITH ENTITIES CARRYING OUT STATE PROGRAMS UNDER SECTION 4 OF THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 1998; AND

II. PROCEDURES FOR THE ACQUISITION AND DISSEMINATION OF SIGNIFICANT KNOWLEDGE FROM RESEARCH AND OTHER SOURCES TO VR AGENCY PROFESSIONALS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS AND FOR PROVIDING TRAINING REGARDING THE AMENDMENTS TO THE REHABILITATION ACT MADE BY THE WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT.

Empowering Training and Continuous Education for VR Professionals and Paraprofessionals:

Innovative Programs in Assessment, Vocational Counseling, Job Placement, and Rehabilitation Technology:

- The agency proudly announces the creation of Consumer Services and Youth Services Leads positions, directly reporting to the Consumer Services Director. These roles are instrumental in spearheading the training and development of staff within these vital programs. We are excited about the development of job-specific training in key areas like assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology. The agency has invested in a state-of-the-art Learning Management System dedicated to

the professional growth of Vocational Rehabilitation staff. The upcoming training modules are tailored to empower staff with a variety of effective techniques and tools, enhancing their ability to accurately assess consumer needs, identify strengths, provide constructive counseling, and implement cutting-edge job placement strategies. Our comprehensive training program, encompassing interactive workshops, seminars, and hands-on sessions, is a testament to our commitment to staff development and consumer service excellence.

- Dynamic Collaboration with Assistive Technology Programs: We are actively collaborating with partners involved in state programs under the Assistive Technology Act of 1998. This strategic alliance is aimed at keeping our staff abreast of the latest advancements in assistive technologies, thereby significantly enhancing the quality of our vocational rehabilitation services. This collaborative training initiative is designed to deepen our staff's understanding and integration of assistive technologies, ultimately enriching the lives of consumers with disabilities.

Strategic Acquisition and Dissemination of Knowledge; Progressive Training on Legislative Amendments:

- Broadening Horizons through Knowledge Acquisition and Dissemination: The SCCB has forged a strategic partnership with the University of South Carolina, alongside esteemed private and public consultants specializing in vocational rehabilitation and blindness. This collaboration is set to deliver superior staff development training. Further enriching our knowledge base, SCCB is receiving comprehensive technical assistance from VRTAC-QM and VRTAC-QE, ensuring our services reflect the latest and most effective best practices. Additionally, our partnership with The National Research and Training Center for Blind and Visually Impaired at Mississippi State University and the Hadley Institute fortifies our specialized training programs, enabling us to serve consumers who are blind or low vision with unparalleled expertise and care.

- Forward-Thinking Training on Rehabilitation Act Amendments by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act: It is imperative for our VR professionals and paraprofessionals to receive top-tier training on the amendments to the Rehabilitation Act introduced by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. The training currently in development is meticulously designed to encompass crucial aspects such as eligibility, service delivery, and coordination with other workforce development programs. This initiative underscores our commitment to ensuring that our staff are not only well-versed in legislative changes but also skilled in applying them effectively to enhance our work and consumer services.

3. DESCRIPTION OF VR AGENCY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF PERSONNEL STANDARDS CONSISTENT WITH SECTION 101(A)(7)(B) TO ENSURE THAT VR AGENCY PROFESSIONAL AND PARAPROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL ARE ADEQUATELY TRAINED AND PREPARED, INCLUDING—

A. STANDARDS THAT ARE CONSISTENT WITH ANY NATIONAL OR STATE-APPROVED OR -RECOGNIZED CERTIFICATION, LICENSING, REGISTRATION, OR OTHER COMPARABLE REQUIREMENTS THAT APPLY TO THE PROFESSION OR DISCIPLINE IN WHICH SUCH PERSONNEL ARE PROVIDING VR SERVICES; AND

B. THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A)(7)(B)(II) OF THE REHABILITATION

ACT, TO ENSURE THAT THE PERSONNEL HAVE A 21ST CENTURY UNDERSTANDING OF THE EVOLVING LABOR FORCE AND THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

At SCCB, we are committed to fostering a diverse and dynamic team of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselors. We proudly adhere to state standards while administering our Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD), ensuring excellence in our hiring practices. Our approach is inclusive and versatile, recognizing the value of varied educational backgrounds in enriching our services.

We welcome candidates with a master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling, as well as those with master's degrees in related fields of counseling. Understanding the breadth of knowledge and perspectives these disciplines offer, we are open to degrees that align with our mission, even if they are not exclusively in Rehabilitation Counseling.

For professionals whose degrees are outside the traditional scope of Rehabilitation Counseling, we offer a robust Counselor Series development program. This program is designed to nurture and develop our counselors, equipping them with the necessary skills and knowledge to excel in their roles. Candidates without a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) certification or specific coursework can still join our team. They are encouraged to engage in continuous learning, with the opportunity to complete relevant coursework. This coursework encompasses various essential topics, including Theories and Techniques of Counseling, Occupational Information, Job Development, and Placement, and several other key areas critical to VR counseling.

Our approach is not just about meeting requirements but about embracing professional growth and development. As our counselors advance in their careers, becoming CSPD compliant is a milestone we support them in achieving, particularly for those aspiring to senior VR Counselor roles. This commitment to professional development ensures that our team is not only qualified but also continuously evolving to meet the diverse needs of those we serve.

4. METHOD(S) THE VR AGENCY USES TO ENSURE THAT PERSONNEL ARE ABLE TO COMMUNICATE IN APPROPRIATE MODES OF COMMUNICATION WITH OR IN THE NATIVE LANGUAGE OF APPLICANTS OR ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE LIMITED ENGLISH SPEAKING ABILITY.

SCCB strives to have qualified staff proficient in Braille production, in communication with the Deaf/Blind, and a bilingual counselor to communicate with the rapidly growing Hispanic population. SCCB engages in ongoing efforts to study demographic trends and changes to the population to identify areas of needed expertise. Braille services are provided to SCCB staff and upon request to other public and/or private entities statewide. SCCB has a Deaf/Blind Coordinator who is proficient in the use of sign language for the deaf, hard of hearing and dual sensory impaired. SCCB contracts interpreter services as needed to serve all other individuals who have limited English speaking ability or limited modes of communication.

5. AS APPROPRIATE, DESCRIBE THE PROCEDURES AND ACTIVITIES TO COORDINATE THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT'S COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT WITH PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT.

SCCB continues to collaborate with the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDOE) to coordinate procedures and activities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The focus of the collaboration has been the development of strategies for improving service delivery systems for blind and low vision individuals who are receiving services from the SCCB Children's Services program and VR Youth Services Counselors.

SCCB is an active partner in the South Carolina Endeavors for Transition Resources and Interagency Collaboration (SCENTRIC) that includes regional coordinating councils where the partner agencies receive training, develop collaborative plans, and develop professional relationships. SCENTRIC is a partnership of the SCDOE, South Carolina Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (BHDD), South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department (SCVRD), and SCCB. SCCB provides regular training for staff including partnering with VRTAC-QM to ensure staff remain knowledgeable on current IDEA and RSA requirements.

J. COORDINATION WITH EDUCATION OFFICIALS.

In accordance with the requirements in Section 101(a)(11)(D) of the Rehabilitation Act—

1. DESCRIBE PLANS, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES FOR COORDINATION BETWEEN THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND EDUCATION OFFICIALS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PUBLIC EDUCATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, THAT ARE DESIGNED TO FACILITATE THE TRANSITION OF THE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES FROM THE RECEIPT OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES IN SCHOOL TO THE RECEIPT OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES, INCLUDING PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES.

SCCB works in partnership with South Carolina's Independent Living Centers, the National Federation of the Blind of South Carolina, and LEAs. Pre-employment transition services (pre-ETS) are provided to eligible and potentially eligible students, aged 13 to 21, with visual disabilities. These services include Self-Advocacy Workshops, Work Readiness Soft Skills Workshops, Exploration of Higher Education through College Tours, and Work Based Learning Experiences.

SCCB's VR program serves students from age 13 through 21. SCCB has dedicated Youth Services Counselors statewide, building program infrastructure and education relationships to improve services to Transition Students. The Youth Services Counselors primarily collaborate with education officials such as the South Carolina Department of Education, LEAs, and the South Carolina School for the Deaf and Blind (SCSDB).

Additionally, SCCB is an active member of the South Carolina Endeavors for Transition Resources and Interagency Collaboration (SCENTRIC). SCENTRIC supports local interagency transition teams by providing resources to increase collaboration, partnerships, coordination, and effectiveness in serving students with disabilities transitioning from high school to adult-life. SCCB collaborates with the Office of Special Education at the South Carolina Department of Education. These committees and councils create avenues for coordination and collaboration with state and local education officials.

Procedures for outreach to, and identification of blind and low vision students include, but are not limited to, the utilization of SCCB program data, statistical data from the Data Analysis System of the US Department of Education (Office of Special Education) and the American Community Survey data. An Analysis of the data from these sources identifies the location of transition aged unserved and underserved individuals.

SCCB and SCVRD have aligned the age range for pre-employment transition services and VR transition services with the age ranges specified in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). SCCB provides pre-employment transition services to students and youth with disabilities aged 13 to 21.

SCCB collaborates with Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to strengthen partnerships with public schools. SCCB is also an active partner in the South Carolina Vision Education Partnership

whose goal is to bring Blind and Visual Impairment Educators and VR Youth Services Counselors together for collaborative training, team building, and technical assistance.

2. DESCRIBE THE CURRENT STATUS AND SCOPE OF THE FORMAL INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE VR AGENCY AND THE STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCY. CONSISTENT WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE FORMAL INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT PURSUANT TO 34 C.F.R. § 361.22(B), PROVIDE, AT A MINIMUM, THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION ABOUT THE AGREEMENT:

A. CONSULTATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, WHICH MAY BE PROVIDED USING ALTERNATIVE MEANS FOR MEETING PARTICIPATION (SUCH AS VIDEO CONFERENCES AND CONFERENCE CALLS), TO ASSIST EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES IN PLANNING FOR THE TRANSITION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES FROM SCHOOL TO POST-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES AND OTHER VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES;

B. TRANSITION PLANNING BY PERSONNEL OF THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND EDUCATIONAL AGENCY PERSONNEL FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES THAT FACILITATES THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THEIR INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS (IEPS) UNDER SECTION 614(D) OF THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT;

C. THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, INCLUDING FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES, OF EACH AGENCY, INCLUDING PROVISIONS FOR DETERMINING STATE LEAD AGENCIES AND QUALIFIED PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE FOR TRANSITION SERVICES AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES;

D. PROCEDURES FOR OUTREACH TO AND IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES WHO NEED TRANSITION SERVICES AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES. OUTREACH TO THESE STUDENTS SHOULD OCCUR AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE DURING THE TRANSITION PLANNING PROCESS AND MUST INCLUDE, AT A MINIMUM, A DESCRIPTION OF THE PURPOSE OF THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM, ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS, APPLICATION PROCEDURES, AND SCOPE OF SERVICES THAT MAY BE PROVIDED TO ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS;

E. COORDINATION NECESSARY TO SATISFY DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS SET FORTH IN 34 C.F.R. PART 397 REGARDING STUDENTS AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE SEEKING SUBMINIMUM WAGE EMPLOYMENT; AND

F. ASSURANCE THAT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH 34 C.F.R. § 397.31, NEITHER THE SEA NOR THE LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY WILL ENTER INTO A CONTRACT OR OTHER ARRANGEMENT WITH AN ENTITY, AS DEFINED IN 34 C.F.R. § 397.5(D), FOR THE PURPOSE OF OPERATING A PROGRAM UNDER WHICH YOUTH WITH A DISABILITY IS ENGAGED IN WORK COMPENSATED AT A SUBMINIMUM WAGE.

To avoid the duplication of services, low vision and assistive technology needs are coordinated with LEAs in accordance with the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and SCCB Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

SCCB Youth Services counselors coordinate with schools to ensure students with disabilities receive technical assistance and services to assist them with achieving their educational and vocational goals. This may include receiving tuition assistance with post-secondary education, technical training, internship/apprenticeship opportunities, career exploration, and other pre-ETS or VR services. Services may be provided in-person or by video or phone call (SCCB

encourages in-person interaction to ensure the effectiveness of individualized service provision).

Along with LEAs, SCCB is an active partner in SCENTRIC and the South Carolina Vision Education Partnership. These partnerships lead to identifying and providing pre-ETS to eligible and potentially eligible students with disabilities and lead to referrals to SCCB and SCVRD when comprehensive transition services are necessary. Finally, SCCB staff participate in conferences, parent outreach, and referral events.

To satisfy documentation requirements in 34 CFR part 397 regarding students and youth with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment, SCCB has identified the following processes:

1. Utilization of a consistent checklist coversheet by the SCCB, SCDOE, and school districts identifying the required documentation being requested and transmitted by school districts;
2. Provision of documentation of the receipt and, if applicable, completion of transition services under the IDEA by the school district for any student seeking to enter work that is compensated at a subminimum wage. This will include a copy of the most recent IEP and Summary of Performance;
3. Provision of documentation by the school district of a student's refusal to participate in transition services under the IDEA, if applicable;
4. Retention of all documentation provided to the SCCB in accordance with 2 C.F.R. 200.333 by the school district, and
5. Adherence by the school district to the required timeframes for transmittal of documentation to the SCCB as outlined in the WIOA:
    a. no more than thirty (30) calendar days after completion of the transition service, OR
    b. no more than sixty (60) calendar days after completion of the transition service if additional time is needed due to extenuating circumstances, OR
    c. within five (5) calendar days of the student's refusal to participate in transition services.

In February 2023, joint resolution S.533 was signed into law to end subminimum wage in South Carolina by August 2024. In accordance with this law and 34 CFR 397.31, neither the SEA, LEAs, nor SCCB will enter into an agreement with any entity for the purpose of operating a program under which youth with a disability will engage in work that is compensated at a subminimum wage. As a result, the process identified above is longer needed.

SCCB and SCDOE will continue to develop data sharing agreements that identify the required data elements for students receiving pre-employment transition services under section 113 of the WIOA and section 116 of the Act which defines performance accountability reporting requirements.

K. COORDINATION WITH EMPLOYERS

In accordance with the requirements in Section 101(a)(11)(E) of the Rehabilitation Act, describe how the VR agency will work with employers to identify competitive integrated employment and career exploration opportunities in order to facilitate the provision of VR

services; and transition services for youth and students with disabilities, including pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities.

Services provided by SCCB Employment Consultants allow the SCCB to engage with the South Carolina business community. SCCB staff participates in local workforce boards (primarily through integrated business service teams) to build and maintain partnerships with businesses to:

- Assess and better understand the unique workforce needs of South Carolina businesses;
- Align SCCB programs to better meet the unique and specific workforce needs of South Carolina businesses;
- Create, establish, and foster relationships with South Carolina businesses that help them meet their unique and specific workforce needs, including talent acquisition and talent retention;
- Develop opportunities for work-based learning experiences, internships, job shadowing, and workplace readiness training that provides South Carolina businesses with opportunities to gain experience with a diverse and qualified workforce;
- Create mutually beneficial relationships and facilitate linkages of job openings to a highly skilled and diverse talent pool of candidates.

SCCB is committed to meeting the needs of employers and consumers through job preparation and placement. SCCB staff refer specific consumers who are seeking employment and are job ready to meet the needs of local employers. Agency staff also provide businesses and consumers with access to services available through SCCB and other partner agencies.

SCCB has an Assistive Technology (AT) Department that works directly with businesses and consumers to provide assessment and technical assistance through the provision of workplace modifications and/or assistive technology solutions considered reasonable accommodations to consumers who is are blind or low vision.

These recommendations may include:

- Software and/or other AT equipment to enable the consumer to be successful in employment;
- Customized software solutions necessary to allow the consumer to access computer systems effectively; and
- The delivery and installation of this equipment on the work site and provide consumer training on any specialized applications.

SCCB partners with South Carolina's Independent Living Centers, the National Federation of the Blind of South Carolina, and LEAs to support the provision of pre-employment transitions services (pre-ETS) to eligible and potentially eligible youth/students. SCCB has partnerships with vendors such as NFBSC's Successful Transitions, Able SC, Walton Options, and others. Utilizing these vendors enables SCCB to provide a variety of pre-ETS services year-round to eligible and potentially eligible youth/students across SC and expand the network of employers providing work-based learning experiences (WBLEs) in local communities.

L. INTERAGENCY COOPERATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES

In accordance with the requirements in Section 101(a)(11)(C) and (K), describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce development system to develop opportunities for community-based employment in integrated settings, to the greatest extent practicable for the following:

1. STATE PROGRAMS (DESIGNATE LEAD AGENCY(IES) AND IMPLEMENTING ENTITY(IES)) CARRIED OUT UNDER SECTION 4 OF THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 1998;

The South Carolina Assistive Technology Program (SCATP) offers assistive technology expertise to South Carolina residents with disabilities as well as family members, employers and support providers who help those with disabilities.

SCCB partners with SCATP to ensure consumers have access to a broad range of assistive technology resources throughout the state. This includes device demonstrations to help consumers make informed choices about appropriate assistive technology and workshops or hands-on training sessions to learn functional strategies and preview the latest devices. SCCB continues to participate in SCATP's annual Assistive Technology Expo (SCCB has been a partner in this expo for more than 30 years). SCCB consumers may benefit from SCATP's technology reuse service by receiving low cost or no cost assistive technology devices.

SCCB partners with South Carolina Talking Book Services, which is offered by the South Carolina State Library, to provide free braille and talking book library services for people with low vision, blindness, or physical disabilities that prevent them from reading or holding the printed page.

SCCB continues to provide consumers with free access to the NFB-Newsline, an audio news service for anyone who is blind, low vision, deaf-blind, or otherwise print disabled. Through this service, consumers have access to more than 500 publications, emergency weather alerts, job postings, and more. Content is available by phone, smartphone, smart devices (i.e., Alexa), computers, and other options.

SCCB partners with the South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department (SCVRD), referring consumers with co-occurring disabilities who may benefit from assistive technology resources offered through SCVRD's rehabilitation technology services.

2. PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT BY THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE;

SCCB is exploring options to partner with South Carolina's AgrAbility program to provide opportunities to individuals who are blind or low vision in rural areas of the state. This may involve providing cross-training between AgrAbility partners to assist individuals who are blind or low vision that engage or seek to engage in farming or farm-related occupations.

SCCB is also exploring options to partner with Clemson University's Cooperative Extension Service to provide work-training opportunities for consumers involving horticulture and agriculture. SCCB is hoping to provide opportunities for consumers to learn horticultural skills through programs at SCCB's Training Center. Consumers will learn transferrable skills that may be applied in the agricultural or other industries when seeking competitive integrated employment.

3. NON-EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES SERVING OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH;

Non-educational agencies serving out of school youth participate in South Carolina's statewide workforce development system and work in partnership through the provisions of the Combined State Plan. SCCB participates in infrastructure meetings with WIOA partner agencies to discuss issues affecting jointly served populations.

SCCB is also exploring opportunities to partner with AbleSC, Goodwill and CVS to provide work opportunities for out-of-school youth. These partnerships may provide peer mentoring, job readiness training, , and work-based learning opportunities to help youth achieve competitive integrated employment.

SCCB is seeking ways to partner with the Department of Mental Health (DMH) and Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (BHDD) to provide additional support services to out-of-school youth as they progress towards achieving their employment goal. Other agencies that SCCB is seeking to expand partnerships with include Centers for Independent Living and AccessAbility.

4. STATE USE CONTRACTING PROGRAMS;

SCCB does not use contracting programs.

5. STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR ADMINISTERING THE STATE MEDICAID PLAN UNDER TITLE XIX OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT (42 U.S.C. 1396 ET SEQ.);

SCCB refers consumers who may need assistance with Medicaid to the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). DHHS is the state agency responsible for administering the state Medicaid plan under Title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.). This agreement outlines the roles and responsibilities of all parties regarding the delivery of VR services, including extended services, for individuals with the most significant disabilities who have been determined to be eligible for home and community-based services under a Medicaid waiver, Medicaid state plan amendment, or other authority related to a state Medicaid program as applicable to South Carolina.

6. STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES;

SCCB will seek to partner with the South Carolina Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (BHDD) to avoid duplication of services, increase coordination of employment services provided to the shared consumer populations, and to enhance Supported Employment programs.

South Carolina Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (BHDD) serves individuals with intellectual disabilities, related disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, traumatic brain injury, traumatic spinal cord injury, and similar disabilities (i.e., disabilities affecting the brain or spinal cord which are not associated with a progressive, degenerative illness or disease, dementia, or a neurological disorder related to aging).

SCCB is exploring options for reestablishing the partnership with DDSN to expand the employment services available to consumers with the most significant disabilities. This may include providing additional assistance to obtain and sustain employment, opportunities to interact with workers who are non-disabled, and job coaching.

In addition, DDSN may be able to assist with residential services support based on a consumer's unique needs. This could include Supported and Supervised Living Program Models that provide adults with needed support to live in apartments or other (single-family) housing and

At-Home Supports to provide support for independent living, such as access to the community, paying bills, shopping for groceries, accessing medical care, and other personal assistance as needed.

7. STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES; AND

SCCB partners with the South Carolina Department of Mental Health (DMH) to collaborate, coordinate, and enhance the employment outcomes of shared consumers.

The South Carolina Department of Mental Health (DMH) provides mental health services to children, adolescents, adults, and families with severe symptoms of mental illness, substance abuse (dual diagnosis) and/or emotional distress who are residents of South Carolina.

SCCB collaborates with DMH to provide counseling services to SCCB consumers who may have mental health concerns or co-occurring disorders such as anxiety, attention deficit disorder, depression, thought disorders (e.g., schizophrenia, schizoaffective), and trauma. This helps to ensure that SCCB consumers have appropriate supports in place to improve their ability to be successful in their employment outcomes.

SCCB is exploring options to provide cross training with DMH to ensure a greater understanding of the services available from each agency and how to appropriately refer between agencies.

8. OTHER FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS OUTSIDE THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM.

SCCB partners with:

- South Carolina School for the Deaf and for the Blind (SCSDB) to provide pre-ETS services to eligible and potentially eligible students with disabilities;
- South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to create administrative efficiencies and improve services to consumers statewide;
- South Carolina Worker's Compensation Commission (SCWCC) to facilitate the referral process of injured workers to SCCB to enhance return-to-work efforts;
- Social Security Administration (SSA) to collaborate on employment incentives and supports and maximize Social Security Administration/Vocational Rehabilitation (SSA/VR) reimbursement activity through the Ticket to Work Program;
- South Carolina Office of Veterans' Affairs (SCOVA) to help identify veterans who need additional supports in securing benefits, gaining employment, and accessing advocacy services;
- South Carolina Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (BHDD) to eliminate potential duplication of services and increase coordination of employment services provided to the shared consumer populations;
- South Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS) to eliminate duplication of services and increase coordination of employment services provided to the shared consumer populations; and
- South Carolina Department of Mental Health (DMH) to collaborate, coordinate, eliminate potential duplication of services, and enhance the employment outcomes of shared consumer populations.

9. OTHER PRIVATE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS.

SCCB partners with:

- The National Federation of the Blind (NFB) of South Carolina for the purposes of ensuring statewide availability of adjustment to blindness training, job readiness and computer skills training, independent living skills training;
- The Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ABVI) for the purposes of ensuring statewide availability of adjustment to blindness training, job readiness and computer skills training, and independent living skills training;
- South Carolina Association of the Deaf, Inc. for promoting the equal treatment of Deaf and Hard of Hearing citizens in areas of education, employment, legislation, healthcare, and other fields;
- The Helen Keller National Center (HKNC) for the purpose of expanding training options for consumers who are Deaf/Blind and need training beyond the scope of programs provided at the SCCB Training Center for Employment and Independence;
- Lions Vision Services to increase referrals to SCCB Prevention Services;
- Able SC as part of their Employer Summit, allowing SCCB to reach a larger audience of employers and establish new relationships; Able SC has also provided work-based learning (WBL) experiences for transition-age consumers; and
- Informal partnerships with community-based partners such as faith-based organizations, charitable organizations, and non-governmental community-based organizations.

ASSURANCES

The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate and identified in the State certifications included with this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, through signature of the authorized individual, assures the Commissioner, that it will comply with all of the requirements of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement, as set forth in sections 101(a) and 606 of the Rehabilitation Act. The individual authorized to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement makes the following assurances:

The VR agency must select the "Edit" button to review and agree to the VR State plan Assurances.

The State Plan must include
1. Public Comment on Policies and Procedures: The designated State agency assures it will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements for public participation in the VR Services Portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, as required by section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.
2. Submission of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Its Supplement: The designated State unit assures it will comply with all requirements pertaining to the submission and revisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement for the State Supported Employment Services program, as required by sections 101(a)(1), (22), (23), and 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; section 102 of WIOA in the

The State Plan must include
case of the submission of a Unified State plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.
3. Administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan: The designated State agency or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures it will comply with the requirements related to:
3.a. the establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.b. either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.c. consultations regarding the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.d. the financial participation by the State, or if the State so elects, by the State and local agencies, to provide the amount of the non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out the VR program in accordance with section 101(a)(3).
3.e. as applicable, the local administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.f. as applicable, the shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.g. statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.h. the requirements for cooperation, collaboration, and coordination, as required by sections 101(a)(11) and (24)(B); and 606(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.i. all required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.j. the requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.k. the compilation and submission to the Commissioner of statewide assessments, estimates, State goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports, as appropriate, and as required by sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2), and 606(b)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.
3.l. the reservation and use of a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of VR services to individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities as set forth in section 101(a)(18)(A).
3.m. the submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4. Administration of the Provision of VR Services: The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:

The State Plan must include
4.a. comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(E) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.b. impose no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for VR services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State in accordance with section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.c. provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services or, if implementing an order of selection, in accordance with criteria established by the State for the order of selection as set out in section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.d. determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.e. comply with the requirements for the development of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.f. comply with requirements regarding the provisions of informed choice for all applicants and eligible individuals in accordance with section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.g. provide vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State, in accordance with section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.h. comply with the requirements for the conduct of semiannual or annual reviews, as appropriate, for individuals employed either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as required by sections 101(a)(14) and 511 of the Rehabilitation Act.
4.i. meet the requirements in sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act if the State elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs.
4.j. with respect to students with disabilities, the State:
4.j.i. has developed and will implement,
4.j.i.A. strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and
4.j.i.B. strategies to achieve the goals and priorities identified by the State, to improve and expand vocational rehabilitation services for students with disabilities on a statewide basis; and
4.j.ii. has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services (sections 101(a)(15), 101(a)(25) and 113).
4.j.iii. shall reserve not less than 15 percent of the allocated funds for the provision of pre-employment transition services; such funds shall not be used to pay for the administrative costs of providing pre-employment transition services.

The State Plan must include
5. Program Administration for the Supported Employment Title VI Supplement to the State plan:
5.a. The designated State unit assures that it will include in the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan all information required by section 606 of the Rehabilitation Act.
5.b. The designated State agency assures that it will submit reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Commissioner may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under title I and individuals receiving supported employment services under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act.
6. Financial Administration of the Supported Employment Program (Title VI):
6.a. The designated State agency assures that it will expend no more than 2.5 percent of the State's allotment under title VI for administrative costs of carrying out this program; and, the designated State agency or agencies will provide, directly or indirectly through public or private entities, non-Federal contributions in an amount that is not less than 10 percent of the costs of carrying out supported employment services provided to youth with the most significant disabilities with the funds reserved for such purpose under section 603(d) of the Rehabilitation Act, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(H) and (I) of the Rehabilitation Act.
6.b. The designated State agency assures that it will use funds made available under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including extended services to youth with the most significant disabilities, who are eligible to receive such services; and, that such funds are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, when providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment, in accordance with section 606(b)(7)(A) and (D), of the Rehabilitation Act.
7. Provision of Supported Employment Services:
7.a. The designated State agency assures that it will provide supported employment services as defined in section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act.
7.b. The designated State agency assures that the comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome, in accordance with the requirements of section 606(b)(7)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act an individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act, which is developed and updated with title I funds, in accordance with sections 102(b)(3)(F) and606(b)(7)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act.

Do you attest that these assurances will be met?
Yes

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (BLIND) CERTIFICATIONS

States must provide written and signed certifications that:

1. THE (ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AS APPROPRIATE,) IS AUTHORIZED TO SUBMIT THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN UNDER TITLE I OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 (REHABILITATION ACT), AS AMENDED BY TITLE IV OF WIOA[1], AND ITS STATE PLAN SUPPLEMENT UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT;

[1]Public Law 113-128.

ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AS APPROPRIATE

South Carolina Commission for the Blind

2. IN THE EVENT THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY IS NOT PRIMARILY CONCERNED WITH VOCATIONAL AND OTHER REHABILITATION OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES, THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY MUST INCLUDE A DESIGNATED STATE UNIT FOR THE VR PROGRAM (SECTION 101(A)(2)(B)(II) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT).AS A CONDITION FOR THE RECEIPT OF FEDERAL FUNDS UNDER TITLE I OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES, THE (DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY OR THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WHEN THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY HAS A DESIGNATED STATE UNIT)[2]AGREES TO OPERATE AND IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE STATE VR SERVICES PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN[3], THE REHABILITATION ACT, 34 CFR 361.13(B) AND (C), AND ALL APPLICABLE REGULATIONS[4], POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED BY THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION. FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE TO STATES UNDER SECTION 111(A) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT ARE USED SOLELY FOR THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN;

[2] All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

[3] No funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

[4] Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 79, 81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3474; and the State VR Services program regulations at 34 C.F.R. part 361.

ENTER THE NAME OF DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY

South Carolina Commission for the Blind

3. AS A CONDITION FOR THE RECEIPT OF FEDERAL FUNDS UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES, THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY, OR THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WHEN THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY HAS A DESIGNATED STATE UNIT, AGREES TO OPERATE AND IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SUPPLEMENT TO THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN[5], THE REHABILITATION ACT, AND ALL APPLICABLE REGULATIONS[6], POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED BY THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION. FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE UNDER TITLE VI ARE USED SOLELY FOR THE

PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE SUPPLEMENT TO THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN;

[5] No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supported employment supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

[6] Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in footnote 4, as well as Supported Employment program regulations at 34 C.F.R. part 363.

4. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT OR, IF NOT APPLICABLE, THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY HAS THE AUTHORITY UNDER STATE LAW TO PERFORM THE FUNCTIONS OF THE STATE REGARDING THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT AND IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR PROGRAM IN ACCORDANCE WITH 34 CFR 361.13(B) AND (C);

5. THE STATE LEGALLY MAY CARRY OUT EACH PROVISION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT.

6. ALL PROVISIONS OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT ARE CONSISTENT WITH STATE LAW.

7. THE (ENTER THE NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW) HAS THE AUTHORITY UNDER STATE LAW TO RECEIVE, HOLD, AND DISBURSE FEDERAL FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE UNDER THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINEDSTATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT;

ENTER THE NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW

Darline Graham

8. THE (ENTER THE TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW) HAS THE AUTHORITY TO SUBMIT THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINEDSTATE PLAN AND THE SUPPLEMENT FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES;

ENTER THE TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE BELOW

Commissioner

9. THE AGENCY THAT SUBMITS THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT HAS ADOPTED OR OTHERWISE FORMALLY APPROVED THE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT.

[1]PUBLIC LAW 113-128.[2] ALL REFERENCES IN THIS PLAN TO "DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY" OR TO "THE STATE AGENCY" RELATE TO THE AGENCY IDENTIFIED IN THIS PARAGRAPH.[3] NO FUNDS UNDER TITLE I OF THE REHABILITATION ACT MAY BE AWARDED WITHOUT AN APPROVED VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 101(A) OF THE REHABILITATION ACT.[4] APPLICABLE REGULATIONS, IN PART, INCLUDE THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS (EDGAR) IN 34 CFR PARTS 76, 77, 79, 81, AND 82; 2 CFR PART 200 AS ADOPTED BY 2 CFR PART 3474; AND THE STATE VR SERVICES PROGRAM REGULATIONS AT 34 C.F.R. PART 361.[5] NO FUNDS UNDER TITLE VI OF THE REHABILITATION ACT MAY BE AWARDED WITHOUT AN APPROVED SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SUPPLEMENT TO THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINEDSTATE PLAN IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 606(A) OF THE REHABILITATION

ACT.[6] APPLICABLE REGULATIONS, IN PART, INCLUDE THE CITATIONS IN FOOTNOTE 4, AS WELL AS SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM REGULATIONS AT 34 C.F.R. PART 363.

[1]Public Law 113-128.

[2] All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

[3] No funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

[4] Applicable regulations, in part, include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 76, 77, 79, 81, and 82; 2 CFR part 200 as adopted by 2 CFR part 3474; and the State VR Services program regulations at 34 C.F.R. part 361.

[5] No funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supported employment supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan in accordance with section 606(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.

[6] Applicable regulations, in part, include the citations in footnote 4, as well as Supported Employment program regulations at 34 C.F.R. part 363.

CERTIFICATION SIGNATURE

To review and complete the Certification section of the VR portion of the State plan, please select the "Edit" button.

Note, please do not edit the table header or formatting. Only edit the table contents.

If you accidentally edit the table headers and structure, open this link to the blank table. You can copy and paste the table into the narrative field, and start over if needed.

Signatory information	Enter Signatory information in this column
Name of Signatory	Darline Graham
Title of Signatory	Commissioner
Date Signed	March 15, 2024

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Each State VR program must submit expected levels of performance in its Unified or Combined State Plan and in the two-year modification of that plan. Expected levels of performance for the first two years of a state plan must be submitted in the initial submission of the Unified or Combined State Plan and in the initial submission of the two-year modification of that Plan, for years three and four, as described in 34 CFR § 361.170(a). Expected levels of performance must be stated to the nearest tenth of a percent (XX.X %) or to the nearest whole dollar for median earnings. State VR programs are reminded that the expected levels of performance must be published for public comment prior to plan submission in accordance with state law, regulation, and policy.

After the Unified or Combined State Plan submission, each State VR program must reach agreement with RSA on the negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the Unified or Combined State Plan (or for the third and fourth years of the

Unified or Combined State Plan during the required two-year modification process) in accordance with WIOA section 116(b)(3)(A)(iv).

RSA will use its statistical adjustment model to derive pre-program year estimated levels of performance for each indicator. Each State VR program and RSA will consider the negotiation factors outlined in WIOA section 116(b)(3)(A)(v) during the negotiation process. Once negotiated levels of performance are agreed upon, each State VR program must incorporate the negotiated levels of performance into the Unified or Combined State Plan and the two-year modification of that plan prior to the plan's approval (section 116(b)(3)(A)(iv) of WIOA).

Effectiveness in Serving Employers

In the final rule implementing WIOA, the Departments indicated that they would initially implement this indicator in the form of a pilot to test the feasibility and rigor of three proposed approaches. During Program Year (PY) 2022, the Departments initiated the rulemaking process to establish a standard definition of Effectiveness in Serving Employers. States will continue to report two of three proposed approaches until the Departments issue the final rule and implement the indicator.

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	65.7%	65.7%	65.8%	65.8%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	61.7%	61.7%	61.8%	61.8%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$6,112	$6,112	$6,234	$6,234
Credential Attainment Rate	42.7%	42.7%	44.8%	44.8%
Measurable Skill Gains	52.3%	52.3%	54.9%	54.9%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]

1

The Departments have not issued the final rule defining Effectiveness in Serving Employers. As a result, states will not submit expected levels of performance for this indicator and the Departments will not establish negotiated levels of performance for PYs 2024 and 2025.

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.

GEPA Section 427 Form Instructions for State Applicants

State applicants must respond to the following four questions:

1. Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.

2. Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?

3. Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?

4. What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?

• Applicants identify any barriers that may impede equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity, including, but not limited to, barriers based on economic disadvantage, gender, race, ethnicity, color, national origin, disability, age, language, migrant status, rural status, homeless status or housing insecurity, pregnancy, parenting, or caregiving status, and sexual orientation.

• Applicants use the associated text box to respond to each question. However, applicants might have already included some or all this required information in the narrative sections of their applications or their State Plans. In responding to this requirement, for each question, applicants may provide a cross-reference to the section(s) in their State Plans that includes the information responsive to that question on this form or may restate that information on this form.

• Applicants are not required to have mission statements or policies that align with equity to apply.

• Applicants that have already undertaken steps to address barriers must still provide an explanation and/or description of the steps already taken in each text box, as appropriate, to satisfy the GEPA Section 427 requirement.

• Applicants that believe no barriers exist must still provide an explanation and/or description to each question to validate that perception, as appropriate, to satisfy the GEPA Section 427 requirement.

Please refer to GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

1. DESCRIBE HOW YOUR ENTITY'S EXISTING MISSION, POLICIES, OR COMMITMENTS ENSURE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO, AND EQUITABLE PARTICIPATION IN, THE PROPOSED PROJECT OR ACTIVITY.

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) *(20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education.*

The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

State applicants must respond to four questions.

The first of four questions is:

Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.

The South Carolina Commission for the Blind's mission is to provide quality individualized vocational rehabilitation services, independent living services and prevention services that lead to competitive integrated employment and/or social and economic independence for individuals who are blind and low vision.

Our goal is to remove barriers to employment, independence and inclusion for individuals who are blind and low vision and advance their abilities and opportunities to achieve personal and professional success.

Our values guide all our decisions and efforts:

- Being responsible and accountable,
- Providing quality innovative services,
- Teamwork,
- Building and strengthening partnerships, and
- Communicating effectively.

2. BASED ON YOUR PROPOSED PROJECT OR ACTIVITY, WHAT BARRIERS MAY IMPEDE EQUITABLE ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION OF STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, OR OTHER BENEFICIARIES?

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) *(20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.*

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

State applicants must respond to four questions.

The second of four questions is:

Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?

As an agency serving the blind, our consumers may face barriers to employment such as lack of accessible transportation, access to assistive technology, language or other communication barriers, access to adequate childcare, affordable housing, and other supports that may impede their ability to participate in services.

3. BASED ON THE BARRIERS IDENTIFIED, WHAT STEPS WILL YOU TAKE TO ADDRESS SUCH BARRIERS TO EQUITABLE ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION IN THE PROPOSED PROJECT OR ACTIVITY?

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) *(20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.*

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

State applicants must respond to four questions.

The third of four questions is:

Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?

The agency provides services and resources to overcome barriers to employment that consumers may face, such as:

- Providing transportation to medical and service appointments, and funding for mileage, bus passes, ride share services, taxis, and payments to friends or family members they rely on.
- Providing assessments to determine the assistive technology needs of consumers, and adaptive devices to overcome barriers to information.
- Assistance through bi-lingual staff, interpreters, and other preferred methods of communication such as braille and large print.
- Referrals to community partners for access to adequate childcare, affordable housing, and other assistance.
- Partnerships with schools, developmental disability agencies, and other Federal, State, and local programs serving individuals with disabilities to increase access, awareness, service delivery and outcomes.

4. WHAT IS YOUR TIMELINE, INCLUDING TARGETED MILESTONES, FOR ADDRESSING THESE IDENTIFIED BARRIERS?

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) *(20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.*

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

State applicants must respond to four questions.

The final of four questions is:

What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?

The agency strategic plan includes timelines with milestones for addressing many of the areas listed above and covers a two to three-year timeframe.

GEPA 427 FORM INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICATION PACKAGE - SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

EQUITY FOR STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, AND OTHER PROGRAM BENEFICIARIES

OMB Control Number 1894-0005 Expiration 02/28/2026

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) (20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.

GEPA Section 427 Form Instructions for State Applicants

State applicants must respond to the following four questions:

1. Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.

2. Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?

3. Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?

4. What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?

• Applicants identify any barriers that may impede equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity, including, but not limited to, barriers based on economic disadvantage, gender, race, ethnicity, color, national origin, disability, age, language, migrant status, rural status, homeless status or housing insecurity, pregnancy, parenting, or caregiving status, and sexual orientation.

• Applicants use the associated text box to respond to each question. However, applicants might have already included some or all this required information in the narrative sections of their applications or their State Plans. In responding to this requirement, for each question, applicants may provide a cross-reference to the section(s) in their State Plans that includes the information responsive to that question on this form or may restate that information on this form.

• Applicants are not required to have mission statements or policies that align with equity to apply.

• Applicants that have already undertaken steps to address barriers must still provide an explanation and/or description of the steps already taken in each text box, as appropriate, to satisfy the GEPA Section 427 requirement.

• Applicants that believe no barriers exist must still provide an explanation and/or description to each question to validate that perception, as appropriate, to satisfy the GEPA Section 427 requirement.

Please refer to GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

1. DESCRIBE HOW YOUR ENTITY'S EXISTING MISSION, POLICIES, OR COMMITMENTS ENSURE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO, AND EQUITABLE PARTICIPATION IN, THE PROPOSED PROJECT OR ACTIVITY.

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) *(20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.*

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

State applicants must respond to four questions.

The first of four questions is:

Describe how your entity's existing mission, policies, or commitments ensure equitable access to, and equitable participation in, the proposed project or activity.

The South Carolina Commission for the Blind's mission is to provide quality individualized vocational rehabilitation services, independent living services and prevention services that lead to competitive integrated employment and/or social and economic independence for individuals who are blind and low vision.

Our goal is to remove barriers to employment, independence and inclusion for individuals who are blind and low vision and advance their abilities and opportunities to achieve personal and professional success.

Our values guide all our decisions and efforts:

- Being responsible and accountable,
- Providing quality innovative services,
- Teamwork,
- Building and strengthening partnerships, and
- Communicating effectively.

2. BASED ON YOUR PROPOSED PROJECT OR ACTIVITY, WHAT BARRIERS MAY IMPEDE EQUITABLE ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION OF STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, OR OTHER BENEFICIARIES?

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) *(20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.*

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

State applicants must respond to four questions.

The second of four questions is:

Based on your proposed project or activity, what barriers may impede equitable access and participation of students, educators, or other beneficiaries?

As an agency serving the blind, our consumers may face barriers to employment such as lack of accessible transportation, access to assistive technology, language or other communication barriers, access to adequate childcare, affordable housing, and other supports that may impede their ability to participate in services.

3. BASED ON THE BARRIERS IDENTIFIED, WHAT STEPS WILL YOU TAKE TO ADDRESS SUCH BARRIERS TO EQUITABLE ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION IN THE PROPOSED PROJECT OR ACTIVITY?

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) *(20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.*

GEPA 427 - Form Instructions for Application Package

State applicants must respond to four questions.

The third of four questions is:

Based on the barriers identified, what steps will you take to address such barriers to equitable access and participation in the proposed project or activity?

The agency provides services and resources to overcome barriers to employment that consumers may face, such as:

- Providing transportation to medical and service appointments, and funding for mileage, bus passes, ride share services, taxis, and payments to friends or family members they rely on.
- Providing assessments to determine the assistive technology needs of consumers, and adaptive devices to overcome barriers to information.
- Assistance through bi-lingual staff, interpreters, and other preferred methods of communication such as braille and large print.
- Referrals to community partners for access to adequate childcare, affordable housing, and other assistance.
- Partnerships with schools, developmental disability agencies, and other Federal, State, and local programs serving individuals with disabilities to increase access, awareness, service delivery and outcomes.

4. WHAT IS YOUR TIMELINE, INCLUDING TARGETED MILESTONES, FOR ADDRESSING THESE IDENTIFIED BARRIERS?

Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) *(20 U.S.C. 1228a) applies to a State applicant submitting a state plan for a formula grant from the US Department of Education. The State applicant is responsible for completing the GEPA Section 427 form that provides a description of the steps the State proposes to take to ensure all program beneficiaries have equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally funded, State-level project or activity.*

State applicants must respond to four questions.

The final of four questions is:

What is your timeline, including targeted milestones, for addressing these identified barriers?

The agency strategic plan includes timelines with milestones for addressing many of the areas listed above and covers a two to three-year timeframe.

VII. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS

States choosing to submit a Combined State Plan must provide information concerning the six core programs—the Adult program, Dislocated Worker program, Youth program, Wagner-Peyser Act program, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program, and the Vocational Rehabilitation program— and also submit relevant information for any of the eleven partner programs it elects to include in its Combined State Plan. When a State includes a Combined State Plan partner program in its Combined State Plan, it need not submit a separate plan or application for that particular program. 24 If included, Combined State Plan partner programs are subject to the "common planning elements" in Sections II-IV of this document, where specified, as well as the program-specific requirements for that program.

[24] States that elect to include employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Act (42 U.S.C.9901 et seq.) under a Combined State Plan would submit all other required elements of a complete CSBG State Plan directly to the Federal agency that administers the program. Similarly, States that elect to include employment and training activities carried by the Department of Housing and Urban Development would submit all other required elements of a complete State Plan for those programs directly to the Federal agency that administers the program.

TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF)

States that include TANF in the Combined State Plan must outline how the State will meet the requirements of section 402 of the Social Security Act including how it will:

(OMB Control Number: 0970-0145)

A. CONDUCT A PROGRAM DESIGNED TO SERVE ALL POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS IN THE STATE (NOT NECESSARILY IN A UNIFORM MANNER) THAT PROVIDES ASSISTANCE TO NEEDY FAMILIES WITH (OR EXPECTING) CHILDREN AND PROVIDES PARENTS WITH JOB PREPARATION, WORK, AND SUPPORT SERVICES TO ENABLE THEM TO LEAVE THE PROGRAM, SPECIFICALLY CASH ASSISTANCE, AND BECOME SELF-SUFFICIENT (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(I) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

The TANF Program is built around two primary components, set forth below:

1. Work Program & Self-Reliance
    - The program provides temporary financial assistance and work training and education programs that lead to individuals' social and economic independence.
2. Prevention Programs

- Prevention programs focus on (a) teen pregnancy prevention, (b) strengthening and maintaining intact families, (c) assisting in the reunification of troubled families, and (d) providing short-term services and resources to resolve crisis situations that might result in welfare dependency.

Work Program and Self-Reliance

South Carolina will refer work eligible individuals receiving assistance to a TANF work program case manager for development of the TANF Family Plan. The Family Plan outlines the overall strengths and growth areas within the family and actions necessary to achieve self-reliance. The assessment process involves gathering and analyzing information on external and internal factors that affect the client to determine the current level of employability and work readiness. Assessments include screenings to identify potential barriers that may affect the client's ability to participate in work or work-related activities. Screening results may be used to refer to local service providers or qualified specialists who will provide assistance to minimize barriers such as substance abuse, physical or learning disabilities, domestic violence, and other impediments to employment.

DSS will require each work-eligible individual to sign an individual employment plan. The individual employment plan is an agreement between the recipient and DSS that describes the actions necessary to fulfill the vocational goals and time frames for completing those actions. Each work-eligible individual will be placed in work-related activities consistent with his/her skills, education, experience, and competence. Work activities may include employment, on-the-job-training, job search, job readiness activities, work experience, community service programs, vocational educational activities, job skills training or educational activities. Those caretaker relative families identified as "Child-Only" will not be required to participate in the TANF work program as they are exempt from work requirements and will not require an individual employment plan. The individual employment plan is also inclusive of the entire family and set forth steps that family members can take to attain a higher level of individual functioning.

Job Search Requirement as a Condition of Eligibility

DSS will require TANF applicants, identified as work-eligible, to conduct an initial job search. Applicants who meet the criteria outlined in Section 2.4 #1 of the TANF Manual are exempt from the initial job search requirement.

Applicants considered young custodial parents (YCP) are required to conduct an initial job search as a condition of TANF eligibility. County staff will provide job search information during the initial interview with the YCP applicant. Young custodial parents:

- Are between the ages of 18-25;
- Do not have a high school diploma, GED, or certificate of completion; and
- Have a child under the age of 12 months.

The YCP must make and document a minimum of five employer contacts during the application process. It is recommended that the search be completed within two weeks. Failure to complete the job search without good cause (good cause reasons are those generally considered to be beyond the control of the applicant) will result in denial of the application.

Individuals who are exempt from initial job search requirements are:

  - Ineligible non-citizens

- Child only cases
- Individuals required in the home (medical statement needed)
- Only parent with a child under age one (YCP's over 18 must complete IJS)
- Pregnant (seventh month)
- Incapacitated (verified by physician)
- Teen Adult in high school or equivalent
- Victims of family domestic violence (prevents IJS)
- Individuals that reapply to cure a sanction within sixty days after the closure
- Refugees

TANF Child Care and Support Services

DSS is committed to providing support services for clients based on individual needs. Child care and support services are available to assist an applicant of the TANF program in order for them to conduct the initial job search, participate in approved job preparation activities, and obtain or maintain employment.

Also, clients participating in an approved educational or training activity, or who have become employed may receive support services. Support services include, but are not limited to, child care, transportation, prescription eyeglasses, physical exams, automobile repairs/car expenses, parenting programs, safety equipment, criminal records checks, and relocation assistance. Support services include coordination with other agencies for services such as alcohol and drug counseling, health services (non-medical treatment), housing services, vocational rehabilitation, mental health services and referral services, at no cost to the agency.

To allow parents to go to work, the State will provide reimbursement for child care pursuant to the state plan for the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), including the principle that parents will have the right to choose the child care arrangement that best meets the needs of their children. Under the CCDF plan, the State may provide funds for care by providers who meet the State's child care regulatory requirements or for qualifying self-arranged informal child care.

The State has established criteria, procedures, and definitions for determining whether a parent is unable to obtain needed child care so that a parent's failure to work or attend training on that basis may be addressed.

Work Training Allowance

A Work Training Allowance (WTA) is an allowance paid to a DSS Work Experience or Community Service Program participant if the number of monthly hours of work experience or community service participation multiplied by the federal minimum wage exceeds the combined dollar value of SNAP and TANF cash benefits. If the family is entitled to a WTA allowance, it must be provided as a supplemental TANF benefit.

Participation in Employment Preparation Programming

As part of the program's requirements, each adult and minor parent recipient determined by the case manager to be in need of employment skills training must participate in an

employment preparation activity. These activities include, but are not limited to, job readiness training and supervised job search.

Employment Retention and Advancement

The TANF Program emphasizes pre-employment job keeping skills and offers post-employment services designed to ensure continuous attachment to the labor force. In order to foster employment stability, transitional services such as child care are provided. Other retention services may be offered including intensive case management, follow-up contacts and home visits, referrals to community resources, banking and financial management, and re-employment assistance. Special services and resources may be offered to employed clients to assist in their job progression and career advancement such as employment counseling, access to job leads and skill enhancement training.

Transitional Child Care

Transitional child care will be provided, based on available funding, for up to 24 months to individuals who meet the following eligibility criteria:

(1) TANF recipients who no longer receive a cash payment due to loss or declination of earned income disregards or increased earnings.

(2) TANF recipients who formerly received a cash payment and who were employed at the time their case was closed.

(3) TANF recipients who formerly received a cash payment and whose cash payments were terminated due to the 24-month time limit expiration, who become employed and (a) request assistance within 24 months from TANF case closure and (b) whose income did not exceed 85% of the State Median Income.

(4) TANF recipients who formerly received a cash payment and an increase in child support income causes the TANF case to close when an adult household member is employed.

(5)TANF recipients who formerly received a cash payment, had earned income, and requested the removal of earned income disregards, but this does not result in a case closure. The recipient can submit a request for voluntary case closure due to earned income.

(6)A household member becomes employed or increases earnings during a full family sanction, and the earnings cause the household to become ineligible. In this situation, a TANF mini budget must be completed to determine if excluded earned income or refusal of disregards would cause the TANF case to close.

Eligibility will cease if any of the following occurs:

(1)The recipient no longer has a dependent child in the home.

(2)Employment ends (a 30-day interruption to go from one job to another job will be deemed continuous employment).

(3)The client's income exceeds 85% of the State Median Income.

Assistance may be provided for up to 24 months from the first month of eligibility. Sanctioned clients may qualify for transitional child care by obtaining a full-time job and "curing" the sanction.

The state will expect the parent to make a co-payment based on a sliding fee scale. Parents will have the right to choose the child care arrangement that best meets the need of their

child(ren).Payments will be made to providers who meet the State's child care regulatory requirements. Self-arranged, informal care arrangements that do not meet the State's child day care regulatory requirements will be paid for, if prescribed basic health and safety standards are met.

Work Program Sanction Exemptions

- The only parent in the home with a child under one year of age; however, custodial parents under age 25 who have not completed their high school education are required to comply with these provisions regardless of the age of the child;
- At least six months pregnant and the pregnancy is verified by a qualified licensed health care provider;
- Incapacitated and the incapacity is verified by a physician as clearly precluding the recipient from engaging in current or future gainful employment, education, or training;
- Caring for an incapacitated child in the home or other adult relative whose incapacity has been verified by a physician and, if DSS considers it necessary, confirmed by an assessment performed by the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation; or
- Unable to participate because appropriate child care or reasonable transportation was not provided.

Domestic Violence Option

DSS will provide waivers of certain program requirements (residency, child support, family cap, time limits and work requirements) pursuant to a determination of good cause of normal program requirements for so long as necessary in cases where compliance would make it more difficult for such individuals to escape domestic violence.

TANF applicants and recipients will be screened to identify individuals with a history of domestic violence. DSS has contracted with domestic violence service providers to provide comprehensive training on domestic violence to all TANF case managers.

Referrals to the local domestic violence agency for counseling and support services will be made upon identification of an individual with a history of domestic violence. Cases referred will be jointly staffed by DSS and the local domestic violence agency to develop a collaborative service plan designed to lead to self-reliance.

DSS will provide information to current and potential beneficiaries regarding resources made available to victims of sexual harassment and survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

DSS will also ensure that case management staff, supervisors, and associated program employees are trained in: the nature and dynamics of sexual harassment and domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking; state standards and procedures relating to the prevention of, and assistance for, individuals who are victims of sexual harassment or survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking; and methods of ascertaining and ensuring the confidentiality of personal information and documentation related to applicants for assistance and their children who have provided notice about their experiences of sexual harassment, domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

Sanctions for Failure to Comply with Employment and Training Requirements Contained in Employment Plans

Recipients not meeting the work program exemption criteria described in 3.1.7, who fail without good cause to comply with the employment and training requirements contained in the individual employment plan will be sanctioned in the following manner:

1. A 30-day conciliation period will be granted the recipient to discuss a failure to meet the terms of the individual employment plan. During the 30-day period the recipient may (a) establish good cause for failure to meet the terms of the individual employment plan, (b) agree to meet, in the future, the terms of the individual employment plan, or (c) terminate the conciliation process. If at the end of the conciliation process the participant does not comply, TANF benefits must be terminated by imposing a full-family sanction. The recipient has the right to appeal the Department's decision to impose a sanction. At the end of the appeal period, if the Fair Hearing decision is not in the recipient's favor, all TANF benefits must be terminated. Benefits may be reinstated when the recipient agrees to comply according to the terms of the agreement and demonstrates a willingness to comply by participating in the employment and training program or obtaining a full-time job for a period of 30 days.

2. Terminate all benefits if the recipient completes the training requirements contained in the individual employment plan and then refuses an offer of employment without good cause.

Requirement for Treatment of Alcohol and/or Drug Abuse

DSS may require the following recipients of benefits to participate in an alcohol or drug treatment program approved by the Department of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Services (DAODAS) as a part of their individual employment plan. If the recipient refuses, he/she is ineligible for benefits.

TANF recipients will be referred to DAODAS for clinical assessment for participation in an alcohol or drug treatment program who:

- Have been identified by a case manager, with concurrence from a supervisor, as possibly in need of alcohol or other drug abuse treatment services using screening indicators provided by DAODAS; or
- Have within six months prior to the date of last application for TANF or have subsequently been convicted of an alcohol or drug related offense; or
- Within six months prior to the date of last application for TANF or subsequently gives birth to a child who tests positive for drugs.

Determination that substance abuse treatment is necessary will be made by appropriate clinical staff approved by DAODAS. Such staff will also assess the participant's compliance with the treatment program using recognized methods of assessment including, but not limited to, random testing. In no instance shall failure to pass a random test by itself constitute a noncompliance with treatment. For participants who complete the approved DAODAS treatment program, DSS will monitor their compliance with the individual employment plan using recognized methods of assessment including, but not limited to, random testing. Failure to pass such a random test for the use of alcohol shall not constitute the basis for a sanction but may constitute grounds for review by a clinical professional who will determine if there are additional indicators of substance abuse or grounds for resumption of treatments may sanction for noncompliance with the individual employment plan those participants who complete treatment and fail to pass a random test for use of illegal drugs.

DSS will keep records of an individual's alcohol and drug treatment participation confidential and will not release this information to law enforcement personnel.

TANF funds are not used for medical services per 408(a)(6) of the Social Security Act.

Resource Limit

The resource limit for all liquid resources and real property, excluding homestead property, is $2,500 for applicant and recipient households.

Vehicles

One licensed/registered automobile per licensed driver in the household (passenger car or other motor vehicle) is excluded. If a household member owns a vehicle that is not licensed/registered, the equity value of this vehicle is counted against the $2500 resource limit. A household member may own more than one vehicle as long as the number of vehicles does not exceed the number of licensed drivers. The following vehicles are also excluded:

- Vehicles owned by or used to transport a disabled person;
- Vehicles essential to self-employment;
- Income producing vehicles; and
- Vehicles used as a home.

Earned Income Disregards

Provided the household has passed the 185% gross income limit test, the State will disregard from earned income:

- 50% of the monthly gross countable earned income of each individual whose needs are included in the budget for the first four months in which earned income is countable. This is a onetime only disregard.
- $100 per month from gross countable income of each individual whose needs are included in the budget, for the remaining months of eligibility after the four months in (1) above have been exhausted.

Earned Income of Minors

The earned income of any minor in the household of an adult specified relative is excluded in the eligibility and benefit determination.

Interest and Dividend Income

Interest and dividend income up to $400 per year per household is disregarded in the eligibility and benefit determination.

Time Limits

Under State Law, a family may receive TANF benefits for no more than 24 months out of 120 months. The exceptions are:

- An adult household member is permanently or totally disabled, whether physically or mentally and the disability is expected to last 90 days or longer. The disabled are exempted under state law and are being served in a solely funded State program.

- An adult household member is providing full-time care for a disabled family member living in the home.
- The teen parent/adult (both parents in a two-parent household) of the child(ren) for whom assistance is received is a minor under the age of 18 who has not completed high school. Assistance must be provided for a period of up to 24 months after the minor parent attains the age of 18 or completes high school, whichever occurs first.
- Child care or transportation is not reasonably available for participation in work requirements.
- The adult caretaker relative is not the parent of the child and is not included in the TANF cash benefits.
- An adult household member is providing a home for and caring for a child whom DSS has determined to be abandoned by his or her parents and for whom the alternative placement is foster care.
- An adult household member is involved in an approved training/education program set forth on his/her individual employment plan that will not be completed by the 24th month. An extension is granted for up to six months when the training/education program has a fixed beginning and ending date and has a specific job/vocational goal. If the program has not been completed by the 30th month and satisfactory progress toward completion is being made, the County Director may grant month-to-month extensions for as long as necessary to complete the program and secure employment.
- Any household that contains two parents in the TANF grant, including sanctioned or disqualified parents. These clients are being served in a solely funded State program. Households that contain an SSI parent or an ineligible alien will not be considered a two-parent household.

Households not meeting any of the time limit exception criteria above are subject to the 24-month time limit from the point in which the household begins receiving benefits, regardless of the time in which they become job ready.

TANF allows for up to 20% of the TANF caseload to be extended beyond the federal 60-month time limit due to hardship reasons. If one or more of the following criteria are met, an extension beyond the 60 months should be given:

- A family member is a victim of domestic violence, and the family member is enrolled in a program supervised by a recognized domestic violence advocate.
- The family has an open case with Child Protective Services.
- As a result of the Family Plan, an adult household member is active in a recognized substance abuse treatment program.
- The family has reached the federal time limit but has not yet reached the State 24-month time limit due to months received in another state. This is an extension reason only. If an applicant is ineligible in another state due to federal time limits, he/she must meet a state time limit exemption to become eligible in South Carolina.
- An adult in the household is working a full-time job but is still eligible for a TANF benefit.

Family Cap

DSS will not increase benefits to an eligible family as a result of a child born to that parent 10 or more months after the family begins to receive TANF benefits. This requirement does not apply if the State determines that the child was conceived as a result of rape or incest.

DSS may provide benefits for a child born after 10 months in the form of vouchers that may be used to pay for goods and services as determined by DSS, that permit the child's custodial parent to participate in education, training, and employment related activities.

Recipients under the Age of 18 Must Attend School

TANF recipients under the age of 18 must be enrolled in school and maintain satisfactory attendance, as defined by the South Carolina Department of Education, as a condition of eligibility for benefits, unless they have attained a high school diploma, GED, or certificate of completion.

Requirement to Provide Certain Information for Child Support Purposes and Sanctions for Failure to Provide

As a condition of eligibility applicants and recipients of TANF must provide:

- The first and last name of the absent parent and putative father and any known license(s) which might be subject to revocation; and
- At least two of the following items on each absent parent and each putative father named: (a) Date of birth; (b) Social Security Number; (c) Last known home address; (d) Last known employer's name and address; (e) Either of the absent parents' name and address.

An applicant or recipient who fails to provide this information or who provides the names of two putative fathers, both of whom are excluded from paternity by genetic testing, is ineligible for assistance for herself and the child for whom parental information was not provided unless the applicant or recipient verifies there is good cause for not providing this information. Good cause includes, but is not limited to, documentation of incest, rape, or the existence of or the threat of physical abuse to the child or custodial parent.

When paternity is legally established for a child in sanctioned status, TANF benefits may be granted, if all other eligibility requirements are met.

Disregard of Cash Value of Life Insurance

The cash value of life insurance is disregarded for any person whose resources must be counted in determining TANF eligibility.

Reporting Requirements

TANF recipients shall report the following changes within ten days:

- A change in the composition of the household;
- A change of address;
- Employment status which includes obtaining a job or losing a job, hours of employment or rate of pay; or
- Source of income.

When it is determined that a household member temporarily living away from home will not return, the recipient must report this within five days.

Failure to report any of the above changes does not excuse the recipient from repayment of benefits in the situation where failure to report caused an overpayment of the TANF benefit.

Annual Review

There will be at least one redetermination of eligibility factors every 12 months with a required interview.

Legal Basis of the TANF Program

The State operates the TANF Program under the following provisions:

- Title IV-A of the Social Security Act, as amended.
- Title 45, Code of Federal Regulations, Parts 260-265.
- South Carolina Code of Laws of 1976, Title 43, Social Services, Chapter 5, Public Aid, Assistance and Relief Generally, Articles 1, 5 and 9.
- South Carolina State Regulations, Chapter 114, Article 11, Family Independence Program.
- The *South Carolina Department of Social Services TANF Policy Manual.*

Delivery of Services to Needy Families

Services will be provided to needy families whose income is equal to or less than 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. There is no resource test in order to receive these services. Services provided in the following paragraph will meet goal one as stated in section 1.1 of this State Plan.

Services such as the following will be available; however, some of them may only be available in selected counties:

- Intensive case management and treatment services for low-income parents (and their children) that are in need of addiction services for alcohol or other drug abuse.
- Preschool programs will be offered with services that assist parents in promoting optimal early childhood development, school readiness, and in reducing the risk of children developing major physical, developmental, and learning problems. These programs will help ensure that children arrive at school ready to learn and will increase the likelihood of eventual self-reliance.
- After school and summer programs will be offered to students with services that provide students with basic and remedial educational services, recreational activities, life skills classes, enhancement of self-esteem, health education and parental involvement activities.
- A unified literacy program, incorporating components from early childhood education, adult literacy or adult basic education, and parenting education programs, will be made available to low-income clients.

Other services to be provided include psychological evaluations, family and group counseling, case management including home visitation, and community-based assessment to determine

the type of crisis intervention necessary to maintain the family or to expedite family reunification.

B. REQUIRE A PARENT OR CARETAKER RECEIVING ASSISTANCE TO ENGAGE IN WORK (DEFINED BY THE STATE) ONCE THE STATE DETERMINES THE PARENT OR CARETAKER IS READY TO ENGAGE IN WORK, OR ONCE HE OR SHE HAS RECEIVED 24 MONTHS OF ASSISTANCE, WHICHEVER IS EARLIER, CONSISTENT WITH THE CHILD CARE EXCEPTION AT 407(E)(2) (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(II) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

South Carolina will refer work eligible individuals receiving assistance to a TANF work program case manager for development of the TANF Family Plan. The Family Plan outlines the overall strengths and growth areas within the family and actions necessary to achieve self-reliance. The assessment process involves gathering and analyzing information on external and internal factors that affect the client to determine the current level of employability and work readiness. Assessments include screenings to identify potential barriers that may affect the client's ability to participate in work or work-related activities. Screening results may be used to refer to local service providers or qualified specialists who will provide assistance to minimize barriers such as substance abuse, physical or learning disabilities, domestic violence, and other impediments to employment.

DSS will require each work-eligible individual to sign an individual employment plan. The individual employment plan is an agreement between the recipient and DSS that describes the actions necessary to fulfill the vocational goals and time frames for completing those actions. Each work-eligible individual will be placed in work-related activities consistent with his/her skills, education, experience, and competence. Work activities may include employment, on-the-job-training, job search, job readiness activities, work experience, community service programs, vocational educational activities, job skills training or educational activities. Those caretaker relative families identified as "Child-Only" will not be required to participate in the TANF work program as they are exempt from work requirements and will not require an individual employment plan. The individual employment plan is also inclusive of the entire family and set forth steps that family members can take to attain a higher level of individual functioning.

The recipient is exempt from the employment and training sanctions of the individual employment plan if the recipient is:

- The only parent in the home with a child under one year of age; however, custodial parents under age 25 who have not completed their high school education are required to comply with these provisions regardless of the age of the child;
- At least six months pregnant and the pregnancy is verified by a qualified licensed health care provider;
- Incapacitated and the incapacity is verified by a physician as clearly precluding the recipient from engaging in current or future gainful employment, education, or training;
- Caring for an incapacitated child in the home or other adult relative whose incapacity has been verified by a physician and, if DSS considers it necessary, confirmed by an assessment performed by the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation; or

Unable to participate because appropriate child care or reasonable transportation was not provided.

C. ENSURE THAT PARENTS AND CARETAKERS RECEIVING ASSISTANCE ENGAGE IN WORK IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 407 (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(III) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY

ACT). CONSISTENT WITH THE REQUIRED STRATEGIC ELEMENTS DISCUSSED IN SECTION II (A)(2) HEREIN, PROVIDE A SPECIFIC ANALYSIS OF HOW THE STATE'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES ARE ADDRESSING EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICES FOR PARENTS OR CARETAKERS RECEIVING ASSISTANCE

To ensure that individuals receiving assistance are engaging in work, there is a sanctioning process in place for noncompliance. South Carolina will refer work eligible individuals receiving assistance to a TANF work program case manager for development of the TANF Family Plan. The Family Plan outlines the overall strengths and growth areas within the family and actions necessary to achieve self-reliance. The assessment process involves gathering and analyzing information on external and internal factors that affect the client to determine the current level of employability and work readiness. Assessments include screenings to identify potential barriers that may affect the client's ability to participate in work or work-related activities. Screening results may be used to refer to local service providers or qualified specialists who will provide assistance to minimize barriers such as substance abuse, physical or learning disabilities, domestic violence, and other impediments to employment.

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The recipient is exempt from the employment and training sanctions of the individual employment plan if the recipient is:

- The only parent in the home with a child under one year of age; however, custodial parents under age 25 who have not completed their high school education are required to comply with these provisions regardless of the age of the child;
- At least six months pregnant and the pregnancy is verified by a qualified licensed health care provider;
- Incapacitated and the incapacity is verified by a physician as clearly precluding the recipient from engaging in current or future gainful employment, education, or training;
- Caring for an incapacitated child in the home or other adult relative whose incapacity has been verified by a physician and, if DSS considers it necessary, confirmed by an assessment performed by the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation; or
- Unable to participate because appropriate child care or reasonable transportation was not provided.

In order to increase economic stability and greater levels of economic self-sufficiency, DSS provides TANF outreach services that provide information about TANF and related services or programs for which low income families might be eligible, including Medicaid, SCHIP, school lunch and other benefits. Outreach services include an informational brochure, provided to all

recipients of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) with income less than 200% of the federal poverty level.

Any SNAP custodial or non-custodial parent or responsible relative of a child may also receive employment services that include, but are not limited to the following: orientation, assessment, case management, employment plan development, barrier resolution, job search skill training, resume and soft skill development, job placement services, support services, retention, and re-employment services. These services meet TANF purposes 1 and 2, and do not provide basic income support or constitute "assistance" under the Federal rules.

D. TAKE SUCH REASONABLE STEPS AS THE STATE DEEMS NECESSARY TO RESTRICT THE USE AND DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION ABOUT INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES RECEIVING ASSISTANCE UNDER THE PROGRAM ATTRIBUTABLE TO FUNDS PROVIDED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(IV) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

DSS restricts the use and disclosure of information about individuals and families receiving assistance in accordance with South Carolina State Regulations, Chapter 114, Article 11, Section 114.1170, Safeguarding Information. However, DSS may disclose confidential information to agencies and entities outside the Department, that provide services to recipients to enable them to become independent and self-reliant when DSS has the recipient's signed release form on file stating that he/she consents to the release of confidential information regarding his/her household.

E. ESTABLISH GOALS AND TAKE ACTION TO PREVENT AND REDUCE OUT-OF-WEDLOCK PREGNANCIES, WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON TEENAGE PREGNANCIES (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(V) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

The State considers prevention programs to be critical in assisting families to provide safe, stable nurturing environments for their children. The following prevention programs will accomplish these goals.

DSS contracts with entities to provide abstinence until marriage teen pregnancy prevention programs and services within the State. The programs provide an abstinence first, age appropriate comprehensive approach to health and sexuality education with a goal of preventing adolescent pregnancy throughout South Carolina.

F. CONDUCT A PROGRAM DESIGNED TO REACH STATE AND LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS, THE EDUCATION SYSTEM, AND RELEVANT COUNSELING SERVICES, THAT PROVIDES EDUCATION AND TRAINING ON THE PROBLEM OF STATUTORY RAPE SO THAT TEENAGE PREGNANCY PREVENTION PROGRAMS MAY BE EXPANDED TO INCLUDE MEN (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(VI) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

DSS believes that as part of the educational efforts it will provide in programs designed to promote responsible fatherhood, encourage marriage, and build character and higher self-esteem, statutory rape prevention issues will be discussed, and training will be provided. TANF workers are required to report cases of suspected abuse or neglect to the Child Welfare Division/Human Services.

DSS partners with the SC Center for Fathers and Families, a faith-based organization, whose mission is to develop and support a statewide infrastructure deeply invested in repairing and nurturing relationships between fathers and families. The Center for Fathers and Families works with six local fatherhood programs in 11 locations to deliver quality, father-friendly services throughout South Carolina. The program addresses ways to overcome obstacles to becoming an engaged and responsible father by focusing on a wide range of topics such as

improving employment status, family relationships, effective communication, job readiness, child support and the legal system, financial management, parenting and co-parenting, healthy relationships, men's health, and education.

DSS partners with the SC Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy which provides programs/trainings engages adult males and also addresses the problem of statutory rape. Programs provided by the SC Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy include information regarding legal definitions and consequences of statutory rape and the SC law regarding the age of consent. Training is designed to reach state and local law enforcement officials, community educators which include teachers, coaches, nurses, and other health professionals such as those providing counseling services.

DSS through its domestic violence and batterers intervention programs provides assistance for victims, their dependents, and perpetrators of intimate partner violence. The goals of the domestic violence programs are to prevent and/or reduce the incidence of domestic violence and ensure accessible emergency shelter and related assistance to those in need of services for the intervention and prevention of intimate partner violence as well as for treatment for perpetrators. Domestic violence programs work with multiple government and non-government agencies to address the serious problem of domestic violence in our state and to reduce domestic violence in South Carolina. DSS partners with other state agencies such as South Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (SCCADVASA), Department of Public Safety and the Department of Health and Environmental Control in an effort to develop and sustain the best methods in domestic violence prevention.

G. IMPLEMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AS NECESSARY TO PREVENT ACCESS TO ASSISTANCE PROVIDED UNDER THE STATE PROGRAM FUNDED UNDER THIS PART THROUGH ANY ELECTRONIC FUND TRANSACTION IN AN AUTOMATED TELLER MACHINE OR POINT-OF-SALE DEVICE LOCATED IN A PLACE DESCRIBED IN SECTION 408(A)(12), INCLUDING A PLAN TO ENSURE THAT RECIPIENTS OF THE ASSISTANCE HAVE ADEQUATE ACCESS TO THEIR CASH ASSISTANCE (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(VII) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

South Carolina provides TANF benefits through three methods:

- Paper checks – for recipients who have demonstrated electronic card misuse or recipients without the appropriate demographic information to establish a bank account;
- Deposit into a debit account with a branded MasterCard (ePay); and
- Direct deposit into a personal account by state procedure, limited to non-parents with custody of the TANF eligible child(ren).

South Carolina does not use Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) for cash programs.

TANF recipient payments delivered electronically to debit accounts, called ePay, are set up by a contracted vendor. The only funds deposited in the account are those issued by DSS and can be accessed only by the debit card. ePay accounts are governed by FDIC regulations. In South Carolina, any TANF recipient, without the appropriate demographic information, will receive benefits in the form of a paper check.

Instructional material and information regarding the ePay cards, TANF restrictions, benefit access, customer service, fees, etc., are issued, upon approval, to recipients in a cardholder "Welcome Packet" by our contractor.

Benefit Access and Fee Information:

- South Carolina recipients receive information on how to access benefits without paying fees as well as applicable fees and surcharge information. The recipient is free to choose the most advantageous and safest method to access his/her benefits. Access to benefits is not limited to locations at which cash is provided. Recipients may access benefits at automated teller machines (ATM) or use Point-of-Sale (POS) devices to make purchases at locations that accept Mastercard. Recipients have free access when the ePay card is used in transactions at U. S. merchants and retailers or when they receive cash back with a purchase. POS transactions allow "cash-back" options at no additional charge.

- Recipients are allowed free, teller-assisted "over the counter" cash transactions at any bank or credit union that accepts MasterCard for the dollar amount of the recipient's choosing. Recipients are allowed two ATM cash withdrawals for no fee per month at MoneyPass® ATMs. A $1.50 fee will be assessed for each additional ATM withdrawal. Out-of-Network ATM withdrawals will also assess $1.50 fee for withdrawals not conducted at MoneyPass® ATMs. ATM owners and operators may charge an additional fee called "surcharge" or "convenience fee" to use their ATM.DSS state office staff review the fees charged monthly in order to monitor and evaluate the utilization of the funds. The ePay card can be used for electronic bill paying via the internet.

Information regarding applicable fees and surcharges are included in the recipient's "Welcome Packet" and are also included on an "ePay Flyer" in the Resource Library of the DSS website that is available to the public. https://dss.sc.gov/resource-library/forms_brochures/files/1202.pdf

H. ENSURE THAT RECIPIENTS OF ASSISTANCE PROVIDED UNDER THE STATE PROGRAM FUNDED UNDER THIS PART HAVE THE ABILITY TO USE OR WITHDRAW ASSISTANCE WITH MINIMAL FEES OR CHARGES, INCLUDING AN OPPORTUNITY TO ACCESS ASSISTANCE WITH NO FEE OR CHARGES, AND ARE PROVIDED INFORMATION ON APPLICABLE FEES AND SURCHARGES THAT APPLY TO ELECTRONIC FUND TRANSACTIONS INVOLVING THE ASSISTANCE, AND THAT SUCH INFORMATION IS MADE PUBLICLY AVAILABLE (SECTION 402(A)(1)(A)(VIII) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

South Carolina State Regulation 114-1150 – Determination of Benefits – provides the TANF benefit restrictions.114-1150(F) states that TANF payments are not to be accessed, by electronic transaction using a Point-of Sale device, ATM, or access to an online system for the withdrawal of funds or the processing of a payment for merchandise or a service, at any of the following locations:

- A liquor store. A liquor store means any retail establishment which sells exclusively or primarily intoxicating liquor. Such term does not include a grocery store which sells both intoxicating liquor and groceries including staple foods (within the meaning of section 3(r) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008(7U.S.C. 2012(r)).

- A casino, gambling casino or gaming establishment.

- An adult oriented entertainment establishment which is defined as a retail establishment that provides adult-oriented entertainment in which performers disrobe or perform in an unclothed state for entertainment are prohibited.

Merchant Category Code blocks were placed on the SC ePay cards to prevent the use of the ePay cards at the retailer types listed below:

- Package Stores/Beer/Wine/Liquor

- Betting/Track/Casino/Lotto

DSS provides information to new ePay TANF clients which give details on how to access TANF benefits and restrictions described above.

DSS includes TANF restrictions in written notices sent at initial approval and at annual redetermination.

Posters with restrictions have been distributed to all 46 county offices and provided to partners contracted by DSS to serve our TANF population.

DSS has placed the restriction information on the DSS webpage, at www.dss.sc.gov.

South Carolina does not allow the operation of casinos within its borders, nor does the one federally recognized Indian tribe in South Carolina operate a casino on tribal land. Adult entertainment businesses are not regulated by state licensing or local regulations, nor are there unique Merchant Classification Codes for adult entertainment businesses. Local governments default to local ordinances for nuisance businesses (e.g., tattoo shops, chicken, or pig operations, etc.), if there are issues relating to a local business. The MCC used by some of these businesses is the same as can be used by theaters or museums (i.e., entertainment or education).DSS continues to seek avenues to address this unregulated group.

I. INDICATE WHETHER IT INTENDS TO TREAT FAMILIES MOVING FROM ANOTHER STATE DIFFERENTLY FROM OTHER FAMILIES UNDER THE PROGRAM, AND IF SO HOW (SECTION 402(A)(1)(B)(I) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

Families who move into the State from another state will have their eligibility determined under the program requirements of the South Carolina TANF Program. South Carolina will not apply standards from the applicants' previous state of residence. Note: Months of TANF benefits received in another state will be identified and counted against the federal five-year limit.

J. INDICATE WHETHER IT INTENDS TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO NON-CITIZENS, AND IF SO INCLUDE AN OVERVIEW OF THE ASSISTANCE (SECTION 402(A)(1)(B)(II) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

Applicants and recipients of TANF benefits must be citizens of the United States or qualified aliens within the scope of TANF eligibility as described in Section 4.4, *South Carolina Department of Social Services TANF Policy Manual*.

In addition to U.S. citizens, certain non-citizens who otherwise qualify may also be eligible for benefits.

The following groups of non-citizens may receive benefits if all other requirements are met, for up to five years from either the date the status is granted or from the date of entry:

- Refugees, Asylees, Amerasians, Cuban/Haitian entrants and aliens whose deportation is withheld.
- Victims of severe forms of trafficking (those forced into prostitution, slavery, or forced labor) through coercion, threats of violence, psychological abuse, torture, and imprisonment.
- Aliens granted parole for at least one year under Section 212 (d)(5) of the INA, aliens battered or subjected to extreme cruelty in the U.S., and aliens granted conditional entrant refugee status before April 1, 1980.

Lawful permanent residents who have worked or can be credited with working in the United States for 40 qualifying quarters under Title II of the Social Security Act.

K. SET FORTH OBJECTIVE CRITERIA FOR THE DELIVERY OF BENEFITS AND THE DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY AND FOR FAIR AND EQUITABLE TREATMENT, INCLUDING AN EXPLANATION OF HOW IT WILL PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECIPIENTS WHO HAVE BEEN ADVERSELY AFFECTED TO BE HEARD IN A STATE ADMINISTRATIVE OR APPEAL PROCESS (SECTION 402(A)(1)(B)(III) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)

Applicants and recipients of the TANF Program are granted appeal rights from decisions they deem to be adverse. When a hearing is requested within ten days after the receipt of an adverse notice, the TANF benefits are not continued unless the recipient specifically requests in writing that they be paid pending the hearing decision. The recipient must be informed that an adverse hearing decision will require the repayment of benefits paid pending the hearing decision. Fair hearings for TANF applicants and recipients are provided for in South Carolina State Regulations, R. 114-110.The specific procedures for a Fair Hearing are found in the *South Carolina Department of Social Services TANF Policy Manual*.

L. INDICATE WHETHER THE STATE INTENDS TO ASSIST INDIVIDUALS TO TRAIN FOR, SEEK, AND MAINTAIN EMPLOYMENT (SECTION 402(A)(1)(B)(V) OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT)—

1. PROVIDING DIRECT CARE IN A LONG-TERM CARE FACILITY (AS SUCH TERMS ARE DEFINED UNDER SECTION 1397J OF THIS TITLE); OR

2. IN OTHER OCCUPATIONS RELATED TO ELDER CARE, HIGH-DEMAND OCCUPATIONS, OR OCCUPATIONS EXPECTED TO EXPERIENCE LABOR SHORTAGES AS, DETERMINED APPROPRIATE BY THE STATE FOR WHICH THE STATE IDENTIFIES AN UNMET NEED FOR SERVICE PERSONNEL, AND, IF SO, SHALL INCLUDE AN OVERVIEW OF SUCH ASSISTANCE.

As a WIOA Partner, DSS is connected with the State's workforce system to stay informed about high-demand occupations. In an effort to better align and coordinate programs that help individuals prepare for competitive employment, TANF representatives are co-located in each of the comprehensive SC Works Centers across the state. This strategic co-location has proven to be beneficial in co-enrolling TANF participants in WIOA or other partner programming. TANF's involvement in the WIOA MOU has resulted in better coordination of services at the local level. Local TANF representatives are involved in business services discussions, job fair planning, and general service delivery.

DSS currently does not have a plan to assist individuals in training for, seeking and maintaining employment in the eldercare workforce as outlined in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010.DSS works with various state agencies to provide referrals of TANF participants seeking training and/or employment in the elder care workforce. Additional assistance is also available to include vocational education training, job search and job readiness assistance, and support services.

M. PROVIDE FOR ALL MOE-FUNDED SERVICES THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION: THE NAME OF THE PROGRAM BENEFIT OR SERVICE, AND THE FINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA THAT FAMILIES MUST MEET IN ORDER TO RECEIVE THAT BENEFIT OR SERVICE. IN ADDITION, FOR TANF MOE-FUNDED SERVICES (CO-MINGLED OR SEGREGATED MOE) DESCRIBE THE PROGRAM BENEFIT PROVIDED TO ELIGIBLE FAMILIES (SSP SERVICES DO NOT HAVE TO INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION BUT THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES ENCOURAGES IT) (§263.2(B)(3) & §263.2(C) PREAMBLE PAGES 17826-7)

As a condition of receiving federal TANF funds, states are required to spend a certain amount of their own funds ("Maintenance of Effort") on TANF-allowable categories. South Carolina's State MOE funds are expended in the following categories:

- Basic Assistance: cash payments, vouchers, and other forms of benefits designed to meet a family's ongoing basic needs (i.e., for food, clothing, shelter, utilities, household goods, personal care items, and general incidental expenses).
- Education and Training Activities: secondary education; adult education, GED, or equivalent and ESL classes; education directly related to employment; job skills training; education provided as vocational educational training or career and technical education; and post-secondary education.
- Early Care and Education:
    - Child Care (spent or transferred): child care expenditures for families that need child care to work, participate in work activities or for respite purposes. Also includes funds transferred to Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Discretionary.
    - Pre-Kindergarten/Head Start: pre-kindergarten or kindergarten education programs, expansion of Head Start programs, or other school readiness programs.
- Program Management: administrative costs and systems costs related to monitoring and tracking under the program.
- Non-assistance: support services (including transportation), job retention programming, wage subsidies, relocation assistance, and coordination with other agencies for services such as parenting programs, safety equipment, business, and job retention services. Non-assistance funding is available for TANF applicants and recipients.
- Other work activities: subsidized employment, on-the-job training, work experience, and community service for TANF applicants and recipients.
- Out-of-wedlock pregnancy prevention: in-school pregnancy prevention programs serving students whose family income is at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level.

For TANF applicants and recipients, the income and resource limits are outlined in sections 3.1.11 – 3.1.15 of this plan. The maximum financial eligibility threshold for needy families not receiving a grant is 200% of the Federal Poverty Level unless otherwise noted.

TANF CERTIFICATIONS

States that include TANF in the Combined State Plan must provide a certification by the chief executive officer of that State, that during the fiscal year, the State will:

The State Plan must include	Include
1. Operate a child support enforcement program under the State Plan approved under part D. (section 402(a)(2) of the Social Security Act);	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
2. Operate a foster care and adoption assistance program under the State Plan approved under part E, and that the state will take such actions as are necessary to ensure that children receiving assistance under such part are eligible for medical assistance under the State Plan under title XIX. (section 402(a)(3) of the Social Security Act);	Yes
3.Specify which state agency or agencies will administer and supervise the program referred to in paragraph (1) for the fiscal year, which shall include assurances that local governments and private sector organizations (section 402(a)(4) of the Social Security Act)—	N/A
3. (A) have been consulted regarding the plan and design of welfare services in the state so that services are provided in a manner appropriate to local populations; and	Yes
3. (B) have had at least 45 days to submit comments on the plan and the design of such services;	Yes
4. Provide each member of an Indian tribe, who is domiciled in the state and is not eligible for assistance under a tribal family assistance plan approved under section 412, with equitable access to assistance under the state program funded under this part attributable to funds provided by the Federal Government. (section 402(a)(5) of the Social Security Act);	Yes
5. Establish and enforce standards and procedures to ensure against program fraud and abuse, including standards and procedures concerning nepotism, conflicts of interest among individuals responsible for the administration and supervision of the state program, kickbacks, and the use of political patronage. (section 402(a)(6) of the Social Security Act);	Yes
6. (optional) Establish and Enforcing standards and procedures to (section 402(a)(7) of the Social Security Act).—	N/A
6. (A) screen and identify individuals receiving assistance under this part with a history of	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
domestic violence while maintaining the confidentiality of such individuals;	
6. (B) refer such individuals to counseling and supportive services; and	Yes
6. (C) waive, pursuant to a determination of good cause, other program requirements such as time limits (for so long as necessary) for individuals receiving assistance, residency requirements, child support cooperation requirements, and family cap provisions, in cases where compliance with such requirements would make it more difficult for individuals receiving assistance under this part to escape domestic violence or unfairly penalize such individuals who are or have been victimized by such violence, or individuals who are at risk of further domestic violence (section 402(a)(7) of the Social Security Act).	Yes
7 Establish and enforce standards and procedures to*—	N/A
7. (A) ensure that applicants and potential applicants for assistance under the state program funded under this part are notified of assistance made available by the state to victims of sexual harassment and survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking;	Yes
7. (B) ensure that case workers and other agency personnel responsible for administering the state program funded under this part are trained in—	N/A
7. (B) 1. the nature and dynamics of sexual harassment and domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking;	Yes
7. (B) 2. state standards and procedures relating to the prevention of, and assistance for, individuals who are victims of sexual harassment or survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking; and	Yes
7. (B) 3. methods of ascertaining and ensuring the confidentiality of personal information and documentation related to applicants for assistance and their children who have provided notice about their experiences of sexual	Yes

The State Plan must include	Include
harassment, domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking; and	
7. (C) ensure that, if a state has elected to establish and enforce standards and procedures regarding the screening for, and identification of, domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking pursuant to paragraph (7)—	N/A
7. (C) 1. the state program funded under this part provides information about the options under this part to current and potential beneficiaries; and	Yes
7. (C) 2. case workers and other agency personnel responsible for administering the state programs funder under this part are provided with training regarding state standards and procedures pursuant to paragraph (7).	Yes

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMS UNDER THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (PROGRAMS AUTHORIZED UNDER SECTION 6(D)(4) OF THE FOOD AND NUTRITION ACT OF 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(D)(4)))

A. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS [27]

The State agency must prepare and submit an Employment and Training (E&T) Plan to its appropriate Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Regional Office. The E&T Plan must be available for public inspection at the State agency headquarters. A State agency may include its plan for the SNAP E&T program in a Combined Plan under WIOA but will require FNS approval prior to implementation and must continue to make a copy of the plan available for public inspection. If a State includes SNAP E&T in a Combined Plan under WIOA, the State agency will detail the following for each year covered by the Combined Plan:

[27] 7 CFR § 273.7(c)(6)

1. THE NATURE OF THE E&T COMPONENTS THE STATE AGENCY PLANS TO OFFER AND THE REASONS FOR SUCH COMPONENTS, INCLUDING COST INFORMATION. THE METHODOLOGY FOR STATE AGENCY REIMBURSEMENT FOR EDUCATION COMPONENTS MUST BE SPECIFICALLY ADDRESSED. IF A STATE AGENCY PLANS TO OFFER SUPERVISED JOB SEARCH IN ACCORDANCE WITH PARAGRAPH (E)(2)(I) OF THIS SECTION, THE STATE AGENCY MUST ALSO INCLUDE IN THE E&T PLAN A SUMMARY OF THE STATE GUIDELINES IMPLEMENTING SUPERVISED JOB SEARCH. THIS SUMMARY OF THE STATE GUIDELINES, AT A MINIMUM, MUST DESCRIBE: THE CRITERIA USED BY THE STATE AGENCY TO APPROVE LOCATIONS FOR SUPERVISED JOB SEARCH, AN EXPLANATION OF WHY THOSE CRITERIA WERE CHOSEN, AND HOW THE SUPERVISED JOB SEARCH COMPONENT MEETS THE REQUIREMENTS TO DIRECTLY SUPERVISE THE ACTIVITIES OF PARTICIPANTS AND TRACK THE TIMING AND ACTIVITIES OF PARTICIPANTS;

South Carolina will offer the following components for fiscal year 2026; Job Retention, Supervised Job Search, Workfare, Basic/Foundational Skills Instruction, Career/Technical Education Programs or other Vocational Training, Work Readiness Training, and Work Experience.

Job Retention

Due to financial limitations, job retention services will be provided for a maximum period of 30 days per fiscal year. South Carolina will allow up to 30 days of retention services per year with a minimum of 30 days regardless of the number of times a client participates in the employment and training program. Job retention services include but are not limited to: • Counseling/case management. • Support services/transportation/childcare/etc. • Referrals to other services/navigation services. • Clothing required for employment. • Equipment or tools required for employment. • Test fees • Licensing and certifications South Carolina will ensure that participation in the job retention component is for a minimum of 30 days by entering the component start and end dates into the SCCETS database when adding the client into the component. E&T Coordinators will be responsible for providing services during the dates specified in the database.

Job retention services are available **statewide** to: ABAWDs, homeless, returning citizens (aka: ex-offenders), single parents, students, those that reside in rural areas, underemployed, and veterans.

All SNAP E&T participants who have secured employment within 30 days of participating in another E&T component can receive up to 30 days of retention services.

Projected Annual Participation is 50.

Estimated Annual Component Administrative Cost is $7500.00.

Supervised Job Search

The state will require that all supervised job search participants use the Department of Employment & Workforce's virtual online job search system to search for employment. The virtual online job search system in South Carolina is called South Carolina Works Online System, or SCWOS. The Department of Employment & Workforce is South Carolina's labor agency.

SCDSS SNAP E&T Coordinators have been co-located in these centers and will have the responsibility of providing supervision for E&T participants engaging in the supervised job search component. E&T Coordinators have access to the SCWOS database and are able to virtually monitor or supervise all participant’s job searches. E&T Coordinators are also able to pull individual job search reports and determine the feasibility of jobs applied for by each participant using SCWOS. E&T Coordinators are also able to virtually assist participants by sending custom employment opportunities to participants through the system by matching their qualifications (from assessments) and sending links to apply for specific jobs. E&T Coordinators are able to view jobs applied for by participants (i.e. actual application submissions). SCWOS also shows the date and time a participant logged into the database. This virtual component can be utilized in any location, thereby assisting participants with transportation or childcare employment barriers.

Supervised Job Search is available **statewide** to: ABAWDs, homeless, returning citizens (aka: ex-offenders), single parents, students, those that reside in rural areas, underemployed, and veterans.

Based on their assessment, all E&T participants who are considered work ready, computer literate, and seeking immediate employment may participate in the SJS component.

Projected Annual Participation is 200.

Estimated Annual Component Administrative Cost is $30,000.00.

Workfare

The workfare component is being offered in order to enhance the employability of program participants. Workfare provides individuals with an opportunity to gain work experience and useful workplace skills at a supervised worksite. In lieu of wages, workfare participants receive compensation in the form of their household's monthly SNAP allotment divided by the state's minimum wage. Worksites and worksite agreements are established by the state agency. These agreements outline requirements for working conditions and require data exchanges such as reporting participation hours in the SCCETS database. The SCDSS E&T program provides workers compensation insurance for participants in the workfare program. Volunteer placements for the workfare component are made at public, non-profit organizations.

Workfare is available **statewide** to: ABAWDs, homeless, returning citizens (aka: ex-offenders), single parents, students, those that reside in rural areas, underemployed, and veterans.

The ability to follow instructions, good communication skills, demonstrated soft skills and the desire to learn.

Projected Annual Participation is 25.

Estimated Annual Component Administrative Cost is $1,625.00.

Basic/Foundational Skills Instruction

The basic education component is designed to increase employability by providing remedial and education leading to a GED, high school diploma or certification. SNAP recipients may be referred to basic education activities to include adult basic and/or foundational skills instruction. This component will increase the participant’s ability to perform math or other activities necessary for the attainment of a secondary school diploma or equivalent, transition to post-secondary education and training, and obtain employment. Clients are assessed to determine their ability to understand and communicate. Partner agencies who will be providing this component are the SC Department of Education and various community- based organizations. Educational expenses will not be paid for training that is normally available to the public at no cost.

Basic/Foundational Skills Instruction is available **statewide** to: ABAWDs, homeless, returning citizens (aka: ex-offenders), single parents, students, those that reside in rural areas, underemployed, and veterans.

Comprehension skills, good communication skills, computer skills and the desire to increase knowledge.

Projected Annual Participation is 950.

Estimated Annual Component Administrative Cost is $152,000.00.

Not Supplanting: The Department of Education utilizes non-federal dollars to pay for adult education instruction and these fees are not charged to participants.

Cost Parity: All costs for SNAP E&T participants must not exceed the cost for non-SNAP participants. All partner agencies must certify that SNAP E&T participants will be charged at the same amount for services as non-SNAP participants for the same services as non-SNAP participants for the same services. Signed certification documents are on file. Prior to contracting SC E&T program verifies that all costs are equal for SNAP and Non-SNAP participants. Course catalogs with tuition cost are requested. Some organizations provide course outline sheets which contain the cost of the courses offered.

Career/Technical Education Programs or Other Vocational Training

This component provides vocational training or equivalent knowledge and skills required in a specific occupational area. The focus of the vocational training component will be the "Quick Jobs" program and other similar certificate and non-certificate programs which allow participants to quickly obtain skills matching the needs of local businesses and industries. Quick Jobs and other certificate programs have been developed for fields where job growth is expected and in consultation with local employers. The Quick Jobs program offers training and certifications with most courses lasting three months or less, but all courses last less than one year. Examples of Quick Jobs certificate and non-certificate programs include welding, manufacturing, information technology, healthcare, customer relations, truck driving and basic construction skills. Technical colleges, non-profit and for-profit organizations that provide vocational training certificates and certifications will provide training in this component. Clients will be assessed to determine literacy level as part of the process.

Career/Technical Education Programs or Other Vocational Training is available **statewide** to: ABAWDs, homeless, returning citizens (aka: ex-offenders), single parents, students, those that reside in rural areas, underemployed, and veterans.

The criteria for participation in the vocational training components depends on the training. However, the minimum requirement for all vocational training is the ability to read at a 6th grade level and the ability to comprehend.

Projected Annual Participation is 1200.

Estimated Annual Component Administrative Cost is $1,800,000.00

Not Supplanting: South Carolina does not provide statewide funding for vocational training programs as verified by each institution's printed and public costs, tuition and financial aid information. Signed certification documents are on file.

Cost Parity: All cost for SNAP E&T participants must not exceed the cost for non-SNAP participants. All partner agencies must certify that SNAP E&T participants will be charged at the same rate as non-SNAP participants for the same services. Signed certification document are on file. Prior to contracting with organizations, the SC E&T program verifies that all cost is equal for SNAP and Non-SNAP participants. Course catalogs with tuition cost is requested. Some organizations provide course outline sheets that contain the cost of the courses offered

Work Readiness Training

Work Readiness Training will provide meaningful assistance to SNAP recipients helping to improve their ability to get a job. Work readiness training activities may be conducted locally or online based on the available resources and will be designed to meet the needs of job seekers and employers. Activities may include skill assessment and educational remediation services that prepare individuals for the workforce. Cognitive skills such as reading for information, applied mathematics, locating information, problem solving, and critical thinking and non-cognitive skills, or soft skills, which are defined as personal characteristics and behavioral skills that enhance an individual's interactions, job performance, and career prospects such as adaptability, integrity, cooperation, and workplace discipline will also be included in this component. All clients will be assessed to determine if they meet the criteria to participate in this component.

Work Readiness Training is available **statewide** to: ABAWDs, homeless, returning citizens (aka: ex-offenders), single parents, students, those that reside in rural areas, underemployed, and veterans.

The criteria for the work readiness training component includes the ability to read and comprehend, good communication skills, demonstrated soft skills and the desire to participate in this component.

Projected Annual Participation is 600.

Estimated Annual Component Administrative Cost is $165,000.00

Not Supplanting: South Carolina does not provide statewide funding for education (ex. GEDs/literacy programs). The E&T program will only reimburse providers for educational instruction that is paid for utilizing non-federal dollars. Signed certification documents are on file.

Cost Parity: All costs for SNAP E&T participants must not exceed the costs for non-SNAP participants. All partner agencies must certify that SNAP E&T participants will be charged at the same rate as non-SNAP participants for the same services. Signed certification documents are on file. Prior to contracting with organizations, the SC E&T program verifies that all cost is equal for SNAP and Non-SNAP participants. Course catalogs with tuition cost is requested. Some organizations provide course outline sheets that contain the cost of the courses offered.

Work Experience

The Work Activity (Work Experience) component is being offered in order to enhance the employability of E&T Program participants. This activity is designed to increase a participant's job skills by providing actual work experience and/or training opportunities. SNAP E&T participants can volunteer to work in any agency or organization to gain work experience. Placements are made at public and private sector employers as well as for-profit agencies. Examples of these placements include clerical, janitorial, and grounds keepers. SNAP clients may participate in the work experience component for up to 20 hours a week. Exact hours worked are based on the clients' SNAP benefits divided by minimum wage (currently $7.25).

Work Experience is available **statewide** to: ABAWDs, homeless, returning citizens (aka: ex-offenders), single parents, students, those that reside in rural areas, underemployed, and veterans.

Individuals referred to this work activity component may be in need of training or are re-entering the job market after a long absence. They must have the ability to follow instructions, good communication skills, demonstrated soft skills and the desire to learn new skills as a volunteer.

Projected Annual Participation is 25.

Estimated Annual Component Administrative Cost is $1,625.00

2. A DESCRIPTION OF THE CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES AND MODELS, HOW PARTICIPANTS WILL BE REFERRED TO CASE MANAGEMENT, HOW THE PARTICIPANT'S CASE WILL BE MANAGED, WHO WILL PROVIDE CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES, AND HOW THE SERVICE PROVIDERS WILL COORDINATE WITH E&T PROVIDERS, THE STATE AGENCY, AND OTHER COMMUNITY RESOURCES, AS APPROPRIATE. THE STATE PLAN SHOULD ALSO DISCUSS HOW THE STATE AGENCY WILL ENSURE E&T PARTICIPANTS ARE PROVIDED WITH TARGETED CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES THROUGH AN EFFICIENT ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESS;

South Carolina provides the following E&T case management services: comprehensive intake assessments, individualized service plans, progress monitoring, coordination with service providers, and reassessment.

Case management is provided by the state's E&T Coordinators and all of the E&T program's contracted partner agencies.

Assessments, employment plans, referrals participation data, outcome data, and support services are provided statewide.

Case management services are delivered via group meeting (virtual), group meeting (in person), individual (virtual), individual (in person), phone, text, and email.

Communication and coordination occurs with other staff and services in the manner described in the table below:

SNAP eligibility staff:	Communication and coordination with eligibility staff occurs via email on an ongoing basis, however, this communication is followed-up in the SCCETS database and the SCOSA imaging system. Case managers provide participation data to eligibility staff for ABAWD work requirements via email, whenever appropriate.
State E&T staff:	Communication and coordination between case managers and E&T state staff occurs via SCCETS database or via email initially but with follow-up in the SCCETS database. Communication may also be done virtually on TEAMS.
Other E&T providers:	Case managers use email, phone communication, and in-person visits to maintain an open dialogue with E&T providers. This communication is documented in the SCCETS database.
Community Resources	Case managers use email, phone contact, and in-person visits to maintain an open dialogue with community resources. When specific to a participant, this communication is documented in the SCCETS database.

All E&T program participants receive targeted, individualized case management. When situations arise where a participant cannot participate in person, the case manager can facilitate virtual or telephonic services to avoid a burden on the client but also maintaining participation and program engagement. Additionally, E&T case managers are physically located in a SC Works Center which makes partner referrals more collaborative but also more efficient and effective for the participant.

The offered case management services are designed to be the central support system that guides participants through the E&T program while still keeping sight of their goals. Meaningful support is provided through individualized employment plans, periodic check-ins which anchor the participant to the program and to progress, participant reimbursements, and connections to community partners, resources, and services.

Case managers collaborated with participants to co-create employment plans based on an individual's goals, strengths, and barriers to employment which ensures relevance and commitment. E&T Coordinators (case managers) have completed training in motivational interviewing and coaching which are techniques that empower participants to lead their own goal setting and decision making. Participant reimbursements such as transportation and childcare mitigate common barriers making goal achievement more feasible. Policies and procedures issued from the state level provide for consistency and quality monitoring. This is achieved through periodic, supervisory case reviews and compliance oversight.

3. AN OPERATING BUDGET FOR THE FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR WITH AN ESTIMATE OF THE COST OF OPERATION FOR EACH FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR COVERED BY THE COMBINED PLAN. ANY STATE AGENCY THAT REQUESTS 50 PERCENT FEDERAL REIMBURSEMENT FOR STATE AGENCY E&T ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS, OTHER THAN FOR PARTICIPANT REIMBURSEMENTS, MUST INCLUDE IN ITS PLAN, OR AMENDMENTS TO ITS PLAN, AN ITEMIZED LIST OF ALL ACTIVITIES AND COSTS FOR WHICH THOSE FEDERAL FUNDS WILL BE CLAIMED, INCLUDING THE COSTS FOR CASE MANAGEMENT AND CASEWORK TO FACILITATE THE TRANSITION FROM ECONOMIC DEPENDENCY TO SELF-SUFFICIENCY THROUGH WORK. COSTS IN EXCESS OF THE FEDERAL GRANT WILL BE ALLOWED ONLY WITH THE PRIOR APPROVAL OF FNS AND MUST BE ADEQUATELY DOCUMENTED TO ASSURE THAT THEY ARE NECESSARY, REASONABLE AND PROPERLY ALLOCATED. A STATE MUST SUBMIT A PLAN AMENDMENT TO REQUEST BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS AT LEAST 30 DAYS PRIOR TO PLANNED IMPLEMENTATION;

Direct Program and Admin Costs

	Non-Federal Share	Federal Share	Total
Salary/Wages (State agency only)	$400,000.00	$1,140,965.26	$1,540,965.26

E&T Program Director-$72,419.92*1.00 FTE=$72,419.92 6 Office Administrative Staff $328,856.19*1.00 FTE=$328,856.19 SNAP E&T Coordinators-$739,689.15 *1.00 FTE=$739,689.15

	Non-Federal Share	Federal Share	Total
Fringe Benefits	$0.00	$506,297.81	$506,297.81

Fringe benefits are based on the actual amounts for each staff and includes state retirement, social security, health and dental insurance, and retirement. The approved fringe rate is 46%.

	Non-Federal Share	Federal Share	Total
Non-Capital Equipment	$0.00	$12,468.00	$12,468.00

Funds will be utilized to purchase printers, ink cartridges and other needed non-capital equipment and supplies.

	Non-Federal Share	Federal Share	Total
Materials	$0.00	$15,254.00	$15,254.00

Funds will be utilized to purchase office supplies. Copy paper, pens, calendars, scissors, staplers and all other essential materials will be purchased for the operation of the E&T program

	Non-Federal Share	Federal Share	Total
Travel	$0.00	$22,280.43	$22,280.43

Frequent travel is required in order to effectively administer the E&T program in South Carolina. The E&T Coordinators are responsible for multiple counties and travel daily in order to conduct orientations and case management for SNAP clients. The central office staff conduct announced and unannounced monitoring visits throughout the state which also require a significant amount of travel. E&T staff must also travel for various meetings and trainings throughout the year.

	Non-Federal Share	Federal Share	Total
Building Space	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00

	Non-Federal Share	Federal Share	Total
Equipment and other capital expenditures	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00

There are no plans for equipment and other expenditures over $5000 that would be charged to E&T funds.

	Non-Federal Share	Federal Share	Total
Subtotal / State Agency Costs Only	$400,000.00	$1,722,265.50	$2,122,265.50
Contractual Costs	$4,465,927.28	$4,565,927.28	$9,031,854.56
County Administered Direct Program Admin Cost	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
Total Direct Program and Admin Costs	$4,865,927.28	$6,288,192.78	$11,154,120.06

	Non-Federal Share	Federal Share	Total
Indirect Costs	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00

	Non-Federal Share	Federal Share	Total
Federally Approved Cost Allocated Costs - State agency only	$0.00	$158,029.50	$158,029.50
County Administered Allocated Costs (only applicable to County Administered Programs)	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
Total Allocated Costs based on Cost Allocation Plan	$0.00	$158,029.50	$158,029.50

	Non-Federal Share	Federal Share	Total
State In-kind Contribution	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
Total Administrative Costs	$4,865,927.28	$6,446,222.28	$11,312,149.56

	Non-Federal Share	Federal Share	Total
Dependent Care	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
Transportation & Other Costs	$252,350.00	$252,350.00	$504,700.00
State Agency Cost for Dependent Care	$0.00		$0.00
Total Participant Reimbursements	$252,350.00	$252,350.00	$504,700.00

	Non-Federal Share	Federal Share	Total

Total Cost	$5,118,277.28	$6,698,572.28	$11,816,849.56

Source Type	Funding Sources	Allocation or Target	Distribution of Planned Expenses	Over/Under Allocation/Target or Over/Under Planned Expenses	Percent of Allocation Planned Use
Federal	100 Percent Federal Grant	$1,580,295.00	$1,580,295.00	$0.00	100.00%
Federal	100 Percent Federal Grant - Additional Funds	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	
Federal	ABAWD Pledge Grant		$0.00	$0.00	
Federal	Total - All 100 Percent Funds	$1,580,295.00	$1,580,295.00	$0.00	
Federal	50 Percent Administrative		$4,865,927.28		
Non-Federal	50 Percent Administrative		$4,865,927.28		
Federal	50 Percent Participant Reimbursements		$252,350.00		
Non-Federal	50 Percent Participant Reimbursements		$252,350.00		
Federal	Total 50 Percent Federal Target	$1,481,612.00	$5,118,277.28	$3,636,665.28	
	Total	$3,061,907.00	$11,816,849.56		

Funding Sources	Non-Federal Share	Federal Share	Total
100 Percent Federal Grant		$1,580,295.00	$1,580,295.00
ABAWD Pledge Grant		$0.00	$0.00
50 Percent Administrative	$4,865,927.28	$4,865,927.28	$9,731,854.56
50 Percent Dependent Care	$0.00	$0.00	
50 Percent Transportation/Other	$252,350.00	$252,350.00	
50 Percent Total Participant Reimbursements	$252,350.00	$252,350.00	$504,700.00
Total 50 Percent Funds	$5,118,277.28	$5,118,277.28	$10,236,554.56
Total	$5,118,277.28	$6,698,572.28	$11,816,849.56

4. THE CATEGORIES AND TYPES OF INDIVIDUALS THE STATE AGENCY INTENDS TO EXEMPT FROM E&T PARTICIPATION, THE ESTIMATED PERCENTAGE OF WORK REGISTRANTS THE STATE AGENCY PLANS TO EXEMPT, AND THE FREQUENCY WITH WHICH THE STATE AGENCY PLANS TO REEVALUATE THE VALIDITY OF ITS EXEMPTIONS;

South Carolina exempts all work registrants from mandatory participation in the SNAP E&T program.

South Carolina re-evaluates these exemptions from mandatory E&T on an annual basis.

5. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POPULATION THE STATE AGENCY INTENDS TO PLACE IN E&T;

☒ ABAWDs

☒ Homeless

☒ Veterans

☒ Students

☒ Single parents

☒ Returning citizens (aka: ex-offenders)

☒ Underemployed

☒ Those that reside in rural areas

6. THE ESTIMATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS THE STATE AGENCY EXPECTS TO PLACE IN E&T;

2,400 participants are estimated to volunteer in South Carolina's SNAP E&T program.

7. THE GEOGRAPHIC AREAS COVERED AND NOT COVERED BY THE E&T PLAN AND WHY, AND THE TYPE AND LOCATION OF SERVICES TO BE OFFERED;

SCDSS will operate a voluntary SNAP E&T Program in FY 2026 in all 46 counties of the state to assist SNAP recipients in securing employment.

Due to the voluntary nature of the program, it is feasible to offer the services to all SNAP recipients in the state.

8. THE METHOD THE STATE AGENCY USES TO COUNT ALL WORK REGISTRANTS AS OF THE FIRST DAY OF THE NEW FISCAL YEAR;

South Carolina generates monthly work registrant (WR) reports. A report is generated utilizing data from the state's eligibility system showing all WRs in the state on October 1st of each year.

9. THE METHOD THE STATE AGENCY USES TO REPORT WORK REGISTRANT INFORMATION ON THE QUARTERLY FORM FNS–583;

Data for the submission of the FNS-583 Report is collected manually (reports) and through databases.

- The number of WR on Oct 1st is provided by a state agency report (MR719)
- Monthly WR data is provided by a monthly state agency report (MR721)
- All monthly participation and outcome data comes from the E&T database

- The number of ABAWD exemptions comes from the state agency Eligibility System database
- The number of unduplicated participants comes from the E&T database
- Outcome data for the fourth quarter report comes from the E&T database

All of the data is collected by state agency employees. The reports are downloaded monthly. After all data is collected, it's entered into FPRS.

10. THE METHOD THE STATE AGENCY USES TO PREVENT WORK REGISTRANTS FROM BEING COUNTED TWICE WITHIN A FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR. IF THE STATE AGENCY UNIVERSALLY WORK REGISTERS ALL SNAP APPLICANTS, THIS METHOD MUST SPECIFY HOW THE STATE AGENCY EXCLUDES THOSE EXEMPT FROM WORK REGISTRATION UNDER 7 C.F.R. §273.7(B)(1). IF THE STATE AGENCY WORK REGISTERS NONEXEMPT PARTICIPANTS WHENEVER A NEW APPLICATION IS SUBMITTED, THIS METHOD MUST ALSO SPECIFY HOW THE STATE AGENCY EXCLUDES THOSE PARTICIPANTS WHO MAY HAVE ALREADY BEEN REGISTERED WITHIN THE PAST 12 MONTHS AS SPECIFIED UNDER 7 C.F.R. §273.7(A)(1)(I);

In order to ensure an unduplicated count of work registrants in the state, a report is generated to identify the number of work registrants in the state as of October 1st. New work registrants added during October and the remainder of the fiscal year are checked against the master list before being reported as a new work registrant and therefore, ensuring an unduplicated count.

11. THE ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE UNITS RESPONSIBLE FOR CERTIFICATION AND THE UNITS OPERATING THE E&T COMPONENTS, INCLUDING UNITS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM, IF AVAILABLE. FNS IS SPECIFICALLY CONCERNED THAT THE LINES OF COMMUNICATION BE EFFICIENT AND THAT NONCOMPLIANCE BY THE PARTICIPANT BE REPORTED TO THE CERTIFICATION UNIT WITHIN 10 WORKING DAYS AFTER THE NONCOMPLIANCE OCCURS;

South Carolina has a separate SNAP E&T unit that manages all aspects of the SNAP E&T program. Staff working in this unit is 100% dedicated to the SNAP E&T program. The SNAP E&T program also includes the Pathway Scholarship. The Pathways Scholarship is an employment and training program that provides scholarships to SNAP clients who wish to further their education and to gain skills and certifications that can lead to employment. The Pathways Scholarship Program (PSP) provide mini grants that will pay for tuition and books for SNAP clients. These funds can be used at any accredited organization that provide work related training certifications. Pathways Scholarships are utilized when there are no existing E&T providers offering a participant's desired training curriculum.

The SNAP E&T unit consists of a program director, two program supervisors, a program navigator, a support service specialist, five eligibility specialists, and a fiscal analyst/scholarship program coordinator. There are also 16 E&T regional coordinators who work directly with SNAP E&T participants.

• Program Director - Manages overall program operations. The program director provides training, supervision and guidance for all E&T employees.

• Regional Supervisors (2) - Supervises the E&T Coordinators, provide training, case reviews and support for all of the regional employees.

• Program Navigator - The program navigator assists all contracted providers. Provides group and individual training, assists with conducting ME Reviews, monitors all data entered into the E&T provider portal and assists with on-boarding new partner agencies. The navigator is the direct contact for all contracted partner agencies.

• Support Services Coordinator– Ensures that all requests for support services are processed timely and that all documentation is accurate. The coordinator manages the E&T program's centralized inbox and supervises the five E&T Eligibility Specialists.

Eligibility Specialist (5) - Screens and schedules eligible SNAP recipients to attend the local E&T program orientation. Responsible for managing the E&T database referral queue and the benefit portal queue for the Pathways Scholarship.

• Fiscal Analyst, Scholarship Program and ME Coordinator – Manages all financial aspects of the program (processes invoices, conducts financial ME reviews, reviews all A133 audit reports, reviews all budgets for contracts, maintains all financial records, etc.). Reviews all applications for E&T scholarships, conducts assessments, creates employment plans, tracks and enters all client participation, case notes and outcome data into the E&T database. Reviews all county E&T ME reviews and assists with corrective action plans as needed.

• E&T Coordinators - Conducts orientations, completes assessments, creates employment plans, makes referrals to training and educational programs, assists with finding employment opportunities, provides support services and case management for E&T program participants. Tracks and enters all client participation, case notes and outcome data into the E&T database.

SCDSS eligibility staff are responsible for all actions related to determining SNAP eligibility including interviews, certification, recertification, and verifying information. During the certification process (initial application or recertification), staff will notify SNAP recipients about the availability of the E&T Program.

During the application process, eligibility and case management staff utilize an oral script during the interview process to determine if a client meets the eligibility criteria to receive SNAP benefits. Once eligibility has been established, the individuals are screened to determine if the client meets any work registration exemptions. If the client does not meet an exemption, the worker codes them as a work registrant (WR). South Carolina notifies all WRs about their work requirements as well as the SNAP E&T program (and other work programs). This information is mailed to the SNAP recipient in their benefit approval letter. Following the determination for SNAP approval, a written Consolidated Work Notice is sent.

After screening the client for appropriateness (i.e. ability to work, interested in participation, etc.) the eligibility staff will refer all eligible SNAP participants to the E&T program.

After a client is referred to the E&T program, the client is assigned to an E&T Coordinator. The E&T Coordinator will conduct an orientation, complete an assessment and an individualized employment plan with the client. Based on the assessment and client's interview, the client is then referred to a component and provided support services if needed.

The E&T program contracts with various community-based organizations, state agencies and technical colleges statewide. South Carolina utilizes a MIS system, the South Carolina

Comprehensive Employment & Training System database (SCCETS), as its main source of communication with partner agencies. The SCCETS database is a web-based provider portal which allows the state and partner agencies to enter and share participation data, outcome data, certifications, employment, case management notes and all pertinent information pertaining to the client's participation in the E&T program (assessments, employment plans, support services provided, etc.). The state agency can view all data entered into the system by all contracted partner agencies. Communication is also done through email, virtual meetings on Microsoft Teams, by telephone, and in person.

In order to keep all partners aware of new policies, procedures and other programmatic information, the SC E&T program:

• Schedules virtual training meetings to provide updates and information;

• Updates and submits copies of the SNAP E&T Third Party Reimbursement Program Provider Handbook;

• Schedules individual training and technical assistance for partner agencies; and

• Conducts an annual training conference that provides updates and technical assistance.

The SC E&T program contracts with various community-based organizations, state agencies and technical colleges statewide. South Carolina utilizes a MIS system, the South Carolina Comprehensive Employment & Training System database (SCCETS), as its main source of communication with partner agencies. The SCCETS database is a web-based provider portal which allows the state and partner agencies to enter and share participation data, outcome data, certifications, employment, case management notes and all pertinent information pertaining to the client's participation in the E&T program (assessments, employment plans, support services provided, etc.). The state agency can view all data entered into the system by all contracted partner agencies.

The SCCETS database has a secure portal that allows providers to determine a clients' eligibility in real-time. Partner agencies can complete client assessments, employment plans, add clients to components, enter participation and outcome data from any computer. They can also enter support services and maintain case management notes. The SCCETS database allows providers to submit invoices and contract renewals. Partner agencies are able to view other components that their clients are participating in as well. Clients can also be referred through the system. Based on the data entered, the administrative team at the state office can download reports and get real-time program data. Provider determinations and reverse referrals are also communicated through the database.

Management Evaluation (ME) review questionnaires and final reports are downloaded from the SCCETS database.

The state agency conducts annual Management Evaluation (ME) reviews for all contracted partner agencies. A review is conducted once a year for each provider.

County office operations also conducts ME reviews. The frequency of the reviews are based on the size of the county's average monthly SNAP household caseload. The reviews are scheduled as follows:

• Annually - (large) 25,000 and Above

• Bi-Annually – (medium) 5,000 – 24,999

• Tri-Annually – (small) less than 4,999

The ME reviews provide a systematic method of monitoring and assessing program operations. They also provide a basis to improve and strengthen program operations by identifying and correcting deficiencies.

Prior to review for contracted partner agencies, the team will review the contract and scope of work, a review questionnaire, submitted invoices and all back-up documentation requested prior to the actual review. The ME review team also conducts participant case reviews. All reviews are conducted for a specific period of time with a minimum of three months, unless under special circumstances.

During the review, the team conducts an entrance conference (to explain the review), interviews with staff, case file reviews, review on-site financial documents, perform program observations, and conducts an exit conference (overall review comments). During the exit conference preliminary findings and recommendations may be discussed.

Prior to annual monitoring visits, the state agency provides technical assistance to new organizations to ensure they are prepared for compliance with programmatic and fiscal requirements by providing:

• Onboarding of new partners (A scheduled meeting to review program requirements and responsibilities). Partners are able to ask questions and receive guidance and support.

• Training on program operations (A scheduled training is conducted to train on required data entry into the database system. (participant eligibility, reporting, and case management)

• Training on fiscal operations (A scheduled training is conducted to train on fiscal requirements and accountability (invoicing procedures, documentation, allowable costs)

• The Program Navigator is available to provide ongoing support to partner agencies, assisting with questions or challenges that may arise while working with participants.

• Ongoing TA is also provided through check ins, calls, TEAMS meetings and email communication.

• E&T providers are invited to an annual training conference where best practices, new initiatives, and policy changes are shared.

SC's SNAP E&T Program monitors E&T providers' program and fiscal operations annually.

The state agency evaluates the effectiveness of partner agencies by analyzing participant enrollment, program completions, certifications/certificates, and by the number of participants who become employed.

The ultimate measurement is the number of participants who become employed after participation, have reached self-sufficiency, and do not rely on SNAP benefits to feed their families.

The SNAP E&T program uses the following data sources to complete the evaluations:

• Wage records from the states' labor department (Department of Employment and Workforce)

• The SCCETS database

• FNS 583 Report

• FNS Annual Report

• Southeast Region Quarterly Report

The E&T program is continuing the process of developing a Return on Investment (ROI) analysis and a database dashboard utilizing the above data and key performance indicators to evaluate the performance of the entire SNAP E&T program.

SC's SNAP E&T Program evaluates providers' performance in achieving the purpose of E&T annually.

12. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE STATE AGENCY AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS IT PLANS TO COORDINATE WITH FOR THE PROVISION OF SERVICES, INCLUDING ORGANIZATIONS IN THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM, IF AVAILABLE. COPIES OF CONTRACTS MUST BE AVAILABLE FOR INSPECTION; THE STATE AGENCY MUST DOCUMENT HOW IT CONSULTED WITH THE STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD. IF THE STATE AGENCY CONSULTED WITH PRIVATE EMPLOYERS OR EMPLOYER ORGANIZATIONS IN LIEU OF THE STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD, IT MUST DOCUMENT THIS CONSULTATION AND EXPLAIN THE DETERMINATION THAT DOING SO WAS MORE EFFECTIVE OR EFFICIENT. THE STATE AGENCY MUST INCLUDE IN ITS E&T STATE PLAN A DESCRIPTION OF ANY OUTCOMES FROM THE CONSULTATION WITH THE STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD OR PRIVATE EMPLOYERS OR EMPLOYER ORGANIZATIONS. THE STATE AGENCY MUST ALSO ADDRESS IN THE E&T STATE PLAN THE EXTENT TO WHICH E&T ACTIVITIES WILL BE CARRIED OUT IN COORDINATION WITH THE ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE I OF WIOA;

Date	State Workforce Development Board Name	Title(s) of Person Consulted	Outcome of Consultation
06/19/2025	Mayor George Patrick McLeer, Jr.	Mayor of Fountain Inn, SC	Mr. McLeer Jr. proposed staging the E&T mobile office in locations experiencing increased food insecurity and other locations to create a strategic opportunity to engage individuals at the point where they are already seeking assistance, which would create a potential entry point into the workforce

			pipeline beyond SC Works Centers.
06/19/2025	Colonel Craig Currey	Chief Executive Officer	Mr. Currey is with Homeless Transitions Center and shared that the homeless centers across the state are open to collaboration with supporting the work programs. Many of the center program graduates rely on SNAP benefits, as they often face food insecurity, especially after transitioning out of housing programs. He noted that 15 individuals recently graduated, but many are struggling by the end of the month due to empty refrigerators. There is a significant need for support statewide, and he expressed interest in continued communication and partnership in developing ways to utilize the mobile technology office to bring additional services to more jobseekers.

06/19/2025	Representative Randy Ligon	SC House of Representatives	Mr. Ligon expressed strong support for the mobile technology office, noting its statewide impact. He questioned whether an additional mobile technology office is necessary or if it would create management challenges. However, given the size of the state with 46 counties and 40 centers, he believes there may be room for more than one mobile technology office. He is open to exploring coordination strategies and indicated he will advocate for the program, and its success.

As a result of the discussion generated with the State Workforce Development Board, leadership from SNAP E&T and the Department of Employment and Workforce (South Carolina's labor agency) are working to plan and implement events collaboratively for better utilization of several mobile specialty units. This collaboration is planned to continue into 2026. Following an endorsement by Governor McMaster, SC's SNAP E&T Program was selected by the National Governors Association's Center for Best Practices to participate in the 2025 cohort of the Policy Academy to Strengthen SNAP E&T service delivery. SC's application proposed to build upon a the existing, thriving SNAP E&T system and connect to other human services priorities. SNAP E&T will continue to work with WIOA partners around the potential construct of a shared case management system to improve customer experiences across all programs and to support faster, more data driven employment and re-employment services. The included partner agencies are the Department of Employment and Workforce, the Vocational Rehabilitation Department, the Commission for the Blind, the Department of Education/Adult Education, the Department on Aging, and the Department of Social Services' Temporary Assistance to Needy Families program.

Continuing the work from FY2024 centered around co-enrollment of WIOA and SNAP E&T participants, a pilot study is being established in one local workforce development area to explore ways to better align service delivery of co-enrolled participants. Ideally, both programs will identify opportunities to leverage services to fully serve the dually enrolled customers and thereby improving individual outcomes. As a partner with a WIOA Combined Plan, SC's SNAP E&T continues to coordinate efficient and effective service delivery for job seekers under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

SC intends to utilize TANF "leaver" data as a source of potential referrals to the E&T program. Additionally, E&T leadership will connect with TANF management to provide targeted, refresher training on at least a quarterly basis on the benefits to TANF

participants of joining the E&T program. SC aims to build upon the existing relationships established between TANF and E&T case managers to ideally generate additional, quality referrals to the E&T program.

During FY25, SNAP E&T presented to Child Support Services and collaborated to share the benefits of referring participants to the program. Additionally, SNAP E&T presented to the SC Center for Fathers and Families on the benefits of the programs forging better collaborative communication. These presentations have resulted in stronger, local connections and SC intends to build upon this momentum in FY26.

13. THE AVAILABILITY, IF APPROPRIATE, OF E&T PROGRAMS FOR INDIANS LIVING ON RESERVATIONS AFTER THE STATE AGENCY HAS CONSULTED IN GOOD FAITH WITH APPROPRIATE TRIBAL ORGANIZATIONS;

The South Carolina Department of Social Services (SCDSS) made multiple attempts to conduct a Tribal Counseling Sharing Session (TCSS) with the Catawba Indian Nation for FY 2025. The goal was to discuss programs of interest, share information, and provide applicable feedback as it relates to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). SCDSS does not administer a separate/specific SNAP program for the Catawba Nation on the reservation; however, with the approval of Tribal Leadership, the Agency's intent was to share an overview and any programmatic updates for the following SNAP and/or USDA Food and Nutrition Programs with the Catawba Nation: • SNAP Application Process • SNAP Employment and Training Services • SNAP Education and Outreach Services • SNAP Incentive Program (Healthy Bucks) • Senior Farmer's Market Nutrition Program SCDSS prepared a PowerPoint presentation summarizing SNAP and SNAP programs relevant to this Sharing Session. Agency staff were prepared and available for open dialog and to answer any questions or concerns that resulted based on the information that would have been shared. SCDSS remains committed to connecting with Catawba Indian Nation for the purposes of collaboration and information sharing.

14. IF A CONCILIATION PROCESS IS PLANNED, THE PROCEDURES THAT WILL BE USED WHEN AN INDIVIDUAL FAILS TO COMPLY WITH AN E&T PROGRAM REQUIREMENT. INCLUDE THE LENGTH OF THE CONCILIATION PERIOD; AND

This is not applicable to South Carolina's program.

15. THE PAYMENT RATES FOR CHILD CARE ESTABLISHED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROVISIONS OF 45 CFR 98.43, AND BASED ON LOCAL MARKET RATE SURVEYS.

The South Carolina ABC Childcare Program provides childcare for SNAP E&T participants statewide. There is no charge to the SNAP E&T program for this support service. At this time there is not a cap on the number of slots available to the E&T program.

Currently, there is no wait list for SNAP E&T participants to receive childcare in South Carolina. There is no rate associated with the childcare provided through the E&T program. These slots are provided free of charge to the E&T program.

16. THE COMBINED (FEDERAL/STATE) STATE AGENCY REIMBURSEMENT RATE FOR TRANSPORTATION COSTS AND OTHER EXPENSES REASONABLY NECESSARY AND DIRECTLY RELATED TO PARTICIPATION INCURRED BY E&T PARTICIPANTS. IF THE STATE AGENCY

PROPOSES TO PROVIDE DIFFERENT REIMBURSEMENT AMOUNTS TO ACCOUNT FOR VARYING LEVELS OF EXPENSES, FOR INSTANCE FOR GREATER OR LESSER COSTS OF TRANSPORTATION IN DIFFERENT AREAS OF THE STATE, IT MUST INCLUDE THEM HERE.

Estimated number of E&T participants to receive participant reimbursements	1,080
Estimated number of E&T participants to receive reimbursements for dependent care participation costs	0
Estimated number of E&T participants to receive reimbursements for transportation and other participation costs	1,080
Percentage of participants expected to receive reimbursements	45.00%
Estimated budget for E&T participant reimbursements in upcoming FY	$504,700.00
Estimated budget per participant in fiscal year	$467.31
Estimated number of E&T participants to receive participant reimbursements per month	90
Estimated budget of participant reimbursements per E&T participant per month	$467.31

Allowable Participant Reimbursements	**Participant Reimbursement Caps (Optional)**	**Who Provides the Participant Reimbursement?**	**What is the payment method for Participant Reimbursements?**	**Method of Disbursement**
Childcare will be available on a limited first come, first-served basis for SNAP recipients participating in the E&T program and have children in their SNAP household.	No cost to the E&T program in South Carolina.	SNAP State Agency	Direct payment to participant	Vouchers. Reimbursement is provided in advance.

Component related expenses resulting from E&T participation in an allowable activity. (For Example, welding helmets, uniforms, personal protective equipment, background checks, test fees, etc.).	300.00 per fiscal year	SNAP E&T Provider	Direct payment to vendor(s)	E&T e-Pay Visa card, check. Reimbursement is provided both in advance and as a reimbursement

Component related expenses resulting from E&T participation in an allowable activity. (For Example, welding helmets, uniforms, personal protective equipment, background checks, test fees, etc.).	$300.00 per fiscal year	SNAP State Agency	Direct payment to vendor(s)	E&T e-Pay Visa card, check. Reimbursement is provided both in advance and as a reimbursement.
Job Retention Support Services	Up to $150.00 (lifetime limit)	SNAP State Agency	Direct payment to vendor(s)	Check, e-Pay Visa card Reimbursement is provided both in advance and as a reimbursement

Rent Assistance	$1,000.00 lifetime limit	SNAP State Agency	Direct payment to vendor(s)	Check, credit card payment for items purchased. Reimbursement is provided both in advance and as a reimbursement
Technology Support Services: The technology support services can be utilized to pay for up to three months of internet access.	$225.00 lifetime limit	SNAP State Agency	Direct payment to vendor(s)	Check, credit card payment for items purchased. Reimbursement is provided assistance with telephone connectivity and the purchase of a tablet
Transportation	$150.00 per month	SNAP State Agency	Direct payment to participant	E&T e-Pay Visa card, gas card, check, bus tickets. Reimbursement is provided both in advance and as a reimbursement

17. Information about expenses the State agency proposes to reimburse. FNS must be afforded the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed reimbursements before they are implemented.

Allowable Participant Reimbursements	**Participant Reimbursement Caps (Optional)**	**Who Provides the Participant Reimbursement?**	**What is the payment method for Participant Reimbursements?**	**Method of Disbursement**

Childcare will be available on a limited first come, first-served basis for SNAP recipients participating in the E&T program and have children in their SNAP household.	No cost to the E&T program in South Carolina.	SNAP State Agency	Direct payment to participant	Vouchers. Reimbursement is provided in advance.
Component related expenses resulting from E&T participation in an allowable activity. (For Example, welding helmets, uniforms, personal protective equipment, background checks, test fees, etc.).	300.00 per fiscal year	SNAP E&T Provider	Direct payment to vendor(s)	E&T e-Pay Visa card, check. Reimbursement is provided both in advance and as a reimbursement
Component related expenses resulting from E&T participation in an allowable activity. (For Example, welding helmets, uniforms, personal protective equipment, background checks, test fees, etc.).	$300.00 per fiscal year	SNAP State Agency	Direct payment to vendor(s)	E&T e-Pay Visa card, check. Reimbursement is provided both in advance and as a reimbursement.

Job Retention Support Services	Up to $150.00 (lifetime limit)	SNAP State Agency	Direct payment to vendor(s)	Check, e-Pay Visa card Reimbursement is provided both in advance and as a reimbursement
Rent Assistance	$1,000.00 lifetime limit	SNAP State Agency	Direct payment to vendor(s)	Check, credit card payment for items purchased. Reimbursement is provided both in advance and as a reimbursement
Technology Support Services: The technology support services can be utilized to pay for up to three months of internet access.	$225.00 lifetime limit	SNAP State Agency	Direct payment to vendor(s)	Check, credit card payment for items purchased. Reimbursement is provided assistance with telephone connectivity and the purchase of a tablet
Transportation	$150.00 per month	SNAP State Agency	Direct payment to participant	E&T e-Pay Visa card, gas card, check, bus tickets. Reimbursement is provided both in advance and as a reimbursement

18. FOR EACH COMPONENT THAT IS EXPECTED TO INCLUDE 100 OR MORE PARTICIPANTS, REPORTING MEASURES THAT THE STATE WILL COLLECT AND INCLUDE IN THE ANNUAL REPORT IN PARAGRAPH (C)(17) OF THIS SECTION. SUCH MEASURES MAY INCLUDE:

A. THE PERCENTAGE AND NUMBER OF PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS WHO RECEIVED E&T SERVICES AND ARE IN UNSUBSIDIZED EMPLOYMENT SUBSEQUENT TO THE RECEIPT OF THOSE SERVICES;

555 (or 21.33%) of E&T participants obtained employment in FY2024 as documented in South Carolina's annual report.

B. THE PERCENTAGE AND NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS WHO OBTAIN A RECOGNIZED CREDENTIAL, A REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP, OR A REGULAR SECONDARY SCHOOL DIPLOMA (OR ITS RECOGNIZED EQUIVALENT), WHILE PARTICIPATING IN, OR WITHIN 1 YEAR AFTER RECEIVING E&T SERVICES;

601 (or 44%) participants obtained a recognized credential, a registered apprenticeship, or a regular secondary school diploma (or its recognized equivalent), while participating in, or within 1 year after receiving E&T services.

C. THE PERCENTAGE AND NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS WHO ARE IN AN EDUCATION OR TRAINING PROGRAM THAT IS INTENDED TO LEAD TO A RECOGNIZED CREDENTIAL, A REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP AN ON-THE-JOB TRAINING PROGRAM, A REGULAR SECONDARY SCHOOL DIPLOMA (OR ITS RECOGNIZED EQUIVALENT), OR UNSUBSIDIZED EMPLOYMENT;

879 of participants are in an education or training program that is intended to lead to a recognized credential, a registered apprenticeship an on-the-job training program, a regular secondary school diploma (or its recognized equivalent), or unsubsidized employment.

D. MEASURES DEVELOPED TO ASSESS THE SKILLS ACQUISITION OF E&T PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS THAT REFLECT THE GOALS OF THE SPECIFIC COMPONENTS INCLUDING THE PERCENTAGE AND NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS WHO ARE MEETING PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS OR ARE GAINING SKILLS LIKELY TO LEAD TO EMPLOYMENT; AND

Outcome Reporting Measures	**Employment & Earnings Measures**	**Attainment of Credential / Certificate**	**Measurable Skill Gains**
Quarterly Wage Records (QWR)	■		
National Directory of New Hires (NDNH)			
State Management	■	■	■

Information System (MIS)			
Manual Follow-up with SNAP E&T Participants			
Random Sample			
Other			

E. OTHER INDICATORS APPROVED BY FNS IN THE E&T STATE PLAN.

This is not applicable.

B. ABLE-BODIED ADULTS WITHOUT DEPENDENTS (ABAWD) [28]

1. A State agency interested in receiving additional funding for serving able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) subject to the 3- month time limit, in accordance with 7 C.F.R. §273.7(d)(3), must include the following for each Federal fiscal year covered by the Combined Plan under WIOA:

[28]7 CFR § 273.7(c)(7)

1. ITS PLEDGE TO OFFER A QUALIFYING ACTIVITY TO ALL AT-RISK ABAWD APPLICANTS AND RECIPIENTS;

South Carolina does not operate as a "pledge state".

2. ESTIMATED COSTS OF FULFILLING ITS PLEDGE;

South Carolina does not operate as a "pledge state".

3. A DESCRIPTION OF MANAGEMENT CONTROLS IN PLACE TO MEET PLEDGE REQUIREMENTS;

South Carolina does not operate as a "pledge state".

4. A DISCUSSION OF ITS CAPACITY AND ABILITY TO SERVE AT-RISK ABAWDS;

.

5. INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIZE AND SPECIAL NEEDS OF ITS ABAWD POPULATION; AND

.

6. INFORMATION ABOUT THE EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND WORKFARE COMPONENTS IT WILL OFFER TO MEET THE ABAWD WORK REQUIREMENT

TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE (TAA)

There are no program-specific state planning requirements for TAA. If the state includes TAA in a Combined State Plan, the state must incorporate TAA in its responses to the common planning elements in sections II, III, IV, and V of the WIOA State Plan requirements instrument.

Has the state incorporated TAA into the sections indicated above?

Yes

JOBS FOR VETERANS' STATE GRANTS

(OMB Control Number: 1293-0017)

Components of the Jobs for Veterans State Grants State Plan

Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) recipients must provide a four-year state plan as a condition for the receipt of annual funding in accordance with 38 U.S.C. § 4102A(c). This plan must include responses to each of the components below.

A. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE INTENDS TO PROVIDE EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING, AND JOB PLACEMENT SERVICES TO VETERANS AND ELIGIBLE PERSONS UNDER THE JVSG PROGRAM (I.E., VIRTUALLY AND IN-PERSON).

The goal is to help the Veteran become job-ready and gain employment in a field of their interest and/or ability. South Carolina has developed a standardized process for referring veterans and other eligible persons with qualifying employment barrier (QEB) to a DVOP (see attached flowchart). This screening approach begins at the point of entry into the American Job Center (AJC). Screening can be conducted either in-person or electronically by front desk staff asking a series of questions to determine eligibility for the various AJC programs, QEBs, and services desired. South Carolina also offers assistance through a virtual AJC where veterans and eligible persons can identify what services they are seeking, and the system will match them with the appropriate AJC partner.

As part of the screening process, all customers are asked if they have served in the military. If they answer "YES" to the question, the veteran/eligible person is given a copy of the most current approved "DVOP eligibility screening tool", with instructions on how to complete the form and then return it to the intake person. The intake person will review the form and assess the questionnaire responses. If determined to have an QEB, and based on their self-attested reason for visit, they may be referred to a DVOP for services.

At this point, veterans and eligible persons who are identified as having an QEB through the initial intake process at the AJC and need specific Individualized Career Services will be referred to appropriate DVOP staff for assistance as required. Through the case management framework, the DVOP and the Veteran/eligible person will work together to complete a comprehensive assessment to document any current or potential QEBs and services needed to help overcome those QEBs and develop an individual employment plan (IEP) to assist them in becoming job ready through agreed upon goals and objectives. The veteran/eligible person would then, if required, be referred to an appropriate partner for additional services as needed based on the IEP. Consistent contact with the veteran/eligible person will be conducted through in-person, virtual, or telephonic means. Consistent contact will occur no less than every 14 days and more often as needed, depending on the veteran/eligible person's barriers. DVOPs will continue to follow-up with the veteran/eligible person once they obtain employment at 30/60/90-*day* intervals.

In the absence of DVOP staff or if the Veteran/eligible person either opts out of services rendered by the DVOP or does not meet the criteria for DVOP services, other Wagner-Peyser staff assumes responsibility for the career assessment of the individual and assures that appropriate referrals and services are provided. DVOPs are a supplement to the AJC staff and should not be a substitute for providing services.

South Carolina will continually monitor and assess the individualized career and employer services performance data provided to ensure that the roles and responsibilities of both the DVOP and the LVER are adhered to and determine if adjustments to the program are needed. The Quarterly Manager's Reports, along with state and JVSG onsite monitoring review and office validations desk audits, will be used to ensure compliance with this directive and other guidance as given by DOL ETA, VETS, and SCDEW.

DVOP staff and other AJC staff work together as a close-knit team to provide services to all veterans/eligible persons. After the comprehensive assessment is conducted to identify barriers and services needed, a DVOP will refer the veteran/eligible person to partner AJC staff such as Title I (Adult) for training and other support services, Adult Education (AE), the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T), Re-employment Services Eligibility Assessment (RESEA), and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. The use of this multi-agency strategy, combined with a value for streamlined program integration, will ensure the veteran/eligible person is provided maximum employment and training assistance that will aid in addressing the basic skills needed to promote more qualified, effective, and efficient opportunities for veterans. DVOPs will coordinate case management with the partners to ensure there is not a duplication in services, the IEP is being followed/updated as appropriate, and case notes are properly maintained.

LVER staff are assigned to each of the twelve local workforce areas. They are responsible for employer outreach, promoting the benefits of hiring veterans/eligible persons and developing employment opportunities for veterans/eligible persons in their respective areas. One way this promotion process can be accomplished is by introducing employers to the immediate tangible incentives such as the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC, when funded), Incumbent Worker Training, On the job training (OJT), apprenticeships, GI Bill benefits, and State and Federal dislocated worker programs that are available to them when they hire Veterans.

Intangible incentives to hiring veterans include the "soft skills" veterans bring to the hiring table such as teamwork, trainability, leadership, diversity in the workplace, and a host of others that are inherent to the military experience. The LVER staff increases exposure for employers by organizing and/or promoting public events like career fairs, Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) events, Chamber of Commerce events, and the Hire Vets Medallion Program, which in turn increases the visibility of employment opportunities for veterans.

LVERs serve as a valuable source within the business engagement program, which includes a focus on identifying business needs through numerous and innovative channels, depending on the lifecycle of the business, and ensuring a full range of possible resources and benefits are delivered in a timely manner. This level of engagement support reaching the goals of improving communications, alignment, implementation, measurement, accountability, and agility of the agency and the workforce system statewide.

LVERs are an integral part of our Business Service Team (BST). The BST provides valuable information about promoting veterans within a variety of venues, including job fair participation, Chamber of Commerce meetings, Society for Human Resource Managers (SHRM) meetings, employer visits, public radio and television service spots, and departmental

brochures. The advantage of hiring veterans/eligible persons is a topic that needs to be presented to an employer consistently. South Carolina's American Job Centers (AJCs), through the Business Services Team (BST), provide an effective conduit to promote veterans/eligible persons to businesses as a sound and wise investment. Federal contractors and subcontractors are also targeted as they not only benefit from the hiring of veterans but are reminded about their responsibilities under the Office of Federal Contract and Compliance Programs (OFCCP) and Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act (VEVRAA) guidelines as well.

LVERs also work closely with Chambers of Commerce and local governments across the state with the development of a military recruitment strategy to encourage transitioning service members and their families to relocate to those areas.

B. LIST THE POPULATIONS TO BE SERVED BY DISABLED VETERANS' OUTREACH PROGRAM (DVOP) AND CONSOLIDATED POSITION STAFF, INCLUDING THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR REFERRAL FOR DVOP SERVICES.

All populations served by DVOPs must meet eligibility requirements in accordance with Veterans' Employment and Training Service guidance. Please refer to the following Veterans' Program Letters (VPL 05-24), or most current guidance, to identify the eligible populations to be served by this grant:

Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists (DVOPs) within the South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce (DEW) will specifically service Veterans within all categories that have been identified as QEBs as defined by VPL's 05-24, or current guidance.

These include:

A. **Populations Eligible for DVOP Services.** DVOP specialists must limit their activities to providing services to eligible populations who:

- Are interested in receiving one or more individualized career services, **and**
- Meet at least one of the following two criteria:
  - Are defined as an eligible veteran or eligible person and are experiencing at least one of the qualifying employment barriers defined in Section VI.A.1 below; **or**
  - Are members of additional populations eligible for DVOP specialist services as authorized by the current annual appropriations act, as outlined in Section VI.A.2. below.

1. Qualifying Employment Barriers. To receive DVOP services, an eligible veteran or eligible person must affirm that they are experiencing at least one of the following employment barriers:

a. Has a disability, which may include any of the following:

i. Special disabled veteran, defined in 38 U.S.C. § 4211(1) as a veteran who is entitled to compensation (or who but for the receipt of military retired pay would be entitled to compensation) under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for a disability rated at 30 percent or more, or rated at 10 or 20 percent in the case of a veteran who has been determined to have a serious employment handicap; or person who was discharged or released from active duty because of a service-connected disability.

ii. Disabled veteran, defined in 38 U.S.C. § 4211(3) as a veteran who is entitled to compensation (or who but for the receipt of military retired pay would be entitled to compensation) under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs1F2; or a person who was discharged or released from active duty because of a service-connected disability.

iii. Other disability. Eligible veterans and eligible persons who self-identify as having a disability, as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. § 12102.

b. Is a Vietnam-era veteran, as defined by 38 U.S.C. § 4211(2) as an eligible veteran any part of whose active military, naval, or air service was during the Vietnam era, as defined by 38 U.S.C. § 101(29).

c. Is a recently separated veteran, defined in 38 U.S.C. § 4211(6) as a veteran who was discharged or released from active duty within the last three years.

d. Has been referred for employment services by a representative of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

e. Is experiencing homelessness, as defined in Sections 103(a) and (b) of the McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. § 11302(a) and (b)).

f. Is justice-involved, as defined in WIOA Section 3(38), 29 U.S.C. § 3102(38) (definition of "offender").

g. Is between the ages of 18–24 years of age at the time of enrollment.

h. Is educationally disadvantaged, meaning that the individual lacks a high school diploma or equivalent certificate.

i. Is economically disadvantaged, which means any of the following: i. Meets the definition of a low-income individual in WIOA Section 3(36), 29 U.S.C. § 3102(36).

ii. Unemployed.

iii. Heads of single-parent households containing at least one dependent child.

the following additional populations: a. Transitioning Service Members (TSM) who, at the time of enrollment have participated in any part of the Transition Assistance Program, including self-paced online modules and Individualized Initial Counseling.

2. *Additional Populations*. Annual appropriations acts may authorize JVSG staff to serve certain non-veteran populations. Continued service to these individuals is contingent upon future appropriations act authorization. States are responsible for consulting with the DVET and reviewing the appropriations act each year to ensure DVOP specialists are serving only eligible populations. At the time of publication of this VPL, Congress has

authorized DVOP specialists to serve, and LVERs to work with employers on behalf of, the following additional populations:

a. Transitioning Service Members (TSM) who, at the time of enrollment have participated in any part of the Transition Assistance Program, including self-paced online modules and Individualized Initial Counseling.
b. Wounded, ill, or injured members of the Armed Forces who are receiving treatment in military treatment facilities or warrior transition units.
c. Spouses or other family caregivers of those wounded, ill, or injured service members described in subparagraph b.

As part of the screening process, all customers are asked if they have served in the military. If they answer "YES" to the question, the veteran/eligible person is given a copy of the most current approved "Eligibility Screening Tool, with instructions on how to complete the form and then return it to the intake person. The intake person will review the form and assess the questionnaire responses. If determined to meet the criteria for a population that can be served by a DVOP, further assessment by a non-JVSG staff person will be conducted to determine if they meet the definition of an eligible veteran based on 38 USC 4211(4) or an eligible person based on 38 USC 4101(5).

An eligible veteran is a person who:

1. Served on active duty for a period of more than 180 days and was discharged or released therefrom with other than a dishonorable discharge;
2. Was discharged or released from active duty because of a service-connected disability; or
3. As a member of a reserve component under an order to active duty pursuant to section 12301 (a), (d), or (g) 12302, or 12304 of title 10, served on active duty during a period of war or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge is authorized and was discharged or released from such duty with other than a dishonorable discharge.

An eligible person is:

1. The spouse of any person who died of a service-connected disability;
2. The spouse of any member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty who, at the time of application for assistance under this chapter [38 U.S.C 4101] et seq.]' is listed' pursuant to section 556 of title 37 and regulations issued thereunder, by the Secretary concerned in one or more of the following categories and has been so listed for a total of more than 90 days: (i) missing in action, (ii) captured in line of duty by a hostile force, or (iii) forcibly detained or interned in line of duty by a foreign government or power; or
3. The spouse of any person who has a total disability permanent in nature resulting from a service-connected disability or the spouse of a veteran who died while a disability so evaluated was in existence.

Per VPL 05-24, transitioning service members; wounded, ill, or injured servicemembers residing in military treatment facilities; and spouses/family caregivers of those wounded, ill, or injured servicemembers can be served by DVOPs provided they have an identified QBE.

C. DESCRIBE THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES ASSIGNED TO DISABLED VETERANS' OUTREACH PROGRAM (DVOP) SPECIALISTS, LOCAL VETERANS' EMPLOYMENT REPRESENTATIVE (LVER) STAFF, AND CONSOLIDATED DVOP/LVER POSITIONS BY THE STATE. THESE MUST BE CONSISTENT WITH 38 U.S.C. 4103A AND 4104.

DVOPs duties:

The primary duty of the DVOP is to provide Individualized Career Services to veterans/eligible persons with QBEs through a case management framework.

After the initial assessment of a Veteran in the AJC by non-JVSG staff and determined that they are eligible for JVSG services, consistent with VPL 05-24, Ch. 1 & 2, or current guidance, they will be referred to a DVOP for assistance. To render effective individualized career services, the DVOP must, at a minimum:

- Conduct a comprehensive assessment of individual needs.
- Develop a documented Individual Employment Plan (IEP) based on any employment barriers identified during the assessment process and regularly update the plan as needed.
- Consistent Contact – Regular, consistent contact between the DVOP and the veteran/eligible person, including meetings and updates, both pre- and post-employment. Consistent contact is based on the participant's individual needs and situation per the written plan and case notes and will occur no less than once every 14 days during case management and during the 90-day follow-up period once employment is obtained. Any contact or attempt at contact must be documented in case notes.

These three elements form the core of an effective case management framework under which individual career services will be delivered.

Upon completion of the objective assessment, the DVOP can determine the need for additional individualized career services and document those services on the IEP and in case notes.

These services can take the form of:

- Providing vocational guidance and individual counseling as required, such as skills assessment, career planning, communications skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct.
- Refer veterans/eligible persons to community–based organizations regarding employment and training services available to veterans; develop relationships with Veteran Service Organizations and other federal, state, and local programs to provide maximum employment assistance.
- Job referrals for specific employment opportunities.
- Referrals to training programs with other agencies, such as VA Veteran Readiness and Employment, as well as partner programs within the AJC, such as SNAP E&T, Adult Education, State Vocational Rehabilitation, and Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Activities.

DVOPs are required to take an active role in conducting outreach to find and assist QBE veterans/eligible persons through individualized career services. Outreach may occur at other

local, state, and federal government agencies, veterans service organizations, community service organizations, LWDA partners, faith-based organizations, local community colleges/universities, Veterans Treatment Courts (VTC), and any other entities that are dedicated to locating and serving veterans.

DEW acknowledges that homeless veterans may not seek our services on their own and that an "under the bridge" approach is to be taken by DVOPs, encouraging them to go where these individuals can be found. DVOPs will also go to locations where there is access to organizations that serve homeless veterans, such as US DOL VETS Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP) grantees, Supportive Services for Veterans and Families (SSVF), VA Medical Centers, Vet Centers, County Veteran Service Offices, civic and community service organizations, local homeless shelter organizations, and other sources as identified to provide services to homeless veterans.

LVER Duties:

The LVER will actively advocate for employment and training opportunities with business, industry, and community-based organizations on behalf of veterans/eligible persons consistent with VPL 05-24 , or current guidance. LVERs will be assigned duties that promote to employers, employer associations, and business groups the advantages of hiring veterans/eligible persons and will be part of the "Business Services Team" within the AJC that conducts outreach activities to these entities.

The following activities will be part of this program:

- In conjunction with employers, conduct job searches and workshops and establish job search groups to facilitate the use of the DEW labor exchange system to enhance their employee search activities.
- Form effective relationships with the business community and trade unions to enhance the availability of employment and training opportunities for veterans/eligible persons.

(a) Encourage businesses to hire veterans/eligible persons and provide OJT and Apprenticeship programs geared to the Veteran community. Inform and promote the Hire Vets Medallion Program to employers which LVERs contact.

(b) Maintain current labor market information on trends and adjust strategies accordingly.

- Work with training providers and credentialing bodies to promote opportunities for Veterans/eligible persons.

(a)Encourage employers in professions requiring licensure or certification to develop OJT and/or apprenticeship programs for veterans/eligible person.

(b)Promote the participation of veterans/eligible persons in programs leading to certification or licensure.

(c)Advocate with training providers and credentialing agencies for recognition of equivalent military training.

- Plan and participate in job fairs to provide employment opportunities for veterans/eligible person.

The LVER will facilitate this by:

(a) initiating contact and developing relationships with employers, community leaders, labor unions, veterans' organizations, and training program representatives to develop their commitment to providing employment and training opportunities for veterans/eligible persons.

(b) maintaining current information regarding a full range of employment and training options available to Veterans/eligible persons.

- The net result of LVER outreach to employers and the community will be an increased awareness of the capabilities of Veterans and their qualifications, along with developing employers' willingness to utilize the OJT program that is available to them to increase the opportunity for Veterans/eligible persons.

General Duties:

LVER/DVOP personnel all attend AJC staff meetings to provide updates on veteran/eligible persons, answer questions from staff, and discuss needed services. LVER staff is also available to provide training to other AJC staff. LVER staff conducts employer outreach and plan job fairs and other activities to promote the employment of veterans/eligible persons.

Strategies to address individual needs include literacy and basic skills programs, resources for occupational skills training, job accommodations, assistive technologies, disability awareness training, and other activities that may address barriers and support the achievement of positive employment outcomes. South Carolina has established and continues to adhere to a Priority of Service for Veterans.

D. DEMONSTRATE THE MANNER IN WHICH DVOP, LVER AND CONSOLIDATED DVOP/LVER STAFF ARE INTEGRATED INTO THE STATE'S EMPLOYMENT SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEMS OR AMERICAN JOB CENTER (AJC). THIS DEMONSTRATION SHOULD SHOW ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT BETWEEN JVSG AND OTHER AJC STAFF, SUCH AS THROUGH PARTICIPATION IN STAFF MEETINGS AND CROSS-TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES.

The LVER in each Workforce Center is part of the local workforce area business services team to develop a plan for an effective employer relations program that emphasizes the hiring and retention of veterans, especially with Federal Contractors. The LVER is also responsible for informing management, staff, and other Workforce Center Partners of current veteran policies, laws, and programs. South Carolina recognizes the importance of developing job driven employment and training opportunities for the veterans/eligible persons residing in the state. Each LVER works with other business engagement staff to identify job-driven employment and training opportunities that can be filled by veterans/eligible persons with qualifying barriers to employment or by other veterans and provides that information to DVOP staff and other Workforce Center staff. This occurs at weekly staff meetings, through email exchanges, and through one-on-one discussions with staff. Priority of service for veterans/eligible persons is observed for these opportunities, just as with any DOL-funded programs or services that are available.

DISABLED VETERANS OUTREACH PROGRAM SPECIALISTS (DVOP)

Integration into the Workforce System: Integration of the DVOP via the AJC will be accomplished by utilizing in-place procedures for servicing Veterans with QBEs and combining them with the new policies and processes that will support functional alignment within the AJC. All partners will work together to support our plan for a seamless, customer-driven system. The new policies will enhance the delivery system and reflect the Governor's vision of effective and efficient governance through the

alignment of several programs. DVOP staff, other AJC staff, and Workforce Partners work together as a close-knit team to provide services to all veterans/eligible persons and combine efforts to provide case management and individualized career service to those veterans who have barriers to employment.

DVOPs attend weekly staff meetings and monthly directed by their Regional Managers and quarterly AJC Cross-training meetings with local and regional partner staff hosted by the One Stop Operator to ensure that all partners are aligned with the same goals and standards across the local area and state to enhance services to veterans. DVOPs have the opportunity to share ideas with the other partners on the delivery of services for veterans/other eligibles and discuss how they can work together to enhance those services.

E. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S PERFORMANCE INCENTIVE AWARD PROGRAM TO ENCOURAGE INDIVIDUALS AND/OR EMPLOYMENT SERVICE OFFICES TO IMPROVE AND/OR ACHIEVE EXCELLENCE IN THE PROVISION OF SERVICES TO VETERANS, INCLUDING:

1. THE NOMINATION AND SELECTION PROCESS FOR ALL PERFORMANCE INCENTIVE AWARDS TO INDIVIDUALS AND/OR OFFICES;

In accordance with 38 U.S.C. 4112 and VPL 01-22, Attachment #5, the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) includes a 1% "set aside" of the total grant amount for use as incentive awards. The individual will be scored based on performance or activities during the program year (July 1, through June 30,), for which the award is given. These funds will be obligated by September 30th of each year and expended by December 31st of each year and will be awarded as Monetary Awards to the top (6) staff members in each DVOP/LVER category who display exceptional service to veterans and eligible persons.

Award winners will be announced during the 4th Quarter of each year. If these funds are not used, DOL VETS retain them at the national level. ***(No other use of incentive award funds is allowable)***

The Incentive Award program will be utilized for Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist (DVOP) and Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER)s who provide employment, training, and placement services to veterans and eligible spouses. They must demonstrate outstanding outreach on behalf of veterans who have barriers to employment, especially those experiencing homelessness, incarceration, disability, or recent separation from service. The nominees must provide exemplary employment services to veterans and eligible spouses or affect improvements of veterans' service delivery system. All information will be collected from the SC Works Reporting System using the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist (DVOP) services provided individuals report, referrals and placements, and the services provided employers report.

The award recognizes staff that have made a substantial contributions or efforts to veterans and eligible spouses. Examples of such contributions or effort include, but are not limited to:

Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist (DVOP) Criteria

1. Outstanding Case Management process. (90% Outstanding Objective Assessment Summary and Individual Employment Plan based upon previous training and experience resulting in obtaining employment.
2. Improve outcomes for Veterans and other eligible persons. (e.g., vocational rehabilitation & Homeless Veterans Reintegration Programs (HVRP), South Carolina Department of Veteran Affairs (SCDVA) leading to employment.

3. Establish strong working partnerships with other Veteran organizations and/or the local community at large to improve services to Qualifying employment barriers (QEB) Veterans and other eligible persons resulting in obtaining employment.

    a. Community Outreach - Veteran Services Officers (VSO), Disabled American Veterans (DAV), Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), American Legions etc.

4. Limiting the duration that the veteran or eligible spouse draws unemployment – Number of weeks drawn if below the average at employment.

5. Placement with Substantial earnings (Unemployment insurance wage records). A 25% or higher wage increase.

6. Improving performance outcomes for veterans and eligible persons through regional performance measures.

Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER)s Criteria

1. Improve direct employment and placement services for veterans while working with employers on special projects or hiring initiatives that leads to employment.

2. Promote and encourage the hiring of Veterans through the Hire Veterans Medallion Program (HVMP). (Staff with the highest number of E31 codes that matches the most eventual awardees minimum of 5-10.)

Awards will occur annually on the following timeline:

- October 1st Presentation of Annual Incentive Award Program
- August 1st Submission deadline
- August 15th Committee meets to review submissions
- September 1st Announcement of Awards

Selection Committee

The selection committee for these awards will be comprised of the 1 Assistant Executive Director, 2 Area Directors, the State Veterans Program Coordinator, and the Assistant State Veterans' Program Coordinator(s). The selection committee members will be responsible for: (a) recording the minutes of each committee meeting; (b) retaining documentation for one (1) year on all AJCs that have been nominated; and (c) ensuring persons on the selection committee who have made nominations do not vote on those nominations;

2. THE APPROXIMATE NUMBER AND VALUE OF CASH AWARDS USING THE ONE PERCENT INCENTIVE AWARD ALLOCATION;

The South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce will award Monetary Awards to the top (6) staff members in each DVOP/LVER category who display exceptional service to veterans and eligible persons based on the amount of the grant, which could fluctuate and is distributed through The South Carolina Department of Finance. Individual award will be granted through the state's payroll system in each category Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist (DVOP) and Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER)s in the amount of $2500.00. DEW affirms that no Incentive funds will be expended until the plan is approved by US DOL VETS National Office.

3. THE GENERAL NATURE AND APPROXIMATE VALUE OF NON-CASH PERFORMANCE INCENTIVE AWARDS TO BE CHARGED TO THE BASE ALLOCATION; AND

DEW does not utilize funds from the base allocation to support non-cash awards.

4. ANY CHALLENGES THE STATE MAY ANTICIPATE TO CARRYING OUT A PERFORMANCE INCENTIVE AWARD PROGRAM AS MANDATED BY 38 U.S.C. § 4102A(C). THIS SHOULD INCLUDE ANY STATE LAWS OR POLICIES THAT PROHIBIT SUCH AWARDS, IF APPLICABLE. DESCRIBE THE STATE'S EFFORTS IN OVERCOMING THOSE CHALLENGES.

Not applicable.

F. LIST THE PERFORMANCE TARGETS FOR DIRECT SERVICES TO VETERANS PROVIDED BY JVSG STAFF, AS MEASURED BY PARTICIPANTS':

- employment rate in the second quarter after exit from the program;
- employment rate in the fourth quarter after exit; and
- median earnings in the second quarter after exit.

Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit: **50%**

Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit: **48%**

Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit: **$5,160**

SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (SCSEP)
(OMB Control No. 1205-0040)

A. ECONOMIC PROJECTIONS AND IMPACT

1. DISCUSS LONG-TERM PROJECTIONS FOR JOBS IN INDUSTRIES AND OCCUPATIONS IN THE STATE THAT MAY PROVIDE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR OLDER WORKERS. (20 CFR 641.302(D)) (MAY ALTERNATIVELY BE DISCUSSED IN THE ECONOMIC ANALYSIS SECTION OF STRATEGIC PLAN.)

The South Carolina Department on Aging's Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) will defer to the economic analysis, long-term job projections, and current and project employment opportunities provided by DEW in the Combined State Plan.

2. DISCUSS HOW THE LONG-TERM JOB PROJECTIONS DISCUSSED IN THE ECONOMIC ANALYSIS SECTION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN RELATE TO THE TYPES OF UNSUBSIDIZED JOBS FOR WHICH SCSEP PARTICIPANTS WILL BE TRAINED AND THE TYPES OF SKILL TRAINING TO BE PROVIDED. (20 CFR 641.302(D))

South Carolina's top economic needs for unsubsidized employment are currently: health care, social assistance, manufacturing, and retail trade. The South Carolina Department on Aging has been working with our sub-recipient to develop On-the-Job training in the healthcare field. There is a huge need for direct care workers in South Carolina to provide assistance and care to South Carolinians across the age spectrum. These jobs have recently seen a large increase in the amount of pay per hour. There has been a national push from the federal government to ensure the increased pay for direct health care workers goes to those who are actually performing the direct services.

The South Carolina Department on Aging is working with our sub-recipient to develop relationships with businesses in South Carolina that hire direct care workers. These businesses are places such as nursing facilities, in-home care providers, and community-based providers.

Retail is another area in which South Carolina's SCSEP Program is working with the sub-recipient to help SCSEP participants find unsubsidized employment. Many times, these retail jobs are part-time which SCSEP participants like. Developing relationships is critical to helping participants find unsubsidized employment.

3. DISCUSS CURRENT AND PROJECTED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE STATE (SUCH AS BY PROVIDING INFORMATION AVAILABLE UNDER §15 OF THE WAGNER-PEYSER ACT (29 U.S.C. 491-2) BY OCCUPATION), AND THE TYPES OF SKILLS POSSESSED BY ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS. (20 CFR 641.325(C))

The South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce shows the top growing occupations from 2020-2030 as the following:

S.C. Statewide Top Growing Occupations, 2020-2030

SOC Code	SOC Title
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand
35-2014	Cooks, Restaurant
35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers
31-1120	Home Health and Personal Care Aides
41-2031	Retail Salespersons
35-3031	Waiters and Waitresses

The top growing occupations in South Carolina for 2020-2030 present some opportunities for SCSEP participants. The need for cooks, home health and personal care aides, and salesperson look for individuals who want to work part-time. Part-time employment for SCSEP participants can be considered ideal for many older workers who are looking to return to the workforce but still enjoy parts of retirement. The three titles mentioned above mostly hire part-time individuals. This is especially important give the age of the SCCEP participants and the amount of physical ability needed to work a full time job. This is not to say older adults can't work full time but more often than not they are looking to work part-time.

B. SERVICE DELIVERY AND COORDINATION

1. A DESCRIPTION OF ACTIONS TO COORDINATE SCSEP WITH OTHER PROGRAMS. THIS MAY ALTERNATIVELY BE DISCUSSED IN THE STATE STRATEGIES SECTION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN, BUT REGARDLESS OF PLACEMENT IN DOCUMENT, MUST INCLUDE:

A. PLANNED ACTIONS TO COORDINATE ACTIVITIES OF SCSEP GRANTEES WITH WIOA TITLE I PROGRAMS, INCLUDING PLANS FOR USING THE WIOA ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM AND ITS PARTNERS TO SERVE INDIVIDUALS AGED 55 AND OLDER. (20 CFR 641.302(G), 641.325(E))

The state SCSEP program is currently working with many organizations that provide services to serve older adults. The list below is not comprehensive but gives an idea of the variety of organizations that will work with the South Carolina Department on Aging and SCSEP to provide services to participants. We will continue to identify programs and services to benefit our participants. We will continue to contact service providers to update materials, so resources are readily available to assist participants as needed.

B. PLANNED ACTIONS TO COORDINATE ACTIVITIES OF SCSEP GRANTEES WITH THE ACTIVITIES BEING CARRIED OUT IN THE STATE UNDER THE OTHER TITLES OF THE OLDER AMERICANS ACT (OAA). (20 CFR 641.302(H))

The South Carolina Department on Aging is the designated State Unit on Aging and receives

Older American Act funding partially funds the aging network in South Carolina. The network is made up of Area Agencies on Aging (AAA), one located in each of the 10 regional planning

districts. The Administration for Community Living (ACL) makes annual allotments to South Carolina. From these allotments under Title III, the SUA expends five percent to pay part of the costs of administration of the State Plan on Aging. The remaining funding is allocated to our 10 AAAs based on our funding formula. The services provided under the Older Americans Act are (**OAA 303**):

1. in-home and community-based services; (Title III-B)
    a. Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) are types of person-centered care delivered in the home and community. A variety of health and human services can be provided. HCBS programs address the needs of people with functional limitations who need assistance with everyday activities, like getting dressed or bathing. HCBS are often designed to enable people to stay in their homes, rather than moving to a facility for care. Examples of these are:
        i. Homemaker Services (light housekeeping)
        ii. Personal Care Services (assistance with activities of daily living)
        iii. Chore Services (heavy house cleaning or yard work)
        iv. Minor Home Repair (minor repairs to older adults' homes)
        v. Transportation (to senior centers, medical and essential shopping)
2. long term care ombudsman program; (Title III-B and Title VII)
    a. The South Carolina Long Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP) seeks to improve the quality of life and quality of care for residents of long-term care facilities through advocacy for residents. The LTCOP serves as a point of entry where complaints made by or on behalf of residents in long-term care facilities can be received, investigated, and resolved. Additionally, the LTCOP identifies the problems and concerns of residents receiving long-term care services and recommends changes to improve the quality of care.
3. elder abuse prevention services; (Title VII)
    a. Elder Abuse prevention activities in South Carolina were established to protect the health, safety, and well-being of all older adults. The OAA stipulates that the Department on Aging shall use the allotment for Elder Abuse to carry out programs to educate the public for the prevention, detection, assessment, treatment of, intervention in, investigation of, and response to elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation, including financial exploitation.
4. health insurance counseling and Senior Medicare Patrol; (ACL)
    a. South Carolina's State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) is a statewide health insurance information, counseling, and assistance program administered by the Department on Aging with funding through the Administration for Community Living (ACL). The SHIP mission is to empower, educate, and assist Medicare-eligible individuals, their families, and caregivers through objective outreach, counseling, and training, to make informed health insurance decisions that optimize access to care and benefits.

5. congregate nutrition services; (Title III-C-1)

    a. The primary purpose of operating a group dining center is to provide a nutritious meal and education in proper nutrition, health, and wellness and to promote socialization. The group dining site shall provide opportunities for socialization to prevent social isolation in accordance with the OAA.

6. home-delivered nutrition services; (Title III-C-2)

    a. The nutrition program services program is considered a part of the healthcare continuum to maintain and/or improve the nutritional, health status, and quality of life of older adults. One meal is delivered per day to a client's home.

7. nutrition services incentive program (ACL);

    a. The purpose of NSIP is to provide incentives to encourage and reward effective performance by States and tribal organizations in the efficient delivery of nutritious meals to older individuals (OAA 311(a)). The AAA must ensure that funds awarded through the NSIP are applied to the purchase of domestically produced foods used in the meals served in the nutrition program (OAA 311(d)(4)).

8. disease prevention and health promotion services; (Title III-D)

    a. Title III-D of the Older Americans Act (OAA) provides grants to states and territories based on the share of the population aged 60 years and over for education and implementation activities that support healthy lifestyles and promote healthy behaviors.

9. family caregiver support services; (Title III-E); and

    a. Respite is a service that provides a temporary break to an unpaid caregiver caring for an older adult, an adult with a disability, or a caregiver age 55+ caring for a minor child (not their own). Respite care has been shown to help sustain family caregiver health and well-being. The primary caregiver is a person who is responsible for an individual's daily care, provision of food, shelter, clothing, health care, education, nurturing, and supervision on an uncompensated basis.

The South Carolina Department on Aging's leadership team has been working to make SCSEP more visible to the Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) since this is one of the two programs not currently administered by the AAA. The AAAs come into contact with lots of older adults who would benefit from SCSEP. We are working to make this program more visible to the AAAs. The South Carolina Department on Aging holds monthly training for the AAAs, and SCSEP is now included in this training. The training focuses on resources for older adults that are beneficial to the SCSEP Case Managers.

C. PLANNED ACTIONS TO COORDINATE SCSEP WITH OTHER PRIVATE AND PUBLIC ENTITIES AND PROGRAMS THAT PROVIDE SERVICES TO OLDER AMERICANS, SUCH AS COMMUNITY AND FAITH- BASED ORGANIZATIONS, TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMS, AND PROGRAMS FOR THOSE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS OR DISABILITIES. (20 CFR 641.302(I))

The state SCSEP program is currently working with many organizations that provide services to serve older adults. The list below is not comprehensive but gives an idea of the variety of

organizations that will work with the South Carolina Department on Aging and SCSEP to provide services to participants. We will continue to identify programs and services to benefit our participants. We will continue to contact service providers to update materials, so resources are readily available to assist participants as needed.

Name of Partner Entity	Type of Partner Entity	Description of Partnership
Appalachian Area Agency on Aging	Local Government	Contracted Services
Upper Savannah Area Agency on Aging	Local Government	Contracted Services
Catawba Area Agency on Aging	Non-Governmental Organization	Contracted Services
Central Midlands Area Agency on Aging	Local Government	Contracted Services
Lower Savannah Area Agency on Aging	Local Government	Contracted Services
Santee-Lynches Area Agency on Aging	Local Government	Contracted Services
Vantage Point-Care South Area Agency on Aging (Pee Dee)	Private Business Organization	Contracted Services
Waccamaw Area Agency on Aging	Local Government	Contracted Services
Trident Area Agency on Aging	Non-Governmental Organization	Contracted Services
Lowcountry Area Agency on Aging	Local Government	Contracted Services
Regional contracted service providers	Non-Governmental Organization	Delivers aging services as procured by AAAs
AARP SC	Non-Governmental Organization	Aging Partner
Alzheimer's Association - SC Chapter	Non-Governmental Organization	Aging Partner and provides funding
SC Institute of Medicine and Public Health	Non-Governmental Organization	Aging Partner
USC Arnold School of Public Health /Office for the Study on Aging	Higher Education Institute	Aging Partner
Clemson University	Higher Education Institute	Aging Partner
Medical University of South Carolina	Higher Education Institute	Aging Partner

Name of Partner Entity	Type of Partner Entity	Description of Partnership
University of South Carolina School of Social Work	Higher Education Institute	Aging Partner
University of South Carolina	Higher Education Institute	Aging Partner
SC Legal Services	Private Business Organization	Contracted Services
SC Department of Social Services/Adult Protective Services	State Government	Aging Partner
SC Advisory Council on Aging	State Government	Aging Partner
SC Fire Marshall (Fire Safe SC)	State Government	Aging Partner
Silver Haired Legislature	State Government	Aging Partner
Legislative Committee to Study Services, Programs and Facilities for Aging (Joint Legislative Committee on Aging)	State Government	Aging Partner
Harvest Hope Food Bank	Non-Governmental Organization	Aging Partner
SC Association of Council on Aging Directors (SCACAD)	Professional Association	Aging Partner
National Association of States United for Aging and Disabilities(NASUAD)	Professional Association	Aging Partner
SC Association of Area Agencies on Aging (SC4A)	Professional Association	Aging Partner
Southeast Association of Area Agencies on Aging (SE4A)	Professional Association	Aging Partner
US Aging	Professional Association	Aging Partner
SC Emergency Management Division	State Government	Aging Partner
Walgreens Corporation	Private Business Organization	Aging Partner
SC Blue Cross Blue Shield	Private Business Organization	Aging Partner
American Red Cross	Professional Association	Aging Partner
SC Department of Employment and Workforce	State Government	Aging Partner
SC Department of Transportation	State Government	Aging Partner
Salvation Army	Professional Association	Aging Partner

Name of Partner Entity	Type of Partner Entity	Description of Partnership
SC Respite Coalition	Professional Association	Aging Partner
Family Connection of SC	Non-Governmental Organization	Aging Partner
AIRS (Alliance of Information and Referral Specialists)	Non-Governmental Organization	Aging Partner
SC Department of Insurance	State Government	Aging Partner
Social Security Administration	Federal Government	Aging Partner
CMS (Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services)	Federal Government	Aging Partner
Consumer Voice	Non-Governmental Organization	Aging Partner
SC Protection and Advocacy	State Government	Aging Partner

D. PLANNED ACTIONS TO COORDINATE SCSEP WITH OTHER LABOR MARKET AND JOB TRAINING INITIATIVES. (20 CFR 641.302(J))

The South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce (DEW) keeps the SCSEP community informed of the market trends and job training initiatives. We rely heavily on DEW to obtain this information due to their knowledge, skills, and ability to present and understand labor market information. Each year SC DEW issues a formal report during the annual board meeting which is shared with the South Carolina Department on Aging and the other SCSEP providers in South Carolina. The SCSEP community will continue to be proactive in acquiring data on labor market trends by obtaining current information from market trend resources such as the SC Department of Commerce and the Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDA).The SCSEP community will work with local employees, technical institutions, and the Department of Employment and Workforce to provide current job training initiatives.

The national grantee and the one sub-recipient are all part of the Goodwill Industries network whose mission as a non-profit is to offer career services, job training, certifications and programs that help South Carolinians become independent through employment.

E. ACTIONS TO ENSURE THAT SCSEP IS AN ACTIVE PARTNER IN THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM AND THE STEPS THE STATE WILL TAKE TO ENCOURAGE AND IMPROVE COORDINATION WITH THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM. (20 CFR 641.335)

SCSEP will continue to utilize the South Carolina Works Online Services (SCWOS) when training decisions are being made for participants. The SCSEP community will continue to consult with the SC Works centers as participants transition into unsubsidized employment.

The South Carolina Department on Aging, the sub-grantees, and representatives from the SC Works centers will meet each year to discuss the pros and cons of the past year as it relates to

the collaborative effort of SCSEP and the SC Works centers. An action plan detailing corrective action steps will be outlined to address problem areas. Best practices will be shared, and grantees will be encouraged to replicate best practices in their respective areas.

Before enrollment in the SCSEP, all participants register with their local SC Works center. This helps to ensure the applicant is seeking employment, which is a requirement for enrollment. Once enrolled, participants attend job fairs and hiring events listed and/or hosted by their local SC Works center. Listings of these and other events sponsored by the SC Works centers are distributed to all participants at the monthly Job Club meeting hosted by Goodwill. In addition, participants are assigned to train at their SC Works center, which strengthens our relationship and provides continual opportunities for participants to obtain more information on employment opportunities.

F. EFFORTS TO WORK WITH LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICES IN RURAL LOCATIONS.

There are several economic development entities in South Carolina, including, but not limited

to the SC Department of Commerce, readySC™, and county and regional economic alliances.

Workforce development programs and activities are well coordinated with economic development entities across the State.

SCSEP participates regularly in the WIOA Partners meetings. These meetings assist the SCSEP Program to be more visible. They also help to create partnerships with the economic development offices.

2. THE STATE'S LONG-TERM STRATEGY FOR ENGAGING EMPLOYERS TO DEVELOP AND PROMOTE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE PLACEMENT OF SCSEP PARTICIPANTS IN UNSUBSIDIZED EMPLOYMENT. (20 CFR 641.302(E)) (MAY ALTERNATIVELY BE DISCUSSED IN THE STATE STRATEGIES SECTION OF STRATEGIC PLAN.)

The SCSEP community (national, state, sub-grantees) will work as a team to continue to support the purpose of SCSEP participants gaining unsubsidized employment. The SCSEP community will invite stakeholders to the local annual planning meeting. The SCSEP community will continue to develop relationships with local businesses, organizations, and agencies to educate them on how SCSEP can assist them with their employment needs. The SCSEP community will work closely with the South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce, the Department of Commerce, the Governor's Office, and others in promoting older workers initiatives when a new industry is located in the state.

As stated in our executive summary, the South Carolina Department on Aging has new ideas for the SCSEP Program. We are working to make the program more visible and modernize the program to meet the needs of the baby boomers who are now eligible for SCSEP with new ideas. This will be an ongoing strategy for SCSEP over the next four years.

3. THE STATE'S LONG-TERM STRATEGY FOR SERVING MINORITY OLDER INDIVIDUALS UNDER SCSEP. (20 CFR 641.302 (C))

The SCSEP community will continue working with the local SC Works centers to identify minorities who are eligible for the SCSEP program as well as with our AAAs. We will develop a media outreach campaign in other languages to adequately reflect the older workers and their respective languages. Brochures will be developed in Spanish to assist in the recruitment of those who are Spanish speakers.

We will work to narrow the gap to advance the quality of life to include diversity, equity, and inclusion in our SCSEP community. Racial, ethnic, and gender disparities continue across various aspects of life, such as income, education, healthcare, food security, and home ownership. These disparities significantly affect life expectancy, safety, and overall well-being for older adults in South Carolina.

4. A LIST OF COMMUNITY SERVICES THAT ARE NEEDED AND THE PLACES WHERE THESE SERVICES ARE MOST NEEDED. SPECIFICALLY, THE PLAN MUST ADDRESS THE NEEDS AND LOCATION OF THOSE INDIVIDUALS MOST IN NEED OF COMMUNITY SERVICES AND THE GROUPS WORKING TO MEET THEIR NEEDS. (20 CFR 641.330)

Most-in-Need is a SCSEP performance measure. Most-in-Need looks at eight different areas that affect older adults 55+ in obtaining employment; veterans or qualified spouse of a veteran, homeless or at risk of homelessness, reside in a rural area, limited English proficiency, low literacy skills, low prospect of employment, failed to find services under WIOA, and/or has a disability.

<u>Homeless or at risk of homelessness</u>

According to "Addressing Homelessness Among Older Adults Final Report", people aged 50 and older are the fastest-growing age group of those experiencing homelessness, and their numbers are estimated to triple by 2030 (Culhane et al., 2019). According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), in 2021, people aged 55 and older composed 19.8 percent of the sheltered homeless population (HUD, 2023), an increase from 17.9 percent in 2020. This rate is even higher when we focus on adult-only households experiencing homelessness: 28.7 percent in 2021 (HUD, 2023). Among sheltered homeless adults with chronic patterns of homeless, those aged 55-64 made up the largest share of people experiencing chronic homelessness (27.0 percent), and a total of 35.7 percent were aged 55 and older in 2021 (HUD, 2023).

In SFY 2022-2023, 145 participants or 77.54% of those who received services were categorized as homeless or at risk for homelessness. There are many reasons why an older adult in South Carolina may be at risk for homelessness or homeless. "The consumer price index report from July 2023 showed that prices on the "all items index" have increased 3.2% in the past 12 months. "South Carolina does not have a cap on how much the cost of rent can increase from one lease time to another lease time. The average cost of rent increased by 30% since 2020 in South Carolina.

In program year 2024-2025, the South Carolina Department on Aging as the state grantee served 155 or 77.54% of participants who were homeless or at risk for homelessness.

<u>Resides in a rural area</u>

In South Carolina thirty-five of the forty-six counties are consider rural or partially rural as define by the Administration for Community Living and the Older Americans Act definition of rural.

In program year 2024-2025, the South Carolina Department on Aging, as the state grantee, served 44 or 21% % participants who resided in a rural area.

SC Population (2019 American Community Survey)

County	Estimated Total Population	Population 60+	Poverty	Minority	Disability	Rural (ACL)
Abbeville	24,627	7,092	1,144	1,368	1,128	22,287
Aiken	168,301	43,513	3,681	6,168	10,348	0
Allendale	9,024	2,418	290	4,770	863	1,068
Anderson	198,064	47,683	4,678	1,211	13,599	1,068
Bamberg	14,376	4,061	610	1,607	1,091	15,987
Barnwell	21,346	5,250	696	1,448	1,820	16,920
Beaufort	186,095	61,612	2,965	5,900	12,675	71,663
Berkeley	215,044	41,243	3,748	7,895	10,903	0
Calhoun	14,663	4,295	711	1,262	1,272	3,440
Charleston	401,165	88,524	8,641	17,909	19,539	1,738
Cherokee	56,895	12,703	1,512	1,564	3,466	43,940
Chester	32,311	8,339	1,424	1,804	2,401	0
Chesterfield	45,953	10,918	1,472	2,543	3,245	22,687
Clarendon	33,957	10,562	1,545	3,135	3,113	1,150
Colleton	37,585	10,311	1,166	2,788	2,233	17,114
Darlington	67,027	17,005	2,527	4,374	4,815	30,455
Dillon	30,689	6,869	1,369	1,910	1,944	32,062
Dorchester	158,299	30,546	2,670	5,142	7,808	7,683
Edgefield	26,927	6,620	657	1,557	1,208	7,439
Fairfield	22,565	7,016	1,020	2,142	1,591	0
Florence	138,475	31,649	4,059	8,097	7,330	15,661
Georgetown	61,952	21,786	2,343	3,635	4,877	34,343
Greenville	507,003	108,614	9,375	13,399	25,685	0
County	Estimated Total Population	Population 60+	Poverty	Minority	Disability	Rural (ACL)
Greenwood	70,411	16,977	2,014	3,038	4,921	69,661
Hampton	19,564	4,719	662	1,676	1,228	2,631
Horry	332,172	103,481	7,892	7,390	24,820	0

Jasper	28,657	7,577	963	1,864	1,697	0
Kershaw	65,112	16,434	2,014	2,855	4,518	7,445
Lancaster	92,308	24,847	2,325	2,814	5,363	53,105
Laurens	66,846	16,500	1,889	2,739	5,100	50,207
Lee	17,365	4,259	815	1,753	1,316	14,456
Lexington	290,278	64,228	5,082	5,180	15,722	0
McCormick	9,531	4,091	356	887	872	8,115
Marion	31,308	8,603	1,526	2,908	2,238	29,041
Marlboro	26,753	6,450	1,526	2,235	2,071	28,933
Newberry	38,194	10,095	1,785	1,758	2,585	28,000
Oconee	77,528	23,448	1,257	1,257	6,829	74,273
Orangeburg	87,687	23,405	4,011	9,016	6,003	72,203
Pickens	124,029	26,747	2,220	1,279	7,603	0
Richland	411,357	73,537	7,912	21,824	18,217	22
Saluda	20,303	5,233	585	925	1,418	15,021
Spartanburg	307,617	68,171	6,724	9,089	10,241	0
Sumter	106,757	23,201	2,962	7,929	6,333	0
Union	27,490	7,368	870	1,451	2,230	25,224
Williamsburg	31,324	8,624	2,106	3,758	2,361	31,468
York	265,872	53,687	4,294	6,634	11,385	8,273
State Total	**5,020,806**	**1,190,310**	**120,863**	**201,914**	**298,083**	**863,733**

Has a disability

The South Carolina Department on Aging defines disability as a number of persons aged 65 plus who have at least one of six disabilities as defined by the Census Bureau. This factor represents the social need factor of "physical and mental disability" as defined by the Older Americans Act. According to the 2019 American Community Survey 25% of those who are 65 and older meet the definition of having a disability.

SC Population (2019 American Community Survey)						
County	**Estimated Total Population**	**Population 60+**	**Poverty**	**Minority**	**Disability**	**Rural (ACL)**
Abbeville	24,627	7,092	1,144	1,368	1,128	22,287
Aiken	168,301	43,513	3,681	6,168	10,348	0
Allendale	9,024	2,418	290	4,770	863	1,068
Anderson	198,064	47,683	4,678	1,211	13,599	1,068
Bamberg	14,376	4,061	610	1,607	1,091	15,987
Barnwell	21,346	5,250	696	1,448	1,820	16,920
Beaufort	186,095	61,612	2,965	5,900	12,675	71,663
Berkeley	215,044	41,243	3,748	7,895	10,903	0
Calhoun	14,663	4,295	711	1,262	1,272	3,440
Charleston	401,165	88,524	8,641	17,909	19,539	1,738
Cherokee	56,895	12,703	1,512	1,564	3,466	43,940
Chester	32,311	8,339	1,424	1,804	2,401	0
Chesterfield	45,953	10,918	1,472	2,543	3,245	22,687
Clarendon	33,957	10,562	1,545	3,135	3,113	1,150
Colleton	37,585	10,311	1,166	2,788	2,233	17,114
Darlington	67,027	17,005	2,527	4,374	4,815	30,455
Dillon	30,689	6,869	1,369	1,910	1,944	32,062
Dorchester	158,299	30,546	2,670	5,142	7,808	7,683
Edgefield	26,927	6,620	657	1,557	1,208	7,439
Fairfield	22,565	7,016	1,020	2,142	1,591	0
Florence	138,475	31,649	4,059	8,097	7,330	15,661
Georgetown	61,952	21,786	2,343	3,635	4,877	34,343
Greenville	507,003	108,614	9,375	13,399	25,685	0
Greenwood	70,411	16,977	2,014	3,038	4,921	69,661
Hampton	19,564	4,719	662	1,676	1,228	2,631

SC Population (2019 American Community Survey)						
Horry	332,172	103,481	7,892	7,390	24,820	0
Jasper	28,657	7,577	963	1,864	1,697	0
Kershaw	65,112	16,434	2,014	2,855	4,518	7,445
Lancaster	92,308	24,847	2,325	2,814	5,363	53,105
Laurens	66,846	16,500	1,889	2,739	5,100	50,207
Lee	17,365	4,259	815	1,753	1,316	14,456
Lexington	290,278	64,228	5,082	5,180	15,722	0
McCormick	9,531	4,091	356	887	872	8,115
Marion	31,308	8,603	1,526	2,908	2,238	29,041
Marlboro	26,753	6,450	1,526	2,235	2,071	28,933
Newberry	38,194	10,095	1,785	1,758	2,585	28,000
Oconee	77,528	23,448	1,257	1,257	6,829	74,273
Orangeburg	87,687	23,405	4,011	9,016	6,003	72,203
Pickens	124,029	26,747	2,220	1,279	7,603	0
Richland	411,357	73,537	7,912	21,824	18,217	22
Saluda	20,303	5,233	585	925	1,418	15,021
Spartanburg	307,617	68,171	6,724	9,089	10,241	0
Sumter	106,757	23,201	2,962	7,929	6,333	0
Union	27,490	7,368	870	1,451	2,230	25,224
Williamsburg	31,324	8,624	2,106	3,758	2,361	31,468
York	265,872	53,687	4,294	6,634	11,385	8,273
State Total	**5,020,806**	**1,190,310**	**120,863**	**201,914**	**298,083**	**863,733**

The South Carolina Department on Aging SCSEP program needs to increase outreach to meet some of the most in need categories areas which appear to be underserved. The areas below will be addressed over this four-year plan. We will work to ensure the data is entered into GPMS which is SCSEP Federal data system. We will work to ensure we are reaching out to those who might qualify under a most-in-need category. Those areas are:

Most-In-Need Category	Participants Served in PY 24-25	Percent Served
Veterans or qualified spouse of veterans	19	9%
Has a limited English proficiency (LEP)	1	1
Has low literacy skills	129	61%
Has low employment prospects	177	83%
Has failed to find employment after using WIOA Title 1 services	14	.53%

5. THE STATE'S LONG-TERM STRATEGY TO IMPROVE SCSEP SERVICES, INCLUDING PLANNED LONG-TERM CHANGES TO THE DESIGN OF THE PROGRAM WITHIN THE STATE, AND PLANNED CHANGES IN THE USE OF SCSEP GRANTEES AND PROGRAM OPERATORS TO BETTER ACHIEVE THE GOALS OF THE PROGRAM. THIS MAY INCLUDE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE DEPARTMENT AS APPROPRIATE. (20 CFR 641.302(K))

The South Carolina Department on Aging will emphasize the importance of supportive services to sub-grantees and participants. We will work with our sub-grantee to develop a workshop on the role of supportive services and their role to the successful SCSEP participant. We will continue to work with host agencies to make them more accountable for the training they provide. We will continue to offer training to the sub-recipients' case managers to help them become more informed on available resources.

Many of the participants believe their training assignment is their employment. It is critical to the program's success for participants to understand unsubsidized employment is the ultimate goal of SCSEP. We believe working with participants in finding more on-the-job training is critical to the continued success of the program and may help meet the immediate needs many employers are facing.

6. THE STATE'S STRATEGY FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT IN THE LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE FOR SCSEP PARTICIPANTS' ENTRY INTO UNSUBSIDIZED EMPLOYMENT, AND TO ACHIEVE, AT A MINIMUM, THE LEVELS SPECIFIED IN OAA SECTION 513(A)(2)(E)(II). (20 CFR 641.302(F))

South Carolina's performance levels were above average for the past two program years. Improving these levels is a consistent goal. Participant earnings and entered employment are the categories where the focus will remain. The categories measured are:

1. Entered Employment 107.9%
2. Retention 109.3%,
3. Participant Earnings 94.3%
4. Most-in-Need 98.9%

Developing and maintaining partnerships is critical to the attainment of meeting our goal. We achieve this by:

- Understanding labor market data at the state, regional, and local levels
- Working with the local educational and training programs to provide a pool of older workers to meet the demand
- Developing partnerships with a local employer
- Working with employers who can employ SCSEP Participants who would benefit from On-the-Job training.
- Engaging in activities that promote the SCSEP concept
- Provide a quarterly newsletter that highlights accomplishments
- Participating in outreach
- Providing orientations annually for host agencies
- Working with the Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDA) in establishing new protocols as appropriate
- Provide computer skills training to participants so they can access online tools for employment opportunities and resources
- Provide supportive services to help ensure participants can function optimally during the training session
- Closely monitor the participants' progress and make changes as appropriate

C. LOCATION AND POPULATION SERVED, INCLUDING EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION

1. A DESCRIPTION OF THE LOCALITIES AND POPULATIONS FOR WHICH PROJECTS OF THE TYPE AUTHORIZED BY TITLE V ARE MOST NEEDED. (20 CFR 641.325 (D))

<u>Ten Poorest Counties in South Carolina</u>

South Carolina has 46 counties. The ten poorest counties in the states are listed below. The South Carolina Department on Aging has 2 of the 10 poorest counties in our service area. The National Contactors provide services to the other 8 counties. Most of the poorest counties are located in South Carolina's promise zone area and the top 20 poorest areas in the United States access additional grants and funds to help with employment. These counties include Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, and Hampton Counties. The remaining counties are located in South Carolina's "Corridor of Shame". The Corridor of Shame is a strip of poor, rural areas along Interstate 95. The Corridor of Shame, although unofficially defined, consists of 17 counties with 7 of these counties, Bamberg, Dillon, Hampton, Lee, Marlboro, Orangeburg, and Williamsburg in the top ten poorest counties in South Carolina.

County	Total Population	60+	Poverty	Minority	Median Income
Allendale**	9,024	2,418	3,681	1,211	$31,262

County	Total Population	60+	Poverty	Minority	Median Income
Marion*	31,308	8,603	1,715	2,908	$37,534
Orangeburg**	87,687	23,405	4,011	9,016	$39,832
Dillon*	30,689	6,869	1,369	1,910	$39,613
Lee**	17,365	4,259	815	1,753	$39,125
Bamberg**	14,376	4,061	610	1,607	$37,906
Marlboro**	26,753	6,450	1,526	2,235	$38,254
Hampton**	19,564	4,719	662	1,676	$41,281
Barnwell**	21,346	5,250	1,111	1,448	$42,265
Williamsburg**	31,324	8,624	2,106	3,758	$40,235

Source:2019 American Community Survey

*South Carolina Department on Aging County

** State Grantee County

2. LIST THE CITIES AND COUNTIES WHERE THE PROJECT WILL BE CONDUCTED. INCLUDE THE NUMBER OF SCSEP AUTHORIZED POSITIONS AND INDICATE WHERE THE POSITIONS CHANGED FROM THE PRIOR YEAR.

The State of South Carolina was awarded a total of 501SCSEP Slots in Program Year 2024-2025. There has not been a significant change in the distribution of SCSEP state slots during the last four years. The equitable distribution information listed below represents PY 2024-2025 PY.

Region	Counties	Slots
Appalachia	Anderson*,Cherokee*, Greenville*, Spartanburg*, Oconee, and Pickens*	126
Upper Savannah	Abbeville, Edgefield, Greenwood, Laurens, McCormick, and Saluda	30
Catawba	Chester, Lancaster, York, and Union	42
Central Midlands	Fairfield, Lexington*, Newberry, and Richland*	64
Lower Savannah	Aiken, Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Calhoun, and Orangeburg	46
Santee-Lynches	Clarendon, Kershaw*, Lee, and Sumter*	31
Pee Dee	Chesterfield*, Darlington*, Dillon*, Florence*, Marion*, and Marlboro	55

Region	Counties	Slots
Waccamaw	Georgetown*, Horry*, and Williamsburg	53
Trident	Berkeley, Charleston, and Dorchester	54
Lowcountry	Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton, and Jasper	27

*South Carolina Department on Aging Counties

3. DESCRIBE CURRENT SLOT IMBALANCES AND PROPOSED STEPS TO CORRECT INEQUITIES TO ACHIEVE EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION.

There don't appear any slot imbalances in South Carolina state slots. National slot imbalances will be addressed as the state and national grantees meet and review future data.

4. THE STATE'S LONG-TERM STRATEGY FOR ACHIEVING AN EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF SCSEP POSITIONS WITHIN THE STATE THAT:

A. MOVES POSITIONS FROM OVER-SERVED TO UNDERSERVED LOCATIONS WITHIN THE STATE IN COMPLIANCE WITH 20 CFR 641.365.

South Carolina Department on Aging (SCDOA) has had consistency in implementing SCSEP for the past 10 years, which has created a sense of stability for both the grantee and the participants. Currently, South Carolina has one sub-grantee, Goodwill Industries of the Upstate/Midlands, SC, Inc. There are two national grantees in the State, Goodwill International and Palmetto Goodwill.

SCDOA will again develop a plan that will address new census data or other reliable data that indicates there has been a shift in the location of eligible populations or when there is over-enrollment for any other reason. The plan will discuss the need for a gradual shift in positions to accomplish equitable distribution. It will include instructions for transferring slots along with specific language that defines the criteria to warrant the transfer. Additionally, the plan will stipulate, that grantees must submit, in writing, any proposed changes in distribution that occur after the submission of the equitable distribution report. The plan will also instruct all grantees to coordinate any proposed changes to the South Carolina Department on Aging for approval.

The request for the Department of Labor's approval must include the comments of the State SCSEP Director, which the Department of Labor will consider in making the decision. Conversely, before any changes are made the national and state grantees must meet to discuss proposed changes. Additionally, current data will be reviewed to ensure urban and rural areas are being served equitably as well as individuals afforded priority for service under 20 CFR 641.520.SCDOA will develop a calendar to convene SCSEP providers once a quarter. Meeting agendas will be developed by the attendees. Once again, sharing information consistently will be critical to ensuring equitable distribution issues are addressed in a deliberate and timely manner. Equitable distribution strategies should improve with increased emphasis on the SCSEP grantees acting in a more coordinated fashion.

B. EQUITABLY SERVES RURAL AND URBAN AREAS.

Distribution of Eligible Rural, Greatest Economic Need, Minorities, Limited English Proficiency and Greatest Social Need

SC Population (2019 American Community Survey)						
County	**Estimated Total Population**	**Population 60+**	**Poverty**	**Minority**	**Disability**	**Rural (ACL)**
Abbeville	24,627	7,092	1,144	1,368	1,128	22,287
Aiken	168,301	43,513	3,681	6,168	10,348	0
Allendale	9,024	2,418	290	4,770	863	1,068
Anderson	198,064	47,683	4,678	1,211	13,599	1,068
Bamberg	14,376	4,061	610	1,607	1,091	15,987
Barnwell	21,346	5,250	696	1,448	1,820	16,920
Beaufort	186,095	61,612	2,965	5,900	12,675	71,663
Berkeley	215,044	41,243	3,748	7,895	10,903	0
Calhoun	14,663	4,295	711	1,262	1,272	3,440
Charleston	401,165	88,524	8,641	17,909	19,539	1,738
Cherokee	56,895	12,703	1,512	1,564	3,466	43,940
Chester	32,311	8,339	1,424	1,804	2,401	0
Chesterfield	45,953	10,918	1,472	2,543	3,245	22,687
Clarendon	33,957	10,562	1,545	3,135	3,113	1,150
Colleton	37,585	10,311	1,166	2,788	2,233	17,114
Darlington	67,027	17,005	2,527	4,374	4,815	30,455
Dillon	30,689	6,869	1,369	1,910	1,944	32,062
Dorchester	158,299	30,546	2,670	5,142	7,808	7,683
Edgefield	26,927	6,620	657	1,557	1,208	7,439
Fairfield	22,565	7,016	1,020	2,142	1,591	0
Florence	138,475	31,649	4,059	8,097	7,330	15,661
Georgetown	61,952	21,786	2,343	3,635	4,877	34,343

SC Population (2019 American Community Survey)						
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Greenwood	70,411	16,977	2,014	3,038	4,921	69,661
Hampton	19,564	4,719	662	1,676	1,228	2,631
Horry	332,172	103,481	7,892	7,390	24,820	0
Jasper	28,657	7,577	963	1,864	1,697	0
Kershaw	65,112	16,434	2,014	2,855	4,518	7,445
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Lee	17,365	4,259	815	1,753	1,316	14,456
Lexington	290,278	64,228	5,082	5,180	15,722	0
McCormick	9,531	4,091	356	887	872	8,115
Marion	31,308	8,603	1,526	2,908	2,238	29,041
Marlboro	26,753	6,450	1,526	2,235	2,071	28,933
Newberry	38,194	10,095	1,785	1,758	2,585	28,000
Oconee	77,528	23,448	1,257	1,257	6,829	74,273
Orangeburg	87,687	23,405	4,011	9,016	6,003	72,203
Pickens	124,029	26,747	2,220	1,279	7,603	0
Richland	411,357	73,537	7,912	21,824	18,217	22
Saluda	20,303	5,233	585	925	1,418	15,021
Spartanburg	307,617	68,171	6,724	9,089	10,241	0
Sumter	106,757	23,201	2,962	7,929	6,333	0
Union	27,490	7,368	870	1,451	2,230	25,224
Williamsburg	31,324	8,624	2,106	3,758	2,361	31,468
York	265,872	53,687	4,294	6,634	11,385	8,273
State Total	**5,020,806**	**1,190,310**	**120,863**	**201,914**	**298,083**	**863,733**

C. SERVES INDIVIDUALS AFFORDED PRIORITY FOR SERVICE UNDER 20 CFR 641.520. (20 CFR 641.302(A), 641.365, 641.520)

Distribution of Eligible Rural, Greatest Economic Need, Minorities, Limited English Proficiency and Greatest Social Need

SC Population (2019 American Community Survey)						
County	**Estimated Total Population**	**Population 60+**	**Poverty**	**Minority**	**Disability**	**Rural (ACL)**
Abbeville	24,627	7,092	1,144	1,368	1,128	22,287
Aiken	168,301	43,513	3,681	6,168	10,348	0
Allendale	9,024	2,418	290	4,770	863	1,068
Anderson	198,064	47,683	4,678	1,211	13,599	1,068
Bamberg	14,376	4,061	610	1,607	1,091	15,987
Barnwell	21,346	5,250	696	1,448	1,820	16,920
Beaufort	186,095	61,612	2,965	5,900	12,675	71,663
Berkeley	215,044	41,243	3,748	7,895	10,903	0
Calhoun	14,663	4,295	711	1,262	1,272	3,440
Charleston	401,165	88,524	8,641	17,909	19,539	1,738
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Chester	32,311	8,339	1,424	1,804	2,401	0
Chesterfield	45,953	10,918	1,472	2,543	3,245	22,687
Clarendon	33,957	10,562	1,545	3,135	3,113	1,150
Colleton	37,585	10,311	1,166	2,788	2,233	17,114
Darlington	67,027	17,005	2,527	4,374	4,815	30,455
Dillon	30,689	6,869	1,369	1,910	1,944	32,062
Dorchester	158,299	30,546	2,670	5,142	7,808	7,683
Edgefield	26,927	6,620	657	1,557	1,208	7,439
Fairfield	22,565	7,016	1,020	2,142	1,591	0
Florence	138,475	31,649	4,059	8,097	7,330	15,661
Georgetown	61,952	21,786	2,343	3,635	4,877	34,343
Greenville	507,003	108,614	9,375	13,399	25,685	0

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Hampton	19,564	4,719	662	1,676	1,228	2,631
Horry	332,172	103,481	7,892	7,390	24,820	0
Jasper	28,657	7,577	963	1,864	1,697	0
Kershaw	65,112	16,434	2,014	2,855	4,518	7,445
Lancaster	92,308	24,847	2,325	2,814	5,363	53,105
Laurens	66,846	16,500	1,889	2,739	5,100	50,207
Lee	17,365	4,259	815	1,753	1,316	14,456
Lexington	290,278	64,228	5,082	5,180	15,722	0
McCormick	9,531	4,091	356	887	872	8,115
Marion	31,308	8,603	1,526	2,908	2,238	29,041
Marlboro	26,753	6,450	1,526	2,235	2,071	28,933
Newberry	38,194	10,095	1,785	1,758	2,585	28,000
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Pickens	124,029	26,747	2,220	1,279	7,603	0
Richland	411,357	73,537	7,912	21,824	18,217	22
Saluda	20,303	5,233	585	925	1,418	15,021
Spartanburg	307,617	68,171	6,724	9,089	10,241	0
Sumter	106,757	23,201	2,962	7,929	6,333	0
Union	27,490	7,368	870	1,451	2,230	25,224
Williamsburg	31,324	8,624	2,106	3,758	2,361	31,468
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State Total	**5,020,806**	**1,190,310**	**120,863**	**201,914**	**298,083**	**863,733**

5. THE RATIO OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS IN EACH SERVICE AREA TO THE TOTAL ELIGIBLE POPULATION IN THE STATE. (20 CFR 641.325(A))

Ratio of Eligible SCSEP Participants

The percentage of eligible seniors receiving services is .36%.

PSA	Region	Total Pop	60+	60+ Pov	SCSEP Slots
1	Appalachia	1,271,136	287,366	26,414	129
2	Upper Savannah	218,645	56,513	6,645	31
3	Catawba	417,981	94,240	8,913	38
4	Central Midlands	762,394	154,876	15,498	65
5	Lower Savannah	315,397	82,942	9,999	22
6	Santee-Lynches	223,191	54,456	7,570	12
7	Pee Dee	340,205	81,494	12,668	22
8	Waccamaw	425,448	133,891	12,341	20
9	Trident	774,508	160,313	15,059	67
10	Lowcountry	271,901	84,219	5,756	27
Total	**South Carolina**	**5,020,806**	**1,190,310**	**120,863**	**433**

6. THE RELATIVE DISTRIBUTION OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO:

A. RESIDE IN URBAN AND RURAL AREAS WITHIN THE STATE

Distribution of Eligible Rural, Greatest Economic Need, Minorities, Limited English Proficiency and Greatest Social Need

SC Population (2019 American Community Survey)						
County	**Estimated Total Population**	**Population 60+**	**Poverty**	**Minority**	**Disability**	**Rural (ACL)**
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Union	27,490	7,368	870	1,451	2,230	25,224
Williamsburg	31,324	8,624	2,106	3,758	2,361	31,468
York	265,872	53,687	4,294	6,634	11,385	8,273
State Total	**5,020,806**	**1,190,310**	**120,863**	**201,914**	**298,083**	**863,733**

B. HAVE THE GREATEST ECONOMIC NEED

Distribution of Eligible Rural, Greatest Economic Need, Minorities, Limited English Proficiency and Greatest Social Need

SC Population (2019 American Community Survey)						
County	**Estimated Total Population**	**Population 60+**	**Poverty**	**Minority**	**Disability**	**Rural (ACL)**
Abbeville	24,627	7,092	1,144	1,368	1,128	22,287
Aiken	168,301	43,513	3,681	6,168	10,348	0
Allendale	9,024	2,418	290	4,770	863	1,068
Anderson	198,064	47,683	4,678	1,211	13,599	1,068
Bamberg	14,376	4,061	610	1,607	1,091	15,987
Barnwell	21,346	5,250	696	1,448	1,820	16,920
Beaufort	186,095	61,612	2,965	5,900	12,675	71,663
Berkeley	215,044	41,243	3,748	7,895	10,903	0

SC Population (2019 American Community Survey)						
Calhoun	14,663	4,295	711	1,262	1,272	3,440
Charleston	401,165	88,524	8,641	17,909	19,539	1,738
Cherokee	56,895	12,703	1,512	1,564	3,466	43,940
Chester	32,311	8,339	1,424	1,804	2,401	0
Chesterfield	45,953	10,918	1,472	2,543	3,245	22,687
Clarendon	33,957	10,562	1,545	3,135	3,113	1,150
Colleton	37,585	10,311	1,166	2,788	2,233	17,114
Darlington	67,027	17,005	2,527	4,374	4,815	30,455
Dillon	30,689	6,869	1,369	1,910	1,944	32,062
Dorchester	158,299	30,546	2,670	5,142	7,808	7,683
Edgefield	26,927	6,620	657	1,557	1,208	7,439
Fairfield	22,565	7,016	1,020	2,142	1,591	0
Florence	138,475	31,649	4,059	8,097	7,330	15,661
Georgetown	61,952	21,786	2,343	3,635	4,877	34,343
Greenville	507,003	108,614	9,375	13,399	25,685	0
Greenwood	70,411	16,977	2,014	3,038	4,921	69,661
Hampton	19,564	4,719	662	1,676	1,228	2,631
Horry	332,172	103,481	7,892	7,390	24,820	0
Jasper	28,657	7,577	963	1,864	1,697	0
Kershaw	65,112	16,434	2,014	2,855	4,518	7,445
Lancaster	92,308	24,847	2,325	2,814	5,363	53,105
Laurens	66,846	16,500	1,889	2,739	5,100	50,207
Lee	17,365	4,259	815	1,753	1,316	14,456
Lexington	290,278	64,228	5,082	5,180	15,722	0
McCormick	9,531	4,091	356	887	872	8,115
Marion	31,308	8,603	1,526	2,908	2,238	29,041
Marlboro	26,753	6,450	1,526	2,235	2,071	28,933

SC Population (2019 American Community Survey)						
Newberry	38,194	10,095	1,785	1,758	2,585	28,000
Oconee	77,528	23,448	1,257	1,257	6,829	74,273
Orangeburg	87,687	23,405	4,011	9,016	6,003	72,203
Pickens	124,029	26,747	2,220	1,279	7,603	0
Richland	411,357	73,537	7,912	21,824	18,217	22
Saluda	20,303	5,233	585	925	1,418	15,021
Spartanburg	307,617	68,171	6,724	9,089	10,241	0
Sumter	106,757	23,201	2,962	7,929	6,333	0
Union	27,490	7,368	870	1,451	2,230	25,224
Williamsburg	31,324	8,624	2,106	3,758	2,361	31,468
York	265,872	53,687	4,294	6,634	11,385	8,273
State Total	**5,020,806**	**1,190,310**	**120,863**	**201,914**	**298,083**	**863,733**

C. ARE MINORITIES

Distribution of Eligible Rural, Greatest Economic Need, Minorities, Limited English Proficiency and Greatest Social Need

SC Population (2019 American Community Survey)						
County	**Estimated Total Population**	**Population 60+**	**Poverty**	**Minority**	**Disability**	**Rural (ACL)**
Abbeville	24,627	7,092	1,144	1,368	1,128	22,287
Aiken	168,301	43,513	3,681	6,168	10,348	0
Allendale	9,024	2,418	290	4,770	863	1,068
Anderson	198,064	47,683	4,678	1,211	13,599	1,068
Bamberg	14,376	4,061	610	1,607	1,091	15,987
Barnwell	21,346	5,250	696	1,448	1,820	16,920

SC Population (2019 American Community Survey)						
Beaufort	186,095	61,612	2,965	5,900	12,675	71,663
Berkeley	215,044	41,243	3,748	7,895	10,903	0
Calhoun	14,663	4,295	711	1,262	1,272	3,440
Charleston	401,165	88,524	8,641	17,909	19,539	1,738
Cherokee	56,895	12,703	1,512	1,564	3,466	43,940
Chester	32,311	8,339	1,424	1,804	2,401	0
Chesterfield	45,953	10,918	1,472	2,543	3,245	22,687
Clarendon	33,957	10,562	1,545	3,135	3,113	1,150
Colleton	37,585	10,311	1,166	2,788	2,233	17,114
Darlington	67,027	17,005	2,527	4,374	4,815	30,455
Dillon	30,689	6,869	1,369	1,910	1,944	32,062
Dorchester	158,299	30,546	2,670	5,142	7,808	7,683
Edgefield	26,927	6,620	657	1,557	1,208	7,439
Fairfield	22,565	7,016	1,020	2,142	1,591	0
Florence	138,475	31,649	4,059	8,097	7,330	15,661
Georgetown	61,952	21,786	2,343	3,635	4,877	34,343
Greenville	507,003	108,614	9,375	13,399	25,685	0
Greenwood	70,411	16,977	2,014	3,038	4,921	69,661
Hampton	19,564	4,719	662	1,676	1,228	2,631
Horry	332,172	103,481	7,892	7,390	24,820	0
Jasper	28,657	7,577	963	1,864	1,697	0
Kershaw	65,112	16,434	2,014	2,855	4,518	7,445
Lancaster	92,308	24,847	2,325	2,814	5,363	53,105
Laurens	66,846	16,500	1,889	2,739	5,100	50,207
Lee	17,365	4,259	815	1,753	1,316	14,456
Lexington	290,278	64,228	5,082	5,180	15,722	0
McCormick	9,531	4,091	356	887	872	8,115

SC Population (2019 American Community Survey)						
Marion	31,308	8,603	1,526	2,908	2,238	29,041
Marlboro	26,753	6,450	1,526	2,235	2,071	28,933
Newberry	38,194	10,095	1,785	1,758	2,585	28,000
Oconee	77,528	23,448	1,257	1,257	6,829	74,273
Orangeburg	87,687	23,405	4,011	9,016	6,003	72,203
Pickens	124,029	26,747	2,220	1,279	7,603	0
Richland	411,357	73,537	7,912	21,824	18,217	22
Saluda	20,303	5,233	585	925	1,418	15,021
Spartanburg	307,617	68,171	6,724	9,089	10,241	0
Sumter	106,757	23,201	2,962	7,929	6,333	0
Union	27,490	7,368	870	1,451	2,230	25,224
Williamsburg	31,324	8,624	2,106	3,758	2,361	31,468
York	265,872	53,687	4,294	6,634	11,385	8,273
State Total	**5,020,806**	**1,190,310**	**120,863**	**201,914**	**298,083**	**863,733**

D. ARE LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT

In South Carolina, there is a very small amount of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) older adults as calculate by census data.

E. HAVE THE GREATEST SOCIAL NEED. (20 CFR 641.325(B))

Distribution of Eligible Rural, Greatest Economic Need, Minorities, Limited English Proficiency and Greatest Social Need

SC Population (2019 American Community Survey)						
County	**Estimated Total Population**	**Population 60+**	**Poverty**	**Minority**	**Disability**	**Rural (ACL)**
Abbeville	24,627	7,092	1,144	1,368	1,128	22,287
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Beaufort	186,095	61,612	2,965	5,900	12,675	71,663
Berkeley	215,044	41,243	3,748	7,895	10,903	0
Calhoun	14,663	4,295	711	1,262	1,272	3,440
Charleston	401,165	88,524	8,641	17,909	19,539	1,738
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Chester	32,311	8,339	1,424	1,804	2,401	0
Chesterfield	45,953	10,918	1,472	2,543	3,245	22,687
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Colleton	37,585	10,311	1,166	2,788	2,233	17,114
Darlington	67,027	17,005	2,527	4,374	4,815	30,455
Dillon	30,689	6,869	1,369	1,910	1,944	32,062
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Edgefield	26,927	6,620	657	1,557	1,208	7,439
Fairfield	22,565	7,016	1,020	2,142	1,591	0
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Lexington	290,278	64,228	5,082	5,180	15,722	0
McCormick	9,531	4,091	356	887	872	8,115
Marion	31,308	8,603	1,526	2,908	2,238	29,041
Marlboro	26,753	6,450	1,526	2,235	2,071	28,933
Newberry	38,194	10,095	1,785	1,758	2,585	28,000
Oconee	77,528	23,448	1,257	1,257	6,829	74,273
Orangeburg	87,687	23,405	4,011	9,016	6,003	72,203
Pickens	124,029	26,747	2,220	1,279	7,603	0
Richland	411,357	73,537	7,912	21,824	18,217	22
Saluda	20,303	5,233	585	925	1,418	15,021
Spartanburg	307,617	68,171	6,724	9,089	10,241	0
Sumter	106,757	23,201	2,962	7,929	6,333	0
Union	27,490	7,368	870	1,451	2,230	25,224
Williamsburg	31,324	8,624	2,106	3,758	2,361	31,468
York	265,872	53,687	4,294	6,634	11,385	8,273
State Total	**5,020,806**	**1,190,310**	**120,863**	**201,914**	**298,083**	**863,733**

F. FORMERLY INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS, AS DEFINED IN TEGL 17-20

The South Carolina Department on Aging SCSEP State sub-recipient has served nine formerly incarcerat d individuals based on the data in GPMS. There is a goal to meet with the SC Department of Corrections and the SC Department of Probation, Parole, and Pardons to identify ways we can work together to get referrals for formerly incarcerated individuals.

7. A DESCRIPTION OF THE STEPS TAKEN TO AVOID DISRUPTIONS TO THE GREATEST EXTENT POSSIBLE, WHEN POSITIONS ARE REDISTRIBUTED, AS PROVIDED IN 20 CFR 641.365; WHEN NEW CENSUS OR OTHER RELIABLE DATA BECOME AVAILABLE; OR WHEN THERE IS OVER-ENROLLMENT FOR ANY OTHER REASON. (20 CFR 641.325(I), 641.302(B))

The SCDOA will work with the sub-recipient and other WIOA partners to limit the impact of any disruption related to the redistribution of slots when the new Census is available. In SC, the rural areas continue to lose population and the more urban areas continue to grow. The areas

around the cost of SC such as Horry and Beaufort Counties have the highest senior population percentage at 31%.

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR APPENDIX

ALL WIOA CORE PROGRAMS

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES - ADULT PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as “baseline” indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A “baseline” indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels. As a result, “baseline” indicators were not used in the end of the year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as “baseline” based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Credential Attainment Rate; and
- Measurable Skill Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a

reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as "baseline" for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as "baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA." The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as "baseline" for PY 2020 and PY 2021 will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as "baseline" for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs not listed as "baseline." Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state's plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	77.9	79.1	77.9	79.1
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	75.7	78.3	75.7	78.3
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$6,525	$6,900	$6,525	$7,000
Credential Attainment Rate	67.5	67.5	67.5	67.5
Measurable Skill Gains	60.1	66.3	60.1	66.3
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]

[1] The Departments have not issued the final rule defining Effectiveness in Serving Employers. As a result, states will not submit expected levels of performance for this indicator and the Departments will not establish negotiated levels of performance for PYs 2024 and 2025.

ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES - DISLOCATED PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as “baseline” indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A “baseline” indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels. As a result, “baseline” indicators were not used in the end of the year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as “baseline” based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available

to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Credential Attainment Rate; and
- Measurable Skill Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as "baseline" for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as "baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA." The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as "baseline" for PY 2020 and PY 2021 will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as "baseline" for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs not listed as "baseline." Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state's plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	80.9	81.6	80.9	82.0
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	78.3	80.9	78.3	81.4
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$7,935	$8,550	$7,935	$8,650
Credential Attainment Rate	65.6	69.1	65.6	69.6
Measurable Skill Gains	60.9	67.7	60.9	67.7
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]

[1] The Departments have not issued the final rule defining Effectiveness in Serving Employers. As a result, states will not submit expected levels of performance for this indicator and the Departments will not establish negotiated levels of performance for PYs 2024 and 2025.

ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES - YOUTH PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as "baseline" indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment

Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A "baseline" indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels. As a result, "baseline" indicators were not used in the end of the year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as "baseline" based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

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- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as "baseline" for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as "baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA." The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as "baseline" for PY 2020 and PY 2021

will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as "baseline" for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs not listed as "baseline." Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state's plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	74.2	78.0	74.2	78.5
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	70.4	75.0	70.4	75.5
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$3,622	$3,985	$3,622	$4,030
Credential Attainment Rate	59.7	63.0	59.7	63.5
Measurable Skill Gains	53.9	61.5	53.9	62.5
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]

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The Departments have not issued the final rule defining Effectiveness in Serving Employers. As a result, states will not submit expected levels of performance for this indicator and the Departments will not establish negotiated levels of performance for PYs 2024 and 2025.

Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as "baseline" indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A "baseline" indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels. As a result, "baseline" indicators were not used in the end of the year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as "baseline" based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Credential Attainment Rate; and
- Measurable Skill Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as "baseline" for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as "baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA." The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as "baseline" for PY 2020 and PY 2021 will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as "baseline" for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs not listed as "baseline." Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state's plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	63.5	67.0	63.5	68.0
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	62.8	66.0	62.8	67.0
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$5,461	$5,755	$5,461	$5,855
Credential Attainment Rate	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Measurable Skill Gains	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]

[1]

The Departments have not issued the final rule defining Effectiveness in Serving Employers. As a result, states will not submit expected levels of performance for this indicator and the Departments will not establish negotiated levels of performance for PYs 2024 and 2025.

ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAM - ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Each state submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan is required to identify expected levels of performance for each of the primary indicators of performance for the first two years covered by the plan. The state is required to reach agreement with the Secretary of Labor, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, on state-negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the plan.

For Program Year (PY) 2016-2019 plans, the Departments used the transition authority under section 503(a) of WIOA to designate certain primary indicators of performance as "baseline" indicators to ensure an orderly transition from the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to those under WIOA. A "baseline" indicator was one for which states did not propose an expected level of performance and did not come to agreement with the Departments on negotiated levels of performance because sufficient data was not available to establish such performance levels. As a result, "baseline" indicators were not used in the end of the year adjustment of performance levels and were not used to determine failure to meet adjusted levels of performance for purposes of sanctions. The Departments designated indicators as "baseline" based on the likelihood of a State having insufficient data with which to make a reasonable determination of an expected level of performance.

For PYs 2020-2023 Plans, Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and the Title II program (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) will have two full years of data available to make reasonable determinations of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Credential Attainment Rate; and
- Measurable Skill Gains

The Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III of WIOA, will have two full years of data available to make a reasonable determination of expected levels of performance for the following indicators for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);

- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit); and
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)

The Credential Attainment Rate and Measurable Skill Gains indicators do not apply to the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program; therefore, this program will not submit expected levels of performance for these indicators.

For the first two years of PYs 2020-2023 Plans, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by title IV of WIOA, will have two full years of data available for the Measurable Skill Gains indicator only. Therefore, the Departments will designate the following indicators as "baseline" for the VR program for PY 2020 and PY 2021:

- Employment (Second Quarter after Exit);
- Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit);
- Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit); and
- Credential Attainment Rate

VR agencies must continue to collect and report on all indicators, including those that have been designated as "baseline, pursuant to section 116(d) of WIOA." The actual performance data reported by these programs for indicators designated as "baseline" for PY 2020 and PY 2021 will serve as baseline data in future years. The Departments will require VR agencies to submit expected levels of performance for these indicators for PY 2022 and PY 2023.

The Departments determined that the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator will be measured as a shared outcome across all six core programs within each state to ensure a holistic approach to serving employers. The Departments will continue piloting approaches for measuring this indicator for the first two years of PY 2020-2023 plans. Therefore, states are not required to submit an expected level of performance for the Effectiveness in Serving Employers indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021. However, core programs are expected to collect data and report on this indicator for PY 2020 and PY 2021 as they did for PYs 2016-2019 plans.

Each core program must submit an expected level of performance for all of the other indicators, as applicable, with the exception of the four indicators designated as "baseline" for the VR program in PY 2020 and PY 2021. The Departments will work with states during the negotiation process to establish negotiated levels of performance for each of the primary indicators for the core programs not listed as "baseline." Each state must update its plan to include the agreed-upon negotiated levels of performance before the Departments approve a state's plan.

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	33.0%	38.6%	35.0%	38.7%

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	34.0%	46.0%	36.0%	46.3%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	3,300.00	3,680.00	3,350.00	3,685.00
Credential Attainment Rate	41.0%	41.0%	42.0%	42.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	41.0%	42.8%	42.0%	43.0%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]

[1] The Departments have not issued the final rule defining Effectiveness in Serving Employers. As a result, states will not submit expected levels of performance for this indicator and the Departments will not establish negotiated levels of performance for PYs 2024 and 2025.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM (COMBINED OR GENERAL) - VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Each State VR program must submit expected levels of performance in its Unified or Combined State Plan and in the two-year modification of that plan. Expected levels of performance for the first two years of a state plan must be submitted in the initial submission of the Unified or Combined State Plan and in the initial submission of the two-year modification of that Plan, for years three and four, as described in 34 CFR § 361.170(a). Expected levels of performance must be stated to the nearest tenth of a percent (XX.X %) or to the nearest whole dollar for median earnings. State VR programs are reminded that the expected levels of performance must be published for public comment prior to plan submission in accordance with state law, regulation, and policy.

After the Unified or Combined State Plan submission, each State VR program must reach agreement with RSA on the negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the Unified or Combined State Plan (or for the third and fourth years of the Unified or Combined State Plan during the required two-year modification process) in accordance with WIOA section 116(b)(3)(A)(iv).

RSA will use its statistical adjustment model to derive pre-program year estimated levels of performance for each indicator. Each State VR program and RSA will consider the negotiation factors outlined in WIOA section 116(b)(3)(A)(v) during the negotiation process. Once negotiated levels of performance are agreed upon, each State VR program must incorporate the negotiated levels of performance into the Unified or Combined State Plan and the two-year modification of that plan prior to the plan's approval (section 116(b)(3)(A)(iv) of WIOA).

Effectiveness in Serving Employers

In the final rule implementing WIOA, the Departments indicated that they would initially implement this indicator in the form of a pilot to test the feasibility and rigor of three proposed approaches. During Program Year (PY) 2022, the Departments initiated the rulemaking process to establish a standard definition of Effectiveness in Serving Employers. States will continue to report two of three proposed approaches until the Departments issue the final rule and implement the indicator.

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	65.7%	65.7%	65.8%	65.8%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	61.7%	61.7%	61.8%	61.8%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$6,112	$6,112	$6,234	$6,234
Credential Attainment Rate	42.7%	42.7%	44.8%	44.8%
Measurable Skill Gains	52.3%	52.3%	54.9%	54.9%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]

[1]The Departments have not issued the final rule defining Effectiveness in Serving Employers. As a result, states will not submit expected levels of performance for this indicator and the Departments will not establish negotiated levels of performance for PYs 2024 and 2025.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM (BLIND) - VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Each State VR program must submit expected levels of performance in its Unified or Combined State Plan and in the two-year modification of that plan. Expected levels of performance for the first two years of a state plan must be submitted in the initial submission of the Unified or Combined State Plan and in the initial submission of the two-year modification of that Plan, for years three and four, as described in 34 CFR § 361.170(a). Expected levels of performance must be stated to the nearest tenth of a percent (XX.X %) or to the nearest whole dollar for median earnings. State VR programs are reminded that the expected levels of performance must be published for public comment prior to plan submission in accordance with state law, regulation, and policy.

After the Unified or Combined State Plan submission, each State VR program must reach agreement with RSA on the negotiated levels of performance for the indicators for each of the first two years of the Unified or Combined State Plan (or for the third and fourth years of the Unified or Combined State Plan during the required two-year modification process) in accordance with WIOA section 116(b)(3)(A)(iv).

RSA will use its statistical adjustment model to derive pre-program year estimated levels of performance for each indicator. Each State VR program and RSA will consider the negotiation factors outlined in WIOA section 116(b)(3)(A)(v) during the negotiation process. Once negotiated levels of performance are agreed upon, each State VR program must incorporate the negotiated levels of performance into the Unified or Combined State Plan and the two-year modification of that plan prior to the plan's approval (section 116(b)(3)(A)(iv) of WIOA).

Effectiveness in Serving Employers

In the final rule implementing WIOA, the Departments indicated that they would initially implement this indicator in the form of a pilot to test the feasibility and rigor of three proposed approaches. During Program Year (PY) 2022, the Departments initiated the rulemaking process to establish a standard definition of Effectiveness in Serving Employers. States will continue to report two of three proposed approaches until the Departments issue the final rule and implement the indicator.

Performance Indicators	PY 2024 Expected Level	PY 2024 Negotiated Level	PY 2025 Expected Level	PY 2025 Negotiated Level
Employment (Second Quarter After Exit)	65.7%	65.7%	65.8%	65.8%
Employment (Fourth Quarter After Exit)	61.7%	61.7%	61.8%	61.8%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter After Exit)	$6,112	$6,112	$6,234	$6,234
Credential Attainment Rate	42.7%	42.7%	44.8%	44.8%
Measurable Skill Gains	52.3%	52.3%	54.9%	54.9%
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]	Not Applicable [1]

[1] The Departments have not issued the final rule defining Effectiveness in Serving Employers. As a result, states will not submit expected levels of performance for this indicator and the Departments will not establish negotiated levels of performance for PYs 2024 and 2025.

ADDITIONAL INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE

States may identify additional indicators in the plan, including additional approaches to measuring Effectiveness in Serving Employers, and may establish levels of performance for each of the state indicators. Please identify any such state indicators under Additional Indicators of Performance.

Additional Indicators of Performance
Not applicable.

OTHER APPENDICES

Not applicable.