LOUISIANAWORKS

Workforce Investment Council Meeting

Date: 02/25/2026
10:00AM – 12:00PM

EBRPL-Main Library
Large Meeting Room-1st Floor
7711 Goodwood Blvd
Baton Rouge, LA 70806

I. Call to order

a. Chairman David Helveston @10:06 am

II. Roll call –

WIC Director Kaffia Arvie **Quorum: Yes** **Time:10:06 am**

First Name	Last Name	Member	Designee	Designee
Terry	Baugh		✓	Patrick Robinson
Melissa	Bayham	✓		
Ellis	Bourque, III	✓		
Mayor Michael	Danahay			
Mark	Dearman			
Jason	Dedon			
Renee'	DeLouche	✓		
Rep. Phillip	DeVillier			
Chelsea	Dufrene		✓	Mark Bond
Mayor Friday	Ellis			

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Jason	Engels		✓	Gary Warren
Connie	Fabre	✓		
Gregory	Feirn		✓	John Pourciau
David	Gaines	✓		
Stacey	Gautreau	✓		
Sec. Rebecca	Harris			
David	Helveston	✓		
Dr. Kim	Hunter-Reed		✓	Dr. Lisa Vosper
Jay	Johnson	✓		
Dr. Chandler	Leboeuf	✓		
Ben	Lemoine	✓		
Roy	Martin, III	✓		
Terri	Mitchell	✓		
Neil	Rader	✓		
Louis	Reine	✓		
Tina	Roper	✓		
Kyle	Ruckert			
Sec. Susan	Schowen	✓		
Sen. Alan	Seabaugh			
David	St. Etienne			
Michael	Tanner	✓		

Joel	Thames	✓		
Suzanne	Torregano	✓		
Buck Tom	Vandersteen Yura	✓		

III. **Review and approval of previous minutes**

a. Motion to approve/deny the minutes

1. 1st . Louis Reine
2. 2nd- Roy Martin, III
3. Unanimous vote-All Passed

IV. **Comments from Secretary Susie Schowen**

a. There is a plan to obtain SNAP from LDH

b. Sec. Schowen provided an update to the One Door Model.

V. **Comments from Chairman David Helveston**

a. Chairman Helveston welcomed everyone to the 1st meeting of the year

b. Chairman Helveston mentioned of the rapid sessions that happened the year of 2025. Stated that he appreciated the commitment of the Council.

c. He also mentioned to be prepared as there will be additional discussion that will cause the WIC to have more involvement.

d. WIC will be going on the road. Challenged the Council to show up in the other regions just like we do in Baton Rouge.

VI. **State Plan Review from Assistant Secretary Jessica Vallelungo**

a. The One-Door Model was reinterated.

1. Entering through 1 door and exit through the same door into the workforce
2. Went on to explaining and providing information concerning the different services via WIOA.

b. The submission of the State Plan will be in April

c. Louis Reine inquired about any exemptions under the SNAP work requirements.

d. Tina Roper advised that businesses need to come to the table because with SNAP E &

T, you can't use federal funds

e. Dr. Lisa Vosper mentioned a little about the "benefit cliff" requesting that a full explaination be done and maybe allow it to be on the next agenda.
f. Suzanne Torregano advised that we need to be mindful and have a full understanding of the phrase "livable wage."
g. Deputy Secretary Osmar Padilla briefly spoke about the different waivers that goes into the State Plan and that the waivers are to provide a form of flexibility.
h. Secretary Susie Schowen spoke about the Executive Order (JML 26-011) explaining that the WIC will have more responsibility.

VII. Review and Approval of WIC By-Laws

a. Motion to defer the vote to next meeting, needing to go under legal review as well as to see a copy of the old By-Laws to understand the changes and the purpose.

1. 1st . Louis Reine
2. 2nd- Renee DeLoche'
3. Unanimous vote-All Passed

VIII. Nomination and Vote of WIC's Vice-Chair

a. Chairman Helveston nominated Tom Yura for this selection.
   a. Motioned by Roy Martin, III
   b. 2nd by Dr. Lisa Vosper
   c. **Unanimous vote-All Passed**

******At this time, Chairman Helveston mentioned that the end time was coming near and unless someone made a motion to extend the meeting, the meeting will end**** NO MOTION MADE**

IX. Key Legislation Priorities-Did not get to due to time

X. Other Business- N/A

XI. Public Comment-N/A

XII. Adjournment at 11:59am

a. **1st – Louis Reine**
b. **2nd –Tom Yura**

LOUISIANAWORKS

BYLAWS OF THE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT COUNCIL

Article I
Name and Mission

Section 1. Name. The organization's name is the "Workforce Investment Council" (WIC).

Section 2. Authorization. The WIC is established in accordance with Section 101 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Pub. L. 133-128, enacted July 22, 2014, and under Louisiana Law, LSA-R.S. 23:2042-2056.

Section 3. Mission. The Louisiana Workforce Investment Council supports the development of an employer-led, demand-driven workforce development system based on occupational forecasts, in which training, education, and services for job seekers prepare Louisiana residents for high-wage, high-demand career opportunities.

The WIC achieves this mission by:

a) Recommending policy actions to both public and private institutions and creating coalitions to achieve their implementation.
b) Working with workforce development system partners to integrate workforce development into the decision-making of business people, economic developers, educators, government officials, and human resource professionals.
c) Raising public awareness of the importance of workforce development for Louisiana's economic future.
d) Ensuring public accountability by evaluating the effectiveness of the overall workforce development system.

Section 4. Responsibilities. Pursuant to Section 101 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and applicable Louisiana law, the WIC shall serve as the State Workforce Development Board and as the governing body for a unified, statewide workforce development system. The WIC may establish, oversee, and modify policies, standards, accountability frameworks, and administrative structures necessary to implement an integrated workforce system consistent with federal and state law. The responsibilities of the WIC include:

a) Submit a statewide strategic plan to meet current and forecasted workforce needs to the Governor and provide regular reports on implementation progress, outcomes, and system performance.
b) Establish and enforce statewide performance, fiscal, and operational accountability standards; hold system partners, service providers, and delegated entities accountable for achieving agreed-upon outcomes aligned with workforce supply and demand.
c) Establish, oversee, delegate, or coordinate statewide governance, administrative, and

operational functions necessary to support effective workforce service delivery, including oversight of service providers, contracts, performance management, fiscal integrity, and compliance,

d) Direct the activities of the Occupational Forecasting Conference and use labor market intelligence to drive statewide policy decisions that align education, training, and workforce investments with employer demand.
e) Oversee the Industry-Based Certification Council and related credentialing and program approval processes to ensure alignment with statewide workforce demand, economic priorities, and performance outcomes.
f) Oversee, jointly with the Board of Regents, the evaluation of two-year and shorter-term programs for TOPS Tech eligibility to ensure alignment with statewide workforce demand and economic priorities.
g) Participate in and provide workforce demand analysis to inform the evaluation of TOPS Tech Early Start training providers to ensure alignment with state and regional workforce needs.
h) Provide workforce demand guidance and alignment recommendations through the Graduation Pathway Review Panel to support alignment of Jump Start Pathways with statewide and regional workforce priorities.

Section 5. Board Staff and Address. Louisiana Works shall be responsible for providing staff to the WIC. The official office location and mailing address of the WIC shall be: Workforce Investment Council, P.O. Box 94094, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804-9094.

Article II
Powers

The powers of the WIC shall include:

a) Perform all duties and responsibilities of the State Workforce Development Board as defined in Section 101(d) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and any additional authorities permitted under federal or state law or approved waivers.

b) Direct the Occupational Forecasting Conference and related labor market activities to project current and future job growth, skills demand, and economic trends in the state.

c) Adopt, modify, or otherwise utilize occupational forecasts and labor market analyses to inform statewide workforce strategy, funding decisions, credential alignment, and program priorities.

d) Establish and maintain the statewide list of high-demand, high-wage occupations, including criteria, methodology, and update frequency, and delegate administrative responsibility for maintaining such lists as appropriate.

e) Advise the Governor and Legislature on the full range of workforce development, education, training, and labor force participation issues impacting the state.

f) Establish standards and oversight processes for the evaluation and approval of industry-based credentials and workforce-aligned education and training programs

g) Approve and oversee approval authority for TOPS Tech eligibility, TOPS Tech Early Start programs, and related eligible training provider determinations to ensure alignment with workforce demand and statewide priorities.

h) Delegate powers, responsibilities, and decision-making authority to officers, committees, staff, or external entities, as appropriate and allowable by law, to carry out the purposes of the WIC and ensure efficient operation of the statewide workforce system.

Article III
Members of the WIC

Section 1. Appointment. Appointments to the WIC shall be made in accordance with LSA-R.S. 23:2043

Section 2. Terms. Initially, the Governor may appoint members to two-, three-, or four-year terms to stagger arrivals and departures. At the conclusion of the initial board members' terms, future gubernatorial appointments shall be for terms of six years.

Section 3. Representation. Members shall be appointed to include: All required partners and programs according to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Title I, subtitle A, chapter 1, section 101 and LSA-R.S. 23: 2043. A majority of all WIC members shall represent the business community. Not less than 20 percent of the WIC membership shall be representatives from organized labor. The Governor may appoint as many members as are needed to fulfill the duties of the WIC, and to meet applicable federal and state laws. Members shall include:

a) The Governor.
b) The Secretary of Louisiana Works.
c) The Secretary of the Department of Children and Family Services.
d) The Secretary of Louisiana Economic Development.
e) The State Superintendent of Education.
f) The President of the Louisiana Community and Technical College System.
g) The Commissioner of Higher Education.
h) The Secretary of the Department of Public Safety and Corrections.
i) Representatives of businesses.
j) Representatives of organized labor, including at least one member of a labor organization or a training director from a joint labor management registered apprenticeship program within the state.
k) Two members of each chamber of the state legislature.
l) One member who is a chief executive officer of a community-based organization.
m) Two chief elected officials representing either parish and/or city government.

Section 4. Officers. The Officers of the WIC shall be the Chair and the Vice Chair. The Governor shall select the Chair from among the WIC business representatives The Chair shall nominate a candidate for Vice Chair from the business representatives, and the nomination shall be confirmed by a majority vote of the membership. The Chair and Vice Chair will serve one-year terms, beginning July 1 and ending June 30 of the following calendar year. There is no limit to the number of terms the Chair and Vice Chair may

serve within the limits of their appointments. The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the WIC and shall have other duties as assigned by the WIC or these bylaws. Should the Chair be absent, the Vice Chair shall act as Chair, and have such other duties as assigned by the Chair or the WIC. The Chair shall appoint the chairs and members of all standing, special, and advisory committees, except where committee composition is otherwise prescribed by law. The WIC may establish additional officer positions, including but not limited to a Secretary or Treasurer, and may define their duties by resolution.

Section 5. Resignations/Retirements. A Council member may resign by providing a written notice to the Governor, the WIC Chair, and the WIC Director.

Section 6. Removal. The Chair of the WIC, in consultation with the other WIC members, may recommend member removal to the Governor for cause including misconduct, incompetency, neglect of duty, or absence from two out of four consecutive meetings.

Section 7. Replacement. If a Board member resigns or must otherwise be replaced, the new appointment shall follow the same procedure as that described in Article III. The newly appointed member shall fill out the remainder of the departing member's term.

Article IV
Members of the WIC

Section 1. Attendance. WIC members are required to attend all Council meetings. If a member is unable to attend a meeting, the member may request approval to appoint a designee with voting privileges to serve in the member's absence. Such request must be submitted in writing (via email) to the WIC Chair and Director of the Workforce Investment Council no later than twenty-four (24) hours prior to the scheduled meeting. The designee shall not be seated or permitted to vote unless formally approved by the Chair. Approval shall be documented in the meeting record.

Section 2. Council Meetings. The WIC shall meet no less than four times each calendar year, All meetings shall comply with Louisiana's Open Meetings Law (Article XII, Section 3 of the Louisiana Constitution and LSA-R.S. 42:11-42:28). Votes by email, phone call, or web forum are prohibited except under an emergency proclamation of the governor and as directed by state law.

In an effort to encourage maximum participation of members and stakeholders, the chairman and director have taken and will continue to take the following actions:

a. Send agendas out in advance of the meeting via electronic mail.
b. Send meeting documents to members via electronic mail so as to accommodate pre-review prior to meetings.
c. Post meeting minutes electronically to the state boards and commissions site as per state law so as to make approved meeting minutes available to the public.
d. Meet non-member stakeholders via electronic means to solicit input from regional, local, and statewide stakeholders outside of board meetings.
e. Survey stakeholders for input via electronic means.

f. Allow meetings covered by a gubernatorial emergency declaration, which cover emergency agenda items (as defined by state law), to be held via electronic means.

Section 3. Special meetings. Other special meetings may be called by the Chair.

Section 4. Minutes of the proceedings for each WIC meeting will be recorded and maintained by Louisiana Works and presented at the next public meeting for approval. Minutes shall document attendance and absences of WIC members. A summary of the recorded minutes will be distributed to each WIC member before the next scheduled meeting.

Section 5. Quorum. A quorum for taking action shall be 51 percent of serving members.

Section 6. Decisions. Decisions shall be made by a vote of a majority of the total serving membership of the WIC.

Section 7. Procedural rules. Decision-making portions of meetings shall be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order. Educational and informational portions of meetings shall be conducted at the Chair's discretion.

Section 8. Participation of non-members. All WIC meetings and committee meetings are open to the public. The Chair shall provide opportunities for non-WIC members to speak on issues of concern at each meeting, as issues are discussed, at the Chair's discretion. The Chair may appoint Louisiana residents to participate on council committees. Those appointees cannot vote or be counted towards a quorum. Appointments of Louisiana citizens to committees shall be made at the discretion of the Chair and shall not extend beyond the Chair's term of office.

Section 9. Conflict of interest. A conflict of interest arises when a Board member, any member of that individual's immediate family, or an organization that employs (or is about to employ) any of the above, has a financial or other interest in a firm or organization that is considered for selection for an award, grant, or contract by the WIC. Members of the WIC shall not cast votes nor participate in any decision-making capacity on the provision of services by such a member (or any firm or organization that member represents), nor on any matter which would provide financial benefit to that member. Members shall take state-mandated ethics training annually. Failure to comply with this section constitutes misconduct and will result in removal from the WIC.

Article V
Committees of the WIC

Section 1. Types. The WIC shall have an Executive Committee, an Occupational Forecasting Conference, and advisory and special committees. The nature of each is described below.

Section 2. Executive Committee. There shall be an Executive Committee composed of the Chair, the Vice Chair, the Secretary of Louisiana Works (or designee), the Secretary of Louisiana Economic Development (or designee), the President of the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (or designee), and four additional members appointed by the Chair from among the membership of the WIC. The Executive Committee is authorized to act on behalf of the WIC between full Council meetings on matters related to operations, performance oversight, and implementation of approved policies, except where prohibited by

law. Any Actions taken by the Executive Committee shall be reported to the full WIC and entered into the official record.

Section 3. Occupational Forecasting Conference. There shall be an Occupational Forecasting Conference. The Occupational Forecasting Conference is a statutorily mandated WIC standing committee. The conference is tasked with developing a method to forecast current and emerging statewide and regional workforce needs to support workforce development system planning and resource allocation. Conference membership shall consist of the following:

a) The Governor
b) The Secretary of the Louisiana Works.
c) One person appointed by the Governor from a list of three nominees submitted by the Louisiana Association of Business and Industry.
d) One member appointed by the Governor from a list of three nominees submitted by the Louisiana AFL-CIO.
e) One member appointed by the Governor from a list of three nominees submitted by the Council; such nominees shall be three of the nonpublic council members serving on the Council.
f) Two members, each of whom shall be a faculty member of a public or private university or college in Louisiana, who shall be econometricians and have occupational forecasting expertise or expertise in economic planning and industry/occupation matrix formulation, to be selected by the other five principals of the conference from a list of not less than three nor more than five nominees submitted by the Louisiana Board of Regents.
g) The Secretary of the Department of Economic Development.
h) The President of the Louisiana Community and Technical College System.
i) One member of the Louisiana Minority Supplier Development Council.
j) The Chairman of the conference shall be the principal appointed by the Governor from the WIC.

If members are unable to attend in person, they may appoint a designee to serve in their stead.

Section 4. Advisory and Special Committees. The Chair may establish Advisory and Special Committees as necessary to carry out the purposes of the WIC and shall set the membership of such committees, except where otherwise required by law. Advisory and Special Committees shall be composed of individuals who represent relevant workforce development stakeholders and who are qualified to perform their assigned duties. . State and local agency personnel may serve on these committees as members or consultants.

Article VI
Bylaws

Section 1. Bylaw Changes. Proposed amendments to these bylaws shall be submitted to the Chair for consideration. Amendments may be placed on the agenda by the Chair and shall be adopted, amended, or

repealed only by the affirmative vote of a majority of the total appointed membership of the WIC at a meeting at which a quorum is present.

Section 2. Bylaw Enactment. These bylaws were enacted by the WIC on the date set forth below.

APPROVED BY THE LOUISIANA WORKFORCE INVESTMENT COUNCIL

Chair: _____ **Date:** _____

BYLAWS OF THE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT COUNCIL

REDLINE COMPARISON: 2021 BYLAWS vs. 2026 DRAFT

Deletions shown in ~~red strikethrough~~ | Additions shown in blue underline

Article I
Name and Mission

Section 1. Name. The ~~name of the organization is~~organization's name is the "Workforce Investment Council" (WIC).

Section 2. Authorization. The WIC is established in accordance with Section 101 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Pub. L. 133-128, enacted July 22, 2014, and under Louisiana Law, LSA-R.S. 23:2042-2056.

Section 3. Mission. The Louisiana Workforce Investment Council supports the development of an employer-led, demand-driven workforce development system based on occupational forecasts, in which training, education, and services for job seekers prepare Louisiana residents for high-wage, high-demand career opportunities~~ in Louisiana~~.

The WIC achieves this mission by:

a. Recommending policy actions to both public and private institutions and creating coalitions to achieve their implementation.
b. Working with ~~Workforce Development Systems~~workforce development system partners to integrate workforce development into the decision-making of business people, economic developers, educators, government officials, and human resource professionals.
c. Raising public awareness of the importance of workforce development for Louisiana's economic future.
d. Ensuring public accountability by evaluating the effectiveness of the overall workforce development system.

Section 4. Responsibilities. Pursuant to Section 101 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and applicable Louisiana law, the WIC shall serve as the State Workforce Development Board and as the governing body for a unified, statewide workforce development system. The WIC may establish, oversee, and modify policies, standards, accountability frameworks, and administrative structures necessary to implement an integrated workforce system consistent with federal and state law. The responsibilities of the WIC include:

a. Submit a statewide strategic plan to meet current and forecasted workforce needs to the Governor and ~~annually report plan progress.~~provide regular reports on implementation progress, outcomes, and system performance.
b. ~~Hold stakeholders accountable for implementing agreed upon strategic goals that align workforce supply and demand.~~Establish and enforce statewide performance, fiscal, and operational accountability standards; hold system partners, service providers, and delegated entities accountable for achieving agreed-upon outcomes aligned with workforce supply and demand.

c. ~~Evaluate the effectiveness of Workforce Development Boards in meeting workforce demand.~~Establish, oversee, delegate, or coordinate statewide governance, administrative, and operational functions necessary to support effective workforce service delivery, including oversight of service providers, contracts, performance management, fiscal integrity, and compliance.
d. Direct the activities of the Occupational Forecasting Conference ~~Drive state and local policy to support the alignment of education and training with workforce demand.~~and use labor market intelligence to drive statewide policy decisions that align education, training, and workforce investments with employer demand.
e. Oversee the Industry-Based Certification ~~(IBC) Council, responsible for evaluating the alignment of credentials with state workforce demand for inclusion on the IBC State Focus List.~~Council and related credentialing and program approval processes to ensure alignment with statewide workforce demand, economic priorities, and performance outcomes.
f. Oversee, jointly with the Board of Regents, the evaluation of two-year and shorter-term programs for ~~TOPs~~TOPS Tech eligibility ~~in alignment with state workforce demand.~~to ensure alignment with statewide workforce demand and economic priorities.
g. ~~Contribute to~~Participate in and provide workforce demand analysis to inform the evaluation of ~~TOPs Tech Early Start training provides~~TOPS Tech Early Start training providers to ensure alignment with state and regional workforce needs.
h. ~~Support the alignment of Jump Start Pathways with statewide and regional workforce demand through the Graduation Pathway Review Panel.~~Provide workforce demand guidance and alignment recommendations through the Graduation Pathway Review Panel to support alignment of Jump Start Pathways with statewide and regional workforce priorities.

Section 5. Board Staff and Address. The ~~Louisiana Workforce Commission~~Louisiana Works shall be responsible for providing staff to the WIC. The official office location and mailing address of the WIC shall be: Workforce Investment Council, P.O. Box 94094, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804-9094.

Article II
Powers

The powers of the WIC shall include:

a. Perform~~ing~~ all ~~of the~~ duties and responsibilities of the State Workforce Development Board as defined in Section 101(d) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and any additional authorities permitted under federal or state law or approved waivers.
b. ~~Directing~~Direct the Occupational Forecasting Conference and related labor market activities to project current and future job growth, skills demand, and economic trends in the state ~~of Louisiana~~.
c. ~~Approving the forecasts approved by the Occupational Forecast Conference.~~Adopt, modify, or otherwise utilize occupational forecasts and labor market analyses to inform statewide workforce strategy, funding decisions, credential alignment, and program priorities.

d. ~~Approving the Star Jobs list of High-Demand, High-Wage jobs for the state.~~Establish and maintain the statewide list of high-demand, high-wage occupations, including criteria, methodology, and update frequency, and delegate administrative responsibility for maintaining such lists as appropriate.
e. ~~Advising~~Advise the Governor and Legislature on the full range of workforce development, education, training, and labor force participation issues ~~related to workforce development.~~impacting the state.
f. ~~Approving Industry-Based Certification Applications presented by the Industry-Based Certification Committee.~~Establish standards and oversight processes for the evaluation and approval of industry-based credentials and workforce-aligned education and training programs.
g. ~~Approving of the TOPS Tech Eligibility List~~Approve and oversee approval authority for TOPS Tech eligibility, TOPS Tech Early Start programs, and related eligible training provider determinations to ensure alignment with workforce demand and statewide priorities..
h. ~~Approving the TOPS Tech Early Start program list and TOPS Tech Early Start Eligible Training Provider List.~~Delegate powers, responsibilities, and decision-making authority to officers, committees, staff, or external entities, as appropriate and allowable by law, to carry out the purposes of the WIC and ensure efficient operation of the statewide workforce system.

Article III
Members of the WIC

Section 1. Appointment. ~~Except for the two members of each chamber of the state legislature, the Louisiana Governor shall appoint all members of the WIC.~~Appointments to the WIC shall be made in accordance with LSA-R.S. 23:2043.

Section 2. Terms. Initially, the Governor may appoint members for two-, three-, or four-year terms in order to stagger arrivals and departures. At the conclusion of the initial board members' terms, future gubernatorial appointments ~~may be for terms of up to six years. Members are limited to two terms, whether consecutive or not.~~shall be for terms of six years.

Section 3. Representation. Members shall be appointed to include: All required partners and programs according to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Title I, subtitle A, chapter 1, section 101 and LSA-R.S. 23: 2043. A majority of all WIC members shall represent the business community. Not less than 20 percent of the WIC membership shall be representatives ~~from organized labor.~~of the workforce. The Governor may appoint as many members as are needed to fulfill the duties of the WIC, and to meet applicable federal and state laws. Members shall include:

a. The Governor.
b. The Secretary of ~~the Louisiana Workforce Commission.~~Louisiana Works.
c. The Secretary of the Department of Children and Family Services.
d. The Secretary of Louisiana Economic Development.
e. The State Superintendent of Education.
f. The President of the Louisiana Community and Technical College System.
g. The Commissioner of Higher Education.

h. The Secretary of the Department of Public Safety and Corrections.
i. Representatives of businesses.
j. ~~Representatives of organized labor, including at least one member of a labor organization or a training director from a joint labor management registered apprenticeship program within the state.~~Representatives of the workforce.
k. Two members of each chamber of the state legislature.
l. One member who is a chief executive officer of a community-based organization.
m. Two chief elected officials representing either parish and/or city government.

Section 4. Officers. The Officers of the WIC shall be the Chair and the Vice Chair. The Governor shall select the Chair from among the WIC business representatives. The ~~Vice Chair shall be selected by the WIC members from among the business representation.~~Chair shall nominate a candidate for Vice Chair from the business representatives, and the nomination shall be confirmed by a majority vote of the membership. The Chair and Vice Chair will serve one-year terms, beginning July 1 and ending June 30 of the following calendar year. There is no limit to the number of terms the Chair and Vice Chair may serve within the limits of their appointments. The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the WIC and shall have other duties as assigned by the WIC or these bylaws. Should the Chair be absent, the Vice Chair shall act as Chair, and have such other duties as assigned by the Chair or the WIC. The Chair shall ~~also appoint the Chairs of standing, special, and advisory committees.~~appoint the chairs and members of all standing, special, and advisory committees, except where committee composition is otherwise prescribed by law. The WIC may establish additional officer positions, including but not limited to a Secretary or Treasurer, and may define their duties by resolution.

Section 5. Resignations/Retirements. A Council member may resign by providing a written notice to the Governor, the WIC Chair, and the WIC Director. ~~If a member resigns or retires from the position with the organization for which the member serves as a representative, that member must resign from the Council, through a written notice to the Governor, the WIC Chair, and the WIC Director.~~

Section 6. Removal. The Chair of the WIC, in consultation with the other WIC members, may recommend member removal to the Governor for cause including misconduct, incompetency, neglect of duty, or absence from two out of four consecutive meetings.

Section 7. Replacement. If a Board member resigns or must otherwise be replaced, the new appointment shall follow the same procedure as that described in Article III. The newly appointed member shall fill out the remainder of the departing member's term.

Article IV
Meetings

Section 1. Attendance. WIC members are required to attend all Council WIC meetings. ~~If they are unable to attend in person, members may appoint a designee with voting privileges to serve in his or her stead. Each councilmember who desires to have a designee shall provide written notice of such to the WIC Chair and Director.~~If a member is unable to attend a meeting, the member may request approval to appoint a designee with voting privileges to serve in the member's absence. Such request must be submitted in writing (via email) to the

WIC Chair and Director of the Workforce Investment Council no later than twenty-four (24) hours prior to the scheduled meeting.

Section 2. Council Meetings. The WIC shall meet no less than four times each calendar year, and a time and location must be determined no later than the prior meeting. All meetings shall comply with Louisiana's Open Meetings Law (Article XII, Section 3 of the Louisiana Constitution and LSA-R.S. 42:11-42:28). Votes by email, phone call, or web forum are prohibited except under ~~emergency proclamation of governor~~an emergency proclamation of the governor and as directed by state law.

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e. Survey stakeholders for input via electronic means.
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Section 4. Minutes of the proceedings for each WIC meeting will be recorded and maintained by ~~the Louisiana Workforce Commission, and be brought~~Louisiana Works and presented at the next public meeting for approval. Minutes shall document attendance and absences of WIC members. A summary of the recorded minutes will be distributed to each WIC member before the next scheduled meeting.

Section 5. Quorum. A quorum for taking action shall be 51 percent of ~~appointed~~serving members.

Section 6. Decisions. Decisions shall be made by a vote of a majority of the total serving membership of the WIC.

Section 7. Procedural rules. ~~Decision-making votes~~Decision-making portions of meetings shall be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order. Educational and informational portions of meetings shall be conducted ~~according to the preference of~~at the Chair's discretion.

Section 8. Participation of non-members. All WIC meetings and committee meetings ~~of committees~~ are open to the public. The Chair shall provide opportunities for non-WIC members to ~~speck~~speak on issues of concern at each meeting, as each issue is discussed, ~~according to the Chair's discretion.~~at the Chair's discretion. The Chair may appoint Louisiana residents to participate on council committees. Those appointees cannot vote or be counted towards a quorum. ~~Appointment of Louisiana resident members to committees by the WIC Chair will be for the period of his or her tenure.~~Appointments of Louisiana citizens to

committees shall be made at the discretion of the Chair and shall not extend beyond the Chair's term of office.

Section 9. Conflict of interest. A conflict of interest arises when a Board member, any member of that individual's immediate family, or an organization ~~which~~that employs (or is about to employ) any of the above, has a financial or other interest in a firm or organization that is considered for selected for an award, grant, or contract by the WIC. Members of the WIC shall not cast votes nor participate in any decision-making capacity on the provision of services by such a member (or any ~~organization which that~~firm or organization that member represents), nor on any matter which would provide financial benefit to that member. Members shall take state-mandated ethics training annually. Failure to comply with this section ~~is considered misconduct resulting in removal from the WIC.~~constitutes misconduct and will result in removal from the WIC.

Article V
Committees of the WIC

Section 1. Types. The WIC shall have an Executive Committee, an Occupational Forecasting Conference, and advisory and special committees. The nature of each is described below.

Section 2. Executive Committee. There shall be an Executive Committee ~~comprised of the Chair, Vice Chair, heads or designees of state agencies represented on the WIC, at least one legislator, and at least two organized labor representatives. It shall be composed of a majority of business members. Duties include, but are not limited to overseeing the implementation of the strategic plan; tracking workgroup plans and progress; leading the alignment of workgroups; and driving provisions of critical workforce data.~~composed of the Chair, the Vice Chair, the Secretary of Louisiana Works (or designee), the Secretary of Louisiana Economic Development (or designee), the President of the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (or designee), and four additional members appointed by the Chair from among the membership of the WIC. The Executive Committee is authorized to act on behalf of the WIC between full Council meetings on matters related to operations, performance oversight, and implementation of approved policies, except where prohibited by law. Any actions taken by the Executive Committee shall be reported to the full WIC and entered into the official record.

Section 3. Occupational Forecasting Conference. There shall be an Occupational Forecasting Conference. The Occupational Forecasting Conference is a statutorily mandated WIC standing committee. The conference is ~~charged with developing a method of forecasting~~tasked with developing a method to forecast current and emerging statewide and regional workforce needs ~~as a tool~~ to support workforce development system planning and resource allocation ~~processes~~. Conference membership shall consist of the following:

a. The Governor
b. The Secretary of ~~the Louisiana Workforce Commission.~~Louisiana Works.
c. One person appointed by the Governor from a list of three nominees submitted by the Louisiana Association of Business and Industry.
d. One member appointed by the Governor from a list of three nominees submitted by the Louisiana AFL-CIO.

e. One member appointed by the Governor from a list of three nominees submitted by the Council; such nominees shall be three of the nonpublic council members serving on the Council.
f. Two members, each of whom shall be a faculty member of a public or private university or college in Louisiana, who shall be econometricians and have occupational forecasting expertise or expertise in economic planning and industry/occupation matrix formulation, to be selected by the other five principals of the conference from a list of not less than three nor more than five nominees submitted by the Louisiana Board of Regents.
g. The Secretary of the Department of Economic Development.
h. The President of the Louisiana Community and Technical College System.
i. One member of the Louisiana Minority Supplier Development Council.
j. The Chairman of the conference shall be the principal appointed by the Governor from the WIC.

If members are unable to attend in person, ~~members~~they may appoint a designee to serve in ~~his or her~~their stead.

Section 4. Advisory and Special Committees. The Chair may establish Advisory and Special Committees as necessary to carry out the purposes of the WIC and shall set the membership of such committees, except where otherwise required by law. Advisory and Special Committees shall be composed of ~~persons who represent the views and interests of the various~~individuals who represent relevant workforce development stakeholders and who are ~~known to be~~qualified to perform their ~~duties.~~assigned duties. State and local agency personnel may serve on these committees as members or consultants.

Article VI
Bylaws

Section 1. Bylaw Changes. ~~These bylaws shall be adopted and may be amended, repealed, or new bylaws may be enacted through affirmative vote of a majority of the WIC during any meeting at which a quorum is present.~~Proposed amendments to these bylaws shall be submitted to the Chair for consideration. Amendments may be placed on the agenda by the Chair and shall be adopted, amended, or repealed only by the affirmative vote of a majority of the total appointed membership of the WIC at a meeting at which a quorum is present.

Section 2. Bylaw Enactment. These bylaws were enacted by the WIC on the date set forth below.

APPROVED BY THE LOUISIANA WORKFORCE INVESTMENT COUNCIL

Chair: _____ Date: _____

COMBINED STATE PLAN

UNDER THE WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT

PY 2024 - PY 2027

Approved

LOUISIANA WORKFORCE COMMISSION

CONTENTS

I. WIOA State Plan Type and Executive Summary

I.a. WIOA STATE PLAN TYPE

This is a combined plan.

Combined Plan Partner Program(s)

- 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)))

- 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.)

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

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

I. b. Plan Introduction or Executive Summary

The State of Louisiana is at a critical juncture, with an opportunity to leverage its economic strengths and growing job market to promote widespread upward mobility among its residents. Guided by Governor Jeff Landry's leadership, there is a clear vision to improve educational accessibility and excellence across all levels, from K-12 education to adult learning programs.

This comprehensive approach aims to address barriers hindering individuals from taking advantage of Louisiana's evolving economy. Despite progress, challenges persist in providing accessible pathways to economic mobility and self-sufficiency, particularly for those facing poverty and low educational attainment.

II. STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

ECONOMIC, WORKFORCE, AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES ANALYSIS

II. a. 1. A. Economic Analysis

Regarding the industry sectors and job categories specified in (A)(i) and (ii), assess the workforce requirements from the perspective of employers. This should include details about necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities, as well as any relevant credentials and licenses required.

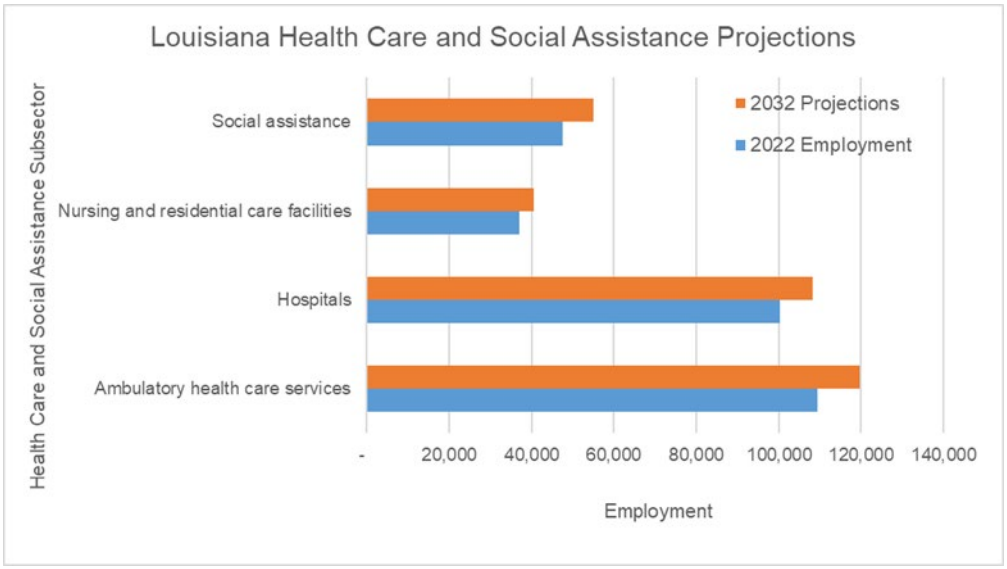
Louisiana is home to a diverse workforce that continues to grow following the pandemic and natural disasters that have impacted the state the past three years. There are 2,075,061 people engaged in the state's Civilian Labor Force as of July 2025. 2,002,500 of those people are represented in the Seasonally Adjusted Total Nonfarm Employment in July and the state continues to experience low unemployment rates. The Civilian Labor Force Participation Rate was 57.3% in 2020 and has increased to 57.9% in 2025. The Baton Rouge region of the state has seen the most consistent growth in employment over this three-year period, showing approximately 8% employment growth in the parishes that comprise the Greater Baton Rouge area.

The healthcare industry remains the largest employer in Louisiana with approximately 320,000 people employed. The ambulatory health care services industry is expected to experience the most growth from 2022 to 2032 with an expected gain of approximately 10,200 employees. Hospitals are expected to increase employment by approximately 8,000 over the same period of time. With this expected growth, registered nurses are expected to be the fastest growing occupation in the state over the forecast horizon. Aside from nurses, overall healthcare jobs and skilled trade occupations are expected to experience the most employment growth in Louisiana by 2032.

Louisiana is poised to experience continued employment growth from investment in infrastructure around the state and the continued need for skilled workers in every industry. Especially those in construction, manufacturing, and healthcare.

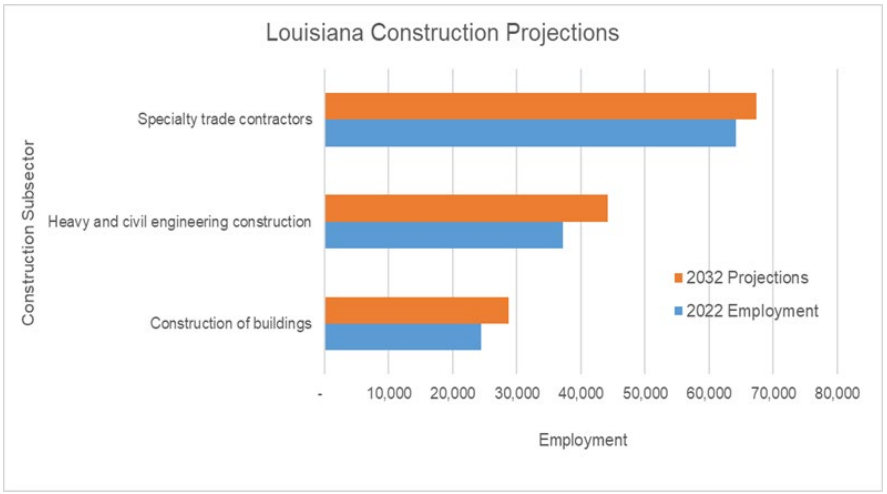
II. a. 1. A. i. EXISTING DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS

Louisiana is expected to experience a rise in employment in all subsectors of the Health Care and Social Assistance Sector by 2032. Most notable of these increases are to be in Ambulatory health care services and Hospitals.



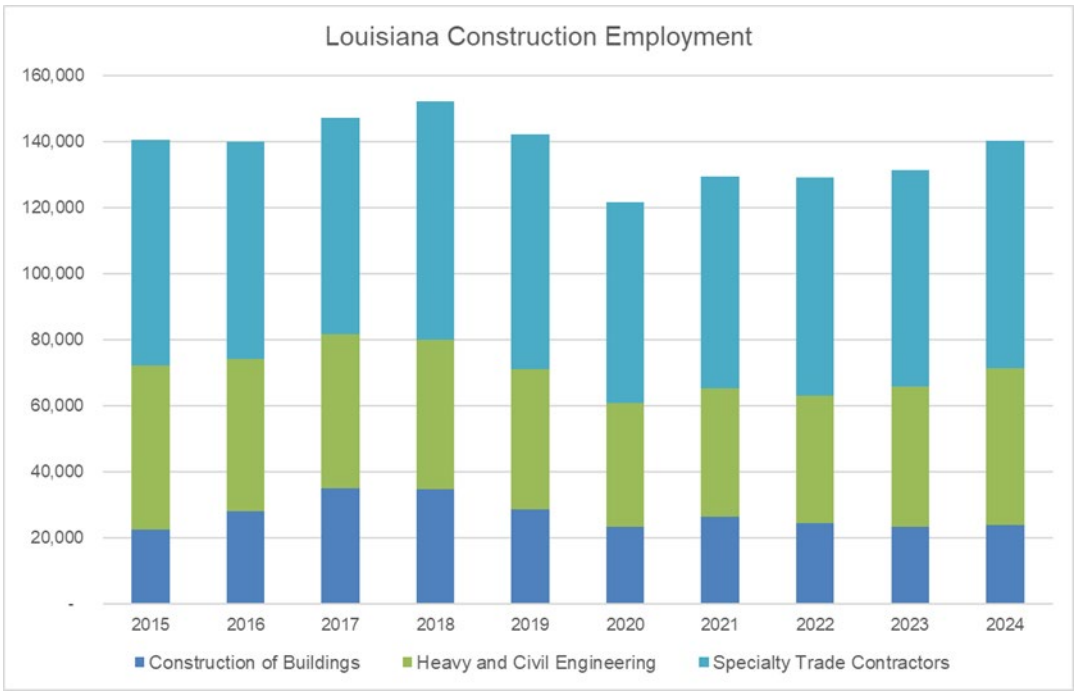
Source: Louisiana Works LMI Division

The Construction sector in Louisiana is expected to grow in employment through 2032, most notably in the Heavy and civil engineering construction subsector with the Construction of buildings subsector following closely as the second highest projection in this sector. While these two subsectors show a larger margin of expected growth, Specialty trade contractors remains the largest employment subsector of Construction in the projections.



Source: Louisiana Works LMI Division

A closer look at construction employment by type and over time shows how the majority of employment in this sector has been focused within the Specialty Trade Contractors subsector since 2015. This trend is expected to carry forward into 2032 reflecting the need for specialized skills within trades that are used during finishing phases of large-scale construction projects. These employees do specialized projects such as electrical, plumbing, and HVAC specifically in the construction of new structures.



Source: Louisiana Works LMI Division

2022-2032 Industry Employment Projections by Regional Labor Market Area

New Orleans Region Industry Employment Projections 2022-2032

The top growing industries in the New Orleans region are largely within the Health Care and Social Assistance sector and Educational Services. The health care sector is the largest employer in the region and contains the largest numeric growth of industries in the region. The greatest projected declines in this region are broken across the Finance and Insurance sector, Management of companies and enterprises, Administrative and waste services, the arts, entertainment and recreation sector, and the retail trade sector.

New Orleans Region - Regional Labor Market 1 Industry Employment Projections 2022-2032				
Industry Title	Estimated 2022 Employment	Projected 2032 Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change
Growing Industries				
Hospitals	28,126	30,997	2,871	10.2%
Social assistance	11,082	13,449	2,367	21.4%
Ambulatory health care services	31,442	33,775	2,333	7.4%
Educational services	44,503	46,076	1,573	3.5%
Heavy and civil engineering construction	6,526	7,808	1,282	19.6%
Declining Industries				
Credit intermediation and related activities	6,612	6,077	-535	-8.1%
Management of companies and enterprises	6,886	6,579	-307	-4.5%
Administrative and support services	29,437	29,233	-204	-0.7%
Motion picture and sound recording industries	4,713	4,561	-152	-3.2%
Furniture, Home Furnishings, Electronics, and Appliance Retailers	3,711	3,566	-145	-3.9%

Source: Louisiana Works LMI Division

Baton Rouge Region Industry Employment Projections 2022-2032

The Baton Rouge region is expected to experience growth primarily within the Health Care and Social Services Sector as well as Construction with majority of expected numerical gains to be found within the Health Care and Social Services sector. Declining industries are similar to those in the New Orleans region and include industries within the Finance and Insurance sector, Management of companies and enterprises, Administrative and waste services, and the Retail trade sector.

Baton Rouge Region - Regional Labor Market Area 2 Industry Employment Projections 2022-2032				
Industry Title	Estimated 2022 Employment	Projected 2032 Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change
Growing Industries				
Heavy and civil engineering construction	15,618	19,320	3,702	23.7%
Ambulatory health care services	25,969	28,602	2,633	10.1%
Chemical manufacturing	12,432	14,997	2,565	20.6%
Hospitals	19,953	22,289	2,336	11.7%
Social assistance	10,876	13,085	2,209	20.3%
Declining Industries				
Credit intermediation and related activities	5,951	5,423	-528	-8.9%
Administrative and support services	21,820	21,513	-307	-1.4%
Management of companies and enterprises	5,456	5,168	-288	-5.3%
Clothing, Clothing Accessories, Shoe, and Jewelry Retailers	3,254	3,136	-118	-3.6%
Furniture, Home Furnishings, Electronics, and Appliance Retailers	2,402	2,286	-116	-4.8%

Source: Louisiana Works LMI Division

Houma Region Industry Employment Projections 2022-2032

The Houma region of the state is expected to gain employment across multiple sectors including the Health care and social assistance sector, Accommodation and food services, Educational services, Professional and technical services, and Construction. Declining industries consist of those within the Management of companies and enterprises sector, Mining, Administrative and waste services, Retail trade, and the Transportation and warehousing sector.

Houma Region - Regional Labor Market Area 3 Industry Employment Projections 2022-2032				
Industry Title	Estimated 2022 Employment	Projected 2032 Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change
Growing Industries				
Ambulatory health care services	4,335	4,791	456	10.5%
Food services and drinking places	6,648	7,038	390	5.9%
Educational services	6,125	6,481	356	5.8%
Professional and technical services	2,867	3,212	345	12.0%
Heavy and civil engineering construction	1,917	2,192	275	14.3%
Declining Industries				
Management of companies and enterprises	763	653	-110	-14.4%
Support activities for mining	4,340	4,235	-105	-2.4%
Administrative and support services	3,153	3,062	-91	-2.9%
General Merchandise Retailers	2,600	2,522	-78	-3.0%
Water transportation	1,940	1,873	-67	-3.5%

Source: Louisiana Works LMI Division

Lafayette Region Industry Employment Projections 2022-2032

The Lafayette region is expected to experience most employment growth by 2032 within the Health care and social assistance sector followed by Professional and technical services, and Educational services. Declining industries in the region include those within the Management of companies and enterprises sector, Finance and information, Mining, Retail trade, and Administrative and waste services.

Lafayette Region - Regional Labor Market Area 4 Industry Employment Projections 2022-2032				
Industry Title	Estimated 2022 Employment	Projected 2032 Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change
Growing Industries				
Professional and technical services	11,176	12,971	1,795	16.1%
Ambulatory health care services	17,321	18,551	1,230	7.1%
Social assistance	8,272	9,070	798	9.6%
Educational services	19,504	20,253	749	3.8%
Hospitals	11,742	12,439	697	5.9%
Declining Industries				
Management of companies and enterprises	2,120	1,830	-290	-13.7%
Credit intermediation and related activities	3,641	3,417	-224	-6.2%
Support activities for mining	10,720	10,519	-201	-1.9%
General Merchandise Retailers	7,009	6,858	-151	-2.2%
Administrative and support services	9,672	9,595	-77	-0.8%

Source: Louisiana Works LMI Division

Lake Charles Region Industry Employment Projections 2022-2032

The Lake Charles region is expected to experience the most employment growth in the Construction sector, most specifically in the Construction of buildings and the Heavy and civil engineering construction sub-sectors. Ambulatory health care services is expected to grow the most out of the sub-sectors in the region. The retail

trade sector is among those with the largest expected employment declines in the region.

Lake Charles Region - Regional Labor Market Area 5 Industry Employment Projections 2022-2032				
Industry Title	Estimated 2022 Employment	Projected 2032 Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change
Growing Industries				
Ambulatory health care services	6,109	6,899	790	12.9%
Construction of buildings	3,920	4,515	595	15.2%
Heavy and civil engineering construction	4,534	5,082	548	12.1%
Educational services	11,135	11,646	511	4.6%
Chemical manufacturing	5,977	6,384	407	6.8%
Declining Industries				
Administrative and support services	4,637	4,414	-223	-4.8%
General Merchandise Retailers	3,923	3,729	-194	-4.9%
Furniture, Home Furnishings, Electronics, and Appliance Retailers	783	635	-148	-18.9%
Management of companies and enterprises	873	732	-141	-16.2%
Support activities for transportation	963	867	-96	-10.0%

Source: Louisiana Works LMI Division

Alexandria Region Industry Employment Projections 2022-2032

The Alexandria region of the state is expected to see an increase in employment around 700 in the Health care and social assistance sector with majority of these positions being in the Nursing and residential care facilities sub-sector. Declining industries in the region are less concentrated within any given sector. Sub-sectors expected to experience the most loss in employment are the Credit intermediation and related activities sub-sector and the Administrative and support services sub-sector.

Alexandria Region - Regional Labor Market Area 6 Industry Employment Projections 2022-2032				
Industry Title	Estimated 2022 Employment	Projected 2032 Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change
Growing Industries				
Nursing and residential care facilities	3,000	3,457	457	15.2%
Educational services	7,858	8,203	345	4.4%
Heavy and civil engineering construction	2,479	2,789	310	12.5%
Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals	5,576	5,854	278	5.0%
Ambulatory health care services	5,734	5,989	255	4.4%
Declining Industries				
Credit intermediation and related activities	1,485	1,202	-283	-19.1%
Administrative and support services	3,802	3,632	-170	-4.5%
General Merchandise Retailers	2,893	2,760	-133	-4.6%
Management of companies and enterprises	760	640	-120	-15.8%
Furniture, Home Furnishings, Electronics, and Appliance Retailers	511	406	-105	-20.5%

Source: Louisiana Works LMI Division

Shreveport Region Industry Employment Projections 2022-2032

The Shreveport region is expected to experience the most employment growth across the Health care and social assistance sector by 2032 with an expected increase of 3,073 in employment in the sector. Like most other regional labor market areas of the state, Shreveport expects to see declining employment numbers across various sectors. Most notable of which is within the retail trade sector with a combined expected decline of 402 between Furniture retailers and General merchandise retailers in the region.

Shreveport Region - Regional Labor Market Area 7 Industry Employment Projections 2022-2032				
Industry Title	Estimated 2022 Employment	Projected 2032 Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change
Growing Industries				
Ambulatory health care services	10,113	11,500	1,387	13.7%
Hospitals	18,652	19,809	1,157	6.2%
Social assistance	5,332	5,861	529	9.9%
Food services and drinking places	18,929	19,435	506	2.7%
Educational services	20,705	21,138	433	2.1%
Declining Industries				
Credit intermediation and related activities	2,934	2,607	-327	-11.1%
Furniture, Home Furnishings, Electronics, and Appliance Retailers	1,475	1,205	-270	-18.3%
Management of companies and enterprises	1,385	1,199	-186	-13.4%
Administrative and support services	10,274	10,093	-181	-1.8%
General Merchandise Retailers	6,935	6,803	-132	-1.9%

Source: Louisiana Works LMI Division

Monroe Region Industry Employment Projections 2022-2032

The Monroe region is expected to gain most of its employment in the region within the Health care and Social assistance sector – the equivalent of 2,239 jobs in the region. Declining industries over the forecast horizon are spread across multiple sectors, most notably within the Retail trade and Financial services sectors.

Monroe Region - Regional Labor Market Area 8 Industry Employment Projections 2022-2032				
Industry Title	Estimated 2022 Employment	Projected 2032 Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change
Growing Industries				
Ambulatory health care services	8,438	9,549	1,111	13.2%
Social assistance	4,139	4,905	766	18.5%
Educational services	10,255	10,633	378	3.7%
Hospitals	5,438	5,800	362	6.7%
Food services and drinking places	8,340	8,549	209	2.5%
Declining Industries				
General Merchandise Retailers	3,374	3,102	-272	-8.1%
Credit intermediation and related activities	2,826	2,592	-234	-8.3%
Management of companies and enterprises	1,093	887	-206	-18.8%
Administrative and support services	6,658	6,488	-170	-2.6%
Paper manufacturing	2,267	2,189	-78	-3.4%

Source: Louisiana Works LMI Division

Turnover

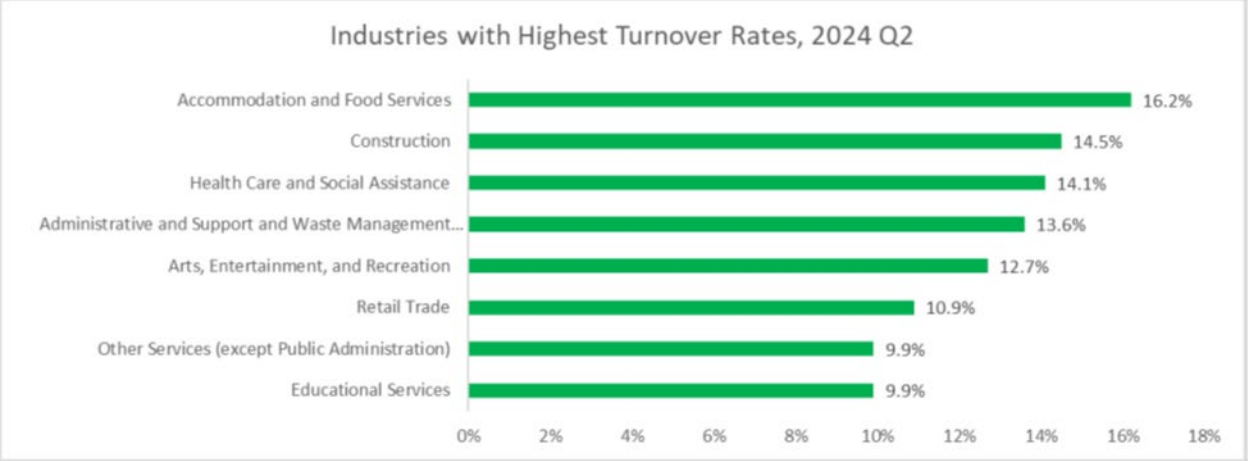
The chart below presents industries with the highest employee turnover rates in the second quarter of 2024, illustrating sectors with relatively high levels of workforce instability.

Accommodation and Food Services exhibits the highest turnover rate at 16.2%, reflecting the sector's reliance on seasonal employment, lower average wages, and a high prevalence of part-time and entry-level positions. Construction follows with a turnover rate of 14.5%, consistent with the project-based nature of employment and sensitivity to economic and environmental conditions.

Health Care and Social Assistance reports a turnover rate of 14.1%, indicating continued workforce pressures associated with labor shortages, demanding working conditions, and employee burnout. Similarly, Administrative and Support and Waste Management Services records a turnover rate of 13.6%, reflecting the sector's dependence on contract, temporary, and lower-wage employment.

Moderately high turnover is observed in Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation (12.7%) and Retail Trade (10.9%), both of which are characterized by variable work schedules and demand-driven employment. Other Services (except Public Administration) and Educational Services report turnover rates of 9.9%, suggesting comparatively greater workforce stability within these sectors.

Overall, the data indicate that higher turnover rates are concentrated in industries with structural features such as lower compensation, nonstandard work arrangements, and physically or emotionally demanding job conditions. These trends underscore the importance of workforce retention strategies, improvements in job quality, and targeted labor market interventions in high-turnover industries.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Quarterly Workforce Indicators

Occupational Demand 2022-2032

Looking toward 2032, the top five occupational groups with the greatest number of annual openings through 2032 are Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations, Sales and Related Occupations, Office and Administrative Support Occupations, Transportation and Material Moving Occupations, and Healthcare and Support Occupations. Occupations with the largest number of annual openings include Fast Food and Counter Workers, Waiters and Waitresses, Cashiers, Retail Salespersons, Customer Service Representatives, General Office Clerks, Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Stockers and Order Fillers, Home Health and Personal Care Aides, and Nursing Assistants.

Louisiana is well positioned for economic growth as indicated by the projected job openings across various occupational groups and titles. A closer glance shows the potential these roles have and highlights the occupations that are at the forefront of need in the state.

Fast Food and Counter Workers (Projected Annual Openings: 6,610): Louisiana's hospitality and food service industries are a substantial part of job creation across multiple regions in the state. The demand for this occupation further supports the anticipated need and growth within the state's impressive culinary scene and the role it plays across regional and local economies.

Waiters and Waitresses (Projected Annual Openings: 6,171): Louisiana's hospitality industry continues to thrive with an increasing demand for service professionals. The positive trend for Waiters and Waitresses further signals an expected positive trend for Louisiana tourism and dining experiences.

Cashiers (Projected Annual Openings: 10,525): Cashiers are an occupation needed across several industries but are most common within the Retail trade sector. This increased need in Cashiers reflects a growing need for this occupation across industries such as retail but also within Accommodation and Food Services and the state's tourism sectors.

Retail Salespersons (Projected Annual Openings: 7,335): While the retail trade sector is expected to decrease by 1,505 jobs by 2032, the need for retail salespersons does not look to be a driving factor in that decrease. Salespersons are most needed within the Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers, and the Building Material and Garden Equipment sub-sectors of Retail Trade. These sub-sectors rely more on salespersons with specific knowledge and are less likely to have all of their sales activities moved online.

Customer Service Representatives (Projected Annual Openings: 3,365): Customer Service Representatives are an essential part of most office and administrative functions. Such individuals interact with customers to provide information about products and services. This occupation supports multiple industries in the state.

Office Clerks (Projected Annual Openings: 3,339): Office clerks are a widely used office support position and perform duties too varied and diverse to be categorized into one specific office clerical position. Office clerks perform a wide range of duties, such as but not limited to: bookkeeping, answering telephones, typing, and office machine operation. This occupation supports multiple industries in the state.

Laborers and Freight, Stock and Material Movers (Projected Annual Openings: 5,069): This occupation is comprised of roles that manually move freight, stock, luggage, and other materials. The need for manual laborers is expected to grow to better support the expanding infrastructure projects and plans for the state, alongside new investments which will require construction. This role is most prevalent within Transportation support.

Stockers and Order Fillers (Projected Annual Openings: 4,886): Stockers and Order Fillers play a critical role in the supply chain and are an occupation which contributes to the logistics and distribution sector. The continued need for these occupations points to the state's continued position as a hub for commerce and trade.

Home Health and Personal Care Aides (Projected Annual Openings: 6,818): As the demand for personalized care services continues to increase, the significant number of projected openings for Home Health and Personal Care Aides further reflects this expanding sector that provides essential support to individuals and their families.

Nursing Assistants (Projected Annual Openings: 2,817): Healthcare continues to be the largest employer in Louisiana and a cornerstone of economic growth for multiple regions within the state. The projected openings for Nursing Assistants underscores the continued need for these critical roles.

As Louisiana looks ahead, the projected annual job openings for these key occupations and others illustrates an image of a state with potential and growth on the horizon. A diverse range of industries positions the state for a prosperous future. Embracing these opportunities will allow citizens to contribute to the vitality and strength of the state and its residents.

Top 2022- 2032 Occupational Projection Groups Ranked by Expected Employment Profile					
Occupation Group	Estimated 2022 Employment	Projected 2032 Employment	Annual Exits	Annual Transfers	Annual Openings
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	170,175	173,841	14,376	17,277	32,020
Sales and Related Occupations	186,679	183,278	11,758	13,872	25,291
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	237,635	222,463	12,269	13,616	24,369
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	173,345	182,869	8,795	12,934	22,682
Healthcare Support Occupations	86,258	99,370	6,181	6,981	14,473
Construction and Extraction Occupations	125,004	137,305	4,470	6,873	12,573
Management Occupations	135,182	145,173	4,062	6,398	11,461
Production Occupations	96,313	100,066	4,046	6,296	10,720
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	141,238	154,522	4,763	3,795	9,887
Educational Instruction and Library Occupations	105,581	110,008	4,630	4,339	9,412
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	93,909	100,183	3,815	4,740	9,184
Personal Care and Service Occupations	50,391	53,689	3,375	5,149	8,853
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	62,883	64,409	4,042	4,521	8,715
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	83,495	87,508	2,665	4,066	7,133
Protective Service Occupations	56,599	57,476	2,549	3,230	5,868
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	27,763	28,526	1,243	1,655	2,974
Community and Social Service Occupations	28,696	31,792	1,124	1,478	2,912
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	30,983	33,483	929	1,236	2,415
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	22,609	25,006	551	883	1,674
Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	13,773	15,105	315	988	1,436
Legal Occupations	17,241	18,321	529	614	1,251
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	6,982	6,970	375	636	1,010

Source: Louisiana Works LMI Division

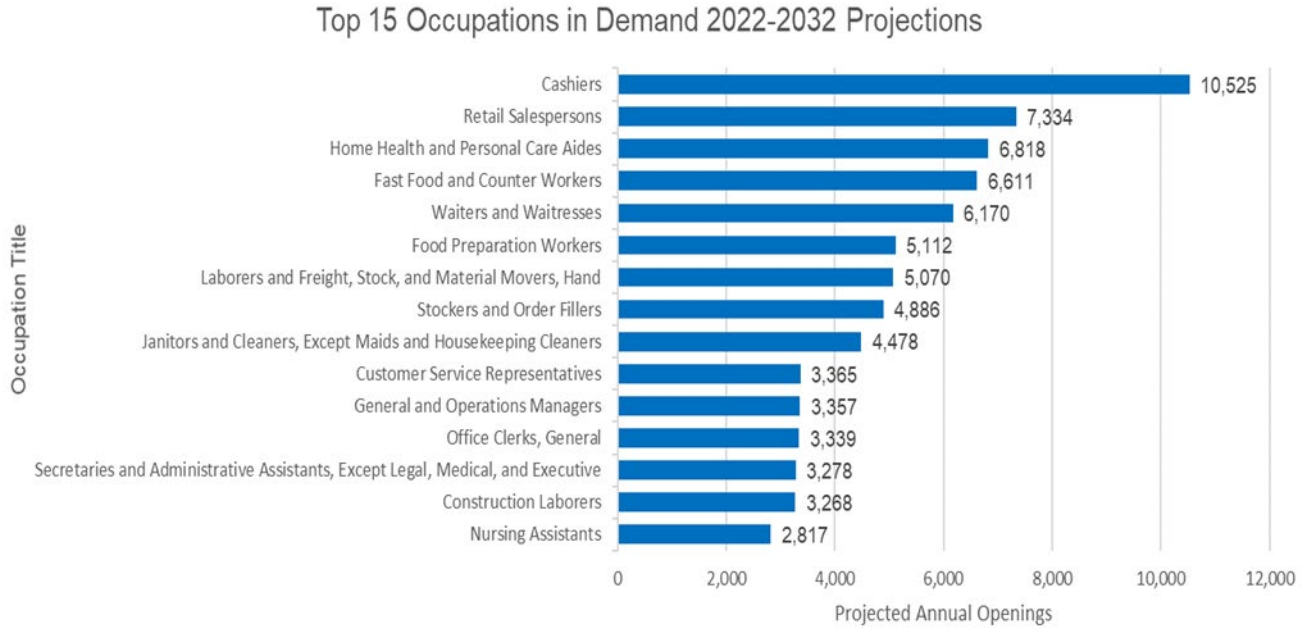
The following chart illustrates the top 15 occupations with the highest projected annual job openings for the 2022–2032 period. The data indicates that workforce demand is largely concentrated in service, retail, healthcare support, and administrative occupations, with projected openings driven primarily by replacement needs and occupational size rather than rapid employment growth.

Cashiers are projected to experience the greatest demand, with more than 10,500 annual openings, reflecting both the large size of the occupation and high turnover rates. Retail Salespersons also demonstrate substantial demand, with over 7,300 projected openings annually. Food service occupations—including Fast Food and Counter Workers, Waiters and Waitresses, and Food Preparation Workers—rank prominently, underscoring the continued need for these roles across the economy.

Healthcare support occupations are another significant area of demand. Home Health and Personal Care Aides show nearly 6,800 annual openings, highlighting the growing need for direct care services, particularly for aging and medically vulnerable populations. Nursing Assistants further contribute to this trend, reinforcing the importance of frontline healthcare support roles.

Additional demand is evident in logistics, maintenance, construction, and administrative functions. Occupations such as Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers; Stockers and Order Fillers; Janitors and Cleaners; Office Clerks; Customer Service Representatives; and Secretaries and Administrative Assistants all exhibit substantial projected openings. Construction Laborers and General and Operations Managers reflect continued demand for both skilled labor and managerial oversight.

Overall, the chart demonstrates that projected job openings through 2032 are concentrated in essential, high-turnover occupations that support daily economic activity. These trends highlight the importance of workforce development efforts focused on sustaining a reliable pipeline of workers for foundational service and support roles across multiple sectors.



Source: Louisiana Works OEWS Unit

The chart below presents occupations with the highest projected growth rates for the 2022–2032 period, incorporating annual growth rates alongside projected annual exits, transfers, and total job openings. Collectively, the data indicate sustained and expanding demand across healthcare, technology, and data-oriented professions.

Healthcare-related occupations account for a substantial share of the fastest-growing roles. Nurse Practitioners exhibit the highest projected annual growth rate at 4.4 percent, accompanied by a significant number of annual openings driven by both workforce expansion and replacement needs. Medical and Health Services Managers also demonstrate strong demand, with a projected annual growth rate of 2.9 percent and more than 700 annual openings, reflecting the increasing complexity and scale of healthcare delivery systems. In addition, allied health occupations—including Occupational Therapy Assistants, Physical Therapist Assistants, Orthotists and Prosthetists, and Home Health and Personal Care Aides—show consistent growth. Notably, Home Health and Personal Care Aides account for the largest number of annual openings, largely due to high turnover and growing long-term care needs.

Technology- and data-focused occupations also feature prominently. Data Scientists, Statisticians, Information Security Analysts, Software Developers, and Actuaries all display above-average growth rates, underscoring the expanding reliance on data analytics, cybersecurity, and digital infrastructure across sectors. While these

occupations generate fewer openings from exits, their growth reflects sustained demand for specialized technical skills.

Additional professional occupations, such as Epidemiologists and Chemical Engineers, demonstrate moderate but steady growth, supporting ongoing needs in public health, research, and industrial applications.

Overall, the chart indicates that projected job growth through 2032 is driven by both structural expansion and replacement demand, with healthcare and technology sectors leading in both growth rates and total annual openings. These trends underscore the importance of aligning education and workforce development strategies with high-growth occupations.

Top 15 Occupations with Highest Projected 2022-2032 Growth Rate				
Occupational Title	Annual Growth rate	Annual Exits	Annual Transfers	Annual Openings
Nurse Practitioners	4.4%	120	121	436
Epidemiologists	3.7%	2	7	14
Data Scientists	3.3%	15	24	57
Statisticians	3.0%	2	4	9
Medical and Health Services Managers	2.9%	209	311	711
Information Security Analysts	2.8%	12	20	45
Occupational Therapy Assistants	2.8%	42	73	135
Orthotists and Prosthetists	2.7%	9	8	24
Physical Therapist Assistants	2.6%	86	156	283
Chemical Engineers	2.5%	16	23	56
Taxi Drivers	2.4%	14	13	32
Actuaries	2.4%	2	3	6
Software Developers	2.4%	52	107	223
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	2.3%	3,260	2,718	6,818
Veterinary Assistants and Laboratory Animal Caretakers	2.2%	68	144	235

II. a. 1. A. iii. EMPLOYERS' EMPLOYMENT NEEDS

Louisiana has implemented a STAR rating system to classify occupations based on demand and wage levels. A five-star rating represents the most desirable occupations, characterized by high demand and high wages, while a one-star rating denotes the least desirable, marked by low demand and low wages. In Louisiana, there are 265,705 five-star jobs, making up 16% of the total; 482,073 four-star jobs, accounting for 28%; 233,785 three-star jobs, comprising 14%; 294,869 two-star jobs, representing 17%; and 428,973 one-star jobs, constituting 25% of the workforce.

II. a. 1. B. Workforce Analysis

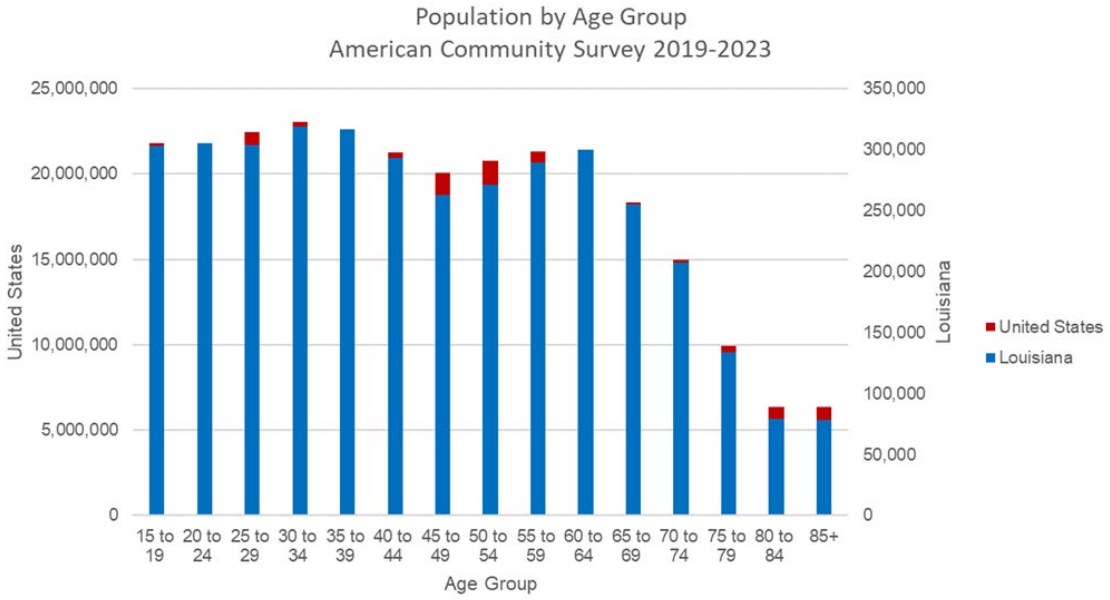
II. a. 1. B. i. Employment and Unemployment

Louisiana's population is concentrated in the prime working-age cohorts, particularly among individuals aged 25 to 39. These age groups represent the largest segments of the state's population, indicating a substantial base of early- to mid-career adults who are critical to the state's labor force and economic activity. Population levels remain relatively strong through the 40–44 age group but begin to decline more noticeably after age 45, signaling a gradual narrowing of the population base as cohorts move into later adulthood.

The data show a modest resurgence in the 55–64 age range, reflecting the aging of larger cohorts into late working life. This pattern suggests that Louisiana, like the nation, is experiencing the effects of an aging population; however, the overall scale of older age groups remains comparatively limited. Beginning at age 65, the population declines steadily, with particularly sharp reductions among those aged 75 and older. The relatively small size of the 80–84 and 85-and-over cohorts indicates a smaller elderly population compared with younger age groups, which has implications for long-term healthcare demand, elder services, and

population retention.

When viewed against the national distribution, Louisiana generally follows the same age-related trends but at a reduced magnitude. Notably, the state appears to have proportionally fewer residents in the oldest age groups, suggesting potential influences from migration patterns, health outcomes, or demographic turnover.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates

The following chart presents labor force participation rates by age group in Louisiana in 2024, revealing a pattern consistent with both economic life cycles and structural characteristics of the state's workforce.

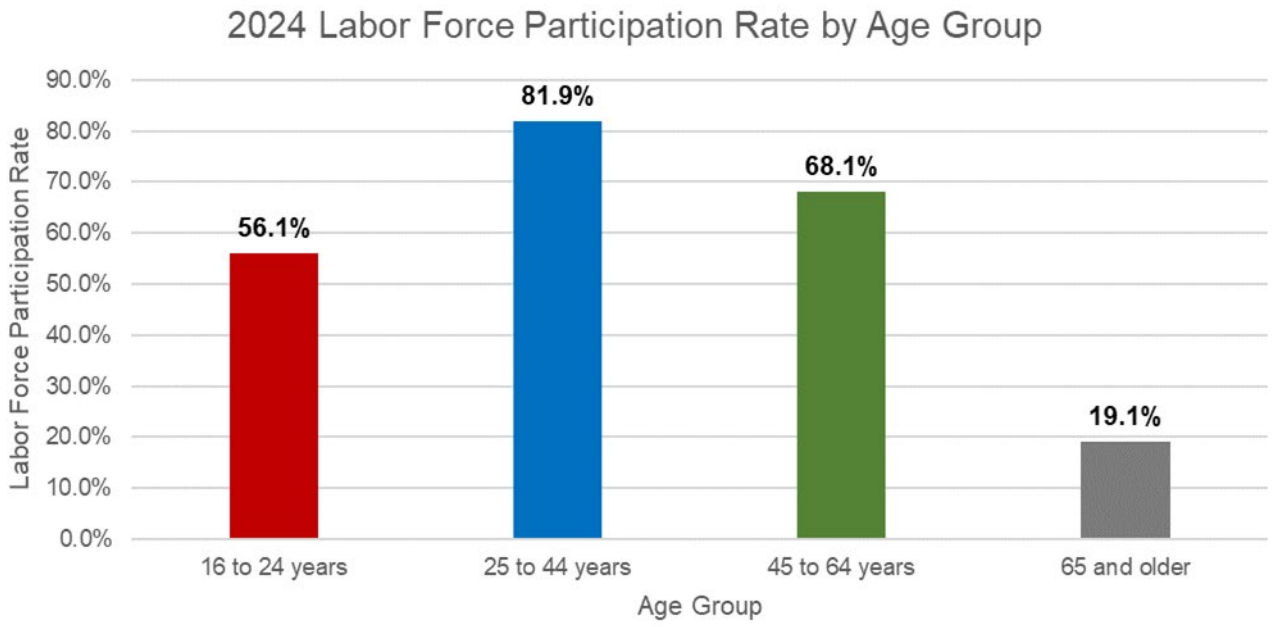
Labor force participation is lowest among individuals aged 65 and older (19.1%), reflecting retirement trends and reduced labor market attachment among older residents. While this rate indicates that the majority of older Louisianans have exited the workforce, the continued participation of nearly one-fifth suggests the influence of financial necessity, part-time employment opportunities, or delayed retirement, particularly in sectors such as services, education, and healthcare.

Among individuals aged 16 to 24, participation stands at 56.1%, reflecting the balance between labor market entry and educational enrollment. In Louisiana, this rate may also be influenced by access to postsecondary education, vocational training, and early entry into industries such as retail, hospitality, and energy-related services.

The 25 to 44 age group exhibits the highest labor force participation rate at 81.9%, representing the core of Louisiana's workforce. This cohort encompasses prime working years, characterized by full-time employment, career development, and peak productivity. High participation within this group is critical to the state's economic output and tax base.

Participation declines to 68.1% among individuals aged 45 to 64, indicating a gradual withdrawal from the labor market as workers approach retirement age. Factors contributing to this decline in Louisiana may include health limitations, caregiving responsibilities, industry-specific job displacement, and early retirement, particularly in physically demanding sectors.

Overall, the chart demonstrates a clear age-related trajectory in labor force participation in Louisiana, with engagement peaking during prime working years and diminishing at younger and older ages. These trends have important implications for state workforce development, highlighting the need for policies that support youth workforce integration, retain experienced mid-career workers, and encourage flexible employment options for older residents to sustain long-term labor force stability.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2024ACS 1-Year Estimates

Louisiana Net Migration

The table compares population change across the United States, the South, and Louisiana, highlighting significant demographic divergence. The United States and the Southern region both experienced strong population growth, driven primarily by positive net migration, with additional contributions from natural increase. Migration is the dominant factor supporting growth at both levels.

In contrast, Louisiana recorded population decline, with net out-migration of 70,376 and a negative natural change of 8,964, indicating that deaths exceeded births. These trends suggest ongoing demographic challenges for the state, including resident outflows and an aging population.

Overall, the data indicate that while the South continues to attract population gains, Louisiana is not benefiting from these regional dynamics, raising concerns for long-term workforce supply and economic growth.

Geographic Area	Total Net Migration	Natural Change*
United States	7,169,842	1,425,410
South	5,802,546	558,943
Louisiana	-70,376	-8,964

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for the United States, Regions, States, and Puerto Rico: July 1, 2020 to July 1, 2024 population estimate

Disability

Louisiana's disability profile for 2024 reveals a dynamic picture. Of the individuals with disabilities, 189,175 are employed, showcasing their significant contributions to the state workforce and economy. An additional 21,854 people with disabilities are unemployed in the state, thus signaling potential areas for targeted employment support and targeted support from Louisiana Rehabilitation Services. 266,347 individuals with disabilities are not currently in the labor force, meaning they are neither working nor looking for work. This suggests a combination of unique challenges or personal choices and is supported by the work done for the

state by The Louisiana State University (LSU) Center for Economics, Business, and Policy Research in 2023.[1] This study deployed a statewide survey targeted at working age individuals in Louisiana who are not in the civilian labor force. Key findings include that disability benefits are a leading means of funding living expenses among respondents (27%) and that over half of respondents (53%) were people with disabilities who perceived their disability as adversely affecting their ability to get a job. The Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) for individuals with a disability is 30.9%, emphasizing the need to foster inclusivity and accessibility across occupations. Louisiana should focus on addressing barriers, promoting workplace accommodations, and implementing targeted training programs to enhance workforce participation as we look forward. Doing so will better allow Louisiana to tap into the skills and talents of individuals with disabilities to build a more inclusive and resilient economy for all state citizens.

2024 Disability Profile	
Employed with a disability	189,175
Unemployed with a disability	21,854
Not in Labor Force with a disability	266,347
Disability Status	**LFPR**
With any disability	30.90%

Source: U.S. Census ACS 2024 1-Year Estimates

The proportion of the employed population aged 18-64 in Louisiana living with disabilities is at 8.3%, roughly one and a half percentage points higher than the national average of 6.8%. The data further reveals a more pronounced representation of individuals with disabilities among the unemployed (18.4%) and those not in the labor force (31.0%). This indicates there are barriers that individuals with disabilities face in securing and maintaining employment in the state.

Looking closer at specific disabilities, those with a cognitive difficulty are the most likely to be unemployed across all disability categories in the table below. The percentage of people with cognitive difficulties who are unemployed is 6.3% yet approximately 57.1% of this population in Louisiana is not in the labor force. This suggests that cognitive impairments may present significant challenges in both job acquisition and retention.

The data also highlights the difficulties faced by those with self-care and independent living difficulties. These individuals are more likely than others with a disability to not be participating in the labor force, most likely due to the significance of their disability. This also suggests possible physical barriers or inadequate workplace accommodations that hinder their employment opportunities.

These figures highlight the need for focused policy interventions and support systems designed to facilitate access to employment for people with disabilities in Louisiana. Further enhancements in workplace accommodations, availability of adaptive technology, and targeted vocational training could all be beneficial strategies to improve employment outcomes for this part of the state's population.

[1] Peralta, A., Terrell, D., Fuller, A., & Thornton, J., LLSU Center for Economics, Business, and Policy Research, Understanding Trends in Louisiana Labor Force Participation Rate

Disability Characteristics and Employment Status			
Disability Characteristic	**Employed**	**Unemployed**	**Not in Labor Force**
With a Hearing Difficulty	52.2%	4.3%	43.5%
With a Vision Difficulty	46.3%	5.8%	48.0%
With a Cognitive Difficulty	36.7%	6.3%	57.1%
With an Ambulatory Difficulty	24.6%	3.7%	71.8%
With a Self-Care Difficulty	13.4%	4.4%	82.2%
With an Independent Living Difficulty	18.2%	5.7%	76.1%
No Disability	76.4%	3.7%	19.9%
With a Disability	41.3%	5.0%	53.7%

Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey 2024 1-year estimates

*Disabilities are not mutually exclusive

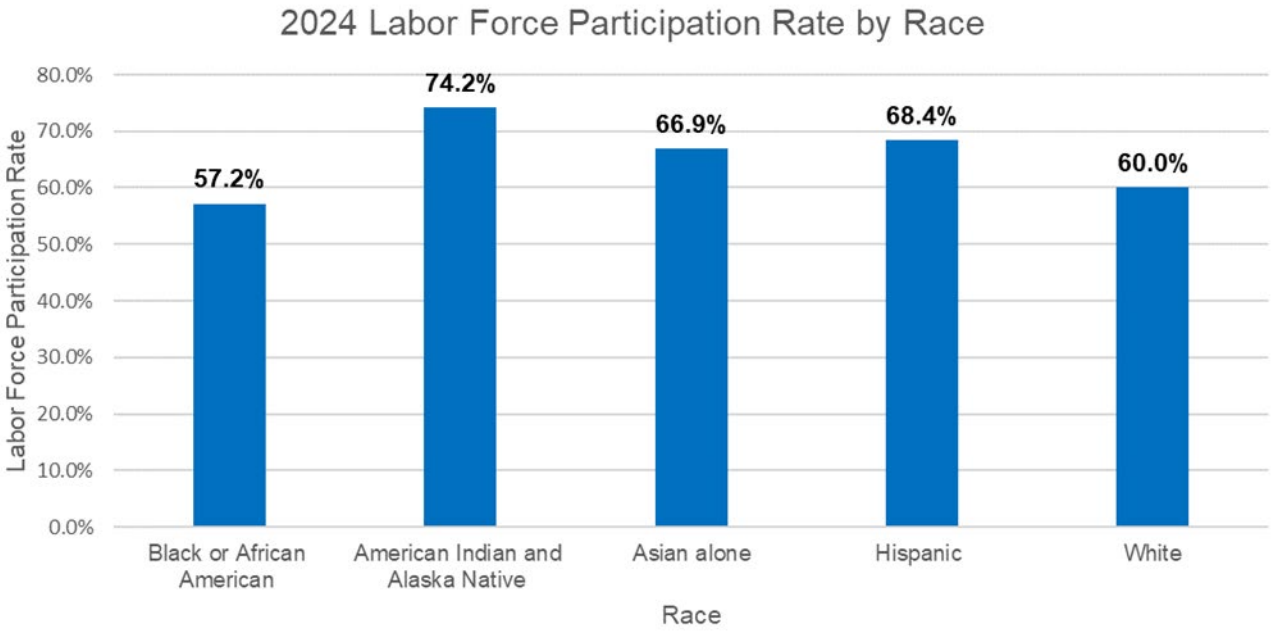
Sex and Race

The chart presents labor force participation rates in Louisiana in 2024 by race, demonstrating measurable variation in labor market engagement across racial groups.

Participation is highest among individuals identifying as American Indian and Alaska Native (74.2%), indicating relatively strong attachment to the labor force. Hispanic individuals also exhibit a comparatively high participation rate of 68.4%, followed by those identifying as Asian alone (66.9%), both reflecting above-average workforce engagement.

In contrast, White individuals have a labor force participation rate of 60.0%, while Black or African American individuals record the lowest rate at 57.2%. These differences may be influenced by variations in age structure, educational attainment, health outcomes, geographic distribution, and access to employment opportunities.

Overall, the data indicate that labor force participation in Louisiana differs significantly by race, underscoring the continued role of structural and socioeconomic factors in shaping labor market outcomes. These patterns highlight the importance of policies and programs aimed at reducing participation gaps and promoting access to employment opportunities across all racial groups.



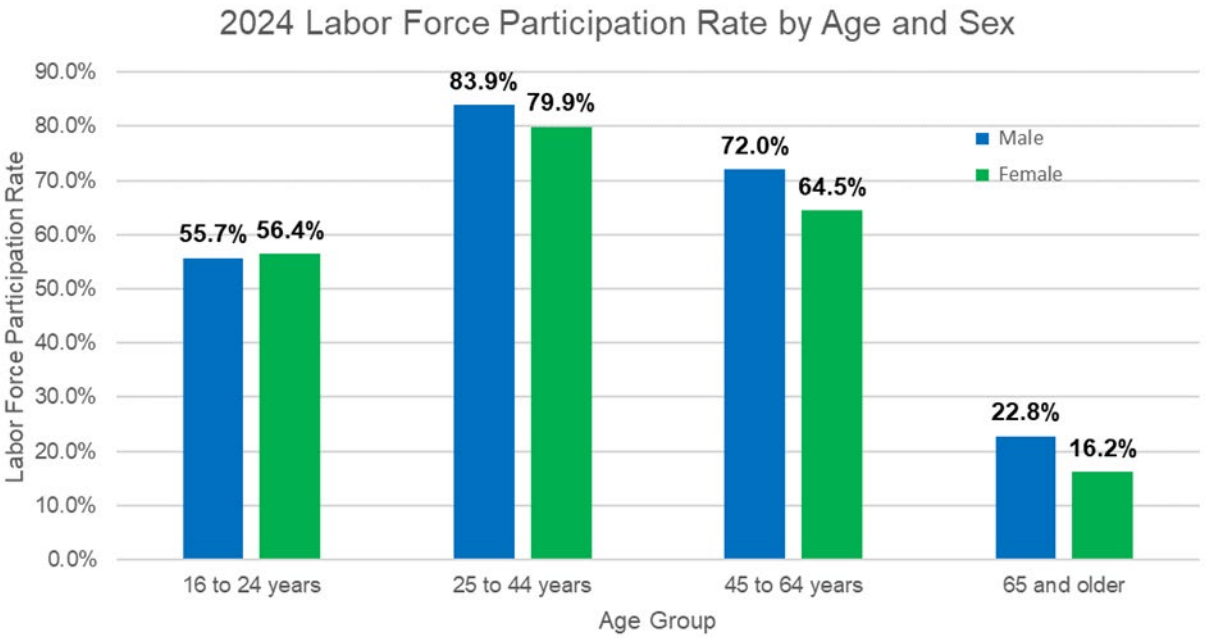
The following chart presents labor force participation rates in Louisiana in 2024 by age group and sex, illustrating both life-cycle labor market patterns and persistent differences between men and women.

Among individuals aged 16 to 24, labor force participation is nearly equal by sex, with 55.7% for men and 56.4% for women, indicating comparable levels of workforce engagement during early working and educational years. Participation reaches its highest levels for both sexes in the 25 to 44 age group, reflecting prime working years. Men in this cohort have a participation rate of 83.9%, compared with 79.9% for women, indicating a modest but notable gender gap.

In the 45 to 64 age group, participation declines for both men and women, while the gender disparity widens. Men maintain a higher participation rate (72.0%) than women (64.5%), which may be influenced by differences in occupational tenure, health status, caregiving responsibilities, and retirement timing.

Labor force participation decreases substantially among individuals 65 years and older, consistent with retirement patterns. However, men (22.8%) remain more likely than women (16.2%) to participate in the labor force at older ages, suggesting stronger labor market attachment among older men.

Overall, the data indicate that labor force participation in Louisiana follows a predictable age-related trajectory, peaking during prime working years and declining thereafter, while also highlighting persistent gender differences that are most pronounced in mid-career and later stages of the working life.



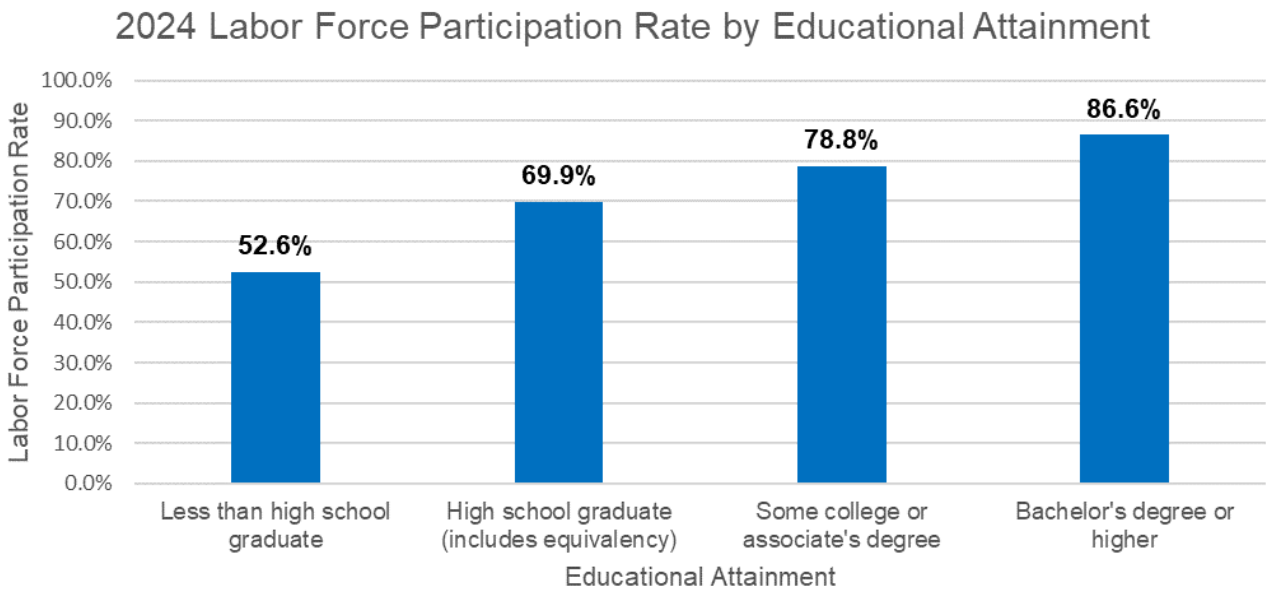
II. a. 1. B. iii. **Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce**

The chart below demonstrates a clear and systematic relationship between educational attainment and labor force participation in Louisiana in 2024, with participation rates rising steadily as education levels increase.

Individuals with less than a high school diploma have the lowest labor force participation rate at 52.6%, indicating limited engagement in the labor market and reflecting barriers such as reduced job opportunities and lower skill demand. Participation increases markedly to 69.9% among high school graduates, underscoring the economic importance of completing secondary education in Louisiana's labor market.

Those with some college education or an associate's degree exhibit a higher participation rate of 78.8%, suggesting that postsecondary credentials significantly strengthen labor market attachment and employability. The highest participation rate, 86.6%, is observed among individuals with a bachelor's degree or higher, highlighting strong demand for higher-skilled workers across key sectors of Louisiana's economy.

Overall, the data indicate that educational attainment is a critical determinant of labor force participation in Louisiana. These trends emphasize the importance of policies that support educational completion, workforce training, and access to higher education as strategies to expand labor supply, improve economic competitiveness, and support long-term workforce stability in the state. These statistics emphasize the importance of access to and the promotion of higher education, as the data suggests that higher educational attainment correlates with broader career options and potential for economic advancement. Addressing the educational needs of those without a high school diploma and encouraging further education among high school graduates could significantly impact individual well-being and overall economic health in Louisiana.

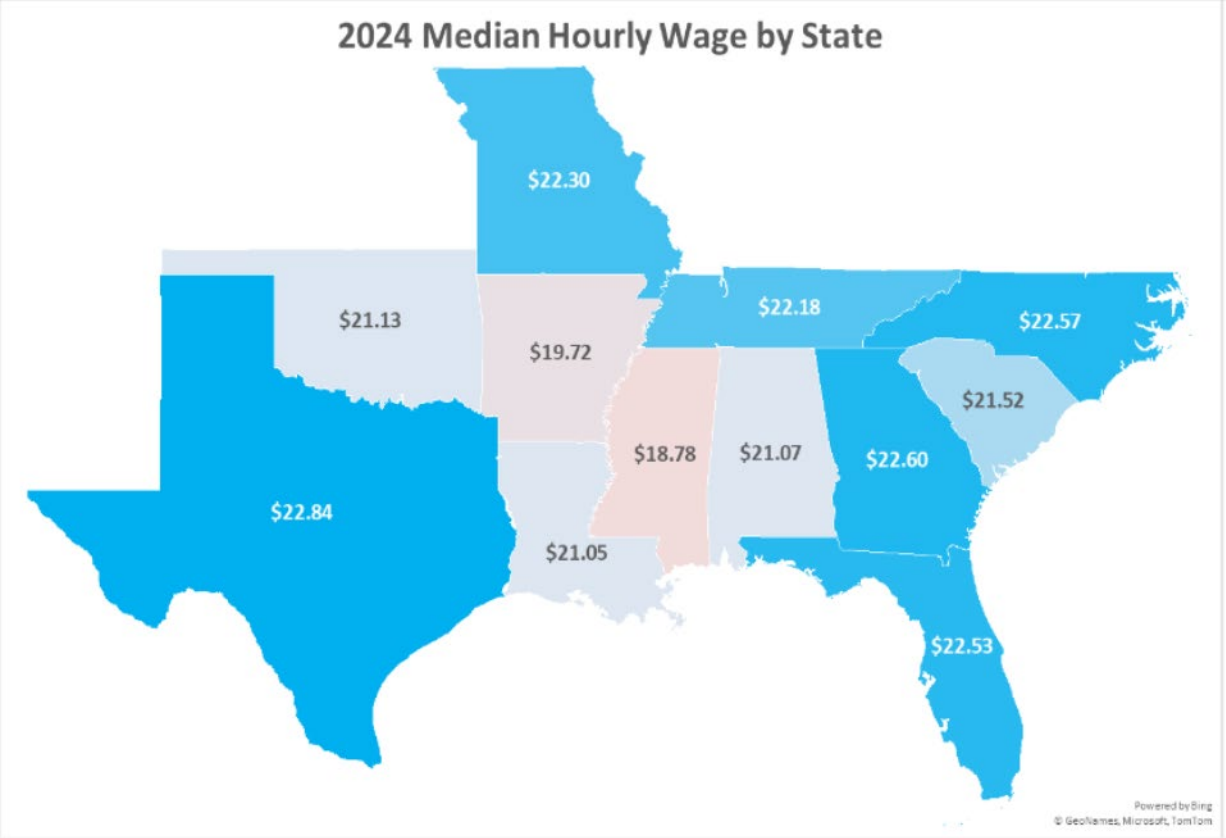


II. a. 1. B. ii. Labor Market Trends

The following map presents median hourly wages by state in 2024, illustrating wage differentials across the Southern region and situating Louisiana within the broader regional labor market.

Median hourly wages are highest in several neighboring states, including Texas ($22.84), Georgia ($22.60), North Carolina ($22.57), Florida ($22.53), Missouri ($22.30), and Tennessee ($22.18). These higher wage levels are generally associated with more diversified economic structures, larger metropolitan labor markets, and stronger demand for higher-skilled occupations. By comparison, Louisiana's median hourly wage of $21.05 is lower than that of many surrounding states, placing the state in the lower-middle range within the region. Similar wage levels are observed in Alabama ($21.07) and Oklahoma ($21.13), while Arkansas ($19.72) and Mississippi ($18.78) report even lower median wages, reflecting persistent income disparities across parts of the Deep South.

Overall, the map highlights meaningful regional wage variation with important implications for labor mobility, household income, and economic competitiveness. Louisiana's relatively lower median hourly wage may constrain its ability to attract and retain workers, particularly in higher-skilled occupations, underscoring the importance of policies that promote productivity growth, workforce development, and economic diversification to improve wage outcomes over time.



Source: Louisiana Works OEWS Unit

The following chart presents a comparison of annual median wages by occupational group in 2023 and 2024, illustrating wage levels across major occupational categories and highlighting year-over-year changes.

In 2024, Management Occupations record the highest median annual wage at $100,430, followed by Architecture and Engineering Occupations ($93,560) and Computer and Mathematical Occupations ($76,650). These occupations command higher wages due to elevated educational requirements, specialized skills, and greater levels of responsibility. Other professional fields, including Legal Occupations ($75,630) and Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations ($69,940), also exhibit relatively high median earnings.

Across most occupational groups, median wages increased from 2023 to 2024, indicating broad-based wage growth. Notable increases are evident in management, engineering, and healthcare-related occupations, reflecting sustained labor demand and competitive pressures for skilled workers. In contrast, wage growth among lower-paying occupations appears more modest, suggesting continued constraints on earnings in these sectors.

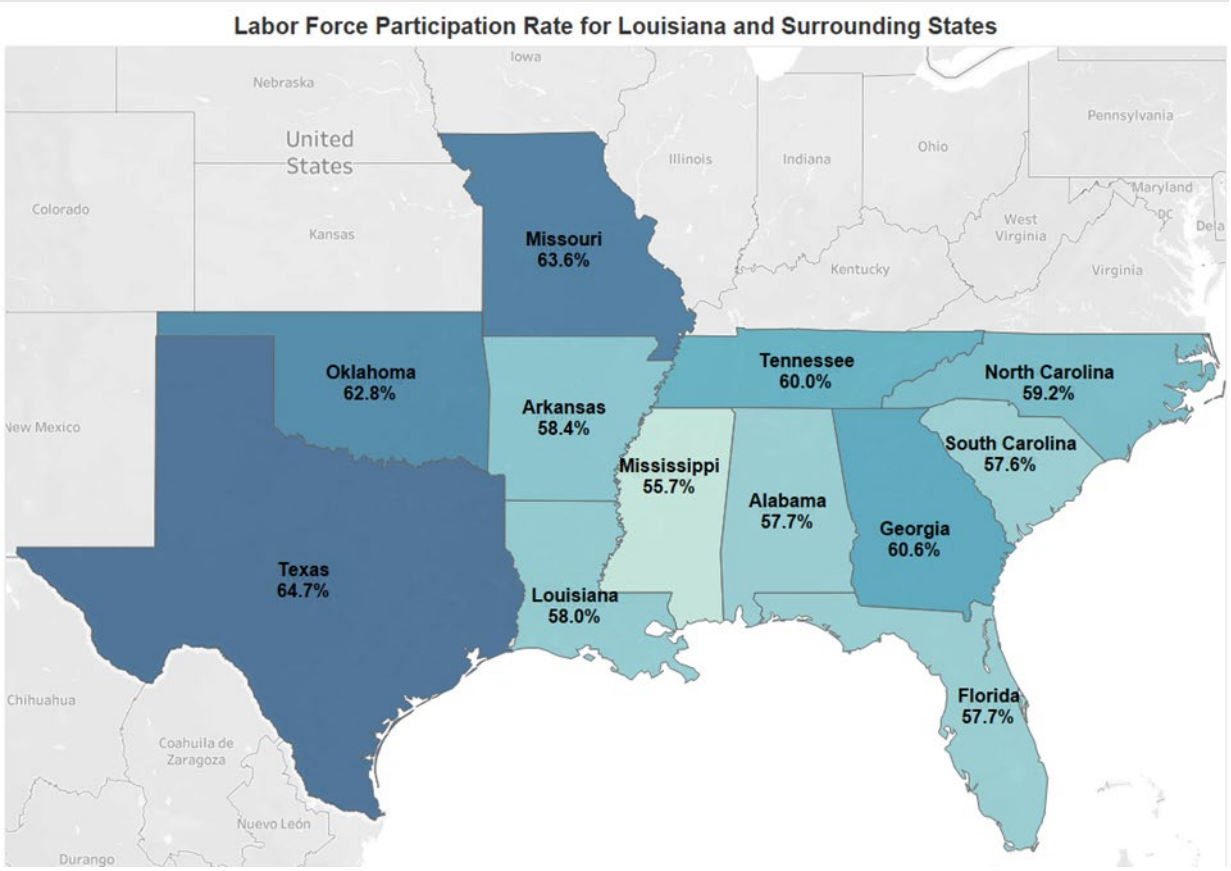
Lower median wages persist in service-oriented occupations, including Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations ($23,570), Personal Care and Service Occupations ($27,430), and Healthcare Support Occupations ($28,580). Despite incremental increases, these occupations remain at the lower end of the wage distribution, reflecting structural differences in skill requirements, industry norms, and compensation practices.

Overall, the data demonstrate a clear wage stratification across occupational groups, with higher earnings concentrated in managerial, technical, and professional fields. While the observed wage increases from 2023 to 2024 indicate gradual improvement, the chart underscores persistent wage disparities that have important implications for income distribution, workforce development, and long-term economic mobility.

Source: Louisiana Works OEWS Unit

Labor Force

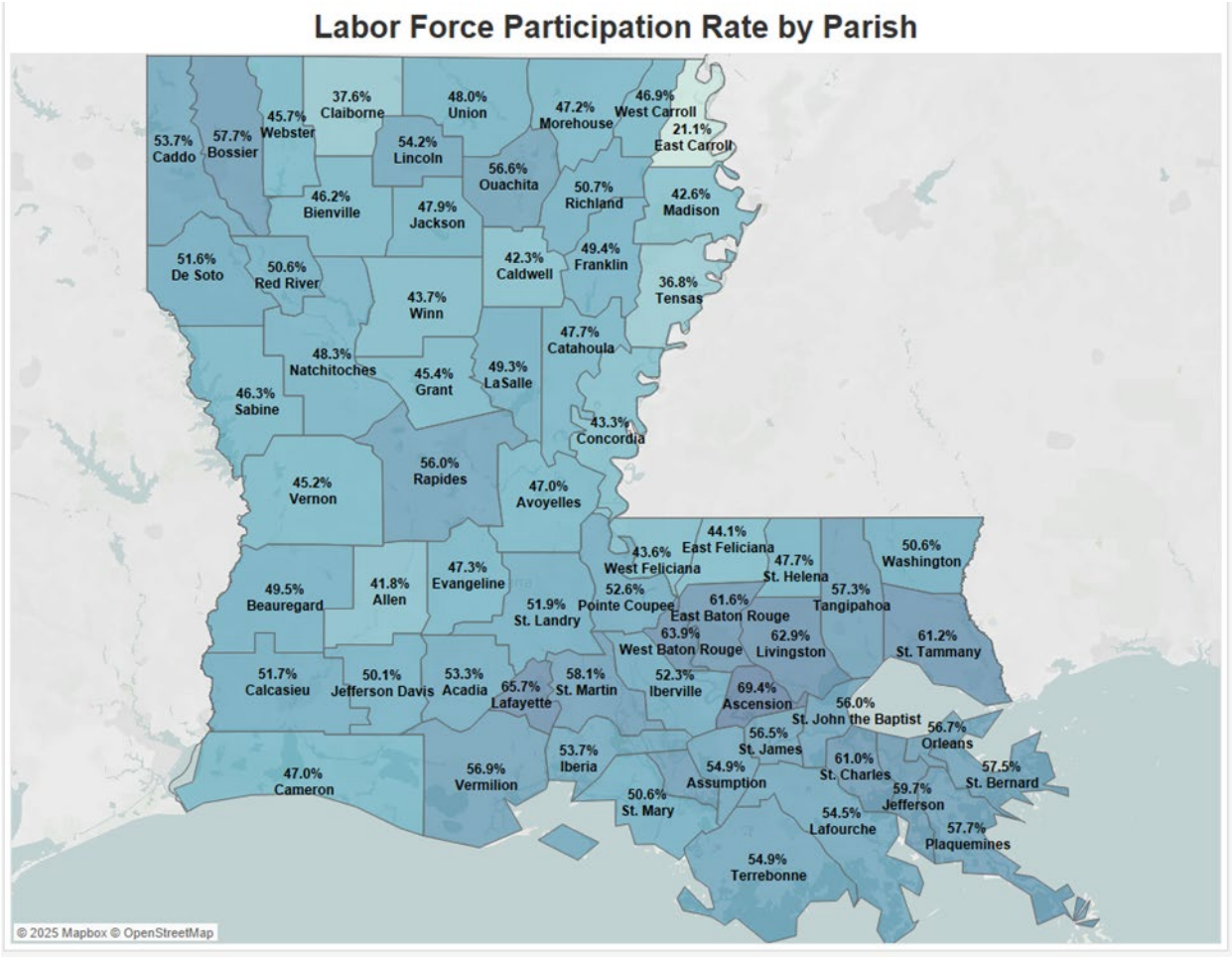
At the regional scale, Louisiana exhibits a labor force participation rate of approximately 58 percent, placing it below several neighboring states. Texas (64.7 percent), Missouri (63.6 percent), and Oklahoma (62.8 percent) demonstrate notably higher levels of labor force engagement, while Arkansas, Alabama, Florida, and South Carolina cluster near Louisiana in the upper-50 percent range. Mississippi records the lowest participation rate in the region at 55.7 percent. Collectively, this pattern underscores Louisiana's relatively weak labor force participation within a broader Southern region that, overall, trails national averages.



Source: Louisiana Works LMI Division

The parish-level map reveals pronounced internal disparities that are not apparent from the statewide average alone. Higher labor force participation rates are concentrated in and around major metropolitan and economic centers. Parishes in the Baton Rouge metropolitan area, including East Baton Rouge, West Baton Rouge, Ascension, and Livingston, exhibit some of the strongest participation rates, many exceeding 60 percent. Similarly, Lafayette Parish stands out with one of the highest rates in the state, reaching the mid-60 percent range. Portions of southeast Louisiana, particularly suburban parishes such as St. Tammany, also demonstrate relatively strong labor force engagement.

In contrast, many rural parishes, especially in northeast and central Louisiana, display substantially lower participation rates, often in the 40- to low-50 percent range. These patterns are indicative of persistent structural challenges, including limited employment opportunities, demographic aging, higher poverty levels, and reduced access to economic centers. Coastal and southwestern parishes show more moderate and varied outcomes, reflecting the influence of industries such as energy, petrochemicals, and maritime activity.



Source: Louisiana Works LMI Division

Overall, these maps convey that Louisiana's labor force participation challenges are highly uneven across the state. Stronger performance in urban and suburban regions is offset by persistently low participation in many rural areas, contributing to the state's comparatively modest statewide rate. This spatial unevenness highlights the importance of targeted, place-based workforce and economic development strategies to address Louisiana's labor market disparities.

Occupations

Louisiana's occupational landscape continues to evolve while maintaining focus on the eight Regional Labor Market Area's in the state. The tables below demonstrate the expected need via projected job openings for the 15 occupations with the most projected openings for each region from 2022 to 2032. These tables do not take into consideration the wage level of these occupations, thus demonstrating how when we control for higher wages, we are able to better tailor workforce development targets toward occupations with high-demand and high-wages. Otherwise, Louisiana would be solely focused on funneling employees into lower paid occupations with high turnover rates.

New Orleans Region Occupational Employment Projections 2022-2032

In the New Orleans region, Cashiers, Waiters and Waitresses, Retail Salespersons, and Fast Food and Counter Workers have a combined projected openings of 92,566 from 2022 to 2032. This substantial expectation in hiring supports the region's tourism and hospitality driven economy and the ever flowing need to hire workers in the occupations that support these industries.

New Orleans Region - Regional Labor Market Area 1 Occupational Employment Projections 2022-2032 Top Occupations by Projected Openings		
41-2011	Cashiers	28,450
35-3031	Waiters and Waitresses	22,966
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	22,583
35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers	18,567
31-1120	Home Health and Personal Care Aides	14,606
35-2021	Food Preparation Workers	14,257
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	13,588
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	13,411
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	13,180
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	10,648
43-9061	Office Clerks, General	9,707
35-2014	Cooks, Restaurant	9,563
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	9,463
43-6014	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	9,230
29-1141	Registered Nurses	8,661

Source: Louisiana Works LMI Division

Baton Rouge Region Occupational Employment Projections 2022-2032

Similar to the top projected openings in the New Orleans region, the Baton Rouge region is expected to have the most job openings for Cashiers, Retail Salespersons, Home Health and Personal Care Aides, and Fast Food and Counter Workers. This region while, less concentrated in hospitality and tourism than New Orleans, is more diverse in the hiring needs, spanning out to the construction and transportation industries.

Baton Rouge Region - Regional Labor Market Area 2 Occupational Employment Projections 2022-2032 Top Occupations by Projected Openings		
41-2011	Cashiers	23,252
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	16,179
31-1120	Home Health and Personal Care Aides	15,262
35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers	14,493
35-3031	Waiters and Waitresses	13,622
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	12,712
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	12,614
47-2061	Construction Laborers	11,286
35-2021	Food Preparation Workers	11,199
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	10,098
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	7,748
43-6014	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	7,672
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	7,657
43-9061	Office Clerks, General	7,120
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	6,422

Source: Louisiana Works LMI Division

Houma Region Occupational Employment Projections 2022-2032

The Houma region expects most projected openings to be in Retail Trade occupations as well as Food service and Transportation. Most notable is the presence of occupations needed within the transportation sector such as Sailers and Marine Oilers, Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, and Captains, Mates, and Pilots of Water Vessels.

Houma Region - Regional Labor Market Area 3 Occupational Employment Projections 2022-2032 Top Occupations by Projected Openings		
41-2011	Cashiers	4,815
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	3,063
35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers	2,762
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	2,534
53-5011	Sailors and Marine Oilers	2,524
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	2,479
35-2021	Food Preparation Workers	2,390
35-3031	Waiters and Waitresses	2,317
31-1120	Home Health and Personal Care Aides	2,073
53-5021	Captains, Mates, and Pilots of Water Vessels	1,909
47-2061	Construction Laborers	1,622
51-4121	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	1,563
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	1,539
43-6014	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	1,516
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	1,453

Source: Louisiana Works LMI Division

Lafayette Region Occupational Employment Projections 2022-2032

The Lafayette region expects job openings largely for Cashiers, Home Health and Personal Care Aides, and Retail Salespersons from 2022 to 2032. A general look at this list of the top 15 occupations by their projected job opening demand shows that this region has a slightly more diverse anticipated need across occupation groups and industries.

Lafayette Region - Regional Labor Market Area 4 Occupational Employment Projections 2022-2032 Top Occupations by Projected Openings		
41-2011	Cashiers	15,620
31-1120	Home Health and Personal Care Aides	11,903
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	10,406
35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers	8,511
35-3031	Waiters and Waitresses	7,738
35-2021	Food Preparation Workers	7,256
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	6,962
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	6,491
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	5,441
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	5,182
43-9061	Office Clerks, General	4,879
43-6014	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	4,788
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	4,629
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	3,861
47-2061	Construction Laborers	3,852

Source: Louisiana Works LMI Division

Lake Charles Region Occupational Employment Projections 2022-2032

Cashiers, Fast Food and Counter Workers, and Retail Salespersons lead with projected openings from 2022 to 2032 in the Lake Charles region. With 7,803 Cashier openings projected, this data suggests that the Lake Charles region is expected to grow in supportive industries such as Retail trade and Food service.

Lake Charles Region - Regional Labor Market Area 5 Occupational Employment Projections 2022-2032 Top Occupations by Projected Openings		
41-2011	Cashiers	7,803
35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers	4,906
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	4,614
35-3031	Waiters and Waitresses	3,528
35-2021	Food Preparation Workers	3,480
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	3,307
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	3,287
31-1120	Home Health and Personal Care Aides	3,021
47-2061	Construction Laborers	3,000
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	2,674
43-6014	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	2,408
43-9061	Office Clerks, General	2,194
31-1131	Nursing Assistants	2,105
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	2,007
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	1,943

Source: Louisiana Works LMI Division

Alexandria Region Occupational Employment Projections 2022-2032

Cashiers have the highest projected job openings in the Alexandria region with 5,193 expected job openings from 2022 to 2032. There are numerous occupations in this list which also support food service, transportation, and health care.

Alexandria Region - Regional Labor Market Area 6 Occupational Employment Projections 2022-2032 Top Occupations by Projected Openings		
41-2011	Cashiers	5,193
31-1120	Home Health and Personal Care Aides	5,057
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	3,567
35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers	2,904
35-2021	Food Preparation Workers	2,377
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	2,358
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	2,183
31-1131	Nursing Assistants	2,153
35-3031	Waiters and Waitresses	1,928
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	1,906
43-9061	Office Clerks, General	1,898
43-6014	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	1,836
47-2061	Construction Laborers	1,599
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	1,555
29-1141	Registered Nurses	1,511

Source: Louisiana Works LMI Division

Shreveport Region Occupational Employment Projections 2022-2032

Cashiers have an expected projected openings of 13,100 jobs from 2022-2032 in the Shreveport region with Fast Food and Counter workers expected to have 9,405 job openings over the same time period. Again, highlighting how prominent service industries are across Louisiana.

Shreveport Region - Regional Labor Market Area 7 Occupational Employment Projections 2022-2032 Top Occupations by Projected Openings		
41-2011	Cashiers	13,100
35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers	9,405
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	9,131
31-1120	Home Health and Personal Care Aides	7,785
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	6,864
35-2021	Food Preparation Workers	6,778
35-3031	Waiters and Waitresses	6,686
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	6,176
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	5,993
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	5,490
31-1131	Nursing Assistants	4,432
43-9061	Office Clerks, General	4,416
29-1141	Registered Nurses	4,325
53-3032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	4,280
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	3,805

Source: Louisiana Works LMI Division

Monroe Region Occupational Employment Projections 2022-2032

Home Health and Personal Care Aides, Cashiers, Fast Food and Counter Workers, and Retail Salespersons all top the list of occupations with the highest projected openings from 2022 to 2032 in the Monroe region. Such a large need in supportive industries such as healthcare and food service indicate the expected growth in these industries as other investments in the area finish during the projected time horizon.

Monroe Region - Regional Labor Market Area 8 Occupational Employment Projections 2022-2032 Top Occupations by Projected Openings		
31-1120	Home Health and Personal Care Aides	8,421
41-2011	Cashiers	7,046
35-3023	Fast Food and Counter Workers	4,628
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	3,812
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	3,798
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	3,736
35-2021	Food Preparation Workers	3,436
31-1131	Nursing Assistants	3,044
35-3031	Waiters and Waitresses	2,889
53-7065	Stockers and Order Fillers	2,473
43-9061	Office Clerks, General	2,194
33-9032	Security Guards	2,044
43-6014	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	1,706
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	1,698
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	1,641

Source: Louisiana Works LMI Division

Skill Gaps

"Skill Gaps" is a term defined as a "significant mismatch between the needs of employers for skills and the current capabilities of the available workforce". This topic is of particular concern for Louisiana as the state's Labor Force Participation Rate trends below the national average. Multiple initiatives are taking place within the state to address the lagging LFPR. One of which is the "One Door" program focus described within this state plan, which seeks to effectively coordinate the delivery of support services and workforce development services to better assist Louisianians in going from dependence to independence. The One Door program focuses on streamlining support services and mitigating individuals getting lost in the system on their way to independence. Goals include shortening the distance between training programs and employment in high-demand, high-wage jobs across the state, with an emphasis on sustainable and meaningful employment for the state's citizens.

Louisiana Knowledge Gaps 2022-2032			
Knowledges	Exits	Transfers	Change
Administration and Management	456,445	599,752	35,932
Biology	47,778	50,030	11,878
Building and Construction	73,270	102,472	18,155
Chemistry	115,627	139,016	8,605
Clerical	329,273	446,616	13,975
Communications and Media	18,448	22,797	900
Computers and Electronics	436,703	563,183	18,757
Customer and Personal Service	791,440	1,002,246	52,808
Design	61,191	91,130	15,324
Economics and Accounting	53,664	73,114	1,865
Education and Training	517,546	685,622	54,667
Engineering and Technology	87,838	130,644	19,649
English Language	789,468	1,005,587	54,304
Fine Arts	4,053	5,070	295
Food Production	101,090	128,167	2,177
Foreign Language	463	518	-9
Geography	28,915	39,402	3,067
History and Archeology	8,421	8,539	895
Law and Government	83,711	108,604	8,731
Mathematics	586,486	769,902	35,762
Mechanical	233,917	334,366	34,460
Medicine and Dentistry	70,541	72,583	16,633
Personnel and Human Resources	93,015	138,515	9,931
Philosophy and Theology	20,281	20,065	2,729
Physics	30,624	43,879	7,617
Production and Processing	167,176	256,630	22,169
Psychology	214,899	252,501	23,308
Public Safety and Security	349,220	454,397	29,867
Sales and Marketing	230,830	304,726	3,515
Sociology and Anthropology	58,269	60,599	11,934
Telecommunications	9,233	14,277	1,018
Therapy and Counseling	67,703	68,649	13,790
Transportation	102,406	141,961	12,436

Source: Louisiana Works LMI Division

Louisiana's evolving workforce landscape has critical concerns that emerge as we look into the knowledge gaps projected from 2022 to 2032 within the state. The table below delineates the anticipated exits, transfers, and changes within various knowledge domains, shedding insight on areas where the state may face challenges. Administration and Management, and Biology lead in terms of anticipated need that is predicted to outpace the knowledge base ability to fill the positions that a substantial number of individuals are expected to exit from.

As a note when observing the table above, exits represent those individuals who are leaving jobs as they exit the workforce, by either retiring or leaving the state for employment elsewhere. Transfers are those individuals who leave a position for another. The overall change is the metric which represents the need for the knowledge.

Strategic measures are imperative in addressing and bridging these knowledge gaps and grow a resilient and

well-rounded workforce for Louisiana. These knowledge projections emphasize a need for targeted educational and professional development initiatives across the state to ensure a smooth transition and sustainable growth across diverse industry sectors within the state.

II. a. 1. B.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.

While Louisiana boasts a diverse economic landscape and workforce, there are areas in need of more skilled workers. An analysis of total job openings by occupation over the past 12 months, alongside data on completers of educational programs in Louisiana reveals some occupational and industry areas that require more attention. Construction, health care, manufacturing, and transportation industries all appear to have large deficits in the supply of skilled workers in comparison to the job openings available within related occupations in Louisiana. Some of the most notable occupations in need of more workers are Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses, which is in need of approximately 2,000 skilled workers who can fill available positions. Other notable occupations in demand of skilled labor include Nursing Assistants (1600), Welders (1230), Customer Service Managers (900), and Installers and Repairers (615). Occupational areas in which there are a saturated presence of skilled labor include Chief Executives, Electro-Mechanical and Mechatronics Technologists and Technicians, Electrical and Electronic Installers and Repairers, and Computer and Information Systems Managers.

II. a. 2. Workforce Development, Education and Training Activities Analysis

Louisiana's Workforce Development system is grounded in the One Door model, which establishes a strong foundation for integrated case management, customer centered delivery aligned with WIOA. While the state has made meaningful progress through co-location and coordinated service strategies. Louisiana recognizes that it is not yet operating as a fully integrated system and is actively working to advance toward a true whole of government approach with integrated case management at its core. Full implementation of this model requires waiver authority, as current statutory and regulatory requirements limit the State's ability to fully align programs, integrate service delivery, and operate as a unified system.

Under this model, job seekers and businesses may enter the workforce system through any required partner and receive coordinated, aligned, and non-duplicative services that are responsive to state, regional, and local labor market needs.

One Door emphasizes sector strategies, career pathways, work-based learning opportunities, and services to individuals with barriers to employment, including veterans, individuals with disabilities, out of school youth, and other priority populations. This model supports regional planning and service coordination across designated Regional Labor Market Areas, strengthens alignment with education and economic development partners, and promotes accountability through WIOA common performance measures. Through One Door, Louisiana advances its goal of developing a skilled workforce that meets current and future employer demand while improving employment, retention, and earnings outcomes for job seekers.

AJCs offer job seekers: Outreach, common intake and assessment, orientation and referral to other services; Initial and Comprehensive assessment of skills, aptitudes, interests and abilities, both in a self-service and staff assisted service context, based on the specific needs of the job seeker; Career Counseling, job search and placement assistance; Provision of Labor Market Information by location, region, and national areas – job vacancy listings, information on skills relating to local occupations in demand and the earnings and skill requirements for those occupations; and Provision of performance information and program cost information on eligible training providers. Provision of information relating to the availability of supportive services such as child care and transportation.

AJCs offer employers: Screening and referral of qualified job candidates; Outreach and assistance in developing effective recruiting job orders; Access to the State's "talent bank"; Coordination of job fairs and recruitment

events; Connection with community service organizations and tax credit opportunities; Training opportunities for Incumbent Workers; Connections to Registered Apprenticeship programs; Provision of information regarding the availability of OJT and Customized Training, including referral of employers to sources of funding for worker training; Coordination with economic development and other programs that assist business; and Assistance with layoff aversion.

The WIOA Title I Adult program provides workforce activities that increase, (*particularly for individuals with barriers to employment*), employment, retention, earnings, and attainment of recognized postsecondary credentials of adults age 18 and older. These outcomes help improve the quality of the workforce, reduce dependency on public assistance, and increase economic self-sufficiency. WIOA aligns systems to support workforce development and career preparation.

Louisiana Works clarifies to all partners that participants are not required to pass through multiple layers of assessments and services before entering into training. The state service delivery model has effectively combined core and intensive services into career services, giving all partner staff in One-Stop Centers the flexibility to provide access to training based on assessed need. The redefined service model provides more flexible training delivery options to meet the needs of low-income individuals; flexibility to contract directly with colleges or eligible training providers to supply training for high-demand occupations and/or industry sectors; and expands reliance beyond Individual Training Accounts (ITAs)and increases flexibility to help use WIOA funds more effectively.

Louisiana continue to develop and refine innovative and effective models for obtaining industry-recognized credentials, including: integrated education and training approaches; career pathways, industry or sector partnerships, including those pertaining to Registered Apprenticeship programs and opportunities; cohort-based approaches; evidence-based approaches that reflect best practices including Registered Apprenticeship programs; and development of interim credentials for longer-term Registered Apprenticeship programs, which Louisiana can do as an "SAA State" (State Apprenticeship Agency).

Louisiana is seeking a waiver to expand pay-for-performance contracts as a form of training delivery under WIOA Title I. Under current statutory limitations, the use of pay-for-performance strategies is restricted, limiting the State's ability to fully implement outcome-based contracting models at scale. This expansion cannot be achieved without waiver authority. These contracts will include ongoing evaluation to ensure that target populations are selected fairly, and services effectively reach individuals facing barriers to employment and economic success.

The WIOA Title I Adult Program is one of the six core programs authorized by Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The goal is to provide assistance and resources to individuals transitioning into the workforce. Louisiana Works recognizes that for many low-skilled and disadvantaged youth and adults, improved economic opportunity depends on their ability to access education and training necessary to prepare them for college and career success. Evaluation of job training programs for adults finds that postsecondary education, in particular a degree or industry- recognized credential related to in-demand jobs, is the primary determinant of lifetime earnings. Education and training provides opportunities for increasing a family's financial resources, helps parents stay employed and establishes a solid foundation for the next generation (youth).

Enhanced access and flexibility are offered for WIOA work-based training options at all American Job Centers across the state. Available programs include Registered Apprenticeship, On-the-Job Training, Customized Training, and Incumbent Worker Training. A primary goal of the agency is to expand the number of registered apprenticeship programs and enhance the resources and support for local area staff in the screening and assessment processes. This active involvement is essential for effectively guiding candidates into work-based training, a fundamental aspect of our employer-based training programs. Waiver strategies further support the expansion of work-based learning models by providing flexibility to align training investments with employer demand and regional workforce needs. Emphasis shall be placed on work-based learning strategies that align with business needs. Incorporating Registered Apprenticeship into service design and delivery is one- way Louisiana Works expects to address the middle skill jobs that account for over half of Louisiana's labor market as noted in an earlier section, and it likewise addresses the need to focus on in-demand occupations and

recognized credentials. One way to accomplish this is by having American Job Center staff involved and engaged in screening and assessment for current registered programs.

Louisiana Works operates its Adult Training Program to identify workers who currently need or will need higher levels of education to fare better in the labor market to reduce the incidence and duration of unemployment while supporting higher earnings and job stability. Louisiana honors the Title I Priority of Service requirement by leveraging all available funding streams and partnerships, regardless of state or local funding availability, in providing priority access to higher-intensity career services.

The Rapid Response Services Unit is a much- needed measure to provide assistance quickly to layoffs and plant closing by coordinating services. The goal is to provide dislocated workers with tools and support needed to obtain credentials, occupational skills, and suitable employment at comparable wages with minimal disruption to individual lives. Direct services to workers facing a plant shutdown or large-scale lay-off, are focused on preparing them to find suitable new employment, and get them back to work as quickly as possible by helping them overcome such difficult barriers to employment as: transferring and/or upgrading specialized skills to other jobs, occupations or industries; a decline in the market demand for certain skills; age or length of work experience.; need for formal training or education.; and lack of jobs with earnings at a level comparable to their previous positions.

The Youth Apprenticeship program connects high school students to apprenticeships by combining academic and technical instruction with work experience through a Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP). This program lays a foundation for students to pursue various post-high school pathways, including college enrollment, apprenticeship entry, full-time employment, or a combination thereof.

In 2010, the Louisiana Legislature finalized the transference of responsibility of Louisiana's adult education delivery system from the Louisiana Department of Education (LADOE) to Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS). This effort was not simply about moving a program's administration from one agency to another. It was about reconsidering completely the goals, outcomes, and direction of adult education in Louisiana. LCTCS developed a new policy framework whose primary focus is putting Louisiana adults to work by providing high-quality basic skills instruction, in addition to wrap-around student services that lead to a seamless transition to postsecondary enrollment, technical skill training, credentialing, and family-sustaining employment. As a symbol of the new vision, the Louisiana Adult Education Program was re-branded "WorkReady U." Adult education programs have progressively adjusted educational services and delivery models and are well-positioned to provide/deliver/coordinate the required activities under Title II-WIOA.

Adult Education connects with the One-Stop system through the intake and assessment process to identify adults with limited basic skills and use innovative instructional models as necessary to prepare adult learners for transition to postsecondary training or careers. The LCTCS Adult Education and Family Literacy Program (WorkReady U), administers and provides program performance oversight to eligible local entities that provide adult education services. These services include academic instruction and education services that increase the individual's ability to: read, write, and speak English and perform mathematics or other activities necessary for the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent; transition to postsecondary education and training: and obtain employment.

Through the One Door initiative, Louisiana strategically integrates Wagner-Peyser Employment Services into American Job Centers across all LWDA regions statewide. This approach ensures that all job seekers, including individuals accessing SNAP, SNAP E&T, STEP, TANF, unemployment insurance, and those from priority populations, receive consistent, high-quality services. These services include career counseling, labor exchange referrals, customized labor market information, and connections to required WIOA partners and community based resources.

Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) is present in all Comprehensive One-Stop centers and in affiliate locations as necessary to assure effective service to individuals with disabilities through participant’s skills training which enhances participant ability to obtain employment in their desired field, in particular “high demand jobs”. LRS consistently places clients in high demand jobs.

The LRS Program Coordinator for rehabilitation technology provides consultation to Comprehensive One-Stop Center staff and affiliate locations to improve knowledge regarding assistive technology and address other accessibility issues. In addition, the agency's Rehabilitation Employment Development Specialists (REDS) serve as LRS liaisons for all Comprehensive One-Stop centers and affiliate locations within their region, providing public awareness and services to consumers such as building job-seeking skills and employment development. The State is committed to the success of individuals with disabilities and leads the collaboration effort across all Partner Programs.

LRS continues to renew and revise existing local cooperative agreements, as applicable, with all school districts in Louisiana. The Department of Education (LDOE) and LRS continue to work together to establish regional core teams throughout the state. LRS collaborates with LDOE, the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD), Work Incentive Planning Program, the Office of Community Services, and the Office of Youth Development in an effort to network, share information and utilize comparable benefits to enhance VR services to transitioning students. The primary focus of LRS' collaboration is to identify and address barriers (e.g. policies, eligibility process, resource allocation), assure effective service provision through support of local interagency core teams, provide cross-agency training, outreach, engage in capacity building of young adults and family outreach efforts, provide continued support of innovative models and practices related to transition and provide information and technical assistance.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

Through an interagency agreement The Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) partners with the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) and Louisiana Works (LA WORKS) to ~~is~~ committed to providing cash assistance and supportive services to needy families meeting specific financial criteria and to provide services necessary to accomplish the goals and purposes of Section 401 of the Social Security Act (42 USC 601) in order to:

Provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives.

End dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work and marriage.

Prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancy.

Encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

Trade services are considered an integral part of the American Job Center's service delivery and may involve any and all partners based on the particular needs of individual clients. As such, trade- affected workers may be eligible for: training services.; job-search allowances; relocation allowances; re-employment services; funded training; on-the-job training;.

Louisiana provides employment, training and placement services to all veterans through a network of strategically located American Job Centers and supported by HiRE. JVSG provides services to veterans and eligible persons according to need, and Qualifying Employment Barriers. Louisiana Works Jobs for Veterans State Grant-funded activities are co-located within the state's American Job Centers. JVSG staff referred to as Local veteran Employment Representative (LVER) and Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialist are essential parts of and fully integrated into the workforce development network. The veteran's program is operating a fully functional re-entry program.

The goal of the planning process is to design a long-term strategic view of the senior citizen employment opportunities, inclusive of SCSEP and measurable strategies to achieve the defined goals. Currently the Louisiana Senior Community Service Employment Program is operated by both the state and national non-profit organizations. The program serves low-income persons who are 55 years of age and older who have poor employment prospects by placing them in part- time community service positions and by assisting them to transition to unsubsidized employment. This does not include individuals who are seeking employment and are not eligible for program services. Through this collaboration, Louisiana is committed to bringing SCSEP

together with diverse stakeholders (including local boards and One-Stop operators) to develop and expand employment and training opportunities for the state's senior citizens. The goal of the planning process is to design a long-term strategic view of the senior citizen employment opportunities, inclusive of SCSEP and measurable strategies to achieve the defined goals.

There is a significant opportunity for enhanced coordination between the CSBG and the local workforce partners and employers. Such coordination could streamline access to these essential services and bridge gaps in support that are not covered under WIOA. Currently, Louisiana's Community Action Network is actively engaged in the implementation of the One Door to Work service delivery model. A network consultant is engaging with the CAAs to embed the One Door Model within their strategic plans. Strategies include co-location, recurring regional partner convenings, cross-training opportunities, memoranda of understanding, cooperative endeavor agreements and innovative collaborative projects. This integration would ensure that supportive services and additional funding provided by CAAs reach a broader audience and more effectively meet the complex needs of Louisiana's low-income populations. This establishment of robust coordination between the CSBG program and local workforce partners and employers not only enhances service delivery but also maximizes the impact of available resources, ensuring that every initiative is strategically aligned to foster economic stability and community revitalization across Louisiana.

SNAP Employment & Training recipients gain the skills, training, or work experience needed for employment, increased self-sufficiency, prosperity, and lower reliance on SNAP benefits by participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment and Training (E&T) program. Goals of SNAP E&T include: 1) Collaborate with community organizations to span the state to ensure availability of educational and training services; 2) Strategically plan to consult and partner with the four federally recognized Indian Tribal Organizations in Louisiana, and 3) SNAP recipients will obtain skills and gain meaningful employment that moves them forward towards self-sufficiency.

The Strengths and Weaknesses of Workforce Development Activities

The Louisiana Legislative Auditor recently released two reports titled *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act* and *Coordination of Public Assistance and Workforce Development Programs*, both focused on the outcomes of workforce development programs statewide. These two reports provide detailed analysis related to both the strengths and weaknesses related to workforce development activities across the state.

Strengths

Comprehensive Service Range: Louisiana Works administers a broad spectrum of services under the WIOA programs, offering career and training services for adults, dislocated workers, and youth. This comprehensive approach is aimed at preparing individuals for sustainable employment in high-demand careers.

Training and Credentialing Success: The audit report highlights that Louisiana's WIOA programs have been successful in providing customers with valuable credentials and skills. The state has outperformed others in credential attainment rates, indicating strong training programs that effectively meet the needs of participants.

Collaboration with Educational Institutions: Collaboration with the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS) and the Louisiana Board of Regents (BOR) demonstrates a strategic approach to linking workforce development with educational pathways, enhancing the relevance and impact of training programs.

Efficient Use of One-Stop Centers: The existence of 53 One-Stop Centers across the state, including comprehensive and affiliate centers, ensures accessible career services and employer support.

Weaknesses

Fragmentation and Lack of Integration: The report points out a fragmented system with insufficient collaboration between various programs and entities. The lack of comprehensive memorandums of understanding (MOUs) among local workforce partners and employers and partner programs undermines the potential for a cohesive service delivery system.

Underutilization of Programs: There is a significant gap between the number of individuals eligible for WIOA services and those who are actually enrolled. This underutilization suggests issues with outreach, awareness, and possibly the perceived value or accessibility of the programs.

Discrepancies in Employment Outcomes: Although participants are gaining credentials, they are not translating into successful job placements at a satisfactory rate. Many participants find employment that pays less than before, indicating a misalignment between training and market demand or insufficient support in job placement efforts.

Inconsistent Performance Across Local Areas: The audit reveals substantial variance in the cost per participant and outcomes across different LWDBs. This inconsistency suggests uneven resource allocation, program management, and service quality, which could lead to issues in workforce development efforts across the state.

Challenges in Sustainable Employment: The finding that most WIOA participants did not achieve earnings high enough to be self-sufficient post-program highlights a critical area for improvement. Ensuring that training programs not only lead to employment but also to jobs that offer a living wage is essential for the success of workforce development initiatives.

A significant weakness noted by both reports is the lack of integrated data systems and comprehensive longitudinal data across workforce development partners in Louisiana represents a significant weakness in the state's approach to workforce development. This limitation hampers the ability to assess program effectiveness over time, understand the long- term impact on participants, and make informed decisions for continuous improvement

Lack of Integrated Data Systems

Fragmented Information Sharing: The absence of a unified data system across WIOA and its partner programs leads to siloed information storage and sharing. This fragmentation prevents the seamless exchange of participant data and service outcomes, complicating efforts to track individual progress comprehensively from entry to post-exit phases of workforce programs.

Impacts on Service Delivery: Without integrated data systems, coordinating services and identifying overlapping or complementary program offerings becomes challenging. This lack of coordination can result in duplicated services, gaps in support for participants, and inefficient use of resources.

Barrier to Strategic Planning: Effective strategic planning and resource allocation depend on detailed and consolidated data. The current disjointed data infrastructure limits the ability of policymakers and administrators to perform in-depth analyses, hindering strategic decisions that could enhance program impact and efficiency.

Need for Longitudinal Data

Tracking Long-Term Outcomes: Longitudinal data is crucial for understanding the sustained impact of workforce programs on participants' employment stability, wage growth, and career advancement. The current lack of such data in Louisiana restricts the ability to evaluate long- term program success and economic mobility of participants.

Evaluating Program Effectiveness: Long-term tracking of participant outcomes would allow for a more nuanced assessment of program effectiveness, including the identification of which programs consistently lead to successful employment and which may require redesign or improvement.

Informing Policy Development: Comprehensive longitudinal data would provide a solid evidence base for policy development and program refinements. It can highlight trends, successes, and areas for improvement, thereby informing targeted interventions and policies to bolster workforce development efforts.

To address these issues, Louisiana could benefit from developing a more integrated data system that allows for

the sharing of information across all workforce development programs and partners. Additionally, establishing mechanisms for collecting and analyzing longitudinal data on participant outcomes would greatly enhance the state's ability to monitor progress, evaluate the effectiveness of workforce initiatives, and adapt strategies to meet the evolving needs of the labor market and workforce participants. The waivers Louisiana has submitted will further support these improvements by providing increased flexibility in program design and service delivery, enabling Louisiana to streamline administrative processes, reduce barriers to coordination and implementing innovative approaches to data integration.

In summary, while Louisiana's workforce development activities exhibit strengths in training and credentialing, there are significant opportunities for improvement in integration, outreach, employment outcomes, and ensuring effective service delivery across the state. Addressing these weaknesses will be crucial in enhancing the overall impact of Louisiana's workforce development efforts.

State Workforce Development Capacity

Louisiana has defined capacity in three categories of service: efficiency, connectivity, and funding. Through a series of waivers, Louisiana Works has a solid foundation in efficiently providing coordinated services. While Louisiana Works has made progress in coordinating services, full system alignment remains constrained by existing statutory and regulatory requirements. Through a coordinated set of waivers, Louisiana is establishing the foundation to deliver a more integrated and efficient workforce system. The waiver for the state agency serving as fiscal agent will address the fragmentation by facilitating strategic and swift allocation of funding across the system.

There is opportunity for stronger coordination and consistency between Partner Programs, through the use of a Common Intake Process and integrated case management strategy that will improve efficiencies across the board for all partners. The state board serving as the local board waiver will allow Louisiana Works to not only continue the integrated case management development for Wagner Peyser, Veterans, Re-entry, Snap E&T and STEP, but expand the integration to case management through the continuum of services provided through WIOA program. This "One Door" approach to case management will enable any customer to enter the system with a consistent process, resulting in seamless transitions among Partner Programs and Supportive Services providers. This model cannot be fully implemented under current programmatic and administrative requirements without waiver authority.

These efforts require waivers that enable a unified statewide governance structure, allowing for stronger alignment of policies, case management practices, and service delivery across all partner programs. This enhanced connectivity ensures that participants experience a seamless system regardless of their point of entry.

The State has adopted a Career Pathway approach to address efficiency issues related to how timely and responsive it is in developing plans and entering job-seekers into training. This will allow employers and job seekers to focus on a stepped approach to earning education and training. In many regions, capacity challenges are not limited to the availability of training programs, but also reflect gaps in foundational literacy, numeracy, English language proficiency, and digital skills among job seekers. Addressing these gaps through aligned adult education services is essential to ensuring access to education and training opportunities statewide. The state agency serving as the fiscal agent waiver will allow Louisiana to strategically address variance across local boards. By reducing the overhead cost of operations, a greater percentage of funds can be directed to direct services investments.

Additional funding flexibility waivers are necessary to support this approach by allowing Louisiana Works to deploy resources in a more integrated and participant-centered manner, ensuring that funding is aligned with demand-driven training, career pathways, and employer needs rather than constrained by programmatic silos.

Louisiana's Business Services system is undergoing a strategic redesign to better serve employers, strengthen regional coordination, and directly contribute to increasing the state's Labor Force Participation Rate. This effort reflects a shift from a fragmented, program-driven approach to a unified, employer-facing system that is responsive to the speed and complexity of today's economy.

Pursuant to Act 330, Louisiana Works is transitioning from the previous dual structure of Industry Sector Coordinators and Business Services Representatives to a cohesive Regional Workforce Development model. This model establishes clear ownership of employer engagement at the regional level, reduces duplication across partners, and ensures that businesses experience a single, coordinated system rather than multiple disconnected entry points.

At its core, this restructuring is about delivering solutions, not services. Regional teams will be positioned to understand employer demand in real time, align training and talent strategies accordingly, and connect businesses to the full range of workforce, education, and supportive service resources. This includes stronger integration with economic development efforts, more consistent engagement with regional stakeholders, and a clearer feedback loop to inform statewide strategy.

This transformation is reinforced by Louisiana's broader waiver strategy, which provides the flexibility to align business services across funding streams, standardize service delivery, and deploy resources where they drive the greatest impact. Together, these changes position Louisiana Works to operate as a true business partner to employers while ensuring more Louisianans are connected to meaningful employment opportunities.

This restructuring is supported by Louisiana's broader waiver strategy, which enables alignment of business services across programs and regions.

II. b. State Strategic Vision and Goals

Vision

The State of Louisiana is at a critical juncture, with an opportunity to leverage its economic strengths and growing job market to promote widespread upward mobility among its residents. Guided by Governor Jeff Landry's leadership, there is a clear vision to improve educational accessibility and excellence across all levels, from K-12 education to adult learning programs. This comprehensive approach aims to address barriers hindering individuals from taking advantage of Louisiana's evolving economy. Despite progress, challenges persist in providing accessible pathways to economic mobility and self-sufficiency, particularly for those facing poverty and low educational attainment.

Governor Jeff Landry issued the Executive Order on *Modernizing Louisiana's Workforce for a New Era*, charging Louisiana Works to pursue federal waivers and administrative flexibilities necessary to redesign the state's workforce system for today's economy. The order directs a reduction in unnecessary administrative overhead, a greater share of resources dedicated to direct participant services and employer-driven strategies, and the implementation of a unified, statewide framework for planning, performance, and accountability that prioritizes measurable employment outcomes, strong employer engagement, and responsible stewardship of federal and state workforce funds.

Louisiana is entering a period of historic economic expansion, with billions of dollars in announced private-sector investment and more than 100,000 current job openings statewide, alongside tens of thousands of additional positions expected in the coming years. At the same time, changes in federal policy, including the implementation of community engagement requirements tied to programs like Medicaid, will require a significant number of Louisianans to engage with workforce systems to maintain benefits and transition toward employment. Together, these dynamics are fundamentally reshaping both the scale and expectations of the workforce system. Louisiana must be positioned to connect more individuals to work, respond to employer demand in real time, and support sustained labor force participation through an integrated approach that aligns workforce development, education, and social services.

Louisiana's Strategy:

Louisiana's strategy is centered on building a fully integrated, performance-driven workforce system that connects individuals to employment more quickly, supports clear benefits-to-work pathways, and operates with greater efficiency and accountability. At the core of this approach is the One Door model, which aligns workforce development, education, and public assistance programs into a single, coordinated system. This

model reduces fragmentation by creating a unified point of entry for individuals and a coordinated, employer-facing system on the back end, ensuring that services are not duplicative, disconnected, or difficult to navigate.

Through One Door, Louisiana is redesigning how individuals move from public benefits to employment by integrating eligibility, intake, case management, and service delivery across programs. This approach positions social services and public benefit programs as active tools for reducing barriers to employment and advancing self-sufficiency. Individuals receiving supports such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and Medicaid are not only supported in meeting basic needs, but are intentionally connected to training, work-based learning, and employment opportunities without unnecessary administrative friction. These programs are leveraged to stabilize individuals, address immediate challenges such as childcare, transportation, and health coverage, and create the conditions necessary for successful entry and persistence in the workforce. The focus is on establishing a clear, supported pathway from assistance to employment, where benefits are aligned with workforce participation and designed to facilitate long-term economic mobility rather than delay it.

This strategy also prioritizes system efficiency by reducing administrative overhead, standardizing service delivery, and leveraging statewide coordination enabled through Louisiana's waiver strategy. Resources are increasingly directed toward direct participant services, employer-driven training, and rapid attachment to work, rather than duplicative administrative structures. At the same time, Louisiana is strengthening employer engagement through a more coordinated, regional approach that ensures businesses can access talent solutions quickly and consistently across the state.

Ultimately, Louisiana's approach is designed to deliver a system that is easier to navigate, faster to respond, and more accountable for results, ensuring more Louisianans are connected to meaningful employment while meeting the evolving needs of employers and the state's economy.

Partnerships and Integration:

Louisiana has a rich history of interagency collaboration, which Governor Landry's economic agenda prioritizes as vital for driving job growth and fostering economic resilience. Recognizing the power of cooperation, the state is committed to forging strong partnerships across government agencies, educational institutions, community organizations, and businesses to achieve its economic goals.

Central to this collaborative effort is the integration of employment and training services, which the Landry Administration views as essential for maximizing efficiency and effectiveness in addressing workforce needs. By breaking down silos and promoting seamless coordination between various service providers, Louisiana aims to eliminate redundancies in program structures and ensure that resources are leveraged to their fullest potential.

In particular, Louisiana is focused on streamlining services for populations who may face additional barriers to employment. By integrating support systems and providing comprehensive assistance tailored to the unique needs of these individuals, the state aims to create clear pathways to family-sustaining employment and opportunities for career advancement.

Moving away from complex and bureaucratic processes, Louisiana is committed to simplifying access to services and fostering a more user-friendly and consistent experience for residents seeking employment and training opportunities. By aligning leadership, streamlining decision-making, and standardizing procurement, the state intends to create a more cohesive approach to workforce development. This approach will ensure that residents encounter the same high-quality services and supports regardless of where they live or seek assistance. Through collaboration, innovation, and a shared commitment to success, the state is working to build a more inclusive and dynamic workforce ecosystem that benefits all Louisianans.

Every workforce and education-related agency in the state has a crucial role to play in advancing Louisiana's economic agenda. Over the past decade, these agencies have actively engaged in regular gatherings as part of

the state's interagency collective, aimed at addressing issues impacting workforce and educational alignment. Through intentional collaboration and concerted efforts, these gatherings have led to the development of several initiatives that are adding significant value to the state and benefiting its citizens, which will be discussed throughout this Plan.

The commitment to intentional collaboration among these agencies has been instrumental in identifying and addressing challenges related to workforce development and education. By coming together regularly, stakeholders from various sectors have been able to share insights, resources, and best practices, fostering a collective understanding of the complex issues facing Louisiana's workforce, and evaluating the need for legislative support.

As a result of this collaborative approach, several initiatives have been launched to enhance workforce readiness, skills training, and educational opportunities across the state. These initiatives are designed to address specific needs and priorities identified through the collaborative efforts of the interagency collective. From innovative training programs to targeted outreach initiatives, each initiative contributes to the overall goal of fostering economic growth and prosperity in Louisiana.

Moreover, the tangible benefits of these initiatives are evident in the positive impact they have on the lives of Louisiana citizens. By equipping individuals with the skills and resources they need to succeed in the workforce, these initiatives are not only improving employment outcomes but also enhancing overall quality of life for residents.

The commitment to intentional collaboration among Louisiana's workforce and education- related agencies has been instrumental in driving positive change and advancing the state's economic agenda. Through ongoing partnership and collective action, Louisiana continues to make strides in creating a more prosperous future for all its citizens.

Key Metrics and Goals:

Louisiana’s Combined State Plan is anchored in a clear, outcome-driven objective: increasing the state’s Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR), currently at 58.1%. Over the next four years, Louisiana aims to increase LFPR by at least one percentage point, representing approximately 34,000 additional Louisianans engaged in the workforce. Achieving this goal requires not only expanding access to employment but fundamentally redesigning how the workforce system operates to deliver results at scale.

A central component of this strategy is improving system efficiency by reducing administrative overhead and redirecting resources toward direct participant impact. Louisiana is establishing a clear target to increase the share of workforce funding dedicated to Direct Participant Services to 60%, including Individual Training Accounts, on-the-job and incumbent worker training, supportive services, and frontline case management. This shift ensures that the majority of resources are invested in activities that directly connect individuals to employment and support long-term success, while reducing infrastructure and administrative costs and reinvesting those savings into training and supportive services.

At the same time, Louisiana is implementing the One Door model to create a unified, integrated system that accelerates entry into the workforce and supports sustained labor force participation. This includes the transition to a single, statewide intake and coordinated case management approach, eliminating duplicative entry points and ensuring individuals can seamlessly access services across programs. A key priority within this model is increasing co-enrollment across workforce and partner programs, enabling individuals to access a broader, more coordinated set of services that address both employment and barrier reduction needs. By strengthening co-enrollment, Louisiana will better align funding streams, improve service continuity, and ensure individuals receive the full range of supports necessary to enter and remain in the workforce.

Louisiana is also strengthening its employer-facing strategy through a coordinated, regional model that delivers consistent, high-quality workforce solutions. Performance will be measured by participant outcomes, including entered employment, retention, and wage progression, alongside stronger employer engagement and satisfaction and an increase in repeat business partnerships. In parallel, the state will reduce the time required

to implement statewide policy and operational changes, enabling the workforce system to respond more quickly to evolving economic conditions and employer demand.

Through this disciplined focus on outcomes, efficiency, and integration, Louisiana is positioning its workforce system to connect more individuals to meaningful employment, better serve employers, and drive sustained economic growth.

Strategies for Increasing LFPR:

Louisiana is implementing a range of strategies aimed at boosting the state's Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) and fostering economic growth for all stakeholders. These strategies are designed to optimize resources and produce tangible outcomes for employers, job seekers, and workers alike:

Launching the One Door to employment system: This initiative focuses on streamlining service delivery to meet the needs of businesses, workers, and job seekers more effectively. By providing a unified platform, Louisiana aims to simplify access to employment opportunities and support services, ultimately encouraging greater engagement with the labor market.

Employing comprehensive sector and regionally based approaches: Louisiana recognizes the importance of addressing skills gaps to facilitate smoother integration into the labor force. By adopting sector-specific and regionally tailored strategies, the state aims to identify and prioritize education and training initiatives that align with industry demands, thereby enhancing workforce readiness and employability.

Launching and expanding work-based learning initiatives: Louisiana is committed to promoting hands-on learning experiences, particularly through the expansion of Registered Apprenticeship programs. These initiatives emphasize the linkages between education and job preparation, providing individuals with practical skills and industry- recognized credentials that enhance their employability and career prospects.

Enhancing the referral process and integrating services: Louisiana seeks to improve access to tailored supportive services for individuals seeking education and employment opportunities. By enhancing the referral process and integrating services, the state aims to ensure that individuals receive the assistance they need to overcome barriers and achieve their goals in the workforce.

Through the implementation of these strategic initiatives, Louisiana is working towards creating a more inclusive and dynamic labor market where all residents have the opportunity to participate, contribute, and thrive.

It is crucial to highlight that Louisiana has set an educational attainment goal of having 60% of all working-age adults in the state hold a degree or high-value credential by 2030. This ambitious target reflects Louisiana's dedication to equipping its residents with the skills and credentials necessary for success in the modern economy. To achieve this goal, Louisiana has devised a multi-faceted set of coordinated strategies aimed at expanding pathways to postsecondary attainment that offer economic value.

This educational aspiration serves as a guiding principle, guiding Louisiana's efforts to not only increase workforce participation but also enhance the quality of the state's labor force. By investing in education and skill development, Louisiana aims to create a highly qualified and competitive workforce capable of meeting the demands of a rapidly evolving job market.

Coupled with the state's commitment to increasing the prime-age Labor Force Participation Rate, this educational goal forms the cornerstone of Louisiana's economic development strategy. Together, these initiatives signify Louisiana's holistic approach to fostering economic growth and prosperity for all its residents. Through strategic planning, collaboration, and targeted interventions, Louisiana is working towards building a future where opportunity and success are within reach for every citizen.

Goals

As noted in the state's vision for workforce development, Louisiana's goals cover four broad areas:

Launching a One Door to employment system, aimed at streamlining service delivery and maximizing effectiveness in meeting the needs of businesses, workers, and job seekers.

Released in February 2024, the Louisiana Legislative Auditor's report titled *Coordination of Public Assistance and Workforce Development Programs* evaluated the state's public assistance programs related to workforce development to identify areas of coordination. Many of the Core and Combined Programs included in this Combined State Plan were included. A critical finding in this report highlighted the need for increased collaboration among agencies and stakeholders in order to implement a unified vision and plan for how to best coordinate and administer public assistance and workforce development programs. As currently built, the workforce development and public assistance system across Louisiana is convoluted. When a resident needs to access their eligible public assistance and/or workforce development funding, they are largely required to track down and contact the appropriate agency and complete unique application processes, many of which include common elements. Key steps and outcomes of a One Door system will include:

Enhanced Access and Success for Residents

Implement a unified application to simplify enrollment in services across workforce, education, and public assistance programs. This approach will reduce duplicative paperwork, minimize administrative burden, and allow residents to access appropriate services through a single point of entry regardless of where they live or which program they initially engage.

Establish a multi-disciplinary working group to design and implement a comprehensive case management, referral, and training support system. This group will focus on aligning service delivery practices to ensure residents can more easily navigate available services.

Expand and standardize case management services, eligibility determination, and training staff to deliver coordinated, high-quality support. This will enable state to better understand the complex participant needs and ensure consistent experience for residents statewide.

Increase centralization of multiple services in a shared physical or virtual location. This will improve accessibility, reduce transportation and scheduling barriers and foster a stronger collaboration among service providers.

Coordinated State Agency Efforts

Define common metrics and objectives that align with statewide and regional workforce and economic development priorities. These measures will provide a definition of success, enable data-driven decision making, and ensure workforce development programs are working towards mutually reinforceable goals.

Strengthen the state Workforce Investment Council (WIC) as a central coordinating body to guide strategy, monitor progress, promote accountability, ensure policy alignment, and track continuous improvement.

Formalize interagency, regional and local coordination by defining parameters for collaboration, oversight, roles, responsibilities, and shared objectives. This structure will improve communication, reduce silos, and support more efficient and effective service delivery statewide.

Reduction of Redundancy

Systematically evaluate programmatic overlap, operational and administrative redundancies and opportunities for enhanced collaboration and streamlined administrative functions.

The state has initiated a comprehensive asset mapping to assess state-owned and leased property assets for more efficient use of space. This ongoing effort supports a reduction of operational and administrative costs and redundancy.

These recommendations address systemic issues like program overlap, poor coordination and communication, undefined success measures, programmatic knowledge gaps, and dispersed service delivery sites. The pressing need for a systemic overhaul in Louisiana, particularly to adopt a "One Door" model, is evident. By providing continuous training and technical assistance to state and local partners, aiming not just for compliance but for a dynamic, cooperative approach to adopt best practices and foster a unified commitment to the outcomes of the one- stop system.

Employing comprehensive sector and regionally based approaches to address skills gaps, facilitate pathways into the labor force, and inform the prioritization of education and training initiatives.

Louisiana is strengthening its sector and regional workforce strategies through the new Regional Workforce Development model established under Act 330. This model enhances coordination across state, regional, and local partners by positioning **Regional Workforce Development Coordinators (RWDCs)** as the primary connectors between employers, Local Workforce Development partners and employers, education providers, and economic development entities. RWDCs gather real-time employer intelligence, identify regional skills gaps, and support the alignment of workforce solutions with industry demand, contributing directly to improvements in the state's Labor Force Participation Rate.

Comprehensive sector strategies are central to this approach. High-growth sectors including advanced manufacturing, construction, healthcare, technology, tourism, and energy are prioritized based on labor-market analysis and regional economic needs. Through structured employer engagement and data-driven insights, RWDCs help ensure that training investments, work-based learning models, and supportive services align with employer-validated skill requirements. This coordination strengthens regional sector partnerships and provides consistent pathways for individuals to enter or reenter the labor force.

To facilitate clear and efficient pathways into employment, Louisiana integrates career pathways, work-based learning, and supportive services within a regionally coordinated framework. Through collaboration with education providers and WIOA core partners, the workforce system ensures that individuals can access training aligned with industry needs, gain practical experience, and overcome barriers through services such as counseling, childcare, transportation, and job placement assistance.

The prioritization of education and training initiatives is guided by robust, data-informed decision-making. RWDCs, Local Workforce Development partners and employers, and state partners analyze labor-market trends, employer feedback, and regional workforce priorities to identify high-demand occupations and emerging skill needs. This process supports consistent statewide planning while allowing for regional flexibility, ensuring that Louisiana's training investments remain responsive to employer demand, promote sustainable career pathways, and effectively support growth in the labor force participation rate.

Launching new and expanding existing work-based learning initiatives, particularly Registered Apprenticeship programs, is a strategic approach to bridge the gap between learning and job preparation in Louisiana. These programs offer a combination of on-the-job training and related classroom instruction, allowing participants to earn while they learn and acquire hands-on experience in their chosen field. By increasing the number of apprenticeship programs in key sectors such as healthcare, technology, manufacturing, and construction, Louisiana can ensure that individuals develop the specific skills that employers need. This approach not only prepares workers for immediate employment in high-demand industries but also creates a pipeline of skilled labor that can adapt to evolving market needs. As a result, enhancing work-based learning initiatives will support an increase in Louisiana's prime-age labor force participation rate by providing more accessible pathways to employment and career advancement, thus encouraging more individuals to enter and remain in the workforce.

Expanding work-based learning initiatives requires strong partnerships between businesses, educational institutions, and government agencies. By fostering collaboration, these stakeholders can ensure that training programs are aligned with industry standards and workforce needs. Employers can play a crucial role in shaping the curriculum and providing practical training experiences, ensuring that participants acquire relevant and up-to-date skills. For educational institutions, integrating work-based learning into their programs enhances the relevance and applicability of their offerings, making their graduates more attractive to

employers. Government agencies, on the other hand, can support these initiatives through funding, policy development, and creating a regulatory environment that encourages the growth of work-based learning programs. Strengthening these partnerships will increase the efficacy and reach of work-based learning initiatives, contributing to a higher prime-age labor force participation rate by producing a workforce that is well-prepared for the demands of the modern labor market.

To effectively launch and expand work-based learning initiatives in Louisiana, programs must be available to a broad range of individuals, including those traditionally underrepresented in certain industries or occupations. By providing opportunities for all segments of the population, including women, minorities, individuals with disabilities, and veterans, these programs can tap into a wider talent pool and address workforce shortages more effectively. Additionally, support services such as career counseling, mentoring, and assistance with transportation and childcare can help remove barriers to participation in work-based learning programs. Making these initiatives more inclusive and accessible will not only help diversify the workforce but also increase the prime-age labor force participation rate by enabling more individuals to acquire the skills and experience needed for successful employment. The vocational rehabilitation program has added Adult Work-Based Learning Experiences as a service available to VR participants, further expanding access to Work Based Learning Experience opportunities, including support services needed to participate, for individuals with disabilities.

Finally, continuous evaluation and adaptation of work-based learning initiatives are essential to ensure their long-term success and relevance to Louisiana's labor market needs. Regular assessment of program outcomes, employer satisfaction, and participant employment rates can provide valuable feedback for improving the design and delivery of these initiatives. Engaging with industry leaders and workforce experts can also help identify emerging trends and skill requirements, allowing for timely updates to training content and methods. By maintaining a dynamic and responsive work-based learning ecosystem, Louisiana can sustain a competitive edge in the labor market, ultimately supporting an increase in the prime-age labor force participation rate by equipping individuals with the skills and experiences needed to thrive in an ever-changing economic landscape.

Enhancing Louisiana’s referral process and integrating services to improve access to tailored supportive services for individuals seeking education and employment opportunities.

Enhancing Louisiana's referral process and integrating services to improve access to tailored supportive services for individuals seeking education and employment opportunities involves creating a seamless and customer-centered process. This system should connect individuals with the resources they need to pursue their career and educational goals effectively. This integrated approach ensures that individuals receive comprehensive support tailored to their specific needs, reducing barriers to accessing education and employment. As a result, more people in the prime-age labor force will be encouraged to participate in the job market, boosting the state's labor force participation rate by making it easier for individuals to find and engage with the services they need to succeed in their careers.

Collaboration across state agencies, local and state workforce development boards, educational institutions, training providers, and private sector partners is essential to enhance the referral process and service integration in Louisiana. By fostering a networked approach, these entities can share information, resources, and best practices, creating a more cohesive support system for individuals. This collaboration can lead to the development of cross-sector pathways that streamline access to education and employment opportunities, ensuring that individuals can transition smoothly between learning and work. Enhanced coordination among service providers will also prevent duplication of efforts and ensure that resources are utilized efficiently, thereby improving the quality and accessibility of support services. Strengthening these partnerships will not only facilitate individual career progression but also contribute to an increase in the prime-age labor force participation rate by creating a more dynamic and interconnected ecosystem for workforce development.

To support an increase in Louisiana's prime-age labor force participation rate, the state must focus on continuous improvement and customization of support services. This means regularly assessing the needs of the workforce and adapting services to meet these evolving demands. By implementing feedback mechanisms and conducting ongoing evaluations, Louisiana can ensure that its referral and service integration processes remain relevant and effective. Tailoring services to address the unique challenges faced by different segments

of the population, such as veterans, disabled individuals, or those re-entering the workforce after an extended absence, will help to engage a broader range of people in the labor market. Personalized support can significantly enhance individuals' ability to pursue education and employment, leading to a more inclusive and active workforce.

Finally, promoting awareness and accessibility of these integrated services is crucial to enhancing Louisiana's referral process. Effective communication strategies, including outreach campaigns, workshops, and collaboration with community organizations, can increase engagement with the target population. Ensuring that information about available services is easily accessible and understandable to all, particularly in underserved communities, will help to bridge information gaps and encourage more individuals to take advantage of the support offered. Increased awareness and accessibility will directly contribute to a higher prime-age labor force participation rate by enabling more individuals to access the education and employment support they need, thus facilitating their entry or re-entry into the workforce and enhancing their contribution to Louisiana's economy.

Performance Goals

Employer Penetration Rate (Percentage of employers using services out of all employers in the State.)

This approach tracks the percentage of establishments as defined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics Quarterly Census of Earnings and Wages program who are using the core program services out of all establishments represented in an area or the State served by the public workforce system. American Job Centers will keep track of the number of establishments served within a program year, and States will collect that data and compare it to the aggregate number of employers in the state.

The primary source of information for this measure is data recorded in the Management Information Systems (MIS) system of the Louisiana Works, HiRE. Services to employers are both automatically recorded by HiRE and manually entered into HiRE by One-Stop Center staff. The HiRE system has the capability to have service codes added to indicate business market penetration activity.

Repeat Business Customers (Percentage of repeat employers using services within the previous three years)

This approach tracks the percentage of establishments as defined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics Quarterly Census of Earnings and Wages program who receive services that use core program services more than once. This approach is useful in determining whether employers who receive services from the core programs are satisfied with those services and become repeat customers. This approach also assesses the workforce system's ability to develop and maintain strong relationships with employers over extended periods of time.

The primary source of information for this measure is data recorded in the MIS system of the Louisiana Works, HiRE. Services to employers are both automatically recorded by HiRE *and* manually entered into HiRE by One-Stop Center staff. The HiRE system has the capability to record service codes to indicate business market penetration activity.

Retention with the same employer

This measure reflects the percentage of WIOA participants who exited into unsubsidized employment and were subsequently employed with the same employer in both the second and fourth quarters after exit. To calculate this rate, all customers who attain unsubsidized employment upon exit serve as the denominator. The numerator consisted of those customers who demonstrated continued attachments to the same employer at both required post exit intervals, based on wage record information and allowable supplemental wage data. This indicator provided a meaningful assessment of whether the workforce system not only connected job seekers to employment but also supported placements that led to sustained, stable engagement with employers over time. DOL is working on finalizing this rule and will issue further guidance on implementing this indicator when the rule is finalized. States are not required to submit expected levels of performance during the State planning process for this indicator for PY 2024 and PY 2025. However, States must continue to report the metric as required. The primary source of information for this measure is the MIS System of Louisiana Works.

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.

To assess the overall effectiveness of the workforce development system in Louisiana, the state will implement a multi-faceted assessment strategy aligned with its strategic vision and goals. This strategy will be data-driven, focusing on continuous improvement and leveraging feedback for quality enhancements. Here's how the strategy will be structured:

Alignment with Strategic Goals

Goal-Oriented Evaluation: Assess how well the workforce development system aligns with and contributes to the state's strategic goals, such as improving employment outcomes, meeting industry needs, and increasing educational attainment.

Outcome Measurements: Define specific, measurable outcomes related to these strategic goals to gauge the effectiveness of the workforce development system.

Data-Driven Analysis

Comprehensive Data Review: Regularly analyze participant data to understand the impact of workforce programs on individual progress, employment outcomes, and skill development.

Benchmarking: Compare program outcomes against established benchmarks and targets to evaluate success and identify areas for improvement.

Regular and Collaborative Reviews

Quarterly Assessments: Conduct quarterly reviews of the workforce development system to monitor progress, assess program effectiveness, and identify operational challenges.

Stakeholder Engagement: Involve local workforce development partners and employers in the evaluation process to ensure a comprehensive analysis that includes local insights and needs.

Identification of Opportunities

Capitalized and Missed Opportunities: Identify and analyze opportunities that have been effectively utilized and those that have been overlooked to understand decision-making processes and resource allocation.

Continuous Learning: Foster a culture of continuous learning and adaptation to ensure that the workforce development system remains responsive and effective.

Utilization of Assessment Findings

Feedback Loop: Establish a robust feedback loop to incorporate evaluation findings and stakeholder feedback into program planning and implementation.

Quality Improvements: Use assessment results to make informed decisions for continuous or quality improvements in workforce development services.

Action Planning and Implementation

Strategic Planning: Develop strategic action plans based on assessment findings to address identified gaps, scale successful initiatives, and optimize resource use.

Implementation and Monitoring: Implement the action plans with clear timelines and responsibilities, and

monitor progress to ensure that improvements are effectively realized.

Additionally, Louisiana's Workforce Investment Council will revitalize its approach to facilitate deeper engagement with partners, including updates on labor market information, presentations on services for different workforce groups, and involvement of WIC members in subcommittees, new policies, and performance evaluations.

By following this comprehensive assessment strategy, Louisiana will be able to evaluate the

effectiveness of its workforce development system in achieving the state's strategic goals. The strategy emphasizes the importance of data analysis, stakeholder engagement, and a proactive approach to continuous improvement, ensuring that the workforce development system evolves to meet the changing needs of the economy and its workforce.

II.c. STATE STRATEGY

Louisiana's strategy for aligning workforce development under its Combined State Plan employs a holistic and collaborative approach, bringing together key state agencies and initiatives to create an integrated service delivery model. This model is designed to enhance workforce capabilities, address specific employment challenges, and achieve the broader economic objectives of the state.

Targeted Economic and Workforce Development Opportunities

Louisiana Works' workforce development efforts align with the Governor's economic strategies by allocating resources to support opportunities in vital industry clusters.

Louisiana Works is spearheading the Governor's Reform Task Force team to address skills gaps and ensure that a talent pipeline is available to address regional industry needs. The Task Force provides an outlet for collaboration between an array of stakeholders and industry partners by leveraging matching monetary contributions and qualifying expenditures for workforce-related activities. Matching funds may be used to support WIOA activities and emphasize in-demand or target occupations as determined by Boards, or the occupations in industries that are targeted by the Office of the Governor.

A critical component of this strategy is the Louisiana Board of Regents (BOR), which coordinates public higher education initiatives to boost postsecondary attainment and meet the evolving needs of the labor market. BOR's strategic initiatives, such as the development of the Career Ladder Identifier and Financial Forecaster (CLIFF) tool and its involvement in various task forces and commissions, aim to close the workforce gaps. These efforts ensure that education and training programs are aligned with industry demands, fostering a skilled workforce that can contribute to a prosperous and inclusive Louisiana.

The Department of Children & Family Services (DCFS) plays a crucial role in enhancing workforce participation among economically disadvantaged populations. Through its SET for Success program and collaboration with Civil Service, DCFS is developing specialized units focused on increasing work participation rates for TANF recipients. By working closely with community-based providers and WIOA partners, DCFS connects individuals to training and employment opportunities, ensuring that they are equipped with the skills needed for high-demand jobs. The department's focus on the ALICE population underscores its commitment to addressing poverty and economic vulnerability through targeted workforce development initiatives.

LED FastStart, Louisiana Economic Development's workforce arm, provides comprehensive support to new and expanding businesses, including project-based recruitment and custom training. By offering these services at no cost to eligible companies, LED FastStart not only facilitates business growth but also enhances the state's workforce development capacity. The program's collaboration with other state agencies and its role in creating and sharing training resources exemplify a concerted effort to bolster Louisiana's workforce ecosystem.

The Department of Corrections (DOC) integrates education and reentry programs to reduce recidivism and support community reintegration for formerly incarcerated individuals.

Initiatives like the “Return for Good” campaign and partnerships with workforce and social service agencies highlight DOC’s commitment to improving employment outcomes for this population. By focusing on education, skill development, and community connections, DOC plays a vital role in transitioning individuals from incarceration to productive employment, thereby contributing to the state’s workforce and economic stability.

Adult Education (WIOA Title II), administered by the Louisiana Community and Technical College System plays a critical role in advancing the objectives of the Louisiana Workforce Reform Task Force. Adult Education provides the foundational literacy, numeracy, English language acquisition, and digital skills necessary for adults to access and succeed in workforce training, Registered Apprenticeship, and postsecondary credential pathways. As Louisiana advances a more integrated and person-centered workforce system, Adult Education serves as a key entry point and re-engagement strategy for individuals with low educational attainment, ensuring that workforce reforms reach populations who are not yet prepared to benefit from training or employment services alone.

Apprenticeship Program

Louisiana Works recognized as the State Apprenticeship Agency (SAA), has focused on improving the effectiveness and efficiency of RAPs by offering individuals career pathways that include paid on-the-job learning, skills acquisition, mentorship, and the earning of transferable credentials.

There are currently 133 RAP Sponsors in Louisiana with 562 active employers. Key Industries and Occupations with RAPs include but not limited to Plumbing, Carpentry, Electrical, Insulation, HVAC, Laborers, Millwrights, Painters, Welders, Pipefitter, Ironworkers, Heavy Equipment Operators, Roofers, Information Technology, Manufacturing, Video Production, Barbering, Oil and Gas, Water/Wastewater, Recycling, Process Technology, Refinery Operator, Machinist, Technicians and Mechanics. Industries of new programs include Broadband/Telecommunications, Glass Tech, Healthcare services, K-12 Teacher, funeral home director, Engineering, Education and Early Childhood Education, Public Service, Manufacturing, Welding, and Automotive. Expanding apprenticeships in Louisiana will benefit both citizens and employers, and show the nation a model for workforce training, economic mobility, and pathways to self-sufficiency.

The RAP created new professional pathways for educators. To meet the growing labor demand and further its initiatives, Louisiana Works is concentrating on enhancing workforce development in tandem with local workforce boards, Louisiana Economic Development, the Board of Regents, and Louisiana Department of Education. This strategy aims to diversify the state's economy by building a labor market that is prepared for the jobs of today and of tomorrow, thereby supporting the attraction of new employers in professional and technical fields and promoting a skilled workforce that earns higher wages.

To make Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs) and pre-apprenticeship opportunities more accessible to all Louisianans, the state is focusing on expanding RAPs into burgeoning industries and enhancing existing programs by introducing trade-specific pre-apprenticeship options. In addition, Louisiana Works aims to recruit a broader range of individuals into RAPs and pre- apprenticeship pathways, including women, youth, and people of color, veterans, and those with disabilities.

Adult Education programs support the expansion of Registered Apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship pathways by providing bridge instruction, high school equivalency preparation, contextualized basic skills instruction, and Integrated Education and Training (IET) models aligned to apprenticeship-related occupations. These services ensure that adults with skill gaps can meet entry requirements, persist in training, and successfully transition into paid work-based learning opportunities, strengthening the overall apprenticeship talent pipeline.

Louisiana’s Five-Year Registered Apprenticeship Work Plan will drive modernization and improvement, creating increased capacity in developing and expanding RAPs while providing opportunities for job seekers and employers. Each goal will have set deliverables and measurable outcomes to access effectiveness.

Louisiana’s strategy will focus on four strategic goals:

Goal 1: Developing a robust statewide infrastructure and building internal capacity to support the continued growth of RAPs through outreach initiatives.

Goal 2: Enhancing technology solutions, streamlining case management, and adding mechanisms for enhanced compliance with state and federal policies.

Goal 3: Expanding Pre-Apprenticeship Pathways and Registered Apprenticeships with a greater focus on individuals and industries historically underrepresented in apprenticeship programs.

Goal 4: Establishing a unified and systematic approach for developing Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs) that leverages demand-driven, data-informed strategies to align with the state's workforce needs and economic objectives, ensuring seamless integration with existing infrastructure, technology, and outreach efforts.

Serving Youth, Aiding Economic Development

Youth Outreach Consultant work in partnership with independent school districts across the state to provide career exploration, readiness, and development resources and services. The primary goal of these teams is to help students make informed decisions about what they choose to do beyond a high school diploma. These teams help expose students to a variety of postsecondary pathways as well as explore different industries and occupations. Additionally, these teams help students, families, teachers, and counselors understand how labor market data, occupation options, and different postsecondary pathways could align with a student's interests, competencies, knowledge, and skills.

Re-Engaging Adult Learners as a Workforce Strategy

While youth-focused initiatives are critical to Louisiana's long-term talent pipeline, the state's immediate economic competitiveness and labor force participation goals depend on the successful re-engagement of adults who are currently disconnected from the labor market. An estimated 42 percent of working-age adults in Louisiana face one or more barriers to workforce participation, including low literacy or numeracy skills, lack of a secondary credential, limited English proficiency, disrupted educational pathways, or competing work and family responsibilities. This estimate is informed by U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS) data on educational attainment and limited English proficiency, as well as PIAAC literacy and numeracy estimates. Addressing these barriers is essential to expanding the labor force, increasing credential attainment, and ensuring access to employment opportunities created through public and private investment.

Adult Education, administered by the Louisiana Community and Technical College System under WIOA Title II, serves as a primary re-entry point for adults seeking to reconnect with education and employment. Adult Education programs provide foundational skills instruction in literacy, numeracy, English language acquisition, digital skills, and workforce preparation, along with High School Equivalency (HSE) preparation and attainment. These services are designed to be flexible and accessible for working learners, parents, and individuals with complex life circumstances, enabling adults to build skills while remaining engaged in work and family responsibilities.

A central component of Louisiana's strategy is the expansion of **Integrated Education and Training (IET)** models that combine adult foundational instruction with workforce training aligned to in-demand industries. IET allows adults to gain basic skills and occupational competencies concurrently, reducing time to credential attainment and accelerating entry into employment or career advancement. These models support alignment with sector strategies, Registered Apprenticeship, and other work-based learning initiatives outlined in this plan.

Louisiana is also advancing **adult dual enrollment pathways**, which allow adult learners to simultaneously enroll in adult education and postsecondary or workforce training programs. Through these pathways, adults can earn an HSE while accumulating postsecondary credits or industry-recognized credentials, creating clear and efficient on-ramps to college and career pathways. Adult dual enrollment strengthens transitions between systems and reinforces the state's goal of increasing postsecondary attainment among working-age adults.

In addition, Adult Education programs provide **college and career readiness (CCR)** instruction and **just-in-time educational supports** embedded within workforce training, apprenticeship preparation, and postsecondary coursework. These targeted supports help adults address specific skill gaps as they arise, improving persistence, completion, and employment outcomes across workforce programs. By integrating foundational skills into training environments, Louisiana reduces attrition and maximizes the return on investment of workforce and education funding.

Together, these strategies position Adult Education as a core component of Louisiana's workforce development system—supporting re-engagement, accelerating transitions, and ensuring that adults with the greatest barriers are not left behind. Strengthening adult re-entry pathways is essential to achieving the state's labor force participation, credential attainment, and economic mobility goals, and to building a workforce that is inclusive, resilient, and responsive to employer demand.

In summary, Louisiana's workforce development strategy, as outlined in this Combined State Plan, reflects a comprehensive and collaborative approach to aligning and strengthening workforce programs across the state. By leveraging the capabilities of partnering agencies, and focusing on integrated service delivery, skill development, and targeted support, Louisiana aims to build a resilient and skilled workforce that can meet the demands of a dynamic labor market and support the state's long-term economic growth and broad community participation.

OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

STATE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

III.a.1. STATE BOARD FUNCTIONS

Louisiana is seeking a waiver to permit the State Board to function as the Local Board and to carry out the roles and responsibilities of all local workforce development boards statewide. Under the current structure, multiple local governance frameworks can result in inconsistent policies, service delivery approaches, and administrative processes across regions, limiting the State's ability to fully implement a unified workforce system. This waiver will enable Louisiana to streamline workforce governance by eliminating inconsistent governance structures, policies, and practices across regions. In doing so, the state will establish a more cohesive and efficient system that supports a unified strategy for integrating workforce development and social services assistance programs.

By consolidating these functions at the state level, Louisiana aims to reduce administrative duplication, improve coordination among partners, and ensure consistent service delivery to both employers and job seekers. The waiver will also enhance the state's ability to respond quickly to evolving labor market demands, align resources with priority industries, and implement data-driven strategies across all regions. This approach cannot be fully implemented under current statutory and regulatory requirements without waiver authority. Ultimately, this approach is intended to strengthen accountability, increase operational efficiency, and improve outcomes for participants and businesses alike.

Louisiana Works will establish a transitional period in order to ensure meaningful local input. This will include designing and building a model that supports local decision-making authority to support effective functional oversight of day-to-day operations. To further strengthen regional input, the transitional period will prioritize gathering local feedback and recommendations to establish a structure by which local labor market data and regional economic conditions directly inform policy and program design. This governance model supports Louisiana's broader "One Door" strategy by enabling consistent policies, integrated case management, and coordinated service delivery across all regions.

Currently, the mission of the Louisiana Workforce Investment Council (WIC) is to support the development of an employer-led, demand-driven workforce development system based on occupational forecasts in which training, education, and services for job-seekers prepare Louisiana residents for high-wage, high-demand career opportunities in Louisiana.

The WIC achieves this mission by recommending policy actions to public and private institutions and creating coalitions to achieve their implementation. It works collaboratively with workforce development system partners to integrate workforce development into the decision-making of business leaders, economic developers, educators and human resource professionals. In addition, the WIC raises public awareness of the importance of workforce development for Louisiana's economic future and ensuring public accountability by evaluating the effectiveness of the overall workforce development system.

The responsibilities of the WIC include submitting a strategic plan to meet current and forecasted workforce needs to the Governor and report plan progress The WIC holds stakeholders accountable for implementing agreed-upon strategic goals that align workforce supply and demand, evaluating the effectiveness of Workforce Development Boards in meeting workforce demand, and directs the activities of the Occupational Forecasting Conference. Furthermore, the WIC drives state and local policy to support the alignment of education and training with workforce demand, and overseeing the Industry-Based Certification (IBC) Council responsible for evaluating the alignment of credentials with state workforce demand for inclusion on the IBC State Focus List.

The powers of the WIC include:

- Performing all the duties and responsibilities of the State Workforce Development Board as defined in Section 101(d) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

- Directing the Occupational Forecasting Conference for the purpose of projecting job growth and demand in the state of Louisiana.

- Advising the Governor and legislature on the full range of issues related to workforce development.

The WIC meets no less than four times each calendar year, and all meetings comply with the Louisiana Open Meetings Law. Decisions are made by a vote of a majority of the total serving membership of the WIC. Decision-making votes shall be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order. Educational and information portions of meetings are conducted according to the preference of the Chair. The Executive Committee of the WIC is comprised of the Chair, Vice Chair, a sample of heads or designees of state agencies represented on the WIC, at least one legislator, and at least two organized labor representatives. The WIC is composed of a majority of business members. Duties include, but are not limited to overseeing the implementation of the strategic plan, tracking workgroup plans and progress; leading the alignment of the workgroups; and driving provisions of critical workforce data.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE STRATEGY

III.a.2.A CORE PROGRAM ACTIVITIES TO IMPLEMENT THE STATE'S STRATEGY

Louisiana Works administers the development and integration of workforce services and planning efforts. Service delivery is provided through 15 comprehensive one-stop AJCs and 38 affiliated sites.

The Louisiana Works joint efforts continuously bring together interagency workforce and education partners to establish a strategic process focused on shared accountability. This collaborative effort also explores the potential for co-location where appropriate, further the advancement and monitoring of shared programming efforts, and develop a referral-based protocol aimed at enhancing efficiency. Through these concerted actions, Louisiana Works seeks to foster a more cohesive and effective approach to addressing the workforce and training needs of the state.

III.a.2.B. ALIGNMENT WITH ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THE PLAN

Louisiana will focus on enhancing collaboration and coordination across various sectors to increase Louisianian's competitiveness in today's job market. This effort will bridge employment, training, education, and human services to ensure a comprehensive and unified approach to workforce development. In order to accomplish this, Louisiana will focus on enhanced data integration and analysis.

- Comprehensive Workforce Analysis: Leverage the data collected by the Board of Regents and LCTCS on program enrollments, completions, and employment outcomes to perform a comprehensive analysis of the workforce pipeline, identifying trends, gaps, and opportunities in high-demand fields. Integration of Adult Education data: Incorporate metrics such as enrollment, measurable skill gains, high school equivalency attainment, English language acquisition, and transition outcomes into statewide workforce analyses to better understand how adults with foundational skill gaps enter and progress through education and training.

- Outcome-Based Metrics: Develop and utilize outcome-based metrics in partnership with Louisiana Works) to evaluate the success of educational and training programs in meeting workforce needs and aligning with labor market demands.

- Feedback Loops and Continuous Learning: Establish continuous feedback loops with all stakeholders, including students, educators, employers, and workforce professionals, to regularly assess and improve the effectiveness of workforce development programs.

Louisiana Works will also focus on strategic engagement to better align educational pathways

- Expanding High School Dual Enrollment: Build on the success of dual enrollment programs by identifying and reducing barriers to participation, especially in CTE fields, to ensure that more students can access these opportunities, regardless of their geographical location or economic background.

- Adult Dual Enrollment and Bridge Pathways: Expand adult dual enrollment opportunities that allow adult learners to concurrently earn foundational skills, high school equivalency, and postsecondary credit or workforce credentials aligned to regional labor market demand.

- Targeted CTE Expansion: Specifically focus on expanding CTE dual enrollment in alignment with regional and state workforce needs, ensuring that students gain the skills and credentials demanded by employers.

- Industry-Academia Partnerships: Strengthen partnerships between educational institutions and industry sectors to ensure that curricula and training programs are directly aligned with current and emerging job market needs, facilitating real-time responsiveness to labor market shifts.

- Re-entry Partnership: Strengthen partnerships between corrections and industry sectors through participation in Untapped Talent initiative. This initiative brings together agencies to expand opportunities for incarcerated individuals to develop job skills within demand occupations.

- Innovative Work-Based Learning Models: Expand and enhance work-based learning models, such as apprenticeships and work-experience, to provide real-world experience to students and job seekers, aligning educational outcomes with practical workforce needs.

Louisiana Works will also focus on the integration of statewide workforce strategies and the expansion of support services.

- Enhanced Support for Work-Eligible Individuals: Through TANF and SNAP E&T programs, provide comprehensive support services, including job preparation, work, and training to improve employment prospects for work-eligible individuals, thereby contributing to an increased labor force participation rate.

- Barrier Removal Initiatives: Implement specific initiatives to remove or reduce barriers to accessing education and training, such as transportation, childcare, and financial constraints, particularly focusing on rural, underserved, and disadvantaged populations.

- Seamless Workforce Pipeline Development: Develop a seamless workforce pipeline that integrates education, training, and employment services across the state, ensuring that individuals can smoothly

transition from education to employment. This pipeline includes intentional re-engagement strategies for adults disconnected from the labor force, with Adult Education serving as an on-ramp through assessment, foundational skill development, high school equivalency, and transition into training or employment.

- Consistent and Unified Workforce Programs: Align the Fast Forward and Jump Start High School pathways and other training initiatives across different regions to ensure consistency and coherence in workforce development efforts, making these programs more predictable and accessible to students and job seekers.

By adding these detailed elements to the strategy, Louisiana will be able to create a more dynamic and responsive workforce development system that not only meets the current needs of its labor market but is also adaptable to future changes and challenges. This strategy will foster a skilled, competitive workforce that contributes to the state's economic growth and long-term prosperity.

III.a.2.C. COORDINATION, ALIGNMENT AND PROVISION OF SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS

Successful implementation of integrated case management depends on the development of true partnerships and honest collaboration at all levels and among all stakeholders. This means developing effective partnerships within local communities, including but not limited to, business and industry associations, businesses, local workforce development partners, community-based organizations, educational institutions and other partners.

The Combined State Plan partners continue to refine Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) that define the parameters and principles of roles and responsibilities for partners in support of robust comprehensive One Stop Centers. The refinement of service delivery provides an unprecedented opportunity to modernize Louisiana's workforce system, where the needs of employers and job-seekers drive workforce solutions. This allows One-Stop Career Centers and partners to provide excellent customer service to job-seekers and employers with continuous improvement through evaluation and data-driven policy.

The foundation for success is efficient and effective coordination of programs, services and governance, based on common assessment/intake process, integrated case management and job development systems. Leadership at all levels must think expansively, moving forward to produce the best customer-focused comprehensive delivery system. Services include career counseling, job search assistance, skills assessments, and referrals to education and training programs such as adult education, English language acquisition, and high school equivalency programs. These services are tailored to individual needs, particularly for populations with barriers to employment. Supportive services, including transportation and other assistance necessary for participation, are coordinated across partner programs to ensure individuals can access and complete workforce services and training. Partners work collaboratively to identify needs and leverage available resources to address barriers to participation.

In the service delivery process, there are three tracks that any job-seeker may take. These are defined as workforce-ready in a demand occupation, workforce ready not in a demand occupation and intensive case management. It is important to note that one of these tracks will apply to all job-seekers regardless of their reason for entering our staff-assisted service, and that during service assessments and re-evaluation the job-seeker may move from one track to another.

Louisiana is seeking a waiver to authorize the State Workforce Board to perform the functions of a local board as part of a single, unified statewide workforce system. This structural shift is central to the state's strategy to increase labor force participation by expanding access to employment and training opportunities and ensuring that individuals, particularly those facing barriers to employment, are connected to services that lead to measurable outcomes.

Operating as a single statewide workforce board will eliminate fragmented governance, reduce administrative duplication, and enable consistent, data-driven policy implementation across all regions. This approach ensures that workforce resources are deployed more efficiently and aligned with employer demand, while creating a more navigable system for residents.

Under this model, Louisiana will implement a unified statewide accountability framework with standardized eligibility, performance, and service delivery policies. This will allow the state to more effectively track outcomes, hold providers accountable for results, and direct resources toward strategies that demonstrably improve employment, retention, and wage progression. By aligning governance, funding, and performance expectations at the state level, Louisiana will increase the share of resources dedicated to direct services and accelerate progress toward higher labor force participation and stronger economic outcomes.

III.a.2. D. COORDINATION, ALIGNMENT AND PROVISION OF SERVICES TO EMPLOYERS

Through House Bill 951 of the 2026 legislative session, Louisiana is seeking to create the Louisiana Talent Accelerator. This will create a dedicated office responsible for employer engagement acting as a single point of entry for businesses navigating workforce programs. This centralization of coordinated employer efforts seeks to reduce fragmentation across agencies including education and economic development. And training providers removing siloed programs and providing employers with an integrated delivery model.

The talent accelerator builds on the proven foundation of the Regional Business Services Team (RBST) model which represents a collaborative partnership between core workforce program partners, One Stop programs, and local workforce leaders which convene and provide strategic guidance to ensure alignment with regional economic priorities. Through this structure the team has successfully established a coordinated, employer focused approach to workforce service delivery. Bringing together multiple partners into a unified team, RBST aligns resources, expertise, and service delivery to better respond to the evolving needs of employers across the region.

Through House Bill 951 of the 2026 Legislative Session, Louisiana is establishing the Louisiana Talent Accelerator within Louisiana Works as a centralized, employer-facing office designed to serve as a single point of entry for businesses engaging with the workforce system. This office will coordinate employer engagement across workforce, education, and economic development partners, reducing fragmentation and eliminating duplicative or siloed efforts that currently limit system effectiveness.

The Louisiana Talent Accelerator will streamline how employers access workforce solutions by aligning programs, funding streams, and service delivery into a cohesive, demand-driven model. Employers will be able to more easily identify, access, and utilize services such as customized training, work-based learning, incumbent worker training, and recruitment support, all through a coordinated structure that prioritizes responsiveness, speed, and alignment with industry needs.

This model formalizes and codifies Louisiana's Regional Workforce Development approach, establishing a structured, regionally coordinated model for employer engagement and service delivery. Under this framework, regional teams bring together core workforce partners, One-Stop operators, and other key stakeholders into a single, aligned unit responsible for responding to employer demand and delivering workforce solutions.

Rather than operating as separate programs with independent outreach and service strategies, the Regional Workforce Development model creates a unified approach that aligns resources, expertise, and service delivery at the regional level. This reduces duplication, strengthens coordination, and ensures that employers experience a consistent and streamlined interface with the workforce system.

By codifying this model, Louisiana is transitioning from fragmented, program-driven engagement to a demand-driven, regionally executed system operating within a consistent statewide strategy. Regional teams will be responsible for identifying employer needs, coordinating service delivery, and supporting implementation, while the state provides standardized policies, performance expectations, and oversight. This structure ensures both regional responsiveness and statewide consistency, improving efficiency and driving stronger employment outcomes.

The Louisiana Talent Accelerator will scale and formalize this approach statewide by integrating regional insights with centralized strategy, performance management, and accountability. Regional teams will continue to play a critical role in identifying employer demand and supporting service delivery, while the state provides

consistent standards, coordination, and oversight. Together, this structure will ensure that employer engagement efforts are aligned across regions, responsive to labor market needs, and directly connected to measurable workforce outcomes, including job placement, retention, and wage growth.

The team operates with a shared mission: to collaborate and coordinate efforts that directly address employers' workforce needs while strengthening the regional talent pipeline. Key services provided include:

- Providing access to One-Stop Centers to develop innovative workforce investment strategies to meet the needs of the region's employers.
- Customized screenings and referrals of qualified participants in employer based training services to employers.
- Customized recruitment/hiring events, job fairs, workshops and related services for employers.
- Teaching job interview techniques for efficiency and compliance.
- Providing customized labor market information for specific employers, sectors, industries or clusters.
- Coordination with stakeholders to support and develop pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship opportunities.
- Creating job order listings and applicant referrals through HiRE.

The talent accelerator elevates and institutionalizes this regional model by creating a centralized function that enhances coordination, strengthens alignments across partners and expands services deliver. In doing so, it ensures that Louisiana's workforce system remains demand-driven, agile, and responsive to the needs of both existing and emerging businesses.

III.a.2. E. PARTNER ENGAGEMENT WITH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND OTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROVIDERS.

Louisiana Workforce Investment Council membership includes representation from the state's educational systems, including the Louisiana Community and Technical College System, the Board of Regents of Higher Education and the Superintendent of Education (K-12). Louisiana has developed a shared definition and framework for Career Pathways as a method for the alignment of education, training and work-based learning (apprenticeships, internships) and support services that enable individuals and students to be better prepared to achieve economic independence and family stability. The WIOA partners have continuously organized resources (staff, supports, etc.) around target job-seeker populations and business development using a model that will encourage separate agencies to wrap resources, staff and supports around the customer base.

The educational partners, particularly the Louisiana Community and Technical College System institutions and K-12 school systems, plan cooperatively through not only the alignment of Perkins V and WIOA but also the inclusion of Perkins as a combined state plan partner. This allows for the alignment of workforce skills training and integrated work-based training to meet regional employer and economic development needs. State partners continue to work with local and regional workforce development boards and partners to define and build pathways appropriate to the region. Through the integration of Perkins V, colleges, adult education and school systems convene quarterly regional meetings to facilitate collaboration and strategic planning between education, workforce, and economic development state and regional partners. These collaboration efforts continue to yield breakthrough service results for all partners and specifically benefit served populations.

Adult Education serves as a foundational pillar that complements and aligns with the system's workforce training (non-credit) and credit-bearing postsecondary education missions. Adult Education provides adults with the foundational academic, employability, and digital skills necessary to access, persist in, and complete postsecondary education and training, as well as to obtain and retain family-sustaining employment. In

alignment with Louisiana's shared Career Pathways framework, Adult Education programs are designed to support clearly articulated pathways that connect foundational education to workforce training and postsecondary credentials in high-wage, high-demand industries. Integrated Education and Training (IET) models implemented through AEFLA-funded programs are developed in alignment with regional and local labor market information and in coordination with workforce and postsecondary partners. Embedding Adult Education within postsecondary education and training environments enables adult learners to access academic supports, technical expertise, career navigation, and appropriate wraparound services that support successful transitions into and through postsecondary credentials. These pathways may be delivered through a variety of formats, including Integrated Education and Training (IET), pre-apprenticeships, and adult dual enrollment in credit or non-credit postsecondary programs of study.

With the support of LMI and Occupational Forecasting Conference, the Louisiana Workforce Investment Council's Star Jobs ratings system was developed. The Star Jobs ratings system provides a ranking of the highest-demand, highest-wage jobs in Louisiana, based on factors such as forecasted employment growth (long-term and short-term), jobs available in the previous year, and wages. Star Jobs ratings are developed and dynamically updated. Since the inception and implementation of Star Jobs ratings, this ranking system has been utilized by educators across Louisiana at all levels. This includes a strong for in both K-12 and high education on alignment of programs to credentials and technical skills identified a 4 and 5 star jobs in the region.

III.a.2. F. IMPROVING ACCESS TO POSTSECONDARY CREDENTIALS

The State of Louisiana's strategies, as outlined in the Board of Regents' Academic Planning process and the broader Louisiana Prospers Master Plan for Higher Education, are designed to improve access to activities leading to recognized postsecondary credentials, including Registered Apprenticeship certificates. These strategies focus on creating a more integrated, responsive, and market-aligned higher education system through:

- Alignment with Workforce Needs: By using real-time labor market data and collaborating with regional economic development organizations and state agencies, the state ensures that new and existing academic programs align with high-demand occupations. This alignment increases the relevance and attractiveness of these programs, leading to credentials that are valued in the labor market.

- Data-Driven Program Development: The use of interactive tools and labor market data allows institutions to identify and develop programs that lead to industry-recognized certificates, licenses, or certifications. By focusing on areas of strategic need, the state can channel resources and support toward programs that offer credentials with strong employment prospects.

- Regional Tailoring of Academic Programs: Academic planning is regionally tailored to meet specific local and regional economic and workforce needs. This ensures that educational institutions across the state offer programs that lead to credentials in demand in their respective areas, thereby improving access to relevant postsecondary credentials for students in different regions.

- Support for Registered Apprenticeship Programs: The state promotes and actively seeks new Registered Apprenticeship programs as a pathway to gaining recognized credentials. These programs combine on-the-job training with classroom instruction, leading to certificates that are recognized across industries and are often stackable and portable.

- Expansion of Dual Enrollment and Early College Programs: Initiatives such as dual enrollment early college programs, and adult dual enrollment enable both youth and adult learners to earn college credits and industry-recognized credentials while completing secondary education requirements. This includes the valuing of both academic and technical dual enrollment, earning of Louisiana Workforce Investment Council's state focus list credentials, and early access to Registered Apprenticeships in the secondary accountability model. These strategies accelerate credential attainment, reduce time to completion, and support transitions into high-demand occupations.

- Integration of Statewide Success Strategies: Incorporating elements like the Universal Transfer

Pathways and Open Educational Resources into academic planning ensures that students can move seamlessly between programs and institutions, stacking credentials along the way. This approach supports lifelong learning and the continuous upgrading of skills and qualifications.

- Enhanced Advising and Support Services: By providing robust advising tools and support services, the state can guide students toward educational and career paths that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials, ensuring that students understand the pathways available to them and the potential career outcomes.

- Financial Investment in Technical and Vocational Education: Increased investment in technical and vocational education, including support for institutions offering programs leading to industry-recognized credentials, helps expand the capacity of these programs and improve access for a broader range of students. This includes a substantial state investment in secondary career and technical education. These investments allows for Perkins to provide supplemental support for better alignment to both regional needs and continuity of program between secondary education and higher education.

Through these strategies, Louisiana is working to create a more accessible, responsive, and integrated postsecondary education system that aligns with industry needs and promotes the attainment of recognized credentials, including Registered Apprenticeship certificates. This alignment not only serves the immediate needs of the labor market but also establishes a foundation for sustainable economic growth and workforce development in the state.

III.a.2.G. COORDINATING WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

A key component of a successful statewide strategy to place individuals into high-wage, high- demand careers is a strong partnerships with Louisiana Economic Development and Louisiana Works. In particular, robust linkages and integration with LED FastStart initiatives is critical. LED FastStart is the workforce development incentive program of Louisiana Economic Development. LED FastStart provides project-based recruitment, job-specific training, and workforce pipeline support for companies relocating to, or expanding in, Louisiana. As an economic development incentive, this program is provided to eligible companies at no cost. The project deliverables are also shared with other state workforce development entities at no cost to boost the capacity and capability of Louisiana's workforce development efforts.

- **Recruitment support**: LED FastStart assists new and expanding companies during the ramp-up of their operations by providing targeted recruitment efforts. LED FastStart provides physical and virtual job fairs, interview events, custom recruitment and job profile videos, workforce data, and job posting on a custom recruitment portal. LED FastStart also partners with other state agencies (Louisiana Works, LCTCS, LDVA) and regional workforce partners to include them in our events and enhance their recruitment efforts on behalf of the client companies.

- **Custom Training support**: LED FastStart provides custom-designed, job-specific training for client companies. LED FastStart's curriculum development team conducts a thorough on-site task analysis of a company's process and develops a custom training prescription. Materials developed may be instructor-led, self-guided, on-the-job, video, virtual-reality based modules, or a hybrid of methods. All custom materials developed are copyrighted to the company and become the company's intellectual property. With permission of the company, materials are shared with workforce development partners, at no cost, to continue the workforce partnership with the company following the completion of the project and/or to increase the capabilities of the workforce partner in serving the greater skills training needs for the state.

- **Workforce Pipeline support**: LED FastStart serves as an initial conduit for the client companies in connecting to other state workforce development partners. During the initial ramp-up, companies may be unfamiliar with the state, regional, and local workforce development network. LED FastStart works to connect the company to these entities throughout the project lifespan so that productive relationships are engaged when the LED FastStart project is complete.

LED FastStart also serves to boost workforce development partners' capacity and capabilities in conjunction with the company projects. The comprehensive analysis performed at the onset of the project often identifies broader educational programs or initiatives. When applicable, and as appropriated through project commitments, LED FastStart can provide funding to partners (LCTCS, BOR) to either create or enhance programs through staffing, equipment, and/or development activities. Louisiana Works collaborates with LED FastStart to enhance the state's labor force participation rate by leveraging the strengths of both entities:

- Integrated Recruitment Efforts: Louisiana Works partners with LED FastStart in its recruitment initiatives, combining resources for physical and virtual job fairs, interview events, and custom recruitment videos. This collaboration extends the reach of LED FastStart's efforts, providing a broader pool of candidates and helping more residents find employment, thus increasing the labor force participation rate.

- Shared Training Resources: Integrating WIOA program participants into LED FastStart's custom training programs, Louisiana Works ensures that the workforce is receiving industry-specific training that meets the needs of companies investing in Louisiana. Sharing training materials and resources also enhance the skills of the current workforce, making them more competitive and job-ready.

- Workforce Pipeline Expansion: Louisiana Works works with LED FastStart to identify and connect with companies in the early stages of their relocation or expansion in Louisiana. By aligning WIOA program services with the needs of these companies, Louisiana Works helps to facilitate a smoother transition for them into the local economy and ensure a steady pipeline of skilled workers, thus supporting an increase in labor force participation.

- Joint Development of Training Programs: Louisiana Works and LED FastStart collaborate on the development of new training programs or the enhancement of existing ones, especially in areas identified as high-demand by LED FastStart's comprehensive analysis. This partnership has lead to more targeted training initiatives that are closely aligned with the state's economic development goals and workforce needs.

- Sustained Engagement and Support: Post-project, Louisiana Works continues to work with companies that have been part of the LED FastStart program to provide ongoing support and workforce development. This continued engagement helps maintain a skilled workforce and ensure companies have the human resources they need for sustained growth and development.

Coordinating with regional economic development organizations is crucial to amplifying the impact of the collaboration between the Louisiana Works and LED FastStart. These regional organizations have deep insights into local industry needs, labor markets, and economic trends. By aligning efforts with them, Louisiana Works, LED FastStart, and local workforce development partners and employers, the state ensures that workforce development initiatives are tailored to the specific needs of different regions within Louisiana. This coordination leads to more effective use of resources, elimination of duplicative services, and a stronger, more unified approach to economic development. Moreover, regional organizations can act as a bridge between state-level initiatives and local businesses, facilitating more direct and meaningful engagement with employers. This helps in creating targeted training and employment programs that accurately reflect the current and future needs of the local economy, ultimately contributing to a more dynamic and inclusive labor force participation rate across the state.

Through these collaborative efforts of Louisiana Works, LED FastStart, and regional economic development organizations, Louisiana creates a more robust and responsive workforce development system that not only meets the immediate needs of businesses but also supports long-term economic growth and increased labor force participation in Louisiana. A key consideration of this renewed focus on collaboration is a full understanding of the projects announced and/or underway through LED. Tracking this list of projects and ensure programmatic and strategic efforts of the Louisiana Works are in alignment with economic growth opportunities.

III. b. 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.)

Louisiana several key systems systems and policies either directly related to workforce development. Louisiana Works is currently undergoing an operational systems analysis to build APIs across the operational systems to enhance real time sharing of data to allow for more efficient eligibility determine and support services. This whole of government approach is aimed to maximize the use of state, federal, local and other funding sources. The key systems help to provide effective services to participants, partners:

- Helping Individuals Reach Employment (HiRE): HiRE, managed by Louisiana Works, enhances customer choice by facilitating entry into the labor exchange process, either independently or with staff support. This system grants job seekers immediate access to employer listings and the capability to create skill-based resumes through its self-service feature.

- Louisiana's Foundational Integrated Research System for Transformation (LAFIRST): The LAFIRST system will knits together data from The Board of Regents; Each public postsecondary education management board; The Louisiana Community and Technical College System, including Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) programs authorized under WIOA Title II; The Louisiana Works; The Department of Children and Family Services; The Department of Corrections; The Office of Juvenile Justice; and Department of Health allowing for research, analysis, and reporting on issues of statewide importance.

- Career Ladder Identifier & Financial Forecaster (CLIFF): A tool used to help participants understand how increasing earnings may affect public benefits, enabling them to plan career pathways that reduce barriers and support long-term economic stability

III. b. 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.

The Workforce Investment Council serves as the primary governing body for Louisiana's workforce development system. The council is comprised of representative from business and industry, organized labor, state and local government and community organizations. It is responsible for setting strategic direction, aligning workforce development while advancing a coordinated, customer centered workforce system. While the WIC provides systemwide governance and oversight for WIOA implementation, the administration of individual WIOA titles is carried out by designated state agencies in accordance with federal and state law. Louisiana Works administers WIOA Titles I, III, and IV, while Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) programs authorized under WIOA Title II are administered through the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS). Perkins is administered by LCTCS in partnership with the Louisiana Department of Education. These entities coordinate through the WIC framework to support integrated service delivery, career pathways, and effective operation of the One-Stop delivery system.

Policies supporting the implementation of WIOA core programs and associated partner services are issued by the appropriate governing and administering entities and made available through their respective agencies. Together, these policies establish the governance, operational, and accountability structures that guide statewide implementation of WIOA. The table below provides an overview of key state policies that support effective coordination, compliance, and performance across Louisiana's workforce development system. Several of the policies will require revision if the Louisiana submitted waivers are approved.

Policy Number	Policy Name	Purpose
OWD 4-11.1	WIOA Board Composition and Certification Policy	Guidance on composition and certification criteria for LWDBs.

OWD 2-13.4	WIOA Eligible Training Providers	Guidance to LWDA, training providers and other stakeholders on the certification process and procedures.
OWD 2-21.3	Youth Program Operation Policy	Codifies TEGL WIOA 23-14 guidance for the operation implementation WIOA Youth formula funds.
OWD 2-23.2	Integrated Service Delivery Policy	Defines the role and responsibilities for state staff in the One-Stop Centers; and key definitions.
OWD 2-24.3	WIOA Adult Dislocated Worker Eligibility Policy	Provides LWDBs with criteria and documentation sources for establishing WIOA Title I program eligibility for adults, dislocated workers and youth. The policy guide is based on WIOA statue, final rules for Titles I-IV, and applicable Training and Employment Guidance Letters and Training and Employment Notices issued by DOL.
OWD 2-29.2	Guidelines on Co-enrollment and Common Intake Policy	Guidance on Co-enrollment and Common Intake.
OWD 2-27	IEP & LMI Policy	Codifies TEGL 22-08 , LMI is a tool that provides information for IEP.
LCTCS 1.101	WorkReady U – Legislative Authority & Accountability	Establishes the legislative authority, governance, and accountability framework for Louisiana's Adult Education (Title II) programs under AEFLA.

Louisiana is seeking a waiver from the requirement to maintain a comprehensive One-Stop Center in its current form in order to provide greater flexibility in how services are delivered. This waiver would not eliminate physical locations, but instead allows the state to enhance and complement existing centers by incorporating additional access points, mobile service delivery, and technology-enabled solutions. This approach enables Louisiana to build on its current infrastructure while expanding access and improving responsiveness to both job seekers and employers. By allowing for a more flexible service delivery model, the state can reduce administrative and infrastructure constraints and direct a greater share of resources toward employment and training services that drive measurable outcomes.

This model also improves accessibility by reducing reliance on a single physical location and addressing barriers related to transportation and geography, particularly for individuals in rural and underserved communities. Services will be delivered through a coordinated network that includes physical centers, mobile units, and virtual platforms, ensuring consistent, high-quality access regardless of how individuals engage with the system.

Louisiana is actively pursuing advancements in the statewide pay for performance strategy through seeking a waiver. This will allow for specific performance measures to be targeted at the state level with regional demand inputs. The will allow for the identification of specific deliverables that must be achieved for the contractor to receive payment. The deliverables will be tied to the prime indicators of performance, WIC supported metrics, and adjustments thereof related to economic conditions and the population demographics. Louisiana Works will maintain the latitude provided for in WIOA to consider the development of a pay-for- performance contract strategy aligned with the submitted waiver.

Determination of Funds Provided for Infrastructure Costs

Louisiana Works currently provides policy and procedural guidance regarding the funding of one-stop infrastructure costs through its Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA) policy, consistent with WIOA §121 and 20 CFR §678.500. Under existing requirements, infrastructure funding is determined through Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with required one-stop partners, which include provisions outlining how infrastructure costs will be funded. These agreements rely on either a Local Funding Mechanism (LFM), based on negotiated partner contributions, or a State Funding Mechanism (SFM), which is implemented in cases where consensus cannot be reached.

While this framework is compliant with federal requirements, the current approach requires repeated negotiation across multiple partners and agreements, resulting in inconsistent cost allocation methodologies, extended timelines, and increased administrative burden. These challenges limit the state's ability to efficiently align infrastructure investments with a modern, integrated service delivery model.

To address these limitations, Louisiana is seeking a waiver to implement a statewide infrastructure funding model that establishes a consistent, transparent, and standardized approach to determining partner contributions. Under this model, infrastructure costs will be allocated through a uniform methodology that aligns with the state's broader strategy to integrate service delivery, streamline operations, and increase the share of resources directed toward employment and training services.

This approach will maintain full alignment with WIOA §121 cost-sharing principles while replacing fragmented, negotiation-driven processes with a more efficient and predictable framework. By standardizing infrastructure funding at the state level, Louisiana will reduce administrative burden, improve consistency across the system, and ensure that infrastructure investments directly support accessible, high-quality workforce services. Implementation of this model requires waiver authority, as existing statutory requirements limit the state's ability to apply a fully standardized, statewide approach.

Louisiana uses co-enrollment as a key strategy to support integrated service delivery across the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) core programs and required partners. Co-enrollment enables individuals to access coordinated education, training, and employment services that align with career pathways and reduce barriers to participation and success.

Louisiana prioritizes efficient and integrated service delivery for employers, job seekers, and individuals with barriers to employment, including low-income adults, individuals with basic skills deficiencies, veterans, and other priority populations. Co-enrollment strategies have historically included included co-location of services, shared intake and referral processes where appropriate, virtual and in-person service delivery, and the coordination of education, training, and support services across programs. These strategies are supported using labor market information to inform career planning, pathway development, and business engagement. Louisiana Works is currently developing a universal intake assessment and integrated case management process. This will allow for the advancement of the One Door initiative. Through integrated case management and seamless platform integration, partners providing services in the workforce development ecosystem can provide a whole of government regional approach.

Trade Adjustment Assistance Co-enrollment

Louisiana Works requires co-enroll trade-affected workers in WIOA Dislocated Worker (DW) services whenever eligible unless the worker declines. Further information about Louisiana Works co-enrollment efforts for trade-affected workers can be found in OWD 2-27.1 IEP and LMI policy for Trade Affected Workers.

Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Program Co-enrollment

UI claimants who are determined eligible for the RESEA program are supported by Louisiana Works staff to co-enroll services upon initial program intake. This allows for the leveraging of support services in a way that increases positive employment outcomes. Louisiana Works has developed an expedited eligibility process for RESEA claimants to enroll in the Wagner Peyser and WIOA dislocated worker program. Louisiana Works is developing a strategic approach to scale RESEA services to meet 100% participation of eligible claimants. This includes a randomized selection process that can be strategically scaled to quickly respond to increased work

capacity. This approach will be coupled with the implementation of a profile tiering strategy to identify the level of support needed by claimants. By combining a randomized system for identification with a system to tier the level of support required, Louisiana aims to effectively and efficiently serve an increased number of RESEA claimants,

Title II Adult Education and Literacy Co-enrollment

Adult Education serves as both an entry point into the workforce system for adults with foundational skill needs and as a transition point into workforce training and postsecondary education. Co-enrollment between Title II Adult Education and other WIOA programs may occur in multiple directions, including movement from Title II to Title I workforce programs, from Title I to Title II for individuals requiring foundational skill development, and from Adult Education into postsecondary education and training. These transitions are designed to support clearly articulated career pathways that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials and employment in in-demand industries. Where feasible, partners braid resources and align services to support participant success while maintaining compliance with the distinct statutory, funding, and accountability requirements of each program.

Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation (LRS) Co-Enrollment
Individuals with disabilities may be co-enrolled in Vocational Rehabilitation services authorized under WIOA Title IV and other WIOA programs, including Titles I and II, where appropriate. Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) is a part of Louisiana Works. This integration allows for seamless coordination of services, encourages co-enrollment and supports aligned service delivery that promotes access to education, training, and employment consistent with participants' individualized goals.

LRS is included in the Office of Workforce Develop at Louisiana Works. As such, LRS plays a key role in developing statewide workforce development strategies, data analysis, and integration of services across the workforce development system. Co-enrollment strategies involving Title IV emphasize coordinated referrals, accessibility, and the provision of appropriate accommodations and supports, while maintaining compliance with program-specific eligibility criteria, confidentiality requirements, and accountability standards. These coordinated efforts support inclusive career pathways and improve access to workforce and postsecondary opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

STATE PROGRAM AND STATE BOARD OVERVIEW

III. b. 3. A. State Agency Organization

Louisiana's workforce development strategy is set by Louisiana Works. The system of delivery is administered through multiple state agencies, each with distinct statutory authority and programmatic responsibility. All of members of the agencies that administer services of workforce development are members of the Workforce Investment Council (WIC) which serves as our state board.

- Post-secondary education is governed by a state Board of Regents, some of whose members are appointed by the Governor. The Regents' chief executive, the state Commissioner of Higher Education, is a member of the WIC. Under the Regents' umbrella is the Board of Supervisors for the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS). Title II (Adult Education) and Perkins are administered by LCTCS, whose chief executive is a member of the WIC.

- Elementary and secondary education is governed by the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE). Eight members are elected from the eight BESE districts, and the remaining three members are appointed by the Governor. BESE's chief executive is the Superintendent of Education, who also is a member of the WIC.

- Title I (Adult, Youth, and Dislocated Worker) and Title III Wagner-Peyser, Community Service Block Grants (CSBG) are administered by Louisiana Works. The Secretary of Louisiana Works is a member of the WIC. Title IV Vocational Rehab is administered by the Office of Workforce Develop in Louisiana Works. The Director of LRS is a member of the WIC.

- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) administered by the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) whose Secretary is a member of the WIC.

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) are administered by the Louisiana Department of Health whose Secretary is a member of the WIC. The SNAP Education and Training program is administered by Louisiana Works.

- Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) program has dedicated staff to provide individualized career and training-related services to veterans and eligible persons with Qualifying Employment Barriers and to assist employers in filling their workforce needs with job-seeking veterans.

- Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is overseen by the Office of Elderly Affairs. Louisiana SCSEP administers two Sub-Grantees which are: the Capital Area Agency on Aging, and the Jefferson Council on Aging. In addition, to collaboration with the National Grantees: Institute for Indian Development (IID), and Asociación Nacional Pro Personas Mayores (ANPPM), the purpose of the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is to foster and promote useful part-time opportunities in community service activities for unemployed low-income persons who are 55 years of age or older and who have poor employment prospects; to foster individual economic self-sufficiency; and to increase the number of older persons who may enjoy the benefits of unsubsidized employment in both the public and private sectors.

III. b. 3. B. State Board

Chelsea Dufrene, Executive Office, Secretary, LED

David Matlock, Executive Office, Secretary,

Susana Schowen, Executive Office, Secretary, Louisiana Works

Baugh, Terry L., Appointed by Governor; Representing Businesses in the State

Bourque, Ellis J. III, Appointed by Governor; Representing Workforce in the State

Brumley, Preston "Cade", Ed. D., Executive-Officer; Superintendent of Education

Crews, Raymond J. (Rep.), Executive-Officer: Speaker of House or Designee

Danahay, Michael E., Appointed by Governor; Representing Parish & City Government; CEO of Parish or City

DeLouche, Renee L., Executive Officer; Secretary, DPS&C

Dearman, Mark K., Appointed by Governor; Representing Businesses in the State

Dedon, Jason M., Appointed by Governor; Representing Workforce in the State

Ellis, Oliver Friday, Appointed by Governor; Representing Parish & City Government

Engels, Jason B., Appointed by Governor; Representing Workforce in the State

Fabre, Cornelia L. "Connie", Appointed by Governor; Representing Businesses in the State

Feirn, Gregory C.. Appointed by Governor; Representing Businesses in the State

Gaines, David M.. Appointed by Governor; Representing Businesses in the State

Appointed by Governor; Representing Businesses in the State

Helveston, David B., Appointed by Governor; Representing Businesses in the State; Chair

Johnson, James S. "Jay", Appointed by Governor; Representing Businesses in the State

Martin, Roy O. III, Appointed by Governor; Representing Businesses in the State

Reed, Kim Hunter, Ph.D., Executive Officer; Commander, Higher Education or Designee

Reine, Louis S., Appointed by Governor; Representing Workforce in the State

Roper, Tina L., Appointed by Governor; Representing Workforce in the State

Ruckert, Kyle D., Office of the Governor, Executive Officer; Designee of Governor

Seabaugh, Alan (Sen.), Executive Officer; Appointed by Senate President; Member of Senate

Sullivan, Monty, Ed.D., LA Community & Technical College System, Executive Officer; President, LCTCS

Tanner, Michael J., Appointed by Governor; Representing Businesses in the State

Vandersteen, Charles A. "Buck", Appointed by Governor; Representing Businesses in the State

Yura, Thomas A., Appointed by Governor; Representing Businesses in the State

III. b. 4. A. Assessment of Core and One-Stop Program Partner Programs.

Louisiana Works regularly uses performance data to evaluate programs and partners, and actively monitors the system through monthly, quarterly, and annual performance reports. Program staff reviews the reports and communicates with system partners, as appropriate, to provide technical assistance and obtain information on best practices to share with other partners.

WIOA's primary measures of performance measure each core program's effectiveness at producing desired outcomes. Proposed §677.190(a) directs that state and local final adjusted levels of performance each year will take into consideration characteristics of the participants as well as state and local economic conditions through the application of a federal statistical adjustment model. The state and local areas are assessed based on a comparison of the actual performance level with the adjusted level of performance each quarter and annually.

The state implements the following criteria to evaluate local workforce development area common performance indicators:

- Exceed: Outcome for each measure must be greater than 100 percent of the performance level.
- Meet: Outcome for each measure must not fall below 90 percent of the performance level.
- Fail: Outcome for any one of the measures is less than 90 percent of the performance level.

In instances when the state or a local area fails a performance measure, targeted technical assistance is provided to improve the proficiency of staff members in providing services and develop strategies to improve the program's ability to meet performance measures.

Core Programs are also assessed through financial and administrative monitoring of all sub-recipients of funds expended under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. The State provides policy guidance to each entity responsible for the administration of Core Programs. The assessment and evaluation process includes completing annual on-site monitoring reviews of each Core Program to ensure compliance with the Uniform Administrative Requirements of WIOA. These reviews include the appropriate administrative requirements for

sub-recipients and applicable cost principles. The assessment ensures established policies achieve program quality and outcomes, and meet the objectives of the governing federal laws and regulations. This includes the provision of services by One-Stop Operators, eligible providers of training services, and eligible providers of youth activities; and makes certain that sub-recipients and contractors have demonstrated substantial compliance with federal requirements. Louisiana is exploring opportunities to extend the services of the technical training unit to include best practice guides, ongoing professional development to further improve quality of service to job seeker and produce a stronger workforce.

Louisiana's statewide One-Stop operator procurement and operation waiver will not only allow the state to competitively procure one or more statewide or regional one stop operators but also provide for a more unified accountability framework. This waiver will allow Louisiana to implement at centralized performance monitoring system that applies uniform expectation and accountability measures across all operators. This includes establishing a clear separation of duties including procurement, fiscal management and service delivery functions. This will include internal controls and conflict of interest safeguards. One stop operator performance will be evaluated using standardized metrics tied to service quality, and participants outcomes.

Adult Education conducts programmatic and fiscal onsite monitoring. Programs are identified for onsite monitoring through a comprehensive risk analysis based on the following factors: (1) desk monitoring; (2) need to verify data quality and program expenditures; (3) consistent low performance on NRS indicators in several categories; (4) prospective noncompliance with grant requirements identified through review of programmatic and fiscal reports, or ongoing communications with the program; (4) unresolved audit findings; (5) ongoing lack of progress in resolving required actions from prior monitoring visit; (6) significant staff turnover in the program; and (7) recent or newly established programs.

The goal for State onsite monitoring visits are to: ensure that programs meet AEFLA requirements; improve the quality of federally-funded activities; provide assistance identifying and resolving accountability problems; and, ensure the accuracy, validity, and reliability of data collection and data reporting as well as policies and procedures for program accountability.

Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) monitors the services provided within the guidelines of the existing cooperative agreements and evaluate if modifications will be needed when they are renegotiated. To ensure the quality of supported employment services provided to eligible consumers by monitoring the vendors. The monitoring will utilize site reviews and include quality indicators to evaluate the assessment of employment outcomes and an evaluation of the provision of services. The monitoring will be carried out by the state and field office staff.

III. b. 4. B. Previous Assessment Results

All partners and their federally funded programs are measured according to their method of operation in determining the effectiveness of service delivery to job seekers and employers. OWD also conducts annual monitoring of programmatic and fiscal management of grants to ensure that funds are being spent in compliance with federal and state laws and regulations. As part of this ongoing annual monitoring, Louisiana Works has included a risk management assessment tool for our WIOA formula and discretionary grants under the management of OWD.

Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (Title IV, Vocational Rehabilitation) captured the information below indicating the effectiveness of performance of the WIOA accountability indicators by implementing the following strategies: specific layouts were created in the AWARE case management system, staff participated in training on these layouts and were explained the relevance for capturing this data, regional reports were generated with regard to compliance or non-compliance, and a collaboration with Workforce Partners to retrieve the necessary data.

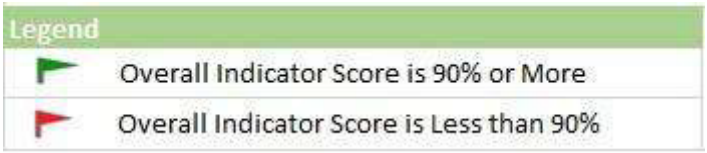
WorkReady U (Title II, Adult Education & Family Literacy) demonstrated significant success in meeting performance expectations by exceeding or coming within 90% of negotiated targets for four out of five key performance indicators. This reflects local programs' effectiveness and dedication in addressing adult learners' educational needs. In response to the credential attainment rate falling short of the federally negotiated level,

Louisiana will implement a comprehensive strategy to address this issue and improve outcomes. The state's analysis has identified key challenges, including gaps in support services and misalignment between program content and industry needs. To address these issues, Louisiana will undertake targeted interventions such as enhancing academic and career counseling, revising curricula, and introducing flexible learning options. Additionally, the state will invest in professional development for educators and utilize data-driven insights to monitor progress and make necessary adjustments. Through collaborative efforts with stakeholders and a commitment to continuous improvement, Louisiana aims to significantly increase credential attainment rates and better support adult learners in achieving their educational goals.

State agency partners assess the performance outcomes of the workforce system through annual performance reviews. The state agencies responsible for each of the core programs outlined in program-specific areas assess performance accountability measures at the state, regional and local levels as required by each core program. To ensure that program partners are well-positioned to meet the performance accountability requirements of WIOA, Louisiana Works has created an Performance and Accountability Working Group with core partners to ensure that systems have the capacity to collect and report required new and updated data elements under WIOA, as well as the capacity to track aggregate data for performance indicators applicable to all four core partners. This working group will also review Customer Satisfaction Surveys from both program participants and employers that can be aggregated and compared across the WIOA partner programs. Results from surveys and recommendations from this working group will allow the State to assess our workforce system as well as gauge our progress toward continuously improving service delivery and increase and enhance the quality of employment outcomes for participants.

The State monitors performance measures and implementation of its strategies to improve targeted performance areas identified through ongoing assessments and provide technical assistance as needed. Through ongoing assessment, the State analyzes and adjusts its measures and activities to align performance improvement with strategy implementation.

PY 22 Assessment



Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit

Program	2022 Performance Obtained	2022 Negotiated Goal	Percentage of Goal Achieved	Performance Rating
Adult	75.7%	65.9%	114.9%	
Dislocated Worker	74.3%	64.0%	116.1%	
Program	2022 Performance Obtained	2022 Negotiated Goal	Percentage of Goal Achieved	Performance Rating
Youth	74.9%	70.7%	105.9%	
Adult Education	30.1%	31.0%	109.0%	

Wagner-Peyser	65.9%	56.0%	97.1%	
Vocational Rehabilitation	54.9%	55.9%	98.2%	

Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit

Program	2022 Performance Obtained	2022 Negotiated Goal	Percentage of Goal Achieved	Performance Rating
Adult	72.6%	66.1%	109.8%	
Dislocated Worker	73.2%	67.0%	109.3%	
Youth	73.4%	72.0%	101.9%	
Adult Education	29.1%	31.0%	93.9%	
Wagner-Peyser	62.6%	57.0%	109.8%	
Vocational Rehabilitation	55.9%	56.0%	99.8%	

Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit

Program	2022 Performance Obtained	2022 Negotiated Goal	Percentage of Goal Achieved	Performance Rating
Adult	$7,376	$6,400	115.3%	
Dislocated Worker	$8,481	$7,500	113.1%	
Youth	$4,762	$3,100	153.6%	
Program	2022 Performance Obtained	2022 Negotiated Goal	Percentage of Goal Achieved	Performance Rating
Adult Education	$3,282	$3,100	105.9%	
Wagner-Peyser	$7,074	$5,000	141.5%	

Vocational Rehabilitation	$5,085	$5,100	99.7%	

Credential Attainment Rate

Program	2022 Performance Obtained	2022 Negotiated Goal	Percentage of Goal Achieved	Performance Rating
Adult	78.8%	73.5%	107.2%	
Dislocated Worker	84.7%	79.8%	106.1%	
Youth	55.0%	52.0%	105.8%	
Adult Education	17.33%	21.5%	80.6%	
Vocational Rehabilitation	46.2%	46.4%	99.5%	

Measurable Skills Gains

Program	2022 Performance Obtained	2022 Negotiated Goal	Percentage of Goal Achieved	Performance Rating
Adult	74.8%	65.5%	114.2%	
Dislocated Worker	71.2%	74.5%	95.6%	
Youth	54.2%	50.0%	108.4%	
Adult Education	41.6%	42.5%	97.9%	
Vocational Rehabilitation	53.0%	53.5%	99.1%	

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III.b.4.C. Evaluation

The Louisiana Workforce Investment Council evaluates the effectiveness of the overall workforce development system by requiring updates on program effectiveness. This component of the plan, is an ongoing effort, intended to provide the opportunity to provide input to the evaluation matrix. Louisiana Works implements existing methods for program evaluation through systematic and objective assessments such as annual

compliance monitoring, data validation, and continuous tracking of state and local performance and expenditures.

Louisiana Works evaluation process includes reviewing existing program evaluation tools and processes, working with partner agencies in developing additional methods to evaluate existing data, developing policies and guidance on how to identify and evaluate potential promising practices, and use evaluation as part of process improvement, requiring the use of logic models and outcome measures as part of the development of new projects and proposals, and identifying evidence-based practices used for program evaluation and sharing this information with the appropriate state or federal entities.

In coordination with economic and workforce partners, the state continues to expand outcomes measures to strengthen program evaluation and support data-driven decision making. Under the current framework, performance measurement and reporting are largely program-specific, limiting the State's ability to evaluate outcomes across programs and fully assess system-wide effectiveness. Louisiana is pursuing a set of waivers to enhance reliability of performance data, allowing for a more integrated approach to performance tracking and evaluation. These enhancements cannot be fully realized under existing statutory and regulatory requirements without waiver authority.

Louisiana intends to develop a statewide performance dashboard that provides real-time visibility into performance across programs and regions. This technology will reduce duplicative reporting, improve transparency, and support continuous improvement by enabling the State to evaluate outcomes such as employment, retention, and wage progression across the workforce system.

Louisiana has launched a statewide customer satisfaction survey through a common collection platform. Louisiana Works utilizes the technology platform to provide monthly reports to local teams. The data are provided in both raw form and through data visualization. This will allow for local teams to understand the participant experience and make changes to provide better customer service.

III.b.5 DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

III.b.5.A. FOR TITLE I PROGRAMS

III.b.5.A.i YOUTH ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA SECTION 128(B)(2) OR (B)(3)

Title I Youth formula distribution complies with the statutory methodology in WIOA. Funds are distributed by percentage share to the Local Workforce Development Areas according to the formula shown below.

- 33 1/3 percent based on the relative number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment in the local workforce development area, compared to the total number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment in the state.

- 33 1/3 percent based on the relative excess number of unemployed individuals in the local workforce development area, compared to the total excess number of unemployed individuals in the state.

- 33 1/3 percent based on the relative number of disadvantaged youth in the local workforce development area, compared to the total number of disadvantaged youth in the state.

A hold-harmless provision ensures that each local area's percentage share of the State allotments designated for local WIOA Title 1 Youth and Adult program activities does not fall below 90% of the local area's average percentage share for the prior two fiscal years.

Louisiana currently utilizes the statutory allocation methodology outlined in WIOA Section 128(b) to inform the distribution of Title I Youth funds. This methodology incorporates factors related to unemployment and disadvantaged youth populations to ensure that resources are directed toward areas of greatest need. The state also maintains a hold-harmless provision to ensure funding stability over time.

To support a more integrated and outcomes-driven workforce system, Louisiana is seeking a waiver to allow Title I Youth funds, in coordination with Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Wagner-Peyser funding, to be administered as a consolidated and flexible funding pool at the state level. This approach will enable Louisiana to align funding decisions more directly with actual labor market conditions, service demand, and the needs of individuals facing barriers to employment, including opportunity and disconnected youth.

Under this model, the state will continue to utilize a data-driven, formula-based methodology informed by the statutory factors in WIOA, while allowing for greater flexibility in how funds are deployed to support service delivery. This includes the ability to organize and deploy resources in a manner that reflects workforce needs and service patterns, including consideration of regional labor market dynamics. Where appropriate, funds may be pooled and managed at a regional level to support coordinated service delivery; however, all allocations will remain grounded in a consistent statewide methodology to ensure transparency, alignment with need, and compliance with federal requirements.

This approach addresses limitations in the current structure, where rigid allocation methodologies may not fully reflect variations in opportunity youth populations or evolving workforce demands. By maintaining a formula-informed framework while introducing flexibility in deployment, Louisiana will improve its ability to target resources effectively, reduce inefficiencies, and drive stronger outcomes in employment, training completion, and long-term workforce attachment.

III.b.5.A.ii ADULT AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA SECTION 133(B)(2) OR (B)(3)

Title I Adult formula distribution complies with the statutory methodology in WIOA. Funds are distributed by percentage share to the Local Workforce Development Areas according to the formula shown below.

- 33 1/3 percent based on the relative number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment in the local workforce development area, compared to the total number of unemployed individuals in areas of substantial unemployment in all local workforce development areas in the state.

- 33 1/3 percent based on the relative excess number of unemployed individuals in the local workforce development area, compared to the total excess number of unemployed individuals in all local workforce areas in the state.

- 33 1/3 percent based on the relative number of disadvantaged adults in the local workforce development area, compared to the total number of disadvantaged adults in all local workforce development areas in the state.

A hold-harmless provision ensures that each local area's percentage share of the State allotments designated for local WIOA Title 1 Youth and Adult program activities does not fall below 90% of the local area's average percentage share for the prior two fiscal years.

The State has put into place control measures through its monitoring division, to identify the following in an attempt to ensure and maintain fiscal integrity.

- Formal determinations of disallowed costs and non-compliance as documented by reports of the results of the state's WIOA monitoring, single audits and DOL monitoring (if applicable);

- Results of investigations of incident reports alleging gross negligence, fraud, abuse or other misconduct; and

- Formal communication of high-risk status and/or suspension of cash payments resulting from continued violations of administrative requirements and grant terms and conditions and the subsequent corrective actions implemented by the local area to correct the violations. This system of accountability adds another set of tools to ensure grant recipients sustain fiscal integrity.

Louisiana currently utilizes the statutory allocation methodology outlined in WIOA Section 133(b) to inform the distribution of Title I Adult funds. This methodology incorporates key factors related to unemployment and disadvantaged adult populations to ensure that resources are directed toward areas of greatest need. The state also maintains a hold-harmless provision to promote funding stability over time.

To support a more integrated, efficient, and outcomes-driven workforce system, Louisiana is seeking a waiver to allow Title I Adult funds to be administered as part of a consolidated and flexible funding pool at the state level, in coordination with Youth, Dislocated Worker, and Wagner-Peyser funding. This approach will enable the state to align funding decisions more directly with labor market demand, participant needs, and service utilization patterns.

Under this model, Louisiana will continue to apply a data-driven, formula-informed methodology grounded in the statutory factors identified in WIOA to guide the distribution and use of funds. At the same time, the state will have the flexibility to deploy resources in a manner that supports coordinated service delivery and maximizes impact. This includes the ability to organize and manage funds in alignment with regional labor market dynamics and service delivery needs. Where appropriate, funds may be pooled and administered at a regional level to support integrated strategies, while remaining subject to a consistent statewide allocation framework that ensures transparency, consistency, and compliance with federal requirements.

This approach addresses limitations in the current structure, where rigid allocation methodologies can constrain the state's ability to respond to shifting economic conditions and participant needs. By maintaining a formula-informed framework while introducing flexibility in deployment, Louisiana will improve targeting of resources, reduce administrative inefficiencies, and strengthen outcomes related to employment, training completion, and long-term workforce attachment.

To ensure continued fiscal integrity and accountability, Louisiana will maintain robust monitoring and oversight mechanisms. These include formal determinations of disallowed costs and non-compliance identified through state monitoring, single audits, and federal reviews; investigation of allegations related to fraud, abuse, or misconduct; and the application of corrective actions, including designation of high-risk status or suspension of funds where necessary. These controls ensure that all funds are managed in accordance with federal requirements and that performance and compliance expectations are consistently enforced across the system.

III.b.5.A.iii DISLOCATED WORKER EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH WIOA SECTION 133(B)(2) AND BASED ON DATA AND WEIGHTS ASSIGNED

Louisiana currently utilizes the statutory allocation methodology outlined in WIOA Section 133(b)(2)(B) to inform the distribution of Title I Dislocated Worker funds. The Research and Statistics Division, in coordination with the Office of Management and Finance and the Office of Workforce Development, conducts an annual review of the formula to ensure that the most current and relevant data are used to guide funding decisions.

The state's methodology is informed by key economic indicators that reflect dislocation trends and labor market conditions, including unemployment concentration, insured unemployment without earnings, plant closures and mass layoffs, long-term unemployment (exhaustees), and economic hardship within the agricultural sector. These factors are weighted to ensure that resources are aligned with areas experiencing the greatest levels of worker dislocation and economic disruption.

To support a more responsive and integrated workforce system, Louisiana is seeking a waiver to allow Dislocated Worker funds to be administered as part of a consolidated and flexible funding pool at the state level, in coordination with Adult, Youth, and Wagner-Peyser funding. This approach will enable the state to align funding decisions more directly with real-time economic conditions, rapid response needs, and evolving workforce demands.

Under this model, Louisiana will continue to utilize a data-driven, formula-informed methodology based on the

statutory factors identified in WIOA to guide the allocation and use of funds. At the same time, the state will have the flexibility to deploy resources in a manner that supports coordinated service delivery and rapid response to dislocation events. This includes the ability to organize and manage funds in alignment with regional labor market dynamics and service delivery needs. Where appropriate, funds may be pooled and administered at a regional level to support timely and coordinated responses, while remaining subject to a consistent statewide allocation framework that ensures transparency, consistency, and compliance with federal requirements.

This approach strengthens the state's ability to respond quickly and effectively to layoffs, industry shifts, and economic disruptions, while maintaining alignment with WIOA requirements. By combining a formula-driven foundation with flexibility in deployment, Louisiana will improve targeting of resources, reduce administrative delays, and enhance outcomes related to rapid reemployment, skill development, and long-term workforce attachment.

Factor	Weight	Statistic
Unemployment concentration	33	The 12-month average for the most recently completed October-September fiscal year showing the unrounded number of persons unemployed by parish within each local area.
Insured unemployed without earnings	20%	The 12-month average for the most recently completed October-September fiscal year showing the number of continued claims filed without earnings for the reference week that includes the last day of each month. Data is also by parish within the LWDA.
Plant closing and mass layoff	2%	The term plant closing is when an employment site (or one or more facilities or operating units within an employment site) will be shut down, and the shutdown will result in an employment loss for 50 or more employees during any 30-day period. A mass layoff that does not result from a plant closing, but results in an employment loss at the employment site during any 30-day period for 500 or more employees, or for 50-499 employees if they make up at least 33% of the employer's active workforce. Data is comprehensive by parish and includes the most recently completed fiscal year. A weighted factor of 2% is based on WARN notices submitted to Louisiana Works for the most complete proceeding calendar year.
Exhaustees (long-term unemployed)	25%	This is long-term unemployment data that refers to claimants who received a final payment in unemployment benefits. Data is by parish and is an annual average for the most recently completed fiscal year.
Farmer/rancher economic hardship	5%	Numerical difference between the last two Census of Agriculture to determine decline in hiring farm workers.

A hold-harmless provision ensures that each local area's percentage share of the State allotment designated for local Dislocated Worker program activities does not fall below 90% of the local area's average percentage share for the prior two fiscal years.

III.b.5.B - FOR TITLE II

III.b.5.B.i DESCRIBE THE METHODS AND FACTORS THE ELIGIBLE AGENCY WILL USE TO DISTRIBUTE TITLE II FUNDS.

The Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS), WorkReady U (WRU), is responsible for administering Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) funds to eligible providers and providing program/performance oversight to grantees. As the administrative/fiscal agency, LCTCS/WRU awards multi-year grants to eligible local providers through a competitive RFP process for the purpose of developing, implementing, and improving adult education within the State. The grants are for a five-year cycle that applies to all programs. After implementation of services, providers must apply on an annual basis for continuation funding under Title II. (See Title II – Adult Education and Literacy Programs (b) Local Activities, Eligible Provider).

WIOA, Title II defines an eligible provider as an organization that has demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education and literacy activities to eligible individuals and may include:

- A local education agency;
- A community-based or faith-based organization;
- A volunteer literacy organization;
- An institution of higher education;
- A public or private nonprofit agency;
- A library;
- A public housing authority;
- A nonprofit institution with the ability to provide adult education and literacy services;
- A consortium or coalition of agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries or authorities described above; or
- A partnership between an employer and an entity described above.

All applications received are evaluated using the 13 considerations in WIOA section 231(e). The evaluation of each grant application involves an intense assessment of the ability of the eligible provider to comply with the expectations and statutes described within the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act inclusive of: (a) meeting the literacy needs of the area; and (b) demonstrating past effectiveness in improving the literacy of eligible individuals, especially those individuals who have low levels of literacy, participants with disabilities; refugees, dislocated youth and foster care youth, individuals with low literacy skills, displaced homemakers, ex-offenders, individuals with cultural barriers and individuals with a variety of barriers to employment. The grant cycle is a minimum of five years, and all providers are subject to the same funding cycle: Year One – July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026; Year Two-July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027; Year Three-July 1, 2027 through June 30, 2028; Year Four-July 1, 2028 through June 30, 2029; and Year Five-July 1, 2029 through June 30, 2030. Eligible providers apply to receive adult education funding for the delivery of any of the following adult education and literacy activities: Adult education; Literacy; Workplace adult education and literacy activities; English language and acquisition activities; Integrated English literacy and civics education; Workforce preparation activities; Integrated education and training.

As required in Section 427 of GEPA, each applicant provides a description of the agency's process to ensure access to and participation in [AF1] the WIOA Title II adult education program for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs. LCTCS has approved state policies that provide for equal opportunity

for all qualified persons without regard to disability in the recruitment of, admission to, accessibility to, participation in, treatment in, or employment in the programs and activities operated and sponsored by the Louisiana Community and Technical College System.

The Louisiana Community and Technical College System ensures that all applicants provide data demonstrating their ability to improve the skills of eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals who have low levels of literacy, in the content domains of reading, writing, mathematics, English language acquisition, and other subject areas relevant to the services contained in the RFP application for funds and in accordance with WIOA §463.24. Forms are provided for new eligible applicants (See Title II – Adult Education and Literacy Programs (b) Local Activities, Eligible Provider) to provide performance data for student learning gains, including performance outcomes for low-literacy level and English language learners. All applicants are required to report effectiveness in improving the knowledge and skills of adults to successfully transition to postsecondary education, skills training, or employment. Each application is reviewed to determine whether it met the standard of demonstrated effectiveness.

Several factors are used to determine the funding amounts for successful applicants: (1) performance-based funding formula based on the core indicators of performance as outlined in Title II of WIOA and (2) the literacy rate within each workforce region. The formula is designed to consider the levels of performance in the local programs as compared with established benchmarks as a basis for an increase or decrease in funds.

Programs that do not meet established minimum standards in the first year are expected to demonstrate and document substantial improvement toward meeting those standards. Using the approved statewide data management system, monitoring results, and other documentation, WRU determines and applies requirements for program improvement in the subsequent grant cycles. Minimum standards are determined initially based on data collected during the first year and are raised with each new grant cycle. Programs that do not demonstrate and document substantial improvements during each year of the multi-year grant cycle may not be eligible to receive funding in subsequent years of the cycle.

III.b.5.B.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.

LCTCS uses the same application process for all eligible providers for sections 225, 231, and/or 243. This ensures that all applications are evaluated using the same rubric and scoring criteria. The full and open competition is consistent with the standards of Subpart C, CFR 200.319. All activities funded under WIOA are authorized, approved and administered by the LCTCS, WorkReady U. WorkReady U, ensures that all eligible providers have direct and access to apply and compete for grants. LCTCS adheres to all State and Louisiana WIOA Combined Plan laws regarding awarding grant funds and the expenditure of public funds. The following steps are utilized to ensure direct and access:

- An announcement of the availability of federal funds, under the support of Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, is disseminated in various methods including but not limited to a minimum of two newspaper outlets that provide state, local and regional news coverage, the LCTCS website, and social media outlets in order to provide the widest possible state coverage;

- The same grant and application process is used for all eligible providers in the state;

- Standard criteria for evaluation of local proposals are used for all eligible providers;

- Technical assistance is provided to assist with the dissemination of information to all eligible providers interested in applying. Technical assistance opportunities are included in announcements and the Request for Proposal; and

- 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 regarding the awarding of contracts and the expenditure of public funds.

LCTCS uses 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 and to carry out section 225, Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals, of which not more than 20 percent of such amount shall be available to carry out section 225;

- Shall not use more than 12.5 percent of the grant funds to carry out state leadership activities under section 223; and

- Shall not use more than 5 percent of the grant funds for administrative expenses of the eligible agency.

Federal funds may be used to increase the level of nonfederal funds that would be available in the absence of federal funds, and, in no case, replace those nonfederal funds. Federal funds must not be used for the purpose of supplanting, only for supplementing.

See Title II – Adult Education and Literacy Programs (b) Local Activities for additional details regarding the processes for the request for application process.

III.b.5.C. - VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM

This is not applicable in Louisiana as Blind Services are combined with the State Vocational Rehabilitation Program.

III.b.6.A. - PROGRAM DATA

III. b. 6. A. 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

Louisiana Works coordinates the delivery of business workforce solutions to address the state of Louisiana's workforce and economic development needs through various workforce and educational agencies of the state. Data sharing agreements with core and other state partner agencies allows for better data interoperability across state agencies in an effort to minimize duplication of efforts.

In partnership with the Blanco center, Louisiana Works produces an annual return on investment analysis of workforce development programs across Louisiana. This helps to ensure programs are strategically aligned to achieve the interrelated and often interdependent goals for the state. Long-term, Louisiana has a vision of developing integrated data dashboard that identifies performance levels in real time.

Louisiana Works HiRE system is the comprehensive system utilized for WIOA programs. The system allows for streamlined intake for programs, exchanging information for case management purposes and providing the necessary data for required federal and state reporting. Louisiana currently produces reports as required by the WIOA by aggregating data through multiple sources. HiRE houses participant case management data. Unemployment Insurance wage data is housed in a state-managed mainframe system. Louisiana is a SWIS member and imports out-of-state wage data for its participants from other SWIS member states and territories.

Louisiana Works will further strengthen its workforce development efforts by partnering with Louisiana Economic Development to pursue the creation of a shared job posting platform. This initiative will enhance employers' ability to connect with job seekers who possess the skills needed to meet workforce demands.

Louisiana Rehabilitation Services

Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) continues to use the AWARE system (Accessible Web- based Activity

and Reporting Environment). Unemployment Insurance wage data is imported into the AWARE system to enable LRS to capture wage data necessary for reporting on performance measures. Louisiana Works and core partners continue to research innovative methods of capturing additional data for reporting purposes and for more efficiently servicing Vocational Rehabilitation consumers.

III. b. 6. A. 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

Louisiana has a robust system in HiRE that has comprehensive on-demand reporting capabilities from a statewide database. State and local staff are able to enter, view, update, print and upload participant data, and analyze various reports daily. These reports provide mechanisms to measure levels of service and outcomes by program or targeted groups which allows state and local staff to view outcome data at the state, regional, local, and case manager level for Wagner-Peyser, WIOA Title I-B, TAA, Veterans Employment and Training Services and individuals with disabilities while providing a better measure of the impact of outreach programs or specialized initiatives on performance supporting State's strategies. Staff has the ability to run reports any time with the majority of data in real-time. Analysis of report data and case management information allows staff to identify errors and quickly correct and improve service delivery. Ongoing technical assistance and training is provided to local workforce areas to ensure understanding of performance measures and the impact of program strategies on performance outcomes. All performance reports have a breakout of how individual customers fit into each performance measure, whether positive, neutral or negative. This allows staff to better find errors and improves analysis by revealing the source of the data down to the individual level.

Louisiana recognizes the opportunities that exist to streamline and enhance intake and service delivery, reporting, and cost-sharing agreements through data sharing. This triggers a broad- based system allowing data to be shared across various data systems of required partners. System updates and expansion of workforce and labor market information will continue to achieve high-quality, timely, integrated data that informs policy, employer and job seeker decision-making.

In 2025, SNAP and TANF workforce programs merged with Louisiana Works. This allowed for Louisiana Works to begin conducting a full systems inventory analysis of software, data, intake assessments, and applications utilized by all programs in Louisiana Works. The analysis includes a inventorying software, process mapping, and system integration capability. The goal of digital transformation is to reduce redundancies, eliminate bottlenecks, and improve overall efficiency.

As part of the Medicaid work requirement, Louisiana Works has partnered with Louisiana Health and Hospitals to initiate the development of API tools to share data for common participants. This will allow Louisiana to more efficiently support Medicaid participants in meeting workforce goals by building a closed loop referral system.

The overall strategy for streamline data systems is aligned to the goals of One Door. By creating seamless data integration across multiple programs and state agencies, the overall workforce development and support services system becomes more intuitive and easier to navigate. Regardless of entry point into the system, participants a consistent customer service and reduced need for duplicative information sharing.

III. b. 6. A. 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

Louisiana Works, through its Management Information Systems (MIS) Unit and Research and Statistics Division, leads the coordination and alignment of technology and data systems across required one-stop partner programs. These units are responsible for the collection, integration, and analysis of participant-level and labor market data, which are used to inform system performance, program design, and strategic decision-making.

The Workforce Investment Council plays a central role in reviewing data, establishing performance

expectations, and advising the Governor on system improvements. Through this governance structure, data is used to continuously refine service delivery, align workforce strategies with labor market demand, and ensure that resources are directed toward approaches that produce measurable outcomes for job seekers and employers.

As part of Louisiana's broader system transformation, the state is advancing the development of an integrated, technology-enabled service delivery model aligned with its One Door approach. This includes the implementation of a standardized, statewide intake process, enhanced data sharing across partner programs, and the use of interoperable systems supported by modern integration tools, including APIs. These efforts will enable real-time data exchange, reduce duplicative data entry, and improve visibility into participant engagement across programs.

Louisiana's waiver to allow the State Workforce Board to perform the functions of local boards further strengthens this approach by enabling a unified data governance and system design strategy. This will allow the state to consolidate and streamline intake and case management systems, establish consistent data standards, and develop comprehensive performance reporting tools that provide actionable insights into system performance.

Collectively, these efforts will improve the quality and consistency of data, enhance coordination across programs, and support a more responsive and efficient workforce system. By aligning technology and data systems under a unified framework, Louisiana will improve service delivery, reduce administrative burden, and enable more effective tracking of outcomes, including employment, retention, and wage progression.

III. b. 6. A. 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)).

Louisiana uses performance accountability indicators and performance reporting requirements to assess the effectiveness of local areas in achieving positive outcomes for individuals served by the workforce development system's six core programs. Louisiana Works data systems, Helping Individuals Reach Employment (HiRE) is used for date collection reporting of performance outcomes for Title I and Title III, and the AWARE system is used for the VR program. These systems generate quarterly and annual reports used to measure performance outcomes.

The State has data sharing agreements (DSA) between several partnering agencies to govern the terms and conditions under which program data may be shared. The State has the opportunity to collect program data from each partnering agency through secured data transmission protocols. Each partner has a vendor to produce required federal reports and each core partner is successfully meeting the reporting requirements.

III. b. 6. B. Assessment of Participants' Post-program Success

Louisiana Works applies the statutorily prescribed performance measures to assess participants' post-program success across the six core programs. Louisiana Works also applies state-prescribed performance measures and—with input from Boards, grantees, and other partners—works to continuously develop and test other measures that may provide a more meaningful way of communicating strengths and identifying areas of improvement. Through case management follow-up services, OWD assesses the progress of participants exiting to jobs and post-secondary education. These approaches are improved through the local MOU service agreements developed with required one-stop partners. At the state level, Louisiana Works also works with state partners to share data and develop methods to evaluate outcomes for participants served through their respective programs.

In addition, Louisiana Works is currently working to incorporate evaluation strategies into all of its programs and initiatives, and develop additional outcome measures, such as wage progression, to help determine the effectiveness of strategies such as sectors and career pathways.

Data regarding the progress of participants exiting the adult education and family literacy program into post-secondary education and training and employment will be analyzed annually as part of the program annual

performance report process and the grant continuation application process.

Louisiana's Workforce Investment Council (WIC) works closely with Louisiana Works research and statistics team as well as the Labor Market Information team to ensure data alignment, data sharing and the integration of such data as it relates to WIOA. Those teams evaluate each core partner's current collection method of the required data elements. Specifically, the teams examine what is collected, how it is collected and how and where data is stored. Collection process changes are the outcome of the evaluation and are incorporated into a data storage system that cooperates when possible with other partner agencies.

Louisiana Works vision under the LA First Initiative, is the next generation of an integrated performance reporting system that will involve the incorporation of customer data from all state- and federally funded employment and training programs and a customer-focused data model that supports the aggregation of data into any combination of programs and characteristics. This incorporation of data will allow the system to meet program reporting requirements while enabling the user to customize how they view the data. To ensure its effectiveness and ability to support transparency and accountability, the system must be able to report customer outcomes the same way for each program or aggregation of data while ensuring the security and confidentiality of such data.

Louisiana Works is strengthening its approach to assessing post-program success by expanding the use of outcome-based measures that go beyond initial employment placement to include long-term retention, wage progression, and career advancement. The State is leveraging integrated data systems, including wage record matching and cross-program data sharing, to track participant outcomes across multiple quarters after exit. These efforts support a more comprehensive understanding of participant success and allow the State to evaluate the effectiveness of workforce strategies, including sector-based training and career pathway models.

Evaluating participant outcomes is important to ensuring accountability. Lastly, Louisiana Works evaluates current and historic data to understand what factors influence performance in order to determine whether the results achieved were reasonable, predict what levels of performance are likely to be achieved in the future, and identify what actions the system should take when serving specific customers to achieve effective outcomes. These efforts support continuous improvement and set the foundation for developing the means to measure the return on investment.

III. b. 6. C. Use of Unemployment Insurance (UI) Wage Record Data

Based upon the WIOA requirements to utilize wage record data for performance review and evaluation, Louisiana Works Offices of Workforce Development and Unemployment Insurance work together in identifying and using a variety of on-demand reports that track wage-based performance for Wagner-Peyser, WIOA Title I-B, TAA, and Veterans Employment and Training Services. Out-of-state wages are imported from the Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS2) into participant wage records. There are a significant number of participants who previously had and/or seek out of state employment before and after participation in workforce programs. Louisiana Works transitioned to State Wage Interchange System (SWIS) wages to produce a more complete and accurate record of participant earnings.

Unemployment Insurance (UI) Wage Record Data is utilized in data matching for assessing and reporting on state and local employment and training program performance, evaluating training provider performance, and for other purposes allowed by state law and data sharing agreements among state agencies. By utilizing UI Wage Data, the State can measure entered employment, employment retention, and earnings of the individual.

The State continues to work with each of the Core Program partners to continue to meet performance accountability reporting requirements, evaluate and research goals set to support data sharing with education agencies to evaluate the long—term impact of investment and workforce outcomes for individuals who move along a career pathway. Data Sharing Agreements are continuously being reviewed, updated, and maintained to accommodate performance related goals. Louisiana Works will create and incorporate a Data Advisory Group across major Secretariats and agencies to help guide this process.

III. b. 6. D. Privacy Safeguards

Agency legal counsel and Division of Administration Office of Technology Services reviews and approves language in any applicable data-sharing agreement (DSA)and service contract to ensure that privacy safeguards are properly in place.

Louisiana Works employs multiple safeguards to customer data. Internally, staff members are held accountable for the use of customer data. All employees accessing Louisiana Works customer management system, HiRE, are required to sign confidentiality agreements governing the use of information in the HiRE system. Rules, policies, and practices employed by Louisiana Works staff are focused on guarding customer data being used strictly for Louisiana Works program purposes. Staff use of the HiRE system is monitored by supervisors and state administrators for appropriate use.

Information in HiRE is kept on file in a secure database and will only be used by our staff to better provide assistance to Louisiana Works customers in determining eligibility for federal assistance in obtaining employment and/or training for employment. Customer information will not be transmitted to other companies, solicitors or organizations not associated with the performance of the responsibilities delineated in the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014.

For security purposes and to ensure that this service remains available to all users, HiRE also employs software programs to monitor network traffic to identify unauthorized attempts to upload or change information, or otherwise cause damage.

III. b. 7. Priority of Service for Veterans

- 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.

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

- Describe the intake 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.

The state shall provide priority of service for veterans and covered persons per VPL 07-09 and TEGL 10-09. The term "priority of service" means, with respect to any qualified job training program, that a veteran or covered persons shall be given priority over nonveterans for the receipt of employment, training, and placement services provided under that program, notwithstanding any other provision of law. Such priority includes giving access to a service for a veteran or covered person before a non-covered person, or, if resources are limited, giving access to such services to a veteran or covered person instead of a non-covered person.

Priority starts with the first AJC member that comes in contact with the veteran or other covered person. During the reception process, a series of questions identifies veteran or eligibility status. Qualified veterans or other covered persons are provided services prior to other customers, and an initial assessment is completed by the first available AJC staff member. If during the initial assessment it is determined that the veteran or other covered person has a Qualifying Employment Barrier and are interested in receiving one or more individualized career services, they are immediately referred to a DVOP specialist. Please note that not all covered persons are eligible for DVOP services.

Priority begins when veterans and eligible spouses are identified at the point of entry, during the registration process. Registration may occur in person or virtual. During registration, questions are asked to identify veterans and eligible spouses. Veterans and eligible spouses are identified during intake screening which is beginning of the reception process.

A series of questions identifies veteran or eligibility status. Qualified veterans or other covered persons are provided services prior to other customers, and an initial assessment is completed by the first available AJC

staff member. If during the initial assessment it is determined that the veteran or other covered person has a Qualifying Employment Barrier and are interested in receiving one or more individualized career services, they are immediately referred to a DVOP specialist. DVOP-eligible populations who are not referred to a DVOP specialist, must be referred to other workforce programs in accordance with priority of service requirements, as described in VPL-07-09 and TEGL 10-09. Please note that not all covered persons are eligible for DVOP services.

Veterans may self-attest to their veteran status and are only required to verify their status once they are enrolled in a program and resources are committed that require verification. They are then allowed to follow-up with the required verification of veteran status.

The state provides priority of service in accordance with VPL 07-09 and TEGL 10-09. When a veteran or other covered person is identified as having barriers to employment, they are fast tracked on a priority basis to ensure that those barriers are resolved as expeditiously as possible. The state has memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with U.S. Department of Labor- funded programs covered by 38 U.S.C Section 4215 on veterans' priority and refers veterans to training and supportive services within that network on a priority basis. The state has partnered with educational entities within the state and the vocational/technical institutions, which also provide priority service for veterans and assist them with their educational and literacy needs.

Veterans or other covered persons receive priority for employment and job training opportunities available through WIOA funding, on-the-job training, skills development training and youth training contracts. Veterans or other covered persons can locate training opportunities through the use of the HiRE database and receive training at private facilities, which have been approved through the State Established Training Provider List (ETPL). Should veterans or other covered persons meet the eligibility criteria, their training costs are paid by the WIOA program or through individual training accounts. Veterans or other covered persons always take priority in instances of training as long as eligibility is met. Priority is given by placing the veteran on top of the waiting list, if one exists. LVER staff and other AJC staff identify jobs and training opportunities specifically tailored for veterans or other covered persons, as they promote them as potential employees. These priority services are made available and provided to veterans, Chapter 31 veterans, Native American veterans and other groups targeted for special consideration, including difficult-to-serve veterans and veterans with barriers to employment.

Relevant to programs with statutory priorities veterans and eligible spouses who meet the mandatory priorities or spending requirements or limitations will receive the highest level of priority for the program or service.

The state will closely monitor the provision of priority of service. Both JVSG management and local area coordinators shall periodically conduct site checks to ensure all required priority of service signs are present and properly displayed, and that AJC staff understand both the requirement of priority of service and its proper implementation. During these site visits, monitors pay particular attention to the implementation of priority of service beyond core services, particularly in the allocation of training funds. The state shall consider an indicated referral rate in any one of these areas being lower for veterans and other covered persons than for nonveterans to be evidence of a potential priority-of-implementation problem. The state shall immediately place the affected region under examination and take corrective action measures to include but not be limited to additional training.

Louisiana provides employment, training and placement services to all veterans through a network of strategically located AJCs supported by the state's proprietary HiRE database system. The state, working closely with each AJC and their LWDA, has implemented a standardized framework for customer flow. This flow determines the methodology through which all clients (both jobseeker and employer) are integrated into the system and how they are assessed to identify their service needs. All programs are coordinated through a joint referral process described in each region's memorandum of understanding (MOU) between partners. Each partner performs the services allowed by their authorizing legislation or policy. Inter-staff collaboration is also enforced via program updates and workforce development policies are shared among partners at regularly scheduled staff meetings and training. During those contacts, all staff members share information about new

employers and job orders received, AJC scheduled activities and positive recruitment activities taking place in the region. All DVOP specialists are full-time employees, . They are singularly responsibility for locating and providing individualized career services to targeted veterans and other eligible persons in the context of an effective network system. Although DVOP specialists are responsible for facilitating the case management and individualized career services of veterans with Qualifying Employment Barriers(QEB), they are not alone in this effort.

Providing individualized career services to veterans with QEBs takes a team effort and as such, all services available in any particular AJC are available to veterans on a priority-of-service basis. The state mandates and monitors that non-JVSG funded staff provide individualized career services through the case management framework as appropriate to veterans and other eligible persons when no DVOP specialist is available. All veterans are identified during intake screening. If it is determined the veteran has a Qualifying Employment Barrier and they meet eligibility, then the veteran should be referred to a DVOP for individualized career services.

III. b. 8. Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for Individuals with Disabilities

Recognizing the high unemployment rate among individuals with disabilities and the qualified employee shortage businesses are facing, the Louisiana Works is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and access to all programs, services and facilities. American Job Centers have incorporated practices to effectively serve persons with disabilities through required assistive technology and equipment. Louisiana's one-stop service delivery system complies with provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 with regard to the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology and materials for individuals with disabilities. Louisiana Works Monitoring Unit and Louisiana Rehabilitation work in coordination to conduct on-site reviews of one-stop centers and administrative offices. These reviews are conducted to ensure physical accessibility for customers as well as employees. Reviews are conducted annually and use portions of the Section 188 checklist to ensure programmatic accessibility for customers. Results are included in monitoring reports to ensure Center operations and delivery system partners follow all applicable requirements in the provision and accessibility of services for individuals with disabilities. Any deficiencies noted are part of corrective actions.

The WIC reviews and updates the criteria every two years. The AJCs and AJC network must be certified at least once every three years. The OWD provides guidance to LWDAs on the certification process as outlined in state policy. Certification of sites is evaluated by OWD to ensure accurate completion, adherence to service delivery requirements, accessibility requirements, and appropriate partner presence. OWD requires LWDAs to submit completed certification packets for all comprehensive and affiliate sites included in their local MOU. OWD maintains a list of certified sites. During annual monitoring, staff reviews the material to ensure all certification is up-to-date, and that recertification is conducted in accordance with the local MOU, state policy, and federal regulations.

Louisiana Works continues to work with other state agencies, disability partners and advocacy groups in reviewing and revising monitoring tools and procedures, ensuring the incorporation of accessibility criteria as part of the One-Stop certification, and investments in staff training and technology to make certain AJC staff serve adult job-seekers with disabilities effectively.

III. b. 9. Addressing the Accessibility of the One-Stop Delivery System for Individuals who are English Language Learners

Louisiana places a high priority on ensuring access to workforce training, education programs, and unemployment insurance (UI) assistance for English Language Learners (ELLs). To achieve this goal, Louisiana Works has established a partnership with Language Line Translating Service under a dedicated contract. This service provides translation and interpreting services in multiple languages for UI and American Job Center personnel. The translator works closely with both clients and staff members, ensuring that services are easily accessible, comprehensible, and accurately documented. Every staff member and partner at the American Job Centers receives comprehensive training and information about the Language Line translation service.

IV. Coordination with State Plan Programs

All core partners were consulted for input. Combined plan partners discussed goals and strategies, and each partner contributed information, data, vision and/or goals for their programs as well as coordination of programs with other partners. The State Board oversees and reviews, as appropriate, the Combined State Plan. It will also steer and align with the State Plan, the local and regional planning processes.

Louisiana Works has strong partnerships with the programs included in the combined state plan. Moving forward, Louisiana Works will set a cadence to convene combined state plan partners and regional workforce partners to review program data along with workforce needs both regionally and at the state level. This convening will help ensure that Louisiana stays nimble in addressing the needs of both the state and local communities.

Louisiana is also pursuing waivers to streamline planning and governance structures, including allowing the Combined State Plan to serve as the regional plan and aligning workforce governance under a unified statewide framework. These efforts will strengthen coordination across partners, reduce administrative duplication, and support a more integrated and responsive workforce system.

V. Common Assurances (For All Core Programs)

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, 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;	Yes
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
7. The State has taken the appropriate action to be in compliance with WIOA section 188, Nondiscrimination, as applicable;	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 Barrier (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

Performance Indicator Appendix. Additional Indicators of Performance

N/A

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND

YOUTH ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE I-B GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

a.1.A. Identify the regions and the local workforce development areas designated in the State

Louisiana is organized into eight (8) workforce regions, within which fifteen (15) local workforce development areas (LWDAs) are designated in accordance with WIOA requirements. These designations remain in place to meet federal statutory requirements. While these regions and LWDAs continue to serve as the geographic structure for service delivery and labor market analysis, Louisiana intends to implement a more unified, statewide approach to workforce system governance, planning, and performance management. This approach ensures that services are delivered consistently across the state, while still allowing for responsiveness to regional economic conditions and employer demand.

The following parishes are included in each region:

<u>Region 1</u>

- LWDA 10 - St. Bernard, St. Tammany, and Plaquemines
- LWDA 11 - Jefferson
- LWDA 12 - Orleans
- LWDA 14 - St. Charles, St. James, and St. John

<u>Region 2</u>

- LWDA 20 - Ascension, East Feliciana, Iberville, Livingston, Pointe Coupee, St. Helena, Tangipahoa, Washington, West Baton Rouge, and West Feliciana
- LWDA 21 - East Baton Rouge

<u>Region 3</u>

- LWDA 31 - Assumption, Lafourche, Terrebonne

Region 4

- LWDA 40 - Acadia, Evangeline, Iberia, Lafayette, St. Landry, St. Martin, St. Mary, Vermilion

Region 5

- LWDA 51 - Allen, Beauregard, Calcasieu, Cameron, Jefferson Davis, and Vernon

Region 6

- LWDA 60 - Avoyelles, Catahoula, Concordia, Grant, LaSalle, and Winn
- LWDA 61 – Rapides

Region 7

- LWDA 70 - Bienville, Bossier, Caddo, Claiborne, DeSoto, Lincoln, Natchitoches, Red River, Sabine, and Webster s
- LWDA 71 - Shreveport/Caddo

Region 8

- LWDA 81 - Ouachita
- LWDA 83 - Caldwell, East Carroll, Franklin, Jackson, Madison, Morehouse, Richland, Tensas, Union, and West Carroll

a. 1. 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

Louisiana maintains fifteen (15) designated local workforce development areas (LWDAs) organized within eight (8) workforce regions in accordance with WIOA Section 106. These designations remain in place to meet federal statutory requirements and provide a geographic framework for service delivery and labor market analysis. While these designations are maintained, Louisiana is implementing a unified, statewide approach to workforce system governance, funding, and performance management. Under this model, designated areas operate as components of a coordinated statewide system, with consistent policies, centralized oversight, and aligned service delivery expectations. Louisiana is seeking a waiver to designate the State as a single planning region and to allow the Combined State Plan to serve as the regional plan, establishing a more unified and streamlined approach to workforce planning and strategy development across all regions.

Performed Successfully: A local area has achieved at least 80 percent of their negotiated local performance goal on each performance measure .

Sustained Fiscal Integrity: The local area has not been found in violation of one or more of the following:

- Final determination finding(s) from audits, evaluations or other reviews conducted by state or local governmental agencies or the United States Department of Labor which identify issues of fiscal integrity or misexpended funds due to the willful disregard or failure to comply with any WIA requirements. This

includes failure to grant priority of service or verification of participant eligibility; or

- Gross negligence, defined as a conscious and voluntary disregard of the need to use reasonable care, which is likely to cause foreseeable grave injury or harm to persons, property or both; or

- Failure to observe accepted standards of administration. Local areas must adhere to the uniform administrative requirements set forth in Title 2 CFR Part 200 and Title 29 CFR Parts 95 and 97. Local areas must have fully met their federally-mandated responsibilities for the two previous program years, including timely reporting of WIA participant and expenditure data, timely completion and submission of the required annual single audit and not having been placed on cash hold for longer than 30 days. (WIOA Section 106(e)(2)) (i.e. failure to submit timely expenditure reports to LWC).

In 1999, eight regional labor market areas were developed within the state. Within these regions and consistent with the criteria set forth in section 116(a) of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998, the Governor, in collaboration with the Workforce Investment Council (WIC) grandfathered eighteen (18) local service delivery areas that were developed under the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) of 1982 as Local Workforce Investment Areas (LWIA). Louisiana maintained these LWIAs for many years. After review and analysis of workforce data, and in conjunction with the WIC, chief elected officials (CEO) and local workforce boards, Louisiana realigned its LWIAs from eighteen (18) to fifteen (15).

OWD 4-10 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Initial Designation was developed to address the procedures regarding the initial designation of Local Workforce Development Areas. Louisiana Works in consultation with the state workforce board, local chief elected officials and local boards will review subsequent designation. Since the initial designation, there have been limited changes to the local areas. The process outlined below is to be followed by a unit or units of local government seeking subsequent designation of local workforce development areas under the WIOA.

Step 1: The local government unit(s) seeking subsequent designation of a local workforce development area(s) should coordinate and consult with the CEOs of the local areas and existing local workforce development boards.

Step 2: If a decision is made by the local government unit(s), in coordination with the CEOs, to seek designation under the WIOA, the local government units must undertake a formal public comment period and provide documentation of the results of the formal public comment period with the designation request to partners, including existing local workforce development boards. The formal comment period must allow for comments by businesses, labor organizations, institutions of higher education, community- based organizations, and the public- at-large.

Step 3: The request for subsequent designation of a local workforce development area under the WIOA shall include the following information:

- How the proposed local workforce development area is aligned with labor market areas including information on growth industries and occupations in the local labor market.

- How the proposed local workforce development area is aligned with a regional economic development area within the state of Louisiana.

- How the proposed local workforce development area can effectively administer activities under provisions of the WIOA with available federal and non-federal resources, including a description of area education and training providers, a description of how the available resources will be made available for training activities, and a description of the percentage of overall resources administered by the local area that will be dedicated to training activities.

- Whether the proposed local workforce development area is seeking Initial or Subsequent Designation as defined by WIOA and a statement of assurance that the proposed local workforce development area meets the requirements for Initial or Subsequent Designation under the WIOA.

- For Subsequent Designation requests, a discussion of how the local workforce development area met the three criteria outlined in WIOA section 106(b)(3).

Step 4: After submission of the subsequent designation request, the Louisiana Workforce Investment Council will review the request and provide a consultative opinion and recommendation for the Governor. As required by the WIOA, the Governor will use the consultation of the Louisiana Workforce Investment Council and consult with chief elected officials prior to designating local workforce development areas in Louisiana. The Governor may rely on the submissions from the requestor(s) as meeting the requirement for consultation with chief elected officials, including the public records of meetings and any recorded votes or resolutions regarding the designation request.

Opportunity to Appeal: Pursuant to section 106 (b)(50 of WIOA and 20 CFR 683.630, if the State denies subsequent designation of a local area, the chief elected official(s) may appeal the decision through the following appeals process. Within 15 days from the date of receipt of the notice of denial, the chief elected officials may file an appeal to the Workforce Investment Council by submitting including a statement that the chief elected official(s) is appealing the denial of subsequent designation; the reason(s) why the local area should be designated; and signature(s) of the chief elected official(s). The Workforce Investment Council will provide the parties with the opportunity for a hearing, review the appeal, and make a ruling on the appeal. These procedures must provide an opportunity for a hearing and prescribe appropriate time limits to ensure prompt resolution of the appeal. The Workforce Investment Council shall notify the CEO(s) in writing, of its decision on whether or not to approve subsequent designation of an area as a local area. In the event the Workforce Investment Council denies the appeal or fails to issue a decision within 60 days of the dates the appeal is submitted , the CEO may further appeal the Workforce Investment Council's decision or lack thereof to U.S. Department of Labor (U.S.DOL). Pursuant to 20 CFR 683.640, appeals made to USDOL, must be filled no later than 30 days after receipt of written notification of the denial from the Workforce Investment Council. The appeal must be submitted by certified mail, with return receipt requested, to the following address. Secretary, U.S. Department of Labor 200 Constitution Ave. N.W. Washington, D.C. 20210Louisiana is seeking a waiver to modernize the definition of sustained fiscal integrity to better reflect the needs of a high-performing, integrated workforce system. While the State will continue to apply the federally defined criteria for purposes of designation, this waiver would allow the Governor to incorporate additional state-defined methods of administration that evaluate financial health, operational efficiency, and alignment with statewide service delivery and performance expectations. This includes consideration of administrative cost structures, the ability to meet infrastructure funding obligations, and the extent to which resources are directed toward training, career services, and supportive services.

This approach does not eliminate local workforce development area designations, which will remain in place to meet federal statutory requirements. Instead, it ensures that all designated areas operate within a unified, statewide framework for governance, funding, and accountability. In coordination with Louisiana's broader waiver strategy, including the State Workforce Board serving in the capacity of a local board and the State Workforce Agency serving as the fiscal agent, this waiver strengthens fiscal oversight by aligning compliance with system performance, efficiency, and outcomes.

Additionally, Louisiana is seeking a waiver to designate the State as a single planning region and to allow the Combined State Plan to serve as the regional plan. This approach will streamline planning requirements, reduce administrative burden, and eliminate duplicative regional planning processes while maintaining responsiveness to regional labor market conditions. All elements of the required regional plans are found in this State Plan.

Under this model, workforce strategies will be developed and implemented through a unified statewide framework, with regions continuing to play a critical role in informing employer demand, sector strategies, and service delivery. This ensures that planning is both coordinated at the state level and informed by regional economic conditions.

This approach aligns with Louisiana's broader strategy to integrate governance, planning, and service delivery, ensuring that workforce investments are guided by consistent priorities, data-driven decision-making, and a shared focus on improving employment outcomes and labor force participation.

a. 1. C. Provide the appeals process and policy referred to in section 106(b)(5) of WIOA relating to designation of local areas

A unit of local government (or combination of units) which has requested and been denied an initial designation as a local area under WIOA may appeal the denial to the State Board within 15 calendar days of the date of the decision. The request must include the name of the contact person (e.g., WDB Director) and the address where official notices are to be mailed. The appeal request must be legible, written/typed clearly and concisely and the following must be placed at the top of the first page in capital letters: REQUEST FOR APPEAL. The written/typed appeal must specifically state why the designation as a LWDA should be approved. The request shall be no longer than five pages. (Exhibits and attachments are not included in the five-page limit). Within five calendar days of the receipt of the appeal, the State Board will contact the appellant to schedule a hearing date. The State Board will conduct the appeal hearing and provide a written decision to the appellant no later than ten calendar days after the hearing. Appeal of State Board Decision

If the appeal to the State Board does not result in approval for initial designation, the appellant, if appealing an initial designation under WIOA Section 106(b)(2) or subsequent designation under Section 106(b)(3), may request a review by the Secretary of Labor. An appeal to the Secretary must be submitted by the appellant or grant recipient no later than 30 calendar days after receipt of written notification from the State Board that the appeal has been denied.

If the Secretary determines that the appellant was not accorded procedural rights under the appeal process established under the above section, or that the area meets the requirements for initial or subsequent designation in WIOA Section 106(b)(2) or 106(b)(3), the Secretary may require that the area be designated as a workforce development area. The Secretary must issue a written decision to the Governor.

a. 1. D. Provide the appeals process and policy referred to in section 121(h)(2)(E) of WIOA relating to determinations for infrastructure funding

Local funding agreements must satisfy the requirements of section 121(h)(2)(E) of WIOA. The State has provided guidance to the LWDAs which contains an appeals process for the allocation of One-Stop Center infrastructure funding. The guidance includes the State infrastructure funding mechanism to be implemented in the event that a LWDA fails to reach consensus on funding methods.

If a Local WDB does not believe they will be able to come to an agreement regarding joint infrastructure costs with any of their AJC partners by (May 1st each year thereafter), they must notify Louisiana Works in writing immediately. If a Local WDB is unable to complete an IFA with all its AJC partners, then the SFM will be triggered and Louisiana Works, with the Governor's approval, must then determine the required contributions of each AJC partner.

All AJCs partner programs and/or the Local Board may appeal the SFM decision. Appeals must include justification by the program and/or Local Board and be based on believed noncompliance with WIOA that outlines the Governor's funding allocations.

Upon receipt of the specific terms of a State Funding Mechanism, any Local WDB or one-stop required partner may appeal for cause, within 30 calendar days, in writing, Louisiana Works determination regarding the portion of funds (or non-cash contributions) it is to provide. The appeal letter must be addressed to the attention of the Secretary of the Louisiana Works or his/her designee, include an introduction identifying the appellant and designating the letter as a formal appeal, and contain citations from WIOA or the WIOA Final Rules in Title 29 or Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) that support the appeal. Furthermore, the petitioner must make a case that the State's determination is inconsistent with: the proportionate-share requirements in 20 CFR 678.737, or the cost-contribution limitations in 20 CFR 678.730(c), or the cost-contribution caps in 20 CFR 678.738

The letter must be signed by signatory authority (electronic signature is acceptable) and dated.

Louisiana Works will acknowledge receipt of the appeal and issue a determination, under the authority delegated by the Governor, no later than 60 days upon the date receipt of appeal. Until the appeals process is completed, the appellant will remain liable for its contribution as originally determined in the State Funding Mechanisms. If a one-stop partner's appeal to Louisiana Work, using the process described in 20 CFR 678.750 is successful and results in a change to the one-stop partner's infrastructure-cost contributions, then the Local Area's MOU *must* be updated to reflect the final one-stop partner infrastructure cost contributions.

a. 2. A. Provide State policies or guidance for the statewide workforce development system and for use of State funds for workforce investment activities

Louisiana administers WIOA funds for the purpose of development and funding innovative statewide activities that will improve service delivery strategies and target specific populations throughout the state. State policies for the statewide workforce development system include:

- OWD 4-11.1 - WIOA Board Composition and Certification - Guidance on composition and certification criteria for LWDBs
- OWD 2-13.4 - WIOA Eligible Training Providers - Guidance to LWDA, training providers and other stakeholders on the certification process and procedures.
- OWD 2-21.3 - WIOA Title I Youth Program Operations - Codifies TEGL WIOA 23-14 guidance for the operation implementation WIOA Youth formula funds.
- OWD 2-23.2 Integrated Service Delivery - Defines the roles and responsibilities for staff in the One-Stop Centers; and key definitions
- OWD 2-24.3 - WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Eligibility Policy – Guidance to LWDAs on requirements for eligibility
- OWD 2-27 – Individual Employment Plan (IEP) and Labor Market Information (LMI) for Trade Affected Workers - Codifies TEGL 22-08, LMI is a tool that provides information for IEP
- OWD 2-29.2 - Guidelines on Co-enrollment and Common Intake – Guidance for LWDAs on requirements for co-enrollment of adult, dislocated workers and youth
- OWD 4-14 - Use of WIOA funds for Statewide Employment and Training Activities - Guidance on allowable statewide activities
- OWD 4-15 - WIOA Title I Allocations and Financial Reporting - Guidance on allocations to LWDAs

a. 2. 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.

The State will utilize Governor's reserve funds, as authorized under WIOA Sections 128(a) and 133(b), to support statewide workforce system priorities and initiatives. Consistent with federal flexibility, Louisiana may use these funds across Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker activities to advance a coordinated, demand-driven approach that aligns resources with workforce and economic development needs.

Governor's set-aside funds will be used to support statewide strategies that strengthen service delivery, expand access to training and work-based learning opportunities, and improve alignment with employer demand. These investments will support initiatives such as sector-based training, rapid response to economic development opportunities, workforce system modernization, and targeted efforts to address barriers to employment.

Louisiana will also use these funds to support a comprehensive, statewide evaluation and continuous

improvement framework. The State will implement standardized evaluation methodologies across all Title I programs to assess program effectiveness, service quality, and outcomes, including employment, retention, and wage progression. Evaluation activities will include performance analysis, participant and employer feedback, and ongoing review of service delivery strategies to ensure alignment with statewide goals. As part of this approach, Louisiana will incorporate pay-for-performance strategies into the use of Governor's reserve funds, where appropriate, to align funding with verified outcomes. This may include structuring contracts and funding mechanisms to tie payments to the achievement of specific performance benchmarks, such as employment placement, retention, wage progression, and credential attainment. These models will be designed to incentivize high-quality service delivery, promote accountability, and ensure that public investments are directly linked to measurable results.

Customer experience and employer engagement data will be integrated into this framework through surveys, focus groups, and other feedback mechanisms. These insights will be used to inform policy, improve service delivery, and guide technical assistance and performance management efforts. Findings will be incorporated into the WIOA Annual Report and used to support data-driven decision-making across the system.

In alignment with Louisiana's broader workforce system transformation, Governor's reserve funds will be deployed within a unified statewide framework for governance, planning, and accountability. This ensures that investments are coordinated, scalable, and aligned with the State's strategic priorities, while still informed by regional labor market conditions and employer demand.

Louisiana is also seeking a waiver to expand the flexible use of Governor's set-aside funds to support integrated, statewide initiatives. This flexibility will allow the State to more effectively align funding with high-impact strategies, including enhanced evaluation activities, system-wide performance analysis, and continuous improvement efforts. By leveraging this flexibility, Louisiana will strengthen its ability to assess program effectiveness, direct resources toward proven approaches, and ensure that workforce investments produce measurable outcomes for participants and employers.

a. 2. 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.

Louisiana Works utilizes a contracting process to execute its Rapid Response strategies and deliver the full range of activities necessary to plan for, respond to, and support worker transitions following a layoff event or business closure. Services are customized to meet the specific needs of employers and affected workers and are delivered at the worksite, prior to separation whenever possible, and at times convenient for both employers and workers. This proactive approach ensures early access to information, services, and reemployment pathways.

- The State Rapid Response team oversees an organized, multi-faceted response to all qualifying layoff events and ensures coordination across state, regional, and local partners. Core Rapid Response activities include:

- Posting Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act notices on the Louisiana Works website and distributing notices;

- Establishing direct contact with affected employers and labor representatives to assess needs and coordinate services;

- Coordinating with local leadership, American Job Centers (AJCs), and regional workforce partners to plan service delivery;

- Engaging community-based organizations and supportive service providers to address barriers to employment;

- Arranging and facilitating Rapid Response employer meetings; and

- Conducting Rapid Response worker orientations to provide timely information on employment services, unemployment insurance, training opportunities, and supportive resources.

Through One Door, Rapid Response serves as the initial point of entry for dislocated workers, triggering coordinated engagement with WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker services, Wagner-Peyser Employment Services, Unemployment Insurance (UI), Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), and other applicable programs.

Rapid Response staff work closely with local AJCs to ensure that affected workers experience a single, aligned service pathway rather than fragmented referrals. This integration allows workers to receive rapid assessment, career services, reemployment assistance, training referrals, and supportive services through a unified system. One Door coordination also strengthens data sharing, reduces duplication of services, and improves outcomes by aligning case management, employer engagement, and labor market information.

Louisiana's Rapid Response team collaborates closely with industry sector strategies and business services staff to conduct ongoing outreach to targeted employers. These relationships enable rapid coordination of hiring events, job fairs, and customized recruitment activities for dislocated workers. To further support reemployment, Louisiana operates the HALOW (Hire A Laid-Off Worker) initiative, which shows that workers to prospective employers by sharing anonymized profiles that include job title, length of employment, parish of residence, education level, and veteran status.

a. 2. D. Describe the State policies and procedures to provide Rapid Responses in cases of natural disasters including coordination with FEMA and other entities.

Louisiana has developed a comprehensive and well-tested disaster response and recovery plan the engages state agencies for specific roles in both Emergency Preparation and Recovery. Louisiana Works plays a vital role in this team support the central command operations. Rapid Response is a critical component to this plan. Louisiana Works works closely with the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP) and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to coordinate Rapid Response activities in cases of natural disasters. Louisiana Works maintains two Mobile Workforce Centers (MWC) operated by Rapid Response staff. In the event of a natural disaster resulting in job loss or other interruption of employment, the MWC units can be deployed immediately, anywhere across the state to provide services when and where needed. These units are essentially local offices on wheels, equipped with computer work stations, printers and device-charging hubs. They operate on generators with dual Wi-Fi and satellite communication redundancies. Once a natural disaster has been declared, Rapid Response is prepared for activation.

a. 2. 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)).

Although the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program is in sunset status and new petitions can no longer be filed, Louisiana continues to provide services to dislocated workers covered under previously filed and certified petitions, consistent with federal guidance.

Workers covered under existing TAA certifications are notified of their eligibility and provided information on available benefits and services through coordinated in-person or virtual orientations. These orientations

ensure that affected workers receive a clear understanding of their remaining options under TAA and are seamlessly connected to WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker services and other One Door programs, as appropriate.

b. 1. Work-Based Training Models

Louisiana is submitting a waiver to increase the job training employer reimbursement. The purpose of this waiver is to increase work-based learning opportunities by reducing barriers to employer participation and strengthening overall employer engagement. Specifically, the waiver would permit Louisiana to reimburse employers at a rate exceeding the current statutory maximum.

This proposal aligns with the state's broader initiative to expand access to work-based learning experiences at both the secondary and postsecondary levels. It will also support Louisiana's efforts to prioritize on-the-job training (OJT) opportunities for individuals facing significant barriers to employment, including the long-term unemployed, justice-involved individuals, and veterans. By increasing reimbursement rates, the state aims to provide employers with the financial support necessary to invest in these high-potential, but often higher-risk, populations.

b. 2. Registered Apprenticeship

Registered Apprenticeship is currently aligned with WIOA through initiatives of the State Apprenticeship Expansion (SAE) grant awarded to the Louisiana Works by USDOL. One of these initiatives includes a supportive services pilot for apprentices similar to those offered at the local comprehensive career centers. SAE supportive services have provided tools, childcare assistance, and gas reimbursement for apprentices with financial need, supplementing funds for WIOA participants who need additional support and providing resources for those who are not eligible for WIOA but still require such assistance. These supportive services will continue until the SAE grant ends in June 2026.

Louisiana Works partnered with local boards to execute this incentive, braiding funds with OJT contracts and ITAs to increase the amount of WIOA funds utilized by employers with a Registered Apprenticeship model and encourage Registered Apprenticeship expansion across the State of Louisiana.

ApprenticeshipLA.com utilizes a WIOA pre-screening form to determine potential WIOA eligibility for apprentice applicants. This has proved beneficial, as many are unaware of the services provided at comprehensive job centers. The pre-screening form increases the likelihood of determining eligibility before employment where afterward they may no longer be eligible for OJT contracts, supportive services, and/or individual training accounts (ITAs).

During National Apprenticeship Week, Louisiana Works coordinates with local workforce boards and other workforce partners in hosting events focused on informing employers of the benefits of Registered Apprenticeship and how WIOA funding can amplify programs. These events help strengthen partnerships between Louisiana Works, the local boards, and employers.

b. 3. Training Provider Eligibility Procedure

Louisiana Works intends to improve upon the existing structured, data-driven approach to the management and oversight of the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) to ensure that approved training programs lead to recognized credentials, align with high-demand, high-wage occupations, and produce measurable employment outcomes for participants. ETPL policies, review processes, and supporting system functionality are designed to promote transparency, consistency, and accountability across all providers. In addition, Louisiana Works is required to disseminate the State's list of eligible providers of training services, including eligible providers of non-traditional training services, performance information and program costs.

Louisiana Works is currently reviewing the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) process including how the agency receives and reviews applications, the mechanism for program data to be reported by training providers, and the performance review process. Louisiana Works is developing a rubric to evaluate new

applicants and renewal applicants.

The statewide standardized system aims to eliminate duplication and provide uniformity in the provider information gathered for the statewide list. Currently potential training providers must submit an application for each course of study or program being proposed, including cost information on each course or program. Each training provider must submit one (1) single application containing all required information on the training institution and one (1) on each program being proposed to receive WIOA training funds. Louisiana Works will review the application for training providers to report programs to determine areas of improvement. This includes identifying areas in which training providers such as Louisiana Career and Technical colleges are providing duplicative information. The goal of the application analysis is to remove burdensome program reporting while maintaining program efficacy.

Louisiana Works will implement a newly designed weighted rubric for ETPL provider approval to ensure consistent, objective decision-making. Providers are evaluated across clearly defined areas using documented evidence rather than narrative-only review. Core evaluation areas are utilized for both initial applications and bi-annual renewals:

- Credential Alignment & Recognition: Program credentials align directly with high-demand, high-wage occupations; credential is industry-recognized and portable across employers.

- Credential Attainment & Exit Points: Provides measurable attainment data with clear formal and intermediary exit points; supports stackable credentials and skill portfolios.

- Employment Outcomes & Wage Progression: Demonstrates high employment rates at immediate, 2nd, and 4th quarter exits; wages exceed non-credentialed peers.

- Program Completion & Success: High completion rate (≥80%) with verified student outcomes tied to employment or continued education.

- Provider & Instructor Qualifications: Provider in operation ≥2 years, registered and in good standing with state and Secretary of State; instructors have verified credentials, experience, and resumes on file.

- Fiscal & Compliance Controls: Includes verified fiscal controls; demonstrates compliance with financial and administrative standards.

- Data Integrity & Tracking: Comprehensive, validated data tracking for credential, employment, and wage outcomes; aligns with CIP–SOC–STAR job crosswalk.

- Continuous Improvement & Review: Program regularly reviewed and updated using performance data; integrates intermediary exit tracking and employer feedback.

- Each area carries an assigned weight and includes defined scoring descriptors and minimum performance expectations. Approval decisions are based on a cumulative score, ensuring providers meet baseline quality standards across all critical areas.

Initial Eligibility

- Providers must submit an application to the State for training program(s) it wishes to offer. In addition to any local requirements, providers must follow the process outlined in this policy and submit student and performance data as required by the State.

- Providers are eligible only for programs that qualify and are approved.

- Providers must submit evidence of accreditation and/or licensure from the appropriate state or other governing body.

- Distance learning programs are eligible only when offered by institutions that are fully accredited by a recognized accrediting body.

- Initial eligibility is limited to a period of one (1) calendar year for each approved program.

- The provider must renew its eligibility and establish continued eligibility for each approved program to continue receiving WIOA funds after the program's one-year period of eligibility ends.

- Providers must contact the State every two years to renew each program's continued eligibility to receive WIOA funds.

- The State shall provide a written notice of determination of acceptance or rejection of an initial application in HiRE to an applying entity within thirty (30) calendar days of the receipt of the completed initial eligibility determination application.

Louisiana Works recognizes stackable and intermediary credentials as meaningful indicators of participant progress and workforce value. ETPL providers are evaluated on their ability to document and report intermediate exit points within program pathways, including certifications that support entry into employment even if a participant does not complete the highest-level credential. Provider scoring reflects both the availability of these credentials and documented outcomes associated with them.

Louisiana Works employs a collaborative, cross-functional approach to ETPL oversight, using performance data, system reporting, and stakeholder feedback to monitor provider quality and maintain program integrity. This approach ensures that the ETPL remains a reliable, high-quality resource for participants seeking training that leads to meaningful employment outcomes. Louisiana Works is responsible for removing existing training providers/programs from the certified training provider/program list under the following conditions: (There must be documented proof that these conditions exist).

- The training provider intentionally supplied inaccurate information; the termination will remain in effect for a minimum of two years.

- The training provider substantially violated any requirement under WIOA or state policy, the termination will remain in effect for a minimum of two years.

- If a Registered Apprenticeship program is deregistered, it shall be removed from the ETPL. Information on any deregistered program will be provided by the State Director of Apprenticeship.

- A provider who has been removed from the list of eligible training providers is liable to repay all adult and dislocated worker training funds received during the period of noncompliance and will remain off the ETPL for a minimum of two years.

Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors are automatically eligible for placement on the state- approved ETP list and will remain on the list as long as the program is registered or until the program sponsor notifies the State that it no longer wants to be included on the list. However, registered apprenticeship programs are given an opportunity to consent to inclusion on the ETPL before being placed on the list. Registered Apprenticeship programs are not subject to the same application and performance information requirements or to a period of initial or continued eligibility as other providers. In addition, LWDBs cannot establish additional criteria and information requirements or establish higher levels of performance for these entities to provide training services in the local areas.

b. 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).

American Job Center (AJC) staff are required to assess and document priority status at the point of intake using standardized eligibility determination procedures. Priority populations are identified through self-attestation and verification using data-sharing mechanisms and partnerships with public assistance programs, including SNAP E&T, TANF, and Medicaid agencies where applicable. Through partnership with the Louisiana Department of Health, Louisiana Works is developing a technology based system to integrate LDH data systems with Louisiana Works data systems to automate the identification of priority service candidates.

The collaborative efforts, aligned to the One Door to Work model, include the move of SNAP E&T and TANF workforce development programs to Louisiana Works. This has allowed for Louisian Works staff to cross walk case management models for the programs to the historic case management models. Louisiana Works is developing an integrated case management model that uses a whole of government approach to providing support.

Development of a comprehensive Local Outreach Plan geared towards increased enrollment and service delivery to individuals with barriers to employment. This includes a broadening of the current local area service delivery base to identify and collaborate with advocates for veterans and their spouses, the homeless, low-income, formerly incarcerated, single mothers, and individuals with limited English proficiency or cultural barriers. This plan will be reviewed during the annual State WIOA Monitoring site visit. Designating staff who will serve as the lead coordinator(s) of Local Area outreach efforts to serve individuals with barriers to employment. The lead coordinator will be interviewed during the annual State WIOA Monitoring site visit.

b. 5. Describe the State's criteria regarding local area transfer of funds between the adult and dislocated worker programs

Louisiana will accept requests allowing a maximum of 50 percent transfer in the first year that program funds are available. In the second year in which funds are available at the local level for expenditure, the State will accept subsequent requests for additional transfers at 25% increments up to the maximum. The Transfer Funding Request Form must be completed and attached to the letterhead.

The written request must include the following information:

- The transfer fund source (i.e., from adult to dislocated worker or dislocated worker to adult);
- The dollar amount of the transfer request, including the percentage share of the base allocation represented by that dollar amount;
- The reason(s) for the transfer; (Example: Economic conditions such as high/low unemployment, business closures, etc.);
- Signed approval from the full local board or Board Chairperson requesting the transfer.

Transfer of funds process

Requests to transfer WIOA Adult or Dislocated Worker Funding must be submitted to Louisiana Works Office of Workforce Development to the Assistant Secretary.

Louisiana Works' Office of Workforce Development will make recommendations to the Assistant Secretary based on funds availability and business case submitted by the LWDA. As part of the review, may request additional information from LWDBs, however, OWD may alternatively deny the request or authorize a partial transfer of funds. Following approval of a fund transfer, OWD will notify LWDBs by email, which will also include the appropriate grant modification packages for LWDBs to complete and sign.

b. 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).

Ongoing partnership, collaboration and regularly scheduled trainings with the Local Workforce Development Areas are essential to ensure understanding of and compliance with the policy. Trainings are scheduled quarterly, more frequently if needed. This facilitates a seamless delivery of services most suited to participant needs. Louisiana Works requires the LWDA to co-enroll trade-affected workers in WIOA Dislocated Worker (DW) services if the worker is eligible and does not decline to do so. Boards must determine the eligibility of potential trade-affected workers for WIOA DW program services and provide career and training services, as applicable. Additionally, following TAA petition certification, LWDA Office staff must enroll trade-affected workers in the WIOA DW program and provide appropriate services throughout the duration of TAA program participation.

b. 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)

To promote the integration of employment and training services as envisioned by WIOA, Louisiana Works encourages trade-affected workers to access all appropriate services to help them re-enter the workforce through their local American Job Center Offices. Services include labor market information, training referrals, career planning, and follow-up services. Louisiana Works' Employment and Training Services for Dislocated Workers details the formal strategy to ensure statewide availability of services to TAA participants. Local Boards have established policies that outline their trade service strategies to assist trade affected workers in obtaining suitable employment as an alternative to training referrals; promote the use of WIOA career services to support successful reemployment; and help them in employment retention and career advancement.

"Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Program Sunset," (TEGL 13-21) ensures that Local Boards continue to administer the TAA program and serve trade-affected workers according to statutory guidance provided by DOL during the TAA program sunset. Furthermore, TAA staff members routinely call and email previously certified workers who have not yet availed themselves of TAA services as eligibility does not expire. TAA staff members review TAA outreach. Co-enrollment is still a regulatory requirement for all TAA participants served, regardless of petition number.

b. 8. Describe the State's process for familiarizing one-stop staff with the TAA program. 20 CFR 618.804(j), 20 CFR 618.305

Louisiana Works Trade staff uses a variety of methods to ensure that the Local American Job Center staff are familiar with the TAA program. Methods include providing programmatic and skill-building information through Local Board calls, webinars, training events, and customized technical assistance. Participation in job fairs and community events at the AJC by Trade staff is frequent.

The aim of case management and support provided to participants is for it to be coordinated across all co-enrolled programs. Stronger collaboration and coordination will be achieved through the referral process between Wagner-Peyser and RESEA, referrals made to SNAP, co-enrollment referrals with WIOA, and continued connection between Wagner-Peyser and Business Services after Trade participants complete training.

c. 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.[11] 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.

Currently, youth workforce investment activities are procured and delivered in accordance with WIOA requirements through processes administered at the local level. Local workforce development boards may follow local procurement policies, provided those policies are not less stringent than Louisiana State procurement requirements. In all cases, procurement must be conducted in accordance with federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

Local boards are responsible for identifying and selecting youth service providers based on criteria established in the State Plan. These criteria are designed to ensure that providers demonstrate the capacity to deliver high-quality services and achieve performance outcomes aligned with the primary indicators of performance under WIOA Section 116(b)(2)(A)(ii). Providers are evaluated based on their ability to:

- Implement effective outreach, engagement, enrollment, and retention strategies, particularly for out-of-school youth (OSY).
- Demonstrate partnerships with eligible training providers, institutions of higher education, and employers in in-demand industries.
- Provide a continuum of services supporting attainment of a high school diploma or equivalent, transition to postsecondary education or training, and entry into employment.
- Utilize career pathways and sector strategies with structured progression and integrated supportive services.
- Deliver work-based learning opportunities that lead to employment.
- Provide intensive case management and support services to address barriers and support successful program completion and employment retention.

Local boards must award grants or contracts for youth services through a competitive process that considers the provider's ability to meet performance accountability measures, unless a sole-source justification is determined to be appropriate due to a lack of available providers. Where a provider performs multiple roles within the system, appropriate agreements and internal controls must be in place to ensure transparency, accountability, and separation of duties.

In addition, local areas are encouraged to incorporate performance-based contracting approaches that emphasize outcomes, such as employment and retention, rather than outputs alone. However, current statutory limitations restrict the use of pay-for-performance strategies to no more than 10 percent of local youth funds, limiting the State's ability to fully implement outcome-driven contracting models at scale.

Louisiana is seeking a waiver to allow for the competitive procurement of youth workforce activities at the state level and to expand the use of pay-for-performance contracting strategies. This waiver will enable the State to implement a more coordinated and standardized procurement framework, aligned with its broader strategy to operate a unified, statewide workforce system.

Under this approach, the State will have the ability to conduct competitive procurement processes that establish consistent expectations for provider performance, service delivery, and alignment with workforce outcomes. This model will reduce fragmentation, improve consistency in service quality, and ensure that providers are selected based on demonstrated capacity to achieve measurable results.

The waiver will also allow Louisiana to expand the use of pay-for-performance models by tying funding more directly to the achievement of outcomes such as employment placement, retention, wage progression, and credential attainment. This will strengthen accountability, incentivize high-quality service delivery, and align provider performance with long-term participant success.

While services will continue to be delivered through a regional structure, providers will operate within a more unified statewide framework for procurement, performance management, and oversight. This approach ensures that youth workforce services are responsive to labor market needs, aligned with statewide priorities, and focused on delivering measurable outcomes for participants.

Local areas are encouraged to refocus traditional performance—based contracts to place an emphasis on the contractor achieving outcomes, like participants obtaining and retaining good jobs, rather than outputs like the number of people served. Currently, no more than 10 percent of the local youth allotment can be expended on

the implementation of WIOA pay—for—performance contract strategies for youth training services and other activities. This limitation restricts the State's ability to fully implement outcome-based contracting models at scale and limits incentives for providers to deliver long-term, results-driven services.

Louisiana is seeking a waiver to expand its authority to use pay for performance contracting models. This expansion cannot be fully achieved under current statutory limitations without waiver authority. This would allow Louisiana to tie payment to measurable outcomes such as employment, wage progression, and credential attainment for Youth. Expanding this authority will incentivize service providers to deliver high-quality, results-driven programs that lead to sustained success for participants. It will also drive innovation in program design and strengthen accountability, ensuring that public funds are used effectively to achieve measurable workforce outcomes for young people.

Local Boards may directly provide some or all of the youth workforce service activities. If a Local Board serves as the youth service provider and performs other roles such as fiscal agent or AJC Operator, the Local Board must have appropriate firewalls in place between the staff providing services, the staff responsible for oversight and monitoring of services, and the Local Board. The firewalls must demonstrate internal controls and preventing conflicts of interest.

c. 2. Explain how the State assists local workforce boards in achieving 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.

Louisiana Works partners closely with the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE), the Board of Regents, local workforce, and Louisiana Economic Development to expand and enhance high quality work-based learning opportunities statewide. This collaboration supports aligned career pathways that integrate education, training, and employment, with a particular focus on Industry-Based Credentials (IBCs), internships, pre-apprenticeships, and Registered Apprenticeships.

The Apprenticeship Unit delivered a series of technical assistance seminars focused on the effective use of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds to support apprenticeship and work-based learning models. These sessions emphasized strategies for braiding and aligning funding sources across partner programs to promote sustainability, scalability, and long-term workforce pipeline development.

Louisiana Works also launched an Apprenticeship Pilot in collaboration with the Ouachita Parish Workforce Development Board to strengthen alignment between WIOA funded services and the Registered Apprenticeship system. This pilot supports increased employer engagement, expanded access for youth and adults, and improved coordination between education and workforce partners. Additionally, a tri-agency workgroup consisting of the Board of Regents, the Louisiana Department of Education, and Louisiana Works was tasked with developing a teacher residency apprenticeship in collaboration with colleges, the Department of Education, and local school systems.

Louisiana Works has partnered with LED FastStart to attract new business and industry partners interested in collaborating with local school districts. Additionally, Louisiana has launched a pilot with Louisiana Department of Education to expand the Jobs for America's Graduate program to include a focus on pay internship experience for juniors and seniors. This aligns to a concerted effort in Louisiana to expand early access to work place experiences. This experience is supported by the strong structures in place for the JAG programs employability skills trainings.

The Local Boards are responsible for developing local plans for the governor's approval, designating local One-Stop Operators (OSO), designating eligible partners of training services, negotiating local performance measures with the state workforce board and the Governor, monitoring local system performance against established performance measures, and helping to develop the labor market information system for local areas. Local Boards will facilitate relationships between Partner Programs, local entities, and supportive service

agencies for a strengthened service delivery in regard to provision of services to youth, including individuals with disabilities. These relationships will include, as a minimum, procedures for youth participant co-enrollment and common intake as necessary to integrate intake, case management, and reporting. This shall be the case for all Partner Programs under which youth may be served.

Youth services shall begin with a systematic approach to gathering information about strengths and assets, need and challenges, and interests and goals. These assessments shall be used to determining program eligibility and subsequently guide the development of individualized plans and all other Case Management activities. Youth shall be co-enrolled as necessary in any programs under WIOA funding sources and any Partner Program that is not WIOA funded, e.g., Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, Children and Family Services that is necessary based on their needs assessment. Youth will be simultaneously co-enrolled in any and all programs under which they are eligible for and receiving services. This will prevent youth having to wait until they exit one program in order to access services offered by other programs and allow them to receive the best combination of services from different funding streams.

c.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.

Students in Louisiana high schools have early access to registered apprenticeship as part of their high school course options through the Fast Forward program. These opportunities serve students in mechanical design, component manufacturing, hospitality, and software design. Students gain technical and soft skills embed on the job training with industry tools, welding fundamentals and processes, software engineering and full-stack development, and on-the-job work experience. Louisiana Works actively works with existing and potential registered apprenticeship programs to identify their ability to work with youth candidates.

Local Boards must also identify youth service providers based on criteria in the State Plan *(Title 20 CFR Section 681.400)*. The State Plan establishes that Local Boards should select service providers that do the following:

- Employ proven recruitment strategies of effective outreach, engagement, enrollment, and retention of OSY.
- Demonstrate meaningful partnerships with eligible training providers, institutions of higher education, and employers from in-demand industries.
- Offer a continuum of services that allow participants to obtain a GED/High School diploma, enroll into postsecondary education, and obtain employment within their chosen career path.
- Utilize career pathways and sector strategy models with a structured sequence of activities, as well as multiple entry and exit points that provide adequate supportive services.
- Use structured work-based learning, such as paid and unpaid work experiences and career exploration that leads to gainful employment.
- Provide intensive case management and support services to help youth overcome complex barriers, successfully complete the program, and retain employment.

c.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.

As outlined in OWD policy 2-21.3 "Youth Program Operations" Local Boards are responsible for establishing local definitions and eligibility documentation requirements for "requires additional assistance" as it relates to both OSY and ISY. The local policy should be reasonable, quantifiable, and based on evidence that the specific characteristics of the youth identified in the policy objectively requires additional assistance. Some examples could include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Have repeated at least one secondary grade level or are one year over age for grade.
- Have a core grade point average of less than 1.5.
- For each year of secondary education, are at least two semester credits behind the rate required to graduate from high school.
- Are emancipated youth.
- Have aged out of foster care.
- Are previous dropouts or have been suspended five or more times or have been expelled.
- Have received court/agency referrals mandating school attendance.
- Are deemed at risk of dropping out of school by a school official.
- Have been referred to or are being treated by an agency for substance abuse related problem.
- Have experienced recent traumatic events, are victims of abuse, or reside in an abusive environment as documented by a school official or other qualified professional.
- Have serious emotional, medical or psychological problems as documented by a qualified professional.
- Have never held a job (applies to OSY).
- Have been fired from a job within the 12 months prior to application (applies to OSY).
- Have never held a full-time job for more than 13 consecutive weeks (applies to OSY).

d.1

d. Single-area State Requirements (D1-D4)

Louisiana is not currently operating as a single-area state under WIOA and therefore the requirements outlined in this section do not presently apply. Louisiana currently operates with designated local workforce development areas and corresponding governance and administrative structures.

However, Louisiana is seeking multiple waivers as part of this State Plan, including the State Board Serving as Local Board waiver, the State Workforce Agency Serving as Fiscal Agent waiver, and the Combined State Plan serving as a Regional Plan waiver, which together establish the framework for operating as a single statewide workforce development area.

If these waivers are approved, Louisiana will implement a unified, statewide governance, planning, and service delivery model. In that context, the requirements of this section will become applicable, and Louisiana will operationalize them through a centralized, statewide approach consistent with federal requirements.

ANY COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD THAT REPRESENT DISAGREEMENT WITH THE PLAN. (WIOA SECTION 108(D)(3).) 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).) 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).)

Louisiana has a total of 15 Local Workforce Development Boards statewide. Additionally, there will always be an opportunity to receive any comments during the public comment period for the state as well as the local areas.

d. 4. A description of the roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners.

Current State:
Roles and resource contributions of one-stop partners are currently defined through locally negotiated Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) and Infrastructure Funding Agreements (IFAs), consistent with WIOA Section 121 and implementing regulations. These agreements establish each partner's responsibilities within the one-stop delivery system, including service delivery expectations, referral processes, and proportionate contributions to infrastructure and shared system costs.

Partner contributions are determined through locally negotiated methodologies based on factors such as proportionate use, relative benefit, and programmatic alignment. Contributions may include direct funding, in-kind resources, staffing, and provision of services. Louisiana Works provides statewide policy guidance, technical assistance, and oversight to support the development and execution of MOUs and IFAs and to ensure compliance with federal cost allocation requirements.

Future State (Subject to Waiver Approval):
If approved to operate as a single statewide workforce development area, Louisiana will implement a standardized, statewide framework for defining one-stop partner roles and resource contributions. This framework will replace fragmented, locally negotiated approaches with a consistent methodology aligned with the State's integrated service delivery model and centralized fiscal structure.

Under this model:

- Roles and Responsibilities:
  One-stop partner roles will be clearly defined through standardized, statewide agreements that establish consistent expectations for service delivery, co-enrollment, referral, and participation in the integrated One Door system. These agreements will ensure that all required partners contribute to a unified, customer-centered service delivery model.

- Resource Contributions and Cost Allocation:
  Partner contributions will be determined through a statewide infrastructure funding methodology aligned with WIOA requirements and based on objective factors such as proportionate use, relative benefit, and program alignment. This approach will ensure consistency, transparency, and equitable distribution of costs across partners while maintaining full compliance with federal cost principles under 2 CFR Part 200.

- Flexible, Regionally Responsive Application:
  While the methodology will be standardized statewide, Louisiana will retain the ability to apply funding and resource alignment at a regional level where appropriate. This may include pooling resources across regions or service areas to support shared infrastructure, technology, and service delivery strategies, while maintaining a consistent formula-based approach to cost allocation.

- Centralized Oversight and Accountability:
  The State Workforce Agency, serving as the fiscal agent, will oversee the collection, management, and allocation of partner contributions, ensuring consistency in application and compliance. The State Workforce Development Board will provide strategic oversight and ensure alignment with statewide

priorities, service standards, and performance outcomes.

- Integration with Service Delivery and Technology:
  Partner contributions will support a fully integrated service delivery model, including shared technology platforms, common intake and case management systems, and coordinated service strategies across workforce and required partner programs. This ensures that infrastructure investments directly support improved access, service quality, and participant outcomes.

Through this approach, Louisiana will strengthen alignment across partners, reduce administrative burden associated with repeated local negotiations, and ensure that infrastructure resources are deployed in a manner that supports consistent, high-quality service delivery statewide while maintaining the flexibility to respond to regional workforce needs.

d. 5. The competitive process used to award the subgrants and contracts for title I activities.

Current State:
Subgrants and contracts for WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth activities are currently awarded through locally administered procurement processes in accordance with WIOA requirements and applicable federal, state, and local procurement laws and regulations. Local workforce development boards are responsible for conducting competitive procurements, evaluating proposals, and selecting service providers based on established criteria, including demonstrated capacity to deliver services and achieve performance outcomes aligned with WIOA primary indicators of performance.vProcurement processes must ensure full and open competition, transparency, and accountability. Local areas may utilize a variety of procurement methods, including competitive solicitations and, where appropriate, sole-source procurement consistent with federal and state requirements. Louisiana Works provides statewide policy guidance, oversight, and technical assistance to support compliance and promote consistency across local procurement activities.

Future State (Subject to Waiver Approval):
If approved to operate under a unified, statewide workforce system, Louisiana will implement a more coordinated and standardized approach to the procurement of Title I activities. This approach will align with the State's broader waiver strategy, including centralized governance, fiscal oversight, and performance accountability.

Under this model: Statewide Competitive Procurement Framework:
Louisiana will have the ability to conduct competitive procurement processes at the state level to establish consistent standards for provider selection, service delivery, and performance expectations. This will reduce fragmentation, improve quality and consistency of services, and ensure alignment with statewide workforce priorities and labor market needs.

Performance-Based Contracting:
The State will expand the use of performance-based and pay-for-performance contracting strategies, subject to waiver approval, to align funding with measurable outcomes such as employment, retention, wage progression, and credential attainment. These models will incentivize high-quality service delivery and strengthen accountability for results.

Flexible Service Delivery Model:
While procurement may be coordinated at the state level, Louisiana will retain flexibility in how services are delivered across the state. This may include contracting with a range of entities, including regional providers, community-based organizations, educational institutions, and other qualified partners, to ensure effective and responsive service delivery. This approach allows for continued leveraging of local expertise and capacity while operating within a consistent statewide framework.

Use of Subawards and Contracts:
The State may utilize a combination of subawards and contracts to deploy services, including the potential to engage regional or locally based entities to carry out specific service delivery functions. All such arrangements will be structured to ensure clear performance expectations, accountability, and alignment with statewide

standards.

Centralized Oversight and Quality Assurance:
The State Workforce Agency, serving as the fiscal agent, will oversee procurement and contract administration to ensure compliance with federal and state requirements. The State Workforce Development Board will provide strategic oversight, ensuring that procurement decisions align with system goals and performance expectations. 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. Training services are currently delivered through a combination of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) and contracted services, as determined at the local level, with requirements to ensure informed customer choice.

Future State (Subject to Waiver Approval):
Under a unified statewide framework, Louisiana will strengthen coordination of training investments to ensure alignment with high-demand occupations, employer needs, and participant outcomes. The State will maintain ITAs as the primary mechanism for delivering training services while expanding the strategic use of contracts for targeted, employer-driven, and work-based training opportunities.

Training investments will be guided by labor market data, sector strategies, and statewide priorities, while continuing to ensure participant choice and access to high-quality providers through a standardized ETPL. This approach will support increased participation in training and contribute to the State's goal of directing a greater share of resources toward training and supportive services that lead to employment, retention, and wage progression.

d. 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.N/A

Current State:
Coordination between Title I and Title II activities occurs through existing state-level collaboration and local partnerships.

Future State (Subject to Waiver Approval):
If approved to operate under a unified, statewide workforce system, Louisiana will strengthen coordination between Title I and Title II activities through a fully integrated, statewide framework aligned with its One Door approach.

Under this model:

- **Integrated Service Delivery:**
  Title I and Title II services will be more fully aligned through coordinated intake, case management, and service delivery strategies. This will support increased co-enrollment, streamlined participant flow between programs, and improved alignment of adult education with workforce training and employment pathways.

- **State Board Role in Coordination and Review:**
  The State Workforce Development Board, in fulfilling local board functions, will coordinate Title I activities with Title II programs and will carry out the review of Title II applications in accordance with WIOA Sections 107(d)(11)(A) and (B)(i) and Section 232. This will ensure that adult education providers are aligned with workforce system priorities, career pathways, and employer demand.

- **Alignment of Programs and Career Pathways:**
  Louisiana will further align adult education services with sector strategies, occupational training, and work-based learning opportunities to support participant progression to employment, retention, and wage advancement.

- **Data and Performance Integration:**

Coordination will be supported through improved data sharing, aligned performance metrics, and integrated reporting, enabling the State to track participant outcomes across programs and strengthen accountability.

d. 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.

Current State:
Cooperative agreements supporting service integration within the one-stop delivery system are currently established at the local level through Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) and related agreements among required one-stop partners. These agreements define how partners coordinate service delivery, ensure access to the full range of workforce and partner services, and meet requirements related to accessibility, including coordination with entities administering programs under the Rehabilitation Act.

These agreements outline partner responsibilities for service delivery, referral processes, and physical and programmatic access to services. Louisiana Works provides statewide guidance and oversight to ensure that agreements are consistent with WIOA requirements, including nondiscrimination and accessibility standards under Section 188, as well as requirements related to integrated service delivery.

Future State (Subject to Waiver Approval):
If approved to operate under a unified, statewide workforce system, Louisiana will implement standardized, statewide cooperative agreements to support a fully integrated one-stop delivery system.

Under this model:

- **Standardized Statewide Agreements:**
  Louisiana will develop and implement uniform cooperative agreements that define partner roles, responsibilities, and expectations for integrated service delivery across all locations. These agreements will replace fragmented local agreements with a consistent framework aligned with statewide policies and service standards.

- **Integrated One Door Service Delivery:**
  Cooperative agreements will support Louisiana's One Door approach by enabling coordinated intake, shared case management, and seamless access to services across workforce and partner programs. This will ensure that individuals can access the full range of services through a unified system, regardless of entry point.

- **Access and Accessibility:**
  Agreements will ensure full compliance with WIOA Section 188 and applicable Rehabilitation Act requirements, including physical and programmatic accessibility for individuals with disabilities. This includes coordination with vocational rehabilitation and other required partners to ensure equitable access to services.

- **Technology and Data Integration:**
  Cooperative agreements will incorporate expectations related to shared technology platforms, data sharing, and system interoperability to support integrated service delivery, performance tracking, and improved customer experience.

- **Centralized Oversight and Continuous Improvement:**
  The State Workforce Agency, in coordination with the State Workforce Development Board, will oversee the implementation and ongoing management of cooperative agreements to ensure consistency, compliance, and alignment with statewide priorities. Agreements will be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect evolving system needs, policy changes, and performance outcomes.

e. Waiver Requests (optional) (e1-e6)

Title I-B Assurances

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 income, public assistance recipients and basic skills deficient;	Yes
2. The State has implemented a policy to ensure local areas have a process in place for referring veterans with Qualifying Employment Barriers 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 cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I;	Yes
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

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR WAGNER-PEYSER PROGRAM (EMPLOYMENT SERVICES)

a.1 EMPLOYMENT SERVICE STAFF 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.

Louisiana Works will strategically deploy state merit staff across its fifteen (15) comprehensive and select affiliate American Job Centers to ensure the effective and consistent delivery of labor exchange services. These state merit staff will be co-located with SNAP E&T, STEP, and WIOA partner programs to support integrated service delivery and strengthen coordination across the workforce system.

a.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

In PY24, the Louisiana Works Office of Workforce Development (OWD) began reintegrating internal programs, such as the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program, as well as externally mandated programs established through state legislation, including SNAP, SNAP Employment & Training (E&T), and the STEP program. This ongoing integration has led to a substantial increase in professional development efforts and has significantly enhanced the skills and growth of staff across the workforce system. Moving forward, OWD will continue to expand both the quality and quantity of training opportunities available.

Over the past year, OWD conducted quarterly training sessions with newly integrated program staff to strengthen service delivery. State merit staff also received instruction from the Unemployment Insurance Division to reinforce their ability to provide accurate, meaningful assistance to UI claimants. As integration of SNAP, SNAP E&T, and STEP staff progresses, additional cross-program training will be implemented to ensure consistent and coordinated service delivery.

Louisiana Works and the Louisiana Community & Technical College System's Adult Education program have also begun collaborating on the development of a comprehensive WIOA system training initiative. This effort aims to create a unified training framework that explains how various workforce programs and agencies fit together within Louisiana's workforce system. The proposed "WIOA System Training" will offer a strategic overview for new hires, frontline staff, and board members, covering topics such as program functions, case management expectations, funding structures, and system wide coordination. The training is planned as an online, on demand course supplemented by opportunities for job shadowing, cross-agency exposure, and periodic in person statewide training events. This initiative is intended to equip Louisiana's workforce system with a shared understanding of WIOA, its structure, and how collaborative leadership drives improved outcomes for job seekers, workers, and employers.

In alignment with Louisiana State Civil Service requirements, the Office of Workforce Development mandates that all Employment Service staff complete twenty (20) hours of professional development annually. This requirement may be met through WorkforceGPS courses, webinars, or other workforce-focused learning opportunities.

Additionally, Employment Services managers are required to conduct monthly trainings addressing key operational topics, including Wagner-Peyser outreach, strategies for engaging individuals not currently participating in the labor force, customer enrollment procedures, effective use of labor market information and labor exchange services, follow-up and documentation standards, referral processes to partner programs and community resources, and best practices for serving unemployment insurance claimants.

a.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

Louisiana Works has developed a comprehensive, integrated approach to support training, awareness, and collaboration across core WIOA programs and the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program. These strategies ensure that Employment Services (ES) and WIOA staff are well equipped to identify potential UI eligibility

issues, document them appropriately, and refer customers to UI staff for adjudication when needed.

Integrated Case Management and Shared Technology

Louisiana Works continues to utilize the HiRE system as a fully integrated case management platform for UI, Wagner-Peyser Employment Services, and Employment and Training programs. This shared system provides staff with real time access to UI claim information, eligibility issues, determinations, adjudication timelines, shared documents, and case notes. Staff across programs can quickly identify common issues with UI claims, provide accurate guidance to claimants, and often resolve concerns without requiring escalated UI contact. This integrated platform enhances staff efficiency and supports a comprehensive, coordinated approach to service delivery across all American Job Centers (AJCs).

Real Time Communication on UI Program Updates

AJC staff in both comprehensive and affiliate centers receive timely communication regarding UI program, policy, and process updates that impact service delivery. These updates are shared through HiRE notifications, Louisiana Works website announcements, email communications, electronic meetings with state and local leadership, UIPLs, and access to statewide policies and training resources. This ensures that frontline staff remain informed about UI changes that may affect claimants and referral requirements.

Cross Program Training and Professional Development

Louisiana Works provides frequent staff development webinars and cross program training sessions that cover UI operations, Wagner-Peyser service delivery, RESEA requirements, and WIOA case management. ES and WIOA staff also participate in scheduled monthly professional development periods dedicated to webinars, virtual training, and in person instruction on topics relating to UI, labor exchange services, and cross program coordination.

To support UI integrity and improve frontline identification of eligibility issues, the UI Division provides direct training to ES staff. These sessions focus on recognizing separation issues, availability concerns, refusal of work issues, and other potential non-monetary eligibility factors, as well as documenting these issues in HiRE with clarity and accuracy. Staff are also trained on using proper referral pathways to UI adjudicators and understanding claimant rights, responsibilities, and mandatory participation requirements. In addition, the training emphasizes support for RESEA and enhanced coordination with UI

Because RESEA plays a dual role in reemployment and UI compliance, ES/RESEA staff receive additional instruction on UI eligibility reviews, conducting fact finding interviews, documenting potential non-compliance, and ensuring that RESEA components align with federal UI mandates. This strengthens coordination between RESEA and the UI program.

Expansion of Systemwide WIOA and UI Training Initiatives

In PY24, Louisiana Works and the Louisiana Community & Technical College System (LCTCS) initiated development of a comprehensive WIOA system training curriculum designed to standardize understanding of WIOA, UI, and other core programs across the workforce system. This training, planned as an online on demand course, will provide new hires, front-line staff, and board members with a foundational understanding of UI processes, cross-program roles, case management expectations, and referral procedures. The initiative also incorporates job shadowing, cross-agency exposure, and periodic in-person statewide training events.

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

Louisiana Works ensures that individuals requesting assistance with filing Unemployment Insurance (UI) claims receive meaningful, timely, and accurate support through its network of American Job Centers (AJCs), in full alignment with WIOA requirements for career services.The HiRE system provides clear, step by step

written instructions to guide individuals through the online UI claims filing process. Claimants can access these instructions from any internet enabled device or from public access computers located within all comprehensive and affiliate AJCs.

Self Service and Staff Assisted Options

AJCs provide multiple public access computers and printing resources, enabling individuals to independently file initial UI claims, submit weekly certifications, or access other online workforce services. For individuals who need additional help, state merit staff are available in all comprehensive AJCs to provide meaningful assistance. These staff are trained in UI program basics, including navigating the online claims application, understanding UI eligibility requirements, addressing common questions about weekly certifications, assisting claimants in locating required documentation, and explaining next steps after filing a claim. While merit staff do not make UI determinations, they ensure that claimants understand the process and can successfully complete UI-related tasks, providing both operational oversight and regional support.

Louisiana Works maintains strong operational oversight to ensure consistent, high quality assistance statewide. Regional formal managers, in partnership with Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) leadership, oversee staff training, daily operations, and adherence to UI assistance protocols.

c. Describe the state's strategy for providing reemployment assistance to UI claimants and other unemployed individuals

Louisiana Works' reemployment strategy is centered on engaging UI claimants and other unemployed individuals as early as possible to reduce the duration of unemployment and support rapid return to the workforce. This strategy is implemented across American Job Centers (AJCs) through coordinated service delivery, targeted outreach, and strong integration with labor market intelligence.

AJC Operators, Business Services Representatives, and Regional Workforce Development Coordinators (RWDC) collectively support this goal by promoting user friendly customer interfaces, maintaining real time information on labor market conditions, and coordinating outreach with employers. This ensures job seekers, particularly UI claimants and RESEA participants, along with individuals representing priority populations are positioned as high quality candidates for current and emerging job opportunities across the state.

Goals and Objectives

Louisiana Works supports reemployment through several key objectives. UI claimants and other unemployed job seekers receive both in person and online access to the full range of career, training, and support services available through AJCs. Through the HiRE platform, job seekers can upload resumes, apply for jobs, explore career pathways, research labor market information, identify training opportunities, and file UI claims at any time. Wagner-Peyser and AJC staff work collaboratively toward a unified goal of helping individuals achieve employment. Staff provide direct services or coordinate referrals with partner agencies while avoiding duplication through strong interagency relationships. Staff ensured UI claimants fulfill work search requirements and participate in required reemployment services. Through Rapid Response coordination, Louisiana Works provides timely onsite support, information sessions, and claim filing assistance to affected employers and workers. Job seekers interested in self-employment receive referrals to entrepreneurial training, counseling, and business development resources.

RESEA integrates reemployment services with local labor market needs, community services, and academic and occupational training opportunities. The program promotes skills development, career pathway alignment, and measurable skill gains to support long term labor market attachment.

To further support Louisiana's Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR), RESEA requires participants to apply for employment at every Service Point, reinforcing consistent engagement in the work search process. All profiled RESEA participants initially enter the Case Management track, where they receive comprehensive assessments and access to a full range of career and training services. As individuals become workforce ready, they may transition into one of the Workforce Ready tracks.

All job seekers, whether profiled, required to participate, or voluntarily seeking services receive an assessment and are placed on the appropriate service track. Case management includes: Comprehensive assessment of barriers, skills, and employment goals; Development and periodic revision of the Individual Employment Plan (IEP); Provision of supportive services and referrals; and Regular follow-up using a 30, 60, and 90 day cycle until employment or training completion.

d. 1. Coordination of and provision of labor exchange services for UI claimants as required by the Wagner-Peyser Act;

The State of Louisiana utilizes Wagner-Peyser (WP) funds to support Unemployment Insurance (UI) claimants through an integrated service delivery model that aligns labor exchange, reemployment, and UI program functions. WP resources are directed toward shared technology, coordinated staff training, and consistent delivery of career and reemployment services across Louisiana's American Job Center (AJC) network. This approach ensures a seamless flow of information between the WP Employment Service (ES) and the UI Program while promoting timely, accurate, and customer centered assistance for UI claimants.

System Integration and Use of Funds

A portion of the State's HiRE system, Louisiana's comprehensive case management, labor exchange, and UI registration platform, is supported with WP funds. These funds help maintain the system's functionality, through Automatic registration of UI claimants into WP upon filing a claim; real time exchange of information between UI, WP, WIOA, RESEA, SNAP, SANP E&T, STEP, TANF, JVSG, and other workforce programs; visibility of UI claim status, eligibility issues, adjudication timelines, and work search activity; and immediate access to labor exchange tools and employment opportunities for self-referral. This integrated platform provides both claimants and staff with a unified system that supports reemployment, compliance, and coordinated case management.

WP funds support a comprehensive training framework that reinforces alignment between the UI and WP programs. Regular cross-training for WP and WIOA staff on UI eligibility requirements, work search laws, claimant responsibilities, and referral processes. Dissemination of policy updates and procedural guidance through HiRE alerts, the Louisiana Works website, statewide email distribution, and virtual meetings. Collaboration among ES leadership, UI technicians, MIS professionals, and local workforce partners to address operational issues and ensure consistent communication. This training infrastructure enables WP staff to accurately identify eligibility concerns, guide claimants through program requirements, and refer issues to UI for adjudication when appropriate.

d.2 Registration of UI claimants with the State's employment service if required by State law;

UI claimants in Louisiana are automatically registered with the State's Employment Service through the HiRE platform. Subsequent to the completion of any UI claim and prior to the determination of "monetary eligibility," the claimants are registered in Wagner-Peyser and the web-based system provides links to an array of labor exchange services available, including links to current employment opportunities for self-referral. Wagner-Peyser funded staff provide services to UI claimants every day as a regular part of their duties. Individuals are enrolled in Wagner-Peyser staff-assisted services and placed on a standardized service delivery track as delineated in the state's "Integrated Service Delivery" policy. All UI claimants are required to register with HiRE, meet "able and available" requirements, complete five weekly work search activities, and file weekly certifications. WP funded staff assist claimants in understanding and meeting these requirements while identifying and referring potential eligibility issues to UI staff.

d. 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

The Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program operates in close coordination with WP services. RESEA targets claimants most likely to exhaust benefits, including transitioning veterans receiving UCX. Participants receive: Three structured appointments over a seven week period; One on one case

management and in depth eligibility reviews; and Access to job readiness tools, reemployment resources; and Flexible service delivery options, including in person, virtual, or telephone appointments.

WP and RESEA staff share information through HiRE and collaborate on referrals, work search reviews, and reemployment strategies.WP funds support the initial and comprehensive assessment processes that form the basis for reemployment planning. Staff conduct client centered assessments that examine barriers to employment, work history and transferable skills, education and credential attainment, and labor market alignment and career goals.

Based on these assessments, staff develop Individual Employment Plans (IEPs) using SMART goal methodology. Case management includes regular follow up, typically at 30, 60, and 90 day intervals, until the claimant secures employment or completes training.

d. 4. Provision of referrals to and application assistance for training and education programs and resources

Louisiana requires that services focus on quality outcomes and system integration. WP funds strengthen this approach through cross program access to training and education resources, coordinated referrals among WP, WIOA, SNAP, SNAP E&T, STEP, TANF, UI, JVSG, Vocational Rehabilitation, and community partners, and consistent statewide implementation of employment, training, and reemployment services. This integrated framework ensures that UI claimants receive comprehensive, coordinated, and accessible services that support rapid and sustained reemployment.

e. 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.

Louisiana's farmworkers face many challenges as well as obstacles while searching for permanent employment. LW through the American Job Centers (AJC) addresses and provides assistance with the following needs:

- Transportation – lack of transportation to AJC's and job sites. AJC's staff coordinates with community and faith based organizations to provide temporary transportation to farmworkers.

- State and Federal Laws – AJC staff, the State Monitor Advocate (SMA), and Outreach Workers continue to educate employers, farmworkers, and crew leaders on applicable state and federal employment laws, including worker protections under the Employment Service (ES) Complaint System. Education and compliance assistance are delivered during outreach visits, housing inspections, and employer meetings.

- Housing availability remains a significant concern. Over the past several program years, Louisiana agricultural job orders have consisted almost entirely of H-2A job orders, reflecting the increasing reliance on employer-provided housing tied to temporary agricultural employment.

Louisiana's labor certification process for temporary agricultural employment in the U.S. continues to expand. More AGERs are turning to the H-2A program in order to find and maintain a secure labor force that will be able to plant, cultivate and harvest the agricultural commodities in the state.

Louisiana's labor certification activity for temporary agricultural employment continues to demonstrate sustained growth. Agricultural Employers (AGERs) increasingly rely on the H-2A Temporary Agricultural Worker Program to secure a stable workforce capable of meeting planting, cultivation, and harvesting demands.

In 2022, AGERs requested and received certification for 13,770 agricultural positions. Over the most recent program years, certification volumes have continued to increase as follows:

Fiscal Year	Louisiana H-2A Positions Certified
2020	11,332
2021	12,473
2022	13,770
2023	~13,100+
2024	~14,000+

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Foreign Labor Certification (OFLC), H-2A Public Disclosure and Selected Statistics.

Based on recent filing trends and employer demand, Louisiana's Office of Foreign Labor Certification anticipates continued annual growth of approximately 8–10 percent in H-2A applications during the current program year.

e. 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.

According to the 2024 Highlights of Louisiana Agriculture published by the Louisiana State University Agricultural Center (LSU AgCenter), Louisiana's agricultural economy remains a critical contributor to the state's overall economic health. In 2024, agricultural products leaving the farm gate contributed an estimated $7.40 billion in gross farm value. When combined with value-added processing (cleaning, packaging, marketing, and distribution), the total economic impact of Louisiana agriculture, forestry, and fisheries was more than $12.9 billion in 2024 — demonstrating the ongoing strength of the industry. Louisiana agriculture encompasses a wide range of commodities including traditional row crops, livestock, forestry, aquaculture, and marine fisheries. The top ten commodities by total value in 2024 were:

Forestry – ~$3.46 billion

Poultry – ~$1.78 billion

Sugarcane – ~$1.59 billion

Soybeans – ~$776.3 million

Cattle and calves – ~$767.9 million

Rice – ~$713.1 million

Aquaculture – ~$668.6 million

Marine fisheries – ~$529.0 million

Horses – ~$518.8 million

Feed grain crops – ~$453.1 million

Louisiana's agriculture, forestry, and fisheries industries not only provide **farm and harvest value**, but also

support extensive processing, marketing, and related economic activities that sustain rural and urban communities across the state. The total economic contribution of agriculture approached $13 billion in 2024, reflecting strong integration between production and processing sectors. LSU AgCenter research and extension services support producers in areas such as crop variety development, pest management, and sustainable production practices, which directly influence commodity competitiveness and resilience.

Plant and animal enterprises continue to recover from weather-related production challenges, with gross farm values for many plant commodities and livestock enterprises showing positive trends compared to historical averages. As noted in LSU AgCenter assessments, agriculture, forestry, fisheries and wildlife continue to be much more than economic engines for many Louisiana families.

Louisiana farmworkers and producers consistently articulate concern over several ongoing structural issues:

Weather extremes including droughts, excessive heat, and hurricanes remain a significant risk factor, as evidenced by estimated multi-hundred-million-dollar losses in major crop and livestock sectors during recent severe weather events.

Workforce availability continues to be a persistent issue, driving increased reliance on the H-2A Temporary Agricultural Worker Program as domestic labor participation remains low in many commodity areas. This challenge is expressed by producers of labor-intensive crops and livestock operations alike.

e. 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

The Louisiana MSFWs population demographics are black, white, and Hispanic. The Hispanic population has the most difficulties assessing and coordinating services due to the language barrier.. Agricultural Employers (AGERS) continually express that there seem to be fewer U.S. workers to help with the planting, cultivation and harvesting of crops in the state, and are increasingly turning to the H–2A Temporary Agricultural Worker Program to meet the need for a stable workforce. AGERs are concerned that various factors such as 1) the aging of the workforce, 2) a younger generation that chooses not to follow in their parents' paths, but instead pursue higher education, and 3) jobs in the manufacturing sector, food service, and construction opportunities may diminish the availability of agricultural workers. The alternative option for the future of Louisiana's agricultural workforce is the growing use of the H–2A program, which allows agricultural employers to bring temporary workers from foreign countries to plant, cultivate and harvest the crops. Louisiana's longstanding goal has been and will continue to be connecting domestic migrant and seasonal farmworkers (MSFWs) with agricultural employers as appropriate.

The State agricultural workforce is considered more of a seasonal nature. The weather in Louisiana allows for planting, cultivation and harvesting year-round. The State of Louisiana domestic migrant agricultural workers identified and reported in the past 4 years have been in the single digits. Louisiana's labor certification process for temporary agricultural employment in the U.S. continues to expand. More AGERs are turning to the H-2A program in order to find and maintain a secure labor force that will be able to plant, cultivate and harvest the agricultural commodities in the state.

e. 4. Outreach Activities

Louisiana employs at this time one full time Outreach Worker. Outreach Worker will work with any and all community groups to explore opportunities for strengthening partnerships to improve outreach. Outreach Worker will continue to offer to speak at partners' staff meetings and provide them with up–to–date information about workforce services and commitments.

e. 4. A. Contacting farmworkers who are not being reached by the normal intake activities conducted by the employment service offices

Outreach Worker will promote H2-A job listings with higher paying wages to the local domestic workforce. To improve this, Louisiana Works (LW), American Job Centers (AJC's) will ensure that those higher paying agricultural jobs are visible and accessible to walk-in customers. AJC's will also look for new and creative ways to promote H2-A job listings to the local domestic workforce. Outreach Worker will also continue to serve as an advocate of the Complaint System to ensure that MSFWs are aware of all of their legal protections. AJCs staff will assist MSFWs in applying for and filling out employment applications for positions listed within HiRE. Staff will also refer registered MSFWs to appropriate and relevant WIOA title I partner agencies and to the local area National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP). LW is leveraging outreach activities with our Section 167 partner, MET, Inc and local interest groups, and employer groups through employer and worker forums, and farmworker support groups.

Outreach Worker has been provided training on the Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS) that includes regular agriculture listings and H2-A job listings. This training helps them work with employers, who increasingly need compliance education to navigate the H-2A application process which can be administratively complex. Partner agency connections have been met with positive outcomes.

e. 4. B. Providing technical assistance to outreach staff.

Technical assistance is offer to all workforce centers for ES Complaint system, housing inspections, and MSFW application and services. Outreach Worker is provided with formal training twice annually, the opportunity to attend National Monitor Advocate training, and one-on-one technical assistance base on specific needs. Training and technical assistance also includes collaboration with other agencies as in most cases we will have other MSFW service agencies provide presentations at our training sessions. Service provider agencies include WIOA 167 partners, Migrant Education, Migrant Head Start, Migrant Health, Farmworker Housing, Catholic Charities and other state, local, and faith based organizations. Agency presenters include US Wage & Hour, OSHA, Workers Compensation, Civil Rights, and Worker Protection Standards etc. These agencies provide information on farm worker rights and laws that are changing or currently in effect for farm worker protection.

e. 4. 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

Outreach Workers receive formal annual training. During these training sessions topics will include awareness across core programs that will include the Unemployment Insurance program and the training on identification of UI eligibility issues for MSFWs. Other programs that will be included are Worker's Compensation benefits. Unemployment Insurance specialists in partnership with Workforce Development Programs have developed various materials such as a training video that is available to workforce customers to learn about work search and UI eligibility requirements and training for outreach staff on eligibility issues and instruction on how to refer potential eligibility issues for UI adjudication.

e. 4. 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

Louisiana launched a new professional training platform for all State Merit Staff called Success Factors under the Louisiana Employee Online (LEO) platform. Merit Staff are required to complete mandatory training and an additional 20 hours of professional development training directly related to their role and responsibilities.

The Office of Workforce Development enourages professional cross training with all partners on a quarterly basis via Zoom. Training sessions are recorded for future reference for all State merit staff to review. All State merit staff is encouraged to pursue other sources of professional development as well like Workforce GPS.

e. 4. E. Coordinating outreach efforts with NFJP grantees as well as with public and private community service agencies and MSFW groups

During this AOP period, the SMA modified its MOU with the LW NFJP provider MET, Inc to specify meeting dates, locations, and times. Outreach Worker traveled with the SMA and made face to face contact with the state NFJP coordinator as well as the NFJP outreach representative. Quarterly meetings are conducted to discuss the identification and registration of MSFWs to include referrals for services. In addition, training is provided on the ES complaint system.

Other quarterly meetings are scheduled and Outreach Worker is required to represent the LW. Some of the community service agencies are Catholic Charities, and the Louisiana Refugee Advisory Council.

e. 5. 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.

In order to meet Louisiana's agricultural employer's needs, Louisiana Works will continue to improve the agricultural referral process by providing employers with industry information and research, farmworkers' rights, and support services and ensuring workers referred through the agricultural recruitment system meet all the job requirements and are job-ready when arriving at the job site.

The Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker Program is designed to enhance and expand services to meet the needs of the agricultural industry. Louisiana will provide services to agricultural employers by effectively providing information about services available through the workforce development system and, at the same time, obtaining sufficient information about the employer's needs to provide appropriate services. The State Monitor Advocate and Outreach Worker will continue to conduct meetings with large growers and farm labor contractors to facilitate the exchange of information and maximize the effectiveness of the program. Staff will promote the use of the American Job Centers to recruit workers by helping employers assess their labor needs and making appropriate referrals to their job openings.

One-Stop Centers will coordinate the services of one-stop partners, community-based organizations, the state MSFW Outreach Worker, MSFW groups, state cooperative extension service, and parish (county) agents, and other agencies and organizations to do the following:

1. Conduct presentations on One-Stop services.

2. Encourage agricultural employers to utilize the Agricultural Recruiting System (ARS),

3. Promote the hiring of MSFWs to employers in all sectors, including agricultural,

4. Offer to distribute their information pamphlets during outreach contacts and provide materials for them to distribute to MSFWs,

5. Advise them of all employment changes affecting their community.

Outreach Worker will continue an ongoing relationship with the LA Farm Bureau Federation and participate in its annual Mid-South Labor Seminar, providing materials and conducting presentations on MSFWs labor issues.

e. 5. B. Marketing the employment service complaint system to farmworkers and other stakeholders

Louisiana markets the ES Complaint system by prominently displaying posters and brochures in the American Job Centers, and conducting presentations at migrant coalition meetings, agency collaboration meetings and during outreach contacts with MSFWs and employers.

e. 5. C. Marketing the Agricultural Recruitment System for U.S. Workers (ARS) to agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such publicity.

Services to agricultural employers will be provided by MSFW Outreach Workers and other workforce center staff through daily planned personal visits and promotional telephone contacts with the employer. Employers will be apprised of all services available through the workforce system to include the Agricultural Recruitment

System (ARS), job orders with HiRE, file searches and other services as needed.

The Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker Program is designed to enhance and expand services to meet the needs of the agricultural industry. Louisiana will provide services to agricultural employers by effectively providing information about services available through the workforce development system and obtain sufficient information about the employer's needs to provide appropriate services. Outreach Workers will continue to conduct meetings with large growers and farm labor contractors to facilitate the exchange of information and maximize the effectiveness of the program.

Louisiana, Office of Foreign Labor certification will continue to conduct pre-occupancy housing inspections to AGERs who provide housing to MSFWs, or to nonimmigrant aliens admitted to the United States under the H-2A Temporary Labor Certification program. Louisiana continues to experience a shortage of agricultural workers and the number of H2A applications has increase for the last four years, although the Adverse Effect Wage Rate (AEWR) changes on a yearly basis.

Outreach Worker will continue to develop and maintain productive relationships with agricultural employers, who are identified in several ways, including knowledge of the local labor market, incoming job orders, employer associations, and word-of-mouth. Louisiana will continue to utilize existing processes to link available MSFWs with employers, including ongoing collaborative efforts by workforce centers and local community-based organizations that provide services to MSFWs.

LW will continue to actively promote all aspects of labor exchange services available to agricultural employers by attending meetings with employer associations and farm labor contractors, and participating in MSFW sponsored meetings and conferences.

Outreach Worker will provide information on local labor market conditions and intrastate and interstate temporary agricultural worker recruitment requirements (including information on the H-2A program). Information will also be provided on the Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act (MSPA) and how it affects agricultural employers and migrant workers.

During periods of federal government shutdowns and travel restrictions, including emergency declarations, Louisiana Works is developing a continuity of operations plan that will temporary suspension or reduction of in-person outreach travel, increased reliance on virtual outreach, phone contacts, and partner-assisted engagement, and delays in employer services and federal partner responsiveness affecting housing inspections and complaint referrals. Despite these constraints, Louisiana Works aims to maintain outreach coverage through alternative methods to the maximum extent practicable, and resumed full in-person outreach activities as restrictions are lifted.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

e. 6. A. Collaboration

Louisiana Works actively collaborates with MET, Inc. (167 provider). The State of Louisiana's MSFW Outreach Worker routinely conducts co-outreach with this staff. Outreach Worker has customized handouts describing the services offered by the One-stop Centers. These handouts are shared with other migrant Outreach Workers in other organizations for them to give to their clients.

The SMA developed and assisted MET, Inc. in modifying its MOUs for the coordinated provision of services. The coordinated services will focus on coordinated outreach to MSFWs, properly identifying MSFWs, assessments of needs, coordinated individual service plans designed to leverage funds from each program, co-enrollment when appropriate and advantageous, and coordination and referrals to supportive services.

The SMA promotes and encourages the provision and coordination of MSFW services to the American Job Centers with MET, Inc., state and local agricultural agencies, farm organizations, and other agricultural stakeholders. The SMA will encourage One-Stop Centers to engage in relationships with these organizations for outreach and the provision of services. These organizations will include:

- Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry,
- Louisiana State University (LSU) AgCenter,
- Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation,
- American Sugar Cane League,
- Louisiana Alligator Advisory Council,
- Louisiana Crawfish Farmers Association,
- Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) Migrant Education,
- USDOL Wage and Hour Division (WHD),
- USDOL Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA),
- U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission,
- Legal aid organizations,
- Migration and refugee centers,
- Other service or advocacy organizations.

LW will continue to disseminate safety and employment related information through the agricultural network.

e. 6. B. Review and Public Comment

LWC Louisiana Works gave the opportunity and solicited comments from WIOA sec. 167 NFJP grantee, Local Workforce Investment Boards, appropriate MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other interested organizations to comment on this Agricultural outreach Plan.

National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) Grantee, MET Inc,

Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry,

Louisiana State University (LSU) AgCenter,

Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation,

American Sugar Cane League,

Louisiana Crawfish Farmers Association,

Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) Migrant Education,

USDOL Wage and Hour Division (WHD),

Louisiana Migration and refugee centers,

Other service or advocacy organizations.

e. 6. C. Data Assessment

In assessing Louisiana's Labor Exchange Agricultural Reporting System (LEARS) for PY22-PY24 Louisiana met all 8 Minimum Service Level Indicators.

Louisiana missed two indicators for PY22. Louisiana missed Most Recent Date Received Unemployment Insurance (UI) Claim Assistance and Most Recent Date Referred to Federal Training.

The problem was caused by updates made in the HiRE system that disconnected the records management function from the PIRL elements. Louisiana Works has been in direct contact with the developer to correct the problem. Louisiana did however meet all the remaining indicators.

e. 6. D. Assessment of Progress

LEARS goals were met or exceeded in all areas that included the eight ERIs. AOP outreach goals were met. Louisiana now has one FTE Outreach Worker and we do not foresee any issues meeting our outreach contact goals for PY25 and beyond.

Requirements

The SWA solicited information and suggestions form WIOA sec. 167 National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantee, and other MSFW groups, public agencies, agricultural employer organizations, and other interested parties. The SWA will post the AOP on its web page for 30 calendar days for review and comments.

e. 6. E. State Monitor Advocate

The Louisiana State Monitor Advocate has written, reviewed, and approved this Agricultural Outreach Plan.

WAGNER-PEYSER ASSURANCES

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
SWA officials: 1) Initiate the discontinuation of services; 2) Make the determination that services need to be discontinued; 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	Yes

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

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAMS ALIGNING OF CONTENT STANDARDS

a. Aligning of Content Standards (WIOA section 102(b)(2)(D)(ii)(I))

Effective July 1, 2016, the Louisiana Community and Technical College (LCTCS), WorkReady U (WRU) aligned the adult education content standards with the Louisiana College and Career Readiness Standards and the state-mandated Academic Standards + Grade Level Expectations curriculum for public schools under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended [20 U.S.C. 6311 (b)(1)] through the adoption and implementation of the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) for Adult Education. The standards alignment provides rigorous content standards that specify what learners should know and be able to do in the areas of reading and language arts, mathematics, and English language acquisition and also takes into consideration alignment with other standards, including high school equivalency, enrollment in non-remedial, for-credit courses in postsecondary educational institutions, and occupational and industry skill standards and certifications widely used and recognized by business and industry.

LOCAL ACTIVITIES

b. ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES (SECTION 203 OF WIOA)

The Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS), WorkReady U (WRU), is responsible for administering Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) funds to eligible providers and providing program/performance oversight to grantees. As the administrative/fiscal agency, LCTCS/WRU conducts a competitive Request for Proposal (RFP) Grant Application process to provide funding to eligible local entities for the provision of adult education services as described in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014: Title II: Common Elements under Distribution of Funds. The RFP is the statewide procurement method through which WRU identifies, assesses, and awards multi-year grants to eligible providers throughout the state to deliver adult education services, including academic instruction and educational services, to eligible individuals. The term "eligible individual" means an individual— (A) who has attained 16 years of age; (B) who is not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law; and (C) who— (i) is basic skills deficient; (ii) does not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and has not achieved an equivalent level of education; or (iii) is an English language learner.

b. Adult Education and Literacy Activities (Section 203 of WIOA)

Louisiana runs all of its competitions (sections 231, 243, and 225) in accordance with 34 CFR 463 subpart C. All activities funded under WIOA are authorized, approved, and administered by the LCTCS. WorkReady U. WorkReady U ensures that all eligible providers have direct access to apply and compete for grants. The grant competition is publicized through various print and electronic media throughout the state. Information is shared through the LCTCS communications office via posting on the LCTCS website and other means of available communication.

LCTCS uses the same application process for all eligible providers for sections 225, 231, and/or 243. This ensures that all applications are evaluated using the same rubric and scoring criteria. LCTCS ensures all eligible providers have direct to grant applications. Applicants must detail how they provide adult education and literacy activities through the one-stop delivery system, allocate funds for its support, adhere to a local memorandum of understanding, and participate in one-stop system operations, including board representation. Eligible providers must show past effectiveness in improving skills, especially in literacy, and report participant outcomes. LCTCS limits administrative costs to five percent. In cases where five percent is too restrictive to allow for administrative activities, the eligible providers may negotiate with LCTCS to determine an adequate level of funds to be used for non- instructional purposes.

As required in Section 427 of GEPA, each applicant provides a description of the agency's process to ensure access to and participation in the WIOA Title II adult education program for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs. LCTCS has approved state policies that provide for equal opportunity for all qualified persons without regard to disability in the recruitment of, admission to, accessibility to, participation in, treatment in, or employment in the programs and activities operated and sponsored by the Louisiana Community and Technical College System.

WIOA, Title II defines an eligible provider as an organization that has demonstrated effectiveness in providing adult education and literacy activities to eligible individuals and may include: A local education agency; A community-based or faith-based organization; A volunteer literacy organization; An institution of higher education; A public or private nonprofit agency; A library; A public housing authority; A nonprofit institution with the ability to provide adult education and literacy services; A consortium or coalition of agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described above; or A partnership between an employer and an entity is described above.

All applications received are evaluated using the 13 WIOA section 231(e) considerations. The evaluation of each grant application involves an intense assessment of the ability of the eligible provider to comply with the expectations and statutes described within the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, inclusive of (a) meeting the literacy needs of the area and (b) demonstrating past effectiveness in improving the literacy of eligible individuals, especially those individuals who have low levels of literacy, participants with disabilities; refugees, dislocated youth and foster care youth, individuals with low literacy skills, displaced homemakers, ex-offenders, individuals with cultural barriers and individuals with a variety of barriers to employment. The grant cycle is a minimum of five years, and all providers are subject to the same funding cycle: Year One - July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026; Year Two - July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027; Year Three - July 1, 2027, through June 30, 2028, Year Four July 1, 2028, through June 30, 2029, and Year Five - July 1, 2029, through June 30, 2030. Eligible providers apply to receive adult education funding for the delivery of any of the following adult education and literacy activities:

Adult education;

Literacy;

Workplace adult education and literacy activities;

Family literacy activities;

English language acquisition activities;

Integrated English literacy and civics education;

Workforce preparation activities;

Integrated education and training.

Federal Definitions and Allowable Services/Activities

In Louisiana, adult education consists of academic instruction and education services below the postsecondary level that increases an individual's ability to 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 and/or transition to postsecondary education and training and obtaining employment.

Literacy is defined as an individual's ability 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 activities are adult education and literacy activities offered by an eligible provider in collaboration with an employer or employee organization at a workplace or an off-site location that are designed to improve the productivity of the workforce through the improvement of literacy skills.

Family literacy refers to a range of programs that address the intergenerational nature of literacy. These programs integrate (1) interactive literacy activities between parents and children, (2) training in parenting skills, (3) literacy training that promotes economic self- sufficiency, and (4) age-appropriate education to prepare children for success in school and life. The core idea of family literacy is to support parents as their children's first teachers. Programs engage both individuals and the family unit, providing developmental experiences for young children while offering parents instruction in parenting skills and support to transform family interactions.

An English-language acquisition program is designed to help eligible individuals who are English-language learners achieve competence in reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension of the English language, leading to the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent and transition to postsecondary education and training or employment.

Integrated education and training (IET) is a service approach that provides three components simultaneously, concurrently, and contextually: (1) adult education and literacy (2) workforce preparation activities, and (3) workforce training. The IET must be a part of a career pathway with a single set of learning objectives for a specific occupation or occupational cluster for the purpose of educational and career advancement, which may be any one of the approved WIOA training services defined in section 134(c)(3)(D) of the Act.

The Louisiana Career Pathway model provides a combination of rigorous and high-quality education, training, and other services that align with the skill needs of industries in the region. The model prepares adults for success by organizing education, training, and other services to support their particular needs, including: counseling to accomplish goals; educational training, and workforce preparation that is offered simultaneously, concurrently, and contextually within a specific occupation or occupational cluster; opportunity for attaining a recognized high school equivalency credential; and entrance or advancement within a specific occupation or occupational cluster. Integrated education and training services of sufficient quality and intensity will be designed based on the most rigorous research available and successful applicants are required to provide the following services/activities:

- a minimum of two career pathway programs that provide the opportunity for students to earn college credit;
- basic skills services that are concurrently integrated and contextualized with the workforce training program of study and aligned with a single set of learning objectives and specific integrated activities;
- basic skills, workforce preparation activities, workforce training, and other services designed to accelerate the educational and career advancement of participants to the extent practicable;
- a logical progression/sequence of courses that are applicable to the target credential;
- the attainment of industry-based and/or academic credentials;
- partnerships with business and industry as well as regional economic development partners in order to meet both current and future sector needs; and
- multiple entry and exit points, flexible scheduling, alternative class times and locations, stackable and portable credentials and/or credit hours, and the innovative use of technology customized for the needs of adults.

Each funded program must demonstrate a commitment to providing appropriate wrap-around support services to students enrolled in the IET program. These services will include but are not limited to, tutoring or other academic support, college navigation support, and career planning.

Integrated English literacy and civics education (IELCE) refers to education services provided to English-language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, that enable them 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. Such services shall include instruction in literacy and English- language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation and may include workforce training.

Workforce-preparation activities include 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 a successful transition into postsecondary education, training, and/or employment.

Federal funds may be used to increase the level of non-federal funds. Federal funds must not be used for the purpose of supplanting, only for supplementing.

Louisiana is focused on performance to ensure that funds are used effectively to serve customers and produce positive results. WRU uses a funding formula for state/federal adult education funds. The formula is designed to consider the scope of services provided in the local program and performance as compared to established benchmarks as a basis for an increase or decrease in funds. Performance benchmarks and performance standards are established with the expectation that grantees will maintain or exceed performance standards through effective service delivery and innovation.

Evaluating the RFP

The assessment of each grant application involves an intense evaluation of the eligible provider's ability to meet the area's literacy needs and comply with the expectations and statutes described within the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Additionally, an eligible provider must **demonstrate program effectiveness** by providing performance data on its record of improving the skills of eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals who have low levels of literacy, in the content domains of reading, writing, mathematics, English language acquisition, and other subject areas relevant to the services described in WIOA §463.24. An eligible provider must also provide information regarding its outcomes for participants related to employment, attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and transition to postsecondary education and training. There are two ways an eligible provider may meet the requirements:

An applicant that has been previously funded under AEFLA, under WIOA, must submit performance data required under Section 116 to demonstrate past effectiveness.

An applicant that has not been previously funded under AEFLA, under WIOA, must provide performance data to demonstrate its past effectiveness in serving basic skills deficient eligible individuals, including evidence of its success in achieving outcomes.

Applicants applying as a consortium must submit demonstrated effectiveness data for each consortium member to determine if each member is an eligible provider of demonstrated effectiveness.

Application review consists of a multi-tier process: (1) applications are pre-screen for all required components, including performance data to demonstrate effectiveness in serving eligible individuals; (2) reviewers are comprised of at least one WRU state staff, representative(s) from core partner entities, and internal/external reader(s) with adult education experience; and (3) local workforce development boards (LWDBs) review the application to determine whether the activities in the application are consistent with and align to the approved local plan and provide recommendations to promote further alignment when applicable in accordance with Section 107(d)(11)(B)(i)(I, II) of WIOA and 34 CFR §463.21(b)(1, 2). Training and technical assistance are provided to each reviewer by the WRU staff. Each reviewer receives the local application, access to the local and regional workforce development plan, and a scoring rubric to evaluate the applications.

All applications are scored based on the applicant’s ability to comply with the expectations and statutes described within the thirteen (13) federal evaluation factors required under WIOA and described in Title II, Sec. 231 (e) listed below:

- The degree to which the eligible provider would be responsive to— (A) regional needs as identified in the local plan under section 108; and (B) serving individuals in the community who were identified in such plan as most in need of adult education and literacy activities, including individuals— (i) who have low levels of literacy skills; or (ii) who are English language learners;

- The ability of the eligible provider to serve eligible individuals with disabilities, including eligible individuals with learning disabilities;

- Past effectiveness of the eligible provider in improving the literacy of eligible individuals, to meet State-adjusted levels of performance for the primary indicators of performance described in section 116, especially with respect to eligible individuals who have low levels of literacy;

- The extent to which the eligible provider demonstrates alignment between proposed activities and services and the strategy and goals of the local plan under section 108, as well as the activities and services of the one-stop partners;

- Whether the eligible provider's program— (A) is of sufficient intensity and quality, and based on the most rigorous research available so that participants achieve substantial learning gains; and (B) uses instructional practices that include the essential components of reading instruction;

- Whether the eligible provider's activities, including whether reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, and English language acquisition instruction delivered by the eligible provider, are based on the best practices derived from the most rigorous research available and appropriate, including scientifically valid research and effective educational practice;

- Whether the eligible provider's activities effectively use technology, services, and delivery systems, including distance education in a manner sufficient to increase the amount and quality of learning and how such technology, services, and systems lead to improved performance;

- Whether the eligible provider's activities provide learning in context, including through integrated education and training, so that an individual acquires the skills needed to transition to and complete postsecondary education and training programs, obtain and advance in employment leading to economic self-sufficiency, and to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship;

- Whether the eligible provider's activities are delivered by well-trained instructors, counselors, and administrators who meet any minimum qualifications established by the State, where applicable, and who have access to high quality professional development, including through electronic means;

Whether the eligible provider's activities coordinate with other available education, training, and social service resources in the community, such as by establishing strong links with elementary schools and secondary schools, postsecondary educational institutions, institutions of higher education, local workforce investment boards, one- stop centers, job training programs, and social service agencies, business, industry, labor organizations, community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and intermediaries, for the development of career pathways;

Whether the eligible provider's activities offer flexible schedules and coordination with Federal, State, and local support services (such as child care, transportation, mental health services, and career planning) that are necessary to enable individuals, including individuals with disabilities or other special needs, to attend and complete programs;

Whether the eligible provider maintains a high-quality information management system that has the capacity to report measurable participant outcomes (consistent with section 116) and to monitor program performance; and

Whether the local areas in which the eligible provider is located have a demonstrated need for additional English language acquisition programs and civics education programs.

Special Rule

LCTCS will not use any funds made available under this title for adult education and literacy activities to support or provide programs, services, or activities for individuals under the age of 16 who are enrolled in or required to be enrolled in secondary school under state law.

c. Corrections Education and other Education of Institutionalized Individuals (WIOA section 102(b)(2)(D)(ii)(II)(bb))

From funds made available under Section 222(a)(1), LCTCS, WorkReady U conducts a full and open competition specifically for Corrections Education funding (Section 225) that is consistent with the standards of 34 CFR 463 subpart C. All activities funded under WIOA are authorized, approved, and administered by the LCTCS, WorkReady U. Applicants must establish that Section 225 funds are utilized to serve criminal offenders in a correctional institution as defined in WIOA as any prison, jail, reformatory, work farm, detention center, halfway house, community- based rehabilitation center, or any other similar institution designed for the confinement or rehabilitation of criminal offenders.

WorkReady U ensures that all eligible providers have direct access to apply and compete for grants. See Title I, Common Elements, (III.b.5.B.ii) Direct and Equitable Access. The grant competition is publicized through various print and electronic media throughout the state. Information is shared through the LCTCS communications office via posting on the LCTCS website and other means of available communication.

LCTCS uses the same application process for all eligible providers for sections 225, 231, and/or 243. This ensures that all applications are evaluated using the same rubric and scoring criteria. LCTCS ensures that all eligible providers have direct access to apply for grants.

As required in Section 427 of GEPA, each applicant provides a description of the agency's process to ensure access to and participation in, the WIOA, Title II adult education program for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs. LCTCS has approved state policies that provide for equal opportunity for all qualified persons without regard to disability in the recruitment of, admission to, accessibility to, participation in, treatment in, or employment in the programs and activities operated and sponsored by the Louisiana Community and Technical College System.

The review of proposals includes rating responses to the 13 considerations in Title II of WIOA in addition to the description of how programs will design academic programs to support the following services/activities:

Adult education and literacy activities;

See VI.b – Local Activities, Federal Definitions, and Allowable Services/Activities.

Special education;

Funded programs must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and partner with mandatory partners such as Louisiana Rehabilitation Services, Vocational Rehabilitation, and secondary partners, such as the Louisiana Department of Education to eliminate barriers to education and/or employment.

Secondary school credit;

Title II resides under the jurisdiction of LCTCS while secondary school credit falls under the jurisdiction of the Louisiana Department of Education. LCTCS partners with the Louisiana Department of Education and the Louisiana Office of Juvenile Justice (OJJ) to ensure that all eligible students receive Title II educational services. Funded programs must provide instructional services/activities that will prepare students to earn a high school equivalency credential.

Integrated education and training;

Career pathways;

Concurrent enrollment;

See VI.b – Local Activities, Federal Definitions, and Allowable Services/Activities

Peer tutoring; and

Funded programs provide training for specified offenders to serve as peer tutors in adult education and career and technical education (CTE) classes.

Transition to re-entry initiatives and other post-release services with the goal of reducing recidivism. Allowable activities to assist with reducing recidivism may include:

(a) providing educational counseling and/or case management; (b) developing plans for post-release education program participation; (c) assisting students in identifying and applying for participation in post-release programs; and/or (d) performing direct outreach to community-based program providers on behalf of re-entering students.

Funds may not be used for the cost of participation in post-release programs or services.

LCTCS will not use less than 82.5 percent of the grant funds to award grants and contracts under section 231 and to carry out section 225, Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals, of which not more than 20 percent of such amount shall be available to carry out section 225.

Through the RFP procurement process for Section 225 funding, described in the Common Elements: Distribution of Funds, the successful applicants must show demonstrated program effectiveness in serving eligible individuals and the ability to provide services that support correctional education activities as defined in WIOA.

Programs that do not meet established minimum standards in the first year are expected to demonstrate and document substantial improvement toward meeting those standards. Using the approved statewide data management system, monitoring results, and other documentation, WRU determines and applies requirements for program improvement in the subsequent grant cycles. Minimum standards are determined initially based on data collected during the first year and will be raised with each new grant cycle. Programs that do not demonstrate and document substantial improvements during each year of the multi-year grant cycle may not be eligible to receive funding in subsequent years of the cycle.

Each eligible provider that receives funds provided under section 225 to carry out a program for criminal offenders within a correctional institution shall prioritize serving individuals likely to leave the correctional institution within five (5) years of participation in the program.

d. Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education Program (WIOA section 102(b)(2)(D)(ii)(II)(cc))

WorkReady U will utilize the considerations specified in section 231(e) of WIOA and in accordance with 34 CFR 463 subpart C to fund eligible providers for establishing or operating Integrated English Language and Civics Education (IELCE) programs under Section 243 of WIOA. This will be executed through a competitive, multi-year request for proposal (RFP) process.

Louisiana runs all of its competitions (sections 231, 243, and 225) in accordance with 34 CFR 463 subpart C. All eligible providers have direct access to apply and compete for grants. The grant competition information is shared through the LCTCS communications office via posting on the LCTCS website and other means of available communication. LCTCS uses the same application process for all eligible providers for sections 225, 231, and/or 243. This ensures that all applications are evaluated using the same rubric and scoring criteria.

As required in Section 427 of GEPA, each applicant must provide a description of the agency's process to ensure

access to and participation in, the WIOA Title II adult education program for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs. LCTCS has approved state policies that provide for equal opportunity for all qualified persons without regard to disability in the recruitment of, admission to, accessibility to, participation in, treatment in, or employment in the programs and activities operated and sponsored by the Louisiana Community and Technical College System.

In evaluating applications, WorkReady U considers whether the provider has demonstrated the need for IELCE services in a designated service delivery area. Applications must include data demonstrating the need for IELCE services in their respective areas of the state. Data sources that may be cited are the US Census Bureau, reports from the Office of Immigration Services, documentation of prior effectiveness in the delivery of this type of service, or other data.

Successful applicants must demonstrate their ability to deliver integrated services that include:

Instruction in Literacy and English Language Acquisition

Programs must use state-approved English Language Proficiency Standards to ensure high-quality literacy instruction.

Advanced literacy instruction should cater to professionals with degrees and credentials from their native countries.

Instruction on Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship

Civics education will help students understand their rights and responsibilities, promoting active and informed participation as parents, workers, and community members.

Combination with Integrated Education and Training (IET) Activities

IELCE programs must offer training opportunities that integrate English literacy with workforce skills training in high-demand sectors.

Providers will co-enroll participants in IET programs offered within the local or regional workforce development area.

Serving Adult English Language Learners

Funded IELCE programs will serve adult English language learners (ELL), including professionals with foreign degrees and credentials, through:

Customized Curriculum

Developing industry-specific curricula to meet the language and literacy needs of ELLs in sectors such as healthcare, IT, advanced manufacturing, and hospitality.

Offering advanced English literacy instruction for individuals seeking to re-enter their professions in the United States.

Workforce Preparation and Placement

Providing career counseling and job placement services to help ELLs navigate the job market and secure unsubsidized employment.

Facilitating work-based learning opportunities, such as internships and apprenticeships, in partnership with local employers.

Integration with Local Workforce Development System

IELCE programs will integrate with the local workforce development system through:

Collaborative Planning and Coordination

Regular engagement with local Workforce Development partners and employers and American Job Centers (AJCs) to align program goals with regional workforce priorities.

Participation in joint planning sessions and workforce initiatives to ensure a cohesive approach to service delivery.

Data Sharing and Performance Tracking

Implementing data-sharing agreements where possible to monitor participant progress and program outcomes.

Using performance data to continuously improve service delivery and achieve better employment outcomes for participants.

Integrated Service Delivery Models

Developing models that combine language instruction, civics education, and workforce development services.

Piloting innovative approaches, such as Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs, to provide contextualized learning experiences.

Offering IELCE in Combination with IET Activities

IELCE programs will incorporate IET activities as outlined in 34 CFR section 463.36 by:

Co-Enrollment in Workforce Training

Participants will be co-enrolled in IET programs that provide concurrent and contextualized instruction in literacy, language acquisition, and occupational skills.

Partnerships with Training Providers

Establishing partnerships with community colleges, technical schools, and other training providers to offer integrated training programs.

Ensuring that training programs meet industry standards and lead to recognized credentials.

Preparing for Unsubsidized Employment

IELCE programs are designed to prepare ELLs for unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries by:

Career Pathway Development

Creating clear career pathways that link education and training to employment opportunities in high-demand sectors.

Working with employers to identify job openings and align training programs with industry needs.

Job Placement Support

Providing job search assistance, resume writing workshops, and interview preparation.

Leveraging relationships with local businesses to facilitate job placements and on-the-job training opportunities.

Instruction in Citizenship and Civic Participation

The IELCE programs will include comprehensive instruction on:

Citizenship Education

Educating students about their rights and responsibilities as citizens.

Promoting civic engagement and participation through practical, community- based activities.

Civic Participation

Encouraging students to take active roles in their communities.

Providing opportunities for students to engage in volunteer work, community projects, and local government initiatives.

By implementing these strategies, IELCE programs will effectively prepare adult English language learners for successful integration into the workforce and community, leading to economic self-sufficiency and active citizenship.

STATE LEADERSHIP

e. 1. Describe how the State will use the funds to carry out the required State Leadership activities under section 223 of WIOA

From funds made available under Section 223, LCTCS WorkReady U will provide statewide leadership activities through the following services and activities:

Aligning Activities with Core Programs and One-Stop Partners

WorkReady U will collaborate closely with core programs and one-stop partners to enhance service delivery and improve outcomes for adult learners. Key strategies include:

- Service Delivery Innovation
    - New Methods: Exploring and implementing new service delivery methods that improve accessibility and effectiveness.
    - Credential Attainment: Expanding opportunities for adults to earn secondary credentials.
    - Instructional Content and Delivery: Incorporating college and career readiness standards into instructional content and delivery techniques.
    - Technology Integration: Leveraging technology to enhance educational opportunities and facilitate remote learning.
    - Transition to Integrated Education and Training (IET): Transitioning from career pathway pilot initiatives to robust IET opportunities through Louisiana Career Pathways.
- Partnership Development
    - Facilitating collaborations with adult education providers, core partners, and one-stop centers to ensure alignment of services and integrated service delivery.
    - Engaging in joint planning sessions with Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) and American Job Centers (AJCs) to align adult education services with regional workforce needs.

High-Quality Professional Development Programs

LCTCS/WorkReady U is committed to providing varied and high-quality professional development opportunities for local program instructors, administrators, and support staff. This commitment is reflected in the following initiatives:

- Professional Development Opportunities
    - Direct WRU Professional Development: Offering targeted training sessions based on needs assessments and emerging trends.
    - Conferences: Facilitating participation in national and state conferences such as the Coalition on Adult Basic Education (COABE) Conference, the LCTCS Conference, and the Louisiana Association for Public, Community, and Adult Education (LAPCAE) Conference.
- Focus Areas
    - Training Preparation and Follow-up: Adopting a three-pronged approach to professional development: Pre-training material distribution; Training delivery; and Post-training follow-up through Communities of Practice or Training of Trainers.
    - Evaluation and Feedback: Collecting participant evaluations to assess training effectiveness and inform future planning.
- Content Areas
    - Technology and Distance Education: Developing and implementing technology applications and supporting the use of instructional technology.
    - Curriculum Development: Creating and disseminating curricula that incorporate essential components of reading instruction and are contextualized for integrated education and training.
    - Transition Models: Developing comprehensive models to assist learners in transitioning from adult education to postsecondary education and employment.
    - Workplace Education: Promoting workplace adult education and literacy activities.
    - Standards Alignment: Identifying curriculum frameworks and aligning content with College and Career Readiness Standards, state assessments, and occupational standards.

Technical Assistance

WorkReady U will use established techniques to provide technical assistance to local programs, focusing on continuous improvement and alignment with core partners. This includes:

- Performance and Risk Assessment
    - Utilizing performance target requirements and a risk assessment model to identify programs needing support.
    - Conducting data reviews and performance negotiations to set baseline goals and identify areas for improvement.
- Enhanced Data Systems
    - Enhancing the web-based data collection and management system to help programs track

progress and meet benchmarks.

    - Using database dashboards to assist programs in identifying strengths and areas for improvement.

- Focused Assistance

    - Aligning adult education activities with core partners and program services.

    - Onboarding new staff with training on the vision and mission of WorkReady U.

    - Improving service delivery through targeted training on classroom practices, teacher observation, and evaluation.

- Research-Based Practices

    - Developing and disseminating instructional and programmatic practices based on rigorous research in key areas such as reading, writing, mathematics, and English language acquisition.

    - Strengthening local partnerships to provide comprehensive access to employment, education, and training services.

Monitoring and Evaluation

LCTCS operates a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system to ensure program quality and compliance. This system includes:

- Compliance Team

    - Conducting monthly data submissions and desk reviews to analyze program performance.

    - Using a risk-assessment model that examines data, recruitment/retention, classroom activities, records/reports, partnerships, and finance.

- Onsite Visits and Reporting

    - Conducting onsite visits based on desk review outcomes to examine student files, attendance records, and program data.

    - Preparing monitoring reports and requiring programs to submit action plans for addressing non-compliance.

- Follow-up and Technical Assistance

    - Ensuring that non-compliance issues are resolved through follow-up processes.

    - Tying monitoring outcomes to targeted technical assistance efforts to support local program improvements.

By implementing these strategies, Louisiana will use Section 223 funds effectively to carry out state leadership activities, align adult education with core programs and one-stop partners, and ensure high-quality service delivery for adult learners.

e. 2. Describe how the State will use the funds to carry out permissible State Leadership Activities under section 223 of WIOA, if applicable

From funds made available under section 223, LCTCS, WorkReady U will provide permissible statewide

leadership activities through the following services/activities.

- Provide grants to local programs to scale innovative practices in distance education and the use of instructional technology.
- Develop and disseminate curricula, including curricula incorporating the essential components of reading instruction, that meet the following criteria:
    - incorporation of workforce preparation standards;
    - alignment with College and Career Readiness Standards;
    - incorporation of digital literacy standards and activities;
    - designed to be delivered in face-to-face, hybrid, and distance classroom settings; and
    - developed to be an Open Educational Resource (OER) that is shareable across the WorkReady U network.
- Operate a statewide framework for the development, growth, and implementation of models for integrated education and training that are aligned with local and regional workforce development plans.

Assessing Quality (WIOA section 102(b)(2)(D)(ii)(V))

Local providers are accountable to LCTCS, WorkReady U to meet the standards of quality for administration and instruction as outlined by WorkReady U. Program effectiveness, services, and activities of local recipients of funds are assessed through a systematic evaluation of local programs. Performance outcomes for each provider must meet or exceed the established levels of performance for each core measure each fiscal year to ensure the highest quality service to adult learners who participate in WorkReady U programs. WRU assesses the quality of providers of adult education and literacy activities through data reviews and on-site program reviews.

Performance Accountability assesses the effectiveness of grantees in achieving continuous improvement of adult education and literacy activities. The performance outcome measures shall consist of the following core indicators:

- Measurable Skills Gains (MSGs);
- The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program;
- The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program;
- The median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program;
- The percentage of program participants who obtain either a recognized postsecondary credential or a secondary school diploma, or its recognized equivalent, during participation in or within one year of exit from the program;
- 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 towards such a credential or employment; and
- The indicators of effectiveness in serving employers established pursuant to clause (iv).

Setting Performance Targets

Each fiscal year Louisiana negotiates proposed target percentages for each of the core indicators of performance with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education (OCTAE). Each local eligible program is responsible for meeting or exceeding the negotiated performance targets. Each program shall analyze progress towards meeting the targets on an ongoing basis. Each program must utilize Louisiana-approved standardized assessments that provide the framework needed to measure program effectiveness.

Data Collection and Analysis

Local programs are required to collect data on the program's performance and are required to analyze it to determine progress towards meeting the targets and areas of improvement.

Analysis should include a review of academic, employment, secondary credential, and postsecondary measures. Local programs must assure that the National Reporting System of Adult Education data quality standards are met.

Program Evaluation

The State evaluates the effectiveness of the adult education and literacy activities, based on the core performance measures, through activities and processes listed below. Strategies, processes, and barriers to attaining the performance levels are reviewed, as well as qualitative and quantitative data. The annual evaluation addresses the extent to which local providers implement the activities specified in Sections 225, 231, and 243 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

The purpose of these activities, strategies, and processes is to assess the effectiveness of the State to achieve continuous improvement of adult education and literacy activities and to optimize the return on investment of Federal funds in adult education and literacy activities. The results of the evaluation will provide relevant information to determine the achievement of levels of performance for each of the core indicators for the local providers.

Data Collection.

The state-approved Management Information System (MIS) shall be used by all eligible entities receiving funds under this title. Providers shall enter data monthly during a program year. Data will be reviewed for compliance with performance measures and expectations for the delivery of services as approved in the individual application. LCTCS and () Louisiana Works will data match placement/wage data for students entered in the state-approved MIS.

LCTCS has instituted a comprehensive data system, Enterprise Resource Planning System (ERP), for all colleges. The ERP system will provide the capability to match data from disparate sources and produce analytical and actionable information to drive programmatic decisions.

Review Process.

Desk Monitoring: Desk monitoring is conducted once a year, at a minimum, by WRU staff. Desk monitoring relies primarily on data that is collected and reported by local programs in the statewide approved data management system. Using a structured format, local programs provide monthly data to the state office where state staff can review the data to guide program review activities, inform technical assistance, identify risk-assessment areas, and promote program improvement. The system can produce a series of reports that allow WRU staff to examine demographic, assessment, and academic information.

Programmatic/Fiscal Onsite Monitoring: WRU staff conduct formal monitoring visits of funded programs on a prescribed schedule each year. Programs are identified for onsite monitoring through a comprehensive risk analysis based on the following factors: (1) desk monitoring; (2) data quality and program expenditures; (3)

consistent low performance on core indicators in several categories; (4) prospective non-compliance with grant requirements identified through review of programmatic and fiscal reports, or ongoing communications with the program; (4) unresolved audit findings; (5) ongoing lack of progress in resolving required actions from prior monitoring visit; (6) significant staff turnover in the program; and (7) recent or newly established programs.

The goals for State onsite monitoring visits are to (1) ensure that implementation of the program service/activities as outlined in the RFP have been fully executed; (2) ensure that programs meet AEFLA requirements; (3) improve the quality of federally-funded activities; (4) provide assistance identifying and resolving accountability problems; and (5) ensure the accuracy, validity, and reliability of data collection and data reporting as well as policies and procedures for program accountability.

Corrective Action Plan

Upon completion of the review, a formal written report will be provided to the program administrator. If a program fails to meet performance goals or other state and/or federal programmatic requirements, a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) will be required to outline the course of action for program improvement. The local program will be given a period of 30 days to respond in writing to the findings. WRU provides technical assistance throughout the corrective process and by the end of a designated time frame, programs should be able to correct the identified issues, end their respective CAP and improve the quality of the program. WRU provides ongoing technical assistance, professional development, and other support until the required steps of the plans are completed.

Programs that fail to comply with grant requirements and regulations may not be eligible to receive funding in subsequent years of the cycle and/or funds may be terminated.

Evaluation of Professional Development

WorkReady U will assess the quality and effectiveness of its professional development activities through the feedback of its local programs (instructors, administrators, and support staff).

Participant evaluations will be collected for all professional development activities. Participants will respond to items regarding:

- the training as a whole
    - objectives
    - materials
    - environment
    - presentation
- the immediate application in
    - classrooms
    - programs
    - workforce

State staff will review this information to plan for future training and potential technical assistance. The team will assess all professional development activities for:

- cost-effectiveness;

- return on investment;
- transferability of skills/knowledge; and
- the benefit of students/clients from Professional Development outcomes.

Connecting Professional Development to Program Improvement

WorkReady U will ensure that professional development directly contributes to local program performance improvement by:

- Needs Assessments: Identifying PD needs based on program performance data and feedback from local providers.
- Targeted Training: Offering PD activities that address specific needs, such as new instructional techniques, technology integration, and program management.
- Follow-Up Support: Providing ongoing support and follow-up activities, including Communities of Practice and Training of Trainers, to reinforce learning and application of new skills.
- Performance Monitoring: Continuously monitoring the impact of PD on program performance, adjusting strategies as needed to achieve desired outcomes.

By systematically evaluating and improving professional development efforts, Louisiana will enhance the quality of its adult education programs, ensuring better outcomes for learners and a stronger return on investment for federal funds.

ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAM CERTIFICATIONS

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	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	Yes
The State Plan must include	Include
WIOA (regarding the supplement-not-supplant requirement);	
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

APPLICANT'S ORGANIZATION	Enter information in this column
Applicant's Organization	Louisiana Community & Technical College System
PRINTED NAME AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE	Enter information in this column
First Name	Erin
Last Name	Landry
Title	Executive Director of Adult Education
Email	erinlandry@lctcs.edu

SECTION 427 OF THE GENERAL EDUCATION PROVISIONS ACT (GEPA)

N/A

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (COMBINED OR GENERAL)

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

a. 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

(B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council.

a. 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.

Council Representative, Current Term Number/Vacant, Beginning Date of Term Mo./Yr.

Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC), Vacant
Parent Training and Information Center, Vacant
Client Assistance Program, 1, 10/2024
Qualified Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselor (Ex Officio if Employed by the VR Agency), 2, 09/2024
Community Rehabilitation Program Service Provider, 1, 10/2025
Business, Industry, and Labor, 1, 06/2023
Business, Industry, and Labor, 1, 10/2024
Business, Industry, and Labor, 1, 03/2025
Business, Industry, and Labor, Vacant
Disability Advocacy Groups, 1, 02/2023
Disability Advocacy Groups, 1, 09/2024
Disability Advocacy Groups, 1, 06/2023
Individual with a Disability, 1, 08/2025
Disability Advocacy Groups, 1, 10/2024
Disability Advocacy Groups, 1, 01/2025
Disability Advocacy Group; Current or Former Applicant/ Recipient of VR Services; Individual with a Disability, Vacant

Current or Former Applicant/Recipient of VR services, 2, 09/2024
Current or Former Applicant/Recipient of VR services, 1, 09/2024
Disability Advocacy Group; Current or Former Applicant/Recipient of VR Services; Individual with a Disability, 1, 01/2026
State Educational Agency Responsible for Students with Disabilities Eligible to Receive Services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), 2, 01/2025
VR Agency Director (Ex Officio), 2, 10/2024
Section 121 Project Directors in the State (as applicable), 1, 10/2025
State Workforce Development Board, 1, 01/2025
Disability Advocacy Group; Current or Former Applicant/Recipient of VR Services; Individual with a Disability, 1, 10/2025
Disability Advocacy Group; Current or Former Applicant/Recipient of VR Services; Individual with a Disability, 1, 10/2025

a. 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.

The Louisiana Rehabilitation Council meets on a quarterly basis as required, reviews applications for membership when received, and makes recommendations to the Governor's Office of Boards and Commissions for appointments that are aligned with membership composition requirements. There are currently 21 appointed members (including 2 ex-officio) and 4 vacant seats. As of January 27, 2026, the Governor's Office of Boards and Commissions was provided names and applications of 4 individuals who meet membership composition requirements to fill the remaining 4 vacancies. The Council has accomplished significant membership progress and continues to employ recruitment efforts toward achieving and maintaining full membership composition appointments. Reappointment requests are made with the Governor's Office of Boards and Commissions when appropriate for members to serve a second term.

a.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.

As in accordance with Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, the Louisiana Rehabilitation Council provides feedback and input to Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) on its effectiveness of service provision and consumer satisfaction. The Council collaborates with LRS on the Annual Report to the Governor and Rehabilitation Services Administration Commissioner, the Vocational Rehabilitation portion of the Louisiana WIOA Combined State Plan, public information disseminated on the Louisiana Works website, which houses the content page for the Council, and the development of Consumer Satisfaction Surveys.

a.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.

During a business meeting conducted on October 23, 2025, the Louisiana Rehabilitation Council members were requested to provide input and recommendations for inclusion in the WIOA Combined State Plan update. The following topics were provided by the Council with the response from LRS as indicated:

1) LRS should conduct a study or an in-depth evaluation of its operational workflow for staff at all

levels in an effort to determine if or where efficiencies can be identified to help avoid staff burnout and assist with staffing retention efforts.

LRS Response – The LRS Director reported that this analysis has already taken place, and as a result, LRS State Office staff are assisting the field offices with performing operational duties, including reviewing and processing invoices for college and universities and assisting customers through State Office caseloads. Additionally, a streamlined application and eligibility process has been developed.

2) LRS should consult with the State Civil Service and Louisiana Works Human Resource Departments on determining appropriate salaries to offer new Counselors.

LRS Response – LRS has met with Louisiana Works' Human Resources to explore applying for a Special Entrance Rate from State Civil Service to recruit more qualified applicants for Counselor positions. A Special Entrance Rate will increase the starting salary for entry-level Counselors above the minimum hiring rate established by Civil Service for this position.

b. 1. A. Individuals with the most significant disabilities and their need for Supported Employment;

From July to September 2024, public comment was vetted through an LRS Statewide Needs and Satisfaction survey aimed at evaluating the effectiveness of vocational rehabilitation services, identifying service gaps, and soliciting recommendations for improving accessibility and employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. A total of 1,358 individuals responded to the survey, with 59.13% of those respondents identifying as an individual with a disability. Of those who identified as having a disability, 10.15% indicated that they received or are currently receiving Supported Employment services from LRS.

Many respondents indicated that Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) do not adequately support certain disability groups, particularly individuals with autism, intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), and those with severe disabilities who need additional accommodations. Respondents frequently mentioned the need for additional job coaching services, particularly with ongoing support after employment begins. They also emphasized the importance of follow-up services to ensure long-term job retention and career growth. The most significant barriers identified by respondents included fear of losing government benefits or services, slow job market, lack of transportation, and employer acceptance of individuals with disabilities.

b.1.B. Individuals with disabilities who are minorities and individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program;

A total of 396 survey respondents identified as being of a minority population, and 180 identified as being of an unserved/underserved population. The survey results indicated that many individuals with disabilities are still underserved due to limited-service availability and long wait times for eligibility and plan development before receiving services. Many respondents pointed out that there are not enough CRPs in their local areas, especially in rural and underserved regions. Transportation was also cited as a major barrier to employment by respondents stating that they were unable to work due to the lack of accessible transportation services.

(C) Individuals with disabilities served through other components of the workforce development system; The LRS Statewide Needs and Satisfaction survey asked if individuals have participated in any other workforce development programs such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Family

Independence Temporary Assistance Program, Adult Education and Family Literacy, American Job Centers, Adult Dislocated Worker, Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers, Community Services Block Grant, and Jobs for Veterans. A total of 245 survey respondents indicated their participation in one of these programs, with the majority having been in SNAP. There were 69.6% of the survey respondents who indicated they had not accessed any workforce development services due to lack of awareness or program accessibility. This indicates a greater need to share resources of other programs that guide individuals toward achieving self-sufficiency and independence.

(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.

Out of 1,358 total survey respondents, 88 identified themselves as a current youth or student with a disability, and 575 indicated they received services provided by LRS while in secondary education settings. Additionally, 522 survey respondents indicated they received services through an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) with their secondary school. Only 275 of those respondents reported to have received information on LRS during their IEP meetings. These results indicate that greater collaboration is needed with secondary education systems to address gaps in communication and access to rehabilitation services by bringing awareness of services provided by LRS to students with disabilities (especially those with an IEP). There is a continued need for transition assistance in the form of financial assistance toward tuition and support expenses for post-secondary training.

(2) Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State.

When survey participants were asked if more CRPs are needed in their area, 854 responded; 67% stated "Yes", while 33% stated "No". When asked if the current CRPs in their area need improvement, 828 responded; 58% stated "Yes", while 42% stated "No". Further exploration revealed the following key themes and issues identified pertaining to the need for additional CRPs: specialized job training and career pathways; gaps in service for specific disability groups; lack of awareness and outreach; need for job coaching and post-employment supports; transportation and accessibility challenges; or, just an overall need for more providers and expanded service areas.

(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

During the quarterly business meeting on April 24, 2025, and again during a Special Elections meeting on June 9, 2025, all LRC members were invited to attend the LRS Strategic Planning meeting on June 10, 2025. One member attended in-person, and two more attended virtually. Members provided questions and feedback to ensure that goals and priorities were developed in a way that would maximize effective

strategies implemented by LRS towards the program's success.

(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.

Goal I: To maximize opportunities for individuals with disabilities to achieve competitive integrated employment and promote self-sufficiency.

Objective A. Provide quality vocational rehabilitation (VR) services leading to employment outcomes for 1,500 eligible individuals with disabilities annually.
Strategy 1. Evaluate and monitor case record documentation compliance with agency policy and procedures through the Quality Assurance process.
Strategy 2. Improve collaborations between Rehabilitation Employment Development Specialists (REDS) and other Office of Workforce Development initiatives regarding service provision such as job development, on-the-job training, job placement, adult work-based learning experiences, and apprenticeships.
Strategy 3. Increase Counselor involvement in secondary education settings to improve the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to transition students.
Strategy 4. Make all Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) documents and the Technical Assistance and Guidance Manual available with accessible formatting.
Strategy 5. Increase outreach to targeted populations who are identified by the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment as being unserved/underserved, including those needing Supported Employment.
Strategy 6. Explore options for collaboration to provide services to specific disability populations including those diagnosed with developmental/intellectual disabilities, autism, mental illness or addictive disorders, blind, blindness/deaf-blindness, deafness/hard of hearing, or individuals transitioning from secondary education.
Strategy 7. Collaborate with the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) to determine if individuals who participate in Day Habilitation programs or enclave work settings are interested in competitive integrated employment and have opportunities to apply for VR services with LRS.

Objective B. Actively participate in the integration of Louisiana’s economic stability employment programs into the Workforce Development system (One Door to Work) to ensure all individuals with disabilities in need of VR services to obtain employment are identified and connected to LRS services.
Strategy 1. Participate in cross-functional integration meetings and focus groups with other workforce and economic stability programs to develop a comprehensive “One Door” pathway for customers navigating multiple systems that provide access to training, employment, and support services needed for these individuals to pursue opportunities and achieve high quality employment outcomes and independence.

Objective C. Explore the use of technology to increase LRS' efficiency and effectiveness in performing casework activities.
Strategy 1. Train LRS staff on upgrades to the Accessible Web-based Activity and Reporting Environment (AWARE) system that will result in more efficient processes as enhancements to AWARE become available.
Strategy 2. Explore options to improve the effectiveness of LRS staff by utilizing new technologies and software applications that facilitate rapid engagement practices, such as the use of the "Sara" platform, which is intended to increase efficiencies with customer communication and expedite casework management.

Objective D. Increase the utilization of Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) to achieve employment outcomes.
Strategy 1. Strengthen the capacity of community employment providers, including those providing supported employment, to increase the number of competitive, integrated employment placements.
Strategy 2. Increase the use of career services, including job search assistance, customized employment, and extended services for youth in supported employment.

Objective E. Increase the number of Randolph-Sheppard Managers earning at least $25,000 annually by expanding opportunities and enhancing customer service delivery in the Randolph-Sheppard Program.
Strategy 1. Expand training opportunities for current and new licensed blind managers to enhance skills, entrepreneurial abilities, and quality of service to customers.
Strategy 2. Evaluate current blind vendor businesses to ensure they are maximizing profits, minimizing losses, and managing labor needs effectively.

Goal II: Ensure LRS has necessary and qualified rehabilitation personnel providing quality vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities who are seeking to achieve competitive integrated employment and self-sufficiency.

Objective A. Provide training resources for LRS staff to increase their efficiency in service provision.
Strategy 1. Provide succession training for staff members interested in pursuing leadership positions by utilizing a Leadership Council comprised of "thought leaders" from each region.
Strategy 2. Provide in-service training to regional staff annually through a variety of methods as identified by training needs assessments/surveys and Quality Assurance reviews.
Strategy 3. Provide support and advise of specialized training opportunities for Counseling staff to obtain a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling and pursue continuing education certifications toward serving customers who are blind, deaf, deaf-blind, or hard of hearing.
Strategy 4. Explore, develop, and implement methods to increase recruitment and retention of qualified staff, and options to increase salaries of Rehabilitation Counselors through Special Entrance Rates by fully utilizing guidance and support provided by LA State Civil Service.

Goal III: To maximize resources and pursue innovative means to leverage the state's full federal VR grant allotment.

Objective A. Work collaboratively with Partners to leverage funding to ensure that services to customers with disabilities are accessed and utilized to the utmost extent.
Strategy 1. Appropriately request an increase in additional State General Funds designated for Louisiana Rehabilitation Services to fully utilize the federal VR grant allotment allocated to LRS.
Strategy 2. Explore additional opportunities to increase the number of Third-Party Cooperative

Arrangements with public entities to serve more students with disabilities.
Strategy 3. Provide information regarding LRS' federal allocation and budget to stakeholders and advocacy groups for transparency of resource utilization and needs.

(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;

Goal I: To maximize opportunities for individuals with disabilities to achieve competitive integrated employment and promote self-sufficiency.

Objective A. Provide quality vocational rehabilitation (VR) services leading to employment outcomes for 1,500 eligible individuals with disabilities annually.
Strategy 1. Evaluate and monitor case record documentation to maintain at least a 90% average level of compliance with agency policy and procedures. This level of compliance will help to ensure timeliness and sustained engagement of participants to assist with the goal achievement.
Progress: From July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2025, the Quality Assurance unit completed statewide case reviews to assess compliance with adherence to agency policy and procedures. The regional reviews conducted for 2023 and 2024 demonstrated that the agency achieved an overall compliance score of 95% each year. The regional reviews conducted from January through June 2025 have also resulted in achieving at least a 90% compliance average.
Strategy 2. Improve collaborations between Rehabilitation Employment Development Specialists (REDS) and other Office of Workforce Development initiatives regarding service provision such as job development, on-the-job training, and job placement through interagency cross-training and weekly meetings to foster improved communication.
Progress: To strengthen collaboration between Rehabilitation Employment Development Specialists (REDS) and other Office of Workforce Development initiatives, a structured approach centered on interagency weekly coordination meetings has proven essential.
Standing meetings were maintained to facilitate ongoing dialogue around employer engagement strategies and available training opportunities, and job fairs. These sessions fostered open communication, enabling employees to identify and address issues collaboratively. As a result, this integrated approach improved job placement and retention outcomes for individuals facing barriers to employment.
Strategy 3. Increase Counselor involvement in secondary education settings through an increased engagement with students, which will increase additional Pre-Employment Transition Services to students, resulting in a timelier referral for VR services.
Progress: Rehabilitation Counselor Associates began processing Pre-ETS applications and drafting Pre-ETS authorizations for services requested by potentially eligible students with disabilities. This allows Rehabilitation Counselors more time to focus on providing higher quality vocational guidance and counseling and serve more customers.
Strategy 4. Make all Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) documents and the Technical Assistance and Guidance Manual available with accessible formatting for ease of use by diverse users.
Progress: Content contained on the Louisiana Rehabilitation Services webpage of the Louisiana Works website was revised to comply with ADA accessibility requirements. This website also houses the LRS Technical Assistance and Guidance Manual (among other documents) which is publicly available and has been specifically formatted for accessibility purposes. LRS State Office staff also participated in Microsoft Word Accessibility Formatting training conducted through the Office of Civil Rights so that all LRS public-

facing documents can be created or edited with appropriate accessibility formatting.

Strategy 5. Increase outreach to targeted populations who are identified by the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment as being unserved/underserved, including those needing supported employment by meeting with Administrators and partner agencies to facilitate rapid engagement.

Progress: LRS initiated revisions to the Technical Assistance and Guidance Manual to prepare for implementing a new high-quality indicator rate for Job Placement and Supported Employment providers serving participants living in rural areas. To address access barriers, LRS prioritized expanding the provider network by introducing financial incentives designed to mitigate provider risk. To support this effort, LRS conducted statewide training for Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) to explain the rate changes. In addition, LRS planned a series of regional focus group meetings with CRPs to gather feedback and encourage collaborative problem solving. The LRS Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) Bureau Administrator, CRP Program Manager, and LRS Director regularly meet with staff from the Office of Behavioral Health (OBH) to collaborate on strategies for improving services for the mental health population. OBH funds and provides Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Supported Employment services for individuals with serious mental illness. These discussions focus on how LRS can better collaborate with OBH to provide support services to ensure success for participants in IPS. To further enhance collaboration, LRS will provide training to Assertive Community Treatment (ACT)/IPS Teams aimed at strengthening communication and coordination between agencies, ultimately enhancing service delivery and increasing competitive integrated employment opportunities for individuals with severe mental health disabilities.

Strategy 6. Explore options for collaboration to provide services to specific disability populations including those diagnosed with developmental/intellectual disabilities, autism, mental illness or addictive disorders, blind, blindness/deaf-blindness, deafness/hard of hearing, or individuals who are students in transition through networking, presenting, and participation in related councils and taskforces.

Progress: The LRS Director began attending the Arc of Louisiana Director's meetings in the last quarter of 2024. These meetings are comprised of the Directors of the local Arc chapters, and discussions center around how LRS can better collaborate with the Arcs so that we can provide better services to participants receiving LRS services through the Arcs.

The LRS staff participate in partner meetings for the Louisiana Department of Education's Disability Innovation Fund Grant. LRS has contributed information to this group concerning the rules and methods of establishing Third-Party Cooperative Arrangements for Pre-Employment Transition Services.

The LRS CRP Bureau Administrator and LRS Director meet regularly with staff from the Office of Behavioral Health (OBH) to collaborate on strategies for better serving the mental health population. OBH provides and funds IPS Supported Employment for individuals with serious mental illness, and discussions include how LRS can better partner with OBH to provide support services when needed to ensure success for participants in IPS.

LRS is working collaboratively with the Louisiana Commission for the Deaf (LCD) to explore adding Vocational Access Service Provider (VASP) services as an option for VR participants. This will involve LCD establishing standards for these professionals and providing the necessary training. LRS will also need to establish procedures and rates for these services. These discussions are ongoing.

Strategy 7. Increase the number of opportunities for individuals with autism spectrum disorders and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities to participate in training services provided by certified Comprehensive Transition Programs by attending and participating in advisory councils.

Progress: The LRS Director is a member of the Post-secondary Inclusive Education Advisory Council led by the Louisiana Board of Regents. The purpose of this Council is to increase the number of Comprehensive Transition Programs in Louisiana. These programs are specifically for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including Autism. Discussion items include strategies for funding, approving applications for funding requests, presentations on CTP programs, and programmatic and financial support for entities interested in starting a CTP. By participating in these meetings, information

about LRS is shared to increase participation of individuals engaged in CTP programs, and as appropriate, in Vocational Rehabilitation.
Strategy 8. Collaborate with the LA Department of Health (LDH) to determine if individuals interested in competitive integrated employment and in Sheltered Workshops are eligible for VR services and provide information and guidance to facilitate continued engagement throughout the vocational rehabilitation process.
Progress: LRS collaborated with the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD) in the redesign of their Supported Employment process for when an individual chooses to obtain employment in the community. A flow chart was developed to outline the responsibilities of the OCDD Support Coordinator, the LRS Counselor, the customer, and the Employment Service Provider. Additionally, the training for their providers focused on Supported Employment to enhance their ability to serve both LRS and OCDD. The referral process was outlined for all parties in the hope of minimizing the time needed for vocational rehabilitation (VR) to assess for eligibility and to expedite IPE development. LRS Counselors and OCDD Support Coordinators continue to work together to coordinate the VR application process for individuals with developmental/intellectual disabilities.

Objective B. To expend a minimum of 15% of LRS federal funding to make available Pre-Employment Transitions Services to applicants and potentially eligible students with disabilities.
Strategy 1. Partner and provide support to LA Department of Education (LDOE) serving as Subject Matter Experts to implement an initiative providing intensive technical assistance and universal support regarding transition services that will harness existing and emerging economic opportunities to foster a disability-inclusive workforce.
Progress: LRS has collaborated with LDOE and participated in meetings and workgroups on an initiative specifically targeting the northeastern region of Louisiana to increase the percentage of students with disabilities who are matriculating into high quality post-secondary outcomes and to support students with applying for services through LRS. The meetings focus on Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) offered through LRS, providing options for who can provide Pre-ETS in the schools or through the entire school district (a Community Rehabilitation Program or Third-Party Cooperative Arrangement), thorough explanation of the pros and cons of each option, guidance on how the school district decides who provides Pre-ETS, contact information for direct support available to the school district and its employees, detailed guidance on the processes to set up Pre-ETS, and more.
Strategy 2. Expand outreach to students with disabilities by educating school districts Pre-Employment Transition Services and Third-Party Cooperative Agreements.
Progress: A Pre-ETS video is in the process of being developed through the LDOE DIF grant with the assistance of LRS intended for various audiences including Special Education staff, Superintendents, students, and parents. The video will also include information on how students may transition from Pre-ETS in secondary education settings to Vocational Rehabilitation and post-secondary opportunities.
Strategy 3. Conduct field visits to monitor the provision of Pre-Employment Transition Services to determine the effectiveness and possible improvement to the service delivery process.
Progress: During PY 2024, LRS staff conducted on-site monitoring visits of every active TPCA and Pre-ETS CRP. Additionally, Pre-ETS CRPs provide bi-annual production reports in regard to activities that were provided to students with disabilities.
Strategy 4. Explore contracting options by consulting other State Vocational Rehabilitation agencies to pilot a contract to increase the number of Counselors dedicated to providing services to transition students.
Progress: LRS has a contract with two organizations to employ Rehabilitation Counselors to coordinate and arrange for the provision of Pre-ETS activities for students with disabilities in the New Orleans and Shreveport regions. These contracted staff accept Pre-ETS intake forms and disability documentation at assigned schools, coordinate and arrange for the provision of Pre-ETS students at these schools, provide general information concerning VR at IEP meetings (LRS staff will attend IEP meetings if discussing VR

service coordination), and coordinating meetings with VR staff for students in need of VR services. Contract staff only perform delegable functions and all actions conducted by these staff are approved by LRS staff.

Objective C. Explore the use of technology to increase LRS' efficiency and any potential cost savings.
Strategy 1. Implement upgrades to the Accessible Web-based Activity and Reporting Environment (AWARE) system software.
Progress: All upgrades were implemented through PY2024 to correlate with the state and federal guidelines. All staff were provided with training on the changes in AWARE and instructed on the information needed to address these changes. Supervisors were given instructions on monitoring the new information and changes in AWARE. Vendors were trained to use the vendor portal, and they continually receive training on all new upgrades. Significant improvements were also made to the AWARESign functionality. Many new electronic forms can now be signed digitally by customers and/or LRS staff and are stored directly in the participant's electronic case record. These upgrades have facilitated the transition to fully paperless case management, improving efficiency and compliance.
Strategy 2. Train LRS staff on upgrades to the AWARE system that will result in a paperless case management system.
Progress: LRS staff was provided guidance on the paperless case management system during a mandatory week-long in-person training event for all staff statewide. LRS staff were also provided more than twenty resources on "office technology" to enhance their ability to adapt to paperless practices.
Strategy 3. Explore options to increase the efficiency of LRS staff by utilizing new technologies and software applications that allow consumers to be served while applying rapid engagement practices.
Progress: LRS staff members researched several options during the period to help increase the efficiency of LRS staff. Saraworks software was selected for implementation and is in the final stages of being procured to help LRS in this regard. Saraworks is an interactive, two-way, text/email communications, tracking/documentation service used to engage customers on behalf of agency staff.

Objective D. Increase the utilization of Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) to achieve employment outcomes.
Strategy 1. Strengthen the capacity of community employment providers, including those providing supported employment, to increase the number of competitive integrated employment placements by ensuring that the rates for employment services are adequate and reasonable.
Progress: A contract with Louisiana State University (LSU) for Rate Setting on Supported Employment and other career services was completed during program year 2023. LSU provided a report with rate recommendations for LRS staff to consider. LRS revised rates on Supported Employment and other career services as a result of the report. LRS continues to update rates as needed. To improve competitive employment outcomes, LRS introduced the job search assistance rate and a flexible milestone payment. This enables Community Rehabilitation Providers to offer ongoing support services that help individuals achieve stable employment before transitioning to extended services.
Strategy 2. Increase the use of employment services, including job search assistance, customized employment, and extended services for youth in supported employment by ensuring that the rates for these services are adequate and by providing technical assistance and training to field staff on these services.
Progress: LRS staff trained on the use of employment services, including job search assistance, customized employment, and extended services for youth in supported employment during a mandatory in-person week-long Vocational Rehabilitation training event titled "The VR Journey". LRS staff were also provided short and easy tutorials (informational one-page reference/resource) regarding employment services and supported employment.

Objective E. Increase the number of Randolph-Sheppard Managers earning at least $25,000 annually by expanding opportunities and enhancing consumer service delivery in the Randolph-Sheppard Program.

Strategy 1. Explore changes to the Louisiana Administrative Code and any other statutes governing the Randolph-Sheppard program that may help to improve opportunities. We will also consider the current enforcement of the current laws and rules to ensure that current opportunities are being maximized.
Progress: To ensure that the Randolph-Sheppard priority is enforced and that both assigned and unassigned vending opportunities are maximized, all Randolph-Sheppard Management Analyst staff and the Randolph-Sheppard Program Manager have been prospecting for locations. To ensure this is done, each staff member has a goal associated with this on their annual performance evaluation. In addition to this, changes to the state rule governing the Randolph-Sheppard program were submitted to the Rehabilitation Services Administration and were approved and are pending promulgation.
Strategy 2. Expand training opportunities for current and new licensed blind managers to enhance skills, entrepreneurial abilities, and quality of service to customers. These opportunities will be offered internally through in-service training, as well as through external means such as training offered through the National Association of Blind Merchants. Expansion of training will enhance the ability of blind vendors to analyze their business and provide products and/or customer service to better meet demand.
Progress: To enhance training opportunities for prospective Randolph-Sheppard vendors, LRS began utilizing the Chicago Lighthouse's online Randolph-Sheppard curriculum. This training is utilized in conjunction with the existing classroom and on-the-job training to enhance prospective new vendor knowledge, skills, and abilities. In addition to this training, LRS staff have provided upward mobility training opportunities to existing licensed Randolph-Sheppard vendors. Training topics included how to maximize profits from vending machines, an update on national issues impacting the Randolph-Sheppard program, new equipment for vending machine locations and micro markets, including kiosks and smart coolers, training on changes to required monthly reporting forms, and the importance of knowing gross profit percent, etc.
Strategy 3. Consider merging locations with annual earnings below $25,000 which will allow vendors to enhance earnings through combining less profitable locations to make a more profitable location to better support a blind vendor.
Progress: To assist blind vendors in increasing their income, LRS combined the Randolph-Sheppard facility at the main Delgado campus location with one of the satellite locations. To improve profitability at the second location, LRS purchased our first Smart Cooler for that site. With the closure of the state office building on the New Orleans Westbank, LRS combined another nearby Delgado satellite location as well as the Office of Motor Vehicles to this location to make a vending route, and to make the location more profitable. LRS combined the vending route in the Laplace area to the Criminal Courts location in New Orleans, and the state office building and Post Offices in Alexandria with the Rest Area in Grand Prairie to make a vending route.
Strategy 4. Increase the number of licensed vendors who are eligible to manage locations. This will allow us to add new locations and will afford us the opportunity to grow the program, as well as to fill blind vendor vacancies more quickly with a permitted vendor.
Progress: Since January 2025, four individuals have become newly licensed Randolph-Sheppard vendors. To date, three of the four individuals have applied for and have been awarded locations, while the fourth is not currently readily available for a location at this time due to personal circumstances. There are an additional three individuals interested in pursuing training to become licensed vendors. They are currently completing other required training, and it is projected they will be able to begin their Randolph-Sheppard manager training program in 2026.
Strategy 5. Evaluate current blind vendor businesses to ensure they are maximizing profits, minimizing losses, and managing labor needs effectively. This will evaluate the scope of the Randolph-Sheppard business and ensure that the products and pricing are a good fit for the location. In some instances, the scope of the location may need to be changed to allow the vendor to maximize profits, as the pandemic caused major changes to work schedules, pricing, and the available labor pool.
Progress: The Randolph-Sheppard Program Manager and Randolph-Sheppard Management Analysts

are collecting data on each Randolph-Sheppard location. The monthly reports submitted by each vendor were updated on October 1, 2024, to better align with the data needed for the RSA-15 federal report and to streamline reporting requirements. All data is being analyzed, and locations whose data indicates potential areas of concern will be audited.

Goal II: Ensure LRS has necessary and qualified rehabilitation personnel providing quality vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities who are seeking to achieve competitive integrated employment and self-sufficiency.

Objective A Provide training resources to LRS staff to increase their efficiency in service provision.
Strategy 1. Identify methods of succession training for staff members interested in pursuing leadership positions.
Progress: The Assistant Director established the Leadership Council for staff members interested in pursuing leadership positions. LRS staff have also been encouraged to complete the Leadership Academy training through the Department of State Civil Service.
Strategy 2. Provide monthly in-service trainings to regional staff through in-person, webinars, and online platform as identified by training needs assessments/surveys and quality assurance reviews conducted by the training and quality assurance units.
Progress: LRS staff complete a minimum of two hours of regional in-service training each month. Training topics have included benefits counseling/Ticket-to-Work, labor market information, payment authorizations, case management, policy and procedure updates, the Louisiana Deaf/Blind Project for Children and Youth, and comparable benefits. Staff also utilize YesLMS to complete trainings on Artificial Intelligence and ethical considerations in counseling, as well as strategies for productive disagreement and leading difficult conversations.
Strategy 3. Provide support for professional staff to obtain a master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling.
Progress: Information is shared with LRS Counseling staff on opportunities for professional development towards earning a master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling and towards earning certifications in serving specialized disabilities such as the blind or deaf.
Strategy 4. Develop and implement methods to increase recruitment and retention of qualified staff by fully utilizing guidance and support provided by LA State Civil Service.
Progress: The agency Human Resources department is assisting LRS with requesting a Special Entrance Rate for the Rehabilitation Counselor and Rehabilitation Specialist job series in order to better recruit qualified staff for these critical positions. The agency Public Relations department is also in the process of developing a recruitment video featuring LRS staff members to enhance job postings to attract candidates.
Strategy 5. Provide specialized training to Counselors working in caseloads serving participants who are blind, deaf, deaf-blind, or hard of hearing by utilizing the YesLMS training platform and subject matter expert trainings.
Progress: In addition to offerings for training that are associated with the YesLMS training platform, the Blind Services Executive Director has been working to offer quarterly virtual training opportunities to the counselors working in the specialized caseloads. This training has included topics such as the use of the OrCam, assistive technology, the use of AI, and the Connect Center offered by the American Printing House for the Blind. In addition to this, Counselors working with individuals who are blind and/or deaf-blind were offered the opportunity to attend the annual convention of the National Federation of the Blind held in New Orleans. Two of our Counselors attend the National Research and Training Center on Blindness and Low Vision at Mississippi State's Vision Specialist certification/training program offered to professionals working in the field of blindness rehabilitation.
Strategy 6. Research and procure software or an online platform that offers on-demand training modules

relevant to Vocational Rehabilitation professionals.
Progress: In November 2023, LRS purchased YesLMS, an on-demand training platform relevant to Vocational Rehabilitation professionals.
Strategy 7. Due to its cessation during the pandemic, reinstitute the requirement of newly hired Rehabilitation Counselors participation in an in-person component of a hybrid Counselor Academy training event.
Progress: During the Fall 2024, all LRS staff attended an in-person week-long Vocational Rehabilitation training entitled "The VR Journey". This training covered a broad range of topics including: vocational guidance and counseling, conducting effective basic interviews, disabilities and functional limitations, authorizations and payments, Pre-Employment Transition Services, comprehensive assessment, vocational rehabilitation services, development of the Individualized Plan for Employment, comparable benefits, exception requests, case closures, and tips and best practices for using AWARE (the case management system).

Goal III: To maximize resources and pursue innovative means to leverage the state's full federal VR grant allotment.

Objective A. Work collaboratively with Louisiana Workforce Commission and other partners to leverage funding in order to ensure that services to consumers with disabilities are accessed and utilized to the utmost extent.
Strategy 1. Appropriately request an increase in additional State General Funds designated for Louisiana Rehabilitation Services to fully utilize the federal VR grant allotment allocated to LRS. This process includes developing a budget request at program level and submitting to LWC Budget for inclusion in the annual budget request.
Progress: LRS requested the full amount of state general funds needed to match all Federal funds available to Louisiana. LRS was able to secure $4 million in additional state general funds for State Fiscal Year 2026.
Strategy 2. Explore and implement third-party cooperative arrangements with public entities and/or establishment projects with Community Rehabilitation Programs and/or public/private non-profit entities based on the needs identified in the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment.
Progress: During PY 2023 and 2024, LRS approved 5 new Third Party Cooperative Arrangements (TPCAs). There are currently sixteen (16) established TPCAs with the following school districts and charter schools: Bossier Parish, Calcasieu Parish, Caldwell Parish, Collegiate Baton Rouge, DeSoto Parish, Educators for Quality Alternatives, Evangeline Parish, Franklin Parish, Grant Parish, G.W. Carver Collegiate Academy, Iberia Parish, Inspire NOLA Charter Schools, Livingston Parish, Natchitoches Parish, Morehouse Parish, and Webster Parish. Transition Specialists are funded through these arrangements to provide the required Pre-Employment Transition Services to students with disabilities within their school or school district. Other school systems who have indicated a recent interest in a TPCA with LRS include: Bienville Parish, Catahoula Parish, Lafayette Parish, Lincoln Parish, Union Parish, and Vermilion Parish.

(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

WIOA Performance Indicator	PY 2024 Negotiated	PY 2024 Actuals	PY 2025 Negotiated
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit	55.9%	58.1%	56.4%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit	56.0%	53.4%	56.5%
Median Earning 2nd Quarter after Exit	$5,100	$6,760	$5,250
Credential Attainment	46.4%	40.1%	46.9%
Measurable Skill Gains	53.5%	58.1%	54%

(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).

LRS provided the following funding to the Louisiana Rehabilitation Council and Statewide Independent Living Council during PY 2024 for allowable expenditures identified in the federal regulations 34 CFR 361.35:
Louisiana Rehabilitation Council (LRC): $8,605.49
Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC): $86,275.23
Total: $94,880.72
Innovation and Expansion funds (I&E) support the travel of the Louisiana Rehabilitation Council (LRC) members to participate in one day quarterly meetings. I&E funds support the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) Resource Plan as outlined in the Louisiana State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL), which includes SILC operations, staff salary, travel, and activities of the SILC. The SILC holds two-day quarterly meetings and attends conferences consistent with the SPIL.

(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:
[XX] VR agency requests to receive title VI funds.
[check box] VR agency does NOT elect to receive title VI funds and understands that supported employment services must still be provided under title I.

(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.

Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) will utilize Title VI funding to maintain the provision of intensive supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities, for the achievement of supported employment outcomes in competitive integrated employment.

Supported employment services will be provided to individuals who have been identified as needing these services to obtain and maintain competitive integrated employment. The goals and plans of the program will be:
1. Promote high-quality supported employment services by helping to increase the capacity of contracted Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) and their staff to efficiently serve LRS customers by ensuring that the rates for supported employment are adequate and reasonable to employ and train qualified staff.
2. Investigate and provide technical assistance and training opportunities for state office and field office staff to improve the supported employment service delivery system. The field staff will receive supported employment training directed at case management and quality supported employment services. In the fall of 2024, the LRS Training Unit and CRP Bureau provided technical assistance and training for state office and field office staff to improve the supported employment service delivery system. The field staff received supported employment training directed at case management, quality services, and changes to the supported employment milestone outcome payment system.
3. Coordinate with the Department of Health (Office of Behavioral Health, Office for Citizens with

Developmental Disabilities-Support Waivers Program, and Medicaid Purchase Plan), the Louisiana Chapter of the Association for Persons in Supported Employment (APSE), and the Louisiana State University (LSU) Health Science Center (HSC) Human Development Center in order to provide input to vendor agencies providing supported employment services and to solicit input from these agencies in the planning and implementation of quality supported employment services.

4. Coordinate with other agencies (public and private), employers, and advocates to establish multiple options for extended services, to ensure more successful supported employment outcomes.

Supported Employment Models Used by LRS:

LRS uses an individual job coach model in which an employment specialist assists the individual with obtaining competitive integrated employment. A job coach then provides training and support and facilitates the use of natural supports on-site or off-site (as specified in the individualized plan for employment) and then gradually reduces time and assistance until the customer's employment situation becomes stable.

(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.

LRS will use a milestone payment system to purchase services from Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) to provide intensive ongoing supports assisting individuals with the most significant disabilities with maintaining competitive integrated employment through job stabilization and transition to extended services.

Purchased supported employment services are identified and listed on the individualized plan for employment (IPE) and must be obtained through an approved supported employment CRP. Funding for extended services is provided by the CRP or sources other than LRS, except in the instance of a youth with a most significant disability when no other funding sources are available. In such instances, LRS will fund extended services for a period not to exceed four years (48 months) or until the youth reaches age 25, whichever comes first. Individualized plans for employment that include extended services for youth in supported employment services will be written for one year only and continued/amended annually until either the service is no longer needed, another funding source is identified, services have been provided for 48 months, or the youth reaches age 25.

(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 CFR 363.4(a) and 34 CFR 361.5(c)(19)(v).

For youth in supported employment, other funding sources for extended services must be identified prior to the end of the 48 months or extended services provided by LRS and before the youth turns 25 years old. LRS will assist the youth with securing extended services funding through private pay, waiver funding through the Office of Citizens with Developmental Disabilities, or Social Security Administration resources such as a Plan to Achieve Self-Support (PASS) plan or Impairment-Related Work Expenses (IRWE), and any other identified sources available. LRS encourages Community Rehabilitation Programs to become an Employment Network through the Social Security Administration Ticket to Work Program in order to fund the provision of extended services for adults receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI).

(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 CFR § 361.29(b), annual estimates must include the following projections:
Estimates for next Federal fiscal year—
VR Program; and
Priority Category (if applicable) - N/A
No. of Individuals Eligible for Services - 13,764
No. of Eligible Individuals Expected to Receive Services under VR Program – 13,764
Costs of Services using Title I Funds - $26,408,797
No. of Eligible Individuals Not Receiving Services (if applicable) - N/A

Supported Employment Program.

Priority Category (if applicable) - 1
No. of Individuals Eligible for Services - 325
No. of Eligible Individuals Expected to Receive Services under Supported Employment Program - 325
Costs of Services using Title I and Title VI Funds - $525,000
No. of Eligible Individuals Not Receiving Services (if applicable) - 0

(g) Order of Selection.
(1) [XX] The VR agency is not implementing an order of selection and all eligible individuals will be served.
[] The VR agency is implementing an order of selection with one or more categories closed.
* VR agencies may maintain an order of selection policy and priority of eligible individuals without implementing or continuing to implement an order of selection.

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.

(2) For VR agencies that have defined priority categories describe—
(A) The justification for the order;
Prior to 2022, LRS had to implement an order of selection due to limited financial resources and staffing deficits. After resolving these issues and completing promulgation in March 2022, LRS consolidated the order of selection from five priority groups to three, opening Groups 1 and 2 to eligible applicants. As of August 2022, LRS opened order of selection category 3, allowing all eligible individuals to be served and for LRS to no longer operate under an order of selection. LRS continues to operate without the implementation of 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

The Counselor assesses limitations in functional capacity to distinguish between levels of severity of the disability as follows:
Selection Group I - The Most Significantly Disabled. An eligible individual is considered the most

significantly disabled (Group I) when the following apply:
a. The individual meets the definition of an individual with a significant disability;
b. The individual's significant physical or mental impairment seriously limits three (3) or more functional capacity areas; and
c. The individual's vocational rehabilitation is expected to require multiple vocational rehabilitation services over an extended period of time.
Selection Group II – Significantly Disabled. An eligible individual is considered significantly disabled (Group II) when the following apply:
a. The individual meets the definition of an individual with a significant disability;
b. The individual's severe physical or mental impairment seriously limits one (1) or two (2) functional capacity areas; and
c. The individual's vocational rehabilitation is expected to require multiple vocational rehabilitation services over an extended period of time.
Selection Group III – Non-Significantly Disabled. An individual is considered non-significantly disabled (Group III) when:
a. the individual has a physical or mental impairment; and
b. the individual has been determined eligible for vocational rehabilitation services; and
c. the individual does not meet the above-stated criteria for an individual who is either "the most significantly disabled" or "significantly disabled."

Should LRS need to impose an order of selection, it would result in the closure of the Non-Significantly Disabled priority group and progress as needed before affecting the Most Significantly Disability priority.

(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.

In PY 2022, promulgation was completed to reduce and consolidate order of selection from five priority categories to three. Effective August 15, 2022, all priority categories were open allowing LRS to serve all eligible applicants. There were no customers on a deferred waiting list at that time. LRS is not under an order of selection and currently no individual is on a deferred wait list.

(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
[XX] No

(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 CFR 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 CFR 361.26. If the VR agency is not requesting or does not have an approved waiver of statewideness, please indicate "not applicable."

Louisiana Rehabilitation Services is requesting approval for a waiver of statewideness in accordance with 34

CFR Section 361.26 for the following Third Party Cooperative Arrangements: LRS has eighteen (18) Third Party Cooperative Arrangements (TPCA's) established with the following school districts and charter schools: Bossier, Calcasieu, Caldwell, DeSoto, Evangeline, Franklin, Grant, Iberia, Livingston, Morehouse, Natchitoches, Webster, Abramson Sci Academy, GW Carver, Walter L. Cohen, Collegiate Baton Rouge, Educators for Quality Alternatives, and Inspire NOLA Charter. Transition Specialists are funded through these arrangements to provide the required Pre-Employment Transition Services to students with disabilities within their school or school district.

All Vocational Rehabilitation services provided under this waiver are specified in the Third-Party Cooperative Arrangement contract. Services are not initiated until the consumer has been approved by the Rehabilitation Counselor for services and required services documented on either the Pre-Employment Transition Services Intake form or an approved VR Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

The Third-Party Cooperative Arrangement (TPCA) Contractors assure that all State Plan requirements, including the potentially eligible Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) or Order of Selection will apply to all individuals receiving services through the arrangement. Currently, all TPCAs are for the provision of Pre-Employment Transition Services. TPCAs are monitored monthly to determine that students meet the definition of a student with a disability and services provided meet the definition of Pre-Employment Transition Services required activities. TPCA contractors are required to provide monthly invoices and supporting documentation (Attendance and Progress Reports). TPCA contractors are monitored to insure they are meeting all contract deliverables. Regional Managers, District Supervisors, Rehabilitation Counselors and Rehabilitation Counselor Associates assure VR service requirements are met according to the LRS Technical Assistance and Guidance Manual procedures written and updated by LRS State Office personnel and monitored by LRS Quality Assurance division.

Louisiana Rehabilitation Services is also requesting approval for a waiver of statewideness in accordance with 34 CFR Section 361.26 for participation in the Project SEARCH program. Project SEARCH is a collaboration between the following required partners: the DOW Chemical Company as the host business who provides students with laptops, steel-toe boots, TWIC card, and DOW safety trainings as required of any new employee; the Iberville Parish School system who provides a special education teacher/certified Skills Instructor, students/customers to participate in the program and transportation for those students; the West Baton Rouge Parish School system who also refers students to participate and provides transportation for those students; LRS for VR Counselor and program management responsibilities; and the Arc of Iberville as the Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) who provides the Skills Trainer for this program. The Skills Trainer is responsible for meeting with each participant to conduct a Skills Assessment, provide Skills training services, and facilitate Job Placement with the host business, or in the community, upon completion of the program. Skills training services include training provided to participants to improve their ability to perform soft and hard skills and to meet the expectations and production standards of the host business, as well as the determination of whether any accommodations and/or compensatory techniques are needed to increase a participant's independence. Examples of these services may include intensive training on learning about work behaviors, work-based social skills, asking for and receiving training and supervision, career exploration, or issues related to disclosure in the workplace. Skills training is provided daily at the host site by the Skills Trainer. The Skills Trainer must provide these services in collaboration with the Skills Instructor and the designated supervisor from the host business.

Project SEARCH students have the opportunity to participate in three of the below internships in a year.
Aramark – Cafeteria
Job duties include stocking and cleaning the cafeteria and coolers; handling tickets, taking orders, and assisting customers during mealtimes; assisting with food preparation (such as prepping ingredients and basic cooking tasks); packaging and distributing orders; and following kitchen procedures and food safety

guidelines.
Poly A and Human Resources – Office Support
Job duties include scanning, organizing, and filing paperwork; preparing documents for scanning; creating, updating, and organizing spreadsheets; and answering phones and taking messages.
Poly B Lab – Water Treatment Lab Support
Job duties include labeling and organizing water samples; assisting with general water quality analyses (including measuring pH); operating, maintaining, and calibrating lab instruments under supervision; following lab safety guidelines and standard operating procedures to ensure safety compliance; and reliable documentation of results.
Occupational Health – Record Keeping and Material Distribution
Job duties include organizing and assembling personal protective equipment (PPE) kits for distribution; transcribing, recording, storing, and maintaining health records in written and/or electronic formats; entering and categorizing data using spreadsheets or computer systems; and compiling, calculating, verifying, and organizing information as assigned.
Garage – Vehicle Maintenance Support
Job duties include assisting with vehicle inspections and documenting findings; helping with routine maintenance tasks on vehicles and equipment in the garage and/or field settings; and recording and organizing information related to parts, materials, vehicles, and repair procedures.
Warehouse – Shipping/Receiving and Inventory Support
Job duties include assisting with checking shipment contents against records (such as manifests, invoices, and orders) to verify accuracy; recording shipment data; helping route incoming shipments and materials to appropriate departments; preparing passes and documentation for drivers to distribute materials within the plant; and entering, transcribing, and maintaining records in written and/or electronic form.

All Vocational Rehabilitation services provided under this waiver are not initiated until the Rehabilitation Counselor has approved the customer for services, and the required program services are documented on an approved VR Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

LRS assures that all State Plan requirements, including the potentially eligible Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) or Order of Selection will apply to all individuals receiving services through this program. This program is monitored monthly to determine that participants qualify and receive the intended services of this program. The Arc of Iberville, as the CRP fee-for-service vendor for this endeavor, is required to provide monthly invoices and supporting documentation (Attendance and Progress Reports). LRS VR staff assure service requirements are met in accordance with established LRS Technical Assistance and Guidance Manual procedures.

(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 VR agency will undertake to ensure it has an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professionals and paraprofessionals that provides the following:

(5) Analysis of current personnel and projected personnel needs including--
(A) 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;
(B) The number of personnel currently needed by the VR agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and
(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.

Personnel Category, No. of Personnel Employed, No. of Personnel Currently Needed, Projected No. of Personnel Needed in 5 Years
Rehabilitation Counselor, 67, 81, 81
Rehabilitation Counselor Associate, 21, 22, 22
Rehabilitation Employment Development Specialist, 5, 5, 5
District Supervisor, 12, 14, 14
Regional Manager, 8, 8, 8
Administrative and Executive staff, 25, 30, 30
Randolph-Sheppard Management Analyst, 4, 4, 4

(D) Ratio of qualified VR counselors to clients: Based on the number of consumers for PY 2024 and the number of Counselors, the ratio of qualified VR Counselors to clients is 1:299.

(E) Projected number of individuals to be served in 5 years: Based on current trends, calculations for the number of individuals projected to be served in 5 years will be 22,737. This amount represents the number projected to be served 5 years from now based upon recent increases in applicants and participants served. This also includes participants and applicants/eligible individuals that are reported during the year who never received planned services.

(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.

Institute of Higher Education, Type of Program, No. of Students Enrolled, No. of Prior Year Graduates

Louisiana State University-Shreveport, Graduate- Master of Science in Counseling with a concentration in Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling, 29, 9
Southern University at Baton Rouge, Undergraduate – Bachelor of Science in Rehabilitation Services, 65, 19
Southern University at Baton Rouge, Graduate – Master of Science in Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling, 14, 11

(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.

LRS shares job posting announcements for Counselor positions with Southern University and LSU Shreveport. Mutually beneficial relationships with these Universities are maintained so that well-qualified

students are made aware of vacancies anticipated in the future. Recruiting is also conducted with other colleges/universities that could be considered for employment (i.e. Social Work, Education, Counseling, etc.). As more Universities are offering graduate programs that are CACREP accredited, outreach efforts have increased to include the Disability offices and Career Centers located on those campuses.
To enhance staff retention, LRS delivers comprehensive onboarding and professional development through the utilization of the YesLMS learning management system. The YesLMS virtual platform enables employees to access a wide range of on-demand training courses specifically tailored to the needs of Vocational Rehabilitation professionals.
Ongoing training will address needs identified in Quality Assurance case reviews. Statewide meetings are conducted virtually to provide timely and consistent communication.
In accordance with the State of Louisiana and LRS's non-discrimination policy, all personnel are selected for employment regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.

(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.

To ensure that staff have access to adequate training, LRS provides systematic, ongoing professional development. Each employee is required to complete at least twenty-four hours of in-service training annually on topics such as assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, rehabilitation technology, and other topics relevant to vocational rehabilitation. Statewide training sessions regarding revised policies and procedures are conducted throughout the year. The LRS Training Unit also elicits input from counselors, supervisors, support staff, and administrators regarding their training needs. LRS also distributes articles, information, and literature about the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and vocational rehabilitation practices at Regional Manager meetings, regional staff meetings, and training sessions. All staff development activities contribute to the mission of improving the quality of services and the number and quality of employment outcomes for people with disabilities. LRS draws on all available information to continuously analyze training needs, including the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, RSA reviews, management reports, and Quality Assurance findings.

LRS is certified through the Commission on Rehabilitation Counseling Certification to provide approved continuing education hours for applicable coursework. All LRS staff also have access to CRC-approved on-demand continuing education courses available through the YesLMS.

LRS consistently analyzes all consumer data to identify areas of need for increased training or varied approaches. Updated information and research is disseminated to all LRS field staff by State Office. In addition, shared network drives and folders are utilized for storage and reference of recorded training, policy and procedural information.

LRS partners with the Louisiana Assistive Technology Access Network (LATAN) under the Assistive Technology Act of 1998 to provide client referral to their Assistive Technology Market Place, peer-to-peer information sharing, and information and referral for other assistance such as the secured loan financing

program that helps consumers obtain financing for assistive technology.

(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

LRS employs 59 staff who have achieved a master's degree or higher, with 25 specifically having a Master's in Rehabilitation Counseling. Of those who have a Master's in Rehabilitation Counseling, 12 serve as Rehabilitation Counselors. Additionally, 23 total staff hold Certified Rehabilitation Counselor certifications, with 10 of those being Rehabilitation Counselors. LRS also provides support to four employees in their pursuit of a Master's or Doctoral degree in Counseling, or Vision Specialist Certification.

(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.

To ensure the employment of qualified staff, LRS utilizes a career progression series for Rehabilitation Counselor positions; Rehabilitation Counselor-Entry, Rehabilitation Counselor, and Rehabilitation Counselor-Master. Qualifications for the Rehabilitation Counselor-Entry position include: a bachelor's degree in any field plus one year of professional level experience in rehabilitation services, social services, administrative services, nursing, or therapy services; or a bachelor's degree specifically in a rehabilitation field, a social sciences field, social work, education, nursing, health and human services, speech therapy, or business administration; or, a master's degree.

Qualifications to promote from Entry-level to the Rehabilitation Counselor position, staff must have satisfactorily performed assigned duties for no less than one year and be recommended for Independent Approval Status (IAS) by their supervisor. The process to be approved for IAS involves Regional Managers conducting reviews of casework performed by that Counselor for no less than 10 cases, with at least 1 case being in each of the following statuses: Eligibility, Original IPE, Plan Amendment, Closed-Rehabilitated, and Closed-Other after services have been rendered on an IPE. Once approved for IAS, the employee will be allowed to approve eligibility determinations, IPEs, and case closures without prior supervisory review or approval. (Note: District Supervisors are required to approve purchase authorizations for all casework conducted by employees on IAS.)

Qualifications to promote from Counselor-level to the Rehabilitation Counselor-Master position, staff must have a Master's degree in a rehabilitation field, a social sciences field, social work, education, nursing, health and human services, speech therapy, or business administration; or a Master's degree in any field with at least 18 semester hours of specialized coursework as follows: 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 Disabilities, or 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, or Delivery of Rehabilitation Services. They must also have satisfactorily performed assigned duties for no less than two years with LRS, and have maintained IAS through satisfactory scores of casework reviewed annually by the LRS Quality Assurance unit.

As they are made known to LRS Administration, staff at various levels are provided information and encouraged to participate in trainings that are relevant to Vocational Rehabilitation offered through mediums such as: VRTAC-QM, VRTAC-QE, NTACT:C, Workforce GPS, Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), and Disability Employment Technical Assistance Center (DETAC). Staff also access and conduct research on Labor Market Trends and information through a Louisiana Works Management Information Systems database called "HiRE". Information contained in this database informs LRS staff on what jobs are in high demand or are considered "Star Jobs" when assisting consumers seeking employment.

Information pertaining to the efforts of LRS addressing the continued professional development of staff can be also be found in the response to (2) C above on this State Plan.

(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.

LRS meets the communication needs of applicants and recipients of services by providing interpreters who can communicate in alternate languages, appropriate modes, or native languages. LRS offices statewide utilize on-demand language interpretation services provided by Propio Language Services, LLC, in order to meet these needs. LRS also ensures employees and consumers with blindness or visual impairments receive information and materials in their preferred mode of communication through various accommodations (assistive communication devices, large print and/or Braille materials, closed- caption and electronic copies).

(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.

Annually, LRS reviews established policy, procedures, and activities within our administration with the goal to coordinate the comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). These objectives include maintaining the state interagency agreement between the Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) and the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) for the systematic transition for Louisiana's youth with disabilities. Additionally, our objectives include increasing LRS and LDOE employee awareness and knowledge of Pre-Employment Transition Services for eligibility and to identify potentially eligible students. The interagency agreement also defines how LRS and LDOE collaborate together for cross training, technical assistance, and service delivery to eligible students while working with stakeholders to establish local level partnerships. LRS staff conduct presentations with multiple levels of school administrators and personnel to provide information on services and how collaboration and cooperation help mutual students served. LRS is also asked to participate in Transition, Career, and College Fairs conducted by local educational agencies statewide. LRS Executive staff are also asked to present on Pre-Employment Transition Services and Vocational Rehabilitation during statewide conferences and conventions conducted by LDOE.

COOPERATION, COLLABORATION, AND COORDINATION (Section 101(a)(11) of the Rehabilitation Act)

(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.

LRS engages with the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) and Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) through Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) which are routinely reviewed, updated, and renewed. These instruments facilitate the exchange of records and information for students/customers served by both entities, allow LRS staff to meet with potential and current consumers in the school setting to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services, and help educate students and parents about the full range of programs offered by LRS. This includes not only Pre-ETS, but also broader transition services that support a seamless progression from secondary school settings to post-secondary training and employment opportunities. These instruments also ensure that students have the opportunity to apply for VR services before graduation. When a LEA expresses interest in establishing a Third-Party Cooperative Arrangement with LRS to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services, LRS supplies explanatory literature outlining the federal requirements or conducts a presentation conveying this information, during which any questions posed by the LEA are addressed directly.

The MOU does not reduce the obligation under IDEA, or LEA, or any other agency to provide or pay for transition services, including pre-employment transition services, that are also considered to be special education or related services necessary for a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in accordance with Section 101 of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.22(c). The LDOE and LEA will use appropriate federal, state, and local funds for the provision of educational services on the approved Individualized Educational Plan that relates directly to the achievement of the agreed upon educational goal.

(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 CFR 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 CFR part 397 regarding students and youth with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment; and
(F) Assurance that, in accordance with 34 CFR 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 CFR 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.

LRS collaborates with the Louisiana Department of Education through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The MOU partners are Louisiana Workforce Commission/Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LWC/LRS), and the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE). This agreement documents how LRS and LDOE partner to provide a coordinated set of activities to facilitate a seamless transition of students with disabilities from high school to post-school activities. The purpose of the agreement is to strengthen interagency collaboration to better assist students with disabilities so that when they exit secondary education, they will have a plan in place to achieve competitive integrated employment, which may include post-secondary education or other vocational rehabilitation services. The LDOE and LRS MOU is designed to act as a guide for the subsequent development of agreements between local LRS Regional Offices and Local Educational Agencies (LEAs). Local agreements specify target populations, identify goals and objectives, and describe roles, responsibilities, and state expectations for data sharing in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to students with disabilities.

LRS provides orientation and information sessions for students with disabilities (and their families) who express an interest in applying for Pre-ETS and/or Vocational Rehabilitation services. These sessions occur as a group presentation or individual meetings that focus on informing students and their families about services offered by LWC/LRS. The meetings take place in-person, via video conference, or as a conference call. LRS staff provide Pre-ETS to students with documented disabilities based on individual need once a student requests or is recommended for one or more of the five required activities.

Transition planning is provided by Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselors to meet the needs of the individual student with a disability. LRS considers a student with a disability to be enrolled in the K-12 education system including traditional public schools, intermediate school districts, private schools, charter schools (public school academies), alternative schools, schools for individuals with disabilities such as the Louisiana School for the Deaf and Visually Impaired, 504 students, home-schooled students, and students in education programs in correctional facilities. Through the provision of guidance and counseling with Pre-ETS students, the VR Counselor is made aware of the customers plans beyond high school. Prior to graduation, the customer completes an application for vocational rehabilitation services. Upon being determined eligible for services, an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) is developed to ensure a seamless transition for services beyond high school.

LRS is working closely with multiple stakeholders to improve employment outcomes for persons with disabilities. LRS has eighteen (18) Third-Party Cooperative Arrangements (TPCAs) in place with the local school districts. The arrangements define vocational rehabilitation services and objectives for students with disabilities that enhance outcome goals. Additionally, there are 31 Community Rehabilitation Programs providing Pre-Employment Transition Services through a fee-for-service agreement. The LRS Transition Program Manager and Program Coordinators meet both in person and through virtual conferences to support all TPCAs, fee-for-service vendors, LEAs, and—when needed or requested—educators who provide services to students with disabilities. This assistance focuses on the planning and delivery of Pre-Employment Transition Services and VR services. The Transition Program Coordinators also participate in the hiring process for TPCA Transition Specialists and monitor the qualifications of both transition specialists and fee-for-service vendor personnel.

Students with disabilities to receive Pre-Employment Transition Services are identified through collaboration between the VR Counselor, LEA personnel, Guidance Counselors, and Special Education personnel. Students with disabilities, and their parent or legal guardian, are provided information pertaining to the purpose of the vocational rehabilitation program, eligibility requirements, application procedures, and scope of services.

As in accordance with 34 CFR 397.31, the MOU with LDOE stipulates an assurance to not enter into a

contract or other arrangement with an entity, as defined in 34 CFR 397.5(d), for the purpose of operating a program under which a youth with a disability is engaged in work compensated at a subminimum wage.

(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.

Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) employs Rehabilitation Employment Development Specialists (REDS) statewide to build and maintain relationships with employers, facilitating competitive integrated employment for individuals with disabilities. Supported by a Program Coordinator who oversees employment initiatives and provides technical assistance, REDS engage in regular outreach and participate in job fairs hosted by local organizations, employers, and municipalities. These events allow REDS to connect LRS customers directly with employers, initiate the job application process, and strengthen partnerships across local, regional, and statewide networks.

In alignment with LRS's commitment to youth employment, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselors and Pre-ETS CRPs collaborate with employers to deliver Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) for students with disabilities. These services (such as work-based learning experiences, employer site visits, and job shadowing) offer students exposure to real-world work environments, build career readiness, and foster early engagement with potential employers.

(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;
LRS collaborates with Louisiana's federal Assistive Technology Act program, the Louisiana Assistive Technology Access Network (LATAN), by referring customers to LATAN services, including assistive technology (AT) demonstrations, AT loan programs, and related supports. LATAN also assists LRS customers in transitioning from school to work, obtaining or maintaining employment, and increasing independence through assessments for computer and AT device access, seating and positioning needs, home accessibility modifications, and worksite accommodations. In addition, LRS staff attend LATAN events to stay informed about current assistive technology solutions.

(2) Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the Department of Agriculture;
LRS does not currently have an interagency agreement with the Department of Agriculture; however, this section will be amended if LRS engages in a Rural Development cooperative agreement.

(3) Non-educational agencies serving out-of-school youth;
LRS provides information and guidance on Vocational Rehabilitation and Pre-Employment Transition Services to organizations such as: The Autism Society of Louisiana, LSU Health Sciences Center - Human Development Center, Families Helping Families, various health services programs through the local governing entity (Louisiana Department of Health – LDH), and other entities providing services to youth with disabilities. Outreach is performed through the distribution of brochures, flyers, and in-person

meetings or presentations.

(4) State use contracting programs;
LRS is not currently engaged in an active agreement with the State Use program; however, the LRS Director serves on the State Use Council, which oversees the selection of a central non-profit agency (currently Employment Development Services, Inc.). All contracts for the State Use program are negotiated and fulfilled through a central non-profit agency. The current State Use program is administered by the State Use Council, under the Department of Health's Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities.

(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.);
LRS does not currently have an interagency agreement with the LDH office that administers Medicaid services to Louisianans with disabilities.

(6) State agency responsible for providing services for individuals with developmental disabilities;
Through the MOU with the Office of Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD) within LDH, LRS maintains collaborative efforts to ensure the sharing of resources. The LRS - OCDD collaboration allows for the identification of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are eligible for vocational rehabilitation services. The goal is to provide these eligible OCDD customers with employment services to pursue competitive employment in integrated settings. LRS accepts referrals of OCDD customers and provides rehabilitation services to eligible LRS customers to assist with achieving suitable employment outcomes through informed choice of available vendors.
In addition, the LRS Director serves on the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council (LADDC). This participation gives LRS a voice to provide input and direction regarding employment services to assist individuals with developmental disabilities to pursue and maintain competitive integrated employment. Through connections with individual and agency members of the LADDC, LRS engages in information and referral sharing to guide customers through the employment service system.

(7) State agency responsible for providing mental health services;
Through the MOU with the Office of Behavioral Health (OBH) within LDH, LRS continues to provide guidance to assist vocational rehabilitation and behavioral health providers to work with individuals with both disabilities and behavioral health diagnoses. Collaboration includes sharing information on major funding, service-availability, and policy changes affecting customers, as well as jointly planning and delivering interagency staff training.

LRS accepts referrals of OBH customers interested in competitive integrated employment and provides vocational rehabilitation services to assist these individuals with obtaining or maintaining a job. LRS also provides extended services for youth with behavioral conditions who qualify for Supported Employment services.

LRS and OBH staff regularly collaborate on strategies to improve services for the mental health population. OBH funds and provides Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Supported Employment services for individuals with serious mental illness. Ongoing discussions focus on how LRS can better partner with OBH to provide support services to ensure success for IPS participants.

(8) Other Federal, State, and local agencies and programs outside the workforce development system; and
LRS continues coordinated efforts with programs other than those within the workforce development system. The other State/Local agencies and Tribal programs with which LRS collaborates via MOUs include:
Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) – This MOU with LDOE promotes transition planning and

vocational preparation for students with disabilities under provisions of the LRS Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) program. Collaboration includes guidelines for implementing WIOA and Pre-ETS within Local Education Agencies (LEAs). Technical assistance is provided to LEAs for Pre-ETS as well as planning the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school opportunities.
Partnership Plus – Lafayette Consolidated Government Employment Network – This agreement between LRS and the Employment Network (which is Lafayette Consolidated Government) creates a smooth transition from pre-employment and placement services to ongoing employment support. LRS is able to expand the scope of long-term services to Ticket to Work beneficiaries. This is accomplished in part by the Employment Network assisting LRS teams with Ticket to Work information, training, marketing, and procedures for sharing information.
Randolph Sheppard and Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) and Department of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism (CRT) – This agreement provides employment to individuals who are blind or have low vision through the Randolph Sheppard Program. LRS oversees the vending machines at Welcome Centers and Rest Areas as designated by DOTD.
Randolph Sheppard and Delgado Community College – This agreement maintains vending and food-service operations at Delgado Community College and Louisiana Works campuses, providing employment for blind individuals while serving students, employees, and visitors.
Strategies to Empower People (STEP) – Through a cooperative agreement with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), referrals are received by LRS regional offices for individuals participating in the STEP program who are receiving government assistance through the Family Independence Temporary Assistance Program (FITAP) and have been screened to potentially have a disability. During in-service staff trainings, LRS regional offices also receive information from STEP employees on this program and how it provides opportunities for work-eligible families in need. Effective as of October 1, 2025, legislation was passed during the regular session, which resulted in the STEP Employment and Training program being moved from DCFS to be governed and administered by Louisiana Works.
Tribal Vocational Rehab Programs (Section 121) – LRS renewed the MOU with Louisiana American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Programs (Section 121). The Tribal VR programs in this collaborative endeavor include: the United Houma Nation Vocational Rehabilitation Program, the Central Louisiana Intertribal Vocational Rehabilitation Program, and the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana Vocational Rehabilitation Program. LRS recognizes Tribal citizens with disabilities as an underserved population in Louisiana. LRS and Tribal VRs refer their customers to each other's programs to maximize services that will allow more American Indians with disabilities to increase their independence through gaining and maintaining competitive employment.

(9) Other private nonprofit organizations.
LRS collaborates with private nonprofits on information sharing of resources for people with disabilities. Some nonprofit collaborations include Families Helping Families (FHF) Centers, Community Independent Living Centers (CIL), and The Arc of Louisiana. FHF, a statewide network of regional nonprofit resource centers, assists individuals and families who experience disabilities. Regional FHF Centers provide information on how to access and utilize employment services, family-to-family support, resource referrals, training, transition services, and more. The Arc of Louisiana advocates for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to promote inclusion, self-advocacy, and self-determination. There are local Arc Chapters that provide support and services to families statewide. Through these collaborative efforts with private nonprofits, families and individuals are referred to LRS to receive assistance to obtain and maintain competitive integrated employment, and LRS customers can utilize these additional resources and services to lead independent, self-sufficient lives.

As the designated state entity for the Independent Living Services Grant Program, LRS maintains a dedicated staff member as liaison to the Statewide Independent Living Council and the Statewide Centers

for Independent Living (CILs). The LRS Director and liaison staff attend the SILC quarterly meetings to maintain effectual collaboration and increase awareness of CILs and LRS initiatives. LRS collaborates with Centers for Independent Living CILs by sharing resources for people with disabilities. LRS contracts with three statewide CILs, New Horizons Independent Living Center, Southwest Louisiana Independence Center, and Resources for Independent Living to provide advocacy, assistive technology, information and referral, peer mentoring, skills training, transition services, transportation, and more, to assist individuals with disabilities with increased independence and improved access to their communities. Additionally, LRS provides financial and technical assistance to the Statewide Independent Living Council to support the work of the CILs.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES

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 : The designated State agency is Office of Workforce Development under Louisiana Works.
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 (enter the name of 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: The designated State unit is Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS).

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;

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 title of State officer 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 Combined State Plan and its supplement: Assistant Secretary, Office of Workforce Development, Louisiana Works

8. The (enter title of State officer below) has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services: Assistant Secretary, Office of Workforce Development, Louisiana Works

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.

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 State Plan must provide assurances that:
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 C.F.R. 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:
(a) the establishment of the designated State agency and designated State unit, as required by section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act.
(b) either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act.
(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.
(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).
(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.
(f) as applicable, the shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act.

(g) statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act.
(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.
(i) all required methods of administration, as required by section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act.
(j) the requirements for the comprehensive system of personnel development, as set forth in section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act.
(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.
(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).
(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:
(a) comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(E) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act.
(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.
(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.
(d) determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.
(e) comply with the requirements for the development of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.
(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.
(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.
(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.
(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.
(j) with respect to students with disabilities, the State: (i) has developed and will implement, (A) strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and (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 (ii) has developed and will implement strategies to provide pre-employment transition services (sections 101(a)(15),101(a)(25), and 113). (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:
(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.
(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):
(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.
(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:
(a) The designated State agency assures that it will provide supported employment services as defined in section 7(39) of the Rehabilitation Act.
(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) and 606(b)(7)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act.

Appendix 1: Performance Goals for the Core Programs

Vocational Rehabilitation Program – Expected Levels of Performance
Program Year: 2026
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit): 58.5%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit): 54.4%
Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit): $6,800
Credential Attainment Rate – 40.8%
Measurable Skill Gains – 58.5%

Program Year: 2027
Employment (Second Quarter after Exit): 58.7%
Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit): 54.6%

Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit): $6,850
Credential Attainment Rate – 41.4%
Measurable Skill Gains – 58.9%

[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 CFR 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 CFR part 363.

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

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 Louisiana TANF-funded programs and services are implemented through interagency partnerships, including the Louisiana Works (LA Works) and the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH), pursuant to approved agreements. The Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) serve as TANF lead agency .

Needy families with, or expecting children, may ~~will~~ be provided with financial assistance and/or other services to include education, job preparation, work and support services under Louisiana's Family Independence Temporary Assistance Program (FITAP), Kinship Care Subsidy Program (KCSP)~~,~~. Cash assistance and kinship services are administered by the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) under DCFS oversight as TANF lead agency. Strategies to Empower People (STEP) program is administered by Louisiana Works (LA WORKS).

Eligibility requirements, definitions of dependent children, qualified relatives, income and resource standards, and payment levels for FITAP, KCSP and STEP remain unchanged and are administered in accordance with applicable state and federal law.

A needy family is defined as a family residing in the state who meets the eligibility requirements listed below for FITAP and KCSP respectively.

For FITAP eligibility a dependent child must be: Under 18 years of age, or 18 years of age and enrolled in a secondary school or its equivalent.

For KCSP eligibility, a dependent child must be under 18 years of age.

Unborn children are not eligible for FITAP. A pregnant woman who has completed the fifth month of pregnancy may be certified if otherwise eligible (unborn is not eligible). To qualify for cash assistance, a child must reside

in the home of a parent or other qualified relative who is responsible for the day-to-day care of the child. The following relatives are qualified relatives:

Grandfather or grandmother (extends to great-great-great); Brother or sister (including half- brother and half-sister); Uncle or aunt (extends to great-great);

First cousin (including first cousin once removed); Nephew or niece (extends to great-great); Stepfather or stepmother; and

Stepbrother or stepsister.

These may be biological or adoptive relatives.

Resources are assets or possessions that a household can convert to cash to meet needs. All resources are excluded when determining eligibility.

Income is any gain or benefit to a household that has monetary value and is not considered a resource. All income is counted when determining eligibility and payment amounts except income from certain sources determined not countable by the department.

Kinship Care Subsidy Program (KCSP)

Income is any gain or benefit to a household that has monetary value and is not considered a resource. All income is counted when determining pretest eligibility except income from certain sources determined not countable by the department. In order to meet this requirement, the

gross countable income of the caretaker relative's KCSP income must be less than 150% of the federal poverty threshold for the family size. For purposes of this pretest, the caretaker's KCSP income unit is defined to include the child, the caretaker relative, and anyone residing in the home for whom the caretaker relative claims financial responsibility. Members who receive federal or state foster care payments or SSI are not counted in the family size. For purposes of this pretest, income is defined as countable income belonging to any member of the KCSP income unit.

Income After Pretest

The child is determined eligible for KCSP if the child's countable income is less than $450. If the child's income is $450 or more, the child is ineligible. Payment amount is $450 a month for each eligible child. A child who receives federal or state foster care payments or SSI is not eligible to receive KCSP benefits.

Strategies to Empower People (STEP) Program

To assist Louisiana families in becoming economically self-reliant so that their dependence on government benefits for basic needs is minimized, the department implemented the STEP program so that cash assistance recipients, with certain exceptions, are actively engaged in meaningful activities designed to enable their transition from cash assistance to self-reliance. It is further intended that cash assistance recipients demonstrate active and diligent personal responsibility in achieving self-reliance through employment and increased workplace literacy. All appropriate state agencies responsible for employment, training, and educating Louisiana's citizens are expected to cooperate in the pursuit of this goal.

Once an applicant is certified for assistance, a comprehensive assessment will be conducted if needed and may include workplace literacy, basic skills and educational attainment, interests and aptitude related to employment, barriers to employment, need for education, supportive services such as child care and transportation, and other supportive services. Specialized assessments can occur for issues that arise after an initial assessment has been completed and could include substance abuse, domestic violence, mental health screening, or others as determined by the department. STEP is using a research model of case management that develops Executive Functioning in participants through coaching and goal development. The case management

model assists participants to develop goals that lead to identifying barriers to employment and plans to address these barriers.

Supportive services provided to clients include but are not limited to:

A full range of case maintenance and case management services designed to lead to self- sufficiency; Transportation assistance; Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits; Child care; and TANF-funded services and other services necessary to accept or maintain employment.

Services may be provided to persons participating in the Family Assessment and to persons referred by the analyst to other activities, such as drug counseling, prior to their participation in a work activity.

Supportive services also include providing services to FITAP recipients participating in approved activities necessary to meet exemptions to the FITAP time limits. Appropriate supportive services may also be provided to allow participation in educational activities for FITAP recipients who are exempt from STEP.

Family Violence Option

Per section 402(a)(7) of the Social Security Act, Louisiana has chosen to waive, pursuant to a determination of good cause, program requirements including: STEP Program participation, time-limited benefits, child support or paternity establishment cooperation requirements, refusal to accept or termination of full-time employment, and residency when the requirement makes it more difficult for the individual to escape domestic violence or places them or their child at risk of further violence.

Effective March 1, 2023, Louisiana expanded the option to allow good cause and temporary waiver of program requirements when sexual harassment, sexual assault, and stalking make it more difficult to escape such violence or places the individual at risk of further violence.

At application for cash benefits and recertification, applicants and potential applicants for assistance are automatically notified of assistance made available by the State to victims of sexual harassment and survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking. The automated correspondence provided advises them of their right to claim good cause for domestic violence, sexual harassment, sexual assault, and stalking, and allows them to self- disclose abuse and to claim a family violence exemption. The correspondence advises the client that any information provided is confidential, provides hotline phone numbers to report child abuse and neglect and to get help with domestic violence and sexual assault, and provides examples of violence to help educate clients.

All work-eligible clients are screened after certification through a questionnaire during a coaching session.

When instances of domestic violence, sexual harassment, sexual assault, or stalking are identified, the client is referred to other appropriate programs that specialize in safety and stabilization, counseling, and supportive services.

Louisiana ensures eligibility case workers and coaches are trained in:

- the nature and dynamics of sexual harassment and domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking;
- the state standards, policy, 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
- the 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.

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)

To assist Louisiana families in becoming economically self-reliant so that their dependence on government benefits for basic needs is minimized, the department implemented the STEP Program effective October 1, 2003, so that all cash assistance recipients, with certain exceptions, are actively engaged in meaningful activities designed to enable their transition from cash assistance to self-reliance. In June of 2020, the Department of Children and Family Services developed a section specifically to focus on employment and training programs for participants in the STEP program and the Department's other Employment and Training programs for participants receiving SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program). It is intended that LA WORKS will assist STEP participants in both addressing the barriers to employment and developing goals that demonstrate active and diligent personal responsibility in achieving self-reliance through employment and increased workplace literacy. All appropriate state agencies responsible for employment, training, and educating Louisiana's citizens are expected to cooperate in the pursuit of this goal. These state agencies can cooperate in these pursuits by collaborating in developing a career pathways model for STEP participants.

Work-eligible members of cash assistance programs are required to participate in STEP activities when they are certified to receive cash assistance to gain readiness for work or when that member has received 24 months of such 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).

Work-eligible recipients shall participate in appropriate work activities as agreed upon in the Family Success Agreement. Work-eligible is defined as families containing an adult under 60 years of age, or teen head of household that is not disabled, incapacitated, or caring for a family member who is disabled or incapacitated as documented by a medical expert to which the status of disability is clearly established and explained.

Work-eligible excludes cases in which only the child portion of need that is unrelated to a sanction or penalty, known as a child only case, is considered in determining eligibility. The work activities may include but are not limited to: Unsubsidized employment; Subsidized employment; Unpaid work experience; On-the-job training; Job search/job readiness; Vocational education; Satisfactory attendance at a secondary school or in a course of study leading to a certificate of general equivalence, in the case of recipients who have not completed secondary schools or received a certificate; Education directly related to employment; Job skills training directly related to employment; Community service; and the provision of child care to an individual who is participating in community service. Participants who are found not to possess basic workplace or basic literacy skills, as determined by an assessment, shall combine employment and job readiness and job search activities with activities designed to increase their basic and workplace literacy skills.

LA WORKS now administers the STEP program. Oversite for the TANF program itself is still with the Department of Children and Family Services. In 2028, LA Works will also administer the TANF program. Presently a Memorandum of Understanding exists between LA WORKS and DCFS to ensure the program integrity of the STEP work program. Now that STEP and WIOA are both administered within LA Works, the two programs are developing tailored services to address the unique needs of the TANF population.

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

Work-eligible recipients are assigned a case manager who jointly performs an in-depth assessment of the participant's family strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and barriers. The assessment helps develop a strategy to determine the programs that the participant will need to become self-sufficient. A family success agreement is then prepared. The family success agreement is a mutually developed contract between the participant and the department.

The case manager, also known as a STEP coach provides services utilizing a research model of case

management that develops Executive Functioning in participants through coaching and goal development. This model emphasizes the need of the STEP coach to engage the participant. This engagement is marked by the assistance of the participant in developing goals that address barriers to poverty. The STEP coach recognizes that the participant has internal and external barriers related to poverty that must be addressed before the participant can successfully maintain and retain employment. Services referred to provide work activities and supportive services must also align with the particular needs of the participant, with the goal of creating a career pathway. A career pathway aligns State Workforce Agencies, State Adult Education Agencies and State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies to develop a framework, resources and tools to develop, implement and sustain incremental steps that lead participants to work experience, certifications and opportunities that lead to sufficient income to support their families.

The work-eligible recipient then participates in the appropriate work activities as agreed upon in the family success agreement.

STEP referrals include non-work eligible clients. Non-work eligible clients are also learning to use executive functioning to help them set goals in preparation for their futures and meeting current medical needs for themselves and their families.

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)

Client information may only be used for the administration of the program. Use and disclosure of information will be restricted in accordance with all applicable state laws and federal regulations. Use of information for commercial, personal, or political purposes is prohibited.

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)

Through an agreement with LA WORKS, DCFS will fund the Jobs for America's Graduates Louisiana (JAG-LA) Program to keep in school those students at risk of failing in school, to capture out-of-school youth in need of a high school education, to provide an avenue for achieving academically, and to assist students in ultimately earning recognized credentials that will make it possible for them to exit school and enter post- secondary education and/or the workforce. Services provided will meet TANF Goal 3 to prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock teenage pregnancies by providing intervention and improved life prospects for students who show evidence of failing, dropping out or engaging in negative behaviors that can lead to dependency, out-of-wedlock births, imprisonment, and/or other undesirable outcomes which may lead to the detriment and impoverishment of youth. JAG Specialists provide advice and support as students make significant career and life decisions and serve as a "one-stop" connection for participants to access personal, behavioral, and other youth services in the community.

Eligible participants in the JAG-LA Program face at least two designated barriers to success that include economic, academic, personal, environmental, or work related barriers.

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)

The Department of Children and Family Services funds the Family Violence Prevention and Intervention Initiative. The Department currently contracts with seventeen family violence prevention providers who are located in all areas throughout the State of Louisiana. In addition to providing immediate shelter for survivors of family violence, providers are tasked with outreach, education, and training. Family violence prevention providers regularly provide training and education on the problem of, and the laws pertaining to, statutory rape. These training and educational activities are provided to law enforcement officials, schools, local community organizations, and targeted adult men's organizations.

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)

Needy families, through the FITAP, KCSP, and STEP programs will be provided financial assistance, job preparation, work and supportive services. Financial assistance is delivered through Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT).

The department has promulgated rules to establish provisions necessary to prevent cash assistance provided under the FITAP and KCSP programs from being used in any electronic benefit transfer (EBT) transaction in a liquor store, gambling casino or gaming establishment, or any retail establishment that provides adult—oriented entertainment in which performers disrobe or perform in an unclothed state for entertainment purposes, or at any retailer for the purchase of an alcoholic beverage, a tobacco product, or a lottery ticket.

Louisiana continues to provide recipients access to their benefits and related services in each of the 64 parishes based on the policies and procedures in effect. All of the major ATM networks accept the Louisiana Purchase (EBT) cards and many carry the Louisiana Purchase logo on the machines to allow the recipient to know that the card is accepted.

Stolen EBT Benefits

Effective May 2023, households who have stolen EBT benefits may complete a statement regarding the theft of EBT benefits. The theft of benefits must be reported within 30 days of the theft and the adjoining police report must be submitted within 14 days of the notification to DCFS.

The state will accept reports of stolen EBT benefits through in-person, phone, call center, online submission, emails, or through the DCFS Fraud Hotline online portal.

The state will determine if the loss of benefits was related to EBT card cloning/skimming at a compromised retailer and the amount of the loss.

The household may request a Fair Hearing if they disagree with the amount of benefits being replaced. The Fraud and Recovery will notify the household in writing that their complaint regarding EBT theft of benefits was denied and why. This notice will include a section for an appeal.

All claims will be maintained within the Fraud and Recovery system which will track the amount of the claim, the required police report, and the Statement regarding the theft of EBT benefits. The Fraud and Recovery Unit will maintain all records for reports of EBT theft to ensure that the benefits will not be replaced more than twice per FFY.

The state is working with our vendor to implement safeguards. The recipient would have to submit a request for available security features to be added to their EBT account, via the

vendor's app, portal, or by telephone. Security features may include:

Spending Threshold

Restrict Out of State Purchases

Restrict Online Purchases

To ensure access to benefits, the state will use social media, text messaging, community partners, and updates to the state website to inform recipients of the new policy.

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)

First time users of the EBT card are provided with a list of banks with no "out of network" surcharges. Information regarding transaction fees and surcharges, including a list of banks that assess no surcharge to recipients, is publicly available on the department's website. Recipients may still access their benefits at grocery stores that sell both groceries and intoxicating liquors as long as the retail establishment does not sell exclusively or primarily intoxicating liquors.

Also, recipients may still access their benefits at establishments that offer gaming activities as long as those gaming activities are incidental to the principal purpose of the business.

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)

The TANF Programs will be operated statewide in all political subdivisions of the state. No specific provisions will be applied to families moving to Louisiana from another state.

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)

Each recipient must be a United States citizen, a non-citizen national (person born in an outlying possession of the United States [American Samoa or Swain's Island] on or after the date the U.S. acquired the possession, or a person whose parents are U.S. non-citizen nationals), or a qualified alien as defined below:

An alien who is lawfully admitted for permanent residence under the Immigration and Nationality Act;

An alien who is granted asylum under Section 208 of such act;

A refugee who is admitted to the United States under Section 207 of such act;

An alien who is paroled into the United States under Section 212(d)(5) of such act for a period of at least one year;

An alien whose deportation is withheld under §243(h) of such act (as in effect immediately before the effective date [April 1, 1997] of §307 of Division C of Public Law 104-208) or §241(b)(3) of such act (as amended by Section 305(a) of Division C of Public Law 104-208);

An alien who is granted conditional entry pursuant to §203(a)(7) of such act as in effect prior to April 1, 1980;

An alien who is a Cuban or Haitian entrant as defined in § 501(e) of the Refugee Education Assistance Act of 1980;

An alien who has been battered or subjected to extreme cruelty in the United States by a spouse or parent, or by a member of the spouse's or parent's family residing in the same household as the alien if the spouse or parent consented to, or acquiesced in, such battery or cruelty. The individual who has been battered or subjected to extreme cruelty must no longer reside in the same household with the individual who committed the battery or cruelty. The agency must also determine that a substantial connection exists between such battery or cruelty and the need for the benefits to be provided. The alien must have been approved or have a petition pending which contains evidence sufficient to establish the status as a spouse or a child of a United States citizen pursuant to clause (ii), (iii), or (iv) of §204(a)(1)(A) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA); or the classification pursuant to clause (ii) or (iii) of Section 204(a)(1)(B) of the INA; or cancellation of removal under section 1229b of the INA (as in effect prior to April 1, 1997); or the status as a spouse or child of a United States

citizen pursuant to clause (i) of §204(a)(1)(A) of the INA, or classification pursuant to clause (i) of Section 204(a)(1)(B) of the INA;

An alien child of a battered parent or the alien parent of a battered child as described in §1223A.8;

An alien who is a victim of a severe form or trafficking in persons, or an eligible relative of a victim of a severe form of trafficking in persons; or

An alien who is an Iraqi or Afghani immigrant who has been granted Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) status. An alien who is a qualified alien and who enters the United States on or after August 22, 1996, is not eligible for any Federal means-tested public benefit for a period of 5 years beginning on the date of the alien's entry into the United States unless:

Exception for refugees and asylees:

An alien who is admitted to the United States as a refugee under section 207 of the Immigration and Nationality Act [8 U.S.C. 1157];

An alien who is granted asylum under section 208 of such Act [8 U.S.C. 1158];

An alien whose deportation is being withheld under section 243(h) of such Act [8 U.S.C. 1253] (as in effect immediately before the effective date of section 307 of division C of Public Law 104-208) or section 241(b)(3) of such Act [8 U.S.C. 1231 (b)(3)] (as amended by section 305(a) of division C of Public Law 104-208);

An alien who is a Cuban and Haitian entrant as defined in section 501(e) of the Refugee Education Assistance Act of 1980;

An alien admitted to the United States as an Amerasian immigrant as described in section 1612 (a)(2)(A)(i)(V)[1] of this title;

An alien who is a victim of a severe form or trafficking in persons, or an eligible relative of a victim of a severe form of trafficking in persons;

An alien who is an Iraqi or Afghani immigrant who has been granted Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) status.

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)

The DCFS Bureau of Appeals is responsible for providing a system of hearings that must meet the due process standards set forth in federal regulations, state laws and Goldberg vs. Kelly 397 US 254 (1970).

Each applicant is informed by the application form and by the appropriate notification forms (as decisions are made affecting his case) of his right to a hearing, of the method by which a hearing may be requested, and who may present his case.

The claimant may represent himself at the hearing or be represented by any authorized agent.

When a decision is made on a case, the client is notified and is allowed the following number of days from the date of the notice to request a Fair Hearing:

FITAP 30 days,

STEP 30 days,

KCSP 30 days.

The client may appeal at any time during a certification period for a dispute of the current level of benefits. An appeal is timely requested if the appeal request:

Is delivered on or before the due date; or Mailed on or before the due date. If the appeal request is received by mail on the first working day following the due date, there shall be a rebuttable presumption that the appeal was timely filed.

Recipients of FITAP and KCSP who request a Fair Hearing prior to the expiration of the Advance Notice of Adverse Action or within 13-days of the date of Concurrent Notice must have benefits continued at, or reinstated to, the benefit level of the previous month, unless:

The recipient indicates he does not want benefits continued;

A determination is made at the hearing that the sole issue is one of existing or changing state or federal law; or,

Change unrelated to the appeal issue affecting the client's eligibility occurs while the hearing decision is pending and the client fails to request a hearing after receiving the notice of change.

A decision by the hearing authority shall be binding on the Department of Children and Family Services and shall summarize the facts of the case, specify the reasons for the decision, and identify the supporting evidence and the pertinent state or federal regulations. The decision shall become a part of the record. The household shall be notified in writing of the:

Decision,

Reasons for the decision,

Available appeal rights, and Right to pursue judicial review of the decision.

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)— PROVIDING DIRECT CARE IN A LONG-TERM CARE FACILITY (AS SUCH TERMS ARE DEFINED UNDER SECTION 1397J OF THIS TITLE); OR 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.

DCFS assists individuals interested in training for occupations related to elder care. Referrals are made on behalf of individuals to the Louisiana Community College System and Health Professional Opportunity Grants (HPOG) programs.

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)

State Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) The State EITC is provided to families with dependents and includes the amount of the State EITC that exceeds the taxpayer's tax liability (amount owed prior to application of any other credits). It is available to Louisiana residents who claim the federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).

These services meet TANF goal 2 to end the dependence of needy parent on government benefits by promoting

job preparation, work and marriage.

Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA)

The department through an agreement with the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) collects information on tuition assistance expenditures provided to eligible low income students who are pursuing postsecondary education for the purpose of claiming eligible expenditures that may count as Maintenance of Effort (MOE) effective TANF State Plan FY 2011 for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) grant. The eligible tuition assistance expenditures that may be claimed as MOE are from the following programs:

Louisiana Go Grants — A need based student financial aid grant that supports nontraditional and low income students in their pursuit of postsecondary education. To receive the Go Grants, a student must be receiving a federal Pell grant and have remaining financial need, as determined in accordance with a formula established by the Louisiana Board of Regents. The formula for determining financial need is subject to change on a yearly basis in order to ensure that the greatest number of students will benefit from the funds appropriated for the program by the Louisiana Legislature.

Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) — A state scholarship program for Louisiana residents who attend Louisiana postsecondary institutions. These services meet TANF goal 3, to prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies, by providing financial aid to eligible students who are pursuing postsecondary education. The services provide the students with the tools necessary to reduce risky behaviors and increase positive decision making.

Financial eligibility for these services attributable to TANF/Maintenance of Effort (MOE) funds is limited as follows:

Certification for TANF MOE for Go Grant expenditures will be those students who receive Pell Grants and have a remaining financial need and are defined as dependent by the U.S. Department of Education. The amount used for TANF maintenance of effort is not duplicated in determining match or maintenance of effort for any other program.

TANF eligibility for students receiving TOPS will be determined by receipt of a Go Grant. Certification for TANF MOE for TOPS expenditures will be for those students who simultaneously receive TOPS and Go Grants and are defined as dependent by the U.S. Department of Education.

Services are considered non-assistance by the department. State dollars associated with Louisiana Go Grants and TANF eligible TOPS expenditures may be applied to MOE funding requirements for Louisiana's federal TANF grant.

Louisiana State Child Care Tax Credit

This is an annual refundable tax credit for low—income individuals and families who have a qualified dependent who is under the age of 13, and the parent or qualified relative has paid someone to provide care so that they can work or look for work.

Eligibility is limited to those families with minor children who meet the Louisiana Department of Revenue Child Care Tax Credit eligibility standards.

These services meet TANF Goal 2, to end dependence of needy parents on government benefits, by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage.

Louisiana 4 Public Pre—Kindergarten Program (LA4)

The LA4 program provides high quality early childhood education for low-income 4-year-olds in participating public school districts and charter schools.

Services are for children of at risk families in which the child is one year younger than the eligible age for kindergarten and is financially eligible to receive free or reduced school lunch meals pursuant to the Federal Child Nutrition Program as documented by a completed application for such meals, whether or not such meals are sought.

These services meet TANF goal 3, to prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies and TANF goal 4, to encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families by placing children in learning environments at the preschool level to foster an interest in learning, increase literacy levels, and increase the likelihood of developing responsible behavior.

TANF CERTIFICATIONS

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
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)—	Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)
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).—	
6. (A) screen and identify individuals receiving assistance under this part with a history of domestic violence while maintaining the confidentiality of such individuals;	Yes

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*—	
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—	
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 harassment, domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking; and	Yes
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)—	
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)))

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS [27]

a.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;

This plan presents Louisiana's proposal to use grant funding to meet the SNAP E&T requirements of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 and utilize 50/50 federal funds to serve participants in defined areas of the state as outlined in this plan. Policies are defined in Chapter 4 of the Policy Management System, SNAP E&T Handbook, and the Louisiana Administrative Code-Title 67, Social Services. Louisiana intends to meet the SNAP E&T requirements through contractual agreements with Community Based Organizations and Community and Technical Colleges known as SNAP E&T Providers.

Louisiana has twenty-five contracted SNAP E&T Providers that offer SNAP E&T services to SNAP recipients throughout the State of Louisiana that are listed below. One of the contractors is the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS), which has 8 colleges under its umbrella: Baton Rouge Community College; Bossier Parish Community College; Delgado Community College; Louisiana Delta Community College; Fletcher Technical Community College; South Louisiana Community College; River Parish Community College; and Nunez Community College.

The SNAP E&T provider services are aligned to industry and employer career paths. Options include high-demand careers in hospitality, construction, healthcare, information technology, and others.

The following components are offered through the SNAP E&T Program :

Job Search Training

Designed to enhance the job search skills of participants by providing instruction in job seeking techniques, motivation, and self–confidence to ensure of job readiness and employment. Job Search Training activities may include, but are not limited to employability assessments, resume writing, job placement services, instruction and support related to seeking employment, workplace etiquette workshops, and career planning.

Job Search Training not to exceed 120 hours per month unless the participant volunteers for additional hours. To get the most out of the component, participants would need to have the ability to read. Participants are not required to have a specific reading level,: however, _they are screened to determine their reading level and complete an employability assessment by providersto to assess their level of employability as well as _their willingness to learn and adapt to changes in a work environment. Individuals would need to be habitually unemployed and/or have difficulty maintaining employment. The estimated annual cost is $2,380,856.00.

To ensure participants benefit, the level of effort should be structured, active, and measurable. Key expectations:

Assessment & Planning: At enrollment, assess strengths, barriers, and training needs. Co-create a job search plan (goals, timelines, needed supports), adjusting intensity by risk level. Document in the case notes.

Instruction/Workshops: Provide regular, structured classes (e.g. resume writing, interviewing, job search techniques, workplace etiquette). Encourage active participation (assignments, mock interviews).

Case Management: Check in at least weekly to monitor progress, tackle barriers, adjust goals, and motivate. Track all contacts and outcomes in SNAP Works.

Activity Targets & Monitoring: Set minimum weekly targets (applications, calls, interviews). Monitor progress regularly and flag lack of momentum for intervention. If targets aren’t met, intensify coaching, add

supplemental services or training, and revise the plan. Document in the case notes.

Supportive Services: Offer necessary supports (transportation, childcare) when they directly enable participation. Document in the case notes.

Documentation & Oversight: Keep clear records of attendance, progress, job leads, outcomes – critical for reporting and ongoing improvement. Document in the case notes.

Completion/Transition: At least 16 weeks (or upon employment), review achievements, identify next steps, transition participants to retention services or refer to further support, and provide the participant with a certificate of completion.

Job Retention

Designed to assist participants inretainingving satisfactory performance, retain employment and tncrease earnings over time. Job retention services such as case management, job coaching, dependent care assistance and transportation assistance for a minimum of 30 days not to exceed 90 days to individuals who has secured employment. The participant must have secured employment after or while receiving other employment/training services under the E&T program. Only individuals who have received other employment and training services under the E&T program are eligible for job retention services. There is no limit to the number of times an individual may receive job retention services as long as the individual has re-engaged with E&T prior to obtaining new employment. The SNAP E&T participant must have obtained employment after completion of a SNAP E&T component SNAP Works system has a validation that will not allow you to have less than a minimum of 30 days and no more than 90 days.

Providers must make a good faith effort to deliver at least the minimum 30 days of active retention support. This includes documented outreach, regular participant contact, and retention planning. Throughout the retention period, case management and job coaching must be proactive and responsive, such as weekly or biweekly check-ins, monitoring employer feedback when possible, resolving barriers (e.g. transportation, childcare, workplace issues), and timely delivery of supports. Supportive services must be reasonable, necessary, and directly tied to retaining employment. Employment status should be verified at least monthly, participant compliance with the retention plan monitored, and all interactions, interventions, and outcomes documented. If the participant leaves the job or fails participation before 90 days, services are closed; a new retention window may begin with new employment if E&T is reactivated. Near the end of the retention period, staff should help transition the participant toward sustainable employment supports (e.g. advancement planning, employer linkage) and formally document whether retention was successful. The estimated annual cost is $1,882,391.00 .

Education – Basic/Foundational Skills Instruction (includes High School Equivalency Programs)

Designed to provide structured academic instruction and education services below the

postsecondary level that supports progress toward employment and self-sufficiency. This component includes Adult Basic Education (ABE), adult secondary education, English as a Second Language (ESL), basic literacy instruction, and high school equivalency preparation such as GED, HiSET.

Instruction is focused on improving an individual's ability to read, write, and speak in English, perform mathematics, and develop other essential skills necessary to attain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, transition to postsecondary education or occupational training, and obtain employment. Participation in this component must reflect a sustained level of effort, with instructional hours not to exceed 120 hours per month unless the participant voluntarily chooses to engage in additional hours. Consistent with 7 CFR 273.7 (c)(17), instruction must be delivered by qualified providers with the demonstrated capacity to offer literacy and numeracy services and must be designed to increase employability, educationalestimated and workforce readiness. The estimate annual cost is $1,177,029.00 .

The individual must be at least 16 years old and did not obtain a high school diploma or its equivalency and be

interested and willing to participate in gaining employment and training skills. Must be willing to participate in test preparation or instruction, take the practice test to qualify for the HiSET exam, and take the HiSET exam. The program is self-paced, allowing participants one year to complete their studies. The subject areas provided to participants include:

Language Arts – Reading Content: Assesses grammar, usage, mechanics, and the ability to organize and express ideas in writing.

Mathematics Content: Covers basic math, algebra, geometry, and data analysis. A calculator is permitted for this section.

Science Content: Assesses understanding of life science, physical science, and earth science concepts.

Social Studies Content: Evaluates knowledge of history, geography, civics, and economics.

Progress must be documented in SNAP Works and obtain a copy of the High School Equivalency Diploma.

Education – Career/Technical Education Program or other Vocational Training

Career and Technical Education and vocational training opportunities to SNAP E&T participants through approved training providers. Instruction will be delivered at community colleges, technical colleges, and vocational training providers offering industry-aligned training in fields such as healthcare, information technology, transportation (CDL), construction, advanced manufacturing, and hospitality. These programs are designed to lead to industry-recognized credentials, diplomas, or licenses that support direct entry into employment.

To participate, an individual must be at least 16 years old and be interested and willing to participate in gaining employment and training skills. SNAP E&T participants are assessed to determine their educational and training level and must score at an 8th grade level on the TABE depending on the course. Some courses may require a high school diploma or equivalent (or be co-enrolled in GED prep), a valid driver's license, demonstrate basic literacy and math readiness, meet any program-specific requirements (like age, background checks, or health screenings), and commit to the training schedule. If they don’t yet meet those prerequisites, they may start in the Basic Foundational Skills component before moving into vocational training.

Participants enrolled in this component are expected to commit to a structured training schedule aligned with their program of study, typically ranging from 20 to 30 hours per week. The 120-hour monthly cap still applies unless a participant voluntarily chooses to exceed it. These programs often run on semester (up to 2 years total) or term schedules (1-16 weeks) and includes classroom instruction, hands-on training and/or virtual training. The level of effort is therefore more intensive than basic literacy instruction, as participants are expected to meet course specific attendance requirements, complete coursework, meet the required benchmarks on mid-course tests, and demonstrate competency in both academic and technical subject matter. Study time that is required by the training provider will be recognized as a countable component activity.

Credential attainment occurs after successful completion of the required coursework, demonstration of competency through program benchmarks, and fulfillment of all testing requirements associated with the course of study. Certificates or recognized credentials may include, but are not limited to, Allied Healthcare (Certified Nursing Assistance), Commercial Driver’s License, Welding Certifications, Information Technology (Web Development, CompTIA) and other occupationally rec,ognized credential sign with Louisiana’s demand industries. Documentation of credential attainment is tracked by the provider and reported to the State agency in accordance with federal reporting requirements, including the E&T Annual Report measures outlined in 7 CFR 273.7(c)(17). All documentation of participation, including classroom, lab, virtual instruction, and verified study time, will be tracked by the provider and reported to the State Agency via SNAP Works and as requested. The estimated annual cost is $6,005,326.00. Education – Work Readiness

Designed to include skill assessment and educational remediation services that prepare individuals for the workforce. Work readiness skills may include both foundational 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.

The individuals would need to be SNAP recipients, unemployed and or looking for better employment; or must be out-of-school and at least 16 years of age, and be interested and willing to participate in gaining employment and training skills. Participants are expected to engage in informational sessions with providers to get an understanding of the program. Participants are expected to be at an 8th grade reading level. To get the most out of the component, participants would need to have the ability to comprehend as well as a willingness to learn, ready to accept employment, and adapt to changes in a work environment. An initial assessment will be conducted to determine employability and training needs. The program emphasizes employability by providing supportive services such as transportation assistance, interview preparation, and job placement support. Monthly progress case notes will be maintained to track participant development and address any barriers to success. Upon successful completion, participants will receive a certificate acknowledging their achievements, enhancing their qualifications for future employment opportunities.

The level of effort for this component is less intensive than Career/Technical Education but still requires consistent engagement and accountability. Participants are expected to demonstrate competency through interim assessments, such as successful completion of workshops, mock interviews, or digital literacy tasks. Credential attainment in this component may include certificates of completion, employability skills certificate, or other provider-issued documentation verifying that the participant has achieved required benchmarks. Documentation of participation and credential attainment will be tracked by the provider and reported to the State agency via SNAP Works or upon request. The estimated annual cost is $3,050,092.00.

Work Experience: Transitional Jobs – Subsidized by E&T

Designed to have sustained interactions with industry or community professionals in real world settings to the extent practicable, or simulated environments at an educational institution that provides firsthand engagement with the tasks required in a given career field, that are aligned to curriculum and instruction. Work-based learning emphasizes employer engagement, includes specific training objectives, and leads to regular employment. In addition, Transitional Jobs is a work-based learning program with a goal to establish a work history for individuals who are otherwise unemployable. Transitional jobs allow the individual to develop specific workplace skills necessary to attain and retain employment . Transitional employment includes specific training objectives and leads to the entry into, and retention in regular unsubsidized employment in environmental services . Training objectives includes project management as it relates to time, completing multiple tasks, and expectations for the job from the employer/Transitional Jobs partner; Professional presentation; Risk management and safety; Equipment operation; Customer service; Effective communication and Digital literacy. Participants are expected to work up to 8 hours per day for 3 to 4 days per week up for three to four months before securing unsubsidized employment not paid with SNAP E&T funds.

Curriculum Design and Onboarding: Provider staff and employer develop a customized training plan that identifies essential skills and work experience needed for the participant's role. Upon onboarding, participants receive a detailed outline of their responsibilities and the learning objectives they will work towards throughout the internship.

Milestone Setting: Employers provide a set of clearly defined milestones that participants are expected to achieve during their internship. These milestones serve as a guide to track progress and development. This is individualized based on the employer.

Employer Feedback: Regular feedback is provided by the employer through structured evaluations including one-on-one meetings and performance assessments. These sessions offer participants the opportunity to receive constructive feedback and adjust their approach to meet goals.

Skill Development: As participants meet employer specified milestones, they gain hands-on experience and develop industry-specific skills that prepare them for future employment.

Transition to Permanent Employment: Upon successful completion participants transition to permanent employment with the employer. This is facilitated by ongoing mentorship, final evaluations, and a job offer, when appropriate. In some cases, participants may receive additional job placement support if a permanent position with the employer is not available.

Participant Reimbursements: As part of the component, participants are eligible for participant reimbursements such as transportation, child care, and other work-related expenses. These reimbursements ensure that participants have the resources needed to fully engage in the program and successfully transition into the workforce.

Upon completion of the component, participants are expected to have gained the skills, experience, and confidence necessary for full-time employment within the industry training is received. Providers track the participant's components hours as well as the participant's progress in the SNAP E&T Program in SNAP Works. SNAP E&T staff monitor data entered for participants on a monthly basis. The estimated annual cost is $566,552.00.

A.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;

All SNAP E&T providers are required to deliver case management as a core component of service delivery to ensure the individual needs of participants are met. While the delivery of case management varies by provider, a method used more frequently by providers includes conducting assessments to identify and address barriers, developing Individualized Employment Plans for monitoring activities/components, providing continuous supportive services, and assisting with job placements. The SNAP E&T participants' cases are managed through SNAP Works. SNAP E&T providers meet with participants on a daily basis to gauge progression and provide support to participants throughout their enrollment. Communication and coordination with:

SNAP Eligibility Staff:	SNAP E&T staff coordinates and communicates with the SNAP section orally and via video conferencing to develop and implement policies and procedures according to federal regulations. SNAP E&T staff provides SNAP E&T providers with guidance, training, and support to efficiently execute program goals and requirements. When providers observe non-participation from the participant, they report suspected non-compliance to eligibility staff through SNAP Works, which creates a task in LITE for eligibility staff to review for non-compliance and/or good cause.
State E&T Staff and Other E&T Providers:	All E&T providers coordinate with other community-based organizations by warm hand-off to provide other supportive services based on the E&T participants needs, barriers and interests as a result of completion of the Comprehensive Assessment and Individualized Employment Plan.
Community Resources:	SNAP E&T providers offer a holistic approach to support the mental, physical, emotional, and social well- being of each E&T participant. As a result of this holistic approach, the SNAP E&T providers have established relationships to refer E&T participants to community resources in their specific services areas.

SNAP E&T staff at the State level ensure effective case management is in place through ongoing Management Evaluation (ME) Review, progress, monitoring, analysis of longitudinal data, referrals to other entities, and outcome tracking in SNAP Works. SNAP E&T providers deliver ongoing case management to all participants.

This includes: Comprehensive Assessment – Evaluation of participant skills, interests, strengths, and barriers to inform the development of an individualized plan focused on skill-building, barrier resolution, and employment. Consent –Completion of a voluntary participation agreement affirming the participant's choice to enroll in SNAP E&T. Verification – Confirmation of the participant's SNAP eligibility status and screening with LDH prior to service delivery. This coordinated approach ensures that all SNAP E&T participants receive targeted support throughout their participation in the program.

Case management services are structured to provide personalized, consistent support that empowers participants to achieve their employment and training goals. Upon enrollment, participants receive a comprehensive assessment that identifies their skills, interests, strengths, and any barriers to employment. This assessment informs the development of an individualized employment plan that aligns with the participant's career goals and outlines the appropriate E&T components, such as education, vocational training, or work experience. Case managers work closely with participants to address barriers through direct supports—such as participant reimbursements for transportation and supplies—and by connecting them to external resources for housing, childcare, mental health services, or other needs.

Throughout the program, case managers maintain frequent communication with participants through in-person meetings, virtual check-ins, phone calls, and SNAP Works case documentation. They monitor progress, track attendance and component participation, and provide guidance to help participants stay engaged and on track. Additionally, case managers motivate participants by offering encouragement, adjusting plans as needed, and celebrating milestones. By aligning services with high-demand industries and integrating credentialed training and job placement support, case management ensures that participants are equipped with the tools and resources needed for long-term success. Ultimately, these services play a vital role in helping participants overcome obstacles, build skills, and transition to employment—fulfilling the core mission of the SNAP E&T program.

The state agency ensures that case management services are supportive, flexible, and never serve as an impediment to participation in SNAP E&T by designing services around the individual needs and circumstances of each participant. Case management is delivered by SNAP E&T providers who are trained to create participant-centered plans that are both realistic and achievable. These plans are based on comprehensive assessments that identify not only a participant's goals but also any barriers that may hinder their ability to fully engage.

To avoid burdening participants, providers offer multiple methods of service delivery, including in-person, virtual, phone, text, and email communication. This flexibility accommodates participants with transportation challenges, work or school schedules, or caregiving responsibilities. Additionally, participation in SNAP E&T is voluntary, which further removes pressure or risk of penalization. The State agency also maintains oversight through Management Evaluation (ME) reviews, SNAP Works data monitoring, and regular provider check-ins to ensure that services are delivered in a way that promotes—not inhibits—success. Any systemic or provider-level issues that may create unnecessary burden are identified and addressed through technical assistance and continuous quality improvement. By fostering a participant-first approach and monitoring service delivery closely, Louisiana ensures that case management enhances engagement and outcomes rather than creating barriers.

a.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;

For the current FFY, the total 100% federal funds allocated to Louisiana is $2,160,393.00 . The total amount of 50/50 funds is $15,062,248.00. The total state share is $7,531,124.00 and the total federal share is $7,531,124.00.

a.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;

Louisiana operates a voluntary SNAP E&T program. The following persons are exempt from work registration requirements:

Persons under age 16 or age 60 or older. An individual is subject to the work registration requirement beginning the month after his 16th birthday. An individual becomes exempt from the work registration requirement effective the month of his 60th birthday.

Persons aged 16 or 17 who are not the head of the household or person 16 or 17 attending school or enrolled in an employment-training program on at least a half-time basis.

Persons aged 18 through 59 enrolled at least half-time in any recognized school (including high school), training program, or institution of higher education. Students enrolled at least half-time in an institution of higher education must meet the student eligibility requirements to meet this exemption. A student will remain exempt during normal periods of class attendance, vacation, and recess if he intends to return.

Parents or other household members personally providing the care of a dependent child under age 6 or an incapacitated person of any age. Verify that the person is needed to care for the incapacitated person.

Regular participants in drug or alcohol treatment and rehabilitation programs. Individuals participating in either an inpatient or outpatient drug or alcohol treatment and rehabilitation program are considered temporarily unfit for work.

Persons who are temporarily or permanently disabled (physically or mentally). A pregnant woman must register unless a doctor's statement verifies incapacity. Persons working an average of 30 hours per week or receiving average weekly gross earnings equivalent to 30 multiplied by the federal minimum wage. Migrant and seasonal farm workers under contract or similar agreement with an employer or crew chief to begin work within 30 days are exempt.

Persons subject to and complying with STEP.

Persons receiving unemployment compensation benefits (UCB). A person who has applied for but is not yet receiving UCB is also exempt if that person is complying with the work requirements of Louisiana Works.

The percentage the state intends to exempt from E&T participation is 100%. These exemptions will be re-evaluated on at least an annual basis.

a.5. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POPULATION THE STATE AGENCY INTENDS TO PLACE IN E&T;

Targeted populations volunteer to participate include individuals such as ABAWDS, Mandatory Work Registrants, participants returning from re-entry programs, individuals of varying age groups (16 and older disconnected from high school, English language learners, and other SNAP recipients who choose to engage in SNAP E&T services to improve employment outcomes. Self-initiated SNAP E&T participants enrolled at:

a.6. THE ESTIMATED NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS THE STATE AGENCY EXPECTS TO PLACE IN E&T;

Louisiana Works expects 2166 volunteers to participate for FFY 2026.

a.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;

The Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) is now the State SNAP agency administering the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), including benefits eligibility and program oversight as part of the One Door initiative. Under this restructure, SNAP Employment & Training (SNAP E&T) services are operated by Louisiana Works (formerly the . Rather than the SNAP E&T program being directly operated statewide by the SNAP agency, SNAP E&T services are delivered through contracted providers across the state and coordinated by Louisiana Works in partnership with LDH. These services include assistance with searching for a job, life skills, coaching, case management, education and training programs, and work experience activities.

The geographic coverage of the SNAP E&T plan includes most metropolitan and population centers throughout Louisiana where contracted providers are located. Providers serve SNAP recipients in designated parishes and regions with the intent to expand access statewide to as many SNAP-eligible individuals as possible. These services are offered based on provider capacity and available funding, with priority on reaching areas with higher SNAP populations and greater need for employment services.

However, not all geographic areas currently have in-person SNAP E&T services, particularly in some rural or less populated parishes. This limitation exists because provider capacity, local partnerships, and funding availability vary by location — meaning some areas may be underserved or rely on virtual services until provider coverage expands.

Why Some Areas Are Not Covered

Provider availability: Contracted SNAP E&T providers are not yet present in every parish, especially in rural regions, and while some offer services statewide (including virtually), not all participants in all areas have easy in-person access.

Resource allocation: Geographic limitations are intentionally structured to make responsible, practical, and productive use of federal and state funds. Focusing available resources where provider networks already exist allows more effective delivery of services while expansion efforts continue.

Barriers to service access: Even in parishes with providers, some participants may face transportation, technology, childcare, or work schedule barriers that limit access; these are considerations in determining where and how services are offered.

By strengthening formal partnerships with AJCs and workforce boards, bringing in more third-party providers (especially community colleges and local nonprofits), using labor market data to target expansion, and aligning case management and outreach across systems, Louisiana can effectively expand SNAP E&T coverage and services — including in areas currently underserved.

Services are delivered both in-person and virtually:

In-Person SNAP E&T Service Delivery: SNAP E&T services are provided through a network of community-based organizations, community and technical colleges, and other contracted partners operating out of brick-and-mortar locations in the specific parishes: Allen, Ascension, Assumption, Avoyelles, Beauregard, Bienville, Bossier, Caddo, Calcasieu, Caldwell, Cameron, Claiborne, East Baton Rouge, East Carroll, East Feliciana, Franklin, Iberville, Jackson, Jefferson, Jefferson Davis, Lafayette, Lafourche, Lincoln, Livingston, Madison, Morehouse, Natchitoches, Orleans, Ouachita, Plaquemines, Pointe Coupee, Red River, Richland, Sabine, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. Helena, St. James, St. Landry, St. Martin, St. Mary, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, Tensas, Terrebonne, Union, Vermilion, Vernon, Washington, Webster, West Baton Rouge, West Carroll, and West Feliciana.

Statewide Virtual Sevice Availability: In addition to in-person deliver, there are virtual SNAP E&T service providers that offer training and employment support statewide, ensuring access for participants who may reside in parishes without a physical provider or who prefer remote participation. These virtual options expand

program reach and accessibility for SNAP beneficiaries throughout Louisiana.

a.8. THE METHOD THE STATE AGENCY USES TO COUNT ALL WORK REGISTRANTS AS OF THE FIRST DAY OF THE NEW FISCAL YEAR;

The initial count for October 2025 was obtained from the State's eligibility system file.

a.9. THE METHOD THE STATE AGENCY USES TO REPORT WORK REGISTRANT INFORMATION ON THE QUARTERLY FORM FNS–583;

LDH uses the participant information provided by the SNAP E&T providers to report participant information to FNS and an unduplicated count of mandatory work registrants from SNAP data files.

a.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);

LDH uses a master list of participant information provided monthly by the providers and SNAP Works (SNAP E&T system), the electronic Unduplicated Count of Mandatory Work Registrants (MWR) Report and the Monthly Mandatory Work Registrants Report to ensure work registrants are not counted twice in a Federal Fiscal Year. Mandatory Work Registrants are screened during certification and recertification for exemptions to work registration requirements. LDH's eligibility system LITE uses work registration statuses to exempt work registrants from work registration requirements.

The eligibility worker at the local LDH office is responsible for screening all SNAP applicants/recipients for exemption to work registration requirements by identifying the work registrant or ABAWDs statewide who would be subject to the SNAP time limit . An ABAWD meets the ABAWD work requirement by fulfilling any of the following: working an average of at least 20 hours per week, participating in and complying with the requirements of any program under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), or any program under section 236 of the Trade Act of 1974 for an average of at least 20 hours per week, or any combination of working and participating in a work program described above for an average of at least 20 hours per week.

If the household member is not exempt, the worker then instructs the household member to register for work with Louisiana Works by creating an active Helping Individuals Reach Employment (HiRE) account before the SNAP case is authorized and documented in LITE. A notice is provided to the household advising that to register for a HiRE account, the MWR must: Go online to the Louisiana Works website at www.louisianaworks.net or go to the local LDH office and register by using a kiosk located at the office or go to a local Louisiana Works Business and Career Solutions Center and register. In LITE, an automated interface is run to check the work registration of all MWRs in HiRE. The results are displayed in the Clearance Summary. Staff must review the Clearance Summary to determine if the MWR is registered for work with Louisiana Works. If the HiRE account information is not displayed in the Clearance Summary, the worker must use the On Demand Louisiana Works button to run the query. Louisiana Integrated Technology for Eligibility (LITE) determines if the household member is an ABAWD or non-ABAWD and if the ABAWD is meeting the ABAWD work requirements. Households are advised of Louisiana's SNAP E&T voluntary program and ABAWD work requirements orally and through notices at certification, recertification, when a new member joins the household, and when a household member becomes subject to a work requirement. The eligibility system, LITE, stores and tracks all notices sent through the system.

A.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;

Mandatory work registrants are identified by specific work registration codes on the State's eligibility system. Statewide and individual parish totals are available. System logic distinguishes all existing work registrants in the system on September 30 from new registrants on October 1 .

Program Coordination

The SNAP E&T unit maintains ongoing coordination and communication with the units responsible for SNAP certification through a collaborative, multi-faceted approach. This includes regular in-person meetings and video conferences that facilitate direct discussions on policy matters impacting both E&T and certification processes. The teams also communicate frequently via email to share updates, clarify procedures, and address emerging issues. Collaborative document review is conducted using tools that support tracked changes and comments, enabling transparent and efficient feedback. This structured communication process ensures strong alignment between the E&T program and SNAP certification units, fostering consistency and cohesion in policy implementation across the agency.

Determination of Good Cause

The eligibility worker determines good cause for failure to comply with work registration requirements. The eligibility worker must determine whether good cause exists within 10 days of determining non- compliance or being notified of non-compliance.

Failure to comply with work registration requirements may include:

Refusal to Accept an Offer of Employment,

Refusal to Provide Sufficient Information to Determine Employment Status or Job Availability,

Voluntarily Quitting a Job,

Voluntarily Reducing Work Effort, and

Failure to Register for Work with Louisiana Works by having an active HiRE Account

Good cause exists when circumstances beyond the client's control prevent compliance with work registration requirements.

Sanctioning Resulting from Noncompliance with Work Registration Requirements

Mandatory work registrants are individuals who are not exempt from SNAP work requirements and are ineligible if they fail to meet the work registration requirements without good cause which includes failing to create a HiRE account. Any household member may assist a mandatory work registrant with creating a (HiRE) account to register for work.

Length of sanction:

First violation - the individual will be ineligible for 1 month or until compliance, whichever is later.

Second violation - the individual will be ineligible for 3 months or until compliance, whichever is later.

Third and subsequent violations – the individual will be ineligible for 6 months or until compliance, whichever is longer.

If the MWR is the only household member, the application will be denied since there is no eligible person in the household.

If the individual who does not comply is the head of the household, only the head of household is ineligible for the duration of the individual's disqualification. The other members of the household remain eligible.

If the disqualified individual joins another household, the disqualified individual remains ineligible for the remainder of the individual's disqualification period.

LITE will automatically send a Notice of Decision of failure to comply with work registration requirements.

Communication:

The State of Louisiana maintains structured and ongoing relationships with its SNAP E&T intermediaries and providers through a centralized communication and monitoring system. LDH serves as the lead state agency for the SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) program with Louisiana Works acting as the primary contractor for service delivery.

A statewide case management system—SNAP Works—is utilized to facilitate real-time data sharing and coordination between state agencies and E&T providers. Providers are granted access to the system and use it to track participant eligibility, referrals, assessments, employment plans, component participation, and case notes, ensuring alignment and transparency across all levels of program implementation.

The state agencies maintain continuous communication with the SNAP E&T providers through multiple channels, including email, phone calls, Microsoft Teams meetings, site visits, and quarterly provider meetings. Onboarding training sessions for new providers are conducted at the beginning and midpoint of each fiscal year, offering hands-on guidance on program expectations, policies, and use of the SNAP Works system.

To support provider performance and compliance, the state agency assigns staff to serve as direct points of contact for technical assistance, monthly reporting, and program monitoring, with a clear separation of duties and appropriate internal controls between program staff and financial actions. The state agency performs regular evaluations through invoice reviews, performance data tracking, and annual Management Evaluation and Civil Rights reviews to ensure compliance with federal and state standards.

Performance expectations are clearly outlined in provider contracts, and outcomes are assessed using Key Performance Indicators and a Performance Outcome Measures Report (POMR), which tracks metrics such as participant engagement, retention, and employment placement. This structured, multi-layered approach ensures effective communication, consistent service delivery, and strong accountability across the Louisiana SNAP E&T provider network.

Communication with Intermediary or other E&T Providers

The state agency shares new policies, procedures, and program updates with the state's contracted SNAPE&T service providers through a coordinated, multi-channel communication strategy. This includes direct outreach via email, phone calls, Zoom or Microsoft Teams meetings, and in-person site visits.

The state agency utilizes the SNAP Works system to distribute official guidance and monitor provider compliance with program requirements. Additionally, quarterly SNAP E&T provider meetings are held, during which important updates are shared, and provider feedback is solicited to inform continuous improvement efforts.

To promote provider readiness and consistency in service delivery, the state agency conducts onboarding and refresher trainings for both new and existing providers at the beginning and midpoint of each federal fiscal year. These sessions offer in-depth instruction on program policies, data entry protocols, reporting procedures, and compliance standards.

Each SNAP E&T provider is assigned a Workforce Development Consultant who serves as the primary liaison for technical assistance and ensures that providers are informed of all policy and procedural changes. This layered communication and support model fosters alignment across the provider network and ensures the

timely and accurate implementation of all SNAP E&T program updates.

a.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;

Special State Initiatives:

As part of Louisiana's transition to the One Door approach, Louisiana Works operates the SNAP Employment & Training (E&T) program, unifying workforce development, education, and employment services under a coordinated statewide system. The One Door model consolidates multiple workforce, training, and support programs—previously housed across various agencies—into a streamlined structure designed to improve service alignment, reduce duplication, and simplify access for individuals seeking employment and skills development. This merger creates opportunities for state agencies and partners to expand employment and training career pathways statewide.

As part of this structure, Louisiana Works coordinates closely with workforce and education agencies to align SNAP E&T strategies with statewide workforce priorities, credentialing goals, and labor market needs. This governance model strengthens cross-agency collaboration, supports data-driven decision-making, and ensures that SNAP E&T participants have access to coherent and effective education, training, and employment pathways that align with Louisiana's broader workforce development agenda.

Other Employment and Training Programs:

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients are exempt from SNAP E&T requirements. All work eligible FITAP recipients are required to participate in the Strategies To Empower People (STEP) program, unless good cause is granted. The Workforce Development Section at Louisiana Works is consistently meeting to strategize on how to collaborate SNAP E&T services with the STEP program.

State Workforce Development Board

Louisiana Works operates the Workforce Development Boards in the State of Louisiana, where the SNAP E&T staff are sworn board members of the Workforce Development Boards and attends quarterly meetings. SThe Workforce Development Boards, SNAP E&T staff, and American Job Center staff discussed the overview of the SNAP E&T program in the State of Louisiana, collaboration and consultation to better serve their respective regions, regional specific programming, and connecting them with high demand employers while simultaneously addressing barriers that prevent them from program completion and self-sufficiency. In addition, ensuring SNAP E&T providers create and maintain partnerships with employers.

WIOA

The State of Louisiana has a combined WIOA State Plan for the State's workforce development system, which is developed every four years in consultation with Louisiana Works, LDH, and the Workforce Investment Council, other state agencies, and employer advocacy groups. In terms of collaboration or co-enrollment, SNAP eligibility is an element of automatic WIOA eligibility, allowing for opportunities to structure and integrate services to provide comprehensive supports and services to help customers move more effectively through education, training, and employment pathways. Many of the SNAP E&T providers partner with America's Job Center

certified sites, which gives direct access to WIOA program providers and partners. Additional opportunities include collaborating on supportive services infrastructure. The consultation efforts are ongoing and therefore the State of Louisiana has not made any program changes.

a.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;

Louisiana is strengthening its partnerships with federally recognized and state Indian tribes within the state to expand access to SNAP E&T services for tribal members living on reservations. As part of this effort, Louisiana Works participates in ongoing meetings with tribal leaders to hear workforce needs, share program goals, coordinate available services, and support the development of responsive E&T opportunities.

a.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

Not Applicable as Louisiana operates a voluntary SNAP E&T program.

a.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.

Monthly household income, before any deductions from a paycheck, is less than the amount listed below

per household size (monthly gross earned and unearned income):

Maximum Daily Rates For Type III Early Learning Centers

INFANTS - $68.00

SPECIAL NEEDS INFANTS - $85.68

TODDLERS - $42.00

SPECIAL NEEDS TODDLERS - $52.92

AGE 3+ - $31.30

SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN AGE 3+ - $39.69

a.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.

The SNAP E&T providers incur the actual costs for services provided to all individuals in their programs. The costs that are associated with individuals who are eligible for SNAP E&T are reimbursed through the monthly invoice process. SNAP E&T conducts onsite monitoring visits with providers to ensure program compliance. During the monitoring visits the provider provides funding proof for participants in the form of billing statements for SNAP E&T participants and non- participants. This is compared to the costs invoiced by the provider.

SNAP E&T Providers use various methods of transportation for participants including services provided

through contractual agreements with different agencies which is free and does not cost the participants any out-of-pocket expenses. Other methods of transportation include bus passes/tokens, public transit, share-a-ride, Uber/Lyft/Taxi services, mileage reimbursements, and gas cards/vouchers.

Dependent care expenses are in accordance with the Childcare and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) and based on local market rate surveys. The majority of the children are school age and do not require reimbursement. DCFS requires all E&T providers to offer dependent care to E&T participants who are in need while participating in their specific E&T program. The E&T providers has at least one of the following: in-house services, funding in their budgets, and/or established relationships with childcare providers.

SNAP E&T Providers offer participant reimbursements such as transportation, childcare, uniforms, work and training tools, tuition, books, certifications, permanent documents, housing and utility allowance (only allowed twice and emergency based), personal hygiene (not ongoing but reasonable and necessary), permit and fees, background checks, clothing for job interviews, fingerprinting, training materials, course registration fees, and wifi (prepaid internet cards),etc. that are reasonable and necessary for successful participation in the SNAP E&T program.

The SNAP E&T Handbook, Quick Start Guide, and SNAP E&T Toolkit provides directions to SNAP E&T Providers regarding which costs are allowable and which costs may and may not be reimbursed.

a.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.

We anticipate that $4,066,157.50 (state/federal funds) will be used for SNAP E&T participant reimbursements.

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.18.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;

The number and percentage of participants who received E&T services and obtained unsubsidized employment after completion of services through job search training.

a.18.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;

The number and percentage of participants who earned a certificate or recognized credential.

a.18.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;

The number and percentage of participants who gained employment after completion of Education: Career/Technical Education Programs or Other Vocational Training.

The number and percentage of participants who gained employment after completion of Work Experience: Transitional Jobs – Subsidized by E&T.

a.18.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

The number and percentage of participants who earned a high school equivalency certificate (HiSET/GED).

The number and percentage of participants who gained employment after completion of Education – Work Readiness Training.

a.18.E. OTHER INDICATORS APPROVED BY FNS IN THE E&T STATE PLAN.

The number and percentage of participants who remain employed after completion of job retention services.

The number and percentage of participants who gained employment after completion of Education: Basic/Foundational Skills Training Instruction (includes High School Equivalency Programs).

ABLE-BODIED ADULTS WITHOUT DEPENDENTS (ABAWD) [28]

b.1 ITS PLEDGE TO OFFER A QUALIFYING ACTIVITY TO ALL AT-RISK ABAWD APPLICANTS AND RECIPIENTS;

Louisiana is not a pledge state.

b.2. ESTIMATED COSTS OF FULFILLING ITS PLEDGE;

Not applicable.

b.3. A DESCRIPTION OF MANAGEMENT CONTROLS IN PLACE TO MEET PLEDGE REQUIREMENTS;

Not applicable.

b.4. A DISCUSSION OF ITS CAPACITY AND ABILITY TO SERVE AT-RISK ABAWDS;

Not applicable.

b.5. INFORMATION ABOUT THE SIZE AND SPECIAL NEEDS OF ITS ABAWD POPULATION; AND

Not applicable.

b.6. INFORMATION ABOUT THE EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND WORKFARE COMPONENTS IT WILL OFFER TO MEET THE ABAWD WORK REQUIREMENT

Not applicable.

TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE (TAA)

Has the state incorporated TAA into the sections indicated above?

Not applicable.

JOBS FOR VETERANS' STATE GRANTS

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).

Services are provided to eligible veterans and eligible persons by JVSG staff members according to the needs of the eligible veteran or eligible person, any Qualifying Employment Barrier (QEBs) to include belonging to a special population identified by the Secretary of Labor or other barriers they may possess and the roles and

responsibilities of JVSG personnel. DVOP specialists and LVERs are essential parts of and fully integrated into the workforce development network. They are included among the AJC partner staff, which consists of all staff employed by programs or activities operated by AJC partners listed in 29 U.S.C. 2841(b) that provide online and/or in- person workforce development or related support services as part of the workforce development system. Other AJC partner staff members include staff of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Wagner Peyser (WP) and other AJC network partner programs. All partners in the AJC are trained to provide initial assessments of veterans to determine their eligibility for DVOPs services and provide the appropriate referrals to them and/or other service providers based on that initial assessment.

DVOP specialists -- Under 38 U.S.C. 4103A(a), a DVOP specialist provides individualized career services and facilitates placements to meet the employment needs of eligible veterans and eligible persons, prioritizing service to special disabled veterans, other disabled veterans and other populations of veterans in accordance with priorities determined by the Secretary of Labor. Additionally, maximum emphasis in meeting the employment needs of eligible veterans and eligible persons shall be placed on assisting economically or educationally disadvantaged veterans.

LVER -- Under 38 U.S.C. 4104(b), the LVER's principal duties are to: (1) conduct outreach to employers in the area 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; and (2) facilitate employment, training and placement services furnished to veterans in a state under the applicable state employment service delivery systems.

DVOP specialists are domiciled in local AJC offices throughout the state or with other partner agencies. One LVER is designated as the state coordinator of veterans' services . These LVERs provide direct supervisory and administrative oversight for the DVOP staff in their assigned areas of operation. It is anticipated the LVERs will perform the traditional role of the LVER within their assigned geographical area 70% of the time. The remaining time will be spent performing supervisory functions such as payroll activities, schedule approval, performance evaluation, etc. for DVOP staff in their respective geographical area. An analysis of the veteran population in each parish throughout the state was conducted to determine an appropriate distribution of DVOP specialists. Official domiciles and areas of responsibility have been adjusted in accordance with the results of that analysis. The state will review analysis results annually in conjunction with the Annual Funding Amendment process and adjust domicile locations as necessary based on population shifts in order to best serve eligible veterans and eligible spouses and other eligible persons in targeted populations. In addition to DVOP specialists, each AJC has individuals trained in case management and business and/or community services networking. DVOP specialists coordinate closely with these AJC staff members when providing individualized career services to eligible veterans and eligible persons with a QEBor those that are otherwise targeted. In turn, DVOP specialists provide advice and guidance as needed to AJC staff members that are providing services to other veterans and other eligible persons. This team approach ensures that all veterans and other eligible persons receive quality services that afford them the greatest opportunity for a successful outcome.

When not actively providing individualized career services or reviewing open case files, DVOP specialists and other AJC career specialists fully trained in case management and networking conduct outreach at off-site locations including, but not limited to, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs offices, Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC) for the U.S. DVA, Military Treatment facilities (MTF), Warrior Transition Units/Battalion (WTU/WTB) and Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP) grantee locations. The purpose of these outreach efforts is twofold. The first purpose is to find veterans and invite the eligible veterans and/or eligible persons to the AJC for assessment and needed services. The second purpose is to develop relationships with supportive services in the area so that QEB veterans and other veterans can be referred to those agencies for services.

LVER staff members are domiciled in local AJCs throughout the state. In the state's business services delivery model, one industry sector coordinator and one business services coordinator has been assigned to each of the state's eight regional labor market areas. The area of responsibility for each LVER staff member has been adjusted to align with that of these regional labor market areas. The LVER coordinates with regional industry sector coordinators, business services coordinators and members of the Recruitment and Placement Team

assigned to AJCs to advocate to employers on behalf of veterans and to develop job opportunities specifically for veterans. LVER staff train all AJC employees to network for veterans and comply with priority of service requirements.

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.

B. Is a Vietnam-era veteran, as defined by 38 U.S.C. Ş 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. Ş 101(29).

c. Is a recently separated veteran, defined in 28 U.S.C. Ş 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 Section 103 (a) and (b) of the McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. Ş 11302 (a) and (b)).

f. Is justice-involved, as defined in WIOA Section 3(38), 29 U.S.C. Ş 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.

Meets the definition of low-income individual in WIOA Section 3(36), 29 U.S.C. Ş 3102(36).

Unemployed.

Heads of single –parent households containing at least one dependent child.

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 specialist are serving only eligible populations. At the time of publication of the latest VPL, Congress has authorized DVOP specialist to ser, and LVERs to work with employers on behalf of, the following additional populations:

Transitioning Service Members (TSN) 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

Wounded, ill or injured members of the Armed Forces who are receiving treatment in military treatment facilities or warrior transition units.

Spouses or other family caregivers of those wounded, ill, or injured service members described in subparagraph b.

References:

VPL 05-24 Jobs for Veterans State Grants Staff Roles and Responsibilities and Coordination with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Service to Veterans of American Job Center (AJC) Staff Serving Veteran of American Job Center (AJC) Staff Serving Veterans.

Implementing Priority of Service for Veterans and Eligible Spouses in all Qualified Job Training Programs Funded in Whole or in Part by the U.S. Department of Labor

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.

The primary function of the state's DVOP specialist team is to provide individualized career services for eligible veterans and eligible persons identified to have an QBE in accordance with 38 U.S.C. § 4103A, and the most recent USDOL policy, and those veterans that are a member of a special population in accordance with the most recent USDOL policy.

Prior to conducting any other individualized career service, DVOP specialists shall conduct a comprehensive assessment, which shall be an "individualized interviewing process" and may also include the use of an Interest Inventory, Work Keys, WIN Assessment or other assessment tool. Once the comprehensive assessment has been completed, the DVOP shall, with the cooperation of the veteran, develop and implement an Individual Employment Plan (IEP), and continuous consistent contact. DVOP specialists shall always, and as a minimum, complete these three individualized career services. Case management continues to be an appropriate delivery strategy or framework within which individualized career services may be delivered, and in most cases, shall be followed. To enhance the implementation of the IEP career guidance, supportive services, job development contacts, job referrals and individualized career services and training may also be provided. Depending on the needs of the individual, the goal of the IEP may be to obtain education, training and ultimately employment. Training or education may be short- or long-term depending on the certification, licensing or skills being acquired to optimize successful employment outcomes. The DVOP specialist may receive assistance with these functions by other career specialists who are also specifically trained to facilitate case management. The state requires DVOP specialists to conduct outreach to service providers in their local community to form create partnerships with external and internal supportive services programs to maximize the number of participants that the service providers refer to the state's workforce delivery system who are both eligible for and could benefit from DVOP specialist services. Also to enhance outcomes for participants that the DVOP specialist refer to other providers and to strengthen community awareness of the array of services available through the workforce development system. Examples of the programs are listed below. The DVOP will work closely with the following partner programs or organizations:

Veterans' Readiness and Employment

Homeless Veteran Reintegration Programs

VA VET Centers

Homeless and Halfway Shelters

Civic and Veteran Service Organizations

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act partners

Louisiana Vocational Rehabilitation facilities

Veterans' Upward Bound Program

State Veterans' Affairs Representatives

Local College and Universities and Vo-Tech Veterans' Service Representatives

Veterans' Service Organizations

Department of Social Services TANF initiatives for veterans

Parish Veteran Service Officers

The LVER responsibilities are specifically targeted to promote the advantages of hiring veterans to employers, employer associations and business groups. LVER roles and responsibilities are consistent with 38 U.S.C. § 4104, and current US DOL policy. As such, the LVER serves an important role in the state's Business Services Delivery Model. In coordination with the other members of the business services team, the LVER advocates for employment and training opportunities for all veterans through outreach to employers, training facilities, unions, apprenticeship programs and private and government businesses. The LVER also participates in job fairs, promotes programs that offer licensing and credentialing opportunities and develops and makes presentations to employers. Each LVER must provide a monthly report to the state veteran's coordinator detailing their outreach activities. LVER Staff members conduct outreach to perform the following activities:

Conducting employer outreach;

In conjunction with employers, conducting job searches and workshops and establishing job search groups;

Coordinating with unions, apprenticeship programs and businesses or business organizations to promote and secure employment and training programs for veterans;

Informing federal contractors of the process to recruit qualified veterans;

Promoting credentialing and licensing opportunities for veterans; and

Coordinating and participating with other business outreach efforts

Under the One Door approach, LVER staff serve as a central connector in delivering coordinated, high-quality services to veterans across the workforce system. This role is carried out through strong partnership development, particularly with AJCs in their assigned regions providing subject matter expertise and ensuring the seamless integration of all employment service available veterans. Within each AJC, LVER staff work in close coordination with the Local Area Coordinator (LAC) to deliver training and technical assistance on priority of service, best practice for serving veterans, engagement with key external partners, the role and integration of DVOP specialist with the AJC service delivery model, and effective employer outreach strategies. .

To further strengthen One Door implementation, the state utilizes a top-down collaborative approach to employer engagement. LVER staff coordinate closely with local business services teams to ensure a unified outreach strategy, reduce duplication of effort, and provide employers with a single, consistent point of access to veteran talent and workforce services. partners, and other state agencies or programs such as Louisiana Rehabilitative Services (LRS), to conduct outreach to employer associations at the state and regional level. In this way the maximum number of employers can be efficiently and effectively incorporated into the promotion of hiring of veterans. This outreach will educate employers on the advantages of hiring veterans, and inform employers on how to find qualified veteran applicants by leveraging the State workforce system and AJCs. The state intends to increase veteran employment by making a sound business case to employers regarding the advantage of hiring veterans and providing employer's tools and contacts to do so effectively.

The Veterans Opportunity to Work (VOW) Act amended USC Title 38, Sections 4103A and 4104, to state that Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program specialists, Local Veterans' Employment Representatives, are prohibited from performing non-veteran related duties that detract from their ability to perform their statutorily-defined duties related to meeting the employment needs of eligible 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.

Louisiana provides employment, training and placement services to all veterans through a network of strategically located AJCs and supported by the state's proprietary database system, Helping Individuals Reach Employment (HiRE). The state, working closely with each AJC and their LWDA, has implemented a

standardized framework for customer flow. This flow determines the methodology through which all clients (both jobseeker and employer) are integrated into the system and how they are assessed to identify their service needs. All programs are coordinated through a joint referral process described in each region's memorandum of understanding (MOU) between partners. Each partner performs the services allowed by their authorizing legislation or policy. Inter-staff collaboration is also enforced via program updates and workforce development policies are shared among partners at regularly scheduled staff meetings and training. During those contacts, all staff members share information about new employers and job orders received, AJC scheduled activities and positive recruitment activities taking place in the region.

All DVOP specialists are full-time employees When not engaged in case management processes the DVOPs can conduct outreach as outlined in the Section C. Although DVOP specialists are responsible for facilitating the case management and individualized career services of eligible veterans and eligible persons with Qualifying Employment Barriers (QEB), they are not alone in this effort.

Providing individualized career services to veterans with QEBs takes a team effort and as such, all services available in any particular AJC are available to veterans on a priority-of-service basis. The state mandates and monitors that non-JVSG funded staff provide individualized career services through the case management framework as appropriate to eligible veterans and other eligible persons when no DVOP specialist is available. All veterans are identified during intake screening. If it is determined the veteran has a Qualifying Employment Barrier and they are interested in receiving one or more individualized career services then the veteran should be referred to a DVOP for individualized career services.

The state promotes employment and job training opportunities through the use of several specialized programs. The state funds an Incumbent Worker Training Program (IWTP) initiative through collaboration with local education and training facilities in order to train participants who are already working toward upgrading their skills and pay. Southeastern Louisiana University and Delgado Community College operate Veterans' Upward Bound Programs to promote additional education for veterans and assist with college or technical school programs designed to help earn a degree or certification. These opportunities are presented to veterans through AJC office visits and presentations at veteran’s workshops.

The state’s Business Services Delivery Model divides the state into eight separate labor regions. Each region is assigned an industry sector coordinator and a business services coordinator. The LVER functions as a member of these Business Services Teams in their respective regions. The team’s primary focus is to conduct job development and outreach to employers, including federal contractors and labor unions. LVER staff responsibilities include operating targeted hiring events, and veterans’ job fairs. LVER staff provides program continuity by acting as the technical program advisor and trainer for AJC staff. The state has four part-time LVER staff.

To facilitate the optimal utilization of the services and resources available from other service providers, the state has developed cooperative relationships with many service providers including all WDBs, AJCs, the Louisiana Economic Development (LED), Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program (HVRP) grantees, Employer Support of the Guard and Reserves (ESGR), Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs (LDVA), U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) and numerous local agencies and nonprofit organizations. The state continues to execute robust, coordinated outreach efforts at the local, regional, and state levels to identify and reach out to additional service providers. As part of this outreach, all DVOP specialists are required to conduct outreach to local USDOL-VETS competitive grantees (currently there is one HVRP grantee in Louisiana) and the one Wounded Warrior Transition Unit located at Fort Polk, LA. This outreach ensures an accurate and realistic picture of what other services and resources are available at the local, regional and state levels and promote the development of relationships to leverage those service providers. This information is shared with JVSG staff across the state. Information sharing provides a vehicle for DVOP specialists to integrate available partner services and resources into the IEP for the veterans they are serving and provide LVER staff with additional avenues to promote and facilitate employment services and placements for veterans and other eligible persons. The state partners with many of these organizations through the MOU process and DVOPs make regular outreach contact with these organizations on behalf of the veterans they serve.

Under the One Door approach, all AJCs across the state work in unified partnership with JVSG funded staff to ensure the seamless, consistent and continuous flow of information on employment and training opportunities. Through a centralized, accessible platform, the state maintains a comprehensive list of approve training providers, including detailed training descriptions and clear connections to high-demand occupation, allowing veterans to easily understand their employment potential upon successful completion. .

Louisiana has adopted a demand-driven approach to all workforce and employment programs to ensure that all services and training are directed toward high-demand jobs. To support this effort, the state is heavily engaged with employers, employer associations and other partners in the top industries within each region to continuously identify the skills necessary to both enter and succeed in high-demand careers.

The LWDAs and their constituent AJCs make up the central hub for all workforce activities and associated training within the state. The state's strategy for the leveraging of other state and federal education and training programs to develop skills necessary to prepare veterans for in demand jobs is therefore focused on and operated in close cooperation with our AJC partners.

By fully integrating JVSG into the One Door service delivery model, strengthening outreach and partnerships with key stakeholders, and maintaining real-time insight into in demand jobs and skills, the state creates a seamless, coordinated system of support for veterans. This integrated approach reduces duplication, closes service gaps, and ensures each veteran is quickly connected to the program or service best aligned with their individual needs. Through One Door, the state strategically leverages its full portfolio of state and federal training programs to efficiently equip veterans with targeted skills needed to obtain and sustain employment in today's high-demand occupations. .

The state's outreach efforts and public information activities are used to inform veterans of the services available at their local AJC and the training opportunities that are available in their area and within the state. These outreach efforts, as described in Section B above, are focused on key service providers likely to interact with veterans that have Qualifying Employment Barriers. The intent of this outreach is to educate service providers about job training and other services available to veterans at their local AJC. In turn, the state's partner service providers can encourage veterans to seek services at an AJC. Due to the complexity of eligibility criteria and the variance of programs offered in disparate areas, public information systems usually do not provide specifics on particular programs but do direct veterans and other eligible persons into the local AJC.

The state is actively engaged in promoting development of high-demand, job-driven training opportunities for veterans and other eligible persons within the education community. Business Services Teams, specifically the ISC, partnering with LED staff members, advise and collaborate with employers and educational institutions, (particularly the Louisiana Community and Technical College System), to promote access to, retention in and completion of individual training and education.

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:

e.1. THE NOMINATION AND SELECTION PROCESS FOR ALL PERFORMANCE INCENTIVE AWARDS TO INDIVIDUALS AND/OR OFFICES;

The state shall request no more than 1 percent of its annual allocation for each year's JVSG grant as performance incentive awards for eligible staff. This award shall be used in accordance with the most recent guidance from USDOL-VETS. The objective of the Louisiana Works incentive award program is to recognize, promote and reward superlative and exceptional performance in the provision of service to veterans within the context of statutes and regulations. The basic objective of the awards program is to create an awareness and continuous level of interest in the importance of priority of service for veterans and an environment that engenders continuous improvement in serving veterans across the spectrum of service. The award system shall continue to operate as defined in the applicable State Policy and as approved by USDOL. The state anticipates that individuals and teams will recognize the value and process of the awards program and will, as a result, develop a competitive attitude within the agency that supports esprit de corps within the team while

sharpening the focus on service to other eligible persons.

An email request for team details and recommendations shall be sent to all Workforce Development Boards, local area coordinators, site supervisors, senior field leadership and JVSG- funded staff during August. Recommendations may come from anyone in the system, coworkers, supervisors, managers, coordinators, directors and JVSG staff.

Determination of the award shall be by a combination of objective and subjective data. Data compilation, analysis and award determination shall be by a team comprised of the veteran's state coordinator and members of the management of information systems (MIS) staff. The final award approval shall be by the appointing authority; Assistant Secretary, Office of Workforce Development who is also the signatory authority for the JVSG grant relationship with USDOL.

Incentive awards shall be expended up to no more than 1 percent of the total grant amount for the fiscal year, which is set aside strictly for this purpose in the annual grant budget. Awards shall be determined based on a percentage of total award available for that fiscal year but shall not (in total) exceed no more than 1 percent of the total available funds for a given fiscal year or the most current USDOL guidance on grant-funded incentive award amounts.

Exceptional merit is based on a number of factors, with the overriding concept being the value of the process. In essence this is determining both a quantitative and qualitative rating and merit based on the following factors:

Total veterans served and total services rendered to those veterans within the parameters of these areas; among the veterans served how many entered career employment.

Outreach to veterans and subsequent flow of basic services that result in veterans becoming job ready, or the need for individualized career services;

Outreach to and the comprehensive assessment of special target groups within the veteran community;

Individualized career services through the case management framework and outcomes of those efforts;

Job placements, in particular job developments, for veterans and disabled veterans;

Outreach to and partner development with employers and federal contractors in the support of creating job opportunities for veterans;

Outreach to and partner development with community service agencies, other state and; federal programs and internal agency components in creating a supportive service network for veterans with barriers to employment and who may need case management;

Organization of, participation in and success in job fairs and other veteran center community activities;

Any other innovative veteran-related activity.

Winners shall be publicly recognized locally by their peers, local dignitaries and leadership for their exceptional performance on behalf of veterans. Winners shall also be recognized at a statewide conference or other similar large-scale event forum that provides the greatest positive publicity for the program.

Tie breakers: If two or more individuals or offices (teams) score equally for their category, then those ties shall be broken by selecting the office that had the highest ratings on customer service reports during the review period, taken from the JVSG Customer Service Surveys, or for the individual by selecting the individual who had the most successful outcomes or the most successful job developments for the period.

Documentation: Documentation used for the award nominee selections shall be taken from the state proprietary employment system HiRE, veteran staff reports and job fair records. Data shall encompass the

period of the first three federal fiscal quarters of the fiscal year. Credit for activities and services shall not be awarded without back-up documentation.

e.2. THE APPROXIMATE NUMBER AND VALUE OF CASH AWARDS USING THE ONE PERCENT INCENTIVE AWARD ALLOCATION;

The award process is restricted by state law, such that to operate all awards must be cash, and all cash awards must be presented directly to individuals. This means that offices (teams) receiving incentive recognition shall share equally in the overall office award, and the individual award amount shall be determined by the team composition.

The 1% of the total grant for LA is approximately $23,103.00. 50%, approximately $11,551.50 of the total Incentive Award fund available shall be awarded to JVSG funded staff as follows:

Ten percent or approximately $2,301.30 for first place; Nine percent or approximately $2,079.27 for second place;

Eight percent or approximately $1,848.24 for third and fourth place; Five percent or approximately $1,155.15 for fifth and sixth place;

Two- and one-half percent or approximately $577.60 for seventh and eighth place;

Thirty-five percent or approximately $8,086.05of the total award fund available shall be split evenly each between the two offices eligible staff (teams of which JVSG grant funded staff may be a part). The two awards made to offices shall be split between one large office (6) full- time staff or more and one small office (5) or fewer fulltime staff.

Fifteen percent or approximately $3,465.45 of the total award available shall be awarded to three eligible partner agency service providers who provide services to veterans through an array of employment and training programs.

The first-place winner will receive seven- and one-half percent or approximately $1,732.72. The second-place winner will receive five percent or approximately $1,155.15.

The third-place winner will receive two- and one-half percent or approximately $577.61. Amounts may be adjusted based on the total incentive award, yearly.

e.3.THE GENERAL NATURE AND APPROXIMATE VALUE OF NON-CASH PERFORMANCE INCENTIVE AWARDS TO BE CHARGED TO THE BASE ALLOCATION; AND

The award process is restricted by state law, such that to operate all awards must be cash, and all cash awards must be presented directly to individuals. This means that offices (teams) receiving incentive recognition shall share equally in the overall office award, and the individual award amount shall be determined by the team composition.

e.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.

LA has no challenges with administering the Incentive Award Program.

f. LIST THE PERFORMANCE TARGETS FOR DIRECT SERVICES TO VETERANS PROVIDED BY JVSG STAFF, AS MEASURED BY PARTICIPANTS':

JVSG Performance Measures Negotiated Levels:

Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit 45.00%

Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit 46.00%

Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit $5,700

SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (SCSEP)

ECONOMIC PROJECTIONS AND IMPACT

a.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.)

In Louisiana, there are several industries and occupations that may provide employment opportunities for older workers based on long-term projections. Below are some prominent sectors and occupations : Healthcare Industry: The healthcare sector is expected to see sustained growth due to aging demographics and ongoing demand for medical services. Opportunities may exist for older workers in roles such as registered nurses, nursing assistants, medical administrators, and home health aides.

Education and Training: With ongoing retirements and turnover in the education sector, there may be openings for older individuals in teaching, tutoring, and administrative positions within schools, colleges, and adult education programs.

Accommodation and Food Services: This industry can be a good fit for older workers who have strong interpersonal skills and organizational abilities. Positions in this industry consist of the following: Front Desk Clerk (hotels, lodging establishments), Kitchen staff (food preparation, kitchen organization), and Restaurant Host/Hostess.

Financial Services: As the state's economy grows, there may be an increased demand for financial advisors, banking professionals, and insurance agents, roles that often benefit from the experience and established networks of older workers.

Remote Work and Telecommuting: Given the rise of remote work and telecommuting arrangements across various industries, older workers may find opportunities in fields such as customer support, virtual assistance, consulting, and online education

a.2. DISCUSS HOW THE LONG-TERM JOB PROJECTIONS DISCUSSED IN THE ECONOMIC ANALYSIS SECTION OF 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))

The long-term job projections discussed in the economic analysis section of a strategic plan provide valuable insights into the types of unsubsidized jobs for which SCSEP participants will be trained and the related skill training to be provided. Aligning the participant's community service assignment (CSA) with projected job opportunities can effectively prepare the participant to succeed in the evolving workforce. This strategic plan will include:

Matching Skills Training with industry projection: The types of skill training to be provided can assist with linking the participant to the best job. For instance, there is an increasing demand for technology-related jobs, the Community Service Assignment (CSA) for the SCSEP participant may include computer literacy, software proficiency, and digital skills training to equip them for employment in these fields. By aligning skill training programs for the participant with the long-term job projections outlined in the economic analysis, the strategic plan can contribute to a more targeted and effective approach to workforce development. This ensures that participant receives training that is relevant to the current and future job market, enhancing their

employability and opportunities for success in unsubsidized employment.

Identifying High-Demand Industries: The economic analysis indicates the following industries that are expected to experience growth in the long term.

Healthcare professionals, retail, customer service, and accommodation/ food services. These jobs include positions for private sitters, certified nurse assistants, home health aides, medical assistants, retail sales clerks, sales associates, cafeteria workers, museum attendants, greeters, etc.

Moreover, high-growth industries with a presence in the community will be identified and targeted as potential employers for older workers. In addition, small businesses will be targeted which has been proven successful. Other strategies that Louisiana SCSEP will use to access the needs of older workers and promote transition into unsubsidized employment will include the continuation of partnership with the Workforce One-stop referral and participation in community business events such as job fairs. Furthermore, Sub-grantees will attempt to recruit Host Agencies/training sites that will provide skills needed within the high-growth industries and occupations. If available, Sub-grantees will also utilize the On the Job Experience (OJE) program to connect the participant with the employer in high-growth industries and occupations. More importantly, it is a priority of Louisiana SCSEP and Sub-grantees to support the vision of long-term employment for older workers.

a.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))

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and Louisiana Works, some of the top growing industries in Louisiana include: Health Care and Social Services, Accommodation and Food Services, Transportation and Warehousing, Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services. With this data, Louisiana will continue to target these industries over the next four years to support employment opportunities for participants. Targeting these continually growing industries will be accomplished through a strategic outreach approach by Sub-grantees and National Grantees. The approach would be to target the specific industry in comparison with the participant's Individual Employment Goal. Moreover, the Louisiana Works projects job growth in occupations such as custodial work, maintenance, stock clerks, office workers, receptionists, childcare, drivers, retail sales, and housekeeping. Louisiana has been most successful in placing participants in unsubsidized employment with community service agencies and service-oriented type industries. Past and current experiences with employers in Louisiana show that they are most likely to hire older workers in hotels, food and beverage industry, pharmacies, retail stores, casinos, banks, government, healthcare, education, medical clinics/offices and home health facilities. However, most participants need assistance with job search, supportive services, and skills training. This brings about issues with self-esteem, lack of confidence, and other insecurities. In addition, many participants lack computer skills, which are needed in the job market. SCSEP staff will work closely with SCSEP participants to overcome these barriers by tailoring plans to the

individual's needs. They will work to foster self-esteem and confidence in the enrollee to help them become more competitive in the job market so they will secure unsubsidized employment. By placing them in appropriate training positions, it will stimulate them cognitively and by enrolling them in educational programs, it will promote better brain fitness. This will maximize their marketability. Past trends show that many host agencies eventually hire their assigned SCSEP participants and the job retention rates are higher which indicates that successful training and preparation is the key. Moreover, continual concentration would be on increasing the skill sets of participants to become job-ready for employers.

SERVICE DELIVERY AND COORDINATION

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:

b.1.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))

As mandatory partners, as prescribed in public law under the Older Americans Act, Louisiana SCSEP grantees will continue to coordinate services with WIOA Boards and service providers. Sub-grantees will continue to report details on participants who have entered employment from each assigned parish. In some areas, job placement numbers increase the regular WIOA employment totals, thereby, improving performance measures throughout the State. State and National SCSEP grantees look forward to improving coordination and collaboration with WIOA during the next four years by looking to implement the following strategies to benefit SCSEP participants:

Identify training for seniors in soft and occupational skills including seniors with disabilities.

Work with WIOA partners, and faith-based community organizations to identify financial assistance and financial planning supportive services for SCSEP participants.

Work with WIOA and One Stop System to identify senior-friendly user technology and identify resources to secure the technology to increase career readiness for participants.

Computer-based training and Teknimedia is being offered to participants statewide.

Work with WIOA partners, and faith-based community organizations to identify and encourage SCSEP participant participation in work-related training and education activities.

Identify literacy resources in Louisiana and work to build partnerships and improve coordination of these resources with WIOA and SCSEP; encourage participation by SCSEP participants in these programs.

Partnering with the Parish Career Solution Centers Service Delivery Systems, in creating a customer-focused method to increase the number of persons 55 years or older who might benefit from unsubsidized employment in both the private and public sectors.

Collaborating with Higher Learning Educational Systems, LA Community/ Technical College Systems (LCTCS), Public School Adult Education, and training providers to improve literacy/educational deficiencies, update present skills, and obtain new training in-demand occupations for potential long-term employment whether it be part or full- time.

SCSEP and the Parish Career Solution Centers will continue to make progress in meeting the employment and training needs of the older worker population. Although the numbers are much higher in the age group of 18 to 54 years that seek services at the Career Solution Centers, seniors 55 and older should receive equal employment assistance.

b.1.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))

Louisiana SCSEP is housed within the Governor's Office of Elderly Affairs(GOEA). GOEA administers all federal funds appropriated, allocated, or otherwise made available to the state for services/programs to the elderly under the Older American Act (OAA) programs. GOEA developed an extensive network of quasi-governmental agencies recognized as the Aging Service Network. This network consists of the 64 Parish Councils on Aging (COA), 34 Area Agencies on Aging (AAA), 139 Senior Centers, University Centers, Advocacy and Service Organizations, the Senior Corps (Foster Grandparents, Senior Companion, Retired Senior Volunteer Program), the state Senior Employment Program (Title V). All SCSEP Sub-Grantees are operated under the Aging Service Network administered by GOEA. The Sub-Grantees administer OAA title programs and SCSEP, along with other services. One program to mention is the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC). The ADRC is a "one-stop-shop" to access public and private programs at the community level. Sub-Grantees coordinate activities with the SCSEP participants through the usage of their Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) line. A prescreening method is utilized for every caller for priority ranking of services needed whether it is SCSEP or

OAA title service. Clients are referred and encouraged to make applications for multiple services if necessary. The goal is to completely meet the needs of the client with all provided services. The ADRC line connects participants to various needed OAA or SCSEP programs along with other potentially beneficial agencies in the caller's local communities. Inquires about SCSEP services are referred to the appropriate sub-grantee according to their parish regardless of state or national grantee status as appropriate distribution dictates. GOEA also has active roles in National Family Caregiver Services, ensuring participants are aware of housing opportunities, partnering with agencies to assist persons with disabilities and ensuring they have assistive technology and services, Vocational Rehabilitation in providing supportive services like eyeglasses, hearing aids, dentures, etc. GOEA has knowledge of services under the OAA and staff is trained in the referral process (helping refer participants to home- delivered meals, in-home services, respite care, medication management, wellness, transportation, etc.) that can be beneficial to participants.

b.1.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))

Louisiana will establish the following planned actions to coordinate SCSEP with other private and public entities and programs that provide service to older Americans, such as community and faith-based organizations, transportation programs, and programs for those with special needs or disabilities. Identify key organizations and programs in the community that serve older adults, individuals with disabilities, and those with special needs. Develop partnerships and collaborative relationships to share resources, expertise, and best practices.

Implement cross-training programs to ensure staff members across different organizations are familiar with each other's services and can refer participants to appropriate programs as needed.

Create outreach and awareness campaigns to inform older Americans, individuals with disabilities, and those with special needs about the range of services available through SCSEP and its partner organizations.

Work with transportation programs to ensure that SCSEP participants have access to reliable and affordable transportation to and from their training or work placements.

Collaborate with organizations that specialize in serving individuals with special needs or disabilities to ensure that SCSEP activities and work placements are tailored to accommodate their specific requirements.

Coordinate with community and faith-based organizations to provide additional supportive services, such as counseling, mentoring, and social activities, to enhance the overall well-being of SCSEP participants.

b.1.D. PLANNED ACTIONS TO COORDINATE SCSEP WITH OTHER LABOR MARKET AND JOB TRAINING INITIATIVES. (20 CFR 641.302(J))

Louisiana SCSEP plans to continue coordination with other labor market and job training initiatives by:

Partnering with the Parish Career Solution Centers Service Delivery Systems, in creating a "customer-focused method" to increase the number of persons 55 years or older who might benefit from unsubsidized employment in both the private and public sectors;

Identifying the appropriate education, skills upgrade and training needs that older workers must obtain to secure new jobs or to retain their present jobs with advancement opportunities;

Collaborating with Higher Learning Educational Systems, LA Community/ Technical College Systems (LCTCS), Public School Adult Education, and training providers to improve literacy/educational deficiencies, update present skills, and obtain new training in-demand occupations for potential long-term employment whether it be part-time or full-time.

Assisting participants with utilizing Alison's web-based courses as an additional training tool.

b.1.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)

As mandatory partners, prescribed in public law under the Older Americans Act, Louisiana SCSEP Grantees continue to coordinate services with WIOA Boards and service providers. Sub- grantees will continue to report details on those seniors who have entered employment from each assigned parish. In some areas, job placement numbers may increase the regular WIOA employment totals, thereby, improving performance measures throughout the State of Louisiana.

Sub-grantees and Nationals will continue to coordinate employment services with WIOA as described below:

A SCSEP representative will continue to attend WIOA board meetings in each area throughout the State. Through these members, the WIOA Boards solicit older workers' input to ensure that senior training and employment issues are addressed;

Seek additional grant funds to provide adequate personnel in the Parish Career Solution Centers and continue to provide participant SCSEP trainees to assist the WIOA staff at these centers;

Identify methods that contractors might employ to assist WIOA service providers attain performance standards and recruitment; conduct job search workshops for older workers and introductory computer training workshops conducted by a professional instructor at the Career Solution Centers;

Involve WIOA service providers in older worker issues, conferences, and training;

Participate, when requested, in writing local and state WIOA plans;

Engage in joint outreach by participating in local Job Fairs, Business Expos, WIOA seminars, Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development planning to accomplish appropriate employment for seniors;

Collaborate with community-based and faith-based organizations, Councils on Aging and other agencies by collaborating and sharing as much information relative to the older worker as possible. Collaboration may include using Workforce Investment Training Vouchers to provide formal job training. In addition, opportunities might exist to leverage on-the-job experience training funds in conjunction with support from for- profit companies seeking to fill critical employment vacancies. When a repetitive training system can be accomplished, the long-term value to the community would be of great benefit; and,

SCSEP Sub-grantees and Nationals will maintain a strong partnership with other community-based non-profit programs to make an impact in the social service network. Each non-profit or government host agency that SCSEP supports creates a social support network; however, all programs must recognize that hiring the older workers is the true focus.

b.1.F. EFFORTS TO WORK WITH LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICES IN RURAL LOCATIONS.

According to the USDA Economic Research-Louisiana Fact Sheet listed below, 16% of Louisiana's total population live in rural or non-metropolitan areas, with the remaining 84% residing in metropolitan areas or in a near proximity to metro areas. 19.5% of the total population live below poverty and 24% reside in rural areas. Louisiana faces challenges with providing services in rural areas such as: assisting participants to find unsubsidized employment due to a shortage of jobs and many of the participants lack transportation. To overcome these challenges Louisiana SCSEP will continue collaborative efforts with rural development. In addition, Louisiana will concentrate on awareness and recruitment efforts in parishes having the highest levels of poverty.

b.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.)

Louisiana will continue building sustainable relationships with agencies and organizations to promote opportunities for the placement of SCSEP participants in unsubsidized employment. In this effort, Louisiana will identify and understand the needs of potential employers while effectively communicating the benefits of hiring SCSEP participants. Sub-grantees will engage with businesses and organizations in the community by developing relationships with key decision-makers, HR professionals, and industry associates to understand their workforce needs and discuss potential opportunities for SCSEP participants. The implementation of a comprehensive strategy that focuses on building strong relationships with employers, understanding their needs, and promoting the benefits of hiring an SCSEP participant, will enhance the placement of SCSEP participants in unsubsidized employment while fostering long- term partnerships within the community. Sub-grantees collaborate with training and educational institutions to assist participants in resume writing and interviewing skills. Offering additional training and up-skilling programs to SCSEP participants will ensure they possess the skills and knowledge required by employers. Tailor these programs to meet the specific needs of local industries and sectors, aligning participant skills with current market demands. It is viable for Louisiana to identify which jobs are available in the current market in which the SCSEP participant can gain the necessary training, including but not limited to computer training, job readiness, appropriate workplace behavior, specialized software training, and soft skills training. In addition, the Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics will be utilized to identify areas of highest unemployment and job placement opportunities. More importantly, Sub-grantees will work with participants to overcome barriers that could prevent their retention in unsubsidized employment through follow-up and the provision of supportive services.

b.3. THE STATE'S LONG-TERM STRATEGY FOR SERVING MINORITY OLDER INDIVIDUALS UNDER SCSEP. (20 CFR 641.302 (C))

According to the SCSEP Analysis of Service to Minority Individuals for PY 2021, Louisiana has an overall SCSEP service rate of 80.7%, which exceeds the 2020 U.S. Census percentage of 50.3%. Louisiana has no significant changes in service delivery to minorities. Moreover, overall Louisiana SCSEP continues to exceed the U.S. Census percentages. According to the U.S. Census, Hispanics account for 5.5% of the population in the state of Louisiana. The minority report indicates that Louisiana served 1.1% of the Hispanic population during PY 21. This is a significant difference from previous years due to the pandemic. The U.S. Census identifies the state of Louisiana's Black population as 41.4%, in which Louisiana SCSEP serves 78.4% (with no significant variance). The report shows Louisiana SCSEP serves 0.6% of the Asian population and the U.S. Census indicates there are 1.3% Asians in the service area. Of the 0.4% of American Indians, there was no service to the population. The U.S. Census shows no Pacific Islanders.

There was no service to those individuals in the program year. Although SCSEP services are not provided to the Asian population and the Pacific Islanders population, there is a small percentage of the overall population of Louisiana. Louisiana will continue to develop strategies to reach both populations. Furthermore, according to the Analysis Minority Individuals for PY 2021 report there were no significant differences in the following employment measures: The common measure Employment in Q2, shows that Louisiana had 24.1% minorities employed whereas 75.9% were not employed. The common measure of Employment in Q4 Louisiana had a 29.2% rate of minorities who retained employment, whereas only 70.8% were unable to obtain employment. Lastly, for the common measure Median Earnings, Louisiana's average participant earnings were $2,400. Louisiana's proportion of rural residents is still higher than the nation's as a whole. According to the 2020 census, 28.5% of Louisiana's 4.6 million residents live in rural areas. Recruitment of eligible participants in rural areas requires more innovative methods than in more urban areas due to distances between participants, high transportation costs, and increased time needed to serve the participants. In efforts to reduce disparities in minorities as it relates to enrollment and employment performance outcomes, Louisiana will continue to seek outreach methods that will include publicity through the use of social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter), cold calling, newspaper advertisements, job fairs, community events, promotional material such brochures, posters, etc. In addition, Louisiana will continue coordinating with National partners to develop techniques for the dispersion populations. Sub- grantees will continue targeting agencies that hire veterans,

persons over 65, and have a disability. Additionally, Sub-grantees will continue to seek methods to increase these numbers by networking with senior centers, religious organizations, city government officials, tribal leaders, veteran organizations and listing vacancies with the local workforce "Career Solution Centers as a primary focus on these minority groups. Moreover, Sub-grantees will continue collaborating with organizations such as Catholic Charities, the Hispanic Apostolate, the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), Employ-BR, the Louisiana Works , and the Chamber of Commerce, to seek minorities for placement Furthermore, Sub-grantees will continue to post information in places like grocery stores, pharmacies, and religious institutions to attract minorities and the underserved populations.

b.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)

The following community service needs are to be focused on by National Grantees and sub- grantees: (1) identifying employers and referring participants to job openings. 2) participants with transportation issues; (3) housing for participants and potential participants, (4) low-cost internet service providers (5) free or reduced-price laptop computers/ tablets will coordinate with other state and local officials who have been able to identify and address community service needs. These community services can provide meaningful engagement opportunities for SCSEP participants, allowing them to contribute their skills and experience while receiving valuable support and resources tailored to their needs as older adults. The community services that are needed exist in 40 of the 64 parishes in Louisiana, which are considered rural areas.

The rural areas consist of the following parishes: Allen, Assumption, Avoyelles, Beauregard, Bienville, Caldwell, Cameron, Catahoula, Claiborne, Concordia, De Soto, East Carroll, East Feliciana, Evangeline, Franklin, Grant, Jackson, Jefferson Davis, La Salle, Lafourche, Lincoln, Livingston, Madison, Morehouse, Natchitoches, Plaquemines, Pointe Coupee, Richland, Sabine, St. Helena, St. Landry, St. Martin, Tangipahoa, Tensas, Union, Vermillion, Vernon, Washington, Webster, West Carroll, West Feliciana and Winn. To address these needs, Louisiana will develop cooperative agreements with outside agencies. Agencies such as Assisted Living Facilities, United Way Organizations, Goodwill Industries, Catholic Charities, Salvation Army, local Libraries, local YMCA, LDOL/WIOA, Adult Education, Louisiana Technical Colleges, Community Action Programs, Hispanic Resource Centers and AAA/Councils on Aging. These agencies are essential to meet the community's social health, welfare, educational, recreational, conservation, and environmental quality efforts. Information obtained through surveys and other sources dictate that our primary focus will be placed on housing, transportation, and medical/prescription needs that are crucial and necessary to the community. SCSEP sub-grantees should develop a rapport with the local utility companies, local cable (government access) stations, free newspapers, and local malls to obtain (low or no cost) advertising of program information that will meet the community needs, environmental quality efforts, economic development, and other essential services to the community.

b.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))

Louisiana and National SCSEP grantees will continue to strive to meet the required goals and targets established by DOL. To achieve and exceed goals and targets, Louisiana SCSEP will continue to develop new relationships and partnerships with local and national employers within the state by reinforcing awareness and outreach efforts. Additionally, Louisiana will apply the following strategies to improve SCSEP services:

Expanding supportive services to include meeting transportation needs for seniors through mass transportation (bus tokens, jobs on bus lines, etc.), car repair, and collaboration for transportation with other agencies serving seniors. Also, linking the participant with additional services for their caregiving responsibilities. Tailoring supportive services to address these barriers can increase participants' success in sustained employment.

Incorporate technology-driven training and skill development to equip participants with relevant digital literacy, remote work capabilities, and proficiency in emerging job sectors. This could include online training modules, virtual job fairs, and remote work placements.

Work with new and existing host agencies in an effort to improve and increase training opportunities for participants.

Expand opportunities for participants through On the Job Experience-OJE, which means to develop employer relationships in the private sector.

Collaborate with community colleges, adult learning centers and libraries to provide basic computer training for seniors.

Develop a more tailored approach to training and employment services based on individual participant needs, skills, and career goals. This would involve personalized career coaching, skills assessments, and customized training programs to enhance participants' employability in fields with high demand.

Develop initiatives to address systemic barriers that older workers may face in the labor market, such as age discrimination, limited access to transportation challenges, and caregiving responsibilities.

The following are recommendations to the U.S. Department of Labor for better program participation and services:

Develop guidelines that will allow program participants to continue receiving government benefits such as Social Security Income, Medicaid, and SNAP benefits.

Increase funding levels to serve those more of the “most in need” population and

increase “service level” goals to provide training and supportive services, as well as, the amount of staff time required to serve participants with multiple barriers to employment.

Realistic and effective coordination between WIOA and SCSEP should be implemented at the National level. This will encourage Career Solution Centers to improve assistance to older workers.

Increase the poverty guideline for income eligibility from 125% to 150%.

b.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))

Louisiana will provide continuous improvement in the level of performance for SCSEP participants’ entry into unsubsidized employment utilizing the following strategies:

Provide participants with personalized guidance to help them identify their career goals, strengths and areas of improvement.

Continual assistance to participants with job searching and application processes. Simply linking the participant with potential employers and providing interview preparation tools.

Connecting participants with training and development programs that will enhance technical, soft, and transferable skills relevant to their desired employment goal.

Linking participants with mentors and industry professionals to gain insights and build a professional network that could lead to a potential employment opportunity.

Establish a vigorous system to monitor participants' progress, identifying challenges, and making necessary

adjustments to support their successful entry into unsubsidized employment.

LOCATION AND POPULATION SERVED, INCLUDING EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION

c.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))

The Equitable Distribution Report (EDR) provides a basis for determining the collective progress made by SCSEP grantees toward equitable distribution of program positions in the State. It is also useful for determining where to locate new or vacant positions. The US DOL releases the annual EDR, which calculates the proportion of income and age-eligible population by parish. It is multiplied by the SCSEP funds for the state, which results in the number of authorized SCSEP positions per parish. These reports are essential in identifying where projects of this type are most needed based on their high unemployment rates..

c.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.

Based upon the SCSEP Equitable Distribution Report Louisiana had a total of 736 slots authorized positions with 139 for the State Grantee and 598 national grantees for PY 2022. In PY 2023 there are a total of 737 authorized positions with 139 for the State Grantee and 598 between the National Grantees. As shown in the table there were no significant variances.

County	PY 2022 Authorized Positions by Parish	PY 2023 Authorized Positions by Parish	Change	Cities
Acadia	12	12	0	Branch, Church Point, Crowley, Duson, Estherwood, Eunice, Iota, Mermentau, Morse, Rayne
Allen	5	5	0	Elizabeth, Kinder, Mittie, Oakdale, Oberlin, Reeves
Ascension	11	11	0	Abend, Darrow, Donaldsonville, Duplessis, Gonzales, Prairieville, Sorrento
Assumption	4	4	0	Belle Rose, Labadieville, Napoleonville, Paincourtville, Pierre Part, Supreme
Avoyelles	16	16	0	Bunkie, Cottonport, Evergreen, Hessmer, Mansura, Marksville, Moreauville, Plaucheville, Simmesport
Beauregard	6	6	0	De Ridder, Dry Creek, Merryville
Bienville	3	3	0	Arcadia, Bienville, Bryceland, Castor, Gibsland, Jamestown, Lucky, Mount Lebanon, Ringgold, Saline

c.3. DESCRIBE CURRENT SLOT IMBALANCES AND PROPOSED STEPS TO CORRECT INEQUITIES TO ACHIEVE EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION.

The Louisiana Program Year 2023 Equitable Distribution Report (shown below). All grantees will concentrate efforts on filling slots in parishes that are underserved first in order to correct the imbalance during this four-year plan period through outreach efforts. Equitable distribution can be challenging in rural parishes and areas with increases in the number of eligible individuals. Louisiana strives to keep the actual position distribution between one or two positions above or below the equitable distribution goal. To better serve participants, Louisiana and National Grantees will implement the following strategies to address slot imbalances:

Under-served parishes:

Increase marketing and communications: Develop marketing materials and communications that will capture

the attention of the senior population.

Build partnerships by identifying other agencies that serve the senior population to develop viable host agencies where enrollees can train.

Increase collaboration with the local workforce, private and public entities to recruit and enroll participants. This will be established by participating in events such as recruitment fairs, health fairs, job fairs, etc.

Provide continual support and additional training to SCSEP staff on ways to increase program participation.

Identify and target the most in-need population in the area to prioritize enrollment.

Over-served parishes:

Increase efforts to utilize the OJE component for current participants to engage in specialized training for job placement.

Review all current participants' IEP to determine whether goals are achieved and if the participant is “job ready.

Increase efforts for seeking employers to place “job-ready” participants into unsubsidized employment.

Develop a waiting list for eligible participants.

Freeze enrollment in over-served parishes.

COUNTY_NAM	STATE	Louisiana Modified Positions	Louisiana Equitable Distribution	Louisiana Variances	Institute for Indian Development (IID) Modified Positions	Institute for Indian Development (IID) Equitable Distribution	Institute for Indian Development Variance	Asociación Nacional Pro Personas Mayores (ANPPM) Modified Positions	Asociación Nacional Pro Personas Mayores (ANPPM) Equitable Distribution	Asociación Nacional Pro Personas Mayores (ANPPM) Variance
Acadia Parish	LA	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	1	-11
Allen Parish	LA	0	0	0	2	3	1	3	3	0
Ascension Parish	LA	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	8	-3
Assumption Parish	LA	0	0	0	0	1	1	4	2	-2
Avoyelles Parish	LA	0	0	0	8	25	17	8	10	2
Beauregard Parish	LA	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	5	-1
Bienville Parish	LA	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	-2
Bossier Parish	LA	0	0	0	4	0	-4	12	3	-9
Caddo Parish	LA	0	0	0	2	0	-2	37	53	16
Calcasieu Parish	LA	0	0	0	10	4	-6	21	4	-17
Caldwell Parish	LA	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	-2
Catahoula Parish	LA	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	4	2
Claiborne Parish	LA	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	-1
Concordia Parish	LA	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	3	-1
De Soto Parish	LA	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	4	-1
East Baton Rouge	LA	29	40	11	0	0	0	14	13	-1
East Carroll Parish	LA	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	-2
East Feliciana Pari	LA	3	1	-2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Evangeline Parish	LA	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	6	0
Franklin Parish	LA	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	5	1
Grant Parish	LA	0	0	0	2	1	-1	4	0	-4
Iberia Parish	LA	0	0	0	4	2	-2	10	5	-5
Iberville Parish	LA	3	1	-2	0	0	0	2	0	-2
Jackson Parish	LA	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	-1
Jefferson Davis Pa	LA	0	0	0	2	1	-1	6	1	-5
Jefferson Parish	LA	51	60	9	4	3	-1	0	0	0
LaSalle Parish	LA	0	0	0	3	3	0	3	0	-3
Lafayette Parish	LA	0	0	0	8	15	7	24	1	-23
Lafourche Parish	LA	12	5	-7	10	2	-8	0	0	0
Lincoln Parish	LA	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	2	-3
Livingston Parish	LA	9	8	-1	0	0	0	5	0	-5
Madison Parish	LA	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	-2
Morehouse Parish	LA	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	1	-4
Natchitoches Paris	LA	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	11	4
Orleans Parish	LA	0	0	0	5	6	1	68	69	1
Ouachita Parish	LA	0	0	0	0	0	0	21	11	-10
Plaquemines Parish	LA	4	3	-1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pointe Coupee Par	LA	5	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rapides Parish	LA	0	0	0	13	19	6	19	9	-10
Red River Parish	LA	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	-3
Richland Parish	LA	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	-4
Sabine Parish	LA	0	0	0	2	6	4	5	0	-5
St. Bernard Parish	LA	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	2	-4
St. Charles Parish	LA	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	-4
St. Helena Parish	LA	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	-3
St. James Parish	LA	3	0	-3	0	0	0	0	0	0
St. John the Baptis	LA	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	3	-2
St. Landry Parish	LA	0	0	0	0	0	0	17	21	4
St. Martin Parish	LA	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	4	-4
St. Mary Parish	LA	0	0	0	10	2	-8	9	10	1
St. Tammany Paris	LA	0	0	0	0	0	0	23	3	-20
Tangipahoa Parish	LA	7	4	-3	0	0	0	11	3	-8
Tensas Parish	LA	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	1
Terrebonne Parish	LA	0	0	0	14	16	2	16	0	-16
Union Parish	LA	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	9	5
Vermilion Parish	LA	0	0	0	2	0	-2	9	9	0
Vernon Parish	LA	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	-5
Washington Parish	LA	11	3	-8	0	0	0	0	0	0
Webster Parish	LA	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	2	-7
West Baton Rouge	LA	2	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
West Carroll Paris	LA	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	-2
West Feliciana Par	LA	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	-1
Winn Parish	LA	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	-3
		139	134	-5	105	109	4	493	309	-184

THE STATE'S LONG-TERM STRATEGY FOR ACHIEVING AN EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF SCSEP POSITIONS WITHIN THE STATE THAT:

c.4.A. MOVES POSITIONS FROM OVER-SERVED TO UNDERSERVED LOCATIONS WITHIN THE STATE IN COMPLIANCE WITH 20 CFR 641.365.

Grantees will address under-enrollment by the following:

Increasing participation in underserved parishes is an ongoing process that will require commitment, collaboration, and adaptability. Implementing, the following strategies provide adequate participation in the Senior Community Service Employment Program.

Build partnerships by identifying other agencies that serve the senior population to develop viable host agencies where enrollees can train.

Increase collaboration with the local workforce, private and public entities to recruit and enroll participants. This will be established by participating in events such as recruitment fairs, health fairs, job fairs, etc.

Increase marketing and communications: Develop marketing materials and communications that will capture the attention of the senior population.

Provide continual support and additional training to SCSEP staff on ways to increase program participation.

Adequately enroll new participants after program participants have achieved durational limits.

Encourage current participants to communicate with peers about their SCSEP experience.

Identify and target the most in-need population in the area to prioritize enrollment. Grantees will address under enrollment by the following:

Increase efforts to utilize the OJE component for current participants to engage in specialized training for job placement.

Review all current participants' IEP to determine whether goals are achieved and if the participant is “job ready.

Increase efforts for seeking employers to place “job-ready” participants into unsubsidized employment.

Develop a waiting list for eligible participants.

Freeze enrollment in over-served parishes.

In addition, Louisiana will collaborate with National Grantees to discuss methods for improving variances. Furthermore, Louisiana will strive to ensure that there is a balance between participants enrolling and exiting the program to decrease over-enrollment and under- enrollment. However, participants will not be terminated from the program due to equitable distribution.

c.4.B. EQUITABLY SERVES RURAL AND URBAN AREAS.

Seventeen parishes have poverty levels of 25% or greater. The parishes with the highest poverty levels are East Carroll (45.7%), Madison (41.7%), St. Landry (32.2%), Tensas (31.6%), and Natchitoches (32.8%). According to the final PY22 Quarterly Progress Report-QPR, there were 11 of 139 participants served who lived in rural areas. Employment opportunities and resources are more difficult to obtain in rural areas. Staff travel as often as needed to assist these individuals in reaching goals and ensuring performance measures are met. National grantees and sub-grantees will work with the local rural economic development offices, mayors, and parish councils to coordinate ways in which seniors can better be served in areas of access to transportation, employment, and training opportunities. Furthermore, Louisiana SCSEP will utilize the Equitable Distribution formula provided by the SCSEP.org website as a long-term strategy to manage and ensure rural and urban areas are equitably served. In addition, Louisiana and National SCSEP Grantees will continue to collaborate on best practices and strategies to ensure that participants are equitably served in both urban and rural areas.

c.4.C. SERVES INDIVIDUALS AFFORDED PRIORITY FOR SERVICE UNDER 20 CFR 641.520. (20 CFR 641.302(A), 641.365, 641.520)

Louisiana SCSEP will ensure when recruiting and selecting participants for SCSEP, priority is given to individuals who have one or more of the following priority of service characteristics:

Are covered persons in accordance with the Jobs for Veterans Act (covered persons – veterans and eligible spouses, including widows and widowers – who are eligible for SCSEP must receive services instead of, or before, non-covered persons);

Are 65 years or older;

Have a disability;

Have limited English proficiency;

Have low literacy skills;

Reside in a rural area;

Have low employment prospects;

Have failed to find employment after utilizing services provided through the One-Stop Delivery System;

Are homeless or are at risk for homelessness

Are formerly incarcerated or on supervision from release from prison or jail within five years of the date of initial eligibility determination.

The priority of service requirements are included in the state SCSEP contract and are also followed by national SCSEP grantees. Sub-Grantees use connections with other programs, such as Veteran Affairs and Vocational Rehabilitation Services at the WIOA One-Stops to promote SCSEP and gain referrals on potential applicants who meet the priority of service and eligibility requirements. Grantees also partner with organizations that serve the hard to reach populations such as those that are geographically or socially isolated and those whose primary language is not English. Catholic Charities has a refugee assistance program in-house, which allows for immediate access to special populations. Due to the demographics of the areas they serve, some grantees will be able to serve larger percentages of these special populations better. The State SCSEP Director (GOEA) will aid the grantees in evaluating whether, collectively, they are serving these populations adequately based on quarterly performance reports.

c.5. THE RATIO OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS IN EACH SERVICE AREA TO THE TOTAL ELIGIBLE POPULATION IN THE STATE. (20 CFR 641.325(A))

As shown in the chart below about 1.2 million people in the state of Louisiana are eligible to apply for SCSEP. In other words, nearly 29 percent of the state's population is 55 or

older. However, the state has a slightly lower-than-average ratio of seniors. Louisiana lags the nation in median household income for seniors and the percentage of those 55 and older who remain in the workforce, but the state has a more diverse group of seniors than the average state. Nearly 32 percent of Louisiana's 60-and-older crowd are people of color, putting the state at No. 11 in the nation.

Natchitoches Parish	35,999	10,635	30%
Orleans Parish	355,121	108,954	31%
Ouachita Parish	155,268	43,637	28%
Plaquemines Parish	20,980	1,774	8%
Pointe Coupee Parish	19,807	7,598	38%
Rapides Parish	124,071	38,250	31%
Red River Parish	7,280	2,614	36%
Richland Parish	19,698	6,229	32%
Sabine Parish	21,759	7,671	35%
St. Bernard Parish	44,777	10,971	25%
St. Charles Parish	48,184	14,998	31%
St. Helena Parish	10,624	3,671	35%
St. James Parish	18,689	6,607	35%
St. John the Baptist Parish	35,550	12,154	34%
St. Landry Parish	80,753	24,375	30%
St. Martin Parish	50,562	15,336	30%
St. Mary Parish	46,991	15,732	33%
St. Tammany Parish	279,615	81,890	29%
Tangipahoa Parish	140,128	35,593	25%
Tensas Parish	3,470	1,766	51%
Terrebonne Parish	96,332	30,517	32%
Union Parish	20,171	7,580	38%
Vermilion Parish	57,148	16,917	30%
Vernon Parish	45,629	10,553	23%
Washington Parish	44,723	14,672	33%
Webster Parish	34,881	12,499	36%
West Baton Rouge Parish	28,492	7,376	26%
West Carroll Parish	9,233	3,267	35%
West Feliciana Parish	15,181	4,375	29%
Winn Parish	12,601	4,376	35%
Total Population	**4,516,527**	**1,291,877**	**29%**

THE RELATIVE DISTRIBUTION OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO:

c.6.A. RESIDE IN URBAN AND RURAL AREAS WITHIN THE STATE

Louisiana has a population of approximately 4,516,527. If an estimated 29% is over the age of 55 and 18.6% of those persons live in poverty, then there are approximately 243,621 eligible SCSEP individuals in Louisiana. The state has a total of 737 slots assigned overall. The percentage of persons residing in rural areas is 18.6% and 81.4% for urban (about a 4:1 ratio in those residing in urban areas rather than rural).

c.6.B. HAVE THE GREATEST ECONOMIC NEED

Of the total SCSEP-eligible population in Louisiana, 19% has been identified as having the greatest economic need, with income at or below the federal poverty guideline.

c.6.C. ARE MINORITIES

Louisiana has a wide range of racial backgrounds. The percentage of African Americans and blacks in the state is the second-highest in the nation, only trailing behind Mississippi. A high percentage of Cajuns and Creoles live in the southern portion of the state. There are also a significant number of Hispanics in the state, including the third largest Honduran American community located in metro New Orleans. Moreover, according to the

United States Census Quick Facts (July 1, 2023) minorities make up about 43% of Louisiana's population.

Louisiana Minority Group	% of Eligible Population
Black/African American	*32.8%*
Hispanics	*5.8%*
Asian	*1.9%*
American Indian	*0.8%*
Alaska Native	*0.57%*
Other Pacific Islander	*1.41%*
Native Hawaiian	*0.1%*

Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Louisiana

c.6.D. ARE LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT

Louisiana's population still greatly reflects the state's history, and 3.5 % of the population speaks Spanish at home, while 3.4% speak French, including Creole and Cajun. A total of 8.6% of the state's residents speak a language other than English at home.

c.6.E. HAVE THE GREATEST SOCIAL NEED. (20 CFR 641.325(B))

DOL defines the "greatest social need" as needs based on non-economic factors. It includes eligible persons with disabilities. It also includes cultural, social, or geographic isolation, including isolation brought about by racial or ethnic status. The goal of SCSEP is to serve those eligible persons who are most in need. DOL advises that "service to most in need" is measured by the average number of barriers per participant. These barriers include severe disability; frailty; age 75 or older; met age requirement for, but not receiving Social Security Title II; severely limited employment prospects and living in an area of persistent unemployment; limited English proficiency; low literacy skills; disability; rural veteran; low employment prospects; failed to find employment after using WIOA Title 1 service; homeless; and at risk of homelessness. Moreover, consideration will be given to all eligible persons with disabilities, isolated geographically, or living alone. These characteristics were measured by the following statistics:

Those with disabilities: 40.6% Limited English proficiency: 8.6% Geographical isolation: 18.6%

c.6.F. FORMERLY INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS, AS DEFINED IN TEGL 17-20

Louisiana has an incarceration rate of 1,094 per 100,000 people (including prisons, jails, immigration detention, and juvenile justice facilities), meaning that it locks up a higher percentage of its people than any democratic country on earth. Moreover, the cost of incarcerating older people is incredibly high, and their risk of reincarceration is incredibly low, yet 15% of people in Louisiana prisons are over the age of 55. On average there is an estimate of 1,360 individuals 55 years and over released from prison. Based on this statistic 3% of Louisiana's formerly incarcerated individuals are eligible to enroll into the program.

c.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))

Sub-grantees and National grantees in Louisiana will not transfer positions from one geographic area to another without first notifying the state agency responsible for preparing the State Plan and the Equitable Distribution report. The State and national program operators will submit in writing any proposed changes in distribution to the Federal Project Officer.

Participants will be notified within 30 to 60 days of any transfer. Participant records, if applicable, will be given to the new grantee within 60 days of the new grant period. This will include any intake documentation and eligibility information to retain current participants. Prior to transfer, every effort will be made to secure unsubsidized employment for participants, and referrals to other workforce programs will be conducted. Participants will be notified of the transfer by the current grantee as soon as possible in order to ease the transition. Any questions regarding the transfer will be answered jointly. Payroll payments will be made by the current agency until the end of the program period. Afterward, the new agency will be responsible for payroll payments.

Additionally, the following strategies will be implemented to address over-enrollment:

Freeze Enrollments: Applicants will be informed of the freezes at the time of service inquiry. Individuals desiring to complete an application for enrollment will be provided with a conditional eligibility determination and placed on a waiting list.

Funding and Enrollment Levels: Louisiana will monitor its enrollment levels and available funding on a regular basis, with the anticipation of removing the enrollment freeze as funding can support new enrollments.

Monitor Durational Limits: Durational limits will be closely monitored to ensure participants approaching their eligibility limits have a prepared transitional IEP in place and are properly exited per program policy.

Emphasize Job Development and Placement: Louisiana will emphasize the use of on-the- job experience (OJE) and specialized training programs. This will provide increased employment opportunities and expedite the transition into unsubsidized employment for job-ready participants.

COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT (CSBG)

Louisiana's Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) program has established active partnerships to facilitate and encourage coordination between the state's 42 Community Action Agencies (CAAs) and 15 Local Workforce Development Areas. Each CAA executes an annual sub- award agreement with Louisiana Works, which mandates adherence to CSBG assurances, including carrying out services and activities permitted under the CSBG Act and those outlined in the approved CSBG State Plan. Section 9.4 of the State Plan describes how the State and the CAAs coordinate the provision of employment and training activities through statewide and local WIOA workforce development systems.

Community Action Agencies are provided with ongoing technical assistance on strategies and best practices to increase collaboration with their local American Job Centers, such as semi- annual training conference sessions, webinars available through WorkforceGPS, and peer roundtable discussions with both Community Action Network and Workforce colleagues who have successfully engaged to improve outcomes for co-enrolled clients.

CAAs engage with community partners and align services with priority State initiatives, including education, training and employment initiatives in alignment with WIOA. Louisiana Works encourages all Community Action Agencies to coordinate with their local American Job Centers to provide supportive services to co-enrolled clients throughout job training and up to the fourth quarter after exit. Louisiana CAAs bridge the gaps by providing supports such as expungements, rental/mortgage assistance, utilities, transportation, identifying documents, etc. These supports have been the difference for many job seekers in securing and maintaining employment.

All Community Action Agencies are encouraged to go beyond simply referring clients to their local American Job Centers. They routinely and actively partner to reduce barriers to employment and provide supportive services to those completing training and/or educational programs. Examples include the use of CSBG funds to assist individuals in obtaining/renewing a Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) card to acquire or maintain their employment, assisting eligible youth in accessing driver's education and obtaining their driver's licenses to address transportation related barriers to employment, the hiring of seasonal school employees to implement Summer Feeding Programs to insure continued needed employment during the summer months and job skills training programs for youth.

Several CAAs have executed memoranda of understanding with local workforce development areas to foster greater workforce development coordination. Additional CAA practices supported by the State are co-locating the CAA with a workforce agency to provide stronger collaboration and maintaining the practice of dual case management with workforce agencies to monitor customer needs and goals across a variety of categories. Partnerships and collaboration with Local Workforce Development Areas are enhanced by participation in ongoing CSBG State Association training conferences, providing the opportunity for interactive learning sessions and shared best practices.

OTHER APPENDICES