Louisiana’s
Workforce Innovation and
Opportunity Act (WIOA)

Combined State Plan

For the Period of July 1, 2018, through June 30, 2020

John Bel Edwards
Governor

Ava Dejoie
Executive Director, Louisiana Workforce Commission

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OVERVIEW

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

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

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

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

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

• Reintegration of Ex-Offenders Program (Programs authorized under section 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007 (42 U.S.C. 17532))
* States that elect to include employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.) under a Combined State Plan would submit all other required elements of a complete CSBG State Plan directly to the Federal agency that administers the program. Similarly, States that elect to include employment and training activities carried by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) and 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 that are included would submit all other required elements of a complete State Plan for those programs directly to the Federal agency that administers the program.
HOW THE STATE PLAN REQUIREMENTS ARE ORGANIZED

I. WIOA STATE PLAN TYPE
   A. COMBINED PLAN PARTNER PROGRAM(S)
      Indicate which Combined Plan partner program(s) the state is electing to include in the plan.

      Career and technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.)   No

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

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

      Work programs authorized under section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(o))   No

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

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

      Unemployment Insurance Programs (Programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws in accordance with applicable Federal law)   No

      Senior Community Service Employment Program (Programs authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.))   No

      Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development   No

      Community Services Block Grant Program (Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.))   Yes
II. STRATEGIC ELEMENTS
   A. ECONOMIC, WORKFORCE, AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES ANALYSIS
      1. ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE ANALYSIS

      Economic and Workforce Analysis

      (A) Economic Analysis

      Louisiana is a major energy producing state. In 2017 Quarter 3, the Mining industry accounted for just
      over 5.3 percent of Louisiana’s $2.1 billion GDP, more than double the percentage of Mining-related GDP
      nationally.

      Mining and Logging employment dropped steeply throughout 2015 and 2016, but has averaged roughly
      35,000 jobs throughout 2017, despite over-the-year employment losses in the first ten months. LWC
      forecasts anticipate continued decline through 2018 and minimal change – a loss of 75 jobs – through
      2024.

      Despite the flagging Mining industry, Louisiana’s long term outlook is encouraging. The state expects a
      7.1 percent rise in employment – over 146,000 new jobs – through 2024.

      The Health Care and Social Assistance industry – a backbone of the state’s economy accounting for 7.5
      percent of total real GDP in 2017 Quarter 3 – is the largest contributor to long term growth, accounting
      for nearly 30 percent of total forecasted growth through 2024.

      Health Care and Social Assistance has grown over 11 percent since January 2012, and the industry has
      posted over-the-year gains every month since August 2006. Health Care and Social Assistance
      accounted for 13.6 percent of Louisiana’s total employment in December 2017, and the industry is further
      highlighted in Existing Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations below.

      Despite the rocky past few years, Louisiana’s seasonally adjusted unemployment rate has continued to
      decline, reaching 4.6 percent in December 2017. Labor force participation declined through 2016, before
      making a small comeback in 2017 and ending the year at 58.7 percent.

      Louisiana is home to nine Metropolitan Statistical Areas, with Hammond as the most recent addition.
      Three of the MSAs were moderately to severely impacted by the decline in oil prices. Several MSAs saw
      some stagnation in employment, while one saw meteoric increases. Below are the employment highlights
      of the nine MSAs and the eight regions encompassing them.

      • The New Orleans region – Louisiana’s largest by employment – anticipates growth above the
        state average through 2018, although at 6.2 percent its long term growth is just below that
        expected by the state. Six of 22 industries in the region anticipate double digit growth through
        2024. Seasonally adjusted nonfarm employment in the MSA, which covers the same parishes as
        the region, has remained somewhat stymied over the past three years, although the NSA
        unemployment rate has steadily declined over the same time period.
- The Baton Rouge region, which includes both the Baton Rouge and Hammond MSAs, has a positive outlook, with both short and long term employment projections predicting growth outstripping that of the state. The Health Care and Social Assistance industry is poised to add the most jobs, with over 38,000 new jobs expected through 2024. Seasonally adjusted nonfarm employment has been on the rise in the MSA, despite a temporary 7,400 decline in August 2016 after the Baton Rouge flooding. The NSA unemployment rate in the MSA has experienced steady decline over the past three years.

- Both the three-parish Houma region and two-parish Houma MSA reflect the negative repercussions of declining oil prices. Seasonally adjusted nonfarm employment in the MSA has declined 15.6 percent since January 2015, although the losses have slowed considerably in 2017. The Houma region is one of two regions anticipating negative growth through 2018. Optimistically, employment is expected to rise 6.6 percent through 2024, and the unemployment rate has dropped considerably since mid-2016; as of December 2017 the rate was 4.1 percent.

- Lafayette is the second region hard-hit by the drop in oil prices: short term growth in the region is projected to be -2.2 percent. The long term outlook is stronger, with 7.3 percent employment growth anticipated through 2024. Much like Houma, seasonally adjusted nonfarm employment in the MSA declined considerable through mid-2016; the MSA lost nearly 11 percent of jobs between January 2015 and December 2017. However, employment appears to have stabilized at just under 200,000 jobs over the past 18 months; the NSA unemployment rate has been on the decline during that same time period.

- The Lake Charles region leads the state in employment growth; a staggering 6.5 percent growth is expected through 2018, and 8.1 percent through 2024. Transportation and Warehousing is responsible for much of the long-term growth, while Construction drives much of the short-term growth. Seasonally adjusted nonfarm employment in the MSA has been on the rise over the past three years, with 13.3 percent more jobs in December 2017 than in January 2015. The unemployment rate mirrors the MSA’s boom; at 3.2 percent Lake Charles had the lowest rate of all the MSAs in December 2017.

- Despite a declining unemployment rate, the Alexandria MSA has also shown a modest 1.8 percent decline in seasonally adjusted nonfarm employment over the past three years. The region posts and unexceptional short and long term forecast, with both coming in just below state average. Despite that, the Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services industry anticipates over 35 percent employment growth through 2024, and another four industries project double digit employment growth through the same time period.

- Shreveport was the third area noticeably affected by oil prices, although it was not nearly as hard hit as either Houma or Lake Charles. The MSA has seen a 3.9 percent decline in seasonally adjusted nonfarm employment over the past three years, although the NSA unemployment rate has slowly declined over the same time period. Short term growth is projected to be just below the state average, while long term growth is just over state average. Health Care and Social Assistance expects to add the most jobs through 2024, at over 6,300, or 15.1 percent growth.

- The Monroe MSA has tracked slow but steady growth over the past three years, with seasonally adjusted nonfarm employment rising 1.7 percent. The unemployment rate has nearly halved over that same time period, falling from 8 percent in January 2015 to 4.1 percent in December 2017. The Monroe region projects above average growth through 2018, with Health Care and Social Assistance expected to add 862 jobs. Long term growth is projected at 6.6 percent, below state average but not the smallest growth in the state.

- The Hammond MSA is Louisiana’s newest and smallest MSA. Composed of just Tangipahoa Parish, it is part of the Baton Rouge region. It is also the only MSA for which seasonally adjusted employment data is not available. The MSA has experienced a steady climb in not seasonally
adjusted nonfarm employment, adding 2,600 jobs over the past three years. The unemployment rate, in keeping with state trend, has also fallen, although at 4.4 percent it was second highest in the state in December 2017.

All nine MSAs and eight regions are making strides to put the state on target to reach its projected employment of just over 2 million jobs through 2018. The continually declining unemployment rate in all MSAs is another positive sign that the state is slowly regaining the ground lost to falling oil prices.

The Louisiana Workforce Commission’s Labor Market Information (LMI), Louisiana Occupational Information System (LOIS) Scorecard is the state’s Virtual Labor Market Information Web Portal. This interactive site provides users with access to the latest Louisiana labor force, wages, population, industry employment, training schools, training programs, Scorecard for completion rates, Youth Web Portal, projections, demographics, nonfarm employment, employer database, unemployment claimants, industry staffing patterns, licensed occupations, demand occupations, and career products. The LMI tables and charts and figures that follow provide projections for Louisiana’s long term industry growth.

**Sources:** The preceding section cited data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis, the Current Employment Statistics Program, the Local Area Unemployment Statistics Program, and LWC Short Term and Long Term Industry Projections.

(i) **Existing Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations**

Louisiana’s short term and long term employment projections suggest that the annual average workforce demand to increase at 1.2 percent, the same rate as the national annual average workforce demand.

**Table 1: Short Term and Long Term Industry Growth by Region**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RLMA</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>2015 Employment</th>
<th>2018 Forecast</th>
<th>Short Term Growth</th>
<th>2024 Forecast</th>
<th>Long Term Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Statewide</td>
<td>2,058,832</td>
<td>2,097,983</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>2,205,120</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>New Orleans</td>
<td>589,295</td>
<td>604,064</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>625,705</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Baton Rouge</td>
<td>471,733</td>
<td>488,743</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>510,520</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Houma</td>
<td>105,430</td>
<td>101,903</td>
<td>-3.3%</td>
<td>112,349</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Lafayette</td>
<td>285,800</td>
<td>279,572</td>
<td>-2.2%</td>
<td>306,524</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Lake Charles</td>
<td>133,933</td>
<td>142,674</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>144,833</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Alexandria</td>
<td>112,224</td>
<td>113,437</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>119,040</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Shreveport</td>
<td>242,133</td>
<td>246,512</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>260,182</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Monroe</td>
<td>117,906</td>
<td>120,793</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>125,709</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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1 Louisiana Workforce Commission Short Term and Long Term Industry and Occupational Projections
Table 2: Short Term Growth Rate in Top Louisiana Industries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leather and allied product manufacturing</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beverage and tobacco product manufacturing</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>2,271</td>
<td>2,461</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction of buildings</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>22,660</td>
<td>24,554</td>
<td>1,894</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy and civil engineering construction</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>49,379</td>
<td>53,411</td>
<td>4,032</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonstore retailers</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>2,131</td>
<td>2,305</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couriers and messengers</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>5,491</td>
<td>5,910</td>
<td>419</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social assistance</td>
<td>624</td>
<td>43,836</td>
<td>46,944</td>
<td>3,108</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture and related product manufacturing</td>
<td>337</td>
<td>1,165</td>
<td>1,242</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambulatory health care services</td>
<td>621</td>
<td>97,014</td>
<td>103,244</td>
<td>6,230</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building material and garden supply stores</td>
<td>444</td>
<td>19,633</td>
<td>20,840</td>
<td>1,207</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 3, various subsectors of the healthcare and transportation industries dominate the top growing subsectors in Louisiana. Healthcare and Social Assistance enjoys projected double digit growth in all eight regions across the state, and Professional and Technical Services projects the same in seven of the eight regions.

Table 3: Long Term Growth Rate in Top Louisiana Industries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leather and allied product manufacturing</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social assistance</td>
<td>624</td>
<td>43,836</td>
<td>52,920</td>
<td>9,084</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambulatory health care services</td>
<td>621</td>
<td>97,014</td>
<td>116,557</td>
<td>19,543</td>
<td>20.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performing arts and spectator sports</td>
<td>711</td>
<td>4,708</td>
<td>5,561</td>
<td>853</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other information services</td>
<td>519</td>
<td>436</td>
<td>505</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couriers and messengers</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>5,491</td>
<td>6,349</td>
<td>858</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building material and garden supply stores</td>
<td>444</td>
<td>19,633</td>
<td>22,421</td>
<td>2,788</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonstore retailers</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>2,131</td>
<td>2,414</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional and technical services</td>
<td>541</td>
<td>89,168</td>
<td>100,873</td>
<td>11,705</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warehousing and storage</td>
<td>493</td>
<td>7,544</td>
<td>8,504</td>
<td>960</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

High demand occupations are those with three, four, or five star rankings as determined by the Louisiana Workforce Commission. LWC’s star ratings system takes into account wages, job openings, employment, and projected growth for over six hundred occupations, both statewide and regionally. Table 4 shows some of the highest rated occupations sorted by employment.

Table 4: Top 20 High-Demand Occupations by Employment
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Star Rating</th>
<th>Occupational Title</th>
<th>2015 Estimate</th>
<th>2024 Projected</th>
<th>Annual Total Openings</th>
<th>2016 Annual Average Wage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>★★★★★</td>
<td>Registered Nurses</td>
<td>42,310</td>
<td>47,860</td>
<td>1,850</td>
<td>$63,370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>★★★★★</td>
<td>General and Operations Managers</td>
<td>30,900</td>
<td>33,340</td>
<td>1,050</td>
<td>$111,119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>★★★★★</td>
<td>Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products</td>
<td>24,050</td>
<td>25,470</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>$58,793</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>★★★★★</td>
<td>Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education</td>
<td>23,770</td>
<td>25,200</td>
<td>690</td>
<td>$48,101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>★★★★★</td>
<td>First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers</td>
<td>20,780</td>
<td>22,380</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>$48,663</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>★★★★★</td>
<td>Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers</td>
<td>17,330</td>
<td>18,080</td>
<td>610</td>
<td>$47,810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>★★★★★</td>
<td>Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education</td>
<td>13,560</td>
<td>14,380</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>$49,567</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>★★★★★</td>
<td>Electricians</td>
<td>13,560</td>
<td>14,150</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>$50,810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>★★★★★</td>
<td>Accountants and Auditors</td>
<td>12,270</td>
<td>13,310</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>$64,406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>★★★★★</td>
<td>Maintenance and Repair Workers, General</td>
<td>29,000</td>
<td>30,900</td>
<td>970</td>
<td>$35,944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>★★★★★</td>
<td>First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers</td>
<td>27,200</td>
<td>29,050</td>
<td>810</td>
<td>$37,241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>★★★★★</td>
<td>Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers</td>
<td>25,350</td>
<td>26,950</td>
<td>610</td>
<td>$40,903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>★★★★★</td>
<td>Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses</td>
<td>21,680</td>
<td>23,920</td>
<td>860</td>
<td>$38,074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>★★★★★</td>
<td>Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks</td>
<td>24,230</td>
<td>22,580</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>$36,132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>★★★★★</td>
<td>Carpenters</td>
<td>18,050</td>
<td>18,580</td>
<td>610</td>
<td>$38,993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>★★★★★</td>
<td>Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive</td>
<td>34,880</td>
<td>35,650</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>$30,518</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>★★★★★</td>
<td>Construction Laborers</td>
<td>22,950</td>
<td>23,940</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>$31,349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>★★★★★</td>
<td>Customer Service Representatives</td>
<td>20,230</td>
<td>22,590</td>
<td>760</td>
<td>$30,578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>★★★★★</td>
<td>First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers</td>
<td>16,970</td>
<td>19,420</td>
<td>780</td>
<td>$29,897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>★★★★★</td>
<td>Security Guards</td>
<td>17,830</td>
<td>19,300</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>$27,023</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Emerging Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations

Figure 1: 2024 Industry Projections for Louisiana, Two-Digit NAICS

The chart above provides projections on what industries are expected to experience the greatest growth by 2024. The highest growth occupation according to these projections will be the medical field. The aging of the baby boom generation will necessitate more people working to care for this segment of the population. Specifically, these projections show the Health Care and Social Assistance Industry growing by 41,446 through 2024. The table below echoes these results.

Table 5: 2024 Industry Projections for Louisiana, Highest Forecasted Growth Jobs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry Sector</th>
<th>Employment Growth</th>
<th>Percent Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health Care and Social Assistance</td>
<td>41,446</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services</td>
<td>11,705</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation and Food Services</td>
<td>23,522</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative and Waste Services</td>
<td>10,587</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>2,937</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Services, Except Public Administration</td>
<td>2,040</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real Estate and Rental and Leasing</td>
<td>16,246</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation and Warehousing</td>
<td>2,141</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management of Companies and Enterprises</td>
<td>9,703</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Services</td>
<td>9,950</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: 2024 Occupational Projections for Louisiana, Highest Forecasted Growth Jobs

Table 2: Louisiana Workforce Commission Short Term and Long Term Industry and Occupational Projections
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Star Rating</th>
<th>Occupation Code</th>
<th>Occupation Title</th>
<th>Growth Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>★★★★★</td>
<td>15-1132</td>
<td>Software Developers, Applications</td>
<td>92.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>★★★★★</td>
<td>15-1133</td>
<td>Software Developers, Systems Software</td>
<td>90.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>★★★★★★</td>
<td>15-1134</td>
<td>Web Developers</td>
<td>65.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>★★★★★★★</td>
<td>15-1131</td>
<td>Computer Programmers</td>
<td>51.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>★★★★★★★★</td>
<td>15-1141</td>
<td>Database Administrators</td>
<td>46.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>★★★★★★★★★</td>
<td>27-3091</td>
<td>Interpreters and Translators</td>
<td>31.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>★★★★★★★★★★</td>
<td>49-9092</td>
<td>Commercial Divers</td>
<td>29.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>★★★★★★★★★★★</td>
<td>51-9081</td>
<td>Dental Laboratory Technicians</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>★★★★★★★★★★★★</td>
<td>25-3021</td>
<td>Self-Enrichment Education Teachers</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>★★★★★★★★★★★★★</td>
<td>31-9092</td>
<td>Medical Assistants</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2: Projected Employment through 2024 in the Health Care and Social Assistance Industry

Quick Facts
Fueled by the aging of the baby boomers, the Health Care and Social Assistance Industry is projected to grow by 41,446 between 2015 and 2024. This growth is broken down further into the Ambulatory health services, Hospitals, Nursing and residential care facilities, and social assistance industries. Nearly three quarters of the growth is attributable to Hospital workers and emergency care professionals. The number of job vacancies in this sector also show strong demand for workers in the Education and Health Services Sector.
(iii) Employers’ Employment Needs

Louisiana has a focus on three industries – Health Care and Social Assistance, Construction, and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services. Below are employment, wage, and projections data for the industries, as well as job opening data for top occupations in each industry.

Table 7: 2017 Quarter 2 Establishment, Employment, and Wage Data for Top Louisiana Industries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry Sector</th>
<th>Establishments</th>
<th>Employment</th>
<th>Average Weekly Wage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total, All Industries</td>
<td>131,408</td>
<td>1,910,791</td>
<td>$869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care and Social Assistance</td>
<td>14,046</td>
<td>303,637</td>
<td>$846</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>11,183</td>
<td>156,168</td>
<td>$1,122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional and Technical Services</td>
<td>15,817</td>
<td>89,141</td>
<td>$1,239</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2017 Quarter 2 Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages

Table 8: Short Term and Long Term Projections for Louisiana’s Top Industries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total, All Industries</td>
<td>2,058,832</td>
<td>2,097,983</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>2,205,120</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care and Social Assistance</td>
<td>286,020</td>
<td>300,048</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>327,466</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>140,581</td>
<td>149,086</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>141,493</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional and Technical Services</td>
<td>89,168</td>
<td>91,906</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>100,873</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Louisiana Workforce Commission Short Term and Long Term Industry Projections

Table 9: 2017 Job Openings for Top Construction Sector Occupations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construction</th>
<th>2015 Employment</th>
<th>Job Openings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carpenters</td>
<td>9,677</td>
<td>1,088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction Laborers</td>
<td>13,083</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricians</td>
<td>8,693</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters</td>
<td>7,652</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisors of Construction and Extraction Workers</td>
<td>7,542</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: LWC Long Term Staffing Patterns and HiRE Internal Job Order Reports

Table 10: 2017 Job Openings for Top Health Care and Social Assistance Occupations
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Care and Social Assistance</th>
<th>2015 Employment</th>
<th>Job Openings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registered Nurses</td>
<td>38,378</td>
<td>8,549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses</td>
<td>18,492</td>
<td>752</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing Assistants</td>
<td>23,055</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Health Aides</td>
<td>9,318</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childcare Workers</td>
<td>7,469</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** LWC Long Term Staffing Patterns and HiRE Internal Job Order Reports

### Table 11: 2017 Job Openings for Top Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services Occupations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services</th>
<th>2015 Employment</th>
<th>Job Openings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Office Clerks, General</td>
<td>3,962</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive</td>
<td>3,933</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Programmers</td>
<td>1,299</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Software Developers, Applications</td>
<td>762</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network and Computer Systems Administrators</td>
<td>829</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** LWC Long Term Staffing Patterns and HiRE Internal Job Order Reports
(B) Workforce Analysis

(i) Employment and Unemployment

Figure 3: Total Nonfarm Employment, Seasonally Adjusted, LA (January 2015- December 2017)

Source: Current Employment Statistics (CES) Program.
Figure 4: Total Employment for Selected Sectors, Seasonally Adjusted, LA (2017)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Mining and Logging</th>
<th>Education &amp; Health Services</th>
<th>Construction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>34,700</td>
<td>January 314,000</td>
<td>January 150,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td>February 314,700</td>
<td>February 153,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>35,200</td>
<td>March 315,400</td>
<td>March 147,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>35,100</td>
<td>April 316,400</td>
<td>April 146,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td>May 317,100</td>
<td>May 151,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>35,600</td>
<td>June 317,400</td>
<td>June 153,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>35,800</td>
<td>July 317,300</td>
<td>July 154,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>36,400</td>
<td>August 316,800</td>
<td>August 152,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>35,800</td>
<td>September 315,900</td>
<td>September 153,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>34,800</td>
<td>October 316,000</td>
<td>October 150,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>35,800</td>
<td>November 315,900</td>
<td>November 151,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December (P)</td>
<td>35,500</td>
<td>December (P) 316,200</td>
<td>December (P) 153,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Current Employment Statistics (CES) Program.

Figure 5: Over the Year Change in Total Nonfarm and Private Sector Jobs (SA), LA
Figure 5 shows the over-the-year change in total nonfarm jobs in Louisiana. The state saw a slump in nonfarm jobs from mid-2015 but has been on the rise since April 2017. Another trend evident in Figure 5 is the decline in the number of jobs in the public sector. The difference between these data series represents the over-the-year change in all government employment in Louisiana. More clearly, Figure 6 demonstrates the year-over-year change in the number of total government employees (federal, state, and local) over the last four years.

**Source:** Nonfarm, Private, and Government Employment Data from the Current Employment Statistics (CES) program
Figure 7: United States and Louisiana Employed to Unemployed Ratio

Source: Employment and Unemployment data produced by the Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) Program

Quick Facts
While the labor force participation rate in Louisiana is below the national level, it mimics the overall trends found nationally. Similarly, Louisiana’s employed to unemployed ratio—which compares the rate at which people are finding jobs to the rate at which they are being separated—reflects the national trend but at a higher level (Figure 9). While the US reached its pre-recession level of 19 percent in January 2016, Louisiana’s employment to unemployment ratio remains just below the 22.3 percent enjoyed in January 2008, although it breached 20 percent in November 2017.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Louisiana Employment</th>
<th>Louisiana Unemployment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 2013</td>
<td>1,951,443</td>
<td>145,434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 2014</td>
<td>1,991,933</td>
<td>115,538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 2015</td>
<td>2,038,748</td>
<td>148,940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 2016</td>
<td>2,008,483</td>
<td>132,272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 2017</td>
<td>1,976,523</td>
<td>123,110</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Seasonally Adjusted)
Quick Facts

The graph above illustrates the number of weekly initial unemployment insurance claims from January 2015 to January 2018. The green linear trend line marks the modest decline in weekly claims over the past three years. A significant jump in claims is visible in August 2016, likely a result of the Baton Rouge area flooding. Along with the graph on the following page, illustrating continued claims, the general trend in unemployment insurance claims suggests improving labor market conditions in Louisiana.

Figure 9: Continued Weekly UI Claims, January 2015 to January 2018


Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services (WPRS) Model

Changes to the U.S. economy—including the contraction of entire industries as a result of changes in technology and overseas competition—have led to increases in the length of unemployment. Unemployed workers are now less likely to be rehired by their previous employers and are at a greater risk of long-term unemployment than in the past. As a result, the Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services (WPRS) system was established nationwide following the 1993 enactment of PL 103-152. Profiling is designed to identify UI claimants who are most likely to exhaust their regular benefits, so that they may receive reemployment services that will help them find a job more quickly.

Louisiana Workforce Commission’s Labor Market Information developed a model for profiling all new claimants for regular UI benefits. The WPRS system strengthens the link between Unemployment insurance and Employment Services for those most likely to exhaust benefits. The worker profiling model for Louisiana helps us achieve the objectives of reducing the weeks of UI benefits, reducing UI benefits per beneficiary, increasing earnings per beneficiary, and providing a management tool for targeting resources and aiding staff in understanding the customers they serve.

(ii) Labor Market Trends

Figure 10: National and State Labor Force Participation Rate, January 2013-December 2017
Quick Facts

The labor force participation rate is a measure of how well labor force growth has kept pace with population growth. Both nationally and in Louisiana, participation rates have experienced a slight decline in recent years. It is widely expected that this will continue in future periods as the baby boom population leaves the labor force and enters retirement.

Related Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Louisiana Population</th>
<th>Louisiana Labor Force</th>
<th>Louisiana Participation Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 2013</td>
<td>3,516,095</td>
<td>2,096,877</td>
<td>59.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 2014</td>
<td>3,538,001</td>
<td>2,107,516</td>
<td>59.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 2015</td>
<td>3,561,014</td>
<td>2,187,688</td>
<td>61.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 2016</td>
<td>3,579,968</td>
<td>2,140,755</td>
<td>59.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 2017</td>
<td>3,595,790</td>
<td>2,099,633</td>
<td>58.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Labor Force data produced by the Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) Program.
Figure 11: Participation Rate and Unemployment Rate in Louisiana (January 2013- December 2017)

Source: Labor Force data produced by the Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) Program.

Figure 12: Participation Rate and Unemployment Rate in U.S. (January 2013- December 2017)

Source: Labor Force data produced by the Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) Program.
Quick Facts

The charts above show the unemployment rate and labor force participation rate from 1976 to 2015. This time period covers the last five U.S. recessions as designated by the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER). During the latest recession, Louisiana experienced a steady increase in unemployment with the peak rate occurring in late 2010 after the recession had officially ended.
Table 12: Employment Status of the Civilian Non-Institutional Population, Annual Averages, Louisiana (June 2016-May 2017)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White (1,108,700)</td>
<td>Black (64.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hispanic (4.5%)</td>
<td>Male (52.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civilian Non-Institutional Population</td>
<td>2,336,700</td>
<td>Female (53.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of Population</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civilian Labor Force Participation Rate</td>
<td>58.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civilian Labor Force</td>
<td>1,372,300</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Employment</td>
<td>1,316,300</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Unemployment</td>
<td>56,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Current Population Survey (CPS) conducted by the Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program.

The Current Population Survey (CPS) provides estimates of the composition of the Civilian Non-Institutional Labor Force. The labor force is all individuals over the age of 16 that are employed or unemployed and actively seeking a job. The chart above provides some information on how different ethnic groups and genders are represented in Louisiana’s workforce. From this information, the proportion of each race in the labor force is approximately equal to the proportion of the race of the population. By gender, it is clear that males comprise a significantly larger proportion of the labor force than the total population.

Table 13: Civilians Not in the Labor Force by Sex and Age, Annual Averages, Louisiana (June 2016-May 2017)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sex</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16 to 24 Year</td>
<td>25 to 54 Years</td>
<td>55 years+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total not in the labor force</td>
<td>1,490,800</td>
<td>293,100</td>
<td>377,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not want a job now</td>
<td>1,403,700</td>
<td>265,700</td>
<td>342,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Want a job</td>
<td>87,100</td>
<td>27,300</td>
<td>35,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not search for work in previous year</td>
<td>50,600</td>
<td>14,500</td>
<td>18,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Searched for work in previous year</td>
<td>36,500</td>
<td>12,800</td>
<td>16,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not available to work now</td>
<td>8,100</td>
<td>3,500</td>
<td>3,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Available to work now</td>
<td>28,300</td>
<td>9,200</td>
<td>13,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason not currently looking:</td>
<td>11,100</td>
<td>2,400</td>
<td>6,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discouragement over job prospects</td>
<td>17,200</td>
<td>6,800</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasons other than discouragement</td>
<td>11,100</td>
<td>2,400</td>
<td>6,600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Current Population Survey (CPS) conducted by the Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program.

Figure 13: Statewide Household Income Distribution, 2016
Green poverty line represents a household of four making less than $23,850/year.

**Source:** Current Population Survey (CPS) conducted by the Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program.
(iii) **Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce**

**Table 14: Educational Attainment of the Population Aged 18 to 24 Years**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population 18 to 24 years</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than high school graduate</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate (includes equivalency)</td>
<td>32.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college or associate's degree</td>
<td>41.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's degree or higher</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** 2016 ACS 5-Year Survey, Table S1501

Tables 14 and 15 highlight the educational achievements of Louisiana’s population. Table 9 looks at a younger cohort, aged 18 to 24, who may still be in postsecondary education. Their relative age likely accounts for the low percentage of Bachelor’s degree or higher completers, and the high percentage of Some college or associate’s degree completers.

Table 15 studies a slightly older population more likely to have left the educational system. Louisiana’s women lead the charge in education, with over 50 percent of high school diplomas, Associate’s degrees, Bachelor’s degrees, and Master’s degrees held by women. Of the nearly 500,000 Louisianans who did not graduate high school, 53.7 percent are men.

**Table 15: Educational Attainment of the Population Aged 25 Years and Over**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population 25 years and over</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than high school graduate</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate (includes equivalency)</td>
<td>33.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college, no degree</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate’s degree</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate or professional degree</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** 2016 ACS 5-Year Survey, Table S1501

**Table 16: Disability Characteristics of the Workforce Aged 18 to 64 by Employment Status**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disability Characteristic</th>
<th>Employed</th>
<th>Unemployed</th>
<th>Not in Labor Force</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With a hearing difficulty</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With a vision difficulty</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
<td>26.2%</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With a cognitive difficulty</td>
<td>30.6%</td>
<td>43.5%</td>
<td>49.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With an ambulatory difficulty</td>
<td>33.2%</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
<td>59.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With a self-care difficulty</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>25.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With an independent living difficulty</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
<td>46.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Disabilities are not mutually exclusive

**Source:** 2016 ACS 1-Year Survey, Table B18120
Over 384,000 Louisianans aged 16 to 64, or 13.7 percent of the state’s population, live with one or more disabilities. Residents with disabilities account for 15.1 percent of the unemployed and only 6.4 percent of the employed population; 31.2 percent of those not in the labor force also have at least one disability.

Table 16 highlights the rates at which various disability characteristics appear in the employed, unemployed, and not in the labor force populations. Disability characteristics are not mutually exclusive, meaning one individual may have multiple difficulties, accounting for the high percentages.

Table 17: Labor Force Status of Veterans Aged 18 to 64

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Labor Force Status</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor Force Participation Rate</td>
<td>73.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>94.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in Labor Force</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2016 ACS 5-Year Survey, Table B21005

Veterans in Louisiana have a fairly high labor force participation rate, with over 70 percent of those aged 18 to 64 part of the labor force. Veterans account for 5.2 percent of Louisiana’s population and a proportional 5.3 percent of Louisiana’s labor force; only 4.8 percent of those not in the labor force are veterans.

Table 18: 2016 Year End Population Jurisdiction Population Rates (Per 100,000 U.S. Residents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jurisdiction</th>
<th>Total Jurisdiction Population</th>
<th>Sentences Greater than 1 Year</th>
<th>Sentences Less than or Equal to 1 Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Statistics (US Total)</td>
<td>464</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>762</td>
<td>761</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics Corrections Statistical Analysis Tool

Louisiana has the highest incarceration rate of all 50 states and the District of Columbia, with 762 of every 100,000 residents behind bars in 2016. 99.9 percent of those incarcerated have sentences in excess of one year.

In 2016 the state had 16,404 releases and 15,968 total admissions to the prison system. 65 percent of the admissions were new court commitments, and 34.4 percent were parole violators. 91.8 percent of the releases were conditional; another 6.7 percent of releases were unconditional. Another 0.8 percent of releases were attributable to death and 0.6 were AWOL/escape.

(iv) Skill Gaps
Table 19: Public Postsecondary Education Program Completers by Degree Level with Projected Annual Openings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree Level</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>Annual Projected Openings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Some Postsecondary, No Degree</td>
<td>7,809</td>
<td>10,142</td>
<td>9,250</td>
<td>9,268</td>
<td>8,802</td>
<td>17,180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Degree</td>
<td>5,459</td>
<td>5,836</td>
<td>5,788</td>
<td>6,183</td>
<td>5,800</td>
<td>4,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baccalaureate Degree</td>
<td>18,637</td>
<td>18,807</td>
<td>18,296</td>
<td>18,516</td>
<td>18,973</td>
<td>8,540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate or Professional Degree</td>
<td>6,883</td>
<td>6,655</td>
<td>6,707</td>
<td>6,918</td>
<td>6,997</td>
<td>2,870</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Louisiana Board of Regents Degrees and Certificates Awarded by Degree, Degree Level, Gender, Race, and Citizenship. Annual Projected Openings from LWC’s Long Term Occupational Projections

The preceding table shows the number of completers from Louisiana’s public postsecondary education programs by degree level. Academic years 2012 through 2016 are included. The academic years are labeled by the year in which they begin, so 2016 is the school year beginning in June 2016 and ending in May 2017.

This is compared to the number of annual openings from LWC’s long-term projections, which provides an approximation of what skill levels may show gaps in the future. Some Postsecondary, No Degree awards show the largest gap, with half as many graduates in 2016 as annual projected openings through 2024. Bachelor’s degrees show another large skills mismatch, with nearly 19,000 graduates in 2016-2017, and only 8,540 annual projected openings.

Below is further breakdown of degrees awarded by occupational category. The same comparison is drawn between 2016 graduates and annual projected job openings through 2024. Construction occupations that do not require post-secondary education are excluded from the Annual Projected Openings to provide better comparison for Construction occupation post-secondary completers.

Table 20: Public Postsecondary Education Program Completers by Occupational Group with Projected Annual Openings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree Category</th>
<th>2016 Completers</th>
<th>Annual Projected Openings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>9,026</td>
<td>7,650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>1,392</td>
<td>1,880*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>971</td>
<td>1,280</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Excludes occupations requiring High School Diploma or Less

Source: Louisiana Board of Regents Degrees and Certificates Awarded by Degree, Degree Level, Gender, Race, and Citizenship. Annual Projected Openings from LWC’s Long Term Occupational Projections

Louisiana has 113 occupations with high demand (3, 4, or 5 stars) and high base year employment (employment greater than or equal to 2,500). The table below shows the star ratings, ten year growth, and education levels required of each occupation.
### Table 21: High Employment, High Demand Occupations in Louisiana

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Star Rating</th>
<th>Occupational Title</th>
<th>10 Year Growth</th>
<th>Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟</td>
<td>Registered Nurses</td>
<td>5,550</td>
<td>Associates degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟</td>
<td>General and Operations Managers</td>
<td>2,450</td>
<td>Bachelors degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟</td>
<td>First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers</td>
<td>1,600</td>
<td>Associates Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟</td>
<td>Industrial Machinery Mechanics</td>
<td>1,590</td>
<td>Postsecondary non-degree award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟</td>
<td>Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education</td>
<td>1,430</td>
<td>Bachelors degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟</td>
<td>Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products</td>
<td>1,430</td>
<td>Postsecondary non-degree award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟</td>
<td>Computer Programmers</td>
<td>1,310</td>
<td>Bachelors degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟</td>
<td>Network and Computer Systems Administrators</td>
<td>1,250</td>
<td>Bachelors degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟</td>
<td>Accountants and Auditors</td>
<td>1,040</td>
<td>Bachelors degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟</td>
<td>Machinists</td>
<td>960</td>
<td>Postsecondary non-degree award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟</td>
<td>Computer User Support Specialists</td>
<td>930</td>
<td>Some college, no degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟</td>
<td>Insurance Sales Agents</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>Postsecondary non-degree award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟</td>
<td>Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education</td>
<td>820</td>
<td>Bachelors degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟</td>
<td>Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>Postsecondary non-degree award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟</td>
<td>Nurse Practitioners</td>
<td>690</td>
<td>Masters degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟</td>
<td>Physical Therapists</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>Doctoral or professional degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟</td>
<td>Electricians</td>
<td>590</td>
<td>Postsecondary non-degree award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟</td>
<td>First-Line Supervisors of Mechanics, Installers, and Repairers</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>Postsecondary non-degree award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟</td>
<td>Management Analysts</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>Bachelors degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟</td>
<td>Medical Records and Health Information Technicians</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>Postsecondary non-degree award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟</td>
<td>Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>Postsecondary non-degree award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟</td>
<td>First-Line Supervisors of Production and Operating Workers</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>Postsecondary non-degree award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟</td>
<td>Loan Officers</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>Associates Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟</td>
<td>Financial Managers</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>Bachelors degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟</td>
<td>Educational, Guidance, School, and Vocational Counselors</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>Masters degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟</td>
<td>Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Specialists</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>Postsecondary non-degree award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟</td>
<td>Lawyers</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>Doctoral or professional degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟</td>
<td>Medical and Health Services Managers</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>Bachelors degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟</td>
<td>First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>High school diploma or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Equivalent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraction Workers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales Managers</td>
<td>260 Bachelors degree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemical Plant and System Operators</td>
<td>260 Associates Degree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claims Adjusters, Examiners, and Investigators</td>
<td>250 Postsecondary non-degree award</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technologists</td>
<td>250 Bachelors degree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Services Managers</td>
<td>240 Associates Degree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Administrators, Elementary and Secondary School</td>
<td>220 Masters degree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanical Engineers</td>
<td>220 Bachelors degree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Service Managers</td>
<td>210 Associates Degree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Star Rating</td>
<td>Occupational Title</td>
<td>10 Year Growth</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pharmacists</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>Doctoral or professional degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Captains, Mates, and Pilots of Water Vessels</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>Bachelors degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Civil Engineers</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>Bachelors degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Structural Iron and Steel Workers</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>High school diploma or equivalent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Construction Managers</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>Bachelors degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cost Estimators</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>Bachelors degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Technical and Scientific Products</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>Bachelors degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses</td>
<td>2,240</td>
<td>Postsecondary non-degree award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maintenance and Repair Workers, General</td>
<td>1,900</td>
<td>High school diploma or equivalent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers</td>
<td>1,850</td>
<td>Postsecondary non-degree award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers</td>
<td>1,600</td>
<td>Postsecondary non-degree award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>High school diploma or equivalent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>First-Line Supervisors of Personal Service Workers</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>High school diploma or equivalent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carpenters</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>Postsecondary non-degree award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>Postsecondary non-degree award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>Postsecondary non-degree award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Billing and Posting Clerks</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>Postsecondary non-degree award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>Associates degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>Bachelors degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Property, Real Estate, and Community Association Managers</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>Associates Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technicians</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>Associates degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Firefighters</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>Postsecondary non-degree award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maintenance Workers, Machinery</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>Postsecondary non-degree award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dispatchers, Except Police, Fire, and Ambulance</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>High school diploma or equivalent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>High school diploma or equivalent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Star Rating</td>
<td>Occupational Title</td>
<td>10 Year Growth</td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>First-Line Supervisors of Housekeeping and Janitorial Workers</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>High school diploma or equivalent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Petroleum Pump System Operators, Refinery Operators, and Gaugers</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>Postsecondary non-degree award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Correctional Officers and Jailers</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>Postsecondary non-degree award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Paralegals and Legal Assistants</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>Associates degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>First-Line Supervisors of Non-Retail Sales Workers</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>High school diploma or equivalent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Heating, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>Postsecondary non-degree award</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Team Assemblers</td>
<td>190</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>First-Line Supervisors of Transportation and Material-Moving Machine and Vehicle Operators</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>Postsecondary non-degree award</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sailors and Marine Oilers</td>
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<td>Postsecondary non-degree award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Painters, Construction and Maintenance</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Telecommunications Equipment Installers and Repairers, Except Line Installers</td>
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<td>Compliance Officers</td>
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<td>Special Education Teachers, Kindergarten and Elementary School</td>
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<td>Production, Planning, and Expediting Clerks</td>
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<td>Purchasing Agents, Except Wholesale, Retail, and Farm Products</td>
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<td>Human Resources Specialists</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Radiologic Technologists</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Insulation Workers, Mechanical</td>
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<td>Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics, Except Engines</td>
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<td>Structural Metal Fabricators and Fitters</td>
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<td>Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Shipping, Receiving, and Traffic Clerks</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Riggers</td>
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<td>Graphic Designers</td>
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### Star Rating

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<tr>
<th>Star Rating</th>
<th>Occupational Title</th>
<th>10 Year Growth</th>
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<td>Logging Equipment Operators</td>
<td>70</td>
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<td>Crane and Tower Operators</td>
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<td>✭✭✭✭</td>
<td>Actors</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Some college, no degree</td>
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<tr>
<td>✭✭✭✭</td>
<td>Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Associates Degree</td>
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<tr>
<td>✭✭✭✭</td>
<td>Payroll and Timekeeping Clerks</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>✭✭✭✭</td>
<td>Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Light Truck or Delivery Services Drivers</td>
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<td>Construction Laborers</td>
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<td>Bill and Account Collectors</td>
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<td>High school diploma or equivalent</td>
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<tr>
<td>✭✭✭</td>
<td>Postal Service Mail Carriers</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>✭✭✭</td>
<td>Legal Secretaries</td>
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<td>High school diploma or equivalent</td>
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<td>✭✭✭</td>
<td>Data Entry Keyers</td>
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<td>High school diploma or equivalent</td>
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<tr>
<td>✭✭✭</td>
<td>Helpers—Pipelayers, Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters</td>
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<td>High school diploma or equivalent</td>
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<tr>
<td>✭✭✭</td>
<td>Roustabouts, Oil and Gas</td>
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<td>Less than high school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✭✭✭</td>
<td>Helpers—Production Workers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Less than high school</td>
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</table>

**Source:** LWC’s Long Term Occupational Projections

Below are the top ten most frequently appearing knowledge, skills, and abilities associated with these 113 occupations. These represent the skills, knowledge, and abilities needed by the workforce through 2024.

**Figure 14: Key Knowledge Areas of Top Occupations**
Figure 15: Key Skills of Top Occupations


Figure 16: Key Abilities of Top Occupations

2. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES ANALYSIS
   a) THE STATE’S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Workforce Development Activities

Four years ago, the State launched an initiative to balance the emphasis on services between employers (creating job opportunities in demand occupations) and job seekers (recruiting and/or training a highly qualified workforce). This initiative was strategic in nature and is operated out of the State’s Business and Career Solutions Centers, with the purpose of increasing the “value” of services that the State provides both to employers and job seekers. Integral to this system is an understanding of and allowance for needed services to individuals with “significant barriers to employment” and the requirement for “priority of service” under the appropriate laws, regulations, and statutes.

Each Business and Career Solutions Center that is also a Comprehensive One-Stop Center (includes the presence of all partners) offers an extensive array of services which include for job seekers:

- Outreach, common intake and assessment, orientation to services, informational services, and referral to other services as necessary based on assessment.
- 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.

• 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.

For employers, Comprehensive One-Stop Centers offer:
• Efficient and effective screening and referral of qualified job candidates.
• Active outreach and assistance in developing effective recruiting job orders.
• Assisting with searching the State’s “talent bank”.
• Job fairs and recruitment events.
• Connection with community service organizations and tax credit opportunities.
• Training 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.
• Assistance with layoff aversion programs and services.

Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth

LWC has formally eliminated the sequence of service provision in Title I programs through development of a new service delivery model. The new model connects all partners to clients at any entry point where assessment occurs. The process is further driven by co-enrollment across all active Partner Programs. The former sequence of service provision required participants to receive career services prior to training services.

LWC, under WIOA codification, and through its policy guidance, clarifies to all partners that participants are not required to pass through multiple layers of 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.
• Allows LWDBs to contract directly with colleges or eligible training providers to supply training for high-demand occupations and/or industry sectors.
• Expands reliance beyond Individual Training Accounts and increases flexibility to help local boards use WIOA funds to a better scale.
• LWDBs continue to develop and refine innovative and effective models for obtaining industry-recognized credentials, including:
  o Integrated education and training approaches; career pathways, industry or sector partnerships, including those pertaining to Registered Apprenticeship programs and opportunities.
  o Cohort-based approaches.
  o Evidence-based approaches that reflect best practices including Registered Apprenticeship programs.
  o Development of interim credentials for longer-term Registered Apprenticeship programs, which Louisiana can do as an “SAA State” (State Apprenticeship Agency).
In addition, LWDBs may use a portion of local funds to fund pay-for-performance contracts as a form of training delivery under Title I, with continuous evaluation of how target populations are chosen, to fairly serve individuals who face barriers to employment and economic success.

LWDBs may consider the full cost of participating in training services, including expenses related to dependent care, transportation and other essential needs for individuals who need additional assistance.

Louisiana uses a broad range of training programs as part of its workforce development strategy. These programs involve collaborating with local boards, companies and education/training providers to improve training.

LWC requires:

- Local boards and/or One-Stop operators to specifically report on expenditures for career and training services and on the number of participants who received career and training services. This requirement is specifically designed to make planning and funding decisions more transparent, and to provide better opportunities for public oversight.

- Eligible training providers to report results for all of their students for common measures for each program of study, not just participants whose training costs were paid for through the use of WIOA funds, in order to improve transparency of results for programs and for disadvantaged persons.

**Adult**

The Louisiana Workforce Commission 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). Incorporating Registered Apprenticeship into service design and delivery is one way LWC expects LWDBs 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 Center staff involved and engaged in screening and assessment for current registered programs.

LWC 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 and training to:

- Public assistance recipients.
- Other low-income individuals.
- Individuals who are deficient in basic skills.

In contrast to WIA, where LWDBs policies on priority of service varied widely, LWC in its implementation of WIOA requires LWDBs to:

- Report the number of individuals with barriers to employment served by each core program, with specific breakdowns by subpopulation.
• Report on the number of individuals with barriers to employment that are served by the Adult and Dislocated Worker program, with specific breakdowns by subpopulation, race, ethnicity, gender, and age.

Dislocated Worker

Layoffs are always challenging for workers and employers. LWC provides Rapid Response Services designed to help employers proceed in an orderly and legal way by guiding them through the process. LWC works with LWDBs and other partners (training and supportive-service providers) to help both.

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 specialized skills to other occupations or industries.
• A decline in the market demand for certain skills.
• Age or length of work experience.
• Need for formal training or education.
• Lack of jobs with earnings at a level comparable to their previous positions.

Dislocated worker services are custom-tailored to meet an individual worker’s specific needs. Working one-on-one with a case manager, workers are guided through the process of developing an Individualized Employment Plan that includes as a minimum:

• Career planning and counseling.
• Job search and placement.
• Approved training, which include Registered Apprenticeship programs.
• Other needed support services.

Youth

Louisiana does not have a defined service delivery model for WIOA Youth Services. Each LWDB has the autonomy to develop their local youth service model. However, these models must support the implementation of Career Pathways that support postsecondary education, and address the needs of low-income in school youth as well as out of school youth, and support pre-apprenticeship to Registered Apprenticeship opportunities. LWC requires each LWDB to competitively procure and provide all fourteen of the program service elements. LWC has committed to assisting the LWDB’s through the One Stop partners, to develop and provide age and developmentally appropriate models for out of school youth.

LWC will work with local areas to ensure they:

• Will not require out-of-school youth in high-risk categories to prove low-income status to receive services.
• Will provide services to individuals who have dropped out of high school, have not attended school for at least one calendar quarter of the most recent school year, or are subject to the juvenile or adult justice systems under the out-of-school youth program.

• Will target and provide services to homeless individuals, runaways, current or former foster care youth and individuals who or are pregnant or parenting.

• Will provide services to youth who are not attending school, hold a secondary credential, and are either basic-skills deficient or an English language learner.

• Will consider youth living in a high-poverty area to meet the low-income criterion for youth activities funding and services.

The state will monitor and guide local boards such that at least 75 percent of available statewide funds and 75 percent of funds available to local areas are spent on workforce investment services for out-of-school youth.

Adult Education

In 2010, The Louisiana Legislature finalized the transference of responsibility of Louisiana’s adult education delivery system from DOE 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 basic education in LA. LCTCS developed a new policy framework whose primary focus is putting LA 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 sustainable employment.

The LCTCS, Moving Adult Education Forward: A Pro Forma Business Plan was a milestone in re-defining the vision for adult education, focusing on new performance goals—including high school equivalency diplomas, postsecondary enrollments, postsecondary completers, and placement in sustainable employment at family-supporting wages. As a symbol of the new vision the Louisiana Adult Education Program was renamed, “WorkReady U.” Since the 2010 renewed set of expectations and vastly different philosophy in LA with regards to adult education, adult education programs have progressively adjusted educational service and delivery and are well-positioned to provide/deliver/coordinate the required activities under Title II-WIOA.

Adult Education connects into the One Stop system through the intake and assessment process to identify adults with limited basic skills, and then to use innovative instructional models as necessary to prepare adult learners for postsecondary education within the context of serving learners at the lowest skill levels. 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.
Wagner-Peyser

Louisiana already meets a major requirement of WIOA – the co-location of Wagner-Peyser Employment Services in Louisiana’s Business and Career Solutions Centers. The intent is to ensure that unemployment insurance claimants receive the same services as all other job-seekers, including job training, labor exchange, career counseling and labor market intelligence. The UI claimant/job-seeker will also receive eligibility assessments and referrals to an array of education resources and training through the Wagner-Peyser Employment Service program.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) provides access to services 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 exceeds 70% successful placement 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 the 70 school districts and 146 charter schools in Louisiana. LRS collaborates with Department of Education (DOE), 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)

The Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) 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.
In January 2014, the Department of Children and Family Services partnered with the LWC to help Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients develop high demand job skills and move toward self-sufficiency. This partnership builds and expands on the previous partnership between DCFS and LWC, and Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWDBs) and One-Stop operators to deliver workforce services to TANF families engaged in the Strategies to Empower People (STEP) program and the SNAP Louisiana Job Employment Training (LaJET) program.

**STEP**
The goal of the Strategies to Empower People (STEP) is to provide opportunities for work-eligible families of FITAP to receive job training, employment and supportive services to enable them to become self-sufficient. STEP is the result of personal Responsibility and Universal Engagement Act of 2003 passed by the Louisiana Legislature.

All work-eligible FITAP applicants/recipients of the Family Independence Temporary Assistance Program (FITAP) must participate in the STEP Program. Work-eligible recipients are defined as FITAP adults under age 60 and FITAP teen heads of household, excluding those FITAP adults and teen heads of household who are disabled or caring for a member who is disabled.

**LaJET**
The LaJET Program is the cooperative employment and training services initiative of three entities, the Local Parish Offices of DCFS, State SNAP Office, and Louisiana workforce Commission.

The LaJET program previously only targeted SNAP recipients classified as a mandatory work registrants living in four metropolitan statistical areas. The expanded partnership supports the registration of all working-age SNAP recipients to enroll with LWC and providing access to job postings, job trainings and all other services of LWC.

To this end the Department of Children and Family Services has committed to entering into agreements with public agencies, non-profit organizations or for-profit organizations to provide intervention services including crisis intervention, counseling, mentoring, support services and prenatal care information, in addition to information and referrals regarding healthy childbirth, adoption and parenting to help ensure healthy and full-term pregnancies as an alternative to abortion. Local boards and One-stop operators shall facilitate and operate as appropriate under the specifics of these agreements.

**The Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)**

The state continues to administer the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program, which is available to workers who lose their jobs or experience reduced hours or income as a result of increased foreign trade activity. Local boards in areas where TAA petitions exist will actively reach out to affected workers to provide TAA-funded training with the same goals as provided under the dislocated worker program.

Trade services are considered an integral part of the One-Stop 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.

Like the dislocated worker program, TAA-funded training helps trade-impacted workers obtain the skills necessary to gain suitable employment. TAA will pay tuition, course fees, books and required supplies and equipment, transportation and other items or services deemed necessary for completion of an approved occupational skills training program, including Registered Apprenticeship programs.
Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG)

Louisiana provides employment, training and placement services to all veterans through a network of strategically located One-Stop Career Centers, and supported by HiRE. JVSG provides services to veterans and eligible persons according to need, and significant barriers to employment. LWC Jobs for Veterans State Grant-funded activities are co-located within the state’s One-Stop 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.

Unemployment Insurance Programs- Louisiana Incumbent Worker Training Programs (IWTP)

The Louisiana Employment Security Administration Fund, is also, known as the Incumbent Worker Training Account. Amounts from this account are pledged and dedicated exclusively to fund training for businesses operating in Louisiana that incur a state unemployment insurance tax liability. The purpose of this program is to upgrade job skills through training on preventing job loss caused by obsolete skills, technological change, or national or global competition; retaining jobs; and creating jobs in labor demand occupations. The IWTP is a partnership between the LWC, business and industry, and training providers. The IWTP is designed to benefit business and industry by assisting in the skill development of existing employees and thereby increasing employee productivity and the growth of the company. These improvements are expected to result in the creation of new jobs, the retention of jobs that otherwise may have been eliminated, and an increase in wages for trained workers.

The Louisiana Incumbent Worker Training Account funds are dedicated to support the following types of training:

- Customized Training - Designed to meet the special need and skill requirements of business and industry. Customized training programs may include specialized curriculums, instructional materials, training delivery methods, and training locations. Customized training may also include standardized courses.
- Small Business Employee Training - This type of training is individual standardized (off-the-shelf) training and is available to businesses having fifty or fewer employees.
- Pre-employment Training - This type of training is provided for non-incumbent workers for expanding businesses. This training may include screening, skills assessment, testing, remediation, and occupational and technical training.

Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)

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. Collectively these programs serve 700 program participants annually. This does not include individuals who are seeking employment and are not eligible for program services. The organizations operating in Louisiana are: AARP Foundation, New Orleans; Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Baton Rouge Inc., Baton Rouge; Experience Works Inc., Cottonport; Governor’s Office of Elderly Affairs, Baton Rouge; Jefferson Council on Aging Inc., Metairie; National Association of Hispanic Elderly, Shreveport; National Council on Aging Inc., Monroe.

Louisiana is committed to bringing together 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 to measurable strategies to achieve the defined goals.

**Job Corps**

Job Corps has three sites in Louisiana: a training center in Carville, a technical school in Shreveport and a learning center in New Orleans. Under WIOA, Job Corps is linked to the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (Title II), the State Vocational and Rehabilitation Programs.

The state is committed to partnering with Job Corps to assist eligible youth to connect to the labor force by providing them with:

- Intensive social, academic, career and technical education and service-learning opportunities.
- Obtaining secondary school diplomas or recognized post-secondary credentials leading to successful careers in in-demand industry sectors or occupations.
- Achieving economic self-sufficiency and opportunities for advancement, or enrollment in post-secondary education, including an apprenticeship program.
- Becoming responsible citizens.

**Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)**

Louisiana is committed to providing resources and fostering partnerships in low-income communities that enable low-income individuals to achieve self-sufficiency enhance family stability and revitalize their community. This commitment is the charge of CSBG unit of the Office of Workforce Development, within the LWC. As partner in the Louisiana Combined Plan, the CSBG unit and Louisiana’s forty-two (42) Community Action Agencies (CAAs) carry out locally designed programs providing a range of services and activities that have measurable impacts on the causes and effects of poverty, and support self-sufficiency. The CSBG Community Action programs assists low income populations with transportation, clothing, health services, food, shelter, job preparedness, education and housing assistance. As partners in the Louisiana workforce system continuum of services, CAA services target vulnerable populations and other least job-ready customers by focusing on reduction of the barriers to employment.

b) THE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF WORKFORCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Title I (Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth)</strong></th>
<th><strong>Title III (Wagner-Peyser)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>STRENGTHS</strong></td>
<td><strong>WEAKNESSES/OPPORTUNITIES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LWC has developed policy, vision, certification criteria and contracts to assist LWDBs in complying with WIOA’s expectations. LWC requires development of a regional plan by respective LWDBs including performance targets.</td>
<td>LWDA leadership across the state has experienced, in many instances, challenges developing viable regional workforce partnerships with economic development and educational entities. Vast improvement has been seen in this area over the 18 months, which should allow the development of regional plans that align with the Governor’s vision on workforce and the sharing of resources and ideas for regional implementation, as scarcity of resources, and the true need to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the past two years, LWC has created a strong foundation on which to build true partnerships through implementation of the new basic service delivery model and the Continuous Improvement Process as support strategies to LWDA operations.

Budgetary realities and restrictions, combined with the refocus and expansion of services under WIOA, require the Office of Workforce Development (OWD) in particular (and LWC in a broader sense) to take a comprehensive look at how it provides support to service partners.

This plan will ensure the existence of at least one comprehensive One Stop Center in each LWDA, and will encourage LWDBs to operate “additional affiliate One-Stop Centers with any subset of partners, or specialized centers”, as allowed under WIOA.

While the state’s local one stop centers effectively became “integrated”, with local WIA and State Wagner-Peyser staff as early as 2005, there are currently One-Stop Centers in certain local areas with limited presence of both local and state-funded staff providing staff assisted services to employers and job-seekers. Failing here will crash the system financially if continued with respect to affiliate sites.

The plan drives the realignment of funding streams to improve accountability across core programs, support career pathways and sector strategies, and create continuous opportunities to measure performance and identify areas for improvement, resulting in an effective and efficient operation.

This will only work if the LWDAs “buy in” and become more strategic and effective in managing formula-fund dollars. This is an opportunity to guide LWDBs toward a more proactive, strategic, and engaged approach.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title II (Adult Education)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>STRENGTHS</strong></td>
<td><strong>WEAKNESSES/OPPORTUNITIES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Education has adopted and implemented the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) for Adult Education. Standard alignment with K-12 partners provides rigorous standards that specify what learners should know at each level.</td>
<td>Streamline assessment mandates and reporting results for students. Adult Education has the capability to provide assessment services throughout the workforce training system for One-Stop Centers, including services to OSY under WIOA, as well as post-secondary educational institutions, TANF and SNAP programs,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide professional development activities/training that aligns CCRS with</td>
<td>Employer engagement and involvement on program design and curriculum to</td>
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<tr>
<td>evidenced-based practices.</td>
<td>ensure valid education/training meet regional labor market demands.</td>
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<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developed and mandated teacher certification course to improve teacher quality and understanding of WIOA requirements.</td>
<td>Develop procedure to evaluate programs and activities to ensure continuous improvement and expansion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data driven teacher quality evaluation process</td>
<td>Must ensure ABE teachers evaluations include analysis of education services provided to WIOA OSY to ensure WIOA Common Measures are understood and met, or exceeded.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Title IV (Vocational Rehabilitation Services)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRENGTHS</th>
<th>WEAKNESSES/OPPORTUNITIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As a result of LRS, and the Vocational Rehabilitation Program being within LWC's organizational structure in Louisiana, integration of vocational rehabilitation into the local One-Stop infrastructure has already begun, with some local areas having counselors working within the One-Stops.</td>
<td>Expand the integration of vocational rehabilitation services within One Stop Centers. Proactively address physical and programmatic accessibility; space and logistics, including funding/cost allocation agreements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An array of services is provided by each component of the One-Stop, including LRS/VR.</td>
<td>Integrate VR into the one-stop service delivery model. Eliminate duplication of effort/services where possible. Cross-train staff, and clarify services available. This includes those responsible for providing said services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LRS has Employment Development Specialists available in each region. These individuals are specialized in working with individuals with disabilities, including job placement.</td>
<td>To enhance employer outreach and collaboration with one-stop efforts in employer engagement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>STRENGTHS</strong></th>
<th><strong>OPPORTUNITIES</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department of Children and Family Services currently has partnership to</td>
<td>State needs to consider increasing the amount of TANF funding dedicated to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>provide Employment and Training Services to TANF recipients state wide</td>
<td>work-related activities in an effort to increase overall capacity of STEP and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>through its Strategies to Empower People (STEP) Initiative</td>
<td>other E&amp;T programs and services to eligible participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TANF recipients (STEP) are connected to local Business and Career Solutions</td>
<td>Referral opportunities through improved partnership with Adult Education and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centers (AJCs), statewide, and are often co-enrolled under WIOA Youth and/or</td>
<td>other programs that will be housed in comprehensive one-stop centers in each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Programs</td>
<td>local area</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>STRENGTHS</strong></th>
<th><strong>WEAKNESSES/OPPORTUNITIES</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Trade unit has redesigned and implemented new forms to capture data</td>
<td>The trade unit has the opportunity to become a best practice state over a period of time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>specific to federal requirements, which has improved the quality of the initial</td>
<td>with the implementation of the new forms, which will yield better results from state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interview and intake process.</td>
<td>and federal monitoring reviews.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Trade unit has restructured its filing system according to the outline of</td>
<td>Retention and quarterly training for TAA staff is essential to ensure continuous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the federal requirements which has streamlined the case management function;</td>
<td>improvement and expansion of the Trade program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>improved the organization and flow of the quarterly monitoring review, and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>minimized the opportunity for findings and disallowed costs.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The Trade unit has changed its manual Trade Readjustment Allowance (TRA) claim filing process to a new automated system, which has tremendously improved customer service and decreased the changes for human error and has increased timely processing.

The Trade Unit must continue to work with the Geosol as issues arrive with new automated claims process in order to ensure that the system is efficient and effective in servicing its adversely trade affected customers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jobs For Veterans State Grant (JVSG)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>STRENGTHS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist are providing individualized career services to 99% of the Veterans they provide services to. Despite serving only veterans with Significant Barriers, DVOPs have achieved an Entered Employment Rate (EER) of 66%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER) are integrated in to the Business Services Teams within their assigned workforce regions. LVERs conduct employer outreach with and as a part of regional business services teams. | LVERs could be more involved in employer engagement centered around assisting employers to develop and start registered apprenticeship programs and On-the-job training programs. These efforts could provide more opportunities for Veterans to learn while they work. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Senior Community Service Employment Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>STRENGTHS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Several reputable NPOs within the state currently providing employment and training programs for seniors 55 and</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
older

the number of NPOs in the state to provide elderly employment and training services in local workforce development areas and workforce regions

Governor’s Office has an existing Office of Elderly Affairs that supports services to elderly citizens

Leveraging WIOA and other federal and non-federal funding to expand services supports by Governor’s Office of Elderly Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Service Block Grant (CSBG)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>STRENGTHS</strong></td>
<td><strong>OPPORTUNITIES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local CAAs have the autonomy to develop strategies and activities that support the needs of low income individuals to secure, and retain employment.</td>
<td>A large percentage of Louisiana CAAs are not engaged partners in their local or regional workforce planning activities, often causing duplication of services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAAs administer LIHEAP and often other local, state and federal resources that may assist job-seekers or workforce training participants to remain self-sufficient.</td>
<td>CAAs must take this opportunity to increase their involvement with LWDBs in developing One-Stop Center partnerships, in particular the development of effective cross referrals, and co-enrollment. The ensuing expansion of services under WIOA will require the LWDB and CAA to take a more comprehensive look at how partner resources are aligned and utilized in providing supportive services to job-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
c) DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

The Louisiana Combined State Plan Partners have defined “capacity” in three categories of service: efficiency, connectivity, and funding. LWC has a solid foundation in efficiently providing employer and job-seeker services. The implementation and operation of a continuous process improvement strategy shows promise in continuing to create efficiencies in these processes.

There is opportunity for stronger coordination and consistency between Partner Programs, through the use of a Common Intake Process and Co-enrollment strategy that will improve efficiencies across the board for all partners. This “any door” approach will enable any job seeker to enter the system with a consistent approach, which will result in seamless transition among Partner Programs and Supportive Services providers. LWC is also engaged in developing a “data warehouse” that will make data sharing more instantaneous and homogenous to all partners.

The situation that has evolved is one of One-Stop Centers being supported primarily by Wagner-Peyser and WIOA Adult, where ever the dwindling resources are forcing service choices to be made based on cost, and not on job-seeker need, or employer demand. LWC will guide LWDA in leveraging additional Partner Program funding in order to overcome this shortfall.

The capacity of the State’s education and training services varies from region to region and is based on the needs of individuals and funding availability by the LWDA. 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.

The State is determined to meet the need of “market connection” by identifying and providing “working learners”, with greater flexibility and broader opportunities in education and training in order to overcome limited funding. The State’s goal is to develop capacity to assist job-seekers, who find training and education at odds with making a “family sustaining wage.” This can be accomplished through closely managed and leveraged resources.

LWC is quickly building capacity in Business Services through the use of a combination of “Industry Sector Coordinators” and “Business Consultants” One of which focuses on specific industries (chemical, medical, etc.) while the other focuses on providing service to specific employers within an industry. Together they connect with Program Partners who are enrolling, assessing, and providing career and individualized services to job-seekers in order to meet anticipate and meet labor market demands in a timely manner.

LWC’s Apprenticeship Division is working statewide to improve the capacity of the workforce system relative to incorporating Registered Apprenticeship in service design and delivery, as well as to support
the emphasis on career pathways. The engagement of State apprenticeship staff with the Office of Apprenticeship in Dallas has also been robust, and we expect that partnership to continue. As noted earlier in this plan, LWC believes Registered Apprenticeship is a model that strikes “…the critical balance between serving individuals and employers in a manner that will produce strategies that in the long run are good for both.”

LWC’s service platform is proven, and is a solid foundation on which to broaden its use. However, there are still challenges with the state’s larger communities and metropolitan areas. These are difficult to serve consistently, due to the varying size of firms and industry concentrations.

Because of the complexity of adopting new laws, in the context of waning budgets and moving industry targets, the State and its LWDAs face a series of strategic challenges to the workforce system both in services to job seekers and employers. Together, these challenges are high, but the opportunities to address these challenges are even greater. The State is building a coalition of Partner Programs, researching and designing support structures, and shall effective address the next stage of The State’s workforce development system through strategic realignment, simplified navigation and an integrated approach to serving all its customers.

LWC’s Office of Workforce Development has realigned staffing and its operational strategy to provide effective guidance and support to Local Workforce Areas identified in the plan, and in support of regional business engagement strategies. One partner, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, has identified human resources as its greatest challenge in meeting the requirements of WIOA. This is due, largely, to current vacancies and attrition. However, the greatest challenge Louisiana faced was the state’s budget deficit at a reported $70 million deficit thru June 30, 2016, and an estimated $700m-1 billion dollars deficit through June 30, 2017. Of greatest concern was that the inevitable cuts in services and belt tightening would negatively impact those individuals to whom WIOA targets; out of school youth, individuals receiving public assistance, the unemployed, basic skills deficient, and those with significant barriers to employment. The State’s service delivery models are a solid foundation for striking the critical balance between serving individuals and employers in a manner that will produce strategies that in the long run are good for both.

d) STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY

B. STATE STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS

1. VISION

On January 11, 2016, Gov. John Bel Edwards assumed leadership of the state of Louisiana. In his inaugural speech, he highlighted the numerous challenges the state faces, beginning with a $1.9 billion budget shortfall. He spoke to citizens of his vision, inspired by General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, of how we will meet the mounting challenges ahead, “to build courage when courage seems to fail, to regain faith when there seems to be little cause for faith, to create hope when hope becomes forlorn.”

Gov. Edwards further stated that every challenging task will be examined in a three-step process: (1) gathering all the information about the job at hand (intelligence); (2) choosing a strategy –seeking out all viable options to successfully address the challenge, and selecting those that best fit our mission and goals; and (3) deciding on the tactics and determining how we are going to get done.

In summation, Gov. Edwards charged the people of Louisiana to achieve our shared mission of “Putting Louisiana First” and to make it possible for all Louisiana citizens to be healthy and prosperous.

The Louisiana WIOA Combined State Plan is being developed with the governor’s strategic leadership and is being submitted in compliance with WIOA requirements as a work in progress.
The Louisiana Workforce Investment Council (WIC), the state’s workforce board, supports 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.

We, the people of Louisiana, envision a workforce system that will provide pathways for all Louisianans, including individuals who are receiving public assistance, the unemployed or underemployed, those who are deficient in basic skills, as well as persons with disabilities, including disabled veterans, and others who have significant barriers to employment. All will have access to education, training and the supportive services needed to prepare for and secure high-demand occupations that pay family-sustaining wages.

2. GOALS

STRATEGIC GOALS

Goal 1: Establish Career Pathways as a model for skill, credential and degree attainment for Louisiana citizens to secure jobs that provide opportunities for economic independence and family stability. This goal will be accomplished by executing the following objectives:

1. Workforce development system partners will develop a shared vision and strategy for industry sector-based career pathways for youth and adults. Career pathways must be diverse, with multiple entry and exit points allowing individuals of varying abilities, including low-skilled adults and youth with multiple barriers to employment, to have realistic access to pathways.

2. Engage employers and integrate sector strategy principles to ensure multiple employers, business associations and organized labor are partners in creating demand-driven career pathways.

3. Increase the identification, prioritization and leverage of workforce system partner resources to provide supportive services and reduce barriers for low-skilled youth and adults.

4. Strengthen the alignment of Jump Start, WorkReady U and other viable initiatives as entry and exit points in the career pathways model for in- and out-of-school youth.

5. Expand utilization of registered apprenticeship by industry sector employers to train workers and meet occupational demands.

6. Support and grow learning opportunities for job-seekers and workers by improving processes for transfer credits through postsecondary, apprenticeships and college coursework.

Goal 2: Expand career services and opportunities for populations facing multiple barriers to close the gap in educational attainment and economic advancement through career pathways and improved career services and the expansion of bridge programs.

1. Expand and incentivize the utilization of evidenced-based workforce strategies that support targeted populations (e.g., the long-term unemployed, individuals with disabilities, veterans, out-of-school youth) into sector-based career pathway initiatives to achieve similar outcomes relative to other populations.

2. Create new pathways for success by preparing very low-skill adults to take advantage of sector-based bridge programs that link foundation skills and adult basic education.
3. Enhance and expand the delivery of integrated re-entry and employment strategies to reduce recidivism among Louisiana’s returning citizens and meet the skill and workforce needs of business and industry.

4. Promote the efficient alignment and utilization of supportive resources for populations facing multiple barriers to employment at the regional and local service delivery levels.

Goal 3: Increase the participation and utilization of the workforce system by employers and job-seekers.

1. Foster the improvement and expansion of employer-driven regional sector partnerships to meet occupational demands as supported by regional labor market information.

2. Increase the use of labor market and educational data and technology, in coordination with local data, to inform and guide strategic workforce development decisions.

3. Develop focused, regional workforce initiatives that blend partner resources (co- investment) to educate and train workers for jobs within the workforce region.

4. Increase the alignment and efficacy of formula, discretionary and competitive workforce funding in efforts to support regional and local workforce initiatives.

5. Promote meaningful, portable industry credentials supported throughout the workforce delivery system that align to workforce demand.

6. Institute a system of accountability for the workforce development system that supports and promotes the evaluation of the effectiveness of state and local workforce development boards in meeting the workforce demands of business and workforce.

3. PERFORMANCE GOALS

Proposed performance levels are in Appendix 1 and are subject to modification pending final published regulations on WIOA Performance Management and Reporting System requirements.

In addition to the common performance measures described in Section 116(b)(2)(A), LWDAs will use business-focused metrics to assess outcomes.

PRIMARY DATA SOURCE

The primary source of information for this measure is data recorded in the MIS system of the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC), HiRE. Services to employers are automatically recorded by HiRE and manually entered into HiRE by Business and Career Solutions Center (BCSC) staff. The HiRE system has the capability to have service codes added to indicate business market penetration activity.

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

This approach tracks the percentage of employers who are using the core program services out of all employers represented in an area or State served by the public workforce system. One-Stop 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 a given State and Parish(s).
Repeat Business Customers (Percentage of repeat employers using services within the previous three years)

This approach tracks the percentage of employers 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.

4. ASSESSMENT

The State operates a standard format “Metrics Review Process” this includes a Monthly Review of Metrics (MRM) and a Quarterly Review of Metrics (QRM). The MRM focuses primarily on what is considered “real time” or managerial metrics which are designed to identify and address deficiencies that may be emerging, or may become anticipated at a time when the Continuous Improvement Process can make “real time correction” and begin the development of a “corrective action plan” when that development is called for.

In addition to a more immediate assessment of operations, the MRM focuses on identification and sharing of emerging best practices and contains a component of objective review for programs in development or new programs that have not stabilized. The QRM is less “tactical” and more “strategic” in both time and scope. In particular the QRM focuses more on evolving Partner Program relationship, cross program activities, and achieved outcomes against set performance measures. Like the MRM, the QRM results become drivers in the Continuous Improvement Process.

Note the following samples of drivers from both the QRM and MRM. These include, but are not limited to:

- Employer Market Penetration
  - Number of New Employers Engaged
  - Number of Employers Returning as a Result of Outreach
  - Business Market Penetration Rate, in Particular Business Sectors
• Specific Services to Employers
  o Total Number of Placements in Demand Occupations
  o Total Number of Placements in On the Job Training (and Demand Occupations)
  o Time Reduction to Refer Candidates Who are Hired
  o Referral to Hire Ratio for Job Seekers who receive Core/Individualized Services

• Relevance to Employers
  o Number of Demand Occupation Jobs Recruited and Staff Referred
  o Number of Weeks Dislocated Workers Receive Benefits.

• Number of Job Seekers Put to Work
  o Qualitative Review of Case Management Processes in Particular Comprehensive Assessments and Individualized Employment Plans
  o Success Rate of Gained Employment for Participants from all Partner Programs, in Particular those with Significant Barriers to Employment as indicated in WIOA Priority Populations.

• Number of Program Partner Participants who Enter Education or Training
  o Metric Points Along this Process Include Percentage of Number Referred, Number Entered, Number of Completions, and Number Employed, of those Eligible for Training or Education Services.

These Samples and all drivers apply across all programs that touch an Employer or Job Seeker (Participant). The QRM and MRM ultimately produce the foundation (through graphical study and depiction) to support the statistical methods used for analyzing and controlling the variations in our processes and thus continuously improving these processes.

C. STATE STRATEGY

The state of Louisiana must put in place an effective strategy to prepare for the impending job market expansion, in terms of both skills demand, and accelerated job growth. WIOA provides a framework in its requirement for agency and program partnerships that will streamline processes, and create a pipeline for recruiting, training, educating, and otherwise preparing citizens to acquire a living wage. To be successful, this must be a collaborative effort and shared responsibility among all partners. An additional benefit of this course of action will come in the form of a stronger economy. The continuous expansion of the collaborative partnerships will allow Louisiana to fulfill the requirements of WIOA. It will also maximize benefits to the state’s workforce, employers and overall economy.

1. DESCRIBE THE STRATEGIES THE STATE WILL IMPLEMENT, INCLUDING INDUSTRY OR SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS RELATED TO IN-DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTORS AND OCCUPATIONS AND CAREER PATHWAYS, AS REQUIRED BY WIOA SECTION
The mission of the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) is to put people to work by continuously improving our demand-driven system that responds quickly to the immediate and long-term needs of employers. The core focus is to fill job vacancies by connecting skilled and credentialed job seekers to employers in demand occupations. This section describes the strategies that Louisiana will implement to achieve the governor's vision and goals of improving employer engagement, cultivating regional labor market intelligence to drive services, targeting workforce recruitment to meet employer demand, integrating all workforce development services, improving training and technical assistance to Workforce Development Boards and One-Stop Center staff, while reducing administrative costs.

To achieve these goals, LWC will capitalize on the shared vision of state and local workforce development boards’ leadership for transformational change by implementing a growing body of promising structural, service delivery and accountability innovations that build on existing strengths, challenge assumptions and create a systemic approach to transform the workforce system into a demand-driven system. A core element of this transformational approach is the commitment of the combined partners to the comprehensive implementation of career pathways.

Louisiana Career Pathways

Through the WIOA planning process, the state’s education and workforce partners developed a vision and framework for Louisiana Career Pathways. The following describes their approach in creating a vision and framework for the implementation of a Career Pathway strategy that aligns with in demand occupations.

Vision: Louisiana Career Pathways are designed to improve lives and the economy. Through integrated career pathways, all Louisianans will have the opportunity to access progressive levels of education and training leading to high-value, high-demand careers. The career pathways approach meets learners where they are, by spanning high school, adult education, post-secondary and beyond, leading to sustainable employment. This includes pre-apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship.

Louisiana Career Pathways connect education and training programs and support services that enable individuals to secure employment within a specific industry or occupational sector, and to advance, over time, to successively higher levels of education and employment in that sector. Each step on the Career Pathway is designed explicitly to prepare workers and students for the next level of employment and education.

The Louisiana Career Pathways Framework

Minimally, all Louisiana Career Pathways must:

- Be designed in partnership with business and industry as well as regional economic development entities (in order to meet both current and future sector needs).
- Have multiple entry points, including for those with limited basic skills and those with prior educational and work experiences
- Incorporate multiple exit points (off-ramps, stop-out points) connected to the attainment of industry-recognized stackable credentials and/or academic credentials.
  - First stop-out point must be aligned with a viable career opportunity.
  - Exit points must be embedded in a longer pathway that ultimately leads to high-wage, high-demand careers.
• Pathways include opportunities, where appropriate, for acceleration, contextualization, work-based learning and co- or dual-enrollment.

• Pathways include Registered Apprenticeship programs and opportunities to obtain a recognized post-secondary credential in the form of a Completion Certificate or an Associate’s Degree for those pursuing further opportunity and credentialing through a community college member of the Registered Apprenticeship College Consortium (RACC).

• Include a logical progression/sequence of courses that are applicable to the target credential.
  o Could define this as blocks of courses tied to defined entry/exit points.
  o Course sequence provides a clear plan for what students take and when.

• Integrate student (participant) supports, including academic supports, non-academic/general support, transitional support, up-front career exploration and ongoing career development as well as job-placement assistance.

• Provide the opportunity to earn college credit.
  o Can include noncredit programs leading to industry-based credentials, but need consistent state policy on how to award college credit for industry-based credentials.
  o Noncredit pathways are aligned with credit pathways so that students can continue into credit-bearing pathways with transcript credit and without repeating coursework.
  o Explore the Registered Apprenticeship College Consortium and support community college membership throughout Louisiana to enable journey workers to get on a fast-track for an Associate’s Degree by incorporating their Registered Apprenticeship program participation.

The Louisiana Workforce Investment Council, , and members of the WIOA Planning Team recognize the need for an education and training system that addresses the state’s economic and workforce challenges. The Planning Team will continue to provide leadership in developing Career Pathway initiatives with a focus on targeted populations with significant barriers to employment (e.g., individuals receiving public assistance, long term unemployed, basic skills deficient adults and youth).

Business Engagement

The Business Engagement Initiative is focused on garnering and utilizing input from businesses to build a package of services and strategies to meet business needs today and into the future. There will be special effort to foster relationships with small businesses and targeted industry sectors in order to develop a custom package of services for these customers. Business Engagement will increase overall business utilization and value received from the workforce system, reduce employer costs to recruit and hire qualified workers and decrease the time required to fill vacancies.

Regional Business Service Structure

Regional business service strategies will transform Louisiana’s workforce development service delivery, creating a positive long-term economic impact. This regional approach is appropriate for the following reasons:
• A sector (also termed “industry cluster”) builds strategic partnerships among businesses, training providers, community organizations and other key stakeholders in a labor market region to bolster the region’s economic competitiveness and promote systemic change.

• A sector approach is more responsive to labor demand than traditional job-matching and training services because it is problem-oriented versus program-oriented, addresses needs interdependently and works to understand the specific needs of businesses within a particular sector.

Reasons a regional approach is preferred include:

• This approach allows Business Services to provide a coordinated plan ensuring adequate service delivery to employers who maintain locations in a wider geographic area than the previous, basically parish-oriented model.

• Expanded areas of delivery capture more job-seekers for employers to choose from.

• Economically less-developed areas are able to recruit, train and retain workers.

• Business Engagement initiatives meet the skill, recruitment and retention needs of employers and the training, employment and career advancement needs of workers. They address the needs of employers by focusing intensively on the workforce needs of a specific industry sector over a sustained period, often concentrating on a specific occupation or set of occupations within that industry.

• Creating formal career paths to good jobs, reducing barriers to employment and sustaining or increasing middle-class jobs.

• Regional economic competitiveness is bolstered by engaging economic development experts in workforce issues and aligning education, economic and workforce development planning.

• A broader array of key stakeholders is engaged through partnerships organized by workforce intermediaries. This promotes systemic change that achieves ongoing benefits for industry, workers and the community.

Louisiana Workforce Commission’s regional sector strategies help promote and support the development of regional sector initiatives.

Regional Business Service Team Framework

Implementation of a regional industry sector-based approach is a partnership of the LWC, local Workforce Development Boards, core programs and other partners in each region to create and develop the regional business services team structure. A Regional Business Service Team (RBST) within each region consists of the following programs:

• Wagner-Peyser.

• Veterans/LVER.

• Adult/Dislocated Worker Youth Program.

• Louisiana Rehabilitation Services/RED.

• Incumbent Worker Training Program (state).

• Rapid Response Team.

• WorkReady U (Adult Education)
• Other stakeholders that engage employers.

This supports and aligns Business and Career Solutions Center (B&CSC) business services to small business and industries within each region.

Sector Strategies and Career Pathways

To create sector strategies, local Workforce Development Boards and chief elected officials in each region will collaborate in a regional planning process, establish a regional service strategy and develop sector initiatives for in-demand sectors or occupations in the region. Along with a sector strategy, the LWDBs in the regions, with representatives from secondary and post-secondary education programs, shall lead efforts in the regional/local area to develop career pathways by aligning employment, training, education, and supportive services. Engaging industry will lead to the development of career pathways, growing the pipeline of qualified job candidates to fill existing skill gaps in targeted industries. Two existing within the education system are Workaday and Jump Start.

WorkReady U supports the mission of educating Louisiana's adult population and moving them beyond a high school equivalency diploma through credit-earning coursework for postsecondary certificates, degrees and family-supporting jobs. Louisiana colleges and WorkReady U providers have implemented career pathways in the following industries:

• Health sciences.
• Information technology.
• Skilled crafts.
• Manufacturing.
• Business office technology.
• Transportation.
• Industrial technology.

Jump Start is a new paradigm for career and technical education (CTE), allowing high school students to attain an industry-promulgated, industry-valued credential in order to graduate high school. Louisiana’s Jump Start program aligns Louisiana’s K-12th grade CTE strategies with the state’s economic development strategies. Jump Start regional teams, consisting of school districts, colleges, businesses and workforce/economic development experts; collaborate to provide career courses and workplace experiences to high school students. Students have the opportunity to earn industry-valued, industry-promulgated credentials in career fields most likely to lead to high-wage jobs, while preparing them to continue their post-secondary education (in 2- and 4- year colleges) and career development.

LWC will provide additional guidance to LWDBs regarding Career Pathways development as part of its ongoing technical assistance and guidance.

Successful regional sector strategies will share the following common principles:

• Serve the dual purpose of aligning education, training and support services to the needs of employers in an industry sector, while ensuring that those services are accessible to a range of workers.
• Require a strong intermediary organization that sustains energy, coordinates dialogue and brokers relationships among service providers and employers in carrying out the partnership’s agenda.
• Be employer-driven, wherein employers recognize their self-interest in and need for the partnership.
• Promote systemic change benefiting workers of all wage and skill levels, the industry and the community at large.
• Include the workforce system as a central player in any number of roles, such as the neutral intermediary body, the manager of operations and funding, and/or the source of labor market information.

The implementation of a regional sector strategy does not follow a cookie-cutter approach, but does reflect the common principles outlined above. Regions create and implement the best overall approach for their local economy with the following core steps in mind:

• Development of a leadership team.
• Identification of a data team that uses traditional and real-time labor market data to identify the top three targeted industry sectors in the region.
• Identification of a neutral, third-party facilitator to assist with creating the process.
• Development of regional sector strategy vision and goals.
• Development of a sector-based strategic plan.
• Identification of performance measures for the strategy.
• Development of a plan to sustain the sector strategy over time.

The ultimate goal is for sector partnerships to successfully identify workers with skills that employers need to compete and expand, as well as for workers to receive relevant training that leads to increased job stability and advancement opportunities. Business needs change rapidly, therefore it is critical that this effort be driven by regional business and is based on continuous, sustained engagement with regional businesses.

2. DESCRIBE THE STRATEGIES THE STATE WILL USE TO ALIGN THE CORE PROGRAMS, ANY COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN, REQUIRED AND OPTIONAL ONE-STOP PARTNER CUSTOMER SERVICE CONSISTANT WITH THE STRATEGIC VISION AND GOALS DESCRIBED ABOVE. ALSO DESCRIBE STRATEGIES TO STRENGTHEN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES IN REGARD TO WEAKNESSES IDENTIFIED IN SECTION II (a) (2).

Development of the Louisiana WIOA Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is fundamental to alignment of Louisiana Combined State Plan partner programs, required and optional partners programs, and other resources. The MOU will (1) articulate the coordinated vision, goals and objectives for the Louisiana Workforce system and the combined State Plan; (2) establish agreement at the state level for service delivery systems, co-enrollment and define framework of key strategies and other key function of WIOA core partners; (3) provide guidance for partnerships at the regional and local areas. A WIOA Team is being organized to development the MOU framework, and recognizes that the fidelity of the state leadership to the collaborative process will have significant impact on regional and local implementation.

LWC has begun providing opportunities and leadership to encourage and facilitate regional collaborative efforts by workforce system leaders LWDBs and WIOA required partner programs to align workforce policies and services with regional economies and supportive service delivery strategies. LWC shall lead in the analysis of regional labor markets, establishment of regional service strategies, development and
implementation of sector initiatives for in-demand industry sectors or occupations for the region and coordination of services. These efforts are expected to enhance capacity and performance of the integrated workforce system.

LWC has developed and continues to modify policy, vision, certification criteria and contracts to assist LWDBs in complying with WIOA’s expectations. LWC requires development of a regional plan by respective local boards which must include performance targets.

It is the intent of LWC to provide guidance, and support to local leadership, while allowing local and regional leadership, the flexibility to develop and implement innovative workforce strategies and solutions necessary to meet the needs of employers, job seekers and the emerging workforce.

LWC shall monitor and support LWDBs efforts in the strategic integration of workforce programs, services and initiatives in order to operate in the most efficient and cost-effective manner possible, while remaining flexible, adaptable, market-based and customer-focused. LWC has adopted, and is committed to, a Continuous Improvement Process approach in refining the structure and alignment of programs under WIOA with additional resources to support achievement of state vision and goals.

III. OPERATIONAL PLANNING ELEMENTS

A. STATE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

1. STATE BOARD FUNCTIONS

The Louisiana Workforce Investment Council (WIC) is established in accordance with Section 101 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, and under Louisiana Law, LSA-R.S. 23:2042-2056. The mission of the 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 implements its function by:

1. Meeting the requirements of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, 29 U.S.C. 3101 et seq. in order to receive funds relevant to workforce activities authorized by the law.
2. Advising the governor on the needs of the state's employers and the state's workforce along with strategies for its continued improvement.
3. Working with industry, government, and citizens to aid in the creation of the strategic combined state plan and outcomes that will coordinate and integrate a workforce development delivery system to assure the greatest cooperation possible between public and private entities, and
4. Directing the Occupational Forecasting Conference in determining such official information that is necessary for planning and budgeting with respect to workforce development.

All meetings of the council are open and subject to the provisions of La R.S. 42:11 et seq. Records of all proceedings at regular and special meetings of the council are kept and are open to public inspection.

The council meets no less than four times each calendar year. A quorum of the council is determined to be a majority of the members serving. In order for the council to take official action, affirmative approval of a majority of members serving is required. If any council member, in the discharge of a duty or responsibility of his/her office or position, would be required to vote on a matter which vote would be a
violation of La R.S. 42:1112 or 1113(B), (s)he shall recuse him/herself from voting. Additionally, the
council receives periodic reports from the various local Workforce Development Boards for the purposes
of evaluation and oversight.

At least once every two years the Occupational Forecast Conference presents for consideration the Long-
and Short-Term Industry projections or updates. At least once every two years the Occupational
Forecast Conference presents for approval the Long- and Short-Term Occupational projections or
updates. These projections and updates are used for the determination of demand jobs and allocation of
in-demand skills.

2. IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE STRATEGY
   a) CORE PROGRAM ACTIVITIES TO IMPLEMENT THE STATE
      STRATEGY

During the past several years, the U.S. Department of Labor has reduced both administrative and
programmatic funds available to state workforce agencies in both WP and WIA (now WIOA). At the
same time funding availability has been diminishing, the cost and complexity of providing service
delivery, programmatic management and support, and fiscal and performance reporting have increased.
This makes it essential that LWC and local boards work together to reduce overhead costs and
streamline (economize) services.

The state integrated One-Stop Center operations under the Workforce Investment Act several years ago.
Within the past two years, stand-alone Wagner-Peyser offices have been eliminated. Each of Louisiana’s
fifteen Workforce Development areas have established at least one Comprehensive Center that has been
certified by its respective board as meeting the criteria to be branded as an American Job Center.
Smaller offices operated by local boards and/or One-Stop operators (contractors) where all Program
Partners are not present, shall be designated and operated as “Affiliate” One-Stop centers and may have
any subset of partners, but shall not be operated as Wagner Peyser stand-alone Employment Services
offices.

Under the plan, local boards will have the flexibility to include additional partners in One-Stop Centers, in
particular and specifically identified by the law:

- Employment and training programs administered by the Social Security Administration, including
  the Ticket to Work and the Self-Sufficiency Program.
- Employment and training programs carried out by the Small Business Administration.
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) employment and training programs.
- Other programs authorized under the National and Community Service Act of 1990.
- In addition to these specified additional partners the law and plan allows boards to include other
  partners as part of the one-stop delivery system -- local employers and community-based, faith-
  based, and/or non-profit organizations, as well as employment, education and training programs
  provided by public libraries or the private sector.

Although support for One-Stop Center operations will change, this plan does not call for any “rebranding”
of centers regarding their status as “comprehensive” or “affiliate.” This plan is designed to support a
refined focus on employment, training, adult education and vocational rehabilitation programs designed to
provide workers and their families an opportunity for economic prosperity.

The new infrastructure combined with the recently redesigned service delivery model will strengthen
existing workforce development and adult education programs in four ways that can benefit adults and
youth with barriers to economic success by:

- Increasing the focus on serving the most vulnerable workers (with limited skills, lack of work
  experience, and other barriers to economic success) through more focused profiling and
  assessment processes.
• Expanding education and training options to help participants access good jobs to start/advance their careers.
• Providing targeted, managed and appropriate levels of supportive services to disadvantaged and unemployed adults and youth while they receive training and effective employment-based activities.
• Supporting the alignment of planning and accountability policies across core programs to support more unified approaches to serving employers and job-seekers (in particular those who are low-income, low-skilled individuals).

This plan creates an opportunity for chief elected officials (CEOs), boards and local communities to rethink reshape and expand workforce systems, policies and practices in a way that conforms to local needs while maintaining fiscal prudence and viability. The plan also drives the realignment of funding streams to improve accountability across core programs, support career pathways and sector strategies and create continuous opportunities to measure performance and to identify areas for improvement.

Operating in the most effective and efficient way by:

Identifying inefficiencies and targeting improvements that will bring costs in line with reasonable standards.

• Measuring local and regional performance so that decision-makers better understand the unit cost of a service, the productivity of staff, results achieved with programs and efficient use of assets.
• Reducing waste (in particular waste created by redundancies in support and oversight), wasted motion, personnel costs, excess paperwork, wasted supplies, excess equipment, etc.
• Maintaining, understanding and managing in real-time with the goal of efficiencies in the actual cost of services at the local and regional level.
• Establishing measures of effectiveness that ensure every dollar spent is delivering the best possible value, then operating a continuous, accurate, real-time effectiveness evaluation of local and regional results, rather than a reactive approach when problems arise.
• Developing (through research and anecdotal studies) reasonable workloads to support a staffing model supported by all partners that establishes a standard and objective framework for responding to position requests.
• Setting benchmarks as a process of comparing performance and practices locally, regionally and statewide at both the par and top performer levels with the goal of providing objective external standard of performance and uncovering more efficient and effective ways of delivering services.
• Setting standards for the cost of services, efficiency, effectiveness, productivity and asset use for local, regional and state comparison to trend cost efficiencies as improving, declining or falling.
• Using reporting, measuring and benchmarking as a foundation for goal setting and to shine a light on efficiencies and effectiveness on how funds are being used.

In addition to the core programs, other programs required to provide access to services in each of Louisiana’s fifteen Comprehensive One-Stop Centers are:

• Career and Technical Education (Perkins).
• Community Services Block Grants Employment and Training Programs
• Indian and Native American Programs.
• HUD Employment and Training Programs, Job Corps.
• Local Veterans Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans Outreach Program.
• National Farmworker Jobs Program.
• Senior Community Service Employment Program.
• Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) (unless the governor takes special action to make TANF an optional partner).
• Trade Adjustment Assistance Programs.
• Unemployment Compensation Programs.
• Youth Build.
• Adult Education
• Job Corps
For the purposes of operations under this plan regarding services provided in a Comprehensive One-Stop Center, each member of the partnership shall agree to core hours, core services, individualized services, supportive services, data sharing and the sharing of costs for business operations. Each of the fifteen local areas will define its operating and cost sharing plans through Memorandums of Understanding that include infrastructure funding agreements.

This plan commits the state to providing support for one Comprehensive One-Stop Center in each local area. Regionally, boards may choose how they use the resources provided under this plan and other support agreements. However, use of these resources shall not be contrary to the provisions and requirements of the U.S. Department of Labor or state laws, regulations and statutes.

Key elements of the service relationship covered in this plan include implementation, performance, finances and operations. All of these characteristic key elements and expectations can be directly related to service-delivery at a One-Stop Center regarding negotiated performance outcomes and managerial metrics.

- **Implementation**: As a minimum, the following details required in WIOA must be crafted into a cost allocation and operation agreement for each of these Comprehensive One-Stop Centers and although they will be specific to the individual LWDA, they must contain detail on the following as a minimum:
  
  - Who will be physically present in the center – full or part time.
  - When not physically present will center staff be required to supply support, i.e. provide customer guidance when using an online tool, etc.?
  - What services will be offered, and how do those services support a Career Pathway?
  - Defined interface with partner programs to provide seamless services.
  - Method of supervision and guidance provided to staff.
  - Defined administrative or other supports required to be successful.
  - Facility costs.
  - Operational delivery, how services are delivered, by whom and when.

- **Performance**: Services shall be provided as required under the relevant funding streams and partnerships identified/negotiated under the statutes, laws and regulations which, in detail, identify expectations, outcomes and outputs by the parties from the arrangements.

- **Finances and other resources**: Resource-pooling arrangements, fee structures, cost variances, adjustments, transparency and arrangements of settlements shall be detailed and agreed to by all parties.

- **Operations**: The state will provide WP-funded staff to support a single Comprehensive One-Stop Center for each WDB. The state recommendation is that LWDA boards utilize this staff to support a centralized recruitment and placement effort, and for a centralized business engagement process. Boards may operate other locations within their LWDA as “affiliate” sites and may from time to time have WP-assigned staff at these locations based on need.

The state shall allocate Wagner-Peyser-funded staff by formula based on the level of effort necessary to support labor exchange services in an LWDA or region. There are both local areas that are currently overstaffed and that need additional staffing. These mismatches are the result of long-term localized planning for staff support rather than regional and statewide planning. The state intends to change staffing levels through attrition and replacement, supplement with short-term career specialists funded by limited fund sources where appropriate to the source requirement, and relocation and reassignment.

**Elements of the Local Delivery Structure**
• Board members and staff operate under prior consistent state law. As such, members and staff are primarily private-sector employers with some representing local education agencies, labor organizations, community-based organizations, economic development councils and One-Stop partners such as adult education and literacy (AEL) and vocational rehabilitation (VR). Each board develops a strategic and operational plan, with local plans subject to review by TWIC and approval by the governor. Boards designate one-stop partners, identify providers of training services, and monitor system performance against performance accountability measures.

• Board staff conducts the board’s day-to-day administrative operations. Boards operate with a high degree of local flexibility for service delivery design and partner with local training and educational institutions to ensure employment and training opportunities meet area employment needs.

• One-Stop Centers provide a variety of online, in-house and on-site services, including employer services, job search resources, labor market information and referrals for customized training. In addition to traditional brick-and-mortar offices, mobile workforce units are a moving extension of the Workforce Solutions Office, offering on-site, rapid response assistance to area employers and communities.

• Business Service Units (BSUs) address the ever-increasing need for skilled workers in high-demand fields by offering job search assistance, skills training and other workforce development services. Supported by state and federal funds, most basic services are provided free of charge to employers registered with the state and federal government. Some boards also provide certain services, including workshops and seminars, at nominal fees. BSUs within an integrated workforce system offer a unique opportunity to ensure that all workforce services are structured to ensure that the business needs are considered when delivering services to job seekers and consumers.

Boards shall develop new local plans under WIOA to align local goals and objectives set forth in the state’s Combined State Plan and also describe collaboration strategies with system partners.

To address limited financial resources yet still meet the needs of Louisiana employers, boards must:

• Leverage additional funding sources.
• Develop, analyze and share labor market information and regional economic studies.
• Engage in planning and service delivery across workforce areas and/or with other workforce and community partners.
• Incorporate new delivery strategies and adapt existing ones, such as the use of mobile units and new technologies that make service more accessible.
• Strive for integrated, effective service delivery by sharing, modifying and replicating effective training models and processes.

Events and projects provide the opportunity for boards and system stakeholders to collaborate, innovate and streamline services to improve workforce service delivery. Continuous improvement efforts by the boards are facilitated and encouraged through activities such as:

• Sharing best practices and other information at LWC’s annual conference, workforce forums and regional and local meetings.
• Maintaining user-friendly, online resources for topics including:
  o Integrated workforce processes.
  o Performance measures.
  o Program-specific monitoring toolkits, through the ongoing work of OWD monitoring effort.
b) ALIGNMENT WITH ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THE PLAN

In recent years, state agencies, business/industry and other partners in Louisiana have engaged processes to align employment, training, education and human services to respond to the needs of employers and job-seekers. These efforts attempt to ensure that the alignment of activities between core programs and partners continues and expands to required partners and One-Stop partners to improve coordination of employment and training activities and avoid duplication of services to customers. Below are some examples of imaginative and coordinated efforts already in action:

I. Engaging Out-of-School Youth (OSY) through LWDA/High School Partnerships

LWC and its local workforce areas have instituted an innovative approach to engaging out-of-school youth throughout the state to enroll in WIOA Youth Programs. Nearly 50 percent of the state’s high school students either drop out of or are expelled from high school before graduation. Understanding the importance of keeping school-age youth engaged in constructive educational experiences, thereby reducing the risk of truancy, crime and violence, LWC’s Office of Workforce Development worked with several local areas to approach public schools and school boards about the possibility of partnering to offer assistance to youth at risk of exiting high school before graduation.

The results are cooperative endeavor agreements signed by LWDB chairs and directors, public school superintendents and local school board to ensure a “soft handoff” occurs the moment these students are removed from the school’s enrollment. The youth is given a referral to the area One Stop where they are screened for eligibility before being formally enrolled.

Once an ISS is completed, these OSY are provided one or more of the 14 elements available to OSY under WIOA. This method will be evaluated to determine the effectiveness of the approach and has already been shared with other states as a promising innovative strategy during the USDOL/NASWA WIOA Convening in Washington, D.C. in January 2016.

II. Louisiana Jump Start Initiative - Employer Engagement- Department of Education

The Louisiana Department of Education, (K-12), has launched an initiative that offers Career Technical Education (CTE) to high school students in grades 10 through 12. This initiative, known as Jump Start, provides classroom training and work experience in demand occupations in Louisiana through unpaid internships provided industry partners. Participating students are able to obtain high school credit hours, college course credits and industry certifications, all leading to high school diplomas. In some instances, students are able to graduate high school with associate degrees, beginning their professional careers in technical fields immediately after completing high school with a dual degree.

Essential to the program’s success is employer engagement. Employers within targeted industries must be willing to engage high school students through internship opportunities, providing students with on-the-job training and career mentors.

As a result, K-12 has engaged industry leaders to promote and support Jump Start. This effort has required many hours of face-to-face meetings, conference calls and engagement of business, local
leaders, state legislators and the executive branch of government in order to resolve legal and bureaucratic obstacles preventing program success.

At the heart of the problem is the fact that this has created unnecessary duplication of efforts to engage business leaders through the formation of 10 regional Jump Start teams statewide. These teams are comprised of education (K-12, community and technical colleges), private business, economic development organizations, local One-Stop operators, public sector leaders and others. This is a clear duplication of effort in that local Workforce Development Boards are comprised of the same organizations, and, in many instances, the same people represent these organizations on both Jump Start teams and local boards. While government employees may be accustomed to conducting business in this manner, it has become increasingly frustrating to business owners, and the fear of losing their enthusiasm and commitment has become apparent. Precious time is wasted having the same discussion, in different forums, with the same people. The need to do something to resolve the issue, and do it quickly, is required.

The state’s K-12 leadership and LWC’s Office of Workforce Development have partnered to streamline the process of business engagement by promoting the alignment of regional Jump Start teams and Workforce Development Boards through the local boards and their standing committees on youth. It is through these standing committees that Jump Start programs will be supported, and issues requiring attention outside of K-12’s normal business and management structure will be addressed and resolved. Meetings with each local board have begun, with more to follow in the coming weeks. Those boards that have met on this issue have expressed support and understanding of the need to move forward with this approach. Many provocative questions regarding Jump Start have been raised by board members and captured by the Louisiana Department of Education consultant and OWD leadership. The interest in making this career pathways initiative for in-school youth the best in the country has taken off, and LWDB members understand their roles in making it happen.

Local and regional workforce plans will be evaluated to ensure those plans align with the state’s plan to support this process. This process is just one solution to promote business engagement as it relates to opportunities for youth and adults in need of training and work experience, but will serve a model of how the public sector must work more closely, eliminate redundancy and work together to provide excellent, result-oriented customer service (e.g., business, job-seekers, future workforce) and improve the business climate.

III. Registered Apprenticeship-LWC

A key strategy identified in the Louisiana Combined Plan goals and objectives is the expansion of the use of Registered Apprenticeship programs as viable talent development opportunities. Registered Apprenticeship programs have demonstrated that employers who invest in training experience lower employee turnover, increased employee productivity, better employee problem-solving skills and improved employee relations. The employer and employee are equally committed to the program’s success.

LWC Registered Apprenticeship Program supports connecting job seekers to high paying jobs. The building and construction trade programs have been and continue to be the backbone of registered apprenticeship in this state and across the country, LWC is working to develop new non-traditional programs in industries such as health care, advanced manufacturing, and Information Technology. The
LWC Apprenticeship Division continues to encourage new and currently existing programs to take advantage of partnership opportunities with our workforce system, and has played an active role in discussions regarding Eligible Training Provider List policies and procedures as it applies to registered apprenticeship under the new WIOA regulations.

Previously, many local workforce boards were reluctant to support registered apprenticeship with workforce funding for a multitude of reasons, including concerns regarding perceived performance implications. With the new provisions in WIOA, that clearly support the expansion and incorporation of registered apprenticeship as an evidence-based approach to workforce development, Louisiana sees this as an opportunity to create a new statewide vision that supports substantive partnerships between LWDBs and registered apprenticeship program sponsors. Aligning registered apprenticeship opportunities with WIOA service design and delivery in a holistic and comprehensive manner, however, will require focused effort and education, and policy support from LWC. In this regard, LWC Apprenticeship Division staff are working closely with the Office of Apprenticeship in the Dallas Regional Office.

Another key in the advancement of opportunities for the Registered Apprenticeship, is the alignment of the IWTP with apprenticeship. Historically, apprenticeship programs have not utilized IWTP funds to support or expand their apprenticeship programs. This has been a shortcoming of the apprenticeship system, as all of the programs do customized training and qualify for the IWTP program. In 2017, more synergies between the two programs were seen as one existing apprenticeship program got awarded a grant, and two existing ITWP training providers started apprenticeship programs. The LWC Apprenticeship Division staff will continue to work with the LWC IWTP staff to better align the two programs.

IV. HUD/Public Housing

As with the aforementioned strategies to engage out-of-school youth through partnerships with high schools, efforts to work with public housing authorities funded with Department of Housing and Urban Development dollars have begun and will continue throughout the life of this state plan. The goal is to partner and share resources to provide education and employment services to out-of-school youth and adults living in public housing.

Public housing authorities received funding from HUD for the main purpose of providing safe, sanitary and decent housing to low-income families. As part of their mission, housing authorities are required to use portions of the funding, subject to its availability, to provide services to residents of public housing in an effort to move them from dependency on public assistance to self-sufficiency.

These limited HUD dollars can be leveraged with resources available through partners of this Combined State Plan to increase services to public housing residents who are eligible to receive services through one or more of the partners herein. This alignment will also decrease the likelihood of duplication of services, as well as other potential waste, fraud and abuse.

V. Re-Entry-Department of Corrections

LWC and its local workforce partners have aligned with the Louisiana Department of Corrections on several re-entry initiatives across the state. Participants are convicted of crimes in criminal court and sentenced to serve time in the re-entry program. This alternative sentencing structure is designed to work with men and women while they are incarcerated in an effort to provide job skills in demand occupations,
reducing the chances of recidivism among participants and complying with the terms and conditions of sentencing. Minimally, engagement in the re-entry program ensures the following:

- Inmate receives workforce services prior to release.
- Inmate must secure employment prior to release.
- Peer mentors are assigned to each inmate.
- Peer mentor must verify the inmate’s readiness for release.

OWD is 100% dedicated to The Louisiana Prisoner Reentry Initiative (LA-PRI) which an emphases on the top five of twelve of the largest urban parishes with the highest recidivism rates (Orleans, Jefferson, East Baton Rouge, Caddo and St. Tammany) this initiative and has specifically assigned specialized staff toward this initiative, working with the Department of Corrections at two of the primary maximum-security state penitentiaries: Angola State Penitentiary and the Louisiana Corrections Institute for Women (LWIW)-St. Gabriel.

Additionally, OWD's Veterans’ Unit received a grant to offer re-entry services to incarcerated veterans in four parishes: Orleans, Jefferson, St. Tammany and East Baton Rouge. Staff work with these four parishes, in which nearly 60 percent of the state’s incarcerated return to live upon release, to engage both parish and state inmates in the following penal institutions: St. Tammany Parish Prison, Rayburn State Institution, Jefferson Parish Prison, LCIW, Angola and Orleans Parish Prison. Because of the success of this initiative, LWC will seek additional grant funding to continue beyond the life of this grant, which expired December 31, 2016. Other sources of funding will also be sought by both state and parish officials, all of whom are committed to assisting with giving people a second chance to become productive, gainfully employed, taxpaying citizens.

VI. Community Service Block Grant

The Community Service Block Grant unit, as component of the LWC, Office of Workforce Development, will provide leadership and, technical assistance to the local Community Action Agencies (CAA) to support their collaboration and coordination of their employment and training activities, as well as their supportive services with their local and regional WDBs. CAAs in each region will be included in the Louisiana Career Pathways model development, and are well-positioned to serve as lead partners in the development of “supportive service pathways” or service flow charts for vulnerable populations (low-skilled, low income, individuals with disabilities, re-entering citizens) focusing on reduction of the barriers to employment. The CSBG unit will achieve this commitment by providing best practices models, and supporting financially innovative strategies that aligns services to ensure that customers receive the best available employment and training services, as well as employment supports, to achieve their employment and self-sufficiency goals.

VII. Job Corps
LWC is supporting a strengthening of the relationship between the three Louisiana Job Corps programs and the local and regional WDBs. The New Orleans Job Corps, is the only non-residential Job Corp site in the state, their students commute each day. Local One-Stop Centers are currently working to strengthen their partnerships with the three Job Corps programs to co-enroll Job Corps students in WIOA Youth Programs. Under WIOA, students attending Job Corps are considered out-of-school youth. In light of the 75 percent out-of-school youth expenditure requirement, this is a great partnership to engage and enroll out-of-school youth, develop an ISS on each youth, offer one or more of the 14 program elements available to them under WIOA that are necessary based on their documented needs, and not provided by Job Corps.

This partnership will also allow local WIOA youth programs the ability to refer youth to Job Corps, so the ability to develop, or improve, a cross-referral process is promising. Local areas will be expected to address their respective strategies in their local plans.

c) COORDINATION, ALIGNMENT AND PROVISION OF SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS

WIOA reaffirms the role of the customer-focused one-stop delivery system, a cornerstone of the public workforce investment system, and enhances and increases coordination among several key employment, education and training programs. WIOA presents an extraordinary opportunity for the workforce system to accelerate its transformational efforts and demonstrate its ability to improve job and career options for our citizens through an integrated, job-driven public workforce system that links diverse talent to our nation's businesses. It supports the development of strong, vibrant regional economies where businesses thrive and people want to live and work.

Through policy, LWC has refined the state’s response to the U.S. Labor Department mandate that the workforce development system become a seamless, integrated system. Prior to implementation, One-Stop Center operations used a rigid customer flow and team model. This new policy establishes a revision and refocusing effort to drive clients to the “right door” because of the state’s need to respond to a decrease in funding and environmental as well as socio-economic changes.

**Goals are as follows:**

- Change the lock-step process and team approach in providing job-seeker and employer services to a more flexible process (or roadmap) that allows quick response to changes in the labor market and workforce needs.
- Add flexibility to the delivery of training services by simplifying the process for identifying qualified candidates.
- Create a process that recognizes the ever-changing funding environment associated with federal mandates and grants, so that it provides necessary flexibility to respond to specific grant and funding mandates of U.S. Department of Labor programs regarding unemployment insurance benefits (UI), workforce participation, veteran’s services and National Emergency Grants.
- Support the state’s redesign of its business engagement Process in a way that optimizes agency response to in-demand industry needs in hiring, retaining, training and advancement of workers.
- Anticipate the ongoing need for creating contingency plans to support economic growth in targeted industry sectors, and developing improved relationships with local and state economic development entities with the goal of pre-empting shortfalls in a skilled workforce.
- Address the need to reintegrate specific UI recipient related functions into the job-seeker process in order to shorten the return-to-work time for individuals receiving unemployment insurance benefits.
The policy also recognized and responded to the need for training dislocated workers in a way that enhances subsequent job retention and links this effort to meeting the emerging needs of employers for specifically skilled workers.

Through the WIOA Combined planning process the partners are continually working to develop a redefined model for the One Stop Centers. This model will provide the foundation for establishing operations that support the key principles found in WIOA law and support expanding partnerships and services. The redesign and refinement provides an unprecedented opportunity to modernize Louisiana’s workforce system and achieve key hallmarks of a customer centered workforce system, where the needs of employers and job-seekers drive workforce solutions, where One-Stop Centers and partners provide excellent customer service to job-seekers and employers, where the workforce system pursues continuous improvement through evaluation and data-driven policy and where the workforce system supports strong regional economies.

The foundation for success is efficient and effective coordination of programs, services and governance, based on common assessment process, career service methodology, case management and job development systems. Leadership at all levels must think expansively, moving forward to produce the best customer-focused comprehensive delivery system.

For this process to realize its potential, it will be necessary to continue moving beyond some current categorical configurations and institutional interest in order to truly unify training, education and employment programs into a single, customer-friendly system tailored to the community it serves. Although each local board is responsible for its own service delivery, the state has established minimum standards for a demand-driven integrated service delivery process in order to establish consistency across the state.

This revision of the service delivery process was undertaken as a result of social and economic pressures driving the need for a more effective “demand-driven” operation. However, the revision does not restrict local leadership in developing processes, procedures and techniques based on local needs. Rather, it encourages this development and provides a standardized foundation to support individual development.

The original service delivery model was intended to be focused on the customer in the context of being demand-driven. As was written: “To ensure that job-seekers get to ‘the right service the first time,’ OWD’s service redesign model provides a standardized framework for how customers enter the system, how they are assessed for service need, how they access services, including job placement and how offices are designed and staffed to meet the needs of job-seekers and employers.”

Unfortunately, over time, the system has evolved to focus on the process rather than the customer. Further, the balance of customer focus has become far too heavy on the job-seeker and too light on the employer. This “process evolution” combined with a reduction in resources (personnel and financial) is inhibiting state and LWDA leadership ability to quickly and effectively respond to compliance and performance demands and be flexible in operating a true outcome-based demand delivery system.

This revision is based on continuous process improvement (CPI). This moves the partnership away from the “compartmentalization” process of the original design and allows for the following in a real-time context: benchmarking (metric driven change), anticipating and meeting changing customer needs, local control of the process to reduce cycle time and idle resources and incorporate lessons learned through marrying quality assurance (monitoring) directly to training.

The new design removes the requirement for the lock step “team approach” of membership, career development and recruitment and placement. While this concept was effective from a process-focused
approach, forcing every customer through these steps whether needed or not, is not customer demand driven and is very inefficient. So, while it is important that all offices will “standardize job-seeker basic career services and enrollment processes,” the way in which these are delivered must be flexible. The inefficiencies of this process steal time from the partnership’s ability to serve its other customer, the employer and often frustrate the job-seeker.

The new process for all job-seekers regardless of their reason for entering our services is a roadmap designed for speed and flexibility. It provides for continuous assessment, career services and follow-up. This supports the original design concept of “efficiently determining customer needs, routing customers to the appropriate service, tracking customer activity through the process and targeting and recording outcomes.” Each step in this process has an associated metric draw for continuous improvement.

**Continued Guidelines and Required Actions:** All job-seeking customers visiting a physical One-Stop Center location who receive staff-assisted services are included in the common measures performance calculations.

Because all One-Stop Center services, staff, facility and activities are funded in-part by both WP and WIOA, sequence of services and assessments shall determine the timing for co-enrollment of job-seekers who receive staff-assisted service in a One-Stop Center, or affiliate, into both WIOA Title I and the WP program for reporting and performance measures.

Any job-seeker served in any One-Stop (or affiliate) should be counted as a participant in WIOA, regardless of the presence of WIOA-funded staff onsite. Conversely, all WIOA participants should be counted as WP participants, regardless of the presence of WP funded staff at the enrolling service location.

Determining eligibility under dislocated worker, adult and youth status are separate issues from this guidance and are addressed in a separate policy.

Staff shall select and provide services to employers and job-seekers with the intent of developing a high-quality outcome. For this reason, the performance accountability system is based on the quality of services and not the number of services provided.

**Service Delivery Process: Assessment, Career Services, and Follow-up for Job-Seekers:**

Rather than being divided into three distinct workspaces, local leadership must design space usage to most efficiently and effectively move customers through the process. This may involve some team areas for specific tasks, but should not “silo” staff such that a “lack of work” can exist.

The old term and concept of “intake process” shall be replaced with “assessment process.” While further discussion of assessment in this policy and in its operation will be divided into “initial assessment” and “comprehensive assessment,” always think of assessment as an ongoing process in the context of service delivery.

Assessment may include the use of tools and processes that shall be modified by local leadership to be most effective based on the demographic of their specific location, customer base, staffing levels, program availability and access to supportive services.
One-Stop staff shall provide services without regard for their status as state or LWDB employees. Minimally, job-seeker services must include initial registration, WP and (when applicable) WIOA enrollment, with the appropriate staff-assisted first service.

Career services shall include both basic career and individualized career services as appropriate based on job-seeker and employer need, and the most recently directed criteria associated with compliance and performance under any applicable U.S. Department of Labor grant. These services may include, but are not limited to, assisted job search activities, evaluation of skills, interests, preferences, career counseling training options, matching skills to current job openings, individualized career services, case management and follow-up.

**The Three Tracks for a Job-Seeker**

In the revised 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 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 the course of service assessments and re-evaluation the job-seeker may move from one track to another.

Entry may begin as a self-service electronic registration (in or out of a One-Stop Center), an outreach contact (regardless of reason for outreach), an automatic registration created by an application for UI benefits and the subsequent required service points requiring a visit to a One-Stop Center, a staff-assisted registration and enrollment for a job-seeker who is a “walk in” to a One-Stop Center or an individual who is registered by any means while receiving Rapid Response services.

**Job-seekers who are also UI claimants**

Required service entry for UI beneficiaries are based on worker profiling through LWC’s statistical profiling model. Profiling results determine UI claimants as “most likely” (workforce ready) or “least likely” (not workforce ready) to exhaust their benefits. Some are profiled while they complete their UI claim as “most likely” to exhaust their benefits (not workforce ready).

Louisiana Workforce Commission’s Re-Employment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program is a grant-funded program designed to specifically assist UI recipients identified as “most likely” to exhaust benefits and assist them to quickly return to the workforce. RESEA services include orientation to the One-Stop Center (OSC)/American Job Center (AJC) services, eligibility assessment, provision of LMI, the development and/or update of an individual re-employment plan, and referral to existing WP and WIOA services.

Selected RESEA participants must report to the OSC/AJC at specified service points as a requirement of continued eligibility to receive UI benefits (following the most current U.S. Department of Labor and state guidance for grant specific requirements).

Any job-seeker who is also a profiled UI recipient entering a OSC/AJC for service shall initially receive an orientation (e.g. provision of labor market information and career information, information on assessment tools and orientation to services available through the OSC/AJC and partner organization). Orientation is optional but is encouraged for all non-UI recipient job-seekers as well.
As these job seekers transition from the RESEA program-specific services, they will be targeted to be assessed, placed in an appropriate track as outlined below and provided services in accordance with that track, including assessment for enrollment in more robust WIOA individualized career services and placement in a more service-intensive track. Individuals not appropriate for enrollment in WIOA will continue to receive staff-assisted or self-directed WP employment services.

**Workforce Ready, in a Demand Occupation:**

Job-seekers who are not UI recipients may arrive at the One-Stop Center for a variety of other reasons (they may be unemployed by choice or seeking a career change, for example). If the initial assessment indicates they have no significant barriers to employment and are workforce ready in a demand occupation, (as defined above), they will be places on the workforce ready in a demand occupation track.

Those job-seekers who are UI recipients and are determined to be least likely to exhaust their UI benefits shall be placed in either of the workforce ready in a demand occupation track or the workforce ready not in a demand occupation track.

When an initial assessment indicates no significant barriers to employment, and that the job-seeker has skills, credentials, certification, education, soft skills, previous experience or a combination of these factors that qualifies them in a demand occupation, they shall be sent to career specialists performing business services or other career specialists designated by local management for job referral.

Career specialists performing business services (or other designee) shall review the job-seeker’s skills comparing them to specific demand occupation job vacancies, match those skills to job vacancies and make a staff referral. The career specialist who made the referral, or who is case-managing the job-seeker, should plan for a formalized follow-up process, such as a 30-, 60-, 90-day cycle, developed locally with documented reassessment.

Follow-up does not necessarily require a contact call. Alerts and electronic messaging available in HiRE may be utilized.

**Workforce Ready, Not in a Demand Occupation:**

When the initial assessment indicates a job-seeker is workforce ready (using the criteria above), but not in a demand occupation (including UI recipients determined to be least likely to exhaust their UI benefits), that job-seeker shall be referred to self-service and offered assistance as needed with informational services. As defined in Informational Services, these services will include guiding the job-seeker to labor market information including jobs in demand, wage rates, education requirements, work search tools, skills and interest-matching assessments.

Career specialists should plan for robust and effective follow-up, reassessing as necessary. This is critical because continued failure to achieve employment may indicate the existence of a barrier to employment that was not identified earlier in the assessment process.

Should follow-up for any job-seeker on the workforce ready track show continued unemployment, more individualized career services may be indicated. These job seekers shall be moved to the Case Management Track.

**Case Management Track:**

Job-seekers who have poor or large gaps in their work history, limited, obsolete or unknown skills, limited education, lack credentials, lack soft skills, have significant barriers to employment or a combination of
any of these factors as well as any job-seeker determined most likely to exhaust all their UI benefits shall be considered not workforce ready.

Job-seekers who are not workforce ready shall be provided individualized career services, consisting of a minimum of a comprehensive assessment and development of an individualized employment plan (IEP) in the context of case management.

Comprehensive assessment is vital to collecting information on job-seeker barriers to employment, employment goals, knowledge skills and abilities, and proficiency in occupational knowledge. This assessment shall be done as a client-centered approach to evaluating the needs of a participant without regard to services or training program availability. The purpose is not to match the job-seeker to what is available, rather to determine job-seeker needs.

This assessment is best defined operatively as an intensive interviewing process, which includes behavioral observations and may also require the use of structured assessment tools. Other information gathered may include detailed work history, family support available, social services affiliations, offender status and a detailed education history.

Comprehensive assessment must be documented via case note(s), with regard for privacy and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) rules. It is the responsibility of local management to ensure staff is cognizant of HIPAA rules.

The comprehensive assessment is the foundation for development of an IEP, and no IEP shall be created without completing a comprehensive assessment. In many cases the comprehensive assessment will then be an ongoing process that may result in changes to the goals and objectives of the IEP.

The IEP is developed with a job-seeker to identify or create employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives and the right combination of services to assist in achieving goals and objectives. In short – “Where am I now?” “Where do I want to go?” “How will I get there?”

The IEP must include goals and objectives that are SMART (specific, measureable, attainable, realistic and time bound). A case note must accompany the IEP and must justify the plan based on the identified barrier(s) to employment.

Case management requires a regular follow-up and review or revision of the IEP until such time as the job-seeker becomes workforce ready or enters a training program. In either case, follow-up is critical, using a 30-day cycle until the job-seeker attains employment or completes training.

All IEP’s must be recorded in HiRE. The preferred method is by using the HiRE Wizard. In order to comply with this requirement when IEPs are created as hard copy only, those IEPs must be scanned into the HiRE system not later than close of business the following business day.

**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Successful implementation of the revised service delivery process depends on 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, organized labor, community-based organizations, educational institutions and
other partners. Establishment and effective operation of an ongoing and aggressive training program for both state merit and Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB)-funded staff is also critical to success.

**Point of Service Leadership:** Local Workforce Development Boards through their leadership and supervisory structure, (e.g. WDB directors, local area coordinators, site managers, except as defined in this policy), shall have full functional supervision over all state merit staff operating as a career specialist in a One-Stop Center.

d) **COORDINATION, ALIGNMENT AND PROVISION OF SERVICES TO EMPLOYERS**

Louisiana’s core program partners along with One-Stop partner programs in each of the 8 regions coordinate activities and resources through local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs), focusing on delivering regional business services and creating a positive long-term economic impact in the regions. The coordinated activities and resources are designed to provide comprehensive, high-quality services to employers to meet their current and projected workforce needs. This regional approach is appropriate for the following reasons:

- It builds strategic partnerships among businesses, training providers, community organizations and other key stakeholders in a labor market region that is designed to bolster the region’s economic competitiveness and promote systemic change to achieve ongoing benefits.
- This approach is more responsive to labor demand than solely traditional job-matching and training services because it is problem-oriented (versus program-oriented), addresses needs interdependently (versus independently) and works to understand the collective needs of business.

The Regional Business Service Team (RBST) determines the skills, recruitment and retention needs of employers, as well as the training, employment and career advancement needs of job-seekers and workers. This meeting of the needs of businesses in the region has the potential to strengthen a region’s overall economic vitality by:

- Addressing the needs of employers through an intense focus on the workforce needs within specific industry sectors and businesses over a sustained period, often concentrating on a specific occupation or set of occupations within that industry.
- Addressing the needs of workers by creating formal career paths to good jobs, reducing barriers to employment and sustaining or increasing middle-class jobs.
- Bolstering regional economic competitiveness by engaging economic development experts in workforce issues while aligning education, economic and workforce development planning.
- Engaging a broader array of key stakeholders through partnerships.
- Promoting systemic change that achieves ongoing benefits for the industry, workers and community.

**Regional Business Service Team**

The Regional Business Service Team is a partnership between core program partners and mandatory/optional One-Stop partner programs with local Workforce Development Boards that convene and provide guidance to the team. The Regional Business Service Team within each region consists of the following programs:

- Wagner-Peyser.
- Veterans.
• Adult/Dislocated Worker Youth Program.
• Louisiana Rehabilitation Services.
• Incumbent Worker Training Program.
• Rapid Response.
• WorkReady U (Adult Education)
• Other stakeholders that engage employers in the region.

The RBST meets as necessary, in order to collaborate and coordinate their focus on employers’ needs in the region. The RBST supports and aligns Business and Career Solutions Center (B&CSC) business services within each region. Below is a list of business services in the region the team provides to the employer community:

• Develop and facilitate industry or sector partnerships.
• Customized screenings and referrals of qualified participants in employer base training services to employers (e.g. on-the-job, customized and internship etc.).
• Customized services to employers, employer associations or other such organizations on employment-related issues.
• Customized recruitment/hiring events, job fairs, workshops and related services for employers (e.g., targeted hiring, new business openings, seasonal hiring and safety training).
• Human resource consultation services, such as writing/reviewing job descriptions and employee handbooks, developing performance evaluation and personnel policies and creating orientation sessions for new workers.
• Teaching job interview techniques for efficiency and compliance.
• Analyzing employee turnover, explaining labor laws to help employers comply with wage/hour and safety/health regulations.
• Providing customized labor market information for specific employers, sectors, industries or clusters.
• Increasing coordination with stakeholders to support and develop pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship opportunities.
• Providing assistance or referral for assistance in the development of registered apprenticeships.
• Creating job order listings and applicant referrals through HiRE. Providing access to Business and Career Solution Centers to develop innovative workforce investment strategies to meet the needs of the region’s employers.

e) PARTNER ENGAGEMENT WITH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

The Louisiana Workforce Investment Council (WIC) membership consists of the state leadership of all of the state’s educational institutions, including the Louisiana Community and Technical College System, the Board of Regents of Higher Education and the superintendent of education (K-12). Additionally, the Executive Directors of the Louisiana Workforce Commission and Louisiana Economic Development serve together on the WIC. The WIC provides advisory leadership, guidance and support for the innovation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) program initiatives.

As stated in Section II (C), Louisiana has developed a shared definition and framework for Career Pathways as the model 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 are embarking on a new concept to organize resources (staff, supports, etc.) around target job-seeker populations and business development using a “pathway” model that will encourage separate agencies to wrap resources, staff and supports around the customer base.
As referenced in Section II (C) Regional Business and Sector Strategies, the educational partners, particularly the Louisiana Community and Technical College System institutions, are key partners in the regional and sector strategies, providing workforce skill training and integrated work-based training to meet regional employer and economic development needs. State partners will work with local and regional workforce development boards and partners to define and build pathways appropriate to the region.

Championed by the WIC, with the support of LMI and Occupational Forecasting Conference, the Louisiana Workforce Commission’s Star Jobs ratings system was developed. The Star Jobs ratings system provides a ranking of high-demand, high-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 in collaboration with leading Louisiana academic, economic development, workforce development and industry experts. Since the inception and implementation of Star Jobs ratings, this ranking system has been utilized by educators across Louisiana at all levels. Below are a few examples:

- The Louisiana Board of Regents incorporates the Star Jobs ratings as part of its cost formula, upon which the funding formula distribution is based.
- The Louisiana Community and Technical College System uses Star Jobs ratings to guide decisions about program eliminations, modifications and additions, to direct its federal Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education funds to grant applications that will increase the supply of high-wage jobs that meet projected state workforce needs and to direct the Workforce Training Rapid Response Grant Program.
- The Department of Education indicates the Star Job rankings related to all Jump Start industry credentials, enabling school counselors to guide students to careers that promise both interesting work and well-compensated career opportunities aligned with their interests and capabilities.

f) PARTNER ENGAGEMENT WITH OTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROVIDERS

LWC provides the policy and structure for the state’s eligible training providers (ETPL), and the LWDBs are charged with aligning education and training resources in their local areas and regions to provide maximum opportunities for job-seekers to attain skills and experiences needed to obtain employment. As the LWOIA working group and LWC continue to refine and develop career pathway models, local areas will be encouraged to engage education and training partners in local model design and implementation.

g) LEVERAGING RESOURCES TO INCREASE EDUCATIONAL ACCESS

The LWC has been a catalyst for the leveraging of federal, state and local investments to expand access to workforce development programs in education and training institutions. Several workforce development regions have leveraged local and state resources to attract philanthropic investments to implement innovative targeted strategies targeting low-skill unemployed and underemployed individuals. LWC will continue to work closely with post-secondary education partners, including all Perkins postsecondary recipients, to leverage federal, state and local resources. This includes including financial aid programs and veterans (e.g. GI Bill) benefits to enhance access to educational opportunities.

It should be noted that Louisiana Community and Technical College System, as well as other public and private organizations in the state, have received millions of dollars in discretionary grants and will continue to apply to receive future discretionary grants to support workforce training services and strategies to impact the lives of targeted populations (e.g., dislocated workers, veterans, re-entry, out-of-
The governor’s vision is to improve coordination and collaboration in delivering services to eligible participants in an effort to improve upon the efficacy and effectiveness of service delivery, thereby increasing participation of the state’s those most vulnerable populations in need of workforce training and supportive services, as well as overall program outcomes.

Under the vision and leadership of Gov. John Bel Edwards, the LWC Executive Director has initiated conversations with federal and state leaders relative to maximization of current federal and state resources to enhance and expand access of low skill citizens to workforce development programs that support career pathways. LWDBs are also being challenged to convene their local partners to develop resource maps of existing resources and transformational opportunities.

**Jobs for America’s Graduates (JAG)**

Louisiana Workforce Commission/Department of Education/Jobs for America’s Graduates (JAG) Collaboration – provides Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to “at risk” youth with disabilities to decrease the number of students dropping out and ease transition from school to work. Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) is currently partnering with Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) and Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) to leverage funding for the JAG program. Through JAG, LDOE and LWC/LRS provide Pre-ETS services in twenty-seven (27) parishes, one (1) virtual school (University View Academy), one (1) community college (Southwest Louisiana Community College/J. S. Clark program) and three (3) Jefferson Parish Chamber of Commerce programs. These services reach almost 500 youth with disabilities. The JAG program provides an educational setting promoting academic and skills attainment, civic responsibility, leadership development and social awareness. Pre-ETS services provided to JAG participants include Job Exploration Counseling, Work Based Learning Experiences, Counseling on Post-Secondary Opportunities, Workplace Readiness Training and Training on Self-Advocacy. Youth with disabilities in the JAG program are encouraged to apply for Vocational Rehabilitation services through LRS after graduation.

h) IMPROVING ACCESS TO POST-SECONDARY CREDENTIALS

The WIC and IBCC have prioritized the development of articulation agreements and the reduction of duplicative processes that challenge and impede the success of Louisiana Career Pathways. Core to the implementation of Louisiana Career Pathways is the identification and development of stackable credentials that meet the needs of high-demand industries and support individual mobility from one post-secondary program to another. This includes Registered Apprenticeships and occupational training programs, and from basic education into post-secondary programs.

The foundation for Louisiana’s approach to post-secondary credentials is the development of Career Clusters at the secondary school level, these are:

- Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources
- Architecture & Construction
- Arts, A/V Technology & Communications
- Business, Management & Administration
- Education & Training
- Finance
- Government & Public Administration
- Health Science
- Hospitality & Tourism
- Human Services
• Information Technology
• Manufacturing
• Marketing, Sales & Services
• Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics
• Transportation, Distributing & Logistics

This Career Pathway approach is designed to prepare students to meet the demands of postsecondary education and the expectations of employers, in particular those representing “in demand” occupations.

These Career Clusters are designed to support a coherent and focused sequence of rigorous academic and career/technical course work, that commences in the ninth grade and will create a “pathway that leads to either a postsecondary education or credential (or series of credentials) then work.

Integral to this process is the opportunity for a participant to acquire a “portable” and “recognized” credential that they have successfully demonstrated skill competencies on a core set of content that is complete with performance standards that are based on a specific set of work-related tasks in either a single occupational area, or a cluster of related occupational areas. Louisiana currently maintains a list of state-wide certifications that are “Industry Based” and local regions have the opportunity to approve certifications that meet a local skills demand around the unique employment needs of specific regions.

i) COORDINATING WITH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Sector strategy initiatives have been developed in each of the 8 Workforce Regions of the state. LWC has industry coordinators on staff assigned to each region. Their primary roles are to engage business and industry to identify short- and long-term workforce needs, and to assist local workforce boards and One-Stop Centers with developing goals, objectives and strategies to address these needs.

Each Workforce Region has identified at least 3 of the top industries within their respective regions that have the need to fill vacancies in high-demand occupations. Star Jobs (3-5 star jobs) are the targets. These industries are identified through the use of LMI and engagement with local and regional economic development associations.

Business metrics have been created to provide a mechanism in which to measure the effectiveness of services provided to businesses in each local area and region. These metrics include overall market penetration, targeted (top industries) market penetration, employer-based training, staff referral to vacancies in demand occupations (based on 3-5 Star Jobs) and repeat business customers.

Three regions (Alexandria, Shreveport and Monroe) are currently engaged in regional sector partnerships. These strategies were initially established through a Sector Partnership National Emergency Grant (SP-NEG) the state received to develop sector strategies and provide employer-based training such as Registered Apprenticeships, on-the-job training and customized training to eligible dislocated workers.

Consultants were engaged to assist with the development of these strategies, which include engaging business and industry, economic development organizations, business associations and others. This is a business-led approach to respond to the needs of employers within specific industries driving the economy of a workforce and/or economic development region of the state. Successful strategies resulting from this effort were shared with other regions of the state to be replicated in other workforce and economic regions in Louisiana.
The Monroe and Alexandria regions have established healthcare sector partnerships while the Shreveport region has an established partnerships with the manufacturing sector. Each partnership has brought together more than thirty employers, education, economic development and workforce development entities. Similar strategies are being used to plan and launch sector partnerships in each region of the state.

LWC and local areas will also work with Louisiana Economic Development’s Fast Start Program. LED-Fast Start provides quick workforce solutions to businesses in LED’s effort to attract new businesses to the state, or retain existing businesses. Solutions include recruitment and workforce training, working with the state’s community and technical college system to develop curriculum approved by the employer(s) to produce short-term training to job candidates and helping trainees attain the skills necessary to fill jobs quickly. Local One-Stop Centers partner with Fast Start to refer job candidates for short term training, conduct targeted job fairs to connect specific job candidates to specific employers with specific job openings that need to be filled over a specified period of time.

**B. STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS AND POLICIES**

1. **THE STATE OPERATION SYSTEMS THAT WILL SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STATE’S STRATEGIES.**
   
a) **STATE OPERATING SYSTEMS THAT SUPPORT COORDINATED IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE STRATEGIES (e.g., LABOR MARKET INFORMATION SYSTEMS, DATA SYSTEMS, COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS, CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS, JOB BANKS, ETC.).**

Customer service and a focus on consumer needs for user-friendly resources in the areas of skill assessment, career planning, post-secondary training opportunities and workforce information are the highest priority. Louisiana Occupational Information System (LOIS) integration with HiRE provides a seamless delivery point for occupational and career data.

Through HiRE, LWC has maximized customer choice, providing the ability to directly enter the labor exchange process by either self-identification or through staff assistance. The system provides job-seekers with direct access to employer listings through the self-service component, as well as the ability complete skill-based resumes.

Enhancements launched in November, 2015, provided job-seekers with the ability to do business with the LWC more efficiently with online access to file appeals to unemployment insurance decisions, access real-time claim updates and the ability to correspond online rather than through postal mail.

Louisiana’s labor market information system, case management system, job bank, and internal (customer and staff) communications systems are all integrated into one system – HiRE. HiRE is administered by Geographic Solutions, Inc. (GSI). GSI is responsible for administration, development, and data management of the HiRE system. Each aforementioned functional area within HiRE has its own module for the intake and management of information (customer, labor market, job listings, etc.). This seamless coordination between these functional areas enables rapid and efficient access to different categories of information needed to assist job seekers and employers.

Louisiana’s HiRE system, as the designated state tool for job postings as well as the official job search tool Louisiana’s networking effort in the America’s Job Bank nationwide network. The HiRE system is also used for integrating job search efforts with other agencies. The raw data from HiRE contributes to the annual projections which are used for purposes of determining the industry and occupational demands of the state.
The system is additionally used as a single entry point for accessing UI benefits and job searches required through that program. MIS, in coordination and agreement with Workforce Development leadership will continue to identify opportunities to link electronic delivery of services and resources.

b) DATA – COLLECTION AND REPORTING PROCESSES USED FOR ALL PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING THOSE PRESENT IN ONE-STOP CENTERS.

Louisiana Workforce Commission’s HiRE system (Helping Individuals Reach Employment) is the principal repository for collected data. LWC’s Management of Information Systems (MIS) unit is responsible for ensuring that the data collected is accurate and timely, analyzed and presented for performance reporting.

Collected data is managed by Geographic Solutions Inc. (GSI). GSI houses the data and aggregates the data for the different USDOL program performance reporting processes for which LWC is responsible. Reporting data is delivered through a File Transfer Protocol (FTP) site to the appropriate LWC personnel in the necessary formats for submission to USDOL. LWC personnel executes any further data processing (if necessary) and submission. LWC’s Technical Support unit of its Information Technology personnel facilitates the distribution of files to and from GSI through the FTP site.

The MIS unit provides technical assistance to boards and Business and Career Solutions Center staff as it relates to data collection and reporting. Such technical assistance comprises common and program-specific requirements such as eligibility, data entry, case management, individual fund tracking and the management of providers.

As a supplement to HiRE, LWC and boards utilize a third-party vendor (Future Works) which further processes Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL) data to enable greater detail of information for analysis. This allows LWC and Boards to optimize decision making related to policy and process. In addition to producing performance data each quarter, LWC (specifically Office of Workforce Development) presents quarterly performance reports during the agency’s Quarterly Review Meetings. During this meeting, the agency’s executive staff is made aware of successes and areas needing improvement, as well as proposed plans for improvement.

2. THE STATE POLICIES THAT WILL SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STATE’S STRATEGIES (e.g., CO-ENROLLMENT POLICIES AND UNIVERSAL INTAKE PROCESSES WHERE APPROPRIATE). IN ADDITION, DESCRIBE THE STATE’S PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING GUIDELINES FOR STATE-ADMINISTERED ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS’ CONTRIBUTIONS TO A ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM, INCLUDING BENCHMARKS, AND ITS GUIDANCE TO ASSIST LOCAL BOARDS, CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIALS AND LOCAL ONE-STOP PARTNERS IN DETERMINING EQUITABLE AND STABLE METHODS OF FUNDING INFRASTRUCTURE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 121(h)(1)(B). BEGINNING WITH THE STATE PLAN MODIFICATION IN 2018 AND FOR SUBSEQUENT STATE PLANS AND STATE PLAN MODIFICATIONS, THE STATE MUST ALSO INCLUDE SUCH GUIDELINES.

3. STATE PROGRAM AND STATE BOARD OVERVIEW
   a) STATE AGENCY ORGANIZATION
The Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) interrelates with its partner agencies as illustrated in the organizational chart above.

Among the Executive Branch agencies, the lines of authority are very clear. Each agency is run by a Cabinet-level appointee, and these appointees all report to the governor. All of the cabinet members in the agencies listed above are members of the Workforce Investment Council (WIC).

All 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), whose chief executive is also 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 1 (Adult Youth and Dislocated Worker), Title III Wagner-Peyser, Community Service Block Grants (CSBG) and Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation are administered by LWC. Title II (Adult Education) is administered by LCTCS.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) are administered by the Department of Children and Family Services.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Agency/Business</th>
<th>Category</th>
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<tr>
<td>Governor John Bel Edwards</td>
<td>Governor's Office</td>
<td>Governor</td>
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<td>Executive Director Ava Dejoie</td>
<td>Louisiana Workforce Commission</td>
<td>WIOA Titles I, III, IV</td>
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<td>Secretary Don Pierson</td>
<td>Louisiana Economic Development</td>
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<td>Secretary Marketa Garner Walters</td>
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<td>One-Stop Partner TANF/SNAP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. John White</td>
<td>Department of Education</td>
<td>Secondary Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Monty Sullivan</td>
<td>Louisiana Community and Technical College System</td>
<td>WIOA Title II</td>
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<td>Dr. Joseph Rallo</td>
<td>Board of Regents</td>
<td>Higher Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secretary James &quot;Jimmy&quot; LeBlanc</td>
<td>Department of Public Safety and Corrections</td>
<td>One-Stop Partner Ex-Offender</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms. Thelma French</td>
<td>Total Community Action</td>
<td>Community-Based Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms. Peggy A. Parker</td>
<td>Allen's Electric Motors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. David St. Etienne</td>
<td>Ultimate Technical Solutions, Inc</td>
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<td>Mr. Conrad Carriere</td>
<td>DC Carriere Properties</td>
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<td>Mr. Richard Flick</td>
<td>Banner Automotive Group</td>
<td>Business and Industry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Brent W Golleher</td>
<td>LMOGA</td>
<td>Business and Industry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms. Kathy Jean Bobbs</td>
<td>Pres. &amp; CEO, Regional Health System of Acadiana</td>
<td>Business and Industry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Michael Shane Boudreaux</td>
<td>Part Owner, Juban's; Beau Soleil</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms. Melissa Mann</td>
<td>Century Link</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Buck Vandersteen</td>
<td>Exec. Dir. Louisiana Forestry Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Stephen David</td>
<td>Hancock Bank and Whitney Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Bruce Busada</td>
<td>Diesel Driving Academy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Larry Berger</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. John Patrick Mulhearn</td>
<td>Executive Director, Celtic Studios</td>
<td>Business and Industry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Robert J. &quot;Bob&quot; Lobos</td>
<td>Owner, Wolf Creek Business Growth Institute</td>
<td>Business and Industry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms. Valerie Aymond</td>
<td>Chief Resource Officer, Gilcrist Construction LLC</td>
<td>Business and Industry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Thomas A. Yura</td>
<td>BASF</td>
<td>Business and Industry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Michael P. “Mike” Palamone</td>
<td>CEO, Urban Systems Associates</td>
<td>Business and Industry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms. Sonia A. Perez</td>
<td>Pres., AT&amp;T Louisiana</td>
<td>Business and Industry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Leigh King</td>
<td>COX Cable</td>
<td>Business and Industry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Leo J. “Jim” Odom</td>
<td>Presonus</td>
<td>Business and Industry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. James Ray Barker</td>
<td>Bollinger Shipyards</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms. Susan Broussard</td>
<td>CLECO</td>
<td>Business and Industry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Todd McDonald</td>
<td>Liberty Bank</td>
<td>Business and Industry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Robert Miller</td>
<td>Governor Appointed; General Business Sector</td>
<td>Business and Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Norisha Kirts</td>
<td>NK Construction</td>
<td>Business and Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Natalie Robottom</td>
<td>President, St. John the Baptist Parish</td>
<td>Chief Elected Official</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayor Edward R Jones</td>
<td>City of Grambling</td>
<td>Chief Elected Official</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Joseph Ardoin</td>
<td>Treasurer, Local Union 1098-Baton Rouge</td>
<td>Organized Labor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Keith Brand</td>
<td>BR Electrical Apprenticeship &amp; Training Committee; Instructor for LTC</td>
<td>Organized Labor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Jason Dedon</td>
<td>AFL-CIO</td>
<td>Organized Labor</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
(2) Board Activities

Workforce Investment Council (WIC) members are Louisiana's workforce champions. They represent a cross-section of stakeholders in the development of a comprehensive, integrated workforce development and delivery system that begins with understanding the workforce needs of industry, connects Louisiana citizens to training, and links trained workers to high-wage, high-demand careers.

The Workforce Investment Council:

- Completes trainings including: ethics, sexual harassment, and board functions.
- Maintains and updates record of statewide industry-based credentials to meet skills needs.
- Promotes the development of a well-educated, highly skilled workforce.
- Works with state Office of Workforce Development to ensure policies to aid local boards.
- Reviews the reports of Workforce Development Boards to monitor the equitable distribution of workforce development resources across the state.
- Makes recommendations to the governor of geographic designations for workforce development areas.
- Directs the activities of the Occupational Forecasting Conference, responsible for overseeing state-wide and regional job-growth projections, which underpin the planning and budgeting of state and local resources.
- Oversees the Industry-Based Credential (IBC) Council, responsible for evaluating the alignment of credentials with state workforce demand for inclusion on the IBC State-Focus List, which guides training programs and other stakeholders to important occupations in the state and the industry-recognized credentials leading to those occupations.

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

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. Therefore, the state...
and local areas will be assessed based on a comparison of the actual performance level with the adjusted level of performance each quarter and annually.

The State’s review of Regional/Local Plans will contain a component regarding to how these plans support and relate to the State’s Vision, Strategies and Goals, and how they relate to realistic achievement of performance measures. More specifically, how they relate to the State’s Continuous Improvement Process. In general, this assessment contains the following components:

- Management Commitment, do they indicate an explicit commitment from all Partner Programs Leadership at the Level of “Decision Maker”?
- Do they indicate a link into the “Common Intake” model, “Co-Enrollment” Process, and Sector Based Business Engagement Effort?
- Do they include a component for developing and maintaining well trained and highly qualified operators (and contractors) providing services in all Partner Programs?
- Is there a component for evaluation of service providers?
- Is there a defined methodology for evaluating outcomes for all Partner Programs and a continuous feedback cycle for those evaluations?
- Are there mechanisms to quickly and accurately identify non-conforming actions in all sub-parts (staff, contractors, partners, supportive services, etc.)? These measurements must be both Valid (measures what it is supposed to measure) and Reliable (measures consistently).
- Do the plans contain a defined methodology for quickly and accurately addressing root causation for failures in a positive and proactive fashion?

These components mirror the State’s approach to continuous improvement and are applied to all individual and group goals and objectives.

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

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

Action: In instances when the state or a local area fails a performance measure, immediate technical assistance will be provided by the appropriate office to improve the proficiency of staff members in providing WIOA services and provide an opportunity to develop strategies to improve the program’s ability to meet performance measures.

Note: Performance evaluation thresholds listed above are subject to revision pending final approval of the WIOA regulations governing performance measures.

**Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth:**

Core Programs will be assessed, in coordination with LWDBs, One-stop Operators and Core partners/providers, through financial and administrative monitoring of all sub-recipients of funds expended under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 for Title I (Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs), Adult Education and Literacy Act, Rehabilitation Act Title I, and Wagner-Peyser Act. Other programs and activities will include, but not limited to discretionary grants such as the National
Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWG) and the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program under the Trade Act of 1974, and the Trade Adjustment Assistance Reauthorization Act of 2015. The State will provide policy guidance to each entity responsible for the administration of Core Programs.

The assessment and evaluation process will include completing annual on-site monitoring reviews of each Core Program to ensure compliance with the Uniform Administrative Requirements of WIOA Section 184(a)(4). These reviews include the appropriate administrative requirements for sub-recipients and applicable cost principles.

The assessment will ensure 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.

The State will ensure compliance with provisions in WIOA for all Core Programs as well as implement a more robust monitoring and oversight process across all levels. Comprehensive and effective monitoring is key to providing opportunities for technical assistance, training, and sharing of proven strategies and practices, which will lead to improved quality of service to job seeker and a stronger workforce.

**Adult Education:**

Programmatic/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.

**Vocational Rehabilitation:**

Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) will monitor the services provided within the guidelines of the existing corporate 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.

b) **ASSESSMENT OF ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS**

Partner agencies and Partner Programs not covered under the monitoring umbrella of the Core Programs shall be monitored in accordance with their individual governing authority and under the
general rules of federal and state fiscal compliance. The LWDB will determine the impact of any of these programs on the Common Intake and Co-enrollment process.

c) PREVIOUS ASSESSMENT RESULTS

All core programs met or exceeded performance goals, at the State level, for program years 2013 and 2014. Adult Education performed at and above the National average at the same time transforming program service delivery to English Language Learners and establishing Career Pathways.

Program years 2016 and 2017 have been adjustment periods to the new performance accountability requirements. PY16, primarily, was spend understanding the core indicators, definitions, methodologies, and the like. Data was collected and reported as well as system changes made to accommodate the new reporting criteria. At the time of this writing, PY17 measures are either being met or exceeded where data is available.

The State is determined to continue focusing on increasing and enhancing the quality of employment outcomes for participants. The forthcoming integrated data warehouse will be an instrumental tool in identifying areas of weakness at the all levels (state, regional, local level) and will identify promising practices.

d) EVALUATION

The Louisiana Workforce Investment Council (WIC) ensures public accountability by evaluating the effectiveness of the overall workforce development system. Additionally, the WIC aids in the monitoring of the effectiveness of LWDBs in meeting workforce demand. This component of the plan, is a work in progress, intended to provide both core program administrators, WIOA program partners, and the LWDBs the opportunity to provide input to an evaluation matrix.

5. DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS FOR CORE PROGRAMS
a) FOR TITLE I PROGRAMS

(1) Youth activities in accordance with WIOA section 128(b)(2) or (b)(3),

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

(2) Adult and training activities in accordance with WIOA section 133(b)(2) or (b)(3),

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

(3) Dislocated worker employment and training activities in accordance with WIOA section 133(b)(2) and based on data and weights assigned.

Unemployment concentration: 35 percent
The 12-month average for the most recently completed October-September fiscal year will be used showing the unrounded number of persons unemployed by parish within each LWDA.

Insured unemployed without earnings: 20 percent
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.

Exhaustees (long-term unemployed): 25 percent
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.

Declining industries: 15 percent
Since data on all parishes from the suggested CES Program do not exist, covered employment from the ES-202 Program was used to identify industries that showed a decline in employment for the four-year period ending in March of the prior fiscal year. Decreases in employment for all industries within a parish were totaled and that figure was used toward the allocation of funds for that parish and LWDA.

Farmer/rancher economic hardship: 5 percent
Numerical difference between the last two Census of Agriculture to determine decline in hiring farm workers.

LWC will evaluate alternative formulas for future allocations in alignment with WIOA sec 133 (b)(2)(B) to ensure that the most appropriate information that is available is incorporated.

b) FOR TITLE II
   (1) Multi-year grants or contracts
   (2) Ensure direct and equitable access

c) TITLE IV VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

This is not applicable in Louisiana since blind services are operated within the same agency.

6. PROGRAM DATA
   a) DATA ALIGNMENT AND INTEGRATION
Effective November 9, 2015, the Louisiana Workforce Commission’s HiRE system became a comprehensive system that fully integrates workforce development with unemployment insurance. Not only does this aid the job-seeker/claimant in managing their unemployment insurance benefits, job-search functions, and case management, it also enhances services provided to employers by allowing them to manage unemployment claims as well as utilize recruiting features within the system.

In 2010, Title IV’s Vocational Rehabilitation services moved to LWC’s oversight, specifically under the Office of Workforce Development. Since the transition, Louisiana Rehabilitation Services continues to use the AWARE system (Accessible Web-based Activity and Reporting Environment). AWARE updates have been implemented to enable the VR program to capture required data elements for performance reporting and an MOU was completed to import Unemployment Insurance wage records into AWARE for more accurate reporting.

As the lead state agency, LWC hosts regularly scheduled meetings with the administrators of the core partner programs. Louisiana’s Office of Technology Systems (OTS) is a key player in the development of a data warehouse. This data warehouse will be used to collect common data points as it relates to performance, and will allow each partner agency to extract data for reporting requirements. At the time of this writing, each core partner program has illustrated its process of data collection and reporting structure as well as evaluating the common data points to include in the new data warehouse structure. Data sharing agreements are being reviewed and/or written to ensure a seamless delivery of information.

Having a fully integrated data warehouse offering a full case management system is a long term goal. However, the construction of such a system will be a phased approach. Phase 1 will introduce all common data points, common intake and meet minimum reporting requirements. In Phase 2, the data warehouse will begin to incorporate non-required partner data and feature enhancements such as management of training providers. With this phase individuals will be exposed to all partner services and referred to appropriate services based on intake information.

Louisiana currently produces reports as required by the Workforce Investment Act 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 also a WRIS member and imports out-of-state wage data for its participants from other WRIS member states and territories.

Unemployment insurance is integrated within our workforce development system via HiRE for ETA programs. HiRE’s system administrator, Geographic Solutions Inc., aggregates data from the aforementioned sources in the required WIASRD format for WIA reporting. Geographic Solutions will continue to assist LWC in the aggregation and preparation of data for WIOA reporting.

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. 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
(4) Describe the State’s plans to develop and produce the reports required under section 116, performance accountability system. (WIOA section 116(d)(2)).

b) ASSESSMENT OF PARTICIPANTS’ POST-PROGRAM SUCCESS
c) USE OF UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (UI) WAGE RECORD DATA
d) PRIVACY SAFEGUARDS

7. PRIORITY OF SERVICE FOR VETERANS

The state shall provide priority of service for veterans in accordance with 38 U.S.C. § 4215(b). The term “priority of service” means, with respect to any qualified job training program, that a covered person 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 services to a covered person before a non-covered person, or, if resources are limited, giving access to such services to a covered person instead of a non-covered person.

Priority starts with the first One-Stop Career Center (OSCC) member that comes in contact with the veteran or eligible person. During the reception process, a series of questions identifies veteran or eligibility status. Qualified veterans and/or qualified spouses are provided services prior to other customers and an initial assessment is completed by the first available OSCC staff member. If during the initial assessment it is determined that the veteran has an SBE or is a member of another special category, the veteran is immediately referred to a DVOP specialist.

The state provides priority of service in accordance with TEGL 05-03. When a veteran 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 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 assists them with their educational and literacy needs.

Veterans receive priority for employment and job training opportunities available through WIOA funding, on-the-job training, skills development training and youth training contracts. Veterans can locate training opportunities through 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 meet the eligibility criteria, their training costs are paid by the WIOA program or through individual training accounts. Veterans take priority in instances of training fund shortages. LVER staff and other OSCC staff identify jobs and training opportunities specifically tailored for veterans, as they promote veterans as potential employees. These priority services are made available and provided to veterans, transitioning service members, Chapter 31 veterans, Native American veterans and other groups targeted for special consideration, including difficult-to-serve veterans and veterans with barriers to employment.

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 OSCC 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 eligible 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.
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 Workforce Commission (LWC) is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and access to all programs, services and facilities. Each One-Stop Career Center should utilize the one-stop disability access checklist provided by the United States Department of Labor to self-evaluate its current level of accessibility.

With support of the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) grant (2012-2015), LWC worked to ensure the physical, communication and programmatic accessibility of all One-Stop Career Centers by conducting specialized training for all center staff on topics including accessibility for all, disability etiquette and awareness, and identifying and assisting job-seekers with hidden disabilities. LWC will continue to maintain these investments in staff training and technology to make certain One-Stop Career Center staff serve adult job-seekers with disabilities effectively.

LWC has incorporated accessibility criteria as part of the One-Stop certification policy criteria in collaboration with the Workforce Investment Council, local boards and CEOs. Additionally, all One-Stop Centers will be monitored onsite annually to ensure compliance with this requirement.

9. ADDRESSING THE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY.

The State encourages local workforce development areas to work with partners—including non-traditional partners such as faith based and community based organizations to identify resources for bilingual assistance in providing services. In addition, future staff recruitment efforts should considered inclusion of second language skills in job descriptions. Basic informational collateral materials describing basic program services should be made available in languages that reflect the make-up of the citizens in the community.

Currently the HiRE case management system is available in Spanish. “Google Translate” has also been added to the HIRE system.

IV. COORDINATION WITH STATE PLAN PROGRAMS

At an Oct. 27, 2014 meeting, the leadership of LWC, DCFS and LCTCS agreed that an inter-agency team should lead the development of the combined state plan. This team operated according to the protocols of LWC’s Agency Initiative Management (AIM) office. The AIM team was tasked with the development of the combined state plan and with the following objectives:

- Develop an inter-agency workforce strategy and high-level implementation plan for the state.
- Divide the state into common regions.
- Create a plan to reach high-risk populations and locations.
- Perform asset mapping throughout the state to coordinate and optimize resources.
- Refine the list of eligible training providers.
• Define the flow of job-seekers from entry points in any of these agencies through:
   A series of assessments, including employment needs and eligibility for services in any agency.
   The provision of essential services to enroll job-seekers in training and/or employment.
   Placement in 3-, 4- or 5-Star Jobs with good wages, existing openings and solid career prospects.

The deliverables developed by the inter-agency AIM team were the road map for state and local areas to implement WIOA service delivery, including all core programs and any other activities and programs the agencies deem necessary.

The team formed by LWC, DCFS and LCTCS will develop a process to identify, assess, train and place job-seekers quickly and efficiently by aligning their federal funding and programs. The goal of this partnership is an efficient and effective service delivery model.

Factors that should be kept in mind while developing this process are:
• Which agencies or programs should/must co-locate? How will the infrastructure and technology costs be spread among the collaborating agencies?
• How will WIOA affect the current field office format for DCFS and LWC?
• How will the state support access to services as outlined in WIOA, making Temporary Assistance for Needy Families mandatory partners? Must these partners be co-located?
• Forecasting data for Louisiana will be used to aid in local and regional coordination. Should forecasting data drive the regional and local plans? ... and if so, how?
• How will the state benefit from the addition of other non-core program partners in this collaboration? (e.g. Department of Corrections, Department of Veterans Affairs, universities, Louisiana Department of Education (K-12), Louisiana Department of Revenue, Louisiana Economic Development).

Interagency AIM Team Structure
State Leadership, Governance and Compliance (Strategic)

- Develop a “Combined State Plan” which includes the six core programs, plus one or more optional programs which promote a shared understanding of the workforce needs of the state and a comprehensive strategy for addressing those needs.
- Align core and other programs in a manner that supports a comprehensive in-demand, job-driven workforce system.
- Guide the implementation and continuous improvement of the workforce development system (addressing alignment, career pathways, sector partnerships, and coordination between partners and local areas).
- Identify and disseminate best practices in priority populations.
- Develop strategies for technological improvements.
- Streamline statewide workforce and labor market information systems.

State Leadership, Governance and Compliance (Operational)

- Develop a plan to integrate intake, case management and reporting systems across key programs.
- Develop policies to promote partnerships, collaboration, integration, and alignment of WIOA programs and activities at the state and local levels.
- Develop policy establishing local board certification, to the extent the local board has ensured that workforce investment activities carried out in the local area have enabled the local area to meet the corresponding performance accountability measures and achieve sustained fiscal integrity.
- Develop policy criteria for certification of One-Stop Centers.
- Develop strategies to support staff training and awareness across the workforce development system and its programs.

State Leadership, Governance and Compliance (Compliance)

- Develop comprehensive state performance and accountability measures to assess core program effectiveness.
- Establish guidelines for determining partners' contributions to infrastructure funds for the One-Stop system in the event that a local area fails to reach agreement.

Local Leadership and Governance (Strategic)

- Develop strategies to continuously improve and strengthen the workforce development system through innovation in, and alignment and improvement of, employment, training and education programs to promote economic growth.
- Develop regional plans that align with the state’s strategic and operational vision and goals outlined in the Combined State Plan.
- Develop effective regional industry and sector partnerships that support employer utilization of the local workforce development system.
• Align workforce investment, education and economic development systems (addressing career pathways, sector partnerships and coordination between partners and local areas).
• Identify and promote best practices for meeting the needs and serving employers, workers and job-seekers/priority populations.

Local Leadership and Governance (Operational)
• Increase access and opportunities (particularly for those identified as priority populations).
• Provide workers with skills and credentials to secure and advance in employment with family-sustaining wages and to provide America’s employers with skilled workers.
• Improve the structure and delivery of services to better address the employment and skills needs and improve the prosperity of workers and employers.
• Develop strategies for using technology to maximize the accessibility and effectiveness of the local workforce development system.

Local Leadership and Governance (Compliance)
• Align local board membership with members that possess optimum policy-making authority in the organizations they represent and have the skills and practical knowledge to contribute fully to the strategic vision of the local area’s workforce system.
• Establish bylaws, consistent with state policy, that help improve operations of the local board.

Communications/Stakeholders
• Develop a communications/marketing plan that encompasses all working groups.
• Initiate a stakeholder analysis.
• Identify communication needs and stakeholder needs.
• Identify partners to collaboratively develop and effectively communicate clear guidance and direction that aligns state economic development, education and workforce system policies.
• Develop strategies that improve public awareness and recognition of the One-Stop system to help job-seekers and employers readily access services.

Eligible Service/Training Providers
• Establish eligibility procedures to ensure the accountability, quality and labor-market relevance of programs or training services that receive funds through WIOA Title I-B.
• Ensure that qualified providers offering a wide variety of demand job-driven training programs are available to participants, including eligible providers with expertise in assisting individuals with disabilities and eligible providers with expertise in assisting adults in need of adult education and literacy activities.
• Establish a mechanism to share eligible training providers under Title II and IV across core program and partners.

Performance and Data Management
• Develop strategies and policies that align technology and data systems across One-Stop partner programs to enhance service delivery and improve efficiencies in reporting and performance accountability measures.

• Develop effective on-going training and dissemination of information practices across core programs that promote quality and accuracy of data.

• Develop methods of reporting performance of the workforce system that promote transparency and accountability to all stakeholders.

Service Delivery and Infrastructure

• Enhance and streamline operations through the integration of customer intake, case management, reporting and fiscal and management accountability systems of One-Stop partners.

• Increase access and opportunities to the workforce system, particularly for those with barriers to employment, both physical and virtual.

• Develop innovative workforce services and strategies for area employers that include career pathways, skills upgrading, apprenticeship and other effective initiatives for meeting the needs of area employers and workers.

• Ensure equitable funding of services and infrastructure costs of the One-Stop delivery system.

• Strengthen professional development of providers and workforce professionals.

Other Collaborative Activities

A Louisiana Workforce Symposium was held on December 15-16, 2015 in Baton Rouge. The two-day event spotlighted tools to help workforce, education, labor and other organizations sharpen their effectiveness under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

The two-day event coincided with the Workforce Investment Council meeting which provided the opportunity to network, share best practices and hear inspiring stories of success in building an outstanding workforce across Louisiana.

Throughout 2015, many partner statewide events have included presentations on WIOA. These opportunities to coordinate in statewide events will continue and grow in order to maximize collaboration.

V. COMMON ASSURANCES

The state plan must include assurances that:

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<th>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. Compliance with this requirement is evidenced through Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Board Composition and Certification Policy (OWD 4-11); State and Local Board members have signed a conflict-of-interest statement as required by state law.</th>
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Louisiana WIOA Combined State Plan  [Add/View Comments]
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. The state assures compliance with this requirement as evidenced through State Law Louisiana Revised Statutes 42:11-42:28, Workforce Investment Council (WIC) by-laws and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Board Composition and Certification Policy (OWD 4-11).

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.

   The Louisiana Workforce Commission oversaw the development of the Louisiana Combined State Plan. Representatives from each of the core programs assisted in writing the Combined State Plan. Additionally, a team of individuals representing each of the core programs met regularly during the drafting of the plan to allow appropriate input and guidance from all partners. All core program partners were given the opportunity to review and comment on the draft plan prior to it being posted for public comment to ensure the plan meets the needs of the populations served by each program.

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 administering the core programs, required One-Stop partners, 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. The Unified or Combined State Plan is available and accessible to the general public.

   The Workforce Investment Council (WIC) director was part of the WIOA leadership team that provided input into the state plan along with members of the WIC participated on various committees that also provided input into the plan. Also, a presentation to provide updates on the state plan was given to the WIC in their June and September meetings.

   The state plan will provide an opportunity to comment on the plan by the WIC members, Chief Elected Officials, businesses, labor organizations, institutions of higher education, the entities responsible for planning or administering core partners, required One-Stop partners and other stakeholders.

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.

   The state assures that all fiscal control and accounting procedures are in place to ensure proper disbursement of and accounting for all WIOA Title I funds to carry out the workforce investment activities for the respective programs.

6. The state has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with uniform administrative requirements in this Act, including that the state will annually monitor local areas to ensure compliance and otherwise take appropriate action to secure compliance with the uniform administrative requirements under WIOA Section 184(a)(3).

   The state assures compliance with this requirement as evidenced through Financial and Programmatic Monitoring for Workforce Innovation Worker (WIOA) Title I, the National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG) and the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Policy (OWD 4-12).

7. The state has taken the appropriate action to be in compliance with WIOA section 188, Nondiscrimination,
as applicable.

As evidenced through Louisiana’s Employment Discrimination Law found within Louisiana’s revised statutes at R.S. 23:301, et seq., the state assures compliance with this requirement. The state will issue a policy that aligns with the proposed rule for implementation of the Non-discrimination and Equal Opportunity Provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

8. The federal funds received to carry out a core program will not be expended for any purpose other than for activities authorized with respect to such funds under that core program. The state assures that its core program funding, administered by the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) and the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS), will be expended only for activities authorized under each of the respective core programs, which allows for cooperation across the programs.

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. The LWC and LCTCS administer the core programs and assure that they will pay their appropriate share of the costs of carrying out WIOA Section 116.

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). The state will issue One-Stop certification policies that ensure the physical and programmatic accessibility of all One-Stop Centers with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) to assure compliance.

11. Service providers have a referral process in place for directing veterans with significant barriers to employment (SBE) to DVOP services, when appropriate. The state assures compliance with this requirement as evidenced through Veterans Policy (OWD 4-13).

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. The state assures compliance with this requirement as evidenced through Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Eligibility Policy (OWD 2-24).

VI. PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR CORE PROGRAMS

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES UNDER TITLE 1-B

A. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

1. REGIONS AND LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREAS

a) IDENTIFY THE REGIONS AND THE LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREAS DESIGNATED IN THE STATE
The Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act of 2014 calls for realigned workforce, education and economic development systems. One of the cornerstones of this legislation is to define common regions across multiple state agencies, most notably workforce, education and social assistance programs.

The LWC’s Research and Statistics division developed a report based on seven of the eight factors proposed in the new legislation including: population centers, commuting patterns, industrial composition, location quotient, local labor market conditions, accessibility of community colleges and geographic boundaries.

The following map illustrates 8 workforce regions in Louisiana. Within the 8 regions are 15 local workforce development areas (LWDAs). Previously, there were 18 LWDAs under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). Four of the 18 boards were either merged or redesigned as a single local area under WIOA.

LWDAs 82 (Morehouse, Union and West Carroll) and 83 (Caldwell, East Carroll, Franklin, Madison, Richland and Tensas parishes) were merged after recommendation of the WIC at its June 15, 2015 meeting and the governor’s approval of the recommendation on July 14, 2015.

Under WIOA, local LWDAs 50 (Allen Beauregard and Vernon parishes) and 51 (Cameron, Calcasieu and Jefferson Davis parishes) requested to be re-designated as a single local area within Region 5 in accordance with WIOA Section 106(b)(4). At its September 15, 2015 meeting, the WIC approved the request of LWDAs 50 and 51 to recommend re-designation to the governor. The LWC executive director, as designee of the governor, approved the re-designation recommendation on September 29, 2015.

On September 14, 2016 Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards re-designated Local Workforce Investment Areas 40 and 41 into a single area which abolished Local Workforce Development Board #41 and added Lafayette Parish to Local Workforce Investment Area #40 which also includes the Parishes of Acadia, Evangeline, Iberia, St. Landry, St. Martin and Vermillion. All other local areas were approved for initial designation under WIOA and their boards have been subsequently certified by OWD.
b) Describe the process 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 section 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.

As stated in WIOA section 106, the Governor shall approve a request made for initial designation by any local area if, during PY 12 and PY 13, the local area:

- Was designated as a local area under WIA.
- Performed successfully.
- Sustained fiscal integrity.

Performed Successfully: A local area has achieved at least 80% of their negotiated local performance goal on each performance measure for PYs 2012-13 and 2013-14 (WIOA Section 106(e)(1) OWD 2-8 Sanction Policy).

Sustained Fiscal Integrity: The local area has not been found in violation of one or more of the following during PY 12 and PY 13:

- 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 requirement. 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).

Initial designations were effective July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2017. Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs) had to apply for initial designation using the process included in this policy. LWDAs that wanted to modify their then current geographical boundaries were eligible to apply under the new structure.

A subsequent designation will be effective February 20, 2018. However, during the initial designation period, local areas should have planned and prepared to meet the WIOA requirements for subsequent designation (i.e., perform successfully, sustain fiscal integrity, and in the case of a local area in a planning
region, meet the regional planning requirements in WIOA Section 106(c)(1)). Additionally, local areas should have planned to meet the new Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Omni-Circular regulations which apply to new awards and additional funding (funding increments) to existing awards made after December 26, 2014 (i.e., the WIOA Title I Youth allocations made available April 1, 2015 and all subsequent allocations).

Initial Local Area Designation Application Process

In order to request initial designation, the local Chief Elected Official (CEO) must follow one the applicable processes noted below:

Existing Local Areas
Complete the Existing Local Area Application for Initial Local Area Designation Program Year 2015-16.

Modified Local Areas
Complete the Modified Local Area Application for Initial Local Area Designation Year 2015-16. A local area that is considering local-area modification as part of its initial designation application can include: two or more areas proposing to merge into a new combined single local area or a local area that will be expanded to include part or parts of another current local area.

If the LWDA consists of more than one parish, an updated WIOA Consortium Agreement between all CEOs in the parishes must be submitted along with the application.

The local CEO(s) should have submit the completed application to the LWC/OWD no later than 5:00 p.m., June 23, 2015 to:

Mail/Hand Deliver: Louisiana Workforce Commission
Office of Workforce Development
1001 N. 23rd St.
Baton Rouge, LA. 70804

Assessment of the Application for Initial Designation

Once a completed application was received, the staff from the LWC/OWD verified the information provided in the application and issued a determination as to whether to recommend approval or denial of the application to the Governor.

The local CEO were notified in writing by June 30, 2015 regarding the approval or denial of its initial designation application. If approved, the initial designation was effective July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2017. If denied, the local CEO may contest the decision using the appeal process below.
c) PROVIDE THE APPEALS PROCESS REFERRED TO IN SECTION 106(B)(5) OF WIOA RELATING TO DESIGNATION OF LOCAL AREAS.

Appeals Process for Initial Designation

In accordance with Section 106 of WIOA, 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 for appeal must be sent by certified mail, return receipt, to the Louisiana Workforce Commission, Attention: Office of Workforce Development P.O. Box 94094 Baton Rouge, La. 70804-9094. 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 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. Appeals must be submitted by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the Secretary, U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, DC 20210, Attention: Assistant Secretary, Employment and Training Administration. A copy of the appeal must be simultaneously provided to the State Board.

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.

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

The State and LWDAs shall continue to negotiate local funding agreements as previously done under WIA for PY 2016. Local funding agreements must satisfy the requirements of section 121(h) of WIOA in PY 2017. The State will develop policy which shall contain an appeals process for the allocation of One-Stop Center infrastructure funding to become effective for PY 2017. The policy shall also include the State infrastructure funding mechanism to be implemented in the event that a LWDA fails to reach consensus on funding methods.

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

REQUIRED STATEWIDE EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES- ADULT, DISLOCATED WORKER, YOUTH PROGRAMS

It shall be the policy of the State to use funds reserved by the Governor, as described in WIOA sections 128(a) and 133(b), regardless of whether the funds were allotted as Youth, Adult, or Dislocated Worker Formula Funds, to achieve the following statewide activities:

- Provide assistance to state entities and agencies, local areas, and one stop partners in carrying out the activities described in the combined state plan, including the coordination and alignment of data systems used to carry out the requirement of WIOA.
- Provide assistance to local areas for carrying out the regional planning and service delivery efforts required under sec. 106(c) of WIOA.
- Provide assistance to local areas by providing information on, and support for, the effective development, convening, and implementation of industry sector partnerships.
- Provide assistance to local areas, one stop operators, one stop partners, and eligible providers, including the development and training of staff, which may include the development and training of staff to provide opportunities for individuals with barriers to employment to enter in-demand industry sectors or occupations and nontraditional occupations, the development of exemplary program activities, and the provision of technical assistance to local areas that fail to meet local performance accountability measures described in sec. 116(c) of WIOA.
- Disseminating the State list of eligible providers of training services, including eligible providers of nontraditional training services and eligible providers of apprenticeship programs registered under the National Apprenticeship Act of 1937.
- Disseminate information identifying eligible providers of on-the-job training (OJT), customized training, incumbent worker training (IWTP), internships, paid or unpaid work experience opportunities, or transitional jobs.
- Disseminate information on effective outreach to, partnerships with, and services for, businesses.
- Disseminate information on effective service delivery strategies to serve workers and job seekers.
- Disseminate performance information and information on the cost of attendance including tuition and fees, for participants in applicable training programs on the Eligible Training Provider’s List (ETPL) with recognized post-secondary credentials, as well as OJT and IWTP.
- Disseminate information on physical and programmatic accessibility, in accordance with sec. 188 of WIOA relative to nondiscrimination, if applicable, and the American with Disabilities Act of 1990 for individuals with disabilities.
- Conduct evaluations of State Programs, in coordination with evaluations of programs and activities carried out by the U.S. Secretary of Labor.
- Disseminate a list of providers of youth workforce investment activities eligible to receive competitive, or sole source, grants and contracts for training with credentials for youth.
- Provide re-designation assistance to local areas.
- Provide assistance in the development of Regional Plans.
- Operate a fiscal and management accountability information system (MIS) to manage, track, and report primary indicators of performance for Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker Programs.
- Conduct continuous, and at least annually, monitoring and oversight of activities carried out by sub-recipients of WIOA funding to conform to the Uniform Administrative Requirements (UAR).
• Provide additional assistance to local areas that have high concentrations of eligible youth

ALLOWABLE STATEWIDE EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES (Discretionary Funds)

This policy allows the State to use funds not more than 15% of the amount of WIOA formula funding allotted for Adult, Youth and Dislocated Workers, reserved by the Governor, and administered by the Executive Director, or her designee, to provide for additional statewide employment and training activities under WIOA. These may include the following:

• Developing strategies for effectively serving individuals with significant barriers to employment and for coordinating programs and services among one stop partners
• Implementing innovative programs and strategies designed to meet the needs of all employers, including small employers, in the State, which programs and strategies may include IWTP, customized training, sector and industry cluster strategies and implementation of industry or sector partnerships, and career pathway programs
• The development or identification of education and training programs that respond to real-time labor market analysis, utilize direct assessment and prior learning assessment to measure and provide credit for prior knowledge, skills, competencies, and experiences, evaluate such skills and competencies for adaptability, ensure credits are portable and stackable for more skilled employment, and accelerates course or credential completion
• Implementing programs to increase the number of individuals training for and placed in nontraditional employment
• Carrying out activities to facilitate remote access to services
• Supporting the provision of career services in the one stop delivery system in the State
• Activities to improve coordination of employment and training activities with child support services
• Activities in the corrections system that assist ex-offenders in re-entering the workforce
• Activities consisting of development and dissemination of workforce and labor market information
• Conducting research and demonstration projects related to meeting the employment and education needs of adults and dislocated workers
• Implementing promising services for workers and businesses, which may include providing support for education, training, skill upgrade, and statewide networking for employees to become workplace learning advisors and maintain proficiency in carrying out activities associated with such advising
• Developing and disseminating common intake procedures and related items, including registration processes, materials, or software
• Providing technical assistance to local areas that are implementing pay-for-performance contract strategies, which technical assistance may include providing assistance with data collection, meeting data entry requirements, identifying levels of performance, and conducting evaluations of such strategies
• Research related to meeting the education and employment needs of youth
• Demonstration projects related to meeting the education and employment needs of youth
• Supporting the development of alternative, evidence-based programs and other activities that enhance the choices available to eligible youth and encourage
• Supporting financial literacy, including the ability of youth program participants to create household budgets, initiate savings plans, and make informed financial decisions about education, retirement, home ownership, wealth building, or other savings goals
Supporting activities that address the particular financial literacy needs on non-English speakers, including providing the support through the development and distribution of multi-lingual financial literacy and education materials; and

Providing technical assistance to, as appropriate, local boards, chief elected officials, one stop operators, one stop partners, and eligible providers, in local areas, which provision of technical assistance shall include the development and training of staff, the development of exemplary program activities, the provision of technical assistance to local areas that fail to meet local performance accountability measures, and the provision of technology to facilitate remote access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system in the State.

b) **DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE INTENDS TO USE GOVERNOR’S SET ASIDE FUNDING.** 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.

The goal of Louisiana’s Rapid Response unit is to quickly mobilize resources to minimize the adverse impact on companies, affected workers and communities that are associated with a job loss. Rapid Response services expedite the process of obtaining information about where new jobs can be found and training, education and/or supportive services that facilitate re-employment as quickly as possible.

Pursuant to WIOA section 134 (a)(2)(A), the governor shall reserve not more than 25 percent of WIOA Dislocated Worker funding to carry out statewide rapid response activities. These statewide rapid response activities shall include:

- provision of rapid response activities, carried out in local areas by the State, or by an entity designated by the State, working in conjunction with local boards and the chief elected officials for the local areas; and
- provision of additional assistance to local areas that experience disasters, mass layoffs, or plant closings, or other events that precipitate substantial increases in the number of unemployed individuals, carried out in local areas by the State, working in conjunction with the local boards and the chief elected officials for the local areas.
- The State’s Rapid Response activities will include, but are not limited to the following:
- Immediate contact with the employer, representatives of the affected works and the local community, which may include an assessment of the layoff plans and the schedule for reemployment orientation sessions.
- The team provides customized transition services and assistance. These services are provided at the job site, prior to the layoff and are offered at times convenient for the employer and affected workers.

Companies and individuals not covered and/or specifically addressed in the WARN Act are also eligible and provided services through the Rapid Response unit.

Layoff-aversion strategies are the first line of defense. The Rapid Response unit provides companies with industry-specific strategies that have been proven to avert layoffs and closures. Additionally, the
Rapid Response unit will quickly convene stakeholders to examine and begin initial implementation of layoff-aversion activities.

These activities and services include, but are not limited to:

- Incumbent worker training, including employer loan programs for employee skill upgrading; and
- Linkages with economic development activities at the federal, state and local levels, including federal Department of Commerce programs and available state and local business retention and recruitment activities.

c) IN ADDITION, 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. Rapid Response is a critical component of the state’s disaster response and recovery plan and provides services such as:

- Filing for Disaster Unemployment Insurance.
- Recovery job placement.
- Assistance in accessing other supportive services.

Rapid Response mobile units function as offices on wheels. In the event of a disaster resulting in a job loss or other interruption in employment, the mobile units are deployed. The units run on generators and are equipped with computers and Internet access. The units can also be deployed to remote locations or to regions where offices may have been destroyed.

d) DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE PROVIDES EARLY INTERVENTION (E.G., RAPID RESPONSE) TO WORKER GROUPS ON WHOSE BEHALF A TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE (TAA) PETITION HAS BEEN FILED. (SECTION 134(A)(2)(A).) THIS DESCRIPTION MUST INCLUDE HOW THE STATE DISSEMINATES BENEFIT INFORMATION TO PROVIDE TRADE-AFFECTED 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 TRADE-AFFECTED 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.

LWC has a policy requiring co-enrollment into WIOA services for Trade affected workers receiving services under Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA). Co-enrolling (or multi-enrolling) TAA participants aligns resources and supports development of clear plans for integrated service strategies necessary to effectively and efficiently assist the Trade-affected workers in transition.
Upon receipt of a valid WARN notification, and LWC determines the lay-warrants a public announcement, notices are disseminated to personnel identified within the WARN notification network. To ensure timeliness, the State’s Rapid Response team, begins intervention efforts within 48 hours of a layoff notification. To better meet local need, Rapid Response coordinators are located in each region of the state to lead and manage activities, and to provide customized responses to businesses and workers within their regions. The Rapid Response Regional Coordinator makes initial contact with the employer and gathers information regarding the cause of the layoff, demographics of the affected workers, immediate needs of the workers, etc.

LWC has activated cross-program strategic planning and service integration (TAA, Dislocated Worker, and Rapid Response) by providing core and intensive services through the Rapid Response unit and by co-enrolling TAA certified participants in need of training in WIOA and TAA. The TAA Statewide Coordinator notifies the Rapid Response Statewide Coordinator whenever a new petition is filed to ensure that Rapid Response services are provided.

The Trade unit organizes orientation sessions for employees who were affected by Trade when there is an active petition in the Trade program. The state also provides guidance to Local Boards to develop strategies and policies to provide progressive levels of intervention for job-seekers. Using information collected through early intervention, WIOA staff initiate enrollment of eligible laid-off employees for case management at One-Stop Centers statewide. All eligible dislocated workers are provided a full range of core, intensive, training and other individually appropriate local partner services.

To accommodate worker schedules and enable more employees to access services every effort is made to negotiate on-site services and paid time-off. When possible, Worker Transition Centers are established on-site. Statistics have proven that when services are on-site and during company time it increases participation, morale, while maintaining productivity. The Work Test is provided throughout the interface of staff with unemployment insurance claimants, not just during the eligibility review process. In both daily re-employment (of claimants) efforts and during the eligibility review process, daily notification of work test issues are provided to the UI adjudication staff for follow-up.

Early intervention services that include orientation; initial assessment of skill levels, aptitudes and abilities; the provision of labor market information; job-search assistance and financial management workshops continue to be a priority for workers in the TAA program. Once trade-impacted employees are certified, local-merit staff at the BCSC approves and enter the TAA program budget obligations and expenditure records in the HiRE system and complete the enrollment of these participants in TAA training.

Certification of a dislocated worker for TAA includes determining eligibility by matching the laid-off employee to the USDOL-certified petition and the employer’s laid-off list, as well as approval of the individual using the six TAA criteria for eligibility to be placed in training along with other steps. The TAA criteria requires assessing the emotional, spiritual, financial and intellectual abilities of the trade-impacted worker, to demonstrate the individual’s qualification to undertake, complete and benefit from the planned training. Supporting the assessment are testing tools (SAGE, TABE, WorkKeys, etc.) administered at the local BCSC level. If the assessment identifies a TAA-certified participant’s need for adult education or remedial services, these programs can be offered by local-merit staff. The assessment tool also can be used to identify education gaps and to pinpoint work-related aptitudes and interests. Approval for TAA
training services and selection of a training method or program is based on matching these factors to the participant for appropriate training for a demand occupation.

B. ADULT DISLOCATED WORKERS PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

1. ALTERNATIVE TRAINING MODELS

The State will maximize Work-Based Training program models including on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, registered apprenticeship, transitional jobs (Work Experience), and customized training as part of its training strategy. These models are designed to ensure high quality training for both participants and employers. The Louisiana Work-Based Training model has as its goal to meet job seeker as well as employer needs.

In order to enhance the success of the Work-Based Training program's model, Louisiana will engage partners in the development of strategies, frameworks, and models to insure successful implementation of work-and-learn experiences. The State will strategize to elevate the importance of work-and-learn models. Through a partnership with many employers to mitigate employer challenges as well as to determine best practices, the State will be able to generate employer support for broader participation statewide.

Furthermore, job seekers will be able to establish connections directly with potential employers by using this evidence-based approach to career readiness. The State will additionally provide guidance for the field through policies, standardized procedures, statewide training, and technical assistance.

Work-Based Training models will utilize work-based learning to fill regional business needs for skilled employees, thereby increasing employee earning potential and the business's bottom line.

To ensure quality in work-based training, local Workforce Development Areas are expected to demonstrate evidence of the following criteria:

- Occupation training for in-demand jobs (STAR JOBS)
- Clear program goals
- Outreach implementation to program participants and employers regarding OJT opportunities; including leveraging various partners' relationships with employers
- Standardizing and streamlining forms, including contracts and training plan templates in each region
- Clear roles and responsibilities for trainers, worksite supervisors and support personnel
- Assessments to identify existing skills of individual learners
- Reasonable training length reflecting both the complexity of the job and skills of the trainee
- Specified methods of instruction
- Assurance that participants are job-ready prior to work-based training opportunities
- Established evaluation processes
- Clear expectations and feedback to assess progress toward achieving learning/skills acquisition goals.

These Work-Based Training programs will better prepare adults and dislocated workers for an economy that demands that workers have career knowledge and skills, are adaptable to change, and are prepared for lifelong learning. The strategy of Work-Based Training will utilize community partners in an effort to provide job seekers with the opportunity to learn the necessary workplace skills required for success in the new economy.
2. REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP

Under WIA, many local workforce investment boards were reluctant to support registered apprenticeship with workforce funding for a multitude of reasons, including concerns regarding perceived performance implications. With the new provisions in WIOA that clearly support the expansion and incorporation of registered apprenticeship as an evidence-based approach to workforce development, the State of Louisiana sees this as an opportunity to create a new statewide vision that supports substantive partnerships between LWDBs and registered apprenticeship program sponsors. Aligning registered apprenticeship opportunities with WIOA service design and delivery in a holistic and comprehensive manner, however, will take time and a great deal of education. Further, policy development at the state level is needed to clarify broad parameters within which local staff can operate in order to achieve the high ROI, that studies clearly indicate registered apprenticeship yields.

Looking forward towards the next several years, we envision a workforce development system where more LWDBs and One-Stop operators are more knowledgeable and involved in supporting registered apprenticeship programs, including: the provision of assistance with screening and testing potential applicants for registered apprenticeship programs; making well-informed and appropriate referrals to available registered apprenticeship programs; encouraging the development of pre-apprenticeship learning opportunities for WIOA participants who are not yet ready for a registered apprenticeship program; providing supportive services to enable apprentices to fully participate and complete their programs and supporting apprentices throughout all or part of their program using WIOA funds to help defray the costs of OJT and the provision of required classroom training. Getting to this point will be a statewide endeavor that fully utilizes the State Apprenticeship Director, in addition to staff from USDOL’s Office of Apprenticeship in Dallas. We are committed to developing better partnerships between registered apprenticeship programs and our statewide workforce system by using the new elements within WIOA that provide better opportunities for building relationships between them.

The State is also focused on expanding registered apprenticeship opportunities throughout Louisiana. Although building and construction trade programs have been and continue to be the backbone of registered apprenticeship in this state and across the country, we are working to develop new non-traditional programs in industries such as health care, advanced manufacturing, and Information Technology. 2017 brought progress in some of these areas with the registration of two medical billing and coding programs and a LPN programs. The apprenticeship division continues to encourage new and currently existing programs to take advantage of partnership opportunities with our workforce system and has played an active role in discussions regarding Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) policies and procedures as it applies to registered apprenticeship under the new WIOA regulations; as well as discussion on how to get apprenticeship programs to better utilize the ITWP program.

3. TRAINING PROVIDER ELIGIBILITY PROCEDURE

The state has established policies on initial and subsequent eligibility. All training programs determined eligible under WIA and on the State’s ETPL on or before June 30th of 2015 will retain their initial eligibility under this policy. Applications that were still in process at close of business June 30, 2015, and in which no determination was made, must follow the procedures outlined in this policy.

The One Stop Center may issue an Individual Training Account (ITA) to an adult to fund training after a determination is made that career services are insufficient to meet the particular client’s needs. The client can then compare the offerings on the ETPL, and with the advice of One Stop Center staff, select the most appropriate training program. In this way, the ETPL helps to provide consumer choice, while also supporting quality training programs.
WIOA supports the expansion of Registered Apprenticeship programs with numerous statutory provisions that include notable exceptions to ETPL reporting and performance-related requirements. In order to get as many programs on the statewide ETPL, which supports both customer choice as well as LWC’s desire to incorporate Registered Apprenticeship programs into local service design and delivery, these programs will be automatically placed on the ETPL with minimal information requirements.

Under WIOA Title I-B, Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors that request to be ETPs are automatically included on the list and will remain 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. Registered Apprenticeship programs are not subject to the same application and performance information requirements or to a period of initial eligibility or initial eligibility procedures as other providers because they go through a detailed application and vetting procedure to become a Registered Apprenticeship program sponsor with Louisiana’s State Apprenticeship Agency (SAA).

The State will work closely with the State Apprenticeship Director to ensure procedures are developed to facilitate the strategic incorporation of Registered Apprenticeship throughout Louisiana’s workforce system. LWC staff shall use Student level data from Registered Apprenticeship Information Data System (RAPIDS) Partners to exclude participants of Registered Apprenticeship programs from performance measurements of co-enrolled programs, which are seeking initial eligibility under ETPL.

**Continued Eligibility**

In order to remain eligible to provide training services, service providers must submit an application and meet performance levels on an annual basis. This re-certification process will verify that the training provider is still offering the program, wishes to continue the program’s eligibility to receive WIOA Title I training dollars, has consumer information in Louisiana’s HiRE System that is accurate, and has provided most recent performance data. Additional information on subsequent eligibility will be addressed through a separate policy.

All performance data will be calculated using the State SCORECARD system and its required elements. Training providers will be eligible to apply throughout the year. As new programs are submitted and approved throughout the year, the statewide ETPL will be updated on an ongoing basis. If the program is found to be ineligible for the statewide ETPL, the LWDB will cease to approve additional ITAs for that program until the program meets minimum eligibility requirements.

4. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL IMPLEMENT AND MONITOR THE PRIORITY FOR PUBLIC ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS, OTHER LOW-INCOME INDIVIDUALS, AND INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE BASIC SKILLS DEFICIENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF WIOA SEC. 134(C)(3)(E), WHICH APPLIES TO INDIVIDUALIZED CAREER SERVICES AND TRAINING SERVICES FUNDING BY THE ADULT FORMULA PROGRAM.

WIOA establishes a priority of service requirement with respect to funds allocated to a LWDA for “individualized” career services in addition to training services. Such “individualized” career services may include career counseling and the development of an individual employment plan which involves more dedicated staff time to provide. One-Stop center staff responsible for these funds must give priority to:

- Recipients of public assistance
- Other low-income individuals
• Individuals who are basic skills deficient

As outlined in OWD policy 2-24, “Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Adult and Dislocated Worker Eligibility Policy”, for the purpose of determining eligibility of Adults under WIOA, individualized career or training services shall constitute a minimum of 51 percent of Adults served meeting the priority target groups. This minimum threshold will ensure that local One-Stops are targeting Adults in most need of services beyond “basic career” services while developing talent pools that meet the short term as well as long term workforce needs of businesses.

Compliance with Adult priority will be evaluated on an annual basis at the end of each program year and should be tracked at the local level on an ongoing basis using regular monitoring and reporting systems.

5. DESCRIBE THE STATE’S CRITERIA REGARDING LOCAL AREA TRANSFER OF FUNDS BETWEEN THE ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKER PROGRAMS.

Per section 133 (b)(4) (4) TRANSFER AUTHORITY.—A local board may transfer, if such a transfer is approved by the Governor, up to and including 100 percent of the funds allocated to the local area under paragraph (2)(A) or (3), and up to and including 100 percent of the funds allocated to the local area under paragraph (2)(B), for a fiscal year between—

- Adult employment and training activities; and
- Dislocated worker employment and training activities.

However, State policy will limit the maximum allowable transfer to 75 percent. A local board may send written notice requesting a transfer of funds between adult and dislocated worker funds up to a maximum amount of 50 percent in the first year in which funds are made available. In the second year, local boards may send written notification requesting up to an additional 25 percent.

Written request must include the following information:

1. Why is there a need to transfer funds? (Example: Economic conditions such as high/low unemployment, business closures, etc.)
2. How will the transfer of funds affect the participant levels in both the Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs? Provide an estimated number of Adult and Dislocated Workers expected to be served if the transfer is granted.
3. Explain the impact on jointly funded employment and training programs in the Local Service Delivery System.

C. YOUTH PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

1. IDENTIFY THE STATE-DEVELOPED CRITERIA TO BE USED BY LOCAL BOARDS IN AWARDING GRANTS 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 IN AWARDING SUCH GRANTS.*
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. 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.

2. DESCRIBE THE STRATEGIES THE STATE WILL USE TO ACHIEVE IMPROVED OUTCOMES FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH AS DESCRIBED IN 129(A)(1)(B), INCLUDING HOW IT WILL LEVERAGE AND ALIGN THE CORE PROGRAMS, AND COMBINED STATE PLAN PARTNER PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN THIS PLAN, REQUIRED AND OPTIONAL ONE-STOP PARTNER PROGRAMS, AND ANY OTHER RESOURCES AVAILABLE.

The Local Board is responsible for developing local plans for the governor's approval, designating local One-Stop operators, 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. 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.

For any program year, LWDBs must spend not less than 75 percent of local workforce development area funds to provide direct services to out-of-school youth. For any program year, LWDBs must spend not less than 20 percent of the funds allocated to the local area to provide in school youth and out of school youth with work experiences such as summer employment, pre-apprenticeship, internship, job shadowing, and on-the-job training.

Local boards shall ensure that parents, participants, and other members of the community with experience relating to the programs for youth are involved in its design and implementation. One-Stop operators shall carry out programs that:

- Provide an assessment of academic levels, skill levels and occupational skills, any prior work experience, employability, interests and aptitudes.
• Develop service strategies for each youth that directly links to one or more of the established performance indicators.
• Provide:
  • Activities leading to the attainment of a secondary school diploma, or its recognized equivalent or a recognized postsecondary credential.
  • Preparation for postsecondary educational and training opportunities.
  • Strong linkages between academic instruction and student academic achievement standards that lead to postsecondary credentials.
  • Preparation for unsubsidized employment opportunities.
  • Effective connections to employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations of the local and regional labor markets.

Local boards shall develop strategies that support the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, entry into postsecondary education, and career readiness for participants, the programs shall provide elements consisting of:

• Tutoring, study skills training, instruction and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized post-secondary credential.
• Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate.
• Paid and unpaid work experiences that have an academic and occupational education component.
• Occupational skills training, which includes priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that are aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area involved, if the Local Board determines that the programs meet quality criteria.
• Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster.
• Leadership development opportunities including community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors.
• Supportive services.
• Adult mentoring for duration of at least 12 months that may occur both during and after program participation.
• Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation.
• Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling as well as referrals to counseling, as appropriate to the needs of the individual youth.
• Financial literacy education.
• Entrepreneurial skill training.
• Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services.
• Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to post-secondary education and training.
3. **DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL ENSURE THAT ALL 14 PROGRAM ELEMENTS DESCRIBED IN WIOA SECTION 129(C)(2) ARE MADE AVAILABLE AND EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENTED.*

Local workforce development areas will ensure that all 14 program elements are made available to youth participants. Local workforce development areas must conduct a survey and assessment of partner services prior to establishing the premise for the request for proposal (RFP). Participant activities will be monitored through desk reviews and other monitoring methodologies.

This survey process will foster continued collaboration across all partners while maximizing opportunities for Co-enrollment of participant. This will result in improved outcomes.

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).**

As outlined in OWD policy 2-21 “Youth Program Operations” LWDBs must establish, and review annually, a policy addressing their criteria for youth “requiring additional assistance”. This policy is subject to the monitoring process.


Louisiana R.S. 17:221, states that “Every parent, tutor, or other person residing within the state of Louisiana having control or charge of any child from that child’s seventh birthday until his eighteenth birthday shall send such child to a public or private day school, unless the child graduates from high school prior to his eighteenth birthday shall send such child to a public or private day school, unless the child graduates from high school prior to his eighteenth birthday.” For the purpose of this plan, this age range is considered the "age of compulsory school attendance."

A youth who is within the age of compulsory school attendance, but has not attended school for at least the most recent completed school year calendar quarter. A school-year calendar quarter is based on how a local school district defines its school year quarters.

6. **IF NOT USING THE BASIC SKILLS DEFICIENT DEFINITION CONTAINED IN WIOA SECTION 3(5)(B), INCLUDE THE SPECIFIC STATE DEFINITION.**

Basic Skills Deficient: A youth is basic-skills deficient if he/she has English reading, writing or computing skills at or below the 8th-grade level on a generally-accepted standardized test; is unable to compute or
solve problems or read, write or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family or in society. (Assessment process must include reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities).

D. SINGLE-AREA STATE REQUIREMENTS

Not applicable to Louisiana

1. ANY COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD THAT REPRESENT DISAGREEMENT WITH THE PLAN. (WIOA SECTION 108(D)(3).)
2. THE ENTITY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DISBURSAL OF GRANT FUNDS, AS DETERMINED BY THE GOVERNOR, IF DIFFERENT FROM THAT FOR THE STATE. (WIOA SECTION 108(B)(15).)
3. THE TYPE AND AVAILABILITY OF WIOA TITLE I YOUTH ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING AN IDENTIFICATION OF SUCCESSFUL PROVIDERS OF SUCH ACTIVITIES. (WIOA SECTION 108(B)(9).)

E. WAIVER REQUESTS

Louisiana is not submitting any waiver request as part of this initial plan. However, waiver requests may be submitted as part of future modifications to this plan contingent upon publication of the WIOA final regulations or as the need arises.

1. IDENTIFIES THE STATUTORY OR REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS FOR WHICH A WAIVER IS REQUESTED AND THE GOALS THAT THE STATE OR LOCAL AREA, AS APPROPRIATE, INTENDS TO ACHIEVE AS A RESULT OF THE WAIVER AND HOW THOSE GOALS RELATE TO THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN;
2. DESCRIBES THE ACTIONS THAT THE STATE OR LOCAL AREA, AS APPROPRIATE, HAS UNDERTAKEN TO REMOVE STATE OR LOCAL STATUTORY OR REGULATORY BARRIERS;
3. DESCRIBES THE GOALS OF THE WAIVER AND THE EXPECTED PROGRAMMATIC OUTCOMES IF THE REQUEST IS GRANTED;
4. DESCRIBES HOW THE WAIVER WILL ALIGN WITH THE DEPARTMENT’S POLICY PRIORITIES, SUCH AS:
   a) SUPPORTING EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT;
   b) CONNECTING EDUCATION AND TRAINING STRATEGIES;
   c) SUPPORTING WORK-BASED LEARNING;
   d) IMPROVING JOB AND CAREER RESULTS, AND
   e) OTHER GUIDANCE ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT.
5. DESCRIBES THE INDIVIDUALS AFFECTED BY THE WAIVER, INCLUDING HOW THE WAIVER WILL IMPACT SERVICES FOR DISADVANTAGED POPULATIONS OR INDIVIDUALS WITH MULTIPLE BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT; AND
6. DESCRIBES THE PROCESS USED TO:
   a) MONITOR THE PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE WAIVER;
b) PROVIDE NOTICE TO ANY LOCAL BOARD AFFECTED BY THE WAIVER;

c) PROVIDE ANY LOCAL BOARD AFFECTED BY THE WAIVER AN OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON THE REQUEST;

d) ENSURE MEANINGFUL PUBLIC COMMENT, INCLUDING COMMENT BY BUSINESS AND ORGANIZED LABOR, ON THE WAIVER.

e) COLLECT AND REPORT INFORMATION ABOUT WAIVER OUTCOMES IN THE STATE’S WIOA ANNUAL REPORT

### TITLE I-B ASSURANCES

The state plan must include assurances that:

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| 1. | The state has implemented a policy to ensure adult-program funds provide a priority in the delivery of career and training services and individualized career services to individuals who are low income, public assistance recipients or basic skills deficient;  
   The state assures compliance with this requirement as evidenced through the Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Eligibility Policy (OWD 2-24). |
| 2. | The state has implemented a policy to ensure local areas have a process in place for referring veterans with significant barriers to employment to career services provided by the JVSG program’s Disabled Veterans’ Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist;  
   The state assures compliance with this requirement as evidenced through the Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Eligibility Policy (OWD 2-24). |
| 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;  
   The state assures compliance with this requirement as evidenced through Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Board Composition and Certification Policy (OWD 4-11). |
| 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);  
   The state assures compliance with this requirement as evidenced through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Board Composition and Certification Policy (OWD 4-11). |
5. Where an alternative entity takes the place of a state board, the state has a written policy and procedures to ensure the alternative entity meets the definition under WIOA Section 101(e) and the legal requirements for membership;  
N/A

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;  
The state assures compliance with this requirement as evidenced through the Financial Policy (OWD 4-3.1).

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).  
The state assures compliance in accordance with WIOA Section 181(b)(7); Louisiana Workforce Commission will not use funds received under WIOA Title I to assist, promote or deter union organizing.

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;  
The state assures compliance with this requirement as evidenced through the Financial Policy (OWD 4-3.1).

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.  
The state assures compliance because Vocational Rehabilitation programs are administered by Louisiana Workforce Commission (Office of Workforce Development). Wagner-Peyser, adult, dislocated worker and youth programs under
Title I are also administered by the Office of Workforce Development allowing for cooperation across the programs.

10. **The State agrees to report on the impact and outcomes of its approved waivers in its WIOA Annual Report.**

   *Louisiana has no current waivers. When a barrier is identified that precludes or limits the effectiveness of efforts to serve businesses or citizens, the Louisiana may pursue a waiver of the provision. Louisiana agrees to report on the impact and outcomes of any approved waivers in the WIOA Annual Report.*

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 WIOA Section 184(a)(3);**

   The state assures compliance with this requirement as evidenced through the Financial and Programmatic Monitoring for Workforce Innovation Worker (WIOA) Title I, National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG) and Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Policy (OWD 4-12).

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**PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR WAGNER-PEYSER PROGRAM (EMPLOYMENT SERVICES)**

**A. EMPLOYMENT SERVICE PROFESSIONAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT.**

1. **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.**

   The Louisiana Workforce Commission, Office of Workforce Development has developed and implemented the following internal training program for employment service staff, which includes:

   - Standardized performance ratings for individual staff members with technical competencies based on federal and state laws, regulations, statutes and standardized operating procedures were developed for use statewide with behavioral competencies required for effective “case management” and provision of service.
   - Standardized performance monitoring of case management and other intensive services.
   - A three-day on-boarding training process that was standardized and provided by expert staff members.
• A mandatory quarterly training program that was specific to the shortfalls and errors discovered in managerial metrics and performance monitoring. (For JVSG funded staff, sending new staff members to NVTI for their first training session within 45 days of being hired).

• A streamlined and effective service delivery model that fit within the requirements of WIOA and Wagner-Peyser, with the nuances required under other programs, and training to board leadership.

2. DESCRIBE STRATEGIES DEVELOPED TO SUPPORT TRAINING AND AWARENESS ACROSS CORE PROGRAMS AND THE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE PROGRAM, AND THE TRAINING PROVIDED FOR EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND WIOA STAFF ON IDENTIFICATION OF UI ELIGIBILITY ISSUES.

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.

C. DESCRIBE THE STATE’S STRATEGY FOR PROVIDING REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE TO UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE CLAIMANTS AND OTHER UNEMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS.

D. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE W-P FUNDS TO SUPPORT UI CLAIMANTS, AND THE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN W-P AND UI, AS APPROPRIATE, INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING:

1. COORDINATION OF AND PROVISION OF LABOR EXCHANGE SERVICES FOR UI CLAIMANTS AS REQUIRED BY THE WAGNER-PEYSER ACT;

As described in the Integrated Service Delivery Policy (OWD 2-23) and in accordance with the provisions of and regarding individuals profiled as qualifying for and receiving services under the Re-employment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) Grant, and for those claimants who qualify for priority of service and/or are eligible for unemployment compensation for ex-service members (UCX) which provides benefits for eligible ex-military personnel. Additionally, the UCX program covers any former members of the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration.

Louisiana operates the RESEA program statewide due to its integrated service-delivery system. Louisiana’s system is demand-driven and operated under a continuous improvement process. Therefore, the system is able to respond quickly to immediate and long-term requests by connecting job-seekers to employers seeking candidates with the skills and/or credentials in demand occupations. Louisiana’s integrated service-delivery process was redesigned as a foundation for establishing operations that support the key principles in WIOA law and to initiate expanding partnerships and services.

All One-Stop Center staff members are trained in the program overview, case management and all key aspects of job-specific functions. Administrative and managerial staff members at all levels provide program and operational oversight and technical support for programs. Regional senior managers through their local managerial structure and in cooperation with LWDA leadership are responsible for ensuring a seamless process in One-Stop Centers through coordinating staff training, providing technical support, maintaining program documentation and continuous communication and dissemination of information. These leaders work in coordination with Management of Information Systems (MIS)
technicians, OWD’s Technical Assistance Unit, and UI technical support teams on all issues relating to UI eligibility, disqualification and requalification.

State management, with support from local management, also provides fiscal and programmatic monitoring and functions as a liaison between workforce and UI. UI staff (the claim center, adjudication, appeals and the technical support unit) provides technical support for external customers (job-seekers/claimants) and internal staff (Workforce Development Specialist (WFDS) and workforce management). The UI technical support unit provides training to all WIOA and WP staff concerning federal and state UI regulations, eligibility reviews, adjudications services, appeal processes and all other related UI services for job-seekers/claimants.

MIS also provides technical assistance for state and local staff using LWC’s integrated case-management system, HiRE (Helping Individuals Reach Employment). This system is used to record and track all re-employment service-delivery activities. Staff training is provided quarterly via localized statewide training, web-based courses and conferences and meetings. Subject-matter experts in workforce services and UI facilitate initial, recurring and specialized training as part of the CIP and as necessary to ensure all service-delivery methods and program-specific goals are being met.

OWD’s Technical Assistance Unit provides assistance to state and local staff through various methods including needs assessments, monitoring outcomes and updates and/or newly issued federal and state requirements. This process identifies knowledge/skills/attitudes (KSAs) gaps and learning objectives for: (1) grants/programs, (2) service delivery, (3) internal (state) and external (local) processes and procedures, (4) accessing/using HiRE, (5) Workforce Specialist roles & responsibilities), etc. Assistance is provided through statewide training, webinars, conferences, workshops and meetings.

Description of a RESEA

**Group and/or Individual RESEA Orientation:** Provides general information concerning UI benefit eligibility, available re-employment services, guidance on the use of self-assisted services, provision of Labor Market Information (LMI) and other services available through American Job Centers and workforce partners.

**Eligibility Review:** Provides immediate feedback on UI eligibility of each job-seeker/claimant by reviewing work-search activities, ensuring job-seeker/claimant is actively seeking employment and is able and available for work. Any issues discovered, such as able and available, are immediately referred to the adjudication unit to be investigated and eligibility determination assigned.

**Labor Market Information:** Through utilization of the general Employment Strategy Plan automatically created in HiRE, with populated information such as the last occupation, information on job-search activities and online courses taken in HiRE, provides information on labor market and career information that addresses the job-seeker/claimant’s specific employment needs.

**Individual Employment Plan (IEP):** Face-to-face interaction conducted by WFDS staff to assist in evaluating the needs of the jobseeker/claimant including reviewing the employment strategy, performing a structured assessment identifying barriers to employment and establishment of employment and/or educational goals with attainable objectives and outcomes. Plans are developed, updated and tracked using the state’s web-based case management system HiRE. Staff discusses strategies to create job alerts and suggests trainings and other re-employment services.

**Referral to Re-employment Services and Appropriate Training:** Through identified barriers, employment challenges and career goals during the face-to-face interview session, referrals to re-employment services which include but are not limited to workshops and/or appropriate training will be provided to each jobseeker/claimant in order to meet the expected objective of the plan and documented in HiRE. The plan will be amended as needed through subsequent RESEA services and WP or WIOA career counseling.

**Re-employment Services:** Job-seekers/claimants will be provided an array of re-employment services that include, but are not limited to, workshops (résumé writing, interviewing techniques and job readiness), job clubs that support peer-to-peer networking, computer literacy and financial literacy.
Service Delivery Process

After the job-seeker/claimant files an initial UI claim and is determined monetarily eligible, he/she is profiled. Job-seekers/claimants that meet specific variables for RESEA as set in the state’s statistical model and receive a factor score of greater than 2.4 are placed in the RESEA selection pool. Once he/she has claimed their 2nd week within their claim series, they are selected to participate in the RESEA program and participation becomes mandatory.

All UCX job-seekers/claimants who are determined monetarily eligible will be required to participate in the RESEA program. Their factor score will not be used to determine participation, but rather determine job readiness.

Once the job-seeker/claimant has filed their second week of a monetarily-eligible claim within their claim series and has met profiling criteria, he/she is notified via a letter generated through an automated process. Letters provide notice of their RESEA appointment with a WFDS and the requirements and date the service must be completed in order to maintain UI eligibility. Job-seekers/claimants have two weeks (14 days) to comply with the service requirement from the date on their notification letter.

Initial notification letters mailed to selected job-seekers/claimants scheduling their RESEA state, “Failure to keep this appointment may result in a denial of your unemployment insurance benefits (R.S. 23:1600(2)).”

Job-seekers/claimants who fail to report for their scheduled RESEA with no contact with the WFDS or UI Claim Center are considered a “Failure to Report” and are in jeopardy of losing benefits for one (1) week. Subsequent RESEA non-compliance determinations will result in an indefinite disqualification until the job-seeker/claimant complies. A non-monetary determination is issued to the job-seeker/claimant explaining the reason for their disqualification resulting in a stop of benefits. Notification is mailed to the job-seeker/claimant and a copy is sent to their personal message center in the HiRE system. The UI Claim Center number is provided for assistance on all correspondence.

LWC has taken an aggressive approach in developing more comprehensive integrated systems throughout the agency. True integration and collaborative processes have been established through building stronger links among OWD, UI, and IT working together to provide a full array of services to our customer base. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is currently in place with all partners.

Louisiana Workforce Commission’s OWD, UI, and (MIS) departments have collaborated to create a seamless relationship in the sharing and transferring of information. This relationship produces the required Federal Reports, ETA 9128, 9129 and 9178, as required by USDOL.

2. REGISTRATION OF UI CLAIMANTS WITH THE STATE’S EMPLOYMENT SERVICE IF REQUIRED BY STATE LAW;

Any person filing a UI claim in Louisiana is automatically registered in HiRE, subsequent to the completion of any UI claim and prior to determination of “monetary eligibility” all claimants are “enrolled” in Wagner-Peyser services and are then profiled and placed on a standardized service deliver track as delineated in the state’s “Integrated Service Delivery” policy.

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
For delivering services to Job Seekers, regardless of their “reason for” or “point of” entry into One-Stop Center service delivery, the State has adopted a Continuous Process Improvement (CPI) methodology. This process moves the Program Partners away from “Compartmentalization” and allows for the following in a real-time context: benchmarking (metric driven change); anticipating and meeting customer changing needs; local control of the process to reduce cycle time and idle resources; and incorporating lessons learned through marrying quality assurance (monitoring) directly to staff training.

The new design is customer demand driven and is very efficient. So, while it is important that all offices will “standardize job seeker core services and enrollment processes,” the way in which these are delivered will be very flexible, and link directly to Program Partners’ ability to serve its other customer, the employer.

The new roadmap for all job seekers regardless of their reason for entering LWC services is designed for speed and flexibility in that, it provides for Continuous Assessment, Career Services, and Follow-up. This supports efficiently determining participant needs, routing participants to the appropriate service, tracking participant activity through the process, and targeting and recording participant outcomes. Each step in this process has an associated metric draw for continuous improvement.

All customers visiting a physical One-Stop-Center location who receive staff-assisted services shall be included in the common measures performance calculations.

Because all One-Stop Center services, staff, facility and activities are funded in-part by both WP and WIOA, sequence of services and assessments shall determine the timing for co-enrollment of job seekers who receive staff-assisted service in a One-Stop Center or affiliate into both WIOA Title IB and the WP program for reporting and performance measures.

Any job seeker served in any One-Stop Center (or affiliate) shall be counted as participants in WIOA, regardless of the presence of WIOA-funded staff onsite. Conversely, all WIOA participants shall be counted as WP participants; regardless the presence of WP funded staff at the enrolling service location.

4. **PROVISION OF REFERRALS TO AND APPLICATION ASSISTANCE FOR TRAINING AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES.**

The State requires One-Stop Center and LWDBs to select and provide services to participants with the specific intent of developing a quality outcome. For this reason, the State bases its performance accountability system on the quality of services and not the number of services provided.

The State has replaced the concept of “Intake Process” with “Assessment Process” (which is the step following “Common Intake”), further dividing the assessment process into “Initial Assessment” and “Comprehensive Assessment”. The assessment process is continuous and ongoing in the context of referrals and assistance in acquiring training, education, access to resources, and employment.

Assessment shall include the use of assessment tools and processes modified by local leadership to be most effective based on the demographic of their specific location, customer base, staffing levels, program (and Program Partner) availability, and supportive services access. To provide a foundation for all services, as a minimum, job seeker services shall include: initial registration, WP and (when applicable) WIOA Enrollment, with the appropriate staff assisted first service.
One-Stop operators shall provide include both core and intensive services as appropriate based on job seeker and employer need, and the most recently directed criteria associated with compliance and performance under any applicable USDOL grant. These services may include, but are not limited to: assisted job search activities, evaluation of skills, interests, preferences, career counseling training options, matching skills to current job openings, intensive services, case management and follow up.

Comprehensive Assessment is vital to collecting information on job seeker Barriers to Employment, Employment Goals, Knowledge Skills and Abilities, and proficiency in Occupational Knowledge. This assessment shall be done as a client centered approach to evaluating the needs of a participant without regard to services or training program availability; the purpose being not to match the job seeker to what is available, rather to determine the job seeker’s need.

This assessment is best defined operatively as an “intensive interviewing process.” which includes behavioral observations and may also require the use of structured assessment tools. Other information gathered may include detailed work history, family support available, social services affiliations, offender status, and a detailed education history.

Comprehensive Assessment must be documented via Case Note, with regard for privacy and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (“HIPAA”) rules.

The Comprehensive Assessment is the foundation for development of an IEP, and no IEP shall be created without completing a Comprehensive Assessment. In many cases the Comprehensive Assessment will then be an ongoing process that may result in changes to the Goals and Objectives of the IEP.

The IEP is developed with a job seeker to identify or create employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and the right combination of services to assist in achieving goals and objectives. In short – “where am I now,” “where do I want to go,” “how will I get there?”

The IEP is a plan for the future, not a rehash of the past. It must include goals and objectives that are SMART (specific, measureable, attainable, realistic, and time bound).

Case Management requires a regular follow-up and review or revision of the IEP, until such time as the job seeker becomes workforce ready or enters a training program. In either case follow-up is critical, using the 30, 60, and 90-day cycle until employed or training is complete is appropriate – except for long term training. For long-term training, Career Specialists should follow the most current guidance.

E. AGRICULTURAL OUTREACH PLAN (AOP). EACH STATE AGENCY MUST DEVELOP AN AOP EVERY FOUR YEARS AS PART OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN REQUIRED UNDER SECTIONS 102 OR 103 OF WIOA. THE AOP MUST INCLUDE—
1. ASSESSMENT OF NEED

Background

The Monitor Advocate system and state requirements for services to MSFWs originated from a court ruling in the 1970s (NAACP, Western Region, et al., v. Brennan). Following a Court Order approving a settlement agreement, the Department published Federal regulations at 20 CFR Parts 651, 653 and 658 on June 10, 1980, to establish standards to ensure that state agencies do not discriminate against MSFWs in providing employment services. These regulations remain in effect today. These regulations
also established a Monitor Advocate system, with Monitor Advocates at the national, regional, and state levels, who monitor and review state agencies for compliance with Wagner-Peyser regulations affecting MSFWs on a continuing basis. Through the American Job Center network, SMAs also advocate on behalf of MSFWs to assure that MSFWs can access and use training programs and services offered by local Workforce Investment Boards, community colleges, and other training providers.

Under 20 CFR 653.100, state agencies must ensure that MSFWs are provided the full range of employment and training services on a basis that is qualitatively equivalent and quantitatively proportionate to services provided to non-MSFWs. The services available from the WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs, the WIOA Youth program, the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program, and from all other Department of Labor-funded public workforce system partners in the state must be available to farmworkers in an equitable fashion, appropriate to their needs as job seekers as well as to their needs as farmworkers.

An MSFW is either, a migrant farmworker, a seasonal farmworker, or a migrant food processing worker:

Farmworkers are individuals employed in farm work that includes the cultivation and tillage of the soil, dairying, the production, cultivation, growing, and harvesting of any agricultural or horticultural commodities. This includes the raising of livestock, bees, fur-bearing animals, or poultry, the farming of fish, and any practices (including any forestry or lumbering operations) performed by a farmer or on a farm as an incident to or in conjunction with such farming operations, including preparation for market, delivery to storage or to market or to carriers for transportation to market. It also includes the handling, planting, drying, packing, packaging, processing, freezing, or grading prior to delivery for storage of any agricultural or horticultural commodity in its unmanufactured state. For the purposes of this definition, agricultural commodities means all commodities produced on a farm.

Seasonal Farmworkers are individuals who are employed, or were employed in the past 12 months, in farm work of a seasonal or other temporary nature and are not required to be absent overnight from their permanent place of residence. Seasonal, Non-migrant individuals who are full-time students are excluded from this definition. Labor by Seasonal, Non-Migrant Farmworkers is performed on a seasonal basis where, ordinarily, the employment pertains to or is of the kind exclusively performed at certain seasons or periods of the year and which, may not be continuous or carried on throughout the year. A worker who moves from one seasonal activity to another, while employed in farm work, is employed on a seasonal basis even though he/she may continue to be employed during a major portion of the year. A worker is employed on other temporary basis where he/she is employed for a limited time only or his/her performance is contemplated for a particular piece of work, usually of short duration. Generally, employment which is contemplated to continue indefinitely is not temporary.

Migrant Farmworkers are individuals who travel to the job site because they are not reasonably able to return to their permanent residence within the same day. Full-time students traveling in organized groups rather than with their families are excluded from this definition.

Migrant food processing worker see Migrant Farmworker.

Significant MSFW one-stop centers are those designated annually by the Department and include those ES offices where MSFWs account for 10 percent or more of annual participants in employment services and those local ES offices which the administrator determines must be included due to special circumstances such as an estimated large number of MSFWs in the service area. In no event may the number of significant MSFW one-stop centers be less than 100 centers on a nationwide basis.
Significant MSFW States are those States designated annually by the Department and must include the 20 States with the highest number of MSFW participants.

Significant multilingual MSFW one-stop centers are those designated annually by the Department and include those significant MSFW ES offices where 10 percent or more of MSFW participants are estimated to require service provisions in a language(s) other than English unless the administrator determines other one-stop centers also must be included due to special circumstances.

The above definitions were taken from 20 CFR Part 500 Reg. 651

Per the DOL Monitor Advocate system, services to MSFWs must be:

- qualitatively equivalent to services provided to non-MSFWs and,
- quantitatively proportionate (equal or greater quality) to services provided to non-MSFWs.

Therefore, the provision of services to MSFWs is a requirement of the workforce system to provide at least a minimum quantity of services and a minimum quality of services to MSFWs. Contrary to the impression of some staff, MSFW services are not a “program,” nor are they intended to be provided only by the State Monitor Advocate (SMA). The majority of such services should be provided locally by American Job Center (AJC) staff.

Federal regulations state that any workforce center where MSFWs account for at least 10% or more of the annual applicants at the center is designated as a Significant Center. Likewise, any state where the same condition exists is considered a Significant State. A Significant Center (or State) is required to operate an outreach program that is more robust than the outreach provisions required by the MSFW system for non-significant states; however, outreach is still a requirement of the MSFW system. Records indicate that Louisiana is not a Significant State nor do any of the local workforce centers fit that designation

* During PY 2017, Louisiana was not a Significant State, nor did the state have any Significant Local Offices or Significant bilingual Local Offices.

**Wagner-Peyser Agricultural Outreach Plan (MSFW)**

The LWC will continue to comply with the requirements of 20 CFR 653, Subpart B, Service to Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers (MSFW). To accomplish the task of providing information and services to MSFWs, LWC will continue to offer a full range of employment services, benefits and protections, including the full range of counseling, testing and job and training referral services as are provided to non-MSFWs. Although Louisiana is not designated as a significant* MSFW state, we strive to make sufficient penetration into the farm workers’ community so that the largest possible number of MSFWs are made aware of those services available to them through our statewide network of Business and Career Solutions Centers (BCSCs).

**Assessment of Needs**

**Assessment of Needs of MSFWs**

The agricultural industry is characterized by a large workforce with numerous job openings, chronic unemployment and underemployment due to the cyclical nature of the work, and below average pay. Migrants and seasonal farmworkers, whose livelihood is primarily derived from agricultural employment,
not only experience the chronic unemployment or underemployment inherent in the industry, but also face additional, significant barriers to employment. These include low levels of education, limited English proficiency, inferior housing, and few assets to sustain them through a period of retraining.

In addition, farmworkers also experience geographical isolation and many lack transportation. Public transportation is rarely available to where they live, and therefore, they are dependent upon their employer or friends for rides, making it difficult for them to make and keep appointments for employment, health, training, or other services.

Despite the above general characteristics of MSFWs, exact figures on the number of MSFWs in Louisiana are limited and contradictory. How the LWC intends to remedy the situation will be discussed further in this report.

a) 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 Louisiana State University (LSU) Ag Center 2016 Agricultural Progress Report, Louisiana agricultural products contributed $5.9 billion to the state’s economy. “Couple the ‘gross farm value’ with the ‘value added’ as those products made their way to consumers and Louisiana agriculture had a total economic value of over $10.9 billion in 2016.”

The top five labor intensive crops include: Sugarcane, Soybeans, Aquaculture, Rice, and Produce (fruits and vegetables). See attached maps for areas of highest production in these areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crop</th>
<th>Peak Season(s)</th>
<th>Geographical Area(s)</th>
<th>Gross Farm Value</th>
<th>Total Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sugarcane</td>
<td>Planting: July through October</td>
<td>Eastern Acadiana Parishes and River Parishes from Avoyelles to Lafourche</td>
<td>$496,604,901</td>
<td>$841,248,702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Harvest: mid-September through early January</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soybeans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$554,694,039</td>
<td>$651,765,496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aquaculture</td>
<td>Aquaculture includes: crawfish, catfish, alligators, oysters, soft-shell crabs, turtles, minnows, and other bait fish</td>
<td>$344,449,380</td>
<td>$576,952,712</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

http://www.lsuagcenter.com/~/media/system/3/5/a/5/35ad6620c7632d2a9b2be67117f7ce07/highlights%20of%20louisiana%20agriculture%202016%20ac-4.pdf.pdf
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crop</th>
<th>Harvest Period</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>2016 Revenue</th>
<th>2017 Revenue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crawfish</td>
<td>March through June, variable</td>
<td>South Central to Southwestern LA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>Planting: mid-March through May 31th</td>
<td>South Central to Southwestern LA</td>
<td>$305,489,269</td>
<td>$407,217,196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Harvest: late July through early October</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Produce</td>
<td>Produce includes: commercial vegetables, greenhouse vegetables, fruit crops, sweet potatoes, pecans and home gardens.</td>
<td></td>
<td>$496,400,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweet Potatoes</td>
<td>Planting: early April through mid-June</td>
<td>Northeastern parishes</td>
<td>$43,483,180</td>
<td>$76,095,565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Harvest: early September through late November</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenhouse Vegetables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$806,098</td>
<td>$3,109,235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Vegetables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$45,177,257</td>
<td>$106,166,554</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit Crops</td>
<td>Tangipahoa and Livingston Parishes</td>
<td></td>
<td>$44,766,870</td>
<td>$60,435,275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant Nurseries</td>
<td>January through mid-November</td>
<td>Rapides and St. Tammany Parishes</td>
<td>$101,389,250</td>
<td>$157,153,338</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to one version of the 2016 Agricultural Outreach Plan (the last year for which an AOP was submitted):

The general employment trend in rural Louisiana has been for workers to leave agricultural work for higher paying or less labor intensive jobs in other occupations. Additionally, while many workers enjoy agricultural work, very few can adapt to living on a seasonal income. As a result, agricultural employers have a difficult time finding reliable local workers. The H-2A temporary agricultural foreign worker program has become increasingly popular among Louisiana agricultural employers, following the national trend. Today, H-2A workers dominate the agricultural labor force in the state.

According to Louisiana Summary: Agriculture and Natural Resources 2016 (p. 3):

Many Louisiana communities depend on agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and wildlife for local jobs and their economic well-being. However, for those who work in it day in and day out, agriculture, forestry and
fisheries are far more than a business, a major job contributor and economic engine. It truly is a way of life. Families have lived on many of these farms, forest lands or fishing villages for generations following a preferred way of life even though it means hard work, many hours, high risks and sometimes low incomes.

b) AN ASSESSMENT OF THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF FARMWORKS 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 FARM WORKERS). 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 ADMINISTRATION.

According to the AOP submitted with the Unified State Plan for 2016:

During 2015, agricultural employers placed 791 job orders, 99 more than 2014, and 279 more than 2013. The total number temporary or seasonal workers requested through these job orders was 7,787, an increase of 565 workers from 2014, and 1,199 from 2013. Almost all of these were H-2A Temporary Foreign Laborer Agricultural job orders. Although this indicates the level of demand for agricultural workers within the state, it also suggests an opportunity for greater coordination of MSFW stakeholders in placing workers into these jobs.

It is estimated that, in Louisiana, there are currently 1,500 MSFWs in the following agricultural industries.

- Sugarcane: 50
- Strawberry: 100
- Crawfish and soybean: 80
- Nursery: 250
- Animal farms and other crops: 220
- Non-migrant seasonal farm worker: 1,000

During 2015, LWC contacted 282 MSFWs, of which 38 were referred to jobs. During 2016, LWC intends to increase the number of MSFWs by five percent as staff is better trained to increase their outreach to MSFWs and to recognize MSFWs who enter the Business and Career Solutions Centers network and register in HIRE. LWC anticipates that at least 55 staff days may be required to provide the qualitatively equivalent and quantitatively proportionate level of services to MSFWs, compared to non-MSFWs.

According to the State Monitor Advocate (SMA) PY 2016 Annual Summary of services to MSFWs (the last PY for which an annual summary is available):
Data: MSFW Accomplishments

During PY 2016, the SWA and its One-Stop partners contacted 271 MSFWs, a 27% increase from the previous year. The goal was a 5% increase, which indicates the SWA surpassed the goal. Of this number, 28 were referred to jobs, a 29% decrease from the previous year. Although undetermined, it is possible this decrease is related the effect of reduced oil prices on a general downturn in the Louisiana economy. A greater focus is being placed upon this indicator for PY 2016.

It is estimated there are approximately 920 MSFWs in Louisiana, with greater concentrations in the northeastern quadrant of the state and Tangipahoa Parish. It is estimated over 90% of these workers are U.S. citizens who are seasonal, non-migrant workers and whose primary language is English. On average 240 of the MSFWs in the state receive some kind of service from the One Stop system annually.

Two measures are used to determine that MSFWs receive workforce services on a quantitatively proportionate and qualitatively equivalent basis – Minimum Service Level Indicators and Equity Ratio Indicators. The PY 2016 performance for both Indicators is as follows.

Minimum Service Level Indicators: Seven indicators are used to measure minimum levels of service provided to MSFWs. These indicators measure that services to MSFWs are quantitatively proportionate to non-MSFWs.

1. Placed in a job
2. Placed $.50 above minimum wage
3. Placed in long term non-ag job
4. Reviews of significant offices
5. Field checks conducted
6. Outreach contacts per staff day worked
7. Timely process of ES complaints

During PY 2016, all but one minimum service level were met each quarter, except two – Placed in a Job and Field Checks Conducted. Field checks are to be conducted on a certain ration of agricultural job orders where domestic workers are hired. One indicator – Reviews of significant offices – is not applicable in Louisiana because Louisiana has no significant offices. Also, during PY 2016, no MSFW or MSFW-related complaints were received.

During PY 2016, MSFWs comprised 1.3% of the total number of job seekers served through the Louisiana One-Stop system. Five indicators are used to determine whether services to MSFWs are qualitatively equivalent to non-MSFWs. During PY 2016 LWC met one of the equity indicators.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PY 2016 Equity Ratio Indicators</th>
<th>MSFWs</th>
<th>Non-MSFWs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Applications</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>1,617,707</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Referred to Jobs</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Rcvd Staff Assisted Services</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>29.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Referred to Support Service</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Career guidance</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Job Development Contact</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to notes in an unpublished version of the 2016 AOP from the retired SMA/H2A specialist:

[I]t is estimated that, in Louisiana, there are currently 920 MSFWs in the following agricultural industries. (This estimate does not include H-2A non-immigrant agricultural temporary workers.)

- 50  –  Sugarcane
- 20  –  Strawberry
- 40  –  Crawfish and Soybean
- 100 –  Nursery
- 60  –  Animal Farms and Other Crops
- 650 –  Other seasonal farmworkers

Although some of these MSFWs are Spanish-speaking Mexican or Central American immigrants or descendants, the great majority of MSFWs in the state are local seasonal workers. According to best estimates the number of migrant workers is very small compared to the size of the LA agricultural industry. Three areas comprise the largest concentrations of MSFWs; Ouachita, southern Rapides, and western Tangipahoa Parishes.

From the best estimates, based upon MSFW contacts by LWC, Motivation, Education and Training, Inc. (MET, Inc., the state Section 167, National Farmworker Jobs Program [NFJP] grantee), and the High School Equivalency Program (HEP) at Delta Community College, the number of migrant farmworkers is very small. According to MET, Inc., (using the broader definition of MSFWs under the NFJP grant) migrant farmworker clients are rare. In PY2014 and PY 2015 100% of MET, Inc. clients were local seasonal workers. The first language is of most of those clients was English. Approximately 3,000 people enroll in HEP annually. Of that number an average of 100 enrollees have engaged in farm work and approximately 50% of them would be categorized as an MSFW. An estimated 75% of that number are local English-speaking seasonal or year-round workers and 25% are local Spanish-speaking seasonal or year-round workers. Almost 100% of the Spanish-speaking workers are from Mexico or of Mexican descent. A few HEP participants each year are H-2A workers who wish to obtain a high school equivalency and learn English. The peak participation period for HEP are the winter months, the off-season for most farm work.

The following characteristics of Louisiana NFJP participants for calendar year 2015 were provided by MET, Inc. and derived from MET’s NFJP database:
“100% Seasonal Farmworkers, 66% Black, 28% White, 21% Hispanic, 10% born in Mexico, 88% born in USA, 216 Families and Individuals served, Average 142 Days Worked in Farm Work, 50% Female, 42% School Dropout, 2% Limited English, 2% Veteran, 47% Long-Term Agricultural Employment, 29% Reading Skill Below 8.9 Grade Level.”

Both NFJP and HEP program operators stated that over 90% of their MSFW participants do not rely primarily upon agriculture for their income at the time of participation, but that agricultural work happens to be part of their past or present experience combined with work in other non-agricultural occupations. Of those that do rely upon agricultural income at the time of participation or within the two years before participation, very few regard agricultural work as a vocation, but one of many different occupations they may work in the course of their careers, especially in rural labor supply areas.

Most participants in both NFJP and HEP utilize the One-Stop System to some degree. The most common needs of MSFWs are employment, increasing income, food assistance, transportation, and training.

As the above excerpts from three different reports indicate, the Louisiana Workforce Commission HIRE registration system and American Job Center intake processes were not adequately capturing MSFWs throughout the state. The SWA recognized that MSFWs were not being accurately recorded and has taken several steps to rectify the situation:

2. Is in the process of hiring two bilingual (English-Spanish) part-time outreach workers (one for the northern part of the state and one for the southern part of the state).
3. Modify the HIRE registration process to include questions about farmwork.
4. Provide technical training to front-line staff on how to identify MSFWs.

2. OUTREACH ACTIVITIES
   a) CONTACTING FARMWORKERS WHO ARE NOT BEING REACHED BY THE NORMAL INTAKE ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE OFFICES.

The Louisiana Workforce Commission will employ a minimum of two bilingual (English-Spanish) outreach workers to communicate with MSFWs about the full range of workforce development services available through Louisiana’s Comprehensive and Affiliate AJCs. One outreach worker will conduct outreach in North Louisiana and a second outreach worker will conduct outreach in South Louisiana. These outreach workers will communicate regularly with AJC managers and the highest ranking Wagner Peyser staff members domiciled in their assigned territories or, other Wagner Peyser staff members designated by the Office of Workforce Development’s Director of Field Operations.

Louisiana’s outreach workers will communicate with MSFWs about the Employment Service and Employment Law complaint system as well as a basic summary of farmworker rights. Outreach workers will strongly encourage MSFWs to visit one of Louisiana’s Comprehensive Job Centers to access the full range of employment and training services provided by WIOA mandated partners.

If an MSFW cannot or does not wish to visit the Comprehensive AJC, the outreach worker will provide on-site the following:

- Assistance in the preparation of applications for employment services;
- Assistance in obtaining referral(s) to employment opportunities;
• Assistance in the preparation of either ES or employment law complaints;
• Referral to supportive services and/or career services in which the individual or a family member may be interested;
• Assistance in making appointments and arranging transportation for individual MSFWs or family members to and from AJCs
• Observe the working and living conditions of MSFWs and report suspected violations to the highest ranking Wagner-Peyser staff member serving in the AJC in the territory in which the suspected violation occurred.

It is mandatory that outreach workers receive training in AJC procedures and in the services, benefits, and protections afforded MSFWs by the Employment Service. It is also mandatory that outreach receive training on protecting farmworkers against sexual harassment and human trafficking.

Outreach workers will maintain complete records of their contacts with MSFWs and the services they perform. These records must include a daily log, which must be sent monthly to the Office of Workforce Development's Director of Field Operations or the Director's designee. At minimum, the log must include: the records of the number of contacts, the names of contacts, and the services provided. The outreach worker must distinguish between a service and complaint in the records. Outreach workers must also report services and complaints in the Louisiana Workforce Commission's HIRE system as applicable.

b) PROVIDING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO OUTREACH WORKERS.
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MUST INCLUDE TRAININGS, CONFERENCES, ADDITIONAL RESOURCES, AND INCREASED COLLABORATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS ON TOPICS SUCH AS ONE-STOP CENTER SERVICES (I.E. AVAILABILITY OF REFERRALS TO TRAINING, SUPPORTIVE SERVICES, AND CAREER SERVICES, AS WELL AS SPECIFIC EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES), THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE COMPLAINT SYSTEM, INFORMATION ON THE OTHER ORGANIZATIONS SERVING MSFWS IN THE AREA, AND A BASIC SUMMARY OF FARMWORKER RIGHTS, INCLUDING THEIR RIGHTS WITH RESPECT TO THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT.

The SMA will work with LWC administrative and local One-Stop Center staff on issues of concern (identification of MSFWs, compliance with equivalency of service and equity indicators, reviving local interest, proper documentation of services, etc.). This technical assistance is provided to all One-Stop Center staff as needed, during field office visits, SMA monitoring reviews, and OWD state training seminars and conferences. Any deficiencies the SMA discovers during daily business or reviews will be addressed upon discovery. The primary emphasis will be placed upon properly identifying MSFWs, meeting the needs of MSFWs, and recording the services provided to them.

The SMA will provide training and follow-up on the outreach and provision of services to MSFWs to One-Stop staff throughout the state. The staff will be encouraged to query clients to better identify MSFWs and record them in the HIRE system. Staff will provide the full range of One-Stop services, including the HIRE labor exchange system, of which the ARS is a part. The labor exchange system provides job openings in both agricultural and non-agricultural employment. Other services, such as training or supportive services,
provide a pathway for MSFWs to transition to higher wage jobs & permanent year round employment in non-agricultural work.

The SMA, Outreach Workers, and front line staff at AJCs will all be provided with technical training from the DOL and the LWC.

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.

LWC utilizes a variety of methods for staff training for the delivery of core services. The most effective is through a combination of training seminars, group sessions, and the provision of self-paced training materials. Training on the identification of and the provision of services to MSFWs will be provided through a combination of training at annual state conferences, on-site training, webinars and conference calls, to be determined after an assessment of effectiveness and feasibility, with training to training to staff statewide by the end of PY2018. The training will be conducted in conjunction with WIOA training to as great a degree as possible, to foster a seamless delivery of services to MSFWs as compared to non-MSFW populations. MSFW partner organizations will be invited to participate so they may learn more about One-Stop services and develop more ways to coordinate services with the SWA. Likewise, partners will be invited to conduct training on their programs and services to promote and enhance coordinated to MSFW services.

Providing services to target groups, e.g., MSFWs or veterans, is incorporated into the training. The LWC University, a set of online staff training modules, is one method of self-paced training for the provision of services to MSFWs. Additionally the State of Louisiana provides an online platform Louisiana Employees Online (LEO), for Civil Service, programmatic, and professional training. LWC has professional training courses on LEO for each of its major programs and requires at least 20 professional training hours per year for each employee. Four MSFW training modules, provided by the U.S. Department of Labor National Monitor Advocate are included in the LWC University and on a Staff Online Services page in HIRE. The modules in HIRE are available to all SWA staff and partners. Additionally, the Staff Online Services page provides access to various other MSFW materials and information, e.g., ES Complaint System forms and instructions, posters, and the Migrant and Seasonal Protection Act. During training sessions, staff will be directed to these training modules for further training and encouraged to retake the training occasionally to refresh their knowledge.

The four modules are:

1. Agricultural Outreach Training
2. Business Service Representatives
3. State Monitor Advocates (Roles and Responsibilities)
4. Front-Line Staff Training on the Job Service Complaint System

For many decades, the state Unemployment Insurance (UI) program was co-located in offices that also provided Wagner-Peyser and WIOA services. This arrangement created a situation where offices activities were dominated by UI activities, to the detriment of job training and placement services. This system also required UI claimants to travel, sometimes long distances, to an office for services.
In 2005, the LWC implemented a centrally operated UI system utilizing an online computerized system and a statewide Call Center. UI services have been removed from Louisiana One-Stop Centers to allow the Center staff to focus solely upon job training, job placement, and related career services. Since a claimant can gain access to the UI system from anywhere, the need for a local presence was no longer needed.

The UI system initially operated separately from the SWA labor exchange system, but continued the requirement that UI claimants register for work and conduct job search or engaged in training. For the last several years, LWC has been integrating UI and Workforce Development (WD) system services through the Helping Individuals Reach Employment (HIRE) online labor exchange and training services system. Upon registering in HIRE, the WD and UI systems are tied into certain automated support activities. For example, upon registration, a UI claimant is automatically profiled for job matching (e.g., the last occupation) and a list of potential employment opportunities within a 25-mile radius is sent to them for consideration. This feature alone has resulted in an average shortened period of unemployment.

UI claimants may file online or by phone at One-Stop Centers. One-Stop Center staffs provide instruction to UI claimants on how to apply for UI services and assist claimants while filing their claims. Further UI services, such as eligibility issues, are provided through the UI Call Center. The online UI application system is available in Spanish. The UI Call Center has bi-lingual staff that offers translation services in Spanish.

All One-Stop staff and workforce partners have been thoroughly trained on the integrated HIRE system (OWD/UI). One-Stop workers regularly provide UI eligibility awareness and may incorporate UI claims income into their individualized service plans.

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.

The four MSFW training modules on the Intranet LWC University and on the Staff Online Resources page in the HIRE labor exchange system comprise part of the merit staff outreach workers’ set of professional development tools. The LWC University is available to all LWC merit employees. The Staff Online Resources is available to merit staff and all partners. Additionally, other MSFW resources are available through the Staff Online Resources: Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act (MSPA), the MSPA poster in English, Spanish and Vietnamese, CFR Part 653 – Services to Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers, TEGL 15-09 Job Service Complaint System, One-Stop Center Complaint Referral Record ETA Form 8429 and instructions. The SMA will attempt to include the four training modules in the training section of the Louisiana Employees Online (LEO) human resources services portal. State merit employees receive professional development credit for courses taken through LEO. The inclusion of the MSFW modules would provide an extra incentive for merit employees to take the courses. Additionally, the SMA will attempt to add online training on the Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS).

e) COORDINATING OUTREACH EFFORTS WITH NFJP GRANTEES AS WELL AS WITH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE COMMUNITY SERVICE AGENCIES AND MSFW GROUPS.

The SWA has already begun a number of measures to increase outreach efforts to MSFWs, as well as with public and private community service agencies and MSFW groups, including:

1. A LWC MSFW policy has been written to assist staff in identifying MSFWs.
2. The HIRE system has been enhanced to include questions about farmwork, so that the SMA and outreach workers can follow-up with eligible MSFWs for services.

3. A MOU has been written between the NFJP partner and the LWC to ensure better coordination between the two agencies, as well as providing coverage to MSFWs throughout the entire state. One new MET office will be co-located in the Houma Comprehensive AJC.

4. The SMA and the state director for MET discussed locations for additional MET offices to ensure outreach efforts on the parts of both agencies will meet the needs of the entire state.

5. Two part-time bilingual (English-Spanish) outreach workers will be hired in the up-coming months (one for the northern part of Louisiana and one for the southern part of the state).

6. An Employment Services (ES) Complaint policy is currently being written and should be disseminated within the next 90 days.

7. The SMA has visited 16/61 AJCs as of February 12, 2018, and will have visited an additional 14 by the end of March 2018 (total of 30/61) to provide technical assistance to front-line staff at AJCs and learn about issues staff have with ES complaints and assisting MSFWs. The SMA will visit all 61 AJCs by the end of 2018, including providing formal reviews once the MSFW and ES Complaint policies have gone into effect.

8. The SMA will attend the MAFO conference in New Mexico in April 2018 to receive additional training and support to bring back to the SWA.

9. The SWA will provide technical training to the SMA, AJC staff and outreach workers. A formal MSFW training is currently being scheduled by the DOL for the region and will likely be held in August 2018 in Chicago.

10. The SMA is collaborating with the Foreign Labor team to ensure that H2A workers are visited upon arrival.

11. The SMA is developing resource materials about local services for MSFWs, and intends to prepare welcome packets for H2A workers, as well as for outreach workers to distribute to MSFWs when they are in the field.

12. The SMA has participated in several conferences specific to MSFW needs and will continue to participate in appropriate conferences as a participant and speaker.

13. The SMA has identified several organizations that work with MSFWs and begun collaborative efforts with them, including:
   a. New Orleans Workers Center for Racial Justice
   b. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
   c. Migrant Education Program
   d. National Guestworkers program
   e. Farm Bureau
   f. LSU Ag Center(s)
   g. NOLO Consulting (Hispanic Farmer Outreach program)
h. MET (NFJP grantee)
i. Houma Nation
j. Farmer’s markets in Baton Rouge
k. SeaGrant (LSU Ag Extension)
l. National Center for Farmworker Health
m. Catholic Charities
n. Alianza de Trabajadores de Marisco y Pescado (ATMP) (Seafood Processing Workers’ Alliance)

14. The SMA has identified several organizations that are pertinent to the ES complaint and referral system and is building relationships with them:

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<th>TYPE</th>
<th>Agency/Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
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<tr>
<td>SMA</td>
<td>State Monitor Advocate (SMA) / Sefla Fuhrman</td>
<td>Sefla Fuhrman 1001 N 23rd Street, 3rd Floor AO Baton Rouge, LA 70802</td>
<td>(225) 342-2662</td>
<td>E-mail: <a href="mailto:sfuhrman@lwc.la.gov">sfuhrman@lwc.la.gov</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>W&amp;H</td>
<td>Louisiana Workforce Commission (Child Labor)</td>
<td>The Louisiana Workforce Commission has also compiled the Minor Labor Statutes and Administrative Rules regarding Minor Labor and has printed the same in an &quot;Informational Booklet Concerning Employment of Minors,&quot; available online or by calling (225) 342-7824.</td>
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<td>W&amp;H</td>
<td>Wage &amp; Hour Division</td>
<td>New Orleans District Office US Dept. of Labor Wage &amp; Hour Division F. Edward Hebert Building 600 South Maestri Place, Room 615</td>
<td>(504) 589-6171 1-866-4-USWAGE (1-866-487-9243) 504.299.1491 (Voice and Facsimile) 504.939.9038</td>
<td><a href="https://www.dol.gov/whd/contact_us.htm">https://www.dol.gov/whd/contact_us.htm</a> E-mail: <a href="mailto:Mouton.troy@dol.gov">Mouton.troy@dol.gov</a></td>
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<td><strong>Worker’s Compensation</strong></td>
<td>Louisiana Workforce Commission&lt;br&gt;Evella L. Quiett&lt;br&gt;Compliance Programs Director&lt;br&gt;P. O. Box 94094, Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9094&lt;br&gt;(225) 342-3075&lt;br&gt;Fax: (225) 342-7961&lt;br&gt;TDD: (800) 259-5154&lt;br&gt;<a href="mailto:equiett@lwc.la.gov">equiett@lwc.la.gov</a></td>
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3. SERVICES PROVIDED TO FARMWORKERS AND AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS THROUGH ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM.
   a) PROVIDING THE FULL RANGE OF EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICES TO THE AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITY, BOTH FARMWORKERS AND AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS, THROUGH THE ONE-STOP DELIVERY SYSTEM. THIS INCLUDES:

   (1) How career and training services required under WIOA Title I will be provided to MSFWs through the one-stop centers;

   (2) How the State serves agricultural employers and how it intends to improve such services.

As previously stated, the One-Stop system has long utilized customer-based approach to services, offering the full range of available services to all customers and accommodating career goals as much as possible with the resources available. The services are described previously in this Louisiana Combined State Plan. All individuals who come within the One-Stop system are offered the same services at the same level, tailored to meet the customer’s career goals. During intake and assessment, staff will ascertain whether the client is an MSFW. MSFWs will then be identified on their registration. The MWFW will be informed of the full range of one-stop services and a plan for services will be developed. MSFWs will also be informed of partners who provide MSFW services for which they may qualify. If the MSFW is put into intensive services, a service plan will be developed, incorporating partner organization services that may be used to enhance the individual’s service plan.

Almost 100% of agricultural job orders placed in the One-Stop HIRE system are for H-2A employment. LWC is in the developing plans to make changes within HIRE for job orders marked as H-2A. The changes are intended to improve program record keeping, tracking, and reporting, and increase the number of domestic worker referrals to the job orders. By the end of PY2018, most of the changes should be in place. The plan involves moving parts of the H-2A housing inspection record keeping into HIRE. Currently, H-2A job orders are input into HIRE 75 to 60 days before the date of need, as specified in U.S. Department of Labor rules. This condition creates a disincentive for job seekers to accept the positions when offered, preferring immediate employment instead. Typically, job seekers peruse recent job orders rather than older “stale” job orders for employment. By the time the date of need approaches, job seekers bypass H-2A job orders for “fresher” job orders. LWC is studying ways H-2A job orders can be “revived”, i.e., brought to the front of the list, for active recruitment as the date of need approaches. The intent is to provide greater exposure of the job order with the hopes of increased referrals.

Regional Business Teams, as part of their regional service strategies, and the SMA and H-2 program operators will reach out to agricultural employers to inform them of One-Stop employer services, including the ARS, partner employer services, and services to employees. The Teams will encourage agricultural
employer engagement in employment and training opportunities and Rapid Response services. The SMA and H-2 operators continually disseminate to agricultural employers and their agents information on One-Stop employment and training services to MSFWs, MSFW employment rights, worker safety and health, housing, and MSFW partner services.

Locally, One-Stop Centers will coordinate the services of one-stop partners, community based organizations, the state MSFW contacts, MSFW groups, state cooperative extension service, and parish (county) agents, and other agencies and organizations listed above to do the following:

1. Give local presentations on One-Stop services, including the My Life, My Way online self-assessment tool and the LWC Star Jobs portal, both accessible online and through smartphones,
2. Set up and utilize an integrated referral system to provide maximum services to MSFWs,
3. Inform agricultural employers of MSFW services and rights,
4. Encourage agricultural employers to utilize the Agricultural Recruiting System (ARS),
5. Promote the hiring of MSFWs to employers in all sectors, including agricultural,
6. Provide required employer posters and other handouts in the English language and in Spanish,
7. Meet on a regular basis to exchange information, discuss problems, and coordinate efforts,
8. Offer to distribute their information pamphlets during outreach contacts and provide materials for them to distribute to MSFWs,
9. Offer services that are relative to their needs, and
10. Advise them of all employment changes affecting their community.

Additionally, the SMA will continue an ongoing relationship with the LA Farm Bureau Federation and participate in its annual Mid South Labor Seminar, providing materials or conducting presentations on agricultural labor issues.

b) MARKETING THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE COMPLAINT SYSTEM TO FARMWORKERS AND OTHER FARMWORKER ADVOCACY GROUPS.

The Employment Services (ES) Complaint System has not been utilized for several years and a new policy and system is being developed. Once in effect, it should operate as follows:

Locally, One-Stop Centers display the ES Complaint System poster in the languages most likely spoken by the customers seeking workforce services. The public is also informed of the ES Complaint System during outreach events. The SMA keeps workforce partners informed of the service and coordinates complaint activities with them.

All complaints from MSFWs alleging violations of employment-related standards and laws shall be taken in writing by One-Stop Center staff and sent to the SMA. The staff will attempt a timely resolution of complaints from non-MSFWs, if possible. In the event the staffs are not able to resolve the complaint, the complainant will be timely referred, as appropriate, to agencies and organizations that may play a role in
resolving the complaint. The complaint records will be reported quarterly to the SMA. One-Stop staff will consult the SMA in cases where they have questions on the proper resolution of complaints or factors of the complaint indicate the complaint may need the assistance or intervention by the SMA.

c) MARKETING THE AGRICULTURAL RECRUITMENT SYSTEM TO AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYERS AND HOW IT INTENDS TO IMPROVE SUCH PUBLICITY.

Annually, the Louisiana One-Stop system receives approximately one dozen non-H-2A agricultural job orders. Several of those tend to be permanent positions from university agricultural research departments.

Although offered to agricultural employers several times each year, none have expressed interest in the Agricultural Recruitment System (ARS) and prefer to search workers locally through the HIRE system. In the past five years, no agricultural employers have agreed to use the ARS.

Even considering this lack of interest, the SMA will continue to promote the ARS to both H-2A and non-H-2A agricultural employers and farmer organizations. The SMA will continue to encourage One-Stop staff to promote the ARS during their outreach to agricultural employers.

4. OTHER REQUIREMENTS
a) DESCRIBE ANY COLLABORATIVE AGREEMENTS THE STATE WORKFORCE AGENCY (SWA) HAS WITH OTHER MSFW SER-VICE PROVIDERS INCLUDING NFJP GRANTEES AND OTHER SERVICE PROVIDERS. DESCRIBE HOW THE SWA INTENDS TO BUILD UPON/INCREASE COLLABORATION WITH EXISTING PARTNERS AND IN ESTABLISHING NEW PARTNERS OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS (INCLUDING ANY APPROXIMATE TIMELINES FOR ESTABLISHING AGREEMENTS OR BUILDING UPON EXISTING AGREEMENTS).

As a non-significant MSFW state, the local One-Stop Centers cooperate and work closely with MET, Inc., and has developed a MOU for the coordinated provision of services. The coordinated services will focus upon:

- 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,
- Coordination and referrals to supportive services.

SWA staff and the SMA will maintain contact with the Migrant Education Program (MEP) to promote the program for the children of migrant parents (whether MSFWs or non-agricultural migrants) and to promote One-Stop services to the parents of MEP students and youths in the program. Likewise, the MEP operators may refer people to the One-Stop Centers.

The SMA has made contact with the Catholic Charities Louisiana Office for Refugees (LOR). Although their clients would rarely, if ever, qualify as MSFW, it is possible some may become eligible after
resettlement. Also, some may be referred to agricultural employment. The LOR has expressed an interest in partnering with LWC to take advantage of the HIRE labor exchange system. By the end of PY2018, LWC plans to provide LOR staff access to HIRE and include local LOR staff, where appropriate, as partners.

The SMA will promote and encourage the provision and coordination of MSFW services to the One-Stop 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. In addition to the 25 organizations mentioned in 2(E) of this plan, the SMA will also reach out to the following organizations:

- Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry,
- Louisiana State University (LSU) AgCenter (other extension offices),
- American Sugar Cane League,
- the Louisiana Alligator Advisory Council,
- the Louisiana Crawfish Farmers Association,
- Latino Farmers Cooperative of Louisiana, Inc.
- Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) Migrant Education,
- University of Louisiana Monroe (ULM) Continuing Education/Delta Community College DeltaLinc,
- Louisiana Community and Trade College System
- Louisiana Educational institutes and universities (e.g. Southern University, University of New Orleans, etc.)
- Louisiana Primary Care Association, Inc.,
- The Louisiana Association of Cooperatives,
- Legal aid organizations,
- Migration and refugee centers,
- Other service or advocacy organizations.

The SMA will continue to coordinate with the LWC Occupational Safety and Health Administration Consultation (OSHA Consultation) section to provide outreach and safety information and training to agricultural employers and employees. Some of the training may be provided either on the job site or in the local area. Safety information and resources will be provided to partners and organizations to hand out to their agricultural clients. LWC will continue to disseminate safety and employment related information through the agricultural network.

b) REVIEW AND PUBLIC COMMENT.

The AOP and Unified State Plans have not yet gone to public comment, so nothing has been collected in response to this question at this time.

c) DATA ASSESSMENT.

The previous four Program Years (PY2012 – PY2016) were analyzed to determine whether LWC met its goals in the provision of quantitatively proportionate and qualitatively equivalent level of services to MSFWs compared to the whole population of LWC customers. LWC provided services to an average of 207 MSFWs each year. In PY2012, LWC only met two (2) of the five (5) Equity Ratio Indicators. The shortfall was attributable to the fact that during that year, MSFWs were not being properly identified and
recorded. Thus the level of services provided to MSFWs was not properly captured in reports. Each year since that time, LWC has met or surpassed its goals for the Equity Ratio Indicators and Minimum Service Level Indicators.

A continuing challenge for the One-Stop staff is identifying who may be an MSFW. Considering that most in the state who may qualify as an MSFW do not consider farm work as their career, they tend to omit farming experience from their resumes, focusing instead upon more desirable occupations. It is suspected that some HIRE registrants qualify as MSFWs but are not identified in the system. Services are provided to them but the services do not count toward the Equity Ratio Indicators and Minimum Service Level Indicators. Simply identifying MSFWs and recording the services provided to them in HIRE should increase both indicators, while providing expanded options for service through partner MSFW programs.

The spotty use of the ES Complaint System and reporting of complaints has been a weakness for many years. When a complaint arises, the issue is often resolved in-house or the complainant is referred to an organization that can assist in the complaint. Yet, the complaint and resolution or referral goes unrecorded. Further staff training and promotion of the use of the ES Complaint System as described in Outreach Activities (2)(B) above should improve or alleviate any weaknesses in these two areas. Additionally, the SMA will continue to train and encourage One-Stop staff in identifying and reporting MSFWs and services to MSFWs.

\[d\] ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

While some of the goals of the previous AOP were achieved, and captured in SMA Summary reports, many were not. The main reasons why goals were not achieved were because the SMA’s duties were combined with the H2A program, and the increasing demand for foreign workers overshadowed monitoring and advocacy activities. By hiring a full-time SMA, as well as 2 part-time bilingual outreach workers the goals of this AOP should be achievable.

\[e\] STATE MONITOR ADVOCATE

The SMA has played an active role in developing the AOP with the SWA.

**Services Provided to Employers and MSFWs through the One-Stop System**

The SMA will promote and encourage the provision and coordination of MSFW services to the AJCs with Motivation Education & Training Inc. (MET, Inc.) (the state WIOA Section 167, National Farmworker Jobs Program [NFJP] grantee), state and local agricultural agencies, farm organizations and other agricultural stakeholders. These organizations will include:

- Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry
- Louisiana State University (LSU) AgCenter
- Louisiana Farm Bureau
- American Sugar Cane League
- Louisiana Alligator Advisory Council
- Louisiana Crawfish Farmers Association
- Latino Farmers Cooperative of Louisiana Inc.
- Louisiana Department of Education Migrant Education
- University of Louisiana-Monroe Continuing Education/Delta Community College DeltaLinc
- Louisiana Primary Care Association Inc.
• USDOL Wage and Hour Division
• USDOL Occupational Safety and Health Administration
• U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
• Louisiana Association of Cooperatives
• Legal aid organizations
• Migration and refugee centers
• Other organizations

The monitor advocate will continue to coordinate with the LWC Occupational Safety and Health Administration Consultation (OSHA Consultation) section to provide outreach and safety information and training to agricultural employers and employees. Some of the training may be provided either on the job site or in the local area. Safety information and resources will be provided to partners and organizations to hand out to their agricultural clients. LWC will continue to disseminate safety and employment-related information through the agricultural network.

**Services Provided to Agricultural Employers and MSFWs Through the BCSCs**

Efforts by LWC to promote and facilitate the provision of services to MSFWs and increase the number of MSFWs in labor exchange activities will be conducted through the AJCs. Locally, the centers will coordinate the services of One-Stop partners, community based organizations, the state MSFW contacts, MSFW groups, state cooperative extension service, parish (county) agents and other agencies and organizations listed above to do the following:

1. Give local presentations on AJC services, including the LWC Star Jobs portal, accessible online and through smartphones.
2. Set up and utilize an integrated referral system to provide maximum services to MSFWs.
3. Encourage employers to utilize the Agricultural Recruiting System (ARS).
4. Provide required employer posters and other handouts in the English language and in Spanish.
5. Meet on a regular basis to exchange information, discuss problems, and coordinate efforts.
6. Offer to distribute their information pamphlets during outreach contacts and provide materials for them to distribute to MSFWs.
7. Offer services that are relative to their needs.
8. Advise them of all employment changes affecting their community.

LWC has partnered with Motivation, Education and Training (MET) to assist Louisiana in providing increased services to MSFWs and farmworker employers. One MET, Inc. office is co-located in a AJC.

The SMA will work with LWC administrative and local office staff on issues of concern (compliance with equity indicators, reviving local interest, proper documentation of services, etc.) This technical assistance is provided to all AJC staff as needed.
The SMA will provide training and follow-up on the outreach and provision of services to MSFWs to AJC staff throughout the state. The staff will be encouraged to query clients to better identify MSFWs and record them in the HiRE system. Staff will provide the full array of employment services, including the labor-exchange system, of which the ARS is a part. The labor exchange system provides job openings in both agricultural and non-agricultural employment. Other services, such as training or supportive services, provide a pathway for MSFWs to transition to higher-wage jobs and permanent year-round employment in non-agricultural work.

All complaints from MSFWs alleging violations of employment-related standards and laws shall be taken in writing by the AJC staff, and referred to the SMA. The local staff will attempt a timely resolution of non-MSFW complaints, if possible. In the event the local staffs are not able to resolve the complaint, the complainant will be referred, as appropriate, to the USDOL Wage & Hour Division or other agencies and organizations that may play a role in resolving complaints. The complaint records will be reported quarterly to the SMA.

F. WAGNER-PEYSER ASSURANCES

<table>
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<tr>
<th>The state plan must include assurances that:</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. The Wagner-Peyser Employment Service is co-located with One-Stop Centers or a plan and timeline has been developed to comply with this requirement within a reasonable amount of time. (Section 121(e)(3)). The state assures compliance that Wagner-Peyser Employment Service is co-located with One-Stop Centers in the state. Louisiana had co-location of Wagner-Peyser Employment Service since 2007.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. The state agency is complying with the requirements under 20 CFR 653.111 (State agency staffing requirements) if the State has significant MSFW One-Stop centers; The state assures compliance with the requirements under 20 CFR 653.111.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. If a state workforce development board, department or agency administers state laws for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, that board, department or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, adult and dislocated worker programs and youth programs under Title I. The state assures compliance because Vocational Rehabilitation programs are administered by Louisiana Workforce Commission (Office of Workforce Development). Wagner-Peyser, adult, dislocated worker and youth programs under Title I are also administered by the Office of Workforce Development allowing for cooperation across the programs.</td>
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<td>4. State agency merit-based public employees provide Wagner-Peyser Act-funded labor exchange activities in accordance with Department of Labor regulations. The state assures compliance that state agency merit-based public employees provide Wagner-Peyser Act-funded labor exchange activities in accordance with Department of Labor regulations.</td>
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PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY ACT PROGRAMS

A. ALIGNING OF CONTENT STANDARDS
B. LOCAL ACTIVITIES
ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES (SECTION 203 OF WIOA)

SPECIAL RULE

C. CORRECTIONS EDUCATION AND OTHER EDUCATION OF INSTITUTIONALIZED INDIVIDUALS

D. INTEGRATED ENGLISH LITERACY AND CIVICS EDUCATION PROGRAM

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL ESTABLISH AND OPERATE INTEGRATED ENGLISH LITERACY AND CIVICS EDUCATION PROGRAMS UNDER SECTION 243 OF WIOA, FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS WHO ARE ADULTS, INCLUDING PROFESSIONALS WITH DEGREES AND CREDENTIALS IN THEIR NATIVE COUNTRIES.

2. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL FUND, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF TITLE II, SUBTITLE C, INTEGRATED ENGLISH LITERACY AND CIVICS EDUCATION SERVICES AND HOW THE FUNDS WILL BE USED FOR THOSE SERVICES.

E. STATE LEADERSHIP

1. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE THE FUNDS TO CARRY OUT THE REQUIRED STATE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES UNDER SECTION 223 OF WIOA.

2. DESCRIBE HOW THE STATE WILL USE THE FUNDS TO CARRY OUT PERMISSIBLE STATE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES UNDER SECTION 223 OF WIOA, IF APPLICABLE.

F. ASSESSING QUALITY

CERTIFICATIONS
CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING
ASSURANCES

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

A. INPUT OF STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

1. INPUT PROVIDED BY THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL, INCLUDING INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN, RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COUNCIL’S REPORT,
THE REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF CONSUMER SATISFACTION, 
AND OTHER COUNCIL REPORTS THAT MAY HAVE BEEN 
developed as part of the Council’s functions;

The Louisiana Rehabilitation Council (LRC), which is the state rehabilitation council, met with Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) quarterly as a part of the council meeting. During these meetings, LRS provided quarterly updates, and LRC provided input and recommendations to LRS. The LRC incorporates public forums, consumer/counselor interviews, etc., to ensure the services provided by LRS meet the needs of Louisiana’s citizens with disabilities. The LRC uses a committee structure to provide focused review and comment to LRS. These committees are: the Executive committee; the Eligibility and Planning committee; the Employment committee and the Transition committee. Much of the interaction included exchanges of information in order to achieve greater clarity and understanding. While the detail work is done in the committee structure, all comments and recommendations are made from the full LRC.

The following is a list of activities and accomplishments of LRC for the period from July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017:

- The LRC produced the annual report which included its accomplishments, as well as consumer success stories.
- Council members received an agency report from LRS Director at each regularly scheduled LRC meeting. Council members asked questions and were provided direct input from the LRS Director and other State Office staff.
- The LRC completed a Consumer Satisfaction Survey in April 2017. The satisfaction rate was 76.5%. LRS consumers that requested to be contacted by a LRC Council member were contacted.
- The Office of Workforce Development Director addressed the Council and discussed re-planning and integration within the organization, making sure the One Step Centers are fully educated about LRS and providing quality services.
- The LRC developed Member Roles and Responsibilities which include visiting at a One Stop Center in their area each year to become familiar with their services to individuals with disabilities and provide feedback to LRS as needed.
- LRS implemented a Council recommendation and included a substance abuse screening tool as a resource in the counselor’s online toolbox and training on the tool was provided to the counselors.
- The LRC continued to provide a forum for consumers and the public the opportunity to openly discuss LRS services and to offer suggestions for improved service delivery. The Council provided feedback to LRS on these ideas and concerns.
- The LRC provided feedback and input regarding the Comprehensive Needs Assessment.
- The Louisiana Workforce Commission webpage continued to be utilized to distribute information about Council activities to include quarterly meeting locations and public forums.
- Regional LRS Offices invited VR consumers to speak to the Council to discuss their experiences regarding Vocational Rehabilitation service provision.
- Council members continued to monitor legislative action for potential impact to the VR program and individuals with disabilities in Louisiana.
- The LRC educated State Legislators during the 2017 Legislative Session on the VR program and the services that benefit the State of Louisiana and its citizens with disabilities.
- Council members are active with other boards and groups statewide that include, but are not limited to, the Statewide Independent Living Council, Governor’s Advisory Council on Disability Affairs, Families Helping Families, Developmental Disability Council, Workforce Investment Council, Special Education Advisory Panel, Brain Injury Association of Louisiana, Metropolitan Human Services District, Developmental Disabilities Region Advisory Council, Traumatic Head and Spinal Cord Injury Trust Fund, Blind Vendor Trust Fund Advisory Board, Louisiana Association for Public, Community and Adult Education, etc.
2. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT’S RESPONSE TO THE COUNCIL’S INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS; AND

The following is a summary of the input and recommendations made from July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017. Recommendations are transmitted to LRS both verbally at LRC meetings and in writing throughout the year by committee reports and the LRC minutes. LRS appreciates the input, partnership, and ongoing dialogue with LRC throughout the year, and will continue to provide updates to LRC on progress made toward implementation of recommendations.

LRC Input: LRC commends the collaboration LRS has demonstrated with providers/partners and the improvement of service delivery as evident in the state plan materials and policies in a number of areas benefiting Louisiana citizens with disabilities.

Recommendation: LRC requested LRS provide statistical information for the Council to develop a fact sheet to be presented to 2017 Legislative session to emphasize the importance of continued appropriation of funds to the VR program.

Response: The LRC developed a fact sheet showing the return on investment based on a study completed by the LSU Public Policy Research Program which found that for every $1 spent in VR, the return over a 5 year period is $16.99.

Recommendation: LRC assessed the benefit of developing a report card system to evaluate vendors and recommended that LRS create a vendor information sheet that could be shared with consumers to further support informed choice.

Response: LRS is evaluating the cost benefit of supplying consumers with separate vendor data sheets in addition to the vendor manual, which they currently review as part of informed choice.

Recommendation: LRC recommended that a substance abuse screening tool be added to the Counselor Toolbox on the web based share drive.

Response: LRS implemented the Council’s recommendation and included the substance abuse screening tool as a resource in the counselor’s online toolbox and training on the tool was provided to the counselors.

Recommendation: In addition to the Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) service provided at every meeting, the LRC recommended that Sign Language Interpreters attend every meeting for at least a two hour minimum and on call for the rest of the meeting in the case a deaf individual requests that accommodation without providing prior notice.

Response: LRS Director agreed and approved the cost of having Sign Language Interpreters attend every meeting for a two hour minimum and be available on call for the rest of the meeting.

3. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT’S EXPLANATIONS FOR REJECTING ANY OF THE COUNCIL’S INPUT OR RECOMMENDATIONS.

None of the LRC’s recommendations were rejected.

B. REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF STATEWIDENESS
1. A LOCAL PUBLIC AGENCY WILL PROVIDE THE NON-FEDERAL SHARE OF COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE WAIVER REQUEST;

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 and Bossier Parish Community College (BPCC) continue a third party arrangement to provide a post-secondary vocational training program to only those students (consumers) with disabilities who are applicants for or recipients of LRS services. The “Program for Successful Employment” (PSE) will be designed to increase the number of consumers with disabilities completing high school through dual enrollment opportunities located on a college campus leading to competitive employment. Once exited from the local education agency, consumers will complete their courses on the BPCC campus. PSE will provide career guidance, vocational sampling and training, and job placement opportunities for those consumers in the Shreveport Region.

LRS has five Third Party Cooperative Arrangements (TPCAs) established with separate School Districts in Grant, Bossier, Evangeline, Orleans and Franklin Parishes as well as with Sci Academy and GW Carver. Through these TPCAs, a Transition Specialist provides workplace readiness training including self-advocacy, work-based learning experiences, and identification of employers who will host students for work-based learning. Virtual Academy of Lafourche has hired a transition specialists, through a TPCA, to provide workplace readiness training including self-advocacy, work-based learning experiences, and identification of employers who will host students for work-based learning.

LRS has a TPCA with LSU HDC Pay Check to hire an Employment Liaison and a Transitional Employment Coordinator to help identify employers for students with developmental disabilities and mental illness.

2. THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL APPROVE EACH PROPOSED SERVICE BEFORE IT IS PUT INTO EFFECT; AND

By entering into a contractual agreement in which LRS has approved each proposed service, the TPCA Contractors are assuring they will provide the non-federal matching funds. All vocational rehabilitation services provided under this waiver are provided under an approved Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) and authorized by the consumer’s VR counselor.

3. ALL STATE PLAN REQUIREMENTS WILL APPLY

The TPCA Contractors assure that all State Plan requirements, including the Pre-Employment Transition Services or Order of Selection will apply to all individuals receiving services through the agreement.

C. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH AGENCIES NOT CARRYING OUT ACTIVITIES UNDER THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM.
1. **FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS;**

LRS has appropriate cooperative arrangements with, and uses the services and facilities of, various federal, state, and local agencies and programs. LRS coordinates with other agencies and programs to ensure individuals with disabilities receive appropriate services. These agencies and programs include:

- Department of Education, Division of Special Populations
- Louisiana Department of Health, Office of Behavioral Health
- Department of Veteran Affairs
- Louisiana Workforce Commission, Office of Workforce Development
- Louisiana Workforce Commission, Work Opportunity Tax Credit Program (WOTC)
- Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD)
- Office of Disability Affairs
- Department of Children and Family Services, Office of Disability Determination
- Department of Children and Family Services, Office of Family Support, Family Independence Temporary Assistance Program (FITAP)
- Social Security Administration
- Central Louisiana Intertribal Vocational Rehabilitation Program (Title 121)
- United Houma Nation (Title 121)
- U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Workers’ Compensation Program

2. **STATE PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT UNDER SECTION 4 OF THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT OF 1998;**

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. **PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT BY THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE;**

At this time, Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) is not aware of any interagency cooperation on the utilization of services and facilities of the programs carried out by the Undersecretary for Rural Development of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Please be advised, that if such agreements are initiated, LRS will amend this section.
4. NONEDUCATIONAL AGENCIES SERVING OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH; AND

At this time, Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) is not aware of any interagency collaboration with non–educational agencies serving out–of–school youth. However, LRS will be determining potential collaboration with the local career solution centers who are serving out–of–school youth to assist with increasing successful employment outcomes within the state for youth with disabilities.

5. STATE USE CONTRACTING PROGRAMS.

At this time, Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) is not aware of any interagency collaboration on the utilization of services and facilities of the programs carried out by State Use contracting programs. Please be advised, that if such agreements are initiated, LRS will amend this section.

D. COORDINATION WITH EDUCATION OFFICIALS

1. DSU’S PLANS

Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) continues to provide transition or post-school training services for those youth with disabilities leaving the secondary education system and who are pursuing employment opportunities in adult life. This is accomplished by reviewing, updating, and renewing the formal interagency agreement between LRS and the Department of Education (DOE) as needed based upon both agencies’ policy and/or procedure changes; ongoing collaboration; joint development and evaluation of goals, and specialized training for both LRS and DOE agency staff.

LRS policy requires the development and approval of the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) for eligible students who have official transition plans in place with the state education system. The IPEs are to be developed as early as possible in the transition process, but at the latest, by the time each Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) eligible student leaves the high school setting.

The formal interagency agreement provides for initial contact to be made with the transition student as early as age sixteen. This is accomplished by the development of criteria and timelines for an effective and efficient referral process; provision of orientation and information sessions for students and their families; and LRS counselors determining transition students’ eligibility for VR services within the timelines established by agency policy.

For each student determined eligible for services, every effort will be made to ensure those who are in an Order of Selection (OOS) Category currently being served by LRS leave the school system with an approved IPE in place that incorporates appropriate segments of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and projected employment needs, as applicable.

2. INFORMATION ON THE FORMAL INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT WITH THE STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCY WITH RE- SPECT TO:
   a) CONSULTATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO ASSIST EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES IN PLANNING FOR THE TRANSITION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES FROM SCHOOL TO POST-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING VR SERVICES;
LRS continues to renew and revise existing local cooperative agreements, as applicable, with the 70 school districts and 146 Charter Schools in Louisiana.

Consultation and technical assistance is provided to educational agencies in a variety of ways. VR Counselors attend IEP meetings to provide recommendations/guidance on adult services available to transitioning students, provide information relative to the VR process, and relay information regarding various training options available within the community.

The State Office Transition Program Coordinator provides consultation and technical support statewide to the field Transition VR Counselors in a variety of methods - to include information on webinars, conference calls, and video conferences - updates of best practice techniques gathered from WINTAC and Transition Core Team meetings.

b) TRANSITION PLANNING BY PERSONNEL OF THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCY AND EDUCATIONAL AGENCY THAT FACILITATES THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THEIR INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAMS;

The Program Coordinator works collaboratively with DOE Transition Coordinator in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities including VR services. Both agencies share responsibility to coordinate the provision of services, conduct outreach, and identify financial responsibility as needed. The DOE will assure that all students with disabilities and their families have knowledge of LRS policies and services including brochures and promotional information supplied by LRS. Information dissemination begins with the writing of the transition service page and continues through referral to LRS. Local Education Agencies (LEAs) also invite LRS representatives to IEP meetings at the students’ request, when a transition service page is being written for a student with a disability who may be eligible for and/or interested in VR services;

- facilitate appropriate orientation meetings among LRS staff, student and family members;
- provide time for LRS staff to meet with teachers, guidance counselors, and other appropriate personnel for such purposes as information sharing/gathering at both the individual and agency levels; and
- assist in the development, provision, and evaluation of interagency vocational assessment processes and functional vocational transition programs.

School Districts that have entered into a third party cooperative arrangement with LRS for a Transition Specialist will have direct services provided to students with disabilities who are applicants and eligible LRS. LRS collaborated with LSU HSC Pay Check, Bossier Parish Community College, Grant, Franklin, Bossier, Evangeline, Orleans Parish School Systems, Sci Academy, GW Carver and Virtual Academy of Lafourche in the implementation of third party cooperative arrangements to provide employment related services to LRS eligible students in order to increase successful employment outcomes for transition aged youth with development disabilities and individuals with mental illness.

c) ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, INCLUDING FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES, OF EACH AGENCY, INCLUDING PROVISIONS FOR DETERMINING STATE LEAD AGENCIES AND QUALIFIED PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE FOR TRANSITION SERVICES;

Current LRS policy and guidelines address the allocation of 15% of State’s VR allotment for the provision of services of Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to high school students with disabilities between the ages of 16 – 21 who are eligible or potentially eligible for VR services. The required activities of Pre-ETS are workplace readiness training, job exploration counseling; work-based learning experiences; counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition
or postsecondary education programs at institutions of higher education; and instruction in self-advocacy. LRS assigned vendors to work with each high school across the state to make Pre-ETS services available to students who receive IDEA funds or students who are individuals with a disability for the purposes of section 504 of the Act (29 U.S.C. 794).

LRS will use agency funds for the provision of Pre-ETS and VR services on the approved IPE that relates directly to the achievement of the agreed upon vocational goal, which is not the responsibility of the education system. The DOE will use agency funds for the provision of educational services on the approved IEP that relates directly to the achievement of the agreed upon educational goal.

d) PROCEDURES FOR OUTREACH TO AND IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES WHO NEED TRANSITION SERVICES.

Outreach is conducted by VR Counselors to identify students with disabilities through the following methods:

LRS Transition Counselors in each region meet with a school liaison, usually the guidance counselor, to provide information regarding LRS services. The school liaison relays the information to students with disabilities and coordinates the student's initial meeting with the LRS Transition Counselor.

LRS Transition Counselors conduct outreach by hosting transition meetings at area high schools to provide information about VR services and to accept referrals. Information disseminated at these meetings includes agency brochures, client handbooks describing the VR processes/services, and referrals to other community resources students may need to access. Counselors work with the students, parents and educators to plan services needed for successful transition from school to work from the point that the student with a disability is identified.

Counselors attend “Career Days” at the high schools to share information with transition students on available services that may identify career goals and to share information regarding services available to assist them in reaching their goals.

E. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH PRIVATE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) establishes fee-for-service cooperative agreements with private non-profit vocational rehabilitation service providers and/or Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) through a vendorship approval process. This process is initiated at the Regional Office level when it is determined the services are needed in the region.

The potential service provider is given a copy of the CRP standards and vendorship approval guidelines and must agree to comply with these guidelines. The guidelines include adherence to 504 and 508 Accessibility, education and training certifications and other procedural standards related to quality services and payment for services. The application for vendorship is submitted to State Office by the Regional Manager, along with a recommendation of approval or disapproval of the program.

The need for new, improved or expanded services is identified through a variety of methods. These include needs identified through the comprehensive statewide needs assessment, regional shortages of service providers, increases in specific service needs, and needs identified as a result of changes in agency processes.
All rates are set by a rate-setting process in the fiscal section, are consistent statewide, and are reimbursed through a fee-for-service.

**F. ARRANGEMENTS AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES**

Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) will maintain cooperative agreements on file with the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH), Office of Behavioral Health (OBH) and Office of Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD), which ensures proper utilization of resources under the Title VI, Part C Program. These agreements are written to comply with the content requirements in 34 CFR 363.50(b) outlining each agency's responsibility in reference to the supported employment program. A description of each agreement follows:

**OFFICE OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH (OBH)**

LRS and the OBH are jointly responsible for meeting the needs of consumers with mental illness, including youth with the most significant disabilities, for whom supported employment is the most appropriate service. LRS will fund the Evidence-Based Employment Service Model for the chronically mentally ill to provide supported work services to assist these consumers in achieving competitive integrated employment. These services will be provided, either directly or through a service provider, as time-limited vocational services to these individuals and will include: (1) short-term evaluation (any evaluation must be supplementary to an evaluation of rehabilitation potential done under the regular program), (2) job development and job placement, (3) intensive training, (4) intensive follow-along, and (5) extended follow-along. LRS is working with partner agencies to amend and update agreements.

Approximately three hundred and fifty (350) consumers could be referred for supported employment services during each fiscal year. Once eligibility for supported employment services has been established, LRS continues to collaborate with OBH to ensure that services are provided in a timely manner and to assure the development of an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). The IPE shall specify the responsibilities of all parties involved in the supported employment program for the individual and shall include reporting requirements for both agencies.

During the operational phase, LRS is responsible for the provision of services as outlined in the agreement. The LRS vendor (service provider) is responsible for actual placement, training and supervision. Any problems which might impact the ultimate success of the job placement shall be immediately brought to the attention of LRS and the OBH. LRS shall maintain an open, active case on each consumer in accordance with definitions and guidelines which have been accepted for each of the program models.

LRS agrees to re-open a consumer's case at any point where additional long-term intensive training is needed, (i.e. consumer loses job and must be retrained, consumer promoted or consumer assigned new responsibilities).

**OFFICE OF CITIZENS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES (OCDD)**

LRS and the OCDD are jointly responsible for meeting the needs of consumers with developmental disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities, for whom supported employment is the most appropriate service. LRS will fund the Job Coach Model to provide supported work services to assist these consumers in achieving competitive integrated employment. These services will be
provided, either directly or through a service provider, as time-limited vocational services to these individuals and will include: (1) short-term evaluation (any evaluation must be supplementary to an evaluation of rehabilitation potential done under the regular program), (2) job development and job placement, (3) intensive training, (4) intensive follow-along, and (5) limited follow-along.

The OCDD will provide extended services for consumers whose services are funded through contractual agreement with private providers. For consumers whose services are funded through a residential facility, extended services shall be provided by or through that facility.

Approximately three hundred (300) consumers could be referred for supported employment services during each year. Once eligibility for supported employment services has been established, LRS will collaborate with OCDD to ensure that services are provided in a timely manner and to assure the development of an IPE that includes extended services. If extended services are not confirmed, there must be a reasonable expectation that supports, including natural supports will become available. The IPE shall specify the responsibilities of all parties involved in the supported employment program for the individual and shall include reporting requirements for both agencies.

In the initial phase of a supported employment placement, the LRS counselor, the service provider, and the consumer are principal participants in initiating the services. OCDD is available for consultation and referral, etc. The LRS counselor will attend Person-Centered Planning meetings as needed.

During this phase, LRS is responsible for the provision of services as outlined in the agreement. The LRS vendor, or service provider, is responsible for actual placement, training and supervision. The service provider shall immediately bring any problems, which might impact upon the ultimate success of the job placement, to the attention of LRS and OCDD.

LRS agrees to re-open a consumer’s case at any point where additional intensive training is needed and is justified in writing, subject to availability of funds. LRS is working with partner agencies to amend and update agreements.

MONITORING AND EXPANSION

1. LRS will monitor the services provided within the guidelines of the existing cooperative agreements and evaluate if modifications will be needed when they are renegotiated.

2. LRS will endeavor to provide access to these individuals by establishing agreements with non-profit organizations and/or community or state agencies including the following:

   - Social Security Administration
   - Department of Education
   - Office of Workforce Development
   - Employment Network of Louisiana
   - Associations for Citizens with Disabilities
   - Title VII, Independent Living Centers
   - Other volunteer organizations and/or resources
3. LRS will work towards establishing relationships with employers through the National VR Business Network, Community Rehabilitation Program - Rehabilitation Continuing Education Program, Business Advisory Committees, Business Leadership Networks, other Networks, and Councils to establish collaboration with businesses and corporations in order to facilitate natural supports at the job site.

G. COORDINATION WITH EMPLOYERS

1. VR SERVICES; AND

Louisiana Rehabilitation Services will continue to uphold the achievement of competitive integrated employment for individuals with disabilities. Our Vocational Rehabilitation Program sets out to accomplish this task by building relationships with employers in the communities and various cities in the state of Louisiana. In order to form these connections, LRS Rehabilitation Employment Development Specialists (REDS) continue to build these relations by first gaining an understanding of what the business and workforce needs are in each area of the state. This is done by expanding our outreach to the business community and then by referring or recommending those clients that will fit their workforce needs.

LRS REDS are involved with the WIOA Board meetings and have formed relationships with LWCs’ Industry Coordinators which helps to identify workforce needs in various sectors. The Industry Coordinator analyzes and acquires knowledge about the full range of existing business solutions and identifies and defines talent pipelines and skill paths to promote sector employment to job seekers. The Program Coordinator over employment initiatives provides further technical assistance to the REDs to assist them in outreach efforts to businesses and their Human Resource Management Teams. Outreach efforts include attendance at local and regional job fairs, Chamber of Commerce meetings and the Society of Human Resource Management monthly meetings. REDS also contact numerous employers every month in an effort to identify workforce needs and determine if we have consumers that are job ready and meet the qualifications for positions available. After the REDS or the Employment Specialists place the consumers in competitive and integrated employment, they continue to work with the business and the consumer, ensuring the employment opportunity is a good fit for both.

2. TRANSITION SERVICES, INCLUDING PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES, FOR STUDENTS AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES.

LRS has five Third Party Cooperative Arrangements (TPCAs) established with separate School Districts in Grant, Bossier, Evangeline, Orleans and Franklin Parishes as well as with Sci Academy and GW Carver. Through these TPCAs, a Transition Specialist provides workplace readiness training including self-advocacy, work-based learning experiences, and identification of employers who will host students for work-based learning.

Bossier Parish Community College has a program called Program for Successful Employment (PSE) funded through a TPCA with LRS to provide job readiness to students with disabilities, work with employers to help find job placement and provide follow up. Virtual Academy of Lafourche has hired a transition specialist, through a TPCA, to provide workplace readiness training including self-advocacy, work-based learning experiences, and identification of employers who will host students for work-based learning.

LRS has TPCA with LSUHDC Pay Check to hire an Employment Liaison and a Transitional Employment Coordinator to provide employment related services for students with developmental
disabilities and mental illness.

LRS assigned Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) to each public high school across the state, including Charter schools, to make Pre-ETS services available to students who receive special education services through IDEA funds or students who are considered individuals with disabilities for the purpose of section 504 of the Act (29 U.S.C. 794). Assigned CRPs provide work readiness and identify employers in the area to give students opportunities for work-based learning experiences.

H. INTERAGENCY COOPERATION
1. THE STATE MEDICAID PLAN UNDER TITLE XIX OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT;

Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) works collaboratively with the State Medicaid Plan housed within the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH). LRS will maintain a memorandum of understanding with LDH in order to ensure proper utilization of resources and continue to explore all available opportunities for employment in integrated settings.

2. THE STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES; AND

Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) works collaboratively with the Office of Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD) housed within the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH). LRS will maintain a memorandum of understanding with LDH in order to ensure proper utilization of resources and continue to explore all available opportunities for employment in integrated settings.

3. THE STATE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES.

Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) works collaboratively with the Office of Behavioral Health (OBH) housed within the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH). LRS will maintain a memorandum of understanding with LDH in order to ensure proper utilization of resources and continue to explore all available opportunities for employment in integrated settings.

I. COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT; DATA SYSTEM ON PERSONNEL AND PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT
1. DATA SYSTEM ON PERSONNEL AND PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT
   a) QUALIFIED PERSONNEL NEEDS.
      (1) The number of personnel who are employed by the State agency in the provision of VR services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category;
This section describes Louisiana Rehabilitation Services' (LRS') procedures and activities to ensure an adequate supply of qualified professionals and paraprofessionals to provide Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services statewide. The Louisiana Rehabilitation Council can review and comment on the agency’s Re-Training Plan upon request.

In order to assess the need for qualified personnel, LRS has developed and maintains a database which includes information on the number of rehabilitation personnel providing VR services, and the ratio of the number of personnel needed by the agency to adequately provide VR services statewide.

LRS is geographically divided into eight (8) regions within the state; each region has one designated transition counselor, one counselor for the deaf and one counselor for the blind. In FY 2017, LRS had a staff of 188, of which 77 were Rehabilitation Counselors with an average caseload size of 148 consumers. LRS provided services to 18,460 VR and 4,036 Pre-ETS consumers. Of the individuals receiving services, the Rehabilitation Employment Development Specialists (REDS), who have varying caseload sizes, provided direct job placement services to 94 consumers. Eight thousand, seven hundred and eighty-one consumers received services from Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) staff and Evaluators. As a result, 1,834 consumers exited the VR program achieving an employment outcome in FY 2017. This does not include Pre-ETS consumers.

(2) The number of personnel currently needed by the State agency to provide VR services, broken down by personnel category; and

At this time, in an effort to adequately serve and meet the needs of consumers in all Order of Selection categories currently being served, LRS needs additional staff that would consist of 35 Rehabilitation Counselors and 5 REDS. LRS is currently assessing human resources available to determine most effective structure to meet the service needs of individuals with disabilities statewide.

LRS will need to increase its staff statewide to be able to meet the growing needs of individuals with disabilities in the coming five years. Currently, LRS has 35 Rehabilitation Counselor vacancies, an additional 9 who are eligible for retirement and has identified 17 more that will be eligible for retirement in the next five years. Also, Rehabilitation Counselors may be promoting to higher positions within LRS and their vacancies will need to be filled.

(3) Projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the State 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Row</th>
<th>Job Title</th>
<th>Total Positions</th>
<th>Current Vacancies</th>
<th>Projected Vacancies over the next 5 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rehabilitation Counselor</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Rehabilitation Employment Development Specialists (REDS)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Support Staff/Paraprofessionals (client services)</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Field Managers (client services)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
b) PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

(1) a list of the institutions of higher education in the State that are preparing VR professionals, by type of program;

Louisiana has two universities with CORE accredited graduate programs in rehabilitation counseling; Southern University (SU) in Baton Rouge, a Historically Black University and Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center (LSUHSC) in New Orleans. SU offers an undergraduate rehabilitation counseling program. Neither SU nor LSUHSC offers a doctoral degree at this time.

(2) the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and

As noted in the following table, a total of 17 students graduated with a Master’s Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling during the previous year from the two institutions listed above.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Row</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Students Enrolled</th>
<th>Employees sponsored by Agency and/or RSA</th>
<th>Graduates sponsored by Agency and/or RSA</th>
<th>Graduates from the previous year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Southern University, Baton Rouge, LA Undergraduate</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Southern University, Baton Rouge, LA Graduate</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Louisiana State University Health Science Center, New Orleans, LA Graduate</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(3) 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.
All graduates from the Master's program at both of the institutions are eligible to meet the national certification requirement and sit for the national licensure of Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC).

2. PLAN FOR RECRUITMENT, PREPARATION AND RETENTION OF QUALIFIED PERSONNEL

RECRUITMENT

LRS continues to be committed to the development and continued growth of professional staff members. In an effort to meet the current and projected needs for qualified personnel, the following process and activities are utilized. All strategies noted below for LRS’ Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) program encourages the hiring of staff members from minority backgrounds and individuals with disabilities.

In an effort to work cooperatively with institutions of higher education in the area of recruitment, the agency participated in Career Day activities at Southern University. To ensure recruitment of individuals from minority backgrounds, LRS works closely with SU, a Historically Black University. Students are provided information on the application process for employment and information regarding advancement opportunities with the agency. LRS provides internship opportunities for graduate students in both assessment and counseling settings. In addition, brochures about the rehabilitation counseling profession are available in Spanish for staff members to distribute to consumers and at functions statewide.

The universities provide program updates throughout the year, which are shared with agency staff members. Notification of agency professional position vacancies is provided to department heads at the universities to assist graduates pursuing employment.

As a method of recruiting individuals with disabilities, Rehabilitation Counselors advise consumers about the career opportunities in the field of rehabilitation. LRS also utilizes cross-training of our Workforce Partners to assist in providing information to potential candidates regarding careers in the field of rehabilitation. LRS works with the State Civil Service and universities to notify potential candidates of vacancies in the field of rehabilitation services.

PREPARATION

Annually, LRS maintains a Re-Training Plan to monitor the number of Rehabilitation Counselors who do not meet CSPD qualifications. Since not all LRS’ Rehabilitation Counselors meet the CSPD requirements in the state, LRS continues the strategies noted below:

- When hiring new staff members who do not meet the guidelines for being “qualified” personnel, the agency encourages the individual to commit to pursuing the higher educational requirement.

- LRS’ CSPD Re-Training Plan is maintained by the Training Section. This plan is utilized to track LRS’ progress toward meeting the CSPD mandate which is closely monitored and updated at least every six months. All professional staff members listed on the Re-Training Plan who do not have a master’s degree in rehabilitation or a degree in a closely related field are considered to be in a “re-training priority” category. LRS has established two categories –
higher and lower priority groups for re-training. The lower priority group consists of the “non-masters degreed” employees that are either currently eligible for retirement or within five years of retirement eligibility. The higher priority group consists of the remaining “non-masters degreed” employees on the re-training list.

- The Program Manager responsible for coordination of the CSPD initiative contacts the “non-masters degreed” employees annually to discuss the mandate and the expectation that they begin training, discuss timelines for possible enrollment and works with them to address and resolve any barriers that may be preventing them from pursuing the Masters in Rehabilitation Counseling degree.

- LRS has procedures in place for the funding of academic course work, textbooks, and when necessary, travel and educational leave for Rehabilitation Counselors to be retrained in accordance with the agency’s CSPD Re-Training Plan. This policy prioritizes funding for staff members in the high priority re-training group.

- LRS staff members participate in training annually, such as are presented by the National Council on Rehabilitation Education (NCRE), Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR), and Technical Assistance Centers, to obtain information and professional training to meet the standards for CSPD. Professional and paraprofessional staff members also regularly attend training workshops delivered by other agencies, state universities, (including the two state universities offering degrees in rehabilitation counseling), and organizations for service providers promoting the enhancement of employment for persons with disabilities. LRS encourages professional development of all staff members through community involvement and membership in state associations such as the Louisiana Rehabilitation Association (LRA), a chapter of the National Rehabilitation Association (NRA), and the Clerical Association of Louisiana (CAL).

The LRS Program Coordinator, Program Manager and/or Bureau Administrator serve on university advisory committees, including the SU Rehabilitation Advisory Council and the LSUHMC Department of Rehabilitation Counseling. The universities are notified annually of LRS’ recommendations for improving their training so that graduates may better compete for agency employment. Universities are offered suggestions based on the agency’s needs to strengthen academic preparation and ensure that curriculums develop the necessary job-related competencies of their students.

LRS collaborates with the universities to support their research efforts in an attempt to obtain information to improve rehabilitation services and service delivery. This allows staff members to participate in studies that may bring more effective practices to the field.

RETENTION OF QUALIFIED PERSONNEL

To provide opportunities for advancement and encourage retention of qualified personnel, LRS provides professional and paraprofessional staff members the opportunity to promote. For professional staff, promotions are based on work performance and the attainment of specific job-related competencies. Positions that are promotional opportunities include Master Counselor and Master Evaluator. In order to qualify for these positions, professional staff members must possess a Master’s Degree in
Rehabilitation Counseling, Evaluation, or a closely related field. If administrative opportunities are desired, professional staff may apply for positions to include District Supervisor, Regional Manager, and various State Office level positions.

Paraprofessional staff who desire to promote within the agency, can apply for the Rehabilitation Counselor Assistant position once specific competencies have been achieved. This position works closely with the Rehabilitation Counselor in managing caseload activities and in provision of services to consumers.

The agency offers the following starting salaries based upon level of education and field of study as a method to attract individuals already possessing a degree in rehabilitation.

To retain qualified staff members, LRS coordinates training with local universities, business professionals and professional associations to assist in obtaining training and the necessary continuing education units (CEUs) required for maintenance of certification and licensure. The LRS training section is certified by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC) to provide CEUs for qualifying training events coordinated or conducted by LRS.

3. PERSONNEL STANDARDS

a) STANDARDS THAT ARE CONSISTENT WITH ANY NATIONAL OR STATE-APPROVED OR -RECOGNIZED CERTIFICATION, LICEN Sing, REGISTRATION, OR OTHER COMPARABLE REQUIREMENTS THAT APPLY TO THE PROFESSION OR DISCIPLINE IN WHICH SUCH PERSONNEL ARE PROVIDING VR SERVICES; AND

LRS’ CSPD standard for qualified rehabilitation professional is a Master’s Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling or a related field. This is in accordance with the academic degree requirement for the national CRC licensure which is offered CRCC.

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 Rehabilitation Counselor positions have an adequate background to successfully enter the profession, LRS requires the following minimum qualifications:

a.) A baccalaureate degree plus one (1) year of professional level experience in social services, teaching, vocational counseling, employment counseling, psychiatric counseling, social services counseling, guidance and counseling, rehabilitation counseling, personnel, nursing, recreation therapy, music therapy, physical therapy, art therapy, rehabilitation instruction, rehabilitation evaluation, worker’s compensation dispute resolution, or worker’s compensation rehabilitation dispute resolution.

b.) A baccalaureate degree in rehabilitation counseling or master’s degree in any field may substitute for the one (1) year of required experience.

LRS decided not to change the qualification requirements for the entry-level Rehabilitation Counselor positions as there are only two universities in Louisiana that have accredited rehabilitation programs. Changing the entry-level Rehabilitation Counselor qualification requirements would have dramatically
affected the ability to fill these positions, particularly those located in more rural areas.

Rehabilitation Counselors at the highest priority for retraining are encouraged to achieve the agency's CSPD standard per 34 CFR 361.18(c)(1)(ii)(B).

The following depicts the educational breakdown of Rehabilitation Counselors and Evaluators on board as of June 30, 2017:

Rehabilitation Counselors – 77
- Has a Masters in Rehabilitation Counseling or a related field - 51
- Lower priority for retraining - 10
- Higher priority for retraining – 9
- Currently enrolled in a Master’s Program – 1
- Those needing to begin training - 8
- Percent of Counselors at higher priority for retraining not currently enrolled - 12%

The agency recognizes that some employees in the higher priority retraining group will not be able to either pursue their master’s degree or complete all requirements of a master’s degree program. These individuals will not be eligible for advancement to the Master Counselor positions, and will not be given priority or consideration when filling supervisory and management level positions. In addition, should the agency consider instituting different sign-off requirements for levels of Rehabilitation Counselors and Evaluators; those individuals not at the master’s level will have casework randomly reviewed to ensure standards are maintained.

Agency staff members serving on university advisory committees keep the universities abreast of the CSPD mandate and status of the agency’s compliance. In addition, vacancy announcements are shared with local universities and posted on the State Civil Service website. Universities frequently refer students to LRS for internships that may lead to full-time employment and to apply for vacant Rehabilitation Counselor positions.

4. STAFF DEVELOPMENT
   a) SYSTEM OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT

LRS utilizes several methods of identifying training needs of professional and paraprofessional staff members, to include a Training Needs Assessment form which is available online. In addition, Regional Managers and State Office Program staff members may identify and request training. The Quality Assurance staff members may also request training when trends are noted during the case review process. All agency training ends with the completion of an evaluation form which allows for comments and/or to request further training.

LRS staff members take advantage of training opportunities provided through webinars and teleconferences as well as on-site training. Numerous types of training and support continue to be provided and/or coordinated by State Office Program staff members to support the field staff. Such training for FY 2015 included the New Counselor Training Academy, Job Placement & Development, an Ethics Symposium at SU, Supported Employment, PETS, Paraprofessional Training, Customer Service, Blind Specialist Training and Deaf Orientation.

Additionally, the agency has specific monthly in-service training requirements (4 hours per month), which are conducted by the regional field offices to ensure continuous education for all professional and paraprofessional staff members. This training is provided by experienced staff members or by knowledgeable community providers who specialize in the area of training required. Rehabilitation
Counselor Associates (RCAs) are required to attend all in-service training with the Rehabilitation Counselors and also attend separate training as needed. Examples of training topics include assessment, guidance and vocational counseling, eligibility, planning, disability related issues, assistive technology, disability services at colleges and universities, ethics, community-based employment outcomes, mental health, and employment related issues.

Career Enrichment/Development

The Bureau of Program Planning/Resource Development researches, develops, implements, and maintains standards to ensure staff development. Chapter 9 of LRS’ Technical Assistance and Guidance Manual is maintained by the Bureau, provides formal procedures to promote the development of qualified rehabilitation staff members as the key to quality service delivery.

Classes are offered through the Comprehensive Public Training Program (CPTP) to all state employees at all levels to further enhance their professional skills and development. Through this program, specialized training is available in areas such as management development, supervisory techniques, skill training for non-supervisory personnel, web-based computer skills and professional development training. LRS encourages all agency staff members to participate in applicable CPTP training classes.

b) ACQUISITION AND DISSEMINATION OF SIGNIFICANT KNOWLEDGE

For the most up-to-date information, all staff members have computers on their desk with access to the Internet to be used for research purposes. Information received on various rehabilitation topics are forwarded to staff statewide for their use.

5. PERSONNEL TO ADDRESS INDIVIDUAL COMMUNICATION NEEDS

Each office is authorized to obtain the services of a foreign language interpreter/translator as the need arises (i.e. LRS has consumers who speak Spanish, French, and Vietnamese). LRS has several staff members who are bilingual. In instances where bilingual staff members are not available, translators/interpreters are secured through community resources.

In order to insure that individuals who are deaf, deaf-blind, hard-of-hearing or blind are able to access services and offices, LRS has the following procedures:

- Receptionists, Specialists for the Deaf statewide, and some Specialists for the Blind are equipped with TDD’s and video phones. Appropriate staff members have been trained in the use of this equipment.
- Specialists for the Deaf must be skilled in sign language.
- All Specialists must attend a graduate program, Northern Illinois University, Western Oregon University, University of Arkansas, San Diego State University or other applicable program approved by the agency. There they learn about hearing loss and the Deaf culture, and are taught basic sign language skills, if needed.
- Specialists must attend an annual 2 - 3 day training related to deafness sponsored by the agency.
- Specific needs are assessed on an individual basis and appropriate training is obtained for each Specialist in their respective region.
• Sign language skills of the Specialists for the Deaf are evaluated through the applicable evaluation instrument as approved by the Program Coordinator for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Services.

• The agency has implemented a series of coursework for the Specialist for the Deaf position, which requires the completion of specific training for advancement.

• To move to the Specialist 2 level, an individual must have obtained sign language skills equivalent to a minimum of the intermediate level on the applicable evaluation instrument approved by the agency, OR interpreter certification equivalent to a minimum of the state’s Level 3 certification, AND attend one of the Orientation to Deafness training programs available at the University of Tennessee, Northern Illinois University, Western Oregon University, San Diego State University or other applicable program approved by the agency.

• To advance to the Master level Specialist for the Deaf, an individual must have a Master’s degree plus sign language skills equivalent to a minimum of the advanced level on the applicable evaluation instrument approved by the agency, OR interpreter certification equivalent to a minimum of the state’s Level 4 certification, and a minimum of nine hours of specialized college course work in deafness or deaf-blindness related areas approved by the agency.

In order to ensure that individuals who are blind or visually impaired are able to access services and offices, LRS has the following procedures:

1. Braille printers and Braille translation software is available to produce Braille translation in- house. Agency publications can be provided in alternative formats upon request.

2. Specialists for the Blind complete introductory course work in Braille and continue to receive training in this area. The agency has a series of training for the Blind Specialist position, which requires the completion of specific training for advancement. To move to the Specialist 2 level, an individual must complete Braille Literacy - Grade 1 and Introduction to Orientation and Mobility.

6. COORDINATION OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT

LRS continues to collaborate with the Department of Education (DOE) to jointly provide staff training for effective provision of transitional services for those youth with disabilities leaving the secondary education system and pursuing successful employment opportunities in adult life. This is accomplished through LRS/DOE’s formal interagency agreement which includes specialized training for both LRS’ and DOE’s staff members.

LRS’ Program Coordinator for Transition and DOE’s Program Manager collaborate on joint agency training and meetings throughout the year to network and share information. They are also responsible for assisting in the coordination and provision of transition services within each agency to assure effective service provision and training through the support of local interagency core teams, cross-agency training, outreach, and other needed activities; capacity building of young adult and family outreach efforts; and continuous provision of information and technical assistance.

Some examples of collaborative efforts include Transition Core Team meetings held statewide attended by the DOE, the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities, Families Helping
Families, and other interested individuals. These meetings are held to assist agencies who serve transition students as they exit from school to work.

LRS has a Program Coordinator specializing in Assistive Technology who conducts in-service training annually to keep field staff members abreast of the most recent technology available to assist individuals with disabilities.

Specialized training is provided to our staff members working with low-incident disabilities to include such training as orientation to deafness, mobility training, sign language coursework, deaf-blindness training, and graduate level training specific to working with low-incident populations (i.e. visual impairment/hearing impairment/significant cognitive impairment).

Local Education Agencies work with LRS staff members to:
- provide training on the Individual Education Plan document;
- facilitate appropriate orientation meetings among LRS staff members, students and family members;
- provide time for LRS staff members to meet with teachers, guidance counselors, and other appropriate personnel for such purposes as information sharing/gathering at both the individual and agency levels.

In line with the CSPD and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act requirements for personnel qualifications, LRS has defined its state recognized certification standard as a Master’s Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling or a closely related field for all professional staff members working with individuals with disabilities (this is inclusive of transitioning youth with disabilities). This is in accordance with the academic degree requirement for the national CRC licensure which is offered by CRCC.

J. STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT

1. PROVIDE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE REHABILITATION NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES RESIDING WITHIN THE STATE, PARTICULARLY THE VR SERVICES NEEDS OF THOSE:
   a) WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES;

Frequency of Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment: The LRS CSNA is conducted every three years. The most recent CSNA was completed in FY 2017

Current Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment:

Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) assists eligible individuals with disabilities to prepare for, achieve, and retain employment in an integrated community setting. LRS administers the general Vocational Rehabilitation program in Louisiana for the Rehabilitation Services Administration. This comprehensive needs assessment focuses on the Vocational Rehabilitation program and the needs of individuals eligible for those services.
The purpose of the statewide comprehensive assessment, conducted jointly with the Louisiana Rehabilitation Council (LRC), is to describe the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within Louisiana, particularly the vocational rehabilitation service needs as outlined in the 34 CFR 361.29:

- Individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services;
- Individuals with disabilities who are minorities and individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation program carried out under this part;
- Individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce investment system as identified by those individuals and personnel assisting those individuals through the components of the system; and
- Youth with disabilities, and students with disabilities, including their need for pre-employment transition services or other transition services; and an assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition services and pre-employment transition services, and the extent to which such services provided under this part are coordinated with transition services provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in order to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities.

(A) Assessments of the need to establish, develop, or improve Community Rehabilitation Programs within the State.

This assessment is in response to the requirements of 34 CFR 361.29 that includes statewide assessment, annual estimates, annual state goals and priorities, strategies, and progress reports. As mandated, LRS and the LRC jointly planned and conducted this Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment. The findings and results of this assessment will assist LRS with planning and developing the agency’s strategic goals and objectives.

**METHODOLOGY**

Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) utilized a variety of modalities and methodologies to research and collect data to assess and identify the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities, as well as the need to establish, develop, or improve Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs).

Data from consumers, staff members, workforce partners/stakeholders, Title 121 and the public at large was obtained. Survey Monkey, accessible survey software available through the internet, was used for all surveys. Surveys in hard copy and alternate languages were also available upon request. The use of online surveys assisted LRS in keeping the cost of conducting the needs assessment within budget.

The Louisiana Workforce Commission’s (LWC) Communications Section solicited participation in LRS’ statewide needs assessment surveys utilizing social media. The survey link was published in the Governors Office for Disability Affairs’ newsletter. An email account was set up to monitor any questions or comments provided. This email account was monitored by a designated LRS employee.
LRS stakeholders, consumers, staff members, Workforce Partners, and Title 121 were emailed a link inviting participation in the survey. All respondents were ensured of the confidentiality of information provided.

In addition to the surveys conducted by LRS, data was accessed from a wide range of publicly available resources including the United States Census Bureau, the American Census Surveys (ACS), the Disability Compendium, and reports provided by Community Rehabilitation Programs.

Six hundred twenty-five survey responses were received. In addition, eighty-three LRS employees responded to total seven hundred and eight survey respondents.

**Louisiana Rehabilitation Council (LRC) Joint Collaboration**

In order to collaborate with the state rehabilitation council on the completion of the survey, LRS staff attended LRC meetings where the Council provided input including assisting with the development of the survey questionnaires, recommending methods of distribution of surveys and in the distribution to potential respondents statewide. As detailed results are compiled and distributed, the council will continue to assist in determining actions needed based on the assessment results.

The LRC/LRS liaison participated in the development of the questionnaires. Once the surveys were developed, the liaison distributed the draft survey instruments to LRC members soliciting their input. Comments and suggestions received contributed to the final development of the survey. As exhibited above, the CSNA is the result of a joint effort between LRS and the LRC.

**Target Populations**

The CSNA survey link was emailed to consumers, staff members, Workforce Partners, Community Rehabilitation Programs, customers of CRPs, Title 121 and stakeholders. The survey link was provided for access by the public through the Louisiana Workforce Commission and Governor’s Office for Disability Affairs social media sites and newsletters. LRS solicited and received feedback from these target populations.

**Consumer Surveys**

Louisiana Rehabilitation Services emailed survey links to 5,607 VR and Pre-ETS applicants and consumers statewide. The survey links were sent to individuals from diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds, unserved/underserved populations and individuals with the most significant disabilities. Surveys were also sent to youth and students with disabilities to determine their specific needs.
Surveys included an introduction explaining the purpose and an invitation to participate. Recipients were ensured of confidentiality of all information submitted.

The consumer survey instrument was designed to:

Be easily read and understood
Be accessible
Be completed by the individual or parent/guardian/advocate
Encourage completion (online survey)
Provide anonymity

Questions on the survey were developed with input from the LRC to access the needs of individuals with most significant disabilities, the unserved/underserved, those being served through workforce partners and to determine the need to establish, develop, and expand CRPs within the state.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Consumer Surveys

LRS received 316 responses. Seventy percent of respondents identified themselves as individuals with disabilities; 19% were identified as a parent or guardian of an individual with a disability answering on behalf of the minor; and 13% were a youth or student with a disability.

Forty-eight percent of respondents were male and 52% were female. Five percent identified themselves as veterans. Sixty percent of respondents identified themselves as Caucasian; 36% percent as African-Americans; and the remaining four percent as American Indian, Hispanic, Native Pacific Islander or Other.

The predominant age of respondents was between the ages 18 – 25 years (30%); followed by the ages of 41 – 50 (17%); ages 31 – 40 years (16%); ages 51 – 60 (14%); ages 26 – 30 (12%); ages 61 – 70 (7%); under 18 years of age (3%); and ages 70 and over (1%).

Thirty-nine percent of respondents indicated living with parents or guardians; 23% lived alone; 17% percent of respondents indicated living with a partner or spouse; 13% lived with their children; 10% with a roommate or other adult.
The top disability categories respondents reported were: Mental Illness (19%); Hard of Hearing (12%); Psychological/Behavioral (11%); Intellectual Disability (10%); Orthopedic/Mobility (10%); Specific Learning Disability (9%); Autism (9%); and Blindness (9%).

Educational levels of respondents were as follows: 26% had either a high school diploma or a GED; 25% had some college training; 21% had a 4 year degree; 12% had a 2 year degree/technical college; 10% indicated that they did or have not completed high school, and 6% had either a master’s or doctoral degree.

Thirty-three percent of respondents indicated being employed, 29% were out of work/looking for work, 38% were students and 7% noted that they are unable to work.

The primary source of income reported included SSI/SSDI (45%); own employment (30%); parent/guardian’s income (19%), and public assistance (6%).

Thirty-four percent of respondents reported an average household yearly income of less than $10,000; 18% reported receiving $10,001 - $15,000; 16% reported an income of $50,000 and over; 13% received $15,001 – $25,000; 6% received $40,001 - $50,000; 6% received $25,001 – $35,000; and 5% received $35,001 - $40,000.

When asked why they wanted to work, 77% of respondents stated that they want to support themselves or their family, 58% wanted to better their lifestyle, 53% to be a contributing member of society, and 30% to have medical insurance.

When asked “If employed, are you earning minimum wage or above?” 111 skipped the question and 205 responded. Of respondents, 55% stated they earned above minimum wage and 45% stated they earned below minimum wage.

**Workforce Partner Agencies, Stakeholders & Title 121**

LRS solicited input from identified workforce partners, stakeholders and the liaison with Title 121. One hundred individuals completed the online survey.
Sixty-eight percent of respondents were service providers, 20% were advocates, and 11% reported having a disability themselves. Seventy-four percent had never received services from Louisiana Rehabilitation Services, 15% had previously received services but were not receiving them currently.

The gender of survey respondents were 58% female and 42% male. Seven percent indicated being veterans. When asked about their race/ethnicity, 70% identified themselves as Caucasian; 31% as African American; 5% Hispanic or Latino and 2% as American Indian or Alaskan Eskimo. Multiple races were selected for some.

Twenty-four percent of respondents were between the ages 51 – 60 years; 21% were between 61 – 70 years old; 20% were between 31 – 40 years old; 18% were between 41 – 50 years old; 8% were between 18 – 25 years old; 3% were between 26-30 and 3 % were under 18 years of age.

The current living situation of respondents are as follows: 59% reported living with a spouse or partner; 21% live with children; 14% live with a parent or guardian; and the remainder live alone, with a roommate, are homeless or institutionalized.

Educational levels of respondents with a master’s or doctoral degree was 45%; a 4 year college degree were 22%; 12% had either a high school diploma or a GED; 10% indicated that they did not complete high school; 9% had some college training; and 2% had a 2 year associates or technical college degree.

Seventy-three percent of respondents indicated that their primary source of income is employment; 11% indicated receiving SSI/SSDI; 10% rely on their spouse’s wages; and 10% rely on the income of a parent/guardian.

The average household yearly income received was $50,001 and over for 51% of respondents; $40,001 - $50,000 for 11%; less than $10,000 for 11%; $10,001 – $15,000 for 7%; $15,001 – $25,000 for 6%; $25,001 – $35,000 for 6%; and $35,001 – $40,000 for 7%.

**LRS Employee Surveys**

LRS sent survey links via email to all agency staff members (173) including administrative, support, and direct service delivery. The online surveys ensured staff of confidentiality and anonymity.

Eighty-three LRS employees from offices statewide responded to surveys. Of the respondents, 37% have worked for the agency from 11 – 10 years; 27% have worked for the agency over 20 years; 27% have
worked for the agency for 6 – 10 years; 12% have worked for the agency for over 25 years and 9% have worked for the agency for less than 5 years.

Fifty-two percent of respondents have their Master’s degree; 22% have their Bachelor’s degree; 11% have some college; 9% have a two year associates or technical college degree and 3% have a Doctoral degree 3% have their high school diploma or GED.

Primary respondents were Rehabilitation Counselors (44%); Counselor Associates, Rehab Secretaries and Receptionist (15%); and District Supervisors (10%).
Individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services:

Survey respondents universally stated that training should be provided to LRS staff, vendors and legislators regarding the vocational rehabilitation program, service provision and budgetary needs; that more staff should be hired to increase capacity to serve; and that more vendors are needed. Respondents indicated that more consumers need LRS services and could be served if additional state dollars could be secured to match the federal funding available to the state.

Upon reviewing survey information of individuals receiving SSI/SSDI, the top needs identified by respondents included job placement (46%); job coaching (30%); benefits planning (30%); transportation (29%); job readiness skills (28%); and vocational guidance and career counseling (27%). They identified barriers to employment as being the fear of losing their government benefits (52%), lack of employer acceptance of their disability (44%), adjustment to disability (32%); lack of transportation (38%); lack of public services (36%); the slow job market (36%); and lack of medical insurance (27%).

Respondents receiving supported employment services identified the following as needs not being met, job placement (23%); training/tuition assistance (21%); transportation (21%); room & board (15%); mental health counseling (14%); post-employment services (14%); benefits planning (13%); and equipment for work (13%).

The barriers to employment identified by respondents receiving supported employment services included the fear of losing government benefits (40%); lack of transportation (39%); employer acceptance of their disability (36%); their personal adjustment to the disability (29%); lack of public resources (29%); the slow job market (21%); and the lack of medical insurance/care (20%).

b) WHO ARE MINORITIES;

To assess the needs of individuals with disabilities who are minorities, unserved or underserved, LRS extracted information from various surveys including LRS consumers, Workforce Partners/Stakeholders/Title 121 and LRS employees.

When asked about barriers to employment, respondents reported the following needs: Comprehensive services are needed for individuals who have psychological disabilities, who are and ex-felons with disabilities. Services are needed for individuals living in rural areas, individuals in order of selection categories not currently being served and those not meeting the agency's economic need criteria.

It was noted that LRS needs to do more outreach to rural communities, students and employed individuals who may need accommodations such as assistive technology devices. Transportation and job opportunities continue to be a need in rural communities.
c) WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM;

Needs identified by unserved/underserved respondents were much the same as those who identified themselves as being a minority. These individuals can be living in rural areas, be in an Order of Selection Category not currently being served, and/or not meet the agency’s economic need criteria. CRPs were identified as being needed in rural areas to assist individuals in preparing for and obtaining employment. Transportation also continues to be a need in rural communities.

d) WHO HAVE BEEN SERVED THROUGH OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM; AND

Respondents from other components of the statewide workforce investment system were given survey links to complete the survey online.

Needs identified by respondents included transportation; benefit planning; job coaching; post-employment services; transition from school to work; assistive technology devices/services; and job placement.

The primary barriers identified by respondents included the lack of medical insurance/care; adjustment to disability; fear of losing government benefits; lack of public resources; lack of employer acceptance of an individual’s disability; and the lack of transportation.

Fifty percent of LRS employees responding noted that they are satisfied or very satisfied when working with the Business and Career Solution Centers (BCSC). Thirty-eight percent noted that they have not worked with a BCSC. Thirty nine percent used a BCSC in the last month to access/provide services to individuals with disabilities. Eighteen percent utilized the BCSC in the last three months. Seventy-four percent of staff are familiar with services available through their local BCSC.

e) WHO ARE YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, INCLUDING, AS APPROPRIATE, THEIR NEED FOR PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES OR OTHER TRANSITION SERVICES.

The primary needs of youth and students who are most significantly disabled were identified by responses of those receiving SSI/SSDI and those receiving supported employment services. Primary needs identified included Pre-ETS Job Exploration Counseling (17%); other services needed to assist in transitioning from high school to employment (17%); and job readiness skills such as resume writing, interview practice, work behaviors (17%).

2. IDENTIFY THE NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP, OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE; AND

LRS received comments from the public, workforce partners/stakeholders and agency staff members to determine the need to establish, develop, or improve CRPs within the state.
The LRS employee survey revealed that 47% of respondents felt that new CRPs were needed to adequately serve consumers and 36% felt that the current CRPs should be improved or expanded. Forty percent of LRS employees felt that the CRPs present in their region did not provide an adequate range of services to meet the needs of their consumers. Fifty-two percent indicated that CRP staff needed more education/training to effectively serve individuals with disabilities.

Additionally, 48% of counselors indicated that the quality of services provided to meet the needs of consumers could be improved. Seventy percent of staff responding felt that more CRPs are needed in their area to serve specific services or to serve specific disability populations. Populations that were identified as needing further CRPs to serve include the deaf, deaf-blind and blind/visually impaired, individuals with cognitive impairments/intellectual disabilities, autism, mental illness, paraplegic/quadriplegic, and traumatic brain injuries. In addition, it was noted that more CRPs are needed to provide services to transition students, to provide services such as supported employment in rural areas, job readiness/placement, sign language interpretation, assistive technology services and training, training, and customized employment.

Eighty-six percent of respondents to the public survey indicated that more CRPs are needed to provide services and 66% of existing CRPs need improvement. Some populations identified as needing more services include those having intellectual disabilities, autism, psychological disabilities, those who are blind/deaf-blind, deaf/hard-of-hearing. In addition, it was noted that CRPs are needed to provide particular services such as those needed by students transitioning from high school into employment and to individuals with disabilities exiting the correctional facilities and have felonies.

A need for additional vendors who provide specific services to individuals who are blind or have low vision, to include orientation & mobility assessments, low vision assessments, and vocational assessments was also noted.

Additional CRPs who provide job placement services, including supported employment, are needed in the regions serving rural areas as some areas do not have CRPs that are conveniently located for consumers’ participation.

3. 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 THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT.

Sixty-nine percent of youth and students with disabilities who responded were receiving services from LRS. Most frequent disabilities indicated were specific learning disabilities (15%), psychological/behavioral (13%), mental illness (11%), and autism (10%). Fifty-two percent of respondents were male and 48% female. Sixty-two percent of respondents indicated that they were Caucasian; 32% Black/African American; 3% Asian, and 3% Hispanic/Latino.

Needs that were identified as not being met for this population include training/tuition assistance (24%); job placement (22%); job readiness skills such as resume writing, interview practice, work behaviors (22%); benefits planning (20%); and other transition services to assist with transitioning from school to work (20%).
Eighty-two percent indicated wanting to work to support themselves or their families; 55% want to work to have a better lifestyle; 49% to be a contributing member of their community; and 27% to have medical insurance.

Lack of transportation was noted as a significant barrier by 33% of respondents; while 27% feared losing their government benefits; and 26% felt that employer acceptance of disability is a significant barrier.

Students noted that more advertisement and information needs to be provided to let people with disabilities know about services available through LRS. More counselors are needed to reduce wait times for services and to allow counselors to spend more time with the students they are working with.

**IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

There are many people in Louisiana with disabilities that could benefit from vocational rehabilitation services designed to help them achieve and retain employment in integrated community settings. To meet this need, LRS maintains eight regional offices located statewide; employs a skilled workforce to help individuals plan services needed; utilizes community rehabilitation programs to deliver services; and collaborates with multiple agencies and community businesses to promote employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

Common trends discovered in this needs assessment included the necessity for more agency and CRP staff, more CRPs, provision of skills training to work with specific disability populations, more funding to serve individuals with disabilities not currently being served, and provision of alternate methods of outreach.

LRS will continue to analyze the findings from this Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and use it as a tool to help develop the agency’s strategies. The data will continue to be used to drive agency goals and initiatives. The agency will continue to work with staff members and the LRC to establish measurable timelines and tracking mechanisms to ensure that strategies are accomplished. In addition, LRS will continue to collaborate with other key workforce partners serving individuals with disabilities to determine improvements that can be achieved through collaboration and partnerships.

**K. ANNUAL ESTIMATES**

1. **THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS IN THE STATE WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES;**

Per the 2017 Annual Disability Statistics Compendium, approximately 384,377 individuals with disabilities ages 18–64 are living in Louisiana. To qualify for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services, individuals with disabilities must be interested in obtaining or maintaining employment. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2017 the unemployment rate for persons with disabilities was 10.5%. To be included in this rate, the person with a disability was unemployed, available for work and was actively looking for a job in the 4 weeks prior to the survey. Although, it would be difficult to determine how many individuals with disabilities would be eligible, based on these statistics, 10.5% or 40,360 of these individuals would be actively seeking employment and could potentially be eligible for VR services.

2. **THE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO WILL RECEIVE SERVICES UNDER:**
   a) **THE VR PROGRAM;**
Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) estimates that it will serve 13,843 individuals during fiscal year 2017 – 2018. The estimated number LRS anticipates serving includes all cases from application through the service status (including cases already open from the previous fiscal year; see breakout projections on the following chart).

b) THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM; AND

Of the estimated 13,843 individuals receiving services, approximately 2,190 will receive supported employment services through funds provided under Title I and through Title VI program funds. Because at this time all Order of Selection (OOS) Categories are closed, this number will decrease by approximately 300 for each month all categories remain closed.

c) EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY, IF UNDER AN ORDER OF SELECTION;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Title I or Title VI</th>
<th>Estimated Number to be Served</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Order of Selection Category I</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>11,177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Order of Selection Category I</td>
<td>VI</td>
<td>391</td>
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<tr>
<td>Order of Selection Category II</td>
<td>I</td>
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<tr>
<td>Order of Selection Category II</td>
<td>VI</td>
<td>59</td>
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<tr>
<td>Order of Selection Category III</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>325</td>
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<tr>
<td>Order of Selection Category IV</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Order of Selection Category V</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>I &amp; VI</td>
<td>13,843</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR VR SERVICES, BUT ARE NOT RECEIVING SUCH SERVICES DUE TO AN ORDER OF SELECTION; AND

The number of consumers on the waiting list by Order of Selection Category follows:

- OOS Category I – 0
- OOS Category II – 395
- OOS Category III – 211
- OOS Category IV – 135
4. THE COST OF SERVICES FOR THE NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS ESTIMATED TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES. IF UNDER AN ORDER OF SELECTION, IDENTIFY THE COST OF SERVICES FOR EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY.

Cost for the VR Program in the Fiscal Year 2019:

LRS is projecting that the VR Program will need $48,946,122 to provide services to eligible consumers. Projected revenue is State General Funds of $7,399,887 and Federal Section 110 Funds of $41,546,235.

Projected cost to serve individuals with existing Individualized Plans for Employment:

State General Funds: $1,827,377
Federal Section 110: $6,751,860
Total: $8,579,237

Projected cost for determining eligibility of new applicants:

State General Funds: $192,739
Federal Section 110: $712,137
Total: $904,876

Projected revenue State General Funds is $7,399,887 and Federal Section 110 Funds of $41,546,235:

Amount of State General Funds recommended in the 2018/2019 budget to match Section 110 Federal Funds is $7,339,887

Amount of Section 110 Federal Funds is $41,546,235 Total Available Budget

$48,946,122
Less projections of $48,946,122 For a difference of $0

ORDER OF SELECTION

Estimates of costs of services for each Order of Selection category are in the chart that follows entitled Projections for Fiscal Year 2018-2019. LRS began serving only Order of Selection Category I effective November 8, 2017. Order of Selection Categories II through V remain closed. LRS will continue to provide services to those with plans of service in place as long as funding allows. Consumers reflected in chart below are those continuing to receive services as a result of “continuity of services.”

Projections for Fiscal Year 2018-2019
### L. STATE GOALS AND PRIORITIES

1. **IDENTIFY IF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES WERE JOINTLY DEVELOPED**

   The goals and priorities below were jointly developed, reviewed, revised and agreed upon by Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) and the Louisiana Rehabilitation Council (LRC) in order to carry out the vocational rehabilitation program and supported employment services.

2. **IDENTIFY THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES IN CARRYING OUT THE VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS.**

   **Goal & Priority I:** To maximize opportunities for individuals with disabilities in achieving employment and independence.

   **Goal & Priority II:** To ensure that Louisiana Rehabilitation Services has necessary and qualified rehabilitation personnel, both professionals and paraprofessionals, to provide the myriad of vocational rehabilitation services necessary to meet the employment and independence needs of eligible individuals.

   **Goal & Priority III:** To maximize resources by operating Louisiana Rehabilitation Services in an efficient and effective manner to ensure quality services that lead to successful employment outcomes and pursue innovative means to leverage the state’s full federal VR grant allotment.

   **Goal & Priority IV:** To provide vocational rehabilitation services that result in individuals with disabilities achieving quality employment outcomes by reaching the established performance indicators.

3. **ENSURE THAT THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES ARE BASED ON AN ANALYSIS OF THE FOLLOWING AREAS:**

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Title I or Title VI</th>
<th>Estimated Funds</th>
<th>Estimated Number to be Served</th>
<th>Average Cost of Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OOS Category I</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>$15,667,852</td>
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<td>$1,403</td>
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<tr>
<td>OOS Category I</td>
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<td>$303,515</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>$776</td>
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<tr>
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<td>$109</td>
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<tr>
<td>OOS Category V</td>
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<td>$41</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>$1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>I &amp; VI</td>
<td>$18,000,000</td>
<td>13,843</td>
<td>$1,300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The goals and priorities were based on an analysis of needs identified in the comprehensive statewide needs assessment, the SRC recommendations and performance accountability measures identified in WIOA.

a) THE MOST RECENT COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT, INCLUDING ANY UPDATES;

The goals and priorities were based on an analysis of needs identified in the comprehensive statewide needs assessment, the SRC recommendations and performance accountability measures identified in WIOA.

b) THE STATE’S PERFORMANCE UNDER THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES OF SECTION 116 OF WIOA; AND

LRS is negotiating the following performance measures with CORE partners and will continue developing systems of tracking data for measures required per 116 of WIOA in the upcoming year.

(a) Percent of program participants in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program;

(b) Percent of program participants in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program;

(c) The median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program; (baseline first year)

(d) Percent of program participants obtaining a recognized postsecondary credential, or a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, during participation in or within 1 year after exit from the program; (subject to clause (iii) Indicator relating to credential...program participants who obtain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent shall be included in the percentage counted as meeting the criterion under such clause only if such participants, in addition to obtaining such diploma or its recognized equivalent, have obtained or retained employment or are in an education or training program leading to a recognized postsecondary credential within 1 year after exit from the program.)

(e) Percent of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains toward such a credential or employment; and

(f) Determine the indicators of effectiveness in serving employers established pursuant to clause (iv) Indicator for services to employers - Prior to the commencement of the second full program year after the date of enactment of this Act, for purposes of clauses (i)(VI), or clause (ii)(III) with respect to clause (i)(IV), the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of Education, after consultation with the representatives described in paragraph (4)(B), shall jointly develop and establish, for purposes of this subparagraph, 1 or more primary indicators of performance that indicate the effectiveness of the core programs in serving employers.)

LRS has identified in (o) State Strategies the strategies that will be used to meet these identified Goals and Priorities.

Refer to (p) Evaluation and Reports of Progress: VR and Supported Employment Goals for performance on standards and indicators.
Agency goals focus on improving opportunities for individuals with disabilities and improving satisfaction of LRS consumers through participation in an effective and efficient system of workforce investment. These goals will be pursued in a manner that enables individuals with disabilities to make informed choices.

These goals are compatible with the vision of LRS in regards to serving individuals with disabilities, which is, “To be the most effective and efficient agency providing employment services for persons with disabilities in Louisiana.”

c) OTHER AVAILABLE INFORMATION ON THE OPERATION AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE VR PROGRAM, INCLUDING ANY REPORTS RECEIVED FROM THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL AND FINDING AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM MONITORING ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED UNDER SECTION 107.

The Rehabilitation Services Administration completed a monitoring report for Louisiana Rehabilitation Services on September 24, 2013. This report can be found at the following web address:

https://rsa.ed.gov/about–your–state.cfm?state=Louisiana

M. ORDER OF SELECTION
1. WHETHER THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT WILL IMPLEMENT AND ORDER OF SELECTION. IF SO, DESCRIBE:
   a) THE ORDER TO BE FOLLOWED IN SELECTING ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS TO BE PROVIDED VR SERVICES

The Order of Selection (OOS) assures that individuals with the most significant disabilities receive priority for VR services. After determination of eligibility for VR services, each individual will then be classified by placement into one of the five following priority categories:

OOS Category I (Severe limitations in four or more functional capacity areas): An individual who has been determined eligible for VR services and:

1. Who has a significant physical or mental impairment which seriously limits four or more functional capacities (mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, motor skills, interpersonal skills, work tolerance, or work skills) in terms of an employment outcome; and,

2. Whose VR can be expected to require *multiple VR services over an *extended period of time; and,

3. Who has one or more physical or mental impairments resulting from amputation, arthritis, autism, blindness, burn injury, cancer, cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis, deafness, head injury, heart disease, hemiplegia, hemophilia, respiratory or pulmonary dysfunction, mental illness, mental retardation, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, musculo-skeletal disorders,
neurological disorders (including stroke and epilepsy), paraplegia, quadriplegia, other spinal cord conditions, sickle cell anemia, specific learning disability, end-stage renal disease, or another impairment or combination of impairments determined on the basis of an assessment for determining eligibility and VR needs to cause comparable substantial functional limitations.

An individual's placement in the Order of Selection shall not be based upon residency requirements; economic status; type of disability; age, sex, race, color, creed, or national origin; source of referral; or expected employment outcome.

*Definitions of terms in #2 above:

Multiple VR Services - are defined as vocational counseling and guidance and at least one other service needed to obtain, maintain, or advance in employment.

Extended Period of Time - Means that the individual requires VR services that are anticipated to extend three months or longer.

**OOS Category II** (Severe limitations in three functional capacity areas): An individual who has been determined eligible for VR services and:

1. Who has a significant physical or mental impairment which seriously limits three functional capacities (mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance, motor skills, or work skills) in terms of an employment outcome; and,

2. Whose VR can be expected to require multiple VR services over an extended period of time; and,

3. Who has one or more physical or mental impairments resulting from amputation arthritis, autism, blindness, burn injury, cancer, cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis, deafness, head injury, heart disease, hemiplegia, hemophilia, respiratory or pulmonary dysfunction, mental illness, mental retardation, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, musculo-skeletal disorders, neurological disorders (including stroke and epilepsy), paraplegia, quadriplegia, other spinal cord conditions, sickle cell anemia, specific learning disability, end-stage renal disease, or another impairment or combination of impairments determined on the basis of an assessment for determining eligibility and VR needs to cause comparable substantial functional limitations.

An individual's placement in the Order of Selection shall not be based upon residency requirements; economic status; type of disability; age, sex, race, color, creed, or national origin; source of referral; or expected employment outcome.

**OOS Category III** (Severe limitations in two functional capacity areas): An individual who has been determined eligible for VR services and:

1. Who has a significant physical or mental impairment which seriously limits two functional capacities (mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance, motor skills or work skills) in terms of an employment outcome; and,

2. Whose VR can be expected to require multiple VR services over an extended period of time; and
4.  
   3. Who has one or more physical or mental impairments resulting from amputation, arthritis, autism, blindness, burn injury, cancer, cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis, deafness, head injury, heart disease, hemiplegia, hemophilia, respiratory or pulmonary dysfunction, mental illness, mental retardation, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, musculo-skeletal disorders, neurological disorders (including stroke and epilepsy), paraplegia, quadriplegia, other spinal cord conditions, sickle cell anemia, specific learning disability, end-stage renal disease, or another impairment or combination of impairments determined on the basis of an assessment for determining eligibility and VR needs to cause comparable substantial functional limitations.

   OOS Category IV (Severe limitations in one functional capacity area): An individual who has been determined eligible for VR services and:

   1. Who has a significant physical or mental impairment which seriously limits one functional capacity (mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance, motor skills or work skills) in terms of an employment outcome; and,

   2. Whose VR can be expected to require multiple VR services over an extended period of time; and,

   3. Who has one or more physical or mental impairments resulting from amputation, arthritis, autism, blindness, burn injury, cancer, cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis, deafness, head injury, heart disease, hemiplegia, hemophilia, respiratory or pulmonary dysfunction, mental illness, mental retardation, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, musculo-skeletal disorders, neurological disorders (including stroke and epilepsy), paraplegia, quadriplegia, other spinal cord conditions, sickle cell anemia, specific learning disability, end-stage renal disease, or another impairment or combination of impairments determined on the basis of an assessment for determining eligibility and VR needs to cause comparable substantial functional limitations.

5.  
   OOS Category V: An individual with a physical or mental disability:

   1. Who has been determined eligible for VR services; and

   2. Who does not meet the criteria of an individual with either a “most significant” or “significant” disability as defined in Categories I – IV above.

6. An individual's placement in the Order of Selection shall not be based upon residency requirements; economic status; type of disability; age, sex, race, color, creed, or national origin; source of referral; or expected employment outcome.

   Individuals shall be classified in the highest priority category for which they are determined qualified. Upon placement into a priority category, individuals shall be notified in writing of the priority categories, which category they have been placed in and their right to appeal their category assignment.

   LRS shall provide for continuity of services once an otherwise eligible individual is selected for services and has begun to receive services under an IPE, irrespective of the severity of the individual’s disability. LRS will continue to provide needed VR services to all individuals with an
existing Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

All services, including post-employment services, shall be available to individuals receiving services under an Order of Selection insofar as such services are necessary and appropriate to the individual's Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) in order to ultimately place them in successful employment.

All Agency policies and procedures governing the expenditure of funds, consumer financial participation, and use of comparable services and benefits are applicable to individuals receiving services under an Order of Selection.

b) THE JUSTIFICATION FOR THE ORDER.

The diminished funding available from the state to match the federal dollars allotted has impacted the agency’s overall ability to effectively serve many individuals with disabilities in Louisiana who could potentially become employed.

The loss in funding corresponded to a decline in agency staffing, resulting in reduced capacity to administer the program and serve consumers. In 1988, when the Order of Selection (OOS) was implemented, LRS had approximately 565 staff members on hand to administer the programs under the auspices of LRS. In 2017 this number declined to 177 (69% decrease). Specifically, Rehabilitation Counselors have decreased by 46% over the last sixteen years (from 142 in 2002 to 77 in 2018). The agency goal as positions have been lost due to budget cuts, has been to maintain counselors above all other positions as indicated by the slower decline in counselor numbers as compared to other staff.

On March 20, 1988, LRS moved to providing Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services statewide through an OOS. This enabled the agency to continue providing services to those eligible, preserve its ability to accept applications, to provide diagnostic studies, to provide trial work experiences/extended evaluations and to determine placement in the OOS.

Effective July 20, 1999, LRS served all current consumers and new applicants determined eligible and placed in OOS Category I due to decreased funding. OOS Category II was opened in February of 2000. On March 9, 2001 LRS moved from three OOS categories to five OOS categories. In August of 2002, LRS opened OOS Category III and it was closed again in August of 2003.

OOS Category III was opened again in December 14, 2005 and in January 10, 2006, due to a waiver of the state match approved by Congress to assist the state in its recovery efforts after hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma, all OOS categories were opened. Due to this waiver, LRS was able to serve all five OOS categories from January 10, 2006 through April 13, 2009. From April 14, 2009 through September 30, 2010, LRS served OOS Categories I & II. Effective October 1, 2010, LRS began serving OOS I only. On January 1, 2014 LRS began serving individuals on the waiting list in Order of Selection Category II. On July 1, 2014 OOS Categories II and III were opened and individuals on the waiting list in Category IV were served. LRS served individuals determined eligible and placed in Categories I – III through February 29, 2016 at which time Categories I – III were closed. On June 3, 2016, Category I was opened and individuals on the Category II waiting list were served. On February 22, 2017, Category I was closed so all categories remained closed. On July 3, 2017 1,007 were served from the Category I waiting list. On September 1, 2017 1,019 were served from the Category I waiting list. On October 16, 2017 605 were served from the Category I waiting list. On November 8, 2017, LRS fully opened Category 1 and served the 795 on the waiting list. Funding remains unavailable to serve new applicants and eligible individuals placed in Categories II – V at this time. LRS will continue to provide services to those with plans of service in place as long as funding allows.
c) THE SERVICE AND OUTCOME GOALS.

LRS anticipates serving all individuals with existing plans of service. LRS served new consumers determined eligible and placed in Order of Selection Categories I effective November 8, 2017. Order of Selection Categories II –V remain closed.

Estimated Number of Individuals with Existing Plans of Service in the Next Fiscal Year:
Louisiana Rehabilitation Services estimates that it will serve 13,843 individuals during fiscal year 2018-2019 in the vocational rehabilitation program. This number includes all cases from application through the service statuses (including cases already open from the previous fiscal year). In addition, approximately 5,300 students with disabilities will be served through the Pre-Employment Transition Services program.

Projected Cost for the Vocational Rehabilitation Program in the Next Fiscal Year:
LRS is projecting that the VR Program will need $48,886,122 to provide services to newly eligible consumers in OOS Category I, those with plans of service in place in all five categories and to potentially eligible students receiving Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS). Projected revenue is State General Funds of $7,399,887 and Federal Section 110 Funds of $41,546,235.

d) THE TIME WITHIN WHICH THESE GOALS MAY BE ACHIEVED FOR INDIVIDUALS IN EACH PRIORITY CATEGORY WITHIN THE ORDER.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Category</th>
<th>Number of Individuals to be served</th>
<th>Estimated number of Individuals who will exit with employment after receiving services</th>
<th>Estimated number of Individuals who will exit without employment after receiving services</th>
<th>Time within which goals are to be achieved</th>
<th>Cost of services</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$18,000,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

e) HOW INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES ARE SELECTED FOR SERVICES BEFORE ALL OTHER INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES; AND

All individuals within a higher priority category for services shall be served before individuals in the next lowest priority category are served. When it is impossible to serve all individuals within a priority category, individuals shall be placed on a deferred services waiting list and served in chronological order based on the date of application. In the event that the Order of Selection is rescinded,
individuals on deferred services waiting lists and in unserved categories will be contacted and served.

The number of consumers on the waiting list by Order of Selection Category follows:

- OOS Category I – 0
- OOS Category II – 395
- OOS Category III – 211
- OOS Category IV – 135
- OOS Category V – 28
- Total – 769

2. IF THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT HAS ELECTED TO SERVE ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS, REGARDLESS OF ANY ESTABLISHED ORDER OF SELECTION, WHO REQUIRE SPECIFIC SERVICES OR EQUIPMENT TO MAINTAIN EMPLOYMENT.

Due to budgetary restrictions, Louisiana Rehabilitation Services does not elect, at this time, to serve eligible individuals in Order of Selection Categories not currently being served to assist them in maintaining employment. If additional funding should be received, this option will be revisited.

N. GOALS AND PLANS FOR DISTRIBUTION OF TITLE VI FUNDS.

1. SPECIFY THE STATE’S GOALS AND PRIORITIES FOR FUNDS RECEIVED UNDER SECTION 603 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT FOR THE PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES.

Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) will provide and improve the quality of supported employment services through the Title VI program to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities, through a project designed to improve outcomes for all supported employment consumers.

Description

The Order of Selection assures that individuals with the most significant disabilities receive priority for vocational rehabilitation services. Supported employment services will be provided to individuals with most significant disabilities in the following categories:

- Order of Selection Category I - Severe limitations in four or more functional capacity areas.
- Order of Selection Category II - Severe limitations in three functional capacity areas.

The goals and plans of the program will be:
1. 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.

2. To investigate, purchase or 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.

3. To coordinate with the Department of Health & Hospitals (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), LSU Health Science Center Human Development Center, and the Louisiana Work Pays Consortium 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. To coordinate with other agencies (public and private), employers and advocates to establish multiple options for extended services, including the use of natural supports, to ensure more successful supported employment outcomes.

Supported Employment Models Used by LRS:

LRS used an Individual Job Coach model. It is estimated that approximately 450 individuals will be provided supported employment services with the funding available through the Title VI program in FY 2018. Individuals with the most significant disabilities and who have a plan prior to March 1, 2018 will be eligible for this service.

2. DESCRIBE THE ACTIVITIES TO BE CONDUCTED, WITH FUNDS RESERVED PURSUANT TO SECTION 603(D), FOR YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING:

   a) THE PROVISION OF EXTENDED SERVICES FOR A PERIOD NOT TO EXCEED 4 YEARS; AND

   LRS is exploring options for provision of extended services and will be developing protocol to ensure that consumers receive these supports.

   b) HOW THE STATE WILL LEVERAGE OTHER PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FUNDS TO INCREASE RESOURCES FOR EXTENDED SERVICES AND EXPANDED SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES.

   LRS will continue to collaborate with the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities and Office of Behavioral Health to identify funding sources for extended services.

O. STATE’S STRATEGIES
1. THE METHODS TO BE USED TO EXPAND AND IMPROVE SERVICES TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Goal I: To maximize opportunities for individuals with disabilities in achieving competitive integrated employment and promote self-sufficiency.

Objective A. Provide quality vocational rehabilitation services leading to employment outcomes for 2000 eligible individuals with disabilities annually through FY 2020.

Strategy 1. Evaluate and monitor case record documentation to maintain at least a 90% average level of compliance with agency policy and procedures.

Strategy 2. Explore opportunities for consumers to participate in Telework in order to increase employment outcomes.

Strategy 3. Identify and collaborate with employers to provide job development, work based learning experiences and job placement.

Strategy 4. Increase Counselor presence in secondary education settings in order to improve provision of vocational rehabilitation services to transition students.

Strategy 5. Coordinate with employers on transition services for youth and students with disabilities.

Strategy 6. Increase resources for assistive technology assessments and devices to improve employment outcomes.

Strategy 7. Make all agency documents available in accessible formats.

Strategy 8. Ensure LRS office buildings are 504 compliant.

Strategy 9. Expand employment opportunities through improved interfaces with professional organizations focused on employment.

Strategy 10. Increase outreach to targeted populations who are identified by the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment as being unserved/underserved, including those needing supported employment.

Strategy 11. Explore options for collaboration to provide transportation to consumers in rural areas.

Strategy 12. Explore options for collaboration to provide services to specific disability populations including those diagnosed with developmental/intellectual disabilities, autism, mental illness or addictive disorders, blindness/deaf-blindness, deafness/hard-of-hearing or individuals who are students in transition.

Strategy 13. Explore potential of establishing a program to provide training to individuals with autistic spectrum disorders.

Strategy 14. Explore how to determine if vocational training programs for industry-based certifications are qualified or certified to provide quality vocational training that results in competitive integrated employment outcomes.

Strategy 15. Collaborate with LDH to determine if individuals interested in competitive
Objective B. To expend a minimum of 15% of LRS federal funding to make available Pre-Employment Transitions Services (PETS) to applicants and potentially eligible students with disabilities.

Strategy 1. Perform comprehensive statewide needs assessment to determine needs of students with disabilities.

Strategy 2. Expand outreach to students with disabilities to make them aware of VR services including PETS.

Strategy 3. Monitor the provision of PETS services to determine effectiveness and possible improvement to service delivery process.

Objective C. 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. Monitor all legislation, which might impact the program’s preference (first choice at selecting to occupy available locations).

Strategy 2. Expand training opportunities for licensed blind managers to enhance skills, entrepreneurial abilities, and quality of service to customers.

Strategy 3. Consider merging locations with annual earnings below $25,000.

Strategy 4. Identify opportunities for new assigned and unassigned locations, including a staff position.

Goal II: To ensure that Louisiana Rehabilitation Services has necessary and qualified rehabilitation personnel to provide quality vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities to achieve competitive integrated employment and self-sufficiency.

Objective A. Provide training resources to 100% of agency staff in order to increase their efficiency in service provision through FY 2020.

Strategy 1. Implement upgrades to the Accessible Web-based Activity and Reporting Environment (AWARE) software.

Strategy 2. Identify alternative methods of succession training for staff members interested in pursuing leadership positions.

Strategy 3. 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 4. Provide support for professional staff to obtain a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling.

Strategy 5. Develop and implement methods to increase recruitment and retention of qualified staff.

Strategy 6. Provide LRS staff with disabilities, written or electronic communication in accessible format(s) or provide other reasonable accommodations.
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 in order to ensure that services to consumers with disabilities are accessed and utilized to the utmost extent by FY2020.

Strategy 1. Explore and utilize web-based networks in order to improve consumer employment outcomes.

Strategy 2. Continue collaboration with the Second Injury Fund (SIF) and request increase in funding to assist consumers in obtaining or maintaining employment.

Strategy 3. 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.

Strategy 4. Explore options to increase the number of Counselors dedicated to providing services to transition students.

Strategy 5. Collaborate with Veterans program and Apprenticeship program at LWC to determine methods to increase outreach and successful employment outcomes.

Objective B. Monitor and evaluate 100% of the Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) for quality and cost effectiveness of service provision in order to assure compliance with agency standards through FY 2020.

Strategy 1. Monitor and evaluate CRPs through a Regional Triennial Renewal Process.

Strategy 2. Monitor and evaluate the cost effectiveness of service provision by reviews of a sample of CRPs through site visits on an annual basis.

Strategy 3. Annually measure consumer satisfaction with CRP services through agency survey instrument.

Strategy 4. Conduct outreach to determine potential vendors who can collaborate to serve targeted populations in rural areas including, but not limited to, those who are veterans, mentally ill, ex-felons, recovering from addictive disorders or homeless.

Strategy 5. Explore the use of a vendor quality instrument and/or questionnaire for counselors/consumers to be used to provide informed choice.

Objective C. Explore the use of technology to increase agency efficiencies in processes to realize cost savings.

Strategy 1. Explore requirements to upgrade AWARE to paperless system.

Strategy 2. Explore options to increase functionality of LRS staff in the community by utilizing Telework, new technologies, and complementary work processes.

Goal IV. Investigate the transfer Independent Living Program to LDH to align with the federal program transfer.
Strategy 1. Discuss with administration of LDH, LWC and stakeholders.

2. **HOW A BROAD RANGE OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES AND DEVICES WILL BE PROVIDED TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES AT EACH STAGE OF THE REHABILITATION PROCESS AND ON A STATEWIDE BASIS.**

   In 2018 the AT Program Coordinator is working with Fiscal, Planning, and the CRP Bureau Administrator to update approved Rehabilitation Technology and Assistive Technology professionals, providers and vendors listed in our Technical Guidance and Assistance Manual. For fee–for–service assessments and evaluations statewide.

   LRS continues to coordinate with Louisiana Assistive Technology Network (LATAN) on an expanded program, funded by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) to provide statewide demonstration, learning, lending, and purchasing assistance of assistive technology. LATAN is an approved vendor for providing a device rental service so consumers may have a more realistic trial use of an AT device before requesting that LRS provide them with said device. LATAN is adding a leasing & lease-to-own program as an added option to the loan financing program. LATAN is a VOAD agency and a member of the Louisiana emergency preparedness and response network for persons with disabilities known as Emergency Management for Disabled and Aging Coalition (EMDAC). They conduct training to assist individuals with their personal planning for evacuations and participate in table-top exercises with First Responders (Fire and Police personnel who are part of search and rescue units)

3. **THE OUTREACH PROCEDURES THAT WILL BE USED TO IDENTIFY AND SERVE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE MINORITIES, INCLUDING THOSE WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, AS WELL AS THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM.**

   LRS Counselors are required to conduct outreach to faculty and students statewide at high schools and colleges to educate consumers with disabilities, who are unserved or underserved, regarding available VR services. In addition, outreach is conducted at prisons for individuals in pre-release programs and at community functions regarding available services.

   In rural areas, the counselors travel to meet with applicants/consumers in a convenient location to provide services and work with them to obtain employment.

   Based on needs identified in the needs assessment for transition students, outreach to local school districts continues to be conducted to identify those districts who are interested in a Third Party Cooperative Arrangement for transition services to increase success and improve post-secondary outcomes for students with disabilities.

   LRS maintains a strong collaboration with the Office of Behavioral Health, Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities and the Office of Aging and Adult Services to identify potential sources of referrals.
LRS works collaboratively with Section 121 VR programs to ensure that any service needs to Native Americans with disabilities are addressed. A Program Coordinator is assigned to provide technical assistance to the field concerning outreach to this population. Outreach is performed through presentations at events sponsored by Section 121 groups and at functions attended by Native Americans. A representative from Section 121 VR programs is on the State Rehabilitation Council and acts as a liaison between the two programs.

4. **THE METHODS TO BE USED TO 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, POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES).**

LRS is continues to review proposed ideas and initiatives for Pre–Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS).

LRS has designated VR counselors to work with Pre-ETS only cases across the state. LRS is working with a technical advisor to develop innovative and progressive systems and regulations for Pre-ETS services. The following strategies will expand and improve VR services for students and youth with disabilities who are transitioning from high school to postsecondary education and/or employment, and improve coordination with state and local secondary and postsecondary educational entities:

- Continue to evaluate, revise, and develop policy, procedures, and staffing strategies to improve consistency and increase effectiveness in the provision of transition services.
- Continue to expand and increase partnerships with schools to facilitate the coordination and provision of pre–employment transition services to students with disabilities.
- Continue to expand and increase partnerships with state and local secondary and postsecondary educational institutions and organizations to facilitate the identification of best practices, leveraged resources, and improved coordination.

5. **IF APPLICABLE, PLANS FOR ESTABLISHING, DEVELOPING, OR IMPROVING COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN THE STATE.**

LRS monitors and evaluates 100% of the CRPs triennially for quality and cost effectiveness of service provision to determine what improvements may be needed as well as to assure compliance with agency standards.

Based on the results of the triennial statewide needs assessment, LRS identified areas of the state
where CRPs are unable to meet the current need or are not present to provide services. This information is used to explore funding options, facility and staffing needs to establish, develop or improve CRPs.

6. STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE PERFORMANCE OF THE STATE WITH RESPECT TO THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA.

Strategies to improve performance are listed in the section above entitled “(1) The methods to be used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities.”

LRS is negotiating performance measures with CORE partners and will be developing strategies to improve performance per 116 of WIOA.

7. STRATEGIES FOR ASSISTING OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM IN ASSISTING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

LRS continues to collaborate with LWC in identifying effective ways to integrate services in the Career Solution Centers and to be involved with the Workforce Commission and its fifteen (15) Workforce Development Areas. LRS is represented on each of the 15 boards and attends meetings as scheduled. There are fifteen (15) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) established with each of the 15 Workforce Development Boards (WDBs). Within the 15 Workforce Development Areas, 62 Career Solution Centers have been established. Fifteen cost allocation plans have been completed by the WDBs, and approved by all parties. LRS has a good working relationship with the Career Solution Centers and continues to pay expenses to the local Career Solution Centers for our participation, as per the local cost allocation plans. To improve knowledge regarding assistive technology and address other accessibility issues, LRS’ Program Coordinator for Rehabilitation Technology continues to provide consultation to the Career Solution Centers. In addition, our agency’s REDS serve as the LRS liaison for all Career Solution Centers within their region and include providing “LRS Public Awareness” as well as services to consumers such as job seeking skills techniques and employment development. LRS and LWC are committed to the success of the Career Solution Centers and work collaboratively to serve individuals with disabilities at assigned Centers.

LRS continues to renew and revise existing local cooperative agreements, as applicable, with the 70 school districts and 146 Charter Schools in Louisiana. The LRS Transition Program Coordinator continues to collaborate and partner with DOE, OCDD, Work Incentive Planning Program, Office of Community Services, LWC, and the Office of Youth Development in an effort to network, share information and utilize comparable benefits to enhance VR services to transition 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 the 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. The Program Coordinator provides guidance and information to the Rehabilitation Counselors regarding specific transition issues. The Program Coordinator worked collaboratively with WINTAC’s Coordinator using conference calls, to discuss transition topics and provide information to LRS’ field offices. The Training Unit developed a School-to-Work Job Readiness curriculum and has trained staff to implement the curriculum with eligible students. Training will continue to be provided statewide. VR Counselors are encouraged to provide services at least once a month, when feasible, to students determined appropriate for job
readiness training.

As LRS continues to focus on increasing/enhancing quality employment outcomes, every Regional Office now has a REDS position or an Employment Specialist that provides job development/placement assistance to consumers. This assistance may include direct job placement, job shadowing, work experience, on the job training, or custom solutions.

In addition, a State Office position coordinates employment activities statewide. The Employment Initiative Program Coordinator serves as LRS’ direct contact to the VR Business Network and distributes job leads and information to the regional offices. In FY 2015, the VR Business Network provided job leads from all over the country. Some of the job leads were from the following companies: Walgreen’s, Lowe’s, TJX Companies, Office Max, Wells Fargo, DOL, Manpower, Inc., USDA, Marriott International, and many others.

LRS continues to participate with Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD) in the “Employment First” initiative, which was designed to provide employment as a first option for persons with developmental disabilities, as an alternative to institutionalization, and to provide integration/independence in the community.

LRS participates in roundtable discussions hosted by OCDD to inform their staff and providers of new requirements related to integration of individuals with developmental disabilities into their communities as a result of new Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) rules, as well as how to better collaborate with LRS to achieve goals set forth in WIOA.

8. HOW THE AGENCY’S STRATEGIES WILL BE USED TO:
   a) ACHIEVE GOALS AND PRIORITIES BY THE STATE, CONSISTENT WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE NEEDS ASSESSMENT;

LRS will use goals and strategies in this State Plan to determine staffing for initiatives, funding appropriations, and address the VR needs identified in the triennial needs assessment to improve services to consumers with disabilities. The agency will appoint staff members to coordinate and conduct activities to achieve identified goals and strategies.

b) SUPPORT INNOVATION AND EXPANSION ACTIVITIES; AND

LRS will continue to explore opportunities to incorporate innovative methods of service delivery to improve consumer employment outcomes and expansion of opportunities.

c) OVERCOME IDENTIFIED BARRIERS RELATING TO EQUITABLE ACCESS TO AND PARTICIPATION OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE STATE VR SERVICES PROGRAM AND THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM.

Strategies to improve access include evaluation of all LRS offices, publications and all other electronic media utilized by consumers. LRS uses information from the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, as well as consumer, staff and vendor input to identify areas where access can be improved.
P. EVALUATION AND REPORTS OF PROGRESS: VR AND SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT GOALS

1. AN EVALUATION OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE VR PROGRAM GOALS DESCRIBED IN THE APPROVED VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN FOR THE MOST RECENTLY COMPLETED PROGRAM YEAR WERE ACHIEVED. THE EVALUATION MUST:

   a) IDENTIFY THE STRATEGIES THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS.

The following summarizes the agency objectives/goals and the progress that has been made toward reaching them for Federal Fiscal Year ending 2017. State VR agencies submit a state plan annually to RSA to identify the goals and priorities of the state in carrying out the program.

Goal I: To maximize opportunities for individuals with disabilities in achieving competitive integrated employment and promote self-sufficiency.

Objective A. Provide quality vocational rehabilitation services leading to employment outcomes for 2,000 eligible individuals with disabilities annually through FY 2020.

Strategy 1. Evaluate and monitor case record documentation to maintain at least a 90% average level of compliance with agency policy and procedures.

Progress: LRS quality assurance staff randomly selected and reviewed 270 consumer service records during the 2017 review cycle (January 1, 2017 through December 31, 2017). Samples were drawn statewide from records in Service and Closed Rehabilitated statuses to review the following areas of casework for compliance: Application, Eligibility, Assessment, IPE, Supervision, Closed Rehabilitated, and Fiscal. The statewide rate of counselor compliance with agency documentation requirements delineated in the QA-1 monitoring form was measured at 95.9% (≥ 90% is considered “Satisfactory”) for the 2017 review cycle. This compliance rating represents a decrease (.5%) from the 2016 review year which was measured at 96.4%. The sample size for the 2017 review year was in compliance with RSA recommendations (2%) based on total consumer population.

Each of the eight regions achieved a “Satisfactory” rating during the 2017 review cycle for casework documentation compliance measured by the monitoring form. Regional scores ranged from 93% to 98%. Corrective action recommendations resulting from QA monitoring activities for the 2017 review year have been implemented. The QA-1 monitoring form was revised to incorporate changes in LRS guidelines implemented over the past 12 months.

Two Master Rehabilitation Counselor reviews were conducted by the Quality Assurance Unit during the 2017 review year. Each of the caseloads reviewed for promotion to Master Rehabilitation Counselor status exceeded the 90% compliance level required.

Strategy 2. Explore opportunities for consumers to participate in Telework in order to increase employment outcomes.

Progress: Telework employment options are considered for consumers when appropriate.
Strategy 3. Identify and collaborate with employers to provide job development, Work-Based Learning Experiences and job placement.

Progress: Through collaboration with the LRS Rehabilitation Employment Development Specialists (REDS) and local businesses throughout the state, 115 jobs were developed leading to successful job placements. Additionally, LRS vendors work with businesses throughout the year in developing jobs and placing consumers.

Strategy 4. Increase Counselor presence in secondary education settings in order to improve provision of vocational rehabilitation services to transition students.

Progress: Pre-ETS counselors have been assigned to all public schools throughout the state.

Strategy 5. Coordinate with employers on transition services for youth and students with disabilities.

Progress: Pre-ETS counselors and REDS have identified employers and placed students with disabilities into Work-Based Learning Experiences.

Strategy 6. Increase resources for assistive technology assessments and devices to improve employment outcomes.

Progress: Two additional, out-of-state vendor/providers have been vetted, and added to provide rehabilitation driving assessments and training on a fee-for-service basis, to include vehicle modification specifications for LRS consumers. A contractual agreement to hire a Physical Therapist and Rehabilitation Engineer through LSU Health Sciences Department was negotiated and approved. These professionals will conduct seating and positioning assessments, wheelchair and personal mobility evaluations, home modifications for accessibility evaluations, job accommodations assessments, and other rehabilitation engineering field services as required. The state-approved list of assistive technology and rehabilitation technology providers/vendors has been updated, and referral forms made available to the regional offices.

Strategy 7. Make all agency documents available in accessible formats.

Progress: All documents can be provided in alternative formats, such as braille, large print, etc. upon request.

Strategy 8. Ensure LRS office buildings are 504 compliant.

Progress: 504 audits of the LRS buildings and facilities are on-going.

Strategy 9. Expand employment opportunities through improved interfaces with professional organizations focused on employment.

Progress: The Rehabilitation Employment Development Specialists and Employment Coordinator participate in the Diversity Job Fairs, Society of Human Resource Managers, Mayors Commission on Disability, Business Service, Louisiana Diversity Council and Chamber of Commerce meetings. The Employment Coordinator collaborates with veterans groups including site visits with employers and quarterly training events. In 2017, the Louisiana Diversity Council will be adding a chapter in the Baton Rouge area. This will expand opportunities for employment.
Strategy 10. Increase outreach to targeted populations who are identified by the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment as being unserved/underserved, including those needing supported employment.

Progress: The Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment is being conducted in 2017 for submission in the State Plan updates completed in 2018.

Strategy 11. Explore options for collaboration to provide transportation to consumers in rural areas.

Progress: A three-year relationship with the Tangipahoa Voluntary Council on Aging (TVCOA) resulted in a proposal to the Transportation Research Board (TRB) to network seven para-transit equipped vans between businesses along the Highway 51 corridor between the cities of Amite, Hammond and Ponchatoula. The strategies behind this proposal will provide a reliable round-trip option for non-driving job-seekers, via Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) planning.

In Evangeline Parish the Council-on-Aging is planning to provide transit services for an LWC-sponsored apprenticeship training program proposal to begin training technical skills at the Vocational Technical School in Ville Platte.

As a result of WIOA-initiatives to increase collaboration between services agencies (LWC, LRS, VA, CAA and FITAP) at the local level, a JARC initiative to link job-training and development programs between St. Landry and Evangeline parishes with Lafayette is underway from the Business and Career Solutions Center in Opelousas. The JARC program will build on their current fleet of five, USC-49 5310 (Elderly and Disabled) program vehicles.

Moreover, the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) of Lafayette, Louisiana has working plans to link urban transit services with rural communities such as Carencro and Breaux Bridge, LA. The LRS Regional Manager of the Lafayette office is an active participant in this planning process.

Strategy 12. Explore options for collaboration to provide services to specific disability populations including those diagnosed with developmental/intellectual disabilities, autism, mental illness or addictive disorders, blindness/deaf-blindness, deafness/hard-of-hearing or individuals who are students in transition.

Progress: LRS has two Third Party Cooperative Arrangements (Bossier Parish Community College and LSU-Human Development Center) that work specifically with the autistic and developmental/intellectual disability populations of students to offer college experiences while providing Pre-Employment Transition Services. LRS also has a fee-for-service agreement with Nichols State University to provide services to autistic and developmental/intellectual disability populations.


Progress: LRS investigated establishing this program in the Baton Rouge area and determined that a similar program was already established. Continued investigation will reveal other areas of the state where this type of program will be of benefit.
Strategy 14. Explore potential of establishing a program to provide training to individuals with autistic spectrum disorders.

Progress: LRS has developed a fee-for-service agreement with Nicholls State University and a contract with Bossier Parish Community College to provide services primarily to consumers with autism.

Strategy 15. Explore how to determine if vocational training programs for industry-based certifications are qualified or certified to provide quality vocational training that results in competitive integrated employment outcomes.

Progress: This will be explored in FY 2018.

Strategy 16. Collaborate with Louisiana Department of Health to determine if individuals interested in competitive employment and in Sheltered Workshops are eligible for VR services.

Progress: LRS is in the process of updating our Memorandum of Understanding with the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities to ensure a seamless referral process to LRS for individuals interested in competitive integrated employment. LRS also implemented WIOA’s subminimum wage regulations and developed guidance for staff statewide to aid in implementation.

Objective B. To expend a minimum of 15% of LRS federal funding to make available Pre-Employment Transitions Services (Pre-ETS) to applicants and potentially eligible students with disabilities.

Strategy 1. Perform comprehensive statewide needs assessment to determine needs of students with disabilities.

Progress: The needs assessment is scheduled to be conducted in calendar year 2017 for submission in the State Plan submitted in 2018.

Strategy 2. Expand outreach to students with disabilities to make them aware of VR services including Pre-ETS.

Progress: Pre-ETS counselors throughout the state attend IEP meeting, career fairs, and other school functions to make them aware of LRS services.

Strategy 3. Monitor the provision of Pre-ETS services to determine effectiveness and possible improvement to service delivery process.

Progress: Pre-ETS counselors monitor vendor activities in the schools to ensure delivery of appropriate services and determine any improvements needed.

Objective C. 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. Monitor all legislation, which might impact the program’s preference (first choice at selecting to occupy available locations).

Progress: This is monitored annually during the legislative session.
Strategy 2. Expand training opportunities for licensed blind managers to enhance skills, entrepreneurial abilities, and quality of service to customers.

Progress: Managers are provided upward mobility training annually. In addition, regional training is conducted to address specific problems.

Strategy 3. Consider merging locations with annual earnings below $25,000.

Progress: As managers exit existing facilities, a systematic evaluation of the facility and potential for earning $25,000 or higher is undertaken. For those facilities that are not deemed to fall within that category, opportunities for merging with existing facilities and/or converting them to unassigned vending locations are investigated.

Strategy 4. Identify opportunities for new assigned and unassigned locations, including a staff position.

Progress: We will continue to pursue this goal pending availability of funds and positions.

Goal II: To ensure that Louisiana Rehabilitation Services has necessary and qualified rehabilitation personnel to provide quality vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities to achieve competitive integrated employment and self-sufficiency.

Objective A. Provide training resources to 100% of agency staff in order to increase their efficiency in service provision through FY 2020.

Strategy 1. Implement upgrades to the Accessible Web-based Activity and Reporting Environment System (AWARE) software.

Progress: LRS continues to upgrade AWARE as new enhancements are published. Upgrades are vital to the implementation of WIOA guidelines and RSA 911 reporting. We are on target to implement all needed upgrades.

Strategy 2. Identify alternative methods of succession training for staff members interested in pursuing leadership positions.

Progress: Succession training is provided through the State’s Comprehensive Public Training Program, mentoring the agency provides and the National Rehabilitation Leadership Institute. Staff members participate based on interests and career advancement goals.

Strategy 3. Provide in-service training to regional staff annually through a variety of methods as identified by training needs assessments/surveys and quality assurance reviews.

Progress: LRS is currently providing video training recorded, archived and accessed on the internal Share drive. Staff members also participate in real time web training and/or in-person training. Video training has allowed the flexibility to reach staff across the state on a more frequent basis without requiring state travel. As funding permits, staff members still have the option to attend live training. New technology options have improved communication statewide and reduced travel cost.

Strategy 4. Provide support for professional staff to obtain a Master’s Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling.
Progress: Staff is advised of training opportunities and universities that offer financial assistance. Educational leave can be provided upon request if meeting predetermined criteria. All professional level staff is encouraged to obtain their Master’s Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling.

Strategy 5. Develop and implement methods to increase recruitment and retention of qualified staff.

Progress: LRS continues to offer educational leave, assistance with books and supplies and a variety of training opportunities to improve competencies and skill level of staff. In addition, continuing education units can be provided by the agency for internal training events to assist staff with maintaining certifications. The agency hosts interns from local universities and attends career days at high schools and universities to recruit.

Strategy 6. Provide LRS staff with disabilities, written or electronic communication in accessible format(s) or provide other reasonable accommodations.

Progress: Provision of materials via recording, in braille, or in other alternate formats are provided upon request.

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 in order to ensure that services to consumers with disabilities are accessed and utilized to the utmost extent by FY 2020.

Strategy 1. Explore and utilize web-based networks in order to improve consumer employment outcomes.

Progress: LRS Counselors utilize the LWC Hire database to assist consumers in locating employment. In addition, various web-based sites with job postings are utilized.

Strategy 2. Continue collaboration with the Second Injury Fund (SIF) and request increase in funding to assist consumers in obtaining or maintaining employment.

Progress: During State Fiscal Year 2017, the agency served 688 consumers with SIF funds and spent the total amount allotted of $2,205,035. The agency remains in constant communication with the SIF Board and continues to request an increase the amount allotted to LRS.

Strategy 3. 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: LRS has negotiated Third Party Cooperative Arrangements with twelve entities throughout the state including school boards, charter schools, and other public entities to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services.

Strategy 4. Explore options to increase the number of Counselors dedicated to providing services to transition students.
Progress: LRS has approximately 17 rehabilitation counselors assigned to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services statewide.

Strategy 5. Collaborate with Veterans program and Apprenticeship program at LWC to determine methods to increase outreach and successful employment outcomes.

Progress: The Program Coordinator for Employment Development works closely with her counterpart at the state Veterans program.

Objective B. Monitor and evaluate 100% of the Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) for quality and cost effectiveness of service provision in order to assure compliance with agency standards through FY 2020.

Strategy 1. Monitor and evaluate CRPs through a Regional Triennial Renewal Process.

Progress: The Bureau of Community Rehabilitation Programs completed programmatic reviews of CRP's across the state. Of those found to have deficiencies, feedback was provided regarding non-compliant areas and corrective action was taken to enable the CRP to become compliant. The triennial review process is near completion. Non-compliant vendors were required to take corrective action prior to renewal.

Strategy 2. Monitor and evaluate the cost effectiveness of service provision by reviews of a sample of CRPs through site visits on an annual basis.

Progress: LRS reviews rates for services when it appears that a rate is too low or if a request for review is received.

Strategy 3. Annually measure consumer satisfaction with CRP services through agency survey instrument.

Progress: The CRP satisfaction survey is administered annually. The most recent survey completed indicated an approval rating of 77% for the CRPs.

Strategy 4. Conduct outreach to determine potential vendors who can collaborate to serve targeted populations in rural areas including, but not limited to, those who are veterans, mentally ill, ex-felons, recovering from addictive disorders or homeless.

Progress: Regional Managers determine areas of service in which vendors are needed within the regions that they serve. In the event that a shortage of service providers is identified within a region, the manager will conduct outreach to determine interest by the public or local service organizations qualified to provide the targeted services.

Strategy 5. Explore the use of a vendor quality instrument and/or questionnaire for counselors/consumers to be used to provide informed choice.

Progress: LRS has considered the use of a "report card" for vendors and continues to explore this option.

Objective C. Explore the use of technology to increase agency efficiencies in processes to realize cost savings.

Strategy 1. Explore requirements to upgrade AWARE to paperless system.
Progress: LRS has implemented the first stages of a paperless system and staff have the capabilities to attach documents in AWARE. Additional equipment will be needed to fully utilize a paperless system. Purchase of this equipment will be considered when necessary funding is received.

Strategy 2. Explore options to increase functionality of LRS staff in the community by utilizing Telework, new technologies, and complementary work processes.

Progress: LRS has considered options to allow counselors to fully work from outside/community locations but does not currently have the appropriate equipment to access the AWARE case management system and capture consumer’s signatures. Laptops, scanners and signature pads will be required. Signature pads have been tested to determine what will function best with AWARE.

Goal IV. Investigate the transfer Independent Living (IL) Program to the Louisiana Department of Health to align with the federal program transfer.

Strategy 1. Discuss with administration of the Louisiana Department of Health, LWC and stakeholders.

Progress: Discussions were held and it was decided that the Independent Living Program will remain with LWC at this time. The IL Centers and their stakeholders have an excellent relationship with LWC and are satisfied with the current placement.

EVALUATION AND REPORT OF PROGRESS FOR STANDARDS AND INDICATORS

Employment Outcomes

The Federal Performance Indicators were affected by the following:

- State budget deficits leading to mid-year cuts in the LRS budget
- Cuts in LRS staff/positions and hiring freezes
- Lack of funding to serve new consumers determined eligible and placed in Order of Selection Categories not being served.
- Reserve of 15% federal funds to provide Pre-ETS services.

Performance Indicator 1.1: The number of individuals exiting the VR program who achieved an employment outcome during the current performance period compared to the number of individuals who exit the VR program after achieving an employment outcome during the previous performance period.

One thousand eight hundred and thirty-four (1,834) consumers exited the VR program having achieved an employment outcome in FY 2017. LRS had 2,346 consumers who exited the VR program in FY 2016 with a successful employment outcome. LRS saw a decrease in successful closures in 2017 as compared to 2016.

Performance Indicator 1.2: Of all individuals who exit the VR program after receiving services, the percentage that are determined to have achieved an employment outcome.
A total of 5,668 consumer cases were closed after receiving services in FY 2017. Consumer’s cases closed as achieving an employment outcome was 1,834. Consumer success rate for FY 2017 was 32.36%. This is a decrease in the percentage with employment outcomes from the previous year.

**Performance Indicator 1.3:** Of all individuals determined to have achieved an employment outcome, the percentage that exit the VR program in competitive, self-employment, or Blind Enterprise Program (BEP) employment with earnings equivalent to at least the minimum wage.

In FY 2017, 1,834 consumers exited the VR program in competitive, self-employment, or BEP employment having achieved an employment outcome; which resulted in 81.57% or 1,496 consumers earning at least Louisiana’s minimum hourly wage of $7.25.

**Performance Indicator 1.4:** All individuals who exit the VR program in competitive, self-employment or BEP employment with earning equivalent to at least the minimum wage, the percentage who are individuals with significant disabilities.

In FY 2017, 1,496 consumers exiting the VR program in competitive, self-employment or BEP employment earned a wage greater than or equal to the $7.25 minimum hourly wage. Of the 1,496 consumers 1,492 or 99.73% were significantly disabled.

**Performance Indicator 1.5:** The average hourly earnings of all individuals who exit the VR program in competitive, self-employment, or BEP employment with earning levels equivalent to at least the minimum wage as a ratio to the state’s average hourly earnings for all individuals in the state who are employed.

The average hourly earnings of individuals exiting the VR program in competitive, self-employment, or BEP employment for FY 2017 was $12.47, which is a ratio of .59 to the state average hourly wage earnings of $21.13 for all individuals in the state who are employed. As a result, this indicator was met and LRS continues to meet this indicator.

**Performance Indicator 1.6:** Of all individuals who exit the VR program in competitive, self-employment or BEP employment with earnings equivalent to at least the minimum wage, the difference between the percentage who report their own income as the largest single source of economic support at the time they exit the VR program and the percentage who report their own income as the largest single source of support at the time they apply for VR services.

In FY 2017, 1,496 individuals exited the VR program in competitive, self-employment or BEP employment earning at least minimum wage. At application 331 or 22.12% reported their own income as the largest single source of support. At closure, this number increased to 1,401 or 93.62% for a positive difference of 71.52. As a result this indicator was met and LRS continues to work diligently to meet this indicator.

**Performance Indicator 2.1:** The service rate for all individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds as a ratio to the service rate for all non-minority individuals with disabilities.

In FY 2017, Louisiana had 4,268 non-minorities exiting the VR program; 2,654 non-minorities received services, for a service rate was 62.18%. Minorities exiting the VR program equaled 4,992 with 3,014 minorities receiving services with a rate of 60.38%; this is a .971 ratio. It is anticipated that the LRS’ VR Program will achieve results in line with those indicated in this performance standard area.

The following is a report of progress for specific Agency activities:

**Second Injury Fund:** In 2017 (July 2016-1 July 2017) $2,205,035. SIF program funds were spent by LRS on 537 consumers who were successfully employed in that year. At the closing of the year, there
were 151 consumers in open IPE’s being served. In 2018, two hundred (200) consumers have successfully been employed, with three hundred sixty-two cases in service status, with $1,250,555.75 spent to date.

**Transportation Initiative:** The AT Program Coordinator continues to work with agencies providing transportation related services to increase accessibility and availability of transportation for individuals with disabilities in the state.

Recently, the Administration for Community Living (ACL) release guidelines showing how their funding could be used to match with USC 49 Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) funds requested from the federal partners. To maximize flexibility and improve transportation coordination, the Administration for Community Living (ACL) has clarified and publicized the ability of grantees to use Older Americans Act Title IIIIB Supportive Services Funds to match to specific FTA programs.

The AT Program Coordinator has worked closely with the Regional LRS Managers and the Regional and Metropolitan Planning Organizations to network these proposals in such a way that LRS Counselors will have these transportation assets available for their consumers in job seeking and employment services. Several JARC’s are already in operation in East Baton Rouge, the River Parishes, and the parishes surrounding New Orleans.

This bodes well for increased leverage for poorer, smaller, rural parishes in helping them serve our non-driving job-seekers.

**Employment Initiatives:** Throughout the regions in this state, LRS continues to focus on business engagements which focuses on connecting with various employers and thereby increasing employment outcomes with people with disabilities. Our Employment Specialists, REDS, and our Program Coordinator persists in educating employers on the advantages on hiring people with disabilities and the financial incentives such as the Work Opportunity Tax Credit Program (WOTC) that they may be able to receive. During Disability Awareness Month, (October) job fairs are held across the state which enables our consumers to make solid connections with employers that could lead to employment opportunities. Our Employment Specialist and REDS continue to provide job development/placement assistance to our consumers. This assistance may include direct job placement, job shadowing, work experience, on the job training, or custom solutions.

Four years ago, a State Office position was hired to coordinate employment activities statewide. The Employment Initiative Program Coordinator serves as LRS’ direct contact to the VR Business Network and distributes job leads and information to the regional offices. The Program Coordinator continues to network by means of attending the Society of Human Resource Management monthly meetings, WIOA board meetings and monthly meetings with the Louisiana Diversity Council. The Program Coordinator continues to work closely with the Veterans personnel related to business engagement as employers often group veterans and people with disabilities as one group.

The Louisiana Rehabilitation Council also has an employment committee that focus on strategies used to increase business engagement as well as various approaches that we can use when working with our consumers to increase their own potential to employment. These committee members consist of Employment Specialists, HR managers from businesses, Representatives from Independent Living Council and former recipients of vocational rehabilitation services. The committee focuses on establishing best practice models to improve services and employment outcomes for LRS consumers.

**Ticket–to–Work:** LRS continues to network and collaborate with MAXIMUS, as well as many other agencies in the state, to ensure Ticket–to–Work is successful in Louisiana. LRS continues to maintain a statewide 1–800 Ticket Hotline number for individuals interested in learning more about their Ticket and how LRS would be able to assist them.

In FY 2017, LRS received $1,163,021.25; this amount was a slight decrease from FY 2016’s $1,488,446.32 which was received from the Social Security Administration’s (SSAs) reimbursement
program. The Program Coordinator continues to work closely with SSA to insure all documentation is submitted properly so that claims can be processed.

**Collaboration with Title 121 Programs:** LRS and the Tribal programs continue to provide coordinated services under the collaborative agreement to make the rehabilitation process more responsive to the needs of American Indians with disabilities. The collaborative agreement allows for mutual acceptance of eligibility decisions, the provision of services through concurrent (joint) cases, the sharing of resources, and to continue cross-training opportunities to facilitate the development of staff persons.

**Due Process:** LRS had seven scheduled Fair Hearings during FY 2017. Of the seven fair hearing requests, three were resolved prior to the actual fair hearing; four (4) went to a fair hearing.

Impartial Hearing Officers and Mediators are initially provided training on LRS Policy and Technical Assistance and Guidance manual materials. Copies of revised policy and technical assistance manual material is provided to the Impartial Hearing Officers/Mediators, if needed, training is provided.

b) **DESCRIBE THE FACTORS THAT IMPEDED THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES.**

LRS continues to be unable to obtain the state match to access full federal funding available to the state. The decline in funding continues to limit services and increase staff reductions.

LRS began serving only Order of Selection Category I effective November 8, 2017. Order of Selection Categories II through V remain closed. LRS will continue to provide services to those with plans of service in place as long as funding allows.

2. **AN EVALUATION OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM GOALS DESCRIBED IN THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SUPPLEMENT FOR THE MOST RECENT PROGRAM YEAR WERE ACHIEVED. THE EVALUATION MUST:**

a) **IDENTIFY THE STRATEGIES THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS.**

Two thousand one hundred and ninety (2,190) individuals with disabilities received supported employment services in FY 2017. The supported employment goals and plans are identified in sections (n) Goals and Plans for Distribution of Title VI Funds and (q) Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services.

It is estimated that approximately 450 individuals will be provided supported employment services with the funding available through the Title VI, Part B program in FY 2017. Individuals with the most significant disabilities in Order of Selection Categories I and II will be served under this program.
b) DESCRIBE THE FACTORS THAT IMPEDED THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GOALS AND PRIORITIES

LRS continues to be unable to obtain the state match to access full federal funding available. The decline in funding continues to limit services and staffing.

3. THE VR PROGRAM’S PERFORMANCE ON THE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY INDICATORS UNDER SECTION 116 OF WIOA.

LRS is negotiating performance measures with CORE partners and will be developing systems of tracking data for measures required per 116 of WIOA.

4. HOW THE FUNDS RESERVED FOR INNOVATION AND EXPANSION (I&E) ACTIVITIES WERE UTILIZED.

During FY 2017, LRS used the following innovation and expansion funds per allowable expenditures identified in the federal regulations 34 CFR 361.35 to support the salaries, travels, and activities of the Louisiana Rehabilitation Council staff person and it members, the Statewide Independent Living Council, as well as the AWARE case management system:

Louisiana Rehabilitation Council (LRC): $11,806.66
Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC): $92,559.90
AWARE System: $1,400
Total: $105,766.56

Q. QUALITY, SCOPE, AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES.

1. 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.

Louisiana Rehabilitation Services will provide and improve the quality of supported employment services through the Title VI Program, and the Title I, Vocational Rehabilitation Program to individuals with the most significant disabilities through the use of fee-for-service reimbursement, or LRS funded grants and/or contracts awarded to supported employment providers.

The goals of the program will be:

1. To fund the vendors necessary to provide supported employment services to eligible
consumers. These vendors will provide services to a diverse population of individuals with significant disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities.

2. To ensure the quality of supported employment services provided to eligible consumers by monitoring the vendors. The monitoring will include an evaluation of the provision of services according to the most recent technology in supported employment and to identify training and technical assistance needed.

3. Provide technical assistance and training opportunities to 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.

4. To work cooperatively with other agencies (public and private), employers and advocates to assist in developing employment opportunities and multiple options for extended services to ensure more successful supported employment outcomes.

5. To coordinate with the Department of Health & Hospitals (OBH and OCDD – Support Waivers Program, and Medicaid Purchase Plan), University of North Texas Workplace Inclusion and Sustainable Employment (UNTWISE), the Louisiana Chapter of the Association for Persons in Supported Employment (APSE), LSU Health Science Center Human Development Center, and the Louisiana Work Pays Consortium 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.

Supported Employment Models used by LRS:

LRS uses and Individual Job/Job Coach model. It is estimated that at least 2,190 individuals can be provided supported employment services.

2. THE TIMING OF TRANSITION TO EXTENDED SERVICES.

The time required for transition to extended services is as follows:

1. Supported employment models:
   Individual Placement Model – Under the individual placement model, stabilization occurs when the consumer has made substantial progress toward meeting the hours per week goal indicated on an IPE and has reached a point where intervention is no more than 25% of the consumer's normal work time and the individual has maintained at least ninety (90) days of consecutive employment after stabilization occurred.

2. Extended Follow–along (transition):
   The consumer must meet the following requirements before the Counselor can provide for the transition of the consumer from LRS to the provider of extended services:

   a. Job placement is stable for the consumer;
   b. The consumer has substantially met the goal for number of hours of employment as indicated on an IPE; and,
c. The Supported Employment Provider agency has committed to arrange for, or develop, on-going support needed to maintain the consumer’s employment. This includes the development of natural supports.

CERTIFICATIONS
CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING — VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION
CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING — SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT
ASSURANCES

VOCA TIONAL REHABILITATION CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES CERTIFICATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.</th>
<th>States must provide written and signed certifications that:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>3. Louisiana Rehabilitation Services is authorized to submit the VR services portion of</td>
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<td>4. the Unified or Combined State Plan under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973</td>
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<td>5. (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by WIOA, and its supplement under title VI of</td>
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<td>6. the</td>
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<td>7. Rehabilitation Act;</td>
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</table>

| 6. | 7. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the |
| | 8. provision of VR services, the Office of Workforce Development |
| | 9. agrees to operate and administer the State VR Services Program in accordance with the |
| | 10. VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan, the Rehabilitation Act, and all |
| | 11. applicable regulations, policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. |
| | 12. Funds made available under section 111 of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the |
| | 13. provision of VR services and the administration of the VR services portion of the Unified or |
| | 14. Combined State Plan; |

| 9. | 10. As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in |
| | 11. accordance with the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or |
| | 12. Combined State Plan, the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations, policies, and procedures established by the Secretary of Education. Funds made |
| | 13. available under title VI are used solely for the provision of supported employment |
| | 14. services and the administration of the supplement to the VR services portion of the Unified or |
| | 15. Combined State Plan; |

<p>| 14. | 15. The designated State agency and/or the designated State unit has the authority |
| | 16. under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding the VR services portion of |
| | 17. the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement; |</p>
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<td>16.</td>
<td>17.</td>
<td>The State legally may carry out each provision of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>19.</td>
<td>All provisions of the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and its supplement are consistent with State law.</td>
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<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>21.</td>
<td>The Executive Director of Louisiana Workforce Commission 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;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>23.</td>
<td>The Director of Louisiana Rehabilitation Services has the authority to submit the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and the supplement for Supported Employment services;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>25.</td>
<td>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.</td>
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</table>
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 of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), 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:

<table>
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<th>26.</th>
<th>The State Plan must provide assurances that:</th>
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<td>27.</td>
<td>28. 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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>30. 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 plan; section 103 of WIOA in the case of a submission of a Combined State Plan; 34 CFR 76.140.</td>
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<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>32. 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) the establishment of either a State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council, as required by section 101(a)(21) of the Rehabilitation Act. The designated State agency or designated State unit, as applicable (Option A or B must be selected): (A) is an independent State commission. (B) has established a State Rehabilitation Council.</td>
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</table>
(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) 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. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the local administration of VR funds. (Yes/No)
(f) the shared funding and administration of joint programs, in accordance with section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act. Select yes or no, as appropriate, to identify if the designated State agency allows for the shared funding and administration of joint programs, (Yes/No)
(g) statewideness and waivers of statewideness requirements, as set forth in section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act. Is the designated State agency requesting or maintaining a waiver of statewideness for one or more services provided under the VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan? (Yes/No) See Section 2 of this VR services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan.
(h) the descriptions 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.
(m) the submission of reports as required by section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act.
38. **Administration of the Provision of VR Services**: The designated State agency, or designated State unit, as appropriate, assures that it will:
   - comply with all requirements regarding information and referral services in accordance with sections 101(a)(5)(D) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act.
   - 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.
   - 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 in accordance with section 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act?
   
   (Yes/No)
   - determine whether comparable services and benefits are available to the individual in accordance with section 101(a)(8) of the Rehabilitation Act.
   - comply with the requirements for the development of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act.
   - 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.
   - 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.
   - 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 section 101(a)(14) of the Rehabilitation Act.
   - 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 with respect to students with disabilities, the State,
   - (i) has developed and will implement, strategies to address the needs identified in the assessments; and
   - 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) and 101(a)(25)).
43. **Program Administration for the Supported Employment Title VI Supplement:**

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.

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.

The designated state unit will coordinate activities with any other State agency that is functioning as an employment network under the Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency program under Section 1148 of the Social Security Act.

44. **Financial Administration of the Supported Employment Program:** 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)(G) and (H) of the Rehabilitation Act.

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.
51. (a) **Provision of Supported Employment Services:** 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:

i. 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.

ii. 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)(6)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act.

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| 1. | PUBLIC COMMENT ON POLICIES AND PROCEDURES: |
| 2. | SUBMISSION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT: |
| 3. | ADMINISTRATION OF THE VR SERVICES PORTION OF THE UNIFIED OR COMBINED STATE PLAN: |
| 4. | ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROVISION OF VR SERVICES: |
| 5. | PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION FOR THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT TITLE VI SUPPLEMENT: |
| 6. | FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM: |
| 7. | PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES: |

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**APPENDICES:**

**Appendix 1.** Performance Goals for the Core programs

Table 1. Employment (Second Quarter after Exit)
Table 2. Employment (Fourth Quarter after Exit)
Table 3. Median Earnings (Second Quarter after Exit)
Table 4. Credential Attainment Rate
Table 5. Measureable Skill Gains
Table 6. Effectiveness in Serving Employers
Table 7. Combined Federal Partner Measures

**Appendix 2.** Other State Attachments